

Prophecy Unveiled - We Three Kings

Saturday, December 4, 2021

3:30 PM

A few weeks ago we began a new series "Prophecy Unveiled." We spent the first two weeks of December examining prophecies concerning the birth of Christ. Jesus' birth and how they were fulfilled to give us a perspective for taking look at prophecy that has yet to be fulfilled.

In those two messages we looked at 12 different prophecies related to Jesus' Birth

1. A Seed To Crush The Serpents Head
2. Prophetic Promises To Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & Judah
3. From The Line of David
4. Born of A Virgin
5. The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem
6. Called Out Of Egypt
7. A Great Loss of Children's Lives
8. He Would Be Worshipped By Shepherds
9. A Star Would Point The Way To Christ
10. Gifts Would Be Presented To Him
11. A Light For The Gentiles
12. He Would Be Called A Nazarene

Since yesterday was Christmas and the Christmas Story is still fresh in our minds, I wanted to revisit two of those prophecies that concern events following the birth of Christ as described in Matthew Chapter 2

Matthew 2:1-12

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi[\[a\]](#) from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

6 "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.' "

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

We have already discussed two specific prophecies related to the visit of the Magi...

A Star Would Point The Way To Christ

Prophecy - “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, and a scepter shall rise from Israel, and shall crush through the forehead of Moab, and tear down all the sons of Sheth” ([Numbers 24:17](#)).

Gifts Would Be Presented To Him

Prophecy - “May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to him. May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts. May all kings bow down to him and all nations serve him” ([Psalm 72:10-11](#)).

But let's see if there are any other prophecies related to the events that Matthew describes.

Traditionally these visitors are referred to as The Magi, Wise Men or Even Kings.

Tradition assigns a number, and names to these visitors. Thus the song "We Three Kings"

We even go so far as to misrepresent the timeline of their visit and depict them as being present on the night Christ was born.

However, the story as related by Matthew doesn't include any of those details. Matthew uses a greek word Magos to define who these visitors are. Though there is great debate, these were most likely wise men, teachers, priests, physicians, astrologers, seers, interpreters of dreams from Babylon. Some believe this is the same type of people that Daniel was placed in charge of as found in Daniel Chapter 2...

Daniel 2:48

48 Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise (**chakkîym**, khak-keem';) men.

Matthew also does not tell us there were three. There could have been more than 3 but we know we do know that there was more than 1. - Magi, Wise Men (Plural). Again it is tradition that has assigned the number, primarily based upon the number of gifts mentioned. (Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh)

And neither the Gospel of Matthew nor the scriptures at all assign names to these men. These too come from tradition - as early as the 8th century AD - and assign them both names and Nationalities

As far as the timing goes, Mathew simply states "After Jesus was born" We know from the answer they gave Herod as to when the Star appeared that Herod then decided to kill all the babies from the age of two. Some the timing of their visit had to occur sometime within 2 years of his birth.

Matthew also describes their visit to a "house" - "they saw the child (as opposed to baby) with his mother Mary."

These traditional reinterpretations do not mean that there is not scriptural truth and prophetic fulfillment in the events of the visit of the Magi.

Remember what the scripture says about prophecy

Amos 3:7

7 Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

Isaiah 46:10-11

10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.'

11 ...What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do.

2 Peter 1:21 (ESV)

21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:21 (NIrV)

21 Prophecy never came simply because a prophet wanted it to. Instead, the Holy Spirit guided the prophets as they spoke. So, although prophets are human, prophecy comes from God.

And remember our ground rules for studying prophecy...

- There is much we can learn from studying prophecy
- There is much that will still be unclear
- By studying prophecy we can become more aware of the devils schemes and the world in which we live. (as evidenced in the Wise Men's decision not to return to Herod because of God's prophetic revelation to them in a dream)
- Prophecy helps us be prepared
- We must keep in mind that prophecy must be examined from three different viewpoints (The Past - prophecy that has already been fulfilled, The Present - Prophecy that is currently unfolding, and The Future - Prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled) In some cases a particular prophecy may have application to all three.

So let's talk about the gifts that The Magi bring to Jesus...

We have already said that tradition, not Matthew, calls them kings. But there is at least some biblical evidence that created this interpretation.

The prophecy we looked at in Psalm 72 is one of those...

Prophecy - "May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to him. May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts. May all kings bow down to him and all nations serve him" ([Psalm 72:10-11](#)).

There is another passage that perhaps speaks prophetically of this event. Again I believe this particular passage must be viewed from three different perspectives. A prophecy concerning the rebuilding of the temple following the time of the Exile, A prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah, and a prophecy concerning the coming Millennial Kingdom. Today we will consider its application to the events of Matthew Chapter 2

Isaiah 60:1-7 (ESV)

60 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
2 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; *(very similar to the words of Isaiah 9:2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those*

who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. And verse 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.)

but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. 3 And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

4 Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. 5 Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. 6 A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, (*Notice Myrrh is not mentioned here*) and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord. 7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on my altar, and I will beautify my beautiful house.

Take special notice of Verse 3 and verse 6. Could this be a reference to the visit of the Magi.

And what about the gifts themselves... **Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh**

The treasures the wise men brought were of significant value and prophetic importance. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh are gifts worthy of a king. Gold is symbolic of Christ's deity as King, frankincense represents His purity as Priest of God, and myrrh is suggestive of His anointed work as a Prophet and of His death.

Gold

Gold in the Bible is symbolic of God. It represents the most precious of metals and is extremely rare in its purest form. The intrinsic value of gold has been established since ancient times and gold was used to honor kings. King Solomon had an ivory throne overlaid with the best gold ([1 Kings 10:18](#)). The furniture of the Tabernacle features gold, symbolically pointing to Christ and His deity. The Ark of the Covenant was constructed of acacia wood (symbolic of Jesus' humanity) and overlaid with gold (symbolic of His divinity). The mercy seat and two cherubim were made of pure gold ([Exodus 25:10-21](#)).

Because gold is a pure and valuable metal, it is also associated with God's precepts, principles, and promises—all of which are perfect and pure and supersede any that are set by man.

The gift of gold, given by one of the wise men, pointed to the begotten Son who was given by God to be King of His people. This wise man's gift proclaimed Jesus to be King at birth a particular fact that Pilate reiterated at Jesus' death

[John 19:19](#) And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Frankincense

Frankincense is an aromatic, clear resin obtained from trees in northern India and Arabia ([Isaiah 60:6](#); [Jeremiah 6:20](#)). It is used in incense and perfumes, and was treasured for its aroma and healing properties. Frankincense was an ingredient used in the sanctuary of the Lord ([Exodus 30:34](#)) as part of the meat offering ([Leviticus 2:1](#), [16](#); [6:15](#); [24:7](#)) and as a sweet savor (incense). Frankincense is also a symbol of prayer ([Psalms 141:2](#); [Luke 1:10](#); [Revelation 5:8](#); [8:3](#)).

Because of the use in the Temple, frankincense is considered to be emblematic of Jesus' office as a Priest of God ([Exodus 30:34-37](#)). It is also symbolic of the priest's work in offering the prayers of the people to the Lord, ([Luke 1:10](#), [Revelation 8:3-5](#)).

The gift of frankincense, given by one of the wise men, pointed to the work of Jesus as a Priest of God, who ministered for three and one half years to the people and continues to minister as our great high priest today

Hebrews 7:25

25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Myrrh

Myrrh was a spice used for medicine, cosmetics, and anointing oil. It was mixed into the oil that was used to anoint prophets for the divinely appointed work of revealing God and communicating His will and words to His people. Jesus came to the nation of Israel ([Matthew 15:24](#)) and He came as a Prophet in fulfillment of a prophecy of Moses:

[Deuteronomy 18:15](#) The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet [Jesus] from the midst of thee [Israel], of thy brethren, like unto me [Moses]; unto Him ye shall hearken. Jesus Himself confirmed His office as a Prophet to Israel. He attributed the office of Prophet to Himself with His words:

[Luke 13:33](#) Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

[Matthew 13:57](#) And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

Jesus also confirmed His office as a Prophet by His works:

- 1. As a Prophet, Jesus did the will of the Father: [John 4:34](#) Jesus said unto them, My meat [food] is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*
- 2. As a Prophet, Jesus did the work of the Father: [Matthew 11:27](#) All things are delivered unto me of my Father...*
- 3. As a Prophet, Jesus spoke the words of the Father: [John 8:28](#) Then said Jesus unto them..I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.*

[John 12:49](#) For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

The gift of myrrh also takes on another representation. In addition to anointing prophets, oil was used in the anointing of the dead. Myrrh was presented to Jesus at His birth pointing to His life as a Prophet and it was used at His death to anoint His body for the grave.

Isaiah's prophecies also point to this a few chapters earlier in Isaiah 53:

Isaiah 53

53 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. 4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. 9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. 11 After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

[Mark 16:1](#) *And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.*

[John 19:39](#) *And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.*

[John 19:40](#) *Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.*

King, Priest and Prophet

Jesus came as King of Israel (Messiah), Priest of God (to atone for man's sins), and Prophet of God (speaking God's words). The wise men's gifts represented each of those offices in prophetic typology and pointed to all that Jesus would do in His incarnation and in His death and resurrection.