

Seeing Christ Through Old Testament Prophecy

Jesus Christ didn't just appear out of nowhere and create a new religion, but rather He fit like a puzzle the Old Testament prophetic framework that began at the dawn of time and reached stunning clarity 1500 years before He was born! His life and message were the long-awaited fulfillment of the Old Testament.

One might ask, if He so clearly fulfilled Old Testament prophecy then how do we know that those prophecies weren't written after He lived? We can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that He fulfilled these prophecies because God didn't entrust them to some obscure individual in the middle of nowhere, but rather He entrusted them to an entire nation in the middle of world history. Not only did God entrust these prophecies to Israel, but some of the most powerful prophecies were an integral part of the very fabric of daily life in ancient Israel. **The meaning of Christ's death on the cross and the hope that it brings us was memorialized in the heart of Israel's culture for 1500 years before He was born!** When people accused the apostle Paul of inventing a new religion, he replied, "I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen - that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people [*the Jews*] and to the Gentiles [*non-Jews*]." (Acts 26:22-23)

Another question that naturally arises is, if Christ so clearly fulfilled these prophecies then why did Israel as a nation reject Him? It would have actually been a greater surprise if they accepted Him! In rejecting Christ Israel retraced the very steps they took 1500 years earlier when they rejected God's plan for them after He delivered them from slavery in Egypt! According to the historical narrative in the Old Testament, God told Moses that He would lead Israel out of slavery in Egypt to the land of Canaan where they would be a sovereign nation. One of their chief purposes as a nation was to serve as guardians of the prophecies that would validate the life of Christ. God made it crystal clear to Israel that new life in the Promise Land of Canaan awaited them (Exodus 6:2-5, 12:24-28, Leviticus 14:34, 18:3, etc.), but when they reached the border of Canaan almost everyone did not believe what God had said. Rather than enter the Promise Land they wanted to run back to Egypt! (Numbers 14:1-4) Likewise, when Christ came in fulfillment of what God had clearly promised, Israel as a nation did not believe. When the apostle Paul proclaimed to unbelieving Israel the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy about the *spiritual* promise land, so to speak, of peace with God through Christ, his voice echoed the voices of Joshua and Caleb 1500 years earlier proclaiming to unbelieving Israel the fulfillment of God's promise of new life in the Promise Land of Canaan! (Numbers 14:6-11)

Outline of Key Messianic Prophecies In The Old Testament:

1. the **substitutionary death of Christ** foreshadowed by the Passover Ceremony and Isaiah's prophecy
2. the **timing of Christ's death** predicted by Daniel's 70 Weeks Prophecy
3. **new life through Christ** foreshadowed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread
4. **salvation apart from works** through the **shed blood of Christ** foreshadowed by tunics of animal skin God made to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness
5. the **virgin birth of Christ** foreshadowed after the fall by God's declaration that Satan would eventually be defeated
6. God's plan of salvation dependent on the **righteousness of ONE person – Christ** – foreshadowed in the life of Adam
7. righteous standing before God based on **faith in Christ alone** foreshadowed by righteous standing of Abraham before God

8. **sacrifice of Christ as God's only Son** foreshadowed in the life of Isaac

9. **Christ dwelling in our hearts through the Holy Spirit** foreshadowed by the tabernacle in Israel

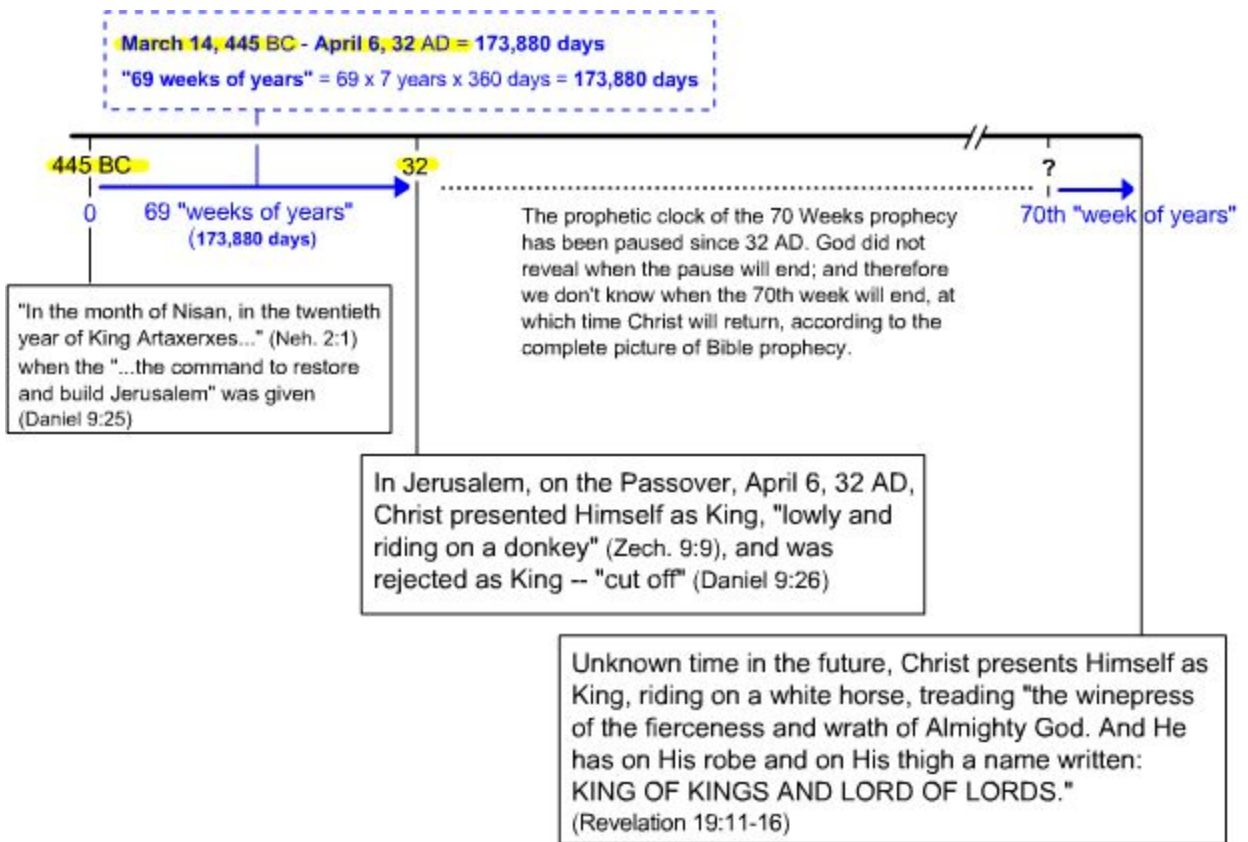
10. **salvation by faith in Christ alone** apart from the law illustrated by the life of Moses

1. the **substitutionary death of Christ** foreshadowed by the Passover Ceremony

- the Passover was first instituted right before Israel's exodus from Egypt when the blood of the Passover sacrifice sprinkled on their doorposts protected them from the plague of death that swept through Egypt.
 - the death of the Passover sacrifice literally protected them from the death plague!
- in 1 Corinthians 5:7 Christ is called our Passover – "Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."
 - the death of Christ as our Passover protects us from the "second death" in eternity!
 - speaking of those whose sins are forgiven through the death of Christ, Revelation 20:6 states: "over such the second death will have no power."
 - in other words, when we trust in Christ He literally dies the second death in our place so that we can have eternal life!
 - when John the Baptist first introduced Jesus he said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)
 - it was on the very weekend of the Passover when families from all around Israel were bringing lambs to Jerusalem to be offered as their Passover sacrifice that Christ Himself died as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!"
 - the prophetic description of Christ in Isaiah 53 states: "He was wounded for our transgressions... He was led as a lamb to the slaughter... He was cut off from the land of the living... He bore the sin of many."

2. the **timing of Christ's death** predicted by Daniel's 70 Weeks Prophecy

- After Israel was conquered and Jerusalem destroyed in 586 BC, God revealed to the prophet Daniel that the decree to "restore and build Jerusalem" would begin a prophetic time clock that would count down for 69 "weeks of years" and then Christ would be "cut off." ([Daniel 9:24-26](#)) This decree was given to Nehemiah "in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes" ([Nehemiah 2:1](#)), which scholars have identified as March 14, 445 BC. On Jewish calendars a "week of years" is 7 years and a prophetic year is 360 days. The following chart shows how this prophecy identified the probable day that Christ rode into Jerusalem, presenting Himself as the King of Israel, and was rejected ("cut off"), a day remembered today as *Palm Sunday*. To identify the year or decade would be amazing, let alone the exact day, 483 years before it happened!



3. new life through Christ foreshadowed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread

- The Feast of Unleavened Bread was first instituted during Israel's exodus from Egypt.
- this feast memorialized Israel's quick departure from Egypt when they didn't have time to wait for leaven to make their dough rise.
- leaven was also symbolic of sin... just as Israel ate unleavened bread after being set free from bondage in Egypt, so we too, after being set free from the eternal consequence of our sin, begin to experience new life as sin ("leaven") is purged from our lives.
- 1 Corinthians 5:7-8... in the context of addressing sin in the Corinthian church, Paul summarizes this concept by writing, "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump [*a little sin in our life leads to more sin...little compromises lead to larger compromises*]? 7 Therefore purge out the old leaven [*remove old sinful ways from our life*], that you may be a new lump [*that we may live new lives that are free of our old patterns of sin*], since you truly are unleavened [*so that our lives will reflect the reality in our spirit...since we are already cleansed of sin in our spirit...we are "born of the Spirit"... a "new creation" in Christ*]. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us [*we are cleansed of our sin in our spirit because Christ died for our sins*]. 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth [*what matters now is not keeping the Old Testament feast of eating unleavened bread but living lives that are free of old patterns of sin*]. (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)

4. salvation by grace alone apart from good works through the shed blood of Christ

foreshadowed by tunics of animal skin God made to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness

- Adam and Eve's sin of eating the forbidden fruit created a state of separation between them and God. Rather than walking in fellowship with God they ran from God in fear...
 - Genesis 3:6-7: "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were

opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?' So he said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.'

- saved by grace alone apart from good works...
 - Adam and Eve's act of sewing fig leaves to cover their nakedness symbolizes the attempt to obtain salvation by our own efforts – our own good works.
 - in Genesis 3:21 God replaced the fig leaf coverings that they made with clothes that He made out of animal skins...
 - God replacing the clothing that Adam and Eve made with clothing that He made is symbolic of our unrighteousness being replaced by His perfect righteousness - the righteousness of Christ that is "credited" (Romans 4:22-25) to our account when we trust in Him!
 - Romans 3:21-22: "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ..."
 - God's provision to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness also foreshadowed the ultimate sacrifice required to pay for our sin!
 - in order for clothing to be made out of skin an animal had to be sacrificed and blood had to be shed!
 - the animal God used to make clothing for Adam and Eve appears to be the first time blood was ever shed and was essentially the first sacrifice of many throughout the Old Testament that pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross!
 - the shedding of blood to make clothing for Adam and Eve pointed to the spiritual law of the universe that "without shedding of blood there is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22)
 - the ultimate consequence of our sin is not merely physical death but a horrifying reality in eternity called the "second death" (Revelation 20:14-15). When we trust in Christ He literally dies the second death in our place!

5. the **virgin birth of Christ** foreshadowed after the fall by God's declaration that Satan would eventually be defeated

- a person's descendants were normally referred to as the seed of a man.
 - for example, Christ was referred to as the promised Seed of Abraham: "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ." (Gal 3:16)
- the only time a person's descendant is referred to as the seed of a woman occurs in Genesis when God refers to the one who will defeat the work of Satan. This subtle point foreshadows the virgin birth of Christ, as only Christ can defeat the work of Satan. One technical reason Christ was able to defeat the work of Satan is His sinless nature. He did not inherit the sin nature of humans because He was born of a virgin - of the seed of the woman.
 - in Genesis 3:15 God declared "And I will put enmity between you [*Satan*] and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He [*Christ*] shall bruise your head [*strike Satan with a fatal blow*], and you shall bruise His heel [*strike Him with a non-fatal wound...though Christ was crucified He rose from the dead*]."

6. God's plan of salvation dependent on the **righteousness of ONE person – Christ** – foreshadowed in the life of Adam

- in Romans 5:14 the apostle Paul identified Adam as a type of Christ: "... Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come."
- a the very beginning of history we see in the fall of Adam and Eve a profound insight into the nature salvation... the profound effect of one man's righteousness (the righteousness of Christ) making salvation possible for the entire race is foreshadowed by the effect of one man's sin plunging the entire human race into sin.
 - Romans 5:18-19: "Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous."
 - "through one man's offense... through one Man's righteous act..."
 - "by one man's disobedience... by one Man's obedience..."

7. righteous standing before God based on **faith in Christ alone** foreshadowed by the righteous standing of Abraham before God

- Paul used Abraham's righteous standing through faith as a proof-text in his argument in Romans that we are saved by faith apart from works: "For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'" (Romans 4:3)

8. **sacrifice of Christ as God's only Son** foreshadowed in the life of Isaac

- Genesis 22:1-5: "Now it came to pass after these things [*after God promised that Abraham's descendants would become a great nation and through them the whole world would be blessed*] that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then He said, 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.'"
 - parallel with Christ... approximately 2000 years later God would send His only Son whom He loved to the land of Moriah on Mt Calvary to be sacrificed as an offering for the sin of all mankind – and thus fulfill the promise of blessing for all nations through Abraham's descendants!
 - the land of Moriah was the general area where Jerusalem was later build
 - the exact "mountain" to which God led Abraham could have been either the location where the temple was built or the location where Jesus was crucified.
 - God referred to Isaac as Abraham's "only son" because he was the only son through Abraham's legal wife while his other children came through handmaids.
- Genesis 22:3-5: "So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."
 - Abraham stated, "we will come back..." thus expressing confidence that God would raise Isaac from the dead.
 - if Isaac died then God would have had to raise him from the dead in order to fulfill His covenant with Abraham: "But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year..." (Genesis 17:21)
- the death and resurrection of Christ foreshadowed in Isaac's life...**
 - by Abraham offering his "only son" ... God offered His only Son.

- by Abraham's confidence in God's ability to raise Isaac from the dead ... Christ rose from the dead.
- by God providing Abraham a substitute sacrifice ... Christ died as a substitute for us.
- by the uncanny timing of Abraham reaching the location God specified "on the third day" after he set out on his journey ... Christ rose from the grave on the third day after His death in the same geographic location 2000 years later!

9. Christ dwelling in our hearts through the Holy Spirit foreshadowed by the tabernacle in Israel

- during the wilderness wandering the Spirit of God dwelled in the tabernacle in the center of Israel's camp, and Israel's daily life revolved around the tabernacle.
- the Spirit of God dwelling in the heart of Israel made possible by atonement through the ceremonial law was a foreshadow... now the Spirit of God dwells in the hearts of people through the atonement of Christ!
- parallels between the tabernacle in the middle of Israel and the tabernacle of the heart:
 - tabernacle in the heart of Israel >> your heart anywhere
 - high priests >> Christ in heaven now
 - daily sacrifices for atonement >> Christ's death 2000 years ago
- Jesus spoke of this profound change (upgrade in spiritual technology, so to speak) with the Samaritan woman at the well...
 - Samaritans were half-Jews who rebelled against Israel's traditions and replaced Jerusalem with Mt. Gerizim as the ordained location of the temple.
 - In John ch. 4 a Samaritan woman started talking to Jesus about this, and Jesus replied: "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain [*Mt Gerizim*], nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father ... But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth [*anywhere in the world through the temple of the heart*]; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:21-24)
- the providential destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD by the Roman army is like an historical exclamation point to the fact that God is seeking people to worship Him "neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem... but [*anywhere*] in spirit and truth..." (John 4:21-24)
 - in Luke 21:5-6 Jesus spoke prophetically about the temple being destroyed: "Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, "As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down."
 - the prophecy was literally fulfilled when the Roman army took apart the temple stone by stone in order to extract all the gold that melted in the fire when the temple was destroyed.

10. salvation by faith alone apart from the law illustrated by the life of Moses

- Moses represented the law...
 - John 1:17: "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

- Luke 24:44: "Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses [*in the following passage the Law is referred to as simply "Moses"*] and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."
 - Luke 24:27: "And beginning at Moses [*here the law is referred to as "Moses"*] and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."
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- Through all the years of Israel's wilderness wandering Moses proved to be a man of exemplary character and faith, yet just one mistake prevented him from entering the promise land.
 - The disqualification of Moses is a picture of all of mankind's predicament under God's standard of perfect righteousness... we could be 99.9% perfect with only one small mistake and we would still be disqualified from entering heaven!
 - The only way around God's standard of perfect righteousness is qualification through Christ – by His righteousness being credited to our account!
 - Colossians 1:12-14: "...giving thanks to **the Father who has qualified us** to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.
 - Romans 3:21-22: "But now **the righteousness of God apart from the law** is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe."
 - Romans 4:22-25: "This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." [speaking of Abraham's faith being credited to him as righteousness] 23 The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, 24 but also **for us, to whom God will credit righteousness**-for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."