

Prophecy Unveiled - The Birth of A Savior (Part 2)

Sunday, December 11, 2021

Last week we began a series entitled "Prophecy Unveiled. The first couple of weeks, I told you we would look back on prophecies concerning Jesus' birth and examine how they were fulfilled to give us a perspective for taking look at prophecy that has yet to be fulfilled.

I want to reiterate our ground rules for studying prophecy...

- There is much we can learn from studying 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.

- There is much that will still be unclear

1 Corinthians 13:12 (NirV)

12 Now we see only a dim likeness of things. It is as if we were seeing them in a foggy mirror. But someday we will see clearly. We will see face to face. What I know now is not complete. But someday I will know completely, just as God knows me completely.

- **The point of prophecy is not to be able to set times and dates** or even to know exactly how things will come to pass, but to believe that God has a time schedule and that the things He speaks of will come true.

Matthew 24:36 (NirV)

36 "But no one knows about that day or hour. Not even the angels in heaven know. The Son does not know. Only the Father knows.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-2 (NirV)

5 Brothers and sisters, we don't have to write to you about times and dates. 2 You know very well how the day of the Lord will come. It will come like a thief in the night.

- By studying prophecy we can become more aware of the devils schemes and the world in which we live.

2 Corinthians 2:11

11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

Ephesians 6:10-14

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 1

- Prophecy helps us be prepared

Matthew 25:13

13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Matthew 24:44

44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

- **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.

I also referenced Dr. Peter Stoners work Science Speaks to give us an understanding of the importance of Prophecy, especially the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament that were fulfilled by Jesus.

Some scholars believe there are more than 300 prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament. These prophecies are specific enough that the mathematical probability of Jesus fulfilling even a handful of them, let alone all of them, is staggeringly improbable—if not impossible.

Peter Stoner, Chairman of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena College, was passionate about biblical prophecies. With 600 students from the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Stoner looked at eight specific prophecies about Jesus. They came up with extremely conservative probabilities for each one being fulfilled, and then considered the likelihood of Jesus fulfilling all eight of those prophecies.

The conclusion to his research was staggering. The prospect that anyone would satisfy those eight prophecies was just 1 in 10^{17} . In [Science Speaks](#), he described it like this:

"Let us try to visualize this chance. If you mark one of ten tickets, and place all of the tickets in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the right ticket is one in ten. Suppose that we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state.

"Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote using their own wisdom."

16 Prophecies 1 chance in 10 to the 45th power

Let us try to visualize this as we did before. Take this number of silver dollars. If you make these into a solid ball, you will have a great sphere with a center at the earth, and extending in all directions more than 30 times as far as from the earth to the sun. (If a train had started from the earth at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed, and had traveled steadily toward the sun at the rate of sixty miles per hour, day and night, it would be about reaching its destination today. But remember that our ball of silver dollars extends thirty times that far in all directions.) If you can imagine the marking of one silver dollar, and then thoroughly stirring it into this great ball, and blindfolding a man and telling him to pick out one dollar, and expect it to be the marked one, you have somewhat of a picture of how absolutely the fulfillment of sixteen prophecies referring to Jesus Christ proves both that He is the Son of God and that our Bible is inspired. Certainly God directed the writing of His Word.

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.

Last week we looked at these prophecies surrounding the birth of Christ and their fulfillment as found in the Christmas Story

A Seed To Crush The Serpents Head

Genesis 3:15

15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Matthew 1:21

21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

Luke 2:10-11

10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Prophetic Promises To Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & Judah

- The nations will be blessed through Abraham's lineage
- God's covenant with Isaac's ancestors
- The nations will be blessed through Jacob's offspring
- The scepter will come through Judah

Luke 1:46-47; 54-55

46 And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

54 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful 55 to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.”

From The Line of David

“The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In His days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which He will be called: The LORD Our Righteous Savior” ([Jeremiah 23:5-6](#)).

Fulfillment:

In fulfillment of this prophecy given over 600 years before, the angel Gabriel told Mary, *“You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David, and He will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; His kingdom will never end”* ([Luke 1:31-33](#)).

Born of A Virgin

Prophecy - “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel” ([Isaiah 7:14](#)).

Fulfillment

“She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). (Matthew 1:21-23; compare Isaiah 7:14)

Mary verifies the fulfillment of this miraculous prophecy with her question to the Angel Gabriel

Luke 1:34-35

34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Let's continue our look with several more prophecies surrounding the Birth of our Savior

The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem

Prophecy:

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." (Micah 5:2).

And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace. (Micah 5:4-5).

Fulfillment:

Before Jesus was born, Caesar Augustus issued a decree demanding a census. This required every citizen to register in the town of their family origin. Scripture tells us, *“So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David...while they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son”* ([Luke 1:1-7](#)).

"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. 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written: "'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.'" (Matthew 2:4-6).

Called Out Of Egypt

Prophecy:

"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hosea 11:1).

Fulfillment:

...an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” (Matthew 2:13).

"So he [Joseph] got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son'" (Matthew 2:14-15).

On the surface the connection appears tenuous, as Hosea's statement in context refers to God bringing Israel out of Egypt at the Exodus. But Matthew was calling to mind the Old Testament portrait of Messiah as representative of Israel, as the perfect Israelite who identifies with his people in their sin so that he might deliver them. From that perspective, the Exodus is a picture of God calling and redeeming his people via his true Son, Jesus.

This is a perfect example of one of prophecy ground rules... Viewing prophecy from the different perspectives of past, present and future.

A Great Loss of Children's Lives

Prophecy:

The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah wrote, *“This is what the LORD says: ‘A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more’”* ([Jeremiah 31:15](#)).

Fulfillment:

Jeremiah foretold the atrocity that occurred after Herod realized he did not know which baby was the Messiah. He was furious and

16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. 17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: 18 “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”([Matthew 2:16-18](#)).

He Would Be Worshiped By Shepherds

Prophecy – “May the desert tribes bow before him and his enemies lick the dust” ([Psalm 72:9](#)).

Fulfillment – The angels came to the shepherds to tell them the good news of Christ’s birth, and they hurried to find him and worship Him.

“This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger...When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child” ([Luke 2:12](#), [Luke 15-17](#))

But there is so much more to this prophecy if you dig a little deeper...

Micah 4:8 (ESV)

8 And you, O tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, the former dominion shall come, kingship for the daughter of Jerusalem.

A number of years ago... Jimmy DeYoung, an outstanding news commentator and Bible teacher, make a presentation at a Bible prophecy conference. Since it was during the Christmas season, he was teaching about the birth of Jesus in the first chapter of Luke. He read {from} Luke 2:8-12:

In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. And the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger.’

Dr. DeYoung then asked the audience a surprising question: “Did you ever wonder why this was a sign?” {He} had us turn to the book of Micah. We were all familiar with Micah 5:2, which prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, but many of us were not familiar with Micah 4:8, which prophesied that He would be announced at the tower of the flock (Migdal Eder). Dr. DeYoung, who had lived in Jerusalem for a number of years, told us that Migdal Eder was a two-story tower that had been built in a pasture outside Bethlehem. The remains of the tower had recently been discovered.

Dr. DeYoung explained that the shepherds in the field had not all been the lowly shepherds that we had always assumed. They were actually priests from the temple who were doing shepherding work to assist in the birthing of the sacrificial lambs so that they would be unblemished for sacrifice. While the shepherds were keeping watch over the flock from the top floor of the tower, the shepherd-priests would bring the pregnant sheep in from the field to the tower’s bottom floor, where the sheep would give birth. As soon as a lamb was born, the priests would wrap it with strips of cloths made from old priestly undergarments. This was done to keep the lamb from getting blemished. The priests would then place the lamb onto a manger to make sure it would not get trampled. Wow! So when these shepherd-priests went into Bethlehem and saw the baby Jesus wrapped in cloths, lying in a manger, they must have exclaimed, “There is the Lamb of God, prepared for sacrifice, unblemished!” They had to be excited beyond description, because they were the only ones who could have understood the sign. It was just for them from God. It was was personal!

{Presumably}, Jesus’ swaddling cloths were from the same source as the lambs’ cloths. Mary’s cousin, Elizabeth, was married to the priest Zacharias. Elizabeth could have given her the cloths made from the priestly undergarments. It is highly probable that the first clothes that Jesus wore were the clothes of a priest. What a sign!

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](#)).

Fulfillment – God places the star in the sky to lead the magi to Christ, that they might worship Him.

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him” ([Matthew 2:1-2](#)).

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](#)).

Fulfillment – The magi who visited Jesus brought him gifts and bowed to worship Him.

“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” ([Matthew 2:11](#)).

A Light For The Gentiles

Prophecy -

Isaiah 9:1-2 (NLT)

9 Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory 2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.

Isaiah 42:1-7 (NIV)

42 “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.

6 “I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, 7 to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

Isaiah 49:6

6 he says: “It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”

Fulfillment –

Luke 2:28-32

28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 29 “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”

He Would Be Called A Nazarene

19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt 20 and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”

21 So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, 23 and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene. (*Matthew 2:19-23; compare Isaiah 11:1-5; 53:3*)

*In this case, Matthew isn’t quoting a direct prophecy. In fact, the words “Nazareth” and “Nazarene” don’t appear anywhere in the Old Testament. Matthew is, however, alluding to a general strain in the prophets, of whom he speaks collectively here. Isaiah, among others, describes the Messiah as a Branch, using a Hebrew word, **netser**, which sounds similar to Nazarene in the original language. Moreover, people from Nazareth were held in low regard at the time of Jesus, and Isaiah wrote that the Christ would be despised and rejected. While these allusions may appear vague to modern readers, they would have been clear – and compelling – for Matthew’s original Jewish audience.*

What does all this prophecy tell us... That Jesus is the promised savior of Mankind. The son of God who has come into the world. Immanuel - God with us in human flesh. And if I can trust what has been fulfilled, then I can believe that what is prophesied to come will also be fulfilled. He came the first time as a baby in a manger. He is coming again as our conquering king.