

I. Why Do So Many Christians Miss These Prophecies Today?

- a. If most of the prophecies in this lesson are new to you, let me assure you that *you are not alone!*
 - i. For me this has been a slow and ongoing process of learning and discovery, over several decades.
 - ii. It took a lot of reading Old Testament passages, combined with taking advantage of insights provided by the apostles and early Christian writers
- b. The reason these prophecies are largely missed is that they are somewhat *hidden*. Many prophecies are hidden not only within allegories and types, but also in the form of *riddles*!
 - i. A classic example of a popular riddle, from when I was a child: “What’s black and white, and red (*read*) all over?”
 1. Those who never heard this famous riddle before are thrown off initially. We generally think of the words “black” and “white” in connection with *colors*; how can something be black and white, and yet also be (the color) *red all over*?
 2. The riddle is solved by realizing that the words R-E-D (the color) and R-E-A-D (past tense of the verb “to read”) are pronounced identically in English.
 3. The answer to the riddle is easily discovered if we switch our perspective and use the other meaning of the word. The answer: *a newspaper*: white paper, black type, and it is indeed *read* all over.
 - ii. My young friend Jeffrey Fischer, who lives in a rural farming part of Lancaster County, PA, likes to tell the riddle:
 1. **Riddle:** “Why is it a bad idea to tell secrets in a corn field?”
 2. **Answer:** “Because there are *too many ears!*”
 - a. The riddle is based on the fact that our English word “ear” has two different meanings.
 - b. It can refer to the organ of hearing on either side of your head, or it can refer to the part of a plant that contains the flowers and seeds, especially as in the case of an “ear” of corn.
 - iii. Jesus himself spoke in riddles.

1. He said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” (**John 2:19**, NKJV)
2. He told Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” (**John 3:3-7**)
3. He told the apostles, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.” (**John 11:11**, NKJV)
4. Remember, most of Jesus’ teaching was in the form of *parables*, the meaning of which his hearers often did not grasp initially. One reason He used that unusual teaching approach is given in **Matthew 13**:
 - a. “All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: ‘I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.’” (**Matthew 13:34-35**, NKJV)
 - b. This is a direct quote from **Psalms 78:2** (designated **Psalms 77:2** in the LXX)
- iv. Should we be surprised that the Holy Spirit revealed things through riddles, parables, and enigmas, kept hidden from the beginning, which we must unlock?
 1. The word ἀνίσταμι (anistami), used in several key passages in the LXX, has multiple meanings. While most no doubt assumed God meant he would figuratively “raise up” a prophet, priest, king or shepherd, He actually meant that He would LITERALLY “raise up” that person, through the resurrection of the body of Jesus from the dead.
 2. David speaks in the first person (“me/my/mine”) in the psalms; but refers to *the one who was coming from his body*, his seed, the Christ.
 3. The terms “lie down to sleep” and “rise up / wake up” are used metaphorically to refer to death and subsequent resurrection from the dead.
 4. The term “tent/ tabernacle” is used to refer to a person’s physical body.
- v. In **Proverbs chapter 1**, Solomon explains the importance of gaining more wisdom. He calls all men to seek wisdom, and says of the wise man,

1. “He will understand both *a parable* and a *hidden saying*, both wise words and *riddles*.” (**Proverbs 1:6**, LXX, OSB)
 - a. “Hidden sayings” is literally “dark sayings” here.
 - b. From the Greek word for “riddle” we find here in the LXX, we get our English word “enigma”.
2. Why is it important to understand “hidden sayings” and “riddles”?
 - a. Is Solomon (and the Holy Spirit) really interested in equipping men to be able to sit around the city gates and pass their time telling and solving corny riddles and jokes? I don’t think so!
 - i. No! He wants us to seek wisdom so that we can unlock the things He has *hidden in Scripture from the beginning*!
 - c. The Spirit has hidden great things in the Scriptures. We need to seek greater wisdom, and to ask God for more wisdom, to be able to see these things that we have missed.
 - i. The Holy Spirit, like Jesus, uses riddles to reveal wonderful truths to those seeking it.
 - ii. They are hidden, but I believe God wants His people to search for and discover these wonderful treasures.

II. Summary and Conclusion

- a. (What we learned in this lesson) The Old Testament is filled with prophecies about the resurrection of Christ. The next time someone asks you if you know of any prophecies about the resurrection of Jesus, you can reply “Yes, I know plenty of them!”
 - i. Jesus explained these prophecies to the apostles, after his resurrection, as it says in **Luke 24**.
 - ii. While we don’t have Jesus’ explanation there, by carefully reviewing what apostles like Peter later taught and preached, I believe we can gain insights into these prophecies.
 1. We can begin to reconstruct the message.
 2. Peter and the other apostles relied heavily on the LXX, the Greek translation of the OT made by the Jews 200-250 years before the birth of Jesus, when explaining the prophecies.

- a. We can see more of what they saw if we use the same Old Testament text.
3. We also can benefit from the insights of early Christian writers (especially during the first 300 years), who used the prophecies to prove the Christian faith to unbelievers.
- iii. The reason most Christians today are unaware of so many prophecies about resurrection is that many of these prophecies are *hidden*: often expressed in the form of riddles, where a word can have two or more meanings.
 1. Words and phrases like “to raise up” and “sleep/wake up”.
- iv. Some prophecies also involve “head-fakes”.
 1. For example: the prophecy given to David superficially might seem to apply to Solomon (son of David, on the throne, built the temple...). However, those who are careful and look closely will discover another picture.
- v. The Holy Spirit, the spirit of wisdom (**Isaiah 11:2**), hid these truths and prophecies throughout the Scriptures. May the Spirit give us more wisdom and insight to uncover these wonderful spiritual treasures!
- b. Why does this matter today?
 - i. Some might be tempted to view prophecies such as the ones we discussed in this lesson as being no more than an interesting curiosity or sidelight.
 1. **Question:** Is there any real value in knowing this, beyond playing ‘Bible trivia’ or stumping your Christian friends at church? What do you think?
 - ii. However, this is how apostles and other early Christians spread the faith all over the world, in the beginning.
 1. To the Jews.
 - a. Throughout the **Book of Acts**, we see men like Peter, Paul and Apollos using the prophecies in a powerful way to persuade the Jews. This is *HOW* they proved the faith, from the Scriptures.
 - b. In the early church, we see other examples, such as in Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew* (in Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1)
 2. However, this approach also was used to persuade the Gentiles.

- a. Philip used the prophecies to convert the Ethiopian eunuch, in **Acts 8**.
- b. Peter, when he preached to the household of Cornelius, a *Gentile* who was a Roman centurion (opening up the kingdom to *full Gentile participation*) spoke about the prophecies there, also.
 - i. Peter preached that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, that He was crucified and was raised on the third day and He will be coming again to judge the living and the dead.
 - ii. Then Peter added, "To Him *all the prophets witness*..." (**Acts 10:43**, NKJV)
- c. Paul, wrote to the Corinthian church, which was predominantly made up of *Gentile converts*.
 - i. "You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led." (**1 Corinthians 12:2**, NKJV)
 - ii. Some translations render this "*when you were Gentiles*" or "*when you were pagans*".
- d. Paul said to them,
 - i. "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures," (**1 Corinthians 15:1–4**, NKJV)
 - ii. The gospel Paul preached to the Gentiles in Corinth was the same one he received: Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead "according to the Scriptures", which means in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.
- e. Justin Martyr, a philosopher originally from Samaria, was converted to the Christian faith by the evidence of

the Jewish prophecies. In the beginning of his *Dialogue with Trypho*, (written c. 160 AD) Justin recounts his own conversion.

- i. One day he met an elderly Christian, a stranger who challenged Justin:
- ii. “There existed, long before this time, certain men more ancient than all those who are esteemed philosophers, both righteous and beloved by God, who spoke by the Divine Spirit, and foretold events which would take place, and which are now taking place. They are called prophets. These alone both saw and announced the truth to men, neither reverencing nor fearing any man, not influenced by a desire for glory, but speaking those things alone which they saw and which they heard, being filled with the Holy Spirit. Their writings are still extant, and he who has read them is very much helped in his knowledge of the beginning and end of things, and of those matters which the philosopher (= *lover of truth*) ought to know
- iii. “...they both glorified the Creator, the God and Father of all things, and proclaimed His Son, the Christ [sent] by Him...”
- iv. [Justin continued...] “When he had spoken these and many other things, which there is no time for mentioning at present, he went away, bidding me attend to them; and I have not seen him since. But straightway a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the prophets, and of those men who are friends of Christ, possessed me...)
- v. ...After which Justin went on to become a powerful Christian teacher and apologist, who ultimately died as a martyr.
 1. (Source: Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*, chapters 7-8; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 198)
- f. Justin Martyr used this approach in his efforts to convert the pagans in Rome. Justin’s *First Apology* was addressed to the emperor, the Senate and all the people of Rome. After defending the Christians against a whole

host of rumors and false accusations, he went *on the offensive*, using the evidence of the prophecies.

- i. “But lest anyone should meet us with the question, ‘What should prevent that He whom we call Christ, being a man born of men, performed what we call His mighty works by magical art, and by this (*only*) *appeared to be* the Son of God?’
- ii. “We will now offer proof, not trusting mere assertions, but being of necessity persuaded by those who prophesied [of Him] before these things came to pass, for with our own eyes we behold things that have happened and are happening just as they were predicted; and this will, we think, appear even to you the strongest and truest evidence.
- iii. “There were, then, among the Jews certain men who were prophets of God, through whom the prophetic Spirit published beforehand things that were to come to pass, before they ever they happened.”
- iv. (Justin then goes on to tell the story of how these Scriptures, first written in the Hebrew language, were translated into Greek at the request of the Egyptians; and were in the possession of the Jews all over the world.)
- v. “In these books, then, of the prophets we found Jesus our Christ foretold as coming, born of a virgin, growing up to man’s estate, and healing every disease and every sickness, and raising the dead, and being hated and unrecognized, and crucified, and dying, and rising again, and ascending into heaven, and being called the Son of God.
- vi. “We find it also predicted that certain persons should be sent by Him into every nation to publish these things, and that rather among the Gentiles [than among the Jews] men should believe on Him. And *He was predicted before He appeared...for in the succession of generations prophets after prophets arose.*”

- vii. (Source: Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chapters 30-31; in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 173)
 - iii. This approach of using the prophecies to prove the faith not only worked in the past...it can be *just as effective* today!
 - 1. Truth-seeking unbelievers I have seen converted by the prophecies.
 - a. In our house church we saw one person who was *raised atheist*, who had a PhD in engineering, brought to faith by the evidence of prophecies like these (and was baptized).
 - b. I also have seen the impact of these prophecies on Christians who had become weak in faith, who were struggling. (Either they were given a poor foundation for their faith initially, or they faced unexpected hard times or had bad experiences in a church.) Seeing the evidence of prophecies like these re-invigorated their faith!
 - 2. In witnessing to those from Muslim backgrounds, using this evidence can be *especially* useful and effective.
 - a. Several years ago, my family and I lived in Albania (which had a large Muslim population). I studied with Muslims there, and elsewhere since that time. Muslims do accept Jesus as a great prophet and even as the Christ of the Jews; yet *Muslims claim*:
 - i. He *did not* actually die on the cross.
 - ii. He *was not* raised from the dead.
 - iii. He *is not* the Son of God.
 - iv. Wherever the New Testament contradicts the Koran, they claim that the text of *the New Testament was corrupted* by the Christians, who added these (allegedly false) teachings later.
 - b. The response I gave to the Muslims: “We don’t need to rely on the New Testament. As in the beginning, we can *prove all these things from the Old Testament!*”
 - i. The prophecies in the Old Testament all were written long before the birth of Jesus.

- ii. The Old Testament Scriptures have *been in the possession of the Jews*, who are hostile to claims of the Christians.
 - iii. Therefore, there is NO WAY that Christians could have altered the prophecies contained in the Old Testament Scriptures!
- c. The Muslims did not know how to respond to this challenge. They had no comeback to this approach, *because logically, there is no comeback!*
- 3. In the spiritual war of faith that we are waging in this world, the ancient weapons (handed down by Jesus, and used with devastating effect by the apostles and early Christians) may still be the most effective weapons against Satan and the forces of evil.
 - a. Perhaps it is time to bring these ancient spiritual weapons out of deep storage, dust them off, and learn how to use them effectively, once again!
- 4. The Old Testament prophecies we discussed in this lesson were issued by a variety of prophets, over a period of *many centuries*. All were given *long before* the birth of Jesus. Consider:
 - a. Jacob's blessing of Judah (**Genesis 49**): at least 1600 years before the birth of Jesus
 - b. Moses revealing that God would raise up a prophet like himself (**Deuteronomy 18**) and Balaam's third oracle (**Numbers 24**): about 1400 years before the birth of Jesus
 - c. The "man of God" telling Eli that God would raise up a priest who would minister before him forever (**1 Samuel 2**): about 1200 years before the birth of Jesus
 - d. From the time of King David, we have Nathan's prophecy about the king to come from his seed (**2 Samuel 7, 1 Chronicles 17**); as well as psalms composed by David himself (**Psalms 3, 16 and 41**): about 1000 years before the birth of Jesus.
 - e. Ezekiel's prophecy about the one shepherd God would raise up (**Ezekiel 34**): about 600 years before the birth of Jesus.

- f. Then - the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, which Jesus and the apostles quoted from was made 200-250 years before the birth of Jesus. It was translated from ancient Hebrew manuscripts by Jewish scholars that were sent down to Egypt by the Jewish High Priest.
 - i. It is important to remember that the LXX was a *Jewish translation* that was later used by the apostles, as well as by the early Christian church for over three centuries as their Old Testament.
 - ii. This made the Jewish Scriptures accessible to people throughout the ancient world.
 - g. Again, clearly there was NO WAY that the Christians could have altered the Jewish Scriptures. This makes the prophecies contained in them *invaluable evidence* for the Christian faith.
- c. WHY THIS IS SO CRITICAL - The entire Christian faith hangs on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead on the third day. *Either it happened, or it didn't.*
 - i. Jesus Himself said that his resurrection on the third day would be *the singular sign of his authority*.
 1. After clearing the temple in **John 2**, the Jews asked Him for some sign of His authority.
 - a. His response: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”. (**John 2:19**, NKJV).
 - b. Of course, He was referring to His body as “the temple” here.
 2. When asked to provide a sign in **Matthew 12**, Jesus responded:
 - a. “...no sign will be given (to this generation) except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of the great fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and nights in the heart of the earth.” (**Matthew 12:40**, NKJV)
 - ii. Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15:14-19** that the entire Christian faith hangs on the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Paul concludes, “*If Christ is not risen*”, Paul reasons...

1. The apostles are false witnesses about God (not ‘good men’, but *liars*).
2. Our faith is empty, futile. We are still in our sins.
3. “We are of all men the most pitiable”
4. Paul concludes that if the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” (**1 Corinthians 15:32**)
- iii. *The entire Christian faith hangs on the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead.* That is why these prophecies, issued hundreds of years beforehand, *are so important!*
- iv. The challenge for us: to master the prophecies (including these on the resurrection) and persuade an unbelieving world.
 1. If we are going to evangelize an unbelieving world in our generation, perhaps we are going to have to bring the old spiritual weapons (the prophecies) out of deep storage, dust them off, and learn how to use them to prove the faith once again.
 2. Let’s use the same powerful and effective approach that Jesus taught, and which the apostles and early Christians used in the beginning!
- d. Let’s go back and consider where we started: what Jesus said to the apostles regarding his resurrection being foretold in the Jewish Scriptures.
 - i. After His resurrection, Jesus had told the apostles:
 1. “...all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” (**Luke 24:44**, NKJV)
 - a. Jesus points to three different parts of Scripture (with Psalms representing the poetic books) and says *they all* testified about Him.
 2. “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day...” (**Luke 24:46**, NKJV)
 - ii. Now we can appreciate what Jesus had in view: all parts of the Jewish Scriptures, the Old Testament, spoke about Him; including that He would rise from the dead! Consider the breadth of the Old Testament that spoke about His resurrection, just from this lesson:
 1. Law of Moses (**Genesis 49, Numbers 24, Deuteronomy 18**)

2. Poetic Books (**Psalms 3, 16, 41, 89, 132**)
 3. Major Prophets (**Ezekiel 34**)
 4. The Twelve (a/k/a 'Minor') Prophets (**Amos 9**)
 5. Historical Books (**1 Samuel 2, 2 Samuel 7** and **1 Chronicles 17**)
- iii. NOTE: There is a very significant prophecy regarding the resurrection: that it would occur *on the third day, that I have reserved for another lesson to follow.*
- e. In closing, if we consider all these prophecies about the resurrection of Christ, we learn much more about Him than simply that He would be resurrected. If we look at these prophecies closely and piece it all together, a wonderful mosaic portrait of Jesus emerges. We can see so many more things about Jesus. Reviewing the prophecies we studied in this lesson, we see:
- i. (**First**) His lineage:
 1. He had to be *a Jew*, according to Moses (**Deuteronomy 18**)
 2. He would be from *tribe of Judah*, according to Jacob (**Genesis 49**)
 3. He would be *descended from David*, according to what God revealed to the prophet Nathan (**2 Samuel 7, Amos 9**, etc.)
 4. Further, He would be *descended from a woman* who was a *direct descendant of David*. (**1 Chronicles 17:11, Psalm 132:11**)
 - ii. (**Second**) His passion and death:
 1. His enemies would conspire against him. (**Psalm 41**)
 2. One of those in his inner circle, who shared his bread, would be deceitful and betray him. (**Psalm 41**)
 3. His soul would descend to Hades, but it would not remain there for long. (**Psalm 16**)
 4. He would be raised from the dead within a relatively short interval of time, before his body saw decay. (**Psalm 16**)
 5. This man would be raised up by God *because of his innocence* (**Psalm 41**).
 - iii. (**Third**) His mission and roles:

1. The one who would be “raised up” would fulfill four roles: King, Priest, Prophet and Good Shepherd.
2. He would be a king who would reign on the throne of David forever (**2 Samuel 7**).
3. He would build the temple that would last forever (**2 Samuel 7**)
 - a. He also will serve forever as the faithful priest over the house of God; one from a new priestly lineage (**1 Samuel 2**)
 - b. We (the church) are that faithful house if we remain faithful to Him to the end, as it says in **Hebrews 3**)
4. He would be a prophet like Moses (**Deuteronomy 18**)
 - a. Similar in leading God’s people out of bondage and bringing new laws and commands.
 - b. Anyone who refused to heed what this prophet says will be called to account; and cut off from God’s people.
5. He would be the one, promised Good Shepherd over God’s flock (**Ezekiel 34**).
 - a. This shepherd would be a ruler in the midst of God’s flock.
 - b. He would oversee the flock, protecting his sheep and bringing back those that had strayed.
 - c. His rule would be associated with a covenant of peace.
 - d. Jesus later would explain (**John 10**) that this one shepherd would lead the one flock, bringing all God’s people (both Jews and Gentiles) into one flock, in the church.
- iv. (**Fourth**) Not only the Jews would be looking for Him. The nations (the Gentiles) would have their hope in him, and would seek Him (**Genesis 49, Amos 9**).
- v. (**Fifth**) He would be fully human, yet also divine.
 1. His brothers would bow down and worship Him (**Genesis 49**)
- vi. (**Sixth**) The one to be “raised up” would be known as:

1. The lion of the tribe of Judah (**Genesis 49**)
2. The Christ, the Anointed One (**1 Samuel 2, Psalm 2**)
3. The Son of David (**2 Samuel 7, 1 Chronicles**)
4. The Son of God (**2 Samuel 7, 1 Chronicles 17, Psalm 2**)