

But, I saw...

Did you hear?

If you see these, report it!

Miracles of a prophet or miracles of the Messiah?
How would Israel's religious rulers recognize the Messiah?

Were there witnesses to these events?

Could HE be the Messiah?

What was the Sanhedrin looking for in the first century?

1

WHEN WILL THE MESSIAH COME?

OLD TESTAMENT

NEW TESTAMENT

CREATION PATRIARCH EXODUS CONQUEST JUDGES KINGDOM EXILE RETURN SILENCE GOSPELS CHURCH MISSIONS FUTURE

Genesis 3:15 Deuteronomy 18:18 Micah 5:2 Daniel 7:13-14 Malachi 4:5-6 The Messiah!

Last of OT prophets

300 years before Jesus, Jewish teachers started to identify from Scriptures what miracles the Messiah would do.

TRYING TO ANSWER... How will we recognize the Messiah?

2

THE RELIGIOUS RULERS AND EVERYONE KNEW THAT THE MESSIAH WOULD BE...

The Son of David

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David."

Matthew 22:41-42



SON OF DAVID

Only the religious rulers had access to the temple registry for the priesthood and for kings and could verify if someone was a descendant of David. So, the public wasn't looking for this detail. They expected that their leaders could or would verify this fact.

3

IN A TIME OF NO AUTHENTICATED PROPHETS

The Jewish leaders separated miracles into two categories

Jews still believe

"According to a prevalent Jewish tradition, prophecy ceased with Malachi, not to be renewed until the messianic age." - Rabbi Hayyim Angel

RESERVED FOR THE MESSIAH

ANY PROPHET (EMPOWERED BY GOD'S SPIRIT)

4 SPECIFIC MIRACLES

ANY OF THE OTHER MIRACLES PERFORMED BY OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

Mostly based on Isaiah 35, 51, 53

"After the last prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi died, the Divine Spirit of prophetic revelation departed from the Jewish people." - Yoma 9b:17; Sanhedrin 11a:7

SO, THEY LOOKED FOR SOMEONE WHO WOULD...

4

#1 CLEANSE A LEPER

Showing God's power over the curse on our flesh.

The only time the Law has someone become unclean by touching a living body is in cases of leprosy. Touching a dead body made a person unclean and banished them outside the camp for a week (Numbers 19:11, 16). Leprosy was like a living death. So long as the person had leprosy, they were treated as unclean without end. There was no cure for leprosy, so it well-illustrated humanity's corrupted yet living flesh.

- The Jews saw leprosy as something inflicted by God. Sometimes calling it "The Finger of God."
- Old Testament examples include God demonstrating His power by
 - briefly giving Moses leprosy Exodus 4:6-7
 - Miriam being temporarily afflicted with leprosy by God for opposing Moses Numbers 12:10-15
 - King Uzziah being permanently stricken with leprosy for his arrogant and rebellious actions. 2 Chronicles 26:16-21

FYI: God miraculously cured one Gentile, but Israel's priests never examined his cure under the Mosaic Law. The reaction of Israel's king during this latter instance shows how Jews felt only God could cure leprosy. Jesus mentioned him in Luke 4:27 (2 Kings 5:1-14). To account for this Gentile, the Jewish sages narrowly claimed that only the Messiah would be able to heal a Jew of leprosy.

Naaman by Elisha

"Am I God, to kill and to make alive."
2 Kings 5:7

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#1 JESUS PUBLICLY CLEANSSED MULTIPLE LEPERS

• Jesus healed multiple people with leprosy. Following each cleansing, He commanded the former lepers to present themselves to a priest and follow through with the tests and the Law's demanded offering.

Jesus may have healed other lepers at unrecorded times, possibly Simon of Bethany; see Matthew 26:6 and Mark 14:3.

Individual healing: Matthew 8:2-4, Mark 1:40-45, and Luke 5:12-15, mass healing of Luke 17:12-18.

And as Jesus entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"

Luke 17:12-18

6

#1 JESUS PUBLICLY CLEANSED MULTIPLE LEPERS

• Jesus healed multiple people with leprosy. Following each cleansing, He commanded the former lepers to present themselves to a priest and follow through with the tests and the Law's demanded offering.

• Throughout Israel's history before Jesus' time, There are no accounts of anyone being declared free of leprosy under the Law. This implies God included this test in the Law solely to confirm these Messianic miracles. The delays in the test, before the priest could declare the leper free from their disease, assured there was true healing.

Leviticus 13-14.



7

#1 JESUS PUBLICLY CLEANSED MULTIPLE LEPERS

• The multiple sacrifices God included in the Law for healing from leprosy reveal the severity of leprosy and the defilement it illustrated under His statutes. There was a guilt offering, a sin offering, a burnt offering, the application of the blood of the guilt offering on the healed leper, and anointing with oil.

Leviticus 14:10-20



EVERY PRIEST IN ISRAEL WOULD HAVE HEARD THAT JESUS HAD REPEATEDLY HEALED LEPROUS PEOPLE, FULFILLING AN EXPECTED SIGN OF THE MESSIAH.

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#2 CASTING OUT A DEAF AND MUTE SPIRIT

- This would show *God's* power over individual sin and spiritual bondage.
- Israel's religious leaders commonly cast out demons using a standard formula where they spoke to the unclean spirit, gained a response, discovered the demon's name, and then commanded that demon to leave in the name of God. For obvious reasons, they deemed it impossible to cast out any demonic spirit resulting in the person being unable to hear and communicate.

There appeared to be a common belief that gaining the name of the evil spirit gave the person power over it.

Jesus did similar in Mark 5:6-13. The pagans from the nearby Decapolis region would have viewed Jesus' actions as those of Israel's priests and Pharisees. Jesus noted His knowledge of the exorcisms the religious rulers and priests performed in Matthew 12:27.

- Jesus cast out many demons and Jesus gave authority to His disciples to do the same.

Matthew 10:5-8

AND, THEN...

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#2 JESUS CAST OUT A DEAF AND MUTE SPIRIT

- One notable case was brought to Jesus when His disciples could not do so - that of a demon that caused a person to be mute and deaf. This was the specific case the sages taught was only possible by the Messiah - and here Jesus did so publicly for all to see. Jesus spoke directly to the evil spirit and commanded its departure. He showed that the demon had no choice but to listen to the voice of God (even as it tried to play dumb).

Jesus stresses to His disciples that this type took prayer. Its removal required God's verbal order, so they needed to seek God's direct intervention. In the person of Jesus, God was present as the Messiah. The witnessing scribes (representing the religious rulers and the Sanhedrin) assured that...

**KNOWLEDGE OF THIS MESSIANIC
MIRACLE WOULD HAVE BEEN
WIDESPREAD THROUGHOUT ISRAEL.**

Immediately after the transfiguration.

See Mark 9 especially verse 25.



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#3 HEALING OF BIRTH DEFECTS

- This would show God's power over humanity's inherited sin.
- The Pharisees commonly believed that a parent's sins could cause birth defects in their child.
- Alternatively, to a lesser degree, they felt a child in the womb could be conceived with an inclination towards good or evil. If evil, its actions in the womb could result in the baby being born with some physical problem.

They implied the parents were responsible for having a child with an evil inclination.

The child born with such an infirmity was considered a recipient of God's punishment for their sin or that of their ancestors. The religious leaders viewed such defects as humanly irreversible conditions and lifelong endless penalties.

They justified their view using passages within the Mosaic Law: Exodus 4:11 and the negative half of Exodus 34:6-7. The Mishnah shows how they considered someone born blind inferior to someone who became blind. In regards to synagogue practice: "a blind person may repeat the Shema, and act as translator [from Hebrew into Aramaic]; but... "One who never beheld the light of the sun, moon, and stars [that is, was born blind], may not repeat the Shema." (Mishnah Megillah 4:6)

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#3 JESUS HEALED A MAN BORN BLIND

Matthew 10:8; Luke 9:2; 10:9.

- Jesus cured all illnesses and gave His disciples the authority to do the same. The cause of each disease or infirmity was often left unspoken. Some were likely from genetically inherited problems. In one instance where clear testimony of multiple witnesses could be given, Jesus healed a man born blind.

Matthew 4:23. Jesus healed Gentiles too. See Mark 7:31-37; this man was deaf and had trouble speaking.

Including his parents. See John 9:20.

The entire account is found in John 9:1-38.

HIGHLIGHTS

1 As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ... 6 Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

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13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." ...

18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) ...

24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." ... 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

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#3 JESUS HEALED A MAN BORN BLIND

Jesus did this miracle shortly after the religious rulers wanted to stone Him for blaspheming. It was done in the presence of many witnesses in the temple's shadow, including Israel's antagonistic religious rulers. For those believing that this man's infirmities were lifelong permanent afflictions given by God, this could not be the work of any "regular" prophet, only God's Messiah or God himself. In Jesus, it was both.

John 8:56-59. Jesus' claim of divinity was not blaspheming if it was true. Jesus proved His divinity in this healing.

This was the basis of their claim that this man was "born in utter sin." John 9:34.

**"NEVER SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN
HAS IT BEEN HEARD THAT ANYONE
OPENED THE EYES OF A MAN
BORN BLIND."**



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#4 RAISING THE DEAD AFTER THREE DAYS

- This would show God's power to restore humanity's lost fellowship with God.
- The corruption that accompanied death was considered a sign of death's permanency.

The religious leaders believed the dead person's soul or spirit remained with the body for three days. On this basis, after three days when decay had begun, revival or resurrection was impossible.

Theoretically, a regular prophet could raise someone to life during those three days. A few Old Testament prophets did so: 1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37; 2 Kings 13:20-21. It appears the rabbis forgot or ignored one that happened far after three days dead. These were dry bones: Ezekiel 37:1-10.

Widow's son by Elijah
Shunammite's son by Elisha
Unnamed person by Elisha's bones



Some rabbis held the spirit could not depart until burial, one of the reasons they sought immediate burial the same day or as soon as possible (generally within three days wherever possible).

— Jewish Midrash
(Interpretations) Genesis Rabbah 100:7 and Leviticus Rabbah 18:1.

Burial Ossuary - 1st century Israel

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#4 JESUS RAISED THE DEAD

• Jesus raised two dead people to a restored physical life while simultaneously healing their cause of death. Both were unquestionably dead, one with a crowd of mourners surrounding her at home and the other being carried to his grave. Many witnessed their deaths, and countless later could verify that these individuals were up, fully healed, and enjoying life. Worst, for Jerusalem's religious elite, the father of one was a respected ruler of the synagogue, a person whose testimony would bear significant weight.

The son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17) and Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:22-24, 35-43; Luke 8:41-42, 49-56).

➤ **ALL WHO HEARD HAD NO DOUBT THAT JESUS WAS A GREAT PROPHET WHO RAISED THE DEAD.** ◀

However, these people had only likely been dead for half a day or perhaps a whole day.

BUT, THEN...

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#4 JESUS RAISED THE DEAD, ONE WELL AFTER THREE DAYS

• In His timing, with Lazarus of Bethany, Jesus does the remaining miracle that testifies He was the Messiah. Lazarus belonged to a well-known family, so many mourners were well-connected with the Jewish leadership. ← John 11:19, 45-46.

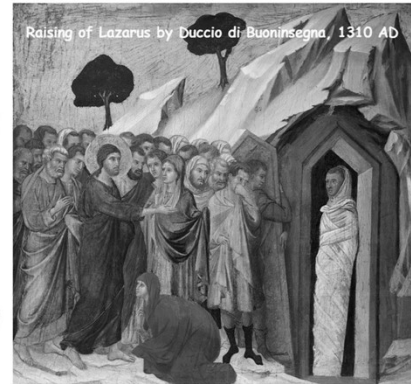
John 11:17

Nobody questioned that someone who died after a lingering illness and had been in the grave for four days was permanently dead. He was stinking dead. ←

John 11:39

Responding to Jesus' voice, Lazarus comes to life, healed of his former illness and restored from death's decay. The religious rulers couldn't dismiss this testimony and a large crowd of reliable witnesses. ←

John 11:43-44



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WITH JESUS' FINAL MESSIANIC MIRACLE THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND SANHEDRIN KNEW HE HAD FULFILLED EVERY AWAITED SIGN.

So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." John 11:47-48

JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH!

JEALOUSY?

For fear of losing their power and offices, they were willing to ignore the clear and irrefutable evidence and follow through with their desire to see Him dead.

So from that day on they made plans to put him to death. John 11:53

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APPLICATION

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

the Messiah
as
promised
and awaited.

John 20:30-31

- We have assurance that God provided eyewitness accounts and evidence sufficient for us to believe - and what we need to share with others.
- Every detail in the Bible is included for a reason.
- Jesus holds power over life and death, any physical infirmities whether genetic or acquired, and wicked spiritual forces. As believers in Him, we have nothing to fear.

1 John 4:18; 2 Timothy 1:7