

# *Smoky Mountain Reflections*

## *Advent*

Sometime between 740 - 686BC a prophet by the name of Micah was warning the kingdom of Israel of the coming onslaught of the Assyrian empire which came to pass for the Samaria in 722BC and Judah which falls to Babylon in 587BC. But just as many other prophets he has things to say about the coming messiah, here is a little of what He wrote, Micah 5:2 ***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 origin is from of old, from ancient days.*** Then over 700 years later the Apostle Matthew wrote: ***Matt 2:1...Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."*** Advent Example # 1

In the same way between 740 - 681BC a prophet by the name Isaiah penned the words..... ***Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*** Many people of Isaiah's day thought him mad as did those in Mary's day when as recorded in Matthew 1:18 we can read ...***When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.*** Advent Example # 2

The Prophet Jeremiah in his day, 628-580BC also warned in vain as the siege of Jerusalem loomed in their future. He speaks of terrible events surrounding the arrival of the long awaited Messiah. ***Jeremiah 31:15 ... "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more."*** The evil king Herod brought this to pass just over 2000 years ago when as the Apostle Matthew records in Matt 2:16 ***Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.*** Advent Example # 3

As we prepare for the Advent of our Lord these initial events of the arrival of God in human flesh are just 3 of over 300 known prophecies that Christ fulfilled in His life time. If you read the words of Isaiah 53 it is hard to believe someone who lived 700 years before the events that took place on Golgotha could describe those terrible events in such detail. While faith and the Holy Spirit make these things clear to us, recorded history the rules written language, and archeology make dismissing these fulfilled prophecies a foolhardy proposition that also takes faith. Faith in man's understanding over the revealed word of God. It seems to me a little easier to accept the preponderance of evidence that affirms God's revealed truth.

Simple Math and Science has something to say about this as well, the statistical impossibility of anyone fulfilling so many prophecies is mind boggling. Mathematician & scientist & professor Peter W. Stoner concluded in his book "Science Speaks: Scientific Proof of the Accuracy of Prophecy and the Bible", that the probability of one person fulfilling just eight of these prophecies was one chance in  $10^{28}$  that is one followed by 28 zeros. And the chance of about one person fulfilling just 48 is one chance in  $10^{157}$  That's a lot of zeros and way beyond what could be called a statistical possibility. These numbers are so big they are hard to comprehend. So maybe you say this can't be considered true statistical science... then consider that the American Scientific Affiliation gave Stoner's work their stamp of approval.

Enough dabbling in science let's just appreciate the fact the we get to celebrate again the anticipation of the Advent season, cut through the facts, figures, of the age of reason along with the garland, bobbles and shiny decorations of the commercialized holiday season and be still and know that God came into human flesh to redeem all. Take time to enjoy the season with a daily devotion that help you to focus on the wondrous gift of the Christ Child.

In Christ,  
Pastor Portier