

Christ in the Old Testament

Summer - Fall 2020

Prepared by Dan Hager

Class Objective: Build students' faith in Jesus by revealing Christ's supreme role in the Bible's overall story. Equip students to study the Old Testament in ways that are productive, enjoyable, and fruitful.

The Story of the Bible

Focus Statement: The Old Testament is so much more than 39 books full of difficult names, ancient history, and outdated rituals. From beginning to end, it is a powerful story about who God is, who we are meant to be, and how far He is willing to go to help us achieve it.

The Hebrew Scriptures

The Law

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

The Prophets

Joshua
Judges
I-II Samuel
I-II Kings
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
Isaiah
Book of 12

The Psalms

Ruth
Psalms
Job
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon
Lamentations
Daniel
Esther
Ezra-Nehemiah
I-II Chronicles

"These are my words that I spoke to you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

– Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44)

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Fulfilled by Jesus

Focus Statement: In both the smallest of details and God's most overarching purposes, Jesus fulfills the story of the Bible.

It seems so obvious to us that Jesus is the fulfillment of the story of the Bible. Yet it was nowhere near so obvious to the people Jesus lived among each day. Read **John 7:1-52**.

- **What issues did the people have with believing in Jesus?**

After giving a detailed family tree – showing Jesus' lineage as **Son of Abraham, Son of David** – the Apostle Matthew shows us just how much the birth of Jesus fulfilled the story of the Bible. Read **Matthew 1:17-2:23**.

- **How did Jesus' birth fulfill specific prophecies and the overall story of the Bible?**

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All of this significance unfolded just in Jesus' first years on earth! The extent to which Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures became even more apparent once His ministry began. In a dense couple of chapters, Matthew presents to us the full significance of Jesus' ministry to the story of the Bible. Read **Matthew 12:1-13:58**.

- **How did Jesus' life fulfill specific prophecies and the overall story of the Bible?**

When the "**sign of Jonah**" did come to pass, it revealed how absolutely Jesus really is the fulfillment of the story of the Bible. Through His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus fulfilled a variety of prophecies in stunningly specific detail. He also accomplished what the Scripture said must happen. Read **John 19:1-20:10**.

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- How did Jesus' death fulfill specific prophecies and the overall story of the Bible?

Jesus fulfills the story of the Bible, but that story does not end with His death, burial, and resurrection. When we obey the gospel, we become a part of the story. That's where the New Testament – and the story of our own lives – come in!

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Making All Things New

Focus Statement: The New Testament writers frequently quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures to explain the significance of what Jesus accomplished. As we learn to appreciate the connections between the Old and New Testaments, we will grow more and more excited for how the story ends – and for how it doesn't.

By the first century AD, the Hebrew Scriptures were already ancient, ranging from 400 to 1,400 years old. Yet, the **Law**, the **Prophets**, and the **Psalms** – the three major groupings of its books in Jesus' day – were a vital part of how Jesus and His apostles explained the reality of who He is and the significance of what He accomplished. We can see this clearly in how the Spirit inspired them to write the **gospel accounts** of **Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John** and the **history** of **Acts**. As what the apostles had been preaching about Jesus was committed to paper, it was full of references to the Hebrew Scriptures.

Though there is some subjectivity in identifying what constitutes a direct quotation – there are so many paraphrases and allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures they are impossible to tabulate – the four gospel accounts alone have nearly **200 direct quotations** from:

- the **Law**: **68 quotes**, of which 27 were from **Deuteronomy**
- the **Prophets**: **70 quotes**, of which 39 were from **Isaiah**
- the **Psalms**: **56 quotes**, of which 43 were from **Psalms**

These quotations appear in a variety of ways:

- The gospel writers quoted from the Old Testament over **30 different times** as they narrated how Jesus – or the reaction He received – **fulfilled** some element of the story of the Bible.
- As the crowds tried to make sense of who Jesus was or as the scribes conversed with Him, the Scriptures would be **quoted another 40 times** in these **discussions**.
- Appropriately, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms were on Jesus' lips more than anyone else, as the gospel writers show Him quoting these sacred words around **120 times** as He **prayed, taught, and preached** them.

The apostles and early church leaders clearly picked up on this about our Lord and adopted it themselves: nearly all of the **40+ Old Testament quotations in Acts** appear in their **prayers, sermons, and teaching**.

As they turned to **letter writing** to teach people all over the world how to follow Jesus, the Hebrew Scriptures continued to play a vital role in their communications. The Old Testament is directly quoted 225 times in their letters, especially in:

- Paul's letter to the **Romans**, which has **70 quotes** in its 16 chapters;
- The anonymous writer's letter to the **Hebrews**, which has **50 quotes** in its 13 chapters; and,

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- Peter's letter of **1 Peter**, which has **29 quotes** in its 5 chapters.

As the church became made up of more and more Gentiles over the decades, we see Paul, whom Jesus appointed as the Apostle to the Gentiles, going to great pains to stress that the Gentiles' faith in Jesus made these ancient Jewish writings their own history now (cf. Gal. 2:8, 3:21-29). Instead of making lists of which commands still applied, he stressed "**Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes**" (Rom. 10:4). This enabled him to use the Hebrew Scriptures to explain who Jesus is and the kind of life His followers should lead without forcing Gentiles to become culturally Jewish (cf. Rom. 13:8-14:23). Many of the early Christians did not grow up knowing the Scriptures: they had to be taught. The key was they were taught it as a way of understanding Jesus, not as a set of rules they needed to keep.

- **How did Jesus, His apostles, and the early church use the Hebrew Scriptures differently than we often do today?**

Without the story of Jesus and the church in the New Testament, so many threads are left dangling in the story of the Bible presented in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms ended with **II Chronicles 36:22-23**, which gives Cyrus' proclamation allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem. The Old Testament in our English Bibles ends with **Malachi 4:5-6**, God's promise to send Elijah the prophet to prepare for the day of the LORD. Talk about a cliffhanger! We need Jesus as the culmination of the story. The interconnectedness of the Old and New Testaments is especially clear in the **Revelation** of Jesus Christ, the final book of the Bible. Read **Revelation 1:4-7**.

- **What are ideas from our study of "Christ in the Old Testament" that get referenced here?**

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In fact, as appealing as a New Temple was to the Jewish exiles of Ezekiel's day, the temple Christ has built is far greater than anyone could have imagined. Read **Ezekiel 40:1-4, 43:1-12, 47:1-12**.

- What would this vision of a new temple have meant for Jews living in exile?

- How do Jesus' followers experience the building of a new temple?

Having these images in mind can heighten our appreciation for what John saw. Read **Revelation 21:9-22:5**.

- Given many similarities, how is John's New Jerusalem greater than Ezekiel's New Temple?

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Having learned to see Christ in the Old Testament, the end of the Bible becomes incredibly exciting. Read **Revelation 22:6-21**.

- What are things from this passage that stand out more to you when you think about the entire story of the Bible?

- What should a follower of Jesus reading these words do next?