



A Retelling of the Biblical Story

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The Great Story



1. **CREATION** (p. 1)
 - a. Elohim (p. 3)
 - b. The Two Trees (p. 3)
 - c. The Fall (p. 3)
 - d. The Foreshadowing (p. 4)
2. **COVENANT #1** (p. 4)
 - a. The Flood (p. 4)
 - b. The Covenant with NOACH (unconditional; p. 4)
3. **COVENANT #2** (p. 4)
 - a. The Covenant with AVRAHAM (unconditional; p. 5)
 - b. The Akedah (p. 5)
 - c. Moriyah (p. 5)
 - d. Migdal 'Eder (p. 6)
4. **COVENANT #3** (p. 7)
 - a. The Covenant with ISRA'EL (Moshe @ Sinai; conditional; p. 7)
 - b. The Sh'ma (p. 8)
5. **COVENANT #4** (p. 8)
 - a. The Covenant with DAVID (unconditional; p. 8)
 - b. Messiah from David's line (p. 8)
6. **COVENANT #5** (p. 9)
 - a. Covenant #3 failed because of human sin (p. 9)
 - b. The NEW COVENANT (conditional; p. 10)
7. **Finding MASHIACH** (p. 10)
 - a. Messianic prophecy and fulfillment (p. 10; also see Appendix)
 - b. Dani'el's Vision of 7's (p. 10)
 - c. Yo'el's prophecy & the Celestial Dance (p. 11)
8. **ISSUES** (p. 12)
 - a. Blood Atonement (p. 12)
 - b. Composite Unity (p. 13)
 - c. Messianic Age (p. 14)
9. **COMPLETION** (p. 16)
 - a. Personal New Creation (p. 16)
 - b. Cosmic New Creation (p. 17)
 - c. Two Trees Once More (p. 17)

The Great Story

Creation

In the beginning G_d created the heavens and the earth. The earth was unformed and void, darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of G_d hovered over the surface of the water (B'resheet [Genesis] 1:1-2).

And G_d stepped out on space,
And He looked around and said:
*I'm lonely - I'll make me a world.*¹

And far as the eye of G_d could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then G_d smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
And G_d said: *That's good!*

Then G_d reached out and took the light in His hands,
And G_d rolled the light around in His hands
Until He made the sun;
And He set that sun a-blazing in the heavens.

And the light that was left from making the sun
G_d gathered it up in a shining ball
And flung it against the darkness,
Spangling the night with the moon and stars.

Then down between
The darkness and the light
He hurled the world;
And G_d said: *That's good!*

Then G_d Himself stepped down -
And the sun was on His right hand,
And the moon was on His left;
The stars were clustered about His head,
And the earth was under His feet.
And G_d walked, and where He trod
His footsteps hollowed the valleys out
And bulged the mountains up.

¹ James Weldon Johnson, "The Creation," from *G_d's Trombones* (Viking Press, 1927).

Then he stopped and looked and saw
That the earth was hot and barren.
So G_d stepped over to the edge of the world
And He spat out the seven seas -
He batted His eyes, and the lightnings flashed -
He clapped His hands, and the thunders rolled -
And the waters above the earth came down,
The cooling waters came down.

Then the green grass sprouted,
And the little red flowers blossomed,
The pine tree pointed his finger to the sky,
And the oak spread out his arms,
The lakes cuddled down in the hollows of the ground,
And the rivers ran down to the sea.

And G_d smiled again,
And the rainbow appeared,
And curled itself around His shoulder.

The G_d raised His arm and He waved His hand
Over the sea and over the land,
And He said: *Bring forth! Bring forth!*

And quicker than G_d could drop His hand,
Fishes and fowls
And beasts and birds
Swam the rivers and the seas,
Roamed the forests and the woods,
And split the air with their wings.
And G_d said: *That's good!*

Then G_d walked around,
And G_d looked around
On all that He had made.
He looked at His sun,
And He looked at His moon,
And he looked at his little stars.
He looked on His world
With all its living things,
And G_d said: *I'm lonely still.*

Then G_d sat down
On the side of a hill where He could think;
By a deep, wide river He sat down;
With His head in His hands,
G_d thought and thought,
Till He thought, *I'll make me a man!*

Up from the bed of the river
G_d scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river He kneeled Him down;
And there the great G_d Almighty
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of His hand;
This Great G_d,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till He shaped it in His own image;

Then into it He blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.

Elohim. As you may know, the word used for “G_d” in B’resheet 1:1 is “Elohim.” This is the most common name used for G_d in the *Tanakh*, occurring thirty-two times in the first chapter of B’resheet alone, and 2,500 times in the *Tanakh*.

You may also know that *Elohim* is plural. While this is most likely what is called the “plural of majesty,” it may also suggest something more. Already, in the second verse of the Bible, we have *Elohim* and *Ruach Elohim*, the Creator and the Spirit, working together in the process of Creation.

On the sixth day of Creation, G_d created humankind and gave them—gave us—dominion over the earth. On the seventh day, G_d rested, establishing what would later become known as “Shabbat,” one of G_d’s first and best gifts to us all.

The Two Trees. G_d placed Adam and Havah (Eve) in a beautiful, bountiful garden where all of their needs would be provided. In this garden there were many trees, many of them bearing edible fruit, but two of those trees were unusually special. One of these trees was located in the very center of the garden, and it was called The Tree of Life. The other special tree was apparently not in the center. It was called The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

ADONAI walked in the garden every evening to be with Adam and Havah, and their fellowship was very special. Adonai told Adam and Havah that they were allowed to eat from any tree in the garden, including The Tree of Life, but they were forbidden to eat from The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The Fall. Sadly, before long, a creature the Bible simply calls “the serpent” enticed Adam and Havah to eat from the forbidden tree, disobeying G_d and destroying their special fellowship with G_d. Several severe things happened as a result of this disobedience.

Adam was told that no longer would the earth produce food without any labor on his part. Havah was told that bearing children would now be much more painful and difficult than it would have previously been. And they were exiled from the garden into the much less friendly world beyond.

This exile, though severe, was also merciful. Adam and Havah had apparently not yet eaten of The Tree of Life, which would have made them immortal, and G_d sent them out of the garden before they could eat from that tree and become immortal in this condition of separation from G_d. We'll see The Tree of Life again, but it will be a long, long time in the future.

The Foreshadowing. And because of this deception, G_d placed a very interesting curse on the serpent. G_d said, *“I will put animosity between you and the woman, and between your descendant and her descendant; he will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel”* (B’resheet 3:15). It’s important to note that the Hebrew word used for “descendant” and the pronouns used here are all masculine singular.

The significance of this choice of words will become apparent later. For now, it is worth noting that even in this moment of separation and judgment, G_d provided a hint about how that separation and judgment would eventually be removed.

COVENANT #1 (unconditional)

One thing led to another, as things will do, and one of Adam and Havah’s sons killed the other in a jealous rage. As the number of people on the earth increased, so, too, did their wickedness increase.

The Flood. *ADONAI saw that the people on earth were very wicked, that all the imaginings of their hearts were always of evil only. ADONAI regretted that he had made humankind on the earth; it grieved his heart. ADONAI said, “I will wipe out humankind, whom I have created, from the whole earth; and not only human beings, but animals, creeping things and birds in the air; for I regret that I ever made them.” But Noah found grace in the sight of ADONAI* (B’resheet 6:5-8).

The Covenant with Noah. G_d sent a great flood that covered the earth, and only Noah (Noah) and his family, together with animals that G_d brought to Noah for rescue, survived that flood. After the flood, G_d made a covenant with Noah, a promise that the world would never again be destroyed by a flood, and the rainbow was given as a sign of this promise. This covenant was made unconditionally. That is, it would come true because of G_d’s faithful promise with no behavioral requirement on Noah’s part (B’resheet 9:1-9).

COVENANT #2 (unconditional)

Uncounted years passed, and ADONAI said to a man named Avram (Abram), *“Get yourself out of your country, away from your kinsmen and away from your father’s house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, I will bless you, and I will make your name great; and you are to be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed”* (B’resheet 12:1-3).

Avram obeyed ADONAI. Years passed—many years—but Avram and his wife Sarai had no children through whom these great promises might be fulfilled. ADONAI came at last to Avram once more and told him, *“Your heir will be a child from your own body.” Then ADONAI brought Avram outside and said, “Look up at the sky, and count*

the stars—if you can count them! Your descendants will be that many!” Avram believed in ADONAI, and ADONAI credited that belief to Avram as righteousness (B’resheet 15:4-6).

The Covenant with Avram. Many more years passed. When Avram was 99 years old, ADONAI appeared to him once more and said to him, *“I am establishing my covenant between me and you, along with your descendants after you, generation after generation, as an everlasting covenant, to be G_d for you and for your descendants after you. I will give you and your descendants after you the land in which you are now foreigners, all the land of Kena’an [Canaan], as a permanent possession; and I will be their G_d”* (B’resheet 17:7-8).

Like the covenant with Noach, the covenant with Avram was an unconditional covenant, and the primary sign of this covenant was circumcision. A secondary sign of the covenant was that ADONAI changed Avram’s name to Avraham (Abraham); from “exalted father” to “father of many.”

The Akedah. More years passed, and ADONAI tested Avraham. ADONAI said to Avraham, *“Take your son, your only son, whom you love, Yitz’chak [Isaac]; and go to the land of Moriyah [Moriah]. There you are to offer him as a burnt offering on a mountain that I will point out to you”* (B’resheet 22:2).

This was a terrible test. Yitz’chak was the Son of Promise, through whom the Covenant would be fulfilled. No Son of Promise, no Promise . . . or so it seemed. Nevertheless, Avraham set out to obey ADONAI’s unbelievable command. Amazingly, Yitz’chak was most likely a teenager when this happened, and so he had to be willing for his father to obey ADONAI in this awful binding and sacrifice.

Happily, as you know, ADONAI’s angel stayed Avraham’s knife at the very last moment and provided an animal for the offering. But there was more going on here than might be apparent at first. In order to see it, we must jump forward hundreds of years. We’ll return to Avraham in a moment.

Moriyah. Centuries passed, and Avraham’s descendants did become a nation in the land of Kena’an (we’ll come back to Moshe [Moses] after a while). ADONAI raised up the greatest king of Isra’el, David, and promised him an everlasting kingdom (Sh’mu’el Bet [2 Samuel] 7:8-17). Once again, this was an unconditional covenant, and the sign of this covenant would be G_d’s Messiah, the Branch of Righteousness (Yirmeyahu [Jeremiah] 33:14-16).

Although David was a good and great king, he was also a sinner, as are we all. One of David’s sins was causing a census to be taken of Isra’el against ADONAI’s wishes. As a result of this sin, ADONAI sent a plague on Isra’el until David repented. When the plague ended, the destroying angel was at the threshing floor of Aravnah (Araunah), and David built an altar of sacrifice there (Sh’mu’el Bet 24:17-25).

This is where we come again to the Binding of Yitz’chak. The threshing floor of Aravnah was located on Moriyah, the same mountain where the Binding of Yitz’chak had taken place long ago. Later, David would cause the first Temple to be built on

that same mountain (Divrei-Hayamim Bet [2 Chronicles] 3:1), and the second Temple would be built there, too, centuries later.

Many more centuries later, on April 3, 33 C.E., ADONAI Himself would become a sacrifice on that same mountain, not sparing Himself what He had spared Avraham on that very spot. That's important, and we'll come back to that; but now we need to return to Avraham's story.

Avraham's son, Yitz'chak, had two sons, 'Esav (Esau) and Ya'akov (Isaac); and it would be from Ya'akov's twelve sons that the tribes of Isra'el would come. As He had changed Avram's name, so ADONAI changed Ya'akov's name, to Isra'el.

Migdal 'Eder. Another significant thing is mentioned in B'resheet 35 when Isra'el and his clan were near Beit-Lechem (Bethlehem). Isra'el's wife, Rachel, died in the process of giving birth to their youngest son, Binyamin, and she was buried beside the road to Beit-Lechem. B'resheet notes that this took place near Migdal-'Eder (35:21).

Migdal-'Eder, or "the tower of the flock" is also mentioned in Mikhah (Micah) 4:8 in connection with Messiah's birth. There Mikhah wrote, "*But you, Beit-Lechem near Efrata (Ephrathah), so small among the clans of Y'hudah (Judah), out of you will come forth to me the future ruler of Isra'el, whose origins are far in the past, back in ancient times*" (Mikhah 5:1).

This ruler is described as having origins or an existence stretching back to the "days of eternity." In Mishlei (Proverbs) 8:22-23, this phrase is used to describe eternity that precedes the creation of the world. So the messianic one coming out of Beit-Lechem has existed for eternity. He is human in his birth but supernatural in his origin.

A number of ancient rabbis found the Messiah in this passage. The famous medieval rabbi David Kimchi wrote in his commentary on the prophets, "Although you are little among the thousands of Y'hudah, out of you shall come forth to me a judge to be a ruler in Isra'el; and this is the king Messiah."

The *Targum Yerushalmi* adds: "Out of you Bethlehem shall Messiah go forth before me to exercise dominion over Isra'el; whose name has been spoken from of old, from the days of eternity." *Targum Jonathan* agrees: "King Messiah is born . . . from whence is he? He replied, 'From the royal palace of Bethlehem.'" The *Talmud* also applies this passage in Mikhah to the Messiah (*Yoma* 10a; *Sanhedrin* 98b).

Migdal 'Eder's connection with all this is even more interesting. You know that according to the Law of Moshe, animals sacrificed to ADONAI, especially those to be sacrificed as sin offerings, had to be without blemish or defect of any kind. The sacred flocks for this purpose were nourished and nurtured from birth until they were taken to the Temple in order to ensure that they had no wounds or scars or blemishes of any sort.

A thousand years after Isra'el camped by Migdal 'Eder (the "tower of the flocks"), that tower became the watchtower from which the Temple shepherds watched over

their flocks, because the Temple flocks were kept near that tower from the time King Solomon built the first Temple.

While the Temple flocks lived outdoors all year, there was one occasion when a ewe was brought indoors, and that was when she was ready to give birth. The Temple shepherds maintained a special, ceremonially clean stable in The Tower of the Flocks, where they brought those ewes for birthing. It would be in that very tower, and in that very birthing stall, that Mashiach would be born. *Targum Yerushalmi* had foretold this: “*He spread his tent beyond Migdal Eder, the place where King Messiah will reveal Himself at the end of days.*”²

COVENANT #3 (conditional)

Well, we need to back up and return to the sons of Isra’el to continue the Story. G_d told Avraham that his descendants would be enslaved for four hundred years, but that they would eventually be brought back to the Promised Land (B’resheet 15:13). This did happen, of course, and G_d raised up Moshe to lead Isra’el back to Kena’an.

The Covenant with Isra’el. On the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant and promise made to Avraham in B’resheet 15, G_d delivered the children of Isra’el from Egypt and established another covenant with them at Sinai. G_d used Moshe as the deliverer and mediator of this covenant between Isra’el and G_d. It is not a covenant of salvation, but is instead a covenant “of blessing and cursing” based on trusting and faithfulness on Isra’el’s part.

At Sinai G_d told Moshe that Isra’el would be G_d’s chosen people for the accomplishment of G_d’s purposes and salvation on the earth. The sign of this covenant was the sacrificial system. This covenant was conditional; that is, in order to receive its benefits, Isra’el had to obey G_d’s laws.

The Mosaic Covenant is similar to a marriage contract (*ketubah*) or a vassal treaty between G_d, as husband and king, and Isra’el, as his wife and people. It spells out the parameters of the relationship between them summarized in Sh’mot (Exodus) 19 and 20. The Mosaic Covenant includes blessings and security in the land for

² Migdal Eder is mentioned in B’resheet 35:21 and Mikhah 4:8. This quote comes from the *Targum Yerushalmi* (also known as *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*): *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel On the Pentateuch with the Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum from the Chaldee* by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. (1862): “And Rahel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jakob erected a pillar over the house of burying—which is the pillar of the tomb of Rahel unto this day. **And Jakob proceeded and spread his tent beyond the tower of Eder, the place from whence, it is to be, the King Meshiha will be revealed at the end of the days.**”

<http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/> <http://targum.info/pj/pjgen32-36.htm>; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Targum_Pseudo-Jonathan

See also Alfred Edersheim, *The Life & Times of Jesus the Messiah* in one volume (1886; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), part 1, pp. 185-186, especially this: “**That the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, was a settled conviction. Equally so was the belief, that He was to be revealed from Migdal Eder, ‘the tower of the flock’**” (p. 186); and also see Rabbi Mike L. Short, *Migdal Eder*, www.mayimhayim.org/Rabbi%20Mike/Migdal%20Eder.htm; <http://www.kolsimcha.org/messages/2009/040909M.pdf>; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migdal_Eder_\(biblical_location\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migdal_Eder_(biblical_location)).

faithful obedience (D'varim [Deuteronomy] 28), and curses and exile for faithless disobedience (D'varim 27).

The Mosaic Covenant further includes a promise that even though Isra'el will not keep this covenant fully and will ultimately be removed from the land, G_d will not completely forsake Isra'el, but he will punish them and scatter them among the nations. From their exile, G_d will circumcise their hearts and they will return to him in repentance (*t'shuvah*). G_d will gather Isra'el back and atone for his people and the land, keeping his promise to Avraham.

The Mosaic Covenant is not a replacement of the covenants with Noach and Avraham. It is dependent upon them and, along with them, is presently in effect.

The Sh'ma (Shema). Key dimensions of the Mosaic Covenant include the Ten Declarations of Sh'mot 20 and the Sh'ma of D'varim 6. It is worth noting that the word translated "one" in the Sh'ma is the Hebrew word *echad*.

Echad is a word that indicates a composite unity, as in Adam and Eve becoming "one flesh" (B'resheet 2:24). There is another Hebrew word, *yachid*, which is also translated "one," indicating an absolute singular unity, like the number one. But in the Sh'ma, G_d's *Ruach* moved upon Moshe in such a way that he chose to write the word *echad*. (Remember that the Hebrew Scriptures frequently use the word *Elohim* for G_d, which is a plural term.)

COVENANT #4 (unconditional)

The Covenant with David. Centuries passed, and G_d raised up David to be king of Isra'el. And G_d made a covenant with David, a covenant related to the covenants with Noach, Avraham, and Moshe. This fourth covenant specifically addressed the messianic kingship that would come through the line of David. David was promised a dynasty that would stand forever, in which, in the fullness of time, Isra'el will dwell in their own land undisturbed (Sh'mu'el Bet 7:8-17).

Mashiach from David's Line. The Davidic Covenant had immediate and future implications. In the near future, David's son, Shlomo (Solomon), would become king and would build the Temple. In the distant future, David's heir, King Mashiach, would rule over Isra'el in peace and security.

The completion of the Davidic Covenant would be interrupted by exile and diaspora, even as the Covenant with Avraham had been interrupted; but in both cases, ADONAI would keep faith with Isra'el. As the prophet 'Amos wrote,

"When that day comes, I will raise up the fallen sukkah of David. I will close up its gaps, raise up its ruins and rebuild it as it used to be, so that Isra'el can possess what is left of Edom and of all the nations bearing my name," says ADONAI, who is doing this.

"The days will come," says ADONAI, "when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the one treading grapes the one sowing seed. Sweet wine will drip down the mountains, and all the hills will flow with it. I will restore the fortunes of my people

Isra'el; they will rebuild and inhabit the ruined cities; they will plant vineyards and drink their wine, cultivate gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant them on their own soil, no more to be uprooted from their land, which I gave them,” says ADONAI your G_d (‘Amos 9:11-15).

Much later, ADONAI would send *the angel Gavri’el* (Gabriel) to a city in the Galil (Galilee) called *Natzeret* (Nazareth), to a virgin engaged to a man named *Yosef* (Joseph), of the house of David; the virgin’s name was *Miryam* (Mary). Approaching her, the angel said, “*Shalom, favored lady! ADONAI is with you!*” She was deeply troubled by his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “*Don’t be afraid, Miryam, for you have found favor with G_d. Look! You will become pregnant, you will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Yeshua. He will be great, he will be called Son of Ha’Elyon* (the Most High). *ADONAI will give him the throne of his forefather David; and he will rule the House of Ya’akov forever—there will be no end to his Kingdom.*”

“*How can this be,*” asked *Miryam* of the angel, “*since I am a virgin?*” The angel answered her, “*The Ruach HaKodesh will come over you, the power of Ha’Elyon will cover you. Therefore the holy child born to you will be called the Son of G_d*” (Luke 1:26-35)

That is all quite amazing, and it requires more attention, but not yet.

COVENANT #5 (conditional)

We have noted that the covenant ADONAI made with Isra’el through Moshe was a covenant of obedience, of blessings and curses. This covenant was different from those covenants made with Noach, Avraham and David, because each of those covenants was unconditional.

Covenant #3 Failed Because of Human Sin. While the Law of Moshe provided wonderful guidance for living in fellowship with one another and with ADONAI, Isra’el was unsuccessful in keeping its part of the covenant. David would later write, “*From heaven ADONAI observes humankind to see if anyone has understanding, if anyone seeks G_d. But all turn aside, all alike are corrupt; no one does what is right, not a single one*” (Tehillim [Psalms] 14:2-3).

The prophet *Yesha’yahu* (Isaiah) wrote, “*All of us are like someone unclean, all our righteous deeds like menstrual rags; we wither, all of us, like leaves; and our misdeeds blow us away like the wind. No one calls on your name or bestirs himself to take hold of you, for you have hidden your face from us and caused our misdeeds to destroy us*” (*Yesha’yahu* 64:5-6).

In spite of all this, ADONAI was—and is—merciful: “*Come now,*” says ADONAI, “*let’s talk this over together. Even if your sins are like scarlet, they will be white as snow; even if they are red as crimson, they will be like wool*” (*Yesha’yahu* 1:18).

The New Covenant. “*The days are coming,*” says ADONAI, “*when I will make a new covenant with the house of Isra’el and with the house of Y’hudah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day I took them by their hand and brought*

them out of the land of Egypt; because they, for their part, violated my covenant, even though I, for my part, was a husband to them,” says ADONAI. “For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Isra’el after those days,” says ADONAI: “I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their G_d, and they will be my people. No longer will any of them teach his fellow community member or his brother, ‘Know ADONAI’; for all will know me, from the least of them to the greatest; because I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more” (Yirmeyahu [Jeremiah] 31:30-34).

This New Covenant with Isra’el and with Y’hudah was needed because the Mosaic one at Sinai was marred because of human sin. What the Torah cannot do because of mankind’s evil inclinations, G_d will do by sending Mashiach to accomplish it. Yeshua (Jesus), the son Gabri’el promised to Miryam, told his *talmidim* (disciples) that he had not come to annul the *Torah* or the prophets. He had come to bring them into full operation (Matthew 5:17-19).

During his last *Pesach* (Passover), Yeshua took the elements of the Seder (the Passover meal) and told his *talmidim* that ADONAI’s New Covenant was beginning in that moment, though its final fulfilment would still be far into the future. The way in which Yeshua inaugurated the New Covenant as ADONAI’s Passover Lamb was unexpected by most and offensive to many. This brings us to examine the claim that Yeshua was—and is—ADONAI’s Mashiach; and if so, why he died on an execution stake.

Finding MASHIACH

Messianic Prophecy & Fulfillment. I will not take the time now to examine each of the prophecies that help to identify Yeshua as G_d’s Messiah. You have a handout that lists fifty-four such prophecies, citing their sources in the *Tanakh* and their fulfillment in the *B’rit Hadashah* (New Covenant). I commend that handout to you as worthy of your careful and prayerful study.

I hope you will also note the calculations of probability on the last page, which examine how utterly remote is the possibility that such fulfillment could have happened at random rather than by the hand of G_d. To put the matter bluntly, it would have been impossible.

Another line of evidence comes from Dani’el’s (Daniel’s) “Vision of Sevens”:

Dani’el’s Vision of 7’s. “Know, therefore, and discern that seven weeks [of years] will elapse between the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Yerushalayim until an anointed prince comes. It will remain built for sixty-two weeks [of years], with open spaces and moats; but these will be troubled times. Then, after the sixty-two weeks, Mashiach will be cut off and have nothing. The people of a prince yet to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary, but his end will come with a flood, and desolations are decreed until the war is over” (Dani’el 9:25-26).

The calculation works out like this:

$$7 \times 7 = 49 \text{ years}$$

7 x 62 = 434 years

49 + 434 = 483 years

483 years x the 360-day lunar year = 173,880 days

173,880 days/the 365.24-day solar year = 476 years in our calendar system

444 BCE + 476 years = **33 C.E.** (there was no year zero)

Yeshua was killed on the execution stake on Friday, 3 April, 33 C.E.

But there's more.

When Shavu'ot (the Feast of Tabernacles) came that year, ADONAI poured out the *Ruach HaKodesh* (the Holy Spirit) on Yeshua's little band of followers, and they began to speak of Yeshua in languages they did not personally know, which made it possible for them to speak to the many pilgrims who were in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) for Passover.

Yo'el's Prophecy. Quoting the prophet Yo'el (Joel) from the ninth century B.C.E., Kefa (Peter) told the crowd that what was happening on Shavu'ot morning was the fulfillment of Yo'el's prophecy:

*"ADONAI says: 'In the Last Days, I will pour out from my Spirit upon everyone. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my slaves, both men and women, will I pour out from my Spirit in those days; and they will prophesy. I will perform miracles in the sky above and signs on the earth below—blood, fire and thick smoke. **The sun will become dark and the moon blood before the great and fearful Day of ADONAI comes. And then, whoever calls on the name of ADONAI will be saved.**"*

*"Men of Isra'el! Listen to this! Yeshua from Natzeret was a man demonstrated to you to have been from G_d by the powerful works, miracles and signs that G_d performed through him in your presence. **You yourselves know this**" (Acts 2:17-22; Yo'el 3:1-5).*

Kefa reminded this unruly crowd that they themselves had seen the signs confirming that Yo'el's prophecy had been fulfilled. At least three signs had occurred. First, all three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) record *a terrifying and unnatural darkness* that came over Yerushalayim from noon until 3 p.m. as Yeshua died.³ Second, Matthew records *a great earthquake* that shook the city at the moment of his death (Matthew 27:51-52).⁴ And the third, that *the "moon turned to blood"* is especially telling.

The Celestial Dance. Every total lunar eclipse includes a phenomenon known as a "blood moon." This happens during the time when the Earth blocks all of the Sun's direct light, and the Moon is illuminated only by reddish light that is refracted

³ Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44. This must have been similar to G_d's Plague of Darkness on Egypt through Moshe (Sh'mot 10:21-23).

⁴ A documentary is near release that explores the geology of this quake.

through Earth's atmosphere, the same phenomenon that causes sunsets to be reddish in hue.

There was only one lunar eclipse that fell on Passover while Pilate was Prefect in Y'hudah. When the moon rose on Friday, April 3, 33 C.E., it was already in full eclipse, and it was a Blood Moon.

But the celestial dance is even more amazing than this. Thanks to modern computers and software, it is possible for us to recreate the motions of the heavens at any point in history and from any place on earth. Although it has only been a few hundred years since Kepler discovered the Three Laws of Planetary Motion, those laws have been in force since Creation itself.

The significance of the blood moon on April 3, 33 C.E. is that from the very moment G_d spoke the universe into existence, G_d has known the very moment that He would enter human history in the person of Yeshua of Natzeret, and G_d marked that moment in the stars. The marker for Yeshua's birth is described in detail by the website and DVD, *The Star of Bethlehem*.⁵

G_d also knew the very moment when Mashiach would breathe his last on the cross, and that moment was marked in the stars as well, because Yeshua is "*the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world*" (Revelation 13:8). This part of The Celestial Dance is described at the end of the DVD.

ISSUES

Blood Atonement. That G_d's Mashiach would die a bloody death is a problem for many. That is just not the way we ourselves would do things.

But you will remember that ADONAI told Moshe, "*the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for yourselves; for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life*" (Vayikra [Leviticus] 17:11).

I personally don't like the idea of "blood atonement." Blood atonement is messy and "uncivilized." But let me remind you, as I remind our congregation, that this is not our universe, and we don't get to make the rules. This is ADONAI's universe, and **ADONAI is clear: It is blood that makes atonement.**

Yesha'yahu prophesied quite clearly that Mashiach would himself provide our complete and final blood sacrifice, but because we didn't like the idea, we manage to forget that we were told. Here's part of what Yesha'yahu told us:

See how my servant will succeed! He will be raised up, exalted, highly honored! Just as many were appalled at him, because he was so disfigured that he didn't even seem human and simply no longer looked like a man, so now he will startle many nations; because of him, kings will be speechless. . . .

⁵ <http://www.bethlehemstar.com/about/>

Like someone from whom people turn their faces, he was despised; we did not value him. In fact, it was our diseases he bore, our pains from which he suffered; yet we regarded him as punished, stricken and afflicted by G_d. But he was wounded because of our crimes, crushed because of our sins; the disciplining that makes us whole fell on him, and by his bruises we are healed.

We all, like sheep, went astray; we turned, each one, to his own way; yet ADONAI laid on him the guilt of all of us (Yesha'yahu 52:13-15, 53:3-6).

According to Yesha'yahu, Mashiach's suffering was to bear the sorrows, grief, and iniquities of the nation of Isra'el as a guilt offering (53:4-6, 10, 12), and to justify many others as well (53:11). This sacrificial work of God's Servant provides the basis for the redemption and restoration of the Nation of Isra'el as well as for the redemption of the Gentiles. Mashiach's perfect atonement also makes possible the final establishment of the Messianic Kingdom (54:1-57:21).

Historically, the rabbis believed that Isaiah 53 pointed to Mashiach. In *Sanhedrin 98b*, the sages ask, "What is the Messiah's name?" And the rabbis answer, "The great rabbi, commentator, and grammarian of the twelfth century, Ibn Ezra, concurs: 'All the heathen shall look to me to see what I shall do to those who pierced Messiah, the son of Joseph.'"

Midrash Rabbah Numbers on 11:2 notes that "Like the first redeemer so will the final redeemer be. The first redeemer was Moses, who appeared to them and then disappeared . . . The final redeemer will also appear to them and then disappear. . . . For He is the leper scholar, for as it is written, 'He hath borne our grief, he hath carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of G_d, and afflicted.'

In speaking of the same passage, the Sages say, "He is speaking of the king Messiah as it is said, 'But he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.' *Targum Jonathan* states of 52:13: 'behold my servant Messiah shall prosper; he shall be high and increase and be exceeding strong.' Even in Jewish mysticism it is written, 'Surely, our diseases he bore and our pains he carried' (*Zohar* 2:212a)."

The reason Yesha'yahu 53 is not commonly seen in Judaism today as referring to Mashiach is that Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (Shlomo Yitzhaki; *Rashi*) changed the interpretation in the Middle Ages because of persecution of the Jews by so-called "Christians"; but it was not always so. The Jewish scholar Raphael Loewe points out that "Surviving Jewish exegesis up to the end of the Amoraic period (500 C.E.) suggests that it was then frequently, perhaps even generally assumed without question, that the figure referred to was the Messiah" (Orlinsky 17).

Composite Unity. Another problem for many is the idea of G_d as a "composite unity." The idea seems very strange in the context of monotheism, yet this reality was foreshadowed even in the first pages of the Bible. You'll remember that we met ADONAI in B'resheet 1:1. We met *Ruach HaKodesh* in B'resheet 1:2; and we had the first hint of Mashiach in B'resheet 3:15. We've also noted that the most common name for ADONAI is "Elohim," which is a plural noun.

In Yesha'yahu 48:16, G_d's Servant says, "Come close to me, and listen to this: since the beginning I have not spoken in secret, since the time things began to be, I have been there; and now **Adonai ELOHIM** has sent **me** and his **Spirit**." We see three different "persons" of G_d in this verse.

And in Mishlei 30:4, we read, *Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has cupped the wind in the palms of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who established all the ends of the earth? **What is his name, and what is his son's name?** Surely you know!*

The idea of the composite unity of G_d developed in the *B'rit Hadashah* rather like this: Yeshua's first *talmidim* were all practicing Jews. They had known and affirmed the Sh'ma all their lives. And Yeshua himself, when asked what the greatest commandment was, gave this answer:

"The most important is, 'Sh'ma Yisra'el, ADONAI Eloheinu, ADONAI echad (Hear, O Isra'el, the LORD our G_d, the LORD is one), and you are to love ADONAI your G_d with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your understanding, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:29-30; D'varim 6:4-5).

After his *talmidim* had been with him day and night for nearly three years, Yeshua told them, "**Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. . . . I and the Father are one**" (Yochanan [John] 14:9, 10:30). That was an astounding claim for Yeshua to make—that he and ADONAI are One—but little by little, Yeshua's *talmidim* came to believe it, as did Yeshua's mother and at least two of his brothers, who had known him all his life. (What do you think it would take to convince your mother or your siblings, practicing Jews all, of such a thing?)

After Yeshua was killed on the execution stake, ADONAI restored him to life, and literally hundreds of people saw him alive after they had also watched him die. It was by Yeshua's resurrection that ADONAI affirmed his true identity once and for all; and on Shavu'ot, Yeshua sent the *Ruach HaKodesh* to fill and transform his followers, as we've noted already.

It's important to know that before his execution and resurrection, Yeshua had also identified himself with *Ruach HaKodesh*. Here's what he said:

*"If you love me, you will keep my commands; and **I** will ask the **Father**, and he will give you another comforting Counselor like me, **the Spirit of Truth**, to be with you forever. The world cannot receive him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he is staying with you and will be united with you. I will not leave you orphans—**I am coming to you**" (Yochanan 14:15-18).*

The Messianic Age. Another concern many have about the identification of Yeshua as G_d's Mashiach is that the expected Messianic Age of Peace has quite obviously not arrived, at least not in the way that we expect. Yesha'yahu described this Age in this way:

In the acharit-hayamim (last days) the mountain of ADONAI's house will be established as the most important mountain. It will be regarded more highly than the

other hills, and all the nations will stream there. Many peoples will go and say, "Come, let's go up to the mountain of ADONAI, to the house of the G_d of Ya'akov! He will teach us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths."

For out of Tziyon (Zion) will go forth Torah, the word of ADONAI from Yerushalayim. He will judge between the nations and arbitrate for many peoples. Then they will hammer their swords into plow-blades and their spears into pruning-knives; nations will not raise swords at each other, and they will no longer learn war (Yesha'yahu 2:2-4).

The wolf will live with the lamb; the leopard lie down with the kid; calf, young lion and fattened lamb together, with a little child to lead them. Cow and bear will feed together, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. An infant will play on a cobra's hole, a toddler put his hand in a viper's nest. They will not hurt or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain, for the earth will be as full of the knowledge of ADONAI as water covering the sea (Yesha'yahu 11:6-9).

Yeshua's talmidim expected this Age of Shalom to come quickly, but Yeshua told them it was not yet: "Watch out! Don't let anyone fool you! For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah!' and they will lead many astray. You will hear the noise of wars nearby and the news of wars far off; see to it that you don't become frightened. Such things must happen, but the end is yet to come. For peoples will fight each other, nations will fight each other, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various parts of the world; all this is but the beginning of the 'birth-pains.'

"At that time you will be arrested and handed over to be punished and put to death, and all peoples will hate you because of me. At that time many will be trapped into betraying and hating each other, many false prophets will appear and fool many people, and many people's love will grow cold because of increased distance from Torah. But whoever holds out till the end will be delivered. And this Good News about the Kingdom will be announced throughout the whole world as a witness to all the nations. It is then that the end will come.

"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, all the tribes of the Land will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with tremendous power and glory. He will send out his angels with a great shofar; and they will gather together his chosen people from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Mattityahu [Matthew] 24:4-14, 30-31).

The Talmud notes that the time prior to the Messianic Age will be known as the "birth pangs of the Messiah," and these teachings of Yeshua describe what that time will be like.

So the eleven talmidim went to the hill in the Galil where Yeshua had told them to go. When they saw him, they prostrated themselves before him; but some hesitated. Yeshua came and talked with them. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim, immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son, and the Ruach HaKodesh, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, yes, even until the end of the age" (Mattityahu 28:16-20).

COMPLETION

Some years later, Kefa commented on why the Messianic Age had still not come:

*Understand this: during the Last Days, scoffers will come, following their own desires and asking, “Where is this promised ‘coming’ of his? For our fathers have died, and everything goes on just as it has since the beginning of creation.” . . . Dear friends, do not ignore this: with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. **The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some people think of slowness; on the contrary, he is patient with you; for it is not his purpose that anyone should be destroyed, but that everyone should turn from his sins.** However, the Day of the Lord will come “like a thief.” On that Day the heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will melt and disintegrate, and the earth and everything in it will be burned up.*

Since everything is going to be destroyed like this, what kind of people should you be? You should lead holy and G_dly lives, as you wait for the Day of G_d and work to hasten its coming. That Day will bring on the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt from the heat; but we, following along with his promise, wait for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness will be at home (2 Kefa 3:3, 8-13).

Personal New Creation. When Kefa wrote that “It is not G_d’s purpose that anyone should be destroyed, but that everyone should turn from his sins,” he was talking about Yeshua’s affirmation that “unless a person is born again from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of G_d.” This affirmation was most famously made in a conversation with one of the leaders of the Sanhedrin:

*There was a man among the P’rushim (Pharisees), named Nakdimon (Nicodemus), who was a ruler of the Judeans. This man came to Yeshua by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know it is from G_d that you have come as a teacher; for no one can do these miracles you perform unless G_d is with him.” “Yes, indeed,” Yeshua answered him, **“I tell you that unless a person is born again from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of G_d. . . . For G_d so loved the world that he gave his only and unique Son, so that everyone who trusts in him may have eternal life, instead of being utterly destroyed. For G_d did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but rather so that through him, the world might be saved”** (Yochanan 3:1-3, 16-17).*

Yeshua told his *talmidim*, **“I AM the Way—and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through me”** (Yochanan 14:6). And Sha’ul (Paul) wrote that *“If you acknowledge publicly with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord and trust in your heart that G_d raised him from the dead, you will be saved. . . . For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”* (Romans 10:9, 13).

Much of the *B’rit Hadashah* describes what it is like to live such a life with God. Here is one example:

But G_d is so rich in mercy and loves us with such intense love that, even when we were dead because of our acts of disobedience, he brought us to life along with the Messiah—it is by grace that you have been delivered. That is, G_d raised us up with

the Messiah Yeshua and seated us with him in heaven, in order to exhibit in the ages to come how infinitely rich is his grace, how great is his kindness toward us who are united with the Messiah Yeshua. For you have been delivered by grace through trusting, and even this is not your accomplishment but G_d's gift. You were not delivered by your own actions; therefore no one should boast. For we are of G_d's making, created in union with the Messiah Yeshua for a life of good actions already prepared by G_d for us to do (Ephesians 2:4-10).

ADONAI's invitation to each of us is to acknowledge our sinfulness, to repent from it, and to accept Yeshua's atonement made on our behalf. To decide to do these three things causes us to be "born again from above" and to begin a new life filled with G_d's *Ruach HaKodesh*.

After being born again, we spend the rest of our days on earth joyfully serving ADONAI and inviting others to come to know Yeshua, who is alive and with us every moment as he promised. But that is still not the end of the Story.

From the very beginning of the Bible, ADONAI has been at work to birth a "chosen people" who will serve and glorify him, extending God's reign to every corner of the earth. And in the end, the Messianic Age will come in its fulness as ADONAI creates a "new heaven" and a "new earth," where righteousness reigns, as the prophets foretold

Cosmic New Creation. In a vision of this New Creation, Yochanan wrote: *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer there. Also I saw the holy city, New Yerushalayim, coming down out of heaven from G_d, prepared like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne say, "See! G_d's Sh'khinah (Shekinah; glory) is with mankind, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and he himself, G_d-with-them, will be their G_d. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will no longer be any death; and there will no longer be any mourning, crying or pain; because the old order has passed away"* (Revelation 21:1-4).

Two Trees Once More. But it gets better still. You'll remember that there were two trees in the Garden of Eden. One, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, was forbidden; the other, the Tree of Life, was not forbidden, at least until Adam and Havah had sinned. At that time, they were mercifully separated from the Tree of Life so that they did not experience immortality while separated from ADONAI.

But now, in the New Creation, there are two trees once more. This time, though, there are two Trees of Life, on both sides of the River of the Water of Life, so that it will never be possible to be separated from its Life. Yochanan continued:

Next the angel showed me the river of the water of life, sparkling like crystal, flowing from the throne of G_d and of the Lamb down the middle of the city's main street. The Tree of Life was on each side of the river, producing twelve kinds of fruit, a different kind every month; and the leaves of the tree were for healing the nations—no longer will there be any curses. The throne of G_d and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their

foreheads. Night will no longer exist, so they will need neither the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because ADONAI, G_d, will shine upon them. And they will reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:1-5).

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Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekha ha'olam, kol tzur ha-olamim,  
tzaddik b'khol ha-dorot, ha-El hane'eman ha'omeir v'oseh, hamdabeir u'makiyem,  
shekol devarav emet ve-tzedek. Ne'eman attah Adonai eloheinu,  
ve-ne'emanim devarekha, ve-davar echad midevareykha achor lo yashuv reikam,  
ki El melekha ne'eman ve-rachaman attah. Barukh attah Adonai,  
ha-El hane'eman be-khol devarav.

**Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, rock of all eternities,  
righteous in all generations, the faithful God, who says and does,  
who speaks and fulfills, all of whose words are true.  
Faithful are you, LORD our God, and faithful are your words.  
Not one of your words turns back unfulfilled,  
for You, O God, are a faithful and compassionate King.  
Blessed are You, LORD, the God who is faithful in all His words.**



# FINDING GOD'S MESSIAH <sup>1</sup>

|     | <b>Prophecy:<br/>The Messiah must . . .</b>                                                                                          | <b>Source<br/>in the <i>Tanakh</i></b>                     | <b>Fulfillment<br/>in the <i>B'rit Hadashah</i></b>                            |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | Be the "seed of the woman" that would "bruise" or "crush" the serpent's "head"                                                       | Genesis 3:15                                               | Galatians 4:4<br>1 John 3:8                                                    |
| 2.  | Be the "seed of Avraham"                                                                                                             | Genesis 12:3                                               | Matthew 1:1; Acts 3:25;<br>Galatians 3:16                                      |
| 3.  | Be the "seed of Yitz'chak"                                                                                                           | Genesis 17:19, 21:12                                       | Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:34;<br>Hebrews 11:17-19                                    |
| 4.  | Be the "seed of Ya'akov" and the "star out of Ya'akov" who will "have dominion"                                                      | Genesis 28:14;<br>Numbers 24:17, 19                        | Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:34;<br>Revelation 22:16                                    |
| 5.  | Be a descendant of Y'hudah                                                                                                           | Genesis 49:10                                              | Matthew 1:2-3; Luke 3:33;<br>Hebrews 7:14                                      |
| 6.  | Be a descendant of David and heir to his throne                                                                                      | 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Isaiah 9:6<br>(7), 11:1-5; Jeremiah 23:5 | Matthew 1:1, 6; Acts 13:22-23;<br>Romans 1:3                                   |
| 7.  | Have eternal existence                                                                                                               | Micah 5:1 (2)                                              | John 1:1, 14, 8:58; Ephesians<br>1:3-4; Colossians 1:15-19;<br>Revelation 1:18 |
| 8.  | Be the Son of God                                                                                                                    | Psalms 2:7; Proverbs 30:4                                  | Matthew 3:17; Luke 1:32                                                        |
| 9.  | Have God's own Name, <i>Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh</i> , applied to him                                                                         | Isaiah 9:5-6 (6-7);<br>Jeremiah 23:5-6                     | Philippians 2:9-11                                                             |
| 10. | Come 69 x 7 years (483 years) after the rebuilding of the wall of Yerushalayim                                                       | Daniel 9:24-26                                             | Matthew 2:1, 16, 19;<br>Luke 3:1, 23                                           |
| 11. | Be born of a virgin <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                     | Isaiah 7:14                                                | Matthew 1:18-2:1;<br>Luke 1:26-35                                              |
| 12. | Be born in Beit-Lechem, in Y'hudah                                                                                                   | Micah 5:1 (2)                                              | Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4-7                                                        |
| 13. | Be adored by great persons                                                                                                           | Psalms 72:10-11                                            | Matthew 2:1-11                                                                 |
| 14. | Be preceded by one who would announce him                                                                                            | Isaiah 40:3-5; Malachi 3:1                                 | Matthew 3:1-3;<br>Luke 1:17, 3:2-6                                             |
| 15. | Be anointed with the Spirit of God                                                                                                   | Isaiah 11:2, 61:1;<br>Psalm 45:8 (7)                       | Matthew 3:16; John 3:34;<br>Acts 10:38                                         |
| 16. | Be a prophet like Moshe                                                                                                              | Deuteronomy 18:15, 18                                      | Acts 3:20-22                                                                   |
| 17. | Have a ministry of binding up the brokenhearted, proclaiming liberty to the captives, and announcing the acceptable year of the Lord | Isaiah 61:1-2                                              | Luke 4:18-19                                                                   |

<sup>1</sup> This table is from *The Complete Jewish Study Bible: Insights for Jews & Christians; Illuminating the Jewishness of God's Word* (Hendrickson: Peabody, MA, 2016), pp. liii-liv.

<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew word *'almah* in Isaiah 7:14 means "a young woman," and in the context of the *Tanakh* always "a young woman of unsullied reputation," which is why the Jewish translators of the Septuagint, the Greek version of the *Tanakh* prepared 200 years before Yeshua's birth, rendered this word into Greek as *parthenos*, "virgin"; this is the word used in Matthew 1:23.

|     |                                                                               |                                        |                                                                        |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 18. | Have a ministry of healing                                                    | Isaiah 35:5-6, 42:18                   | Matthew 11:5; throughout the Gospels                                   |
| 19. | Have a ministry in the Galil                                                  | Isaiah 8:23-9:1 (9:1-2)                | Matthew 4:12-16                                                        |
| 20. | Be tender and compassionate                                                   | Isaiah 40:11, 42:3                     | Matthew 12:15, 20; Hebrews 4:15                                        |
| 21. | Be meek and non-ostentatious                                                  | Isaiah 42:2                            | Matthew 12:15-16, 19                                                   |
| 22. | Be sinless and without guile                                                  | Isaiah 53:9                            | 1 Peter 2:22                                                           |
| 23. | Bear the reproaches due others                                                | Isaiah 53:11-12; Psalm 69:10 (9)       | Romans 15:3                                                            |
| 24. | Be a priest                                                                   | Psalm 110:4                            | Hebrews 5:5-6, 6:20, 7:15-17                                           |
| 25. | Enter publicly into Yerushalayim on a donkey                                  | Zechariah 9:9                          | Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11                                          |
| 26. | Enter the Temple with authority                                               | Malachi 3:1                            | Matthew 21:12-24; Luke 2:27-38, 45-50; John 2:13-22                    |
| 27. | Be hated without cause                                                        | Isaiah 49:7; Psalm 69:5 (4)            | John 15:24-25                                                          |
| 28. | Be undesired and rejected by his own people                                   | Isaiah 53:2-3, 63:3, 5; Psalm 69:9 (8) | Mark 6:3; Luke 9:58; John 1:11, 7:3-5                                  |
| 29. | Be rejected by the Jewish leadership                                          | Psalm 118:22                           | Matthew 21:42; John 7:48                                               |
| 30. | Be plotted against by Jews and Gentiles together                              | Psalm 2:1-2                            | Acts 4:27                                                              |
| 31. | Be betrayed by a friend                                                       | Psalm 41:10 (9), 55:13-15 (12-14)      | Matthew 26:21-25, 47-50; John 13:18-21; Acts 1:16-18                   |
| 32. | Be sold for 30 pieces of silver                                               | Zechariah 11:12                        | Matthew 26:15                                                          |
| 33. | Have his price thrown into the Temple treasury                                | Zechariah 11:13                        | Matthew 27:6-7                                                         |
| 34. | Be forsaken by his <i>talmidim</i>                                            | Zechariah 13:7                         | Matthew 26:31, 56                                                      |
| 35. | Be struck on the cheek                                                        | Micah 4:14 (5:1)                       | Matthew 27:30                                                          |
| 36. | Be spat on                                                                    | Isaiah 50:6                            | Matthew 26:67, 27:30                                                   |
| 37. | Be mocked                                                                     | Psalm 22:8-9 (7-8)                     | Matthew 26:67-68, 27:31, 39-44                                         |
| 38. | Be beaten                                                                     | Isaiah 50:6                            | Matthew 26:67, 27:26, 30                                               |
| 39. | Be executed by crucifixion, by having his hands and feet pierced <sup>3</sup> | Psalm 22:17 (16); Zechariah 12:10      | Matthew 27:35; Luke 24:39; John 19:18, 34-37, 20:20-28; Revelation 1:7 |
| 40. | Be thirsty during his execution                                               | Psalm 22:16 (15)                       | John 19:28                                                             |
| 41. | Be given vinegar to quench that thirst                                        | Psalm 69:22 (21)                       | Matthew 27:34                                                          |
| 42. | Be executed without having a bone broken                                      | Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:21 (20)         | John 19:33-36                                                          |
| 43. | Be considered a transgressor                                                  | Isaiah 53:12                           | Matthew 27:3; Luke 23:32                                               |

<sup>3</sup> The Septuagint (see previous footnote) has “They pierced my hands and my feet,” implying the Hebrew word *karu* in its source text. The Masoretic Hebrew text, accepted as standard in traditional Judaism, has *k’ari*, and the line reads, “Like a lion, my hands and my feet.”

|     |                                                                                                   |                                    |                                                               |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 44. | Be “cut off and have nothing . . .” 69 x 7 years after the rebuilding of the wall of Yerushalayim | Daniel 9:24-26                     | Romans 5:6; 1 Peter 3:18                                      |
| 45. | Be the one whose death would atone for the sins of humanity                                       | Isaiah 53:5-7, 12                  | Mark 10:45; John 1:29, 3:16; Acts 8:30-35                     |
| 46. | Be buried with the rich when dead                                                                 | Isaiah 53:9                        | Matthew 27:57-60                                              |
| 47. | Be raised from the dead                                                                           | Isaiah 53:9-10; Psalm 2:7-8, 16:10 | Matthew 28:1-20; Acts 2:23-36, 13:33-37; 1 Corinthians 15:4-6 |
| 48. | Ascend to the right hand of God                                                                   | Psalm 16:11, 68:19 (18), 110:1     | Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11, 7:55; Hebrews 1:3                    |
| 49. | Exercise his priestly office in heaven                                                            | Zechariah 6:13                     | Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25-8:2                                 |
| 50. | Be the cornerstone of God’s Messianic Community                                                   | Isaiah 28:16; Psalm 118:22-23      | Matthew 21:42; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:5-7                  |
| 51. | Be sought after by Gentiles as well as Jews                                                       | Isaiah 11:10, 42:1                 | Acts 10:45-46, 13:46-48                                       |
| 52. | Be accepted by the Gentiles                                                                       | Isaiah 11:10, 42:1-4, 49:1-6       | Matthew 12:18-21; Romans 9:30, 10:20, 11:11, 15:10            |
| 53. | Be the king                                                                                       | Psalm 2:6                          | John 18:33-37                                                 |
| 54. | Be seen by Israel as pierced <sup>4</sup>                                                         | Zechariah 12:10; Psalm 22:17 (16)  | Luke 24:39; John 19:34-37; Revelation 1:7                     |

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<sup>4</sup> See previous footnote.

## Calculating Probabilities

“We find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled [even] eight prophecies is 1 in  $10^{17}$ .” That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates it by supposing “we take  $10^{17}$  silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom.”



Stoner considers 48 prophecies and says, “we find the chance that any one man fulfilled all 48 prophecies to be 1 in  $10^{157}$ . This is really a large number and it represents an extremely small chance. Let us try to visualize it. The silver dollar, which we have been using, is entirely too large. We must select a smaller object. The electron is about as small an object as we know of. It is so small that it will take 2.5 times  $10^{15}$  of them laid side by side to make a line, single file, one inch long. If we were going to count the electrons in this line one inch long, and counted 250 each minute, and if we counted day and night, it would take us 19,000,000 years to count just the one-inch line of electrons. If we had a cubic inch of these electrons and we tried to count them it would take us, counting steadily 250 each minute, 19,000,000 times 19,000,000 times 19,000,000 years or 6.9 times  $10^{21}$  years.

“With this introduction, let us go back to our chance of 1 in  $10^{157}$ . Let us suppose that we are taking this number of electrons, marking one, and thoroughly stirring it into the whole mass, then blindfolding a man and letting him try to find the right one. What a chance has he of finding the right one? What kind of pile will this number of electrons make? They make an inconceivably large volume.”<sup>5</sup>

*Such is the chance of any one man fulfilling 48 prophecies, much less 54!  
How will you respond to this Promised One?*

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<sup>5</sup> Peter W. Stoner, *Science Speaks* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), p. 109.