

Greeting to you! The theme for our morning's meditation is that 'The Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ.' From the book of Genesis all the way to Malachi there are numerous references to the Messiah. As early as Genesis Chapter 3, God says, 'And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.' (Gen 3:15 NIV). This is normally known as *the Proto- Euangelion* or the first gospel which tells us that Satan will be a defeated foe though the struggle between human beings and Satan will continue to the end. However, the death blow will be affected by a human eventually on Satan.

The word Messiah in the Hebrew meant 'anointed' and in Greek the word is *Christos* from which we get our English word Christ. The Messiah was the great deliverer for whom the Jews waited and longed. One of the earliest disciples after he had met Jesus told a friend, 'We have found the Messiah,' and the gospel writer explains it as, 'The Christ' (John 1:41). The birth of Jesus is foretold by the prophet Isaiah, 'therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel' (Isaiah 7: 14) which Matthew confirms in his gospel. The coming of Jesus in human form fulfilled the promise of 'God with us'. In a similar manner Isaiah had promised about the ministry of Jesus as: 'The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn' (Isa 61:1-2 NIV). When Jesus began his ministry this was the passage that he read in the synagogue and at the end of the reading he said, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.' (Luke 4:21 NIV).

In the gospel reading from St. Luke, Jesus says, 'everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms.' This was the three-fold division of the Hebrew Bible, *Torah* (Law), *Neviim* (Prophets), and *Kethuvim* (Writings). In other words Jesus was saying that the entire Old Testament Scripture was talking about him as 'The Messiah who will suffer and rise from the dead after the third day and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations beginning at Jerusalem.' Jesus used prophecies of the Old Testament as powerful evidence when he spoke to the apostles after he had risen from the dead. On the road to Emmaus post resurrection he spoke to the two disciples, 'Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded unto them what was said in all the scripture concerning him' (Luke 24:26-27 NIV). These are important and significant words as He said that in those scriptures there were things about himself which were being fulfilled in his own life-story. "In all the scriptures" is how Jesus summed up the evidence. Describing some of these prophecies Jesus said; 'Moses wrote of me' (John 5: 46). Moses lived about fifteen hundred years before Jesus, though he was referring to Deuteronomy 18: 15 which read 'the Lord your God will raise up a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.' Moreover, in the covenant with David, God promises that a king from one of his descendants will rule forever (2 Samuel 7: 12- 13). Jesus is the one who fulfils this promise.

The climax of the life of Jesus was his death by crucifixion. The Old Testament word could not be clearer: 'Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa 53:4-6 NIV).

Peter spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, 'that he was not abandoned to the realm of the

dead, nor did his body see decay.' God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. In all this we see that God's word is fulfilled. In a similar manner he has promised that he will come back as judge. During this advent season we are called to prepare ourselves by waiting and watching for his second coming.

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