

"The Prophecy of Coming Grace"

Galatians 4:4

The Coming Reign of Grace

As we approach the celebration of our Lord's first coming, we will look at it in four stages over the month of December.

- First, the prophecy of coming grace
- Second, the pattern for embodied grace
- Third, the provision by sacrificing grace
- Fourth, the power of unleashed grace

In the Old Testament, there are sixty major messianic prophecies and approximately 270 ramifications that were fulfilled in one person, Jesus Christ. It is helpful to look at all these predictions fulfilled in Christ as His "address."

Using the science of probability, we find the chances of just forty-eight of these prophecies being fulfilled in one person to be right at one in 10^{157} (a one followed by 157 zeros!).

One could possibly find one or two prophecies fulfilled in other men, but not all sixty major prophecies and 270 ramifications. One author noted 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} ." That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000.

The gospel of Matthew stands at the portal of the New Testament narrative. The significance of this is providential. It is a book of fulfilled expectation.

Matthew's gospel identifies Jesus as the expected coming Messiah. His lineage is traced back to David. He comes in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. Herod sees this new *king* as a legitimate threat to his own throne. The gifts brought by the magi are appropriate for a king. Surely, the reference point for Matthew's audience is the Old Testament Scripture. Matthew's intent is to present Jesus as the Christ of God and of the Old Testament Scripture. Matthew sees Him as the fulfiller of the prophetic word. There are two promises I wish to note in our present study.

400 years of silence is broken by . . .

- I. A Birthing Virgin (Matt. 1:22, 23)
 - A. The promise
 - B. The procedure (Matthew 1:18 ["by the Holy Spirit"])

Continued on the other side...

II. A Powerful Rabbi (Luke 4:32)

A. A liberating message ([in Nazareth] Luke 4:16-22)

- To preach the gospel to the poor,
- To proclaim release to the captives,
- And recovery of sight to the blind,
- To set free those who are oppressed,
- To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.

Upon leaving Nazareth, He enters the city of Capernaum and goes to the Synagogue.

B. A piercing light ([in Capernaum] Matt. 4:14-17)

Our Lord's coming is in fulfillment of Isaiah 9:1, 2. This is the piercing light of our Lord's presence. It is before this light that all men shall bow.