

QUESTIONS WE WANT ANSWERED

14 How Do We Know that Jesus Is the Messiah?

Scripture; Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38; Genesis 3:14-19, 21, 12:1-3;
 21:1-12; 22:15-18; 28:14; 49:1, 10; II Samuel 7:5-16; Isaiah 7:14
 Jeremiah 22:30; Micah 5:21; Galatians 4:4

There is a very interesting story about a boy and girl who enjoyed a friendship with one another by the letters they exchanged. One thing led to another and they decided it was time for them to meet face to face, in spite of the fact that such a meeting would call for a long journey. The following arrangements were made. On a given Saturday afternoon the boy was to travel to the girl's home town which was located in another state. He was to stand on a specified corner of the main street in that town at a certain time. The girl, in turn, was to come into town from her home in the country on a buggy with four black wheels and hitched to a white horse. We can well imagine that when the boy saw the buggy with the black wheels being drawn by a white horse, he would excitedly introduce himself to the girl with whom he had been exchanging letters.

The only problem is that it is conceivable that some other farmer's daughter might arrive in town at the same time also driving such a vehicle. It could happen. Let us suppose that our letter writing friends anticipated such a coincidence, and to avoid any mistake they multiplied details of verification so that duplication would be not only improbable, but virtually impossible. We might assume that one black wheel, one white wheel, one red wheel, one yellow wheel, and pink bonnet on the horse would do the trick. It would be unreasonable to believe that two or more such buggies would arrive at the same place at the same time. It is most improbable that such a thing could happen. Now, the reason that I draw this story to your attention is that we are creatures who work with probabilities. We have come to assume that the higher the probability factor, the safer the venture. The answer to the question about Jesus being the "*Messiah*" or "*Anointed One*," the promised Deliverer of Biblical Messianism, is bound up in the fact that the details of his identity have been multiplied to the degree that no other rational conclusion can be reached about Jesus. Out from the masses of humanity the line of his identity narrowed with

the passing of time until it converged upon the comely Jewish maiden of Bethlehem's grotto. The purpose of our study this morning is to trace from Scripture the ancestry of the incoming redeemer of mankind and to establish the fact that Jesus is heir, legal heir, to the throne of David through Joseph and the properly fitted Savior of all who trust Him as the son of Mary. Yes, it is true, we are saved by Mary's son. She was the host to bring forth the body of the Messiah in His humanity. Jesus would come into the world with the words, "*A body has thou prepared for me.*" (Hebrews 10:5) Clearly, Jesus was born to die. The Old Testament is thus fulfilled in the New Testament and together they pound home the truth that sin brings death and the sacrifice of animals brought only typical atonement. It was the body of Jesus that was prepared by God to make atonement for the sin of humankind. Let us look at the way such a redeemer was described centuries before He was born in order that He be recognized.

The first announcements having to do with Messianic hope for mankind occur in the book of Genesis. One interesting side thought here has to do with the criticism of Christianity on the basis that it is a relatively new religion because Christ was born only 2000 years ago, whereas the teachings of the Buddha and Hinduism go back five or six centuries before Christ. The answer to this lies in the realization that Christianity in no way confines Jesus to the first century A.D. Well informed Christians are able to lead anyone to the Scriptures and point out the teaching that Jesus was alive long before the babe was born in Bethlehem. It is no strain that Buddha made an appearance on earth before Jesus did. Jesus is the one who poured breath into the Buddha's lungs and supported the atoms which composed Guatama's body. Buddha never existed before he saw the light of day or was being formed in his mother's womb but Jesus, never did not exist. The early Jews knew that this was the way Jesus felt about Himself, they considered the thought utter blasphemy and were moved to stone Him for it. (John 8:56-59)

As we come to trace the line of Jesus' human heritage let us bear in mind that He is actually the theme of the Old Testament. The fact that our normal attention to the typological and prophetic references to Him is rather casual, in no way alters the fact that Jesus Christ is the unifying factor in the unfolding drama of the Biblical message. The whole span of Scriptural revelation is Christocentric and the reason we hold Bibles this morning as propositional revelation is that Jesus might be introduced to us and a relationship might be formed with Him. There are several occasions where Jesus openly declared Himself to be the central

figure of the Old Testament story. This was not a realization which came upon Him in due course. At the very outset of His ministry, immediately following His baptism and encounter with Satan, Jesus entered the synagogue in Nazareth, promptly opened the roll of the prophet Isaiah, and cried to the bewilderment of those present, *"This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears."* (Luke 4:21) He also closed His earthly ministry by making the first doctrinal utterance after He arose from the dead. It was a declaration that He is the object of the writings of Moses. (Luke 24:44) Other references are Luke 24:25, John 5:39, Hebrews 10:7 and Matthew 5:17. It is not an optional matter that Christians view the Old Testament Christocentrically. If they take the words of Christ seriously, it becomes a divine imperative. Now let us consider the unveiling of the Messiah's identity as it progresses in the Old Testament. We will consider the line as it begins in the Pentateuch and continues through the prophecy of Nathan, Isaiah, and Micah. There is also one prophecy in Jeremiah having to do with the curse of Coniah.

I. THE PROTEVANGEL - Genesis 3:15

Soon after sin came into God's perfect creation, the promise of an incoming deliverer was made. The first indication of Messianic hope in the Bible is found in Genesis 3:15. There it is stated, *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It will bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel."* The serpent here stands representative of the Evil one, and God establishes a perpetual hostility between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. This conflict does not exist between all the natural seed of women inasmuch as there is a great portion of that seed which follows the authority of the Evil one. The God-ordained conflict here is between that seed of the woman under Satan's control and the seed of the woman under Jehovah's control. Further, to those who follow Jehovah, deliverance is promised. A mighty deliverer will come, a man will bruise the serpent's head. A wound to the head is a fatal blow. The serpent will be crushed, his power put down. The redeemer will appear out of the human race, he will not be angelic or otherwise created for his work.

It is interesting to note that it will be the seed of the woman which will bruise the head of the serpent. It has been suggested that this is a hint that the redeemer would be born of a virgin because the more expected way of describing the seed would be to say it is the seed of the man. As one moves through the Old Testament the reference is made to the seed Of Abraham, the seed of Isaac, and

the seed of Jacob. Here it is the seed of the woman. We must be careful not to read something into the text which is not intended, but we may feel safe in saying this is a hidden reference to the virgin birth of Christ. Three important principles emerge at the very dawn of recorded history from this passage. We know it must have been written at least four thousand years before Christ, some believe as many as ten or many more thousands before that. The principles are, **(1)** evil in the world results from man's historic disobedience to God, **(2)** man is redeemable or salvageable, **(3)** there will be mortal combat followed by final victory over sin through a deliverer who will be the seed of the woman.

II. THE CALL OF ABRAHAM - Genesis 12:1-3; 22:15-18

We have seen that somewhere in the human race a man is to be born who will redeem mankind. With millions of people being born, how shall we tell where he is going to come from? The known world is now populated by the descendants of Noah. They have grown into nations differing in language, customs and worship. The birth of these nations created the need to deal with mankind on a national level. God decided to create a new nation to be His messenger to the idolatrous polytheistic nations of the world. He called upon a man, Abram, to leave his home in Mesopotamia and to settle in Canaan which would in time be the land of the people who would descend from him. In so doing, God narrows the line through which the redeemer would come. (Galatians 3:16)

III. THE SHILOH PROPHECY - Genesis 49:1, 10

Abraham complicates our line by having several sons. From Sarah there was Isaac and Ishmael was from Hagar. He also had about six sons from Keturah. Which one of these boys will continue the line of the Messiah? Again the way is made clear by God who instructs that the Messiah will come through the line of Isaac. *"In Isaac shall thy seed be called."* (Genesis 21:12) Now, Isaac goes on to have two boys, Jacob and Esau. Which one will be chosen? Before the boys are born the choice is made. God chooses Jacob. (Romans 9:10-13) With the passing of time Jacob confuses the line by having a dozen boys. The solution is found in Genesis 49:10 where we read, *"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah."* This is the most complete Messianic revelation in the book of Genesis. On the eve of the Egyptian period of Hebrew history, Jacob gathers his sons before him (Genesis 49:1) and just before his death speaks of *"latter days."*

The aged Jacob speaks to his sons who are the fathers of the various tribes of Israel. He calls Judah a *"lion's whelp."* Judah is strong as is a lion, out of him shall

come a strong ruler. Interesting, that in Revelation 5:5 Jesus is spoken of in the words, *"And one of the elders said unto me, 'Weep not: behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah.'"* The words *"sceptre"* and *"ruler staff"* symbolize royal power and sovereignty. There was an ancient custom of the lawgiver who sat with a large staff resting between his feet as he exercised judgment. The word *"Shiloh"* in Hebrew means the author of tranquility. The word of the prophecy is that *"to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."* In Ephesians 1:10 and II Thessalonians 2:1 we read of peoples being gathered to Christ. The redeemer will come only out of the tribe of Judah at this point.

At this point we come to an unusual happening, everyone in the tribe of Judah is ruled out for ten generations. The thirty-eighth chapter of Genesis tells about Judah who went to shear his sheep and saw a woman with her face covered. She was his daughter-in-law but he supposed her to be a harlot, and they had a child. (38:13-18) The child's name is Pharez, he is Judah's illegitimate son and bears the line of the redeemer. I wish Genesis 38 was not in the Bible. If I had written the Bible I would have left it out, most of us would. But man did not write the Bible, God did. The story will be told. God decrees *"that a bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even unto his tenth generation."* (Deuteronomy 23:2) Now, we need not look for the Redeemer, even in the tribe of Judah for at least ten generations.

Time goes by. Israel cries for a king. In the tribe of Judah a man by the name of Jesse was the ninth generation from the illegitimate Pharez. God goes to the tribe of Benjamin and selects Saul, son of Kish. (I Samuel 9) Back in the tribe of Judah when David is born of Jesse, God anoints him king while he is still a boy and stays with that line by swearing an oath. (Ruth 4:18-22; Acts 2:30).

IV. THE LINE IN DAVID – II Samuel 7:14-16

This prophecy of Nathan is an important one. Out of the millions being born into the world, we are concerned with one out of David's line only. He makes it difficult for us by having about two dozen sons. Which one will it be? God makes it plain by selecting Solomon. (II Samuel 7; I Kings 1:37-39) From here we go down the line of Solomon until we come to a wicked king by the name of Ahaz. Ahaz wearies God. God stands him aside and speaks to all of Israel with the words, *"Behold, a virgin shall conceive..."* (Isaiah 7:10-14) Now, out of the masses of people living on the earth we have come to realize the Redeemer will be born of a virgin. Furthermore, Micah prophesies that such a thing will happen

out of Bethlehem in Judah. (Micah 5:2-4) Seven hundred years go by. The angel Gabriel speaks to a virgin by the name of Mary who is espoused to Joseph in Nazareth of Galilee. The Messiah thus receives His body through Mary who was a descendant of David's son, Nathan. (Luke 1:30-35)

V. JOSEPH AND THE CURSE OF CONIAH - JEREMIAH 22:30; LUKE 3:23

Let us go back through our line once again. God promised a Redeemer for humanity through the seed of a woman. He narrowed the line to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, and the family of Solomon. All went well until we come to a wicked king by the name of Jeconiah, or Coniah. A curse is put upon him. (Jeremiah 22:30) No descendant of his will sit on the throne of David. Joseph was of this line which meant no son of his was eligible for the throne. Had Jesus been the natural son of Joseph, He would have been eliminated also. But any son born to them as man and wife was a legal son. Jesus was Joseph's legal son, though not of his seed. Jesus fulfills the prophecies and is the only person today with the right to sit on the throne of His father David. This is the significance of the genealogy in Matthew 1. It is the story from Abraham to Joseph. The King needed to establish He was of the seed of Abraham and the lineage of David. This is the reason Joseph is introduced at all. Jesus came not only to be Savior, but to be King. (Acts 1:6; John 18:37; 19:3, 14, 15, 19)

Luke's genealogy traces Christ back to Adam because Luke wishes to establish the humanity, rather than the kingship of Christ. We can imagine the early Jewish believers wore a path in the temple's marble floor as they pondered the record there seeking for a flaw in the claim of Christ to David's throne. They found none. Mary was a descendant of David, though not of the royal line. The Holy Spirit caused Mary to fall in love with Joseph to make Jesus a legal heir.

Thanks be to God for our King and Savior, Jesus Christ. What is this all about? It is about trusting Christ in a personal way and belonging to His kingdom.

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