

## **“Promises--Past, Present, Future”**

*November 27, 2016*

Isaiah 53:1-12

### **I. Introduction**

Christmas is a time of year that creates anticipation. I know growing up I couldn't wait until Christmas to open up my presents. My dad was worse, whenever a present would come in the mail—he would open it on the spot. The Advent season is the time to remember and consider what Christmas is all about. It is about reflecting on the anticipation of a Messiah that was fulfilled at the first coming—the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent; it's also a time to consider what we have to look forward to at the second coming of Christ. The Old Testament is filled with prophecies—promises from God to His people of old and even to people today to show them what they had to look forward to in the coming Messiah.

Just like we prepare our homes for Christmas, we need to prepare our hearts and minds for the celebration of Jesus Christ's coming to earth—His Advent. The different things we do and read here at Tabernacle or in other Advent activities bring back memories—memories of Jesus and promises concerning Him. In the Advent reading this morning, Meredith and..... read part of Isaiah's prophecies—God's promises—about the coming Messiah.

Scholars tell us that there are over 300 prophecies concerning the Messiah in the Bible. Some prophecies are related to His actions in the past, including His birth, His life and His death. Others are related to the present—what He is doing right now. And then, there are prophecies about the future. This morning we are going to look at some of these prophecies beginning with Prophecies for the Past and their fulfillment.

### **II. Prophecies for The Past**

The first prophecy is found in [Genesis 3:15](#). After Adam and Eve had sinned in the Garden of Eden, God cursed Satan and said, **“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”** God promised to send someone who would defeat Satan—God would send a Savior. God fulfilled this prophecy—His promise—in Jesus Christ. [Turn to Hebrews 2:14-15](#). Jesus came to earth to be the Savior of all mankind.

On his death bed in [Genesis 49:10](#), the Patriarch Jacob said **“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet.”** Even before the establishment of the nation of Israel, Jacob prophesied that the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah. The genealogy of Jesus is recorded in [Luke 3](#). In [verse 33](#) we find that Jacob's prophecy was fulfilled, Jesus is in the line of Judah

A familiar prophesy about Jesus is found in [Micah 5:2](#), we read it almost every Christmas. It says, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” *Where was Jesus born?* In [Matthew 2:1](#) we read, “After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod . . .” Turn to [Isaiah 7:14](#). We read the fulfillment of this prophesy in [Matthew 1:8](#): “This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together (*that is, while she was a virgin*), she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.”

Our Scripture reading this morning in [Isaiah 53](#) is full of prophesies regarding the Messiah—Jesus the Christ; you probably recognized many of them. In the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 verses Isaiah told about the life of the Messiah. As we are reminded in carols and in Nativity or Crèche scenes, Jesus wasn’t born in a palace and laid in a soft bed. He was born in a barn/cave and His bed was an animal feeding trough—a very non-majestic place! [Isaiah 53:3](#) prophesied that when He grew up, the Messiah would be “despised and rejected by men.” In [John 1:11](#) John wrote, “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.” Later, in [John 10:20](#), he wrote that, “Many of them said, ‘He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?’” Jesus was despised and rejected by those He came to save.

[Isaiah 53:4-9](#) described Jesus’ death. [Verse 4](#) says, “Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.” Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would die for our sins. Turn [1 Peter 2:24](#). In [Isaiah 53:5](#) we read “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.” Jesus was crucified and a spear was used to pierce His heart. In [John 20:24-25](#), Thomas said that he wouldn’t believe that Jesus was alive until “I see the marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side.” He saw and believed, he said to him, “My Lord and my God.” [Isaiah 53:10-12](#) record prophesies concerning the resurrection of the Messiah—the Resurrection that is recorded in the Gospels—the resurrection we celebrate every Easter Sunday. Each of God’s words as recorded by Isaiah were fulfilled.

We have just scratched the surface of the “Prophesies for the Past’ but we need to move on. As these examples demonstrate, all the prophesies made regarding the Messiah’s—Jesus’—actions in the past came true as prophesied—at the right time in the right way. They didn’t come true by some kind of accident; they came true because God was in control.

### III. Promises for the Present

Since God cannot lie or make mistakes, prophecies made in His Name must come true. A prophecy from God is really a promise from God. Just as all the prophecies regarding the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ came true in the past, the prophecies—the promises—that God made for the present must also be true. In [John 5:24](#) Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.” Later in [John 14:6](#) Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” As God, Jesus cannot lie. This means that contrary to popular belief—even in some so-called Christian churches—there is only ONE way to heaven. There is no other way to be saved from an eternity in hell.

In [Romans 10:9](#) Paul explained what it means to hear and believe, i.e. how to be saved, he wrote, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” This is a promise from God. [Acts 4:12](#) says, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” God didn’t say that you might be saved or maybe you will be saved, He says you **must be** saved. Later in [Romans 8:17](#) we are told that we are not just ‘Barely saved’ or saved to be a servant or saved as a 2<sup>nd</sup> class child like Cinderella in the fairy tale, but we are “joint or co-heirs with Christ.”

For those who make Jesus their Lord and Savior, God’s promises don’t stop there, in [Matthew 11:28](#) we read “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Peter put it this way in [1 Peter 5:7](#), “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” If you are a child of God you don’t have to carry your burdens alone or at all. You can give them to Christ and as [Philippians 4:7](#) says, “The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

These are promises from God that we can experience today. Just as the prophecies (or promises) concerning Jesus’ 1<sup>st</sup> coming were fulfilled in the past, the promises for today are also true. Like any other gift we are given at Christmas, all we have to do is reach out and take them.

### IV. Promises for the Future

But God’s promises don’t stop with the past or the present, they continue on into the future. In [Acts 1:11](#), just after Jesus ascended into heaven, His disciples were told by 2 angels, “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” Jesus is coming back. He is coming back to take those who belong to Him back to heaven to be with Him forever. Let me read the familiar verses from [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#) from the New Living Translation: “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout,

with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.”

Jesus is coming in the clouds to call all those who belong to Him—Christians—to come to the place prepared for them. This is God’s promise to those who believe in Jesus Christ.

**Hebrews 9:27** says, “People are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.” Some day in the future there is going to be a time of judgment for all people. In Revelation 20 John wrote about this judgment of the great and the small. **Turn to Revelation 20:11-12**. At that judgment, several books will be opened, but **Revelation 20:15** says, “If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” **Philippians 4:3** tells us, the Book of Life contains the names of those who have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior. These are God’s promises for the future.

## V. Conclusion

It’s good to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. It’s great to sing Christmas carols, read the Christmas story **AND** who doesn’t like all the decorations and giving and receiving presents. But we must not stop there. If we do, we are like a person with a terminal disease—who after being informed by his doctor that there is a tried and tested, safe and permanent cure for the disease, goes home and has a party to celebrate this great information but refuses to take the treatment.

Since God’s prophecies concerning the Messiah have all come true in the past and the present, it is logical and reasonable to assume that His promises—prophecies—for the future will also come true. God doesn’t lie—Jesus is coming back. We will all be judged for what we have done and haven’t done—for our attitudes as well as our actions. **IF** you haven’t accepted God’s gift of eternal life; if your name isn’t recorded in the Book of life, God’s Book says that you will spend eternity in hell. **It’s your choice.**

Satan, the father of lies, has caused many people to believe a pack of lies. Lies like: “*If you try your best, you will get into heaven.*” “*If you have the best of intentions and are a good person, when you stand before God, He will have to let you in.*”

This isn’t what God says. **Turn to Romans 3:10**. “**Righteous**” means to be “right in God’s eyes.” No one is right in God’s eyes. **Look at verse 20 in chapter 3**. Finally, **look at verse 23**. “**All**” means everyone without exception. We have all sinned one way or another. You may not be a murderer or a bank robber, but if you tell a lie or if you take something that doesn’t belong to you, you are a sinner. God cannot overlook sin—big or little. **Turn to Romans 6:23**, “**The wages of sin is**

death.”—an eternity in hell. But the verse doesn’t stop there; otherwise, we would all be in a hopeless situation. The verse continues and says, “But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This is why Jesus came to the earth—not to give us a reason to have parties, presents, and sing “Peace, good will to all men.” He came that we might all have eternal life—eternal life in heaven not in hell. That’s what Jesus meant in [John 3:16](#) “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” There is only one way to heaven—by putting trust and faith in Jesus Christ. As Isaiah prophesied and as we see in the Gospels, Jesus was victorious over death. If you are a child of God—a Christian—your name is recorded in the Book of Life and as prophesied, you, too, will be victorious over death. As promised, when you stand before God’s judgment seat—the Bema seat—you will be judged worthy through Christ’s sacrifice and will be welcomed into heaven.

This is the reason Jesus came to the earth. This is His message to us, this is the message we must take to others—“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” ([Acts 16:31](#)) We must tell the world the reason for Christmas and that Jesus saves. This is the Great Commission.

If you have accepted God’s gift of eternal life, every day, not just Christmas, is a day to celebrate. You have received the greatest gift a person can ever receive. If you haven’t accepted God’s gift, if you are trying to “earn your way into heaven”—that’s never going to be good enough. Why not accept God’s gift of salvation from the punishment of hell and become His child today? All of God’s promises are true—just trust Him. And when it comes time to leave this earth, He, like the prodigal son’s father, will greet you with a hug and the words, “Welcome home.”