

The MESSIAH



REVEALING JESUS
IN THE OLD TESTAMENT



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SESSION 1



✿ OPENING PRAYER ✿

Lord Jesus Christ, from the beginning, You have been with Your people, leading, protecting, forgiving, and guiding them. Give us Your Holy Spirit, that we may see You through the eyes of Your Old Testament people. Amen.

✿ INTRODUCTION

The Bible can be a tricky book to understand. Sometimes it helps to remember that the entire Old Testament was written in the BC years, and all the books in the New Testament were written in the AD years. But since that change from BC to AD occurred during Jesus' earthly life, we can get the impression Jesus wasn't around in Old Testament times. If that's the case, what sense is there in looking for Him in the Old Testament?

But listen to what Jesus told the people of Jerusalem about the Old Testament:

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me. (JOHN 5:39)

The reason Jesus could say this is because He is the almighty Son of God who was begotten in eternity, before God created the heavens and the earth. He has always existed and always will exist. He was not far off, watching human history unfold, waiting for His day in the sun;

indeed, He was active among His people throughout the entire Old Testament, as we will see in the pages of this book.

We will search through each Old Testament book to see where Jesus appears or where His life and work are predicted. But first, it will be helpful to get a firm grasp of Jesus' earthly life and mission. Then, as we work our way through the Old Testament, we will know to which part of His life and work the Old Testament writers were pointing.

The Life of Jesus



FROM ETERNITY

The Gospel of John opens with a beautiful reminder that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was intricately involved when God created the heavens and the earth.

❖ Read John 1:1–5.

The world was made through the Word, God's Son, and nothing was made without Him. But at the right time, that Word became human and dwelt among us.

CONCEPTION, BIRTH, AND CHILDHOOD

Luke 1 records the angel Gabriel's visit to the Virgin Mary, as he announced to her that she would conceive and bear God's Son. She was to name Him Jesus. Luke 2 records His birth in Bethlehem.

❖ Read Luke 2:1–7.

All the events in the Bible took place on this earth in historical time. By faith, we can go to those places and times in spirit and see them through the eyes of eyewitnesses whose testimony is recorded for us in the Scriptures. So it was with the earthly life of Jesus Christ. He was born at a specific time and place in human history, which is why Luke mentions specific details about Caesar's



census. The Son of God was born in the town of Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling cloths, and laid in a manger.

How does it transform our approach to Christmas when we realize the baby lying in the manger was actually the eternal Son of God, through whom everything was created?

Jesus' childhood is recorded in Matthew 2 and Luke 2. After the Wise Men followed the star to Bethlehem, King Herod tried to kill the Christ Child. But having been warned in a dream, Joseph fled with Mary and Jesus to Egypt. After Herod died, Mary and Joseph made their way to Nazareth and raised Jesus there. Thus Jesus was known as "Jesus of Nazareth."

BAPTISM, TEMPTATION, AND GALILEAN MINISTRY

Matthew, Mark, and Luke each record Jesus going to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist when He was approximately thirty years old.

❖ Read Matthew 3:13–17.

Why is Jesus' Baptism so significant?

In His Baptism, Jesus took on Himself all sins—including those that were washed from us at our Baptism—in preparation for carrying them to the cross to destroy them. He also was anointed with the

Holy Spirit to carry out His ministry. That is why we call Him the *Christ*, or “Anointed One.”

His Baptism marked the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. He gathered twelve disciples and went throughout the villages and towns in the northern region of Galilee, teaching about God’s kingdom, healing diseases, casting out demons, and raising the dead. Jesus worked most of His greatest miracles around the Sea of Galilee. Most of this ministry is recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

JUDEAN MINISTRY

The Gospel of John records several events that occurred when Jesus brought His disciples to Jerusalem for various festivals. Most of these revealed the growing opposition He faced from the Jewish religious authorities.

HOLY WEEK

All four Gospels record Jesus’ last week on earth, which ended with His death and resurrection. Holy Week began with Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, as well as His teaching in the temple courts on Monday and Tuesday. Jesus’ actions and teachings angered the Jewish leaders but delighted the crowds.

Late on Thursday of Holy Week, Jesus and His disciples gathered in an upper room to celebrate the Passover. At that Last Supper, He washed His disciples’ feet, taught them about the Holy Spirit, and instituted the Sacrament of Holy Communion. After the meal, He led His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He prayed earnestly to the Father, finally submitting His will to His Father’s will. Then He was betrayed by Judas, one of His twelve disciples. Jesus was arrested and led to the high priest’s house.

DEATH

Jesus was tried by the Jewish high court and condemned early Friday morning for blasphemy (claiming to be the Son of God). The Jewish chief priests and religious leaders brought Him before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, for trial. Pilate declared Jesus not guilty of the charges against Him, but when pressured by the Jewish leaders

and the crowds who were shouting for Jesus' death, Pilate condemned Jesus to execution by crucifixion. Roman soldiers led Jesus to Calvary, where He was crucified between two thieves. Jesus took our sins upon Himself, suffering and dying to satisfy God's wrath against us. His body was buried in a tomb. A large stone was rolled over the entrance, and a guard was set to prevent His disciples from stealing His body and claiming He had risen from the dead.

❖ Read John 19:16–30.

What did Jesus mean when He said “It is finished” on the cross?

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RESURRECTION

The following Sunday morning, Jesus rose from the dead. An angel came down from heaven and rolled the stone away from the tomb. When the guards saw the angel, they fell to the ground as if they were dead; then they fled the tomb and reported to the Jewish religious authorities, who bribed them to claim they had fallen asleep and the disciples had stolen Jesus' body.

The women followers of Jesus had gone to the tomb that morning to finish anointing His body, and they found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. Two angels appeared, announcing that Jesus had risen from the dead. Jesus Himself appeared to His disciples several times over the next forty days.

ASCENSION

Forty days after rising from the dead, Jesus Christ ascended (rose up) into heaven, where He sits at God the Father's right hand, guiding everything that happens on earth for the good of His Church, and bringing our prayers to His heavenly Father. On the Last Day, Jesus

will return to raise the dead, judge all people, and perfectly restore God's creation.

What parts of Jesus' life are most familiar to you? Which parts are a bit unclear?

Our study through the Old Testament will help make all parts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection more clear. But it also helps to read through the four Gospels and other New Testament books to gain a deeper understanding of and faith in Jesus' life and work.

With that basic outline of Jesus' life in place, we can now begin our search through the books of the Old Testament to identify where Christ is revealed to us and which parts of His mission are described.

Genesis



In Genesis, Moses recorded beginnings—the beginning of creation, the beginning of sin, and the beginning of God unfolding His plan to save the world. We will see Jesus often in this book. Let's start in chapter 1 as God created the heavens and the earth.

✧ CREATION ✧

Genesis 1 describes how God created everything that exists today. It begins with the simple phrase “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). In similar words, the Gospel of John shows us how Jesus, the eternal Son of God was involved.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. (JOHN 1:1–3)

As you read the first chapter of Genesis, you read over and over again, “And God said . . .” Each of those statements refers to the Son of God, the mighty Word.

❖ Read about the creation of mankind in Genesis 1:26–31.

The participation of the Son and the Holy Spirit with God the Father in creation is clear in God’s words “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). The fact that the Son of God actually became a human in history shines a light on the creation story and God’s attitude toward His human creatures.

What difference does it make to you to know that Jesus was intimately involved in the creation of our world and the first humans?

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Because Jesus was creating the world at His Father’s side, we know He is personally invested in our lives and in our world—because He made us and He made it. It also helps remind us about why He was willing to come into His world as a baby and go to such lengths as dying on the cross to save us from our sins and restore His creation.

❖ THE FIRST GOSPEL PROMISE ❖

Chapter 2 shows us how God created mankind, personally forming Adam’s body from the earth, then breathing His own breath into his nostrils to make him a living being. God saw that it was not good for humans to be alone, so He took a rib from Adam’s body and created a woman for him, then joined them in marriage. Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden, surrounded by all kinds of beautiful trees filled with fruit to eat. Then we reach Genesis 3, where sin and death first invaded God’s perfect creation.

❖ Read Genesis 3:1–15.

What was the serpent? Clearly it was not just another animal. It was an animal possessed by a fallen angel, known as Satan. The Bible

gives us little information about how this angel turned evil and led a rebellion of angels against God. But he came to the Garden of Eden to turn the first humans against God as well.

He contradicted God's warning that eating the forbidden fruit would cause death, and he deceived the woman, Eve, into thinking God had withheld from her a great benefit that could be hers by eating the fruit. He promised her she would rise above the creaturely position God had given her and become like God.

But disobeying God did not bring the great joy Eve expected; instead, when she ate the fruit and gave it to her husband, Adam, and he ate it, it brought shame and guilt upon them both. Their disobedience brought suffering and death to them and to all God's creation. Now death casts such a shadow over each and every one of us that it seems like it is a natural part of earthly life. But God's Word reminds us that death and sin are foreign invaders. And now God's judgment would rest upon Adam and Eve and all of us, their offspring.

God would have been right and just to destroy Adam and Eve where they stood. But instead, for the sake of His Son, He was merciful and gracious to them—and to each of us. Knowing none of us can undo the damage we have done to ourselves, the world around us, and our relationship with Him, God set about to restore us Himself.

What solution did God declare for humanity's fall into sin?

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Genesis 3:15 is the first prophecy of the salvation Jesus would accomplish on the cross. Thousands of years later, Jesus would be born of Mary, and when He was condemned and crucified, He would receive the punishment all of us deserve and would die in our place. His death would be torturous, burning like the venom of a serpent's bite—but in the process, He would “bruise the serpent's head”—He would inflict an eternally fatal injury. Even though we are still sinners, Jesus has destroyed Satan's power to accuse us of our sins and has set

us free to live with God in glory forever. When Jesus returns to judge the world, Satan and his fallen angels will be banished to hell forever with unbelievers; and Jesus will restore His creation, and all believers will live with Him in glory in the new heavens and the new earth.

✻ NOAH AND THE FLOOD ✻

As we skim along through Genesis, we find Adam and Eve's children exhibiting the sinful nature they had inherited from their parents. Cain killed Abel because he was outraged that God accepted Abel's offering but not his own. When offered God's protection and forgiveness, Cain refused it and turned his back to live without God or His promised Savior. Cain's offspring followed his path, growing more heartless and cruel with each generation.

The promise of the coming Savior was carried by Abel's brother Seth and Seth's children. But as generations came and went, Seth's descendants were attracted to Cain's descendants. They intermarried, and most turned their backs on God and His promise of a Savior. The faithful remnant of Seth's descendants dwindled until only one family was left who worshiped God and believed His promise.

The next huge event takes place in chapters 6–9. Adam and Eve's descendants became so corrupt and filled the world with so much murder and violence that God regretted ever having created humans. He determined to destroy them in a worldwide flood. But God knew faithful Noah, a descendant of Seth, still believed by God's grace. God warned him of the coming flood and instructed him to build a giant ark, an oceangoing ship in which God would save that one human family and a small population of animals. The rest would be destroyed.

God waited patiently while Noah built the ark. Then He gathered together pairs of all the animal kinds and brought them to Noah, who loaded them safely into the ark. When God's time came, Noah and his family entered the ark, eight souls in all. God sealed them in, then sent the devastating flood that covered the entire earth, wiping out all land animals and humans who were outside the ark.

This teaches us something about Jesus Christ's return on Judgment Day. In Luke 17, Jesus compared the last day of the old world when

Noah entered the ark to the day He will return to judge the living and the dead, whom He will raise to life.

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. . . . So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

(LUKE 17:26–27, 30)

Why should we see the story of the great flood and Noah's ark as more than a mythical children's story?

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The fearful destruction of the ancient world is a startling foretaste of how it will be when Christ returns. Just as Noah and his family, who took refuge in the ark, were the only ones who escaped the floodwaters, only those who trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will be saved. All others will be wiped off the earth and suffer eternal torment in hell.

Jesus has built for us an “ark,” His Holy Christian Church. Entering that ark by Baptism and God’s Word, we can rest assured that we will be safe until Christ returns to judge the living and the dead and to cleanse and restore His entire creation.

✻ GOD CALLS ABRAM ✻

The flood removed unbelievers from the world, but it couldn’t cleanse people’s hearts of their sinful nature. Sadly, it didn’t take long before Noah’s sinful offspring again turned in unbelief from God, just as so many of Adam and Eve’s descendants had. But instead of destroying the world again, God chose another man and his wife. From their descendants, He would raise up a nation in which He would preserve

His promise of a Savior, and in time, He would bring Jesus Christ into the world from that nation. The rest of Genesis is the story of this family.

✧ Read Genesis 12:1–3.



God made four promises to Abram:

1. God would make his descendants into a great nation.
2. God would bless him and make his name, or reputation, great.
3. God would bless those who blessed Abram and curse those who cursed him.
4. All the families of the earth would be blessed through him.

Where do we find the promise of the Christ in these three verses?

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