

CHRIST – THE CENTER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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-Everything in **RED** are Old Testament books/prophets-

Jesus said that Moses had written of Him (John 5:46). Jesus said that all of the Old Testament Scriptures “testify of Me” (John 5:39). Before His ascension, Jesus again taught His disciples everything “in all the Scriptures” that spoke of Him (Luke 24:27).

Jesus exposition of all the things “in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets and the Psalms” that spoke of Him and his saving work was a Bible class that assisted the disciples in their ability to understand and comprehend how the Old Testament Scriptures spoke of Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection. Christ also taught them the need to evangelize the world with the gospel message of salvation from sin in Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44-48).

Here follows some glimpses of the portrayal of Christ in the Old Testament:

Genesis proclaims Jesus the “Seed of the woman” (Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:22-23), our Creator God (Genesis 1-3; John 1:1-5), the Descendant of Abraham in Whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 22:18; Acts 3:24-26; Galatians 3:8-9, 27-29).

It is Christ Who passes through the sundered parts of the animals and brings down on Himself the curse of death in order to pay for the broken promises of sinful human beings (Genesis 15:7-21; Galatians 3:10-14). For God to die He needed to become a human being. Thus the incarnation of Christ, His birth, the shedding of His blood, and His sacrificial testamentary death are here prophesied (Luke 1:26-33; 2:25-35; Hebrews 9:11-28). Jesus is the only Son Who like Abraham’s son is a willing sacrifice, and Who carried the wood of the sacrifice (the cross) on His back, and Who unlike Abraham’s son truly dies as the sacrificial Lamb provided by God (Genesis 22:1-19; John 1:29; 19:17-19).

Exodus portrays Christ “the Passover Lamb” (Exodus 12; I Corinthians 5:7).

Leviticus reveals Christ our “Great High Priest” (Leviticus 8-10; Hebrews 1:17-2:6; 4:15-16),

Who is the “Atoning Sacrifice” (Leviticus 16 & 23:26-32; Hebrews 9) for our sin.

Numbers speaks in prophecy about the Christ Who will be “lifted up on the cross” like the “Brass Serpent” was lifted up in the wilderness (Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-15).

Deuteronomy proclaims Jesus Christ as the “Prophet like unto Moses” (Deuteronomy 18:15-19; John 6:14; Acts 3:17-26).

Joshua preaches Jesus, the “Captain of our Salvation.” (Joshua 5:13-15; Hebrews 2:10 KJV) Who will lead us into the Promised Land of heaven

Judges reveals Christ our Judge & Deliverer (Judges 2:16-19; John 5:21-23 & Acts 10:42-43). Judges also reveals Christ as the Angel of the Lord present with His people (Judges 2:1-5; 6; 13; Acts 7:30-34).

Ruth proclaims the Kinsman-Redeemer of all the world, Who is a descendant of a Gentile woman (Ruth 4; Matthew 1:1-6 – note also here the tie to Rahab the harlot in Joshua 2 & 6:22-25. She is Boaz’s mother & great great grandmother of David.).

I Samuel speaks of Jesus the King anointed by the Holy Spirit (I Samuel 10 & 16; Matthew 3:13-17).

II Samuel reveals that Christ the Messianic King will be a descendant of David. He is our Rock, Deliverer, Horn of Salvation & Savior (II Samuel 7 & 22; Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 1:30-25; 68-75; 2:10-14; Matthew 7:24-25; I Corinthians 10:4).

I Kings speaks in prophecy of Jesus as the kingly descendant of Solomon the Temple-Builder Who has an eternal Kingdom (I Kings 2:45; 8:1-26; John 2:13-22), and of John the Baptist as the Second Elijah Who will come (I Kings 17-22; Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 11:7-15). Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36). Their prophetic work pointed to the Messiah they appeared with on this holy mountain.

II Kings portrays Christ as the Prophet Who having completed His work ascends into heaven (II Kings 2:1-14; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-11). The Messiah’s work of saving even Gentiles is seen in the healing and conversion of the Gentile soldier Naaman (II Kings 5:1-19; Matthew 8:5-13; John 3:16; Acts 10; Romans 3:9-4:25; 15:7-13).

I Chronicles shows the Messiah to be the promised Descendant of David Who would have an eternal throne (I Chronicles 17; Luke 1:30-33).

II Chronicles proclaims Jesus Christ as the faithful

kingly descendant of David in contrast to the imperfect kings who sat on Judah’s throne. Unlike Joash who was murdered because of his sins (II Chronicles 24:23-25), Jesus the King dies bearing our sins, and His death saves sinners from their sins (Matthew 1:21; John 1:29; Luke 23:6-12, 36-38; John 18:33-19:22). We also see mourning like the mourning at Jesus’ death (II Chronicles 35:23-25; Luke 23:48; Zechariah 12:10-14).

In speaking about the temple rebuilt in Jerusalem, **Ezra** reveals Christ our Messiah. Just as the physical temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt so the Temple of Christ’s body died and was “rebuilt” (resurrected) (Ezra 5 & 6; John 1:14; 2:18-22).

Nehemiah speaks of the Christ as the Savior God Who is merciful and kind (Nehemiah 9:3). Just as Jerusalem and its walls were rebuilt under Nehemiah, so Christ rebuilds lives broken by sin. Mary Magdalene & Paul are notable examples (Nehemiah 9:31; Luke 8:2; John 20:1-2, 11-18; Acts 9).

Esther is someone who puts her life on the line to protect and preserve the lives of the Jewish people. So Christ laid down His life for all people – Jew and Gentile alike (Luke 2:29-35; Romans 9:22-33). Wicked Haman plotted to wipe every Jew from the face of the earth. This would have destroyed God’s plan of salvation for salvation was to come from the Jews in Jesus Christ (John 4:22). Thus working through Esther & Mordecai, God delivered the Jews to bring salvation to all (John 3:16).

Job speaks of the Messiah Who is our living Redeemer, the One Who is able to raise us from the dead (Job 19:23-27; John 11:1-44; Galatians 3:13-14; I Peter 1:18-21; Revelation 5:1-14). In the sufferings of Job we also see the sufferings of Christ.

The Psalms proclaim Christ as our Good Shepherd (Psalm 23; John 10:1-18), the Crucified and pierced One for Whose robe lots were cast, the One Who cried out “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?” (Psalm 22; Mark 15:34; John 19:24, 33-37). He is the Priest like Melchizedek (Psalm 110; Hebrews 5:1-12; 6:17-8:2), the One who like David was betrayed by His good friend Ahithophel – so Jesus was betrayed by His friend Judas. Just as Ahithophel hanged himself when his plans came to naught, so Judas hanged himself in despair over his sin (II Samuel 15:10-17:23; Psalm 49:1-9; Matthew 26:47-50; 27:3-5; Acts 1:16-20). Jesus is prophesied to be the Messiah Who would rise, Whose body would see neither corruption nor

decay (Psalm 16:5-11; Acts 2:25-33; 13:26-39). Jesus is the Lord’s Anointed against Whom the heathen would rage (Psalm 2; 132:10-18; Acts 4:24-28).

Proverbs proclaims Christ the Messiah as Wisdom personified (Proverbs 8:1-9:10; Matthew 13:54; Luke 2:40-52; I Corinthians 1:17-3:20).

Ecclesiastes reminds all that life is vanity, and that life is empty without God/Christ in one’s life. All need to heed God’s wise words that tell us to “Fear God and keep His commandments” for God will judge all human works (Ecclesiastes 12:1-14). Jesus was the only one to perfectly “fear God and keep His commandments,” for He lived sinlessly under the Law “fulfilling all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15; I Peter 2:19-25; 3:18). He will judge all people’s secret deeds with righteousness and truth (Matthew 10:26-27; Mark 4:22; John 5:30; 17:17; 21:25).

The **Song of Solomon** reveals Christ as the Husband to His Bride the Church. It also reveals the blessedness that should exist in the love of husbands and wives which is to reflect the perfect love Christ has for His Bride the Church (Ephesians 5:21-33; I Corinthians 13).

Isaiah is often described as the Gospel of the Old Testament because it prophetically reveals so much about Christ – His Virgin Birth as Immanuel the God Who is with us (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22-23); His being God’s Son, the kingly Prince of Peace Who sits on David’s eternal throne (Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:32-33; 2:14). Jesus is seen as the Stone of stumbling and the Rock of offense (Isaiah 8:13-15; Matthew 21:42-44; Romans 9:32-33; I Peter 2:7-8). Jesus ministry in Zebulun & Naphtali are prophesied in Isaiah 9:1-2; Matthew 4:12-16. Jesus is described as the Root of Jesse Who will be anointed by the Holy Spirit and will save even Gentiles (Isaiah 11:1-16; Matthew 3:13-17; Romans 15:12; Revelation 5:5; 22:16). We see Christ as our Suffering Servant, the Man of Sorrows Who carries our sins and sorrows and is acquainted with our griefs, the One by Whose stripes we are healed (Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Matthew 8:17; Matthew 26-28; Acts 8:30-40). Jesus is the Light to enlighten the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; Luke 2:27-32; Acts 13:46-49).

Jeremiah reveals Christ as the Righteous Branch, the Lord our Righteousness, Who will pardon sinners from their sins (Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:14-15; Matthew 5:6; Luke 23:47; Romans 5:18-19; I John 2:1-2).

Lamentations reveals the Christ Who weeps over Jerusalem as Jeremiah wept for that same city

(Lamentations 3:48-49; Matthew 23:37-38). It is only by God's abundant mercies in Christ that come to us new every morning that we are redeemed rather than being consumed in our sins (Lamentations 3:22-26, 58; Ephesians 2:4-7; Hebrews 4:14-16).

Ezekiel reveals Christ as the true Shepherd Who will feed His flock (Ezekiel 34:11-31; John 10:1-18). Our resurrection from the dead is seen in the resurrection of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-14; I Thessalonians 4:16-17. Ezekiel reveals the loving God Who performs heart surgery on sinners – removing from them the dead stony heart of sinful unbelief, and giving sinners a living heart that beats with the joy of faith in the Messiah (Ezekiel 36:24-28; II Corinthians 3:2-3).

Daniel reveals Jesus as the Son of Man Who rules with the power of the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 12:40; 16:13-16; 17:9, 22-23). This title, "son of man" is also used to refer to the prophet Daniel (Daniel 8:17). This phrase is also used to identify the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 37:3, 9, 11, 16). These references point to Christ's prophetic office (Ezekiel 36:25-28; Romans 2:29; II Corinthians 3:2-3), and to Him being the Son of Man (Matthew 8:20; 12:8, 32, 40; 16:13). Just as God delivered His servants Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego from the fiery furnace to we are delivered from the fires of hell by the grace of our God and Savior Jesus Christ (Daniel 3; Revelation 20:14-15).

Hosea refers to Jesus as the beloved Son Who is called out of Egypt (Numbers 24:8-9; Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:13-15). Christ's redemption of His Bride the Church is seen in Hosea's redemption of his faithless wife, Gomer (Hosea 1-3; Ephesians 5:21-33).

Joel speaks about the promise of the Messiah to send the Holy Spirit in His fullness to His Church (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:1-21)

Amos speaks of the Messiah Who raises up the fallen Tabernacle of David and Who brings Gentiles to His Church (Amos 9:11-15; Acts 15:13-18).

Obadiah points us to the deliverance and salvation God provides on Mount Zion through the kingly Messiah (Obadiah 17 & 21; Revelation 11:15; Revelation 21-22).

Jonah points to the Messiah Who dies, rests in the tomb for three days and then rises again (Jonah 1:17-2:10; Matthew 12:39-41). Jonah also proclaims the Messiah Who is the Savior of all, even terrible Gentile

sinners like the Assyrians, the Samaritan woman, Roman soldiers, and even of publicans and tax collectors (Jonah 3 & 4; Luke 7:1-10, 34, 39-50; 15:1-2; John 4).

Micah prophesies about the Savior's birth in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1-11). Micah also portrays the Messiah as a God of mercy Who in compassion pardons the iniquity of sinners (Micah 7:18-19; Romans 15:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; Hebrews 5:1-2).

Nahum speaks about the beauty of the feet of those who bring the Gospel of peace in Christ to the nations (Nahum 1:15; Acts 10:36; Romans 10:15).

Habakkuk is known as the prophet of the Reformation for he speaks emphatically about justification by grace through faith in the coming Messiah (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:37-39).

Zephaniah speaks about the Christ Who comes to judge the living and the dead and encourages the meek to seek the righteousness that can only be found in the Messiah (Zephaniah 2:3; Matthew 5:6; 6:33).

Haggai speaks about the Messiah as the Desire of the nations Who will come and fill the rebuilt temple with His glory (Haggai 2:7; Luke 2:25-35). Zerubabel, a descendant of David who rules as governor, is described as the signet ring, the seal of God to reassure His people that the promises about the kingly Messiah and Descendant of David's Descendant Who is to come are still in effect and that all those promises will come to pass (Haggai 2:20-23; Matthew 1:12-13; Luke 1:67-79).

Zechariah is the most Messianically dense book in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit led Zechariah to provide a "Reader's Digest" condensed summary of all previous Old Testament prophecy which then is seen fulfilled in the New Testament books. Christ's work as the High Priest Who cleanses His penitent people from the filthy robes of their sins and dresses them in His righteous white robes is seen in the cleansing of Joshua the High Priest (Zechariah 3:1-10; Revelation 4:4; 7:9-17). Jesus is again described as the Servant Branch (3:8) and as the Stone (3:9). The Messiah is the Branch, a kingly priest Who will build a temple (6:9-15; John 2:19-21). The Messiah's fountain for cleansing from sin is seen when Jesus side is pierced by the spear and out comes blood and water (Zechariah 13:1; John 19:34-35). We receive cleansing from sin in the waters of Baptism and in the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38; Colossians 2:11-14; Matthew

26:26-28; I John 5:6-9)

Christ's entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday is prophesied in Zechariah 9:9 (cf. Matthew 21:1-5). The Messiah will be a Man of peace Who rules as a King (Zechariah 9:10; Luke 2:14; John 14:27; 16:32-33). The shed blood of the Messiah will free sinners who are imprisoned by their sins (Zechariah 9:11-12; I John 1:7). Jesus is prophesied to be the Cornerstone (Zechariah 10:4; Matthew 21:42; I Peter 2:6-8). The betrayal price paid to Judas was 30 pieces of silver – Zechariah speaks of them and of the potter's field in 11:12-13. The Holy Spirit combined this prophecy with God's command to Jeremiah to buy some of the "potter's field" (Jeremiah 19:1; 32:6-10) and these prophecies come to fulfillment in Matthew 27:3-10. The impartation of the Holy Spirit on Christ at His Baptism, His being pierced on the cross, and the great mourning at His death are seen in Zechariah 12:10-14; Matthew 3:13-17; John 19:33-37; and Luke 23:48.

Jesus is the Shepherd Who is stricken and the sheep are scattered at His death (Zechariah 13:7-9; John 10:11; Matthew 26:31 & 56). The Messiah will be the King of all the earth (Zechariah 14:9; I Timothy 1:17; Revelation 19:16).

Malachi proclaims the coming of the Second Elijah, John the Baptist, the messenger who prepares the way before the Messiah (Malachi 3:1; Matthew 11:7-15). Malachi also proclaims the Christ Who is the Sun of Righteousness Who arises with spiritual healing in His wings (Malachi 4:2; Matthew 17:1-2; Acts 26:12-18; Revelation 1:16; 21:23; 22:5 Romans 1:16-17; 3:21-26; I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 5:21).

Luther and Althaus on the Christological nature of the Old Testament:

"There are some who have little regard for the Old Testament. They think of it as a book that was given to the Jewish people only and is now out of date, containing only stories of past times. They think they have enough in the New Testament...But Christ says in John 5[:39], 'Search the Scriptures, for it is they that bear witness to me.' St. Paul bids Timothy attend to the reading of the Scriptures [I Tim. 4:13], and in Romans 1[:2] he declares that the gospel was promised by God in the Scriptures, while in I Corinthians 15 he says that in accordance with the Scriptures Christ came of the seed of David, died, and was raised from the dead. St. Peter, too, points us back, more than once, to the

Scriptures. They do this in order to teach us that the Scriptures of the Old Testament are not to be despised, but diligently read. For they themselves base the New Testament upon them mightily, proving it by the Old Testament and appealing to it...The ground and proof of the New Testament is surely not to be despised, and therefore the Old Testament is to be highly regarded. And what is in the New Testament but a public preaching and proclamation of Christ, set forth through the sayings of the Old Testament and fulfilled through Christ?"

"In order that those who are not more familiar with it may have instruction and guidance for reading the Old Testament with profit, I have prepared this preface to the best of the ability God has given me...Here [in the Old Testament] you will find the swaddling clothes and the manger in which Christ lies, and to which the angel points the shepherds [Luke 2:12]. Simple and lowly are these swaddling cloths, but dear is the treasure, Christ, who lies in them." [Luther's Works – Volume 35 - Word and Sacrament I (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), pp. 235-236]

"It [the Old Testament] not only offers to lead men to Christ but is itself already filled with Him. This is true first because Christ is always present in the God of the Old Testament, in his activity and promises, and in his relationship to the godly...These promises, ultimately, are all promises of Christ. The God who speaks in them is the God who is already at work fulfilling them and saving the world through Christ...Christ is promised in the prophets, in the Psalms, and in the well-known Messianic passages of the historical books-but also in many places beyond these...Like the prophets, the Psalms are filled with prophecies of Christ, his person, his suffering, his death and resurrection, his ruling as king, the gospel, the kingdom, and Christianity, or the church. Not only the Psalms, however, are to be interpreted in a Christological and prophetic sense but also much in the historical accounts of the Old Testament and in the books of Moses...[for] he 'prophecies powerfully of Jesus Christ our Lord'...the Old Testament [also] offers figures of Christ and of his church." [Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 93-95.]