

MESSIAH'S BIRTH

“Origins of Old: The Prophetic Pronouncement of Messiah’s Birth”

Introduction-

We are in the season that the Christian Church celebrates the birth of Messiah. Without entering the debate that surrounds the various ways the world celebrates this event (or even the date they choose to celebrate), we are going to examine the prophecies that went before Him.

Gen 3:14-15

14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. KJV

Genesis 3:15 is considered to be the first prophecy of the coming Messiah. Note to whom it was announced. It was in the language of the curse upon the devil that the Lord informed us of His intent to send a savior born of a woman.

Gen 3:21-24

21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. KJV

Even though they were atoned for through animal sacrifice (coats of skins), Adam and Eve were still driven from the Presence of God in the garden and their access to the tree of life was denied. In this one event, God signified substitutionary sacrifice and the inability of animal sacrifice to be ultimately sufficient.

I. Prophecies of His Lineage

From the time that the Lord God told the serpent that the seed of the woman would crush his head, the devil has hated women. All misogyny (hatred and hostility towards women) has its root in this.

But God is not deterred by His enemy knowing His plan. On the contrary, He announces His plans as prophecy and then brings them to pass in spite of interference, thus bringing more glory to His name. Accordingly, He was not satisfied with singling out one gender for the bringing forth of Messiah into the world. He would narrow the field through the declaration of an ever-narrowing lineage.

Gen 22:15-18 NIV

15 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time

16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,
17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies,
18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

From Abraham, the line narrowed to Isaac, and from Isaac to Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons.

Gen 49:9-10

9 You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness--who dares to rouse him?
10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his. NIV

That a mighty King and Ruler would come from Israel was even witnessed to by a foreign prophet who had incentive to be antagonistic to Israel.

Num 23:21-24

21 "No misfortune is seen in Jacob, no misery observed in Israel. The LORD their God is with them; the shout of the King is among them.
22 God brought them out of Egypt; they have the strength of a wild ox.
23 There is no sorcery against Jacob, no divination against Israel. It will now be said of Jacob and of Israel, 'See what God has done!'
24 The people rise like a lioness; they rouse themselves like a lion that does not rest till he devours his prey and drinks the blood of his victims." NIV

Num 24:17-19

17 "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the sons of Sheth.
18 Edom will be conquered; Seir, his enemy, will be conquered, but Israel will grow strong.
19 A ruler will come out of Jacob and destroy the survivors of the city." NIV

Balaam had come to curse Israel for money. Instead, he delivered prophecies of blessing and of the coming of Messiah.

From Judah, the line narrows to David.

2 Sam 7:11-14a

11 and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you:
12 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom.
13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
14a I will be his father, and he will be my son. NIV

From the general “seed of the woman” to the specific line of David, God forecasts centuries before the event to whom Messiah would be born. He not only specified which group, He also specified the circumstances of His birth.

II. Prophecies Regarding the Circumstances of His Birth

Born of a virgin:

Isa 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: **The virgin will be with child** and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. NIV

Born in Bethlehem:

Mic 5:2

"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." NIV

Tragedy would attend His infancy:

Jer 31:15

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 her children are no more." NIV

Exiled and called from Egypt:

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

III. The Witness of the Godhead

He declared that a body had been prepared for Him:

Ps 40:6-8 (**Heb 10:5-7**)

6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened **[but a body hast thou prepared me]¹**: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,

8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. KJV

God commanded all the angels to worship Him:

Deut 32:43 (**Heb 1:6; Luke 2:4**)

Rejoice, O nations, with his people, **[Let all God's angels worship Him]²** for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take vengeance on his enemies and make atonement for his land and people. NIV

Conclusion

In considering these prophecies regarding the birth of Jesus, it is interesting to note the probabilities of any one of them occurring by chance.

- ❑ That He would come from Abraham.

¹ Septuagint reading.

² So the Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint.

Abraham belonged to one of the nations listed in Genesis 10. The nations numbered 70, so a conservative probability for the Messiah to come from Abraham would be 1 chance in 70.

- ❑ That He would be of the tribe of Judah
*Jacob had twelve sons. For the Messiah to be of Israel **and** Judah would be 1 chance in 12.*
- ❑ That He would be of the line of David.
*David was in one of the clans of Judah. Based on the genealogies of 1 Chronicles, a conservative number for the clans of Judah would be 40. Messiah being from Judah **and** Jesse's clan (i.e. David) would be a probability of 1 chance in 40.*
- ❑ That He would be born of a virgin.
Dismissing the near improbability of a virgin giving birth, let's get our number from an estimate of the women of marrying age. If we say that the population was 1,000,000 (it was more) in the time of Christ and that half of these were women and only 10% of the women were of marrying age, this would be a number of 50,000. So the probability for the Messiah being born to a young maiden in Israel in the time of Christ was 1 chance in 50,000.
- ❑ That He would be born in Bethlehem.
In the time of Christ, there were at least 2,400 inhabited villages in the territory of Judah. The probability of Messiah being born in one of them (Bethlehem) would be 1 chance in 2,400.
- ❑ That He would be called out of Egypt.
At least five nations were near enough to Judah for Mary and Joseph to flee to. Conservative estimate of probability: 1 chance in 5.

When we figure the probability for all these prophecies happening together by chance, we have to work the following equation:

1 chance in $(70 \times 12 \times 40 \times 50,000 \times 2,400 \times 5) = 20,160,000,000,000$ or 1 in 20^{13} .

If the population on earth was 5 billion when Christ was born (it wasn't), and each year from His birth had a population of 5 billion (they didn't), that would be $5,000,000,000 \times 2,000 = 10^{13}$.

Praise God, Jesus is Messiah!!!