

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

APPENDIX 3 (*see notes on pp. 242-243*)

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DIRECT PROPHECY</u>
A John 1:1-5 The Word	<u>Note 3</u>
B Matt 1:1–17 the genealogy cp. Luke 3:23–38	Ps 132:17 2 Sam 7:8-17, Isa 11:1-11 Jer 33 (esp vv. 14-17)
C Luke 1:5-25 John the Baptist birth announced	Isaiah 40:3 (see John 1:23)
D Luke 1:26-56 – annunciation of birth of Jesus Christ, Mary, Elizabeth, Mary’s song	Isa 7:14 Isa 9:1-7
E Luke 1:57-66 –the birth of John the Baptist	Isa 40:3 and 9-11
F Luke 1:67-80 –Zechariah’s prophecy about John the Baptist (cp. John 1:6-9)	–
G Matt 1:18-25 –Joseph’s dream and decision	Isa 7:14
H Luke 2:1-20 –the birth of Jesus Christ, the visit of the shepherds	Micah 5:2-4
I Luke 2:21-38 –the baby Jesus presented in the temple in Jerusalem	Re Lk 2:30-32 cp. Isa 11:10, 42:6, 60:3 Re Lk 2:38 cp. Isa 52:9 (note all of Isa 52 and Isa 53 are seen as messianic prophecy)
J Matt 2:1-12 –the visit of the wise men	<u>Note 4</u>
K Matt 2:13-18 –the flight into Egypt and the slaughter of the innocents	Hosea 11:1 Jeremiah 31:15
L John 1:10-14 –to all who received Him	–

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INDIRECT PROPHECY (Note 2)

Gen1:1, Isa 42:1-7, Prov 8:27-31, Ps 33:8-9, Ps 45:18-19, Ps 51:4-6

Zech 3:8 (see also Matt 21:1-11), Gen 22:18, Isa 9:2, 6-7, Ezek 34 (esp vv. 23f).

Mal 3:1 [Jews traditionally apply this to Elijah, who they believe will return to herald the Messiah. John the baptist saw himself in this role (see Lk chapter 3) and so did Jesus (see Lk 7:24-28)].

The miraculous birth of a son to an old woman, as Elizabeth, is prefigured in the similar circumstance of Hannah and the birth of her son Samuel (1 Sam 1). Mary's song is prefigured in Hannah's prayer (1 Sam 2:1-10).

Mal 4:5-6 noteworthy as the last words of the OT. The heart of the father turned to his child could be Zechariah (Lk 1:7). Compare to the first 2 verses of Mark's Gospel, the first Gospel to be written.

In Jewish tradition, as in others, the birth of a child is the cause of celebration (see Prov 23:24f).

Eastern people, including the Jews had a great regard for dreams. On numerous occasions God used dreams to reveal some important message to his people, although Joseph's dream is not specifically prefigured.

Ezek ch.34 (Note: the primary reference to 'shepherds' is to the false religious leaders of Israel, but the secondary reference is to the Messiah (e.g. v.11). It is significant that the first visitors to the baby Jesus were shepherds, as Jesus himself would in a few years shepherd the lost sheep of Israel (see John 10:11).

Exodus 13:2 consecration of first born males

Leviticus 12:8 mother's offering on the birth of a child

Psalms 72:9-11 all kings will bow down before Him

Ex 4:22 has been applied historically in Judaism as a messianic prophecy but does not appear to modern commentators to be a true messianic prophecy

Joel 2:28-32a

Note 5

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Note 1

The schedule above assembles the accounts of the nativity of the Lord Jesus from the Gospels of John, Matthew and Luke into chronological order of the events described, commencing in pre-history (A) and concluding in the theological statement (L) that to all who receive Him, to those who believe in His name, He gives the right to become children of God. The Schedule, whilst by no means exhaustive, presents those Old Testament texts generally accepted as fulfilled in the New Testament narrative of the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus.

Note 2

Within Old Testament prophecies there was often a two-fold purpose —a message to hearers at the time the prophecy was given (direct prophecy) and a partially concealed message giving insights into God’s overall scheme of salvation (indirect prophecy). This is sometimes referred to as “salvation history” and, as one biblical commentator has pointed out, all history is ultimately His-story!

Note 3

The Old Testament does not make a direct prophecy of the Messiah being “the Word”. The indirect references illustrate that God has revealed through the Scriptures that His servant is inextricably linked to the creation process. When God created the world, as described in Genesis chapter 1, it is notable that the narrative describes this process eight times with the prefix “and God said”. Whether this is accepted as literal or allegorical, the underlying code in the text is inescapable —the creation process was carried out by the Word of God.

Note 4

The visit of the Magi, or wise men, is not directly prophesied. Some commentators, perhaps with mischievous motives, have suggested that Numbers 24:17, Isaiah 8:4 and Isaiah 60:6 point towards the Magi. Others have consequently seized upon this as “evidence” that the narrative concerning the Magi is rooted in myth as Christians seek texts to ‘support’ the New Testament account. However, Psalm 72 was considered by the ancient synagogue to be messianic throughout. It is in Psalm 72:9-11 that we read of

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desert tribes bowing before Him, and the kings of Tarshish, Sheba and Seba presenting Him with gifts. In this passage we have some support for the idea there may have been three Magi bearing gifts for the infant Jesus.

Note 5

Most Christian commentators see the gospel of Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of all Old Testament prophecy. Whilst the Jewish nation was chosen by God to be His own people (the 'old covenant' —Genesis 17:7-9), the nation's continued rebellion throughout the Old Testament period led to the promise of a 'new covenant' (Jeremiah 31:31-34) which was clarified in God's covenant with King David to 'build him a house' and to 'establish his throne' forever (2 Samuel 7:8-17). But it was always God's intention that the covenant should eventually extend to all nations (Isaiah 42:6).