

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST

Lesson One: Christ: The Fulfillment of Prophecy

Christ was a favorite theme of Old Testament prophets. "But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should, suffer, he thus fulfilled" (Acts 3:18). A large number of prophecies are Messianic, that is, refer to Christ or Messiah. The Old Testament writers, from Moses to Malachi, spoke of Him. The New Testament repeated affirms that Jesus is the fulfillment of prophecy. A study of this subject builds faith. Only God can know the future. The Old Testament presents evidence of being able to reveal future things. This study also shows that Jesus is the Son of God because He fulfilled what was prophesied.

Seven major areas of the life of Christ will be considered. In each we will find that the Old Testament prophecy will correspond with the New Testament reality.

His Lineage.

The Old Testament repeatedly states that Christ will come from the family of Abraham through Isaac (Gen. 12:1-3; 21:12; 49:10). The promise was later limited to the family of David (Psalm 89:3). The New Testament confirms each point. Matthew's first argument for Jesus being the Messiah is the genealogy from Abraham to Christ. Many other New Testament verses declare this (Gal. 3:16; Rom. 1:3,4; Heb. 7:14; et al.)

His Birth.

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). It is remarkable that this was fulfilled since Mary did not live in Bethlehem, but Nazareth, a hundred miles away (Luke 2:1-7).

Another feature of His birth was foretold. "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). Many refuse to believe this, but there is no reason to deny it except by limiting the power of God (Matthew 1:2). "Who was Christ? Was He actually the Son of God, or was He simply a great man?" These questions bring us back to the question of His virgin birth.

His Forerunner.

Two Old Testament prophets foretold He would be preceded by another. "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa. 40:3; see also Malachi 3:1; 4:5). These prophecies were remarkably fulfilled in the life of John the Baptist (Mt. 3:1-3).

His Suffering.

Among the greatest of the prophecies is the picture of the Messiah as a Servant suffering in behalf of others (Isaiah 53:3-7). There are numerous minute details in these words. "He was despised and rejected." "He was wounded for our transgressions." He suffered patiently and "Opened not his mouth." He is pictured as a Lamb led to slaughter. "He made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man." Several verses show that these things could only have been known by Isaiah because God told him (Luke 18:31-33; Mark 10:33,34; John 1:10,11; Heb. 9:28; Mt. 26:63; 27:12-14; 27:57-60).

His Death and Resurrection.

Probably no phase of the work of Christ is mentioned more in prophecy than the events connected with His death and resurrection. "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver. And Jehovah said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was prized at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them unto the potter, in the house of Jehovah" (Zech. 11:12,13; see also Zech. 9:9; Psm. 22:16,18; Isa. 53:9; Psm. 16:10). Peter makes his point about this in the first sermon. "He foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption" (Acts 2:31).

His Offices.

The picture of Christ given in the New Testament is of One Who occupies three great offices: prophet, priest, and king. All these were prophesied. He would be a prophet (Deut. 18:18). This is specifically applied to Christ. "Moses indeed said,

A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me: to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you" (Acts 3:22). He would be priest (Psalm 110:4). This was applied to Christ. "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that spake unto him, Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee: as he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. He would be king (Jer. 23:5). This was fulfilled (Acts 2:32-36). "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Psalm 110:1).

His Kingdom.

There are Old Testament prophecies that portray Christ as king. We saw this in our previous point. Is He king now, or, as some modern religionists maintain, is He yet to be crowned? The most familiar prophecy is Daniel 2:44. "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." "Those kings" have come and gone. If the kingdom was not established then, one of two conclusions

is necessary. Either the promise of God has failed irrevocably, or the Empire must be re-established in the future. The prophecy was fulfilled when the church was established on Pentecost (Acts 2). Christ is now reigning over His kingdom. "Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1:13). He is now seated at God's right hand. "When he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3). Surely the kingdom prophecies have been fulfilled in the present reign of Christ.

Conclusion.

There are in the Bible two distinct pictures of Christ, each true and each drawn by a number of artists working together. The first group consists of Old Testament prophets; the second, Christ's contemporaries. One group picture is much older than the other. The two pictures coincide perfectly. What they establish about Jesus of Nazareth is Peter's conclusion on Pentecost. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:36). If you have not accepted Him as your Lord, do so (Acts 2:38).

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