Dec. 1, 2021

The Lord blessing to all and I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends. So, we are now in the last month of the year and we can all say “Where did the past eleven months go”? Time just keeps on going at the same pace as before but to most of us, it seems faster than ever before. The way I look at it, we are just closer to “Jesus return” and that’s what we should be looking forward to.

## With that said, the **Bible Scripture Letter** for this month is – **“Jesus Birth Prophecies”** and what a better time to review what the prophecies say about his birth. If you have family gathering on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, you might consider reading this letter to your family.

## At this time, I would like to said that there is more scripture about Jesus birth than found on this letter. You will notice that the prophecies in this letter are from the New Testament. At the end of each scripture, Old Testament prophecies are mention by book, chapter and verse only.

So, let’s get started.

Your Brother in Christ, Tony Gonzalez

**1 Peter 3:15**

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always being prepared to make a defense** to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

## **Jesus Birth Prophecies**

## **Matthew 1 : 21 - 23** **The virgin shall conceive**

* **21** “She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”
* **22** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:
* **23** “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). (Compare Isaiah 7:14)

Writing for a Jewish audience, Matthew appeals to Old Testament prophecies early and often, in order to show his readers that Jesus was their long-awaited Messiah, the descendant of David and Abraham. He begins by citing this message from Isaiah to the Judean king Ahaz, from over 700 years earlier, which found its fulfillment in the virgin birth of Christ. Matthew parallels the name Jesus (“God is salvation”) with the title Immanuel (“God with us”) as they both describe Mary’s child, the incarnate Son of God who would save His people from their sins.

## **Matthew 2 : 4 - 6** **Born in Bethlehem of Judea**

* **4** He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.
* **5** They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:
* **6** “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’” (Compare Micah 5:2-5)

Matthew’s next batch of prophetic quotes is tied to the relationship between Herod, the Roman client king of Judea, and the Messiah who would be the true king of Israel. Perturbed at the idea of being supplanted, Herod wanted to know where this Messiah would be born. The location, Bethlehem, was an open secret, having been predicted by the prophet Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah. But Micah offered other details that should’ve given Herod pause. The Messiah would be king and shepherd to His people, ruling the whole earth in the name and majesty of God, having existed since before ancient times.

## **Matthew 2 : 14 - 15** **Out of Egypt I called my son**

* **14** And he rose and took the child and His mother by night and departed to Egypt
* **15** and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.” (compare Hosea 11:1)

Having been warned of Herod’s murderous plot, Joseph fled with his family to Egypt, thus fulfilling the words of the prophet Hosea. On the surface, the connection appears tenuous, as Hosea’s statement in context refers to God bringing Israel out of Egypt at the Exodus. But Matthew was calling to mind the Old Testament portrait of Messiah as representative of Israel, as the perfect Israelite who identifies with His people even in their sin, in order to deliver them. From that perspective, the Exodus is a picture of God calling and redeeming His people via His true Son, Jesus.

## **Matthew 2 : 17 - 18 Rachel weeping for her children**

* **17** Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:
* **18** “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.” (compare Jeremiah 31:15)

Not all prophecies are pleasant, not even all Messianic prophecies. Herod, furious at being thwarted by the magi and intent on killing the newborn king, orders the slaughter of every male child under the age of two in and around Bethlehem. The words of Jeremiah – aptly known as the weeping prophet – not only provide a fitting epitaph to this dreadful episode. They also illustrate the darkness that’s present in the world, against which the light of the coming Savior shines that much brighter.

## **Matthew 2 : 23** **He would be called a Nazarene**

* **23** And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that He would be called a Nazarene. (compare Isaiah 11:1-5; 53:3)

In this case, Matthew isn’t quoting a direct prophecy. In fact, the words “Nazareth” and “Nazarene” don’t appear anywhere in the Old Testament. Matthew is, however, alluding to a general strain in the prophets, of whom he speaks collectively here. Isaiah, among others, describes the Messiah as a Branch, using a Hebrew word, netser, which sounds similar to Nazarene in the original language. Moreover, people from Nazareth were held in very low regard at the time of Jesus, and Isaiah wrote that the Christ would be despised and rejected. While these allusions may seem vague to modern readers, they would have been clear – and compelling – for Matthew’s original Jewish audience.

## **Luke 1 : 16 -17** **The spirit and power of Elijah**

* **16** “And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,
* **17** and he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.” (compare Malachi 4:5-6)

In contrast to Matthew, Luke wrote with a Hellenistic gentile audience in mind, assembling for them an orderly account of the life of Jesus. Rather than inserting prophetic quotes editorially, he allows them to speak through the voices of the men, women and angels in his narrative. He begins with the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist, in which the angel Gabriel paraphrases the final words in the book of the prophet Malachi – which were in fact the final prophetic words recorded in the Old Testament. In so doing, the angel bridges the 400-year gap in prophecy with an emphatic declaration: The Messianic forerunner was about to arrive, and the Messiah Himself would not be far behind.

## **Luke 1 : 31 - 33** **The Son of the Most High**

* **31**  “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus.
* **32** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David,
* **33** and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” (compare 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 9:6-7)

Luke then records the angel Gabriel making a similar announcement to Mary regarding the miraculous birth of her own son, Jesus. Once more, the angel references a number of prophecies that would’ve been familiar to Mary. These include God’s promise to King David via Nathan the prophet, that one of David’s descendants would sit on his throne and rule an everlasting kingdom. They also include Isaiah’s more explicit Messianic prophecy, in which the prophet describes the future Davidic sovereign as “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

## **Luke 1 : 46 - 47; 54 - 55** **Abraham and his offspring**

* **46** And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord,
* **47** and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour . . .
* **54**  He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy,
* **55** as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.” (compare Genesis 12:3; 17:4-5; 22:18)

Mary responds to the prospect of bearing God’s Son with her exuberant Magnificent, brimming with allusions to Old Testament themes, most notably the song of Hannah. She concludes her poem by recalling God’s promises to Abraham and to his offspring that are scattered throughout the book of Genesis. By connecting the birth of her child with the Abrahamic covenant, Mary becomes the first person in the New Testament to identify Abraham’s offspring with the Messiah, the One to whom the promises were made and through whom the nations would be blessed.

## **Luke 1 : 76 - 79** **Prepare the way of the Lord**

* **76** “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways,
* **77** to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins,
* **78** because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
* **79** to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (compare Malachi 3:1; 4:2; Isaiah 9:1-2; 40:3-5)

At the birth of John, the Baptist, his father Zechariah utters a Messianic poem of his own, drawing as Mary had on a variety of Old Testament themes, including the covenant with Abraham and the redeemer from the line of David. Regarding his own son, Zechariah alludes to the prophecies of Malachi as well as Isaiah. John would be the forerunner, the messenger, the voice crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord. In his wake would arise the Christ, the sun of righteousness who brings light to those living in darkness and under the shadow of death.

## **Luke 2 : 28 - 32** **A light for the Gentiles**

* **28** He took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said,
* **29** “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;
* **30** for my eyes have seen your salvation
* **31** that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
* **32** a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.” (compare Isaiah 9:1-2; 42:1-7; 49:5-6)

Luke continues the theme of Messianic light via the words of Simeon, an old man who witnesses the presentation of Jesus at the temple in Jerusalem. Simeon recognizes the child as the Messiah who would bring light and salvation to both Jews and gentiles, echoing several prophecies found in Isaiah. One of those prophecies speaks of the Jewish tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali as Galilee of the gentiles, the land where Jesus would begin His ministry. It’s no coincidence that Luke inserts Anna the prophetess here, noting that she was from Asher, the one tribe even farther removed from Jerusalem, geographically and spiritually, then Zebulun or Naphtali. The message is unmistakable: Messiah has come with salvation not only to Israel, but to the remotest parts of the earth.

*Source :*

https://www.focusonthefamily.ca/content/the-birth-of-jesus-a-prophetic-chorus-after-centuries-of-silence