



Did Jesus Fulfill Prophecies?

“All of this happened to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet.”
(Matthew 1:22, NLT)

Imagine your parents or someone telling you that they have a book, written hundreds of years ago, which prophesied (predicted or foretold) your family tree, your place of birth, your job, and much more. Would you find this hard to believe and think them a little crazy? You probably would, but for Jesus, it is true. The Old Testament contains over three hundred prophecies about Jesus, written hundreds of years before he was born. God did not write these by fortunetellers, crystal gazers or mediums, but through his prophets. Prophets were “God’s spokesmen,” each communicating God’s own message. If they made just one false prophecy, their life was in jeopardy.

The first prophecy

God spoke the first prophecy about Jesus to Satan, disguised as a serpent. After Satan tempted Adam and Eve and they chose to disobey God, God pronounced their punishments. To Satan he said, *“From now on, you and the woman will be enemies, and your offspring and her offspring will be enemies. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”* (Genesis 3:15, NIV)

This woman’s “offspring” referred to Christ Jesus, God the Son. Satan repeatedly tried to kill Jesus by “striking his heel.” (The only place a snake can strike is from the knee down!) For example, he incited Herod to try to kill Jesus as a baby. After Jesus fasted forty days in the wilderness, Satan tempted him to sin (without success). Satan entered Judas, causing him to betray Jesus. He stirred up the religious leaders with hatred, which led to his crucifixion.

When Jesus died, Satan and his demons must have danced with glee. Satan thought he had won, but he was in for a big surprise. Jesus resurrected, defeating Satan with a “crush on his head”! A crush on the head is fatal; a bruise on the heel is not. The Bible says: *“But the Son of God came to destroy these works of the devil.”* (1 John 3:8, NIV) At the end of this age, God will complete Satan’s judgment when he throws him and his demons into the lake of fire (hell) forever! (Revelation 20:10) Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Genesis 3:15.

The prophecy of his genealogy

- Were there prophecies predicting his family tree, his genealogy? There are two lists of the genealogies of Jesus in the New Testament. Matthew begins with Abraham, the father of the Jews; Luke traces Jesus all the way back to Adam. Remember, genealogies often compress history, meaning not all ancestors are mentioned. Read the record of

Jesus' ancestors in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38. Here are a few of these prophecies.

- **Abraham** would be the father of a great nation (Israel) and through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. Through Jesus, Abraham's descendant, this prophecy came true. (Genesis 12:2-3; 22:15-18) God reconfirmed this promise to Abraham's son **Isaac** and to Isaac's son, Jacob. (Genesis 26:2-4 and 28:13-15) **Jacob** had twelve sons and each became head of a tribe of the Jewish nation. Jacob prophesied that Jesus would come from the tribe of his son Judah. (Genesis 49:10)
- From **Judah**, God chose the family line of **David**. God promised King David that a king descended from him would reign forever, referring to Jesus' second return to earth as King and Ruler. (1 Chronicles 17:11-12; Isaiah 11:1-5) God will fulfill this prophecy in the future. Both Mary and Joseph (the legal, but not the physical father of Jesus) were direct descendants of King David.
- Jesus would be born of a virgin. *"The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."* (Isaiah 7:14, NIV) The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, a virgin engaged to Joseph, and told her she would have a son. When she asked how she could have a baby since she was a virgin, the angel answered, *"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, and he will be called the Son of God."* (Luke 1:35, NLT) Read the stories of the birth of Jesus in Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38 and Luke 2:1-20.

The prophesy of his birthplace

Did God predict Jesus' place of birth? When the wise men from the east saw a special star and arrived in Jerusalem to see the new king, how did the religious leaders know where Jesus would be born when King Herod asked them? Because God, hundreds of years before his birth, told the prophet Micah he would be born in Bethlehem! *"But you, O **Bethlehem** Ephrathah, are only a small village in Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past."* (Micah 5:2, NIV) Luke writes about this fulfillment in Luke 2. In Psalm 72:10, God even predicted that the wise men would come with gifts!

The prophecy of his mission

The prophet Isaiah predicted the **purpose of Jesus' mission** in Isaiah 61:1-2. In his hometown synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus stood up and unrolled the Isaiah scroll to the place where it says:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has appointed me to preach the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released [from sin], that the blind will see, that the downtrodden will be freed from their oppressors, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come. (Luke 4:18, NLT)

He rolled up the scroll, sat down and said, *"This Scripture has come true today before your very eyes."* (v. 21) The people of his small village refused to believe the village carpenter's son could be the Messiah. They mobbed him and tried to push him over a cliff, but he escaped.

Attitude Check:

- How do these prophecies strengthen your faith in God and his Word?

Explore:

- Read Matthew 2. How many fulfilled prophecies did you find? Write in your journal why you think God gave prophecies and how it affects your faith.
- Read Jesus' purpose and fulfillment in "Jesus Had a Specific Mission to Accomplish." (Luke 4:16-21)

Talking with God:

- Thank you, Father, for the prophets who listened to your voice and wrote these prophecies. Keep me faithful in holding fast to the truths you are teaching me.

¹ Source: McDowell, Josh, (1972) Chapter 9: The Messianic Prophecies of the Old Testament Fulfilled in Christ. In *Evidence Demands a Verdict*. Campus Crusade for Christ, Inc