

5 Proofs Jesus Is the Messiah

The Sprit of Make Believe

Five Proofs From the Prophets that Jesus Is the Messiah
Matt. 1:18-2:23

Introduction:

1. Around this time of year the spirit of make believe is alive and well.
2. Parents tell stories of characters with white beards and red suits to those who have not yet developed the ability to do abstract thinking. They do not mean to deceive any more than they do when reading a story about "The Cat In the Hat."
3. It's an exciting time and fun for everyone.
4. But distinguishing fact from fiction is an important endeavor.
 - a. Joseph must have struggled with this very issue.
 - b. Mary, his betrothed, was pregnant and he knew that the child was not his.
 - c. But an angel said, "The Child conceived is of the Holy Spirit."
5. For more than 2,000 years now people have been questioning whether this is true or only make believe.
6. Matthew, however, presents his account of the early life of Jesus as fact and uses 5 proofs from the O.T. prophets as evidence.
7. He is writing primarily to those who accept the prophets as communication from God.
8. He is NOT asking us to "make believe" these things are true. He is NOT asking us to "pretend like" they are real. He is asking us to place our trust in Jesus as the Messiah, "the one who saves His people from their sins." (1:18, 21).

Discussion:

- I. What did the concept of Messiah mean to Matthew and his Jewish readers?
 - A. In chapters 1 and 2 Matthew specifically mentions the Messiah 5 times (1:1, 16, 17, 18; 2:4).
 - B. The first instance is in the opening statement of his account (1:1).
 1. It defines something of his purpose for writing.
 2. It summarizes Jesus' genealogy, connecting him with David and Abraham.
 - a. This is significant because the O.T. had predicted the coming of a special King that would sit on David's throne (2 Sam. 7:11-13).
 - b. He would be a descendant of Abraham. God had promised that through Abraham's descendants one would come who would bless all nations (Gen. 12:3).
 - c. For Matthew to trace Jesus' lineage through these two men AND to identify him as a descendent of Judah (Gen. 49:10) connected Jesus to the Jewish expectation created by the history of the Jewish nation and the promises of Scripture.
 - C. His second mention of the Messiah is in 1:16.
 1. It identifies him has the object of immediate history.

2. He is not just a descendent of Abraham and David, but born now to Joseph and Mary. The implication is that God is NOW intervening in history in a unique and powerful way.
- D. The third mention (1:17), reiterates the culmination of the history in 14 generation intervals.
- E. The fourth mention (1:18) calls attention to the unusual way Jesus was born. He was born before Joseph and Mary came together. (Note the NASB translates "Christ" here. "Christ" is the Greek for Messiah in the Hebrew. It is "Christos" throughout Matthew's Greek text.)
- F. The fifth mention (2:4) reveals that the priests and scribes observed that on the basis of what Micah said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.
- G. "Messiah" literally means "the anointed" and traces back to the history of God anointing the priests and kings of Israel. Oil was symbolically poured on them as indication of God selecting them for their special function. Matthew implies that Jesus is the one specially anointed by God as King of Israel, the one promised from long ago.

II. Matthew presents 5 proofs from the O.T. prophets as evidence that Jesus is the Messiah.

- A. The first is from Isa. 7:14 (1:23).
 1. Matthew reasons that Jesus was born of a virgin.
 2. Some have questioned Matthew's use of this text. Observing that in the Hebrew text a word is used that could be translated "young woman," not necessarily a virgin. But Matthew uses the Greek term that means "virgin." So does the LXX.
 3. Matthew makes it clear in his text that he means a virgin.
 - a. He specifically mentions that Mary was found to be with child before she and Joseph came together (1:18).
 - b. An angel explains to Joseph, "the child is conceived of the Holy Spirit" (1:20).
 - c. And then Matthew adds, "Joseph kept her a virgin until she gave birth" (1:25).
 4. The significance of this birth Matthew says, He is "God with us" (1:23) and "He will save His people from their sins" (1:21).
- B. The second is from Micah 5:2 (2:6).
 1. It is a prediction of a ruler from the tribe of Judah.
 2. He will be born in Bethlehem.
 3. A messianic interpretation was given to this text by all the chief priests and the scribes by consensus judgment.
 4. When Herod asked them where the Messiah was to be born. They said, "Bethlehem."
- C. The third is from Hos. 11:1 (2:14).
 1. The O.T. context refers to the nation of Israel being called out of Egyptian bondage.
 2. Matthew interprets it of Joseph and Mary and Jesus leaving Egypt.
 3. We might object and say, "Matthew has taken this passage out of its O.T. context and applied it to an unrelated event (namely, Joseph, Mary and Jesus coming out of Egypt).
 - a. But to say this fails to recognize that Matthew sees the whole O.T. as

- converging in one Messianic event.
- b. Some passages he sees as **directly** fulfilling an O.T. passage from a **historical perspective**, as in the two previous passages (Isa. 7:14 and Micah 5:2).
 - c. Others he sees from a type – anti-type perspective. Israel coming out of Egypt typifies Joseph, Mary and Jesus leaving Egypt. Their exit from Egypt is the anti-type to the Exodus. Like Solomon was the type of the coming King. Moses the type of the new Deliverer. The Levites the type of the coming priesthood. The sacrificial animals the type of the coming sacrifice.
- D. The fourth is from Jeremiah 31:15.
1. Those exiled to Babylonian captivity assembled to begin their march to Babylon at Ramah (Jer. 40:1).
 2. The image of the matriarch weeping is because her descendants are being carried away into captivity. Later she is told to stop weeping because the Lord will deliver them from their captivity (Jer. 31:16).
 3. Matthew uses this passage in reference to Herod killing the babies 2 years old and under. How? Again in type – anti-type format Matthew sees the weeping associated with the death of the children of Bethlehem, like that of the captivity.
 4. But God delivered from Babylonian captivity. And Herod died and God acted to preserve Jesus and bring Him back to Nazareth of Galilee.
 5. Although things may look bleak, God is not finished! He turns weeping into rejoicing!!
 6. Note how God was at work in the lives of Joseph, Mary and Jesus (Matt. 2:19-22).
- E. The fifth is in Matt. 2:23.
1. Jesus lived in a city called Nazareth.
 2. Matthew says, “This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: ‘He shall be called a Nazarene’” (2:23).
 3. Note the plural “prophets” is used. What prophets in particular? He probably does not mean to identify particular prophets. But like Matt. 26:56 refers to “prophets” in general.
 4. But Nazareth is never mentioned in the O.T.
 5. Various theories have been advanced. (See NICNT, for review of various theories.)
 6. Probably what Matthew is doing is referring to the fact that the prophets indicated that He would be unimpressive.
 - a. Note Jn. 1:45-46. “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”
 - b. The prophets did indicate that He would be unimpressive.
 - 1) Humble riding on a colt of a donkey (Zech. 9:9-10). No white horse here!
 - 2) Pierced (Zech. 12:10).
 - 3) Struck down (Zech. 13:7).
 - 4) Sufferer (Psa. 22, 69).
 - 5) Servant (Isa. 52:13-53:12).
 - 6) Despised/rejected (Isa. 49:7).

- 7) Like one from whom men hide their face; despised, and we did not esteem Him (Isa. 53:1-3).

III. Observations.

- A. People have criticized Matthew's use of the O.T. texts. They have questioned his use of language. Some deny his claims of prophecy as originating from God. Some deny His claim that Jesus is the Messiah.
- B. Whatever you do with the idea of a promised Messiah . . . whatever you do with Matthew's uses of the O.T. texts . . . whatever you do with the concept of God revealing things through prophets . . . understand what Matthew is calling on you to do.
 1. He is asking you to accept the prophets as revealing information from God.
 2. He is asking you to believe in a God that knows future events.
 3. He is asking you to believe that Jesus was born of a virgin and that He is "God with us."
 4. He is asking you to believe that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a leader, ruler and shepherd of people.
 5. He is asking you to believe He was called out of Egypt, like Israel was called out of Egypt.
 6. He is asking you to believe in one that is unimpressive.
 7. He is asking you to believe that Jesus is the Messiah sent by God to save His people from their sins.
- C. He is NOT asking you to "make believe" these things are true. He is NOT asking us to "pretend like" they are real. He IS asking us to place our trust in Jesus as "the one who saves us from sin" (1:21).
- D. So the bottom line is, "Do you believe it or NOT?" To make no decision is to decide not to believe it, to take no action. That's what most do. But there is no middle ground allowable for Matthew. You cannot "make believe." You cannot "pretend." This is unbelief! You are either in or out!!!
- E. If you are in . . .

It means you accept the existence of God. You accept God knowing future events. You accept Scripture as God's revelation. You accept a virgin birth. You accept Jesus as the Messiah, sent from God to save His people from their sins. "Incredible." "Unbelievable." You say. Exactly!!!!

Conclusion:

1. So what are you going to do?
2. There are more incredible things than this. Matthew is going to call on you to believe in the resurrection of the dead. He is going to call on you to place your trust in what God has done in the cross for your forgiveness.
3. He believes it. Will you?