

# LESSON 2 Jesus, the Promised Messiah

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Promises are part of our lives. Parents promise to do things for children. Politicians, business people, and friends make promises. We have all had the experience of waiting for someone to keep a promise he or she made to us. Sometimes we have had to wait a long time! And sometimes we have been disappointed.

God has also made promises. For many centuries before Jesus was born, God promised that a Messiah, or Anointed One, would come. He spoke through His prophets, describing this person and what He would do.

When Jesus came, many of the people who knew these prophecies noticed something very important. They saw that the things Jesus said and did matched the descriptions. They realized that Jesus was the Messiah whom God had promised to send. God had kept His word!

In this lesson, you will study the different kinds of prophecies that were made about Jesus. You will discover the wonderful things they foretold about Him.

## ***The Plan***

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- A. Understanding Bible Prophecy
- B. Truths About the Messiah

## ***The Goals***

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1. State the different kinds of biblical prophecy.
2. Identify several ways in which Jesus fulfills the Bible prophecies about the Messiah.

## **A. UNDERSTANDING BIBLE PROPHECY**

**Goal 1.** State the different kinds of biblical prophecy.

Bible prophecies are messages that God gave His people through His messengers, the prophets. Through them God let the people know what He wanted them to do and showed them many things that would happen in the future.

God inspired the prophets to write down these revelations, so now we have them in the Bible. Many of these predictions have already come true in the smallest detail. The Bible contains the historical fulfillment of a great number of them. Some of the prophecies are being fulfilled right now. Others will take place in the future.

### **Prophecies Are Important**

The fulfillment of Bible prophecies lets us know that the Bible is what it claims to be—the Word of God. Who else knows every detail of the future and can describe just what is going to happen to certain people in a certain place at a certain time hundreds of years later? God has confirmed the inspiration of the Bible by announcing His purpose ahead of time and then making everything happen just as He had said through His prophets.

The prophecies in the Old Testament about a coming Savior are extremely important to us for three reasons:

1. We can measure Jesus' life against these predictions and see if He really is the promised Savior.
2. We can better understand, through the prophecies, who Jesus is and why He came. We are shown His work in the past, present, and future.
3. We can know that God does what He has promised. Just as the first phase of the prophecies about Jesus has worked out exactly as it was foretold, the prophecies about the future will be fulfilled too.

### ***Application***

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- 1 Bible prophecies of future events are
  - a) messages that prophets received from the spirits of the dead.
  - b) predictions of the future gained by studying the stars.
  - c) revelations that God gave through His prophets.
- 2 The prophecies about a coming Savior are important because they
  - a) show that God does what He promises to do.
  - b) describe the political situation during Bible times.
  - c) contain many interesting pictures and symbols.



### Messianic Prophecies Were Given Gradually

We call the prophecies about the Savior messianic prophecy. This is from the Hebrew title Messiah, which means the “Anointed One.” Priests, prophets, and kings were anointed with oil to show that God had chosen them and set them apart for His work. The coming Messiah would be anointed by God’s Holy Spirit to do His work. He would be Prophet, Priest, and King. The Greek word for Messiah is Christ. When we talk about Jesus Christ, we are calling Jesus the Messiah, the Anointed One, the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies.

God’s promises of the Messiah were written to His people of events that span a period of over 4,000 years. Some of them

described the work that Jesus would do on earth as our Savior. Others refer to His future everlasting kingdom. Some of these prophecies were given in messages about a local situation, but went beyond the immediate problem to the coming of Messiah.

God revealed more and more details about the Messiah as time went by—where He would be born, how He would die, what kind of work He would do. In fact, some Bible students have counted over 300 details about the Messiah in Old Testament prophecy. God wanted everyone to be able to recognize the Messiah when He came.

### ***Application***

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**3** The title Christ means

- a)** Anointed One.
- b)** Conqueror.
- c)** Sacrifice.

**4** God gave the messianic prophecies

- a)** more than 4,000 years before Christ was born.
  - b)** at different events for a period of over 4,000 years.
  - c)** to one of His prophets who lived 4,000 years ago.
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### **Rituals Pictured the Messiah**

The rites of worship that God's people used in the Old Testament were prophetic. God had established a whole system of sacrifices as a picture of the coming Messiah who would give His life to save people from their sins. The work of the priests was a picture of what Jesus would do as a perfect priest for all humanity. The whole book of Hebrews in the New Testament tells how Jesus fits perfectly the prophetic picture given by the symbolic ritual of the Old Testament.

All over the world today we find traces of the prophetic rites and sacrifices that God instituted when man sinned. Many religions have in their worship some of these signs that were

meant to point to Jesus. Members of these religions should study the Christian Bible to discover the true meaning of their ritual.

### ***Application***

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- 5** Do you know of any rituals of sacrifice that are practiced in your area? What meaning do they have?
- 6** The best way to find out how Jesus fits the symbolic picture given by the Old Testament is to
- a)** think about the religions practiced in your area.
  - b)** learn the names of all the messianic prophets in the Bible.
  - c)** study the book of Hebrews in the New Testament.
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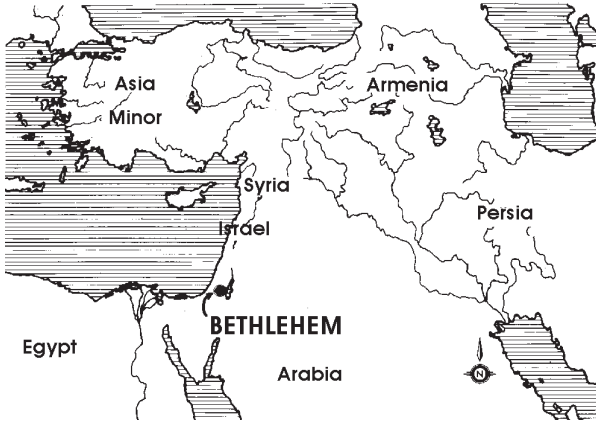
## **B. TRUTHS ABOUT THE MESSIAH**

**Goal 2.** Identify several ways in which Jesus fulfills the Bible prophecies about the Messiah.

The Old Testament prophets foretold many important things about the Messiah. Five of these are described in this section of your lesson.

### **Human and Divine**

We find the first promise of the Messiah in the first book of the Bible. God refers to Him as the seed of the woman. He would be born of a woman. Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, had sinned. Satan, God's enemy, had persuaded them to disobey God. This separated them from God and gave Satan power over them. But God promised that a Savior would be born who would fight Satan and destroy his power. God told Satan, "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" (Genesis 3:15).



Down through the following centuries, God told His people many more details about the Savior. He would be born in Bethlehem, in the land often called Palestine today. Yet He would not be an ordinary man. He was eternal. He had always existed, but would come to earth to be born as a human baby and grow up to be ruler in Israel. Micah prophesied:

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” (Micah 5:2)

Bethlehem Ephrathah means a village called Bethlehem near a town called Ephrath (see Genesis 35:19; 48:7) or Ephrathah (see Ruth 4:11). In Judges it is also called Bethlehem Judah (17:7). It was necessary to distinguish it because there was a Bethlehem in the territories of other tribes of Israel (Joshua 19:15) but this Bethlehem was in Judah, near a larger town called Ephrath or Ephrathah.

About 700 years before Jesus was born, God showed the prophet Isaiah that the coming Savior would be both human and divine. He would be born of a virgin, without a human father. One of His titles would be Immanuel, which means “God with us.”

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”  
(Isaiah 7:14)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

In the Gospels of Matthew and Luke you can read about the birth of Jesus. He was conceived without a human father and born of the virgin Mary. This happened through the power of God—the Holy Spirit. Human and divine, He was Immanuel—God with us. Note the final earthly words of Jesus: “‘And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’” (Matthew 28:20).

## *Application*

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**7** We know that Jesus is the “Immanuel” foretold in the Old Testament because He was

- a)** born in Bethlehem Ephrathah.
  - b)** conceived by the Holy Spirit.
  - c)** a great and wise teacher.
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## Sacrifice and Savior

God showed several of the prophets that the Savior would give His own life as the sacrifice for our sins. Before Jesus came, animals were sacrificed to God on behalf of the people’s sin. The sinner brought a lamb or goat to the priest to be killed and burned on the altar.

The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah describes how God would make the Savior a sacrifice for our sins, but how later He would live again. Jesus became our sacrifice for sin and our Savior. Prophets told when, where, and how Jesus would be betrayed by

a close friend, falsely accused, put in prison, mocked, scourged, crucified, and buried. Then He would rise again.

## ***Application***

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**8** Jesus fulfilled the rituals of sacrifice for sin in the Old Testament because He

- a)** died for us.
  - b)** did many good deeds.
  - c)** told us about God.
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## **Prophet, Priest, and King**

Old Testament prophecies show that the Messiah would be anointed by God's Spirit to be our Prophet, Priest, and King. As Prophet He would be God's voice to us. As Priest He would be our voice to God. As King He would be God's hand to help us and direct us. He would set the standard for us to live by and establish God's rule in our lives.

When Jesus began His public ministry, He read this Messianic prophecy to the people to let them know that they were seeing it fulfilled in Him:

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor.” (Isaiah 61:1–2)

Prophet. Moses was a great prophet, religious leader, and ruler of the Jewish people about 1,400 years before Jesus was born. God spoke through him to the people. He led them out of slavery. Great miracles accompanied his ministry and proved that God had sent him to be the leader of his people. Moses wrote,



The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. (Deuteronomy 18:15)

Jesus was like Moses in many ways. God spoke through Him. He performed great miracles. He freed people from the slavery of sin. As a prophet, Jesus foretold many events, including His own death by crucifixion, His resurrection after three days, His return to heaven, what His followers would do, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the spread of the gospel, and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. All this happened just as Jesus said. Some of His other prophecies are being fulfilled right now. And we know that the rest of them will all come true.

Priest. The psalmist wrote of the Messiah, “The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek’” (Psalm 110:4). Melchizedek was the first priest named in the Old Testament, and it appears that he was chosen directly by God. All the Old Testament priests prayed for the people and also offered sacrifices for their sins.

Jesus prayed much for His followers when He was on earth, and is praying for us now. The sacrifice He offered for our sins was His own life. Now we can go to God for forgiveness through Jesus our Priest. Whenever we go to Him in prayer, our Priest presents our needs to God.

King. What a conquering King the Messiah would be according to the Old Testament prophecies! He would defeat Satan, the enemy of God and of humanity. He would conquer sin, sickness, sorrow, and even death. He would defeat the forces of evil and establish a reign of perfect justice and peace on the earth. He would provide the solution to all the world’s problems. No wonder the people looked forward to His coming! The prophecy you read in Isaiah 9:6 about the Prince of Peace goes on to say:

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s

throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. (Isaiah 9:7)

You will notice in the gospels that some people called Jesus Son of God. He was a legal heir to the throne of David. His followers recognized in His miracles and His ministry all the characteristics of the wonderful kingdom that the Messiah would establish. Many wanted to make Him King then. But Jesus was not ready to establish His universal kingdom. First He gave us the standards and conditions for His kingdom in our hearts and lives. We are now in a period of inviting people to accept Jesus as King of their lives. He frees from the power of sin and Satan all those who receive Jesus as their King.

Jesus is the true King of the universe. Someday He will come back to earth for those who belong to Him. He will set up His kingdom for everyone to see, and He will rule forever. This is why you should learn all you can now about who Jesus is and what He wants you to do.

## ***Application***

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**9** Write the number of the prophecy about the Messiah in front of each phrase that describes the way in which Jesus fulfilled it.

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|--|-------------------------|
| ... <b>a</b> Foretold His own death and resurrection       | 1) Human and Divine     |
| ... <b>b</b> Gave His life for our sins                    | 2) Sacrifice and Savior |
| ... <b>c</b> Was the legal heir to the throne of David     | 3) Prophet              |
| ... <b>d</b> Prayed for His followers                      | 4) Priest               |
| ... <b>e</b> Was the son of the virgin Mary                | 5) King                 |
| ... <b>f</b> Was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit |                         |

**10** Suppose a friend asked you, “How do you know that Jesus is the promised Messiah?” Circle the letter in front of the best reply.

- a)** Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies given about the Messiah in the Old Testament.
- b)** Most religious people agree that Jesus was a good man and a very wise teacher.
- c)** Many prophets in the Old Testament told about the coming of an Anointed One.



The Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah were like separate threads. Only after Jesus came did people see that in Him, they were all wonderfully woven together. In our next lesson, we study more about how Jesus is the Son of God.

## ***Check Your Answers***

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- 6 c)** study the book of Hebrews in the New Testament.
- 1 c)** revelations that God gave through His prophets.
- 7 b)** conceived by the Holy Spirit.
- 2 a)** show that God does what He promises to do.
- 8 a)** died for us.
- 3 a)** Anointed One.
- 9 a)** 3) Prophet  
**b)** 2) Sacrifice and Savior  
**c)** 5) King  
**d)** 4) Priest  
**e)** 1) Human and Divine  
**f)** 1) Human and Divine
- 4 b)** at different events for a period of over 4,000 years.
- 10** All the statements are true. However, statement **a)** is the only one that offers the proof that is needed. It says that the actual life of Jesus matched the predictions given about the Messiah.
- 5** Your answer. The fact that people make sacrifices shows that they know they have sinned and are afraid that God is angry with them.