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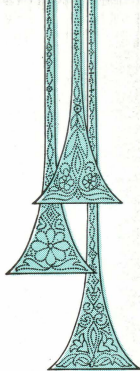


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Who Is Jesus?

The Old Testament said He would come! In the midst of expelling Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden because of their rebellion, God promised, "I will put enmity between thee (talking to the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:16). Unlike any other Old Testament promise, this passage encouraged the human family to watch for one uniquely described as "the seed of woman" who would overpower Satan.

The Old Testament said He would come as a prophet like Moses. This first great leader of Abraham's descendants promised Israel, "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; . . . I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto thee all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19).

The Old Testament said He would come as a kingly son of Jesse. Isaiah so wrote, "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah" (Isaiah 11:1, 2). Later, in the same chapter, the prophet predicts that this "shoot out of the stock of Jesse" will rule the earth and will be characterized by "righteousness" and "faithfulness" (Isaiah 11:3-5).

This leads me to clarify even more definitely that the Old Testament said He would come as the son of David. God says, "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have shown unto David my servant: thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations" (Psalm 89:3, 4).

The Old Testament said He would come as a priest and ruler. "Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies," says David in Psalm 110 (verse 2). "Jehovah hath sworn," he continues in the same Psalm, "and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). An eternal ruler-priest is here predicted for some future era.

The Old Testament said He would come as "Immanuel," born of a virgin. "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," Isaiah writes (Isaiah 7:14). We immediately remember the unique promise God made in Genesis 3 about "the seed of woman." Now, we are told, a virgin will give birth to a man named "Immanuel."

The Old Testament said He would come as governor and ruler from God. Two chapters later in Isaiah we hear, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Isaiah also adds, "Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, . . ." (Isaiah 9:7). Although the King David had been dead for many years, this coming child of the virgin, named Immanuel, would be priest, prophet, and king in David's line.

The Old Testament also said He would come as a "suffering servant." Nowhere in all the Bible does one find the pathos and tragedy that Isaiah portrays in Isaiah 52 and 53. In these two chapters this great Old Testament

figure foretells the coming, the suffering, agony, and death that our sins would create for God's servant to come. Listen as God speaks through Isaiah, "Behold, my servant shall deal wisely, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high" (Isaiah 52:13). In chapter fifty-three we read, "He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; . . . But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:3-6).

In eight specific areas of prophetic reference, we have listened to the Old Testament testimony about an unusual figure to appear at some time still future to these Old Testament writers. We have introduced this figure in these eight areas with the words, "The Old Testament said He would come!" The man the Old Testament said would come is Jesus Christ, whom the New Testament says is here!

First, Paul tells us that this Jesus was born of a woman, as God promised in Genesis 3:15. Listen as the apostle says, "but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4, 5).

Second, just as Moses predicted that another prophet would come from God in later times, so Matthew's Gospel records the roar of the throngs in Jerusalem on the Sunday before His crucifixion, "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee" (Matthew 21:11).

Third, as Isaiah pictured Him in the Old Testament, so came "Wise men from the east" asking, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw this star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matthew 2:1, 2). We learn later in the same chapter of Matthew that these sages found the baby Jesus and worshiped Him as King.

Fourth, as we read in the Psalms of a coming priest after the order of Melchizedek, so the author of the New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews devotes almost four chapters to the explanation of Jesus Christ's priesthood. We have "a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," chapter four, verse 14, states. This "high priest" has faced temptations just like ours but without sinning, the next verse declares (Hebrews 4:15). Christ, our high priest, offered Himself as the once-

for-all sacrifice for our sins, not "the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, . . . (he) obtained eternal redemption" for all of us (Hebrews 9:11, 12). Because of our high priest, Jesus Christ, we can now approach God's throne in boldness and confidence, knowing that Jesus "ever lives to make intercession" for us (Hebrews 4:16; 10:19-25; 7:25).

Fifth, Matthew reveals how the angel of God informed both Mary and Joseph, her husband-to-be, that Mary had "conceived . . . of the Holy Spirit" and would give birth to a child named Jesus (Matthew 1:20, 21). The angel further showed how this event fulfilled what we earlier read from Isaiah 7:14. Listen to Matthew's account of this: "Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us" (Matthew 1:22, 23). The Old Testament said He would come! The New Testament says He is here, this child of the virgin called "Immanuel."

Sixth, Isaiah also predicted that this same character would be a governor, and ruler, or leader sent by God. Paul talks of Christ's return and the final judgment in I Corinthians 15 and then adds, "Then cometh the end, when he (Christ) shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power" (I Corinthians 15:25). Now, throughout the Christian age in which we live, Christ reigns supreme as "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace," to borrow Isaiah's terminology. In the New Testament Epistle to the Ephesians we learn that God raised Christ from the dead "and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he (God) put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:19-23). As head of His spiritual body, the Church, and as king over God's kingdom on earth (Colossians 1:13), Christ reigns according to the very predictions of Isaiah 9:6.

Seventh, the repeated Old Testament emphasis on "the son of David" is too obvious to neglect. In Luke's Gospel the angel makes this announcement to Mary: "He shall be called great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke

1:32, 33). After all these hundreds of years, the true and valid "son of David" had come in the person of Jesus.

Eighth, Jesus the Christ did not fail the prophets even to His life and death. The very first presentation of the saving power and kingly rule of Jesus Christ after His death, resurrection, and ascension, appears in Acts, chapter two. Among other stirring things Peter said about Him was this, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay; . . ." (Acts 2:22, 23). Later, in his First Epistle, Peter writes of the Christ who "suffered for you, . . . who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:21-24).

The Old Testament said He would come! We have closely examined eight specific predictions about His life and death. The New Testament says He is here! These eight areas of concern in prophecy and fulfillment center in a definite, historical figure, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God!

He assures us today that He is with all who obey Him throughout this entire age. When giving His followers their instructions to "evangelize the world" or tell all men about Him, and after instructing them that full, obedient faith in Him as the Christ must culminate in the penitent believer's baptism, and after urging these same followers to nurture through teaching all who come as spiritual infants to be His disciples, He then assured them, "and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

The Jesus that the Old Testament said would come and that the New Testament says is here, is, according to Hebrews 13:8, ". . . the same yesterday and today, yea and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). I am not talking about a dim, musty figure out of the past. I urge you to accept the one so deeply longed for throughout the ages, and the one revealed so dramatically in His earthly life, as chronicled by the New Testament writers.

If He is the same today as yesterday, we must hear His invitation, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any

man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). If Jesus Christ is the same today as yesterday, we must accept His invitation in the manner He prescribed when He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

But to so understand Jesus as the same yesterday and today, also assures us that He will be the same savior, guide, and brother "for ever." Will you answer the question, "Who is Jesus?" with these words, "My only hope for the good life here and hereafter."



John Allen Chalk, dynamic evangelist and long-time radio speaker, is the first full-time speaker on the Herald of Truth radio program.

He began his work with the Herald of Truth on January 1, 1966. Previously, Chalk was the featured personality in a 13 week Herald of Truth television series.

A native of Lexington, Tennessee, he began preaching at 15. Chalk and his wife and two children now live in Abilene, Texas where he spends full time working with the Herald of Truth.

He is a graduate of Tennessee Tech and has written a book, "The Praying Christ and Other Sermons" and two tracts. Chalk was nominated for the Outstanding Young Man of Tennessee in 1964 and was named Cookeville's Young Man of the Year in 1963.