Preacher's Pen points

The Prophecies of Jesus

A Skeptic's Criteria for Faith

Many years ago noted skeptic Bertrand Russell was reportedly asked in a magazine interview, "Under what condition would you believe in God?" Russell gave the following response, "Well, if I heard a voice from heaven and it predicted a series of things and they came to pass, then I guess I'd have to believe there's some kind of supernatural being".

Russell's criteria for faith is reasonable. A God who could predict the future would surely qualify Him as the true God! Indeed, Isaiah, the prophet of God, revealed this as a reasonable test and proof of God's existence (Is. 41:21-23) Moreover, by Russell's own standards, the existence of God has been clearly established.

The Prophecies of Jesus

In the case of Jesus Christ, God not only spoke from heaven; he came down to earth and spoke in person. Jesus, the Word who was "with God" and "was God" came and in the presence of His creatures, to use Russell's words, predicted a series of things that came to pass. These predictions prove not only that God exists, but also that Jesus' claims to be God were true!

Prophecies already fulfilled

While on earth Jesus predicted:

- That He would die in Jerusalem by crucifixion at the instigation of the Jews (Mt. 16:21).
- That His disciples would flee and that Peter would deny Him (Mt. 26:31-35).
- That He would be raised from the dead three days later (Mt. 16:21; Jn. 2:19).
- That miraculous power would come upon His disciples by the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 24:49; Ac. 1:4-5).
- That they would be persecuted from city to city as they preached the gospel (Mt. 10:16-23).
- That Jerusalem would be surrounded by the Romans, the temple destroyed, and its people killed (Mt. 24:1-28).

Jesus' predictions of the future have been to this point completely accurate. By Russell's reasonable standard of faith "a voice from heaven predicted a series of things that came to pass"!

Prophecies yet to be fulfilled

Yet, not all Jesus' prophecies have yet been fulfilled. He also prophesied :

- That He would return again from heaven (Mt. 25:31).
- That all that were in the tombs would be raised from the dead (Jn. 5:28-29).
- That all men would be judged by Him, some being sentenced to eternal punishment and others rewarded with eternal life (Mt. 25:32-46).

Do You Believe?

Inasmuch as God has announced predictions that have come to pass, what reason could one give for not believing in Him? Jesus' power to describe His own destiny as well as that of His disciples and the Jewish people is a clear indication of His deity. And based on Jesus' record so far, I'd say those predictions that remain unfulfilled are as certain to come to pass as those already fulfilled. Are you ready for the fulfillment of them? —Johnny Felker