

POV: A Christmas Perspective1 "A Long Lens"

I have to admit I don't know much about photography at all. I'm not going to pretend I do, but the cameras at a college or NFL football game are impressive in size. Now we've all become photographers in our own right with our phone cameras and our obsession with picture taking, but we are a long way, I'm sure, from the knowledge and quality of a true professional photographer. At a game, a professional can make you think he is as close as a player by using an expensive (no doubt) long range lens that takes us into the action play itself; at least appears that way.

The Old Testament prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, and Hosea, do something similar, but better! He doesn't just take a picture from a great distance that appears close; he describes an event that is hundreds of years in the future and does so accurately! Isaiah foretells of the birth of Jesus, which certainly points to the fact that Jesus' birth, and all the circumstances around it, was planned by God! His prophecy, given by the Holy Spirit through inspiration, describes the birth of Jesus long before it took place, to provide hope for those in the present. Hope that still remains in full force today!

A View of the Future (Prophets speaks toward the future)

Isaiah 7:14 NAS

14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6 NAS

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

A View of the Past (Several prophets' words from the past come true)

-Some 700 years pass before Isaiah's prophecies of Jesus' birth come true.

Matthew 1:22 NAS

Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet.

Matthew 1:23 NAS (from Isaiah 7:14)

*"BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD * AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."*

-After Christ's birth the magi arrived in Jerusalem. Herod gathered the chief priests and scribes and asked them where the Messiah was going to be born.

Matthew 2:1-4 NAS

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,

2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

-Their response in **Matthew 2:5-6** was a prophecy from **Micah 5:2**.

5 They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

6 'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.' "

-Herod's murderous response of slaughtering the young boys of Bethlehem led to the fulfillment of three more prophecies. First, this tragic massacre fulfilled the words of Jeremiah.

Matthew 2:18 NAS (Jeremiah 31:15)

"A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN; AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE."

- The second fulfilled prophecy resulting from Herod's paranoiac rage took place after Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt. Upon their return, God's words to Hosea were fulfilled.

Matthew 2:15b NAS and Hosea 11:1

This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."

A View of Our Future

1. It's obvious from the prophets that God has a plan for us.

2. His plan is one of redemption.

3. His plan has never been last minute because He is all knowing; thus, has full perspective.

4. He knows everything you need, and especially what we need most.

5. If sin is our greatest problem, then, a Savior is our only Solution.

Bottom Line – The God Who created everything has always had a plan for redeeming us.