

Episode #1051 Christmas 2024 2: The Prophesied Virgin

I. The birth of Christ was a miraculous event that prepared the way for all that He would accomplish in His death, burial, and resurrection. At this time of year we remember that birth and the glorious salvation that God gave us as a result.

II. The Jewish audience who originally read the Old Testament quotations in the Christmas story would have immediately been able to call to mind the passages that were referred to. They would have known the context and what the passage was saying. We often do not have that level of knowledge of the Old Testament, however, so we need to review these passages and see what they were all about. Today we will be doing this with the quotations in the story of Christ's birth.

III. Matthew 1:23 quoting Isaiah 7:14 (10-17)

- A. Matthew 1:18-23. The story of His birth from the father's perspective.
- B. Isaiah 7:10-17. Ahaz offers a self-righteous excuse not to obey in asking for a sign. If he got the sign he would be under obligation to obey the LORD. But God is not impressed by his posturing, so He gives him a sign anyway.
- C. A sign hundreds of years after Ahaz is dead? No! The initial prophecy was regarding Ahaz's day, but it has a fuller fulfillment in Christ.
- D. Judah was in conflict with Israel and Aram (Syria). Before this child is old enough to discern good food from bad, both these kings will be dead.
- E. A virgin birth in Ahaz's day? The Hebrew is *almah*, maiden, not *bethulah*, virgin. Originally, it was a maiden who would be with child, probably one Isaiah was about to marry. Her child was Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.
- F. A principle in prophecy: often Jehovah's words have an immediate fulfillment in the context, but speak too to a deeper reality later, a fuller fulfillment. This prophecy was fulfilled in Isaiah's child and his mother, but later "filled full" or completed in Christ. When quoted in the New Testament, it was a true virgin *parthenos* with child.
- G. Immanuel = God With Us. In Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz's days, God was with Judah. But in the fuller fulfillment, God Himself was born and was with us.

IV. Matthew 2:6 quoting Micah 5:2.

- A. Matthew 2:1-6. The rulers of Israel at this time, members of the Sanhedrin that was created for the purpose of recognizing the Messiah when He came, bear witness to Jews of all times that the most qualified men of that day believed that (a) Messiah would be a Man, and (b) He would be born in Bethlehem of the line of David.
- B. These chapters in Micah speak of events in "the last days" (4:1-5), with some reference to the then current events when Micah was writing.
- C. Micah 5:1. The "judge" of Israel smote on the cheek would have been the King of Judah in the past day, probably King Zedekiah. But this brings us forward to a much greater King in a much greater event: Christ Himself.
- D. Too small to be included among the thousands of Judah. This is a reference to the captains over thousands in the army, II Samuel 18:1. They did not have a thousand fighting-aged men in order to have a captain of thousands. Yet the Ruler they would produce would be the greatest Ruler of all!
- E. The One Who was to be born in Bethlehem Ephratah would become the "Shepherd" of 5:4 Who would be their peace in 5:5.

VII. We can learn much about the story of Christ's birth by not just reading the Old Testament quotations, but by actually going back and reading the passages these come from to learn what

they are talking about. We learn that, while a prophecy was given to King Ahaz in the past to teach him something Yahweh was going to do in his days, that prophecy had a later, fuller fulfillment when an actual virgin would be with Child, the Lord Jesus Christ. We learn that the passage the religious leaders quoted from Micah 5:2 regarding Messiah being born in Bethlehem tells us much more about this Savior than just what they quoted: He is the One Who will bring in the glorious Kingdom of God, He will deliver them from war and be the peace, He will feed them like a Shepherd, and He will deliver them from their enemies. Praise God for the reality of the Prophesied Savior!