

The Messianic Prophecies

...the coming of the Messiah
as foretold & prophesied in the Old Testament...

- or -

How the Old Testament points to Jesus Christ!

The Old Testament Prophecies: in Order of their Appearance in Scripture

Genesis 3:15

The Lord God said to the serpent, "...I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Christians believe Jesus is the fulfillment of **Gen. 3:15**.

Jewish interpretation of **Gen. 3:15** varies — some Jews consider this verse a prophecy relating to the **Messiah**; others don't.

Many Christians think **Gen. 3:15** also refers to the **Virgin Birth** of Christ.

The reasoning goes like this: in the Old Testament, descendants were almost always identified through the father. In **Gen. 3:15**, the **Messiah** is identified as the descendant of the Woman.

Because **Gen. 3:15** does not mention a father, support for the **Virgin Birth** of the **Messiah** is found.

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Genesis 3:15

The Lord God said to the serpent, "...I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

The prophecy in **Gen. 3:15** is short, but that does not mean it is easy to understand. Trying to understand **Gen. 3:15** shows the pitfalls of studying prophecy —

- Prophecies can be specific, but are often very general. It is sometimes hard to recognize when a prophecy is fulfilled.
- Because of their generalized nature, prophecies can be fulfilled in more ways than one. This aspect of prophecy leads us to differing interpretations about what a certain prophecy means.

You have to decide for yourself if you think **Gen. 3:15** refers to the **Virgin Birth** of **Christ** or not.

Not everyone will be convinced that it does, and this is the challenge facing all Christians when discussing how Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecy: *not everyone will believe!*

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It is important to remember: we do not need to be convinced by "all" the prophecies that Jesus is the **Messiah whom God sent to save the world; we only need to be convinced by "enough."**

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All the Old Testament prophecies have this goal:

**to prepare God's people, the Jews
— and through them, all humanity —
for the coming of **Christ**,
God's promised **Messiah**.**

The Messianic Prophecies of the Old Testament were given to God's people to help them recognize the Savior of the world when He came.

The Messianic Prophecies were given to help all people put their faith in God's **Anointed, and to believe in Him.**

Note: in Hebrew, "Messiah" means "Anointed**."
In Greek, "Christ" means "**Anointed**."**

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Genesis 3:15

The Lord God said to the serpent, "...I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

We — the people of God called the Church — believe that God sent us the **Messiah, the **Christ**, the **Anointed** in the **Person of Jesus**.**

The Old Testament prophecies tell us to expect **Him, and the New Testament tells us that **Jesus** is the fulfillment of God's plan announced in **Gen. 3:15**.**

The Old Testament Prophecies: in Order of their Appearance in Scripture

Gen. 3:15 is the first of many **messianic prophecies** in the **Old Testament**.

Question:

How many prophecies are there?

According to **Alfred Edersheim**, there are **456 prophecies** of the **messiah** in the **Old Testament**.

Question:

Who was Alfred Edersheim?

Alfred Edersheim was a **Jewish convert to Christianity** and a **Biblical scholar**. **Edersheim (1825-1889)**, was known for his book, **The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah**.

Alfred Edersheim believed that a **knowledge of ancient Jewish society** would help readers of the **New Testament** more fully understand **Jesus' life and works**. **Jesus was, after all, Jewish**.

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Edersheim lists **456** passages in the Old Testament that apply to the **Messiah** or to **Messianic times** —

75 are in the **Pentateuch**,
243 appear in the **Prophets**, and
138 are in the **Writings**.

Note:

The Christian Bible is divided into **2** parts:
the **Old & New Testaments**.

The Jewish Bible is divided into **3** parts:
the **Law**, the **Prophets**, and the **Writings**.

Edersheim also says there are more than **558** separate quotations from Rabbinic writings about the **messiah**.

We will *not* look at all **456** passages.
Our study will cover only the most important
& well-known prophecies.

The Old Testament Prophecies: in Order of their Appearance in Scripture

As we look at the **messianic prophecies** in order, notice their gradual progression.

With each new prophecy, more and more detail is revealed about the coming **messiah**:

- *the kind of person the **Messiah** will be when he comes;*
- *the things the **Messiah** will do;*
- *even specific details about the coming **Messiah's** life are given.*

The **messianic prophecies** are not all given at once; they are sprinkled throughout the experiences and history of the Jewish people.

Because they are given through time and history, the **messianic prophecies** have a cumulative effect—

Slowly, the **messianic prophecies** prepare the Jewish people to have faith in the **Messiah** when he comes.

The Old Testament Prophecies: in Order of their Appearance in Scripture

God's promise in **Gen. 3:15** was that humans, who were originally deceived by Satan, would have a role in ultimately defeating Satan. If human beings will have a role in God's plan to defeat Satan, then human beings must be **spiritually prepared**.

The **messianic prophecies** are given gradually, over time, to aid in that **spiritual preparation**.

The next **messianic prophecy** is from the story of Abraham.

The Old Testament Prophecies: in Order of their Appearance in Scripture

Gen. 22:18

“...and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Again, as with **Gen. 3:15**, it is the Lord God who speaks this prophecy.

God announces this prophecy to Abraham. The context of this prophecy is important.

In **Gen. 22**, God tested Abraham:

Genesis 22:1-2

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

Gen. 22 tells the story of how Abraham obeyed God, made the journey to *Mt. Moriah*, and proceeded to offer his only son Isaac in sacrifice.

The Old Testament Prophecies: in Order of their Appearance in Scripture

Gen. 22:18

“...and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Abraham would have sacrificed his son, but the angel of the Lord prevented him.

The outcome of the story is that God provided a ram to use in place of Isaac. God then blessed Abraham:

Genesis 22:15–18

And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

More can be said about this prophecy than was said about **Genesis 3:15.**

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Gen. 22:18

“...and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

In **Gen. 22:18**, the word “*offspring*” once again appears in place of the Hebrew word, “*seed*.”

Again, as in **Gen. 3:15**, the word “*seed*” is singular.

Again, here in **Gen. 22:18**, God’s promise refers to one particular person, who will be descended from Abraham (*Abraham is already descended from the Woman of Gen. 3:15*).

Through this one descendant, *all* peoples of the earth will become blessed. **Gen. 22:18** indicates that the blessing comes through faith.

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Gen. 22:18

“...and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

The Apostle Paul picks up heavily on this theme of faith in Romans 5.

Romans 5:18–19

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

In Romans 5, Paul compares Adam's work with Christ's work. Adam's work was to bring us to sin and death; the work of Jesus Christ was to redeem us and bring us from death to life.

Jesus' work is accomplished in us through our faith in Him.

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Gen. 22:18

“...and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Gen. 22:18 foretells the role of faith in salvation. As faith made all the difference in the outcome of Abraham's story; so faith will make all the difference in our story, too.

There's something else in **Gen. 22** that makes this prophecy very important.

Not only does God give Abraham the prophecy in **Gen. 22:18**, but God also foreshadows the very action that God will take in the future: the Lord God will sacrifice His own Son.

The foreshadowing is shown via the ram that Abraham finds in the thicket. It is not a female sheep that God provides Abraham, but a male ram.

The male ram foreshadows God's own son, **Jesus**, whose life will be given up for ours.

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Gen. 22:18

“...and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

In **Gen. 22**, we see that God asked Abraham to do nothing that God Himself was not also willing to do — to offer up *His own Son*.

In **Gen. 22**, Abraham was the “*prototype*” for God the Father’s actions in giving up Jesus, and Isaac was the “*prototype*” of God the Son who would suffer and die on the Cross.

Think about this comparison between Isaac & Jesus, Abraham & God, and the prophecy in **Gen. 22** when you read **John 3:16**.

John 3:16–17

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

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Gen. 22:18

“...and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Gen. 3:15 was the **first** prophecy for the messiah, and was spoken by God to Satan.

Gen. 22:18 is the **second** prophecy for the messiah, and is spoken by God to Abraham.

Several hundred years elapsed between the time of the first prophecy and the second.

Remember, the **messianic prophecies** were given gradually, over time, to aid in the spiritual preparation of God's people for the **Messiah**.

In **Gen. 22**, we see that **Abraham** is spiritually prepared for the **Messiah**, which is why he received the prophecy about his own seed (“offspring” - singular) becoming a blessing for all.

The Old Testament Prophecies: in Order of their Appearance in Scripture

Gen. 22:18

“...and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

The prophecy in Gen. 22 about the coming messiah is a very important prophecy.

In the prophecy, note how God confirms His promise with a vow:

Genesis 22:15–18

And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

In this prophecy, God “forth-told” what He will do — God says it, and so it will happen!

...our study continues!

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