

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 1

Luke 24:13-35

September 24, 1996

Intro: Years ago before I finished my university work, I went to the University of Houston to see how much credit they would give me for the work that I had already done. One of the professors I had to talk to was the head of the “Religion Department.” In looking over the courses that I had taken he came to a course called, “Christ in the Pentateuch.” He turned to me and said, “That is ridiculous; anybody knows that Christ does not appear in the Bible until you get into the NT.” I don’t know if he decided to give me elective credit for it or not. I didn’t enroll in the university, but I mention this because it made me realize how limited some people are in their understanding of the Bible—even a professor of “religion.”

I doubt if any of you has such a limited understanding of the Scriptures, but I thought that it would be worthwhile in starting a series on “Christ in the Old Testament” to take some time as we begin to establish the fact that *Christ is in the Old Testament*. I am sure that one reason that the professor I talked to did not believe that Christ was in the Pentateuch was because he did not believe in the Deity of Christ. He probably looked upon Jesus of Nazareth as only a human being—just like you and I are. I didn’t try to explain to him that there are different ways in which Christ appears in the OT, such as, types and prophecies, but I am sure that I could not have convinced him that such a course as *Christ in the Pentateuch* was anything but “ridiculous.”

Anyway, that is all ancient history now, *but let me point out several reasons why we know that Christ is not only in the Old Testament, but that He is the main theme of all of the Bible, OT and NT*. Interestingly, to do this we must turn, first of all, to the NT. And I want you to realize that we can’t take *all* of the references to the Christ in the OT that we find in the NT, but I want to give you enough so that, if you have any questions along this line, hopefully your questions will be answered.

Let us take at least one reference from each of the four Gospels.

I. THE FOUR GOSPELS.

I am using the four Gospels so that you will see we have the testimony of the four men who wrote the four Gospels. Please turn first to:

A. Matthew 1:18-25, especially vv. 22-23.

I suppose we could have a difference of opinion as to whether or not verses 22 and 23 were the words of the angel who appeared to Joseph, or they were the words of Matthew explaining why this had happened to Mary. Whichever view you take, the result is the same. When Isaiah wrote Isaiah 7:14, he was writing about Christ. Isaiah predicted that a virgin would give birth to a son, and that He would be Deity, Emmanuel--“God with us.” Of course we should know that Isaiah and the other prophets who spoke of the coming of Christ, spoke by direct revelation from God.

B. Mark 1:1-4.

As John Mark began his Gospel, he referred to two passages, one in Malachi 3:1, and the other, Isaiah (again) 40:3. Both of these Scriptures referred to the coming of John the Baptist, but they did so proclaiming that he would prepare the way of the Lord, the Messiah, Whom we now know to be the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. Luke 4:16-21.

This passage contains another reference from the prophecy of Isaiah--61:1-2, and the Lord Jesus said in verse 21 that the passage He read was fulfilled by Himself.

F. B. Meyer, who was born in London in 1847, ministering there for most of his life, and dying in 1929, wrote many books. One of them was *Christ in Isaiah*. Concerning finding Christ in Isaiah, he had this to say in his Preface to that book:

The humiliation and suffering, sorrow and anguish of soul, substitution and death, exaltation and satisfaction of the Saviour are portrayed, with the minuteness and accuracy of a contemporary; and there is hardly a sentence from which we cannot begin and preach Jesus, as Philip did to the Ethiopian eunuch.

CF. ALSO LUKE 18:31.

D. John 5:39, 46.

These are the words of the Lord Jesus Himself. In the first passage we see that He claimed that all of the OT Scriptures speak of Him. And then in the second verse listed above our Lord declared plainly that Moses wrote of Him. So we are authorized by our Lord Himself to look for Him in the reading of the first five books of the Bible, but not to limit ourselves to those books alone. All of Scripture speaks of Christ in one way or another. And we can say that the Apostle John would never have recorded this words if he did not believe them. Also John 1:45.

But now let us go on to:

II. THE BOOK OF ACTS--PETER AND PHILIP.

There are several passages in Acts where we could show that the Old Testament speaks of Christ, but let me point to one of them found in Peter's message on the Day of Pentecost as he spoke to Jews from all over the Roman Empire who had gathered in Jerusalem to observe the Passover. Let me read you his words found in **Acts 2:22-36**. So Peter believed that Christ was spoken of in the OT, and in this instance he referred to the words of David in particular. Peter was referring to **Psalms 16 and 110** which were written by David.

I have already alluded to what Philip did with the Ethiopian eunuch when he found him returning home in his chariot, reading from the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 53, verses 7 and 8.. Let me read the passage to you: **Acts 8:29-35**.

III. THE APOSTLE PAUL.

In the book of Acts when Paul and Bamabas were on their first missionary journey, and had gone to Antioch in Pisidia, Paul in his message quickly referred to three OT passages of Scripture as he spoke of the resurrection of Christ: Psa. 2:7; Isa. 55:3; Psa. 16:10. The passage is found in **Acts 13:26-37**. Let me read this passage to you, and as I do, notice that twice Paul referred to what was “fulfilled” (v. 27) and “fulfilled all that was written of him” (v. 29). Where was anything “written” of our Lord? Obviously in the OT.

So to show how the OT spoke of Christ was the most powerful way that the apostle had of witnessing to the Jewish people about salvation.

Let me give you another passage from the Apostle Paul where he spoke of Christ in the OT Scriptures: **Rom. 1:1-4**. The Apostle Paul did not quote in these verses from the OT, but he made it clear that through the OT prophets God had promised the Gospel which had to do with Christ.

When **Paul** and **James** spoke of the doctrine of justification, Paul went back to Abraham and to David, while James went back to Abraham and Rahab. And, of course, there is no justification for sinners before God except through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul referred to the OT many times in speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ. One passage where he took his readers into *the types of Christ in the OT* was when he wrote 1 Cor. 10:4. Referring to the journey of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, and speaking of how God gave His people water out of the rock, he said that the rock was a type of Christ. Listen to what he wrote:

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: **and that Rock was Christ** (1 Cor. 10:4).

And how could we overlook Paul’s great statement of the Gospel in 1 Cor. 15:3, 4? Notice in particular the phrase, “according to the scriptures.” This is clear evidence that both the death and the resurrection of Christ were prophesied and pictured in the Scriptures of the OT.

IV. THE BOOK OF HEBREWS.

There have been several suggestions as to who wrote the book of Hebrews. Personally I believe that the Apostle Paul was the writer. But let us leave that question for now, and get some examples of how the writer, whoever he was, used the OT to refer to Christ. And we could find not stronger examples than in Hebrews 1. There the writer quoted from Psa. 2:7; 2 Sam. 7:14; verse 6b is probably a quotation from Deut. 32:43 in the LXX; Psa. 45:6, 7; Psa. 102:25-27; and Psa. 110:1. All of these passages speak of Christ. Let me read to you **Heb. 1:5-13**.

There are many other references to Christ in Hebrews. One that is especially prominent is the reference to Christ a priest after the order of Melchizedek in Heb. 5-7. But for the sake of time we must go on. It is not my purpose to point out every reference to OT passages in the NT which speak of Christ, but just to give you enough to show that the evidence is very clear that the OT does speak of Christ--over and over and over again.

V. THE APOSTLE PETER.

I have already referred to Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, but let me add to that a reference which we have in Peter’s first epistle, chapter 1, verses 10 and 11.

And in 1 Peter 2:6-8 Peter spoke again of Christ combining Isa. 28:16; Psa. 118:22; Isa. 8:14.

VI. THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.

In this prophetic book of the NT the title that is given to our Lord more than any other title is **Lamb**--26 times if I have counted correctly. Where did that come from? What about the Passover lamb in Ex. 12? And what about the many lambs which were slain year after year in sacrifices to the Lord? And what about Isa. 53:6, 7?

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.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought **as a lamb** to the slaughter, and **as a sheep** before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

I hope that from all that I have given you in these NT passages, you are firmly convinced that the OT speaks over and over again about our Lord Jesus Christ. But to conclude this I want to take you to one more passage

where we can see this very clearly, but not only that the OT speaks of Christ, but also the spiritual benefits you and I can expect from our study of *Christ in the Old Testament*. The passage to which I refer is **Luke 24:13-35**. Please turn to this passage.

VII. CHRIST WITH THE TWO EMMAUS DISCIPLES (Luke 24:13-15).

Most of this account is self-explanatory, but there are some details that need to be made clear.

This event took place after the resurrection of our Lord. But at this time it was not clear to His disciples what had actually happened. These two disciples (not of the twelve) were returning home from Jerusalem, but it is obvious that they were disappointed and saddened and confused by all that had happened. They had hoped that the Lord had come to “redeem Israel” (v. 21). But they felt that His death had put an end to that hope. But then they were confused even by the report that the Lord was alive.

As they walked, the Lord joined them, but verse 16 tells us that they were not able to tell that it was the Lord because “their eyes were holden that they should not know Him.” The Lord was the One Who determined the time and circumstances under which they would recognize that He was the Lord.

The Lord asked them what they were talking about (v. 17), and why they were sad. Cleopas answered (vv. 18-24).

When the Lord called them “fools” He used a word which indicated that there was a moral fault behind their inability to understand the truth of God. This is Trench’s comment, p. 283. They had done like so many of the Jews in our Lord’s day: they believed what the prophets had predicted about the glory of the Messiah, but failed to see that He was going to have to suffer first. It was common for them to attribute the glory in the prophecies to the Messiah, but the sufferings to the people. They had not believed “all that the prophets have spoken,” and here was their moral problem. It was not that they were living in some kind of sin, but that they had failed to take *all* that the Scriptures said.

And then it is that we come to the verse which is important in the study we will have this year: verse 27. “Moses and all the prophets” was one way the Jews had of dividing the OT. So this means that the Lord went through all of the Scriptures. “He **expounded** unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” He *interpreted* the Scriptures to them. What a marvelous time that was for those two disciples! What could be more wonderful than to have the Lord teach us His own Word? Obviously they must have been blessed in hearing the Lord explanation of the Scriptures, but the full blessing was yet to come when they would recognize that this One Who had come to them was the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.

By this time they had arrived in Emmaus, and asked the Lord to stay with them. He accepted their invitation, and they provided a meal for Him. Expositors differ as to the interpretation of verse 30, whether or not the Lord ministered at an observance of the Lord’s Supper, or whether it was just the conclusion of the meal. I am inclined to think that it was an observance of the Lord’s Supper. The language seems to indicate that it was. And it was on this occasion that the Lord opened their eyes, “and they knew Him” and then “vanished out of their sight.”

Now notice the results:

1) Their hearts “burned within” them. The sadness, the discouragement, the confusion was gone. Joy and delight had come to them. They had come to understand the Scriptures as never before, putting Christ and the Word together, taking all that the Word had to say about the Lord. Their hearts were warmed and gladdened with what they had heard.

2) And this is so important: They saw that Christ opens the Word to us, but that He opens the Word when we see that it all speaks of Christ. Christ, and all that the Word has to say about Him, is the key which unlocks the treasures of God’s Word. Christ is the key to all of Scripture, OT and NT.

3) They had to go back the approximately seven miles to Jerusalem to tell the disciples what they had learned and that they had seen the Lord! Were they weary? They certainly had been. But now their strength was renewed. They did not ride animals back to Jerusalem. They did not have cars to drive, nor could they have called a cab. They walked! And they told the disciples that the Lord really had been raised from the dead, and He actually did appear to Peter. Seeing Christ in the Word will make us want to talk about Him, too.

Concl: So I want you to see that Christ is not just important in the NT; *He is all through the Scriptures!*

Ignore Him, and the Book will remain a closed Book. But ask the Holy Spirit to show you Christ all through the Word and your heart will burn with joy, you will understand more of the Word than ever before, and you will be like the early apostles who could not be silenced, but had to tell others what they had seen and heard. May the Lord make our study of *Christ in the Old Testament* a blessing each week like the two disciples had on the road to Emmaus.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 2

Christ, the Creator

October 1, 1996

Intro: When we speak of Christ in the OT, we mean that Christ lived before He became a Man, and that He was Deity. And we have the authority of Scripture to back up our belief that Jesus Christ was God, and, therefore, *eternal!* But it is important for us to establish these facts from Scripture as we begin our studies. You can understand why people who don't believe in the Deity of Jesus of Nazareth, don't believe that He is ever in the OT, except that His birth may have been predicted like the birth of John the Baptist was predicted. So how will we establish from Scripture that our Lord is the eternal Son of God, without a beginning and without an ending? In this, as in our lesson last week, we begin with what is said about Christ in the NT:

When we speak of “Christ in the Old Testament,” what specifically should we have in mind, and what should we be looking for as we go through the OT? We will find that this subject can be divided into three categories:

- 1) Appearances of Christ in the OT.
- 2) Types of Christ in the OT.
- 3) Prophecies of Christ in the OT.

When we speak of the appearance of Christ in the OT, we are speaking of what Bible teachers call *Christophanies*, or *pre-incarnate appearances of our Lord*. Sometimes these are spoken of as *Theophanies*. I am very strong in believing that every appearance of God as a Person in the OT is Christ. I say, “as a Person,” because God's presence is manifested in different ways. For example, the burning bush, or the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. These, of course, could have been manifestations of God's presence. But God appeared as a Person to Abraham. I am referring to Genesis 18 when what Abraham originally saw was three men who turned out to be the Lord and two angels. It is my conviction that the Person of the Godhead Who appeared to Abraham was our Lord, *a pre-incarnate appearance of our Christ*.

My reason for saying that every time God appeared as a Person in the OT, it was Christ, is John 1:18,
No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father,
he hath declared him.

The Greek here is very strong. Robertson in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament* translates the first part of that verse, “God no one has ever seen.” The Greek justifies the translation, *at any time!* But notice that the last part of the verse speaks of Christ, “the only begotten Son” as the One Who has “declared him.”

“Declared him” is the translation of the Greek word from which we get our English words, *exegete* and *exegetis*. A person who explains Scripture, a Bible teacher in other words, is one helps us to understand the Scriptures. The Lord Jesus was in that position: He is in Himself the greatest revelation of God that has ever been given to man. All through the OT we learn a great deal about God, but the revelation of God was completed when Christ came. And every time we see God in the OT, we see Christ. Christ is the One Who reveals God in the OT just as He is preeminently the One Who reveals God in the NT. We still don't know all that we will know someday when we get to heaven, but Christ is the final and complete revelation of God--not just by what He taught, but because of Who He is! So this verse, John 1:18, is a verse we would use when seeking to show the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is “the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father.” Christ is uniquely the Son of God, and there is no other like He is, and He is lit. *into the bosom of the Father*. That is, He shares the closest possible relationship with God, which Westcott calls “the ultimate fellowship of love” (p. 15).

So Christ came to reveal God, and there never has been another, nor will there ever be another, there is no other, who can reveal God to us as He is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So our verse, John 1:18, must mean that if no one has ever seen God, then appearance of God in the OT must be appearances of Christ.

Now let us look further into:

I. THE DEITY AND ETERNITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Let's stay in the first chapter of John for a while.

There are three books of the Bible which begin with the word "beginning" in the first verse: Gen. 1:1; John 1:1; and 1 John 1:1.

Genesis 1:1 tells us that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This means that our universe began when God in the very beginning of time "created the heaven and the earth." Nothing that is referred to in Genesis 1 existed before that beginning. So that is where all of creation came into being.

John 1:1 actually pre-dates creation because it tells us Who existed before the heaven and the earth existed. The Apostle John speaks of "the Word." That "in the beginning," already existing and apparently without any beginning, "was the Word." Moreover, "the Word was with God." So before creation we are told that "the Word" and "God" existed. But then we have the statement that "the Word was God."

Now if "the Word was God," then we must ascribe Deity to "the Word." If God is a Person, and "the Word was God," then the Apostle John must have been speaking about a Person when he wrote about "the Word." I am trying to get you to think like a person would have to think who was reading the Gospel of John for the first time and trying to figure out what John meant by "the Word."

You can't say that they are the same Person because John said that "the Word was with God." If the Word were with God, then He is distinct from God, and yet just like God! And to emphasize the point that God and the Word are not the same Person, the Apostle John actually repeated himself in verse 2, for the sake of emphasis, and because he did not want anyone to miss the point that he was making. (Read John 1:2.)

But who was the Apostle John talking about when he used the name, "the Word." Look with me at John 1:14. (Read.)

It was Jesus of Nazareth that John was speaking about. He "was made flesh." Now this is not the way that you normally announce the birth of a baby. Lucille and I have four children, and we didn't announce the birth of any of them by saying that Gary "was made flesh." Or that John "was made flesh." To say that they were "made flesh" means that they existed somewhere before they were born. Now the Mormons might say that, but that is a part of their heresy. This statement, "And the Word was made flesh," means that the Word entered into an existence which He did not have before. The Greek actually means that He *became flesh*. From all eternity He had been God; now at this point in history He became a Man.

But let me show you something else that is very wonderful about this verse. Theologians have argued throughout history about what the birth of Jesus as a Man did to His Deity. If we would read our Bibles carefully we could answer a lot of our own questions. Be sure to notice that when the Apostle John spoke about the birth of the Word, he continued to use the same Name that he used when he spoke of what He had been in eternity past, before there was any creation at all. He would have had to have changed from using "the Word" if the birth of "the Word" had made any change in His Deity. When "the Word" *became flesh*, He was just as much "the Word" as He had been before He became flesh. Becoming flesh for our Lord did not in any

way change the fact that *He was God!* He was God in every sense of the word before He became a Man, and He continued to be God in every sense of the word after He became a Man. The birth of Jesus Christ in no way lessened nor changed in any way His total and absolute Deity. He was a perfect Man, completely without sin, but He was also very God!

Let me read verse 14 to you again and notice what the Apostle John said about “the Word” after He was made flesh: “And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.’ John saw the glory of Jesus Christ *after* He was born, a declaration that Jesus Christ was God in human flesh. To be sure His glory was veiled. Many people saw Him as being no more than a man. But the glory was there, and His humanity did not change that in the least.

So what “the Word” was in eternity past, He continued to be when He became a Man and lived on earth as a Man. He had a beginning as a Man, but He had no beginning as God!

But why was the Apostle John directed by the Holy Spirit to call our Lord Jesus Christ, “the Word.” The title will carry over until the Lord comes in power and great glory. We read this in Rev. 19:11-16:

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: **and his name is called The Word of God.**

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**

But why was He called, the Word of God? Well, words have always been a means of communication, haven't they? Jesus Christ is called “the Word of God” because He is God's major means of communicating to us, not just in what He said, but in what He is. He is the very expression of what God is. What Christ is, God is. You will never find anything in God that you do not see in Christ. He and the Father are distinct Persons, but they are identical in nature. And the same can be said about the Holy Spirit--all Three are identical in nature.

Do you remember what the Lord said to His disciples about this in the Upper Room. The Lord said, and we have His words in John 14:7,

7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

And then we read that Philip said to Him, “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us” (John 17:8). And then the Lord responded with these words: “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” (John 14:9).

This is why our Lord is called, the Word. It is because He is God's Word to us, God's revelation to us, in His teaching, in His Person, and in His work--especially His work on the Cross.

Perhaps I should tell you that the only other time our Lord is referred to as “the Word” in the NT is likewise in another of the Apostle John's writings, 1 John. Let me read to you the first three verses of that epistle:

- 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of **the Word of life**;
- 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you **that eternal life**, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)
- 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:1-3).

These verses also speak not only of the Deity of Christ, but of His eternal character. He gives us His life which is eternal life, a life of fellowship with God the Father and with Christ the Son.

But I can hear some of you saying, “But pastor, you told us this would be a class on “Christ in the Old Testament.” When are we going to get to our subject? Well, we were there last week as we noticed various OT passages which were quoted in the NT, and which pointed to Christ. But now in getting back to the OT, let’s return for a moment to the Gospel of John, chapter 1--this time to verse 3. Here we learn of:

II. CHRIST, THE CREATOR (John 1:3).

(Read John 1:3.)

If we want to talk about Christ in the OT, where do we start? We start with Genesis 1:1. (Repeat it.)

I am not saying that the Father was not active in creation. Nor am I saying that the Holy Spirit was not active in creation. But I am saying that our Lord Jesus Christ was there, was creating, and according to what we learn in John 1:3, there was not a ray of light, not a drop of water, not a speck of dirt, not a blade of grass, nor grain of wheat, nor a tree, nor any of the heavenly bodies--sun, moon, stars, not a fish, not an animal, not a bird--there was not anything in all of God’s creation that the Lord Jesus Christ did not have a hand in making. The word for God in Genesis 1:1 is Elohim, which is a name for God with a plural ending. So you can’t even start to read the Bible without coming into contact with God, and included in all that took place in Genesis 1, we find the Father, and we find the Holy Spirit (see v. 2), *but Christ is there also, having a part, and we would have to say, a major part, in everything that took place during those six days of creation.*

CF. EPH. 3:9
HEB. 1:2-

When we come to the record of the sixth day of creation, what do we read? “And God said, Let **us** make man in **our** image, after **our** likeness, and let them have dominion over...” Who was God talking to? And what Member of the Godhead was speaking? Here is further proof of Christ being involved in creation. See also the “**us**” in Gen. 3:22. One thing you can be sure of is that Christ was there!

Listen to what the Apostle Paul wrote in Col. 1:15-19 in speaking of Christ:

- 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:
- 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:
- 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.
- 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.
- 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

This goes beyond what we read in Genesis 1 and 2. Here we see that our Lord is sovereign over all of the nations in OT times, in Bible times, and in all times up to the end of time. Men think they have things under their control, but the Lord Jesus Christ is the One Who is over all. Creation reveals His wisdom, His power,

His goodness, His grace and mercy, His righteousness, and His glory. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork” (Psa. 19:1).

Concl: In the middle of 1977 and going into 1978 I made a list from my Bible reading of all the verses I came across that had to do with creation. There are literally hundreds of them--found in both the Old and New Testaments. We should never read in our Bibles about creation, nor even looking at the wonders of our creation, without thinking of Christ. And it is all for His glory.

Last summer when our son, Dwight, was here, he told us a cute story that somebody with a lot of wisdom made up. It seems that there was a genetic engineer who was talking to God, and he told God that it wasn't such a great thing to be able to make a man--that that was something that he could do. So God told him to go ahead. A little while later God came upon this engineer outside digging in the dirt. God asked him what he was doing. He said, “I'm getting some dirt so that I can make a man.” But God said to him, “Oh no you don't! You make your own dirt!”

How ridiculous it is that people would spent a moment's thought on such a preposterous theory as that of evolution! It illustrates how people can be brilliant in some areas, and totally dumb when it comes to the origin of all things. How thankful we should be that the Lord has opened our eyes to truth, and that we know our Lord Jesus Christ not only as the Creator of all things, but as our gracious Redeemer and our wonderful Lord.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 3

Christ, the Redeemer

October 29, 1996

Intro: In our first lesson in this series on “Christ in the Old Testament” we saw how this study was authorized by our Lord Jesus Christ. When He joined two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus, and learned that they were confused about what had happened to Him in Jerusalem, without revealing to them initially Who He was, we read this about what He did:

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:27).

Later, in the same chapter, we learn that our Lord did essentially the same thing when He was with the twelve:

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 (Luke 24:44).

So we could have it on no higher authority than that of our Lord Jesus Christ that *the message of the OT is a message of Christ*. To state it another way we can say that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Key to the Old Testament. *Of course, the same is true of the New Testament. The Bible really remains a closed book until we see that it is a revelation of Christ.*

Back in the mid-1800's two German evangelical scholars completed, and later revised, a monumental work on the Old Testament. There are twenty-seven volumes in the set. The names of the men were Karl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch. Their work is usually referred to as the Keil and Delitzsch commentaries. They worked together on some of the volumes, but on most of them they worked individually. I think that I can safely say that the whole set is one of the finest and most exhaustive work on the entire OT that has ever been written. I am going to be making constant use of their work during our study of Christ in the Old Testament. So when you hear me speak of Keil and Delitzsch, or just one of them, you will know who they are. Both of these men were Hebrew scholars, and use the Hebrew freely in their commentary. But it is still possible for those who do not know Hebrew to profit a great deal from their work.

I mention these men just now because I want to read to you what they had to say about the Old Testament. You will see that they believed very strongly in what I have been pointing out to you from Luke 24. Here are their words:

The Old Testament is the basis of the New. “God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath spoken unto us by His only-begotten Son.” The Church of Christ is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. For Christ came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil. As He said to the Jews, “Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me;” so also, a short time before His ascension, He opened the understanding of His disciples that they might understand the Scriptures, and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. With firm faith in the truth of this testimony of our Lord, the fathers and teachers of the Church in all ages have studied the Old Testament Scriptures, and have expounded the revelations of God under the Old Covenant in learned and edifying works, unfolding to the Christian community the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God which they contain, and impressing them upon the heart, for doctrine, for reproof, for improvement, for instruction in righteousness (*Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. I, p. 7).

So you can see that basic to their work was the belief that the Old Testament speaks of Christ from beginning to end, from Genesis to Malachi.

In our second lesson we saw that Christ is spoken of in the NT as the Creator. The Gospel of John begins with those familiar words:

John 1:1-3

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God (John 1:1-2)..

And then we read this in verse 3:

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made (John 1:3).

And to confirm the truth that when the Apostle John spoke of “the Word,” he was speaking of Christ, we find this on down in the chapter at verse 14:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

It is true that the Father was active in creation, and that the Holy Spirit also had a part, but nothing was created but what the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had a part in it. In fact, it would seem from Col. 1:16-17 that the Lord Jesus was the main Creator. Listen to what the Apostle Paul wrote about our Lord and creation:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist (Col. 1:16-17).

So our Lord Jesus not only was the Creator, but He is also the Sustainer of the whole universe, and will continue to be for all time.

Therefore, in Genesis chapter 1 when we read about creation, we are reading about the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also, it can be said that wherever the work of creation is referred to in either the OT or the NT, it is speaking about the work of Christ.

Today we come to Lesson 3. I have with some hesitation called this third lesson, **Christ, the Redeemer**. And I say “with some hesitation” because this subject cannot be limited to the chapter we will be considering today: Genesis 3. This is the chapter where the doctrine of redemption is first introduced, but it is a doctrine which runs through all of Scripture like a golden thread. The more we get into the Scriptures, the more we learn about the subject of redemption--and in saying this I am including not only the OT, but also the NT. In saying that the OT is primarily a revelation of Christ, we must understand that it is a revelation of Christ as the Son of God, our Redeemer, our Savior. The Lord occupies many offices according to Scripture. But all are in one way or another related to His work as our Redeemer, our Savior. However, in order to understand this work of Christ, we must understand not only the need for redemption, but the nature of the redemption which God has provided for us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So let me take as my first point,

I. THE NEED FOR A REDEEMER.

When we speak of a Redeemer, we are saying that there is something for us to be redeemed *from*. And when we call our Lord a Savior, we are saying that there is something for us to be saved *from*. *What was it that required that our Lord, the Creator, become a Redeemer, a Savior?*

We all should know that when our Lord created the heaven and the earth, He did a perfect work. There was no imperfection in creation anywhere along the line. Five times in Genesis 1 we are told that what our Lord did in creating the heaven and the earth, was “good.” See Gen. 1:10, 12, 18, 21, and 25. Then we are told in Gen.

1:31 with reference to the finished work of creation,

And God saw every thing that he had made, **and, behold, it was very good.** And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

What did this mean? Well, obviously it meant that what the Godhead had done in creating the heaven and the earth was very pleasing to them. Their work had been to perfection. It could not have been better. There was no way that it could have been improved upon. Listen to how Keil and Delitzsch explained the meaning of “good”:

God saw His work, and *behold it was all very good; i.e., everything perfect in its kind, so that every creature might reach the goal appointed by the Creator, and accomplish the purpose of its existence.* By the application of the term “good” to everything that God made, the repetition of the word with the emphasis “very” at the close of the whole creation, the existence of anything evil in the creation of God is absolutely denied (K & D, *The Pentateuch*, Vol. I, p. 67).

Perhaps we can understand more fully the meaning of the word “good” if we see the Bible’s description of conditions just before the Flood. Cf. Gen. 6:5-6:

5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

Why the difference? You all know the answer. Between the end of creation and the time of the flood, a most terrible thing had taken place. The story is told in Genesis 3. Man had become a sinner by nature. Sin had affected his whole being. That is what we mean when we speak of his *total depravity*. Adam and Eve had been placed in a perfect garden. Their responsibility was to dress it and keep it. The Lord had provided everything for them. There was only one restriction placed upon them: they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were warned that if they did eat of it, on the very day that they ate of it, they would “surely die.” There was no question as to what the consequences of their disobedience would be.

Well, they sinned! They ate of the fruit which had been forbidden to them. *And they died!*

Oh, they didn’t drop dead immediately, but physical death began to work in them. They were immediately separated from God. They experienced spiritual death, and they faced the awful prospect of being separated eternally from God, and of suffering the torments of an eternal death. The Apostle Paul recorded the consequences of the disobedience of Adam and Eve when he wrote,

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (Rom. 5:12).

Adam and Eve had been created in the image and likeness of God, and therefore it is very likely that a glory covered them until the time of their sin. But when they sinned, the glory departed, “and they knew that they were naked.” So they made coverings for themselves from fig leaves. However, when God came to them (and this must have been Christ since no one has ever seen God at any time), they hid themselves among the trees of the garden. By their own testimony they had become afraid of God, and they knew that the coverings they had made did not really prepare them to stand in the presence of God. We can very accurately say that this was their attempt to redeem themselves, to save themselves. This was the first evidence we have in Scripture of salvation by works. But it was not enough to prepare them to stand before God, and they knew it!

They both stood condemned before God. They had violated His will, and now would have to suffer the consequence which was *death!* This is what caused them to need a Redeemer.

II. THE PROVISION OF A REDEEMER.

In the warning that God had given to Adam in chapter 2 about what they were not to do, and what the consequences would be if they did, *nothing was said about a Redeemer*. The penalty for their disobedience would be death. Even the idea of a Redeemer seems not to have occurred to either Adam or Eve. They did not plead for mercy as God pronounced judgment first on the serpent, then on the woman, and finally on Adam. But we notice that in pronouncing judgment on the serpent God gave:

A. An unrequested promise of a Redeemer (Gen. 3:15).

We immediately must recognize that this was *an act of the grace of God*. It was completely undeserved. They deserved death in the fullest sense of the word. God cannot go back on His Word, even His words of judgment. And so it was necessary that someone be appointed to take the punishment if Adam and Eve were to be spared the judgment which God had declared would be theirs.

What all Adam and Eve understood about verse 15 it is impossible for us to say, but the likelihood is that they knew that a man would be provided to intervene in their behalf.

Notice that the Lord said that it would be “the seed of the woman” who would bruise the serpent’s head. Keil and Delitzsch point out very correctly that since “it was through the woman that the craft of the devil brought sin and death into the world, so it is also through the woman that the grace of God will give to the fallen human race the conqueror of sin, of death, and of the devil” (K&D, *The Pentateuch*, I, p. 102). *Thus we have in this verse which is both a prophecy and a promise, an indication that the Redeemer would be virgin-born*. Normally the Scriptures would speak of a child as being the seed of a man. So it must have attracted the attention of both Adam and Eve even in those early days that the prophecy had to do with One Who had a human mother, but not a human father. This is a truly remarkable prophecy.

The Seed of the woman would be, as we now know, Christ! When we think of what the Lord God meant when He spoke of “thy seed,” it should help us to see that the Lord went on in the latter part of verse 15 to say to the serpent, “It shall bruise **thy** head, and **thou** shalt bruise his heel.” The Devil had no descendants, as such, and so he is his own “seed.” The seed of the serpent is the Devil; the seed of the woman is Christ. The conflict of the ages is really between the Son of God and the Devil.

Are we assuming too much? Are we reading into Gen. 3:15 more than the Lord intended to be there? I don’t think so. We read in Rev. 12:9 that “the great dragon was cast out, **that old serpent**, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.” And in Rev. 20:2 we have this statement:

And he laid hold on the dragon, **that old serpent**, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

Of course he is old. He was an angelic being created before the creation of man, and he has lived all through time from the beginning until now, and he will continue to live until he is finally cast into the lake of fire which burns forever and ever.

The bruising of the heel of the seed of the woman speaks of the part that the Devil had in the death of the Lord on the Cross. And as severe as that was, the finality of it was nothing in comparison with the serpent’s head being bruised. This surely was what the Lord had in mind when He said prior to His death on the Cross, and referring to one of the victories that He would have on the Cross, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John 12:31).

Involved in all of this is what the Apostle John said in 1 John 3:8b, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

So in this verse, Gen. 3:15, we have:

- 1) The first promise of a Redeemer.
- 2) The first mention of the virgin birth.
- 3) The first prediction of the Cross.
- 4) The first evidence of the final defeat of Satan.
- 5) The first manifestation of the grace of God.

But now I will go on to the other verse in Genesis 3 which gives us evidence of “Christ in the Old Testament.”

B. A type of Christ in His death (Gen. 3:21).

In Gen. 3:15 we learned that the seed of the serpent would bruise the heel of the seed of the woman. That was done, we now know, at the Cross. But what would happen to Christ is even clearer in Gen. 3:21.

Adam and Eve made for themselves a covering of fig leaves to hide their shame, but it proved to be insufficient when the Lord God met them in the Garden. And so again we see evidence of the grace of God, and it was not even at the request of Adam and Eve. God did it freely according to His own will. He made “coats of skins, and clothed them.”

I have called this “a type of Christ in His death.” Since we are going to be dealing with *types* in the OT, let’s make sure that we all understand what we are talking about. *What is a type in Scripture?*

A type is some representation of something to come, and in Scripture they usually have something to do with Christ. For example, when the Apostle Paul said that “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7), he was saying that the Passover Lamb of the OT was a type of Christ, it prefigured what Christ would be, and what would happen to Him. In the same epistle, in 1 Cor. 10:4, when Paul was speaking of the journey of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, he said that “they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” In other words, the rock which Moses struck to get water was a type of Christ.

We have to be careful in our study of the OT not to make everything a type--as some expositors have done. On the other hand, personally I don’t believe that a type has to be labeled as such in order for it to be a type. I don’t think that Noah’s ark is ever referred to as a type of Christ, and yet it seems to me to be clear that it is--the ark represented Christ as the One Who shields us, and delivers us, from the judgment of God.

So in the skins of animals with which the Lord clothed Adam and Eve, we have a type of Christ. This can be seen in the following ways:

- 1) The animal was an innocent victim. He had done nothing worthy of death, but he died to provide a covering for those two sinners, Adam and Eve. We are told about our Lord that He “did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth” (1 Pet. 2:22). Isaiah said of our Lord that “He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth” (Isa. 53:9). And yet it was because He was a Man without sin that He could die as a Substitute for those who were sinners.
- 2) The death of the animal involved the shedding of blood. As long as this animal, probably a lamb, lived, its skin could not cover Adam and Eve. But when its blood was shed, and the animal died, then the skin could be taken as a covering for Adam and Eve. Cf. 1 Pet. 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:
- 3) The skins of the animal pictured the righteousness of God. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:21.

Concl: So in Genesis 3 we not only have original sin, but we have original grace. Genesis 3 is a Gospel chapter. We see the Cross. We see that which was required by God for the justification of sinners. Personally I believe we are going to see Adam and Eve in heaven. But whether we do or not, we certainly have enough in Genesis 3 to teach that we need to be saved, why we need to be saved, and the only way that we can be saved. And there is nothing taught later about our salvation which in any way changes the truth that we find in this very important chapter.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 4

The Genealogy of Christ

November 5, 1996

Intro: If you were to ask people who read the Bible, what part of the Bible they find the most difficult, most of them would probably say, “the genealogies.” We find the names hard to pronounce, and probably very few know the purpose of the genealogies. Actually they are very important, and a study of Christ in the Old Testament would not be complete without at least one lesson dealing with the genealogies of the OT. We can’t, of course, include all of the genealogies, but we need to deal with a part of them because of their importance in any study of what the Old Testament has to say about Christ.

In our third lesson we learned that One was coming who would bruise the serpent’s head, in other words, to destroy the works of the Devil and to provide salvation for sinners. We also saw in type that such a redemption would require the death of a substitute. Looking ahead to the prophecy of Isaiah we are told in chapter 7, verse 14, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” This harmonizes perfectly with what the Lord told the serpent in the garden about the Redeemer being “the seed of the woman.” And then when we get into the NT, and into the Gospel of Matthew to be specific, we read that the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph who was very disturbed to find out that Mary, the one he was to marry, was already pregnant. He could come to only one conclusion, as hard as it was for him to believe it: Mary had been unfaithful to him. And so he planned to break the engagement, but not publicly, because he “was not willing to make her a public example” (Matt. 1:19). He loved her too much to disgrace her—even though according to the Law, if she were guilty of adultery, she should have been stoned.

As he was thinking about all of this, the angel of the Lord, who appeared to him in a dream, explained what had happened to her, and said to him,

20b ...Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:20b-21).

In Isaiah 7:14 we are told that a virgin would conceive and bear a son, but how that would be we do not learn until the angel of the Lord told Joseph that Mary was with child by the Holy Spirit.

Earlier when Mary was told by the angel Gabriel that she would conceive, and bear a son whose name would be Jesus, and saying that He would also be “the Son of the Highest,” she responded by saying, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” (Luke 1:34). Then Gabriel responded and said this:

The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35).

Although this is not a part of our lesson today, I want you to notice that in the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, in the angel’s message given to Joseph, and in Gabriel’s message given to Mary, we have clear evidence in all three that “the seed of the woman” would not only be a true human being, but He would be God. We see this in the Name “Immanuel,” in the Name “Jesus,” and in the title given to Mary, “the Son of God.”

In Genesis 3:15 we have the original prophecy, and in the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ we have the fulfillment of the prophecy. Now it is the genealogies which link the promise with the fulfillment. Gradually as we go through the OT we learn more and more about the genealogy of our Lord, but perhaps it will be easier for all of us to plow through the names in the genealogies of Scripture if we know what *and Who* they are leading to. The genealogies are progressive in nature, just as is the revelation of all of the great teachings of Scripture.

Where do we start? We start with what Scripture calls,

I. "THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM" (Gen. 5).

Please turn to Genesis 5.

Moses in writing the book of Genesis used the word "generations" a number of times. The first is found here in Gen. 5:1. What did he mean by this expression? He meant that following in chapter 5 we have the descendants of, or the family of, Adam. And running down through the list you see that this list of names takes us from Adam, through Seth, and on down to Noah. They all lived a long time, but, with the exception of Enoch, they all eventually died. Enoch was translated into heaven without experiencing physical death. But the important thing to see is that we have here the family of Adam, his descendants, leading down to Noah.

Then Moses cut off the genealogy temporarily to tell us about the Flood, and about the division of the human family after the Flood into nations. This continues until we get to Genesis 10, and then we read about:

II. "THE GENERATIONS OF THE SONS OF NOAH" (Gen. 10:1-32; 11:10-26).

We were told at the end of "the generations of Adam" that Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Now we are going to learn about their descendants. We have:

- 1) The sons of Japheth in Gen. 10:2-5.
- 2) The sons of Ham in Gen. 10:6-20.
- 3) The sons of Shem in Gen. 10:21-31.

But then when we get to Gen. 11, after we are told about the tower of Babel, we have a second list of the family of Shem, and to show its importance, Moses again used the word "generations":

III. "THE GENERATIONS OF SHEM." See Gen. 11:10-26.

We have to realize that each son mentioned had sons, and so the Spirit of God is selective in pointing out what sons are important as we move on toward the coming of "the seed of the woman." To see the difference between the genealogy of Shem at the end of chapter 10, and the genealogy of Shem in chapter 11, please look at 10:25-26. You will see that Eber (from whom some think we get the name, Hebrew) had two sons: Peleg and Joktan. The genealogy in Gen. 10 follows the line of Joktan. But you find the opposite is true when you get into chapter 11. In verse 16 we are told that Peleg was born to Eber. Joktan is not even mentioned. Jesus Christ came through the family of Peleg, not through Joktan, although both were sons of Shem. Why? The only answer we can give to that is that Peleg's line was the sovereign choice of God.

Now notice that the line from Peleg led to Terah in 11:24, and in verse 26 we are told that Terah had three sons, Abram, Nahor, and Haran. And in 11:27 we come to the fourth time the word "generations" is used, and this time it is:

IV. "THE GENERATIONS OF TERAH" (Gen. 11:27-32).

The important part about this genealogy is that it brings us to Abram, one of the most important men in all of the OT. I am sure that you all know that later his name was changed to Abraham.

When I used to teach Genesis at the Multnomah School of the Bible, I used to point out to the students that the first eleven chapters of Genesis were fast moving and introductory not only to Genesis, but to the whole Bible. Personally I believe that this world is only about 6,000 years old. I date Adam about 4,000 years B.C., and

Abraham about 2,000 years B.C. So this means that Genesis 1-11 covers as much time as the rest of the OT put together. God did not lead His servants to write a history of the world; He led them to write a history of redemption. And so Moses gave us enough to see how we get from Adam to Abraham, but then, because Abraham was such a key figure in God’s scheme of redemption, the record which had been very brief now slows down and we have a great deal more detail. In fact, when Matthew was giving us the genealogy of Joseph, through whom our Lord could lay claim to the throne of Israel, Matthew omitted the first eleven chapters in his genealogy of “the generation of Jesus Christ,” the earthly and human family of Christ, *and began with Abraham*. Turn with me to Matt. 1:1 and you will see what I mean. (Read.)

Now let us go back to Genesis 12. The first three verses of this chapter are among the most important verses in all of the OT in connection with the coming of Christ. Let me read them to you. (Read Gen. 12:1-3.)

Abram was born in Ur of the Chaldees. According to Gen. 12:1 we are told that “the Lord **had** said unto Abram that which we find in the first three verses. The Lord promised him a “land” in verse 1. He promised to make of him “a great nation” in verse 2. And in verse 3 God promises to bless all of the families of the earth through him, Abram. We know now that the land was the land of Canaan. We know that the nation was Israel. And what is most important, we know that the promise of blessing upon all of the families of the earth was *the blessing of salvation*. How do we know this? Turn to Gal. 3:8. (Read.) The Spirit of God, speaking through the Apostle Paul, said that when the Lord told Abram, “In thee shall all nations be blessed,” that He, God, was preaching the Gospel to Abram. Later on in Abram’s life, after he had been renamed “Abraham,” God said this to him:

- 15 And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,
- 16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:
- 17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;
- 18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice (Gen. 22:15-18).

Abraham’s seed, mentioned in verse 18, could mean that the Savior would come from the nation God had promised to make him, but it also could be a reference to “the seed of the woman.” It could mean that the Savior would come from Abraham’s family--and I am inclined to mean that is what it does mean. The Apostle Paul said in Gal. 3:16,

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

So this is proof that even then, approximately 2,000 years B.C., God was thinking about His Son and preparing the way that would ultimately lead to the coming of Christ into the world to provide salvation for sinners.

Now this covenant which God made with Abraham, was confirmed to Isaac (not Ishmael). See Gen. 17:19. And then it was passed on to Jacob (not Esau). Cf. Gen. 28:10-15. And from Jacob it went, not to Joseph, but to Judah. See the blessing of Jacob upon his sons in Gen. 49, and specifically what was said to Judah in verses 8 through 10. Joseph is certainly one of the greatest of all types of our Lord Jesus Christ (and we will consider him as such in a future lesson, but the promise of salvation was to be carried on through Judah, not through Joseph. When in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, John wept because no one was found worthy to open the book with the seven seals, he was told this by one of the elders,

Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof (Rev. 5:5).

And it was our Lord, the Lamb, Who came and took the scroll out of the hand of God, and began to open the seals.

I am not going to try to trace all of the genealogies of our Lord through the Scriptures, but there is one more which I must include. That is David, King David of Israel.

V. THE GENERATIONS OF DAVID (Matt. 1:17).

This is what Matt. 1:17 tells us at the end of the genealogy which is recorded for us in Matthew’s Gospel:
 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

What does this tell us? *It tells us that the OT is really a history of the earthly family of our Lord Jesus Christ.* It is a message of Christ our Redeemer Who is Prophet, Priest, and King. And so as we go from David to David’s son, and then to David’s grandson, and so on, we are following the line from which our blessed Lord Jesus Christ would eventually come. Our Lord was and is David’s greatest Son.

Perhaps you remember when our Lord during His time here on earth questioned the Pharisees as to whom they thought the Messiah would be. Matthew gives us the account in Matt. 22:41-46. This is what we read:

- 41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,
- 42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David.
- 43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,
- 44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?
- 45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?
- 46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

The Lord, of course, was referring to Psalm 110, and He was indicating that when David wrote that Psalm, he was speaking of Christ. And so this gives us an example of what we call *Messianic Psalms*--Psalms which speak of Christ Who was and is both God and man, David’s Lord, but also David’s Son, true God and true Man.

Concl: I hope from what we have seen today that you will begin to see that Christ is not only *in* the Old Testament, but that the OT is full of Christ. It is all about Christ. Take Christ out of the OT, and you won’t have anything left! He is the Theme--from start to finish! We see Him in prophecy, we see Him in types, we see Him in His many appearances.

What are some of the important lessons that we are to learn from *the genealogy of Christ in the Old Testament*?

1) It surely emphasizes what we have already learned from passages like Luke 24 and the account of our Lord with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Christ is the key Who unlocks for us the message of Scripture. Failure to see Christ in the OT leaves the truth of the OT locked up. But once we see the OT as a revelation of Christ, then the books are opened to us, and our hearts bum within us with delight as we read and think and learn of Him.

2) This ought to convince us more than ever that the Bible is indeed the Word of God, and that the God of the Bible is the God of history, making sure that His purposes are being fulfilled. He is, as Paul said in writing to the Ephesians, working all things out after the counsel of His own will. And our Lord Jesus Christ is involved

in all that God is doing. Through all the years of time, God has sovereignly controlled the affairs of all men and nations so that, as with the testimony of the children of Israel in Canaan, there will not fail anything which God has promised would come to pass.

3) To see Christ in the OT, His human family, the prophecies concerning Him, the evidences of His supreme power, should give us peace in these evil days in which we are living. Through all of the obstacles that have stood in God’s way, both among the heathen nations and even among those who claim to be the people of God, it is always our God and His beloved Son Who prevail. There have been many nations in the past who would have gladly put an end to the godly line leading to Christ. The Devil has done his best to stand in God’s way. But he has not only failed; he has been defeated in the process and his doom today is sealed and certain. We need to remember what the Psalmist, very likely David, said in Psa. 33:10-11,

10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

And Solomon agreed 100%:

There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand (Prov. 19:21).

Proverbs 21:1 is another good verse for us to keep in mind in these days when we are all so concerned about the way our country is going:

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Also, Prov. 21:30, “There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD.”

I love those words of judgment which the Lord pronounced against Assyria found in Isaiah 14:

24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

26 This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? (Isa. 14:24-27).

Isaiah 46:9-10 can give us real encouragement:

9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

God has taught many of the kings and leaders of the earth that He is the One Who is in charge of the affairs of earth. I love to read the testimony of Nebuchadnezzar after God humiliated him, driving him from among men, making him eat grass like an ox, and letting his hair grow until it was like eagle’s feathers and his finger nails and toe nails became like the claws of a bird. Listen to what he said after his reason was restored to him. You will find it in Dan. 4:34-35:

34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will

in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

The people of our country ignore God. They defy His will. They insist on doing their own way. We kill our babies. We pervert the marriage relationship. We are more concerned about animals and spotted owls than we are God. I saw a bumper sticker the other day that said, “May Goddess bless.” We take the Name of the Lord in vain so constantly that you can’t turn on your TV and listen to it very long before somebody is blaspheming the Name of the Lord. Our leaders do not hesitate to lie if it will get them what they want. Corruption is everywhere. Every day we as a nation move farther and farther from God and from His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Psalm 2 is still in the Book, and is just as true as the day it was written. Let me read it for you as we close. (Read Psalm 2.)

How thankful we should be that the Lord has opened our eyes to the truth. And we should pity those who turn away from God and from His Word, and we should do all that we can in these days to get the Word out to our wicked and dying world. The Lord has been very patient with us, amazingly patient, but there comes a time when His patience is exhausted, and judgment falls. Let us be faithful. Let our trust be in the Lord, and we shall never have any cause to be ashamed. Blessed are all those who trust in Him.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 5

Christ and Melchizedek

November 12, 1996

Intro: A very interesting person appeared to Abraham in the OT. His name was called Melchizedek. We read about him in Genesis 14. Please turn with me to that chapter, and I will read verses 17-24. Actually only verses 18-20 have to do with Melchizedek. He was unique in the sense that he was both a priest and a king.

Now turn with me, if you will, to Psalm 110, and I would like to read that Psalm to you.

This was written approximately 1,000 years after Abraham’s encounter with Melchizedek. King David was writing one of the many Messianic Psalms, and he was led by the Holy Spirit to predict concerning our Lord that which we find in Psalm 110:4,

The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

In the first verse of Psalm 110 we have the words which our Lord referred to when He was confronted by the Pharisees. The Pharisees believed that the Messiah would come from David’s line, that is, they believed that he would be a son of David. But in Psalm 110:1 David wrote,

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

David was saying that God the Father had said to His Son, “Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” So in verse 4 of Psalm 110 where Melchizedek is mentioned, again it is God the Father speaking to His Son when David tells us,

The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

So the Father declared with an oath that His Son would not only be a priest, but a priest *forever* after the order of Melchizedek.

But it is not until we get into the book of Hebrews in the NT that we learn about the Melchizedek priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Melchizedek is mentioned nine times in the book of Hebrews, and only in the book of Hebrews: 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 10, 11, 15, 17, 21. (Survey these verses from the beginning of chapter 5, the digression which the writer of Hebrews initiated in verse 5:11, getting back to his subject in 6:20--and then explaining it in detail in Hebrews 7. Read verses 1-10, and comment on it. These verses are a commentary on the passage in Genesis 14.)

Many believe that Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ--and he may very well have been. But because it is said that our Lord would be a priest *after the order of Melchizedek*, and in Psalm 110 where we have recorded the words that the Father spoke to His Son where He referred to Melchizedek as a third person, I am inclined to believe that Melchizedek was a type of Christ, but not Christ. The significance of these chapters as they relate to Christ is not changed whichever view you take, but I believe that Melchizedek was a separate person from Christ, and that there were two priests in this order, Melchizedek, and Christ who succeeded him. And it is clear that no one has ever replaced Christ. This is what the writer of Hebrews explained in Hebrews 7:11-28. (Survey these verses.)

Now, having seen all of these passages where Melchizedek is mentioned in the Bible, let me distinguish between them in this way:

- 1) In Genesis 14 we have *Melchizedek in history*.
- 2) In Psalm 110 we have *Melchizedek in prophecy*.
- 3) In Hebrews 5-7 we have *Melchizedek in doctrine*.

From the way the doctrine is presented in the book of Hebrews we are told that this is “strong meat,” not “milk.” This is truth which requires, like all of the great doctrines of Scripture, that we are making progress in our sanctification. Note the Apostle’s word in Heb. 6:1, “Let us go on to perfection.” A mature believer in Christ will know about the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, but he or she will living in the enjoyment of this great truth. Most Christians know that Christ is our High Priest, but not all of us, unfortunately, are profiting from this truth in our daily lives. Like all of the doctrines of Scripture, this doctrine of the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ is intended to affect our lives in a practical way. And if it does not, then that fact is evidence that we have not really grasped the full significance of what it means that Christ is our great High Priest. Let us pray as we consider this great truth today that the Holy Spirit will teach us the doctrine, and then lead us to benefit from it today as we seek to live with the Lord and for the Lord.

Now, since our subject is “Christ in the Old Testament,” let us go back to the Genesis passage, and then to Psalm 110 to learn what we can about Christ as our King and our Priest. And as we consider them, we will draw from the chapters in Hebrews to make the truth as clear as possible.

I. CHRIST AS SEEN IN THE PRIEST-KING MELCHIZEDEK (Gen. 14:18-20).

It is quite amazing to me that a subject of such great importance should in Scripture actually occupy only three verses in the OT. The foundation for Psalm 110 is in these three verses, and the same can be said for Hebrews 5-7. We would not be able to understand Psalm 110 nor Hebrews 5-7 if we did not have the historical record in Genesis 14.

But, having said that, let me also say that in order to understand those three verses in Genesis 14, and to benefit from them as we should, we need the whole fourteen chapter of Genesis. Remember the saying, “A text without a context is a pretext.” The text we are primarily concerned with in Genesis 14 is in verses 18 through 20. The context consists of the verses which precede verse 18 and the verses which follow verse 20. It is the setting in which the text is given to us. If I ignore them, I have a pretext. What is a pretext? It means that I only have what seems to be the meaning, but I might be wrong, or at least incomplete in my interpretation. Always when we consider the context, we get added light and blessing from the text.

What, then, is the context of our text in Genesis 14?

A. The context of Genesis 14:18-20.

Perhaps I would be more correct in saying that the context of chapter 14 extends back into Genesis 13 and Genesis 12, and even into the last few verses of chapter 11. When Abram left Ur of the Chaldees where he was born, his nephew Lot went with him. After they had gone down into Canaan where they found themselves in a famine, they went down into Egypt, and later came back to Canaan. Both men had become very wealthy. They had many cattle and sheep. It was impossible for them to find pasture for their sheep while they were together, and so they decided to go their separate ways. Lot decided to move in the direction of Sodom, a very, very wicked city, and eventually moved into Sodom. Sodom and several other cities were at the time under the control of Chedorlaomer who was the king of Elam. Then they rebelled. So Chedorlaomer with three other kings went to war against Sodom, Gomorrah, and three other cities, and Chedorlaomer was victorious. Lot also was taken captive. When Abram heard about what had happened to Lot, he armed his 318 servants, pursued Lot’s captors, and was able to rescue Lot and his family and all of his possessions. And it seems that, in addition, he rescued all of the people of Sodom, as well as killing the kings who had been victorious over the King of Sodom and his allies.

Well, the spoil actually belonged to Abram. And so in Gen. 14:17 we find the King of Sodom going out to

meet Abram after he returned from his victory, *but before he got to Abram, we read about the arrival of Melchizedek, and beginning with verse 18 we learn who Melchizedek was, what he did, and what he said.* Then we learn what Abraham gave to Melchizedek. And all of this is in the three verses which are our text.

B. Melchizedek in Gen. 14:18-20.

1. Who was Melchizedek?

Well, his name was Melchizedek, and he was the King of Salem. Now these details are very important. The writer of Hebrews gave us this explanation: “First being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace (Heb. 7:2b). The location of Salem is not important (although it may have been the original site of Jerusalem), but the translation of the names is important: “King of righteousness” and “King of peace.”

But the writer of Hebrews tells us something else: It is important in this case to notice what is not said about Melchizedek. Notice:

Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually (Heb. 7:3).

We are not told about Melchizedek’s father, nor his mother, nor his family, nor the date of his birth, nor the date of his death--and the reason? It does not necessarily mean that he had no father nor mother, no family, no birth date, nor future date of death. But it means that all of that was omitted so that he could appear on the scene in Abram’s life “made like unto the Son of God.” Notice Moses in writing Gen. 14 did not say that he was the Son of God, but that he was “like unto the Son of God.” **He appeared as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ in His Deity!**

And then we read at the end of verse 18: “And he was the priest of the most high God.” So he was both a king in a twofold sense, and he was also a priest--“the priest of the most high God.” This is the title that is given to God not only in verse 18, but also in verses 19, 20, and 22. What does it mean? It means that God is *the Supreme God, the Highest God, the Greatest God of all.* This title expresses *the absolute sovereignty of the God of Scripture.*

2. What did Melchizedek do, and what did he say?

a. He “brought forth bread and wine” (v. 18a).

This was to refresh and strengthen Abram and his men as they returned from the battle they had been involved in.

b. He “blessed” Abram and the most high God, and this is where he spoke (vv. 19, 20a).

Notice that from what Melchizedek said he was in a position between Abram and the most high God. He blessed Abram “of the most high God,” meaning that Abram belonged to the most high God. And here Melchizedek added to the title for God--“possessor of heaven and earth.” This part of our Lord’s title means that God is the Creator, Possessor, and Redeemer--indicating not only that God has a chosen people, but that redemption will be extended to include the heavens and the earth when sin will be taken out and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. To bless God is to praise Him. Melchizedek as a priest stands between God and Abram as both a Mediator and Intercessor.

C. Abram’s response (Gen. 14:20b).

Without any suggestion that Abram was required to do this, he voluntarily gave to Melchizedek as the priest of the most high God, “tithes of all.” Instead of receiving, Abram gave.

D. The Sequel--that which followed (Gen. 14:21-24).

Now the King of Sodom comes, we can see how providential was Melchizedek’s coming *before* the King of Sodom got to Abram.

Often times of victory are followed by times of temptation. The King of Sodom wanted to work out a compromise with Abram: “Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.” But Abram was prepared, and it was the ministry of Melchizedek which had prepared him. He had already made a promise to the Lord that he would not take the least, most insignificant things from Sodom because he did not want the King of Sodom to be able to say, “I have made Abram rich.” Abram wanted the men who went with him to be rewarded, but not in any extravagant way. How different it would have been with Lot if he had refused to have anything to do with the king and people of Sodom. There must never be any compromise with evil.

Now let me take a few minutes with the lessons in this very important text.

E. The Lessons to be learned.

1. Who can fail to see in the “righteousness” and “peace” which characterized Melchizedek that those same two qualities are in our Lord. And these are descriptive of our salvation. Cf. Rom. 5:1.

2. This is the first mention in Scripture of “bread and wine,” given to Abram and his men for their physical refreshment. Is this also a suggestion of where our spiritual refreshment comes from? And is this not one purpose of the Lord’s Supper--to refresh and strengthen us in the battles of daily life as we come together to meditate upon the death of our Lord, His broken body and shed blood.

3. How glorious is the revelation of God which we have in this visit of Melchizedek with Abram. “The most high God,” the sovereign God, our Maker, our Redeemer, the One to Whom we belong.

4. How thankful we should be for our Mediator and Intercessor, One Who lives, has always lived, and who will never die. Cf. Heb. 7:25. He stands between us and our Sovereign God, and He is the bond which secures our relationship with God. In our battles and struggles, we need to remember that we have One Who continually prays for us, and secures just the blessings that we need at every stage of our lives.

5. May we, too, lift our hand to the Lord, as a solemn promise that, by His grace, we will never be found compromising with evil or with evil men.

I am sure that there are more lessons to be learned from this wonderful chapter, but it will be well if we learn and continue to profit from these obvious lessons.

And now before I close, let me go for just a moment to Psalm 110. Please turn, if you will, to that chapter again.

II. THE MESSAGE OF PSALM 110.

Please look with me again at verse 4. The Lord could just have given us His promise, but to show how secure we are with our great High Priest, He has sworn. He has taken an oath showing that there never will be the slightest possibility that our Lord Jesus Christ will cease to be our Priest, our High Priest, before God. He ever lives to make intercession for us. We can be sure that even before we were saved, our Lord has prayed for us. And every day (although there have been days when we have failed to pray for ourselves) He has prayed and continues to pray for us. And He holds this position eternally. When we look ahead into heaven and glory, there must be some ways, possibly many ways, in which we will continue to need the mediation and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has always been our Priest, making us acceptable to God and keeping us acceptable to God--and He always will! How wonderfully secure we are in our Sovereign God and in our equally sovereign Lord Jesus Christ!

Concl: Every day I read a Psalm. Already this year I have read the Psalms through three times. The Psalms are always a source of rich blessing to me. I love to read them and then to think about them after I have read them. I am sure that in your reading you often notice words or phrases that are repeated in whatever books of the Bible you may be reading.

As I think of the Melchizedek priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and what my reaction should be, I remembered a statement that is found in Psalm 40, and also in Psalm 35--both Psalms of David.. The sentence which is actually a command, is, "The Lord be magnified." Let me read it to you as it appears in Psalm 35, verses 27 and 28:

27 Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, **Let the LORD be magnified**, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

28 And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.

You will find basically the same in Psalm 40: 16-17:

16 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, **The LORD be magnified**.

17 But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

What better word could be given to us concerning the marvelous priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us say it, and say it as both Psalm say, "continually, The Lord be magnified." We can never praise Him enough for all that He has done for us, and for what Christ has done for us. So day by day, whatever else we may say, let us tell the Lord, and tell others also, "The Lord be magnified."

“THE ANGEL OF THE LORD” IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Gen. 16:7, 9-11

7 And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

9 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

10 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

11 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

Gen. 22:11, 15 (16-18)

11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

15 And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Ex. 3:2

2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

Num. 22:22-27, 31-32, 34-35

22 And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him.

23 And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way.

24 But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side.

25 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again.

26 And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.

27 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff.

31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

32 And the angel of the LORD said unto him. Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me:

34 And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.

35 And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

Judges 2:1, 4

1 And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

4 And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept.

Judges 5:23

23 Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty.

Judges 6:11-12, 21-22

11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

22 And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

Judges 13:3, 13, 15-18

3 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware.

15 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.

16 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the LORD.

17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour?

18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?

Judges 13:20-21

20 For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground.

21 But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the LORD.

2 Sam. 24:16

16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.

1 Kings 19:7

7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

2 Kings 1:3, 15

3 But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?

15 And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king.

2 Kings 19:35

35 And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

1 Chron. 21:12, 15

12 Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.

15 And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

1 Chron. 21:16, 18

16 And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

18 Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

1 Chron. 21:30

30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Psa. 34:7

7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Psa. 35:5-6

5 Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase them.
6 Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

Isa. 37:36

36 Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

Zech. 1:11-12

11 And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest. 12 Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?

Zech. 3:1, 5-6 (7-10)

1 And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

5 And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.

6 And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying,

7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.

8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

9 For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

10 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.

Zech. 12:8

8 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 6

The Angel of the Lord

Part 1

November 19, 1996

Intro: One of the key verses in the NT for the study of Christ in the Old Testament is John 1:18:
No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

This is a very powerful verse as it is expressed in the original Greek. God has never, and can never, be seen as God by any human being. The Lord God expressed this to Moses in that sad day when Israel was journeying from Egypt to Canaan, and they at Sinai, tired of waiting for Moses to come down from the mount, caused Aaron to make a golden calf which they worshiped as their God. As Moses interceded for them (because God was prepared to destroy the nation, Moses made this request of God which we find in Exodus 33:18-20:

18 And he [Moses] said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

19 And he [the LORD] said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

20 And he said, **Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.**

Later, in the last days before Moses died, he spoke to the people of Israel, reminding them of how God had spoken to them at Sinai. This is what he said. You will find these words in Deut. 4:11-12. Moses said this:

11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.

12 And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, **but saw no similitude;** only ye heard a voice.

During our Lord's ministry here on earth, He said this on one occasion. The words are recorded for us in Matt. 11:27:

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

So our Lord indicated here that it was He Who revealed the Father. And this is what the Lord said also in the words we find in John 6:45-46:

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

The Apostle Paul in writing to Timothy had this to say about the glory of God as it will one day be revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ. These words are found in 1 Tim. 6:11-16:

11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16 Who only hath immortality, **dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto;**

whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

This means that although God the Father has seen fit to reveal Himself to us in Christ, yet even in Christ the full glory of God and the other Two Members of the Godhead has not be fully revealed.

The Apostle John in his old age was still declaring that no one had seen God, i.e., God the Father. Listen to these words found in 1 John 4:12 and 20:

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

And then in verse 20,

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

So we must conclude that God the Father has never been seen. How, then, can we explain those times in the OT when God did appear. John 1:18 indicates that *always*, when there is an appearance of God in the OT, it is Christ. This would include the times when the Lord appeared to Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses, and to Joshua--just to mention a few. Do you remember the account of the three men came to Abraham's tent in Genesis 18? As the account goes on we realize that one of the men was God, and the other two were angels--but they all appear to Abraham in human form. The One Who appeared as God was God the Son. The same is true about the man with whom Jacob wrestled at the place which became known as Peniel. He was wrestling with Christ, not God the Father.

Now John 1:18 says that our Lord was “the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father.” This means not only that Jesus Christ was God's Son, thus equal with God even according to the way the Jews understood such a claim (see John 5:17, 18), but that God had no other Son like Him, and being ‘in the bosom of the Father,’ Christ's relationship with the Father was as close and as tender as it is possible for one person to be related to another person. This is why it is so important to understand the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. He and the Father are one--not one Person, but one in character, one in Deity, identical as to their Deity. So for the Lord Jesus to come to earth to reveal the Father, was exactly what it would have been if God the Father had come in human form. As glorious as Christ was in His revelation of the Father, yet in His humanity that glory was veiled. We are yet to see the full display of the glory of God. That will come when we see the Lord and God and the Holy Spirit in heaven. *But let us all understand that both in the OT and in the NT, the One Who reveals God is not God the Father Himself, but God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. If we are to know God, we will know Him through Christ. We have marvelous declarations throughout Scripture of the glorious attributes of God, but I am speaking of those times in God is said to appear. It is always Christ!*

Now one of the important ways in which God made Himself known in OT times was as “the angel of the Lord.” There are times when “the angel of the Lord” is not Christ, but an angel sent by the Lord, e.g., when the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph. However, there are times when it is very clear that “the angel of the Lord” is the Lord, and these we can say are appearance of Christ in the OT, pre-incarnate appearances of Christ. They reveal must precious truth to us concerning our gracious and wonderful God.

Before we look at the first account of the angel of the Lord in Scripture, let me point out that the basic meaning of the word *angel* is that he is *a messenger*. So when our Lord appears as the Angel of the Lord, it is always that He has a message to convey. Our Lord's appearances as the Angel of the Lord, then, are always with messages to those to whom He appeared, but also to all who are the people of God. So we need to know that God means it to be very profitable to us to study these times when the Lord appeared as an Angel.

I want to consider with you the appearance of the Angel of the Lord to Hagar, to Abraham, and to Moses. And I want to take two weeks, this and next, to cover these important events.

It should be especially interesting to us that the first appearance of the angel of the Lord was to a woman, a Gentile, Hagar, the Egyptian handmaiden whom Abraham and Sarah brought with them out of Egypt. Let us turn to Genesis 16 and learn what we can from this most important incident in the life of Hagar.

I. HAGAR AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD (Gen. 16).

Hagar is first mentioned in Gen. 16:1. The whole chapter is devoted to her. She is mentioned again in Gen. 21:9-17, and finally in Gen. 25:12. It is assumed (and I think rightly so) that Abram and Sarai acquired her when they were in Egypt, the account of which we read in Gen. 12. That event in the life of Abram and Sarai was itself due to their weak faith. They had finally gotten into the land of Canaan only to find “a famine in the land” (Gen. 12:10). And so without seeking guidance from the Lord as to what they should do, or how the Lord would provide for them, then went down into Egypt, but not to stay--only “to sojourn there” (Gen. 12:10). Therefore, the fact that Hagar was with them, was a result of their disobedience some nine or ten years before. So Gen. 16:1 gives us the situation at that time. Sarai had “no children,” but she did have a handmaid named Hagar, an Egyptian.

I agree with Calvin that Sarai was not motivated by her woman’s desire to be a mother, but because of the promise of God which had brought them to Canaan in the first place. God had promised to make of Abram a mighty nation, and that through him the promised Seed would come through Whom “all families of the earth” would “be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). So her object was to see the will of God done, but her method was all wrong. Calvin said in his commentary, that “Sarai, through the impatience of long delay, resorted to a method of obtaining seed by her husband, at variance with the word of God” (Vol. I, p. 422). What she did was culturally acceptable, but a violation of the will of God. God never intended that a man should have more than one wife. In addition, she verbally expressed the fact that “the Lord hath restrained me from bearing,” i.e., *from bearing children*. So what she suggested to Abram was a double violation of the will of God.

Impatience is a result of sin. None of us likes to wait. It even influences us when what we desire is the will of God. What Sarai wanted was the will of God. There is nothing to indicate in Scripture that she was not a godly woman. Her problem was that she did not have as great a knowledge of God as she should have had. *We all need to realize that it is possible to seek the right thing in the wrong way, and that when we do the wrong thing even to see the will of God done, it can only bring us into more trouble and greater heartache.*

God us just as aware of the passing of time as we are. His purpose in waiting is never that He is unable to do what He has promised to do, nor that He is having trouble knowing what to do. His purpose always is that we would grow through waiting upon Him. James expressed it this way in the NT:

- 2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;
- 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.
- 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.
- 5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.
- 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.
- 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.
- 8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways (James 1:2-8).

We have no evidence in Genesis that Sarai asked God for the wisdom to know what to do. She merely moved ahead “on her own,” and sought to help God fulfill His promise to them.

So instead of seeking wisdom from God, or even from her husband, she told Abram what to do, and he foolishly agreed to do as she said. So it was no only a lack of faith for both of them, but it was done in

rebellion against God. We are not told this in Scripture, but it seems clear that both Abram and Sarai may have given up hope that they would be the parents of a child. When God withholds anything from us, it is sin and folly for us to make plans to get it for ourselves in our own way. The whole situation at this point in the lives of Abram and Sarai was wrong, and there would be a price to pay. And I hope that all of us can see how this applies to our lives, because it is probably true that all of us have run ahead of God when our prayers were not being answered, and when it seems that we have waited long enough for the Lord to do something.

Hagar was the victim in all of this. She was given to Abram by Sarai. Abram went into her, and the result was that she became pregnant. But at that point something happened which neither Sarai nor Abram had counted on. “When she [Hagar] saw that she had conceived, her mistress [meaning, Sarai] was despised in her eyes” (Gen. 16:4b). She looked upon her mistress with utter contempt, and Sarai felt this keenly. And she said so to her husband. Remember that this is the way Peninnah treated Hannah.

Note what Sarai said to Abram in verse 5. (Read.)

“My wrong be upon thee.” This sounds to us like she was confessing that she had sinned against the Lord. But that probably was not the case. When she said, “My wrong,” she probably was speaking about the unjust way that Hagar was treating her. *And so she was blaming Hagar, but also her husband!*

We live in a day when people characteristically refuse to accept the responsibility for their own wrongdoing. We blame our background, or our circumstances (such as the way others have provoked us), but we don’t want to take the responsibility upon ourselves. How commendable it would have been if Sarai had said, like the prodigal son said in our Lord’s parable (paraphrasing Luke 15:21 to fit Sarai), “Abram, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy wife.” But she didn’t say that. She put the blame on Hagar and Abram.

Years later Agur would write words which we find in Proverbs 30:21-23 and which apply directly to what Sarai and Abram had done--because they both were guilty. Listen to what he wrote:

21 For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear:

22 For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat;

23 For an odious woman when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

Hagar did not replace Sarai, but she was definitely placed upon higher ground socially than Sarai because she was going to have a child--which Sarai had never been able to do.

At this point Abram made another mistake, committed another sin. We see this in verse 6. (Read.)

It was as though Abram had said to Sarai, “You don’t have to take this kind of behavior. You are the boss. If she is doing the wrong thing, you are over her. Don’t take what she is doing; you do whatever you want to do. You are over; she is not over you.”

How unbecoming this was to a man of God like Abram! Isn’t it both interesting and tragic that when we do one thing that is wrong, this inevitably means that we at least are faced with the need to do other things that are wrong. Abram sinned in listening to Sarai’s plan. Then he sinned again when he did what Sarai wanted him to do. And now he is sinning again by telling Sarai to do whatever she needed to do in order to put Hagar back in her place.

What did Sarai do? The KJV says that “Sarai dealt hardly with her.” This means that she did everything that she could possibly do to make like both miserable and impossible for her. She not only humbled her, but humiliated her. She afflicted her in every way she could. Jealousy and vengeance had filled Sarai’s heart, and

she turned with the greatest rage on Hagar.

Well, how long Hagar suffered under Sarai, we don't know. But we can be sure that it wasn't long before Hagar did the only thing that she could do to get out from under Sarai's attacks upon her: *“She fled from her face.”* She ran away!

AT THIS POINT WE READ FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SCRIPTURE ABOUT “THE ANGEL OF THE LORD.” Cf. Gen. 16:7.

Now at this point let me run a little ahead of the story, and call your attention to what Hagar said later about the One Who had found her, and Who had spoken to her. I am referring to verse 13. (Read.)

Somehow, and we don't know how this came to her, she recognized that the One Who appeared to her as “the angel of the Lord,” was actually “God,” Deity. And in view of what we have learned about the appearances of God in the OT, *we can now say that the One Who sought Hagar, found her, and spoke to her, was our Lord Jesus Christ!* Hagar, of course, did not recognize Him as Christ, nor even as the Son of God. But she did recognize that “the angel of the Lord” was “God.” Now let us follow what happened.

It is significant that we read in Gen. 16:7 that “the angel of the Lord found her.” Hagar wasn't looking for the Lord, but the Lord was looking for her. The Lord was fully aware of all that had taken place. He knew the mistakes that all three had made: Abram, Sarai, and Hagar. He knew Hagar's despair and the sense of hopelessness which filled her heart. He knew how alone she felt. He knew that she didn't know where she was going. He knew how little she knew about the ways of the Lord. He knew that she was expecting a baby. There wasn't anything about Hagar that the Lord did not know. And so He sought her and found her.

And when the Lord found her, He asked her two questions. The first was, Where did you come from? The second was, Where are you going? Hagar knew the answer to the first question, but she didn't know the answer to the second question. Her response was (and you see it at the end of verse 8), “I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.”

How tragic it is when believers (because Sarai was a believer) behave in such a way that those who ought to be profiting from them, want to get as far away from them as possible. This whole chapter is full of wrongdoing, and Hagar is the one who was suffering the most, and she was the one who had the least opportunity to do anything about it--or that is what she thought. But the Lord didn't consider it that way.

Have you ever considered it strange that the Lord did not appear at this time to Abram, telling Abram that he needed to talk to Sarai and to make her see how she was grieving the Lord by what she was doing? Or isn't it strange that the Lord did not appear to Sarai? She was the troublemaker at this time. The Lord could very well have rebuked Sarai, and told her to change what she was doing. The Lord could have told Abram and Sarai that *they* should go after Hagar and bring her back! The Lord's ways are always different from our ways. Think about what you would have done, and it is usually the case that what we would do is not what the Lord would do, nor what He did! He sought Hagar, and He found her, and appeared to her, and spoke to her, telling her what to do.

Ron Rhodes who is associated with the Christian Research Institute, has written a book called, *Christ Before the Manger*, a book dealing with Christ in the Old Testament. He called this Hagar's “darkest hour,” and pointed out that the Lord appeared to her as “the angel of the Lord,” the Messenger of God Himself, to give Hagar both comfort and guidance when she was most discouraged, and did not know what to do. Rhodes spoke of her as “emotionally devastated and spiritually wasted.” See pp. 79 and 95. It is hard for any of us to

describe adequately all that was in Hagar’s heart, but despair must have been very obvious to anyone who saw Hagar at this time in her life.

What did the Lord tell her to do? He told her this: “Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.” She had told the Lord that Sarai was the very one she had run away from. And now the Lord tells her to go back, and to do what Sarai wanted her to do, *and all of this without the slightest hint that Sarai would be any different*. Can we agree with Ron Rhodes who said that the Lord appeared to her *to comfort her*? Yes, we can, but it appears that the Lord was being cruel, not comforting, in telling Hagar to go back to Sarai. But this is what He did. The Lord knew that Hagar had a lesson to learn in submission. Even though Sarai used the wrong measures, and was motivated by anger, her objective was probably to make Hagar submissive to her. Strangely, although the Lord would never have approved of the measures Sarai employed, yet His objective for Hagar was the same. Hagar needed to learn that she could without fear submit herself to Sarai if she did it *as unto the Lord*. The Apostle Peter said this in 1 Pet. 5:6-7:

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

And Solomon said in Prov. 16:7, “When a man’s ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

It is significant that when Hagar went back to Sarai, we hear no more of the trouble that Hagar had run away to escape. Years later Hagar was sent away, but at that time it was the will of God that she and Ishmael go. Cf. Gen. 21:9-21.

On this occasion that we are studying today, the Lord gave Hagar promises concerning her son. The Lord also gave her unborn child his name, Ishmael, which means *God hears*, as it is explained in Gen. 16:11. He was to be a constant reminder that the Lord had heard the cry of Hagar’s heart when she fled from Sarai, and that He had stepped in to meet her need.

The Lord named Hagar’s son, and Hagar gave the Lord a new name: El Roiy. He sees us, and in Christ we see Him. What comforting truths these are! And we see them throughout the Scriptures. Cf. Psa. 34:15,

The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

In Psalm 34 we read these words:

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

19 To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

Concl: Next week, the Lord willing, we will be looking at Christ as “the angel of the Lord” in Abraham and Moses’ lives. But what does all of this in Genesis 16 teach us about the Lord Jesus Christ as “the angel of the Lord” in the life of Hagar?

- 1) It teaches us His absolute sovereignty. He overrules us all for His own glory.
- 2) It teaches us of His mercy and compassion.
- 3) It teaches us His wisdom. He knew exactly what Hagar should do.
- 4) It teaches us He is ever mindful of our needs and able to meet them..

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 7

The Angel of the Lord

Part 2

November 26, 1996

Intro: In our lesson last week I began by pointing out to you what the Apostle John had to say about the appearances of God in the Old Testament. The verse is John 1:18. (Quote.)

This means that Christ is the One Who revealed God in the Old Testament just as He is the One Who revealed God in the New Testament. Our Lord appeared in different ways. Sometimes it was in a vision of some kind. Sometimes He appeared as a man. But right now we are considering His appearances (some of them) as *the angel of the Lord*. The passage we studied last week was Genesis 16 where the Lord Jesus as the Angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar after she had fled from Sarai. Today, if time permits, I would like to consider two more of our Lord’s appearances as the Angel of the Lord. These are:

- 1) His appearance to Abraham when Abraham was about to offer Isaac as a burnt offering to God. This is in the first nineteen verses of Genesis 22.
- 2) His appearance to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3.

Each appearance of Christ, and each way in which Christ is typified in the OT, as well as the many prophecies which have to do with Christ, are all important because of what they teach us about our Lord. And since the Deity of our Lord and the Deity of God are identical, although They are separate Persons, these are all extremely significant when it come to knowing God. Angels can teach us much about God. Those who have written the Scriptures also have taught us much about God. But no one is as qualified as our Lord to reveal God because He is the Son of God.

What did Christ as the Angel of the Lord teach us in His dealings with Abraham in Genesis 22? Let us begin by reading **Gen. 22:1-19**. (Read.)

First, let us consider:

I. THE BACKGROUND LEADING UP TO GENESIS 22.

We have seen in our previous lessons how Christ was involved in creation. We have also seen that when Adam and Eve sinned by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a promise of a Redeemer was graciously given to them by God in Gen. 3:15, and that we have a type of the nature of salvation when God clothed them with the skin of an animal before He put them out of the Garden of Eden. Obviously an animal had to be killed to obtain the skins, a type of the future death of our Lord, and the skins represented the righteousness of God which we have in Christ.

So right from the beginning of Genesis we are taught that Old Testament history actually has to do with *the history of redemption*. And, as we go through the OT, we learn more and more about the salvation which God had planned before the foundation of the world.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis are largely introductory, not only to the book of Genesis, but to all of Scripture. But when we come to Genesis 12, the Biblical account becomes more detailed, and we see that the Holy Spirit led Moses in writing this book to focus attention on Abraham and Sarah. I personally believe that the first eleven chapters cover as many years as do all of the remaining books of the OT. But the important thing to recognize as far as our study today is concerned, is what God told Abraham according to Genesis 12, and the effect that this had on both Abraham and Sarah until Isaac was born. Let me briefly summarize this for you.

In the first three verses of Genesis 12 we are given the orders and promises which God gave to Abram and Sarai before they left Ur of the Chaldees. This is why Genesis 12 begins, “Now the Lord **had said** unto Abram.” This was confirmed by Stephen in Acts 7:2-3 as he began his message to the council in Jerusalem. This is what Stephen said:

- 2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran [or, Haran],
- 3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

At that time God gave Abram three promises. Please turn to Genesis 12:1-3 so that you can see what they were:

- 1) That He would give Abram a land (Gen. 12:1).
- 2) That He would make of Abram’s descendants “a great nation” (Gen. 12:2).
- 3) That through him “shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3).

We know now that the land was Canaan. And we know now also that the nation would be Israel. But it is the meaning of the last promise which is so very important. And to understand what the Lord had in mind, we can turn to Gal. 3:8 in the NT. The best commentary that we have on the OT is the NT. This is what we read in Gal. 3:8:

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

I reminded you of this verse last week. The blessing that God promised Abraham was the blessing of salvation, or better, the blessing of a Savior. And the blessing was not just for the people of Israel, but for Gentiles throughout the whole world.

Now when God called Abram and Sarai in Ur of the Chaldees, they had no children. They moved to Haran, and still had no children. And when they finally got into the land of Canaan, they were still childless. We know from Gen. 12:4 that when Abram and Sarai left Haran and moved down into Canaan, Abram was 75 years old. When Sarai gave Hagar to Abram in Gen. 16 to have a child by her, they had been in Canaan for 10 years—and so Abram was 85 by that time. See Gen. 16:3. In Gen. 17:1 we read that Abram was 99 years old, and still he had no son. So how could he possibly become “a great nation.” In that chapter the Lord appeared to Abram and told him that Sarai would have a son, and that his name would be Isaac. See Abram’s reaction in Gen. 17:17.

In chapter 18 the Lord appeared to Abram again, this time as a Man, and Sarai learned that she was to have a son by Abram. She laughed also as Abram had laughed, and you can understand why. Even though they lived longer in those days, it was thought that a man 99 with a wife 89 were too old to have children. They had waited all of those years for the fulfillment of the promise that they would have a family. *But Gen. 21 tells us that the following year Isaac was born when Abram was 100 and Sarai was 90.*

This brings us to our chapter for today.

We are not given a date for this chapter, but as you read it, it is clear that Isaac was no longer a child, but a young man. And amazingly, after all of those years of waiting, and knowing how Abram and Sarah loved their son, plus the fact that the hope of salvation was clearly linked with Isaac, the Lord told Abram to take Isaac to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering to the Lord. Even if so much of the promised salvation had not been directly related to Isaac, it would seem heartless and cruel and wicked to ask Abram to do such a thing! It would seem inconceivable that God would ask Abraham to do this. But He did! This gives us the background for what we are to learn from Gen. 21 about Christ.

II. THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC (Gen. 22:1-19).

This chapter is full of Christ. Not only do we have Christ appearing later as the Angel of the Lord (see v. 11), but it is clear that Isaac is a type of Christ.

The purpose of what God was doing with Abraham is clearly stated in verse 1 of Gen. 22. The KJV says that “God did tempt Abraham,” but a better translation would be that God was testing Abraham, testing his faith, seeking to prove that Abraham would trust Him and obey Him even though it would have been hard, extremely hard, for Abraham to do what God had asked him to do.

Notice that we are not told how Abraham felt, the thoughts, the questions, that may have been going through his mind; *we are only told what he did--and how promptly he did it!* Probably the most difficult moment for Abraham was when Isaac questioned him as we are told in verse 7. In verse 8 we see Abraham unswerving confidence in God. He was assured, as he said, that God would provide a lamb for a burnt offering. Those are wonderful words: “God will provide.”

Throughout chapters 12 to 20 we see many times that Abraham failed to trust the Lord, but we are involved now with a mature child of God, a man who had walked with the Lord for many years, and one who was willing to trust God *completely* in this which had to have been the greatest trial in his whole life.

They came to the place where God had told them to go. Abraham built an altar, placed the wood on it, and then took his son, tied him up, and laid him on the altar. Then he took the knife which he had been carrying, and proceeded to kill Isaac before he set fire to the wood.

At that very moment, our Lord Jesus Christ (as He would be called) shouted from heaven before Abraham could plunge the knife into the heart of his son, and He told Abraham to stop. Abraham had proved that, *as much as he loved Isaac* (and God knew how much that was because He said so in verse 2), *Abraham loved God even more!*

Then Abraham turned around and saw a ram that had providentially been caught in the bushes, and Abraham took it and offered it up as a burnt offering to the Lord. The ram died in place of Isaac.

Then Abraham forever commemorated that place by giving God a Name which He had not made known before: JEHOVAH-JIREH.

There have been a couple of translations given to this Name. One is mentioned in the latter part of verse 14 where it is found. And it would amount to saying that *Jehovah sees*. But there are those who link his name also with verse 8 of this chapter and say that it means *Jehovah provides*. Spurgeon, in preaching on Gen. 22:14 said, “For God to see is to provide.” And Spurgeon added, “Our heavenly Father sees our need, and with divine foresight of love prepares the supply.” Abraham knew that God could be trusted. He knew that somehow, as he told the young men who had gone with them, that, “I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.” Abraham was depending upon the faithfulness of God all of the way. The writer of the book of Hebrews tell us this:

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 (Heb. 11:17-19).

And yet we know from Scripture that up to that time there is no record that anyone had ever been raised from

the dead. But you see what God was doing in addition to everything else: He was given us a type in Isaac, not only of Christ, God’s beloved Son, but of Christ raised from the dead.

Now it is a temptation to go into many of the truths involved here. But we are thinking today about Christ as the Angel of the Lord. In verse 12 the Angel of the Lord said to Abraham that he had not withheld his son, his only son, “from me.” And then we see the confirmation of the promise of salvation in verses 15-18 where the Angel of the Lord confirmed it with an oath.

What is the outstanding lesson in this trial that Abraham and Isaac went through? It is that God is to be trusted to the very limit, and that He will always be faithful to what He has promised to do in His Word. Spurgeon used to say that those who believe the promises of God can almost speak like a prophet in predicting that God will be faithful to His Word. He provided a substitute for Isaac, and He has provided a Substitute for us. But it was not a ram, but the beloved Son of our heavenly Father. And what better way can we close this part than by reading Romans 8:31-32:

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Abraham’s son was spared, but God’s Son was not spared. The Angel of the Lord stopped Abraham’s sacrifice knowing that He was appointed of God to die for the salvation of all sinners who would put their trust in Him.

But now let us turn briefly to consider the appearance of the Angel of the Lord to Moses. Our Scripture is Exodus 3:1-10. Let me speak, as I did with Genesis 22, about the background of this passage.

III. THE BACKGROUND OF EXODUS 3:1-10.

Moses was born while the children of Israel were captives in Egypt. His life was miraculously spared while other Hebrew baby boys were being killed. And it was God’s plan that Moses would be the one to lead the children of Israel out of their Egyptian captivity, and back to the promised land. But Moses ran ahead of the Lord and killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave. Consequently he had to flee for his life. He went down to Midian where he lived for 40 years. It was probably the case after all of those years that Moses felt that he would never get back to his people again.

Then we come in chapter 3 of Exodus to the account of *the burning bush*.

IV. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD AND THE BURNING BUSH (Ex. 3:1-10).

When you link together verse 2 with verse 4 you can see that “the angel of the Lord” was “the Lord.” Remember that “angel” means *messenger*. That was our Lord’s mission to Abraham, and here He is fulfilling the same mission to Moses. Moses first noticed the bush that was burning, which was not in itself an uncommon sight in the desert. Because of the great heat I am told that this happened frequently. But the strange thing about this particular bush was that it was not consumed by the fire. So Moses turned to see what was going on, and when He did, the Angel of the Lord spoke to him out of the bush.

There are several things of interest here for our encouragement.

A. First, He called Moses by name (Ex. 3:4).

This must have startled Moses because we have no instance that any Member of the Godhead had appeared to

Moses before. The more Moses must have reflected upon this afterwards, the greater must have been the blessing which he experienced in his own heart. We may never hear the Lord speak our names until we get to heaven, but let us be sure that He knows us, knows us by name, knows where we are, and knows what He wants to do with us.

B. Second, He sought to impress Moses with His holiness (Ex. 3:5).

Our Lord’s holiness not only speaks of His absolute perfection and freedom from all evil, but it means that He is forever set apart from us because He is God. We know that this was true of our Lord Jesus Christ even after He became a Man. He did no sin. He knew no sin. He was without sin. There was no sin in Him. None of these statements could be made of us.

C. Third, He identified Himself (Ex. 3:6).

We normally think of this Name as belonging only to God the Father. Here we see that they are also a title which our Lord Jesus claims. And the mention of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would suggest immediately that the Angel of the Lord was thinking in terms of the salvation which had been promised to Abraham, passed on to Isaac, and then to Jacob--a salvation which, from a merely human perspective, had been threatened time and time again in Egypt, but here Moses was to learn that it was not in trouble at all. The God Who spoke to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, was now speaking to Moses. The circumstances in which the Hebrew people found themselves had changed drastically even since Jacob was alive, but the purpose of God had not changed. Our Lord had come to Moses to assure him of that glorious fact.

D. Finally, the Angel of the Lord told Moses why He had come (Ex. 3:7-10).

Notice how the Lord, as the Angel of the Lord, spoke to Moses. There are some wonderful truths here that are just as meaningful for us in our circumstances, whatever they may be. We will never have a place like Moses had, but we need these truths just as much as he did.

Note:

- 1) “I have surely seen...” (Ex. 3:7).
 - 2) I (understood) “have heard their cry...” (Ex. 3:7).
 - 3) “I know their sorrows” (Ex. 3:7).
 - 4) “I am come down to deliver them...” (Ex. 3:8).
 - 5) Understood, “I am come down...to bring them up out of that land unto a good land...” (Ex. 3:8).
 - 6) For the second time, “I have also seen the oppression...” (Ex. 3:9).
- And then finally,
- 7) “I will send thee unto Pharaoh...” (Ex. 3:10).

Moses was learning all of this for the first time, *and remember: there was not a single Hebrew man, woman, or child in Egypt who knew that these things were true. They did not know that the Members of the Godhead saw, and heard, and knew, and that He was coming down to deliver them and to bring them into their own land, and that He had chosen the servant, the human instrument that He was going to use. They did not know any of this. If God had not done anything during the hundreds of years that they had been in Egypt, who would have thought that He would be doing anything then? But the glorious truth is that He knew every detail of their suffering.*

Cf. how Exodus 2 closes--the last two verses. It doesn’t say that the children of Israel were crying out to God. It does not say that they were expecting God to do anything. It may have been the case that God was not in all

of their thoughts. They felt that their condition was hopeless.

Concl: Do you see some of the messages that our Lord gave to Moses and Israel at that time that are meant for us too?

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. See Heb. 13:8. But it is clearer today than ever that He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Cf. Heb. 4:14-16. He is not a God Who is far off, but One Who is nearer to us than anyone else can possibly be. So let us not just groan, as the children of Israel did, but let us call upon the Lord. And let us never give up on Him. He may wait, but He will never abandon us. And He will never forsake His purposes. He will never forget His promises. And He is our “Mighty God.” Things are always getting too big for us to handle, but that is never true of our Lord Jesus Christ. So let us take heart. The Angel of the Lord had a message for Moses, and for the children of Israel, but the message is for our comfort and encouragement as well. Moses had trouble believing all of this, but He learned to His great blessing that the Lord meant all that He said. And that is still true today. Whatever you and I need, He is the Great Provider and our Great God.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 8

More Theophanies

December 3, 1996

Intro: For the past two weeks we have been considering “Christ in the Old Testament” as *the Angel of the Lord*. We have looked at Hagar’s encounter with the Angel of the Lord when she fled from Sarah in Genesis 16. Then we went on to Abraham and Isaac’s experience with the Angel of the Lord in Genesis 22 when the Angel of the Lord stopped Abraham just as he was preparing to sacrifice Isaac. And then we looked at Moses in Exodus 3 when the Angel of the Lord spoke to him out of the burning bush, calling him to go back into Egypt to be the deliverer of the people of Israel from Egyptian bondage. In all of these passages the Angel of the Lord is identified as Deity. Our authority for saying that the God Who appeared to Hagar, Abraham, and Moses was indeed our Lord Jesus Christ, is John 1:18 and other verses of Scripture which declare in one way or another that “no man hath seen God at any time,” but that it is always the Son Who has declared God, or revealed Him. These appearances, and all of the others too, should be considered by us as among the most important revelations of God through Christ that we have in the Old Testament.

There are other appearances of the Angel of the Lord which we did not consider. There is so much to consider on the subject of “Christ in the Old Testament” that we will never get through the various ways that Christ is seen in the Old Testament if we try to include everything, but perhaps I should refer to some of the other passages so we will all have a better understanding of the importance of the Angel of the Lord.

For example, let me read to you Exodus 23:20-25. Note especially the statement in verse 21 which says, God speaking of the Angel of the Lord, “for my name is in Him.” And notice in verse 25 where God speaks of “the Lord God” and “he” as distinguished from God Who referred to Himself as “I.”

One other passage I should mention is Judges 13. It has to do with a man by the name of Manoah. The Angel of the Lord appeared to his wife first, and then to both of them later. It was on this occasion that Manoah recognized that they had seen God--Who, of course, had to be the Son of God Who is always the One Who reveals God, the Father. (Read the chapter.)

There are other passages in which God appeared to His people, and some writers include those with the passages we have considered where the Angel of the Lord is specifically mentioned, but I personally believe that these, some of which I want to consider with you today, deserve to be considered in a category by themselves. We call these *theophanies*, or perhaps more accurately, *Christophanies*. The word *theophany* means *an appearance of God*. A *Christophany* is *an appearance of Christ*--and the idea is usually that of a physical appearance. Now, in the light of what we have seen regarding the Angel of the Lord, we know that *a Christophany is a theophany*. By that I mean that when Christ appears it is equal to an appearance of God since God and Christ are identical in Their nature, in Their Deity. So these appearances are all a part of what Christ did in OT times to reveal the Father. The appearances of our Lord as the Angel of the Lord are *theophanies*, but now I want to consider with you theophanies in which the Lord appeared other than as the Angel of the Lord.

One point we should all recognize in dealing with “Christ in the Old Testament” is that every appearance of Christ in the OT, is proof of His pre-existence, that is, He existed before creation. Of course, if we believe the Bible, we believe that Christ, like God, is eternal--without beginning, and without ending. That is, He has always existed, and so there never was a time when He began to exist. And we can also affirm on the testimony of Scripture that Christ will always be. On one occasion when our Lord was speaking to some of the leaders of Israel, He said to their amazement: “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56). They responded to Him by saying, “Thou art not yet fifty years old, and has thou seen Abraham?” (John 8:57). And then He did say something which both startled and angered them. He said,

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58). Following this the Apostle John said in John 8:59 that “they took up stones to stone Him.” Why? Because He was not only claiming to have existed eternally before Abraham, but, in doing so, He was claiming Deity. To the Jews this was blasphemy, and it was--IF IT WERE NOT TRUE! BUT IT WAS TRUE! Both claims were true. Since He was the Son of God, He was equal in Deity with the Father, having existed before creation and from all eternity--a concept which you and I cannot fully comprehend, but we can believe it and rejoice in it. Jesus Christ is eternally pre-existent.

We have spent most of our time so far in considering passages in the book of Genesis, and I want to continue in Genesis as we consider *the theophanies*. And first I want to take you to Genesis 18.

I. THE APPEARANCE OF CHRIST TO ABRAHAM (Gen. 18).

We are told in the first verse of the chapter that “the Lord appeared unto him [i.e., Abraham] at Mamre. But look, in verse 2 we are told that “three men stood by him.” We learn as we go through the chapter that one of these men was the Lord--the Lord appeared to Abraham at this time as a man! In verse 3 Abraham said, “My Lord,” but this does not necessarily mean that he had discovered that one of these men was Deity. “Lord” was often used as we use the word *sir*. And so as we read on in the chapter we must assume that, at the beginning, Abraham thought he was speaking to men who were just men.

To give you some evidence as to why I believe this, let me remind you of what the writer of Hebrews wrote when he was obviously referring to this incident. I am speaking about Heb. 13:2 where we read,

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

“Unawares” means that he was entertaining angels without knowing what he was doing. And more than that, he was entertaining the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But let me read through the chapter with you. (Read and comment.)

Down through verse 8 we see what a gracious host and hostess Abraham and Sarah were. They probably would not have done more even if they knew that they had the Lord and two angels on their hands.

Beginning with verse 9 the purpose of their visit started to become clear. They had come with a message for Sarah.

In verse 10 the Lord spoke as only One Who is Deity could speak. The Lord was going to restore their ability to have a family, and only One Who is God could possibly do that.

Sarah laughed within herself, and in verse 15 we see that the Lord knew what she was doing even though she denied it and no outward laughter was heard.

But read vv. 13 and 14. What a tremendous question that was which the Lord asked, and which is recorded for us at the beginning of verse 14. Neither Abraham nor Sarah were capable of doing this for themselves, nor was there anybody else whom could make it possible for them to have a child.

I have said before in our studies of “Christ in the Old Testament” that Christ, as the One Who revealed God in the OT as well as in the NT, has done so that we might increase our knowledge of God. What do we learn about God in this chapter thus far?

Well, we certainly learn that God does not forget His Word, His promises. At this time Abraham was 99 and

Sarah was 89. And in spite of the fact that the Lord had appeared to Abraham in the preceding chapter (17) to tell Abraham that he and Sarah would have a son, and the Lord even named the son Isaac, yet it seems clear that Abraham was by this time convinced that, if he were to have an heir, it would be Ishmael. Read Gen. 17:23-27 and see if you don't get that same impression.

When I see the reaction of Abraham to the good news that the Lord gave him in chapter 17, and then the similar reaction of Sarah in chapter 18, I am reminded of those words which Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:13: “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.” To deny Himself would have meant that God would go back on His Word. It would have meant that He would have shown Himself to be false if He went back on His Word. We can give God the glory when we continue to believe His Word when circumstances seem to tell us that God cannot do, and will not do, what He has promised to do. God delights to honor our faith. But if we don't believe, that does not cause Him to nullify His promises. He continues faithful to His word even when we do not believe. There are some things which God cannot do, and one of them is that He cannot deny Himself. He cannot go back on His Word. If nobody believes Him, He will always stand by His Word. *The Lord Jesus wants us to know this about God!*

So even though you don't find that Abraham and Sarah will still hoping for a son. They were not seeking the blessing of God, but God was seeking them, and He did it in the Person of His Son. And the Lord Jesus confirmed in verse 10, and again in the latter part of verse 14, *the faithfulness of God*.

God is faithful, even when we aren't faithful. He is true to His Word and true to us, even when we are not true to Him. The fulfillment of His promises is not dependent upon our faith. So the Lord came to this dear old couple, Abraham and Sarah, upon whom the Lord had set His love in a special way, and He patiently and lovingly put up with their unbelief, seeking to restore their faith in Him and in His promises.

But what else do we see in this chapter so far?

Let me call your attention again to the question at the beginning of verse 14: “Is any thing too hard for the Lord?” Well, we know that He cannot lie. He cannot deny Himself. He cannot sin. He cannot die. But can there ever be a time or circumstances within time, which render God powerless? John Calvin said regarding Sarah's reaction, and Abraham's reaction before her, that “we also attempt to rob God of his power, whenever we distrust his word” (*Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, p. 475). Matthew Henry had this to say about this question:

Our unbelief and distrust are a great offence to the God of heaven. He justly takes it ill to have the objections of sense set up in contradiction to his promise, as Luke i. 18... Here is a question asked which is enough to answer all the cavils (frivolous objections) of flesh and blood: *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* (Heb. *too wonderful*), that is, (1.) Is any thing so secret as to escape his cognizance? No, not Sarah's laughing, though it was only *within herself*. Or, (2.) Is any thing so difficult as to exceed his power? No, not the giving of a child to Sarah in her old age (Vol. I, p. 117).

Has God ever made a promise that He cannot keep? Does He ever declare a purpose which may or may not be fulfilled? Many things are impossible to us, and just because they are impossible to us, we are inclined to think that they are impossible to God, too. Oh, how great is the power of God. He spoke the word, and the heavens and the earth came into being. The preincarnate Christ came that we might know something of *the omnipotence of God*.

But let us go on to **the second part of this chapter** because there, too, we are still concerned with our Lord, the Son of God, revealing to us the Father.

The two men who had come to Abraham and Sarah's tent with our Lord, went on to the city of Sodom. And the first verse of chapter 19 tells us that they were two angels. Abraham escorted them part of the way on their journey, and then came back to stand before the Lord.

While Abraham was gone, and before he came back, verses 17-22 seem to indicate that the Lord was deliberating within Himself as to what He would do. Should he tell Abraham what the other purpose of his mission was--that He was going on to see how wicked the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were, with the purpose of bringing judgment upon them?

God's promise to Abraham back in Ur of the Chaldees was that through Abraham's seed all of the nations of the earth would be blessed with salvation--not every person without exception, but a salvation that would include people from every tongue and tribe and nation. How would you have felt about revealing your heart to Abraham if he had laughed at you like Abraham had laughed at God? Peter was in the same position after he had so grievously denied that he even knew the Lord. Would God trust Him with the responsibilities that He had intended to give him?

The answer for both is found in Gen. 18:19. One marginal reading of this verse is: *For I have known him to the end that he will command his children and his household after him...* Here is another wonderful thing about God that our Lord wanted Abraham and all of us to learn. The Lord doesn't bless us and use us because He trusts us, or depends upon us. We are all weak and prone to fail and to be unfaithful. We are nothing before God. But the important thing to God is why He does in our hearts, and what He makes us by His grace. Our sufficiency is not in ourselves, but in God. And the important lesson that we see as we begin the latter part of this chapter is that *God never gives up on us*. One NT verse for this is Phil. 1:6. We have been predestined to be made like the Lord Jesus, and God is not going to stop working on us until that purpose is accomplished.

So the question was, What would Abraham do if our Lord told him what was ahead for Sodom and Gomorrah? Would he be faithful, or unfaithful? And if he were faithful, how would he express his faithfulness?

Before we see how he responded, let me point out that our Lord wanted us to know that the sins of earth, the sins of nations, and the sins of all individuals, is common knowledge in heaven. Our God is a holy God. The Lord Jesus wants us to know that. He may be very patient and even continue His blessings when people are grieving Him with their sins, but He is not overlooking anything! On the one hand Abraham had the Lord; on the other hand, a wicked city with his nephew Lot living there. God's purpose for Abraham was for the salvation of the nations of the earth. Would Abraham remember that in his actions and attitude toward Sodom?

Look at verse 23. In the beginning of the chapter we saw our Lord drawing near to Abraham, coming to his tent, when Abraham was not drawing near to the Lord. But the situation is different in verse 23. Now it is Abraham drawing near. And He is drawing near to pray. He is drawing near to pray for those two wicked cities, cities that were contaminated with the vilest of sins: homosexuality.

Now let me inject something here that I need, and perhaps after I have said it, you may feel like you need it, too. We live in very evil times. Our country is saturated with sins of all kinds. As a nation we have no place for God in our country. And we have people among us who are intent on ridding us of everything that has to do with God, the God of the Bible, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the triune God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When you think of our governmental leaders, when you think of all of the vile sins that are being in our city at this very moment, and only increase when the shades of night are drawn across our city, what do we do? Do we criticize, and turn away in disgust, and just wish that the Lord would come and get us out of this mess? Yes, we do all of that. But I ask you today, and I press this question upon myself, *do we pray? Do we look upon people who are living in sin as eternal souls who are going to spend eternity in one*

of two places--either heaven, or hell? I am not for a moment excusing the sins of people in Portland and people throughout our nation, but are we remembering that God's purpose in leaving us here is for salvation? Do we realize that if the Lord had not saved us, we would be out there doing what so many in our city are doing--living under the dominion of Satan and under the control of their sinful hearts? You know the saying, "We can do more than pray after we have prayed, but we can't do more until we have prayed."

Well, but you might say, Abraham's prayers seem to have been concerned primarily for the righteous. I agree that he was concerned about them. He did not know how many Lot had been able to lead to God and the Redeemer. But when you look closely at his prayers you can also see a burden for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In verse 24 he spoke to the Lord about sparing the place. In verse 26 the Lord spoke to Abraham about sparing all the place. In verse 28 Abraham spoke to the Lord about what He would do to "all the city." In verses 30, 31, and 32 Abraham spoke to the Lord about what was going to happen "there."

I don't know what Abraham didn't go on praying, and we all know that judgment finally fell on the city--that the city was destroyed, and only Lot and his two daughters escaped. Is it possible that Lot and his daughters would have died in the conflagration if Abraham had not prayed? I think it is very possible. But why would Abraham pray that such a place might be spared if it were not for the fact that he was remembering why the Lord had brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, and why the Lord had given him such amazing and far-reaching promises, and why the Lord had revealed to him, Abraham, what He was about to do? There were (we do not know how many) people in Sodom, most of them vile sinners, a city given over to gross sin, but they were people who needed the Gospel and needed the Lord. There is probably more in this chapter than any of us have ever seen. I hope that the Spirit of God will use it more and more in my own life. I, like you, am inclined to be thoroughly disgusted with all of the wickedness of our country, and of the world, but should we not be standing before the Lord and pleading with Him for the souls of the unregenerate people who are all around us? This chapter certainly tells us that the fact that we, the Lord's people, are here, is one of the main reasons that judgment has not fallen upon our nation before now. But let us not be smug and proud because we aren't living like so many people are in our day. We are what we are only by the grace of God, and if God could save, and did save, the chief of sinners, then we know that no one is beyond the reach of His grace.

Concl: We don't know what lies ahead for us or for our nation. But we know what we should be doing, and let us seek God's grace and God's blessing so that we will be the people that He wants us to be:

- 1) Living in the closest possible fellowship with Him every day.
- 2) Praying for one another and the people we know who need the Lord.
- 3) Seeking from God the courage to speak boldly about salvation from sin through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And what else have we learned about God?

- 1) That He has a special love, a very great love, for His people.
- 2) That although He is holy, He is longsuffering and gracious in all of His dealings with us, His people, but also with the people of the world, however wicked they may be.

Next week: The Lord willing, we will continue with the theophanies, looking into the life of Jacob.

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 9

Theophanies Continued

December 10, 1996

Intro: Our lesson today is a continuation of the lesson we had last week except for the fact that last week we considered a theophany in the life of Abraham; today we will consider two appearances of our Lord in the life of Jacob. The first is in Genesis 28; the second is in Genesis 32. In the first Jacob was leaving his home because Esau had threatened to kill him; in the second Jacob was returning home after twenty years, and was facing the uncertainty of knowing what Esau would do when they saw each other again. As we have done in our previous lessons, our main concern in examining these accounts will be to see how God is revealed by our Lord at both of these times in Jacob’s life. The numbering in the outline is a continuation from Lesson 8.

II. Our Lord’s Appearance to Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28:10-22).

(Review the events in Genesis 27 which made it necessary for Jacob to leave home--a story of Rebekah and Jacob running ahead of God and the way they deceived Isaac who himself was preparing to disobey God. Note especially Gen. 27:41.)

As we come to Gen. 28:10, Moses, who wrote this account later under the direction of the Holy Spirit, did not try to picture for us the state of Jacob’s mind and heart, but we can be sure that this was not at all the happiest moment of Jacob’s life. It is true that he had left with the blessing of his father, and the blessing of his mother, but as far as he was concerned, he was stepping out into the unknown, and what must have been for him, great uncertainty. He left Beersheba, in the southern part of Canaan, traveling north toward Haran where Abraham had lived before moving down into Canaan. Verse 11 tells us that he came to “a certain place” (which Jacob would name later), and there he settled down for the night.

In verse 12 we are told that he dreamed.

Hebrews 1:1-2a tells us about “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son...” But there were times, many times, when God spoke directly to the fathers--as well as to others--by dreams. And this in Gen. 28, beginning with verse 12 was one of those times. We must not think that every dream was a revelation from God, but this certainly was! God was speaking to Jacob as he left home, fleeing from his brother Esau.

When we think of all that Jacob had done, thus making it necessary for him to leave home, I am sure that we would all agree that he did not deserve the blessing of the Lord, and certainly not for the Lord to appear to him. But we see here that God is a God of grace, and, as David was to write later, speaking of God,

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him

(Psa. 103:10-11).

PSA. 78:
38-39.

This is not to excuse what Jacob had done, but it is to emphasize that if God were to deal with us in judgment for what we deserve, probably none of us would even be here today; at least, we would certainly not have the many blessings that God has so graciously poured out on our lives. Do you remember how greatly Ezra was exercised when the people of the captivity who had returned to the land began to become involved in the sins of the Gentiles again, the very sins which had brought about their captivity in the first place. And this is what he said,

13 And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this;

14 Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping? (Ezra 9:13-14).

Nehemiah also marveled at the goodness and grace of God when he had been speaking of the way the children of Israel had so persistently disobeyed God. He said this in prayer to God:

Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God (Neh. 9:31).

We read also in Psa. 130:3 that this was included in one of the Psalms of the Ascents: "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" Even Daniel in the great prayer he prayed which is recorded for us in Daniel 9, had to admit that he could not call upon God for blessing because of the righteousness of the people, but because He was a merciful God.

It ought to move all of our hearts to think of how God's grace and God's mercy have been manifested to us time and time again in spite of the many times and many ways we have sinned against Him. So let us not be surprised as the goodness of God to Jacob, but recognize that this is one of the ways of the Lord. And it is all because our blessed Lord is the One Who has taken the penalty for our sins upon Himself.

The first thing that Jacob was conscious of in his dream was that there was a ladder "set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven" (v. 12). Griffith Thomas had this to say about the ladder:

The vision of Bethel was used by our Lord as a symbol and type of Himself: "Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending *upon the Son of man.*" [This is a quote from John 1:51. And so we have in Jacob's dream a double reference to Christ--one in the ladder, and the other in the appearance of the Lord as the tope of the ladder.] As the ladder was to Jacob so is our Lord Jesus Christ to mankind, a revelation of God's wonderful condescension and mercy. Set up on earth in Bethlehem, the top of it reached to heaven at the Ascension, and now the Lord Jesus is our Divine ladder, first of revelation and then of communication. All that we know of God comes through Him, and all that we receive from God comes through Him. Ever since the Incarnation of our Lord earth has been no desert [as it was to Jacob], but a place where God is manifest to the eye and heart of faith (Griffith Thomas, W. H., *Genesis, A Devotional Commentary*, p. 265).

The ladder also represented the tie that still existed between Jacob and the Lord. He was separated from his parents, and from his home, and from his brother, *but he was not separated from God.* Once we belong to the Lord, He will never leave us, nor forsake us. In spite of our sin, His love is everlasting--which also means that it is unchanging. We, like Jacob, and grieve the Lord with our sins (and we do), but we can never make Him stop loving us.

On the ladder were angels--"ascending and descending on it." Angels are messengers, as we have learned of our Lord as the Angel of the Lord. The fact that they were going up and coming down was to represent that the communication between Jacob and the Lord was a two-way communication. He speaks to us, and we hear Him, and we speak to Him, and He hears us.

But we learn immediately that in this instance it was the Lord Who was speaking. And what did He say? He spoke to Jacob of the covenant that He had made with Abraham, and then to Isaac, and now it is apparent that the covenant would be carried on through Jacob. The Lord spoke to Abraham about salvation--a salvation that would extend to "all the families of the earth." It would appear from what Jacob had done, that the purposes of God were in disarray, but we can see from what the Lord said to him here that everything was on course. God is greater than our sins, and He never changes course. He keeps us from failing Him completely, and our failures

are designed to make us realize how dependent we are upon the Lord. Our Lord was preserving the family from which He would eventually be born.

In the light of the covenant made with Abraham, the Lord then spoke a personal word, a gracious word, a most encouraging word, to Jacob. (Read Gen. 28:15.)

The "behold" meant that he did not want Jacob to miss a word of what He had to say. To be "with" Jacob always meant more than just the promise of His presence (we all have that). It meant the promise of His blessing. And look at the "I am" and the "I will's" of God. And then the Lord had one "I will not" to give to Jacob. If the Lord would not leave Jacob, until He had done that which He had spoken about to Jacob, *this meant that He would never leave Jacob at all!*

That was the end of the message that the Lord had for Jacob, and that was the end of the dream. This particular revelation was completed.

In verse 13 we are told that Jacob saw the Lord. From all that we have learned thus far we know that the One he saw was the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the Lord Jesus Who spoke with Him. It was the Lord Who gave him those wonderful promises. And it was the Lord upon Whom Jacob had been forced to focus his attention. It seem reasonable to imagine that Jacob's heart was full of remorse for what he had done, and for the lies that he had told. He regretted that he had not trusted the Lord to take care of him. But the only way Jacob could have had any peace at all was to turn his eyes from himself, and focus his attention upon the Lord. And that seems to have been the purpose of the dream. Cf. Isa. 26:3-4.

How significant are Jacob's words which are recorded for us in verse 16! We all fail to remember that even though we are not given a dream like Jacob had, yet the Lord is with us all of the time. David wrote in Psalm 139:7-12 these wonderful words which we can all say as truthfully as David did:

- 7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
- 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.
- 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
- 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.
- 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.
- 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

But Jacob was afraid, apparently, for the first time since he left home, but this was the good kind of fear. It was a fear of reverence, a fear produced by a deeper sense of the presence of the Lord, and the grace of God, and the love of God. He had traveled many miles from his earthly home, but found himself in "the house of God," and at "the gate of heaven."

Then Jacob set up a memorial. He never wanted to forget what had happened to him that night, how the Lord had appeared to him, and what the Lord had said. And he called the name of the place Beth-el, which means *house of God*.

And Jacob added to the memorial, a vow, which is recorded for us in the last three verses of Genesis 28.

Many feel that this is when Jacob was saved--and the language seems to indicate this. Also, there are those students of the Hebrew who feel that at least the idea in the word "if," and possibly the best translation here is, *since!* Jacob was not doubting the Lord, nor was he placing his emphasis upon the material blessings that the

Lord would give to him, but he was showing his gratitude for the promises that the Lord had given to him, and was pledging that he would honor the Lord for all of the Lord's blessings upon him. If we are right in thinking that this was the time when Jacob was saved, then we can surely forgive him if, as a new-born child of God, his words did not show the maturity that a more mature saint might have shown.

It would be impossible to exhaust the wonderful lessons this passage gives us in the short time that we have devoted to it, but may we learn from it, lessons which our Lord Jesus Himself intended for us to learn, about the mercy of God, the faithfulness of God, the presence of God, and the power of God to do what He has promised to do, and ordained to do, even though we so often fail Him. We will never outgrow our need for the Lord, and God's dealings with us are inclined to teach us that without Him we can do nothing.

But now for the remainder of the time today, let us go on to Genesis 32.

III. The Lord's Appearance to Jacob at Peniel (Gen. 32:24-32).

This is twenty years after the event we have been considering when Jacob was leaving home, and the Lord appeared to him at Bethel. At this point in his life Jacob was returning home. The Lord had loosened his roots with Laban, and it was obviously the Lord's time for Jacob to return home. He was still afraid of Esau, and was not trusting the Lord as he should have been trusting Him, but, nevertheless, he was returning home. The Lord had told him to go. Cf. Gen. 31:3.

Note Jacob's prayer in Gen. 32:9-12. It surely has to be one of the greatest prayers recorded for us in Scripture. (Read.) He had prepared a large number of animals to be given to Esau. And then we read in verse 24 of Gen. 32 that "Jacob was left alone" after he had made all of the preparations for meeting Esau.

When Jacob had left home twenty years before he was very much alone. Now he had two wives, two concubines, and many children. So, in that sense, he was not alone. And yet he was alone, and very fearful of meeting Esau, not knowing that before he met Esau he would again meet with the Lord. But it would not be as it had been at Bethel, through a dream, but here it would be face to face. And this time the Lord appeared to him as a man. See verse 24.

It is very likely that Jacob thought that this man had come from Esau to prepare for an attack upon him (Jacob) and his family. He had no idea that it was the Lord. The Lord wrestled with Jacob all night, but did not overcome Jacob. And so the Lord touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, put his leg out of joint, which put an end to Jacob's ability to fight. But about that time Jacob must have realized that he had been struggling against the Lord. And he began to hang on to the Lord with the same intensity that he had been wrestling with Him. But at this point Jacob was concerned about *blessing*.

At Bethel Jacob had testified that the Lord was in that place, but he did not know it. Here, at what was to become Peniel, again he was ignorant that the Lord was the One Who was dealing with Him. And Jacob was to learn that we do not win the blessing of the Lord by struggling against Him, or insisting that we have our own way, but we win the blessing of God by surrendering ourselves to Him.

What better illustration do we have of this great truth than in the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ! Gethsemane was the place where we see the struggling of our Lord to the point where He was sweating great drops of blood. In the flesh our Lord shrank from what was ahead of Him at Calvary, not just the death by crucifixion, but in having His soul made an offering for sin. But the Lord's victory was secured when He prayed as we read that He prayed in Matt. 26:39, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:

nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Only in eternity will we be able to understand what our Lord was going through in Gethsemane. But even though Jacob's experience was much less than that of our Lord, yet it is hard for us to comprehend what Jacob was experiencing as he wrestled with the Man all night, the Man Who turned out to be the Lord from heaven.

Many people talk about wrestling with God as though we can overpower Him and force Him to do things they way we want to do them. We forget what it means that He is God, and that our greatest need is to understand God's ways and His will, instead of thinking that we are going to force Him to see things our way. The way of victory in our relationship with the Lord is not by opposing the Lord, but in yielding ourselves to Him. Cf. Rom. 12:1-2.

What was the greatest blessing that the Lord could give Jacob? He had plenty of livestock, and had much in the way of material possessions. In fact, we would have to say that he was a very wealthy man. And that was surely evidence of God's blessing.

He also had been greatly blessed with his family--and that blessing was multiplied many times over when we realize how Jacob's sons were to be used by God. Their names have become famous in every generation. So this also was a great blessing from the Lord.

Perhaps Jacob was thinking as he prayed for a blessing that the greatest thing that the Lord could do for him would be to deliver him from Esau. We know that the Lord had in mind to do that all along. And the change that had come about by the grace of God in Esau's heart, was truly a great blessing from the Lord.

But really the greatest blessing that we can possibly have from the Lord, is what He does in us! We who are the people of God this side of the Cross should know that better than anyone else. And this is a blessing that is guaranteed for every child of God. What is that blessing? It is that God is working in all of us "to will and to do of His good pleasure," the result being that we are becoming day by day more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ. No blessing can exceed this blessing, and let us always remember this.

How did the blessing come to Jacob?

Read Gen. 32:27-28. Also Hosea 12:2-6.

What does the name Jacob mean? This name was given to Jacob because when he was born, he came out of his mother's womb holding on to the heel of his twin brother, Esau. And so he was called Jacob because it means *a heel holder*. The name means *one who grabs another by the heel to trip them and to make them fall*. And so it came to mean one who would deceive and defraud another. It was not a very complimentary name to have, to say the least. But providentially it became very descriptive of Jacob and the life that he had lived. But now the Lord was going to change his name *which was an indication of the change that He was making in Jacob's heart*. From that moment on he would be "Israel," a name which the Hebrew grammarians, Brown, Driver, and Briggs, said that it means, "God prevails." It is a name which speaks of **the perseverance of God**. It is a name which glorifies the power of God. Jacob was to be known as one over whom God, in His grace, prevailed. Jacob was victorious over God in getting God's blessing, but the main point of the passage is that God was victorious over Jacob. And that was the blessing that Jacob received from the Lord!

Again, Jacob named the place where he met the Lord. He called it, Peniel, which means *facing God*. "Peniel" and "Penuel" are the same word. The form changes slightly in the way it is used in the Hebrew text. But we know that Jacob did not actually wrestle with God, nor did He actually see God. No one has ever seen God.

The one Jacob wrestled with, and saw face to face was our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is interesting to think in this connection of what is going to happen when we see our Lord. Cf. 1 John 3:2:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.**

Of all the blessing the Lord has given us, this is the crowning blessing of all: **WE ARE GOING TO BE LIKE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!** Nothing could be greater than that. And our part in that glorious work is to be like Jacob, and to make sure that we are spending as much time as possible in seeing the Lord as He is revealed for us in the Word. When we see Christ, we see God!

One other point remains.

When the morning broke upon the earth, Jacob was physically different. He, like the Apostle Paul at a later time, had "a thorn in the flesh." Jacob set up memorials on the earth; the Lord gave Jacob a constant memorial of his own weakness that he might be more faithful in trusting the Lord. It is always true that when we are weak, and recognize how very weak we are, that is when the power of Christ rests upon us.

Concl: How wonderful are these lessons that we can learn from the life of Jacob on these two occasions when he saw the Lord! One enphasizes the presence of the Lord; the other, the power of the Lord. And both of them together magnify the grace of the Lord. We can only conclude that we have a great Savior, and we have an equally great heavenly Father Whom the Lord Jesus came in OT time and in NT times to reveal Him to us.