

## Lesson 121

# The Messiah Has Come

God is faithful to keep his promises.

# Overview

## Lesson Focus

The Old Testament taught that the Messiah was coming, and the New Testament proclaims that he has come. Without the Old Testament, we cannot understand and appreciate the fullness of God's plan for redemption. God promised a Savior to Adam and Eve, and after 4,000 years, God revealed that Savior in the person of Jesus.

## Key Passages

Genesis 3:15, 22:17–18; Exodus 12:21–23; Deuteronomy 4:13; 2 Samuel 7:16; Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 1:1; Hebrews 1:1–3

## Objectives

Students will be able to:

Connect the coming of the Messiah in the Old Testament with his arrival in the New Testament.

Explain how the Old Testament is different from the New Testament.

## Memory Verse

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

## Prepare to Share

### Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

God had closed the Old Testament by confirming his promise to his people through his prophet Malachi that one day the Messiah—the messenger of the covenant—would come (Malachi 3:1). For a remnant of the Jews who understood the message of the prophets, such as Simeon (Luke 2:25–32), this was a message of hope as they waited expectantly for the Savior who would deliver them from their sins.

God's people had already been waiting a very long time for this promise of the Messiah to become reality. In fact, God first mentioned this good news nearly 4,000 years earlier when the serpent was told that a Seed of Eve would bruise his head (Genesis 3:15). We hear of it again when the Lord promised that in Abraham's offspring all nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 22:17–18). The covenant continued with Abraham's son Isaac (Genesis 26:4). Then it passed to Isaac's son Jacob (Genesis 28:13) and through the tribe of Judah to

David (Genesis 49:10; Revelation 5:5). God promised David a throne that would last forever (2 Samuel 7:16). And Jesus, the only eternal King, would one day sit on the throne of his father David (Luke 1:32–33).

Shadows and pictures of the Messiah are woven throughout Old Testament history. This history, these accounts, and the glimpses of God's plan of redemption help to prepare us for the fuller truth revealed in the New Testament—the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, the promised one who is the light of the world.

The writer of Hebrews triumphantly proclaimed Jesus Christ as the revelation of what was anticipated by the prophets of old, expressing that God, who spoke in times past by the prophets, had now spoken through his Son. Then, the Son is richly described as the heir of all things, the one through whom God created the universe, and the express image of God, upholding all things by the word of his power, and seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having cleansed our sins (Hebrews 1:2–3).

Another account that reveals Jesus as the promised Messiah is in the book of Luke. Simeon was a devout man in Jerusalem, “waiting for the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25). The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die before he witnessed the Lord's Christ. When Jesus was brought into the temple as a baby to be dedicated to the Lord, Simeon rejoiced that the Lord had, in Jesus, revealed to him the salvation promised for thousands of years (Luke 2:30–31). Simeon's response to Mary and the baby was based on his knowledge of the Old Testament.

Simeon's reaction to the Christ shows the joy of one who had been faithful to God, had studied the Scriptures of old, and had waited for the revealing of God's plan. Simeon grasped the fullness and richness of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, through the revelation of the Holy Spirit and the Old Testament Scriptures. Like Simeon, our study of the Old Testament and the promises of God to redeem his people coupled with the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit will allow us a richer delight in Jesus Christ. Study of the Old Testament can guide us to a more complete joy in the hope, comfort, peace, grace, and forgiveness we find throughout the pages of the New Testament in the life of our Savior.

## Historical/Apologetics Background

Without the history of the Old Testament, the New Testament narratives are hard to understand. If Jesus just showed up and died on a cross, no one would understand why he came. God was pleased to reveal his plan, but it was slowly revealed over thousands of years with increasing clarity (Romans 3:2).

Many have suggested that the “fullness of the time” described by Paul in Galatians 4:4 is tied, in some part, to the rise of the Roman Empire. Because of the common use of the Greek language and the roads and trade routes that connected the remotest regions of the empire, the message of reconciliation could spread widely and quickly. Combine that with the relative peace that accompanied the period around the birth of Christ (the Pax Romana), and you have a culture that could effectively be reached with news that the Messiah had finally come.

As we turn from the Old Testament to the New Testament, the manuscript language moves from Hebrew to Greek. In the Hebrew Old Testament text, we find Jesus described as mashiyach, or Messiah. The basic meaning of Messiah is "anointed one" and refers to priests and others who were set apart for service to God through an anointing. In the New Testament, we see the Greek equivalent, christos, or Christ, used to describe Jesus. Some misunderstand the title of Christ given to Jesus in the New Testament to be part of his name. It is not his name but proclaims his position as the anointed one of God. He is Jesus the Christ.

There are almost 300 references to the Old Testament in the New Testament. In most Bibles, a quotation from the Old Testament will be set in italics and often set apart as a block quote. It would be worth your while to become familiar with the format used by the publisher of your Bible. It is usually explained in the introduction or preface.

The Bible is the inerrant, infallible, and living Word of God. It is worthy of serious study. It tells of the Savior, who was born of a woman in the fullness of time. As we study the record of Jesus' existence from eternity past, his life on earth, and the hope we have of joining him in eternal glory, we will be filled with anticipation for what is in store for us as believers.

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