

Jesus' Birth Foretold

Key Verse: “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.”

—Luke 1:31

Selected Scripture:

Luke 1:26-40

THE RECORD OF THE angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary as recorded in our Selected Scripture is a remarkable one. It is little wonder that her response was one of humility and disbelief. Why would God bless her among all the women of Israel? Mary would eventually better understand the magnitude of her part in the birth of the promised Messiah, but in the moment of this declaration the many prophesies related to this long-awaited birth were no doubt obscured to her vision. Luke declares that the people at this time “were in expectation” of the appearance of “the Christ” (Luke 3:15), who would return Israel back to prominence in the world. The Prophet Daniel had described the timing of this expectation (Dan. 9:24), and thus the stage was set for his birth. Based on this expectation, all new Jewish mothers might have wondered in their hearts whether their child might be the promised one.

Mary's humility and loving character no doubt weighed heavily on her choice as the chosen one to bear this miraculous child, but she also fulfilled a special prophecy. The Prophet Isaiah describes what many might consider a strange requirement for the mother of the promised Messiah: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” (Isa. 7:14) This prophecy, along with Luke's testimony that

Mary was still “a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph” would be yet another proof that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.—Luke 1:27

Isaiah also spoke of the future effect this birth would have on the world of mankind. “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. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”—Isa. 9:6,7

The future government of God’s kingdom will be upon the shoulders of this offspring of Mary, the Son of God—the glorified Jesus. He shall sit upon the throne of David to bring blessings to the world according to the promise given to Abraham and repeated many times by Israel’s prophets. His kingdom will be a righteous one and will last forever. The Prophet Micah describes the world’s eagerness to embrace this kingdom once it is established: “In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”—Mic. 4:1,2

In this beautiful picture of God’s promised kingdom on earth, we see the full impact of the importance of the prophetically foretold birth of Jesus. The world has yet to understand these enthusiastic words of many Hebrew prophets. In due time, however, the appreciation of all the details surrounding the birth of Jesus will be known by all mankind. ■