

THE EXTRAORDINARY PROPHECIES ABOUT CHRIST

Various Scriptures

We are in our Christmas series called “**An Extraordinary Christmas,**” looking at the extraordinary event and details of Christ’s birth. A simple definition of extraordinary is “very unusual,” “unusually great,” or “convened in a special way.” I think that’s a great description of His birth. Last week we saw how His birth was extraordinary in the fact that He pre-existed His birth. If you missed last week, go back online and listen to that. It’s so important that I wanted to preach it two weeks in a row. Because He is God and God is eternal, this wasn’t the average birth. Eve’s pain might have been average but He isn’t average. He existed from all eternity. We are better off to call it more precisely, an **incarnation**. The taking on of flesh. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14).

But one of the other elements that makes His birth so extraordinary is **the sheer amount of prophecies that foretold His coming**. The Old Testament is full with prophecies about Christ. Actually if you were to sum up the overall message of the OT, you could sum it up with, “**Christ is coming**.” He is the central message and focus of prophecy. Now a biblical prophet is known for a couple of things: (1) he **forthtells** the words of God, giving teaching and revealing divine instruction and (2) he **foretells** God’s future plans. But how do you know whether someone is an authentic prophet or not and his foretelling is true? Well, it’s not complicated. Basically, does what they say in the name of the Lord come true? Deuteronomy 18:22 says, “When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.” In other words if it doesn’t come true, don’t listen to him. That’s the simple test of a true prophet. Isaiah challenged some of the false prophets and false gods of his day to foretell the future as well. He said in Isaiah 41:23, “Declare the things that are going to come afterward, that we may know that you are gods.” And because the false gods couldn’t respond, Isaiah later said, “Behold, you are of no account and your work amounts to nothing.” False gods and false prophets had no credibility according to Isaiah, a true prophet, because they could not foretell or predict the future. So prophecy, **specific and precise** prophecy (that cannot be manipulated by man) **establishes the credibility of God** and His Word. In fact, when it comes to the credibility of the Bible, it’s important to know that **approximately ¼ of it was written prophetically** and this incredible, prophetic nature and prophetic precision of the Bible has been a very effective element in winning many skeptics over the years as you can imagine.

And so what I want to do today is walk through some of the OT prophecies about Christ’s birth, looking at the **predictions** and **fulfillments** because it’s really extraordinary. No one else has had a whole book written about them for 1,000’s of years before they were born other than Jesus Christ.

I. **BORN THE SEED OF EVE (Genesis 3:15)**

This is right after the serpent deceived the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, to sin against the Lord. The Lord is reprimanding all three of them in Genesis 3 but in verses 14 and 15 is where we find our prophecy in the reprimand given to Satan. Verse 14 “Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise Him on the heel.”

A. **Prediction**

Here we see Eve's seed would be in conflict with the serpent's seed, talking about their spiritual **descendants, singular groups**. You're either part of this group or that group – the Kingdom of Light or kingdom of darkness. There's no in-between. Those in the family of God who trust the Lord would be in conflict with Satan's descendants, those who reject God. You see the war between the two lines in particular throughout Genesis leading up to the flood but also all throughout history, up to the present day. Even with the Pharisees Jesus said you are of your father the devil and you want to do his desires (Jn. 8:44). They were religious seed of Satan. But you'll also notice a **singular individual** sense: "HE shall bruise you on the head and YOU shall bruise him on the heel." The **singular individual** seed of Eve here is [Christ] who will bruise you [Satan], on the head. "On the head" meaning Christ is going to deal you a **death blow** – you can get hit in a lot of different places on the body but if you get hit in the head it's deadly (ask Goliath). What the Lord is saying here is that through the cross, Jesus Christ, seed of Eve, as a man, is going to bring a devastating death blow in judgment against Satan.

B. Fulfillment (John 16:8-11; Rom. 5:15-19)

That's exactly what happened. John 16 says through the cross, the ruler of this world (Satan) has been judged. He was dealt a death blow in judgment and as Christ goes to the cross for our sin it's clear He was stricken as if on the heel. It wasn't a mortal wound in the sense that He raised to glorious life 3 days later but Satan will spend eternity in eternal damnation. So that is the prophecy and it's **the first promise of a Savior** in the Bible.

II. BORN THE SEED OF ABRAHAM – (Genesis 12:1-3; Gen. 22:18)

This is another one right off the bat in the Bible. Many of you are familiar with this passage and what is called the Abrahamic Covenant. God singles out Abraham in the line of Eve and says, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the **land** which I will show you; and I will make you a great **nation**, and I will **bless** you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So it's a promise from God concerning land (Israel), seed (a great nation), and blessing (spiritual). Genesis 22:18 revisits it saying, "In your **seed** all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."

A. Prediction (Genesis 12:3, 22:18)

That's the prediction. Abraham would have a **seed** that blessed the nations.

B. Fulfillment (Matt. 1:1-17; Gal. 3:14, 16)

As for the fulfillment, Matthew chapter 1 records the genealogy of Christ, tracing Christ back to Abraham. He is Abraham's seed and in Galatians 3:16 Paul specifically pointed to this verse in Genesis 22 and says the singular "Seed" mentioned there is Jesus Christ. "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'and to your seed,' that is, Christ." And verse 14 "in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

III. BORN OF A VIRGIN – Isaiah 7:14

I want to spend a little more time on this one than the rest because the virgin birth is an important part of the incarnation doctrine. This prophecy was spoken by the prophet Isaiah **734 years before Christ's birth**. At the time, the nation of Israel was in spiritual decline and it

was divided. The northern half was called Israel, or Ephraim (after Israel's largest tribe) and the southern half was called Judah. If you remember from back when Israel entered the land, they were told not to make alliances with the wicked people of Canaan or the nations around them. Well they didn't completely obey the Lord and even became worse than those pagan nations, sacrificing their children to false gods and having idols under every tree and in every corner of the land. They wanted to be like the rest of the world and because of it, they were falling apart spiritually and physically. They were fighting each other and seeking security by making alliances with pagan nations instead of trusting the Lord their God.

At the time, Assyria was the big cheese around and Ahaz, king of Judah, had made an alliance with Assyria, trusting in Assyria and not the Lord. But Rezin, king of Aram(Syria), and Pekah, king of Israel(Ephraim), rebelled against Assyria and actually came up to Jerusalem and besieged it, trying to force Judah to join them in their rebellion. And though the Lord doesn't approve of Ahaz's alliance with Assyria, he actually comforts Ahaz. Isaiah says to him, "Take care and be calm, have no fear and do not be fainthearted because of these two stubs of **smoldering firebrands.**" Basically, these two kings of Israel and Syria are almost burned up. There may be a lot of heat coming from them, but they're already mostly coals by now. There's not much left of them. Their plan to breach Jerusalem will collapse. Assyria will destroy Damascus and Israel. He says the Israelites will go into captivity and won't recover, which was prophetic as well because they there be replaced with foreigners and that's how we got the Samaritans, half Jews who intermarried with the foreigners. That's chapter 7:1-8 so far. But if you look at verse 9, the Lord begins to tell Ahaz that if he continues to trust Assyria and not the Lord, he will not last either. **He's going to end up like Israel and Syria because Assyria will eventually turn on him too.** As one commentator said, his trusting Assyria is like a mouse asking a cat to take care of two bad rats. As soon as the cat is done with the rats, it'll turn on the mouse. That's a good lesson for us. Don't take a tiger by the tail. **Whatever you trust in other than the Lord will eventually turn around and devour you.** So Israel and Syria's fate is decided but Ahaz for the time being has a decision to make.

In verse 11 God asks Ahaz the one thing that most people who have ever lived want from God – **a sign!** God says to ask Him for any sign that these things are going to happen. Make it as deep as Sheol or high as heaven! But the funny thing is, Ahaz doesn't ask for anything. He says, "I will not test the Lord!" And at first glance that seems noble but based on his track record and his plans to trust Assyria anyway, it's actually false piety. **He doesn't want to trust the Lord because he doesn't want to have any obligation to obey the Lord.** We find that sort of attitude towards the Lord a lot today. People won't trust in Him because they don't want to be subject to Him. We've got to be careful that's not us, coming to church and singing praises to God and then going about the rest of life outside these doors living as if the Lord doesn't exist. Many are like Ahaz today snuggling up to their abuser, the world, as Ahaz snuggles up to his abuser, Assyria. He was a professor but not a possessor. He was a fake.

A. Prediction (7:14-16)

The Lord and Isaiah see through his fake piety and the Lord really steps it up here. He broadens the audience to include the whole house of David, the entire Judean nation that keeps testing Him and doesn't obey Him. The Lord says through Isaiah, "Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of **my God** as well? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, a she will call His name

Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey at the time he knows enough to refuse evil and choose good. For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken. The Lord will bring on you, on your people, and on your father's house such days as have never come since the day that Ephraim separated from Judah, the king of Assyria." And in the rest of the chapter it goes on to describe the terrible ways that the land will be laid waste by Egypt and Assyria.

B. Partial Fulfillment (7:15–8:8)

In the immediate context, this prophecy has a partial fulfillment written about a second wife Isaiah had (his first passed away). If you read through chapter 8:1-8 you will see that Isaiah approaches a prophetess, who would've been an unmarried virgin¹ at the time he spoke this, and they have a boy who has two names: One is Maher-shalal-hash-baz which means "quick pickings, easy prey" – signifying the coming attack. The other name is **Immanuel, meaning "God with us"** which is given to him in light of the fact that the boy is evidence God would be with them despite the Syrian-Israeli threat and Ahaz's disobedience(8:8). Isaiah's other son was called Shear-jashub, meaning "a remnant shall return," a prophetic name foretelling that a remnant would return from their Babylonian exile. But before this boy Immanuel knows how to say "mother" or "father", **which would be about 2 years from now if you include the 9 months of pregnancy**, God says the wealth of Damascus in Syria and the spoil of Samaria (Israel) will be carried away before the king of Assyria (8:4). That's exactly what happened. Before this boy would've been able to say mom or dad, both attacking kings were killed. Assyria eventually turned on Judah as well, along with Egypt (7:18) and the land was laid waste (vv. 19-25). And now they're like homeless nomads living off curds and honey. We see a partial fulfillment in Isaiah's son.

C. Ultimate Fulfillment (Matt. 1:18-23)

However the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy would come much later. This is one of those prophecies that fall under the law of double reference. It is **a double reference prophecy**. An OT double reference prophecy like this is not unusual and would have two fulfillments.² First, it could be dealing with ancient Israel at the time but second, it would also be pointing towards a future event with ultimate fulfillment. Some double references point to Christ's 1st and 2nd coming at the same time, without revealing the Church age in-between those advents. But here, **the virgin would ultimately be the virgin Mary, unmarried at the time, bearing a Son named Jesus Christ, who also carries the name Immanuel, God with us.**³ **The difference thought between Isaiah's wife and Mary is that Mary never had relations with a man to bear her child. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit supernaturally.** One of the points God wants Judah and Ahaz to ultimately understand is that eventually, He will raise up a child from the tribe of Judah, to reign in Judah, and He will trust in Me. He too will be born in difficult days when Judah is under foreign oppression too (Rome), but unlike Ahaz, He will refuse evil and do good.

We see the fulfillment of this prophecy explained by Matthew in Matthew 1:18-25. "Now 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. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But 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. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. Now 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.’” And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.” Christ’s conception by the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary is a big deal doctrinally. He did not have an earthly dad which means He did not inherit a sin nature. The generation of His life by the Holy Spirit is a mystery but it is in no way impossible for God who creates and forms all things.⁴

Isaiah is considered the evangelical prophet because he prophesies about Christ more than any other book or other prophets. In fact if you keep reading until the end of chapter 12, which is a continuation of what’s being discussed here, you’ll notice **two more Messianic prophecies** in 9 and 11. In 11, He is described as the branch of Jesse on whom the Spirit of the Lord rests. He, however, is not a branch that will burn up like other kings/firebrands. He is a branch that will bear fruit. Chapter 9:6 describes the child even more.

IV. **BORN TO RULE – Isaiah 9:6**

“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.”

A. **Prediction**

He, this child would be a **gift** from God to man. And He is a **man** but also **Mighty God**, born to rule the world.

B. **Fulfillment**

This is a **double reference prophecy** as well. He was born at His first coming as a man, fulfilling the first part of the prophecy. But the ultimate fulfillment of this will take place in the Millennial Kingdom when He returns to rule the world on the Davidic throne in Jerusalem. Then will the governmental Prince of Peace be fully realized. Zechariah 14 says He will come back and His feet will stand on the Mt. of Olives. On that day “the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one and His name the only one.” What’s also neat about this Isaiah prophecy is that it’s written in what we would call the **prophetic perfect** - “A child has been born to us.” This prophetic “past tense” is used a lot in prophecy and is saying to us that the fulfillment of the prophecies of God are so credible and so certain to take place that the prophet speaks of it already having happened. To the prophet who had the vision, he’s already seen it.

V. **BORN IN BETHLEM – Micah 5:2**

This too was written about the same time as Isaiah and to the same audience of Judah. “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”

A. **Prediction**

So the prediction is that Christ, the eternal God, will be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. There were more than one Bethlehems in the area but the prophet is very specific. He refers to Bethlehem Ephrathah. Out of this Bethlehem, One is going to be born who will eventually rule Israel and will be our peace (5:5)

B. Fulfillment (Luke 2:1-7)

Ultimately, we'll have to wait until His 2nd coming He be ruler in Israel when He returns but in His 1st coming He was born in Bethlehem like it said. There was a census being taken at the time Mary was pregnant and Luke 2:3 says, "And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. Joseph also went up [Jerusalem is higher in elevation though on a map it is going south] from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

VI. BORN WITH ENEMIES – (Jer. 31:15)

1. Prediction (Jer. 31:15)

Jeremiah predicted a great and bitter weeping over children in relation to Christ's birth. "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children because they are no more."

2. Fulfillment (Matt. 2:6, 18; Rev. 12:4-5)

More **immediately** during Jeremiah's time, the weeping would be over the invasion of the Babylonians in Judah and exiling them. But **ultimately**, the second reference is this weeping is used in connection with Herod's slaughter of all the infants in his search to kill Jesus as a baby not long after his birth. In Matt. 2. Herod had heard about a supposed king of the Jews who had been born recently and it troubled him. He questioned the chief priests and scribes as to where the king was born and they told him Bethlehem. So he sent the magi to search for the child and report back to him. He told them that he wanted to worship the newborn King but that was a flat out lie. He really wanted to kill Jesus. God warned the magi in a dream not to return to Herod and an angel also warned Joseph to take the child and go to Egypt and he remained there until the death of Herod, thus fulfilling another prophetic analogy (Hos. 11:1). Matthew 2:16 says, "When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children in the vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi. Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled." What we understand from Revelation too is that there was Satanic activity behind attempt to kill the newborn Savior.

These are only a handful of prophecies about His birth and genetic line. There are many more on His ministry and death and resurrection and second coming. And I want to share with you one of the best illustrations ever conceived as to how extraordinary these prophecies are about Christ. I have this book called '**Jesus on Trial**' and in it there is this illustration from a professor of mathematics and science named Peter Stoner, who took **eight of the roughly three-hundred Messianic prophecies** and calculated the probability of these **occurring to one man**. "What are the odds a certain human being would fulfill

