

We all know that Advent is a time of longing and waiting. For hundreds of years the children of Israel waited for the coming of the Messiah. The last prophetic messenger to herald Christ's coming was John the Baptist who said: ***"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths"***

Archbishop Fulton Sheen made an argument that of the many reasons why we should believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and believe His message is that He is the only figure in history who was pre-announced. Many people in history have claimed to have come from God in some new and definitive way or that they have a special message from Him and that they should be listened to - Mohammed, Joseph Smith, Buddha, and Jesus of Nazareth, to name a few.

Mohammed and Joseph Smith, who founded Mormonism, came with new books and revelations they claimed came from God, but neither they nor their followers claim that the Bible pointed to them. Buddha didn't intend to even found a religion, but rather show a path of wisdom that was not anticipated by prophets or sages.

It would be fitting that if God would reveal something about Himself in a not just new, but definitive and final a way, that humanity should be able to see it coming when it happens. Car makers even let us know when a new model is coming. When the pope visits a country he doesn't just show up at the airport and say *"I'm the pope, listen to me."* There is much planning and verifying beforehand in anticipation of his coming.

The Old Testament is full of anticipation for the coming Messiah who would save His people from their sins. No one prophecy alone would convince, but taken as a whole they are unmistakable. It's amazing to think that on the human level the Old Testament was compiled over the course of centuries, and it points to, and is fulfilled by Jesus.

Here are some of the prophetic reminders - Moses spoke of a coming of a new prophet: ***"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, - it is to him you shall listen"*** (Dt. 18:15). But Deuteronomy also said that ***"Since then no prophet has arisen like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."*** This is the passage the disciples were thinking of when they said ***"We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote"*** (Jn. 1:45).

There are the numerous passages describing how the Messiah would be in the line of King David. There are other prophecies about the Messiah's birth. Isaiah says that He would be born of a virgin. Micah says that He would be born in Bethlehem.

There are passages describing how the Christ would suffer. The prophet Isaiah says things about a Suffering Servant that could easily be mistaken as coming from the New Testament; ***"He was pierced for our offenses...by His stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following His own way; But the Lord laid upon Him the guilt of us all"*** (Is. 53:6).

There are the words of Psalm 22 that Christ Himself began on the cross ***"They pierced My hands and My feet...they stare and gloat over Me; they divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots."*** These were all true of the Lord on his cross!

The last of the Old Testament prophets is represented by St. John the Baptist. He was also looking for the consolation of Israel and heralded His coming. He also asked the Lord ***"Are you the one is to come, or should we look for another?"*** Jesus responded by saying ***"The blind see, the lame walk...and the good news is preached to the poor."***

Of all the people in history there was only one who's coming was foretold, so let's listen to the herald's message: ***"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths."***

God bless,

Fr. Mike

***"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths."
- Lk 3:4***