

## Prophecies of Birth of Jesus: 2

### The Time and Place of Jesus' Birth

#### A. The Timing of Jesus' Birth

##### Genesis 49.10

**“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.”**

In this lesson we are going to look at the prophecies concerning the time and place of the Lord's birth. I'm not an expert in genealogy but my father has done considerable work on our family tree. I have a birth certificate which gives the date and place of my birth – Isleworth, 5 May 1967. One thing I have learnt from his work is in tracing ancestry and to obtain such certificates, it used to be essential to visit the place of a persons birth to access the birth and death registries – this has been done away with to some degree with the advent of technology and the internet.

I think it is generally accepted that 25 December was not the actual date of Jesus' birth, I tend to hold to the view that it was more likely to correspond with one of the major Jewish feasts quite possibly around October time. But the purpose of this study is not to determine or present a date for the birth of Jesus but rather look at the timing of it in relation to God's prophetic timetable for the plan of redemption.

**Prophecy #1** - “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes..” (Genesis 49.10)

Shiloh, a designation given to Messiah. Shiloh means peace/tranquility

“I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; A Sceptre shall rise out of Israel...” (Numbers 24.17)

##### **Fulfilment:**

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered... And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn... For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2. 1, 7, 11)

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law” (Galatians 4.4)

All the prophecies relating to Christ were accurate, and they were exact in every detail – all specifications of His ancestry and the manner and time of His birth came to pass as predicted.

Paul reminds us that 'when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman' – Jesus birth was not a day before 'the time', not a day after but precisely on the hour of God's prophetic timetable.

At the time when Jesus was to be born, Mary was living in the wrong place, the wrong town, not even in the correct district if Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea – as she drew near to giving birth, the Roman Emperor issued a decree that every person in the Roman Empire had to be registered, this necessitated a journey back to each man's ancestral home.

British archaeologist and Bible scholar, William Ramsey, found in 1923 an inscription in a Roman temple in Turkey stating that in the reign of Ceasar Augustus there were three great tax collections. The second of these was decreed *four years* before the birth of Christ. The Jewish people resented this and sent a commission to Rome to protest as the local governor Quirinius, did not have authority to settle the problem. These were days of slow communications and slower travel. The protest failed and the Jews had to submit to this registration and taxation. By the time the official tax collectors had worked their way eastwards town by town, and the delays caused by the protests, sufficient time would have elapsed by the time the enrolment was put in force in Judea to be the exact time for Mary to give birth.

See how God works to bring His prophetic Word to fulfillment.

Dr F J Meldau writes in *Messiah in Both Testaments*

“Neither Mary, nor Caesar, nor the Roman tax collectors did the timing, nor were they in charge of affairs, but the God who rules the world behind the scenes had his hand on the wheel, and He literally 'moved the peoples of the world' and timed everything to the very day, so that Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem in the nick of time, that Jesus, the chosen Messiah, might be born [*at the right time*] in the right place, the place designated by the infallible finger of prophecy.”  
(parentheses mine)

**Prophecy #2** Malachi also prophesies:

“Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” Says the LORD of hosts”  
(Malachi 3.1)

Here he says that the Lord will come to His Temple – Jesus had to appear in the timing of things while the Temple was still standing – this was destroyed in AD70 when Titus ransacked the city of Jerusalem.

Again we read in Daniel:

“Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks... And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself”  
(Daniel 9.25-26)

**Fulfilment:**

“Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.... Then *the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple*, and He

healed them. But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" ...” (Matthew 21. 12, 14-15)

The Messiah had to come 483 years after a specific date given in Daniel's time – a prophecy given by the prophet almost 500 years before Jesus came to the temple. Therefore His public entry into the Temple in Jerusalem was pre-arranged and perfectly fulfilled. His movements matched the blueprint of prophecy. Daniel records in his timetable of the Messiah that He would be '*cut off*' or killed before the destruction of the Temple, which took place approx thirty-five years after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

## B. The Place of His Birth

### Micah 5.2-3

“**“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting.” Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time *that* she who is in labour has given birth...”**”

We have just been considering the preciseness of the timing of the birth of Jesus. Just as precise is the place of His birth. We mentioned earlier that Mary was in the wrong place as the time drew near for her to give birth. So God had to move her to be in the correct place at the right time to fulfil the prophetic timetable.

**Prophecy #3** - “**“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting.” Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time *that* she who is in labour has given birth...”** (Micah 5.2-3)

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots” (Isaiah 11.1)

### **Fulfilment:**

“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” (Matthew 2.1, see also verses 5-6)

“Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" ” (John 7.41-42)

The Rod. Isaiah prophesied that a rod would grow from the stem of Jesse. Jesse was from Bethlehem, he was the father of David. Out of Jesse's family would come One who would be great, a ruler - the staff was a sign of a ruler and leader. But here the word is used to denote something small, like a twig. Messiah would rise from small and humble family but would be called great.

“Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. 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." (Luke 1.30-33)

The Branch. The Branch is another designation for the Messiah. The Hebrew word *netzer* translated here as branch is also the same word used for the 'city of trees' – Nazareth. This prophecy also states then that Jesus would be called a Nazarene.

"And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene." (Matthew 3.23)

**Prophecy #4** - "When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son" (Hosea 11.1)

"Nevertheless the gloom *will not be* upon her who *is* distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed *her*, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined" (Isaiah 9.1-2)

**Fulfilment:**

"Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON." (Matthew 2.13-15)

"Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene." (Matthew 2.19-23)