



The Quarry Gospel Church

BIBLE STUDY - 09.12.20

BIBLE STUDY - BETHLEHEM

INTRODUCTION

The subject of "Bethlehem" is an essential part of the Christmas Story, but in looking at Bethlehem, we are led to look at the subject of prophecy, particularly those about Christ. These prophecies are not general, but very specific and are evidence of the Bible's supernatural origin:

The Old Testament Hebrew text first translated to Greek by 72 scholars in about 250 BC - the "Septuagint translation (confirmation of this found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.)
These books were written well before Jesus was born.

The Messianic Prophecies come from prophets in the Old Testament whose writings span thousands of years and cover all aspects of Jesus:

- **His family life and ancestry**

Genesis 22:18 - descendant of Abraham;

Genesis 49:10 - from tribe of Judah;

2 Samuel 7:12 - through the family line of David;

Isaiah 7:14 - through the virgin Mary.

- **The time of His coming** (during the Roman empire - Judah would still have a king)

Daniel 2:44; 9:26; Genesis 49:10

- **The events of His life and work**

Hosea 11:1 - His escape to Egypt;

Isaiah 9:1-2 - His ministry will be Galilean;

Isaiah 53:3; Psalm 2:2; - He will be rejected by the Jews;

Zechariah 9:9; Isaiah 62:11 - His triumphant entry into Jerusalem;

Psalm 41:9 - His betrayal by a friend;

Zechariah 11:12 - The betrayal will be for 30 pieces of silver;

Zechariah 11:13 - The money will be returned and used to buy a potter's field;

Psalm 107:7-8 - talks of the events of Acts 1:16-20 - Judas is replaced by another;

Isaiah 50:6 - Jesus will be spit upon and beaten;

Isaiah 53:7 - Under accusation Jesus will remain silent;

Psalm 27:12; 35:11 - There will be false witnesses;

Psalm 22:6-8 - Jesus will be mocked and insulted.

- **The events of His death**

Psalm 69:21 - Jesus is given gall and vinegar (*John 19:29*);

Isaiah 53:12 - His death with sinners;

Psalm 22:16 - His hands and feet pierced;

Psalm 34:20 - none of His bones broken;

Psalm 22:18 - Lots cast for His clothes

Isaiah 53:9 - buried with the rich (in the tomb of Joseph Arimethia)

Psalm 16:10 - in death His body would not decay (talks of the Resurrection);

Psalm 68:18; Daniel 7:13-14 - talks of the Ascension of *Acts 1:9*).

These are just 26 of the 300 or so detailed prophecies about Jesus that are written in the Old Testament. They are specific, not general and as yet have not been proven untrue.

Jesus *did* fulfil all the 300+ prophecies about Himself.

The probability of this fulfilment of every prophecy has been studied by a Professor of Maths and Astronomy - He looked to start with at 8 predictions:

- Time of birth; place of birth; virgin birth; 30 pieces of silver; being mocked; being crucified; being pierced; dying with the wicked, but buried with the rich.

Chances of a man fulfilling these predictions = 1 in 10^{17} = 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000

He got as far as 48 predictions with his calculations and concluded:

"This is not merely evidence. It is proof of the Bible's inspiration by God, proof so definite that the universe is not large enough to hold the evidence."

He then said: *"Any man who rejects Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world."*

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THE PROPHECY ABOUT BETHLEHEM?

***Micah 5:2* - "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times."**

1. Prediction was specific - a precise name of a city and the fact a ruler would be born there centuries later! This level of prediction is unsurpassed in human history.

2. He identified it as Bethlelem Ephrathah

It was one of two Bethlehems:

- This one is in Judah - about 5miles south of Jerusalem:

In the Old Testament - *Genesis 35:19, 48:7; Judges 17:7-9; Ruth 1:19; 1 Samuel 16:4; Ezra 2:21; Nehemiah 7:26;*

In the New Testament - This is the Bethlehem that Matthew and Luke name as the birth place of Jesus.

- The other Bethlehem is Bethlehem of Zebulun - in Northern Palestine, very close to Nazareth: Mentioned less frequently: *e.g. Joshua 19:15, Judges 12:8,10.* Archaeological digs have discovered it to be a place of importance in earlier years.

3. Micah is very precise - it is the Bethlehem of Judah

- the birth didn't take place in Bethlehem because of Caesar Augustus!
- God moved Caesar's heart so that the scriptures would be fulfilled (*see Prov.21:1*)
- God directed the wise men first to Jerusalem (wasn't a mistake!), which led to Herod's actions (another fulfillment of prophecy)

All the prophecies about Bethlehem were met.

4. Looking at Micah's prophecy in more detail:

- **The name is significant**

Bethlehem - Hebrew=House of meat; Greek=House of bread

Ephrathah - Hebrew = fruitfulness

(*see John 6:51; John 15:5-8*)

- **The size is significant**

"*You are small among the clans of Judah*" - Bethlehem was the source of Israel's deliverance, not Jerusalem - God loves to choose what is lowly and humble to accomplish His purposes. (*see Isaiah 26:5-6; Psalm 8:2; 1 Cor1:27*)

Bethlehem is a perfect example of God's way of working.

- **It puts to rest a common mistake**

This baby was a baby but was NOT a "new creation" - He was Divine.

Micah calls Him "The One whose origins are of old".

This baby was the creator of all around Him.

(*see Psalm 90:1-2; John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:1-4*) - He was the Son of God.

- **The purpose of this baby is to rule over Israel**

(*see Luke 1:30-33; 1 Peter 3:22*)

**AS THE MESSIAH HE HAS COME TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE AND RULE OVER HIS PEOPLE
DO WE ALLOW CHRIST TO REIGN IN US?**