

# The Gospel in the Old Testament

Christ hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures

## Christ the Key to the Old Testament

### **Luke 24:27**

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

### **Luke 24:44-45**

[44] And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. [45] Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

### **John 5:39**

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

### **John 5:46**

For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

Jesus Himself taught that the entire Old Testament points to Him—He is its central theme and interpretive key. 'Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.' He said, 'All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.'

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.' 'Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.' 'Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.' The Old Testament is not merely Jewish history or moral instruction but Christian Scripture testifying to Christ. Reading the Old Testament without seeing Christ is like reading a mystery novel and missing the solution.

Every page anticipates, prepares for, or pictures the coming Redeemer. This Christ-

centered hermeneutic transforms Old Testament study from mere antiquarian interest to spiritual encounter with the living Christ revealed in Scripture.

## The Protoevangelium

### **Genesis 3:15**

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

### **Galatians 4:4**

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

### **Romans 16:20**

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

### **Hebrews 2:14**

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

The first gospel promise appears immediately after the fall—the seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head, though suffering in the process. 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' This cryptic promise contains the gospel in seed form.

The 'seed of the woman' (unusual phrase—normally seed is traced through men) points to the virgin birth. The enmity between seeds indicates the ongoing conflict between Christ and Satan, between the godly line and the ungodly.

The crushing of the serpent's head signifies Satan's decisive defeat; the bruising of the heel indicates Christ's suffering in achieving victory. When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.

The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. Through death Christ destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

From Eden onward, the Old Testament progressively unfolds this promise until its fulfillment in Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection.

## Gospel in the Patriarchs

### **Genesis 22:8**

And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

### **Genesis 22:14**

And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

### **Galatians 3:8**

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

### **Hebrews 11:17-19**

[17] By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, [18] Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: [19] Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Abraham's life, especially the offering of Isaac, powerfully pictures the gospel of God's provision and substitutionary sacrifice. When Isaac asked about the lamb for burnt offering, Abraham prophetically answered, 'My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.' Abraham called the place Jehovah-jireh—'The LORD will provide.' The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

By faith Abraham offered up Isaac, accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. The binding of Isaac pictures the Father offering His Son; the ram caught in the thicket pictures substitutionary atonement—another dying in Isaac's place.

Abraham's faith in resurrection foreshadows the gospel hope. Jacob's blessing of Judah (Genesis 49:10) promised the scepter would not depart until Shiloh (the one to whom it belongs) comes—pointing to Christ the King.

Joseph, betrayed by brothers, sold for silver, unjustly condemned, raised to glory, and saving his people through suffering, is one of Scripture's clearest types of Christ.

## Gospel in the Exodus

### **Exodus 12:13**

And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

### **1 Corinthians 5:7**

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

### **John 1:29**

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

### **1 Peter 1:18-19**

[18] Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; [19] But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

The Passover and Exodus provide the Old Testament's most developed gospel picture—redemption through the blood of the lamb and deliverance from bondage. 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you.' Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

John the Baptist declared, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. The Passover lamb pictures Christ: without blemish, killed at twilight (as Christ died at

the ninth hour), its blood applied to doorposts (as Christ's blood is applied by faith), its flesh eaten (as we feed on Christ), and none of its bones broken (as Christ's bones were not broken).

Israel's bondage pictures slavery to sin; Pharaoh pictures Satan; the plagues picture God's judgment on false gods; the Red Sea crossing pictures baptism and deliverance; the wilderness pictures sanctification; Canaan pictures the believer's rest in Christ. The entire Exodus narrative is gospel dramatized.

## Gospel in the Sacrifices

### **Leviticus 17:11**

For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

### **Hebrews 9:22**

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

### **Hebrews 10:1-4**

[1] For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. [2] For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. [3] But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. [4] For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

### **Isaiah 53:10**

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

The Levitical sacrificial system taught gospel truths: sin requires death, blood makes atonement, and substitution is God's gracious provision. 'The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.' Without shedding of blood

is no remission.

The law had a shadow of good things to come; those sacrifices could never take away sins—they pointed forward to the one sacrifice that could. It pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.

The burnt offering pictured complete consecration to God. The sin offering addressed specific transgressions.

The guilt offering provided restitution. The peace offering celebrated fellowship with God.

All were shadows; Christ is the substance. His one sacrifice accomplished what millions of animal sacrifices could not—eternal redemption, permanent cleansing, complete forgiveness.

The Old Testament believer who brought sacrifices in faith was looking forward to Christ; we look backward to the same Christ, but He is the object of faith in both testaments.

## Gospel in the Prophets

### **Isaiah 53:5-6**

[5] But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

[6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

### **Micah 5:2**

But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

### **Zechariah 9:9**

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

### **Malachi 3:1**

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

The prophets spoke explicitly of the coming Messiah—His birth, ministry, suffering, death, resurrection, and reign. 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' Bethlehem is named as the birthplace of one 'whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.' Zechariah predicted the triumphal entry: 'thy King cometh unto thee... lowly, and riding upon an ass.' 'The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple.' Isaiah 7:14 promised a virgin-born son named Immanuel. Isaiah 9:6 described a child who would be called Mighty God, Everlasting Father.

Psalm 22 describes crucifixion in detail. Daniel 9 predicted the Messiah's coming and death.

Zechariah 12:10 foretold that Israel would look upon the one they pierced. The prophets provide such detailed predictions that Jesus' fulfillment of them constitutes powerful evidence for His messiahship and Scripture's divine inspiration.

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