

Christmas Eve

Luke 24:44 - He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, God from eternity, yet born to the Virgin Mary, D.F.R.

I like mysteries. Sherlock Holmes, Columbo, Murder She Wrote, and even some real life mysteries like what happened to Amelia Earhart or the Lost Colony of Roenoke, the DB Cooper highjacking or Jimmy Hoffa's disappearance.

Think of Old Testament prophecies as mysteries. God made promises but no one knew exactly when or how those promises – those “mysteries” would be fulfilled. Another reason that God gave us all these Old Testament prophecies about the Savior who would come was so that we could check them one by one to see if any individual fulfilled those “tests” or prophecies.

The Savior had to be a descendant of David, but a lot of people were descendants of David. The Savior also had to be born in Bethlehem, but a lot of people were born in Bethlehem. Jesus fulfilled both of these prophecies, but there many others.

Another prophecy said that Jesus would be born of a virgin, and would be “Immanuel” — God with us. As we all know, Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, and he was the eternal Son of God. Jesus truly is “God with us,” because in Jesus our God took on human flesh and form and chose to live among us. These prophecies, these “tests,” Jesus also passed.

There were other prophecies, too. The Savior would be the Prince of Peace, and would be worshiped by Gentile kings, and God would summon him from Egypt. These prophecies, these “tests,” Jesus passed all of them also.

The Bible contains many other tests for the Savior, and Jesus passed all of them as well.

It foretold Herod's attempt to kill him and the slaughter of the innocents, that Rachel would weep for her children, “because they were no more.”

He would be descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and also King David.

He would be betrayed by a friend for 30 pieces of silver.

He would be welcomed on Palm Sunday with shouts of “Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

He would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey.

He would die with criminals and be buried among the rich.

He would show great zeal for God's house, throwing out the moneylenders.

He fulfilled the prophecy that said he would remain silent before his accusers, that he would die and rise again.

None of his bones would be broken and even though dead, his body would not decay.

All people on earth would be blessed through him.

He would be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

He would be prophet, priest and king.

He would sit on David's throne and his kingdom will never end.

There many other prophecies as well. He would be **pierced for our transgressions ... crushed for our iniquities [and] the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed**, just as Isaiah predicted. (Is 53:5)

Scripture foretold that God would forsake his own Son, and we hear those words fulfilled on Good Friday, **"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"** (Mt 27:46)

We know that all the sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed to the true sacrifice for sin that Jesus made for us on the cross. Likewise, the Passover lamb pointed to Jesus as the true passover lamb, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, as John the Baptist boldly proclaimed.

Altogether, the New Testament specifically points to 31 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. In the very first verse of his gospel, Luke tells us that he is writing the book to show how God's promises had been fulfilled in Christ. Altogether, scholars have identified over 100 Old Testament prophecies that Jesus had fulfilled.

A Christmas song asks the question: “What child is this?” We could give many answers. The child born in a stable, laid in a manger. The child whose birth was prophesied in the OT and foretold by Gabriel. The child born in Bethlehem and shortly thereafter taken to Egypt. The child shepherds came to see and angels worshiped. Take those answers. Add them up. And come to the conclusion that God wants us to come to because this child passes all the tests that God provided us to identify the Savior of the world. As the angels also told: **Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.** (Luke 2:11)

What child is this? This is the child born according to God's promise -- the Savior of the world! Amen.