

The Prophets Witness 11/29 /20

Introduction — well, the pre— Christmas, or advent season, has begun. And with that — the shopping season!!! But, wait — didn't shopping for Christmas start weeks ago, even before hallowe'en?? One woman said about this "season confusion" — "now I'm more ready to think about Christmas. The confusing thing is, all the Christmas decorations in the stores have been up since... What?... Labor day? I'm picturing myself eventually doing my 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic shopping and my Christmas shopping at the same time. It gets earlier every year, doesn't it? I've been experiencing some major season confusion for months." From now on, you can do your back— to— school shopping and Christmas shopping at the same time!!!

If you think some people are planning too far ahead for Christmas shopping, let's just remember that God planned ahead for thousands of years ahead for that first Christmas. To remind us of how far ahead God planned, let us remember that God revealed the first coming of the son of God, known in the Old Testament as the Messiah, to the prophets centuries before that first Christmas. Let us remember what the bible teaches:

i. The prophets fore— told of the Messiah

1. God promised to Abraham to bless his descendants — the nation of Israel — and through them, to bless all the peoples of the earth. — Genesis 12: 1—3

2. In the years after David and Solomon, though, the hope of the promise of God to Abraham seemed to fade. The people of Israel would not stay faithful to God and God's law, the law of Moses. They often disobeyed God, and it seemed that the faithfulness of all the people depended on whether the king was Godly and trusting and obedient to God. Many times, they were not.

3. The prophets, however, brought a renewed vision for Israel, for the fulfillment of Abraham's vision. They foresaw great days again for Israel, for a nation and people that trusted and obeyed God would see great things happen, as we heard in the quotation from Isaiah 60 during

the advent wreath lighting, or the quotation from Isaiah chapter 9 that matt read. Then, let us see:

ii. What the prophets tell us:

1. The first prophecy of the Messiah in the Old Testament is in the first book of the old testament, the book of Genesis. Traditionally attributed to being written by Moses, who was called a prophet after his death (see Deuteronomy 34: 10 ), we see in Genesis, in the garden of Eden, at the very moment of Adam and Eve's disobedience to God, it foretells of one who will confront the devil.

2. Genesis 3:15 (read) — tells us that the offspring of Eve — the Messiah — will be wounded by the devil, but he will crush Satan. (read Rev. 20: 10, or Rom. 16: 20 )

3. The prophet Malachi tells us that Elijah would come before the Messiah would appear. (read Malachi 3:1, 4:5 ) we will see more about this next week.

4. The prophet Micah tells us that the birthplace of the Messiah will be Bethlehem. ( read Micah 5: 2 ) we will see more about this in three weeks.

5. The prophet Isaiah, who gave the most prophecies about the coming Messiah, foretold that a virgin would conceive and bear a son — as we will see in two weeks when we look more closely at Mary and Joseph. (Isaiah 7: 14 )

6. Psalm 72 foretold that kings would offer the Messiah gifts, and in the advent wreath reading earlier we read that 'nations will come to your light, and kings to your brightness.' (Isaiah 60: 3)

7. The prophet tells that God would call his son out of Egypt, as we will see when we look at Mary and Joseph. (Hosea 11: 1 )

8. The prophet Isaiah made it clear that a certain sign of the Messiah would be his healing of the deaf and the blind. (read isa. 29: 18 & 35: 5–6 )

9. Isaiah also foretold that the Messiah would be rejected by his own people. ( read Isaiah 53: 8 and Luke 23: 18 )

10. Psalm 41: 9 foretold that a close friend of the Messiah would betray him. (read psa. 41:9 and Luke 22: 48 )

11. Isaiah foresaw the cruel and harsh treatment that the Messiah would one day receive. ( read isa. 53:5 and mt. 27: 26 )

12. There are so many more examples of the prophets foretelling of the actions and circumstances surrounding the Messiah that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus.

iii. What do the prophets tell us today?

1. They tell us: that Jesus of Nazareth is exactly who he said he was —

2. They tell us: that the first apostles were exactly right in who they said Jesus was, & is —

3. They tell us: that we need to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and savior, & trust Him as our own personal savior and lord. His was the most important birth in all of human history.

Conclusion — it is so incredible to think that a baby, born in a little town in an obscure province of the mighty Roman Empire, so many centuries ago, was forecast with such expectation by the Hebrew prophets. However, babies have grown into world changing persons at other times.

Take the year 1809. The international scene was tumultuous. Napoleon was sweeping through Austria; blood was flowing freely. Nobody then cared about babies. But the world was overlooking some very significant births.

For example, William Gladstone was born that year. He was destined to become one of England's finest statesman. That same year, Alfred Tennyson was born to an obscure minister and his wife. The child would one day greatly affect the literary world in a marked manner. On the American continent, Oliver Wendell Holmes was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And not far away in Boston, Edgar Allan Poe began his eventful, altho' tragic, life. It was also in that same year that a physician named Darwin and his wife named their child Charles Robert. And that same year produced the cries of a newborn infant in a rugged log cabin in Hardin county, Kentucky. The baby's name? Abraham Lincoln.

If there had been news broadcasts at that time, I'm certain these words would have been heard: "the destiny of the world is being shaped on an Austrian battlefield today." But history was actually being shaped in the cradles of England and America. Similarly, everyone thought taxation was the big news— when Jesus was born. But a young Jewish woman cradled the biggest news of all: the birth of the Savior. (from Charles Swindoll )

1) Are you ready to believe in Jesus as your savior??

2) Are you ready to commit your life to Jesus Christ???

3) Do you want Jesus to be real— to you??

4) Remember — we have said before — one way to realize his love, power, and presence in your life — is to give generously to others in his name at this time of year !!!