

# 25 Days of Advent

## Seeing Jesus Through the Eyes of the Christmas Story Characters

### ADVENT DAY 22: Dec. 22 – Isaiah, the Messianic Prophet

#### Devotional

The story of Jesus saturates the Bible narrative and prophecies of His first Advent are found throughout the Old Testament. One scholar, J. Barton Payne, found as many as 574 verses in the Old Testament that somehow point to or describe or reference the coming Messiah. Alfred Edersheim found 456 Old Testament verses referring to the Messiah. Conservatively, Jesus fulfilled at least 300 prophecies in His earthly ministry.

As one of the major prophets, the book of Isaiah has many of those prophecies, perhaps more than any other book of the Old Testament. In fact, Isaiah 53 is the most quoted Old Testament passage in the New Testament. Maybe that's why Matthew quotes Isaiah in the story of Jesus' birth (Matthew 1:23). Jesus himself quotes Isaiah when he announces who He is at the start of His ministry (Luke 4:21).

We just can't look at the birth of Jesus without considering the many prophecies He fulfilled, and Isaiah is the best place to find those predictions. Known as the "Shakespeare of the prophets," Isaiah has often been called the "evangelical prophet" because of his incredibly clear and detailed messianic prophecies – all written nearly 800 years before Christ.

Someone calculated that the 36 details about the Messiah in chapter 53 alone have a 1 out of 68,719,476,736 chance of fulfillment by one person. Jesus fulfilled all of them in His first coming. Yet, there are many more prophecies by Isaiah, and these are astoundingly accurate. Here are just a few found in Isaiah:

- God promised to send a Son who would be "God with us" ("Emmanuel"). (Isa. 7:14, 8:10)
- God promised that a virgin would conceive. Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived. (Isa. 7:14)
- God promised a "stone" that people would trip over. Jesus is our cornerstone. (Isa. 8:14-15)
- God promised David His Spirit would rest on his offspring. Jesus is that offspring. (Isa. 11:1-2)
- God promised a time when the blind would see. Jesus healed the blind. (Isa. 29:18, 35:5)
- God promised a time when the deaf would hear. Jesus healed the deaf. (Isa. 35:5)
- God promised a time when the lame would be healed. Jesus healed the lame. (Isa. 35:6)
- God promised a time when the mute would speak. Jesus healed the mute. (Isa. 35:6)
- God is the shepherd who tends His sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. (Isa. 40:10-11)
- God will send His servant as a light to the Gentiles. Jesus is a light to the Gentiles. (Isa. 42:6)
- He will not be rebellious or turn away. Jesus obeyed God all the way to the cross. (Isa. 50:5)
- Isaiah speaks of one who will be beaten and spit upon. Jesus was beaten and spit upon. (Isa. 50:6)
- The Suffering Servant will be so abused He will not look human. Jesus was beaten, whipped, crucified, and pierced by a spear. (Isa. 52:14)
- He will be despised and rejected by His own people. He will bear the abuse we deserve for our physical and spiritual healing. Jesus' tormentors rejected Him and spit in His face. (Isa. 53:4-5)
- The Suffering Servant will bear our sins. Jesus bore our sins. (Isa. 53:6)
- The Suffering Servant is like a lamb that does not defend itself. Although Jesus spoke during His trials, He never offered a defense. (Isa. 53:7)
- The Suffering Servant's people did not protest His death. Only Pilate protested Jesus' death. (Isa. 53:8)
- The Suffering Servant will die with the wicked. Jesus died with the two thieves. (Isa. 53:9)

- The Suffering Servant will be buried in the grave of a rich man. Jesus was buried in the grave of Joseph of Arimathea. (Isa. 53:9)
- God ordained that the Suffering Servant would suffer and die. God sent Jesus to die. (Isa. 53:10)
- The Suffering Servant's sacrifice offers forgiveness of sins. Jesus' sacrifice offers forgiveness of our sins. (Isa. 53:11)
- The Suffering Servant will intercede for His abusers. Jesus asked God to forgive those who crucified Him. (Isa. 53:12)
- God promises someone to declare good news for the brokenhearted, captives, and prisoners. Jesus is that someone. (Isa. 61:1 – verse Jesus quotes in announcing who he was)

In addition to his prophecies of Christ, Isaiah is where that famous verse we so often quote comes from: "Here am I; send me." (Isa. 6:8). Are we ready to be sent?

## Look Up – Connect with God

**Read:** Take any one (or 2 or 3) of these prophetic verses and talk about how they were fulfilled in Jesus. Discuss the probabilities any one man could fulfill even a small percentage of those prophecies. Marvel at God's handiwork and wonder why it's so difficult for people to accept the truth of who Jesus is.

**Key Verse:** "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

**Pray:** Lord, open our eyes to see, hear, and understand your truth. Thank you for providing such compelling evidence that Jesus is your son. Deepen our faith to believe what you say, always. We are ready to serve you.

## Look In – Family Memories

**Discuss:** Which of the prophecies is most compelling to you? What does that do for your faith?

### Activity:

- Advent Tree: select a dove or scroll ornament and put it on the tree. [Download Ornaments](#) or [Ornament Ideas](#)
- Advent Garland: put the key verse on a paper/card, assign #22, and attach it to the garland twine. [Key Verses](#)
- Advent Cards: select a card and see what the activity might be (i.e., watch a movie about Jesus). [Family Activities](#)

## Look Out – Connect with Others

Bring a plate of Christmas goodies to a neighbor or two, along with an invitation for them to join you at Christmas services at your church.