



Three Weeks Until Easter

By

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Three weeks until Easter – what are Christians around the world doing to get ready?

Many are preparing for the annual celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some are preparing for Good Friday programs – Passion Plays – Easter Cantatas - Easter Sunrise services. Many are fasting and praying. Some have given up something for Christ during the time before Easter to remember what Jesus gave up for us. Good Friday vigils and Easter celebrations were well established by the 2nd Century A.D. Fasting began on Good Friday and continued until Easter morning when Christians would rise early, wash, and greet the sun in celebration of the Lord's Resurrection. Easter is the oldest annual Christian celebration.

What was Jesus doing three weeks before Easter?

He was preparing His followers for what was going to happen to Him and them.

“Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.’ But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.” Luke 18:31-34

“All Things That Are Written By The Prophets Concerning The Son of Man Will be Accomplished!”

Jesus was speaking about hundreds of Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. His profound statement to His disciples was that everything the prophets wrote about the Messiah’s arrest, trial, beatings, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection would be accomplished in Him.

450 years before Easter

“Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” Says the LORD of hosts.”

Malachi 3:1

God was prophetically silent for 400 years. He didn’t say anything new to Israel. Malachi was the last Old Testament prophet. The Lord spoke through Malachi and told the people of Israel that another prophet would come to prepare the way of the Lord. We learn in the New Testament that John the Baptist was that prophet. We also learn that John the Baptist recognized Jesus Christ as the One Who God said would be the “Messenger of the covenant.”

550 years before Easter

“Then I said to them, ‘If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.’ So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.” Zechariah 11:12-13

This prophecy was fulfilled with Judas who betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, tried to return the money to the chief priests and elders who had hired him, then threw the silver into the temple, went out and hanged himself. The chief priests took the 30 pieces of silver and used them to purchase a potter’s field for the burial of strangers.

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” Zechariah 12:10

Fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ.

580 years before Easter

“And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself.” Daniel 9:26

Fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ.

600 years before Easter

“I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.”
Ezekiel 34:23-24

Fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

620 years before Easter

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” Jeremiah 31:31-34

Fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

770 years before Easter

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14

Fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ.

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” Isaiah 40:3-5

Fulfilled by John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

“Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men.” Isaiah 52:13-14

Fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ.

“He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed

Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:3-5

Fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ.

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” Isaiah 61:1-3

Fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

“For He said, ‘Surely they are My people, Children who will not lie.’ So He became their Savior. In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old.” Isaiah 63:8-9

Fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ.

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.” Micah 5:2

Fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ.

800 years before Easter

“And it shall come to pass in that day,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘That I will make the sun go down at noon, And I will darken the earth in broad daylight.” Amos 8:9

Fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ.

1,000 years before Easter

“I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.” Psalm 16:8-10

Fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have

surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.” Psalm 22:14-18

Fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ.

1,500 years before Easter

“And the LORD said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.” Deuteronomy 18:17-19

Fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

1,900 years before Easter

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.” Genesis 49:10

Fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

4,000+ years before Easter

“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” Genesis 3:15

Fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ.

Mathematical Probability That Jesus Is The Messiah

These are just several of the hundreds of prophecies concerning the Messiah of God. Jesus told His disciples that *“all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.”* The mathematical/statistical probability that one person would fulfill every prophecy concerning the Son of Man in the Old Testament is beyond our ability to comprehend. Here are some examples to help us see how amazing the Lord’s statement was to the disciples three weeks before Easter.

More than 40 years ago, the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship at Pasadena City College in Pasadena, California sponsored a class in Christian evidences. More than 600 students participated and the results of their findings were studied and approved by experts in mathematics and statistics. Peter Stoner, a professor mathematics and astronomy, evaluated the findings and changed some to make them even more conservative. Here’s what the students discovered.

Concerning the prophecy in Micah that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem – the students asked – “One man in how many, the world over, has been born in Bethlehem?” Based on the population of the world and Bethlehem between Micah’s prophecy and the birth of Christ, the students estimated the mathematical probability would be one man in 2.8×10^5 was born in Bethlehem. That’s 280,000 men.

If we poured 280,000 silver dollars into a large room – drew a cross on one of the dollars – and led a blindfolded man into that room to select one of the dollars – what are the chances he would pick up the dollar with the cross drawn on it? 1 in 280,000.

Next, the students took Micah’s prophecy and added seven other prophecies to it – for a total of eight prophecies about Messiah. Those seven other prophecies were Malachi 3:1, Zechariah 9:9, Zechariah 13:6, Zechariah 13:12, Zechariah 11:13, Isaiah 53:7, and Psalm 22:16. None of them included prophecies concerning the Virgin Birth – since that is truly impossible in the natural world.

What is the chance that one person could fulfill all eight prophecies? 1 in 10^{17} . That’s a 1 followed by 17 zeroes! 100,000,000,000,000,000. It is estimated that if we were to pour that many silver dollars on the state of Texas, it would cover the state two feet deep. If we added a silver dollar with the cross drawn on it and put it in the mix of coins before we poured them across the State of Texas, then sent our blindfolded friend into the state and asked him

walk as far as he wanted go, then pick up one coin – what are the chances he would find the coin with the cross? 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000.

Next, the math students doubled the number of prophecies to 16 – without any being the Virgin Birth. The chances of one person fulfilling those 16 Messianic prophecies increased to 1 in 10^{45} . That's a 1 followed by 45 zeroes. Now we have silver dollars that would cover a space in all directions 30 times the distance of the earth to the sun. That's $30 \times 93,000,000$ miles in all directions!

The Math students then tripled the number to 48 prophecies – again without the Virgin Birth included. They found that the mathematical probability that one man could fulfill 48 Messianic prophecies was 1 in 10^{157} . That's a 1 followed by 157 zeroes. Now we have silver dollars filling galaxies! What is the chance that our blindfolded man could find the one silver dollar marked with a cross? 1 in 10^{157} .

Keep in mind that we've only gone up to 48 prophecies about the Messiah. There are hundreds of Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. The statistical probabilities of one man fulfilling every Messianic prophecy – except for the prophecy of the Virgin Birth – would be a 1 followed by thousands of zeroes. We would have silver dollars filling the universe! The possibility that a blindfolded person would find the marked coin could truly be called statistically impossible. We know there is only one way Jesus fulfilled every Messianic prophecy – He is the Eternal Son of God.

Oh, and as soon as we include the prophecy about the Virgin Birth – we do have the impossible. It would be a true miracle of God. When God is involved – the chances are always 1 in 1. God is always right!

Three weeks until Easter – what does it mean to you?

#1 – You can **trust** the faith you have in Jesus Christ. It is the **substance** of things hoped for and the **evidence** of things not seen. The Greek word for “substance” (*hupostasis*) means “confidence.” The word for “evidence” (*elegchos*) means “proof, that which is tested, reproof, reprove, rebuke, certain persuasion, leading to conviction.” The proof of our faith is so powerful that it is overwhelming!

#2 – You can **depend** on God to do everything He promises. For a Christian, that includes the promise that we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of God, “who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” God will do everything He promised to do! Jesus is who He said He is – did what He said He would do – and will do what He says He will do. We can depend on God in every area of our life.

#3 – You can **know** the power of God in your life. The same power that forgave sins on the Cross and raised Jesus from the grave is operating in you! You wonder if you can go on? You can in the power of God! You don’t know if you can forgive any longer? You can in the

power of God! You don't know if you can do what God asks you to do? You can in the power of God!

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