

MONTH OF JESUS: MODERN PROPHECY

Luke 1:31-33 ... “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the son of the highest; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Previously we illustrated some of the more than 3,000 verses in the Old Testament that foretold about Jesus. We call those “ancient” prophecies because they occurred hundreds and thousands of years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Today we will look at prophecies about Jesus that occurred just before his birth. Although they are still old to us, we call them modern because they occur in the New Testament. The first is found in Luke chapter one, where the angel Gabriel appeared to a temple priest named Zacharias to tell him that his wife Elizabeth was pregnant with a son and that he must name him John. Gabriel informed Zacharias that John (the Baptist) would prepare the hearts of the people to welcome the Messiah (Jesus).

The next modern prophecy about the coming of Jesus, is when God sent the angel Gabriel to visit Mary and tell her she would give birth to the Messiah. Today’s passage from Luke records Gabriel’s message to Mary. Jesus was born nine months later.

John the Baptist was a few months older than Jesus. John apparently spent several years telling people that Jesus was coming soon because Jesus did not reveal himself as the Son of God until he was around thirty years of age. We learn elsewhere in scripture that John did not know the Messiah had been born until Jesus started his own ministry, because Mary kept her knowledge that Jesus was the Messiah a secret, as Gabriel instructed her to do.

There were two other special people waiting for Jesus: Simeon and Anna, both of whom were devout Jews. Although much of Israel had stopped worshipping God, and stopped sacrificing to him, they remained faithful. God honored Simeon’s faith by promising him he would not die before the Messiah came. When Mary and Joseph brought their new baby to the Temple, the Holy Spirit let Simeon know that Jesus was the Messiah. Simeon also told Mary that day about Jesus’ future ministry and even his death. Anna, another devout servant of God, was also informed by the Holy Spirit that the baby Jesus was the prophesied Messiah.

Jesus’ birth was God’s plan to save us before the creation of the universe. He documented his plan throughout the Old Testament, and told many prophets about it. Zacharias, Mary, Simeon, Anna, and John the Baptist were the more recent to be informed by God of Jesus’ coming and his purpose. I hope this helps you begin to see the big picture of God’s plan for us as we celebrate Jesus’ birth this December.

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