

## THE NEW TESTAMENT MODEL OF THE MESSIAH

## Introduction

In evangelistic work, especially among the Jews, use is often made of the Messianic prophecies and their fulfillment in Jesus. Anyone who has actually been involved in such work, particularly on college campuses, will eventually come upon this problem:

"You say the Bible prophets are 100% accurate?" your prospect asks.

"Yes," you reply.

"And you claim this Jesus fulfills the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah?" he continues.

"That's right."

"Well, the Old Testament says that when the Messiah comes he will rule forever. You say Jesus has come already, but he is not yet reigning. Now either the Old Testament prophets weren't 100% accurate, or Jesus isn't the Messiah, or if he is, he still hasn't fulfilled the major Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. Come back and talk to me when he has!"

Of course we could dismiss such a person as incorrigible and let him take his chances at the Second Coming. However, the Scripture calls on us to do our best in everything, which presumably includes evangelism and apologetics. While it is true that Jesus has not yet fulfilled all of the Messianic prophecies, I believe it is possible to structure an argument in such a way that these prophecies are still a powerful evidence for the truth of Christianity.

## Methodology

Let us borrow some terms from the scientific method and imagine that the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah are the available "data" from which many men have attempted to construct "models" which fit these prophecies into a unified picture. During the several centuries surrounding the time of Jesus, this "model-making" activity seems to have been greatest. The so-called apocryphal books written in the intertestament period contain several models of the Messiah. We also have a model from the Jewish sect at Qumran which copied the famous Dead Sea Scrolls. The Messianic model held by the Rabbis in the early centuries after the time of Jesus is given in the Talmud. Finally, the New Testament gives a model which is claimed to be that of Jesus and His disciples.