

Messianic Prophecies: the Birth of Jesus

What is a messianic prophecy? It is an Old Testament prophecy that foretells something about the coming Messiah. The genuine Messiah would fulfill not one but all the OT prophecies concerning the Messiah. Around the time of Jesus' birth, angels initially play a large role in revealing what Messianic prophecies were being fulfilled and why.

1. Observe carefully the private message the virgin Mary receives from a stranger. What is Mary thinking? Observe carefully what the prophet Nathan is instructed to say to king David. Explain how this is a messianic prophecy.

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and **the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.**" (Luke 1:26-33, NASB)

When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." (2 Sam 7:12-16, NASB)

2. Imagine discovering that your bride is pregnant! What does Joseph learn when an angel appears to him in a dream? What does the name Jesus mean? With careful observation, what was the purpose of the prophet Isaiah's prophecy to king Ahaz around 725 B.C?

And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: **Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,** which translated means, "God with us." And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus. (Matt 1:19-25)

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. (Isa 7:14)

By calling attention to a variety of Old Testament prophecies, angels show how God's word validates Jesus as the Son of God and Messiah. The validation is only meaningful if the Messianic prophecy is fulfilled literally, which Jesus' name and birth does precisely for each prophecy.

The Teacher Note for this lesson is at:

<http://Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/25Curriculum/Class9-12/print/Jesus.MessianicProphecy.Birth.9-12.pdf>

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Teacher Notes

What is a messianic prophecy? It is an Old Testament prophecy that foretells something about the coming Messiah. The genuine Messiah would fulfill not one but all the OT prophecies concerning the Messiah. Around the time of Jesus' birth, angels initially play a large role in revealing what Messianic prophecies were being fulfilled and why.

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Help the student visualize Mary's predicament: Imagine being engaged to marriage. The bride to be receives a personal message from an angel that she will be with a male child as a fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant – who would believe her angelic message?

Help the student with his observation: the bold print identifies the messianic prophecy.

Mary is told that Jesus fulfills God's promise of the King from the line of David who will reign forever.

Encourage the student to carefully read the prophet Nathan's prophecy to king David.

In the Davidic Covenant, some 1000 years earlier, God makes a promise to king David of a Son from his line that will be an everlasting King.

2. Imagine discovering that your bride is pregnant! What does Joseph learn when an angel appears to him in a dream? What does the name Jesus mean? With careful observation, what was the purpose of the prophet Isaiah's prophecy to king Ahaz around 725 B.C?

And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: **Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,** which translated means, "God with us." And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus. (Matt 1:19-25, NASB)

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. (Isa 7:14, NASB)

Help the student visualize Joseph's predicament:

Joseph is told in a dream, despite her pregnancy, to marry Mary, because she is a virgin and her pregnancy is legitimate; Jesus is not an illegitimate child. Who would believe his angelic message? What would Joseph and Mary think if they shared their angelic messages?

Ask the student: why was it important that the Child be named Jesus? Use a Bible dictionary!

The proper name "Jesus," translated from the Greek name "Iēsous," originated from the Old Testament Hebrew name of "Yēšua'." The ancient form of Yēšua' was Yehōšûa'; and Yehōšûa' is the oldest name containing God's memorial name Yahweh, and it means "Yahweh is help" or "Yahweh is salvation."

It is significant to note that the angel instructs Joseph and Mary to name their newborn son Jesus with a view towards the ancient meaning behind Yehōšûa'.

In speaking of His preeminence and purpose, the apostle John placed an emphasis on the name of Jesus:

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, (John 1:12)

Help the student with his observation: the bold print identifies the messianic prophecy.

The angel told Joseph that his Son was the Immanuel (Hebrew: God with us) of virgin birth, which was the miraculous sign of God's salvation (Matt 1:19-25).

Encourage the student to carefully read the prophet Isaiah's prophecy to king Ahaz and understand the context of this periscope.

During Isaiah's time, Ahaz (Judahite king Jehoahaz) doubted that God would save them from the Aram – Israel alliance despite Isaiah's prophecy of deliverance. God offered a miraculous sign to affirm Isaiah's prophecy, which Ahaz declined, and that miraculous sign was the virgin birth of Immanuel.

Corresponding to this context, the angel's message to Joseph is that Jesus is the fulfillment of the miraculous sign that God promised to those who doubted His salvation and reality. The meaning of Jesus' name says it all.

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