

The Prophecy of the Birth of Christ

This is love: not that we loved God,
but that he loved us and sent his Son
as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

1 John 4:10

“God’s Promise to David”

There are some names in the Bible that are not names that we readily know and yet these people were able to do God’s work just as you and I can do it today. One of those people was Nathan, a prophet. He worked with King David. Nathan had many jobs, some would have been pleasant and some would have been very difficult. I wonder if sometimes Nathan completely understood what he was told by God to say. We don’t know, but we know he had one very important prophecy that we understand today, only because we have hindsight.

One day David thought he should build a house for God because David was living in a nice cedar house and the ark of God was still in a tent. After he shared this with Nathan, the Lord

spoke to Nathan and told him to tell David that he would provide the house. We know now that God was not talking about a house made of cedar but the house of the Lord which is not made of brick or wood.

God told Nathan to tell David -

“God himself will build you a house! When your life is complete and you’re buried with your ancestors, then I’ll raise up your child, your own flesh and blood, to succeed you, and I’ll firmly establish his rule. He will build a house to honor me, and I will guarantee his kingdom’s rule permanently. I’ll be a father to him, and he’ll be a son to me. When he does wrong, I’ll discipline him. But I’ll never remove my gracious love from him. Your family and your kingdom are permanently secured. I’m keeping my eye on them! And your royal throne will always be there, rock solid.” from 2 Samuel 7, selected verses.

He promised David that he would build the house but it would not be built by David but by his descendants. He promised David that he would be a great ruler and his reign would last forever. David was very grateful and offered prayers of Thanksgiving. We know that Christ is descended from the line of David and so he did build a house and his reign will last forever, but can we even begin to comprehend what David must have thought?

In Isaiah 7:14 we are told that the Lord would give a sign and that this Savior would be born of a virgin and he would



An artist's perception of Isaiah writing the prophecy of Christ's birth.

be called Immanuel which means “God with Us.”

In Daniel 2:44 we read “God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.”

Hosea, a minor prophet who lived in approximately 750 BC referenced the fact that Christ would spend some time in Egypt. (Hosea 11:1) This is also revealed by Jeremiah another prophet who probably followed Hosea and is often called “the weeping prophet” because he was so concerned because the people of Judah would not listen to the message he had to tell. (Jeremiah 31:15)

Matthew tells us how an angel appeared to Joseph and told him to take Mary and the baby to Egypt. Herod wanted to get rid of this baby he had heard about and who was being called the next king. He had asked the Magi to come back and tell him the details so that he could also go and worship the baby.

However the magi had been told by an angel to go another way.

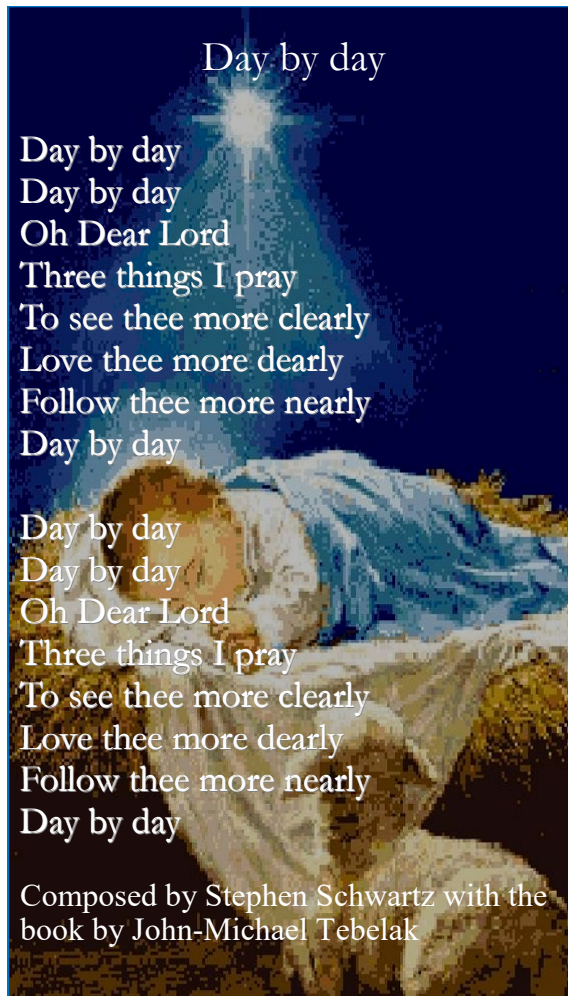
“When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled”

Matthew 2:16

Isaiah had so much to tell the people. He also told them about someone who would prepare the way for Christ. That person was John the Baptist. *“A voice of one calling: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’”* Isaiah 40:3

Could they even begin to expect that it would be the cousin of Christ and that he would live in the wilderness and survive on locusts and honey?

In the musical “Godspell,” Robin, who has just decided to follow Christ, sings a beautiful song called “Day by Day” Just as he was rejected then, he is rejected by so many today, Isaiah told that he would be rejected several hundred years before the birth of Christ. *“He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.”* Isaiah 53:3



John reveals how Christ told his own brothers he was not loved in John 7 and then in John 1:11 he gives us a reference to this: *“He was in the world, the world was there through him, and yet the world didn’t even notice. He came to his own people, but they didn’t want him.”* John 1:11

After so much prophecy and so many warnings, it is difficult sometimes to realize that we can be so blind to God’s revelation to us. But there were more warnings then just as there are today.

“I would like everyone to feel loved by the God who gave his son for us and showed us his boundless love. I want everyone to feel the joy of being Christian.”

Pope Benedict XVI

Prayer: God, Almighty Father, help us to heed Your call, to seek each day to see You as the Son of God, to love You as You have loved us, and to follow Your teachings Amen

1. A study of Nathan tells us that he had some good news for David, but often he also had to tell David the real truth about his actions. Would you have wanted to be in Nathan’s shoes?
2. Does God ever call on us to tell the truth to a friend when we know it is something they don’t want to hear?
3. Why did Herod want all the male babies killed?
4. Do you think we would believe a “hippie” who came to us proclaiming the good news of a Messiah who would save our lives? Would we allow that person to baptize us in a river?
5. Why do we sometimes want to take the teachings of Jesus lightheartedly?

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The prophecies mentioned in this devotional are confirmed in the New Testament in Luke, Matthew, Hebrews, Romans and John