

Sunday, January 10, 2016

“Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 24:25-27)

**“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.”
(Acts 28:23)**

The sermon today is about Messianic prophecies, that is, prophecies in the Bible that are about the Messiah, including both His first advent and His second advent. Of course, the word “Messiah” comes from a Hebrew word meaning “anointed one.” In the Greek language, the equivalent word is “Christos,” which is where we get the word “Christ.”

“The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.” (Luke 4:18)

Although the prophets in the scripture had many facets to their office, I am focusing on the one aspect that we most commonly think of when we think of a prophet, i.e., the inspired foretelling of what God is going to do.

First, I have just a few words about prophecy in general. Prophecy makes up a significant part of the Bible, a conservative estimate being around 27%. Many prophecies in the Bible have been fulfilled, and many have yet to be fulfilled. This is the Word of God we’re dealing with, and this is one of the main ways that God has chosen to speak to us. A quick Internet search will show you that there is no shortage of crackpots on the subject of Biblical prophecy, but we can’t let that stop us from our duty to prayerfully learn everything we can about the Word of God, and lay our petitions up to Him for more and more wisdom and light. On the flip side, we’ve often been warned from this pulpit of the danger of prophecy becoming a “hobby horse” like we see in “Prophecy Club”-type heresies.

In Biblical prophecy, we see the sovereignty of God and the absolute predestination of all things. It is one of the ways in which God has placed the divine stamp on His scripture – when you see so many prophecies being fulfilled hundreds or thousands of years after being foretold, how can this be anything other than the Word of God?

“I am God, and *there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” (Isaiah 46:10)*

And how can anyone but God declare with certainty that this or that thing will happen? God gives us prophecy to show that He is, indeed, God, and the idols that the people of this world worship cannot accomplish anything. Wicked men have no excuse:

“I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did *them* suddenly, and they came to pass. Because I knew that thou *art* obstinate, and thy neck *is* an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even from the beginning declared *it* to thee; before it came to pass I shewed *it* thee: lest thou shouldst say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.” (Isaiah 48:3-5)

Consider all of the intricate, infinitesimal things that God must cause to happen to bring just one prophecy to pass, let alone thousands of prophecies, and you will have a small glimpse into the power, wisdom and sovereignty of God, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. When I was in high school, I read a science fiction short story called “A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury. The story is that a company called “Time Safari, Inc.” offers big game hunters a chance to travel back in time to kill dinosaurs. The main character goes back to kill a Tyrannosaurus Rex. He gets scared, jumps off of the path that he’s on to run away, and accidentally steps on a butterfly. When he returns back to his own time, he discovers that killing this butterfly has changed the whole course of history. It’s a silly story, but it’s an important reality that the events in this world are so tightly interrelated. If God is going to declare the end from the beginning, nothing can be left to chance, or the whole thing will unravel:

“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.” (Matthew 10:29)

Interestingly enough, this story by Bradbury is often associated with the term, “The Butterfly Effect.” That term actually came from a meteorologist who suggested that a butterfly beating its wings on one side of the world could eventually cause a storm on the other side of the world. It’s an example of what is called “Chaos Theory,” which is basically that very small changes in a complex, dynamic system will yield unpredictable results. Using this basic idea of small changes having huge effects, let’s look at an example from the Bible. We have Saul trying with all of his might to affix David to the wall with a javelin not once, not twice, but three times, and he misses every time (1 Samuel 18:10-11, 1 Samuel 19:9-10). David miraculously avoids the javelin, and “Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him.”

(1 Samuel 18:12). This is a relatively tiny event in human history when you look at it by itself, but had the javelin hit David, like the arrow that was drawn at a venture hit Ahab, the whole course of human history would have been different, God's plan would have been thwarted, and the Messiah never would have been born. Saul had to miss, because God decreed that Saul would miss.

Scientists will tell us that human interactions are so complex in their economics, their business transactions, their general behavior, etc., that it would be impossible to predict, for example, that Jesus Christ would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, and that the blood money would be given to a potter. Nevertheless, that **was** predicted, 500 years before it actually happened. Note that the way in which it was fulfilled was a complicated thing. Multiple people had to make multiple decisions and do multiple things, events had to have already taken place such that a potter would be there, he would have something for sale (i.e., his field) at that precise time, and 30 pieces of silver would be a reasonable selling price:

“And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.” (Zechariah 11:12-13)

“Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? see thou *to that*. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.” (Matthew 27:3-10)

(Note that Matthew ascribes the prophecy to Jeremy, rather than Zechariah. At the time, the scripture was ordered such that Jeremiah was the first book in the books of the prophets, so a reference to the “prophets” section of the Old Testament was sometimes referred to by its first book, Jeremiah. Other commentators note that there is some similarity between Jeremiah 32 and what we see in Matthew 27, and suggest that the prophecies being fulfilled were a combination of what both Jeremiah and Zechariah prophesied).

Prophecy in the scripture can be used to strengthen our faith in God and His Word, and it is a great source of comfort to God's people, particularly when we are talking about His second coming. For example, in the throes of despair, Job cried out:

“For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth. And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.” (Job 19:25-27)

And of course, we have the following from Paul:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

Looking into prophecy has also been the means by which some men have been called to salvation:

“And he [Philip] arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to [him], and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on [their] way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, [here is] water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.”
(Acts 8:27-39)

Let's take a more detailed look into the Messianic prophecies. Most estimates that I have seen put the number of prophecies that Jesus fulfilled during His first coming to be around 300-400, many of them converging and being fulfilled over the course of only a few days. Estimates of the number of prophecies of His second coming and the end of the world are around 1000 (some estimates are much higher), with 318 references to His second coming in the New Testament alone, making it one of the (if not the) most referenced fundamental doctrines in the NT. And of course, that topic is a major topic in the preachments of Westboro Baptist Church.

Just as a few examples of Messianic prophecies in the scripture, we have the following:

- His eternal existence - "whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting" – Micah 5:2.
- His lineage - He would descend from Abraham, Judah, David, etc.
- The manner of His birth - the first prophecy in the Bible is Genesis 3:15, and refers to Him being the seed of the woman. Also Isaiah 7:14 – "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son."
- The places He was associated with upon being born – Bethlehem, Egypt, Nazareth
- His forerunner – John the Baptist
- His character – His righteousness, zeal, meekness, mercy, etc.
- The location of His ministry – Galilee, Jerusalem, the temple
- His dual nature as God and man – He shall be called "the mighty God" – Isaiah 9:6. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" – Isaiah 53:3.
- His betrayal by a friend – "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me" – Psalm 41:9
- He would be beaten – "they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek" – Micah 5:1
- His hands and feet would be pierced – "they pierced my hands and my feet" – Psalm 22:16. Note that this prophecy was made at a time when crucifixion was unknown. The first recorded crucifixion would not happen for another 500 years.
- His resurrection – "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" – Psalm 16:10.
- His ascension – "Thou hast ascended on high" – Psalm 68:10.
- His second advent – "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee" – Zechariah 14:1. "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" – Acts 1:11.

Messianic prophecies also lie in the types and symbols of the Old Testament. For example:

- People who are types of Christ – Joseph, Boaz, David, etc.
- Offices – prophet, priest, king, etc.
- Events – manna, the brazen serpent, etc.
- The tabernacle and the temple, and all things related – the Ark of the Covenant, the mercy seat, the table of shewbread, etc.
- The offerings – burnt offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, etc.
- The feasts – Passover, Firstfruits, Atonement, etc.

Some Messianic prophecies are literal, and some are figurative. An example of a prophecy that was literally fulfilled was that Jesus actually rode into Jerusalem on an ass.

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” (Zechariah 9:9)

“And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon.” (Matthew 21:1-7)

I have often wondered what the various interpretations and debates were surrounding that passage in Zechariah in the 500 year period from when the prophecy was made to the time it was fulfilled, when Jesus brought all speculation to an end when “they set him thereon.” Whatever symbolic meaning may attend the King riding upon an ass, and upon the colt, He most certainly literally rode it.

An example of a figurative prophecy can be found in Ezekiel 17:

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set *it*; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant *it* upon an high mountain and eminent: In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. And all the trees of the

field shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the LORD have spoken and have done *it*.” (Ezekiel 17:22-24)

This is a prophecy of the Messiah and His kingdom, His church. But does it mean that Jesus is literally a tender twig who will be planted in a mountain, and then grow into a big cedar tree that all different kinds of birds can dwell under? Of course not. This is figurative language, and this prophecy is still being fulfilled today even as He calls whom He will from every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

I do not have a silver bullet for when prophecies are to be taken literally and when they are to be taken figuratively. Each one has to be taken on its own, but the general approach I take on them is to first look at them literally, try to apply a little bit of common sense, and try to not force a symbol where there isn't one. If taking it literally doesn't make sense, then we look at what the figurative meaning may be. Note that in a lot of cases, a literal thing also carries a figurative meaning with it. In every case, we must compare scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual (1 Corinthians 2:13).

Frequently, we will find these prophecies in the middle of a passage, and it might not be clear at first glance that what you're seeing is a Messianic prophecy. For example:

“When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.” (Hosea 11:1-4)

“And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.” (Matthew 2:13-15)

When reading the original passage in Hosea, this doesn't look like it has anything to do with a Messianic prophecy, or any prophecy at all! It looks like God is rebuking Israel for their ingratitude and their monstrous sins against Him. But tucked there in the middle of everything is “and called my son out of Egypt,” and we know for a certainty that it IS a prophecy, because we are told that it is by Matthew. It is in the past tense, like many prophecies are, because it is decreed by God and is such a sure thing that it's as if it has already happened. John Calvin

expounds the passage like this: *“For it behoves us to consider this, that God, when He formerly redeemed His people from Egypt, only showed by a certain prelude the redemption which He deferred till the coming of Christ. Hence, as the body was then brought forth from Egypt into Judea, so at length the head also came forth from Egypt: and then God fully showed Him to be the true deliverer of His people.”* Other examples of this are the passage on the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:10-17) and Rachel weeping for her children (Jeremiah 31:15). There are probably some passages on the second coming of Christ that fall into this category that we may not even be aware of.

There are a lot of prophecies that have a double (or more) fulfillment (this is also called “Double Reference”). The “types” in the Old Testament mentioned above could go into this category. For example, the event of the brazen serpent. The people had murmured against God, so God sent fiery serpents to bite and kill them! Moses prayed on their behalf and here was the solution:

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.” (Numbers 21:8-9)

This was a thing that actually happened. God said “put the serpent up on a pole, and what’s going to happen is, anyone who looks on it will live.” And that’s what happened. But there was a future event that this was looking toward:

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up [that is, on the cross]: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:14-15)

Another example of a double fulfillment prophecy is when a single prophecy prophesies of both Christ’s first and second coming. For example:

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed

your flocks, and the sons of the alien *shall be* your plowmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: *men* shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. For your shame ye *shall have* double; and *for* confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them. For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they *are* the seed *which* the LORD hath blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”

(Isaiah 61:1-11)

There are elements of both His first and second coming in this passage, including the conversion of the Jews at the last time. Notice that when Jesus quotes from it, He stops and closes the book just before “and the day of vengeance of our God.” Presumably, the part that He read was fulfilled at that time, while other parts of the prophecy would be fulfilled at a later time (maybe later on in His earthly ministry, and certainly at His return).

“And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” (Luke 4:17-21)

A third example of double fulfillment is where the prophet prophesies of two future events, where the first fulfillment is a type of the final fulfillment. We see this in Jesus Christ’s prophecies in Luke 21:7-36 and Matthew 24:3-51. They were prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by Titus the Great, AND prophecies of the end of the world. The destruction of Jerusalem was a type of Christ’s return and the end of the world. Another example is Isaiah’s prophecy of the destruction of Babylon in Isaiah 13. It was a prophecy of the destruction of the actual Babylonian Empire, AND a prophecy of the destruction of spiritual Babylon that we read about in Revelation. Here is some of the language:

“Howl ye; for the day of the LORD *is* at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty... Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it... And I will punish the world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.” (Isaiah 13:6,9,11)

A final example of double fulfillment is where a prophecy is in some way fulfilled during the church age, but will have a final fulfillment at the end of the world. For example:

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

This appears to be a prophecy of the restoration of the Jews, which will certainly happen in the last days. But this is also applied to the church in the meantime:

“*Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these *is*, *there is* no more offering for sin.” (Hebrews 10:15-18)

Several weeks ago, I came upon a video on YouTube entitled “Why Jews Say No To Jesus.” It is by an organization called “Jews For Judaism” and their slogan is “Keeping Jews Jewish.” They were apparently formed as a counterpoint to the “Jews For Jesus” organization. The video had a smart-mouthed old rabbi talking for the better part of seven minutes. His theory was that Jesus Christ could not possibly be the Messiah, because the following six things must happen before anyone can be considered to be the Messiah:

1. The ingathering of the Jewish exiles (Deuteronomy 30:3; Isaiah 11:11-12; Jeremiah 30:3, 32:3; Ezekiel 11:17, 36:24)
2. Rebuilding of the Temple (Isaiah 2:2-3, 56:6-7, 60:7, 66:20; Ezekiel 37:26-27; Malachi 3:4; Zechariah 14:20-21)

3. Worldwide reign of peace (Micah 4:1-4; Hosea 2:20; Isaiah 2:1-4, 60:18)
4. Embracing of the Torah by all Jews (Ezekiel 11:19-20, 36:26-27, 37:24; Deuteronomy 30:8,10; Jeremiah 31:32)
5. Universal knowledge of God (Zechariah 3:9, 8:23, 14:9,16; Isaiah 45:23, 66:23; Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 38:23; Psalm 86:9; Zephaniah 3:9)
6. The Messiah Himself must be of the tribe of Judah, and a direct descendant of David and Solomon, and that Jesus couldn't possibly meet this criterion because He didn't have an earthly father, and genealogies have to go through the father (Genesis 49:10; 2 Samuel 7:12-14; 1 Chronicles 22:9-10) [Note: this, of course, is not accurate. The Messiah is said to be the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15), and His genealogy is traced back to Solomon, David and Judah through both His mother Mary, and through His father (as was supposed) Joseph].

He proceeded to say that Ezekiel 37:24-28 is a Biblical portrait of the Messiah, and that Jesus could not be the Messiah, because Ezekiel 37:24-28 is not a reality right now. Then he began to let it all hang out. He said that Jesus failed in fulfilling the Messianic prophecies. He knew He had failed, and that's why He said, "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He said that the Old Testament does not teach that the Messiah would come, fail in His mission, and then come again to finish the job. He said that there is no evidence that Jesus performed any miracles, and even if He did, it doesn't matter, because even false prophets can perform miracles, and the ability to perform miracles is not a prerequisite of being the Messiah. He said that the second coming of Christ is an admission and a rationalization of His failure, and the Old Testament does not teach anything about a Messianic installment plan.

This is the kind of foolishness that Paul no doubt contended with on a regular basis. The crux of his argument is that there will be no second coming of Christ. If there is a second coming of Christ where He will fulfill the remaining Messianic prophecies, then his arguments fail.

Let's look at a few passages in the Old Testament that answer his argument.

Isaiah 53 is one of the greatest Messianic chapters in the Old Testament. It is all about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. There is no doubt but that this chapter teaches that He died and was buried: "he was cut off out of the land of the living" (v. 8) and "he made his grave with the wicked" (v. 9). But the passage goes on to say that He continued to do things AFTER He died: "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied..." (v. 10-11).

Similarly in Psalm 16, we read of Christ's resurrection and ascension to sit at the right hand of God, showing that there is more to come after His death:

“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.” (Psalm 16:10-11)

Finally, in Daniel 9, we have the following:

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” (Daniel 9:24-27)

I’m not going to go into all of the details, but the word translated “week” means a “week of years,” or 7 years. This amazing prophecy tells us that from the time of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, it would be 7 and 62 weeks (i.e., a total of 69 weeks) to the Messiah, and then the Messiah would be “cut off, but not for Himself” (i.e., He would die for His people). Since we are talking about “weeks of years”, 69 of these “weeks” is 483 years. I have not studied this extensively, but based on initial reading about it, it appears that 483 years from the time of the commandment going forth brings us precisely to the time of Jesus Christ dying. The remaining 1 week (i.e., 7 years) in Daniel 9 is yet to be fulfilled.

The Messiah is not restricted by the timeline of a short-sighted “Jews for Judaism” rabbi. It would do him some good to read Romans 11, and understand that we’re waiting for the fullness of the Gentiles to come in (Romans 11:25). “One day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8) is not only a New Testament concept. We find that also in the Old Testament:

“For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.” (Psalm 90:4)

Jesus Christ has already fulfilled 300-400 Messianic prophecies, and in like manner, He will fulfil the rest of them. I love you all. Amen.