

Thirty Days with Jesus

What Proof Did Jesus Give to Back Up His Claims? #3

Intro: Jesus did not ask people to believe in Him based solely on His claims. He offered them legal proof as a basis for their faith. So far we've consider two proofs Jesus offered to back up His claims. 1) the works or signs that He performed; 2) the testimony of his forerunner John the Baptist. Let's consider together one more proof Jesus offered for faith in Him.

"You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. ...Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (John 5:39-40; 45-47)

We can see that Jesus clearly appeals to the Scripture as providing legal proof that He is the Christ. But in what way did the OT Scriptures testify of Jesus? (We could here of course embark on a comprehensive study of hundreds of OT texts that speak of the coming Christ and the details of His life. But we'll confine ourselves to the Scriptures that John himself identified were fulfilled by Jesus.) As we look at those passages we will see that the Scripture testified of Jesus in two ways:

They gave direct predictions of the Messiah's life

They revealed general principles concerning the conduct of the righteous in relation to God and the wicked

Thus, the Scriptures testified of:

His passion for God's House

John records that during the early days of Jesus' ministry he went into the temple.

And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated. (John 2:14)

Jesus' reaction was passionate and decisive:

And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise." (John 2:15-16)

This action by Jesus caused the disciples to recall a verse from the psalms: *His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Thy house will consume me." (John 2:17)*

Jesus, like the psalmist of Psalm 69 was experiencing the hostility of the wicked because of His zeal for the proper use of the house of God. The Scriptures testified of Him!

His means of making disciples

Jesus in his conversions explained why it was that certain people came to him and others did not. In a word, it was because some experienced the revelation of God through His word and others did not.

“It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. (John 6:45)

Jesus in his ministry fulfilled this principle of divine government taught in the prophets. The Scriptures indeed testified of Him!

His humble and gentle nature

Zechariah had spoken of the coming king as humble and gentle. John acknowledged that Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem fulfilled the prediction of Zechariah though he had not at the time of the action fully comprehended what Jesus was doing.

And Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.” These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him. (John 12:14-16)

Indeed, the Scripture testified of Him! (Continue this thematic statement throughout the lesson).

His rejection by the Jews

John explains as his discussion of Jesus’ ministry draws to a close that his impressive signs had not resulted in the faith they were intended to produce among the Jews; but even this was the fulfillment of what the prophets had said.

But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him; that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

His betrayal by a friend

At the last Supper Jesus was quite aware of the Judas’ plot to betray his whereabouts to the Jews so that they could capture him. He urged his disciples to obedience while acknowledging that one of them would betray him.

“If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.’ (John 13:17-18)

Just as David had experienced the disloyalty of a friend (Ps. 41:9), so the son of David as a righteous man would experience the same.

His innocence in condemnation

Later in that same discourse Jesus would urge his disciples to realize that they too would partake of the hostility that he had experienced. And this hatred in spite of his innocence was in fact a fulfillment of the Scriptures.

“But they have done this in order that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their Law, ‘They hated Me without a cause.’ (John 15:25)

Again, the reference is to David’s experience in Psalm 69. Like David, Jesus too would be hated without real justification.

His mistreatment in death

As John describes the crucifixion he is keenly aware of OT texts like Psalm 22 that describe the severe mistreatment of the righteous at the hand of their enemies.

The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. They said therefore to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be”; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, “They divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.” Therefore the soldiers did these things. (John 19:23-25a)

Later he would see another example of this mistreatment in the cruel attempt to satisfy Jesus’ thirst with vinegar.

*After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, *said, “I am thirsty.” A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop, and brought it up to His mouth. (John 19:28-30)*

Such experiences by Jesus on the cross literally fulfilled the severe mistreatment of the righteous described figuratively (hyperbolically) in OT passages like Psalm 22 and in David’s description of his treatment by his enemies in Ps. 69:21.

His sacrifice as a Passover lamb

John of course was quite familiar with the announcement that John the Baptist had made about Jesus—“Behold the lamb of God!” So as he observed Jesus on the cross he noted the significance of the soldiers by-passing the custom of breaking Jesus’ legs. And he remembered the instruction about the Passover lamb that no bone of it should be broken (Ex. 12:46).

For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, “Not a bone of Him shall be broken.” (John 19:36)

His piercing on the cross

Zechariah in his prophecies had spoken of a future day when the Jews would deeply regret what they had done to God. He had written:

“And 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 first-born. (Zechariah 12:10)

John could see that the Jews were doing to Jesus the very thing that the prophet had said the Jews would do to God.
And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced." (John 19:37)

His resurrection from the dead

Jesus' actions in cleansing the temple prompted a question about the authority by which He acted. Who gave you the right to act like you own the place?
The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?" (John 2:18)

Jesus' answered by prophesying His death and resurrection:
Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19)

The Jews at the moment misunderstood Jesus' intentions:
The Jews therefore said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. (John 2:20-21)

But the disciples having taken note of this expression "in three days I will raise it up" remembered His words after the resurrection. But not only that; they correlated this experience with what the Scriptures had said:
When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken. (John 2:22)

John doesn't give us a reference; but the most common verse quoted by the apostles of the resurrection was Psalm 16:10:
For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. (Psalm 16:10)

Conclusion: Can it be accidental or coincidence that one should find so many correspondences between Jesus' life and the words of OT Scripture? In the events of His life we can see that direct predictions of the Messiah's conduct were remarkably fulfilled. In addition, we can see that the principles that governed the conduct of the righteous in relation to God and the wicked were also fulfilled by Him.

And all of this, Jesus appealed to as proof that He was God and Christ! Was Jesus wrong when He pointed to the Scriptures as proof of His claims? Who in all of history has more successfully fulfilled the Jewish Scriptures than He?

If these things are true, then He is as John said "the Christ, the Son of God". Do believe in Him? Do you know why you believe in Him? Can you tell others why you believe in Him?