



THE COMING MESSIAH

Course 4, *The Promised One*, Lesson 1

The Problem: A young college student, having drifted away from the Christian faith of his parents, voiced his skepticism with a challenging question: "How can I believe that Jesus was both God and man? Isn't it possible that the so-called miraculous events of His life were merely the result of psychological influences? Perhaps His disciples revered Him so deeply that they convinced themselves they had witnessed miracles. Some may have believed He had risen simply because the tomb was empty, while others may have embraced the story because, at the time, it seemed like the most socially and emotionally convenient path forward. How can Christianity's claim that Jesus of Nazareth is truly the Christ be proven?"

A brilliant theology professor in one of our large universities was asked, "Do you believe in the Deity of Jesus and His resurrection from the dead?" He replied, "The evidence is ambiguous. Certainly, the disciples believed these things, but whether we should is another question." When a student reminded the professor of the many Old Testament prophecies that predicted the life and death of the Messiah, he answered, "You mean you believe that events could be predicted hundreds of years before they occurred? Impossible!" The student pressed him a little further. "How would you explain Micah 5:2? *'But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.'*" The student pointed out that hundreds of years later Jesus was born in Bethlehem just as, on the basis of Micah's prophecy, the Jewish leaders expected. See Matthew 2:1-6. The skeptical professor replied, "Micah 5:2 is an exception!"

The student left the classroom with a flood of questions in his mind that he had not dared to express. If Micah 5:2 is an exception why couldn't there be other exceptions? And even if this were the only Old Testament prophecy fulfilled by Jesus, it would be remarkable evidence of a supernatural intervention in our world. A long-standing prophecy, of which the Jewish leaders were thoroughly aware, had been fulfilled. The professor had contradicted his own argument that events could not be successfully predicted hundreds of years before their occurrence, by admitting that Micah 5:2 was one exceptional case in point!

Are we dependent only on Micah 5:2 for prophetic evidence of the Messiahship and Deity of Jesus? The purpose of this lesson is to demonstrate that Jesus fulfilled so many of the Old Testament prophecies, that there can be no doubt that He was the divine promised Savior of the world. Moreover, events foreseen by the prophets cannot be explained away as mere psychological phenomena.

We have already discovered (Course 3, Lesson 12) that the baptism of Jesus in A.D. 27 and His crucifixion in A.D. 31 were foretold by Daniel. In this lesson, we will search the Old Testament for further prophetic evidence.

Objectives

- I. Jesus was born as the prophets foretold.
- II. Jesus' early life was described centuries before.
- III. His ministry was outlined by Old Testament prophets.
- IV. The sufferings and death of Christ fulfilled the prophecies.
- V. His resurrection occurred in accordance with long-standing predictions.

- I. JESUS WAS BORN AS THE PROPHETS FORETOLD

As we consider the Old Testament predictions, we will place alongside them the New Testament fulfillments. By examining the Old and New Testaments together, we will confirm the validity of Jesus' claims.

The Word:

1. Whose descendant was the Messiah to be? Isaiah 11:15; Matthew 1:6, 16; Acts 2:29-31
Compare Psalm 132:11; Acts 13:22-23; Romans 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:8.
2. What kind of woman would be the Messiah's mother? Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:20-23.
3. Where would the Messiah be born? Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1-9
4. By what titles would the Messiah be called? Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:32-33, 67-75; 2:13-14.

Explanation: The Messiah who would judge the world in righteousness was to be a descendant of Jesse, the father of David. Jesus qualified, for both Joseph and Mary were descendants of Jesse. Although Joseph was not Jesus' natural father, Mary was His natural mother, and so the prophecy was fulfilled. As Isaiah 7:14 foretold, the Messiah was born of a virgin. As Micah had predicted, He was born in Bethlehem, and He was hailed as the Prince of Peace who, as Isaiah had indicated, would reign over Israel and bring deliverance for God's people from their enemies. The events surrounding the birth of Jesus were so unusual as to awaken new interest in the prophetic forecasts. Those who, like the wise men from the East, accepted the Old Testament messages, were privileged to welcome the Savior shortly after His birth. But the Jewish leaders, who were familiar with the prophecies, were not spiritually prepared to welcome Him.

Relevance: Ultimate scientific proof of the Deity of Jesus is not what the Bible has to offer. Nevertheless, sufficient evidence is given so that our faith can have a solid foundation. Salvation is by faith, not by objective proof. But historical and prophetic testimony is an aid to faith. We do not believe blindly; we believe intelligently and consistently with the wealth of evidence contained in Scripture.

II. THE EARLY LIFE OF JESUS

The Gospels say little concerning the early life of Jesus, but what they do record was foretold by Old Testament prophets.

The Word:

5. How were the wise men from the East guided as they traveled to Bethlehem to acknowledge the birth of the Messiah? Number 24:17; Isaiah 60:3; Matthew 2:1, 2, 7, 9-11
6. In fulfillment of an ancient prediction, to what country was the baby Jesus taken? Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:13-15.
7. What Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled by Herod's cruelty? Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:16-18.

Explanation: The wise men (Greek: *magoi*) were members of the nobility. They were educated, wealthy, and influential in their own land. To the Jews, the "east" included northern Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia. Exactly which part of the east the wise men were from is not known, although some scholars think that it was the same territory where the apostate prophet Balaam had lived centuries before. This was the Sajur Valley between Aleppo and Carchemish, not far from the Euphrates River. If that were their home country, it must have taken them 2 or 3 weeks or even longer to travel the 400 miles to Bethlehem. Since they traveled at night so that they could follow the star, it is possible that their journey took considerably longer.

The important point is that these wise men were aware of Balaam's prophecy regarding the coming of the Messiah. When they saw the strange star, they were convicted by the Holy Spirit that this was the fulfillment. Hosea 11:1, in its primary application, refers to the children of Israel being miraculously delivered from Egyptian bondage in the time of Moses. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Matthew used this event as a type or an analogy of the Messiah being

taken from Egypt back to Palestine after Joseph and Mary had fled there to escape the wrath of Herod. Thus, Bible prophecies often have dual or even triple applications. When a later inspired writer uses an Old Testament passage as Matthew used Hosea 11:1, we can be sure that this application is intended by the Lord.

Jeremiah foresaw the weeping and sadness that would result from Herod's cruel murder of the infants of Bethlehem. Herod was determined to eliminate all potential competitors to his power and, like other leaders in history, practiced the basest of crimes as a means of achieving his ends.

Relevance: Jesus' early days were marked by significant fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. The supreme God of the universe had come down to earth as a helpless infant so that He might demonstrate how He would have us live, and so that He might pay the penalty for our sins. What wonderful condescension. He did not have to do this; He could have left us to die eternally because of our sins. But His love for the creatures of His hand was so intense that no sacrifice was too great to win them back from the dominion of darkness.

III. THE MINISTRY OF JESUS FULFILLED THE OUTLINE IN OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES

According to the Prophetic forecasts, the ministry of the Messiah was to be characterized by Spirit-directed service for suffering, sinful humanity. The outline of the principles that governed the life and work of Jesus was provided by Old Testament prophets.

The Word:

8. To what extent was the preparatory message of John the Baptist foreseen by Isaiah? Isaiah 40:1-5; Luke 3:2-6.
9. In what way did Jesus magnify the law of God as the Messiah was predicted to do? Isaiah 42:21; Matthew 5:17-19.
10. What kind of ministry would the Messiah conduct? Isaiah 42:2-7; Matthew 12:15-22. Compare Isaiah 29:17-19; Matthew 9:27-29.
11. In what area of Palestine would the Messiah's ministry be especially conducted? Isaiah 9:1-2; Matthew 2:22; 21:11. Compare Luke 4:14; 23:6; John 7:41
12. What would be the source of the Messiah's power? Isaiah 11:2; Matthew 3:16-17.

Explanation: The very message that John the Baptist preached was forecast by Isaiah. John applied the Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 40:1-5) to the work of the Messiah whom he identified as Jesus. See John 1:29-36. Jesus magnified the will of God as expressed in His law, just as Isaiah had anticipated the Messiah would do. Jesus' ministry was that of a meek, unobtrusive servant of God and man. Even when it was in His power to incite rebellion, He refused, because His kingdom was not of this world, and His purpose was to redeem spiritually fallen humanity. See John 6:15; 18:36-37.

The physical and spiritual healing that was so apparent in Jesus' ministry fulfilled the predicted specifications for the work of the Messiah. The evidence of His power was the mighty indwelling Holy Spirit whom the Prophet said would fill the life of the Messiah.

Relevance: To emulate Jesus is the goal of every believing Christian. As Peter expressed it: "*Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did not sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*" 1 Peter 2:21-22. Jesus' life serves as a powerful model for how we should live, embodying love, humility, sacrificial service and unwavering faith.

THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF CHRIST FULFILLED THE PROPHECIES

The suffering and death of Jesus Christ for our sins is the most exciting, good news in all the holy Word of God. The remarkable fact is that many details of His suffering were foretold by the Old Testament prophets.

The Word:

13. What aspects of Jesus' suffering were predicted by Isaiah?

- a. Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 27:29
- b. Isaiah 53:8; John 18:24, 28
- c. Isaiah 50:6; Matthew 26:67; John 19:1
- d. Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 27:14; Mark 15:3-5
- e. Isaiah 53:12; Mark 15:27-28
- f. Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 2:24
- g. Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57-60

14. What aspects of Jesus' suffering did the Psalmist predict? Psalm 22:16-18; John 19:17-18, 24; 20:25-27.

Explanation: The insult of Jesus' illegal trial was foretold by the prophet Isaiah in the late 8th or early 7th century B.C. The Jews despised Him, spat upon Him, and scourged Him, as their own Scriptures said they would. The crucifixion along with common criminals, the disposal of His garments, and the burial in the tomb of a rich man were prophesied hundreds of years before.

Why did God allow Himself to suffer in this way? Peter answers: "*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God*" 1 Peter 3:18. Here we have the two major reasons for Jesus' suffering: (1) to endure our punishment for sin; (2) to bring us back from sin to righteousness.

Relevance: If the One equal with the Father (John 5:18), whom Paul described as "*the fulness of the Godhead bodily*" (Colossians 2:9), could endure the infinite suffering of the cross for us, how can we ever turn away from Him? How can we reject such love?

IV. THE RESURRECTION AND FINAL TRIUMPH OF CHRIST WERE FORETOLD

The tomb could not hold Christ captive. He was the immortal Deity who could not be destroyed by the prince of darkness. Christ's victory over death and ultimate triumph over the power of evil were predicted by the prophets many centuries ago.

The Word:

15. In what words did the Psalmist foretell the Messiah's resurrection? Psalm 16:8-11; Acts 2:25-32.

16. How was the Messiah predicted to destroy death? Isaiah 25:8; 2 Timothy 1:10.

17. What commission would the Messiah give to His people? Isaiah 55:4-5, 11; Matthew 28:19-20.

18. What did the Prophets say about the Messiah's second advent? Isaiah 33:17; Job 19:25-26; Matthew 24:30.

Explanation: In his great sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Peter applied Psalm 16 to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Peter explained that David's tomb was still there for everyone to see (Acts 2:29). When David wrote, "*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption*" (Psalm 16:10), he was not speaking of himself but of the Messiah. Peter went on to point out that Jesus was the Messiah who had been exalted to His former position at the right hand of the Father in heaven. He had conquered sin and death. By faith in Him, believers can be delivered from sin and given eternal life. They may fall asleep at the end of this life, but from this temporary sleep, they will be

awakened at the second coming of Jesus. See 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Jesus' death and resurrection from the dead makes possible the resurrection of believers at the end of time.

Meanwhile, the great Gospel commission, which Isaiah saw would be given to Christ's faithful people, is ours to fulfill. Jesus has given us the great task of making known to the whole world the truth that He was the promised Messiah, that He suffered for our sins, that He will forgive us today if we ask Him (1 John 1:9), and that He is coming again soon to take us to His heavenly home (John 14:1-3).

Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Will you invite Him just now to forgive your sin and take charge of your life?

Review Questions

1. True or False
 - a. The town in which the Messiah would be born was predicted by an Old Testament prophet.
 - b. The Messiah's ancestors were named by the prophet.
 - c. Jesus never traveled out of Palestine.
 - d. The Jews could not have known ahead of time that the Messiah would die a sacrificial death.
2. Discuss: We have seen that the Hebrew Scriptures have much to say about the coming Messiah. Jesus expounded to His disciples "*in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself*" Luke 24:27. Can you identify some other parts of the Hebrew Scriptures that clearly foreshadowed the work and mission of Jesus Christ? Here are a few key examples:
 - a. Genesis 3:15 - After the fall, God declares that the offspring of the woman will crush the serpent's head, foreshadowing Christ's victory over sin and Satan.
 - b. Genesis 22:1-14 - Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac reflects God's ultimate sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. The ram provided as a substitute for Isaac symbolizes Jesus as the Lamb of God.
 - c. Exodus 12:1-30 - The spotless lamb sacrificed during the Passover and its blood applied to protect the Israelites prefigures Jesus, the Lamb of God, whose blood brings salvation.
 - d. Leviticus 16 - On the Day of Atonement the high priest making atonement for the sins of the people points to Jesus, our High Priest, who made the ultimate atonement for sin through His death.
 - e. Psalm 22 - The Suffering Servant Psalm vividly describes the crucifixion and suffering of Christ, with details that align closely with the events of His passion.
 - f. Isaiah 53 - This chapter provides a powerful prophecy of Jesus as the suffering servant who bears the sins of many and brings healing through His sacrifice.
 - g. Micah 5:2 - This passage predicts the Messiah's birth in Bethlehem, which is fulfilled in Jesus.
 - h. Zechariah 9:9 - This verse foretells the Messiah entering Jerusalem on a donkey, a prophecy fulfilled by the triumphal entry of Jesus on the Sunday before His crucifixion.
 - i. Zechariah 12:10 - This passage predicts that the Messiah will be pierced, reflecting Jesus' crucifixion.
 - j. Numbers 21:8-9 - Moses lifting the bronze serpent for the healing of the Israelites foreshadows Jesus being lifted up on the cross to bring salvation.

These and many other passages create a rich tapestry that points to Jesus as the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. For further study, read Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, pp. 17-38.