

# Understanding Prophecy

Volume I



By Joshua Stucki

(Bibliography at end)

“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” – 2 Peter 1:21

Restoration Movement Literature

This booklet may be copied and distributed freely in its original, unmodified form.

## Understanding Prophecy – Part 1

### Why study prophecy?

- 1) God put prophecy all over the Bible – so it's important we understand it!
  - a. Old Testament prophecy (about Israel, the coming Messiah, the end times) – 17 books plus prophecies in many other Old Testament books!
  - b. Jesus' own prophecy (prophecies he made, also ones he fulfilled) – Jesus prophesied himself about future events, often overlooked
  - c. Prophecy of Revelation – one of the most misunderstood books in the Bible (see Revelation's purpose: Revelation 1:3)
  - d. Prophecy as preaching, role of the prophet in both Old and New Testaments (Ephesians 4:11) – it's multiple purposes (not just to tell the future), and what prophets did in the Patriarchal Age, the Israelite Age (sometimes called the Mosaic Age, for Moses), and finally, today in the Church age (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- 2) To answer the relevancy of prophecy in today's preaching and teaching: if anybody argues that prophecy isn't relevant (or applicable, or it's out-of-touch), so it shouldn't be preached today, ask why so many things and ideas are used regularly in church (like church buildings, youth/music ministers, nursery ministry, etc.) that God saw fit not to include in the Bible but 18 of the 66 books of the Bible He did include are prophetic books? On top of that, most of the other books of the Bible still quote, reference, or actually include prophecy themselves. Prophecy is a major theme in the Bible, majorly misunderstood, that God means us to understand! (Colossians 2:2-3)
- 3) To answer the many misunderstood elements of prophecy: if there is any subject in the Bible that is abused repeatedly, it's prophecy. I would personally put it right below the abuse that baptism and the Lord's Supper receives. Misunderstood, out of context, abused interpretations of prophecy have served to make false teachers rich, poor people poorer (both in the pocketbook and in knowledge), Christianity divided, and the world led astray. A Christian's ability to understand and interpret

prophecy by the Bible, through Christ, is essential to understanding over 27% of your Bible!, applying prophecy to our lives (lots of relevant teachings from the prophets!), and sharing it with others to convince the lost and strengthen our brothers and sisters in Christ!

- 4) To identify false prophets: are there prophets today? Have there been any genuine prophets since the 1<sup>st</sup> century church? The New Testament instructs us to identify and eradicate false prophets and teachers:
- a. Paul warns about them: Romans 16:17-18; 2 Timothy 4:3-4
  - b. Peter warns about them: 2 Peter 2:1
  - c. Jesus warns about them: Matthew 7:15
  - d. The Apostle John warns about them: 1 John 4:1; 2 John 1:10-11; Revelation 2:2
  - e. The Apostle John warns against anti-Christ (plural): 2 John 1:7; 1 John 2:18 (a commonly misunderstood subject)
  - f. Moses warns about them (and provided a test of genuineness): Deuteronomy 13:1-5
  - g. Isaiah presents a test of genuineness for prophets: Isaiah 8:20
  - h. Jeremiah presents tests of genuineness for prophets: Jeremiah 23:14, 28:9
  - i. John the Baptist was the last prophet imminently before Christ, but took no credit for himself (exalting God above self, another test for a prophet): John 1:15; John 3:30
  - j. Using the above warnings and tests, we can rightly judge good or false prophets. But who are we to judge? Actually, we are commanded to judge all messengers, to see if they be from God :
    - i. By example: the church in Berea judged Paul rightly by his teaching: Acts 17:11
    - ii. By commandment: Luke 12:57, John 8:26, 1 Corinthians 2:10-16, 2 Corinthians 10:6, Hebrews 5:14, 1 Corinthians 11:19, 1 Corinthians 14:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, 2 Timothy 2:15, Titus 1:9, Titus 2:15, 1 John 4:1, Jude 3, 1 Timothy 1:3, among others!

**Conclusion:** now knowing that prophecy is a large part of our Bible, and the reasons for understanding it are clear, let's go to the first prophecies in the Bible, and build "the prophetic story" from beginning to end (Genesis through Revelation). Understanding prophecy apart from Biblical context and Christ's fulfillment and words is to miss the mark entirely! So we will endeavor to approach prophecy as God revealed it – beginning to end – seeing how each was fulfilled – and what is still to come. You are even living in fulfilled prophecy right now! Did you know that? How exciting! Let's dive into God's Word to find out how!

Next week's preview: **The First Prophecies:** Genesis 3:15-19; 4:12, 15; 5:21-24 (with Hebrews 11:5, Luke 3:37, and Jude 14 as other Scriptural references)

In just the above, God prophesies the defeat of Satan and Jesus, God's prophecies to Cain, and Enoch's prophetic ministry is explained (and the fact that he never died).

### Understanding Prophecy – Part 2 – Seeing Christ Genesis through Revelation

- I. Last week we came to understand WHY to study prophecy and how much of our Bibles consist of prophecy (18 of 66 books in total, plus prophecies scattered throughout the other books).
- II. This week, we dive into the primary subject of prophecy in the Bible: Christ!
  - a. It is much easier, much more sensible, and ultimately more Biblical if we understand prophecy by viewing it through JESUS CHRIST.
  - b. In fact, the entire Old Testament story from the fall of man to the last of the Old Testament prophets (Micah, Malachi) is really one coherent story: the bringing about of Messiah/Christ/Savior, Jesus Christ.
  - c. If Jesus is removed from most prophecy in the Bible, consequences await the unfortunate student such as speculation, inaccuracy, and

ultimately mishandling God's Word. Let's not make that mistake! (2 Timothy 2:15)

- III. The first prophecy: Genesis 3:15 (read)
- a. In summary: the seed of Eve would produce a baby boy who would grow up to defeat Satan
  - b. Satan would "bruise" Messiah's heel (a damaging but not ultimately a fatal blow, i.e. the crucifixion), but Jesus would "bruise/crush" his head (a headshot, a fatal blow!)
  - c. Notice this is God's FIRST curse, even before Adam and Eve's punishments are laid out; He does not delay in sharing with Satan that his short-term victory would result in his ultimate destruction!
    - i. This lets us know initially how jealous God is for us (Exodus 20:5, 34:14; Deuteronomy 6:15)
    - ii. This lets us know that God's first thought is not the punishment of man, but his redemption through God's intervention
    - iii. This lets us know God already had a plan in mind, knowing this would happen, and He still created us anyway (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20)
    - iv. Finally, this lets us know that God cannot tolerate sin (Habakkuk 1:13; Isaiah 59:2), and will judge it completely and finally (Revelation 20:12, Matthew 12:36), but He provides a way out for any who would follow His terms of pardon provided by His Son's teaching (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:16) through His Apostles (John 17:20, Acts 2:38), death, burial and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
  - d. This is one great prophecy! It is the first, and establishes God's love for us, His relentless pursuit of our salvation, and His work over roughly the next 4000 years to bring about Messiah!
- IV. Prophecies to/about man: Genesis 3:16-19 (read)
- a. Though most prophecies (future telling) ultimately point to Christ as their subject/object, some tell the fate of man.

- i. These are told us as warnings – not so we can avoid the inevitable (for every word uttered from the mouth of God is immutable) – but so we can prepare, remain steadfast, and endure to the end (Revelation 2:10)
- ii. Foreknowledge is NOT the same as predestination; just because God “knows” something is going to happen, that does not mean He caused it
  1. This is simply illustrated: we can predict with ease than an alcoholic will drink. We have nothing to do with their drinking; we have not caused it or encouraged it, but we still know it happens and will continue to happen as long as alcoholics are around.
  2. All the same, God’s foreknowledge and warnings and prophecies about men are not to their doom – it’s about the doom (the “sin-oholics”) who will sin because they have chosen sin over God, not because God had anything to do with it.
    - a. Finally, it’s absurd: to claim God’s foreknowledge equals His hand in their sin is claiming God sins vicariously. We know God cannot sin, cannot tell a lie (Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2), etc.
- iii. Genesis 3:16-19 tell us the fate of man’s life here on earth as a result of sin entering the world:
  1. Keep in mind what you are about to read are predicted results of sin we know to this day are true: they are NOT commandments to be fulfilled by us. You will see what is meant by that below.
  2. After Satan, God lets Eve know the consequences of her sin:
    - a. God actually tells Eve of TWO curses, not one (as is commonly stated in most translations, and one prediction (though some might call it a curse!):

- i. First, “I will multiply thy conception” (KJV, and found in the footnotes of most translations besides)
  1. Apparently one of the consequences of sin is not instinctively knowing how many children is too many children; the conception woman was originally designed to have would be greater than what was originally intended.
  2. This can be clearly seen in today’s TV reality shows like, “Teen Mom” that treat a child like a toy or a fashion accessory. Many mothers throughout time have had babies before they were ready to be mothers (single, unwed mothers) or too many children (think, “Octomom”). Without the Holy Spirit guiding a woman, it is very apparent many ladies unwittingly make this error, to both their sorrow and the sorrow of their children!
- ii. Second, “I will multiply your pain in childbirth”
  1. This naturally requires no explanation!
  2. Eve never had a child before they were cast out of Eden, so Eve didn’t even know what to expect!
- iii. Thirdly, “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you”

1. Sin introduced into the world created the irrational choice of partner we see in so many people's young lives today – intelligent girls dating “bad boys”, etc.
2. Sin required a leadership and responsibility role in the family – before sin – there was no need for a responsible party for the family. God establishes male leadership AND responsibility in family throughout the Bible, starting here.
  - b. Eve's punishment was harsh; nobody doubts how much women have to put up with today as a result!
3. Finally, Adam is cursed and given a prediction:
  - a. “Cursed is the ground”
    - i. Hard work, manual labor, difficulties to success in whatever he does is a consequence to sin
  - b. “In sorrow you shall eat of it”
    - i. Hard work may or may not yield results; man will have to depend on God even more in a world full of sin than without
  - c. “Sweat of thy face”
    - i. Adam had work in the garden before the curse (Genesis 2:15, 19) but now the work would be so difficult as to require perspiration
      1. Again, these are prophecies obviously fulfilled in the days of Adam and even today; however, they are not commandments. We don't



have to shut off our air conditioner or avoid helps to grow our crops. There's plenty enough trouble with sin in the world as it is, is what it is saying!

2. When we do manage to technologically leap over a particular difficulty, this falls into our "dominion" the Lord has granted us twice in the Bible (Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 9:1-3)
- d. "You will eat the herb of the field"
- i. This is different than eating of any tree of the garden (Genesis 2:16); now he would have to eat the herb (Hebrew: bitter) of the ground
    1. This is symbolic for saying nothing you grow will ever taste as good or be as good for you as the trees in the Garden were
    2. The tree of life was cut off (Genesis 3:24) from him, but also the other trees that were effortless, free, tasty, all-nutritious food. Now man would have to figure out how to nourishment himself from a continuously, backbreaking, inferior source!
- e. "Until you return to the ground..."
- i. Man came from the ground (Genesis 2:7), but he was not designed originally to return to it. However, sin brought on death, and so his body would deteriorate

chaotically (2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics, entropy) until death would unpredictably take him.

- ii. Amazingly, even with all of our modern technology and medical science, the exact time and cause of death is still unknown until it happens.
- iii. Our modern understanding of the brain is still very inadequate; it is thought possible that its mechanisms may truly never be fully known.

#### 4. God introduces blood sacrifice – Genesis 3:21

- a. It is often overlooked that an animal – for the first time – had to die to accommodate a need of man.
- b. This animal was not eaten; it was killed for its skin. Eating animals was not allowed until after the flood (Genesis 9:3).
- c. It's skin “covered” man's nakedness far more durably than the clothes of leaves Adam and Eve had woven for themselves (Genesis 3:7).  
Nonetheless, even the skin of animals wears out.
- d. This first sacrifice paints for us a beautiful shadow of what was to come:
  - i. The skins of animals covered Adam and Eve's shame (Genesis 3:21)
  - ii. The sacrifice of animals under Mosaic law – later on – would delay God's judgment of sin until Messiah came (Hebrews 10:1-4)
  - iii. The sacrifice of animals under the Christian age would cease, becoming absolutely unnecessary, as the perfect sacrifice that actually atones for shame, and

clothes us forever in robes that will never wear out, had come! (Galatians 3:27)

- e. Genesis 3:21 is not a prophecy in the strict sense of predicting a future event in a literal way but it is nonetheless a prophecy that God provided covering in the beginning, and He has provided a completed, perfect covering for His people who remain faithful to the end! (Revelation 6:11)

### **Understanding Prophecy – Part 3 – Prophecy of God versus Man’s Will**

Last week, we finished looking at the first prophecies given by God in Genesis 3:15-21. There are four (4) prophecies in those six (6) verses alone: one by God for all mankind to bring Messiah (vs. 15) and the prediction of man and woman’s perpetual sufferings in verses 16-20 (which we deal with to this day.

Finally, in vs. 21, the clothing God made from the first sacrificial death of an animal was a type or shadow predicting how animal sacrifice would be used from that point until the cross of Christ to “cover” man’s shame/sins until Christ actually atoned for them once and for all (Hebrews 9:28) on the cross.

One last thought: Adam named each of the animals (Genesis 2:19-20). When the first animal sacrifice occurred to provide Adam and Eve their first set of durable clothes, what a tragic moment that must have been for them. They knew they themselves would die as both God’s initial warning (Genesis 2:17) and now prediction (Genesis 3:19) for them, but they did not likely foresee an innocent animal – one they knew so as well as to have named it – would have to die for them too.

How horrible sin is! How great is our God to provide us His Son, and how grateful we should be!

- I. God gives Cain a prophecy as to the possibility of repentance and blessing
  - a. Genesis 4:7a – “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?”

- b. God *wanted* Cain to repent and do better (2 Peter 3:9). God did not accept Cain's sacrifice, and let him know it (Genesis 4:4), but he was used the moment to try to teach Cain the possibility of repentance and blessing (vs. 6-7).
  - c. Cain and Abel both knew what kind of sacrifice to give (Genesis 3:21, 4:4) and yet Cain wanted his fruit of the land to be the same as substitutionary death. We cannot replace God's terms of pardon with our own – only His will do. Yet, He gives even second chances. But how long will denominations teach various other terms of pardon? Will they suffer the fate of Cain, having the full revelation of the New Testament as their witness? (Colossians 2:2)
- II. God gives Cain a similar prophetic warning He gave to His father and mother if he does not repent
- a. Genesis 4:7b – “Sin is at your door, but you must conquer it, or it will rule over you.”
  - b. In this prophecy, Cain is told what will happen to him if he does not repent – “sin will rule over you”
    - i. Cain already knew the sin of his parents meant he would die – now God tells Cain specifically that sin not only can cause physical death, sorrow, pain, and difficulties but can cause you to lose your freedom as well.
    - ii. James 1:15 says, “After desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”
    - iii. Sin has multiple-negative facets. So far, in just Genesis 3+4, we learn from various prophecies that sin:
      1. Causes physical death
      2. Causes separation from God
      3. Causes multiple sorrows and difficulties
      4. Causes loss of freedom and eternal purpose
    - iv. Yet, even with all that knowledge, Cain chose poorly, as does most of the world (Matthew 7:13).

- c. Cain had a choice – it is truly sadistic to say he did not. The Calvinist will say at this point that Cain “was born to fail” – that in order for things to work out as they did – Cain had to sin.
- i. This implies that God’s plan depends on sin! Anathema! (Romans 6:1-2)
  - ii. No, God’s plan can be *delayed* by sin – this in fact happened multiple times in Scripture (another topic for a different day). However, God’s plan *never depends* on sin! That’s crazy talk.
  - iii. The Calvinist would say that Judas was appointed to the purpose of betraying Jesus – He was born to be damned. Again, anathema! This would make God guilty of murder.
  - iv. Satan certainly has his hands in some crazy “theology”, does he not?
- d. The loss of freedom implied in God’s prophecy to Cain in Genesis 4:7 is a sentence of prison in life:
- i. Physical prison *is*, at its heart, the loss of freedom.
    1. In prison, a person cannot go and do as he pleases.
    2. In prison, a person cannot do gainful employment.
    3. In prison, a person cannot vote.
    4. In prison, a person is separated from their loved ones.
    5. In prison, a person is at the mercy of others, instead of responsible for his own well being.
  - ii. Sin *is a prison*, taking away our freedom and purpose in life:
    1. Sin makes us a slave to the desires of our flesh (John 8:34; Romans 7:14)
    2. Sin makes us have idol hands and destructive gossips (2 Thessalonians 3:11; 1 Timothy 5:13).
    3. Sin makes our prayers less (perhaps non) effective (Psalm 66:18)

4. Sin makes relationships with others selfish and unloving and ultimately destructive (Numbers 32:23, Proverbs 28:13)
5. Sin gives us no mercy, no grace, and no pardon – only damnation (Romans 7:13)
- e. Cain’s response is epically remorseless and even whiny (vs. 13-14)
  - i. Cain complains about his sentence – Genesis 4:13-14
    1. “My punishment is more than I can bear”
    2. “You are driving me from the land”
    3. “I will be hidden from your presence”
    4. “I will be a restless wanderer on the earth”
    5. “Whoever finds me will kill me”
    6. Cain has no regret for killing Abel; and makes no attempt to repent
      - a. There is no indication he could not have repented
        - i. David repented after arranging for the death of Uriah and was forgiven and restored (he did suffer consequences as well as Cain did) – 2 Sam. 12:13+14
        - ii. Saul repented after being a murderer of the earthly church (and suffered consequences such as being hated, hunted, persecuted, and pursued by his previous allies the rest of his life) – Acts 9:16
        - iii. God will even forgive *murder* if we will repent, but Cain shows no interest, just as he showed no interest in repentance

- before when God confronted him over  
his unworthy sacrifice (Genesis 4:6+7)
- b. It's the old story: God wants all men to repent (2 Peter 3:9), and gives them opportunities to do so (2 Peter 2:5), but they rarely do (Matthew 7:3+4)
7. He just wants to be let off easy, so he complains, whines, and makes up things to his judge, God (perhaps with his parents nearby listening, hoping to use their presence as a sympathy tool, like so many children in the wrong do)
  8. Though it is true Cain is being punished, he – just like his mother before him – exaggerates the prohibition God has set on him.
    - a. Eve in Genesis 3:3, “God said... you must not touch it...”
      - i. God never said they could not touch the fruit
      - ii. This exaggeration was another one of Eve’s rationalizations while Satan sold her the literal first “snake oil” panhandled to mankind
      - iii. She “bought” the snake oil to her demise, and Cain apparently did not apply this lesson from his parents
    - b. Cain, in the same way, makes up all kinds of punishments that God never said would occur:
      - ii. God immediately corrects Cain’s exaggerations
        1. “Not so” – otherwise, “Cain, you are making stuff up”
        2. “anyone who kills you will suffer vengeance seven times over”

3. A mark was put on Cain so anyone would know he was protected by God (otherwise, God gave him life without parole in exile, instead of a death sentence – which Cain exaggerated it to be)
- iii. Cain leaves God’s presence and lives out his life as a wanderer just as God had prophesied (Genesis 4:16)
  1. God’s prophecies always come true – in the big things, like Jesus’ coming, and in the smaller things, like Cain’s life after Abel
  2. “Cain went out from the Lord’s presence”
    - a. The above is a fulfillment of God’s prophecy, but also it brings up a side question worth a quick study: how can anyone leave God’s presence? Isn’t He omnipresent?

#### GOD’S OMNIPRESENCE – a quick study

- I. What is omnipresence? Simply translated, “Present everywhere”
- II. Is God described as omnipresent in the Bible?
  - a. The word itself is not used in the Bible, so it is a particular doctrine established from other texts such as Psalm 139:7-10:
    - i. “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.”
    - ii. Another text is: Jeremiah 23:24, “Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord.”
    - iii. A New Testament reference: Colossians 1:17, “And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”
    - iv. And many other verses explain the same basic idea.
  - b. In Scripture, is there any place God is described not being present?



- i. God will not be present in hell: 2 Thessalonians 1:9, “Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;”
    - ii. God is not present where sin stays: Isaiah 59:1+2, “Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.
    - iii. God will separate Himself from the lost at the judgment: Matthew 25:41, ““Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”
  - c. So is God really “omnipresent” then?
    - i. Yes, He can be anywhere He wants to be
    - ii. Yet, His character chooses never to be around sin, in sin’s final destination, or with those who are impenitent perpetually (like Cain, the origin of our study here)
    - iii. It is His Sovereignty – His Omnipotence – His Authority – that grants Him the right to be anywhere He wants – or does not want to be – at anytime He chooses
- III. Why do we need to understand the doctrine of God’s omnipresence?
- a. Sin has separated man from God (Genesis 3:23+24) since the beginning of time
  - b. God worked tirelessly, patiently, and perfectly to bring about a solution to that separation (2 Peter 3:9) – He even sent His Son (John 3:16, Matthew 21:37) – if only we would accept His terms of pardon that we might be saved from our sin (Matthew 28:19+20, Mark 16:16, and through His Apostles – Acts 2:38, 22:16, etc.)
  - c. We are and will be separated from God forever if we do not accept His terms of pardon! (Revelation 20:15)
  - d. He who is Omnipresent – will be forever absent from the mind of Him who knows everything (Omniscience, another study for

another day). Let us snatch them from the fire who do not know the consequences of sin in his short life! (Jude 23)

### **UNDERSTANDING PROPHECY – PART 4 – GENESIS 5-9**

- I. In Genesis 4:25, Eve admits that Seth, her third son, is a replacement for Abel, not Cain.
- II. Genesis 5-9 dictates the genealogy of Seth through Noah and his sons.
  - a. God prophecies Messiah will come through Eve in Genesis 3:15.
  - b. God prophecies through Eve that Messiah will come through Seth in Genesis 4:25.
  - c. God provides that lineage through Moses in Genesis 5 from Adam to Noah – ten generations.
  - d. Lamech, Noah’s father, prophecies that Noah would give the earth “rest” (that is what Noah’s name means) in Genesis 5:29.
    - i. Lamech had other sons and daughters – Genesis 5:30
    - ii. Yet, Noah was chosen by God through Lamech – Genesis 5:29
    - iii. Lamech came from the descendants of Seth
      1. Adam, Eve, Seth, Cain, and all the descendants of all the above had other sons and daughters
      2. Yet Messiah comes down through a very specific line of descendants – carefully chosen of God – to demonstrate:
        - a. God’s omnipotence (defeating Satan at every turn using ordinary, imperfect people)
        - b. God’s omniscience (predicting accurately every ancestor of the Messiah through His prophecy, confirming Jesus IS the Messiah!)
        - c. God’s omnipresence (being anywhere He wants to be, anytime He wants to, to see His will be done)

3. Lamech prophesied accurately (by inspiration, for his prophecy is in Scripture and came true), for Noah would be God's vessel to bring "rest" on the earth
    - a. The Great Flood destroyed the Nephilim (Gen. 6:4)
      - i. Without going into great detail, the Nephilim were an idea of Satan made incarnate by having fallen angels marry (Genesis 6:2) human women, creating a giant race of men even the Israelites feared due to their great stature and size (Numbers 13:28+32)
      - ii. The Nephilim also existed after the flood (Genesis 6:4), but the flood wiped out the first generation
    - b. The Great Flood destroyed all wicked people (Genesis 6:5)
    - c. The Great Flood balanced out again the ratio of man to animal (Genesis 6:7), allowing man to truly start over again as the dominant species (Genesis 9:1-3)
    - d. The Great Flood continued the line of Messiah (Genesis 9:25)
    - e. The Great Flood began what we understand to be different races of men today (Genesis 9:18-19)
- III. The Prophecies of Shem, Ham, and Japheth – Genesis 9:25-27
- a. Canaan – **a grandson** of Noah, **a** son of Ham was cursed for his perverted behavior (Genesis 9:25)
    - i. Ham and his other sons and their descendants **were not cursed**
    - ii. They were in fact blessed with everyone else in Genesis 12:3!
    - iii. This Scripture **cannot** be used to say Ham's descendants are whatsoever inferior.

- iv. Ham's descendants largely occupy Africa as we know it today
- v. Canaan, **one** of Ham's sons, were servants to Shem and Japheth as predicted (Genesis 9:25-27)
  - 1. We see fulfillment of this in Genesis 14:1-11 – the descendants of Shem (“four kings”) had tributes being paid to them by Canaan's descendants
  - 2. When Canaan's descendants rebelled (probably thinking that with the Nephilim they were strong enough to be independent), the four Semitic kings quelled the rebellion
    - a. God's predictions, despite our supposed strength (or Satan's), always come true
    - b. Canaan's descendants eventually die off; there are no “cursed” peoples today.
  - 3. On a side note, Lot and his family in Sodom were victims of this war when they chose to live in this city of wickedness despite their knowledge that God had called the descendants of Canaan into subjection to the Semitic rulers of the time
- b. Ham – a son of Noah – and his descendants
  - i. **Receives no curse**
  - ii. Interestingly, they receive no specific blessing like Shem and Japheth do (Genesis 9:26-27)
  - iii. However, they DO receive the same blessing as all people everywhere, past and present, in Genesis 12:3
    - 1. This blessing came true in Acts 8 with the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunech!
    - 2. Therefore, Shem's descendants (Jews) became Christians first, then Ham's (the Ethiopian Eunech), then Japheth's (white, Asian, European, Australian, etc.), just like the Bible said! (“To the Jew first, then the Gentile” – Romans 1:16)
  - iv. The descendants of Ham are largely in Africa today

- v. In terms of population, they exceed Shem’s descendants, but are smaller than Japheth’s; this is true to this day.
- c. Japheth – a son of Noah – and his descendants (Genesis 9:27)
  - i. If you are white, you are from Japheth – same with most Asian descent
    - 1. Japheth’s descendants would end up occupying most of the world
      - a. They would end up occupying most of Europe, Russia, Asia, North and South America
      - b. Only Africa and the Middle East would not have a significant Japhetic population – this is true even to this day.
      - c. Even with the “globalization” of today’s world, and technology’s ability to move anybody anywhere, God’s prophecies for the races remain true to the letter!
  - ii. Japheth’s territory would be “expanded” – Genesis 9:27
    - 1. Japheth’s descendants would be the largest of all three races
    - 2. This is true, even to this day.
    - 3. Japheth’s descendants occupy the most on every continent except Africa (Ham’s descendants)
  - iii. Japheth’s descendants received the blessing of Genesis 12:3 in Acts 10 with the reception of Cornelius and his family into the fold of God
    - 1. Acts 10:9ff – Peter required some convincing from the Lord Himself!
    - 2. Acts 10:44-48 – Cornelius and his family believed *the preaching*, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (as a final sign to both Peter and his companions the Gentiles were full members of Christ’s church), and were baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ.
      - a. Peter preached – vs. 33-44

- b. Cornelius and his family heard and believed – vs. 43-44
- c. Cornelius and his family were baptized with the Holy Spirit – vs.44-45
  - i. Only other mention of this phenomenon is Acts 2:1-4
  - ii. One was to confirm the message with the Jews, and this time to confirm the Gentile to the Jew (specifically, Peter and his companions)
  - iii. Its purpose complete, it is never mentioned again
  - iv. Baptism of the Holy Spirit does not happen today because it has no need to exist today
  - v. Water baptism *still had to follow* baptism of the Holy Spirit – vs. 47-48
  - vi. Just like the Acts 2 sermon, Peter is interrupted before the terms of pardon for salvation are given by him - same pattern, same results.

IV. The prophecy of Genesis 9 ends at verse 27.

a. Prophecies so far:

- i. Messiah is going to come through:
  1. Eve – 3:15
  2. Seth – 4:25
  3. Noah – 6:8
  4. Shem – 9:26
- ii. God has kept his promises:
  1. Eve gave birth to Seth – 4:25
  2. Noah and his family saved through the flood – ch. 6-8; 1 Pet. 3:18-22

- a. Used by Peter as a “shadow” of our salvation today
  - b. As Noah and his family were saved through the water, “baptism now saves you” (1 Pet. 3:21)
  - c. Our baptism has power because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 3:22), just as the ark had the power to save Noah and his family through the flood (1 Pet. 3:20)
3. Shem spared through the flood and given God’s promise – 9:26
  4. Shem’s descendants came through to Abram (10:22-32, 11:10-27)
  5. God gives Abram three blessings:
    - a. Personal blessings (vs. 2)
      - i. “I will bless you” – Abraham acquired great wealth and influence
      - ii. “You will be a blessing”
        1. He tithed to Melchizedek – Genesis 14:20
        2. Saved Lot – Genesis 14:16
        3. Gave birth to Midian through Keturah – Genesis 25:1-4
          - a. Who became the father of the Midianites found later in Exodus
            - i. Zipporah – Moses’ first wife (Exodus 2:21)
            - ii. Jethro, high priest of Midian, and adviser to Moses (Exodus 18:17ff)
      - iii. “I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you” – Abraham had

God's providential protection throughout his life

- b. A nation (vs. 2)
  - i. The Hebrews (later called the Jews) arose from his grandson Jacob, who fathered the twelve tribes of Israel (Israel was Jacob's new name from Genesis 35:10 on)
  - ii. Their promise of perpetual existence was conditional; when they killed their Messiah, their destruction was foretold by the prophets (Mal. 4:5), Jesus (Mark 13:14ff), and fulfilled in the universally-accepted total destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD
  - iii. The "new Jerusalem" is the church (Rev. 21:2, Rom. 11:26, among other Scriptures), not physical Israel
- c. A great name (vs. 2)
  - i. Mentioned in 27 books of the Bible, often multiples times per book (most famous human character in the Old Testament)
  - ii. Immortalized twice in the Hebrews' Chapter 11 "Hall of Faithful Heroes"
  - iii. After Abraham's obedience "sacrifice" of his son Isaac in Genesis 22, no sin of his is ever mentioned after that (Gen. 15:6 prophecies this, fulfilled in 22:12-18)
  - iv. WE are seeds of the free woman (Gal. 4:21-31) and have the faith of Abraham and benefits promised to Abraham if we obey Christ (Romans 4:13, Gal. 3:7-9, 14)
- d. Messiah, who will bless **all the nations** (Galatians 3:8)

### **Understanding Prophecy – Part 5 – Genesis 10-12:1-4**



The last verse of Genesis 10, verse 32 says, “These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood.”

Verses 2-5 tell us of Japheth’s descendants for awhile yet.

Verses 6-20 tells us of Ham’s descendants for awhile yet.

Verses 2-31 tells us a broad range of Shem’s descendants:

Then, Chapter 11:10-27 tell us the direct line from Shem to Abram.

More genealogies in Genesis and beyond give us the genealogy *going forward* as it continues to develop through Jewish history, ultimately arriving at Jesus. This is why Matthew 1 begins with a genealogy!

Luke 3 tells us the direct line from Christ *back to* Adam, through Mary (blood lineage).

Matthew 1 tells us the direct line from Christ back to Abram, through Joseph (legal lineage).

Shem, Abram, and David were all ancestors of both Mary and Joseph. This was required for the legal *and* bloodline of Jesus to be valid.

NOTE: The Bible has the most to say about Shem’s descendants because this is the race that Messiah, Jesus, will come through. From Shem comes Abram (the nation), the tribe (Judah), the family (Jesse), the house (David), and finally the virgin (Mary).

Ham’s descendants show up as the Egyptians, Canaanites, and others, as well as eventually in Acts 8 by which the Ethiopian Eunuch receives salvation! (Notably before the descendants of Japheth in Acts 10)

Japheth’s descendants predominantly “take the scene” starting in Acts 10 forward as Japheth’s descendants consist of the European and Asian nations and churches, the Roman empire and church, etc. that many of the New Testament letters are written to.

I. Genesis Chapter 10 gives the prophecy of where the sons of Noah and their descendants *would* go, but had not gone yet.

A) Many chapters in Genesis – and in much of the history books of the Bible – are told in parallel – not chronological order.

1) This means, for example, the contents of Chapter 10 actually happen in chapter 11 and beyond.

2) This lets us see what God had in mind (the prophecy), what people actually did (good and bad), and then what God did to fix any wayward path (God did this a lot!).

3) Genesis Chapter 10 seems like just another “boring genealogy” but we learn a great deal about Noah’s sons and their descendants and how this will play out in Jesus’ coming!

a) As a review, we know Jesus is coming through Shem (Genesis 9:26).

b) In Jesus’ genealogy in Luke 3 (through Mary), many names are repeated from Genesis 10: Noah, Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, and Abram so we know we are looking at the same genealogy.

1) Some of these names have slightly different spellings in Greek to English (Luke 3) than Hebrew to English (Genesis 10+11): Arphaxad and Eber are two examples.

This is because when you “transliterate” a name from language to another, a letter may be different, combined, or absent, in another language. Eber in Hebrew, for example is Heber. Same person, H is absent in this context in Hebrew.

c) Matthew 1’s genealogy from Joseph applies at the *very end* of our study, because it goes from Christ back to Abram, and Abram is mentioned at the end of Genesis 11 for the first time.

Matthew was written to Jews, and they cared about Jesus’ genealogy going back to Abram. Luke was written to Gentiles, and they

cared about Jesus' genealogy back to the beginning of the world. And indeed, both genealogies meet their goals right on.

B) Ham's descendants will form Babel (Babylon), Assyria, Shinar, Nineveh, among other places and peoples mentioned in future chapters of the Bible. Ham's descendants play some of the antagonists we see in the rest of Biblical history.

C) Japheth's descendants flourish far and wide (Genesis 9:27, 10:5), especially after the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-11) and the division of the earth that happened after that (Genesis 10:25 & 11:16) to separate all the races. The earth divided 101 years after the flood (Genesis 11:10-16). Genesis 10:5 tells us why we don't see them until Acts 10.

D) We get two (2) accounts of Shem's descendants in Genesis 10+11, **because this is the race Messiah is coming through:**

1) Genesis 10 gives the beginnings of all of Shem's family tree; Genesis 11 gives us just the descendants that head straight down to Abram.

2) Both are in harmony:

Genesis 10: Shem → Arphaxad → Shelah → Eber → Peleg

Genesis 11: Shem → Arphaxad → Shelah → Eber → Peleg  
→ Reu → Serug → Nahor → Terah → Abram

3) Genesis 10 is content to tell us the beginnings of Shem's descendants, and then to simply sum up that they spread across the earth as they continued to multiply.

4) Genesis 11 gives us the same genealogy but further down, heading straight to Abram. **This genealogy continues the story of the first prophecy (Genesis 3:15)**, heading into the promises and prophecies given to Abram (Genesis 12:1ff).

5) God's **faithfulness is evident** as He keeps His promises to bring Messiah:

From Eve (Genesis 3:15), to Seth (Genesis 4:25), to Noah (Genesis 6:8), to Shem (Genesis 9:26), and now to Abram (Genesis 12:3).

God is also narrowing down the specifics about Messiah as we go, so we will be able to recognize Him when He comes:

First, the **seed** of a woman (Genesis 3:15)

Then, the **race** of Shem (Genesis 9:26)

Now, the **nation** of Abram/Abraham (Genesis 12:1ff)

The Old Testament story, as it progresses, reveals more and more about Messiah. Later, God further reduces the Messianic line specifically to the **tribe** of Judah, then the **family** of Jesse, then the **house** of David, and finally a **virgin** from the house of David (Mary). Then, **hundreds of other prophecies** will give us so much detail about the Messiah Himself that when He (Jesus) came, he was immediately recognizable.

E) Genesis 11 ends giving us an account of what Abram and family started out doing, which then Genesis 12 points us was not perfectly in mind with what God had commanded. The promises of Genesis 12 were just the first to Abram; God would repeat them in Genesis 15, 17, 22, and beyond to his descendants. As the patriarchs were faithful, the promises God gave them were fulfilled, and thus prophecy was fulfilled in their wake. This also means when they were unfaithful, the promises were delayed (this happened many times throughout Old Testament history, starting with Abram).

1) Abram had two brothers. One died (Haran – vs. 28). The other had a son named Lot (vs. 27), Abram’s nephew that caused trouble for Abram repeatedly. Nahor stayed behind, but Terah (“delay” in Hebrew, “moon” in Chaldean), Abram, his wife Sarai, and Lot all started out for Canaan but settled in Harran for about a period of seven years (Genesis 11:31).

a) Genesis 12 references the end of chapter 11 by saying in verse 1, “The Lord HAD said to Abram...”

b) Verse 1 tells how God told Abram to leave behind 1) his country, 2) his people, and 3) his father’s household: Abram was not supposed to take them with him but he did anyway. This delayed God’s promises, Messiah, and caused Abram many troubles.

i) **While Abram and family tarry in Harran**

(“fruitless”), **God does not speak to Abram**, while Abram waits for his father to die. This reminds us of Jesus saying, “Let the dead bury their own dead” (Matthew 8:22, Luke 9:60). When God’s work needs done, there’s no time to tarry!

ii) As well, Lot would cause him nothing but grief.

iii) Finally, Abram’s father Terah dies (Genesis 11:32), and Abram gets on his way, but with Lot still in tow (Genesis 12:4-5). They had departed from Ur (“fiery”) of the Chaldees (“destruction”) to Harran (“fruitless”) but now are heading to Canaan (“to bow the knee”) starting in vs. 4, where they are supposed to be going.

2) Terah, Abram’s father, delayed the coming of Messiah. Lot would get Abram involved in all kinds of trouble, further delaying things many times, and always putting Abram’s life in danger. **These were all attempts by Satan to get Abram killed** – why? – because Messiah, Satan’s head crusher (Genesis 3:15), is coming through Abram!

F) God’s Promises and **Prophecies** to Abram (Genesis 12:1-3) were great and many and repeated (chapters 15, 17, 22, and then to his descendants) and **fulfilled**:

1) They were personal – “I will bless you”, “you will be a blessing”, “I make your name great”, and “whoever blesses you I will bless, and whoever curses you I will curse”

2) They were national – “I will make you into a great nation”

3) They were international – “All peoples on earth will be blessed through you”

4) Each of these promises and prophecies were fulfilled:

i) Personal – Abram grew wealthy and famous, Melchizedek received Abram’s gift (Genesis 14) and Abram received Melchizedek’s blessing, Pharaoh gave him gifts (Genesis 12:16), Abimelech gave him gifts (Genesis 20:14+15), the family and servants under him lived well, the Hebrews (later,

Jews) always claimed Abraham as their father (John 8:39), became the most famous Old Testament character, and the only character to be mentioned twice in Hebrews 11 as faithful (vs. 8 + 17).

ii) National – the nation of the Hebrews came through Abram, who also enjoyed great prosperity during the reign of Kings David and Solomon by God’s blessing

iii) International – Messiah (Jesus) came through Abram’s **descendants to bless ALL nations!** (vs. 3)

a) “First to the Jew, then to the Gentile” – Romans 1:16

### **God’s prophecies were fulfilled as promised in**

#### **Acts:**

b) Acts 2:37-41 – Salvation came first to native-born Jews (race of Shem)

c) Acts 4-6 – Then salvation came to Jews born in Greece but still fully Jewish, nationalized Jews (citizens), and religious (circumcised) Jews

d) Acts 8:4-25 – Then salvation came to the Samaritans (race of Shem and Ham mixed)

The Samaritans were “half breeds” from the 700+ year old Assyrian captivity of the ten northern tribes of Israel, having intermarried with them over time. This is why the ten northern tribes are now permanently “lost” to their ethnic origin, but NOT lost to God’s mercy in bringing them the Gospel as well!

e) Acts 8:26-39 - Jewish proselytes (circumcised) – Jewish by religion but nationally foreign (race of Ham) – started in Leviticus 19:34

e) Acts 10+16:11-15 – Then salvation came to uncircumcised, non-Jewish, but God-fearing Gentiles – Cornelius & Lydia (race of Japheth)

f) Acts 18:8 – Then salvation came to total heathens (Corinthians)

### **Understanding Prophecy – Part 6 – Genesis 12, Descendants of Shem**

I. We left off last week finishing our review of prophecy in Genesis 10+11

A) Ham's descendants would form Babylon, Nineveh, Assyria, Shinar, Egypt, the Canaanites, and the rest of Africa. Many, but not all, of Ham's descendants would serve as various antagonists throughout Old Testament history.

1) There is also fulfilled prophecy regarding Ham's descendants we will see come true in Genesis 14, for example, and in Exodus later on. After that, the nations of Babylon (Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, the prophets), Nineveh (Jonah, Nahum), and Assyria (2 Chronicles and 2 Kings) each play their part in fulfilled prophecy.

2) The ultimate fulfillment of prophecy (and exoneration) for Ham's descendants was the Ethiopian Eunuch receiving salvation in Acts 8. So salvation **also** came to Ham, and **before** Japheth. Ham's descendants are not second-class citizens; God shows no favoritism (Romans 2:11, Acts 2:34).

B) Japheth's descendants would form the European, Asian, American, and Australian continents. They were "maritime" peoples (Genesis 10:5), so they traveled farther and wider than the rest. After the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) and the earth splitting into its various land masses (Genesis 10:25, which actually happened before the first part of chapter 11), this kept the races of Shem, Ham, and Japheth separate and distinct **for the sole purpose of bringing Messiah into the world through Shem** (Genesis 9:26).

We will not see much of Japheth's descendants until the New Testament, where from Acts 10 on, the spotlight largely turns to the descendants of Japheth: Cornelius (Acts 10), Lydia (Acts 16), the Corinthians (Acts 16), then the various New Testament letters to the various churches of Europe and Asia.

Even Revelation was originally addressed to Japhetic peoples, showing how the Bible comes full circle in fulfilling prophecy, and showing how God did keep His promises to bless all nations (Genesis 12:3).

II. From this point, the Bible narrows our focus to the descendants of Shem from Genesis 12 forward. This is because Jesus will come through the race of Shem (Genesis 9:26).

A) In Genesis 12:3, God tells Abraham that “through you all of the nations will be blessed.” This is a distant promise to Abraham that through his descendants the Messiah, the Promised Seed, and the Savior of all mankind would come.

So, in the prophecy God has given in Genesis 3-12, we know the following about Jesus:

Boy seed of a woman (Genesis 3:15) → Race of Shem (Genesis 9:26) → Nation of Abraham (Genesis 12:3)

B) Of course, Abraham is the father of the Hebrews (later called Jews). The rest of the Old Testament focuses on the development, history (both good and bad), and culmination of the Jewish people.

B) The New Testament begins with the Jewish people encountering their Messiah. Though a few accept Him, most reject Him (Acts 2:23), but regardless God’s purpose for the Hebrew nation is then completed (Matthew 5:17, Matthew 27:51).

1) Their final judgment (destruction) was predicted in both the Old Testament by Moses (Deuteronomy 28:49-52) and other Prophets (i.e., Joel 2, Micah 3:11-12), and in the New Testament by Jesus (Mark 13:1ff).

2) Some question exactly when Jesus died and rose again:

a) We know through calendar error that Jesus was not born in 0 AD. No one debates this.

b) We know the destruction of Jerusalem occurred in 70AD.



c) The number “forty” is a consistent number in the Bible that always means a period of probation (Jesus being tempted in the desert, the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness, etc.).

d) If we take 70AD minus 40 years, we arrive at 30AD.

i) Why take 40 away from 70AD to arrive at 30AD? When Jesus died, was buried, and raised again, the Jews had entered another period of probation (to ultimately accept or reject their Messiah).

The genealogical records were in the temple:

Matthew 1 has Jesus’ royal genealogy through Joseph of King David to prove He was of the kingly right to rule as the Messiah.

Luke 3 has Jesus’ bloodline genealogy through Mary to prove He was of David’s house by his son Nathan.

The Jews had eyewitnesses, written accounts, miraculous signs, and their own prophecy to come to the foregone conclusion Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 2:22-36) they had crucified.

When the Jews failed to do so, their probation was up, and their destruction was guaranteed (Luke 17:25-34).

e) We know that Jesus’ ministry was about 3.5 years from John’s Gospel. If we take 30AD minus 3.5 years, we are sometime in the year 26AD.

i) Daniel predicted in Daniel 9:24 there would be 70 weeks (“years”, in consistent Old Testament prophetic speech) before the Messiah came:

70 weeks contains 7 days per week. Times the two together and you get 490 “weeks”, or 490 years until Messiah would come from Daniel’s prediction. Daniel gave his prophecy in the year 464BC.  $464\text{BC} + 490 \text{ years} = 26\text{AD}$ .

Jesus' ministry began at His baptism (Daniel 9:25, Matthew 3:13-17) in 26AD. After he was crucified, buried, and resurrection again in 30AD, there was 3.5 years until Stephen's stoning (Acts 7:59).

THESE 2 3.5 year periods are the 7 years of tribulation in Revelation 13 (not some totally-unknown future event). This makes sense since the birth of the church is apocalyptically shown in Revelation 12.

The first 3.5 year period is Jesus' earthly ministry beginning until His ascension.

The second 3.5 year period is the church's final plea to the Jewish people to accept their Messiah but they reject His messengers as well (Mark 12:1-12, Acts 7:59). From there, the Gospel went elsewhere (Acts 8 on).

Then the forty year probation begins and ends with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD by the hands of the Roman general Titus.

With the genealogical records destroyed, the Jewish people killed or scattered, the Jews have no way to prove their lineage to Abraham or to a specific tribe to this day.

The destruction of Jerusalem was on purpose by God to prove once for all for both the remaining Jew and every Gentile that only Jesus could possibly be the Messiah. Only His genealogies remain. If He is not the Messiah, no one could be!

## **Understanding Prophecy - Part 7 - Genesis 12 - Prophecies Concerning Abram**

By Joshua Stucki – 01/28/2015

Quick Review: Last week we finished our review of the prophecies concerning Noah's sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Messiah would come through Shem (Genesis 9:26), and Ham and Japheth had prophecies concerning

them as well. In the end, however, each of the boys and all of their descendants were to be blessed by the coming Jewish Messiah (Genesis 12:3).

This week, we will begin to focus on the prophecies concerning Abram:

1) The various prophecies concerning Abram would have worldwide influence:

a) During Abram's lifetime (Genesis chapters 12-25)

b) During his son's and grandson's lifetime (Genesis chapters 16-50)

c) During Israel's establishment and history (Exodus 1-Malachi 4)

d) To the spread of the Old Testament Scriptures from Israel to:

1) Assyria (2 Kings 18:1ff) – 722BC

- Jonah prophesied against Nineveh, capital of Assyria (Genesis 10:11) around 755BC; however, Nineveh repented, sparing their nation at that time (Jonah 3:5-10)

- The Northern Kingdom of the Israelites had been perpetually unfaithful since their split with the Southern Kingdom. God used Assyria to take the Northern Ten Tribes captive, never to return, in 722BC (2 Kings 18:1ff).

- Amos and Hosea preached repentance and warnings to the Northern Kingdom in their prophecies, but the Northern Kingdom never relented.

- Hosea is famous for comparing the Northern Kingdom to his prostitute wife, Gomer (Hosea 1:2ff); Hosea was a son of a prophet and a learned man.

- Amos was a shepherd called by God to give the Northern Kingdoms their last warnings.

- Finally, Nahum prophesied against Nineveh around 613BC, but this time they did not repent, so they were destroyed in

605BC, just as predicted by Nahum (Nahum 1:1, 3:11-15, and really – the whole book in context).

- Nonetheless, the Old Testament Scriptures spread with the people of Assyria and the Ten Lost Tribes among them; these would be the ancestors of the Samaritans (“half-breeds”) who had their own form of Judaism by the time Jesus came that Jesus corrected (John 4:19ff)

- Salvation came to the Samaritans in Acts 8:4-25 (Philip preached the Gospel there, including to Simon the Sorcerer, right before Philip would preach to the Ethiopian Eunuch – who also already had a copy of the Old Testament Scriptures with him)

## 2) Babylon (2 Kings 24:1ff, 2 Chronicles 36:6ff)

- The Southern Kingdom of Israel was taken captive in 606BC by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar

- Nebuchadnezzar took the finest of Israel’s people and put them to work in his court (Daniel 1:1ff)

- Therefore, the Old Testament Scriptures written up to that point traveled with the Israelites, and continued their development there (the books of Daniel, Obadiah, and Ezekiel)

- Daniel predicted a Kingdom would come after Babylon by which the Israelites would return to their homeland

- It is also interesting to note that Egypt and Babylon were the only two world powers at that time. Babylon conquered Egypt in 605BC at the Battle of Carchemish, solidifying one power from which God would begin the “countdown” towards Jesus’ coming (Daniel 2, 7, 9, and following). See last week’s lesson, pages 2-3, for a breakdown of those events Scripturally in historical and chronological order.

- Isaiah warned Babylon of its destruction

- Joel warned Jerusalem of its destruction in the future

- Micah warned the Southern Kingdom of its coming judgment under Babylon

- Zephaniah warned Israel, Judah, and the whole world at that time of judgment (both imminently in the form of the threat of foreign armies and in the future to judgment for ignoring God long-term, specifically, to rejecting the coming Messiah)

- Jeremiah uniquely prophesied before and during the Babylonian captivity against Judah's imminent captivity, the judgment itself, and then the hope God had in mind for still bringing Messiah through Judah

- Habakkuk's book is written during this time, and it is an interesting conversation between the prophet Habakkuk and God concerning why God uses foreign, evil armies to judge His people. Important truths about faith (2:14, quoted in the New Testament at Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38) and other truths are in this book.

3) Medo-Persia (Daniel 5:1ff, the book of Esther, Nehemiah, Ezra)

- The people of Israel would begin their return to Jerusalem under Persia's rule in 536BC (only 3 years after they conquered Babylon)

- The people of Israel maintained a good relationship with Persia during its reign until Greece took over Persia

- Persia's reign was predicted by Daniel in chapter 2 of his book along with Babylon before it and Greece after it

- King Cyrus of Persia (son of Esther) oversaw the Israelites' return to Jerusalem

- Haggai wrote his prophetic book at this time to urge the Israelites to complete the building of the temple before their own houses

- Zechariah wrote his book at the time to encouraging the Israelites to stay faithful to the Law of Moses as the Messiah was coming soon; Ezra was the spiritual leader of the people at this time, with Zechariah as an accompanying prophet.

- Malachi wrote the last book of the Old Testament, warning the people of Judah to stay faithful with their tithes and offerings as commanded under the Law of Moses, and if they did, blessings would come (most of all, their Messiah would not be delayed as it He had been in the past)

4) Greece (foretold in Daniel 2 as the “bronze sheaves” – vs. 32)

- Intertestamental period; no “revelation” of God during this time

- Lots of interesting secular and religious writings from this period

- After the Babylonian captivity, the Israelites would struggle with a variety of sins and adding/subtracting to the Law of Moses, but they never would again return to idolatry. Instead, they came up with a stricter, legalistic form of the Law of Moses that benefited the elite classes over the commoner.

- Alexander the Great conquered Medo-Persia in 332BC, and disliked the Jews for their allegiance with Persia (after all, Persia, under Cyrus, helped them return and rebuild).

- The Jewish historian Josephus writes in his book *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 11, Chapter 8, Section 5 that Alexander the Great approached the city but the people of the city and the high priest were all standing outside in white robes. Alexander approached the high priest and told him that he had a dream the previous night of this very thing. The high priest then took Alexander into the temple and showed him the prophecies concerning him (Daniel 2:32, 8:20-21, 10:20-11:4). Alexander was

so moved that he gave the Jews freedom of religion under his rule (whereas virtually everywhere Greek polytheism was spread).

- Antiochus IV Epiphanies rose up 150 years after Alexander and invaded Jerusalem and even sacrificed a female pig on the altar in defiance to the Law of Moses. The Maccabean family rose up during this period and successfully overthrew Antiochus' rule. The apocryphal books of 1 and 2 Maccabees tells these stories (included in Catholic Bibles).

5) Rome (predicted in Daniel 2 as “legs of iron and feet of iron and clay” (vs. 33, 40)

- The Roman government allowed a cut-down, “syncretistic freedom of religion” which the Jews were fickle with

- Otherwise, the Romans allowed you to practice your religion, but you had to respect the gods of Rome as well, and honor (and eventually “worship”) the emperor

- Jesus and the New Testament writers affirmed the government's right to rule (Romans 13:1ff, 1 Peter 2:13) and tax (Matthew 22:21, Mark 12:17) but would not allow worship or prayers offered to anyone but God (this is what got the Christians in trouble everywhere they were in the Roman Empire)

- Revelation is written to seven churches that were experiencing this persecution while under Roman rule

- The Roman Empire had put a foreign king (an Edomite, Herod) on the throne of David (over Judah) when Jesus was born. With Genesis 49:10 fulfilled, Jesus was here. The Kings of the Orient recognized this sign and this is why they came looking for the Promised Messiah where Herod was (Matthew 2:1ff).

- Jesus' ministry occurred entirely under Roman rule

- The people wanted Jesus to rise up and crush Rome – John 6:15. This was their picture of the Messiah, romanticized into a military king instead of the promised Savior of their souls.

- The entire book of Acts and the development of the early church happened under Roman rule

- The book of Revelation has strong references to Rome's persecution, ultimate integration, and corruption of Christ's original church (Revelation 15-18). Jesus also foretold this corruption in Mark 4:30-32.

- Under Roman rule the New Testament would be written, circulated, and ultimately compiled. All of the books were written by 95AD, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of Christians began the work of copying and passing them along. We see the first evidences for this practice in Colossians 4:16.

- Thanks to Christ's efforts through the Apostle Paul, Philip, Barnabas, John Mark, Timothy, Titus, and others, the Gospel spread all throughout the Roman Empire very quickly. By Colossians 1:6+23, The Gospel had spread...

#### 6) To the rest of the world by 60AD

- Christ died, buried, and rose again in 30AD (see last week's lesson on pages 2+3 for a detailed timeline of the math regarding this)

- Christ's post-resurrection appearances occurred for 40 days after his resurrection

- Christ's ascension was on that 40<sup>th</sup> day

- 10 days later, the church began in Acts 2

- During these ten days post-Ascension, Jesus entered the heavenly tabernacle to offer His blood on the mercy seat of Heaven as the sacrifice offered "once for all" (Hebrews 9:11-12, 26, 10:10). The coronation of Jesus as King then took place



(Daniel 7:13-14). At the conclusion of this coronation, His Kingdom would begin:

- Jesus' sacrifice was accepted by God just as the priests' sacrifice was accepted by God (2 Chronicles 7:1-3 is one example), and this is shown by the glory of God filling the house where the Apostles were waiting and praying (Luke 24:49, Acts 2:1-4).

- Acts 2 saw 3,000 mostly native-born Jews come to Christ (Acts 2:5, 41, Revelation 12:1ff).

- Acts 4-6 saw Greek-born Jews come to Christ (2000 more – Acts 4:4).

- Acts 8:1ff see Samaritans coming to Christ (end of 7 year tribulation (Revelation 13) – Jews had rejected Jesus as a nation – now salvation would begin to be preached “to the ends of the earth” – Romans 10:18

- Acts 8:26ff see Ethiopians coming to Christ (Africa, from Ham)

- Acts 10+16 sees God-fearing Gentiles coming to Christ

- Acts 18 sees total heathens coming to Christ (the Corinthians)

- Colossians 1:16+23 and Romans 10:18 indicate that by the time Colossians was written, the Gospel had been preached “to every creature under the heavens”, “to the ends of the world”.

- In 70AD, with the Gospel everywhere, and the Jews having rejected their Messiah, the 40 year probation period for them was up to fully investigate their own prophecies and genealogies and the testimonies of others as to the authenticity of Jesus. When they still were not penitent, God sent Rome to destroy

Jerusalem forever, just as it was prophesied in Joel 2 and by Jesus in Matthew 23 and Mark 13.

- See study on “How did the Gospel spread into the whole earth in 30 years before technology?” in print by request or at [www.callaochristianchurch.org/bible-studies](http://www.callaochristianchurch.org/bible-studies).

To sum up this section of our study, the promises (and prophecies) that God would give Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 would have worldwide effect in time, all coming true throughout world history from the point.

- 2) The prophecies concerning Abraham were three-fold (Genesis 12:1-3):
  - A) “I will bless you” and “I will make your name great” – a personal blessing
  - B) “Out of you will come a great nation” – a national blessing
  - C) “All of the nations of the earth will be blessed through you” – an international blessing

## **Understanding Prophecy - Part 8a**

### **Introduction to Messianic Prophecy**

For the last two weeks we looked at Genesis 12:3 in detail - the Promised Messiah (Jesus) coming from the Jews - and how He would be the Savior of the whole world.

So far, we have narrowed the Messiah down...

To the seed of a woman (Genesis 3:15)

To the race of Shem (Genesis 9:26)

To the nation of Abraham (Genesis 12:3)

As we continue to study prophecy, we will continue to run into both Messianic prophecies and prophecies concerning other events in world history. It is time to take a basic look at Messianic prophecy, so as we read, we can identify the "correct" Savior as we go:

I. There are 336+ prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Promised Messiah (Jesus)

A. Eight (8) of these prophecies give us the "address" of Jesus (when and where to find Him)

B. Forty (40) of these prophecies give us the main attributes about Jesus (how, what, why about Him)

C. The remaining 280+ prophecies give us the details about the above attributes (the complete picture about Him)

II. How much information is "enough"? How can we be certain Jesus is the Messiah?

A. "Determination", scientifically-speaking, is concerned with two truths: 1) probability and 2) alternatives

1. Probability tells us the likelihood that a random item could match all predicted characteristics

2. Alternatives tell us what, if any, equally likely alternatives there are to the hypothesis (or, proposed subject)

B. Probability is a matter of math

.i) The simplest of all coincidental "predications" or "matches" is a coin flip:

.a) Predicting which side the coin will land on is a 1 out of 2 chance

.b) Predicting which side the coin will land on twice in a row is a 1 out of 4 chance ( $2^2$ )

.c) Predicting which side the coin will land on three times in a row is a 1 out of 8 chance ( $2^3$ )

.d) And so on. If you could completely - coincidentally - guess which side the coin will land after a flip fifty times, you would have beaten

the odds (completely by chance) of 1 of  $2^{50}$ , or 1:1,125,899,907,000,000! You have thousands of times better chance of winning the big lotto!

.ii) The above helps us determine coincidence vs. real correlation. It is reasonable to assume that there would be a coincidental parallel between any two things, or maybe even three, four, or five of them. However, beyond a certain number of correctly-guessed "coin flips", it is unreasonable to see chance any longer. Something is driving those consistent results.

### C. Alternatives are a matter of logic

1. Let us say Jesus "passes the test" of probability. Are there other "Messiahs" who equally fulfill the prophecies, proving that although Jesus fits the math, He is nothing special, because more than Him also does so

2. An example of this are two people who live at the same address over time:

.a) Bob lived at 101 Maple St. Anywhere, State 99999 from 2001-2005

.b) Sheryl lives at 101 Maple St. Anywhere, State 99999 from 2006 until now

.c) If a letter was sent to 101 Maple St. Anywhere, State 9999 with no addressee on December 31st, 2005, who is the letter for - Bob or Sheryl?

.i) It was sent while Bob lived at the address, but it will arrive when Sheryl will live there.

.ii) Without a name, how can we be certain who the letter is for?

3. This is why it is important to look at not only the "address" of the Messiah, but the "contents of the letter" therein:

.a) The 8 "addresses" that narrow down the Messiah to one Man get us to the when and where

.b) The 40 "attribute" prophecies give us details about the how, why, and what of that one Man

.c) The 280+ "detail" prophecies confirm, spell out, repeat, or help further identify this one Man

4. Is there any other proposed Messiah who fits the "Messianic addresses"?

.a) The most common assertion is "Saoshyant", the "savior of the world" from the ancient Iranian religion Zoroastrianism

.b) Liberal scholarship claims Jesus as Messiah has no historical credence, no 1st century non-Biblical references to Jesus, and that Christianity is really just a conglomeration of various ancient myths creating a synchronized, universally-accepted religion over time.

.c) Other examples include Horus, Mithra, Prometheus, Dionysus, Osiris, Buddha, Krishna, and Apollonius of Tyana.

III. So, will the real "Messiah" please stand up?

### **Understanding Prophecy - Part 8b**

#### **Prophecies that Identify the Correct Messiah**

I. The pagan-religious and secular/liberal world has offered many alternatives to Jesus to either be the Messiah or claim there is none at all. How can we show that Jesus is the Messiah, beyond a reasonable doubt?

1) Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Fulfilled by Jesus in Matthew 2:1, Luke 2:4-6.

2) Messiah would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). Fulfilled by Jesus in Matthew 1:22+23, Luke 1:26-31.

3) Messiah would be a descendant of Jacob (Genesis 21:12, Numbers 24:17). Fulfilled by Jesus in Matthew 1:2.

4) Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah of the nation of Israel (Genesis 49:10). Fulfilled by Jesus in Luke 3:33, Hebrews 7:14.

5) Messiah would be heir to King David's throne (2 Samuel 7:12+13; Isaiah 9:7).  
Fulfilled by Jesus in Luke 1:32+33, Romans 1:3.

6) Messiah's throne would be anointed and eternal (Psalm 45:6+7; Daniel 2:44).  
Fulfilled by Jesus in Luke 1:33, Hebrews 1:8-12.

7) Messiah would be called "Immanuel", or "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14).  
Fulfilled by Jesus in Matthew 1:23.

8) Messiah would spend a season in Egypt (Hosea 11:1). Fulfilled by Jesus in  
Matthew 2:14+15.

9) A massacre of children would occur at Messiah's birthplace (Jeremiah 31:15).  
Fulfilled by Jesus in Matthew 2:16-18.

10) A messenger would prepare the way for the Messiah (Isaiah 40:3-5). Fulfilled  
by John the Baptist in Luke 3:3-6.

Does our #1 alternative candidate, "Saoshyant", fit in the first ten prophecies?

1) Saoshyant born in Iran, not Bethlehem of Israel..

2) According to Zoroastrianism, in their scripture labeled "Denkard 7.10.15ff",  
Saoshyant was born...

.a) Of a virgin

.i) in Lake Kansava (Yasht 19.92) (Jesus was born in Bethlehem, see  
both #1's above)

.ii) where the virgin would receive "victorious knowledge" (gnosis in  
Greek, same word used for Jesus in John 1:1), impregnating her supernaturally

.1) In many pagan religions, "the Holy Spirit" was renamed  
"Sophia", or the Greek word for wisdom

.2) So even if were to give the virgin birth of Saoshyant credit,  
the "how" of the virgin birth does not match

.b) Her son, when born, will not be nourished by his mother (Jesus was  
raised a normal child by his parents as predicted by Isaiah 53:2a)

.c) His body will be sun-like (Jesus was ordinary - Isaiah 53:2b)

.d) The "royal glory" of Khwarenah was with him (Jesus had no majestic features - Isaiah 53:3)

.e) He would live for 57 years (Jesus only lived on earth for 33 years)

.i) subsisting on only vegetables for 17 years (Jesus ate and drank like anyone else - EVEN after His resurrection - Luke 24:41-43)

.ii) water for 30 years (Nobody can live on just water for 30 years)

.iii) Only on spiritual food for 10 years (What is spiritual food that one can physically subsist on?)

.f) Saoshyant would die, raise from the dead

.g) He will return for the final battle with evil (as recorded in Bundahishn 30.1ff)

.iv) reigning victorious (Jesus gives the Kingdom over to the Father after His coming - 1 Corinthians 15:28)

.v) raising the other dead along with him (spiritually, not physically - Christians believe in a bodily resurrection - Romans 8:23)

.1) Virtually all of paganism rejects a physical or bodily resurrection, because the underlying belief is that all physical matter is evil (Gnosticism, a similar belief, was invading the churches was addressed by Paul and John in Colossians, Philippians, 1 and 2nd John)

.2) Judaism and Christianity both recognize creation as "good" and man as "very good" (Genesis 1:31)

.3) Christianity has its core the physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus AND man (1 Corinthians 15)

.vi) where ALL will be restored to eternal perfection, all souls cleansed, and reunited with Ahura Mazda (Zoroastrianism's god) forever in bliss. (No hell in Zoroastrianism - like Mormonism and many other religions that are pagan or derived from pagan roots - everybody makes it, just different levels of reward/esteem, etc.)

- 3) Saoshyant's mother is unnamed with an unknown genealogy (Jesus' mother was Mary, descendant of David, back to the first man, Adam, as recorded in Luke 3)
- 4) Saoshyant has no traceable lineage; all published "genealogies" are recognized as "spiritual only" or merely mythological.
- 5) Saoshyant did not come to rule a Kingdom until the end of time (Jesus rules His Kingdom NOW - Revelation 1:5+6; the Father will rule at the end of time - 1 Corinthians 15:28)
- 6) Saoshyant's "throne" was never physical (Jesus' inherited David's physical throne)
- 7) Saoshyant is not god (Ahura Mazda is god in Zoroastrianism) - in Christianity, Jesus is God along with the Father and the Holy Spirit
- 8) Saoshyant asserts there is an inscription of his mother riding on a donkey on an Egyptian pyramid (it could be literally any woman riding on a donkey; many religions claim this inscription)
- 9) No massacre of children of Saoshyant like in Jesus' time (Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew 2)
- 10) Saoshyant was preceded by Zoraster, founded of the religion named after him. In the beginning, he called himself the Saoshyant (Yasna 46.3), but later decided the Saoshyant was someone else yet to come and offered "prophecies" about his coming.

NOTE: Saoshyant, taking a doctrine from Hinduism, believes that Saoshyant has reincarnated several times, most recently in the form of a woman, "Alexandria H." She claims a divine birth, prophetic abilities, healing powers, and enjoys her current nickname, "Thunderbird Woman" (see [http://www.saoshyant.org/about\\_saoshyant\\_hehpsheboah.htm](http://www.saoshyant.org/about_saoshyant_hehpsheboah.htm)). Naturally, none of this can be confirmed by any outside, independent source.

In Conclusion:

Keep in mind, Saoshyant is the #1 alternative for the promised Jewish Messiah.



- 1) Of just these ten prophecies about the promised Jewish Messiah, only 3 have partial fulfillment (so-called virgin birth, may be in Egypt, resurrection). Jesus, by comparison, fulfills them all, plus hundreds more.
- 2) From these few unsubstantiated scraps, secular/liberal and pagan "historians" make their case that all of Christianity is "stolen" from these myths.
- 3) The math does not add up. The alternatives are not there. The science, math, logic, and history of the Bible are sound beyond a reasonable doubt.

### **Understanding Prophecy – Part 8c – Introduction to Messianic Prophecy**

INTRO: Last week, we analyzed just ten prophecies comparing Christ and liberal theology's closest "match" – Saoshyant of Zoroastrianism. We discovered Saoshyant vaguely matched parts of 5 prophecies concerning Christ, whereas Christ matched all ten.

This week, we will look at another ten prophecies concerning Jesus, to see if He "matches":

11) Messiah would be Semitic, through Abraham's line – Genesis 9:26, 12:3. Fulfilled in Matthew 1:1, Romans 9:5.

- Jesus' genealogy from the beginning of time is recorded in Luke 3
- Jesus' genealogy goes all the way back to Abraham in Matthew 1.
- Jesus' genealogy is recorded from the beginning all throughout the Old Testament.

Nobody else has a genealogy that compares on any level. This also tells us a profound truth – if Jesus is not the Messiah, then no one could be, because no one else has the required genealogy of the Messiah.

12) Messiah would be from Isaac – Genesis 17:19, 21:12. Fulfilled in Luke 3:34.

- Islam consistently claims that the covenant to Isaac was either false or "passed on" to Ishmael.
- However, Ishmael's future is set upon his choice in marriage as of Genesis 21:21:

- When Ishmael married into the Egyptians, a people from Noah's son Ham (Hamitics), his genealogy was never recorded from that point forward.

- Ishmael's descendants are always mentioned in the negative in the Old Testament (such as the Ishmaelites that bought Joseph – Genesis 35:25-28, 37:28, 39:1; or in Judges 8:24 and Psalm 83:6, listed among the enemies of the people of God).

- The Arabs are as eligible as anyone to receive the Gospel (Genesis 12:3), but just like us after Japheth, they after Ham were not God's chosen people to bring Jesus.

- Instead, God emphasizes to Abraham in Genesis 21:12 – “My covenant will be with Isaac.” It is not until Jesus at the Parable of the Vineyard in Matthew 21:33-45, Mark 12:1-9, and Luke 20:9-16, that the covenant was predicted to pass to another – the church.

13) Messiah would be rejected by His own people – Psalm 69:8, Isaiah 53:3. Fulfilled in John 1:11, John 7:5.

- Saoshyant was celebrated by his people.

- Mohammed led his people in military campaigns.

- Jesus was a man, like any other man, except sinless (Hebrews 4:15). Saoshyant “shined like the sun”, and Mohammed was described as looking like no other man.

- Ultimately, Jesus was rejected and crucified, rejected by the very people chosen to raise Him up. For this, their special status would be nullified, and passed to another (Matthew 21:41) – the church.

14) Messiah would be called a Nazarene – Isaiah 11:1. Matthew 2:23.

- Jesus could not be a priest while on earth (Hebrews 7:14) but was preparing to be a priest in heaven (Hebrews 7:17, 22-27).

- Saoshyant was not a priest.

- There are no priests in Islam. Mohammed was considered a prophet.

15) Messiah would bring light to Galilee – Isaiah 9:1+2. Fulfilled in Matthew 4:13-16.

- Saoshyant did not minister in Galilee; he ministered in Iran.

- Mohammed ministered in and around Saudi Arabia, where Mecca is, when he was not conquering neighboring nations.

16) Messiah would speak in parables – Psalm 78:2-4, Isaiah 6:9+10. Fulfilled in Matthew 13:10-15, 34+35, and 37 other places (39 parables in total).

- Saoshyant was referenced in some ancient Zoroastrian parables.

- Mohammed wrote 38 parables in the Quran.

- Jesus has 39 parables recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Many are repeated, but some are in two books, others just one book.

17) Messiah would be send to heal the brokenhearted – Isaiah 61:1+2. Fulfilled in Luke 4:18+19, and many other places.

- The present self-proclaimed Saoshyant, Alexandra H., claims you can email her your remote healing request, and she and her Etherean Beings “are at work behind the scenes to assist you.”

([http://www.saoshyant.org/healing\\_saoshyant\\_alexandra\\_hehpsehboah.htm](http://www.saoshyant.org/healing_saoshyant_alexandra_hehpsehboah.htm))

- See specific Bible verses condemning the use of mediums, psychics, witches, warlocks, shamans, or other pagan spiritual sources for help: Leviticus 19:31, 20:6, Deuteronomy 18:10-13, 1 John 4:1-3, 1 Chronicles 10:13+14, Isaiah 8:19, Acts 16:16-19, Revelation 21:8, 2 Kings 21:6, Exodus 22:18, Daniel 2:27, Psalm 34:1-22, and many more.

- King Saul of the tribe of Benjamin – Israel’s first king – consulted a medium (1 Samuel 28:3-25). He lost his kingship over it (1 Samuel 28:17). He lost the battle too (vs. 19).

- Mohammed was not concerned with the poor who did not immediately bow down – he conquered them and killed them if they would not follow him.

18) Messiah would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek – Psalm 110:4. Fulfilled in Hebrews 5:5+6.

- Saoshyant has no priestly lineage.
- Mohammed was not a priest – there is no priesthood in Islam.

19) Messiah would be praised by little children – Psalm 8:2. Fulfilled in Matthew 21:16.

- Zoroastrian scriptures are vague about Saoshyant’s relationship with children, but the modern self-proclaimed Saoshyant wrote a book entitled, “The Ethereal Travellers and the Magical Child” – she signs it as authored by “Thunderbird Woman” – her assigned name.

([http://www.saoshyant.org/book\\_the\\_ethereal\\_travellers\\_and\\_the\\_magical\\_child.htm](http://www.saoshyant.org/book_the_ethereal_travellers_and_the_magical_child.htm)).

- Did I mention that Miss Alexandra H., “Her Holiness” – The self-proclaimed modern-day Saoshyant in the flesh – wears glasses?

- Mohammed provided instructions about families and children in the Quran, but no personal stories about him regarding children.

20) Messiah would be betrayed – Psalm 41:9, Zechariah 11:12+13. Fulfilled in Luke 22:47+48, Matthew 26:14-16.

- Saoshyant was embraced by his people. The modern, self-proclaimed Saoshyant claims to be loved by millions of loyal followers and does not have persecution inherent to her coming.

- Mohammed was not persecuted but raised up to power and prestige among the Muslims.

- The people of Israel tried to make Jesus king, but He refused (John 6:15). Jesus’ kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36), and neither was His priesthood (Hebrews 7:15-27). Jesus’ betrayal was essential to prophecy, the catalyst to his execution on the cross, for our sins! (1 Corinthians 1:18)

### **Understanding Prophecy – Part 9 – Addressing Further Objections**

1) Did the New Testament writers “abuse” Old Testament prophecy?

a) The ancient Jews universally looked for a Messiah, interpreting the prophets looking forward to a Messiah.

b) Some prophetic quotations in the New Testament are different Old Testament prophecies combined, like individual pearls combined into a beautiful necklace (i.e. 1 Peter 2:6-8 is actually quoting prophecy from Isaiah 28:16, Psalms 118:22, and Isaiah 8:14).

i) This is used in common language to put great ideas together: for example, “The Word became Flesh, and was obedient to even death on a cross.” (Quoting John 1:1 and Philippians 2:8/Hebrews 5:8). Or, “I have a dream [quoting Martin Luther King Jr.] that America will pray and God will forgive us our sins [quoting Alveda King].

ii) Is there always a possibility to abuse this form of language? Absolutely! So let us examine 1 Peter 2:6-8:

vs. 6 - For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.”

Vs. 7 – Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone”

Vs. 8 – and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for.

- Peter quotes the prophecies separately, showing he is making distinctions as to their origin
- Peter was a Jew and well aware of Jewish tradition in understanding how his own people interpreted Old Testament prophecy
- Peter is forthright that the Israelites were unfaithful in the past and prophecy simply says they would be again to God’s Promised Seed
- Peter expects his readers and hearers of his letter to know Old Testament Scripture – as there were no chapters or verses for reference in the original Scriptures

3) Some prophets spoke, others wrote. Not every prophet (by a long shot) has their own Bible book, or their own recorded prophecies. Some things the

prophets spoke were written down by others, or merely referenced to. Some things the prophets spoke were false, like Balaam (Numbers 22-24). Therefore, it is important we differentiate each in context before arriving at a false conclusion about a prophet or his prophecy.

i) Deuteronomy 18:18 (Moses is quoting God directly speaking to him):

“I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in His mouth. He will tell them everything I command Him.”

Compare this to Acts 3:22 (Peter speaking to the onlookers amazed by the healing of the lame man, quoting Deuteronomy 18:18):

“For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you.’”

Peter, in that same discourse, quotes Genesis 12:3, Isaiah 53, repeats his call to salvation from Acts 2:38 in Acts 3:19, and people respond accordingly in Acts 4:4.

ii) Aaron was a prophet (Exodus 7:1) but no prophecies of his are recorded in Scripture, only various mentioning that he did (i.e. Exodus 4:30). In Exodus 16:6+7, he does speak along with Moses to the people for a short while.

iii) Miriam is the third prophet ever so named, but no words spoken by her are “foretelling” (Miriam’s supposed “foretelling abilities” are cultural legend only).

iv) Deuteronomy 13:2+3 reminds and warns us that a true prophet is NOT one who performs miracles, signs, or wonders, but one that preaches truth!

v) This begs the question: are there prophets today?

a) In function, yes. In title or office, NO.

b) Are there prophets that can tell the future today? NO!

c) So who then are the “prophets” today?

- Romans 12:6-8 tells us about all the available spiritual gifts in the local church, including “prophecy”. These gifts are God-given abilities, not titles. For example, “ruling” does not mean to have a position of authority, but rather to have the ability to administrate.

- “Prophecy” in much of the Bible is NOT foretelling, but “forthtelling”, another way of saying presenting the Word of God. That is the meaning there.

- Prophets today – again – are not prophets in “title” or office. Prophets today prophesy, or witness to the Word of God; they do not foretell the future.

4) Some prophecies are prophets quoting other prophets.

i) Matthew 27:9 gives Jeremiah credit for what Zechariah wrote down. This is because Zechariah is quoting something Jeremiah said. They were contemporaries.

ii) Jude 1:14+15 includes a prophecy by Enoch (Genesis 5:21-24) that is not even recorded in Scripture. Jude also quotes a story from the apocryphal book “The Assumption of Moses.” Therefore, some New Testament prophecy has origin in Old Testament times, but not necessarily the Old Testament.

5) Some prophecies get lost in translation:

i) Matthew 2:23 – “and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.”

ii) Isaiah 11:1 – “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.”

How is Matthew 2:23 a fulfillment of Isaiah 11:1? “Nazarene” and “Branch” are the same word in Hebrew.

6) Some prophecies have a literal and figurative meaning.

i) Hosea 11:1, quoted in Matthew 2:15, says, “Out of Egypt I have called My Son”.

ii) Israel left Egypt under Moses; Christ left Egypt after Herod's death (Matthew 2:19-23).

7) Some prophecies are fulfilled as part of a whole:

i) Psalms 69:21 – “They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.”

ii) Mark 15:23 – “Wine was mingled with myrrh”

iii) Matthew 27:34 – “Wine was mingled with gall”

Wine vinegars are still drunk today. Mixing with myrrh and gall was a common anesthetic for the time. This is why Jesus refused to drink it (Matthew 27:34). This was because He was a perfect priest offering a perfect sacrifice and a priest could not have drunk intoxicating wine when he was to be offering sacrifices (Leviticus 10:9; Ezekiel 44:21). Although Jesus was not a Levitical priest, He did fulfill the type of the Levitical priesthood in perfection as becoming the only priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4) who undoubtedly also did not drink intoxicating wine as High Priest.

8) Many easy-to-spot prophecies are not used by the New Testament writers:

i) Most of Isaiah 53

ii) Most of Psalms 22

iii) Most of Psalms 31

iii) Most of Psalms 65

iv) Most of Psalms 69

And many others. If the New Testament writer wanted to “proof text”, the above would have been much more direct than some of the examples they chose. Instead, they chose the examples most befitting the event they were describing. If the New Testament writers quoted and described every prophecy fulfilled in Jesus, then John 21:25 would have literally happened!

9) The New Testament writers did not mask over their difficulties in convincing others. Paul's testimony in Athens was largely rejected while the Bereans



searched the Scriptures daily to test what Paul was telling them (both examples in Acts 17).

Information taken in part from George L. Faull's *Theology of Prophecy*.

### **Understanding Prophecy – Part 10 – “Time of Messiah’s Coming”**

No one denies the Jews expected a Messiah from even before their beginning:

- Genesis 3:15 – Messiah is coming to crush Satan and redeem man
- Genesis 9:26 – Messiah would come through the seed of Noah’s son Shem
- Genesis 12:3 – Messiah would come through the nation under Abraham
- 1) Secular historians do not deny that Jews expected their Messiah
- 2) Modern Jews do not deny their claimed ancestors expected their Messiah
- 3) Some Jews today still expect their coming Messiah
- 4) The people in Jesus day expected the Messiah’s arrival:
  - a) John the Baptist expected Messiah’s imminent arrival:
    - i) When asked, John denied he was the Messiah (John 1:20).
    - ii) When asked, John testified he was “the voice calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’” (Isaiah 40:3)
    - iii) When Jesus came, John testified immediately about him in John 1:29 – “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” and continued from there, in John 1:30+31.
  - b) John’s parents expected Messiah’s soon arrival (John 1:17).
    - i) Zechariah the priest (and prophet), John’s father, specifically predicted Messiah’s coming in Luke 1:67-79).
  - c) Jesus’ parents obviously expected Messiah’s arrival! (Luke 1:26-38)

d) Mary and Elizabeth anticipated both John's and Jesus' birth (Luke 1:39-45)

e) Simeon anticipated Messiah's imminent arrival (Luke 2:25ff).

f) Anna, prophetess, and daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher, also expected Messiah's imminent arrival (Luke 2:36-38).

5) The Jewish Nation under the Law of Moses in the Old Testament expected their Messiah (330+ prophecies during this time concerning the coming Messiah).

6) The genealogical records were kept meticulously in Scripture and in the Jerusalem temple *specifically* to anticipate Messiah's coming.

a) They also became an ignorant matter of pride for the people – “I am a son or daughter of Abraham!” Jesus rebukes this kind of thinking in Matthew 3:9 and Luke 3:8 – “For I tell you out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”

b) Paul again has to deal with the false pride some take in their genealogy in 1 Timothy 1:4 – “...devoting themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work – which is by faith.”

c) The original reason genealogies were kept was because God said Messiah was going to have a specific lineage as the Old Testament unfolded. The Israelites naturally knew this, and kept records, for the purpose of identifying him WHEN he would come.

i) As we know though, this irrevocable proof did NOT convince the Israelites as a whole, however. Why?

ii) The truth of the coming Messiah had been intertwined with their cultural desire for a conqueror of Rome to become “the earthly-king Messiah mythos”, their own blinders put on so they could not see the Messiah for who He was predicted to be:

iii) The people DID initially recognize Jesus as their Messiah, and tried to make Him king by force, according to John 6:15. But right after that

– when he refused and slipped away – and only a day later (John 6:22) presented some of the hardest teachings he would ever give (John 6:25-65), and at this, the crowds and many of his early disciples left him (John 6:66).

iv) Therefore, their later rejection of him was not because of fact, but because He did not give them what they immediately wanted – a physical kingdom to conquer Rome.

v) To this day, people reject Jesus – not because of fact (of which there is innumerable evidence for), but because He does not fit their image of “god” who gives them everything they want without expectation of obedience and loyalty.

vi) A person’s negative reaction to Jesus makes zero sense on actually two levels:

- If the Jews really wanted a King, and Jesus really was one (an eternal, spiritual King), they did not want to obey the King, but rather wanted to tell the King what to do! (John 6:15)
- If people today really wanted “God” to answer their prayers and provide for them, and the one true God really does exist, they do not want to obey Him or be loyal to Him as well, but rather just want Him to do as they desire!
- In reviewing “The Prince of Egypt”, the relatively-accurate Dreamworks 1998 production of the story of the Exodus, Robert Ebert stated, “I have always rather thought God could have spared man a lot of trouble by casting his net more widely, emphasizing universality rather than tribalism, but there you have it.” Mr. Ebert, like most people, really thinks he knows better than whom he calls “God”. Illogical to a “T”.

d) What Scriptures tell us when Messiah was going to come?

i) This is VERY important! If the Old Testament gives us concrete information about when Messiah was going to come, then we will have no problems *being sure* when he does arrive.

ii) Keep in mind no secular, Jewish, or any historian for that matter denies that the Old Testament was written and completed about 400BC. Therefore, if the Old Testament's predictions do come true when it said Messiah would arrive, we no other logical choice but to say, "There He is! There is the Messiah!" Just as John did (John 1:29-31).

iii) Haggai, preaching during the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the temple, and the walls near the end of the Old Testament, writes in Haggai 2:6+7:

““This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. <sup>7</sup>I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the LORD Almighty.”

- What was desired of all nations? Genesis 12:3 – “All of the nations of the earth will be blessed through you.”
- Fulfilled in Jesus, as recorded in Hebrews 12:26 – “At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.””

iv) Haggai also predicted Messiah would come while the temple still stood in Haggai 2:9 –

““The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the LORD Almighty. ‘And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares the LORD Almighty.””

- Along these same lines, it is predicted in the Old Testament that Messiah was desired among all the Israelites Psalm 37:4, 73:25, 132:13+14, 145:16 (parallel to Romans 8:22), etc.
- As well, Abraham prophesied that God would provide on the same hill Isaac was sacrificed upon (Genesis 22:14).

- Isaiah predicted the Messiah would be the “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).
- Zechariah predicted Messiah would guide His followers into “the path of peace” (Luke 1:79).
- Malachi predicted as well that Messiah would come while the temple still stood (Malachi 3:1).
- Jesus of course was in the temple quite a bit, but one example is Mark 11:11 – “...Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple....”

v) Isaiah predicted Messiah would come after both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel would fall in Isaiah 7:14-16.

- After Solomon, the United Kingdom of Israel would split into the Northern and Southern Kingdoms:

- The Northern Kingdom fell to Assyrian forever in 722BC.

- The Southern Kingdom fell to Babylon in 606BC, to return 70 years later as predicted in Daniel 9:2. Daniel would then in turn give us a super-accurate prediction of the arrival of Jesus in Daniel 9:24-27, down to the exact date of His baptism, and thus the beginning of his earthly ministry! We can also determine Jesus’ exact timing by the historically-accepted date of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.

(See Understanding Prophecy, part 6, for a detailed view)

- Hosea 3:5 says the Messiah would come after they returned from exile and in the “last days of Judah.”
- In Acts 2:17, Peter quotes Joel 2 as fulfilled, calling Pentecost of 30AD “the last days”. The last days of what? Jerusalem! The forty year probation had begun!

vi) Hebrews 1:2 also says these are the “last days”. Hebrews was written to Jews (obviously). The destruction of Jerusalem was imminent – their last chance to verify the genealogies and prophecies first-hand was nigh.

vii) Hebrews 9:26 – “now once in the end of the world He has appeared.” The world will hear until Jesus’ return; then, they will face judgment same as Jerusalem.

viii) 1 Peter 1:20 – “Who was foreordained... in these last times for you.” Peter, a Jew, is speaking to Jews, writing later in life (He is now an elder at a local church – 1 Peter 5:1), before his death – around 67 or 68AD – right before the destruction of Jerusalem.

- Many would attempt to see the destruction of Jerusalem through 21<sup>st</sup> century, Western-eyes: that the Jews either would have seen it coming, or they would have had some kind of warning.
- However, the Jews – having rejected Jesus – STILL believed they were God’s chosen people; they believed God would protect them just because of who they were. It had been a few hundred years since they were last in captivity; they had grown complacent and even smug, assuming no disaster could befall them as long as they kept their version of the Jewish Law.
- The Jews believed the Romans were on “their side” as they both persecuted the Christians. However, the Jews were just as much trouble to the Romans as they ever had been, and once every advantage the Jew had once rendered the Roman was gone – no more economic benefit specifically – they were no longer worth the trouble. Emperor Vespasian of the Roman Empire ordered the destruction of Jerusalem to his son, the Roman General Titus, and he besieged the destruction of Jerusalem. The destruction was absolute, total, and forever.
- Jesus predicted this in Matthew 24, Peter predicted in 1 Peter 1:20, the author of Hebrews (likely Paul) wrote in Hebrews 1:2 and 9:26, and other Scriptures, the destruction of Jerusalem came and the remaining Jews were scattered.
- The difference this time was that God did not send any prophets or judges to Israel; God never restored Israel again. All revelation to the Jewish people stopped, and all prophecy for the

Jewish people had been fulfilled. The Jews' time was finished. The Kingdom of God on earth (the church) had begun, and would remain, until the end of time (and it has!).

ix) Numbers 24:17-24, written about 1500 years before the destruction of Jerusalem, predicted that Moab, Edom, the Kenites, Assyria, and Greece would all fall before the Messiah would come (Daniel predicted the same about Greece in Daniel 2:39). Daniel finished Moses' prophecy by describing Rome in Daniel 2:40-43), and finally the "Kingdom that will never fall" in Daniel 2:44ff.

x) In Daniel 2:44, when God was predicted to setup a Kingdom that would never fail, we are left to ask who the King of that Kingdom? He could not be an earthly king, as earthly kings die; it cannot be an earthly kingdom, as they never survive. Rather, at the peak of the Roman Empire, as predicted above by many Scriptures, Jesus would come. In the most powerful of all ancient empires, would come the King of Kings, to "crush all other Kingdoms" and "it shall stand forever and ever."

xi) Daniel 9:25 tells us that 483 years after the command to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem was sent, Messiah would come (see Understanding Prophecy, part 6, for a detailed review). Galatians 4:4 – "In the fullness of time, God sent His Son"

xii) Finally, right before Messiah would come, a forerunner would announce His pending Ministry: Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 fulfilled in Mark 1:2 and John 1:23.

Information taken in part from George L. Faull's *Theology of Prophecy*.

**This is the end of Volume I. As further studies are written, taught, and published, they will be issued in Volume II.**

### **Bibliography**

Faull, George L. *The Eternal Struggle*

Faull, George L. *Theology of Prophecy*

Hunt, Donald G. *The Unfolded Plan of God*.

Hunt, Donald G. *Lessons from Post-Exile Israel*.

Nelson's Charts and Maps, Third Edition (2000).

Halley's Bible Handbook, 2000 Edition.

Strong's Greek-English Interlinear.

Easton Bible Dictionary, Third Edition.