

The Prophecy Of Christ's Coming

No sooner was the promise of the coming deliverer declared in the hearing of Adam and Eve than the full impact of their disobedience began to unfold. Covered in skins they were expelled from the garden of Eden, lost personal communion with God and were prohibited from approaching the tree of life. That tree was a type of the Lord Jesus. Adam's loss of access pictured the sweet union ruined by disobedience. Our first parents now knew the good they had lost and the evil they were under as they fled from the face of God.

The tabernacle of God is with men

Yet a hope remained in the words the Lord had spoken concerning One who would rise to bruise the serpent's head. As time went on this hope took form. Adam and Eve told their children and an expectation grew that a Deliverer would someday be revealed. The knowledge of God remained in the earth amongst men such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and the Patriarchs, and yet greater light was given at the time of Moses.

A mediator desired and promised

When God gave the Law to the children of Israel they became afraid at His glory and cried out for a mediator. Moses told the people God would indeed provide an Advocate and an Intercessor, a 'forth-teller', from amongst themselves. Moses said, 'The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken' (Deuteronomy 18:15). All who had faith looked forward to the revelation of this Prophet, this Messiah, and the words of God by His prophet Moses were treasured in the hearts of believers.

A long line of witnesses

In time Moses died and other prophets were given to Israel. Men such as Samuel, David, Elijah and Elisha brought a true and faithful word from the Lord. Others like Jonah, Jeremiah and Micah added to the knowledge but while all testified of the coming Messiah none was He. When Isaiah brought forth his prophetic message he declared high gospel truths from heaven and revealed more concerning the Messiah than had ever before been told.

A virgin conceives

The Lord Himself would give Israel a sign, said Isaiah. A virgin would conceive and bring forth a son. His name would be Immanuel 'God with us'. He would bear other names describing His nature, offices, accomplishments and victories. Moses had said the Messiah would be a man from amongst the people, Isaiah said a virgin would conceive and bear a son by which God Himself would visit His people. Here the incarnation of God is fully declared.

The gospel in Christ's names

The additional names Isaiah supplies are a most glorious unfolding of gospel truth in Old Testament times. The Messiah will be King in His kingdom, all 'government shall be upon His shoulder: His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace'. His would be a spiritual reign, an enduring, everlasting kingdom, ordered, established and ruled in justice, grace and peace. The zeal of the Lord, the effectual love of God, would accomplish and secure all His good will.

Confirming details

In time other details would follow from other prophets. Micah specified Bethlehem, where the Messiah would be born. 'Out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting' (5:2). Hosea blends Israel's history with the infant Christ's experience and tells us, 'When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt'. Jeremiah foretold the mourning that followed Herod's cruel murder of all the infant children slain in and around Bethlehem at that time, from two years old and under.

Righteous by believing

These prophecies and many others, for example Psalm 22, Isaiah 53 and Zechariah 9, follow Christ's birth, ministry and ultimately chart His journey to His death and resurrection. In this way the Old Testament people of Israel and some beyond the borders of Israel, such as the wise men from the east, were supplied with insight and understanding enabling them to build their faith and hope on revealed truth. At that time God's elect looked forward in faith just as today we

look back in faith, and all God's sons and daughters in every age and every place delight to profess 'the just shall live by his faith' (Habakkuk 4:2).

Amen

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