

spring 2024 lesson
palm
sunday

the rack

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BIG

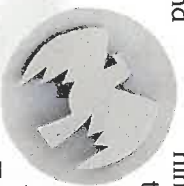
• 332 •

Hundreds of accurate
Old Testament
predictions about Christ
hundreds of years
before He was born



Old Testament predictions that came true hundreds of years later in Jesus.

Imagine that the state of Texas has silver dollars scattered all over it two feet deep. Pretend that you have specially marked just one of those silver dollars. Now stir up all the silver dollars. Next, pick out a blindfolded person to go to Texas and pick up that same silver dollar you have specially marked. What do you think are the chances it could happen? Pretty slim, huh? Well, someone has calculated that this is just how easy it would be



for one person (like Jesus) to fulfill just eight things predicted about him (as predicted of Jesus in the Old Testament). Pretty fantastic, huh? But that's not all. A lot more than eight items were forecast in the Old Testament that would happen to Jesus. In fact, one Bible scholar found 332 specific predictions in the Old Testament about what the Great Deliverer (or Messiah, as the Jews called him) would be like. It was sort of like having 332

pieces of a puzzle scattered around in their Old Testament box—and the Jews were supposed to figure out how the pieces fit together. Now if you're into math, the probability of all 332 things happening to one person is the same as a fraction with one on top and an eighty-four followed by ninety-seven zeroes on the bottom! The Jews divided up their Bible (the Christians' Old Testament) into three parts. These three parts are mentioned in Luke 24:44—the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Let's take a look at at least one forecast or prediction from each of these three parts.

THE LAW

In Deuteronomy 18:15 Moses was told that someday God would raise up a prophet like him from among the Jews. That's why, when John the Baptist had everybody hopping, the religious ringleaders came and asked John, "Are you the Prophet?" (Notice the capital "P." They weren't looking for just any old run-of-the-mill prophet, but for THE Prophet prophesied about in Deuteronomy 18:15.) John said, "No."

"After the people saw the miraculous sign [of feeding over 5000] that Jesus did, they began to say, 'Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world'" John 6:14.

They were right, even if they had some other wrong ideas about Jesus.

THE PROPHETS

Now somebody might say to what he just read above, "No big deal.

Anybody could go around saying he was THE Prophet." Right? Right. But could just anybody plan out his life so that he would be born in a certain town in a certain country—

**Jesus was also born
without a human father.
Pull that one off if you can.**

without a father!—and all this was predicted 700 years before he was born? No way. But that's just what happened to Jesus.

Seven hundred years before Jesus was born, Micah and Isaiah predicted several things. Micah (5:2) said that a "ruler over Israel" would come from Bethlehem in Ephrathah (pronounced EF-rah-thah). You see, there were two Bethlehems back then in the promised land. There was a Bethlehem in the country of Ephrathah, and a Bethlehem in a section given to the tribe of Zebulun (Josh. 19:15). Also, the first Bethlehem isn't even important enough to be named in a list of over 100 towns and cities given to the tribe of Judah (named in Josh. 15:21-63).

Did you ever try to get yourself born in the town of your choice? No way. Yet Jesus was born (as Micah had said) in the little town of Bethlehem.

He was also born without a human father. Pull that one off if you can. It's not done every day, you know. Joseph wasn't Jesus' father. Jesus was born of a virgin,

POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION

Bible Study

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

ACTS 1:11-12

While the people of Israel groaned in captivity and looked back to the glory days of King David and King Solomon, they longed for the coming of the promised Messiah. But what would He be like? How would the people know Him when He came?

The entire Old Testament is sprinkled with clues about the Messiah. Some of the clues are pretty subtle—they don't exactly hit you over the head. But when you take a close look and see how they are all fulfilled in the life of one man, it's pretty astonishing.

Look up the New Testament references, then match the facts with the prophecies from Zechariah.

JOHN 2:19; 19:5

JOHN 12:14-15

MATTHEW 26:15; 27:3-7

JOHN 19:34, 37

Zechariah 6:12-13

¹²Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: "Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord. ¹³It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two."

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Zechariah 11:12-13

¹²I told them, "If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it." So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.

¹³And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the Lord.

Zechariah 12:10

And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

Zechariah 14:3-4

³Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. ⁴On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.

Would you call this sufficient evidence to make a positive identification of the Messiah?



as Isaiah (7:14) had said over 700 years before it happened.

THE PSALMS

Not only was Jesus born in the way (no father) and town (Bethlehem) the Old Testament said the Great Deliverer would be, but the Psalms told something specific about His

crucifixion.

Also, David had said in Psalm 16:10 that God would not allow His "Faithful One [to] see [or go through] decay" or be "abandoned]

... to the realm of the dead." What could it mean? Everybody dies, and everybody's body goes to decay in the grave. But Jesus' body did not.

In Acts 2:24-30, Peter says in Jerusalem: "Everybody knows David died and decayed. Check it out. His grave's right down the street. So Psalm 16:10 and

11 must refer to Jesus, who is no longer dead. We know. We've seen Him. He's alive."

Just a few of the big 3-3-2. That's 332 things predicted in the Old Testament that came true hundreds of years later in Jesus.

DID YOU KNOW there were two Bethlehems back then in the promised land?

death and indicated He wouldn't stay dead. Psalm 22:16, written by David, says: "They pierce my hands and my feet." But David had no pierced ears, much less pierced hands or feet. What could it mean? See the Gospel stories of Jesus'

PUZZLE PIECES

In Old Testament times, God gave hints or pieces of the puzzle about the Messiah to come.

Old Testament Forecast

Zechariah 6:12-13

Zechariah 11:12-13

Zechariah 12:10

Zechariah 14:3-4
(still future)

New Testament Fulfillment

Someone called the Branch would (1) build the temple of the Lord (see 1 Cor. 3:16 for the unexpected type of temple it would be); and (2) be a priest on his throne (Luke 1:32-33 and Heb. 7:17 and 8:1).

Jesus couldn't have conspired to have Judas pull this one off (Matt. 26:14-15 and 27:5, 9-10).

I will pour out ... a spirit of grace (Acts 2:16-17 from Joel 2:28). They will look on me, the one they have pierced (Rev. 1:7 [still future]; John 19:34).

The Lord will ... fight against those nations (Rev. 19:11 [still future]). He will stand on the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:11-12 indicates that at Christ's second coming He will return as He went [from the Mount of Olives]).

Totally Awesome

God's creation is still handing us surprises that are amazing. Here are a few fabulous facts to flabbergast your friends.

SUPERCOOL SQUIRREL

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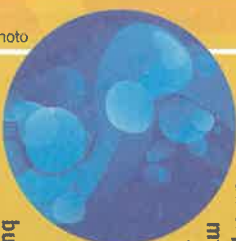
The Arctic ground squirrel sleeps blissfully for weeks at a time with a body temperature of 27 degrees, then wakes up healthy and scampers away with a normal body temperature of 99 degrees. This drop of 72 degrees breaks all records for low body temperature during hibernation. A hibernating bear's temperature drops only nine degrees from its normal of one hundred. This information was so unexpected that Brian Barnes, an animal physiologist studying the Arctic squirrel, thought his measuring equipment had gone berserk. Barnes has concluded that these animals supercool themselves—they flat out defy the normal freezing temperature. He is still trying to figure out how this amazing creature does it.

PULSARS

Neutron stars, also known as pulsars, form when a dying star explodes into a brilliant supernova and then collapses to form a small, dark ball. This ball is so dense that a teaspoonful would weigh 100 billion tons! It rotates rapidly, sending a narrow beam of radio waves out into space like a gigantic lighthouse. Try to picture our sun exploding and then shrinking down to the size of the city of Chicago. Then try to imagine Chicago spinning around a hundred times per second. Feel dizzy? In early 1989, astronomers sighted a neutron star that seemed to be rotating 2,000 times per second, almost one-third the speed of light. Totally awesome!

Craig Pulsar
photo by NASA

(Stockphoto



from hot water
burps erupt

vents in the ocean floor. Once the hot water burps up, the vent clogs and returns to normal. Right now there are theories but no real answers about how this occurs. It seems just as hard for scientists to understand why the earth burps as it is for parents to understand why kids burp at the dinner table.

every day devos

HIDDEN TREASURES

"Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

Luke 24:44b

The Bible is filled with hidden treasure. Sometimes Scripture is very clear about what it is saying to us, but sometimes we need to dig a little bit and do some detective work for ourselves. When you dig, though, what you find becomes much more precious.

MONDAY Read Luke 24:44b. Write out your thoughts about how Christ's suffering and death relate to you, or what you can learn from them.

TUESDAY COURAGE—"Everything must be fulfilled." Jesus knew that He was going to suffer, yet He faced it with courage. What do you need to face with courage today? Ask God for His help.

WEDNESDAY KNOWLEDGE—"Everything . . . that is written." Jesus studied and *knew* the Word of God. Look back over the memory verses for the last few weeks and see how many of them you remember. Work on them again if you need to.

THURSDAY SELF-IDENTITY—"About me." Jesus understood and acknowledged His identity as the Messiah. Make a list of 10 qualities found in Jesus that you want to develop in yourself. What steps can you take today to start developing those qualities?

FRIDAY LIFE—"In the Law of Moses." Jesus came to give us new life so that we would no longer be under the law. What benefits does this new life bring for Christians?

SATURDAY LOVE—Spend 10 minutes today praying and thanking Jesus for His sacrificial love and the positive example He gave us.

Palm Sunday

