

DO YOU BELIEVE?
A BOOK SERIES FROM RATIO CHRISTI
- BOOK 5 -

**DOES
FULFILLED
PROPHECY
CONFIRM
THE BIBLE?**

BY BENJAMIN D. SMITH JR.



RATIO
CHRISTI

FAITH & REASON are at odds in our culture. For many, faith has come to mean little more than wishful thinking and blind belief. Such a concept is completely foreign to the pages of Scripture and historical Christianity. As Edward Feser notes, “In short, reason tells us that there is a God and that he has revealed such-and-such a truth; faith is then a matter of believing what reason has shown God to have revealed. In that sense faith is not only not at odds with reason but is grounded in reason.”

WHAT IS RATIO CHRISTI?

Ratio Christi, Latin for the reason of Christ, wants to help reverse this trend of anti-intellectual Christianity. We organize apologetics clubs at colleges, universities, and even for high school groups in order to strengthen the faith of Christian students and faculty and challenge the rampant atheism and secularism on most campuses. Our mission is to fill the intellectual gap, to make Christianity something worth thinking about, both personally and in the public square.

RATIO CHRISTI IS HIRING APOLOGISTS.

Ratio Christi isn't just another apologetics organization. We use our theological training to share the Gospel on college and university campuses across the globe. We reach the people that nobody else can – and we need your help.

ratiochristi.org/join | info@ratiochrisi.org

NOTE: *Some of the content in this booklet may not necessarily represent the views of every person involved with, or the official position of, Ratio Christi. Ratio Christi's official statement of faith can be seen at ratiochristi.org/about/beliefs*

The Bible is the *only* religious writing that proves its supernatural origin by clear examples of fulfilled prophecy. No other religious book or supposedly paranormal work can give an example of fulfilled prophecy that is as specific or as far in advance of its fulfillment as those of the biblical prophets. This fact shows that the Bible truly is what it claims to be – *the Word of God*; and it shows the others to be untrustworthy frauds. In fact, God challenges all false gods and false prophets to try proving their authenticity by foretelling the future and accurately describing the past. Look at what God says in Isaiah 41:21-24:

“Present your case,” the LORD says. “Bring forward your strong arguments,” The King of Jacob says. Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place; As for the former events, declare what they were, That we may consider them and know their outcome. Or announce to us what is coming; Declare the things that are going to come afterward, That we may know that you are gods; Indeed, do good or evil, that we may anxiously look about us and fear together. Behold, you are of no account, And your work amounts to nothing; He who chooses you is an abomination.

Isaiah 46:9-11 adds that only God can declare the end from the beginning:

Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, “My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure”... Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.

Are the prophets correct in their claims? Did they really foretell the future, proving their words came from God? This booklet will show that the answer to both questions is yes.

EXPECTATIONS OF DIVINE INSPIRATION

If God inspired human authors to write His authoritative words for the purpose of revealing Himself to humanity, we should expect those writings to have several characteristics. A divinely-inspired book should be expected to:

1. Claim it was from God, carrying the authority of “Thus says the Lord;”
2. Reveal information about God that was unknown;
3. Reveal what God expects from humanity;
4. Be true, both internally non-contradictory and externally inerrant (this includes matching what may be known of God through general revelation¹);
5. Be transformational, having a life-changing impact on its readers;
6. Demonstrate its divine inspiration by supernatural means.

The Bible meets the sixth factor in three ways: (1) it gives evidence of foretelling future events (covered here); (2) it speaks accurately of past events that were unverifiable by the original audience (see the Ratio Christi booklet on science); and (3) it gives credible testimony of miracles performed by God (see the Ratio Christi booklets about the Exodus and the resurrection of Jesus).

Other major religious books (and there are not as many as one might think²) make attempts at the first five characteristics of divine inspiration (although the vast majority fail on number 4), but the sixth can only be claimed of one book – the Bible. No other religious book, medium, fortune teller, palm reader, horoscope, or so-called prophet even remotely approaches the level of specific fulfilled prophecies found in the Bible.

Critics of the Bible, and prophecy in general, challenge the authenticity of such claims along six lines of argument. They claim:

¹ General revelation is knowledge of God that can be known by thinking and reasoning about the world in which we exist (see the Ratio Christi booklet on the existence of God). By contrast, special revelation is knowledge we could not have known unless God directly told us, like through a divinely-inspired book.

² Other than the Bible, books claiming revelation from a god (or godlike beings) include some Egyptian texts like the *Book of the Dead*; ancient writings of the Hindus in the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, and *Bhagavad Gita*; Babylonian texts like the Enuma Elish; Greek writings like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; additional Apocryphal writings included in Roman Catholicism plus official Papal decrees; the Quran of Islam; the Mormon additions to the Bible including the Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price, and Doctrines and Covenants; and other not so well known religious books such as the *Urantia Book*. Very few of these writings claim to contain prophecies with the exception of the many modern New Age works related to predicting the future, fortune telling, astrology, mediums, etc.

1. The prophecies were written after the event they “predicted.”
2. They are self-fulfilling, meaning someone could read what was written beforehand and simply do what it says.
3. They are taken out of context and do not mean what some people claim they mean.
4. The fulfillments are not verifiable today.
5. They are too vague, making their fulfillments attributable to chance or a good guess on the part of the prophet.
6. They are not 100% accurate.

These six challenges now establish our critical rules of prophecy. They will be used as a guide to test the authenticity of anything claiming to be prophetic. Here are a few examples that do not meet the standards established, including some Biblical ones.

The Book of Mormon

Written in 1830 by Joseph Smith, who claimed revelation from the angel Moroni, the Book of Mormon *would* be the greatest book of prophecy ever written ... if there was any evidence the stories were written when they claim to have been written. For example, 1 Nephi, its first book, was supposedly written between 600-592 BC. In chapters 10-11, it quotes repeatedly from the New Testament (which was written in the 40s - 90s AD), and it “predicts” events in Jesus’ life in great detail, including the coming crucifixion of the Messiah. 2 Nephi 25:19, supposedly written about 550 BC, specifically names the Messiah “Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Wow! That’s amazing, right? Not at all! It would be if we had any evidence the Book of Mormon was written in the 6th century BC. But as it is, it is only a story written long *after* the events it claims to record. There are no ancient manuscripts of Nephi like there are of the Bible. There is no indication anywhere what its original language was supposed to be, besides the English that Joseph Smith used. It recounts no historically verified city or people names except for Biblical ones. And it makes bizarre errors like claiming one of Jesus’ twelve disciples that he appointed *in the Americas* was named Timothy, a Greek name (*Timotheos* – 3 Nephi 19:4). It is highly implausible that ancient Americans named their children in Greek. The Book of Mormon fails miserably as a book of prophecy, and history for that matter. It was written far too long after the events it purports to describe, and is not corroborated by any historical or archaeological evidence.³

³ See Corey Miller and Lynn K. Wilder, editors, *Leaving Mormonism: Why Four Scholars Changed Their Minds* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2019), especially Corey Miller’s section of the book; see also Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Jesus’ Resurrection and Joseph’s Visions: Examining the Foundations of Christianity and Mormonism* (Tampa, FL: DeWard, 2020).

The Quran

Written 600 to 700 years after Jesus in the 7th century AD by Mohammad, the Quran (Koran) claims to be a revelation from an angel of Allah. Followers of Islam would love nothing better than to have their holy book authenticated by prophecy, but it contains none. The book is mostly a series of sayings, commands, and pronouncements of judgment. Muslims grasp at even the slimmest of prophetic “evidence” to justify their trust in the book.

Consider this proposed example: “And He it is Who shall merge the two seas together. This palatable and sweet, that saltish and bitter. And between them He has (presently) placed a barrier and a massive partition.” (25:54) This is claimed as prophetic of the Panama Canal,⁴ though the canal does not merge palatable and “saltish” water. Both oceans are equally undrinkable. In another example, “And when books are spread abroad,” (81:11) is claimed to refer to the printing press.⁵ Both of these, and other examples I have seen,⁶ are far too vague, and maybe even taken out of context. The Quran contains no examples of fulfilled prophecy meeting the criteria above, and there’s nothing even remotely similar to the specific prophecies in the Bible.

Psychics

Jeanne Dixon made quite the name for herself after John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. She made frequent appearances on TV in the 70s, because in 1956 she predicted a Democrat would win the 1960 presidential election and die in office.⁷ On those two points she was correct, but she was often wrong and made many verified mistakes. Considering her indisputably poor track record, can her 1956 predictions be attributable to chance? She had a 50/50 chance at Democrat or Republican, and at the time 8 of 34 presidents had died in office. That equates to an 11.8% chance (roughly 1 in 9) of being right on both predictions. Those are not bad odds. She almost certainly got lucky that time, and most psychics are not even that good.

Nostradamus

In 1555, Nostradamus published his book *Les Propheties*. Though he never claimed the role of a prophet, he is credited frequently as having predicted the Great Fire of

4 See <https://www.alislam.org/library/articles/fulfilled-prophecies-of-holy-quran/>

5 Ibid.

6 See <https://www.alislam.org/articles/fulfilled-prophecies-of-holy-quran/> and <https://www.islamreligion.com/articles/347/prophecies-of-quran/>

7 Jeanne Dixon, Parade magazine, May 13, 1956; as cited by Josh McDowell, A Ready Defense (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1993), 387.

London, the rise of Napoleon and Hitler, and even the September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001. However, any objective reading of his writings can see they are far from being that specific. He never mentioned any of those events by name, nor did he describe anything in enough detail to identify them or when they would occur.

The Bible

The Bible contains many prophecies, but caution should be exercised when choosing which ones to use as evidence for the supernatural. For example, Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1 both mention a man named Cyrus. That doesn't sound too strange, except that at the time the Bible claims Isaiah wrote those words (ca. 700 BC), Cyrus would not be alive or reign for another 150 years or so. Back then, that would have been a very impressive prophecy. How would you like to become the leader of a nation and have someone show you a prophecy that was written about you 150 years earlier? The problem for us today is that we can't currently verify that Isaiah wrote those prophecies in advance of their fulfillment. In fact, these verses are used with a bias against miracles to say there were two Isaiahs in Israel's past, because it is not possible, by the thinking of some, for God to have given a man that information in advance. While skeptics are wrong to assume miracles are impossible, and even though Isaiah might have really prophesied about Cyrus, it is true that this is not a good example of verifiable prophecy for us.

Zechariah 9:9 is an example of a potential self-fulfilling prophecy. The verse says, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey." Assuming Jesus knew of this verse, and knowing the people in Jerusalem would understand what it meant if He rode into the city on a donkey, it would have been simple to fulfill the prophecy by just sending His disciples to get a donkey, which is what He did in Matthew 21:1-10. In this case, the prophecy was given in advance, not so everyone would be amazed at its fulfillment, but so people would know what Jesus was claiming by doing it. He was claiming to be the Messiah by self-fulfilling the prophecy, and they knew it was a bold move.

One last example deserves mention. Isaiah 7:14 says, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel." Matthew 1:23 applies this verse to Jesus. Critics of this prophecy have three arguments.

First, the Hebrew word does not have to mean "virgin," but simply means a young girl. While this is true, one should note that it would be silly for someone to say, "I prophesy a girl will have a son," since that happens all the time. Therefore, something unusual about this particular birth must apply. The prophecy implies it will be her first child, which is also not unusual. So it must be foreshadowing some other unusual event, which wasn't made clear until Jesus.

Second, some say Matthew took the verse out of context and that it does not apply to Jesus at all, but only to a child born back in Isaiah's time. However, that is not entirely clear in the Isaiah passage, plus the possibility exists that Isaiah's words could have had a double application, to his own time first and then to a later time.

Third, there is no way to verify the virgin birth. This is definitely true, which is the reason these verses should not be used as an example of a proven miracle or a fulfilled prophecy. It was significant to the people involved at the time, and it definitely holds theological significance for us today, but it is not a useful example of fulfilled prophecy. The best we can say for our time is that the gospel-writer Luke has been found to be a very reliable witness to history, so he is believable about the virgin birth (Luke 1:34), especially since he probably got the information directly from Jesus' mother Mary. But we still cannot corroborate this particular part of Luke's account.

THE GIANT LINE IN THE SAND

One factual historical event stands out as the most relevant for our purposes of finding legitimate verifiable prophecies in the Bible. The Greek King of Egypt, Ptolemy II (309-246 BC), gathered some 70 translators to translate ancient manuscripts into Greek during his reign, including the entire Old Testament. The work later became known as the Septuagint (abbreviated LXX due to the 70 translators) and was completed sometime in the early to mid 3rd century BC. What this means is that *we know the Old Testament was written before about 250 BC*. No one can claim that any of the Old Testament prophecies were written after that time. That line in the sand allows us to say beyond doubt that any prophecies in the Old Testament that were fulfilled any time after the 3rd century BC were definitely written at least 200 years before they were fulfilled, satisfying the number one rule above. Therefore, if we can find Old Testament prophecies that are specific, not self-fulfilling, accurately fulfilled, not attributable to chance, and not taken out of context, we can conclude that the Bible was inspired by God, for only God can predict the future, as He said.

Specific Fulfilled Prophecies in the Old Testament

Now, let's compare the failures of psychics and other religions to the specific fulfilled prophecies of the Bible, and the significant differences should be obvious. One cannot pass off this evidence as if it has no consequences. It shows God has spoken through His prophets, and His message should be heard and obeyed. And it reveals the others as false prophets who should not be followed.

Specific Prophecies of the Coming Messiah

The most amazing prophecies in the Old Testament relate to the Jewish Messiah, who Christians believe to be Jesus of Nazareth. That should be no surprise considering the preeminence of Jesus in the Bible, that eventually every knee will bow at His name and every tongue acknowledge Him as Lord (Philippians 2:10-11). Prophets were given bits and pieces of what was to happen when the Messiah came, so let's enumerate their predictions.

Until Shiloh Comes

Genesis 49:10 says, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.”

What does this prophecy mean? It means the descendants of Judah would remain in power to some extent until Shiloh (the Messiah) arrived. This prophecy claims to be recorded just before Jacob’s death (ca. 1860 BC) while the descendants of Jacob’s

twelve sons (the nation of Israel) were relatively few. Much later in the history of Israel, all of the tribes (the descendants of each son) were united under the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon. After Solomon died, the nation divided into two kingdoms, the northern tribes under the name Israel, and the southern tribes of Judah and Levi under the name Judah. The northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Babylonians in 722 BC, but Judah was not conquered until 587 BC when Jerusalem and Solomon’s Temple were destroyed. The Jews (whose name derives from Judah) who remained in power in the region under Babylonian control, and most of the Jews who came back after the 70-year captivity, were from Judah, even after Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt. Specifically, this prophecy predicts that, of the twelve sons of Jacob (Israel), Judah would not lose its identity or judicial powers (tribal staff) until the Messiah would come, and that “peoples,” not just Judah, would obey the Messiah.

FULFILLMENT: After the Babylonian and Persian captivity, the first indication that Judah was losing its power was when Herod the Great became the king of Jerusalem in 37 BC, replacing the Jewish Maccabean kings. The Jews retained their own courts and judges but were under Roman rule. Herod greatly expanded the temple in Jerusalem, and that was the temple standing during Jesus’ time, though Herod the Great had died in 4 BC. Later, likely during the reign of Coponius (ca. 7 AD), the scepter departed further from Judah as the power to execute capital punishment was taken from the Sanhedrin council, which is why the Jewish chief priests and elders couldn’t execute Jesus, but asked Pilate to do it. They didn’t have the authority at the time.

Finally, any ruling power of the Jews was erased during the First Jewish-Roman War (66-74 AD), culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem and Herod’s Temple in 70 AD and the crushing defeat at Masada in 74 AD. At that time, the Jews were scattered, and Judah and Israel ceased to be. It happened just as it had been predicted long before. Shiloh the Messiah came, and the scepter departed from Judah (the only ruling tribe left). In addition, peoples from a variety of nations (not just the Jews) became followers of Jesus. The prophecy specifically predicted what happened *more than a thousand years in advance!* Amazing as that is, the next prophecy is even more incredible.

The 70 Weeks of Daniel 9

Daniel 9:24-26 says this:

Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

These verses make the following predictions:

1. A final atonement for sin was coming. This is significant because the Jews were making frequent animal sacrifices in the temple, and a significant event was necessary to stop it.
2. A decree would be issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and after seven and sixty-two weeks (a week being a group of seven years⁸), meaning 483 years, the Messiah would come.
3. Then the Messiah would be “cut-off” (killed).
4. Then Jerusalem would be destroyed after the 483 years.
5. Also the temple would be destroyed after the 483 years.
6. Wars and desolations would occur in the region to the end.
7. Vision and prophecy would be sealed up, and something significant would occur after only seven weeks (meaning 49 years) after the decree.

FULFILLMENT OF 1: The prophecy states there would be “an end of sin.” This cannot mean people would stop sinning, which would clearly not be true. It means a final atonement for sin would be given, and people could attain an “everlasting righteousness” (a right-standing with God). To do so, the Messiah offered Himself as the final sacrifice for sin: “But now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” (Hebrews 9:26) The Apostle Paul showed that God offers the “righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe” (Romans 3:22), meaning this is a righteousness that is not earned by doing right acts, but a right-standing with God that is given as a free gift. But more

⁸ Good reasons exist to believe a “week” refers to seven years. In context, Daniel 9:1-2 was already thinking in terms of years. In chapter 10:2-3, Daniel specifies “three weeks of days” literally in the Hebrew (see Young’s Literal Translation). Specifying “days” in chapter 10 implies something is different in chapter 9. Also, Leviticus 25:8 speaks of Sabbatical years in groups of sevens, and Lev. 26:32-35 speaks of the penalties for disobeying the Sabbatical years as being captivity by another nation. Daniel’s reference to seven sevens is a clear reference to the seven seven-year cycles of Leviticus 25 and 26.

on that later. For now, just know that Daniel predicted God would make a final sacrifice, and Jesus fulfilled that prediction. To show that it was the final sacrifice, not only was the veil in the temple torn in half (Matthew 27:51), but the temple was destroyed so that no more sacrifices could be made.

FULFILLMENT OF 2: Getting the specifics of this part of the prophecy correct is of the utmost importance, because this is potentially the most amazing overall prophecy in the Bible. Daniel is here predicting more than 500 years in advance⁹ when the Messiah would arrive, and he is giving us the exact number of years until it happens! If you don't think this fulfillment is extraordinary, then I think something is wrong with your thinking.

Two key factors are important to verify this prophecy: (1) when to start the 483-year count, and (2) when it can be considered fulfilled.

(1) When to start: What date do we begin counting off 69 seven-year periods, or 483 years? The prophecy clearly identifies it as the year when a decree would be issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem with “plaza and moat” (better understood as a “city square” and defensive wall with a “trench”¹⁰). Jerusalem, its walls, and the temple that Solomon built were destroyed in 587 BC, and the people of Judah were exiled for 70+ years. The city and its walls were reconstructed during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, but the Persians were still in charge. So who gave the Jews permission to begin rebuilding the city and its walls, and when?

Those who have deeply studied this issue agree there are four possible options for starting the 483-year count:¹¹

1. A decree in 539 BC by Cyrus
2. A decree in 519 BC by Darius
3. A decree in 457 BC by Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) to Ezra
4. Letters written in 444 BC by Artaxerxes I to Nehemiah

A series of articles by Rick Lanser on the Associates for Biblical Research website¹² identifies number 3 as the best candidate for starting the count.

Number 1 only allowed the Jews led by Zerubbabel to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple (2 Chronicles 36:20-23, Ezra 1:1-4). Number 2 only allowed the continuation of the temple construction despite complaints by the Samaritans (Ezra 5 and 6:1-12). Number 4 definitely allowed construction of the city and its walls, and it is clear from Nehemiah 1:1-5 and 2:1-10 that Nehemiah was upset the city and the walls had not been

⁹ Daniel 9:1 says it was the first year of Darius, ca. 522 BC

¹⁰ Rick Lanser, *The Going Forth of Artaxerxes' Decree Part 1*. Article on the Associates for Biblical Research website under the heading “The Rebuilding of Jerusalem.” 11/19/2019.

¹¹ Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1979), 172.

¹² The articles are all written by Rick Lanser and found under the tab ABR Projects listed as “The Daniel 9:24-27 Project” at biblearchaeology.org. For specific references, see the Further Reading section at the end of this booklet. For anyone interested in the nitty-gritty details of this issue, I highly recommend Lanser's very thorough articles from which much of these Daniel 9 fulfillment details were taken.

built. However, he was likely upset because he discovered no progress had been made from what had already been allowed under Ezra. Those in Judah were “in great distress and reproach” (Nehemiah 1:4) because of the constant oppression from Samaritan kings around them, which slowed the progress of rebuilding the city. Nehemiah does not use the word “decree” as Daniel does, but uses the word “letters,” indicating that issuing another official decree was not necessary because Artaxerxes had already issued one earlier to Ezra.

Number 3: A decree had already been issued to rebuild the temple under Cyrus (number 1). However, at least 82 years later, after the temple was completed, the Samaritans complained to Artaxerxes I early in his reign that the Jews were also rebuilding the whole city and its walls. Artaxerxes thus halted the construction at that time “until a decree is issued by me [Artaxerxes].” (Ezra 4:21) This indicates that no decree to rebuild the city had been issued at that time, and it also indicated he might issue a decree for that purpose later. Then, in the seventh year of his reign (Ezra 7:8), Artaxerxes did issue a decree which allowed Ezra to do “Whatever seems good to you and to your brothers to do with the rest of the silver and gold, you may do according to the will of your God.” (Ezra 7:18) Since protecting the temple and the Jewish people were certainly on Ezra’s mind, this *carte blanche* decree allowed Ezra to rebuild the city and walls. The seventh year of Artaxerxes’ reign was 457 BC.

Because the Daniel 9 prophecy says that a series of Sabbatical years would count off the time until the Messiah would come, the count could not begin until the Sabbatical year cycle began. All indications show Ezra reinstated the Sabbatical cycle on the day **Tishrei 1, 457 BC**.¹³ Therefore, the 483-year count began then.

(2) When it was fulfilled: Starting from Tishrei 1, 457 BC, and counting off 483 years lands us on Tishrei 1, 27 AD. Understand, there is no year 0 so 1 BC rolls straight into 1 AD. The BIG question then is, “What was happening in 27 AD on Tishrei 1 (roughly the end of August or the beginning of September) or shortly thereafter?”

The answer depends on the date of Jesus’ crucifixion.

Two dates are argued by scholars for the date of the crucifixion: April 7th, 30 AD, and April 3rd, 33 AD. This booklet cannot cover all the details related to which of these dates is correct, but here is a summary of the evidence for why I believe it is the earlier date.

1. Exodus 12:2-20 specifies that the Passover be observed on the 14th day of the first month (Nisan).
2. The day before Jesus was crucified, the disciples asked Jesus where He wanted them to prepare the Passover meal. (Matthew 26:17-20, Mark 14:12-17, Luke 22:7-15) Therefore, Jesus was crucified on Passover day.

13 Rick Lanser, *Did Ezra Come to Jerusalem in 457 BC?* Article on the ABR website. 9/10/2019.

3. John 19:31 says the Jews asked Pilate to make sure Jesus was dead before evening, because evening started the Sabbath (Saturday). Therefore, the Passover and Jesus' crucifixion occurred on a Friday.
4. Only two Passover dates (Nisan 14) between 29-36 AD occurred on a Friday: April 7th, 30 AD, and April 3rd, 33 AD¹⁴, making these the only two options for the crucifixion.
5. Galatians 2:1-2 says Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem 14 years after Paul's conversion to see those who were of "reputation," meaning the leaders of the Jerusalem church.
6. Paul's trip described in Galatians 2 is best equated with his second trip to Jerusalem described in Acts 11:27-29 that coincided with the death of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:20-23), which is well established to have occurred in 44 AD.¹⁵ Paul and Barnabas left Jerusalem and returned to Antioch after that. (Acts 12:25)

Therefore, Paul's conversion occurred 14 years before 44 AD in 30 AD. Thus, Jesus could not have been crucified in 33 AD, because Paul's conversion clearly occurred afterward. Thus, **April 7th, 30 AD, must be the date of the crucifixion.**

So, we return to our original question: What was happening in the fall of 27 AD? The Gospel of John records three Passovers spanning the ministry of Jesus (John 2:13, 6:4, and 11:55). The last one is the one when Jesus died in 30 AD, so 6:4 refers to the one in 29 AD, and 2:13 refers to the one in 28 AD. Prior to that first Passover, a number of events are mentioned in Jesus' ministry, including the wedding in Cana, the choosing of His disciples, His temptation in the wilderness for 40 days, and His baptism.

Considering few would want to be baptized when it's cold, John the Baptist's ministry most likely began in the warm months of late Summer or early Fall, rather than the cold months of Winter and early Spring. That puts Jesus' baptism in late 27 AD.

Two other lines of evidence bear that out.

First, John 2:20 places the date of the first Passover of Jesus' ministry as 46 years after temple construction began under Herod the Great. Construction began in 20/19 BC placing that first Passover as 28 AD.¹⁶

Second, Luke 3:1 reports John the Baptist's ministry began in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. Tiberius officially became sole ruler in 14 AD, but he had been "co-Princeps" with Augustus for two years prior beginning in 12 AD. Evidence from Luke indicates he is most likely referring to the former date, and thus John the Baptist began his ministry in 27 AD.¹⁷

14 Rick Lanser, *How the Passover Illuminates the Date of the Crucifixion*. Article on the ABR website. 5/15/2019

15 Rick Lanser, *How Acts and Galatians Indicate the Date of the Crucifixion*. Article on the ABR website. 5/15/2019.

16 Rick Lanser, *John 2:12-21 and Herodian Chronology*. Article on the ABR website. 5/15/2019

17 Rick Lanser, *What was the "Fifteenth Year of Tiberius"?* Article on the ABR website. 5/15/2019.

Conclusion of the Fulfillment of 2: the count of the 483 years began on Tishrei 1, 457 BC, and ended on Tishrei 1 (late August or early September) of 27 AD, the year John the Baptist announced, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)

By the Spirit of God, Daniel nailed it to the exact year the Messiah was announced! Incidentally, that Jesus may have known exactly when the 483 years terminated, and may have deliberately chosen to be baptized immediately afterward, does not negate the miraculous accuracy of Daniel’s prophecy.

On a separate note, some Christian scholars still prefer the April 3rd, 33 AD, date for the crucifixion, and they follow an elaborate calculation of the 69 sevens that begins Nisan 1, 444 BC, and ends on the day Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey in 33 AD.¹⁸ I think the evidence better supports the scenario I have presented here.

FULFILLMENT OF 3: Not only did Daniel predict the exact date Jesus would arrive as the Messiah, he also predicted the Messiah would be killed, which occurred when Jesus was executed on April 7th, 30 AD.

FULFILLMENTS OF 4 & 5: The prophecy also says that, after the 69 weeks, the city and sanctuary (temple) would be destroyed. Their destruction did indeed happen in 70 AD. There is no question the prophet got these correct. The accuracy of this part of the prophecy should not be downplayed. Try predicting when a city and temple will be destroyed *500 years in advance*.

FULFILLMENT OF 6: War and desolations would occur until the end. The “end” has the end of times in mind, and the prediction was the region would be plagued with war and desolations continually. Since Jerusalem’s destruction, it has and still is.

FULFILLMENT OF 7: The “sevens” are split into two sections, one of 7 weeks and the other of 62 weeks. One reason for this was suggested above, that the first seven weeks identifies these as Sabbatical periods. However, another reason could also exist. The prophecy states that vision and prophecy would be sealed up. That indicates that prophecies would cease, and thus by connection, so would prophets. The last book of the Old Testament is Malachi, and the conservative date for its composition is around 400 BC. It is very possible Malachi’s role ended by 408 BC (457 BC would be 49 years prior). After that time, the role of the Jewish prophet ceased, and no other writings of prophets like the ones in the Old Testament are recorded. No other books are recognized as belonging to the Old Testament canon, neither by Protestant Christians nor Jews. Vision and prophecy were sealed up *in Judaism*. No further revelation was given to them by God until the revealing of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, in the New Testament. Christianity is built upon the foundation of Judaism and picks up where it left off. Daniel foresaw that in advance.

How did Daniel know all of this ahead of time? His predictions are far too specific to be good guesses. Daniel answers this question by telling us it was revealed to him by

¹⁸ Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, 170-175.

God. (Daniel 2:28, 9:2-4) If you are an atheist or skeptic, you cannot simply pass this off as insignificant.

The Messiah Would Be the Son of God

Psalm 2:7 says, “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’” Verse 12 adds, “Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” The prediction is the Messiah would be begotten and called the Son of God. These days, Christians take it for granted that Jesus is the begotten Son of God; but the idea a man would be born and referred to as the begotten Son of God is not a common occurrence. To predict it in advance is most amazing.

The Messiah Pre-Existed Before He Came to Earth

Micah 5:2 says, “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.” Ignore the prediction about the Messiah being born in Bethlehem, because many skeptics disagree about whether that is true, and the only evidence we have for it comes from the New Testament. Rather, notice the latter part of the prediction. The Messiah is said to have come from “long ago, from the days of eternity.” What!? We may not be able to absolutely prove Jesus’ deity to skeptics these days, but no one can deny that the early Christians believed Jesus was God. Again, that is something many take for granted, but it is certainly unusual for a man to be worshipped as God *and* to have it predicted in advance.

He Would Be Rejected

Isaiah 53:3 says, “He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.” Ironic as it seems, given the number of prophecies of His coming and the anticipation of the Jews for a Messiah, the Bible says He would be rejected, even by His own people. The fact that Jesus was crucified, which is undisputed by reputable historians, proves His rejection, just as it was predicted.

He Would Be Pierced

Isaiah 53:5 says, “But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities.” Psalm 22:16 says, “A band of evildoers has encompassed Me; they pierced My hands and My feet.” Zechariah 12:14 says, “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.” Crucifixion has been practiced by many in many ways even before

the Romans. In the Roman Empire, it was a fairly common practice from its early days until Constantine outlawed it in the early 4th century AD. The Bible specifies in advance by three different prophets that the Messiah would be murdered by a method that matches crucifixion. It says He would be pierced through both His hands and feet, and that people would gaze upon Him, implying a public execution. Crucifixion definitely fulfills the prophecies, unlike other forms of piercing, like being shot by an arrow. The prophets were right again.

The Messiah Would Be Murdered and Not Decay in a Grave

Psalm 16:10 says, “For You will not abandon My soul to Sheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.” The statement that God will not allow His Holy One to undergo decay presupposes that He will die. In case anyone doubts that, Isaiah 53:9 explicitly states it, “His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death.” Everyone dies, and it isn’t much of a prophecy to predict it (unless you can predict when it will happen, as we saw above), but these verses refer to a premature death (murder or execution) at the hands of those who rejected Him, which is a very uncommon way to die. In addition, Psalm 16 says His body would not decay. The crucifixion and resurrection certainly fulfill the predictions He would be executed and not decay. Regardless of whether someone accepts that Jesus rose from the dead, this verse predicts that people would believe He did. That Christians immediately believed He did after His death is undisputed by historians.¹⁹ Again, facts about the coming Messiah were accurately predicted in advance.

The Messiah Will Reign Forever on the Throne of David

Though verification of its fulfillment would be disputed by skeptics, one more Messianic prophecy is worth mentioning for the sake of anyone still expecting the coming of the Messiah, since any future Jewish Messiah will have a difficult time fulfilling this prophecy. 2nd Samuel 7:12 and 16 say, “When your days [David’s] are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom... Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.” That is quite a prediction. How can the descendants of David remain on the throne forever? This is another place where the resurrection of Jesus plays a crucial role in fulfilling prophecy. As a descendant of David, and the resurrected and everlasting King of Glory, Jesus is the only one who can fulfill this prophecy.

For more on this prophecy and many others, see Eric Chabot’s thoroughly documented booklet, *Is Yeshua the Jewish Messiah?*²⁰

19 Gary R. Habermas and Michael Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004)

20 Eric Chabot, *Is Yeshua the Jewish Messiah?* (San Antonio, TX: CJF Ministries, 2017)

Summary of Messianic Prophecies

Fifteen specific prophecies were listed above and shown to be fulfilled just as the prophets predicted:

1. Of the twelve sons of Israel (Jacob), Judah's self-governance would cease after the Messiah came.
2. A variety of peoples would follow the Messiah, not just Jews.
3. A final atonement for sin was coming, leaving no more need for a temple.
4. The Messiah would come 69 sevens after the issuing of a decree to rebuild Jerusalem.
5. The Messiah would be killed after that.
6. Jerusalem would then be destroyed after 483 years.
7. The Temple would also be destroyed after 483 years.
8. Wars and desolations would continue to the end.
9. Vision and prophecy would cease.
10. The Messiah would be believed to be the Son of God.
11. He would be believed to have preexisted His humanity.
12. He would be rejected.
13. His hands and feet would be pierced and He would be gazed upon.
14. He would be murdered/executed.
15. He would die but not decay.

Keep in mind that these fifteen meet the stringent criteria set forth at the beginning. They were all prophesied *well before* they were fulfilled. Most of them are impossible to self-fulfill, and the ones that may be possible to control (10, 11, 12, and 14) have outcomes a normal person would not desire. They are not taken out of context and are all recognized as Messianic prophecies. The fulfillments are all verifiable today, and none of the historical facts I have listed here are seriously disputed. They are not too vague and are too specific to be attributable to chance or good guesses, especially as a collective.

A very conservative estimate for the probability that all fifteen prophecies would be accurately fulfilled is *one chance in 3.46 quadrillion!*²¹ Yet they are 100% accurate. No other religious or supposedly prophetic writing comes anywhere close to this level of accuracy and authenticity. And there's more! Messianic prophecies are not the only specific prophecies in the Bible.

21 (1) 1/12 x 1/500 (assuming it was written at least 500 years in advance, which is conservative) x (2) 1/2 x (3) 1/2 x (4) 1/483 x (5) 1/2 x (6) 1/483 x (7) 1/483 x (8) 1/2 x (9) 1/2 x (10) 1/2 x (11) 1/2 x (12) 1/2 x (13) 1/5 x (14) 1/2 x (15) 1/2 = 1/3.46 quadrillion. Many of these prophecies assigned a 1 out of 2 chance of success should be lower, which would make the odds of occurrence even higher.

The Nation of Israel

After Jesus died, Jerusalem and Herod's Temple were destroyed in 70 AD, the scepter departed from Judah, and the nation of Israel ceased to exist. That had to have been a very hopeless time for the Jews. In Genesis 12:2-3, we see, "And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." Little did they know, the stage had been set for that prophecy to be fulfilled. All the earth would be blessed through the Messiah and His Christian followers, and continues to be blessed.

Despite the setback for Israel, God was not through with His chosen people, even though they rejected the Messiah. Two of the Major Prophets had this to say, even before it made any sense to say it:

*Then it will happen on that day that the Lord
Will again recover the second time with His hand
The remnant of His people, who will remain,
From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath,
And from the islands of the sea.
And He will lift up a standard for the nations
And assemble the banished ones of Israel,
And will gather the dispersed of Judah
From the four corners of the earth.*

ISAIAH 11:11-12

"Say to them, 'Thus says the LORD GOD, 'Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms.'"

EZEKIEL 37:21-22

These two prophets make the following predictions:

1. The Jews will be banished from their homeland.
2. They will be dispersed among other nations and locations.
3. A remnant of Jews will remain and the religion will not die.
4. God will bring them back into the land a second time.
5. They will no longer be divided into two nations.

Remember that these two prophets are definitely writing long before the events they predicted. They were written even before Daniel for that matter.

FULFILLMENT OF 1: After the Jews were routed in the war with Rome and the city was destroyed (70-74 AD), they were banished from returning upon pain of death. So the prophets predicted it right: not only did they lose the war, but they weren't allowed to stay in the land, an unusual result for sure.

FULFILLMENT OF 2: Because they were banished from the land, they dispersed to other nations all over the globe. This is undisputed and right again.

FULFILLMENT OF 3: Despite their banishment and dispersal, they retained their heritage and religion. Considering ancient religions practiced by other nations surrounding Israel have disappeared, this prophecy is not just a good guess. For the most part, no one worships Zeus, Jupiter, Baal, Marduk, or Horus any longer. Those Greek, Roman, Canaanite, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian gods are now recognized as the myths they always were. God challenged the peoples to prove their gods and none could. Only Yahweh legitimately shows Himself and speaks through His prophets.

FULFILLMENT OF 4: God will bring them back into the land a second time. When was the first time? The first was when they returned to rebuild Jerusalem by the decree of Artaxerxes I after 70 years of captivity in Babylon and Persia (Ezra 7). Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in 587 BC, and the northern kingdom of Israel had been conquered in 722 BC. The Jews had dispersed and/or been taken in captivity, and they first returned to Jerusalem in the early 6th century BC.

When did the second return occur? Not long ago, in 1948! After World War II, particularly as a result of the Holocaust, Jews began returning to their homeland, because they could not return to their European homes. The British made attempts to establish independent Arab and Jewish states after the war, but no agreement was reached. Not long after a deadly terror attack, the British withdrew from the region in 1947. On May 14th, 1948, the Jewish Agency declared its independence as the State of Israel. The next day, Arab forces united and attacked Israel. Hostilities ceased after about a year, and on May 11th, 1949, by majority vote, Israel was officially admitted into the United Nations. The Jews had returned a second time as predicted more than 2500 years ago!

FULFILLMENT OF 5: Because of the length of time the Jews were dispersed among other nations, their tribal identities have been lost. Since the issues that divided them were long forgotten and irrelevant, and they were united against the Nazis and Muslims by their own common interests, the new nation of Israel is united under one leader. Imagine what the divided kingdoms to whom Isaiah and Ezekiel originally wrote would have thought about the idea of the two nations would be united! And yet, God was right again through the mouth of His prophets.

Conclusion of the Old Testament

Little doubt should exist that God has spoken! Our Creator and Lord has shown Himself to be Almighty God through revelation to His creatures created in His image. He did not intend to leave us directionless after our creation and fall, therefore He gave us His words through His prophets. Those words are recorded in the Bible, and they do not require blind faith to believe. Plenty of evidence exists to rely on the Scriptures as a guide for our lives. As we have just seen, fulfilled prophecy is a powerful line of evidence that God exists and sovereignly knows the future. So how does our future look?

The Book of Revelation and New Testament Prophecies

The New Testament is a different revelation from God than the Old Testament. Whereas the Old Testament primarily appeals to prophecy as evidence that it was from God, the New Testament primarily appeals to who Jesus is and His resurrection. Though the writers of the New Testament were inspired by God (2 Peter 3:15- 16) just as the Old Testament writers had been (2 Timothy 3:16), and “prophet” is listed as a spiritual office (Ephesians 4:11), and prophecy is a gift for Christian believers (Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 12:10), the NT does not contain as many prophecies of future events as the Old Testament.

One book is an exception. The book of Revelation is a series of visions seen by the Apostle John, many of which relate to our future, and the picture it paints is both terrifying and glorious. It speaks of coming judgment on Earth, the likes of which can only affect the entire planet, even though some of it is regionalized, and it speaks of the coming new heavens and new earth where there is no more pain or death.

Consider these New Testament Scriptures and see if you think they sound more like our modern culture than the cultures to which it was written, or any other culture of the past 2000 years:

MASS MURDER, FAMINE, & SICKNESS: Revelation 6:8 says, “I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.” Such widespread death was not as common in the ancient world as it has been in modern times. The total death toll for World War II has been estimated at 70-85 million including military, civilian, and post-war related effects.²² The top three murderers of the modern age are Mao Zedong (over 50 million in China), Joseph Stalin (over 20 million in Russia) and Adolf Hitler (over 11 million in Germany). Also, do not neglect

²² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties

that abortion has killed over 60 million children in the USA from 1972-2014,²³ over 336 million in four decades in China, and 11 million a year in India²⁴, rivaling numbers from China. In addition, only relatively modern cultures have experienced plagues killing masses of people, like the Black Plague in the 14th century (50 million), AIDS (35 million since its discovery), and Malaria (10 million since 2000²⁵). Various viruses like influenza kill hundreds of thousands every year. Increased worldwide travel, not as possible in the ancient world, is partly responsible.

GLOBAL FOCUS: Notice how the previous quote from Revelation 6:8 mentioned 25% of the Earth's population dying. Other verses in Revelation do the same (9:15, 18 – a third of mankind dying by war). The Bible has changed focus from Israel and its neighbors in the Old Testament to a worldwide focus in the New Testament, frequently mentioning all peoples, tongues, and nations. It is interesting that the New Testament began this type of global focus first.

WORLDWIDE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY: Revelation 7:9 says, “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...” The modern age is showing the spread of Christianity to every nation, whereas religious practices in the ancient world were primarily limited to regional cultures and civilizations. The Bible boldly predicted the worldwide spread and influence of Christianity in advance. (See also Revelation 14:6.) In fact, it is now the largest religion. If Christianity was invented by the early disciples, it would be quite amazing to predict in advance that their false religion would have such influence and widespread appeal.

EVERYONE CAN SEE & KNOW: Revelation 11:9-10 says this concerning two witnesses coming in the end times: “Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days... And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate.” Three and a half days is not enough time for word to spread very far in the ancient world. The Bible is showing here that information would travel much faster in the future, and multiple nations will be able to see it at the same time. How was that possible when John wrote those words? Today, a live broadcast can be shown to everyone via multiple technological mediums.

BUYING & SELLING POWER: Revelation 13:16-17 says, “And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark.” Without speculating on what this “mark” is, this prophecy is much easier to fulfill in modern electronic times than in the past, especially since it specifies all classes of people are involved. In the past, a mark would have been much easier to counterfeit than it is today. Implantation of microchips

23 <https://nrlc.org/uploads/factsheets/FS01AbortionintheUS.pdf>

24 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/9933468/336-million-abortions-under-Chinas-one-child-policy.html>

25 <https://ourworldindata.org/malaria>

in the hand is already available.

LOVERS OF SELF: 2 Timothy 3:1-4 says, “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God...” Though each of these characteristics are common with all generations, Paul is telling us the end times will be marked by amplified versions of the problems, and our “selfie” “reality-show” generation certainly fits what Paul has described.

LOVERS OF PLEASURE: Revelation tells of people worshipping the great harlot of Babylon (18:3) and getting drunk with the passion of her immorality with merchants wealthy with her sensualities, and weeping over the loss of luxuries and profits gained from her at her destruction (18:11-20). Not only does our pornography-soaked culture fit this description, but we live in a culture obsessed with entertainment of every form to the extreme. Imagine the weeping and unemployment that would result from a catastrophic sustained loss of electrical power should some huge natural disaster occur. Without electricity, modern culture collapses. The scene would look a lot like what Revelation 18 describes.

A DIFFERENT GOSPEL: Galatians 1:8 says, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!” Paul warned in advance here that people will claim that an angel appeared to them and it will result in preaching a different Gospel than the original one. Both Mohammad (founder of Islam) and Joseph Smith (founder of Mormonism) claimed that an angel gave them revelation that was supposedly from God, but actually contradicts Christian doctrine as originally taught.

FALLING AWAY FROM THE FAITH: 1 Timothy 4:1 says this, “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.” (See also 2 Thessalonians 2:3) The Bible not only predicted Christianity would spread worldwide, but it also predicted that people would fall away from it in large numbers, as has happened over the last 200 years or so and is continuing today.

We read these words of the Bible that match our culture so well and forget that they were written nearly *2,000 years ago*. One could argue humanity has changed little since then, and that is truer than many wish to believe; but the Bible has prophesied a picture of the end times that is extreme, and it appears to be accurate thus far. The New Testament was first to change humanity’s focus from specific empires and nations to a global picture of all cultures, tongues, and peoples. Plus, most of these prophecies *only make sense in modern times* despite the fact that much of what is predicted in Revelation has not happened yet. This shows good reason to believe in the supernatural power of God to predict the future through His inspired prophets.

CONCLUSION

Of all the gods humans have ever worshipped, only One has *shown* Himself to be worthy of such honor. *That God* has spoken through His prophets to reveal His ways and His will and has given us good reasons to believe that the Bible is His Word. Blind faith is not required to believe Christianity is true, because God made sure the Bible demonstrates its reliability by supernatural means. You have just seen one such proof in examples of fulfilled prophecies that were all written hundreds and thousands of years before their fulfillment. Their fulfillments cannot be attributed to chance or self- fulfillment. They are very specific, and this booklet has attempted to use examples corroborated by historical facts that are indisputable. More examples could have been given, but what is here is sufficient to believe that God inspired the authors of the Bible. So what are you going to do about it? What response is appropriate?

The Good News

With all of this bad news, it's time for some good news.

Revelation 20:11-12 says that in the end, all humanity will be judged by God. You're probably thinking, "That doesn't sound much like good news!" However, it really is a matter of perspective. For God to judge all the evil in the world is to do what many people wish He would do now – punish the bad guys. In the movies, do we not love to see the antagonist get what he deserves in the end? But, here's the problem: In the real world, we are all antagonists. We have all sinned and done wrong. We are all bad guys and deserve to die at the end of the movie. That's the bad news that precedes the good news.

Consider once again these prophetic words written by Isaiah 700 years before Jesus was born. Read them slowly. Think about what they say. Find the good news in them:

*[Jesus] was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;*

*Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.
But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.
All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
To fall on Him*

ISAIAH 53:3-6

Do you see the good news? Jesus died for your sins. The penalty for sin is death, as God told Adam and Eve thousands of years ago (Genesis 2:17), and we all deserve death because we have all sinned. But Jesus bore our griefs, carried our sorrows, was pierced for our transgressions, was crushed for our iniquities, was chastened for our well-being, and was scourged for our healing. The repetitiveness of the prophet's words emphasizes different applications of Jesus' suffering to our lives, and also emphasizes that Jesus' death should not be taken lightly. God "caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him [Jesus]." Because of that, the penalty for our sins is paid.

However, there is one condition for receiving credit for the payment. Paul describes it this way in Romans 4:3-5: "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.' Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness." Paul says that if God gave us righteousness (forgiveness and a right standing with Him) because we worked for it, then it would be like a wage ("what is due"). We would have earned it. But, that is not the way it works. We have a debt we cannot pay back, but Jesus paid the debt, and our account is cleared when we believe He "justifies the ungodly." It is by faith that the free gift of righteousness is credited to our account. We must believe who Jesus is and what He did and make Him our Lord.

Paul says it in Romans 10:9-10: "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

God has given us good reasons to believe that what He said is true. We've just seen some of the evidence of fulfilled Biblical prophecy, which may help remove some intellectual barriers to belief. Now it is time to complete the process: confess Jesus as Lord and believe His word unto a right standing with God and salvation from condemnation. Repent of your sins and begin to seek God's will for your life out of love for Him. Then

you will have good reason to look forward to Jesus' return, rather than having an expectation of condemnation. Here's one last prophecy of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

I saw heaven standing open, and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no one knows but He Himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of His mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has this name written:

KING OF KING AND LORD OF LORDS.

REVELATION 19:11-16

When Jesus returns, He will not be coming as a humble lamb to give His life a second time. He will be coming as a warrior, the final judge, and the ruler of all. When He returns, will you be His enemy or His follower? Willingly declare Him Lord of your life now, and begin the process of becoming like Him, before everyone will have no choice but to bow their knee and declare Him Lord in the end.

FURTHER READING

Articles on the Associates for Biblical Research Website:

All of these articles are part of “The Daniel 9:24-27 Project” written by Rick Lanser under the tab “ABR Projects” found here <https://biblearchaeology.org/the-daniel-9-24-27-project-list>. I highly recommend reading through each article to corroborate the details of the general overview of the Daniel 9 prophecies presented in this booklet.

How the Passover Illuminates the Date of the Crucifixion – 5/15/19

How Acts and Galatians Indicate the Date of the Crucifixion – 5/15/19

What was the “Fifteenth Year of Tiberius”? – 5/15/19

John 2:12-21 and Herodian Chronology – 5/15/19

Did Ezra Come to Jerusalem in 457 BC? – 9/10/19

The Going Forth of Artaxerxes’ Decree: Parts 1 and 2 – 11/15/19

Books:

Boa, Kenneth D., and Robert M. Bowman Jr. *20 Compelling Evidences That God Exists* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 2005)

Chabot, Eric. *Is Yeshua the Jewish Messiah?* (San Antonio, TX: CJF Ministries, 2017)

Geisler, Norman. *Systematic Theology: Volume One – Introduction – Bible* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2002) 550-555.

Hoehner, Harold W. *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation, 1977), 115-138. This older work gives the specifics of the alternative interpretation of Daniel 9 presented here and is the source Josh McDowell used in *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*.

McDowell, Josh. *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* (San Bernardino, CA: Here’s Life Publishers, Inc., 1979) This book and its updated versions give additional multiple examples of fulfilled prophecy not included in this booklet.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Benjamin D. Smith Jr. studied and taught theology and apologetics for over 30 years after he became a Christian while attending Georgia Tech. He is the author of the book *Genesis, Science, and the Beginning*, published in 2018 by Wipf&Stock, and available on Amazon and Kindle. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Christian Worldview and Apologetics from Luther Rice College. He was the Ratio Christi Chapter Director at the University of West Georgia and the Ratio Christi Publishing Project Manager. And he was the General Editor of this “Do You Believe?” apologetics booklet series.

Ben Smith suddenly passed away and met His Savior in glory just before the publication of this booklet. He lived in Carrollton, Georgia, with his beautiful wife of 32 years, with whom they lovingly raised four children. His son Duran Smith finished this booklet and dedicates it to the memory of his Dad.

Duran Smith attended Biola University and Georgia State University to earn a Bachelor’s degree in Film Production and Film Theory with a minor in Theatre. He also studied apologetics under the tutorship of his father Ben Smith for nearly 20 years. He is a former Ratio Christi Chapter President, and he has given numerous apologetics presentations at multiple colleges and conferences. His passion is for apologetics based on the philosophy of art and beauty, for which he recently started www.verimyth.com.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Benjamin D. Smith Jr. studied and taught theology and apologetics for over 30 years after he became a Christian while attending Georgia Tech. He is the author of the book *Genesis, Science, and the Beginning*, published in 2018 by Wipf&Stock, and available on Amazon and Kindle. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Christian Worldview and Apologetics from Luther Rice College. He was the Ratio Christi Chapter Director at the University of West Georgia and the Ratio Christi Publishing Project Manager. And he was the General Editor of this “Do You Believe?” apologetics booklet series.

Do You Believe? Series
General Editor Benjamin D. Smith Jr.

ratiochristi.org | info@ratiochristi.org
Facebook, Instagram, & Twitter: [@ratiochristi](https://www.instagram.com/ratiochristi)

