

The Mysterious Jesus

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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We always worship the Lord together by searching out His Word. One of the elements of worship is to be sure we know the God whom we worship, that we hear Him speak to us, and so we turn to His Word again this morning. And as I thought about the season and the message that the Spirit of God would put upon our hearts, I thought that perhaps we ought to look at the New Testament to see the fulfillment of the miraculous Jesus and also at the Old to see the mystery that surrounded the prophets as they spoke of Him who was to come.

When the prophets wrote of the Messiah, they wrote the Word of God. As it says in Luke 3:2 about John the Baptist, "The word of God came unto him." As it says of so many prophets of old, "And the word of the Lord came unto them and they said." They wrote the Word of God and much of the Word of God was about the coming Messiah, the coming anointed one, the coming Christ, the coming King, and the coming Savior. And as they wrote they were somewhat mystified by the very thing they themselves wrote. I'm reminded of Peter's words in 1 Peter chapter 1 where he says, "The prophets searched diligently into the very things they wrote," to try and understand what person or what time or what circumstances could bring all these prophecies to pass regarding the suffering and the glory of the one who was to come for they were really dealing with mystery. They were dealing with apparent contradictions; statements on the one hand about His glory and the other hand about His suffering that just seemed irreconcilable and they were mystified by much of it.

And the people to whom Jesus spoke were equally mystified. Some said he is the Christ. No, some said, he is a prophet. And others said but can a prophet come out of Galilee? And some said he's Jeremiah and some said he's Elijah. And some said he's some other pre-Messianic prophet, but he can't be the Messiah because everything doesn't seem to fit. And the disciples wondered themselves with confused minds, can this really be the Messiah? Where is the Kingdom? Where is the Glory? Where is the Power? And John the Baptist, John the Baptist of all people, found it very, very difficult to understand.

Look with me for a moment at Matthew chapter 11 as a starting point. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. He was the one who stood one day and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world," and he pointed to Jesus Christ and said, "This is the one." And he said, "You follow him not me, for he must increase and I must decrease." It's time for me to fade away; he's arrived. But all of a sudden we find John the Baptist in prison in chapter 11 of Matthew, and verse 2 says when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ he sent two of his disciples

unto him to say, "Art thou he that should come," or do we look for another?

And here John, who was so sure initially is now so unsure. Are you the one? And we say you must know that, John. You were his herald. You must know that; you pointed to him, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." You must know that, John, you baptized him and a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." You must have known John, for the Holy Spirit sent a dove. You must know who this is. But John is struggling because he's mystified. Well he assumed one thing and he said it in Matthew 3: "When he comes he will have a fan in his hand and he will separate the chaff from the wheat and the chaff will be burned with unquenchable fire." He said He will baptize you with fire. He will come with judgment. He will come with fury. He will come as a consuming fire to engulf the ungodly and the unbelievers in the flames and then to set up the Kingdom for the righteous.

But by now John can't figure out what went wrong because where is the fire? Where is the consumption? Where is the wrath? Where is the Kingdom? He, in fact, to all people should have been exalted as a prisoner at Machaerus, an old Herodian fort, a gloomy, dismal place east of the Dead Sea in a devastating area. And there he is, a prisoner, and Jesus is going around meek and mild healing the sick and loving people and he wonders where is the thunder and where is the vengeance and where is the wrath and where is the Kingdom? He can't resolve it in his mind so he's mystified and he sends his disciples to ask are you really the Messiah?

You see, without the full unfolding of the New Testament, there was tremendous mystery about who this one would be and the mystery came about because of the very diverse and apparently contradictory statements that were made about him. And I agree that there are things about Jesus that are mystifying. The world today is still somewhat mystified by Jesus. Those who do not understand and believe with all their heart the truth of the New Testament are left with incredible mystery regarding Jesus Christ and as a result of that there are myriads of fables and wild tales and fantasies that have grown up about him. I read recently an article in *The Canadian Motorist Magazine* – not one of your top three magazines. I don't even know where I found the thing.

But anyway, there was an interesting article in there and the article was about a new book titled *Jesus Died in Kashmir*. Now if you know your geography, Kashmir is a little country somewhere between India and Pakistan and the book propagates the fact that Jesus died in Kashmir; written by a man named Faber-Kaiser. Now the book begins by telling us that there is alive in the world today a man who is the son of Jesus Christ. He is the only living traceable descendent to Jesus Christ and he is alive right now. His name is Sahibzada Basharat Saleem and he is the living descendant of Jesus Christ. Now the man who writes the book is sure of that, however Sahibzada is not quite yet convinced. But he is very excited if it is, in fact, true. He is not sure what it entitles him to, but he's sure it must entitle him to something to be the son of Jesus Christ.

Now the premise of that – when I got into the article that far I was hooked, to put it mildly – but the book suggests that Jesus visited Kashmir between the ages of 12 and 29, a convenient time because that's the time the New Testament is silent on his life. And so when the New Testament is silent it is because he went to Kashmir, and from the ages of 12 to 29 he studied Buddhism and he became a Buddhist lama or priest. They also note in the book that this can't be proven because the British stole all the evidence in order to preserve Christianity. Now Jesus then spent from 12 to 29 becoming a Buddhist lama. He had such diverse and unique views that they drove him out of Kashmir. He went to India. They drove him out of India. He went to Iran and they drove him out of Iran, and he just kept going west until he got to Israel.

At the age of 29 he landed in Palestine and ministered there. He never died on a cross. He never rose from the dead. Those are fables that have no historical evidence, says the book. He was crucified because there were wounds in his hands that healed over, they say. He was removed from the cross, took Mary – his mother – and Thomas, and the three of them went to India. Now the reason they went to India, says the book, is they were looking for the lost tribes of Israel who obviously were in India. Now when they got to Pakistan they stopped there and Mary died in Pakistan and was buried. Mary is buried, they believe, 30 miles from Rawalpindi. And in case you think this is really strange, let me make it stranger. There is, in Rawalpindi a tomb marked as the tomb of Mary the Mother of Jesus and revered as such by the local people.

Thomas went to south India and died. Nobody knows where and nobody really cares. But Jesus was left alone. He married, fathered children and lived to be 86 years old and was buried at the Rozabal crypt in Srinagar in Kashmir. And to this day people believe that that's his crypt. He traveled to Afghanistan and other places and they gave him a name. His name was Shahzada Nabi Hazrat Yuza Asaf, and *Yuza* is the equivalent of Jesus. I don't know if you know this, but the Koran speaks of him and the Koran says, "We," that's God speaking in plural, "We didn't allow Christ to die on the cross," says the Koran, "Instead we lifted him and took him away to a place full of natural beauty, gardens, lakes, rivers, flowers and fruit." And by the way, hundreds of books have been written to embellish this incredible fable.

Now there are probably a hundred other fantasies about Jesus. There's little question that he's a mysterious individual. But he's not only mysterious to the outside world of unbelievers - and the incredible hoax such as this is indicative of the mystery of Jesus and also of the unbelief of their hard hearts - but there's a certain amount of mystery even about Jesus in the Old Testament and that's what makes it so interesting. There are things that seem very difficult to resolve. Yes, in fact, impossible to resolve. If you were to look only at the Old Testament and have no information in the new, if you didn't know Jesus Christ or anything about him, you would look at certain Old Testament passages about the Messiah and you would say no one could fulfill this. These men are wrong. There is utter and absolute inconsistency in the Old Testament. There's no way all these things could come

to pass in any one man. They're just too farfetched. Well, let's look at some of them and let's meet the mysterious Jesus of the Old Testament.

To give you the idea that we want to have, as we flow through these thoughts, the reason there is mystery attached to Jesus Christ in the Old Testament is because of the apparent conflict in regard to prophecies. For example, one place he is said to be the Coming King. In another place he is seen as a man of sorrows acquainted with grief. In one place he is seen with all of the saints. In another place he is presented as lonely. In one place he is represented as worshipped and adored and honored and revered, and in another place he is lonely and rejected. On the one hand he is King of Glory, King of Heaven, Eternal Savior, and Desire of all Nations, Wonder of Wonders, and Beauty among Beauty. In another place there is no beauty that we should desire and he is a servant. He is bloody. He is crucified. He is even dead. And how can it be?

How can all of these confusing, contradictory things ever come to pass? Little wonder that John was confused. Little wonder the disciples were mystified. Little wonder the people couldn't make up their mind about who this man really was. Mystery. But you and I have the privilege. In Matthew chapter 13, some months ago, I talked to you about this scripture in verse 17: "For verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them." Now back to verse 16: "Blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear." Listen, folks, we are able to see what they couldn't see. We are able to understand what they couldn't understand. We are able to see and resolve what they could never imagine could even be resolved. They're mysteries. Let's see if we can't get some help.

Let's go back to Isaiah chapter 7, and I'm going to select about handful of mysteries and show you how they are resolved in Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 7:14 we read this and the New Testament tells us that it went beyond Ahaz, the man at the time which it was written. It went beyond any child that would be born into his family and it stretched down through history to have connotations that are only possibly finding their full meaning in the Messiah. It says in verse 14, "Therefore the Lord Himself should give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel." Now this is a marvelous statement in its full New Testament implication. The Lord Himself, of his own volition, unasked and unsought and unsolicited, the Lord Himself gave us a sign and a sign points to something. And the sign in this case, in relation to Ahaz, pointed to something far beyond him. The virgin shall conceive and bear a son. *Alma* = virgin. It seems to me all other Old Testament verse that has reference to virgin, and even the Septuagint carries that out and certainly the use of this passage in the New Testament would emphasize the virgin nature of this young woman.

A virgin conceives and bears a son. Not unusual for a girl to have a baby. Not unusual for a human child to be born, but very unusual that he should be called God with Us, and even more unusual that

he should be God with us. While this child may have been called God with Us, there would come another child born of a virgin who would be God with Us. A human child, and yet a divine reality, and you look then at the mystery of God and man. How can anybody be God and man? How can there be a child who is the child of a human being and who at the same time is God with Us? Look at Isaiah 9: “For unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given.” Not so unusual. Not so strange. This, too, a Messianic prophecy, the earlier part of it even quoted by Jesus himself saying he came to fulfill it. Not so unusual a child would be born. Not so unusual a son to be given. It happens all the time. But the government on his shoulder, possibly – possibly he is to be ruler. His name to be called Wonderful Counselor possibly – perhaps he is a wonderful counselor. The Mighty God? The Father of Eternity? Mystery. How can you have a child, God with Us? How can you have a child the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity? How can one be born in time who fathered forever? The paradox is clear. The mystery is obvious: a child born human yet God, a son given in time who is the father of eternity itself.

How can it be that a woman should bring forth a child who made the woman? Little wonder they were confused. Little wonder there was mystery? Blessed are ye, because you can hear what they couldn't hear and see what they couldn't see. Look at Luke 1: “The sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to the city of Galilee, named Nazareth” – verse 26 – “to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came unto her and said, “Hail, thou who art highly favored. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women.” When she saw him she was troubled at his saying and considered in her mind what manner of greeting this should be. And the angel said unto her, “Stop being afraid, Mary for thou has found favor with God and behold thou shall conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son.” Not so unusual that a woman should have a son. “And shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great.” Not so unusual. There had been other great people. “And shall be called the Son of the Highest.”

Now wait a minute that is unusual. Who is the Highest? God. The Son of God. “And the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever.” Yes, he will be great. He will be a king forever, an eternal king, and the Son of the Highest who is God. And of his kingdom there shall be no end. Said Mary unto the angel, “How shall this be seeing I know not a man.” I am a virgin. How can I have a child? The angel answered and said unto her, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” How can a child be man and God? How can it be? The mystery is unresolved in the Old Testament, resolved right here. On the one hand the child is a man born of Mary. On the other hand the child is God born of God for Mary knew no man. There was no earthly father. God was the heavenly Father. God put deity in human flesh provided through the loins of Mary.

The mystery is solved. He was fully God, fully man. Jesus, God in human flesh. Think of it. The Old Testament said that he would be the seed of the woman. Daniel 7:13 said he would be the son of man. Then Psalm 2:7 said he'd be the Son of God. Then Genesis 22:18 said he'd be the seed of

Abraham. How can he be the seed of a woman? A woman has no seed. Now can he be the son of man and the Son of God? How can he be produced from Abraham, produced from David and produced from God? An amazing complex of prophecies; how can God be man and man be God and at the same time be the son of man and the Son of God? How can one be a son of man and yet have no human father, and how can he be the seed of a woman when the woman has no seed? No wonder the prophets were mystified.

Yet Jesus was all of these. He was God. He was man. He was the seed of the woman. He was the Son of Man. He was of the line of Abraham. He was from the line of David. And yet he was the Son of God. Hebrews 1 says "God, in His last days, has spoken through His Son," the express image of his person. Whose son is he? God's Son, Mary's Son, and so resolves the mystery. Let me show you another mystery. Genesis 49 verse 10; Genesis 49 verse 10. Interesting. This is another Messianic prophecy. "The scepter" – that is the ruling right, the ruling authority, the right to be the King – "shall not depart from Judah." In other words of all of the sons of Jacob, all of the tribes, the Messianic line would proceed through Judah. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a law giver from between his feet." That's a very expressive statement regarding progeny or offspring, which come out from between the feet of a woman, so that the children born to the line of Judah will maintain the rule, the authority, and the law-giving power. There will always be the rulership resident in Judah until it says "Shiloh come." *Shiloh* means the one to whom it belongs or the one whose right it is and that's a Messianic indication.

Until the Messiah comes and then the gathering of the people will be to Him in the glorious Kingdom, until then the scepter will never part from Judah. In other words, Judah will maintain the royal line. Judah will be the progressive royal seed. That one of the 12 tribes is the one for whom the Messiah will come. Judah. But you know any Jew that read that would also be drawn immediately to remember what was stated in the 38th chapter of the same book, Genesis. Look back at it, Genesis 38. Here we find an incident that involves Judah; Judah the one to produce the Messianic seed. Verse 24 is where we'll pick it up in Genesis chapter 38: "It came to pass about three months after," and we'll see after what in a moment, "that it was told Judah saying, "Tamar, thy daughter-in-law hath played the harlot and also because she is with child by harlotry. And rather also behold she is with child by harlotry." Now this is news brought to a father-in-law about the wife of one of his sons. Your daughter-in-law has played the harlot. She's prostituted herself. She's gotten pregnant by somebody else. And Judah was indignant. And Judah said in verse 24, "Bring her forth and let her be burned." According to Deuteronomy 22 verses 20-24, somewhere in there, when someone committed adultery they were to be stoned. Why the burning? If you look at Leviticus chapter 20 about verse 14 and chapter 21 verse 9, you'll find there that there's an indication that when the adultery is excessive and the crimes are excessive, there's to be burning.

And so he reaches for the extremity of the law and he says burn her up for harlotry. Verse 25: "And when she was brought forth she said to her father-in-law," – the one who had sentenced her – "saying

by the man whose these are am I with child.” And she said, “Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet and bracelets and staff.” See the guy had left a few personal belongings behind and she sends them to Judah. Verse 26 says, “And Judah acknowledged that” – you know whose they were? They were His. They were Judah’s. He had done it. He had committed adultery with his son’s wife and caused her to have a pregnancy. And he said in verse 26, “She’s been more righteous than I because that I gave her not to Shelah my son and he knew her again no more.” And it came to pass in the time of her travail behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass when she travailed that the one put out his hand.” The first little guy started to come out and stuck out his hand. And because it was really important who was born first in those days because you inherited the right of the family, they tied a little red string around his hand just to make sure when they got them both out they wouldn’t muff up who was who.

But you know what happened? It says he got his hand out and drew it back and the other one came out first. One was Pharez and the other was Zarah. Two sons born to Tamar from Judah. Now you want to know something? If Genesis 49 is true then the Messiah is going to be a bastard child because out of this line from Tamar proceeds the royal line of Judah and is the Messiah to be the son of the legitimate child of adultery? You can understand just in reading Genesis that some people would be mystified, that one would come who should be king and be born in an illegitimate line. There’s some help for this problem in Deuteronomy 23 verse 2, and when you get regulations given here about behavior and about life, God’s laws, among them you read this; Deuteronomy 23:2: “A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord.” That’s right, there’s no place. “Even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord.” How many generations did it take to purify that? It took 10 didn’t it? Ten generations and the line was pure. So Judah started a royal line, but there wasn’t a person in that line who could reign until that line got purged.

Look with me for a moment to Matthew chapter 1 verse 3. It starts out with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Judah giving the genealogy of Christ. In verse 3, Judah begot Pharez and Zarah of Tamar. There they are, those two illegitimate children and then the line follows through Pharez. Pharez begat Esrom. Esrom begat Aram. Aram begat Aminadab. Aminadab begat Naasson. Naasson begat Salmon. Salmon begat Booz of Rachab. Booz begat Obed of Ruth. Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat whom? David. You know what he numbers from Tamar? Ten. And so the line is purged and David has a right to the royal throne. The line is purged in David, the Bible tells us, forever and always. Jesus is a King from not the line of Judah, but from the line of whom? Of David. Back to verse 1, the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, because there is the reconstitution of the royal right to rule. How marvelous, isn’t that? That God resolves the mystery in Genesis.

Let me show you another one. Micah chapter five. Back up about a half a dozen books from the end of the Old Testament and you’ll find Micah. Micah tells us where the Messiah would be born. It’s marvelous. Verse 2 of Micah 5, “But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the

thousands of Judah,” – though you’re really an insignificant village – “yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.” The ruler is coming from you. What ruler? Oh, this is marvelous. The one “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Now this is incredible. Here you’re back to the God/man paradox. Micah must have been doing 360’s on his tiptoes when he heard this. How in the world can you have a child born in Bethlehem whose been around since the eternity passed? But the eternal one born in this obscure inconsequential village of Bethlehem that I daresay would not have been on the map, except for this one great event, Bethlehem.

You say well, that’s easy. We all know that came to pass. That’s right. But what is so mystifying about it is that you go back to Hosea chapter 11, and Israel is presented here. And bound up in the loins of the nation was the Messiah that would come from that nation; and as Israel was truly a son of God, so was Jesus Christ the Son, and so the comparison is obvious. In Hosea 11:1, “When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt.” Now that has very profound Messianic implications. That as Israel was called out of Egypt, in her infancy, so will the Messiah. That is the way the New Testament writers see the passage. We don’t know all that they may have understood at that point in time, but it says here that the son will be called out of Egypt. So in one prophecy he’s coming to Bethlehem and in another one it’s Egypt.

And if that isn’t bad enough, look at Isaiah chapter 11. And this one tells us something yet about him. It says, “There shall come forth a shoot” – or a sprout – “out of the stem of Jesse,” a branch growing out of his roots. Now here you have shoot, *choter*, and branch, *netser*. And this is a Messianic prediction again. Verse 2: “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,” and then it describes the Kingdom and the millennium and so forth that he’ll bring. So it says that when he comes he will be a *netser*, a *netser*, a sprout. The first significance of this prophecy is the title of a branch given to the Messiah. But the second one, and the one that apparently the New Testament writer sees in this as well – we can assume others saw it – suggests that Jesus would be *netser* and that may be suggesting his boyhood residence of Nazareth, so that he is a sprout from sprout town. So on the one hand you have Bethlehem and then you have Egypt and then you have sprout town – Nazareth. How can he be all these things? And you can understand that prophets of old searching the Scripture diligently wondering where is he going to be coming from? Is it Bethlehem? Is it Nazareth? Is it Egypt? And the complexity of all these prophecies make it impossible that they should be counterfeited.

Go to Matthew chapter 2: “And again I saw blessed are your eyes for what they see and your ears for what they hear what those could not see or hear.” Verse 1 of Matthew 2: “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem,” - Bethlehem of Judea – “in the days of Herod the King” – there’s the first one. Verse 5: “And they said unto him in Bethlehem of Judea for thus it is written by the prophet and thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah art not the least among the princes of Judah. For out of these shall come a governor that shall rule my people of Israel.” There of course is an allusion to the very

prophecy in Micah. Bethlehem in the place and Bethlehem was the place. But there's more. Look at verse 13: "And when they were departed, behold an angel of the Lord approached to Joseph in appearance" – in a dream – "saying arise and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt. And be thou there until I bring thee word or Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." Jesus became a refugee. Go to Egypt.

When he arose he took the young child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt and was there until the death of Herod that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophets saying, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." And he fulfills that element of prophecy. He went to Egypt. And then the third part, verse 23, "And he came and dwelled in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled that was spoken by the prophet." He shall be called a sprout, a root, a branch, a Nazarene. Someone despised. Nothing very spectacular. Why didn't he settle in Judah? Why didn't he settle in Jerusalem? Why Nazareth? Because that's what the prophets said. And in a fit of anger shortly before his death, King Herod had changed his will which he had done very often, and he put Archelaus, which was the worst of his living sons, to rule in Judea in the place of Antipas who was assigned to Galilee and Perea. That was one good reason for going up there. Joseph was afraid to settle under Archelaus because Archelaus once killed 3,000 Jews in Jerusalem. He was cruel beyond belief and he was finally, by the way, disposed of a replaced by the Romans themselves.

Well if Herod hadn't changed his will maybe Jesus never would have gone to Nazareth, but he did. Jesus fulfilled every prophecy. How could one person be all these things? He is. Let me give you another prophecy; I think a very interesting one. Turn to Jeremiah chapter 22 and I want you to notice the further conflict, a mystery difficult to understand looking at the Old Testament. In Jeremiah 22 verse 29, "O earth, earth, earth hear the word of the Lord." God's going to speak and He speaks and he's speaking to Jeconiah; Jeconiah the king. "Write this man childless. A man that shall not prosper in his day, for no man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah." Now the Messianic line from Judah to David flows from David to Jeconiah, sometimes called Coniah, and he was evil, unfaithful and God cursed him. And he said write the man childless. Now that doesn't mean he never had any children. We know he had some children. First Chronicles, chapter 3 I think it is, tells us about them. But it goes on in the verse to say no man of his seed will prosper and sit on the throne of David and rule in Judah. And listen to me, I want you to know that this guy is in the Messianic line. So here's the prophet and he's saying, "I know that the Messiah is coming from the line of Judah." But how can he do that when the line of Judah is corrupted at the point of Tamar? How can that be a pure line and then it's purified in the tenth generation with David and he's back on track. Yes he'll come out of the loins of David and he'll flow out of David and you come to Jeconiah and all of a sudden God says one thing about this guy, nobody ever coming out of his loins will be a king in Israel. And you say that is the end of it. It's over.

The Messiah was to be a king. He was to inherit the throne. He was to follow the royal line. But when you come to Jeconiah it's over. And would you like to know something interesting? There haven't

been any kinds since Jeconiah. There haven't been any. He was the last one. There haven't been any kings in Israel since him. That prophecy came to pass. There haven't been any. There never will be who will come out of his loins. Never. Look at Matthew chapter 1. Let me show you something absolutely fascinating. Now we saw down in verse 6 when we came to David and then there's Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehosaphat. It goes down through these kings. It comes all the way down to verse 11: "and Josiah begat Jeconiah and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon." That was the end of the Monarchy. He was the last king and no king ever came out of his loins because of his evil. So all the guys that followed after him, Shealtiel, Zerubbabel, Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Sadoc – all those – they never reigned on the throne. They had the right but they never reigned because the curse was there.

And you come to verse 16 and Jacob begat Joseph. You know something about Joseph? If there hadn't been a curse to Jeconiah and if Palestine hadn't been occupied by the Romans, guess who would have been the king of Israel? Who would it have been? Joseph. He would have been the king. But he couldn't be the king. He couldn't be the king because he was cursed in that sense. You can see the dilemma can't you? So there's no king but the right to rule is there. The legal right to rule is there, it's just that if you come out of the loins of Jeconiah you can't take your scepter. Hmm, how are we going to get a king out of this deal? I'll tell you how. Luke chapter 3, and see how the New Testament resolves this mystery. The kingly line came from David through his son Solomon, right? We just saw it. Look at this line, 3:31, Melea, Menna, Mattatha – Luke 3:31 – who was the son of Nathan, who was the son of David. This is the genealogy of Mary. Now listen. David had more than one child. The royal line came through Solomon, the right to the throne. The royal blood also came through his other son Nathan. Mary was a descendent of Nathan, thus she carried royal blood but not the right to the throne. Joseph had the right to the throne but couldn't take it because his seed was cursed. How are you going to resolve this? Go back to Matthew chapter 1 and watch this. Verse 16: "And Jacob begat Joseph" – listen - "the husband of Mary." Not the father of Jesus, right? "The husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus called Christ."

Listen, you know how the mystery was solved? If Jesus had been born of the seed of Joseph he never could have taken the throne. Because Joseph was not his physical father he was not cursed, but because he was his legal father he inherited the right to the throne without the curse of Jeconiah and he got the royal blood from Mary. Nobody could have figured that out but God. People say, "I don't know if the virgin birth is important." Then you're a fool because you're going to leave the Bible with mysteries that can't be solved.

Can I give you another one? Daniel chapter 2 verse 34. Daniel sees a vision of all the world empires and in the middle of this vision it all of a sudden starts a great event in verse 34, "A stone cut out without hands smote the image on its feet that were of iron and clay broken to pieces. Then were the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, the gold, broke into pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them. And

the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” What Daniel sees is this great image of all the world empires and when they are standing there in all their glory comes this stone cutout without hands. That is not a human being, not made from human sources in terms of this event. This is a stone cutout without hands. No man has anything to do with this. This is representative of Jesus Christ. He comes in his glory, smashes the image, that is destroys the kingdoms of men. His person fills the earth and becomes a whole mountain.

This is a picture of the second coming of Jesus Christ. He comes a glorious conqueror in stone. A stone of triumph, a stone of victory, a smiting stone, a crushing stone, a devastating stone, a stone of judgment. And so when they looked for a Messiah they saw a crushing stone. Listen to what Isaiah said in chapter 8 verse 14, “And he shall be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense both to the houses of Israel for a trap and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble and fall and be broken and snared and be taken.” And here you get a further picture of this stone. It is a stone of stumbling. It is a stone of offense, a rock of offense, a stumbling stone, a crushing, and a smiting stone of judgment.

But then we get further in Isaiah’s prophesy, chapter 28 verse 16. Listen to what he says. “Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation of stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation. He that believeth shall not be ashamed or confused.” And now all of a sudden it isn’t a stumbling stone and a rock of offense and a crushing, smiting stone of judgment, it’s a precious stone, a cornerstone, a tested stone, a sure foundation. Mystery. In Psalm 118:22 it says it’s a rejected stone, a stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner, the one that they threw away. They said we’re not putting that in our building, it’s not right, became the foundation for everything.

And the mystery in the mind of the reader must be how can one person be all these kinds of stones, a precious stone, a cornerstone, a cherished stone, a tested stone, a sure foundation and at the same time a smiting stone, a smashing stone, a crushing stone, a rock of offense and a stumbling stone? How can all of this be? Again, blessed are yours for they hear and your eyes for they see. Peter resolves it in 1 Peter chapter 2 and they can only be resolved in Jesus Christ. He says in verse 6: “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone elect and precious. And he who believeth on him shall not be confounded.” And he quotes the prophet of old: “Unto you therefore who believe he is precious, but unto them who are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” And he just pulls together all of those prophesies with the exception of Daniel’s. And he says if you believe he is a precious cornerstone, if you reject he is a crushing, smiting, stumbling stone. And the mystery is resolved.

It’s not easy to understand Jesus Christ if you do it on your own. That’s why you can’t read the Old Testament without the New or you’ll be mystified. That’s why you can’t read either without the instructing mind of the Spirit of God because the human mind cannot perceive the reality of Christ. Can I bring you just one other, and I’ll just allude to it. Genesis 49 said Judah was a lion and that the

Messiah would come out of Judah and thus the Messiah would be a lion, fierce, powerful, and deadly. The last prophet of the Old Testament was John the Baptist. Even though it writes about him in the New Testament he's really the last of the Old Testament prophets. When he came he didn't say the Messiah was a lion, he pointed to the Messiah and said he's a what? He's a lamb.

John 136: "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." How can he be a lion and a lamb? How can he be a tearing, fierce, ferocious, deadly lion and a gentle, meek lamb and how can he be on the one hand a tearing, dangerous lion and the other hand a lamb? Well, he is. Revelation sees him that way in chapter 5. It says "Weep not the tribe of Judah, the root of David hath prevailed to open the scroll and loose its seven seals. And I beheld and lo in the midst of the throne the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb." They called for a lion, they get a lamb. You say well how can this be? Perspective. To those who reject Jesus Christ he's a lion. For those who accept him he's a lamb.

Christmas doesn't need to be mysterious. We don't have to follow some unimaginable hoax about Jesus. Jesus put it this way: "Search the Scriptures," – right, John 5:39, "for in them you realize you have eternal life and there they would speak of me." All mystery in the Old Testament is unraveled and revealed in the living Lord Jesus Christ. And Beloved, I really believe that one of the greatest validating proofs of Christianity is the harmonization of contradictory, paradoxical prophecies of the Old Testament that find total resolution in Jesus Christ. They could never be counterfeit. And he is who he said he was, the Christ of God, the Savior of the world. Let's pray.

Our Father, we acknowledge that our minds are unable to resolve even the truth You've given us except that we take both testaments and be taught by the Spirit of God. Thank you, Father, that you laid down such prophecies to mystify even the saints so that even the well meaning could never counterfeit them, let alone the critics and unbelievers. Thank you that the credentials of the Messiah are so divine, so other worldly, so supernatural, that every event and circumstance and element is so totally controlled by Your sovereignty that there is no other explanation than that Jesus Christ is all in all, everything promised; the suffering Savior and the glorious King.

And that when we understand how it all harmonizes in Him, His birth, His sinless life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His intercession and His soon return, we know we hold in our hands the very Word of God. Father, it's our prayer that each of us would bow the knee to Jesus Christ, the living Christ, who was born in fulfillment of all the words of the prophets and will, in His own time, bring all things to pass and fulfill every word spoken of Him. Father, we ask that every heart would be open to Christ, first to know Him as Savior and Lord, secondly to walk in obedience, submission and love to His Word. While your heads are bowed in just a parting moment, if you do not know Jesus Christ you are defying the truth of God. You are acting independent of the greatest revealed reality in the history of the world.

There is nothing for which there is equal evidence to compare to the truth that Jesus is God in human flesh, the Savior who came to die and rise again, forgive your sin, give you eternal life. Believe it. Only a fool would not. And if it is true and you've given Him your life and received His salvation, then walk in joyous obedience and submission to His holy purpose.

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