

The Advent of the King

The Anticipation of the King

Matthew 2:19-23

Rev. Freddy Fritz

December 24, 2006

The Anticipation of the King

Scripture

We have just heard the story of Jesus' birth told in the Lessons and Carols.

There is a sense in which the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation is about the Lord Jesus Christ. However, we have listened to various passages of Scripture that deal specifically with the birth of Jesus.

In the Old Testament God was preparing the world for the birth of his Son. The Gospels record his birth, life, death, and resurrection. And the rest of the New Testament teaches what Jesus did through the Holy Spirit in the life of the 1st century Church.

For this season of Advent I have been examining the Advent of the King in Matthew 1 and 2. In the previous four messages we learned about the human ancestry of Jesus, the divine ancestry of Jesus, different responses to Jesus, and the anger against Jesus.

In Matthew 2 the apostle presented further evidence that Jesus is the Messiah by showing that he fulfilled prophecies that had been made about him. Mathew points out four prophecies in this chapter. We have already looked at three. And tonight I want to briefly examine the fourth. Let us read Matthew 2:19-23:

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³ and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene." (Matthew 2:19-23)

Introduction

The apostle Matthew wrote his Gospel in order to show that Jesus really was the long-expected Messiah, who was born king of the Jews.

He began his Gospel by showing that Jesus was a descendant of David, and therefore was heir to the throne of King David.

Then, Matthew showed that Jesus was divine. His conception was supernatural. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Of course, Matthew does not say how this can happen; he simply records the miracle and the mystery of Jesus' supernatural conception.

Some time after Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem his parent apparently moved into a small house. That is when the Magi (i.e., wise men) from the east visited Jesus. They came to worship him and gave him gifts of gold, incense and myrrh. In contrast, we noticed the indifference of the people of Jerusalem and the hatred of Herod regarding Jesus' birth.

Herod, in fact, was so angry that he plotted to kill Jesus. But in the providence of God Herod was outwitted and, sadly, he killed all the boys under the age of two in Bethlehem and its vicinity.

Meanwhile, Joseph had taken Jesus and Mary to Egypt in order to escape Herod's evil and murderous schemes.

Lesson

Tonight, I want to show you how all that took place in the life of Jesus was in fulfillment of prophecy.

I. Jesus Went to Live in Nazareth (2:19-23a)

First, Jesus went to live in Nazareth.

Some time after Jesus and his family were in Egypt Herod died. We don't know how long the family was in Egypt, but it was probably only a few months, at the most.

Matthew says that **after Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.** This is the third time that **an angel** appeared to **Joseph** with a message. The angel **said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."**

Once again we notice Joseph's immediate obedience. Matthew says that Joseph **got up, took the child and his mother,** presumably in the middle of the night, **and went to the land of Israel.**

We don't know where Joseph, Mary and Jesus were staying in Egypt. But, if they were staying at Alexandria, which was a city friendly towards Jews and had a large Jewish population, then they had a journey of almost 300 miles back to Bethlehem!

We also don't know how old Jesus was at this time. He may have been just a few months old. Or, he may have been a toddler. Regardless, a long, arduous journey lay ahead of the family.

Commentators speculate that Joseph intended to go back and live in Bethlehem. However, **when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there.** The reason Joseph was afraid to go and live in Bethlehem is because **Archelaus** was even more brutal than his despotic father **Herod.**

So, **having been warned in a dream,** now for the fourth time, **he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth.** Nazareth was another 60 miles north of Bethlehem. And so the journey continued for the family.

Nazareth is of course the town where Joseph and Mary were from. The Bible does not tell us what Mary's thoughts were, but I cannot help but think that Mary would have been pleased to go back and live in the town of her relatives.

II. Jesus Was Called a Nazarene (2:23b)

Second, notice that Jesus was called a Nazarene.

Matthew notes at the end of this narrative: **So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: “He will be called a Nazarene.”**

Matthew does not tell us which one of the prophets said that Jesus would be called a Nazarene, but only that more than one of them did so.

The term **Nazarene** had long been a term of derision, used to describe any person who was rough and rude. That is why Nathanael, who was from Cana, a few miles to the south, exclaimed to Philip, when he heard that Jesus was from Nazareth: “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” (John 1:46).

The early Jewish persecutors of the church apparently considered Jesus’ being from Nazareth as evidence that he could *not* be the Messiah, rather than, as Matthew tells us, a sign that he *was*.

Jesus’ living in Nazareth not only fulfilled the unnamed prophets’ prediction, but gave him a name, Jesus the Nazarene, that would be used as a title of reproach, thus fulfilling many other prophecies that depict the Messiah as “despised and forsaken of men” (Isaiah 53:3; cf. 49:7; Psalm 22:6-8; 69:20-21). The Gospel writers make clear the fact that he was scorned and hated (see Matthew 12:24; 27:21-23, 63; Luke 23:4; John 5:18; 6:66; 9:22, 29).

It was therefore at lowly and despised **Nazareth** that the royal Son of God, along with the righteous Joseph and Mary, made his home for some thirty years.¹

And all of this was in fulfillment of prophecy. There are two main objections to the fact that the fulfillment of prophecies confirm that Jesus really was the long-expected Messiah, who was born king of the Jews.

¹ John MacArthur, *Matthew* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 47.

The first objection is that Jesus deliberately fulfilled prophecy. Some people have said that Jesus knew the Old Testament Scriptures and that he deliberately went around seeking to fulfill the prophecies about the Messiah. Josh McDowell says that “objection might seem plausible until we realize that many of the prophecies concerning the Messiah were totally beyond the human control of Jesus, such as the place of birth, time of birth, manner of birth, betrayal, manner of death, people’s reaction, piercing, and burial.”²

The second objection is that the prophecy about Jesus was coincidental or accidental. Some people say that you could find some of these prophecies fulfilled in various other leaders in history, such as John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and so on. Again, Josh McDowell says, “Yes, one could possibly find one or two prophecies fulfilled in other men, but not all 61 major prophecies!”³

In fact, Peter Stoner in *Science Speaks* shows that coincidence is ruled out by the science of probability. Stoner says that by using the modern science of probability in reference to just eight prophecies, “we find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10^{17} .” In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates it by supposing that “we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and

² Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict: Historical Evidence for the Christian Faith* (San Bernardino, CA: Here’s Life Publishers, 1979), 166.

³ McDowell, 166.

having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time.”⁴

The fulfillment of the prophecies about Jesus, four of which are given by Matthew in the first two chapters of his Gospel and one of which we examined this evening, prove that Jesus is exactly who Matthew claims him to be: the King of Kings and Savior of Sinners.

Conclusion

Jesus came, as Matthew said earlier, “to save his people from their sins” (1:21). After his birth, Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life. Then, he died on a cross outside of Jerusalem. He died to pay the penalty for sin. But not his own sin, for he had no sin. He died to pay the penalty for sinners such as you and me. And three days after he died, God the Father raised Jesus back to life again, a sign that he accepted Jesus’ payment for sin on our behalf.

What do you need to do to receive the free gift of eternal life? Going to church—even on Christmas Eve—won’t get you to heaven. Giving money to the church won’t get you to heaven. Even serving in the church won’t get you to heaven.

There is only one way to receive the free gift of eternal life. That is by repenting of your sin and believing in Jesus.

I invite you to repent of your sin. Tell Jesus that you have broken his Law, and that you are sorry. Tell him that you want him to change your life. Tell him that you are asking him for forgiveness.

And then, trust that Jesus will save you from your sin, and make you a new creature tonight.

If you do that, Jesus will change you. And you can here this Christmas Eve a new and changed person. And what better Christmas gift can there be than that? Amen.

⁴ McDowell, 166-167.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and **membership** in his church family,
develop them to Christlike **maturity**,
equip them for their **ministry** in the church
and life **mission** in the world,
in order to **magnify** God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

This sermon, and other sermons, by the Rev. Freddy Fritz can be found at:

1. www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/Sermons
2. www.sermoncentral.com/contributor_profile.asp?ContributorID=11181
3. www.sermonaudio.com/search.asp?SpeakerOnly=true&currSection=sermonsspeaker&keyword=Freddy%5EFritz

Please give your input and leave your feedback at websites 2 and 3 when requested to do so. This helps with evaluation and planning of sermons.

Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church (PCA)

Answers for Life!

Address: 19911 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., Tampa, FL 33647

Telephone: (813) 973-2484

Fax: (813) 973-4673

Email: Office@TampaBayPresbyterian.org

Web site: www.TampaBayPresbyterian.org

PRAAYER:

Our Father, we thank you for the birth of Jesus Christ. We thank you that his birth, life, and death is the fulfillment of hundreds of prophecies. And every single prophecy made about Jesus literally came true.

If there is anyone here tonight who would like to ask Jesus for the free gift of eternal life, pray this prayer along with me:

Lord Jesus Christ, I know that I am a sinner. I know that I deserve to go to hell for all eternity. Thank you for your birth, life, death, and resurrection.

Please forgive me of all my sin. Right now I want to repent of my sin and turn toward you.

Lord Jesus, I put my trust in you. I believe that you are the King of Kings and only Savior of sinners. Amen.

CHARGE:

Have a Merry Christmas tomorrow! And as you do, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.