

Sunday 12/08/24 – Panama Methodist Church

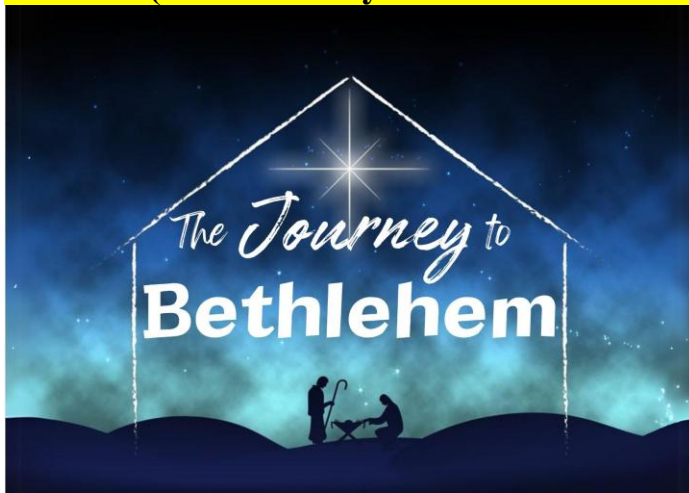
Sermon Title: “The Journey to Bethlehem: Sermon Series: (Part 2 of 5)

(Slides 1-10 will be listed in order throughout this sermon 😊!)

Brothers and sisters, on this Second Sunday in Advent we lit the second purple candle, which is the “peace candle.” Jesus Christ our Lord is the Prince of Peace. Jesus came to bring us peace, to bring us hope, to bring us love, to bring us joy, to bring us mercy, and to bring us salvation. Are we feeling all of these things today? During this forty-day season of Advent, and soon to be the season of Christmas, we are journeying together to Bethlehem. Why to Bethlehem? Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the city of the great King David. As a result, this sermon series is called “The Journey to Bethlehem” series.

Here is our cover slide for this sermon series:

Slide 1 – (“The Journey to Bethlehem” Sermon Series – Cover Picture)



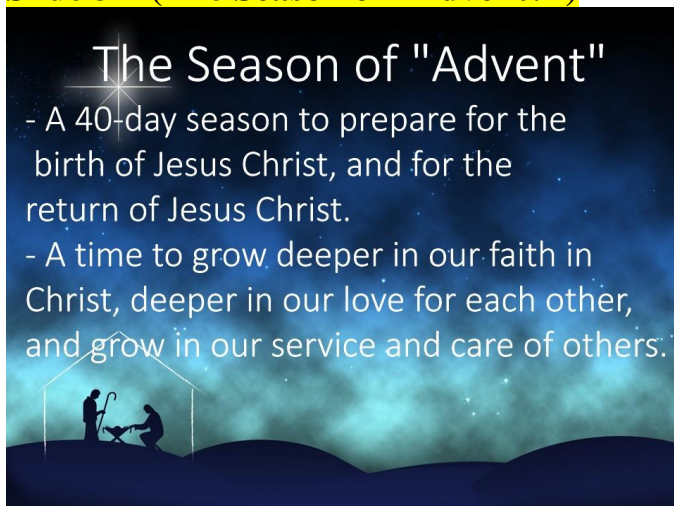
For those of us that joined us last Sunday, we started this sermon series introducing what the forty-day season of Advent is. This morning, we are going to look at a few of the prophecies or predictions of Jesus coming. Specifically, predictions of Jesus' birth and his second coming, as these are important to the Advent and Christmas seasons. For these reasons, my message this morning is called:

Slide 2 – (“The Journey to Bethlehem” Sermon Series – Part 2)



Let us look quickly again at what we have discussed thus far in this sermon series:

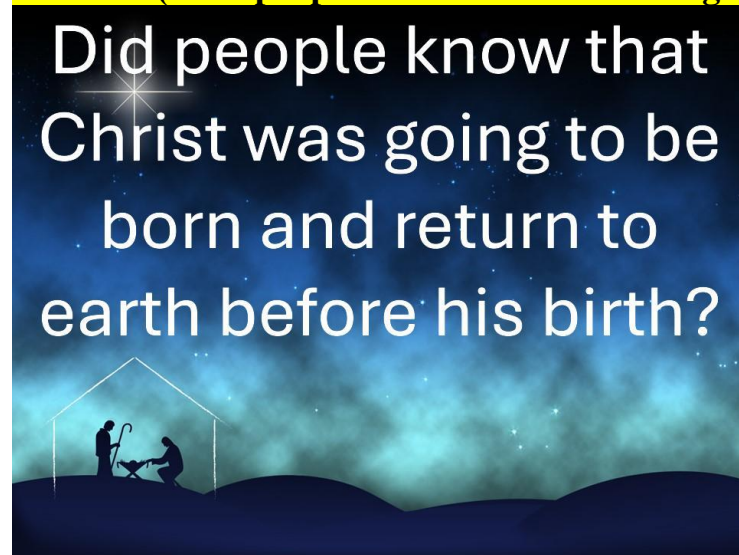
Slide 3 – (The Season of “Advent?”)



It can be a challenge in this busy and hectic season to take some time to sit at the feet of Jesus. I mean we all have so much to do, and so many preparations to make, but this season is about Jesus. Melissa and I are excited to invite you all to the church parsonage next Saturday December 14th from 1 PM – 4 PM for our parsonage open house. We hope it draws us all even closer to Jesus and to each other, and we hope to see you all there. Also, this open house will not result in you losing weight!

It is my prayer and my hope through this season of Advent, and soon to be Christmas, and always, that we can always find peace and rest in Jesus Christ. We all know though that Jesus was born over two-thousand years ago. In part then, every Advent we are awaiting the memory of Jesus' birth. You see, when we were all born, Jesus had long been born, had long died for us on the cross, had long rose from the dead, and had long ascended into heaven. Every year though we tell this grand story of Jesus' birth. I can imagine that first Christmas was exciting, but I wonder if anyone had any idea that Jesus was coming that first Christmas? Did anyone expect that Jesus would be born, would die for us, etc.? Here is a question for us all to think about this morning:

Slide 4 – (“Did people know that Jesus was going to be born and return?”)



Or was Jesus' birth just some fluke that no one expected? I mean sure the savior of the world, God in the flesh came to us on that first Christmas almost two thousand years ago, but was anyone expecting Jesus, the Messiah, Emmanuel? The answer is yes! Many had been expecting Jesus and prophesying or predicting that would come centuries before he was even born. There are literally hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible that prophecy or predict things about Jesus' birth, life, death, second coming, etc. We have probably heard them in Advent and Christmas services and other services many times before. For example, in our Advent Candles prayer this morning we have some of Isaiah 9:6 that said this, once again, in our Advent Candles prayer: "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace." These words predicting the savior of the world and giving him the titles that we just heard once again, were written over

700-years before Jesus was even born. The Old Testament book of Isaiah or the Prophet Isaiah included prophecies or predictions about Jesus.

For centuries people waited for Jesus, the Messiah, Emmanuel. This is why we sing “O Come, O Come Emmanuel.” We are singing for Jesus to come to us, which he did in his birth over two-thousand years ago, and he will when return to earth one day. “Come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.” Let us look at four short prophecies about the birth and second coming of Jesus. Remember these we all written centuries before Jesus’ birth that first Christmas. The first one that I want to discuss is from the Book of Jeremiah, or the Prophet Jeremiah, in the Old Testament. Feel free to grab your Bibles or your Bible apps and open the scripture with me to Jeremiah 23:5-6. This is the prophecy of Jesus, the Messiah, Emmanuel, from Jeremiah 23:5-6:

Slide 5 – (“Jeremiah 23:5-6, New Revised Standard Version”)



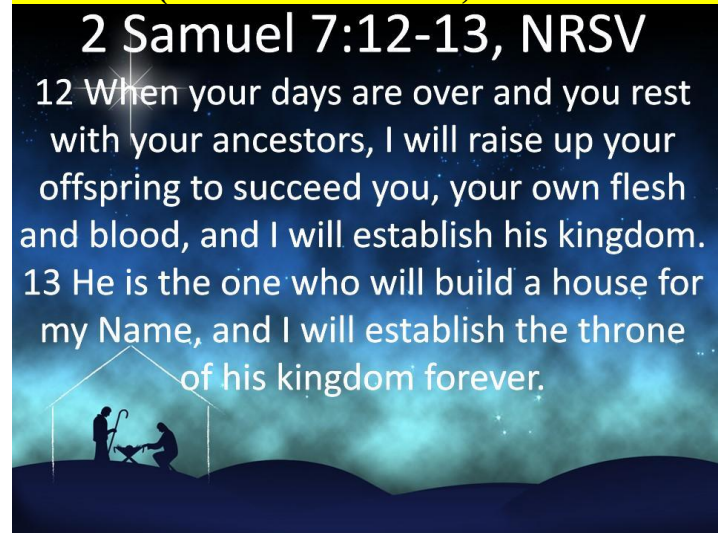
The Old Testament or Hebrew Bible prophecy is that the great King David, who united the Kingdom of Israel would not only be king of Israel, but that his throne would one day be led by an eternal king. One day, the throne of King David would have an eternal, and forever ruler, who is and always will be, Jesus Christ. This ruler would be a “righteous branch,” and a descendent of King David. The way that a tree grows branches and leaves, Jesus Christ our Lord is a descendent of or a branch of the tree that is the great King David. Jeremiah 23:5-6 tells that this future leader will reign as king and deal wisely. This coming eternal king will reign on his throne in Jerusalem and will deal wisely and fairly with all people. Sounds like Jesus to me! This future king according to Jeremiah 23:5-6 “shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.” During Jesus’ life he taught and lived Biblical justice and lived and modeled righteousness. When Jesus returns one day, evil will be destroyed, and righteousness shall reign. Jesus will save Judah, Israel will live in safety, and Jesus will return to Jerusalem one day to reign on earth for a thousand years. According to Jeremiah 23:5-6, his name will be called, “The LORD is our righteousness.” You will notice in the Jeremiah 23:5-6 scripture that in 23:6 the word “LORD” is all capital letters. This is done as place marker for the name of God. The name of God is so holy that devout Jews do not write it, they put something like “LORD” down, or “G-D.” Devout Jews do not even touch the scripture with their hands, as it is too holy. You see, the ruler that the prophet

Jeremiah predicted was coming would not only be all the things that we just discussed, but this ruler would also be called “The LORD is our righteousness.” “The LORD is our righteousness” is name for God, as Jesus Christ was God in the flesh on earth, is the second person of the Holy Trinity, and our eternal king and savior. So, when we have heard Old Testament scriptures in church during the seasons of Advent and Christ, they generally are scriptures that contain prophecies or predictions about Jesus’ birth, life, death, and second coming to earth.

Let us look three other Old Testament prophecies or predictions that tell us about the coming of Jesus. If you want to flip from the Old Testament Book of Jeremiah to the Old Testament Book 2 Samuel, let us look at 2 Samuel 7:12-13.

This is what it says:

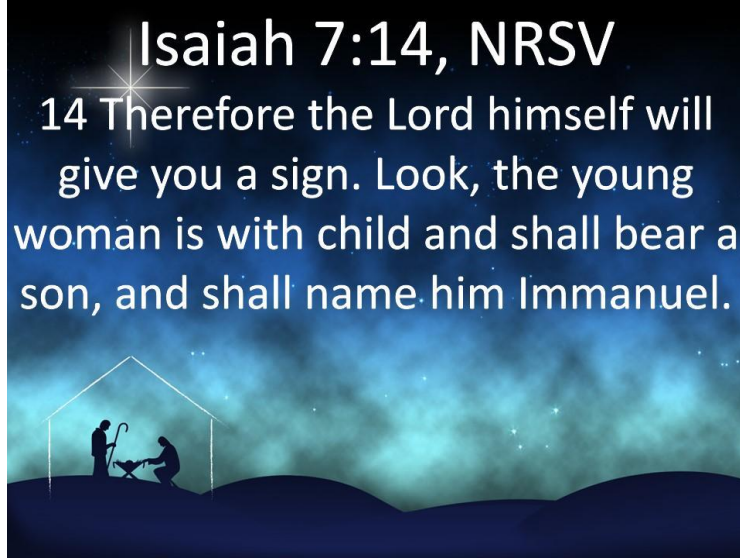
Slide 6 – (“2 Samuel 7:12-13, New Revised Standard Version”)



In 2 Samuel 7:12-13 we hear about the relationship between King David and his descendants. Further, that one of these descendants would be King David's "own flesh and blood." So, a decedent of King David, and one that will be born in Bethlehem, the city of David. This descendant of King David will have his kingdom established by God, and this descendent will build a house in the name of God. Lastly, God will "establish the throne of his kingdom forever" of this descendant of King David. This prophecy in the Book of 2 Samuel is talking about the coming of Jesus Christ. This coming is not just on his birth on Christmas, but his life, death, resurrection, and return to earth one day. This prophecy about the coming of Jesus, and him reigning eternally.

The third example of a biblical Old Testament prophecy about Jesus is the Book of Isaiah 7:14. Turn with me in your Bibles or Bible App from the Old Testament Book of 2 Samuel to Isaiah 7:14. This is just one verse, but it is a prophecy about the birth of Christ on Christmas in Bethlehem. Here is what Isaiah 7:14 says:

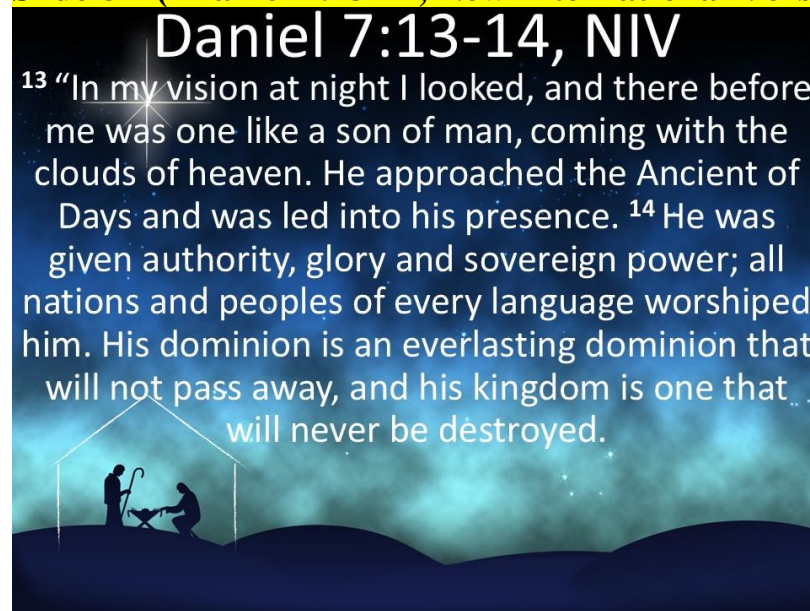
Slide 7 – (“Isaiah 7:14, New Revised Standard Version”)



The Book of Isaiah was written at least seven-hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ. Yet, the prophet Isaiah said, God would give us a sign. We know in the gospel of Luke 1:26-38 that the angel Gabriel came to Jesus' mother Mary, and told her she would conceive a son, and that would take the throne of his ancestor King David. This son would reign forever, and this son will be named "Immanuel," or "God with us." When Jesus was born, this fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14.

I fourth and final Old Testament prophecy for this morning is from the Book of Daniel or the Prophet Daniel 7:13-14. If you want to turn with me in your Bibles or your Bible Apps from the Old Testament book of Isaiah to Daniel 7:13-14, let us see:

Slide 8 – (“Daniel 7:13-14, New International Version”)



The Book of Daniel or the Prophet Daniel was written about five-hundred years before the birth of Christ. In this vision that the Prophet Daniel had about five-hundred years before Jesus was born, he saw the second coming of Christ, the Messiah. That is pretty amazing, considering that it was twenty-five hundred years ago! So, in the Prophet Daniel’s vision, he saw “one like the of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.” This is a vision of a divine man, similar to human “son of man.” Not only this, this divine man, or God, is “coming with the clouds of heaven.” A similar prophecy was made by the Apostle John in the Book of Revelation 1:7, which says:

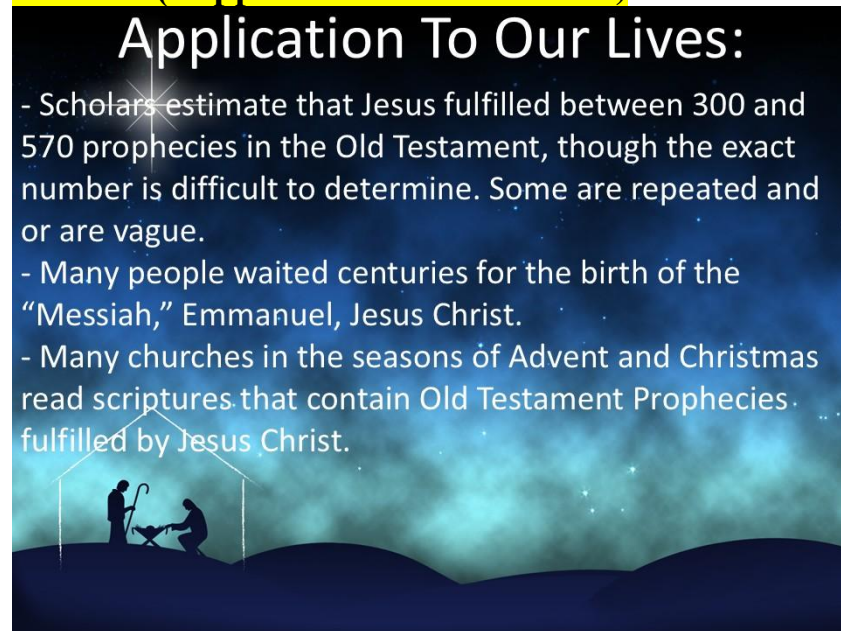
⁷ Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail
(Rev. 1:7, NRSV).

Daniel 7:13-14 continues, as we read that the Messiah, Jesus, approached the “Ancient of Days,” or God the Father. “Ancient of Days” means before all creation, which would include days and nights. God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit existed before days existed, existed. This is where we get the term, “Ancient of Days.” This Messiah, Jesus Christ, that the Prophet Daniel had a vision of, of returning to earth five-hundred years before the birth Jesus said, that the Messiah, Jesus, was “given authority, glory, and sovereign power.” Further, the Prophet Daniel in his vision said that when the Messiah, Jesus Christ return in glory that “all nations and people of every language worshipped him.” Further of this returning Messiah, Jesus Christ, “His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” This prophecy, which was the Prophet Daniel’s vision, occurred about twenty-five hundred years ago, has not yet occurred. This vision, this prophecy is about the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Even though I shared just four brief Old Testament prophecies with you this morning, there are hundreds of other prophecies in the Old Testament. The “Wise Men” coming visit Jesus after he was born, was prophesied. When the Roman soldiers “cast lots,” or divided up Jesus’ clothing on the day of his crucifixion, this was prophesied or predicted in the Old Testament. Jesus coming into Jerusalem on a donkey or colt on Palm Sunday, was prophesied or predicted in the Old

Testament. When I think of the Christmas song, for example, of “Mary Did You Know?” about whether Mary knew who her son Jesus really was, I think she knew at least some. After all, most Jews knew the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament pretty well and knew of the prophecies or the predictions of the Messiah, of Jesus. With these four Old Testament Prophecies or predictions that we discussed, as I said there are hundreds of other about Jesus. Let us look at how these prophecies or predictions apply to our lives, in our “Application To Our Lives” slide:

Slide 9 – (“Application To Our Lives”)



Application To Our Lives:

- Scholars estimate that Jesus fulfilled between 300 and 570 prophecies in the Old Testament, though the exact number is difficult to determine. Some are repeated and or are vague.
- Many people waited centuries for the birth of the “Messiah,” Emmanuel, Jesus Christ.
- Many churches in the seasons of Advent and Christmas read scriptures that contain Old Testament Prophecies fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

So, there are between 300-570 prophecies in the Old Testament about Jesus Christ, but some are repeated and or are vague. Once again, many people waited for centuries for the Messiah, for Emmanuel, for Jesus Christ. In this season of Advent and soon to be Christmas, we often hear prophecies from the Old Testament that

tell of the coming of Jesus. How blessed are we that this Christmas we are celebrating the memory of Jesus' birth, and not waiting for the actual birth!

As we continue to move into this Advent Season together, may we all read some of these Old Testament prophecies anew, and be excited for Jesus' birth on Christmas, and for the Second Coming of Christ one day. Happy Second Sunday of Advent and Amen!

Here is our closing slide for this sermon series:

Slide 10 – (“Closing Slide”)

