

Study Aids

Discussion Questions and Suggested Reading For “What’s the Message?” Lessons

The Meaning of Christmas

The idea that God would come to earth in person to save and restore mankind to Himself is as ancient as Abraham. Old Testament Jews and New Testament Christians have both trusted in the promises of God. We see in Gen 3:15 the very first promise of God. But there is no personal name given there, nor does one appear in any of the Old Testament prophecies. It isn’t until the angel announces it (Luke 1:31) that the name “Jesus” (Yeshua, “God Saves”) became connected with God’s promise. But for nearly two thousand years, the fulfillment of God’s promise has been understood by the Jews to be the person known as The Messiah, “the Anointed One.”

By any set of criteria, there are dozens – if not hundreds - of messages of prophets to the Old Testament church about the coming Messiah. Here are just a few of the clearest and most recognized.

Gen. 49:10-11 - “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs” is called a “fore-shadow” picture.

Exodus 12 - This chapter gives us the institution of The Passover and gives a fore-shadow of the Lamb of God. Other related images are given in Lev. 16; Num. 21:6-9; and Num. 24:17,19.

Deut. 18:15-19 - A clear prophecy that there would be a “special person” that God would raise up.

2 Sam. 7:16 - The throne “of David” will be established forever and will reign over God’s people.

The Psalms have frequent Messianic references. Two good ones are found in Ps. 110 and Ps. 118:22.

Isaiah, of course, is absolutely loaded with Messianic prophecies. Here are just some of the most familiar: 2:2-4; 4:2-6; 7:13-14; 9:1-7; 11:1-10; 32:1-1; 35:5-6; 40:5-11; 42:1-11; and especially the entire chap. 53.

Jer. 23:5-6; the “branch out of David” shall be called “The Lord, Our Righteousness.”

Ez. 34 - The servant out of the house of David shall be their prince forever.

Hosea 1:10 and 11:1 show that His kingdom would include all nations.

Micah 5:2-5 - the prophecy of the birthplace of the Messiah.

Zechariah contains several verses clearly pointing to events in the life of the Messiah. See 3:8; 9:9; 12:9; 11:12-13; 12:10.

One could argue that the people of the Old Testament didn't know Jesus by name, but they certainly knew that God had promised them a Messiah, and much about Him and His work. We see that promise of God completed in Jesus, but like the Old Testament people who looked forward, we too look forward to the completion of the promise of Jesus in our own individual lives.

The one thing that is common to both the Old and New Testament believers is that we believe and trust in the promise of God.