

Sunday School Lesson

The Birth of Jesus in the Old Testament

As one begins to study the Gospels and the beginnings thereof, we must pause and look at the foundation which makes the Gospels validity possible. The Gospels truly do picture the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, and also the events leading up to his birth; but the validity or proof of the deity of Christ can only be really validated by a review of Old Testament prophecies written hundreds and even thousands of years before the actual event of Christ's birth. If these two do not agree then we do not have any proof to validate our trust in God and His Son, Jesus Christ. If we are to believe the New Testament, then we must also understand the correlation between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Without such we may easily be swayed by those who would deny the validity of the Scriptures. In order to avoid this happening we will take the time now to look back at the Old Testament to see the references to the impending birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. There are many references directly and indirectly to the birth of the Messiah. We should be familiar with these prophecies of our Messiah, for some will attempt to shake our belief in God and His Word. As we look through the Scriptures Old and New Testament let us realize and value the wonderful grace of our God for granting us a Written Witness that we can read and believe.

I. The Messiah was Promised Through Abraham's Seed (Genesis 22:18; Matthew 1:1)

The first promise we wish to review is found in **Genesis 22:18** where God speaking to Abraham, promises... *"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."* Abraham was granted this honor for the simple reason of his choice to follow God. His obedience to God made him the candidate through which God's Only Son would be born. There are always benefits that come from obedience. This prophecy was given to Abraham thousands of years before the birth of Christ. It is interesting that the fulfillment of this prophecy occurs in the very first verse of the very first chapter Of the New Testament. In **Matthew 1:1** *"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."* Here the Bible speaks of Jesus Christ as being the Son of Abraham. In the Middle Eastern political culture the lineage goes through the man so God gives this record of Jesus' family line through Joseph, His "supposed" earthly father. God seems to answer all of doubters questions before they can arise. We can trust a God who will promise to give to one of his chosen men, Abraham a tremendous blessing and followed up with that fulfillment starting off the very beginning of the very Testament where His Son's life and ministry would be recorded.

II. The Messiah was promised through Isaac's seed. (Genesis 21:12; Luke 3:34)

God further complicates His prophecies by promising not only that His Son would come through the lineage of just Abraham, but in order to avoid later questionable situations, He specifically labeled that His Seed would come through Abraham's son, from Sarah's womb. Isaac is the only individual that could possibly fit this qualification. Abraham and Sarah only

had one child together and that is well documented through historical accounts, both Biblically and secularly. In **Luke 3:34** *“Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,”* This promise is recorded as being fulfilled as the lineage of Christ as recorded through the line of Mary. In Matthew’s Gospel Jesus’ lineage is traced through Joseph’s line but in Luke’s Gospel it goes through Mary’s line. It is apparent that God did this to thwart any arguments that would arise through Jesus’ virgin birth and his as was supposed earthly father’s lineage. God wanted both to reflect the truth that Jesus was genetically and politically tied to Abraham. A thorough study of both lineages simply proves that Jesus came through the lineage of Abraham and Isaac, that would be a direct contradiction to the argument of the Arabic line which attempts to claim that Jesus came through Ishmael’s lineage. God seems to have known in advance that controversy would continue through the rest of mankind’s time on earth, yet through this controversy God still receives the glory.

III. The Messiah was promised to be of the tribe of Judah and born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Luke 3:32; Matthew 1:2-3)

In Micah 5:2 there is another prophesy that is pretty specific. We have already seen that God predicted that His Son would come through the Abrahamic line. This is a pretty general statement because Abraham is the Father of a pretty large genealogy. God then honed it down to the lineage of Abraham’s son Isaac. Now He even gets more specific in the prophecy that He records in **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.”* Here we find that not only did He specify the lineage of Abraham and Isaac, but now He specified the place and from which Tribe that His Son would be born.

IV. The Messiah was promised through the line of King David

God carried it a step further and stated that the Messiah would come through the line of David in **Isaiah 11:1**. The prophet Isaiah records... *“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:”* that there would come One Who in verse two of chapter 11 speaks of the Spirit of the Lord resting on Him. It is amazing that God had a clear plan. He specified through the previous prophecies we have looked at to mention that Christ’s birth should come through Bethlehem. He was so specific as to also include the city where Jesus would be born. This fulfillment occurs in Luke’s reference and recording of the birth of Christ **Luke 2:4-7**. Through amazing circumstances Joseph and Mary by the providential leading of God were in the proper places at the proper time to fulfill all of the prophecies in the Old Testament. God knew there would be naysayers as there always have been through time that would attempt to discredit God, but God did so much to lay down through prophecy in the Old Testament the fact that His Messiah would truly be One of a kind and He would fill and fulfill all the prophecies which would in turn validate His very existence and the Deity with which He exists.

V. The Messiah is to be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)

Maybe the greatest of all the miracles surrounding the birth of the Messiah is the fact that prophetically He was promised to be born of a virgin. A virgin is a woman who has never known a man. How can this be? In humanity it takes the seed of man combined with the seat of woman to create a new life, yet God in His wisdom promised that His Son would come through only the seed of woman (**Genesis 3:15**). This seems impossible and certainly it is impossible through man and his knowledge, but when one factors God into the equation it is amazing what can transpire. The great miracle is described to have occurred in **Matthew 1:18** *“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.”* There’s a clearer explanation of this in **Luke 1:34-35**. Mary speaking to the angel about the prospects of her carrying God’s Son asked the angel how this could be because she didn’t know a man. The angel promised the Holy Ghost would come up on her and overshadow her. God would plant the Holy Seed of His Own Son inside the womb of Mary.

Conclusion: Through these few references from prophecy in the Old Testament and their fulfillment in the New Testament it is clear to see the way that God used the Old Testament to validate the New Testament and the Gospel story and even to validate the entire Bible. If one with an open mind will simply study the Bible they will find that God told the truth and, in fact, He is the Truth and that man and all men are liars. (**Romans 3:4**)