

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The fulfillment of prophecy is one of the greatest proofs of the inspiration of the Bible. It could not have been written by man, since he does not know the future; only the eternal God does. And when He declares in advance what He will do, it proves that He has power and wisdom as well as knowledge when His will is fulfilled. When Jesus fulfills the prophecies written about Him, it adds the additional truth that He is the Son of God fulfilling the plan of God foretold in the word of God.

All the prophets spoke concerning the days of Jesus and the establishment of His church. Peter says this three times in **Acts 3 (v.18, 21, and 24)**. Isaiah had the most to say about Jesus in his lengthy book.

The gospel of Matthew was written to show the Jews how Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law and Prophets (**Matt. 5:17**). Matthew cites numerous passages and explains their fulfillment, or quotes Jesus who explains their fulfillment (**1:22-23; 2:5-6,15,17-18,23; 3:3; 4:14-16; 8:17; 11:7-11; 12:17-21,38-42; 13:14-15,35; 15:7-9; 17:10-13; 21:4-5,16,42; 22:41-46; 23:31-36; 24:15; 26:23-25,31,54-56,64; 27:9-10,35**).

It seems that many of his thoughts were connected to the prophecies in Isaiah. You might also notice that the most concentrated groups of these passages are at the beginning and the end of the gospel, where the prophecies of Jesus' birth and death are correctly applied to Him.

The first four chapters of Matthew are to show us that Jesus is the king of the kingdom of God. The genealogy is given at the beginning for this purpose (**1:1-17**). The details of the birth of Jesus are also to emphasize that Jesus is to be the king of the Jews (**1:18-2:23**). The ministry of John confirmed that Jesus was the Messiah that was prophesied to come (**3:1-17**). **Chapter 4** shows us the beginning of Jesus' ministry, after Jesus overcame Satan's challenge.

There are several direct or indirect references to **Isaiah 7-12** in this section of Matthew. Obviously, the prophecies of Jesus in **Isaiah 7:14** and **Isaiah 9:1-2** are quoted by Matthew.

There is an odd mention of **Syria** in **Matthew 4:24**. Interestingly, the context of **Isaiah 7-12** is the Syrians joining forces with Israel against Judah. The children born in this section of Isaiah (*Immanuel* ["God with us"] in **7:14** and *Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz* ["swift to the spoil"] in **8:1-4**) symbolize God's speedy judgment on Israel and Syria by Assyria, and typify the arrival of Jesus, who said that His generation would see the fall of Jerusalem.

Jesus was born in the time of Herod, a wicked king, just as the children in **Isaiah 7-12** were born in the time of Ahaz, a wicked king. Ahaz refused God's sign, defiantly claiming not to **tempt** the Lord. Nonetheless, God gave the sign of the virgin birth of Immanuel (**Matt. 1:18-25**). Ahaz tempted the Lord his entire life, faithlessly robbing the temple of the Lord to bribe Assyria not to destroy them (**2 Chron.28:21-25**). Satan **tempted** the Lord when he tempted Jesus (**Matt. 4:1-13**). Jesus said, "*You shall not tempt the Lord your God.*"

Jesus is God with us, and He is the hope of all men. The prophecy in **Isaiah 9:1-7** confirms this, so Matthew quotes a part that refers to His Galilean ministry (**Matt. 4:13-17**). A parallel passage to **Isaiah 9:1-7** is **Isaiah 11**. It prophesies the return of the remnant (the meaning of the name of Isaiah's son Shear-Jashub in **Isaiah 7:3**) and the inclusion of the Gentiles. Jesus is the Rod or Branch from the stem or root from Jesse (the father of David). His rule would be righteous (**9:7, 11:3-5**) and therefore peaceful (**9:6, 11:6-9**). Jesus is king of righteousness and peace (**Heb.7:1-3; 8:1**).