

A Prophetic Path

Easter Sunday

April 16, 2006

BIG MISTAKES

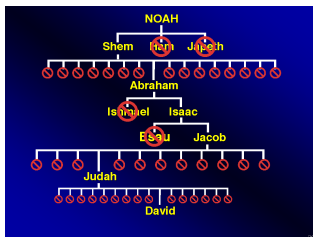
Q: Did you know that the Bible is filled with mistakes?

Adam and Eve eating that forbidden fruit ... that's a mistake! The folks who made fun of Noah ... they had egg on their face. The guys who tied Samson between the pillars ... *huge* mistake! But perhaps the biggest mistake of all was when God's people failed to recognize his Son as their savior; even though God had provided a detailed *prophetic path* to verify Him when He came. As the Apostle John commented on the crucifixion of Christ:

These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: [quoting Psalm 34:20] "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, [quoting Zechariah 12:10] "They will look on the one they have pierced." - John 19:36-37 NIV

This was prophesied 300 years *before* crucifixion was created! Prophecy is such a "cool" aspect of Christianity. It validates, it authenticates, and it exhilarates ... it's just exciting!

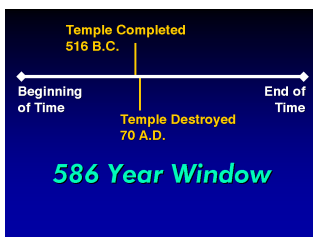
Here's a quick glimpse of the Messiah's prophesied genealogy, geology, and chronology:



Noah had three sons, but only Shem was chosen over Ham and Japheth, thus eliminating 2/3 of the future population. Shem had dozens of descendants, but God selected Abraham. Abraham had two sons, but God chose Isaac over Ishmael. Isaac HAD two sons, but God chose Jacob over Esau. Jacob had twelve sons! The 12 tribes. God eliminated 11/12ths of the Israelites by singling out the tribe of Judah. And of all Judah's families, God elected the house of David.

So, if you're going to claim to be the Messiah - which hundreds of people have - you need an exactly specific pedigree! This is why the genealogies (in Matthew & Luke) are so important.

Critics will point out that the two lists are different. That's because Matthew lists Joseph's blood-line; Luke offers Mary's. Traditionalists would trace the ancestry through the *father*. But Jesus was born of a virgin ... so some go with the *mother*. The family tree of Mary and Joseph can both be traced from Noah's son Shem, to Shem's descendant Abraham, Abe's son Isaac, Isaac's son Jacob, the tribe of Judah, and the house of David!



Then (*Micah 5:2*) God eliminates every city on the planet except one tiny town, Bethlehem (with a population of less than a 1000), as the eventual birthplace. And through the prophet Malachi (*3:1*), God establishes a time frame: while the second temple is standing. Construction on the 2nd temple was completed in 516 B.C. And it was destroyed in 70 A.D. (fulfilling Jesus' prophecy). That's a 586 year window for the Christ to be born *in* Bethlehem; through Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and David!

THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Now let's go back to that first Easter morning. Two of Jesus' followers are walking from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus.

They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces **downcast**. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?" "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a **prophet**, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. - *Luke 24:15-21 NIV*

Q: So why are their faces "downcast"?

They're so sure they'd be rescued from the Romans, they couldn't conceive of a plan that included rescuing the Romans too! How ironic that one of the most profound NT books is the book of Romans.

These gloomy guys go on to tell this "stranger" that Jesus' tomb was discovered empty, and some women even reported seeing angels who told them that Jesus was alive. And that's it. Jesus has heard enough.

He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. - *Luke 24:25-27 NIV*

Jesus lays out the prophesied role of the Messiah as a suffering servant who becomes the ultimate sacrificial lamb for sin. And He explains how the Christ must rise to demonstrate power over death, and to confirm God's acceptance of the sacrifice.

THE PATH OF PROPHECY

I want to recreate this conversation with 40 Old Testament prophecies arranged in chronological order. Remember, these are *Old Testament* scriptures established before Jesus came.

1. **Filled With the Spirit** - *Isaiah 11:2-3 NLT*
And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him – the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. He will delight in obeying the Lord.
2. **Minister of Miracles** - *Isaiah 35:4-6 NLT*
He is coming to save you. And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind and unstop the ears of the deaf. The lame will leap like a deer, and those who cannot speak will shout and sing! ...
3. **Teacher of Parables** - *Psalms 78:1-2 NLT*
Open your ears to what I am saying, for I will speak to you in a parable. I will teach you hidden lessons ...

4. **Riding on a Donkey** - *Zechariah 9:9 NLT*
Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey ...
5. **Stone of Stumbling** - *Isaiah 8:13-14 NLT*
If you fear him, you need fear nothing else. He will keep you safe. But to Israel and Judah he will be a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap that entangles them.
6. **Many Enemies** - *Psalms 69:4 NLT*
Those who hate me without cause are more numerous than the hairs on my head. These enemies who seek to destroy me are doing so without cause. They attack me with lies, demanding that I give back what I didn't steal.
7. **Judas the Betrayer** - *Psalms 41:9 NLT*
Even my best friend, the one I trusted completely, the one who shared my food, has turned against me.
8. **Judas the Close Friend** - *Psalms 55:12-14 NIV*
If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it ... But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend ...
9. **Sheep Scattered** - *Zechariah 13:7 NIV*
Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered ...
10. **Beaten, Mocked, & Spit Upon** - *Isaiah 50:6b NIV*
I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.
11. **A Silent Lamb** - *Isaiah 53:7 NLT*
He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.
12. **Carried Sorrows** - *Isaiah 53:4 NLT*
Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God for his own sins!
13. **Bearing Inequities** - *Isaiah 53:11 NLT*
When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of what he has experienced, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins.
14. **Knees Buckled** - *Psalms 109:24-25 NLT*
My knees are weak from fasting, and I am skin and bones. I am an object of mockery to people everywhere; when they see me, they shake their heads.
15. **Punishment Upon Him** - *Isaiah 53:5b NIV*
... the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
16. **Cut off from the Living** - *Isaiah 53:8 NLT*
From prison and trial they led him away to his death. But who among the people realized that he was dying for their sins — that he was suffering their punishment?
17. **Pierced Hands & Feet** - *Psalms 22:16 NLT*
My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet.

18. **Laid on Him** – *Isaiah 53:6 NLT*
All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the guilt and sins of us all.
19. **Driven like a Peg** – *Isaiah 22:22-24 NLT*
He will bring honor to his family name, for I will drive him firmly in place like a tent stake. He will be loaded down with responsibility, and he will bring honor to even the lowliest members of his family.”
20. **Staring & Gloating** – *Psalms 22:17 NLT*
I can count every bone in my body. My enemies stare at me and gloat.
21. **Scorned & Despised** – *Psalms 22:7-8 NLT*
Everyone who sees me mocks me. They sneer and shake their heads, saying, “Is this the one who relies on the Lord? Then let the Lord save him! If the Lord loves him so much, let the Lord rescue him!”
22. **Hung with Criminals** – *Isaiah 53:12 NCV*
He willingly gave his life, and was treated like a criminal. But he carried away the sins of many people, and asked forgiveness for those who sinned.”
23. **My God, My God** – *Psalms 22:1 NIV*
My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
24. **Gambling for Garments** – *Psalms 22:18 NLT*
They divide my clothes among themselves and throw dice for my garments.
25. **Darkness Falls** – *Amos 8:9 NLT*
At that time,” says the Sovereign Lord, “I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth while it is still day.
26. **Thirsty** – *Psalms 22:15 NIV*
My strength is dried up like [sun-baked clay], and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.
27. **Given Vinegar** – *Psalms 69:22 NIV*
... for my thirst they gave me vinegar.
28. **Into Your Hands** – *Psalms 31:5 NIV*
Into your hands I commit my spirit ...
29. **A Guilt Offering** – *Isaiah 53:10 NIV*
Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer ... the Lord makes his life a guilt offering ...
30. **No Broken Bones** – *Psalms 34:20 NIV*
[The Lord] protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.
31. **Pierced for our Transgressions** – *Isaiah 53:5a*
... he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities ...
32. **A Melted Heart** – *Psalms 22:14 NLT*
My life is poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax, melting within me.

33. **The Pierced One** – *Zechariah 12:10 NLT*
They will look on me whom they have pierced and mourn for him as for an only son.
34. **Not Hung Overnight** - *Deuteronomy 21:23 NIV*
You must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse.
35. **Not Left in Grave** - *Psalms 16:10 NIV*
... you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.
36. **Escape from Death** - *Psalms 68:20 NIV*
Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign Lord comes escape from death.
37. **Up from the Grave** - *Psalms 30:3 NIV*
O Lord, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit.
38. **The Third Day** - *Hosea 6:2 NIV*
... on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence.
39. **The Capstone** - *Psalms 118:22-23 NIV*
The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.
40. **He Has Done It!** - *Psalms 22:30-31 NIV*
Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn – for he has done it.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Q: So what about those two gloomy guys back on the road?

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen ... - *Luke 24:28-34 NIV*

Do you suppose when He handed them the bread, they saw the wounds in His hands? Wouldn’t that give you goose bumps?! I want you to notice three things:

1. We can fail to recognize and appreciate the presence of the Messiah even when He’s walking right beside us.
2. Jesus will not barge in on us. He waits to be invited – and you really have to mean it (*they urged him strongly*).
3. Even though Jesus was their guest, they allowed Him to take on the role of host, and serve them the bread.

Jesus cannot fully reveal Himself until you invite Him to live in your heart as the master of the house.