

Christmas Prophecies

Matt. 1:18-23

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. ²⁰But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying,

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit,

²¹She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

²²Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Behold, the Virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son,

and they shall call His Name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.”

The birth of Christ fulfilled many prophecies.

This season is known as **Advent** - *[the coming]- or arrival of Christ.*

The Old Testament has been described as a document of practices without meaning, of longings unmet, and prophecies unfulfilled.

Since all the Scriptures are about Jesus, in Christ’s Person and work

- all the practices and sacrifices find their meaning in Christ;
- all the longings of the people of God find their satisfaction in Christ;
- and all the many prophecies are fulfilled in Christ’s birth, death, resurrection and ultimately in His 2nd Advent.

The Old Testament is said to be a room richly furnished, but poorly lit.

The New Testament is the light.

The message of Christ in the New Testament completes & makes sense of the Old.

Matthew says that Christ’s arrival was a fulfillment of what God spoke through the prophet. Prophecies are simply God making a promise of what He is going to do and then fulfilling it at the proper time.

Isaiah wrote,

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign:
Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son,
and she will call His name Immanuel.” (Is. 7:14)

This verse was given by Isaiah the prophet to king Ahaz of Judah in the face of a great enemies who were going up to Jerusalem to wage war against it.

“When it was reported to the house of David, saying, ‘The Arameans have camped in Ephraim,’ his heart and the hearts of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake with the wind. Then the Lord said to Isaiah, ‘Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway to the fuller’s field, and say to him, ‘Take care and be calm, have no fear and do not be fainthearted because of these two stubs of smoldering firebrands, on account of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and the son of Remaliah... it shall not stand nor shall it come to pass...’”

(Is. 7:2-7)

In the midst of a time of great fear and difficulty Isaiah was sent to bring comfort to the king of Judah and just happened to interject a key verse prophesying about the birth of the coming Messiah. This was the sign God would give concerning the king’s great deliverance from his enemy’s siege.

Seven hundred years later the angel, Gabriel visited a young woman named Mary, and sited this verse as being fulfilled in her.

Through Matthew the Holy Spirit applied this somewhat obscure verse to the birth of Jesus through the virgin Mary.

A few chapters later Isaiah spoke the word of the Lord to a shattered people. Because they had rejected the commandments of the Lord they became a conquered people. To a people who saw “...distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish, and they will be driven away into darkness.” (8:22)

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them.
You shall multiply the nation, You shall increase their gladness; They will be glad in Your presence as with the gladness of harvest. As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, The rod of their oppressor, as the battle of Midian. For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult, and cloak rolled in blood, will be fore burning, fuel for the fire.

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.”

Isaiah 9:2-7

Israel was a land of idolatry, false prophets, rampant immorality and evil of every kind. God warned them of the judgment that was coming if they did not repent of their sins. Instead of listening they killed God’s prophets and rejected their message. When the consequences came they were overcome by their enemies. God refers to their conqueror, “Assyria, the rod of My anger.” (10:5)

To the remnant of believers God promised a deliverer:

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;

When Jesus was walking with His disciples on the road to Emmaus, He rebuked them and then instructed them. At this point Jesus had finished His work on the cross and risen from the dead; and they didn’t recognize who He was,

And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory” Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. (Luke 24:25-27)

In a sense Jesus explained that history was ‘His story’.

The first part of Isaiah’s prophecy speaks of Christ’s first Advent:

Christ’s first coming took place when He was born of the virgin Mary.

For a child will be born to us... refers to His humanity.

The second, unto us a Son is given... refers to His deity.

In the first coming of Christ, the God-Man came to purchase salvation as a sin offering, satisfying the requirements of God’s holiness in order to justify us.

Paul wrote:

God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor. 5:21)

He added,

“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law that we might receive the adoption as sons...” (Gal. 4:4-5).

The second part of Isaiah’s prophecy shows the same Son as the Ruler of the Governments of the World:

And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.”

Isaiah 9:2-7

This ‘dual prophecy’ is fulfilled by both the first and second coming of Messiah. It’s like looking at two mountain peaks with a valley in-between. From the perspective of an onlooker, it looks like one mountain, but in reality it is two.

So, there are two comings predicted.

1). The first coming of Christ - His incarnation – God the Son took on flesh.

The first part of the verse shows Christ’s humanity: He was born and grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man; then at the age of 30 He began a ministry of healing and teaching. This was followed by His crucifixion where He took on the sins of mankind, dying as a sacrifice. Afterwards He rose from the dead and then ascended to the Father, sitting on His throne at the right hand of power in glory.

James Boice writes,

“Unlike anybody else who has ever been born, He was not only man; He was God as well. Therefore, while as a man He could die upon the cross, as God He died in order to pay the infinite price necessary for our salvation.”¹

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *The Christ of Christmas*, (Phillipsburg: P. & R. Publishing, 2009), p. 20.

2). His second coming is our Blessed Hope. It will take place at some time in the future when He returns to set up His Kingdom on the earth.

And the government will rest on His shoulders

The kingdom described:

- His government will rest on Him
- His government will be ever-increasing
- Will be a government of peace
- It will be established from the throne of David – covenant promise
- It will be established in justice and righteousness
- It will be a never ending rule

These are details surrounding the promise of Christ's rule.

The Revelation records the loud voices in heaven as Christ's reign is foreseen,

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders, who sit upon their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying,

"We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign."

(Rev. 11:15-17).

The King:

His name will be a perfect description of His Person:

And His name will be called

Wonderful – noun – a name in itself; it speaks of His Person and work

Counselor – Speaks of His wisdom, especially in government

Mighty God – omnipotent, supreme ruler

Eternal Father – Father or source of eternity, providing eternal life

Prince of peace – Sar-shalom – the One who brings peace
to a troubled world

Like the **Throne of David** – a shepherd King!

The King who was born in a manger was...

The Infant who is Infinite

From a Mother who is Miraculous

Who was the Revelation and fulfillment that is ultimate.

The writer to the Hebrews spoke of Jesus Christ as God's ultimate revelation.

"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world, and He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high..." (Heb. 1:2-3).

John wrote that the Word who was, was with God and was God, became flesh and dwelt among us, has explained or revealed God to us. (John 1:1, 14-18)

Edmund P. Clowney, the former president of Westminster Theological Seminary, had been speaking about Christ to some individual. The person said, "The problem I have with Christianity is that it all happened so long ago. You're talking about something that happened two thousand years ago. If Christ had only been born, say, a hundred years ago, it would be different." Dr. Clowney's response was the correct one He said, "Those events that happened so long ago have not ceased to be current. Rather, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came then, comes again and again through the person of His Holy Spirit to bring the accomplishment of His salvation to the individual."² That's why Christmas is alive.

Phillips Brooks' carol, "O Little town of Bethlehem," shows this to be true,

How silently, how silently
 That wondrous gift is giv'n!
 So God imparts to human hearts
 The blessings of His heav'n.
 No ear may hear His coming
 But in this world of sin,
 Where meek souls will receive Him still,
 The dear Christ enters in.

One last thought: Christ's Advent that we celebrate at Christmastime, is only part of the prophecy. It means that God has kept His promises. The best is yet to come. It's like a down payment guaranteeing Christ's return. If His first coming

² Boice, p. 25.

changed the world as it has, giving salvation and hope to all who would believe, imagine what a difference His Second Coming will make!