

General Church Education



# Family Lessons: Christmas Prophecies

[Family Talk](#)      [Level 3](#)

[Level 1](#)              [Level 4](#)

[Level 2](#)              [Level 5](#)

## Family Lesson 35 - A

## *Christmas Prophecies*

### **Family Talk: CHRISTMAS PROPHECIES**

*“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

Looking ahead to Christmas is always exciting. It is fun to think about Christmas time, to think about the wonderful things that can happen on Christmas day. Of course, when you think of Christmas you may be thinking about the presents you’re hoping to get, or about some special holiday time that you’re going to share with your friends. Perhaps you’re looking forward with excitement to decorating your home, and to setting up the Christmas tree with all the pretty lights and balls. There are many, many things that you can look forward to with excitement about Christmas. Each year, as you are reminded about it, you can expect that excitement to quicken once again. “Only 20 more days to Christmas,” “Only 10 more days,” and so forth, always cause excitement as you look ahead to the happy time ahead.

Imagine a world without Christmas. Imagine a world where no one knew what really happened on Christmas day, where no one celebrated the birth of the Lord as a little baby in Bethlehem. If you can imagine such a world, you know how people before the Lord came into the world must have felt. You look ahead to Christmas with excitement. Imagine how people much have looked ahead to the very first Christmas. For thousands of years people had been wondering when Christmas would happen. They knew that it would happen, but when? Why do you know that people, before the Lord's birth into the world, knew that He was going to be born? The answer is found in many places in the Old Testament. Again and again, in the Old Testament, people were told by the Lord that He would come. The Word contains many of these statements. They are called Christmas prophecies, because they predict the Lord’s coming. Many of them remind you of Christmas: *“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”* *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”* *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel.”* *“I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near.”* *“The scepter shall not depart out of Judah until Shiloh comes.”*

Those are just a few of the predictions about the Lord’s coming that we find in the Old Testament. In all, there are seventy-six different Christmas prophecies. Each of them reminded people of the coming of the Lord and so helped them to

capture the excitement of what would happen. Just as you look ahead with excitement to Christmas, so people, when they heard the prophecies, looked ahead with excitement to the Lord's coming. They could understand that the Lord would be born on earth. This was a very important thing for people at that time, because it helped them understand who the Lord was. It helped them understand that the Lord was a perfect Man, someone who could love them; someone who had made them in His image; and so someone whom they could love as well.

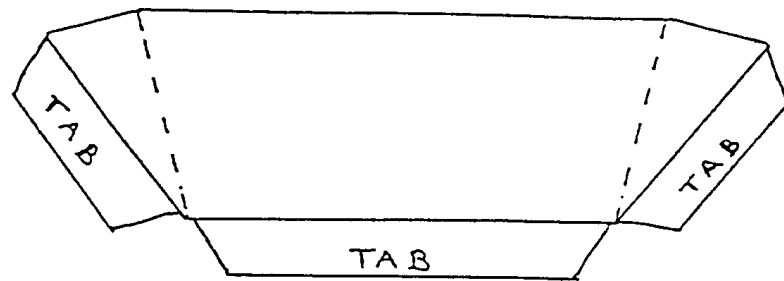
You know that these predictions about the Lord's coming on earth did come true. The very first Christmas did happen. After that people wanted to tell other people about the Lord's birth into the world. So after His birth, when Christians wanted to tell people who the Lord was, that He really had kept His promises and come into the world, they used these same predictions about His coming to help show people that He had come. Think of it. If someone had told you about something that was going to happen, and he was right in every detail, you would believe that he had special knowledge. The Lord, of course, has special knowledge. So the Lord not only can have one person tell about His coming, but the Lord can have hundreds of people, over thousands of years, again and again, tell people about His coming. This very fact helps us to understand that it really was the Lord who was born in the world on Christmas day. For this reason all the predictions about Christmas are important to us as well as to people who were waiting for His coming.

Let us, then, as we hear the wonderful prophecies of the Lord's coming, the beautiful predictions of His birth into the world, remember that the Lord Himself was born on earth as a little baby in a manger, in Bethlehem of Judea, a little Child who grew up to rule over all the heavens as King of kings and Lord of lords. What an exciting time Christmas is. What a wonderful time, full of surprises, full of awe. Certainly, when we think of Christmas we can rejoice, we can be filled with the glad tidings that the angels proclaimed to the shepherds when they said: **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!”**

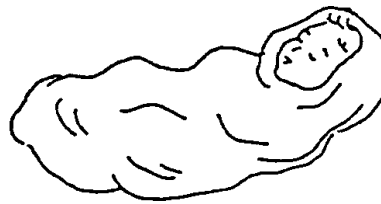
## ***Christmas Prophecies***

### **LEVEL 1 – FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN**

Cut this out. Fold back tabs and fold at dotted lines. Glue tabs to manger in the picture (the next page).



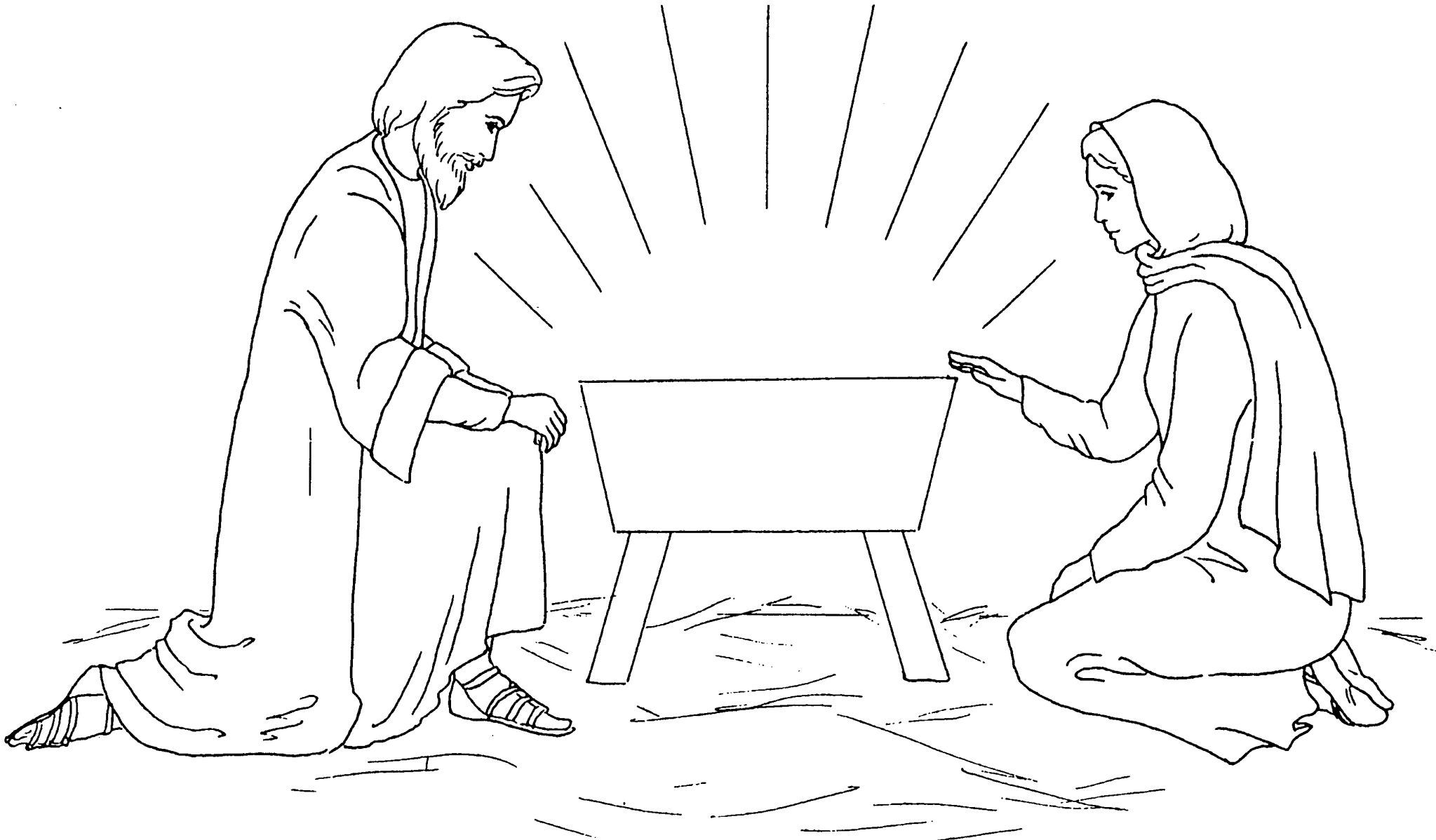
Put some hay or yellow grass in the manger.



Cut out the Baby Lord and gently lay Him in the manger.

Now you can say the prophecy "for unto us a Child is born."

For unto us a child is born



***Christmas Prophecies***  
**LEVEL 2 – PROPHECY COMING TRUE**

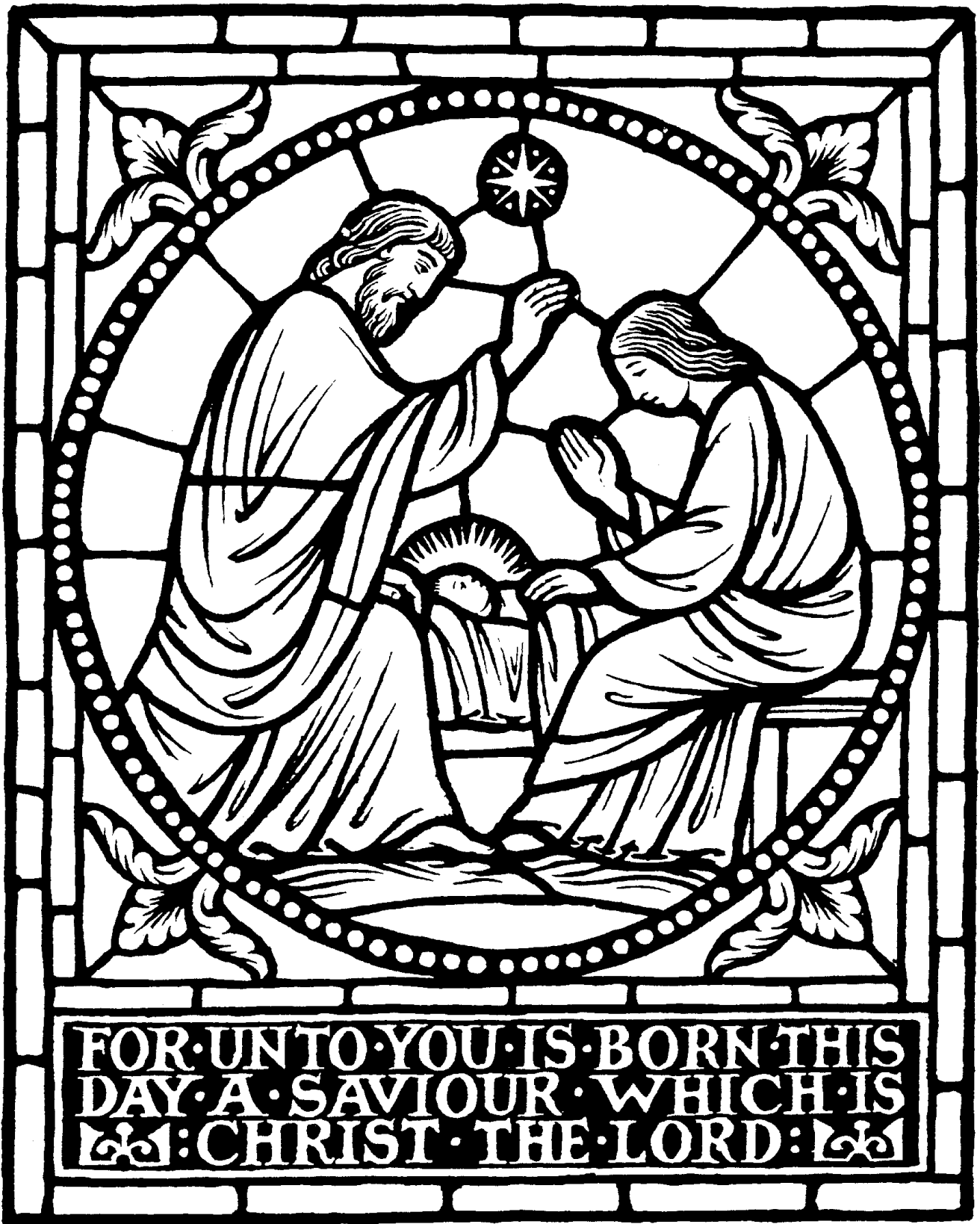
1. Memorize this prophecy from Isaiah:

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah 9:6

Help your child to memorize this prophecy, or a younger child could simply repeat the phrases as you say them

2. Look at the picture on the next page.  
The picture shows how the prophecy came true.  
Ask your child to tell you details of what he or she sees in the picture.
3. Color the picture.  
Use crayons, markers, or paint.







## **Christmas Prophecies**

### **LEVEL 3 – THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH**

In many places in the Old Testament, prophecies were given. These gave the people on earth hope that no matter how evil the world became, the Lord would come someday to save them. When the Lord was actually born on earth, these prophecies helped the people know He was really the Lord.

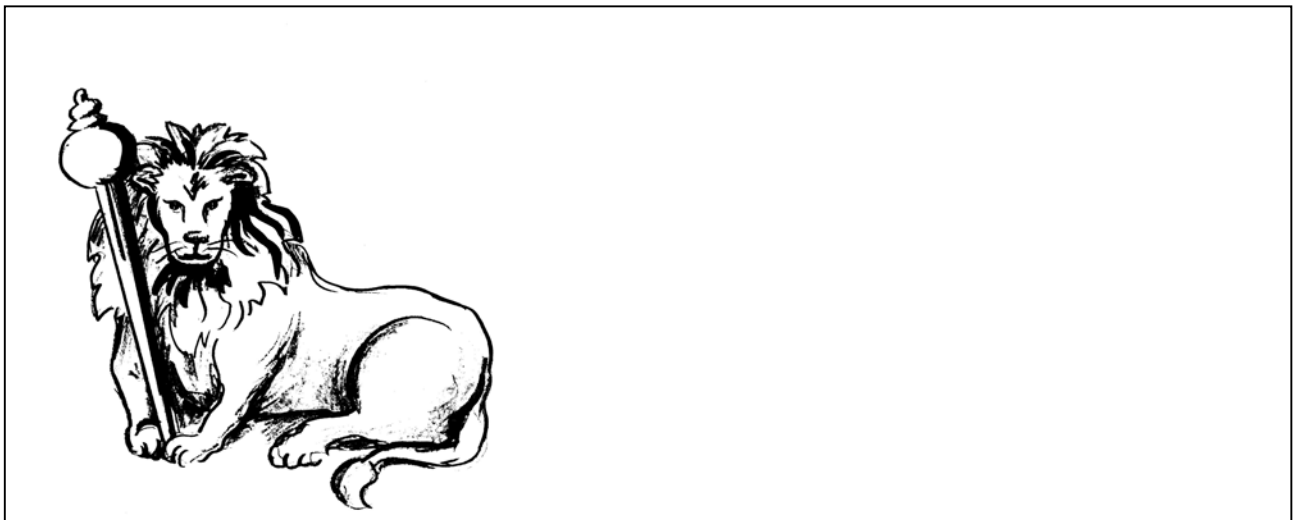
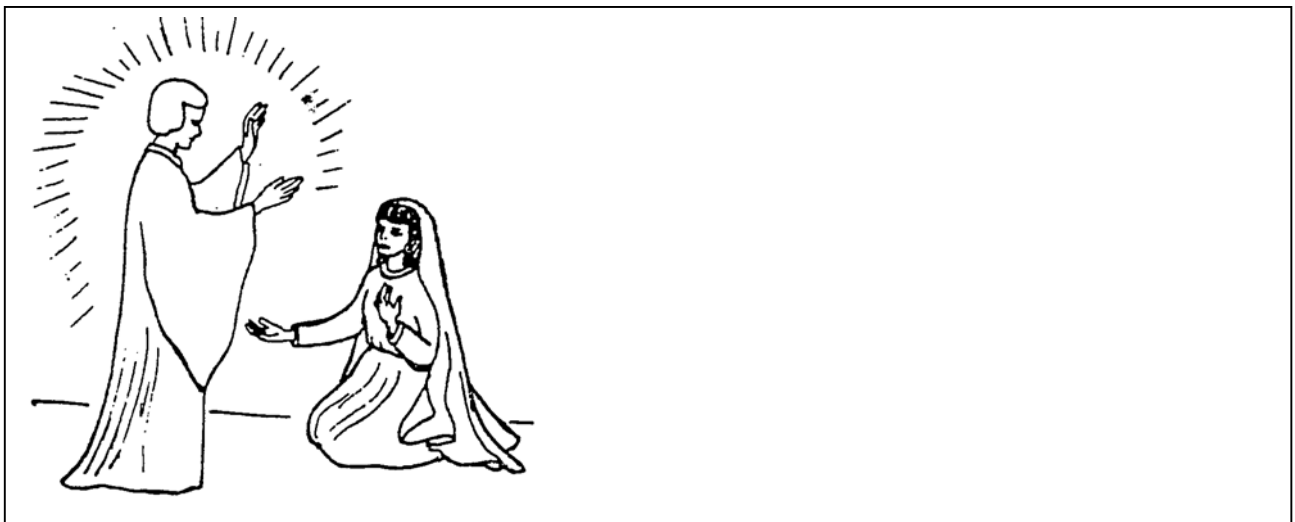
Read the prophecies listed below. Then decide which picture on pages 3 and 4 belongs with each prophecy. For each picture, write the book, chapter and verse of the prophecy it shows. Write in your own words what part of the Christmas story you think the prophecy is telling about or how you know the prophecy means the Lord will be born. (*If you need help, on page 2 you will find some verses in Matthew and Luke you can look at for hints.*)

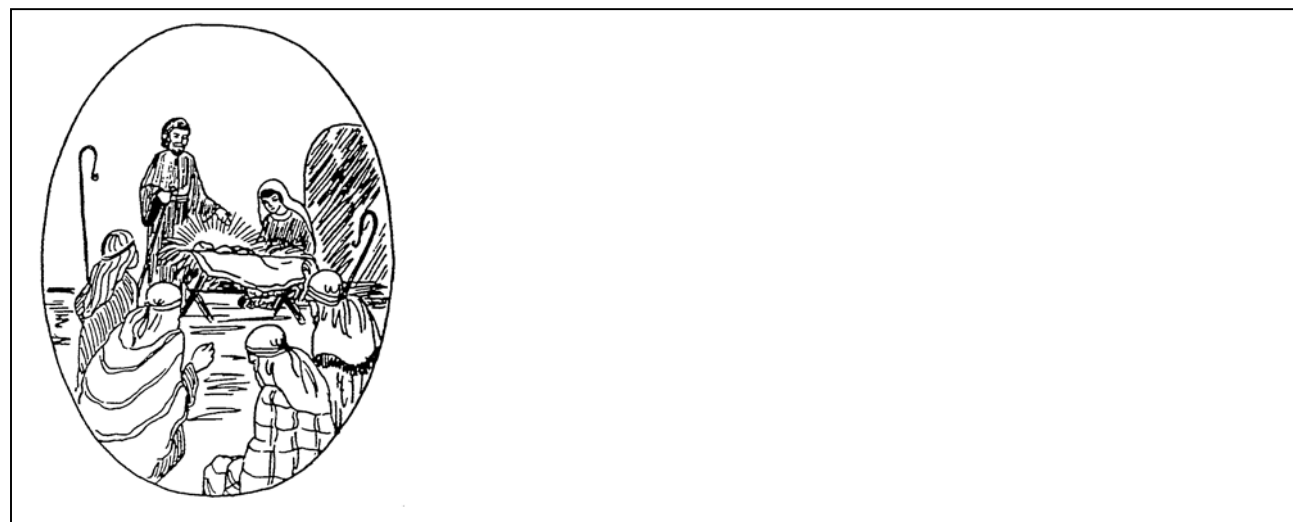
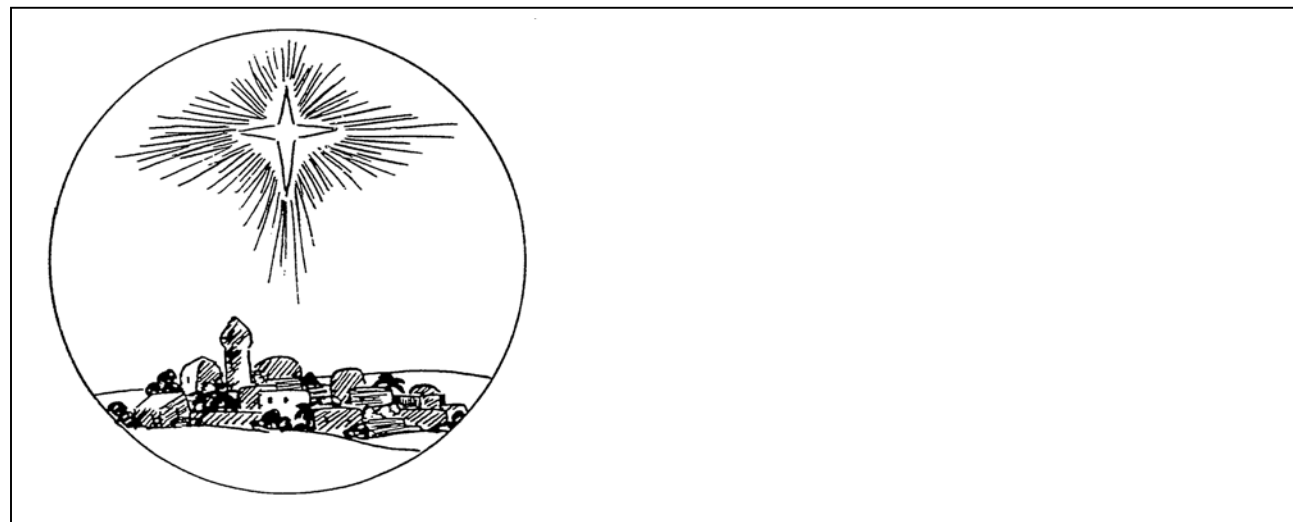
The four pictures on the corners come from *The Birth Day of the Lord* by Noel and Mildred McQueen and illustrated by Mary Cooper. The other two were drawn by Marguerite Acton.

1. Genesis 49:10: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes;..."
2. Numbers 24:17: "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob;..."
3. 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."
4. Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
5. Isaiah 11:1: "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."
6. Micah 5:2: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

IF YOU NEED HELP, READ THESE VERSES

- 1, Matthew 1:2 and 3 (A scepter is a special kind of short rod which is a king or queen's symbol of power.)
2. Matthew 2:1 and 2
3. Luke 1:26-33
4. Luke 2:11-20
5. Matthew 1:5 and 6  
Luke 1:32 and 33
6. Matthew 2:3-6





## Christmas Prophecies

### LEVEL 4 – FINDING THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHECIES

The following references are prophecies in the Old Testament about the Lord's coming on earth. Look up the place in the Word, write out the verse, and answer the following questions about them.

#### 1. Genesis 3:15

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- To whom is the Lord speaking? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who is the woman? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who is the seed of the woman? \_\_\_\_\_
- What will the Lord's heel do to the serpent's head? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who is the serpent? (hint: See Rev. 12:9) \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Genesis 49:10

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- To which son was Jacob speaking? (hint: see Genesis 49:8 & Psalm 60:7)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Who will take the scepter from Judah? \_\_\_\_\_
- What will people do when Shiloh comes? \_\_\_\_\_
- What will happen to those who do not gather to him? (hint: see Luke 11:23)  
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**3. Numbers 24:17**

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a. Who spoke these words? \_\_\_\_\_

b. What does this prophecy have in common with Genesis 49:10?  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. What kind of person would be identified with this thing?  
\_\_\_\_\_

d. Who is the person referred to? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Psalm 68:18**

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a. Make a list of the things the Lord would do.  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Why should the Lord do these things?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Isaiah 11:1**

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a. A rod is a symbol of \_\_\_\_\_.

b. We know that the Lord was to be born of the house and lineage of David. Therefore, we can guess that Jesse was probably the \_\_\_\_\_ of David.

c. Who is the Branch? \_\_\_\_\_

d. What is the clue that tells us that He is the Branch?

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**6. Daniel 7:13, 14**

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a. Write out the four things the Lord is called in these verses.

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**7. Micah 5:2**

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a. Tell how Bethlehem was not important and how it would be important.

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**8. Malachi 3:1-3** (*copy just the first verse*)

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a. List three occupations mentioned in these verses.

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b. Who was the messenger: (hint: see *Isaiah* 40:3 and *Matthew* 3:1-3)

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## **Christmas Prophecies**

### **LEVEL 5 – THE CHRISTMAS PROPHECIES**

Scattered throughout the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, we find repeated predictions of the Lord's Advent.

#### **What Was the Purpose of Prophecies About the Messiah?**

As we look at these prophecies we may wonder at their implications.

- ❖ Did the prophecy of the coming Messiah in any way predestine people (that is, force people to do things they didn't want to do)?
- ❖ What was the purpose of Messianic prophecy? What did it accomplish historically for the people of the church who lived before the Lord's birth?
- ❖ What did it provide for the angels at that time?
- ❖ What did it provide for the Christian Church as it struggled to spread in a pagan world
- ❖ And most important, what do these beautiful sayings give to the New Church man seeking conjunction with the Lord?

#### **The Purpose of Creation**

To answer these questions we first need to understand the purpose of creation. All people were born to be conjoined with the Lord in the happiness of heavenly life.

Conjunction is effected by uniting two distinct paths. The one is a path which we can prepare for ourselves, while the other is provided by the Lord. The one is the path of truth, while the other is the path of love. Truth is learned. It comes to us by our senses, the things we read and experience. Good is felt. It comes from the Lord from within.

To love the Lord, both good and truth must be present. The *feeling* needs the *form*. Jesus Christ provided this form while He walked on earth teaching and miraculously healing people. He could be touched and acknowledged as the One God in whom was all power. Today we may also read the story of these events as they have been preserved in the Word, and rejoice in our knowledge of God now visible in the truth of revelation.

But before the Advent such sight was impossible. Experience of God in Most Ancient times was limited. The people of the Most Ancient Church saw angels who represented the Lord. So the Lord was known by means of instruction by angels. The Lord Himself was invisible at that time. But He did not need to be seen in His Human form since people could feel this form represented in all the various things of His creation. Love inflowing brought conjunction.

## **The Fall**

However, with the fall, when Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, it became necessary that the Lord come in person to restore conjunction between people and Himself. Had He not come, and provided experience of Himself as a Man, no one could have been saved. Had the Lord not made Himself visible to us in His true Human form, all life on earth would have perished, since there would have been no conjunction with Him.

For this reason, the first of the prophecies was given at the fall. God said to the serpent: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (*Gen. 3:15*).

Prophecy is the forecasting of facts which will follow a present event. The part of the prophecy about the bruising of the heel predicts the agony of the cross. The prophecy also predicts the virgin birth. It is the seed of the woman which will provide the medium whereby the Messiah will come. The angels of the celestial heaven well knew that God could not be born of a human father. They knew that if the Lord had been born of anything but Jehovah, He could never have conquered the hells by successively putting off evil and putting on His proper Divine Humanity.

The prophetic message *foresaw* facts already determined by the free choices of people—it did not destroy future free choices. Freedom, in fact, would have been destroyed had God not come, once man freely chose the path of evil.

## **Past Choice and Future Choice**

Choices we have made freely in the past limit the area of choice we have in the future. But they don't take them away.

For example, your mother freely decides to bake a cake, and because she does this you are free to eat it or not. If, in her freedom, she never made the cake, you would never be able to choose to eat it or not. The consequences of her cake-making affects the *kinds of choices* you have, but don't take away your *freedom to choose*.

Such is the relationship between prophecy and freedom. The one never destroys the other, although former free acts will limit future ones. Divine prophecy, then, is the Divine foresight of what will follow from a present state, and since with God such sight is perfect, prophecy also is perfect.

### **1. WHY DON'T PROPHECIES PREDESTINE PEOPLE?**

But what was the use of prophecy? Why didn't the Lord simply come on earth at the fall? Why was it necessary for thousands of years to pass before this blessed event?

The fact is that if the Lord had come at that time, we would have ignored Him, or worse still, profaned His truth. Judgment is only possible when a state is full. Only after the evils, which began in people's minds with the fall, had come completely out in the open was it possible for judgment and new conjunction with God to take place.

Further, the fall had necessitated a new way of conjoining with God by means of a written Word. Since that Word also had to provide a correspondential medium between heaven and earth, this preparation, if it was to preserve human freedom, necessarily would take time. The whole Word of the Old Testament had to be written while the freedom of everyone was protected.

## 2. WHY DID IT TAKE SO LONG FOR THE LORD TO COME AFTER "ADAM" AND "EVE" LEFT "EDEN?"

A final reason for the long delay in God's coming was that the Advent was not necessary until it happened. Why, if the first prediction of the Messiah occurred at the fall, can we say the Advent was not necessary until several thousands of years later?

As we have seen, the purpose of the Advent was conjunction with God. Such conjunction was possible with people after the fall. They had a written Word that they could see as truth. In its pages, **because of prophecies** concerning the coming Messiah, they could worship God in the human form. They could draw from the pages of their Word a doctrine concerning God-Man, because God had told them prophetically that He would come on earth as a Man. Here is a most important use of messianic prophecy. By means of such prophecies people who lived before the Advent could think of the Lord as a Man, and so love Him.

It was these prophecies, and this doctrine of a future God-Man which enabled the Lord to prepare a remnant of good people with whom He could establish His Christian Church - Mary, Joseph, Simeon, the Apostles, and thousands of the early Jewish converts. All accepted Christ as the Messiah, God-Man.

## 3. WHY WERE PROPHECIES ABOUT HIS COMING IMPORTANT TO PEOPLE WHO LIVED BEFORE THE LORD'S BIRTH?

But the prophecies were not given just as a holding action until the Advent could take place. They had real value in the Christian Church, and also have value for us.

From Matthew onward, Christians confirmed their belief in God as Man by the fact that the prophecies were fulfilled in Him. Again and again we read the words: "that it might be fulfilled which was written by the prophet...."



### **ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN THE "CHRISTMAS PROPHECIES" LESSON**

1. They tell the consequences of the present choices people make, not the future choices of people. Mother'’ making a cake means I will have to choose whether to eat it or not, but I'm still free to choose.
  
2. People had to make free choices to do what was needed, including writing all of the Old Testament Word.
  
3. They helped them see Jehovah as a Divine Man. Kept the idea of God as Man alive.
  
4. They used them to confirm the truth that Jesus is Jehovah and therefore is God.
  
5. Prophecies:
  - Help us confirm the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ as God.
  - Help us see that God is a perfect Man.
  - Help us see how the Lord works in His government of the human race.