

# Jesus: A Life Predicted

*Building a Christian Mind*

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Well, this evening we return to our series on how to know Jesus is Lord, and for a couple of preliminary texts I invite you to turn to the book of Acts, is where I'd like to start us out here this evening. How to know Jesus is Lord, and part of the way that we know that and the way that we nourish our faith is to consider the life of Jesus Christ in light of the prophecies that went before him. In Acts 2:22 and 23, we read this, Peter said, "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know-- this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." And then if you would turn to chapter 4 with me, chapter 4, verse 27, we read, "for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place." What your hand had predestined to take place, that in coming just a short time after Scripture had said that Jesus was delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. There was a definite plan and something that God had ordained to take place from before the beginning of time that would be played out in the life of Jesus Christ.

And over the past four messages, we saw that there was a method in place in the biblical testimony to Christ, that over and over and over again, in the words of Christ, in the words of the apostles, in the words of the contemporaries of Christ, in apostolic preaching, they continually looked back and said that this is what the Old Testament said was going to take place. They looked back to prophecies made 400, 600, 1,500 years earlier and showed how the life of Christ was in fulfillment of the definite plan that God had been announcing and unfolding throughout the course of time. And so we see a couple of different things. What we've looked at in the past four messages was to see the method that the apostolic circle used to establish that Jesus was the Christ, that Jesus is Lord. They continually referred back to the Old Testament and said that Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. That was their method.

Now tonight and on next time, it'll be Tuesday, I'll be away on Sunday, but over the next two messages while I'm in the pulpit, we're going to consider something that takes it another step forward and ask ourselves and answer the question: what was the content? What exactly was it that the prophets foretold that Jesus fulfilled? We've seen that they

pointed back to the Old Testament, but what was it in particular that the prophets said that fulfilled that helps us to know that Jesus is Lord, that he is the fulfillment of everything that the prophets had been saying for the prior 1,500 years? Well, that's what we're going to look at and we're going to see tonight the way that the life of Jesus was predicted, and then next time we'll look at the way that the death of Christ was predicted. And what we want to understand and be able to go and understand the argument and understand the texts that undergird it, is to understand how Scripture lays this out in a consistent way over the progress of revelation.

God here's a very fundamental, basic statement, God sent prophets ahead of Christ. Over the course of centuries, God sent prophets ahead of Christ in order to prepare the way of the Lord, and what those prophets did, in the simplest of ways to explain it, is that they told in advance about the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. You see it in Moses. You see it in the Psalms. You see it in the five so-called major prophets. You see it in the 12 minor prophets. There is this theme of the coming Messiah that is set forth and in Christ we see the fulfillment of everything that the prophets promised.

Now our goal in this portion of the series over these next two messages is really modest, it's really inadequate, but it's just to give a sample, you might say, to sketch out a few of the prophecies that you see in the Old Testament and then look to the New Testament to see their fulfillment in Christ, and we start to see how the Old and New Testaments are wedded together, how they fit together, and how the New Testament fulfills the Old Testament and the Old Testament foreshadowed what we would see in the New Testament. This is the foundation of faith in Christ and what I hope that you're starting to get the sense of, and what we're starting to develop deeply as we build a Christian mind together, is that we're wanting to go beyond a very simplistic approach to evangelism and a simplistic approach to our faith. You know, it's perfectly fine and good to quote Romans 10:9, and 10 to people that, you know, you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and you will be saved, and in the simplicity of that, that's a good way to start with somebody perhaps in evangelism, but beloved, there's something really, really critical about being a Christian that we need to understand and embrace and develop and mature in. It's that God never intended for us to be satisfied with two or three verses as the full foundation of everything that we believe in Christ. He gave us 1,189 chapters in the Bible, between 260 in the New Testament and whatever the remainder is in the Old Testament, something along those lines is the math. You know, we're to know the fullness of the Bible, we're to know the robust nature of Scripture so that we are deeply grounded and deeply rooted in Christ and not tossed about by waves of doctrine. Well, this is what we're trying to develop as we study Scripture together, to build a Christian mind, and a Christian mind is one that understands that there is a fullness and a unity of the revelation between the Old and New Testament, and that we know the fullness of these things, not simply an isolated text here and there.

Now, it has been said about this matter of prophecy, it has been said by a scholar who has since gone to be with the Lord, he said, "The Lord Jesus is mankind's only hope for righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. In him alone, prophecy finds its proper explanation and its adequate result." It's in Christ alone that prophecy finds its fulfillment.

No one else matches what the prophets were looking forward to. Only in Christ do we see the right outcome of all of those prophecies that the Jews waited for centuries to see the fulfillment of. And then you realize that, you know, when they had their Messiah in front of them, what did they do with him? They crucified him. The measure of God and the plan of God and the wisdom of God is so contrary to what you and I might expect. But for tonight, what we want to see is this, is that God established a blueprint for the life of Christ long before time began. That's what we saw in those passages from Acts. And over the course of 1,500 years, from the time of Moses until the incarnation of our blessed Lord, God was measuring out details that would be fulfilled in the life of Christ. Christ fulfilled the ancient prophecies, proving beyond doubt that he was the promised one, and for the purpose of this series, proving without doubt that he is Lord, that he is God incarnate, that he is the climax of God's revelation and the only true object of our faith.

Now if you'll go back to the book of Genesis, just for a moment, the prophecies started in Genesis 3 immediately upon the fall of man. God was not surprised by the fall of Adam. In a way that is deep and profound beyond our understanding, while God did not cause Adam to sin and did not tempt Adam to sin, still God had planned from before the beginning of time and God had ordained that this would all take place so that there was a long-term plan in the mind of God about the outworking of redemption and the manner in which he would glorify himself before his people. And after the fall, in Genesis 3:14, you'll remember this, the Lord addressed the woman, addressed the serpent, addressed Adam, and to the serpent in verse 14, the Lord God said this, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." That is the first biblical reference to a coming deliverer, that there would one day be a deliverer who would come who would bruise the head of Satan and disarm him of his power, which is what Christ did when he died on the cross and rose again from the dead.

That's the opening salvo and as the Old Testament progressed, the prophets gave many pictures of the coming Redeemer that we now know as the Lord Jesus Christ, and this was all fore-planned, it was according to the foreknowledge of God. And what I want you to see at this juncture is this, is that God had a plan, God revealed prophecies, made things known in advance, over the course of centuries, Christ came and fulfilled those prophecies in a way that is stunning to us. It is a revelation of the complete, absolute sovereignty of God over all of human history, over all of human events. So sovereign, so great is the power of God displayed in the things that we are looking at that we can see that he works through even the rebellion of man to accomplish his purposes. The rebellion of man does not hinder God at all in the fulfillment of his ultimate purpose. And here's what I want you to take away from that at this particular point. There is, beloved, there is an inflexible certainty about the truth of God, about the judgment of God. God is not operating according to a Plan B or a Plan C or anything like that. He put a plan into place before creation, and all of human history since then has been working out exactly in the way that he intended. God knows the end from the beginning. God works sovereignly through everything that happens to accomplish his will. That's what we see in Ephesians 1, that God works all things according to the counsel of his will. And we see this

supremely in Christ, and then in our own lives and in the different rise and fall of nations around us, we see those matters are really in some ways incidental to Christ, but all of it is unfolding exactly as God intended it to do. An inflexible certainty about the truth of God, an inflexible certainty about the judgment of God. God's standard, God's law never changes. His purpose in Christ never changed, never deviated an iota from what he intended it to be.

Now, you and I aren't used to that. What you and I are used to in our, you know, in the age in which we live, is we're used to seeing standards of morality, for example, shift and change according to popular opinion, so much so that increasingly degraded and perverted lusts are now embraced and celebrated and almost mandated. The mandate, to the extent it hasn't come yet, it will be here one day. It's what was unthinkable just a decade, two decades ago, is now embraced as popular morality in the way that things ought to be and that's happened in the course of our lifetime. But beloved, what you and I need to step back and realize is that when it comes to God's truth, that God's judgment, God's truth never changes, and these unfolding prophecies and the fulfillment of them enforce that principle upon our minds so that we are not anchored in, we do not respond to, we do not base our view of truth according to the latest Gallup poll. We don't care about public opinion polls. We don't care what the majority thinks. That does not influence our view of truth at all. We root our understanding of truth and righteousness and judgment and morality in the word of God.

Now with that little side note explained, I'd ask you to turn to Deuteronomy 18:15, this is still by way of introduction and I alluded to this text a week or two ago. Deuteronomy 18:15, which is really a seminal text in considering this whole matter. Moses, of course, wrote the first five books of the Bible as we have them. In one sense, they're only a single book. The book of Moses, the book of the law of Moses, it's sometimes referred to in Scripture. But in Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses is speaking to the children of Israel shortly before his departure. The time had come for him to die and for the children of Israel to cross the Jordan and take possession of the land that God had promised them. They had been under the leadership of Moses for a solid 40 years. He had led them through the wilderness. He had spoken to Pharaoh before that and effected their deliverance from slavery out of the nation of Egypt and then led them through the wilderness until they were on the brink of the promised land. Now he's giving his swan song, so to speak. He is expressing his departure and preparing Israel for what will come in his wake and in Deuteronomy 18:15, we read this, which is so pertinent to our consideration for this evening. Moses promises the children of Israel as he speaks by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he says this, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers--it is to him you shall listen."

Now think just a little bit about who Moses was and the functions and the roles that he fulfilled for the nation of Israel. What can we say about Moses in very simple terms? Moses was someone through whom they received the word of God. As God met with him on Mount Sinai, gave him the 10 Commandments, and Moses brought those down and spoke God's law to them, he was someone who gave them the word of God. In that way, he was a prophet in that he spoke on God's behalf to the people. Very important to understand. He spoke on God's behalf to the people.

What else can we say about Moses? Well, he was someone who mediated on behalf of the people to God. You can remember that there were times where God said that he was going to destroy the people of Israel for the sake of their sin, and Moses pleaded with him not to do that. God even said, "I'll destroy them and I'll raise up a nation by you," and Moses said, "God, don't do that to your people." He prayed for them. He interceded for them in the midst of their sin and forestalled the judgment of God that would come upon them. In that sense, he was not a priest, but he acted as a mediator like a priest would.

And what else can we say about Moses? Well, think about him leading them through the wilderness for 40 years. He was someone who led the people of God. He guided them. He was God's appointed man to lead them from one place to the next. And Moses, the children of Israel, having seen and known that for Moses for the prior 40 years as he speaks these words, they had come to know and to depend upon Moses's leadership, even though they so often rebelled against it. They knew him as the leader and the spokesman for God.

Well, when it comes to our Lord Jesus Christ, we see all of those traits exalted to a higher level in him. Did Moses speak the word of God to the people of Israel? So did Christ, so much so that the Bible describes him as the Word itself in John 1:1. Did Moses pray for the people? Christ mediated at an even greater level than Moses did. Christ mediated so much to the extent that he gave his life on the cross in order to save the people and to turn away the wrath of God from those who would belong to him. He interceded on behalf of sinners, Isaiah 53 says. And did Moses lead the people through the wilderness? Christ leads his own. Christ leads the church. He says, "I will build my church." He says, "I am the good shepherd." Christ in his early calls to Matthew and other disciples was what? "Follow me. I am your leader. Follow me." So that everything that the children of Israel came to associate with the leadership of Moses was fulfilled and brought to light in an even higher degree in the person of Jesus Christ. It's remarkable to consider so when your eyes are open to these kinds of things, you look to the life of Moses and you see an even higher fulfillment of Christ. Christ is like Moses, but he's a greater Moses in what he did for the people of God. The point here for this evening is simply that the Jews were conditioned from texts like these to be looking for someone like that. They were looking for a coming Messiah and as subsequent prophecies were made, details were filled out to identify Christ with absolute precision that he was the Messiah.

So I want to do something simple here this evening. I want to, first of all, take just a look at a sample of five different prophecies about the life of Christ in the Old Testament, look at the life of Christ predicted, and then look at the same prophecies as they are fulfilled in the New Testament, so that you could call it the prophecies of Christ fulfilled. The life of Christ predicted, and then those prophecies fulfilled. That's what we want to look at.

Now, so the first point for this evening: the life of Christ predicted. Now, before I can even get to my five subpoints here under this topic, I have to go on a tangent. This one is a prepared tangent. It's in my notes. A lot of times my tangents aren't in my notes. But just as a preliminary aside, I want to make another brief statement about the Old Testament in general, which it's easy to miss this; sometimes the most profound and

obvious things about Scripture are easy to miss because we get so tied up in details as we're reading or as we're hearing preaching or something like that. Here's a big picture observation that we need to make sure that we don't miss. As you know, in the law of Moses, God established an elaborate system of sacrifices by which the people of Israel were to approach him; blood of bulls and goats and lambs had to be shed, and there were daily sacrifices and annual sacrifices and all kinds of blood being shed of animals in the process. So much so that when the offerer, the worshiper, brought his animal, he would lay his hands on the head of the animal, signifying a transfer of his guilt from what his hands had done, transferring it to that perfect, unblemished lamb, and then the lamb would be slaughtered and that system of sacrifice was teaching them a great principle over the course of centuries. It was inculcating into them by great repetition again and again and again that forgiveness of sin is brought to a worshiper by the introduction of an unblemished sacrifice, an unblemished substitute that would give its blood on behalf of the worshiper in order that they could have access to God. What I want you to see, and time forbids me from developing this thought as it needs to be, but beloved, as we're contemplating how to know Jesus as Lord, understand that that entire system of sacrifice in the Old Testament, established in the book of Exodus and in Leviticus, all of that was a very elaborate and detailed foreshadowing of the Christ who would come, that there had to be a blood sacrifice made in order to obtain access to God. And the fact that, as Hebrews teaches us, the fact that those animal sacrifices were repeated over and over again shows that there was something missing, that an animal's blood can't be a perfect corresponding sacrifice for human blood that should be shed. An animal's blood can't atone perfectly for it can't atone at all for human sin, but there was a picture being developed that there had to be a sacrifice, a substitute, one who was unblemished, one who shed blood.

Now, to go into that and to detail it in any acceptable way would be a series of messages that time forbids us from undertaking, but one writer said this about it all. He said, "The priestly and sacrificial system was designed primarily to center the attention of the people on the coming Messiah and to teach that there was a way of pardon and access to God." All of that system was designed to establish that a sacrificial substitute was necessary in order to gain access to God, and what you find when you come to the New Testament is that Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of all of that, and his sacrifice of himself, the shedding of that perfect blood, the perfect Lamb of God, is now the one and only means of access to a holy God. What you and I want to grasp here this evening is to understand that God was laying a foundation so that we would understand that and recognize Christ as the Messiah since his coming.

Well, with that said, now we'll just sample five prophecies and examine their fulfillment in the time that we have remaining here this evening. This is just a sampling. It's kind of an arbitrary selection, but just enough to give us a taste that the Old Testament looked forward and the New Testament built on that and said, "What we say here in New Testament writings is the fulfillment of what the Old Testament told us to expect."

So number 1 of these first prophecies that we'll look at, we see that the Redeemer would be born of a virgin. The Redeemer, the Messiah, would be born of a virgin, and you know where to go for this. Isaiah 7:14. Turn there with me. It's somewhat delightful to me to

turn to this text when it's not the Christmas season. This is more than a Christmas text. This is foundational to knowing that Jesus is Lord. In Isaiah 7:14, we read by the prophet Isaiah, and we remember that Isaiah ministered some 700 years before the time of Christ, and in verse 14, we read, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Immanuel being a name that means "God with us." We're saying how to know that Jesus is Lord. Well, his very name says "God with us." His very name means that God is with us. The Redeemer would be born of a virgin.

Now turn over a couple of chapters later to Isaiah 9 and we will see, secondly, that the Redeemer would be a descendant of David, a descendant, a direct lineal descendant of King David. We read in Isaiah 9:6 and 7, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this." The Messiah would be a descendant of David. We'll come back to that in a few moments, but we've seen that the Messiah would be born of a virgin, the Messiah would be a descendant of David. This is what the prophets were telling the people to expect and to look for.

Now if you'll turn a little further back, a book that's a little harder to find in your Bible than Isaiah or Jeremiah, look for the prophet Micah. After Ezekiel and after Daniel and Hosea, you go to the middle of the minor prophets and you'll find the prophet Micah. In Micah 5:2, and sometimes I go back and forth, sometimes I just read these Scriptures to you, tonight I'd like for you to turn and to see these things in your own Bible, to have your finger and your eye fall on the pages in your own Scripture. Here in Micah 5, we read a third prophecy about the Messiah, that he would be born in Bethlehem, the village of Bethlehem. He would be born of a virgin. He would be born a descendant of David. He would be born in Bethlehem. In Micah 5:2, we read this, "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days." Now Bethlehem was a small, tiny village. It was obscure. You would not expect an obscure village to give rise to the Messiah. Now, you know, you don't expect a US President to come from, I don't know, pick a tiny little place. You know, you don't expect great leaders to come from really obscure backgrounds. Well, multiply that by infinity, and again, centuries before the coming of Christ, the prophet Micah points to the village of Bethlehem and says, "This will be the birthplace, this will be the cradle of the Messiah," in a way that no one could have expected.

The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, a descendant of David, a virgin. Already you start to see, it's like, you know, maybe you've seen artists that can draw great drawings in front of your very eyes, and they do an outline of the picture, and then they fill in details before your very eyes. That's what we see as we read the Old Testament. There's a great canvas being painted before us, and we see the outlines being made, a coming Deliverer, someone who would be like Moses, someone who was born of a virgin, a descendant of David, born in the city of Bethlehem, the village of Bethlehem, and you start to get this

picture rising up as you study the Old Testament, and you get this pulsating sense of anticipation, you know, about who this is going to be and what it's going to be like.

Now, this is a different kind of tangent, one that's not in my notes and not planned, but something that is worth saying. You know, as you read, as you should at some point, you know, over the course of a year or two in your life to make room and time for this, you read the Old Testament books of 1 and 2 Kings, or you read 1 and 2 Chronicles. There's something that happens as you're reading about the rise and fall of the kings of Judah, the kings of Israel. You see David being raised up, and you see his excellency, and then he falls. That's sad, a disappointing outcome to what started so well. Same thing in the life of Solomon, splendid king, reigning in peace, a man of great profound wisdom, so much so that the queen of Sheba comes a long distance simply to hear his wisdom, to see his wealth, and in astonished awe, she says, "The people who told me about you didn't tell me half of it. You're far greater than what I ever expected." And you start to look and you see, you know, is Solomon going to be the epitome of these things? And then he falls. Hundreds of wives and concubines and it ends in failure. Then the kingdom is divided after his death. And you start to read over the centuries of different kings that would rise up in no particular order. You read about a man like Hezekiah. You read about a Josiah or a Joash or Jehoshaphat, and you see these kings that introduced reform, and there's a sense of expectation that's created as you read about them, and they're making steps in the right direction, and yet at the end, they disappoint you too. They fall into sin. They stray away. And as you read these things, there should be, as you start to read and understand, there should be this understanding that there's a pattern here, that the best of human kings always let me down. They always ended up in some degree of failure. And there's just this sense of hopes being raised and then disappointed.

Those of you that have given your lives to following politics and hoping in the change of our country based on whoever might come next as the great next leader, sooner or later, you realize it's never going to happen at the hands of a human leader. At the best, they're going to die in the end, and at the best, all they can do is introduce a little bit of marginal social economic change. Beloved, you understand, you know you should embrace and distance yourself from the preoccupation from politics that has any idea that a human leader can deliver us from the mess that we're in. It's not going to happen. They don't have that power, especially as we're increasingly obviously under the Romans 1 wrath of God. Only the gospel can deliver us. There is no leader who can trump the mess that we are in, and it's a fool's errand to hope for such a thing.

Well, in a far greater way, as the people of Israel who had these promises of a coming Messiah, they see a king and, "Oh, not again. Here's another one. Oh, not again." And there's just this simultaneous sense of anticipation based on the promises that the prophets had made, and yet continual histories of human failure and disappointed expectations. And your heart, as you read the Scriptures like that, your heart starts to cry out. Your heart starts to long. "God, how long until you send him? How long must we deal with these failed substitutes that never deliver on the promises of all of the promises that the prophets made?" And the best of reform was quickly undone. Even in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra, reforms were introduced, and before these men were even gone, the

people rebelled against it. And there's just this, it just creates this dying spiritual thirst. "God, we've got to have the real thing." And you realize that no man can provide it.

Beloved, those of you that have been disappointed by people in your life, seen people fail you, disappoint you, sin against you, you've got a little bit of a taste of that, and all of that is designed to create in us a longing to look beyond the human to find the Lord, to find the one who is genuinely the Messiah that will never fail, that will never let us down, and the prophets are painting on the canvas here's who you look for. Well, you know, go a little further in what are called the minor prophets to the book of Zechariah and we see a couple of things in Zechariah. In addition to the fact that the Messiah would be born of a virgin, a descendant of David, born in Bethlehem, we see in Zechariah that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem in triumph. He would enter Jerusalem triumphantly and in Zechariah 9:9, we read this, and understand that we're going to circle back to all of these prophecies before we close tonight. Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." It says, "Jerusalem, your king is coming. You'll know him when he rides in your midst on a donkey." Zechariah was saying that 500 years before the time of Christ.

And then one more prophecy in this little sampling, a mere sample of all that could be said, we see that the Redeemer would be betrayed, that the Christ would be betrayed by a close associate of his. Zechariah 11:12 and 13, and this is all just about the life of Christ. Next Tuesday, we're going to see prophecies about the death of Christ. It's really remarkable to me. Zechariah 11:12 and 13, "Then I said to them, 'If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.' And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver. Then the LORD said to me, 'Throw it to the potter'--the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter." Indicating that the Christ would be betrayed at a price of 30 pieces of silver. Five hundred years before the time of Jesus, Zechariah was saying these things.

So we've seen five different prophecies about the life of Christ, the life of Christ predicted: born of a virgin, descendant of David, village of Bethlehem, triumphant in Jerusalem, betrayed at a price of 30 pieces of silver. Well, flash forward to the life of Christ, flash forward to the New Testament, and now in our second major heading for tonight, you'll see the prophecies of Christ fulfilled. The prophecies of Christ fulfilled, and in every instance, beloved, of these prophecies that we've seen from the Old Testament, we see not only a fulfillment in the Old Testament, we see the apostolic writers specifically saying this fulfilled that prophecy. That prophecy is fulfilled here.

Now, what about Jesus being born of a virgin? Well, turn to Matthew 1. Matthew 1 and let's start in verse 18. Matthew 1:18. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived

in her is from 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 that great familiar announcement, notice what follows in verse 22. What's the significance of that announcement to Joseph? "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel' (which means, God with us)." How do you know that Jesus is Lord? The prophet Isaiah said he would be born of a virgin, and here it is in Matthew 1. You know it based on prophetic certainty. You know it based on the testimony of the word of God. Jesus was born of a virgin. This is what the prophet said would be true of the Christ.

Now secondly, we saw that Jesus was prophesied to be born in Bethlehem. Well, let's go on to chapter 2 of Matthew in verse 1. "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.' When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born." What did they tell him? "They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet.'" Do you see it again? And then he quotes Micah 5.2, "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."

Born of a virgin? Fulfilled. Born in Bethlehem? Fulfilled. Jesus was a descendant of David? Well, turn back to Matthew 1 for just a moment. Matthew 1:1. And if you're new to Scripture, you might well wonder why such a lengthy genealogy is given at the start of the first gospel of the first book in the entire New Testament. Well, it's because this is essential to being identifying Jesus as the Christ, Jesus as Lord. The Christ had to be a descendant of David, a direct lineal descendant, and so the genealogy goes through line by line through the ancestry to show an unbroken connection between Jesus Christ, David the king, and going even further back to Abraham. And so we read in the first verse, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Son, meaning not the next generation in this case, as my son Daniel is my son, next generation from me. Jesus is the son of David and the son of Abraham in the sense that he is in the unbroken ancestry, the unbroken lineage, better stated, from those men. He's the son of David, just like the prophets said he would be.

Now, going on, what about entering Jerusalem in triumph? Well, turn to the book of Matthew 21, chapter 21. Matthew 21:1. "Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord needs them," and he will send them at once.'" Here's that prophetic language yet again, beloved. "This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 'Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and

others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!'" Jesus entered Jerusalem in triumph just as the prophet said that he would, recognized by the fickle crowd, because only a week later they would call for his crucifixion, but the fickle crowd recognized him as the son of David in fulfillment of the prophecies that had been made about him.

Now finally, what about the betrayal of Christ? Well, turn to Matthew 26. Matthew 26:14 through 16. "Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?' And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him."

Jump over to chapter 27. You know the story of how Jesus led the Roman soldiers to the garden and kissed him on the cheek. Judas asked him, "Do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" A false sign of affection, what is accepted as a token of affection Judas used as the means by which he would commit the unspeakable, heinous crime of handing Jesus over and betraying the trust that had been his in the circle of the 12. Verse 3 of chapter 27, "Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' They said, 'What is that to us? See to it yourself.' And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself." Showing that his confession of sin was not a real repentance because he just went out and destroyed himself. That's not a mark of repentance. Verse 6, "the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, 'It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money.' So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day." Now look, verse 9, "Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.'" You can also possibly see an echo of Jeremiah 19 in this prophecy, but particularly Zechariah comes out.

And so we have the canvases of the life set before us. Genesis 3, the one who would bruise the serpent's head. Deuteronomy 18, the one who would be like Moses. And then in these five prophecies that we've seen from Isaiah and Micah and Zechariah, we see them all fulfilled in the New Testament. How do we know Jesus is Lord? Look at the prophecies, see them fulfilled, and recognize the determinate hand of God upon it all. From his birth to his crucifixion, prophecy stamped the life of Christ. He fulfilled those prophecies long after they were made and in the fulfillment of the prophecy, having established beyond a doubt that he was the Christ whom the prophets told us to expect, he offered that sinless, perfect life as an atoning sacrifice for sinners just like you and just like me.

Now, what are we to make of this supernatural attestation to Christ? Well, turn, as a final text, turn to the book of Acts 10 with me. Acts 10 and we'll look at verses 42 and 43. Peter is preaching and he says this, "And he," meaning God, "God commanded us to

preach to the people and to testify that he," meaning Jesus Christ, "Jesus is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him," to Jesus, to Christ, "all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." What are we to make of this prophetic fulfillment, this supernatural attestation? Well, beloved, understand that this is pointing to a day of judgment. Christ is appointed by God, look at verse 42, to be judge of the living and the dead. This is not a game. This is not a game that we're playing here. We're not just putting little puzzle pieces together here. This all relates to the role that Christ will have as the judge of all mankind.

And so the application, the question that we ask ourselves that I would ask you here this evening is: are you ready for that solemn day of judgment? Have you received Christ for the forgiveness of your sin? Understand, I'm not asking your opinion of whether the Bible is true or not. It is, but that's not the question. The question is have you received Christ for the forgiveness of your sin in light of that coming day of judgment? I'm not asking if you're basically a good person, with good conservative politics. I'm not asking that. I'm not asking if you're a good person because you know what? There's no reason for me to ask that question because you're not. Scripture says there is no one good. There are none righteous. So that's not the issue. The issue is whether you have received Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. I'm not asking if you attend church with your Christian family. I'm asking whether you've received Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. I'm not asking you to consider what your friends or your family will think about all of it. I'm not asking you if your family will make fun of you or reject you. In many cases, they will. But I'm not asking you that. That's not important at all in comparison to the question of whether you have received Christ for the forgiveness of your sin. Have you recognized him as the Lord that he is? Have you recognized that his death was a fulfillment of all of the plans of blood atonement prepared throughout the centuries and that he was the full, final, complete, human, God sacrifice for sinners just like you? Have you knelt before him as Lord, confessed him, received him, yielded to him, owned him as your only hope of righteousness? That's the question.

That's what you do with this prophetic outline that's been made before us and understand, beloved, this comes on the authority of the prophets, comes on the authority of Christ, but also understand the vast ocean of grace that you stand on the beach and look out on as you hear these things. God, in an ocean of mercy, in an ocean of grace, in an ocean of goodness, set forth Christ prophetically so that he could not be missed, that there would be no excuse having heard these things, and to realize that a free offer of forgiveness is made to you by God himself through his word here this evening that your sins can be forgiven in this Lord.

*Father, we bow before you. Corporately, we believe the prophets. Corporately, we confess Christ as the only Savior by which men may be saved. Corporately, we confess Jesus as Lord to the glory of God the Father. Yes, Father, we do that gladly corporately, but we realize, Lord, that no one rides into heaven on a corporate confession. We can't rely on what others around us have done. We can't rely on what a church confesses and teaches. Lord, there must be personal repentance, personal faith in Christ. And so I pray, Father, in a time when so much confusion is all around us in so many different areas, I*

*pray that by your Spirit you would pierce through and clear the fog that might shroud an unbelieving heart this evening, and help each one to examine themselves, help each one to feel the weight of the prophetic testimony, the weight of the prophetic fulfillment, and to realize that there is no alternative but to come hurriedly and bow down before Christ and, Father, to say from the depth of the being, "O Lord, save me, an unworthy sinner. Save me in your grace by your atoning work on Calvary." O Spirit of God, not just tonight but in the days to come, we pray that you would work in many hearts and lead them to Christ so that each one under the sound of my voice may answer truly, "Yes, I have believed in Christ for the forgiveness of my sins."*

*Father, we live in a careless age, and certainly a spirit of carelessness can easily seep into the church. Father, I pray that you would stir us all, all of those who identify with Truth Community Church, whether they're here tonight or not, Father, stir and awaken us out of our carelessness. Help us to pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. God, the issues are urgent. They are eternal in their nature. And while we have your word, Father, and we preach it, Father, in the end of the day, human words on human ears are powerless unless your Holy Spirit takes them and give them wings to the inner sanctuary of each heart. So awaken men to faith, awaken men and women within our body to duty and to faithfulness and fidelity, and accomplish your will by the unfolding of your word, not for our sake, Father, but for your glory and for the protection and deliverance of eternal souls on the brink of eternity. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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