

ADVENT – THE FIRST COMING OF THE SAVIOR!

HIS Ancestry DNA

Christians around the world choose to celebrate the birth of Jesus during this time of year—some on December 24 or 25 and others on January 6 or 7. Some followers of Christ choose not to celebrate at all. Whether a Christian decides to celebrate Christ's birth or not, we can all rejoice in the Truth that by becoming a Man the Son of God became one of us to deal with our sin. His first coming was for the purpose of dying in our place and conquering death when He rose from the grave.

During the month of December, we will look into the identity of the One who was born to Mary in Bethlehem. We will begin with what I call HIS Ancestry DNA. Today's modern scientific advances enable us to discover how our DNA reveals traces of our family history—who our ancestors were and where they came from. Before we look at specific details tracing Jesus' ancestors and the prophecies concerning Him, I want to emphasize the 'bottom line' concerning the ancestry of Jesus.

Read John 1:1-2, 14 (ESV) ¹ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* ² *He was in the beginning with God...* ¹⁴ *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

The word 'beginning' refers to when creation came into existence, not when Christ came into existence because He has always existed. The word 'beginning' is when 'time' began. It does not refer to eternity, because eternity is not measured by time. Jesus Christ the Son of God is eternal, He existed before the creation of the world.

I am not sure exactly the number of prophecies predicting the coming Messiah. I have a list that contains 44. Skeptics down through the centuries have questioned how do we know that the Old Testament prophecies were literally written hundreds of years before the earthly days of Jesus? And if they were, how do we know Christians didn't alter the texts later?

Proof in a Jar

For 1,900 years, many skeptics held fast to the human impossibility of accurately predicting future events. But then between 1947 and 1956 in a series of 11 caves near the Dead Sea, scrolls were found sealed in earthen jars. Archaeologists and local Bedouins unearthed thousands of fragments from nearly 900 manuscripts. The Dead Sea scrolls provided copies of Old Testament books that were far older than any others known to exist. Extensive tests proved that many of these copies were made before Jesus Christ ever lived. And they are virtually identical to the texts of the Bible we were already using. As a result, even scholars who deny Jesus as the Messiah accept that these Old Testament manuscripts predate His birth and concede that the prophecies about the Messiah contained within them have not been altered in order to conform to Jesus.

With that said, let's begin connecting the prophecies of the promised Messiah to Jesus. In Judaism, the Messiah is a Savior and Liberator of the people. Remember, the word Messiah comes from a Hebrew term that means 'anointed one.' Its Greek counterpart is Christos, from which the word Christ comes.

The First Promise of a Redeemer

Read Genesis 3:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*”

This verse is the first glimmer of the good news of the coming Redeemer and is known as the Proto-Evangel or First Gospel because this is the first announcement of The Coming Redeemer in scripture. On the cross, Satan caused Christ Jesus to suffer greatly, bruising His heel. The Redeemer, however, will eventually deal the death blow to Satan’s head.

One thing to notice in this verse is that it speaks of *her offspring* – nothing is mentioned concerning the man’s offspring..

Read Matthew 1:20 (ESV) ²⁰ *But as he [meaning Joseph] considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.*

Genesis 3:15 was the first indication of the virgin birth of the Redeemer. **Matthew 1:20** reveals that God’s Son was born of the Holy Spirit and of a woman. A man had no part in the conception. Prophecy fulfilled!

One interesting fact concerning modern day DNA testing is that it can determine the origin of our ancestors and where they migrated to. AncestryDNA has told me that 87% of my ancestry originates from Great Britain and Northwestern Europe. It also told me that my ancestors originally migrated to Tennessee and North Carolina. All of that is ‘after the fact’ information. However, we are told the Savior of the world would be born in Bethlehem long before His birth.

History in Advance

Read Micah 5:2 (ESV) ² *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*

Micah’s prophecy was fulfilled 700 years later.

Read Luke 2:4-6 (ESV) ⁴ *And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,* ⁵ *to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.* ⁶ *And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.*

Micah prophesied that the birthplace of this future ‘ruler of Israel’ would be Bethlehem Ephrathah. There were two locations called Bethlehem in Micah’s day. The use of Ephrathah specifies the Bethlehem in Judea.

Micah’s prophecy reveals that although this ruler would have a human origin in Bethlehem that He was also the one whose *coming forth is from of old, from ancient days*. Jesus was both the Son of God and the Son of Man.

Genesis 3:15 had hinted that the One whose heel Satan would strike would be born of a virgin. Isaiah did not hint – he made it clear.

Read Isaiah 7:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

We could do an entire study on the virgin birth but ultimately, either you believe God’s Word or you don’t. Personally, I have no doubt that Jesus was born of a virgin. Matthew confirms that the prophecy was fulfilled in the One born to Mary, the only virgin mother ever!

Read Matthew 1:22-23 (ESV) ²² *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:* ²³ *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).*

In reference to the birth of Jesus, Matthew cited a specific prophecy by Isaiah more than 700 years earlier. Matthew uses a common statement throughout his gospel: *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet.* Matthew knew it was important to point out to his readers that many of the events he described fulfilled specific prophecies. Our God is capable of foretelling the future with perfect precision, and He has the power to bring His prophecies to pass, even if that means a virgin would need to conceive and bear a Son.

Isaiah had prophesied that the one born of a virgin would be called Immanuel – God with us. That is who was born in Bethlehem – God with us.

Let’s consider ‘family trees’ for a moment. Jesus’ genealogy is given in two places in Scripture: (**Matthew 1** and **Luke 3:23-38**). Matthew traces the genealogy from Abraham to Jesus while Luke traces the genealogy from Jesus to Adam. If you study the names in the two genealogies, you will notice that the names do not completely align. Most conservative Bible scholars believe that Luke traces Jesus’ biological line through Mary while Matthew traces the legal line of Jesus through Joseph.

Both genealogy lists confirm Jesus as being a descendant of Abraham – the Promised Messiah.

Read Genesis 12:3 (ESV) ³ *I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*

That is a grand promise to Abraham – *in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.* It makes perfect sense when you consider that Jesus, the descendant of Abraham from His biological mother’s family (**Luke 3:34**) and from his legal father’s family (**Matthew 1:1**) has blessed the entire world with His gift of eternal life made possible through His perfect sacrifice.

Another prophecy is that the coming Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah.

Genesis 49:10 (ESV) ¹⁰ *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.*

Judah is listed in both Luke and Matthew's genealogies of Jesus. The scepter not departing from the tribe of Judah is a messianic prophecy. It is easy to wonder why Judah was chosen from among the 12 sons of Jacob to lead the messianic line since Judah's life was not always godly. However, when we examine the genealogies of Jesus there are others with known human frailties listed there as well. Judah did eventually offer his own life in the place of his youngest brother, Benjamin's when problems arose in Egypt picturing how Judah's descendant, Jesus, would offer His life for the sins of the world.

The promise of the scepter not departing from Judah is picked up in the story of David. Saul was the people's choice to be king of Israel. David was God's anointed to be king of Israel. Let's read the promise God made to David.

Read 2 Samuel 7:12-13 (ESV) ¹² *When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

David's son, Solomon, did build a physical temple for God in Jerusalem. Eventually, the nation of Israel split into two kingdoms – Israel and Judah. The Assyrians captured the Northern Kingdom of Israel and they never returned to the Promised Land. Later, the Southern Kingdom of Judah was carried into Babylonian captivity but after 70 years a remnant returned to the land. God would keep His promise to establish a kingdom from David's descendant – King Jesus.

Read Isaiah 9:7 (ESV) ⁷ *Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

Isaiah 'saw ahead of time' that Jesus would bring God's kingdom of peace and righteousness to earth. As promised the throne of David will reign forever. Yes, there have been great gaps in that reign. Notice that Isaiah did not mention the 'gap' between the first and second comings of the Messiah. Jesus came the first time to establish peace with God through the cross of Calvary as He paid the sacrifice for our sins. He will come the second time to establish the government of peace forever beginning with a literal thousand year reign on this earth.

When we have our DNA tested and trace our family trees, we may or may not be happy with the results we find concerning our heritage. However, when we accept Jesus as our Savior, our ancestry is no longer under the curse of sin and death we inherited from our forefather, Adam. When we are covered by the precious blood of Jesus, His bloodline ensures we are born into the family of God and we will reign with Him forever!