

Young People’s Quarterly

That It Might Be Fulfilled— Prophecies Concerning Jesus, the Messiah

Quarterly Aim: To show that the coming of the Messiah and His kingdom was foretold by the prophets.

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About the Writer



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After obtaining his Master's Degree in Bible from the Little Rock Seminary, he has served in various capacities for nearly twenty years. Although currently serving as senior pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Sherwood, Arkansas, he continues to be concerned and involved with youth ministry.

Robert's experience with youth began at the Conway MBSF, followed by pastoring the teens of County Avenue Baptist Church in Texarkana, Arkansas. Robert is the camp registrar for National Camp Week Two at Bogg Springs, and also assists in the planning and development of camp programming from year to year. Robert's writing experience includes authoring VBS and youth camp teaching materials for the ABA.

Robert has been married to his wife, Sherri, since 1994, and is the father of two teenage girls, Sophie and Sydney.

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Prophecies of Christ's Birth

APPLICATION

The student will learn about the details of Christ's birth.

SCRIPTURES TO READ

Text: Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-10.

Related Scripture: Genesis 3:15; Psalm 2:6; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Luke 1:39-56; 2:4-7.

Devotional Reading: God's Message to Mary, Luke 1:26-35.

Introduction

Tina loved the Christmas season. She was emotionally attached to it by so many great times she had and was drawn to the joy and goodwill of the holiday. When December came, she quickly began to celebrate Christmas with touches of seasonal décor and fashion.

At school she never hid her exuberance. She was always bringing small gifts to her classmates and friends throughout the month. One day she wore a huge button on her shirt that read, "Jesus Is the Reason for the Season." As a deeply committed Christian, Tina happily embraced this meaningful purpose of the Christmas holiday.

One classmate was not on board with this statement. While he enjoyed all the secular delights that they shared such as gifts, decorations and songs, he didn't believe in God. He leaned close to her during Western Civilization class and challenged the message on the button. He asked her why she would believe such nonsense. He pointed to the book they were studying and stated how its contents are verified historical facts. Things that happened in history are documented and rational. He continued by stating that quality, scholarly historians are able to discern what is mythical and fable from what is accurate history. This is why they discount most of the gospel accounts—especially the made-up fantasies of Jesus birth.

Tina was stunned. She did not mean to upset him. She was expressing her own faith and belief in Jesus as the Son of God who is the inspiration and reason for the Christmas holiday. She had never been confronted by someone who would oppose what she thought was an obvious position about the yuletide event. Who else would Christmas be about? What is so hard to believe about the events of Jesus' birth?

As her classmate continued to prattle on about what he called nonsense about the account of Jesus' birth, Tina fought anger. Then, God's Spirit stirred her heart

to compassion and reminded her of a few things she knew. She calmly replied to him that there is verifiable evidence of prophecies that foretell the coming of Jesus. For instance, the Dead Sea Scrolls are genuine, historical artifacts. They contain the prophecies of Isaiah 53 which undeniably describe Jesus. This same book of Isaiah also contains a description of His virgin birth and other prophecies.

The students who were listening responded loudly in congratulations and laughter. They were happy to hear there is some solid support for the accounts.

- **Have you ever been challenged as Tina was?**
- **What would you say to someone who challenged your belief in the miracles surrounding Jesus' birth? What proof do you have that they really happened?**
- **How would a verified ancient prophecy boost support for the historical accuracy of the accounts of Jesus' birth in the Gospels?**

In today's lesson, we will look at some prophecies which undeniably describe miraculous, specific details about the coming of the Messiah.

1. Announcement (Isaiah 7:14, Micah 5:2)

The first prophecy to look at is Isaiah 7:14. In it, God tells that there will be a specific sign. What is the sign God is giving to the people in Isaiah 7? It is that a virgin will be with child.

This was in itself an impossibility with mankind in the days of Jesus. This is a miracle because no man had anything to do with it. The word virgin is sometimes translated as young woman by some scholars. This is an accurate translation. A young woman would have been one who had never known a man intimately. She would have been a virgin. This young woman would suddenly, miraculously be with child. This is unheard of in all the history of creation; therefore, it is an astounding, epic event!

The other facet of this same prophecy is that the child would be a boy. Until recent times, no one could know the sex of a child before the day of its birth. Today, with the assistance of imaging devices, we can see an unborn human in incredible detail. For a prophecy to give a specific detail about the sex of the virgin's child is a double-sided miracle.

Finally, it is said that she will call the baby Immanuel. Immanuel literally means with us is God. This baby would be a miracle of God and would be known as God! Wow! This was a prediction over seven hundred years prior to the actual event!

The next prophecy to look at is Micah 5:2. This verse says that the Messiah would be from "Beth-lehem Ephrathah." Also, there was a notation that He would be sent by God to be the ruler of Israel and that He is an eternal figure. He alone is eternal. The prophecy declared that this child who would be born in Bethlehem would be God in the flesh.

- **Have you ever made a prediction about an event like a football game or other event? How did it turn out? How is this different than the prophecies in the Bible?**
- **When you see the accuracy of these prophecies, does it boost your confidence in the truth of the accounts in the Gospels?**
- **Why do you think God gave such specific details? Why do you think He chose the details He provided rather than others?**

2. Advent (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-10)

These two gospel records of the birth of Jesus show the full accounting of the birth of Jesus that God wanted us to have. The Bible is a spiritual book that has a purpose to guide people to faith in Jesus. It tells what is important and never deviates from the truth.

These gospel accounts tell about two people from Nazareth who were betrothed to one another. Hebrew culture dictated that a man would not marry a young woman who was not a virgin unless he wanted to be shamed and dishonored. He would bear that embarrassment all his life. By being betrothed to Mary, Joseph was declaring that she was a virgin, and he would keep their honor until they were properly wed.

An angel visited the couple individually. They learned that Mary would conceive a child of the Holy Spirit. She would bear a son and name Him Jesus, though He would be called Immanuel. These two were forced by the law to go to Bethlehem for a government census. There Jesus was born according to the prophecy.

The signs surrounding this miraculous birth were logical. The appearance of angels who worship Him unwaveringly is most rational. How could they not be present and cause a stir when their Lord comes to bring salvation to the world? It is entirely logical to believe in them if they were verifiably predicted hundreds of years previously and experienced and reported by credible witnesses. This is how it happened and it is illogical to believe otherwise when all the facts of this historic event are taken into account.

- **Did you see anything in the account when you read it that you have not noticed before?**
- **Explain in your own words how the miraculous events recorded about the birth of Jesus are completely logical and to be expected.**
- **Can you think of any challenges a person might make to your claims about prophecies and their fulfillment? Strategize wise responses and research some answers if needed.**

3. Assurance (Matthew 1: 21-25)

Embedded in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus' birth is the sweet assurances of its purpose—salvation. The messenger of God spoke to Joseph in a dream and told him something that was not clearly known to him or to any other person at the time of the advent of Jesus. He was coming to save mankind from their sins. He was to be given the name Jesus. In the Hebrew language the name would be *Yehoshua* (pronounced Yeh-HO-sheh-Wah). Usually this name from Hebrew is translated into the more familiar name Joshua. Since the New Testament was written in Greek, it was translated from the Greek version—*Yehoshua* into Jesus. His name was a word with meaning. It means Yahweh (Lord) saved(s). Joseph was in an awkward situation to proceed in marriage to Mary who was carrying a child which was not his own. Yet, the promise of a Savior was enough to give him assurance to carry on.

The angel specifically identified to Joseph that this baby was a fulfillment of the ancient prophecy which we have already studied in this lesson. God was behind the scenes all along working out salvation for the human race through the Son He would send. Joseph was, no doubt, shocked to learn that he would be a part of the fulfillment of this ancient prophecy.

His assurance was evident. He didn't put Mary away by divorce. He honored her as the vessel of his Savior, and she remained a virgin until after she had borne Him. He followed through with the vision he had received to name him Jesus.

- **How would it change your life to receive an angelic visitation in a genuine vision?**
- **Discuss how Joseph's actions demonstrated that he was assured of the truthfulness of the prophecies?**
- **How does your life show that you believe the truthfulness of what the Bible says about Jesus?**

Conclusion

This is the month we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Such a publicly endorsed holiday as Christmas invites a Christian to openly declare his beliefs. If prepared with the facts, he can defend what he believes even to a strong skeptic. The facts about Jesus' birth are found in the Scriptures we have read today. All the facts that are known are in Matthew and Luke along with the Old Testament prophecies. As a believer, you will find this a powerful tool in witnessing for Christ.

- **What fact of the birth of Jesus do you think would be interesting to your friends who don't know Jesus?**
- **What fact about the birth account does the world need to know now?**
- **How can you use the holiday to open opportunities to witness to your unbelieving friends?**