

Messianic Prophecies in Isaiah #1: Introduction; Birth of Messiah

Out of all the OT prophets, Isaiah gives the most complete picture of the predicted Messiah. He had a long ministry starting at or before 739 BC and continuing at least until 681 BC.

Not all the book is Messianic. The first 39 chapters center largely around a denunciation of the corruption of Judah. Like Amos, he protests vigorously against the moral depravity of the people while they still maintain the external observances of the law. The last half of the book denounces idolatry, but speaks mostly of the redemption that would come through the Messiah, dealing in various places with his incarnation, suffering and death, and return in judgment. It also has sections dealing with the future state, in the millennium and in the eternal state.

Outline of the book

a. Judgments	Chapters 1-39	
1. Prophecies about Judah and Jerusalem		1-12
2. Prophecies about the surrounding nations		13-23
3. The "little apocalypse": judgment on earth, coming millennium		24-27
4. Prophecies against Samaria and Judah		28-33
5. Historical narratives (Hezekiah, Assyrian invasion and threat)		36-39
b. Redemption	Chapters 40-66	
1. Promises of restoration		40-48
2. Salvation through the suffering Messiah		49-55
3. Future day of restoration and glory (Millennium)		56-66

In this series, we are going to restrict ourselves to the Messianic prophecies, which are considerable. They will be categorized in a roughly chronological manner.

Birth Predictions

7:14 – “Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Religious liberals and modernists have always mocked this. In fact this has always been one of the chief objections to the Revised Standard Version, which translates “virgin” as “young woman”, thus calling into question the whole doctrine of the virgin birth. The Good News Translation is even worse – “a young woman who is pregnant will have a son”. There are at least two other translations that use “young woman”, but by far the majority of translations (and all the good ones) use “virgin”.

What kind of a sign would it be to say a young woman will get pregnant? That happens every day. The real clincher though, for anyone who believes the Bible, is in the NT where that verse is quoted to explain the birth of Christ. Mt. 1:18 says “before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost”. Then in 1:22-23 it says “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the LORD by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel. which being interpreted is, God with us.”

Why the name Immanuel? It tells us clearly, because in the Hebrew it means “God with us”. Im = with. Immanu = with us. El = God. Therefore Immanuel = God with us.

So why do modernists so hate this verse and its proper translation?

1. They deny that the Bible is a revelation from God. To them it is just fallible words by fallible men.
2. They deny the possibility of predictions, even in the Bible.
3. They deny the miraculous, and mock those who do believe. “How can a virgin conceive?”

4. They deny the deity of Christ, preferring to see him as merely a good man, a good teacher, better than most, but certainly not divine. "God with us" can't be taken literally.
5. Because it also strikes at his sinless nature. If he is the natural son of Joseph, then he is born under the sin of Adam. They do not believe in the fallen nature of man, so they deny the virgin birth.
6. These people are not really Christians. They are the modern version of the Sadducees. They are "elite thinkers" who only read the Bible to tear it down and destroy the faith of their seminarians.

Micah 5:2 – "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet 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."

Even though this is not in Isaiah, it gives a critical prediction of where the Messiah was to be born – in Bethlehem. This also is quoted explicitly in Mt. 2:1-6, as being the explanation for where Jesus was born. It even shows that this location was known and expected by the priests and scribes.

Bethlehem means "house of bread". Jesus is the true bread from heaven (Jn. 6:32-35).

9:1-2 – "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

Mt. 2:23 – "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." (see verses 13-23)

The land of Naphtali was around the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, and Zebulun's land was west of that, in between the Sea of Galilee and the modern port of Haifa on the Mediterranean. In fact, Nazareth was halfway between the two seas, and about 70 miles (as the crow flies) north of Bethlehem. So Jesus was born in Bethlehem to fulfill Mic. 5:2, but after a warning dream, Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt until the death of Herod. On the way back they were again warned by dream to bypass Judea and go north to Nazareth, to fulfill those scriptures.

9:6-7 – "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."

This is a further explanation of 9:2, the light shining on them that walked in darkness. The light was a child, a son, who was to be the King, sitting on the throne of David, reigning in righteousness. In a later session we will perhaps look at the names Isaiah applies to this son, but 9:6 gives quite a list.

Isa. 60:1-3 – "Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

This agrees with chapter 9, that the light, the glory of God, would arise on those who are in darkness. John 1:1-9 refers to Jesus as the Light of the world, shining in darkness.

This is one of the scriptures showing that Gentiles also would eventually come into God's kingdom. It also says kings would come to the brightness of his rising, which was fulfilled in Mt. 2:1-12 (the star in the east, and the three wise men bearing gifts of worship).

Matthew is recognized as the gospel writer who most frequently appeals to OT predictions to explain the events of Jesus' life.