

“Flesh And Blood Has Not Revealed It”



“Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.’” (Matthew 16:16–17)

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Flesh And Blood Has Not Revealed It

Introduction

- I. Before His final trip to Jerusalem, Jesus chose the region of Caesarea Philippi to ask His disciples, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (Matt 16:13-19)
 - A. Caesarea Philippi is twenty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee and is on the southwestern slope of Mount Hermon.
 - B. This city became the northernmost extent of our Lord’s earthly ministry.
 - C. Very few places in Israel had more religious significance than the area around Caesarea Philippi.
 1. The area was scattered with the remains of ancient Syrian Baal worship—at least fourteen temples have been identified.
 2. Greek travelers claimed a cave near Caesarea Philippi was the birthplace of the Greek god Pan, the god of nature, fields, flocks, and shepherds.
 3. This cave is also the most eastern source of the Jordan River—this made the area full of emotion for the Jews.
 4. At Caesarea Philippi, a great temple of white marble was built to the godhead of Caesar—it had been built by Herod the Great.
- II. With Caesarea Philippi as a backdrop, we have a dramatic picture.
 - A. Here is a homeless, penniless Galilean carpenter with twelve ordinary men around Him.
 - B. With these great monuments, temples, relics, and icons behind Him, He asks, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”
 - C. Public opinion was confused about the true identity of Jesus.
 1. Herod Antipas thought that Jesus was John the Baptist who had been risen from the dead (Matt 14:1-2).
 2. Others thought He was Elijah (cf. 1 Kgs 17-2 Kgs 2).
 3. Others thought He was Jeremiah, a prophet of judgment who had prophesied during the final decades before Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity.
 - D. However, Peter boldly declared Him to be “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16).
 1. By using the word *Christ*, he attributed to Jesus all of the hopes, dreams, and prayers of the Hebrew Scriptures.
 2. “In the Greek text this is as forceful as any confession could be. It is only ten words, but in it the definite article occurs four times, like this: ‘You are *the* Christ, *the* Son of *the* God, *the* living One.’” (Boice, *The King and His Kingdom*, 305)
 3. Peter knew that Jesus was not just a prophet or miracle worker but the Son of the living God!
 4. Jesus was the only hope for a world in sin!
- III. If you were present on that occasion, listening to that lowly Galilean carpenter, would you have boldly confessed Him to be the Son of God?
 - A. How would you have formed your opinion?
 - B. Some might say this is not a fair question, for Jesus said that His Father “revealed” His identity to Peter—so Peter had a special revelation about Jesus’s identity that we do not have today.

- C. But I want you to consider this question, “*How* did the Father reveal to Peter the deity of Jesus?”
- D. “It was, says Jesus, ‘my Father who is in heaven’ who had disclosed this truth to Simon Bar-Jonah and had enabled him to give buoyant expression to it. To this disciple, and to all those similarly minded, he, this Father in heaven, had ‘revealed’ it (11:25, 26); and this not necessarily directly, by whispering something into the ear, but by blessing to the heart the means of grace, not the least of these means being the lessons which issued from the words and works of Jesus.” (Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, 644)
- E. “That Peter’s confession came by means of a divine revelation (13.11), rather than human insight (‘flesh and blood’ was a Semitic colloquialism for man; 1 Cor. 15.50, Gal. 1.12), doesn’t mean he received a special revelation given no one else. Instead, it means he drew the correct conclusion from the evidence available to all (Jn. 5.31–39). One of the reasons Jesus refused to give a sign in vv 1–4 was because enough signs had already been given. Peter (and all the apostles) was blessed for seeing what the Pharisees and Sadducees had not seen, viz., that the miracles Christ performed incontrovertibly identified Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Chumbley, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 296)
- F. In this paper, we want to examine the evidence that Peter could have used to conclude about the deity of Christ.

Discussion

I. The Prophecies Jesus Fulfilled

- A. The gospel of Matthew was written primarily to the Jews to demonstrate that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled all of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah.
 - 1. The phrase “all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet,” or a similar phrase, occurs ten times in Matthew to emphasize Jesus’ fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies (Matt 1:22–23; 2:15, 17–18, 23; 4:14–16; 8:17; 12:17–21; 13:35; 21:4–5; 27:9–10).
 - 2. Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus Himself claimed the Old Testament had prophesied of His coming (John 5:39, 45–47; Luke 4:16–21; 24:27, 44).
 - 3. The Old Testament contains over 300 prophecies about the birth, ministry, and teaching of the promised Messiah.
 - 4. All of these prophecies were made *at least* 400 years before the birth of Christ when the prophet Malachi penned the closing book of the Old Testament.
 - 5. The writings of the Jewish prophets, translated into Greek at Alexandria in Egypt and known as the *Septuagint*, spoke about the life and deeds of Jesus centuries before the events of His life transpired.
 - 6. “If you are not satisfied with 450 B.C. as the historic date for the completion of the Old Testament (and all the prophecies about Christ contained in it), then take into consideration the following: The Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures—was completed in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–246 B.C.). It is rather obvious that if you have a Greek translation initiated in 250 B.C. then you had to have the Hebrew text from which it was written. This will suffice to indicate that there was *at least* a 250-year gap between the prophecies being written down and their fulfillment in the person of Christ.” (McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, 168)

7. Copies of the Septuagint (LXX) were in the library at Alexandria, Egypt, centuries before Christ's birth in Bethlehem of Judea.
- B. Let us look at a few of the Messianic prophecies that Peter would have been familiar with that would have convinced him concerning the deity of Christ.
1. There are more than forty Old Testament passages quoted in Matthew in connection with even minor events of the life of Christ.
 2. While Matthew gives many examples of Jesus fulfilling Messianic prophecy, such as the virgin birth (Matt 1:22-23; Isa 7:14), we are going to limit ourselves to just a few of the fulfilled prophecies that Peter had been an *eyewitness* to or those that he could have *investigated* for himself.
 3. The Messiah would be born at Bethlehem of Judea (Matt 2:1-6; Mic 5:2).
 - a) The prophet Micah (735-700 B.C.) was a younger contemporary of Isaiah.
 - (1) Bethlehem of Judea is distinguished from Bethlehem in the region of Zebulun (Josh 19:15).
 - (2) *Ephrathah* is the name of the district where Bethlehem is located and where David was born (1 Sam 17:12).
 - (3) Micah gave no clue as to *when* or *how* the Messiah would come, but he left absolutely no doubt as to *where* He would be born!
 - b) The Jews of the first century understood Micah 5:2 to be a Messianic promise (John 7:40-42).
 - (1) "The use which the scribes made of this prophecy is very important, for it shows that the Jews originally regarded this passage of Scripture as fixing the birthplace of the Messiah, and condemns as a fruit of bigotry and prejudice the modern effort of certain rabbis to explain away this natural interpretation." (McGarvey and Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel*, 46)
 - (2) "The ignorance of the crowd in Jerusalem concerning Jesus is revealed by their uncertainty about his origin. On the basis of Scripture (Micah 5:2), they decided that Jesus could not be the Messiah since Micah's prophecy said the Messiah would come from Bethlehem and Jesus came from Nazareth. The confusion was such that no decision was made concerning his person and no action was taken to arrest him. Perhaps this is another illustration of Johannine irony, for Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The very passage that convinced his critics that he could not be the Messiah was one of the strongest to prove that he was." (Tenney, *The Gospel of John*, comments on John 7:42-44)
 - (3) "Not all in the crowd were convinced of Jesus' authenticity, however. While some were ready to accept Him as the great prophet Moses promised, or even the Messiah, still others remained skeptical. 'Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?' they scornfully asked. The question expects a negative answer; the idea that the Messiah could come from the boondocks of Galilee seemed ludicrous to the sophisticated Judeans (cf. v. 52; 1:46). Besides, they insisted, 'Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?' To their credit, both of those points were valid. The Old Testament Scripture reveals that the Christ comes from the descendants of David (2 Sam. 7:12; Pss. 89:3-4; 132:10-11; Isa 11:1, 10; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; cf. Matt. 22:42), and that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2; cf. Matt. 2:3-6). Secure in their

smug unbelief, however, the scoffers failed to examine the situation fully. Had they done so, they would have discovered that Jesus met both of those qualifications. He was a descendant of David (Matt. 1:1; Luke 1:32; 3:23, 31; cf. Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:27; 2:4), and had been born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1; Luke 2:4-7, 11, 15). They hastily assumed that since Jesus had grown up in Nazareth (Matt. 2:21-23; Luke 2:39, 51; 4:16; cf. Matt. 21:11; 26:71; Luke 18:37; John 1:45), He must have been born there. They had no interest in investigating His messianic credentials.” (MacArthur, *John 1-11*, MNTC, comments on John 7:41b-44)

- c) In the second century, when Christians were being executed regularly, Justin Martyr wrote his *First Apology* to the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius.
 - (1) This apology discussed Old Testament prophecy as fulfilled in Christ, making remarks about philosophy along the way.
 - (2) Justin Martyr told the emperor that he could investigate the location of Jesus’s birth for himself, as the records of His birth were still available at the tax office in Bethlehem.
 - (3) “And hear what part of earth He was to be born in, as another prophet, Micah, foretold. He spoke thus: ‘And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come forth a Governor, who shall feed My people.’ Now there is a village in the land of the Jews, thirty-five stadia from Jerusalem, in which Jesus Christ was born, as you can ascertain also from the registers of the taxing made under Cyrenius, your first procurator in Judaea.” (Justin, *First Apology*, ch. 34)
4. The Messiah would have a messenger who would “prepare the way of the Lord” (Matt 3:1-3; Isa 40:3; cf. Mal 3:1).
 - a) In the closing verses of the Old Testament, a promise is made that “Elijah the prophet” would precede the day of the Lord (Mal 4:5).
 - b) “The prophet does not imagine that the ancient Elijah, who ascended in a theophanic chariot to heaven will come again to introduce the last times; but he looks for a second Elijah, a great prophet, of whom the ancient Elijah was an appropriate type. The work of this Elijah is the preparatory work of turning the hearts of the fathers and children to one another, in reconciling the generations, in bringing back the people to the pure faith and life of their ancestors; indeed, a work of preaching repentance.” (Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy*, 474)
 - c) John the Baptist came “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17).
 - d) Peter knew of the life and preaching of John (Matt 11:11-14).
5. The Messiah would begin His ministry in Galilee, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali (Matt 4:12-17; Isa 9:1-2).
 - a) Peter lived in Capernaum, located within the ancient boundaries of the land of Naphtali (cf. Josh 19:32-39).

- b) “For several reasons it was appropriate for Jesus to begin his public ministry in Galilee. It was a densely populated and exceptionally fertile district in Palestine. Josephus notes that it contained a great number of villages, the smallest of which had a population of at least fifteen thousand (*War* 3.42). Galilee was not a remote back country, but a bustling and productive region through which ran two of the favorite highways of antiquity. Its population was mixed, partly because of colonists imported during the Maccabean conquest. As its name suggests (Galilee means a ‘ring’ or ‘circuit’), it was surrounded by Gentiles (Phoenicians to the west, Syrians on the north and east, and Samaritans to the south). Judea was mountainous and isolated, but Galilee lay open to all sorts of contacts with the wider world. It was there in northern Palestine that Jesus began his public ministry.” (Mounce, *Matthew*, 32)
 - c) In despised Galilee, where people lived without the religious advantages of Jerusalem and Judea, the light has dawned!
6. The Messiah would take our infirmities (Matt 8:14-17; Isa 53:4).
- a) Peter had been an eyewitness to the healing of his mother-in-law!
 - b) “The Greek in Matthew is an exact translation of the Hebrew, and the same translation should have been made in both places. In the fifty-third chapter, Isaiah fully states the doctrine of atonement, or that the Messiah was to suffer for sin. In the verse quoted here, however, he states the very truth which Matthew declares. The word translated *griefs*, in Isaiah, and *infirmities*, in Matthew, means properly, in the Hebrew and Greek, diseases of the body. In neither does it refer to the disease of the mind, or to sin. To bear those griefs, is clearly to bear them away, or to remove them. This was done by his miraculous power in healing the sick. The word rendered ‘sorrows,’ in Isaiah, and ‘sicknesses,’ in Matthew, means *pains, griefs, or anguish of mind*. To carry, then, is to sympathize with the sufferers; to make provision for alleviating those sorrows; and to take them away. This he did by his precepts, his example; and the cause of all sorrows—*sin*—he removed by his atonement. The passage in Isaiah and Matthew, therefore, mean precisely the same thing.” (Barnes, *Barnes’s Notes on the New Testament*, comments on Matthew 8:17)
 - c) “Through His healing miracles Jesus participated in human pain and sorrow in that He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases. He participated first of all by sympathizing with man’s pain and sickness. Jesus knew men’s hearts and all of their inner feelings. He knew the agony, the bewilderment, the confusion, the despair, and the frustration that disease and sickness bring in addition to physical pain. Repeatedly the gospel writers tell of Jesus’ having compassion on those who came to hear Him teach and to experience His healing touch (Matt. 9:36; 15:32; Mark 1:41; Luke 10:33). Just as surely as then, He now knows the agonies of His children, ‘for we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses’ (Heb. 4:15). It was not that Jesus carried away our diseases by contracting them, but by experiencing vicariously the pain they bring.” (MacArthur, *Matthew 8-15*, MNTC, comments on Matthew 8:16-22)

7. The Messiah would teach by parables (Matt 13:10–17; cf. Isa 6:9–10; Matt 13:34–35; cf. Ps 78:2).
 - a) With his own ears, Peter had heard many of the parables of Jesus.
 - b) Jesus’ use of parables fulfilled prophecy, and when His hearers refused to hear Him, His message fell on deaf ears (Mark 4:33–34).
 - c) Those who were willing to listen to Christ had taken the first step toward understanding the mysteries of God that had been kept hidden since the beginning of time.
- C. Jesus fulfilled all of these prophecies and many more *before* Peter made his confession at Caesarea Philippi!
 1. Paul used this type of evidence at Thessalonica to prove the deity of Christ (Acts 17:1–4).
 2. This was also the type of evidence that Philip used when discussing salvation with the Ethiopian nobleman (Acts 8:26–38).

II. The Claims Jesus Made

- A. Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus made many astounding claims about His life and mission—and Peter heard these claims with his own ears.
 1. Jesus said He had come to fulfill the law and the prophets (Matt 5:17).
 - a) The *Law* referred to the Law of Moses (the Torah).
 - b) The *Prophets* referred to the rest of the Old Testament.
 - c) Jesus pointed out that the Old Testament looked forward to Him, not just the passages that referred to the Messiah, but also the entire sacrificial system of the Old Law and the Holy Days and festivals.
 - d) Jesus did not come to modify the Law or the Prophets but to complete or fulfill them.
 2. He claimed that at the judgment, people would call Him “Lord” (Matt 7:22).
 3. He claimed, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever...” (John 6:51).
 - a) Jesus had a reference to spiritual hunger.
 - b) The living bread was His *flesh*, which He would give for the life of the world.
 - c) This is an allusion to His death on the cross.
 4. He claimed to have existed before Abraham (John 8:58).
 - a) This is one of the most potent statements uttered by Jesus—He undeniably proclaimed His divinity.
 - b) This claim cannot be ignored!
 - c) Abraham had lived and died nearly 2,000 years before Jesus was born.
 - d) By using the present tense “I AM” (Gr. *Egō eimi*) in speaking of existence more than 2,000 years earlier, this could only be true of deity.
 - e) This passage has to be associated with Exodus 3:14, where the phrase “I AM” was linked to God Himself.
 5. He claimed the Temple was His “Father’s house” (John 2:13–16).
 - a) This passage reveals how Jesus viewed His relationship with the Father.
 - b) It also reminds us of an event from His youth, when He asked His parents, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49)

- B. At the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus claimed to have fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah (Luke 4:16–21; cf. Isa 61:1–2).
1. Jesus identifies Himself as the subject of Isaiah’s prophecy—this was another unmistakable claim of His deity!
 2. “To have fixed on any passage announcing His *sufferings* (as Isa 53) would have been unsuitable at that early stage of His ministry. But He selects a passage announcing the sublime object of His whole mission, its Divine character, and His special endowments for it; expressed in the first person, and so singularly adapted to the first opening of the mouth in His prophetic capacity, that it seems as if made expressly for the occasion when He first opened His mouth where he had been brought up.” (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *A Commentary: Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, 3:1, 238)
 3. “Jesus was quoting from Isaiah 61:1,2. Isaiah pictures the deliverance of Israel from exile in Babylon as a Year of Jubilee when all debts are cancelled, all slaves are freed, and all property is returned to original owners (Leviticus 25). But the release from Babylonian exile had not brought the expected fulfillment; they were still a conquered and oppressed people. So Isaiah must have been referring to a future messianic age. Jesus boldly announced, ‘The Scripture you’ve just heard has been fulfilled this very day!’ Jesus was proclaiming himself as the one who would bring this Good News to pass, but he would do so in a way that the people were not yet able to grasp.” (*Life Application Study Bible*, comments on Luke 4:17–21)
- C. Perhaps the greatest claim to Jesus’ deity was His assertion that He was the “Lord of the Sabbath” (Matt 12:1–8).
1. “When the Pharisees saw what Jesus’ disciples were doing, they objected, saying that such activity on the Sabbath was unlawful. Had not God said, ‘Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest’ (Exod. 34:21)? In order that the Torah not be broken, the scribes and Pharisees had developed a precise code of regulations. Thirty–nine different kinds of work were prohibited on the Sabbath (m. *Shab.* 7.2). According to the Book of Jubilees a man is to die if on the Sabbath he goes on a journey, farms, lights a fire, rides a beast, travels by ship, kills a beast, or catches a fish (50:12). From the Pharisaic perspective, the disciples had unlawfully reaped (pluck the grain), winnowed (rub it between the hands), threshed (separate the chaff), and prepared a meal (eat the grain).” (Mounce, *Matthew*, 111–112)
 2. “At issue behind this seemingly minor matter is whether the Pharisaic tradition—which evolved into what rabbinic Judaism calls the Oral *Torah*, later committed to writing in the Mishna, Gemara and other works—is God’s revelation to man and binding on all Jews.” (Stearn, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, comments on Matthew 12:2)
 3. Jesus reminded the Pharisees that King David, their hero, had violated the command of *written* Law, which the Pharisees regarded as more authoritative than the rule of *oral* law.
 - a) On one occasion, David ate the holy Bread of the Presence, which the written law plainly stated only the priest could do.
 - b) These Pharisees held David guiltless, even though he violated the written Law, but they held Jesus guilty when He violated their man-made tradition!

- c) Jesus ended His comments by saying, “For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Matt 12:8).
 - d) “For the Son of Man is Lord of *Shabbat!*” (Matt 12:8 CJB).
 - e) To any first-century Jew, this could only have been interpreted as a claim of deity.
 - f) The Sabbath was the center of Jewish life, and the calendar of feasts and holy days was built around it.
4. The book of Leviticus mentions nine Sabbath-based festivals.
- a) The seventh day of the week (Lev 23:3; cf. Exod 20:11).
 - b) The Passover (Lev 23:4-8).
 - c) The feast of first fruits (Lev 23:9-14).
 - d) Pentecost (Lev 23:15-22).
 - e) The feast of trumpets (Lev 23:23-25).
 - f) The Day of Atonement (Lev 23:26-32).
 - g) The Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:33-43).
 - h) The sabbatical year (Lev 25:25:2-7).
 - i) The year of Jubilee (Lev 25:8-55).
5. “All of those Sabbath observances were pictures of the final and eternal rest of the children of God, the time when Messiah would come to earth to set His people free and establish His divine kingdom. Every time a Jew celebrated a Sabbath he was reminded that some day he and all his fellow Jews would be released from all bondage—whether the bondage of political oppression, the bondage of continual sacrifices, or the bondage of labor to make a living. The entire Sabbath system pointed to the true, perfect, and eternal rest that Messiah would bring to His people. For Jesus to claim that He fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-2, as He did in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:18-21), was unmistakably to claim messiahship. For Him to present Himself as the source of rest (Matt 11:28) was to present Himself as the source of holiness, and to claim lordship over the Sabbath (Matt 12:8) was to claim lordship over everything.” (MacArthur, *Matthew 16-23*, MNTC, comments on Matthew 16:17b)

III. The Testimony Of John The Baptist

- A. All four gospel accounts preface Jesus’ ministry with the fact that John’s ministry prepared the people for what was to come (Luke 3:3-6; cf. Isa 40:3-5).
- 1. “Preparing the way” was an allusion to the practice of Eastern monarchs.
 - 2. Before these monarchs traveled, heralds were sent out to call on the people to remove obstacles from the roads and to improve the old roads or make new ones.
 - 3. “Luke portrays John’s ministry as a call to repentance. The ethical thrust of Luke’s Gospel begins here. Ministering in the desert in fulfillment of the pattern of salvation indicated by Isaiah, John preaches ‘a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.’ His ministry in the Jordan River region is designed to get people ready for the arrival of God’s salvation by having hearts open to respond to the coming Messiah (1:15-17, 76-77). That is why in citing Isaiah, Luke mentions the leveling of obstacles in the way of God’s arrival. If the creation bows to God’s coming, certainly human hearts should as well.” (Bock, *Luke*, 109)
 - 4. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by removing the obstacle, i.e., preaching a message of repentance to people in sin (Matt 3:1-12).

- B. John also pointed out who the Messiah was (John 1:19-34).
 - 1. John was not “the Christ” (John 1:20).
 - 2. John was not Elijah the prophet (John 1:21).
 - a) God had promised to send Elijah before the coming of the Messiah (Mal 4:5).
 - b) Jesus said of John, “This is Elijah, that is to come” (Matt 11:11-14).
 - c) John came “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:13-17).
 - 3. John was not “the Prophet” (John 1:21).
 - a) God, through Moses, promised the Israelites that He would “raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst” (Deut 18:15-19).
 - b) When speaking to the people at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, Peter explicitly applied Deuteronomy 18:15 to Jesus (Acts 3:22-26).
 - c) Stephen saw the fulfillment of the words of Moses in Christ (Acts 7:37).
 - 4. John was “the voice of one crying in the wilderness” (John 1:23; Isa 40:3).
- C. “You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth” (John 5:32-33).
- D. “And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. Then many came to Him and said, ‘John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true.’ And many believed in Him there.” (John 10:40-41)

IV. The Miracles Jesus Performed

- A. The four gospels place great emphasis on the miracles performed by Jesus.
 - 1. At least 33 specific miracles are ascribed to Christ in the gospel accounts.
 - 2. Several passages summarize His activities (Matt 4:23-25; 9:35-36; 15:30-31; Mark 1:32-34; 3:7-11).
 - 3. None of these miracles were performed as entertainment or merely to draw a crowd.
- B. Peter’s great confession at Caesarea Philippi occurred after witnessing many of Jesus’s miracles.
 - 1. The healing of his mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-41).
 - a) This was the first of at least eight separate miracles that occurred in the presence of Peter.
 - b) Peter’s name is mentioned in connection with more miracles than the other apostles.
 - 2. The draught of fishes (Luke 5:3-8).
 - 3. The forgiveness of sins (Luke 5:17-26).
 - 4. Christ’s power over nature itself (Matt 8:23-27).
- C. At the time of Peter’s confession, Jesus had already given the apostles miraculous power in the Limited Commission (Matt 10:1-8, 19-20).
- D. Jesus claimed that His miracles were a “greater witness” (better evidence) than the testimony of John himself (John 5:31-36).

- E. Miracles were a sign of the Messiah (Isa 35:5-6).
1. “The similarity between verses 5-7 and Jesus’ response to John the Baptist’s question from prison, ‘Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?’ has led many to the conclusion that Jesus had Isaiah’s words in mind when He sent reply to John (Matt 11:2-6). The strong likeness is sufficient reason to conclude that Isaiah’s words clearly point to the Messiah who would come and to His work. Although Jesus’ reply to John refers to His physical works among men as evidence that He is the one to come, there can be no doubt that Isaiah is looking to the great spiritual work of some future time. The eyes that have been closed to God’s appeal will be opened to see the salvation offered by Him; the ears that have been deaf to His call will be unstopped to hear and heed His word (cf. 6:9-10).” (Hailey, *A Commentary on Isaiah*, 295)
 2. While Herod Antipas imprisoned John the Baptist in the fortress of Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 18.5.2), he sent two of his disciples to Jesus (Matt 11:2-6; Luke 7:18-23).
 - a) Some commentators have suggested that John himself did not doubt Jesus’s identity but asked the question so that Jesus could reassure his followers.
 - b) It is more likely that John was merely puzzled since he had spoken about the judgment the Messiah would bring (Matt 3:10-12) but had seen no evidence of it yet.
 - c) Jesus did not answer John’s question directly, but He referred back to the signs of Isaiah and would let John reach his own conclusion.
 - d) “He refers to prophecies in the book of Isaiah of six signs which the Messiah will give when he comes: he will make the blind see (Isaiah 29:18, 35:5), make the lame walk (Isaiah 35:6, 61:1), cleanse lepers (Isaiah 61:1), make the deaf hear (Isaiah 29:18, 35:5), raise the dead (implied in Isaiah 11:1-2 but not made specific), and evangelize the poor (Isaiah 61:1-2 in the light of 4:23 above).” (Stearn, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, comments on Matthew 11:3-6)
- F. Jesus fulfilled all Isaiah said the Messiah would do (Matt 11:5)!
1. There is no record of *any* Old Testament prophet giving sight to the blind, but it is *the most frequent miracle* performed by Jesus!
 - a) The blind man at the pool of Siloam (John 9:1-7, 24-33).
 - b) The blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26).
 - c) Two blind men at Capernaum (Matt 9:27-31).
 - d) The blind and mute man (Matt 12:22-23).
 - e) The two blind men at Jericho (Matt 20:29-34).
 - f) The blind and lame at the Temple (Matt 21:14).
 - g) In fact, at the “very hour” John’s disciples questioned Jesus, Luke says, “to many blind He gave sight” (Luke 7:20-22).
 2. Matthew records many accounts of the “lame” being healed.
 - a) This was part of His “fame” (Matt 4:23-24).
 - b) The paralytic at Capernaum (Matt 9:1-8).
 - c) The multitudes marveled at such healings (Matt 15:30-31).
 - d) The lame at the temple came to be healed (Matt 21:14).

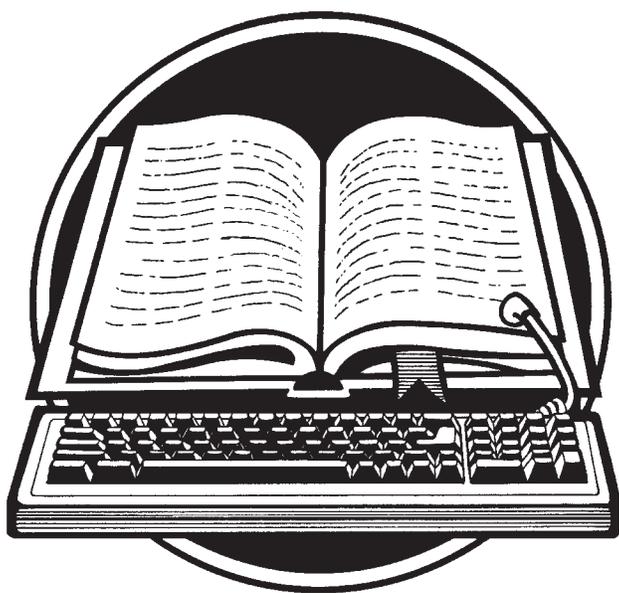
3. The Gospels tell us how Jesus also cleansed the lepers.
 - a) Jesus even touched and healed a leper (Matt 8:2-3).
 - b) "Simon the leper" was apparently a man healed of his leprosy by Jesus, who gave the feast His honor (Matt 26:6-7).
 - c) The ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19).
4. Jesus made the deaf to hear (Mark 7:31-37).
5. Jesus raised the dead.
 - a) Jairus's daughter (Matt 9:18-19, 23-26).
 - b) The son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17).
 - c) Lazarus had been dead for four days (John 11:1-44).
6. The poor had the gospel preached to them (Matt 9:35-38; Mark 12:37).
7. Since Jesus had fulfilled the signs Isaiah gave, John would not have to "look for another."

Conclusion

- I. When Peter made his bold confession at Caesarea Philippi, less than half of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah had been fulfilled.
- II. Later, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the heavenly Father declared Christ to be His Son (Matt 17:1-5).
- III. The crowning act in proving the deity of Christ is to be found in His resurrection from the grave (Rom 1:3-4; 1 Cor 15:1-4).
- IV. We have far more evidence than Peter had!
- V. Because Jesus is God's Son, the promised Messiah, we must listen to Him (Heb 1:1-2).
- VI. "Jesus differs immeasurably from every other person in history. Whether we believe what history tells us about Alexander the Great or William the Conqueror will make little or no difference in the way we live. But the story of Jesus is not just another piece of history, and the study of His character is not just an academic exercise. We cannot relegate Him to a place among the impedimenta of our subconscious minds or add our knowledge of Him to our store of historical facts. He does not merely occupy a chapter in world history. He is the hinge on which history turns. No one who encounters Him can ever again escape into neutrality. The question we cannot evade is not, 'Who *was* He?' but, 'Who *is* He?' No historian or theologian can answer this question for us. It is a personal question, and we alone can answer it. We cannot refuse to give a verdict, and with our verdict we seal our eternal destiny." (Bruce, *The Deity of Christ*, 39)

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