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The Masterpiece of Messianic Prophecy

Layers of Beauty

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The image above is a collage of 40 photographs I took in Mark Gingerich's oil painting class in 2014. Mark painted this woman with 40 strokes. Each image shows the next stroke Mark added until the painting was completed.

These layers illustrate the beauty that emerges every time we study the prophets of the Old Testament! The prophets spoke messages from the Lord by the Holy Spirit for their current time; but their messages often went beyond their own understanding with multiple fulfillments in the immediate and far futures. As we explore and bask in these writings over time, the Lord reveals more and more detail, richness, and understanding. Their truth brings joy and prepares us for the trials ahead.

Messianic prophecies foretell or reflect the events of the life of Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus) hundreds of years before His birth. Here are three types of Messianic prophecy. The examples are numerous; I will give a few, and you will discover more on your own:

1. **Foreshadows** are events in Israel's history that echo the life of Yeshua.

- **Moses** was hidden in Egypt; **Yeshua** was hidden in Egypt.
- **The Israelites** wandered in the wilderness for 40 years; **Yeshua** was in the wilderness for 40 days.
- **Moses** lifted a bronze serpent on a pole in the wilderness; when the Israelites looked at it, they were delivered from the biting serpents (a consequence of their grumbling); **Yeshua** was lifted on a pole. He became sin (represented by the serpent) so that sin could be killed. All who receive His sacrifice for sin are delivered! (Numbers 21:5-9; John 3:14-15; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
- When the blood of the **Passover lambs** was swashed around the doors of the Israelites's homes, they were delivered from God's judgment on the surrounding evil. The blood of **Yeshua**, the Passover Lamb of God, delivers us from judgment.
- The book of Hebrews is full of these foreshadows. For a full study, please see my Learning Tool *The Work of Rest*.

2. **Predictions** are direct prophecies about Yeshua.

- **Genesis 49:10-12**
"The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh (Messiah) comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. He ties his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine. He washes his garments in wine and his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes are dark like wine and his teeth whiter than milk."
- **Number 24:17**
"I see him but not now; I behold him but not near; a star shall come forth from Jacob, and a scepter shall rise from Israel..." (out of the mouth of Balaam, a reluctant prophet)

- **Jeremiah 33:14**
“In those days and at that time, I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth.”
- **Daniel 9:24-27** reveals when Messiah will come. The prophecies of Daniel correlate with those of Ezekiel and Revelation.
- **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**
These verses give a detailed account of Yeshua’s suffering 700 years before His birth.
- **Zechariah 9:9-10**
These verses foretell of Messiah’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem over 500 years before His birth!

3. **Hints** are bits and pieces of Israel’s history that are reflected in Yeshua’s life, the lives of His disciples, and in our lives. They come off the page as if they are highlighted and embossed to grab our attention in a new but timeless way!

- **Genesis 8:8-9**
“Then Noah sent out a dove from him to see if the water was abated from the face of the land, but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark to himself.”

The first time I read this passage years ago, I knew God had taken me into the ark of His heart where I found my resting place. In returning to Him, I found strength, safety, rest, and quiet trust.
- **Isaiah 35**
The prophets of the Old Testament gave messages for their current time; however, their messages often went beyond their own understanding with multiple fulfillments in the immediate and far futures. We see *hints* in their messages that connect to other portions of Scripture. To see these Isaiah 35 connections, please see my writing *The Highway and Messiah’s Return*!
- **Hosea 11:1**
“When Israel was a youth, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.”
This verse refers to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. No Messianic prophecy is suggested, yet Matthew reinterprets this verse when Joseph and Mary return from Egypt having fled there when Herod was searching for the children. (Matthew 2:13-15)

Prayer

Our Father, the Great I AM, Creator of the heavens and the earth and Lover of our souls,
The greatness of Your kindness matches the greatness of Your splendor! Thank You for the gift of Your words to us through the prophets, miraculously protected as a masterpiece to gaze upon, a gem to be explored, a tapestry more intricately woven than we can imagine – all reflecting the beauty of Your character and guiding our steps into truth! Teach us! Lead us! We lift our hands in praise to You!