

SHADOWS OF LIGHT

SEEING JESUS
IN ALL THE BIBLE

BY
DOUG BATCHELOR



Roseville, CA

SHADOWS OF LIGHT

SEEING **JESUS**
IN ALL THE BIBLE

BY
DOUG BATCHELOR



Roseville, CA

Shadows of Light: Seeing Jesus in All the Bible

By Doug Batchelor

Copyright © 2013 Amazing Facts

Printed in the USA

Published by

Amazing Facts, Inc.

PO Box 1058

Roseville, CA 95678-8058

800-538-7275

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked “KJV” taken from the King James Version.

Scripture quotations marked “NASB” taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

Scripture quotations marked “NLT” are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Cover Design by Haley Trimmer

Text Design by Greg Solie • Altamont Graphics

ISBN: 978-1-58019-527-0

Table of Contents

Introduction

Recognition and Gratitude

- 1 Adam, Abel, Enoch, and Noah: The Antediluvian Types
- 2 Abraham, Isaac, Melchizedek, and Jacob: From a Far Country
- 3 Joseph: From the Pit to the Palace
- 4 Moses: The Great Lawgiver
- 5 Joshua: The Faithful General
- 6 Gideon and Samson: Mighty and Powerful
- 7 Ruth and Boaz: A Kinsmen Redeemer
- 8 Jonathan: The Noble Prince
- 9 David: The Shepherd, King, and Poet
- 10 Job: Suffering in the Spirit
- 11 Elijah: Prophet of Fire and Rain
- 12 Elisha: A Man of Miracles
- 13 Solomon: A Wise and Glorious King
- 14 Jonah: The Sign of a Prophet
- 15 Daniel and Nehemiah: Servants in a Foreign Land
- 16 Esther: Sacrificial Courage
- 17 Stephen: Full of Faith and Power
- 18 Jesus: In the Temple
- 19 Living Tapestries

Introduction

Chameleons are among the strangest creatures on earth. At first glance their appearance leaves the impression that they fell from another planet. Their bodies are often ornamented with menacing crests, horns, and spines. Their toes are fused together into one bunch on either side of the foot, forming a pair of grasping tongs for clinging to branches.

With 160 different types of chameleons, their bumpy skin comes in a rainbow of pastels and patterns that can change color because of specialized chromatophore cells. Then there is their sticky tongue, which can “shoot” one-and-a-half times the length of their body in about 20 thousandths of a second to capture prey. This is astounding when you consider how slowly they generally move.

Yet the most bizarre thing about chameleons must be their amazing eyes. Each of their two unusual eyes are mounted in bulging twin conical turrets and can move independently of each other, giving chameleons the ability to clearly see a 360-degree arc all around themselves. Once they have located prey, they synchronize the two binocular-like eyes in front for precision focus as they prepare to strike with their rocket-like tongue. They rarely miss the target.

While I have no desire to look like a chameleon, I admire their independent “double vision.” To be able to look forward and backward at the same time has its advantages. For instance, when driving a car, it helps to have a rear-view mirror. In some ways, having “double vision” can also be an asset when reading the Bible. I don’t mean seeing blurred lettering; that would only give you a headache. Rather, I’m talking about the ability to read the Bible with one eye on history and the other eye on Jesus. This kind of dual vision is the aim of this book. Let me explain.

When we read the thrilling histories of Joseph, Moses, and David, there is much more to their accounts than the obvious surface chronicle. Each of their lives occasionally flashed with what I call “shadows of light”—pictures of Jesus, the God-man who would come.

Christ warned the religious leaders of His day that it is possible to scrutinize the Scriptures and miss the big picture. It's something like standing so close to a redwood and studying its bark that you fail to notice the gigantic tree. Jesus told them, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).

In this book, we are going to explore some astonishing parallels that testify about Jesus. We will stand back and look at numerous examples, mostly from the Old Testament, that show how the different leading Bible characters and events of history are facets that form a composite picture of Jesus, a kaleidoscope of His life. Time and space will not permit us to consider all of the stories and individuals where these shadows of light appear, but we will examine several prominent patriarchs, judges, prophets, and kings in the Bible. I think you'll quickly discover in their lives many astounding counterparts that point to the ministry of Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed One of prophecy.

The Gospel of John tells us that after Philip first met Jesus, he traced down his friend Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1:45). Here, Philip is saying that all through the Bible, Moses and the prophets were writing about Jesus. You might not find Jesus' name, per se, in the Old Testament, but you do find types and shadows of Christ from Moses to Malachi; these symbols are virtually omnipresent.

Luke tells us a story of two men traveling to the town of Emmaus after the crucifixion. Walking down the road, they encounter Christ but do not recognize who He is. When they share with this supposed stranger their discouragement about the death of Jesus, the Lord opens their minds to understand why all these things were supposed to happen. Notice how completely Jesus identifies His life with the Old Testament. "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27). Wouldn't that have been a fascinating Bible study to attend? I would give anything to hear Jesus comb through the Old Testament drawing parallels between those events and His own life!

Caution—Danger!

Before touring an old South African gold mine years ago, my son and I were given a protective helmet, an emergency light, and a short lecture on safety. As we now delve into a deep Bible study where few Christians have ventured, a word of caution is in order. Stay with me as I illustrate my point.

Several years ago, someone assembled an amazing series of bizarre parallels between the lives of Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy. For example, Abraham Lincoln was elected to congress in 1846; John F. Kennedy was elected to congress in 1946. Lincoln was elected president in 1860; Kennedy was elected president in 1960. Lincoln's wife lost a child while living in the White House; Kennedy's wife lost a child while living in the White House. Lincoln had a secretary named Kennedy, who urged him not to go to the theater; oddly, Kennedy had a secretary named Lincoln, who urged him not to go to Dallas. Both Lincoln and Kennedy were shot in the back of the head in the presence of their wives. Lincoln was shot in Ford's Theater; Kennedy was shot in a Lincoln made by Ford. The names Lincoln and Kennedy each contain seven letters. Both Kennedy and Lincoln were killed on a Friday by lone assassins. Lincoln's assassin was known by three names, John Wilkes Booth, comprised of 15 letters; Kennedy's assassin was also known by three names, Lee Harvey Oswald, also comprised of 15 letters. Booth shot Lincoln in a theater and then fled to a warehouse; Oswald shot Kennedy from a warehouse and then fled to a theater. Both Oswald and Booth were killed before being brought to trial. Lincoln's successor was Andrew Johnson, born in 1808; Kennedy's successor was Lyndon Johnson, born in 1908.

How strange! Now, when you hear things like this, you might naturally wonder—is that just a mystifying coincidence? Or is it possible that history tends to repeat itself? Or is there a master hand that is guiding in the affairs of men, trying to send us a cryptic message? I think you could probably take a number of different events in history, line them up side by side, and find similarities. Sometimes you might find more comparisons than others. Anyone with a bit of creativity could manipulate the evidence to produce intriguing parallels.

Obviously, when dealing with the Scriptures, we have to be especially careful. Some people take Bible symbols, allegories, and

typology a little too far and start looking for secret meanings in places where there are no hidden messages. The stories of Kennedy and Lincoln might have much in common, but you can also find much dissimilarity. One was a Republican, the other a Democrat. One was Catholic, the other Protestant. Within these contrasts alone there are hundreds of glaring differences. But when studying the accounts of Bible characters, you will plainly see within their lives a divine DNA of Jesus. There are many obvious (and some not-so-obvious) shadows and types of Christ that are prominent and undeniable throughout Scripture.

So how are we to interpret these symbols in the Bible? The answer is—*very cautiously*. We need to guard against studying Bible stories the way some people witch for water with willow twigs. It is possible for a person to become so preoccupied looking for deep hidden symbols in the Scriptures that they miss the obvious simple teachings lying on the surface. We must let the Bible *itself* provide the pattern for how to discover these connections.

For example, the apostle Paul writes, “Brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Corinthians 10: 1, 2). Here Paul shows us how the Israelites were baptized in the same way you and I need to be born of the water and of the Spirit. When the children of Israel came out of the slavery of Egypt, they went through the water of the Red Sea and were symbolically “baptized.” They also were under a pillar of fire glowing at night, which represented the fiery baptism of the Holy Spirit, just as the apostles were baptized at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–3). While these historical events truly happened, they were also symbols of salvation.

The passage continues, “All ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:3, 4). Paul draws several analogies here. The sea represented baptism, the cloud represented the Spirit, the rock represented Christ, and the manna—the spiritual food—represented Christ and His Word, the Bread of Life. Just as manna tasted good, so the gospel is good news. The Bible says the manna was round; it was pure. So also the gospel is perfect and pure in similar ways. Remember how the manna came quietly in the night? Jesus, too, came quietly into our world,

unannounced except to a few shepherds. Manna was very sustaining and kept the Israelites alive. They had pretty much the same thing on the menu every day! In the same way, Christ is our “daily bread” and His Word continues to be fresh and sustaining. He said, “I am that bread that came down from heaven.” You can see multiple analogies here.

In speaking of the children of Israel, Paul continued, “Now these things became our examples ...” (v. 6). The word “examples” comes from the Greek word “*tupos*,” where we get the word “type” or “pattern.” The people and experiences in the Bible are patterns for us that we might recognize the plan of salvation and apply those truths to our lives. All through the writings of the New Testament, we can see how Bible writers consistently looked to the Old Testament and saw these types and symbols of Jesus and the gospel.

This book is certainly not an exhaustive study on types in the Bible. We’re just going to fly over the mountaintops and identify a number of prominent peaks where the gospel and person of Jesus is reflected through the great characters and events of the sacred book. I want to encourage you to realize that when you look at your Bible, you will see that it’s much more than a history book. It is a *supernatural* book. The only way these types and shadows could exist is if somebody at the helm of history, someone who rules time and space, is responsible for the Scriptures.

I believe the Lord wants us to read our Bibles and recognize these analogies to strengthen our faith. Through our exploration you will discover some of the strongest evidence for the inspired nature of this blessed book. You will learn that Jesus is the Messiah, that His life and message are interlaced like a scarlet thread throughout from beginning to end. If God could so orchestrate history to tell a future story, He must have a special history planned for your life and mine.

God is still on His throne, and He’s not worried.

Doug Batchelor

Recognition and Gratitude

The many amazing symbols, types, and shadows of Christ that I share in this book are certainly not all original with me. “Is there anything of which it may be said, ‘See, this is new’? It has already been in ancient times before us” (Ecclesiastes 1:10).

Sometimes I uncover what I think is a “new truth” only to later discover the tomb had already been ransacked by hundreds before me. So I must thank countless Bible students and scholars, both ancient and modern, for many of the insights I have compiled in this book.

As you read the Scriptures, you will no doubt discover shadows of light and types of Christ I have left out. If you’re willing to share, let me know in the event we print future editions. Be blessed!

Doug Batchelor

CHAPTER 1

Adam, Abel, Enoch, and Noah: The Antediluvian Types

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness’” (Genesis 1:26).

The perfectly pure atmosphere smelled richly fragrant and invigorating. After all, the infant world was only six days into its creation. The Lord God looked over the fresh turquoise sea, the brilliant azure sky, and the lush, green land—all bustling with the exuberant activity, sounds, and songs of millions of colorful, intricate, and fascinating animals celebrating new life. Eden was flawless. Well, almost. The garden had no gardener.

So the Lord kneeled on the dewy world He had made, and His creative fingers began to manipulate earth and clay. With His own hands He molded something. As it took shape, the form looked very much like Himself. He could have simply spoke man into existence as He did with the other creatures, but this crowning act of earth’s creation would be called His son and the leader of the planet. God made him with His own hands. When He finished, the earthen sculpture was beautiful, perfect in every way. It was similar to His own image. But the exquisite form was still and cold. Lifeless.

He needed the kiss of life. Then the Lord God breathed “into his nostrils the breath of life” (Genesis 2:7). Instantly the clay form metamorphosed into cells and tissue and began to move! The chest started to calmly and rhythmically rise and fall; the body warmed and pulsed with life. The perfect cardiac dynamo, designed to throb forever, began peacefully beating.

The eyes flickered open, widened and focused. The new being’s sparkling gaze reflected a combination of curiosity, awe, and joy as he looked up at his Creator’s face. There was perfect recognition as he returned His smile.

The First and Second Adam

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:19).

Even though the Bible contains *our* story—the narrative of our planet and species—Bible history even more profoundly tells *His* story, the message of salvation. From Genesis to Revelation, it’s all about Jesus Christ. It should come as no surprise that the very first type—or symbol—of Jesus is found in the first book of the Bible, even in the first human. It is no accident.

Talk about a far-fetched coincidence! In March 2002, seventy-year-old twin brothers died within two hours of each other after having separate accidents on the same road in northern Finland. The first of the twins died when he was hit by a truck while riding his bike in Raahe, 370 miles north of Helsinki. About two hours later, his twin brother, completely unaware of his sibling’s accident, crossed the same road on his bicycle and was also hit and killed by a truck. He died just one mile from the spot his brother died.

Someone once wrote, “With God there are no mistakes and no coincidences.” If that’s true, then do the similarities we find between the life of Adam and Jesus (the “second Adam”) contain a special message for us? Adam once stood at the beginning of our species filled with bright hope at Creation. But he sinned and triggered our downfall. Without Christ’s intervention our destruction would be forever sealed. Adam was originally made with a loving nature, but sin contaminated it with selfishness. In this sense, he became the antithesis of Christ. Iniquity made Adam’s typology the mirror opposite of Jesus.

The New Testament tells us Jesus is the “second Adam.” As Adam was the beginning of our fall, so Christ was the beginning of hope for humanity. Adam failed a test and brought spiritual death to our planet; Jesus overcame a test and brought us spiritual life. Adam’s fall resulted in physical death and a foreboding of eternal death; Jesus’ victory created healing and the hope of eternal life. “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come” (Romans 5:14). Bible writers from the beginning looked for these types and symbols of Christ. Writing to the Romans, Paul states that Adam is a type of “the One who is to come.” Jesus was made in the likeness of man, with our fallen bodies,

but He lived a perfect life despite that fact. He was sinless and motivated by love.

What are some other ways that Adam's life parallels Christ's life? Both were born in miraculous ways. Jesus is the divine Son of God; Adam, formed by God's own hands, is also called "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). Adam breathed his first on a Friday; Jesus breathed His last on a Friday. God put Adam to sleep on the day he was created, opened his side, and brought out his wife. (That's not how most men find a wife!) Jesus went to sleep on a Friday; a spear opened up His side and from the blood and water that gushed out came His bride—the church was born.

Adam's fall happened in a lush garden surrounded by every beauty and blessing; Jesus was victorious in a dry wilderness surrounded by desolation. Adam fell into sin on the point of eating the wrong thing; Jesus resisted the devil's temptation on appetite. Do you see how this works? Symbols and types tell us how Christ is the second Adam. And just as the first Adam fell—we all feel it every day in our nature—we may through faith receive the DNA of the second Adam, Jesus, and become victorious! "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Adam was not deceived; he chose to eat the forbidden fruit in order to share the fate of his wife. So also Jesus chose to partake of our guilt because of love for His bride, the church. Because Christ lived a sinless life, He redeemed us from the horrible consequences of Adam's mistake. Where Adam failed, Christ prevailed.

These symbols are redemptive. The comparisons bring us hope. They are practical, not just interesting to study. Despite our genuine struggle with temptation because of the fall of the first Adam, we can have true victory because of the triumph of the second Adam. It can be ours. By faith we are adopted back into God's family. Someday we will be restored to the garden home originally made for us to enjoy, a home without sin. We will walk once more in the fragrance of Eden.

First Siblings—Cain and Abel

"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also" (1 John

4:20, 21).

Sibling rivalry is not something new. Consider Cain and Abel, the first sons of Adam and Eve. In the story of these two brothers, we find pictures of Christ, divine shadows of light, in the life of Abel. For instance, you'll quickly see a deep tension in the narrative of the brothers. Cain wanted the things of this world and was driven by fleshly desires. Abel wanted the things of the Spirit and wanted to serve God. The stark contrast resembles the tension between Christ and Satan.

Cain persecuted Abel. He was angry and jealous of his brother's goodness. He wanted a blessing from God, but he wanted it in his own way. The same type of sibling friction is also seen in other brothers in Scripture, such as Jacob and Esau, and Isaac and Ishmael. Abel was not murdered because of disobedience, but because he followed the commandments of God. Can you see the analogy between Abel and Jesus here? Christ suffered persecution because He was obedient to God. Just as worship was the point of contention between Cain and Abel, so in the temptation of Jesus, Satan asked Christ to worship him. Jesus refused, and it made the devil angry—so violently hateful that he murdered Christ because of His goodness. Jesus “humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8).

While Cain was a tiller of the soil, Abel was a shepherd. When God instructed Adam's family to bring a lamb to the altar, Cain refused and brought his own offering. Abel was a good shepherd and brought his best lambs to be sacrificed as an offering, which represented the coming Messiah, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Christ is not only represented in Abel's offering, but in his occupation as well. Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep” (John 10:11). This leads us to another parallel.

Abel was the first person to die in the Bible. He laid down his life in obedience to the Lord as a result of the jealousy and hatred of his brother. So Christ laid down His life in obedience to God. He truly gave “His life for the sheep.” When God approached Cain after he murdered Abel, the Lord said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground” (Genesis 4:10). This is the first reference to blood in the Scriptures. In a similar way,

the blood of Christ cries out. It reminds us how He gave His life for us (1 Corinthians 10:16). It brings us closer to Jesus (Ephesians 2:13). And it cleanses us from sin (1 John 1:7). Even through Abel's apparent willingness to lay down his life (the Bible does not describe him as resisting his brother), we see Jesus voluntarily laying down His life to save us.

Jesus even refers to the blood of righteous Abel that would be required from his brethren that slew him: “. that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple” (Luke 11:50, 51).

The book of Hebrews draws our attention to the symbolic connection between Abel and Christ. It speaks of “Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel” (Hebrews 12:24). The sacrifice of Abel pointed forward to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ. Abel's own death foreshadowed “better things”—that is, the blood of Jesus who “washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Revelation 1:5).

In the life and death of Abel, who is our brother, we see a type of Christ who is, through His humanity, our Brother. Though Jesus is divine, Christ chose to become one with the human race. He did this in order that He might be “in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). We see Jesus through Abel.

Seventh from Adam, First to Ascend—Enoch

“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked” (1 John 2:6).

There is an interesting reference in Genesis about a man, named Enoch, whose life mirrors the life of Christ. Now there are two Enochs mentioned in the first book of the Bible—Enoch in the family of Cain (Genesis 4) and Enoch in the family of Adam (Genesis 5). We're going to look at the latter and discover some parallels with Christ that help us recognize these shadows of light, that reflect the life of Jesus.

The Bible says this of Adam's descendent: “Enoch walked with God” (Genesis 5:24). We can stop right here and immediately see Christ. How many men in the Bible really walked with God? Not many. Of

course, no one walked with God more closely than Jesus. Do you recall Christ's words, "I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love"? (John 15:10). Or this reference, "I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me"? (John 6:38). Enoch was like Christ in how he walked with God. He completely pledged his life to the Lord. In fact, his name in Hebrew means "dedicated one." Christ, too, was dedicated to God (Luke 2:22). Oh, how much we need to be like Enoch!

The reference in Genesis goes on to say of Enoch, "And he was not, for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). Enoch was taken up to heaven in a miraculous way. If God "took him," it means he was caught up or translated to heaven. Enoch was given a glorified body without dying first. He received everlasting life and will never see the grave. It reminds me of how Jesus chose to taste death and the grave in order for us to have everlasting life. After the resurrection, Christ was miraculously caught up and entered heaven with a glorified body, never to taste death again. Jesus' death assured Enoch eternal life and all others who would walk with God like he did.

"Well," you might think, "Enoch was just lucky. God happened to randomly throw dice, and Enoch was fortunate." That's not what the Bible says. Notice carefully what the Scriptures teach about Enoch:

"By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, 'and was not found, because God had taken him'; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:5, 6).

Enoch was not saved by random chance. He didn't win the lucky-7 lottery. This old patriarch was saved by faith, just as each one of us may secure eternal life. Christ also walked by faith. The corrupt world in which Enoch lived did not deter him from staying on the pathway to heaven, and neither did the wickedness that surrounded Jesus knock Him off the road to the cross. Enoch lived both among evil men and in solitude with God. In the same way, Jesus found time alone with His Father to prepare Him to serve among sinful people.

What a perfect example was Enoch! I find it very interesting that he is referred to as "the seventh from Adam" (Jude 1:14). Here's the actual order of his genealogy: "Adam, Seth, Enosh, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch ..." (1 Chronicles 1:1-3). The number seven in Scripture

is a symbol of perfection. Jesus is our perfect example, and just as Enoch lived by faith and ascended into heaven, so Christ is the ultimate way to eternal life.

Enoch is a symbol of Jesus in another way. The rest of Jude reads that Enoch “prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints’” (Jude 1:14). That makes him sound like someone who preached about the second coming of Jesus!

Enoch is an important type of Christ in the Bible that reminds us we can also walk with God by faith in this evil world, preaching the soon coming of Christ, and hoping to be translated, caught up to meet Him in the air without ever having tasted death!

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18).

Christ in the Flood—Noah

“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith” (Hebrews 11:7).

Can we find Jesus reflected in the life of Noah? Oh yes, in many ways. In fact, Jesus personally draws an analogy between His return and the times of Noah.

“As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:37–39).

Let’s look at the beginning of this story. The Bible says, “This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:9). Who is the only man that really was perfect? Jesus. But just like Enoch, Noah also “walked with God.” Jesus walked with God too. There is a synergistic relationship between Noah and Christ.

Anyone who hoped to be rescued in the days of the great flood could only be saved through Noah and his work of building an ark. People did not have other boats just sitting around ready to be used for that kind of emergency. There was one ark and one door into that ship. Remember Jesus' words: "I am the way" (John 14:6) and "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved" (John 10:9)? In the same way that Noah provided the only way to be saved to the antediluvians, Jesus provides the only way to be saved through the cross. There is only one ark of salvation in these last days, and it is Christ.

In addition, the New Testament teaches that all of those who would be saved must be "in Christ." Being "in Christ" was one of the favorite phrases of the apostle Paul, who used it over 80 times in his writings. It was not enough to be near the ark to be saved from the flood; they had to be in the ark. That's why Jesus said we must abide "in Him."

Did you know that Noah was a preacher of the "end times"? Peter writes that God "did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:5). Noah preached to prepare people for the coming destruction. Christ also preached and warned the world of its end. We hear an echo of Noah's preaching in Jesus' own words: "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14).

In Genesis 6:18, God says to Noah, "I will establish my covenant with you." Jesus makes a covenant with us based on His sacrifice on Calvary. He has become "a surety of a better covenant" (Hebrews 7:22) and the "Mediator of the new covenant" (12:24). In fact, it is called "the everlasting covenant" (13:20). Just as the whole world was saved through the covenant that God made with Noah (at least if people chose to enter the ark), so also the entire world has the opportunity to be saved through the covenant made by Christ on the cross for those who choose to accept the gift of salvation.

Another interesting connection between Noah and Christ is found in our relationship to Noah. Is there anyone reading this book who was not at least indirectly saved because of Noah? Is there anyone alive who is not related to Noah? Do you realize that we're all kin? Not only through the common genes we share with Adam, but our family

tree comes back together again in Noah's family. Just as we can trace physically our lineage back to Noah, so we may spiritually trace our lineage back to Jesus. When you accept Christ by faith, you are adopted and become part of God's family. Our spiritual DNA can all be traced back to Christ.

Genesis 7:1 tells us, "Then the LORD said to Noah, 'Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.'" There are two points that stand out in this verse that teach us about Jesus. The first is that Noah's household was saved. Jesus also has a household, a church that He is going to save. It's His family of believers. His ark is God's temple, His church.

The second point is that Noah's family was saved because God said, "You are righteous before Me." It didn't say anything about the family's righteousness, only Noah's righteousness. Likewise, in the truest understanding of salvation, it is only through the righteousness of Christ that the "rest of the family" of believers can be saved. We are saved by virtue of Christ's righteousness and by being related to Him, being part of His family.

Here's another tie that can be made between Noah and Christ: You recall how the ark survived a fierce storm; Christ also survived a diabolical storm. The ark, like Jesus' body, was battered and beaten by the enemy. Only those inside the ark were saved. So only those who are in Christ will survive the end of time. Noah and his family lived through the flood of water. We will only live because of the water and blood that flooded out of Jesus' side when a Roman soldier pierced Him on the cross.

How does the story of the flood end? What happens when Noah leaves the ark and offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God? The Lord makes a covenant of peace with Noah depicted in the beauty of a rainbow. "I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth" (Genesis 9:13). It is a security that the Lord will never again destroy the earth with a worldwide flood.

Has the Lord remembered this promise? If you look at the very last book in the Bible, you will read of the Lord, "And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a

rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald” (Revelation 4:3). After the storm of Calvary, Jesus rose and made a covenant of peace with us that will be remembered for eternity. We will recall His promise every time we see the throne of God.

CHAPTER 2

Abraham, Isaac, Melchizedek, and Jacob: From a Far Country

Television has dramatically changed from when I was a kid. Before the days of cable, we only had three or four channels from which to choose. Black and white was the norm, and I was often the remote control in our family. The “rabbit ears” antenna had to be frequently adjusted depending, I think, on atmospheric changes and what Mom made for dinner. To try to get a sharper image, we sometimes added a wire coat hanger or tinfoil origami to the top of the antenna. Otherwise, we would get this strange ghosting as two programs overlapped one another.

As we continue to look at different types of Christ in the Bible through the lives of patriarchs and prophets, we will begin to see more than strange and misty figures that appear like two overlapping programs on an old black-and-white TV. The Bible is like a powerful antenna that sharpens our picture of Jesus through the characters in Scripture we are studying. You will see this as we now look at the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Melchizedek, and Jacob.

Abraham and Isaac

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called,’ concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense” (Hebrews 11:17–19).

There are many parallels between the great patriarch Abraham and the life of Jesus. We first hear of Abraham’s call to travel from a far country and lead his family to the Promised Land. He was obedient to the call of God. We see that Jesus also journeyed from a far country (heaven) and came to earth in order to lead His family to the heavenly Promised Land. Jesus, too, followed His Father’s call in all His travels.

Abraham is the first one recorded in the Bible to be given the covenant of circumcision. This rite symbolized that the holy Messiah would come through Abraham's descendants. The ritual involved shedding blood and scarring the male. It was a covenant made to symbolize that the Israelites were to be a holy people, not controlled by the flesh, but by the Spirit.

Jesus, the Anointed One, was born as an offspring of Abraham. Christ suffered the shedding of blood and was permanently scarred when He was crucified. Like Abraham, Jesus' life was guided by the Spirit. Whereas the Israelites failed at becoming a holy people, Jesus lived a perfectly holy life and extends that blessing to all through the new covenant, a promise called the circumcision of the heart. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit" (Romans 2:28, 29).

Through the Seed of Abraham, all the world may receive the good news of salvation. Abraham's immediate seed was Isaac. Do you remember what Isaac's name means? It means "laughter." Do you like to smile and laugh? We all do. Isaac's arrival was happy news. What great joy must have filled the home of the aged Abraham and Sarah! When we receive the gospel, it also is good news. Isaac is a type of the joy that Christ brings.

Abraham was an old man and Sarah an old woman when she gave birth to their child. It was certainly a miracle. It's interesting to note in the Bible how many "ancient men" had miracle boys who are types of Christ. The Bible says that Jesse, the father of David, was an old man. Jacob was an old man when Joseph was born. Another Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, evidently was an older man when Jesus was born, because he didn't even live through the ministry of Christ. These fathers represent the Eternal Father, the Ancient of Days, which we have in heaven.

Like Jesus' birth, the birth of Isaac was miraculous. The long-awaited child finally arrived. Then one day the Lord spoke to Abraham and asked him to *sacrifice his only son*. How could this be? It was through Isaac that the entire world was going to be saved! Isaac had not even married or had children. This made absolutely no sense—how could the promise of salvation come through Isaac if Abraham killed him? Has this begun to sound like the story of Jesus? Wasn't

Christ sacrificed in His prime, an offering that broke His Father's heart?

Let's look at the different elements in the story of Abraham that mirror the gospel story. First, God told Abraham to make a journey to the place of sacrifice. Jesus also made a journey to Calvary, the place of sacrifice. In fact, many believe that the mountains of Moriah were the very same place where the Jerusalem temple was built and sacrifices were made.

Abraham says that he will be gone on a journey for three-and-a-half days (the 'half day' includes the trip up the mountain). But it is also interesting that from the time of Christ's baptism when He began His ministry until He went to the place of sacrifice was three-and-a-half years. (A day, in Bible prophecy, is a year.)

Now, the wood for the sacrifice was laid on Isaac's back. Isn't it incredible that the wooden cross was placed on Jesus' own back? On the way up the hill, Isaac said to his father—and this is one of those immortal statements in the Bible—"Father, we have the fire." They probably brought some kind of coals to make a fire. He also said, "We've got the wood." He had probably gone to the place of sacrifice many times before with his father. "But," he said, "we're missing something really important. Where is the lamb?"

All of history now revolves on the statement Abraham makes to his son. He answers, "My son, God will provide *Himself* a lamb" (Genesis 22:8, my emphasis). This is exactly what Jesus did. God the Son provided Himself as a lamb!

Was Jesus a willing sacrifice, or did God the Father force Him? Christ said, "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John 10:17, 18). Think for a moment what must've happened after Abraham and Isaac arrived at the top of the mountain. After Isaac heard from his father the plan, he willingly surrendered! It had to be shocking, but despite his feelings, Isaac said, "Father, if this is what God has told you to do ..." He had tremendous respect for the command that says, "Honor your father and mother." When his father said, "Hold out your hands, son. I'm now going to tie you up and sacrifice you," Isaac held out his hands. He was a willing sacrifice. Jesus was also a willing sacrifice. Jesus prayed, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours,

be done” (Luke 22:42).

We can draw so many more intriguing parallels between this story of sacrifice and the message of salvation. Remember that Isaac was a beloved son. God said to Abraham, “Take your son, your *only* son, whom you love” (Genesis 22:2, my emphasis). The Bible says, “God so loved the world He gave his *only* begotten Son” (John 3:16, my emphasis). Do you recall how, just as Abraham was about to bring the knife down, the angel stopped him and pointed him to a ram—a substitute—caught in a thorn bush, a “thicket,” by the horns? Even this is another representation of Christ, a ram with a crown of thorns.

Later in the story of Abraham, the aged patriarch chooses a wife for his son and sends a servant to the land of Mesopotamia to bring this God-fearing woman out of a pagan land. It’s important to note that the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—all brought their wives from the pagan lands of Mesopotamia to the Promised Land. Does Jesus also bring his wife, His church bride, out of Babylon, the world, into the Promised Land? It’s the story of salvation.

One last Christ-like vignette we might consider is the patience and meekness that Isaac demonstrated when the Philistines continued to take over the wells he and his servants had dug. “Also Isaac’s servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, ‘The water is ours.’ So he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah. And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, ‘For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land’” (Genesis 26:19–22). Like Jesus, Isaac was a meek man who frequently turned the other cheek and went the second mile.

Melchizedek—Mystery Man

“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God ... ‘king of righteousness’ ... king of peace’... without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually” (Hebrews 7:1–3).

Before we leave the time of Abraham, an enigmatic character figures into this story. A king and a priest named Melchizedek is shown later in the New Testament to be a type of Christ. The brief record of Melchizedek is found in the book of Genesis [chapter 14](#).

Lot, Abraham's nephew, was taken captive with many others when marauding armies from Damascus in the north swept through the Jordan Valley. These heathen kings conquered Sodom, Gomorrah, Zoar, and the cities of the plain. To save his nephew, Abraham and his servants went to fight against these four kings from the north. Abraham took his own private army along with some neighboring tribes and rescued his nephew. He caught the enemy off guard and won the battle. In the process of that short war, Abraham recovered a tremendous amount of plunder and treasure: gold, silver, clothing, and other riches. On his way home to Hebron, he stopped at a little community called "Salem," home to a famous king-priest who worshiped the same Jehovah God as Abraham.

This next verse is pregnant with meaning: "Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him" (Genesis 14:18, 19). Nobody's exactly sure who this Melchizedek was or where he came from. Ancient Hebrew literature, specifically the Targum and the Babylonian Talmud, suggest Melchizedek was another title for Shem, the son of Noah. It is true that Shem was actually still alive at this point.

Some have postulated that idolatry got so bad in Mesopotamia in the region around the tower of Babel that Shem decided to leave that place. Perhaps word reached him that God had chosen the new land of Canaan to bear His name. This is where Abraham was now worshiping the true God. Maybe Shem decided to retire in Salem with his household. I can't prove Melchizedek is Shem; it's just one theory.

Nonetheless, here is this mysterious person named Melchizedek. No genealogy is given for him. We don't know where he came from, where he went, or who his people were. He appears out of nowhere in history. He brings out bread and wine to Abraham and blesses him. Do you recall how Jesus, while in the upper room, sealed the new covenant with bread and grape juice, pouring out a blessing on the entire world?

Abraham is an old, great patriarch at this time and very rich. Yet he recognizes Melchizedek as a priest of the Most High God. He pays

tithe to him. He acknowledges him as someone greater than himself—Melchizedek, the King of Salem. The name “Melchizedek” literally means “king of righteousness.” His territory is Salem, later known as “Jerushalom,” or Jerusalem. The word “shalom” means peace. And so Melchizedek of Jerusalem is both a king of righteousness and peace.

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul tells us point blank that Melchizedek is a type of Christ. “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest ‘according to the order of Melchizedek’” (Hebrews 5:9, 10). Christ did not come from the tribe of Levi, where most priests came from. He came from the tribe of Judah. So Christ being a high priest is after a “different kind” of priesthood. It’s not the priesthood of the Levites or the priesthood of Aaron. He is called a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Why Melchizedek? Because this unique priest was without beginning or end. We find no genealogy given for Melchizedek. In the same way, Christ is the Alpha and the Omega. He is without beginning or end. He is the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace (Hebrews 7:2).

Paul, along with the other gospel writers, uses a pattern to study the Old Testament. They see in the lives of Bible characters and stories many different and deep things about Christ. Even in this mystery man, Melchizedek, we see Jesus. Christ is a great eternal king of righteousness, a priest of the Most High God, a ruler of the New Jerusalem, the One to whom we bring our tithes, and who makes a covenant of peace with us through the bread and wine of His body and blood. Wow!

Jacob—The Runaway

“And Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs” (Acts 7:8).

I could write so much about Jacob, whose name was ultimately changed to Israel, but let’s just look at a few prominent high points. Jacob had 12 sons that ended up growing into the 12 tribes of Israel. In the New Testament, particularly in the book of Matthew, we see a strong correlation between Jesus and the entire nation of Israel. An example is found in Matthew’s use of this verse, “When Israel was a

child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son” (Hosea 11:1). Of course, we have already looked at Christ’s literal trip to Egypt and back as a child. But it is of significance that Matthew’s usage of “Israel” connects Christ with *all* of Israel. In fact, we see a transition in the New Testament from God’s people (literal Israel) to God’s church (spiritual Israel). This also comes through when we consider that Jesus chose 12 apostles. Through their ministry the church grew and was and is populated.

So the New Testament refers to the church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). This idea is reinforced when we read how James, when writing to the church, addresses them as “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (James 1:1). From the New Testament times, the church has understood Israel to mean a spiritual body of Christ.

Let’s consider another interesting part of Jacob’s story. You probably remember that before he had any children, Jacob, as a young man, earnestly wanted the birthright that belonged to his older twin brother Esau. It’s strange to read how he schemes to get it. (It’s like stealing a Gideon Bible from a hotel room!) With his mother Rebekah helping as an accomplice, Jacob pretends to be Esau and presents himself before his blind father Isaac. Since his older brother was an unusually hairy man, Jacob places the skin of a sacrificed goat over his own hands and on the back of his neck. Additionally, he puts on his brother’s robe to smell like him. Isaac thinks it is Esau approaching him. Jacob then gets credit for being the firstborn by virtue of the skins of the goat, which represents a sacrifice, and the robe of the elder brother. He receives the blessing of the father who is blind. It’s as if Isaac doesn’t really see Jacob for who he is, but he takes the evidence of what he feels and smells and says, “Because of that, I’m going to give you the blessing of my firstborn son.”

When we think of our own sinful condition, we have nothing to commend us to our heavenly Father. We have no right to receive a blessing from God because of our transgressions. So how can we be justified and receive credit for the righteousness of Christ? We’ve done nothing to deserve it. You might say there is a sense in which the Father “overlooks who we really are.” He chooses to be blind, in a spiritual sense, to our sins. How can this be? It is because we are covered in the clothing (robe) of Christ. Isaac says, “The voice is

Jacob's voice, but the hands [the skin] are the hands of Esau" (Genesis 27:22). And so, Isaac blessed him. We, too, may be blessed when we come before the Father. We get to wear Jesus' robe, the covering made by the sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God. The Father smells the fragrance of Jesus' righteousness; therefore, we get the rightful blessing of the Firstborn.

Jesus Himself draws a parallel with Jacob's life and His own in connection with another part of Jacob's experience. When Jacob flees from home because he has deceived his brother, he lies on the hard ground to sleep that night. He has nothing but a rock for a pillow. I have had a few pillows like that at hotel rooms. It doesn't make for a very restful night's sleep.

As Jacob tries to sleep, his mind is restless and troubled. But then he has a vivid dream of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven. On this ladder are angels ascending and descending. It's kind of like going to the mall and seeing a long up escalator and a long down escalator, side by side. These angels are going up and down, except it's a very tall escalator. It reaches all the way up to the glory of God and disappears off into heaven somewhere. The vehicle, the conduit, the bridge through which God ministers to earth, is this ladder.

What does that ladder mean? In the New Testament, Jesus tells us. "And He said to him [Nathanael], 'Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man'" (John 1:51). Every Jew knew the story of Jacob. When Christ said angels were "ascending and descending on the Son of Man," He was speaking of Himself. Jesus is the ladder. In fact, you can think of that ladder as the cross, for it is through Calvary that a bridge connects heaven and earth. We have access to heaven because Jesus died for our sins. Through the cross angels come and go, answering our prayers, because we pray in Jesus' name.

Jacob thought that he was separated from God because he deceived his brother and father. He was running away from home and thought he was abandoned and all alone. But through this dream, God told him, "I haven't forsaken you. I'll be with you. And I'm going to give you a little vision. You have a ladder to heaven on which angels are coming and going. They will take care of you and watch over you. You're not going to see this vision again, but don't ever forget that

ladder is there.” Friend, you have a ladder too. Wherever you go, if you’ve committed yourself to the Lord and asked for forgiveness, He wants to bless you like Jacob.

There’s one more thing God told Jacob. He said, “I’m going to bring you back into the Promised Land.” The same night Jacob had the dream about the ladder, God promised to also bring him to his heavenly homeland. He makes the same commitment to you and me. “I’m going to bring you home to the Promised Land.” When you pray in Christ’s name, you have a ladder that goes from heaven to earth. God hears and answers your prayers. He will protect you. The very fact that you’re reading this book is evidence that God has watched over your life.

We have seen Jesus in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Melchizedek, and Jacob. Their experiences make the work of Christ in our lives clearer and brighter. Could there be more stories of patriarchs who reveal the Lord in their experiences? We are about to look at a mind-boggling tale with incredible connections to Jesus!

CHAPTER 3

Joseph: From the Pit to the Palace

During World War II, a young marine lay badly wounded in a military hospital on a South Pacific island. Shrapnel had ripped through his chest, and unless he quickly received a series of blood transfusions, the boy was doomed. Making matters worse, the type of blood he required turned out to be very rare. No donors were immediately available, and hope for saving the marine faded quickly. Then a medic discovered a supply of the rare blood in a recent shipment from the United States. The transfusion was given and the marine lived.

After his recovery, the grateful young man persistently investigated to discover the donor. She turned out to be a Boston woman, and he wrote to tell her the story and thank her for the gift of her life-saving blood. Then he wrote to his father in Kentucky and told him about his miraculous experience. His father recognized the donor's name. She was his long-lost sister and the marine's own aunt! The wounded man had never known his aunt, but her donation of rare blood matched his and saved his life in the faraway Pacific. Through that gift of rare blood, their relationship was discovered. Something in their common DNA brought them together. That's just like the connection between Jesus and our next Bible hero.

Joseph—From Servant to Savior

“He sent a man before them—Joseph—who was sold as a slave” (Psalm 105:17).

The life of Joseph, the son of Jacob, is one of the great and majestic mountain peaks of Scripture, filled with symbols that parallel in numerous ways the life of Christ. When you start reading the book of Genesis, you are carried through the history of Adam and Eve, Enoch and Noah, and all the way down to Abraham and Jacob. But then you'll notice that when you come to Genesis 37, the remaining 13

chapters of the book are completely dedicated to Joseph. (This chapter will make a lot more sense if you first read the account of Joseph.) More is said about Joseph in Genesis than Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob.

Why? I believe because Joseph is one of the premier types of Christ in Scripture. If you look at the story of Joseph and compare it to the experiences of Jesus, you will see dozens of similarities between them. These parallels ought to set us back in awe as we realize how fully God's providence is active in human history.

I should add that there are some who question whether they can take Genesis literally. They're skeptical about Adam and Eve, Noah and the ark, and the Tower of Babel. There are even some who will go so far as to denounce the first 11 chapters of the Bible as pure fable. Yet almost all of them universally believe that Joseph is a real character from history. They find too many accurate references to ancient Egyptian life and customs to think this story is fiction.

Of course, Christians and Jews believe Joseph really did live. Even most cynics believe he was an actual person, so seeing how his life profoundly mirrors the life of Jesus will strengthen your faith in the accuracy of Scripture and convince you that God has a plan for your life as well.

Miracle Births and the Joseph Connection

The birth of Joseph was miraculous. Rachel was barren and prayed for years to have a child. God finally answered her prayer and she had a miracle son (Genesis 30:22). Joseph was her firstborn son. We already begin to see here parallels with the life of Jesus, whose birth was itself miraculous. Not only that, Christ is also Mary's firstborn son.

Do you know what the name Rachel means? It means "ewe." That's a female sheep, a mother sheep that has a baby lamb. Rachel gave birth to a "baby lamb" named Joseph. He became something of a sacrifice that the nation of Israel might be saved. In an even more miraculous way, Mary, the mother of Jesus, gave birth to a Lamb. She gave birth to this Lamb in Bethlehem, and an angel named Him Jesus, because He would save His people (spiritual Israel) from bondage in

sin.

There even appears to be a tie between Joseph and Jesus in the town of Bethlehem. The first time you find “Bethlehem” mentioned in the Bible, it is in reference to the place of Rachel’s death (Genesis 35:19). Jacob’s wife, the mother of Joseph, died in Bethlehem. Mary, the mother of Jesus, gave birth to the Savior of the world in Bethlehem.

Jesus’ life is even bookended by people named Joseph. Neither of the two men was a son of Jacob in the Old Testament, but each has his name. Jesus’ earthly father was Joseph and was there to oversee His birth and help place Him in a manger. When Jesus died, another man named Joseph—of Arimathea—donated his grave to oversee His burial and place Him in the tomb (Matthew 27:57–60). Christ comes in and goes out with a Joseph.

Prophets Both Despised and Honored

It is interesting that both Joseph and Jesus are described in the Bible as pious men who received revelations from God of future glory. While Joseph was a sinner, in the same sense we all are, the Bible records no specific sin in his life. Of course, it records no sin in the life of Jesus (1 Peter 2:22).

Jesus and Joseph began their lifework of saving the world at the same age. When does Joseph go out on the stage of Egypt to save the people from hunger? When he’s 30 (Genesis 41:46). When does Jesus begin His ministry for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness? When He is baptized at 30 years of age (Luke 3:23).

Dreams dramatically change the course of the lives of Joseph and Jesus. Through God’s power, Joseph interprets his own dreams and the dreams of others. Through these dreams many lives were saved. A dream is also given to Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, to save the life of the holy Child by fleeing to Egypt. Jesus and Joseph both went to Egypt in their youth. A few years later, another dream is given to Joseph, the father of Jesus, while they are in Egypt. In the dream he is told, “Now it’s time for you to go back to the Promised Land.” You can read a prophecy describing this move in Hosea 11:1, which says, “And out of Egypt I called My Son.” Joseph, the son of Jacob,

prophecies that someday his children will also leave Egypt.

The brothers of both Joseph and Jesus at first doubted the high calling of their sibling. Speaking of Jesus, the Scriptures say, “For even His brothers did not believe in Him” (John 7:5). Joseph’s brothers also mocked him, “Behold, here comes this dreamer” (Genesis 37:19). Later both sets of brothers had a change of heart and believed in them.

Ultimately, Joseph and Jesus attained great authority and inspired confidence in those around them. What did Potiphar say to those in his household? “I’m giving everything into the hands of Joseph. Do whatever Joseph says.” (See Genesis 39:4.) The same phrasing can be heard from Mary regarding Jesus at the wedding feast: “Whatever He says to you, do it” (John 2:5). Despite resistance from some of their peers, others saw that these two men were blessed and put great faith in them.

Eventually, Joseph became second only to the king of Egypt, standing next to Pharaoh in authority. Jesus stands next to the King of the universe, God the Father, with authority over all things. And speaking of fathers, Joseph’s father loved him more than he loved Joseph’s brothers. Likewise, Jesus is called “the Beloved Son,” the preferred one. So also was Joseph’s father “ancient of days” when Joseph was born. God the heavenly Father is also described by this term (Daniel 7:9). Do you think all these parallels are a mere coincidence? I certainly don’t! Let’s look at some more.

Murderous Plots

Because of envy, Joseph’s brothers conspired to kill him.

“Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. Then they said to one another, ‘Look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, “Some wild beast has devoured him”’” (Genesis 37:18–20).

In the same way, the religious leaders wanted to get rid of Jesus. They were envious of His popularity. Like Joseph’s brothers, they conspired and plotted to kill Christ. The chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, Caiaphas, and made plans to arrest Jesus and to slay Him because they hated Him.

Do you know why Jacob gave Joseph a coat of many colors? It was to designate him as the firstborn and leader of the family. The royal robe basically stated to Jacob's oldest son, "Reuben, you're not going to be the firstborn. You're not getting the inheritance of the firstborn." You see, Reuben slept with his stepmother. Jacob essentially said, "You're now disqualified." Immediately after this story, Joseph received this robe of many colors. It was a sign of royalty. All the brothers realized, "Rachel is the wife our father really wanted. Joseph is the firstborn of Rachel. Dad is giving the inheritance to this young whippersnapper." They were deeply jealous of the inheritance that Jacob was going to give to Joseph. So they said, "Come now therefore, and let us slay him" (Genesis 37:20).

Almost as an echo hurtling around a canyon, this same story is repeated when Jesus tells a parable about the tenants of a vineyard, who said, "Oh look, here comes the son, the firstborn. Let's kill him and the vineyard will be ours." It's certainly no accident that such similar wording is used by Jesus to condemn those who were planning His demise (Matthew 21:33–39). In the end, both Joseph and Jesus are rejected by their brethren because of resentment and jealousy. Others wanted their inheritance, yet God raised Joseph and Jesus up to be the judges of their brothers.

Betrayal and a Bloody Robe

Jesus and Joseph are both betrayed and sold for silver. Joseph was sold out by his 12 brothers for 20 pieces of silver. Jesus was betrayed by one of His own 12 and sold for 30 pieces of silver. Though the prices are different, both reflect the going cost for a slave in their respective times. Inflation apparently changed the rates for slaves over those 1,500 years, and this shouldn't surprise us. Joseph was sold into Egypt, to the Gentiles, through the influence of Judah, his brother. Jesus was sold to the Romans under the influence of Judas, which is the Greek form of Judah. Joseph and Jesus were handed over to the Gentiles because of Judah and Judas.

After Joseph was stripped of his robe, it was covered with blood. The robe was then presented to the father of Joseph to cover up the sin of his brothers (Genesis 37:31–33). What do we present before our heavenly Father to have our sins covered? Didn't Jesus have a

bloodstained robe that was taken from Him? Remember that when He went before Herod, they stripped Him of His robe, put a purple robe on Him, and beat Him (Matthew 27:28). Then soldiers took off the purple robe, put His own clothing back on His bloody back and shoulders, and sent Christ back to Pilate (v. 31). He was then sentenced, and they laid the cross on His back.

The precious robe of Christ was certainly stained with blood. It was not torn, and the soldiers cast lots for it. This robe symbolizes the covering we need when we come before the Father. Just as Joseph's brothers used his robe to try to conceal their sin, we may truly have our sins covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness. What a wonderful picture of the work of Jesus to protect us from our unrighteousness!

Into the Pit

Joseph was as good as dead when his brothers saw him coming to check on them. When he arrived, they grabbed him and threw him into a pit and left him there while determining how he would die. When Jesus was captured and stripped of His robe, He was placed in the pit of death. Though Joseph did not actually physically die, he came out of the pit alive. Jesus obviously died for our sins, but the pit could not hold Him! The risen Lord came out of the tomb alive. Joseph and Jesus were both exalted as great princes. Their sufferings brought them both into places of authority.

It is also interesting that both Joseph and Jesus were persecuted because of false witnesses. The wife of Potiphar bore false witness against Joseph before the members of her household and before her husband. False witnesses also accused Jesus of spiritual adultery before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate. Because of the lies told about them, Joseph went to prison and Jesus went to the grave. Intriguingly, the words "prison" and "the grave" are often interchangeable in the Bible.

Both Joseph and Jesus faced great temptations and came out victorious. Joseph became a model of sexual purity. He didn't fall when he was tempted by Potiphar's wife, but successfully resisted. Did Jesus face a great temptation? Was He also victorious? Absolutely. As Joseph turned away from Potiphar's wife, Christ turned away from

Satan's enticements. And you and I can be victorious too!

Potiphar also likely had doubts about Joseph's guilt, yet he still handed him over to the jailer because he was afraid of the pressure he might get for not doing so. Likewise, Pilate had doubts about Jesus' guilt, but he still condemned Him. Such strange parallels! And think about this—while Christ was hanging on the cross between two condemned men, one thief said, “Lord, remember me.” He was then promised eternal life. The other thief was not. One was saved; one was lost. While Joseph was in jail between two condemned men, he interpreted their dreams. One was reinstated and saved; the other was executed. Amazing!

From Pit to Palace

The stories of Joseph and Jesus are both, in a sense, rags-to-riches stories. Both Jesus and Joseph are exalted—*after* their sufferings. Joseph is brought out of the pit and exalted to Pharaoh's right hand.

“Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.’ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt’” (Genesis 41:39–41).

Not only does the Bible tell us all authority was given to Joseph (Genesis 45:8, 9), but to Christ as well. “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth’” (Matthew 28:18). When Joseph went out from the pharaoh, all knees bowed before him. Even Potiphar and his wife had to kneel before Joseph. Did you ever think about that? That would've been something to capture on your smartphone!

The Bible says that Christ also goes from the pit to the palace. “Go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God’” (John 20:17). Jesus went from the pit of our sinful earth to the palace of heaven! In the New Testament, we are told that one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord—both the willing and the unwilling (Philippians 2:10).

The Bread That Saves

Do you recall the dream of Pharaoh that Joseph interpreted? He explained that there would be a severe famine in the land. But first there was going to be seven years of plenty. In a similar way, the Jewish people would experience seven years of plenty in the time of Jesus. “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week” (Daniel 9:27). Here is a prophecy that foretold a time period from the beginning of Christ’s ministry when he was baptized at 30 years of age—until the Christian faith was rejected by the Jewish council and probation was closed for the Jewish nation with the stoning of Stephen in AD 34.

This seven-year period was followed by a great persecution of Christians and was followed by a great famine in the Roman Empire. “Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar” (Acts 11:28).

Because God revealed to Joseph the meaning of Pharaoh’s dream, he was able to prepare for the famine and give the people around him bread. It saved Egypt and the surrounding nations from starvation. Jesus describes Himself as life-saving bread: “I am the bread that came down from heaven” (John 6:33). He miraculously fed the multitudes and saved them from hunger—from both physical and spiritual starvation. Even the free gift of salvation represented by the bread is seen in the story of Joseph and his brothers, who tried to pay for the grain given to them. Joseph kept putting the money back into their sacks. Why did he do that? Because the grain represents the Bread of God, Jesus, and you can’t pay for it. It’s a gift.

Cups of Testing

A cup of testing appears prominently in the stories of both Joseph and Jesus. James and John go to Jesus and say, “Let us sit on Your right hand and Your left hand in Your kingdom.” Jesus told them, “You don’t know what you’re asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I’m going to drink, and be baptized with my baptism?” They said, “Oh yes, Lord, we’re able” (Matthew 20:22). Of course, as Jesus said, they didn’t know what they were saying.

When Christ ate the Last Supper with the disciples, He again speaks of a cup when He says, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20). The grape juice represented His own blood, which He was about to give for our salvation. Later, when Christ was in the garden of Gethsemane, He once more spoke of a cup. “Oh My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me” (Matthew 26:39).

Joseph tested his brothers with a silver cup. He wanted to find out whether they were still selfish and jealous or if they really loved each other. And so, as they took food supplies from Egypt for their families, they were tested with Joseph’s silver cup that was hidden in one of the sacks of grain (Genesis 44:2). Both cups reveal the trueness of the heart.

Forgiving Hearts

Joseph eventually reveals himself to his brothers, who had treacherously sold him. He does this at a private dinner alone with them. Jesus also reveals the new covenant with the 12 disciples at a private dinner. Joseph could have spent those years of bondage in bitterness and conniving. As soon as he came into power, he could have sent an army into Canaan and killed his brothers. But instead he freely forgave them. Does Christ forgive those who are responsible for His crucifixion? Christ said while hanging on the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34). By the way, this message is for you and me. *We* are indirectly responsible for His crucifixion, yet Jesus forgives us.

Not only did Joseph pardon his brothers, but he fed them and said, “Look, I want you to come into this land right now because the famine is not over. I’ll continue to sustain you during this food shortage.” (See Genesis 45:9–15.) There’s a famine for the Word of God in this world (Amos 8:11). Christ speaks of being the bread that comes down from heaven (John 6:33). Like Joseph’s brothers, Jesus not only forgives us, but we may safely abide with Him without fear of retaliation.

Joseph brought his family to Egypt to preserve them; he gave them of the best of the land. Christ also offers us the best of the land. Though we are pilgrims now, we will someday inherit the New Earth.

Even now we are promised a heavenly home even though we do not yet possess it. We may live as if it is ours already.

Do you recall how after Jesus' resurrection, Mary Magdalene announced to the disciples that He was alive and they didn't believe it? They thought it was too good to be true. They wanted proof. In Joseph's story, Jacob is told by his sons who return from Egypt, "Your son is still alive." Joseph had been gone for more than 20 years. The Bible tells us that Jacob's first reaction was, "I can't believe it." It was too good to be true. But as the evidence arrived, he said, "I do believe it." It was a virtual resurrection. When he saw Joseph, he said, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive" (Genesis 46:30). It reminds me of the way Simeon the priest—another ancient of days—saw Jesus as a baby. He said, "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised" (Luke 2:29 NLT).

Joyful Reunions

In the same way that Christ was separated from the Father while He was down here on earth, Joseph was separated from his father. In fact, when Jesus was praying in the garden of Gethsemane, the most dreadful thought pressing on His soul was that the sins of the world, which He agreed to bear, would eternally separate Him from His Father. There was a great reunion in heaven when Jesus arose victorious and ascended to His Father, surrounded by a myriad of singing angels. Likewise, there was a great and tender reunion when Joseph and Jacob reunited.

I don't know about you, but whenever I read the story of Joseph and come to the part where father and son are finally reunited, it deeply moves me. You can see Joseph stepping out of his golden chariot and Jacob practically falling off his old mule. They hasten to each other—the old patriarch hobbling with his cane (remember his hip problem from wrestling with an angel?) and Joseph still in his prime. They hug each other and spend a long time sobbing on one another's shoulders. Jacob thought that Joseph was dead, but he found out he was alive.

How do you think the Father felt when Jesus was on the cross? And how do you think heaven rejoiced when Christ ascended? That's why Jesus said, "Mary, don't cling to Me. I've not yet ascended to My

Father. I've got to go see my Father. He misses me. I've been here on this earth more than 33 years." (See John 20:17.) For decades, both Jesus and Joseph were separated from their fathers. There were joyful reunions when they were reunited.

Carried to the Promised Land

Near the end of Joseph's life, he instructed his brethren, "Don't bury me in Egypt. Bury me back in the Promised Land." After Joseph's death, his family embalmed and protected his bones, later transporting them from Egypt to the Promised Land (Genesis 50:24–26). It is interesting that when Christ died, none of His bones were broken. His disciples also took care of His body, just as the family of Israel cared for Joseph's remains. And when Jesus rose from the dead, He went to the heavenly Canaan.

As Joseph lay dying as leader in Egypt, his boys, Ephraim and Manasseh, had passports stating "Egypt" as their place of birth. His sons could have said to Joseph, "Look, we realize we've got some relatives that are from the Promised Land—those shepherds—and, frankly, it's all kind of hokey. So we're going to stay here with our wealthy families in Egypt. We speak the language. We've got all our friends here. The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh are going to stay here in Egypt."

But Joseph said, "No, boys, you don't belong here. Don't get comfortable in this foreign land. You're going to go back to the Promised Land. I want you to stay with your people. I don't want you to hang out with the Egyptians anymore." You can almost hear the voice of Christ telling His people, "Don't get too comfortable in the world. Don't become part of the world. You're going to the Promised Land. This world is not your home." (See Hebrews 11:16.) The same message of Jesus to the church is the message of Joseph to his posterity.

Surrounded by Witnesses

There are so many parallels between Joseph and Jesus. Both had miraculous births, both were shepherds, both were sent by their

fathers to search for their missing brethren, both were taken to Egypt, both were falsely accused, both began their public ministry at the age of 30, both freely forgave the terrible abuse by their family, both were sold for the price of a slave, both rose to power ... I could list so many more similarities.

I am amazed at the correlations. To me it is divine evidence for God's sovereignty. It strengthens my faith in the Bible. It reminds me that God is in charge of everything. If He can control history this way, He can lead my life.

When we see how God ordered the events of a life to tell a story that would bless future generations, I am convicted of the inspiration of this Book. Joseph understood that the trials and triumphs of his life were being orchestrated by a divine Hand. "But God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Genesis 50:20). Hebrews really captures this idea when it says,

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1, 2).

God is telling us that when we see all this compelling evidence for Jesus in the Bible, it should motivate us to press forward. The Lord can see all of history. All the stories, all the records, all the history in Scripture is really "His" story. Everywhere it tells us about Jesus.

As you read the story of Joseph, you are really reading about Jesus. Or when you look at the life of Noah, you're looking at Someone more than Noah. So also with Abraham, Enoch, and Melchizedek. You're actually reading about the Anointed in these heroes of the Bible. And when you behold them, you will be changed.

Some people say, "I'm only going to read the New Testament because I just want to read about Jesus." When I read the Old Testament, I *am* reading about Jesus. We need to hear more about Jesus and to recognize Him in these stories. When we look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, the One who can be found from Genesis to Revelation, our lives will be transformed. Let's keep searching the Scriptures to find more and more of Christ. We will find Him, even in the life of Moses, our next Bible character.

CHAPTER 4

Moses: The Great Lawgiver

One place God has clearly spoken beforehand about Christ is in Bible characters who reflect Jesus. They help us recognize the divinity of the Messiah—that He was who He claimed to be. The New Testament shows us that the Old Testament is a mirror of Christ. In John 5:39, Jesus says, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.” Only the Old Testament existed when Jesus made this statement. So when Christ said, “Search the *Scriptures*,” He was talking about the Old Testament. The Bible that existed before Christ was born, the Old Testament, tells us about Him too.

After Christ rose from the dead, He told the disciples, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:25–27). How much of the Scriptures? *All* the Scriptures. About who? Himself.

In verse 44 of the same chapter, Jesus says, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” Whenever I read the Old Testament—whether the Law, the prophets, the Psalms—I’m looking for Jesus. He said He’s in there.

Paul convinced the Jews in Rome of the truth about Christ using the Old Testament.

“So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening” (Acts 28:23).

Quoting Psalm 40:7 as referring to Jesus, Paul said, “In the volume

of the book it is written of Me—"To do Your will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). Using only the Old Testament writings, Paul was able to persuade many of the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.

You are saved by knowing Jesus. The better you are acquainted with Him, the more you will love Him. And if your awareness of Christ is limited, then gain a deeper experience of Jesus through the exposure others have had to the Lord.

Let me give you an imperfect but helpful illustration. I wish I'd had a better relationship with my father. Of course, I'm not the only one who has felt this way. Dad was always so work-oriented. It seemed I never saw him. He came home at the end of the day tired, sometimes frustrated, and then he'd drink himself to sleep. I'm sure there were other experiences we had, but most of my exposure to Dad consisted of that narrow perspective.

Since he died, I sometimes meet people who worked with him; they come up to me and say, "Hey, Doug, I used to work with your dad," or, "I used to fly with your dad." When they tell me things about my dad, I'm on the edge of my seat because they're telling me things I never knew about him. Sometimes they say, "Oh, he was such a great guy." I'm always happy to hear that. My dad had a hobby of racing Daytona cars. Someone told me, "When he raced, he was so aggressive; he was fearless." I didn't know that. Even though Dad has been gone a number of years, I've come to know him better through the people who knew him.

While you and I learn about Moses in this chapter, we'll get to know Jesus better through his life because he reflected His life that was to come.

Moses and the Mystery Prophet

One of the most influential characters in the Old Testament is Moses. Not only did God miraculously raise up this Hebrew to become a powerful leader to guide the Israelites out of Egypt, but Moses helped to establish the nation and prepare them to enter the Promised Land. In the life and teachings of Moses, we find some incredible parallels with the life of Christ.

Shortly before Moses died, he gave an amazing prophecy. He told

the people, “My time is almost up, but someone else is coming and He’s going to set you straight.” Here’s the passage:

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear” (Deuteronomy 18:15). “A Prophet”—it doesn’t name him—will come from among them. Not only does this passage give a command (“Him you shall hear”), but it was given as a fact, a statement of history.

Moses’ prophecy is quoted many times in the New Testament. Though the Jews didn’t know the name of this Prophet, everyone wondered, “When will that Prophet like Moses come?”

For instance, the Jews came to John the Baptist asking who he was. “They asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ And he answered, ‘No’” (John 1:21). Obviously, they were referring to this mysterious, great Prophet like Moses who was to come.

Jesus said, “Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me” (John 5:45, 46). Christ is saying, “Look, you know the Prophet whom Moses talked about? That’s me. So if you don’t believe Moses’ writings, how will you believe My words?”

Furthermore, the essence of the Law is Jesus. He’s the very embodiment of the Law and writings of Moses. As you do a little digging, you find out that the New Testament writers recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of this type. John wrote, “Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world’” (John 6:14). Pointing to Christ, they were saying, “He’s the Prophet whom Moses spoke about.”

In Acts, Peter quotes from Deuteronomy: “For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.’ ... Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days” (Acts 3:22, 24). This confirms that not only Moses but all the prophets foretold the days when “the great Prophet” would appear. Again, Peter is reiterating that the Old Testament writers were all talking about Jesus.

Another New Testament writer illustrates that Moses is a very powerful type. He even says that we're baptized in Moses. Now, what would you think if during a baptism I held up my hand and said, "I baptize you in the name of Moses"? That would get your attention. But this is, in a sense, what Paul is saying. In 1 Corinthians 10:1–4, he tells us, "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

Paul, pointing to the Exodus experience, said that when the children of Israel went through the Red Sea, it was a type of baptism. When the pillar of fire was there, it was a type of baptism in the Spirit. When Moses struck the rock and water came out for the children of Israel, the rock represented Christ. Indeed, Christ is the Rock that was struck so that you and I might drink the Living Water.

In fact, Paul says that we can't fully understand the Old Testament without recognizing that Jesus is the symbolic center of it all. It's like doing embroidery while wearing dark sunglasses. "But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2 Corinthians 3:14–16). Once we realize that the entire Bible is about Jesus, the obstructions will fall from our eyes and we will behold wonderful things in His Word.

Rescued at Birth

Let's briefly explore the life of Moses and discover how, in many ways, he is a type of Christ. The parallels between Jesus and Moses begin at their births. It's interesting that both Jesus and Moses survived genocide as babies. Soon after Moses was born, there was a government mandate to kill all of the Hebrew baby boys. "So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, 'Every son who is born you shall cast into the river'" (Exodus 1:22). So also Herod ordered a similar extermination. Matthew 2:16 tells us, "Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent

forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under.”

It's also intriguing that both Moses and Jesus were born of slaves but never actually served as slaves. What I mean is that although Moses was born of slave parents, Moses himself never made bricks or served as a slave. Christ was born to slaves in the sense that He was born into a family of humans who had sinned. Jesus said, “Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34). All have sinned, so even Jesus' parents were slaves to sin, yet Christ never sinned.

Both Moses and Jesus were rescued through Egyptian circumstances. Jesus fled to Egypt as a child to be preserved from a threat. In Exodus you read that the mother of Moses put him in a basket on the river, and he was found and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. “And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, ‘Because I drew him out of the water’” (Exodus 2:10). “Drawn from the water” is what the name “Moses” means. He was raised up from his people. What does water represent in prophecy? It represents multitudes of peoples, languages, and tongues (Revelation 17:15). In this sense, Christ was also drawn from the water. He came from the midst of civilization, of Rome, among all the peoples to save the people.

Forsaking Glory

The Bible says of Jesus that He is “gentle and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:29). The King James uses the word “meek” for “gentle.” The Bible also says that Moses was the meekest man in all the world (Numbers 12:3). The way they lived their lives and the choices they made proved this was true. Both Moses and Jesus refused worldly wealth. Each had opportunity for great glory but turned their backs on it to save God's people.

“By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward” (Hebrews 11:24–26).

Moses and Jesus both turned away from their palaces. Jesus left the

celestial palaces of incomprehensible glory and came to this dark world. Jesus said, “I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father” (John 16:28). Christ left His home in heaven, turned His back on all, so that He might rescue us. Even when the devil offered Him all the kingdoms of the world, Christ turned away (Matthew 4:8–10). Why? Because He wanted to save God’s people, just like Moses was willing to lose his own salvation if God would save the Hebrews. Christ “made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:7, 8).

Women at the Wells

There are two fascinating parallels recorded in Scripture about Moses and Jesus sitting down by a well when they were thirsty; each met a woman at the well. For Moses, it started after he killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave. “When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well” (Exodus 2:15). There Moses met the seven daughters of Jethro. He helped defend them from hostile shepherds who were harassing them. He chased them from the well. When the sisters got home, they told their father about the kind Egyptian stranger who assisted them. Their father said, “Well, where is the man? He saved you and you didn’t even bring him home?” So they went back to get him. Moses ended up staying with Jethro and eventually married Zipporah, one of the seven sisters.

Jesus, in His travels, came to rest at a watering spot. “Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well” (John 4:6). There He met a Samaritan woman who’d had five husbands. She was living with one to whom she was not legally married, so that made six. Jesus—the seventh man—ended up being the only one who gave her soul satisfaction. She had been looking for happiness in all the wrong men, but she finally found the Messiah in the seventh man. The Samaritan woman’s reception of truth represents Christ’s proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile church. She left her water pot at the well, ran back to town (in a

similar way that Jethro's daughters ran back to tell about Moses), and told everyone she could about meeting the Messiah. She brought out the whole village to meet Jesus, and many believed.

Lawgivers and Judges

Moses and Jesus were great lawgivers. Moses, of course, went up on a mountain to receive the law of God which he then spoke to all of Israel. Moses even instructed the people to write all the commandments on whitewashed stones and then speak the blessings and curses from Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. Jesus also went up on a mountain (Matthew 5:1) and repeated the law. In fact, the beginning of Jesus' teaching was to state blessings (vv. 3–12). Then Jesus went over many of the Ten Commandments and gave even greater meaning to them.

Both Moses and Jesus were also judges. "So it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening" (Exodus 18:13). Moses was a great and righteous judge. Then you read in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body." Do you see how Moses is a type of Christ, who is the great judge of God's people?

Bread from Heaven

Shortly after Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, they ran out of food. After a spell of their complaining, God provided a supernatural manna to nourish them. This bread was like nothing ever found on earth.

It can be hard to find good healthy bread these days. Much of what is sold as bread today should really be labeled as "cake." When whole wheat is milled into white flour, 83 percent of the nutrients are removed, with mostly starch remaining. The fiber is gone, along with most of the Vitamin E and 21 other nutrients. The flour that is produced is so leached as a food that it must be refortified with synthetically manufactured thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin, as well as iron. Thirty-five U.S. states actually require that white flour must be thus enriched to be sold. By the time all the sugar and artificial

vitamins are added, the hyper-processed bread bears little resemblance to the bread of Bible times.

Remember what the Bible says about bread? “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance” (Isaiah 55:2). Moses prayed to God, and the Lord provided bread from heaven, something nourishing to them physically. But it was given to teach them of their need for God. Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). That’s actually a direct quote from Deuteronomy, when Moses was teaching them that manna had a spiritual application!

Christ comments on this miracle of manna directly: “Most assuredly, ... Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6:32, 33). The people responded, “Lord, give us this bread always” (v. 34). Of course, they were thinking about the wrong kind of bread. “Oh yeah, we want that miracle bread like what Moses provided. We don’t want to have to go to the market to buy anymore. Can you rain bread from heaven?”

This is similar to the woman at the well, who said, “Oh, I want that living water. I don’t want to have to come back to this well.” (See John 4:15.) Jesus, of course, was speaking in spiritual terms. He said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). Christ is that Living Water. He is also that Bread of Life. In Moses’ day, the manna evaporated if it wasn’t eaten. They needed it fresh every day. You and I also need Christ fresh in our lives every day. This is why the Lord’s prayer says, “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). And so Moses, in a sense, gave the Israelites bread, but Jesus is that true Bread that came down from heaven.

Conquering Serpents

“The serpent you shall trample underfoot” (Psalm 91:13).

Did you realize that both Moses and Jesus defeated a snake pit of

serpents? You probably remember the story found in the book of Numbers where the children of Israel complained about the manna. Because of their ingratitude, the Lord allowed an infestation of fiery, venomous serpents to enter among the people and bite them. (We're not sure if they were called "fiery serpents" because they had bright coloring or because of a fiery sting that went along with their bite. The latter is likely.)

When the snakes attacked, Moses prayed and interceded for the people. "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.' So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived" (Numbers 21:8, 9). Moses acted quickly. He made the bronze serpent, raised it up, and commanded the people to look at it and be healed. Those who did as they were commanded and looked in faith were cured.

By the way, what did the serpent on a pole mean to a nation of shepherds? It's not uncommon in the Middle East to see a shepherd carrying a stick or staff. One of the most common uses for that stick is to hit snakes. It reminds me how, some time ago, I opened up an airplane hangar door at a remote location and discovered a rattlesnake. I got a broomstick and walloped the coiled-up snake in order to neutralize it; I then picked it up with the broomstick, carried it off, and threw it out where nobody could step on it.

Likewise, to protect their sheep, shepherds frequently would kill snakes, pick them up with their staffs, and carry them off. So it was a very vivid sign seeing a shepherd carrying a dead snake on a stick. It meant a *defeated* serpent, a serpent that's not going to bite anymore. And that's why Jesus said in John 3:14, 15, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

Christ draws a parallel between Moses and Himself. Moses was the serpent killer, and Christ is the serpent-dragon killer. The devil is called both a serpent and a dragon (Revelation 12:9). When Christ was lifted up on the cross, He defeated the serpent's most powerful sting—death. We also see Christ crushing the head of the serpent in the prophecy of Genesis 3:15. And finally, Moses was once commanded by God to take up a serpent by the tail (Exodus 4:4).

Jesus told His followers they would take up serpents (Mark 16:18), meaning they would do battle with the devil and not be harmed. “I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Luke 10:19).

Glory on the Mount

Both Moses and Jesus had glorious mountaintop experiences. In Matthew we read that when Christ went up a mountain, He was transfigured before the three disciples. The glory of God was there. “His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light” (Matthew 17:2).

Moses also went up a mountain to talk with God. When he came down, his face shone with the glory of God. “So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him” (Exodus 34:30). Moses had to veil his face so that he could communicate with the people and they wouldn’t need to squint. The similarity is amazing. Christ is God, the glory of the Holy One covered by humanity. In the book *The Desire of Ages*, the writer notes, “Christ veiled His divinity with humanity” (p. 23). In a similar way, Moses veiled this glory after he talked with God.

You also find in the Bible that God spoke audibly to Jesus. It’s recorded that Jesus heard the voice of God at His baptism. You can also find God speaking to Jesus on the mount of transfiguration (Mark 9). The disciples perceived it as well. God spoke to Moses in a clear tone on the mountain and even spoke to him out loud in the presence of the people in the valley. Now, how many other people in the Bible did God audibly speak to where others could hear? Not many. It’s further evidence that Moses is a unique representation of Christ.

And don’t forget, when Jesus was on the mount of transfiguration and God spoke to Him, Moses *literally* stood beside Jesus at that moment. Could this have been done to help us make a connection that Moses was a type of Christ? Maybe it was also Moses’ endorsement that Jesus was “the Great Prophet” whom he had foretold would come.

When the glory faded and Jesus and the disciples went back down the mountain, the first thing they ran into was a boy who was so demon possessed that the disciples could not cast out the devils. It was a stark contrast—from the glory of God on the mountain to dealing with devils in the valley. Moses left the glory of God and came down to find the devil in the valley during the golden calf debacle (Exodus 32). This is yet another remarkable parallel in their lives.

Nearly Stoned by Their Own

On several occasions, the children of Israel were ready to execute Moses and choose another leader. “So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, ‘What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!’” (Exodus 17:4). On another occasion, when people spoke of Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb, it says, “And all the congregation said to stone them with stones” (Numbers 14:10).

In the New Testament we read of Jesus, “Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by” (John 8:59). And again: “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him” (John 10:31).

So both Moses and Jesus were the targets of multiple assassination attempts by their own people. Two times the people wanted to stone their saviors. I wonder sometimes if we’re the same way. Sometimes we get tired of God, and we’re not only ready to walk away, we’re ready to do Him in.

Numbers in Common

Bible numbers are interesting to study. In the western world, we tend to “count” numbers, but in the eastern mind, people “weighed” numbers because they had a deeper significance. Let’s look at some numbers that Moses and Jesus had in common. First, how many men did Jesus lead? “When it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles” (Luke 6:13). Of course, these are the ones He led for three-and-a-half years, and it was from these that the church was populated.

Moses also led 12. “These are the ones who were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered, with the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each one representing his father’s house” (Numbers 1:44). There were 12 princes of Israel, from the 12 tribes that Moses led through the wilderness.

There is also a correlation between Moses and Jesus and the number 70. “Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel” (Exodus 24:9). Moses had a larger circle of leaders with whom he worked, the elders of Israel. How does this relate to Jesus? “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face” (Luke 10:1). Jesus had a second tier group of 70 leaders as well.

Moses also fasted for 40 days and 40 nights on a mountain. “So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water” (Exodus 34:28). Didn’t Jesus also fast for 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness? “When He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry” (Matthew 4:2).

Sharing the Spirit

I also think it’s significant that both Moses and Jesus gave of their spirit to others who would be leaders. The Lord told Moses, “Look, you can’t judge these people by yourself. You need to delegate and train. You need to empower others and disciple them so that they can help lead the people as well.” God said to Moses, “Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone” (Numbers 11:17).

We find a giving of the Spirit to others with Jesus as well. “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me” (John 15:26). Christ assured His disciples He would send them His Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, when the disciples all gathered together in one place and in one accord, He sent the Spirit (Acts 2).

Is Christ also with us now? Physically He’s at the right hand of the Father. But through His Spirit, He’s with each one of us. So in the

same way that God took of the spirit of Moses and put it on the 70 elders, He also took of the Spirit of Christ and put it on the disciples. And He still does that today.

Emancipators and Temple Builders

Both Moses and Jesus delivered God's people from slavery. When Christ began His ministry, He stood up in the synagogue and said, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives" (Luke 4:18). Through His ministry, Jesus released us from the slavery to sin. Moses led the people out of captivity in Egypt to the Promised Land. Isn't Jesus our Moses, who leads us from the captivity of serving the devil—like Pharaoh—out of slavery and into the Promised Land? Christ was a great Savior, as was Moses, whose work pointed to Jesus.

Did both build a temple? Yes, they did. God told Moses on the mountain, "According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it" (Exodus 25:9). Moses built that first tabernacle, the first sanctuary, on the way to the Promised Land. What about Jesus? Was He a temple builder? Christ says in John 2:19, "Destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up." As a matter of fact, at the trial of Christ, they only found two witnesses who would agree with each other. And do you know what they said? "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands'" (Mark 14:58). He was speaking of His own body, the church. Jesus identifies the entire temple and all its rituals with Himself and His ministry. More on this in a separate chapter.

Resurrected Ones

Both Jesus and Moses were resurrected. Concerning Christ, the Bible confirms, "He was buried, and ... rose again the third day" (1 Corinthians 15:4). Everybody knows Jesus died, was resurrected, and is now in heaven. Listen to what the Scriptures say of Moses: "Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation,

but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” (Jude 1:9).

This is a cryptic statement over which scholars have labored. Jude is evidently quoting from a mysterious book from Jewish history that no longer exists. It was called *The Assumption of Moses*. Origen, one of the early church fathers, quotes from this book. The tradition, noted in this book that Origen refers to, is that the third day after Moses died, before he would decompose, God sent Michael the Archangel to raise him. There is a dialogue between Michael and the devil, who says, “No, you can’t have him because he sinned at the end.” But Michael says, “The Lord rebuke you!” And Moses is resurrected. That’s not specifically detailed in the Bible we have, but Jude refers to it as though the listeners would know what he’s talking about. That’s very significant.

I poured over the scholars’ writings on this text and learned a lot of interesting things. I think the most reasonable explanation is that after Moses died, God didn’t want the people of Israel making a shrine to worship him. That’s also the last thing Moses wanted, and it’s the last thing the Lord wanted. So God took him up to heaven. There might be other reasons as well. The heartache of Moses’ life was that, because of his final sin, he was not allowed to lead his people into the Promised Land. He was only able to view the land from a distance, but God went one better than that. He took Moses up to heaven, and he was able to watch from the front row the children of Israel crossing over into Canaan.

You might be thinking, “How can you be sure Moses was resurrected?” As referenced earlier, in Mark 9:4, you will see that Christ is transfigured on the mountaintop. Jesus was standing with two beings. He’s not talking to some disembodied spirits; He’s talking to Moses and Elijah. Michael the Archangel did not go to the grave of Moses so that he could collect a corpse and put it in some heavenly morgue. Whenever God comes for a body in the Bible, it’s a resurrection. So both Christ and Moses have this in common: They were both resurrected from the dead.

Sacrificial Lives

The final and most important parallel to me is that both Moses and Jesus were willing to lay down their lives so their people might be

saved. They were also mediators and intercessors for God's people. When the children of Israel rebelliously sinned with the golden calf, God basically said, "Stand aside, Moses! I'm going to roll up My sleeves and wipe them out. I'll make a great nation of you" (Exodus 32). Now that would be pretty flattering, but Moses didn't even think twice. He said, "I don't want you to make a nation out of me, Lord." Moses loved the people like a shepherd loves his sheep. He says, "Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written" (Exodus 32:32). What book is he talking about? It's the Book of Life. Moses was willing to lay his life down, even forfeit his eternal salvation, that God's people might be spared.

Here we have a very strong type of the sacrificial nature of Jesus. Read the great prayer of Christ in John 17, where He intercedes for His disciples. In Matthew 20:28, He says, "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Let's Recap ...

I want to give you a quick review of what we've learned in this chapter—and also a few more nuggets that you can look into on your own.

Jesus and Moses were both born as Hebrews. They were not priests by birth, but served as priests. Isn't Christ our Melchizedek? Didn't Moses end up serving as a priest and an intercessor? Both were chosen by God to lead people out of slavery. They communicated directly with God. Both Moses and Jesus were disliked by the establishment and were threatened with stoning by their own people. Both were lawgivers. They had brothers and sisters who misunderstood their mission. Both chose 12 leaders to govern, with a second layer of leadership made up of 70 people. They led their people to the Promised Land. Both men chose special people to carry on their work. They taught others how to pray. They chose a life of hardship. Moses is the dominant person in the Torah, or the Book of the Law. Christ is the dominant person in the Gospels. Followers strayed from their teachings in both the New and the Old Testaments. They brought revival. They provided their people with vision and identity. Both

worked miracles and empowered others to do the same.

Such incredible parallels strengthen my faith and help me to see Jesus in the life of this greatest of the Old Testament prophets.

CHAPTER 5

Joshua: The Faithful General

“But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).

After World War I, leaders in Washington, D.C., became concerned about the state of the nation’s roads. The automobile was still a relatively new invention, so most transcontinental travel depended on a few train tracks spanning the country. The U.S. War Department wanted to know if the nation’s roads could handle coast-to-coast ground movements of army units. As a test on July 7, 1919, the Transcontinental Motor Convoy—some 80 military vehicles and 280 soldiers—made an epic road trip from Washington, D.C., to California.

Like the cavalry of old, army scouts would ride in advance of the convoy to check out the conditions that lie just ahead, except they were mounted on Harley-Davidsons instead of horses. The convoy traveled over dirt roads, rutted paths, winding mountain trails, and shifting desert sands roughly along the route of present-day Interstate 80. Many areas were nearly impassable, and the men often had to push or pull the heavy trucks along through the summer heat. The vehicles frequently broke down; got stuck in dust, quicksand, and mud; and sank when roads and bridges collapsed under them. Despite these many hardships, 62 days after it left Washington, D.C., the convoy reached San Francisco with great fanfare. It had covered 3,251 miles, averaging 58 miles a day at an average speed of six miles an hour. The official report of the War Department concluded that the existing roads in the United States were “absolutely incapable of meeting the present-day traffic requirements.” One of the army officers leading the convoy was 28-year-old Lt. Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower, who later said the roads they encountered “varied from average to non-existent.”

Eisenhower never forgot this grueling experience and, 36 years later, one of the most important things he did after becoming

president was to create the U.S. Interstate Highway System. Began in 1956, the entire interstate system now has a total length of 46,837 miles of road, making it both the largest highway system in the world and the largest public works project in history.

Isaiah 40:3 talks about, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’” Did you know the Bible talks about a young soldier who scouted the Promised Land? Then 39 years later he became Israel’s general, leading God’s people into the land he had surveyed during his youth.

Joshua

Joshua is one of only two adults over 20 years of age who made it all the way from Egypt to the land of Canaan. Caleb was the other. When sent from the wilderness by Moses to first spy out the Promised Land, he and Caleb brought back an encouraging report of faith and hope, while the other 10 spies brought discouragement and fear. A capable military, political, and spiritual leader, Joshua is one of the most unrecognized heroes of the Old Testament, and yes, he was a type of Christ in several ways.

For one thing, Jesus and Joshua have the same name! That’s right: The Hebrew way to say Jesus is *Joshua* and, likewise, the Greek way to say Joshua is *Jesus*. Joshua’s name means “Yahweh has delivered” or “God saved.” This is why the angel said to Joseph, “You shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

There are two primary Joshua’s in the Old Testament. One was the famous general who followed Moses and led the people of God into the Promised Land. The other was a high priest who helped lead the people of God, who were captive in Babylon, back to the Promised Land. Of course, Jesus is the Captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10) as well as our High Priest (Hebrews 8:1). So both of these Joshua’s can be compared to Christ. For our purposes, however, this chapter looks at the first one.

Servant-Leader

Joshua first appears as Moses' apprentice. Like Jesus, Joshua had a servant's heart. Notice these examples: "Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth ..." (Numbers 11:28 NASB). "So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God" (Exodus 24:13). In the same way, Jesus was a servant. "Yet I am among you as the One who serves" (Luke 22:27). Even after he became the supreme leader of Israel, Joshua still saw himself as God's servant. "Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, 'What does my Lord say to His servant?'" (Joshua 5:14). The Old Testament prophecies identify the Messiah as the coming "Servant." "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42:1).

When Joshua began his public work as Israel's leader, He was anointed with the Spirit (Deuteronomy 34:9). Not only was Jesus anointed at His baptism (Matthew 3:16), the very name "Christ" is the Greek word for "anointed."

An interesting Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah promised that the Christ would never be discouraged. "He will not fail nor be discouraged ..." (Isaiah 42:4). It is intriguing that there is no record of Joshua ever being discouraged (Joshua 1:9). You can understand this better when reviewing the pep talk God gave him when he was given leadership:

"Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go" (Joshua 1:6, 7).

Like Jesus, Joshua obeyed the law of God. There is no record in Scripture of Joshua ever knowingly disobeying Moses or God. The Bible tells us that Jesus was without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

Shortly after entering the Promised Land, Joshua renews the covenant of circumcision and has the people celebrate the first Passover in Canaan (Joshua 5:10). As Jesus led the disciples into the new covenant, He also celebrated a Passover with them, which typified the circumcision of the heart. "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the

LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live” (Deuteronomy 30:6).

Joshua led all the people through the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Jesus also went through the Jordan when He was baptized and began His ministry, and He encouraged all of His disciples to follow His example. Jesus then picked 12 men for a special work. Joshua also picked 12 men to build a memorial to God. “Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe ...” (Joshua 4:4).

Joshua, Rahab, and Jericho

“Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?” (James 2:25).

After crossing the Jordan and before Joshua attacked Jericho to recapture the land of Canaan, he sent out two spies to gather intelligence on the doomed city. While scouting the city, the men were recognized. Before they could be arrested, however, a harlot in Jericho named Rahab came to their rescue and hid them on the roof of her house, which happened to have been built on the famous walls of the doomed city.

In exchange for risking her life to hide them and help them escape, the spies agreed to make a covenant to show her mercy when Joshua returned to conquer the city. As a token of this promise, she was told to hang a scarlet cord in her window to assure that everyone in her house would be spared on the coming day of judgment.

That scarlet cord is a symbol of the blood of Christ. Just as the children of Israel marked their doors with the blood of a lamb during the Passover in order to be spared from the coming judgment, so must the blood of Jesus be on the door of our hearts.

Later on, Joshua came with the army blowing seven trumpets. They encompassed the city for seven days and, with a final loud blast and a mighty shout, the walls of Jericho fell flat. Strangely, the only section of city wall that was left standing was the section surrounding Rahab’s house—the one with a red rope hanging from the window.

Who can miss this powerful analogy?! After the seven trumpets of

Revelation blast and after the shout of the Archangel, Jesus—our Joshua—will come and the cities of the world will crumble before Him. “And all its cities were broken down at the presence of the LORD, by His fierce anger” (Jeremiah 4:26). There will soon be a day of judgment.

As with the angel of death in the Passover story, only the homes with the token of scarlet blood were spared. Not only were Rahab and all in her house saved, but she was adopted into Israel, married Salmon, and became an ancestor of Jesus! (Matthew 1:4–6).

The two spies who visited Rahab provide a spiritual lesson for us as well. When we receive the two messengers sent from Jesus, we will be safe. Have you ever noticed how God’s Word is often called by two names—the law and the prophets? It’s also called a two-edged sword in Hebrews 4:12, and it is represented by the two witnesses in Revelation 11. The words of the New and Old Testaments are like the two visitors who came to Rahab and saved her life. God’s Word will save our lives as well. “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Psalm 119:11).

We are saved from the coming destruction because we are under the blood of the Lamb. Because we believe, we are adopted into Christ’s family and do not perish. “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Hebrews 11:31 KJV). How can you prepare for Jesus’ coming? Have you received the Word and believed His promise? “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).

Covenant with the Gibeonites

The story of the Gibeonites is another interesting and beautiful analogy of salvation seen in the life of Joshua.

Israel had been strictly commanded by Moses to make no covenant with the inhabitants of Canaan (Deuteronomy 7:2). God knew that if they began to negotiate with the enemy, they would intermarry, adopt their religion, and never fully repossess the land of Abraham. The people of Gibeon knew God was with Joshua and Israel. They saw the

Jordan River miraculously part and the walls of Jericho implode. They realized their city was in the direct path of Joshua's army. Their only hope was to somehow extract a peace treaty by pretending to be from another obscure nation in a far country. The Gibeonites also knew that the law of Israel would not allow them to break their covenant. So they developed a clever strategy.

“But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, ‘We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us’” (Joshua 9:3–6).

When these strange foreign ambassadors showed up, the people of Israel saw their skinny donkeys and camels, their ragged and dusty clothes, and their moldy bread and tattered wineskins—they looked just plain pitiful! The Gibeonite ambassadors said they believed Israel's God was the true God and they had come a very long way to make a peace treaty and be their servants. It was hard for the Israelite leaders to say “no” after these poor men had endured so much and had supposedly come so far.

Based on the Gibeonite's humble and wretched appearance, Israel swore an oath and made a covenant with them. Then, “And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them” (Joshua 9:16). Alas, they could not go back on their word! So the Gibeonites were spared. More than that, Joshua saved them from the other surrounding nations.

So what's the point? Where's the analogy between the Gibeonites who came to Joshua and people who come to Jesus? We must come to Christ, like these foreigners, and plead our poverty to find mercy. Our righteousness is similar to the dirty clothes of the Gibeonites. “But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6).

Even the Gibeonite's moldy bread and cracked wineskins represent the empty teachings of the world. Do you remember Jesus' words to Satan? “But He answered and said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of

God”” (Matthew 4:4). And elsewhere, “But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved” (Matthew 9:17). Even the old, patched sandals of these schemers show how our own walk with God is impeded by our choices.

In short, we come to Jesus “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17). We solicit mercy based on our unworthiness. We must confess our willingness to be His servants. The words of Joshua say it all: “So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live” (Joshua 9:15). I like the way Bible commentator Matthew Henry summarizes it: “Let us do like these Gibeonites, seek peace with God in the rags of abasement, and godly sorrow; so our sin shall not be our ruin. Let us be servants to Jesus, our blessed Joshua, and we shall live.”¹

¹ *Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible—Joshua Ch. 9.*

CHAPTER 6

Gideon and Samson: Mighty and Powerful

When General George Washington in the Revolutionary War achieved victory over the British army, the American people were ready to make him a king. Most of the citizenry were accustomed to having a monarch rule over them; they were familiar with that form of government. Their attitude was, “We know we’re going to be a free country and that we’ll do things differently, but we still need a king.” But Washington said “no” and retired. He understood that the people needed the best leader chosen through a democratic election. Washington’s humility set a precedent for all future presidents to agree, “We have limited terms of service. We don’t have a monarchy.”

This is the type of meekness we find displayed in the character of Gideon.

Gideon

When you read New Testament passages that highlight heroes in the Old Testament, Gideon is listed as a champion of faith. It’s also not surprising to find a number of ways in which he’s a type of Christ. “For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions” (Hebrews 11:32, 33).

When Gideon was a young man, the Midianites and other heathen nations constantly oppressed the Israelites. They sent raiders into the countryside to destroy crops and to kill or steal livestock. While this was happening, “The Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress” (Judges 6:11). Notice the reference to wheat and grapes. Here is a

connection with Christ. One of Jesus' last acts was to present wheat (bread) and grape juice to His disciples. Again, these symbolize the Word of God and the blood of His covenant.

Gideon threshed wheat in a winepress to hide grain from the greedy eyes of the Midianites. Israel was impoverished because of the continuing raids of their enemies. They cried out to God for help, and the Lord heard them. When God appeared to Gideon and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites" (v. 14), Gideon was shocked. "But Gideon said to Him, 'Oh my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house'" (v. 15). Can you see the humility and meekness in this youngest man in his father's family?

God often chooses the youngest—Joseph, David, and Moses were all the youngest siblings, as was Gideon. Jesus was probably the youngest in Joseph's family. Many scholars believe that Christ's brothers and sisters were Joseph's children from a former marriage. Why? First, it would have been very unusual for the oldest son to leave the family business and become an itinerate preacher. Joseph was also a bit older than Mary when they married; the old carpenter had evidently died before Jesus ever began His ministry because he is not mentioned again following Jesus' twelfth birthday. Also, at the cross, Jesus commits the care of His mother to the apostle John (John 19:26, 27). If Mary had other natural children, this would be unnecessary. And so, it's likely that Jesus was the youngest in His family too. God takes ownership of things that are often overlooked and despised. He uses those with childlike faith to accomplish great things.

Something else we discover about Gideon—his future was guided by the way God gave him signs through a fleece. Have you ever heard the expression, "Throw a fleece before the Lord"? This is where that comes from. You might even wonder, what is a fleece? It's a sheepskin. Now think about this for a moment: What does a lamb represent in the Bible? And what did God use to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve? A fleece represents the righteousness of Christ. Gideon's life was guided when he turned to Christ.

Later, when Gideon needed further encouragement before battling the enemy, he spied on their camp. While eavesdropping outside a Midianite tent one night, he overheard one of the soldiers relating a

dream. The enemy soldier had seen a loaf of bread knock over his camp. That's a strange dream, isn't it? How could one little loaf level the tents of the Midianites and destroy them?

Well, what does bread represent in the Bible? Here are the words of Jesus to Satan: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Christ is the Word made flesh (John 1:14). Jesus is the Bread that came down from heaven (John 6:35). It is the Word of God (the loaf of bread), which destroys the enemy.

When Gideon finally assembles a small army, God says he has too many soldiers and whittles the numbers down to only 300—to battle 135,000 enemy troops! Then the Lord instructs Gideon to have these men carry a torch and trumpet and to shout, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" (Judges 7:18). What might these three articles (trumpet, torch, and sword), which God used to give them a miraculous victory, represent?

All three symbols point to the Word of God. A trumpet stands for God's Word (Isaiah 58:1). We've all read how "the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12) and similarly, "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). Moreover, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). Gideon uses all these types of the Word to overcome the enemy, to defeat the adversary. Christ conquered Satan and his domain in the same way. It was through the power of the Word. Jesus consistently told the devil, "It is written ..." (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).

Gideon was an example for others. When he led the army into battle, he plainly said, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do" (Judges 7:17). Isn't this basically what Christ said: "I have come to give you an example"? Many times Jesus said, "Follow me ..." (Matthew 4:19). We're to follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21). The Apostle Paul said, "Brethren, join in following my example" (Philippians 3:17), because he followed Christ.

Let's now back up and consider how God helped Gideon assemble his faithful army. There are some interesting parallels to Christ in this process. The Lord first told Gideon to tell the men, "Whoever is fearful

and afraid, let him turn and depart at once” (Judges 7:3). And 22,000 men went home. Do you recall the time in which Jesus also experienced a mass exodus of followers? “From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more” (John 6:66).

After the fearful left, 10,000 soldiers remained. Gideon’s army was tested once more. Those who didn’t drink water from the brook cautiously by carefully looking around as they drank were dismissed. So Gideon ended up with a small quantity of soldiers who were neither fearful nor foolhardy. It was not the quantity of men, but the *quality* of men whom God used to conquer a massive force. Most of Christ’s early followers also forsook Him, but Christ poured three-and-a-half years of training into a handful of frail but devoted disciples. Jesus also went for quality, not quantity.

Gideon ends up conquering a vastly superior army with a very small force because they were filled with God’s power. Isn’t that what Jesus did? He had a handful of disciples and apostles, and they turned the Roman Empire upside down.

Finally, we see in Gideon’s very name a type of the work of Christ. Sometimes a person’s name in the Bible gives a clue to his or her character. The name Gideon means “hewer” or “feller of trees.” Gideon cut down the enemy and the altars of Baal. He really was a great example of Christ “the lumberjack,” for even Jesus once said, “Even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Luke 3:9). What a mighty work was accomplished by Gideon, a type of Christ in so many different ways.

Samson—Strong and Sacrificial

On January 10, 2010, a minivan struck and killed an old man crossing a Brooklyn street. This was especially tragic because this was no ordinary man. Joe Rollino would have been 105 years old on March 19, and, according to friends, he looked younger than 80 and was the model of health. A decorated World War II veteran, Joe got his start in the 1920s at the peak of the Coney Island carnival era. He was billed as the “Strongest Man in the World.”

At the height of his career, Joe stood about five-foot-five and

weighed around 150 pounds. Pound for pound, he was apparently one of the strongest men in modern times. He once lifted 450 pounds with his teeth. With supposedly just one finger, he raised up 635 pounds; with his back, he moved 3,200 pounds.

Friends say Joe was a lifetime boxer. He walked five miles every morning, rain or shine, and also held the record in the city's winter swimming club. He swam in the freezing Atlantic every day for eight years, even during a stormy six-degree day in January 1974. During his colorful life, Joe hobnobbed with Harry Houdini, watched Jack Dempsey box, worked as a bodyguard for Greta Garbo, and even had a bit part in the movie *On the Waterfront*.

In a 2008 interview, a 103-year-old Joe Rollino said that he was simply born strong. "Fighters would hit me in the jaw, and I'd just look at them." He told the press, "You couldn't knock me out." At his 103rd birthday party, a friend gave him a quarter and Joe bent it between his fingers. Afterward he apologized, saying he used to be able to do it with a dime. Did I mention that Joe didn't drink or smoke and was a vegetarian all his life? Who knows, if it wasn't for the car accident, this strong man could have become one of the oldest men in modern times.

The Bible also makes a connection between the world's strongest man and a unique diet. In the instructions given to the parents of Samson, it says:

"Please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judges 13:4, 5).

We find the hero Samson in the book of Judges. This long-haired strongman made many mistakes, but even in the record of this flawed superman, we see glimpses of Jesus. Despite his many foibles, the New Testament lists Samson among those who will be saved (Hebrews 11:32). Perhaps his name gives us a clue to God's design for him. The word "Samson" means "like the sun" or "sunny." I don't know if his parents thought he had a bright disposition, but Samson represents brightness—like Jesus, the Light of the world. The Bible says Christ is like the "Sun of Righteousness [who] shall arise with healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2).

Samson was born to parents who were barren and childless. It was a miracle birth. An angel even spoke with his mother. An angel also spoke to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and told her about the miracle conception of her Son. And like Jesus, Samson's destiny was planned. Both had a special mission—to deliver God's people from their enemies, which they both accomplished.

You probably recall that Samson was betrayed by his own people into the hands of the enemy. If you read the story carefully, you will discover that he let them do it (Judges 15). One time after Samson singlehandedly beat up the Philistines, they attacked the Israelites in retaliation. The Israelites asked, "Why are you attacking us?"

The enemy responded, "Because of what Samson did to us."

The Israelites begged, "Well, we'll turn him over to you then." So they went to Samson and told him, "Look, you need to surrender to us. We're going to tie you up and give you to the enemy." God's own people betrayed their superman into the hands of the Gentiles. When he was turned over to the enemy, the Spirit of God empowered this hairy Hercules—he broke his bonds, picked up a donkey's jawbone, and slaughtered 1,000 Philistines. Jesus was also betrayed into the hands of the Gentile enemies by His own, and He allowed it to happen.

Another time when Samson's enemies tried to conquer him, he was in a city with walls, gates, and bars. There was no way for him to escape. So his adversaries lay in wait to attack him. But the Bible explains, "Samson lay low till midnight; then he arose at midnight" (Judges 16:3). It's interesting that in the parable of the bridegroom in the New Testament, Jesus returns at midnight (Matthew 25:6). Samson rose at midnight, took hold of the gate of the city (the doors and two posts), and pulled them up—bar and all. He put them on his shoulders, folded the gates together, laid them on his back, and carried them to the top of a hill in front of Hebron. Your Bible map will tell you that's a distance of 10 miles!

I find it fascinating that Jesus said the gates of hell will not prevail against the church (Matthew 16:18). I am also reminded that when Jesus was held within the tomb, held by the gates of death, they couldn't keep Him trapped. He uprooted the gates! Like Samson, no power could hold Jesus from breaking the gates of the enemy.

We see another similarity between the life of Samson and Jesus with a second betrayal. Samson was betrayed for silver by a woman he loved. Jesus was also betrayed by His own people (Judas) for silver. If you recall, the Bible compares a woman to the church, the body of Christ. As a member of Jesus' close group, His traitor was an especially heart-breaking reality. Just as Jesus genuinely loved Judas, so Samson loved Delilah.

In fact, Samson finally told her everything—the secret of his strength. It makes me think of how Christ, before being turned over to the Romans, was asked at His trial (by the “church,” as it were) by the Sanhedrin, “Tell us if you’re the Christ.” (See Matthew 26:63.) And finally He said, “I’m He, it is as you say” (v. 64). Jesus tells them the truth, yet they still betray Him.

After Samson was captured, they blinded and later ridiculed him. Christ was also blinded and ridiculed. “Having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, ‘Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?’” (Luke 22:64). Both Jesus and Samson were blinded so that they could be tormented.

And finally, at the end of his life, Samson was called into the temple of Dagon to be made a sport by the Philistines. He stationed himself between the pillars in the great building and then prayed to be filled with the Spirit. He then stretched out his arms and laid down his life as a sacrifice to defeat the enemies of God’s people. “Then Samson said, ‘Let me die with the Philistines!’ And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life” (Judges 16:30). By his death, Samson did more to defeat his enemies than he did by his life. Can you hear the gospel message ringing through this story?

Because of His perfect life, Jesus accomplished much more through His death than even His incredible life. When Christ stretched out His arms and laid down His life as a sacrifice, He defeated the enemy, brought down the temple of Satan, and bought us eternal life. That’s why, despite all of Samson’s failures, I expect to see him in the kingdom. He’s mentioned in Hebrews 11:32 in the list of faithful heroes. The last act of his life was Spirit-filled, evidence of God’s forgiveness and acceptance of Samson.

Jesus once said, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay

down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13). Samson laid down his life. Like Christ was, he was buried in a tomb by his friends and family (Judges 16:31). Even in the sad story of Samson, we can see our Savior and the scarlet thread of redemption connecting the two of them.

CHAPTER 7

**Ruth and Boaz:
A Kinsman Redeemer**

Late one rainy night in the city of Philadelphia, two tired elderly people shuffled into the lobby of a little third-class hotel. They went up to the night clerk, and the husband pleadingly said, “Sir, please don’t tell us the hotel is full. My wife and I have been all over the city looking for a place to stay. We didn’t know about the big convention in town. The hotels where we usually stay are all booked. We’re dead tired, and it’s after midnight.”

The clerk looked at them a long moment and then answered, “Well, I honestly don’t have a single room available.” He paused. “Except my own. I work at night and sleep in the daytime. It’s not as nice as the other rooms, but it’s clean, and I’ll be happy for you to be my guests for tonight.”

The wife gratefully replied, “God bless you, young man.”

The next morning at the hotel breakfast table, the couple sent the waiter to ask the night clerk if they could see him for a moment on very important business. The weary night clerk went in, recognized the two people, sat down at the table, and said he hoped they had a good night’s sleep. They thanked him sincerely. Then the husband astounded the clerk with this proposal: “You are too fine a manager to stay in this little hotel. How would you like for me to build a big, beautiful, luxurious hotel in New York City and make you its general manager?”

The clerk didn’t know what to say. He thought there might be something wrong with the man’s mind. He humbly stammered, “That sounds wonderful.”

His guest then introduced himself, “I’m John Jacob Astor.”

You’ve probably guessed at this point that in the years that followed, Mr. Astor built the world-famous Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. Yes, the compassionate night clerk became one of the best-known

hotel men in the world. He was exalted because of his compassion.

When someone is lacking in compassion, we call them “ruthless.” This is because in the Bible, the character of Ruth is known as a humble woman of great compassion; she was beloved in Israel because of her devotion.

Most books in the Bible speak of amazing miracles, ominous warnings, profound laws, deep theology, epic battles, and glorious victories. But the book of Ruth is unique in that it talks about relationships, compassion, affliction, loyalty, and redemption. The heroine of this story is a Moabite woman named Ruth. She comes to learn about and to love the true God of Israel through the witness of her devoted Jewish mother-in-law, Naomi.

Bethlehem, House of Bread

The geography for the love story of Ruth is a clue in itself that makes us think of Jesus. The events transpire around the well-known town of Bethlehem. This familiar village is mentioned in the Bible from Genesis to Jesus. It was in Bethlehem that Rachel died giving birth to Jacob’s last son. It was from Bethlehem that the greatest king of Israel, David, was called from being a simple shepherd to the throne. Ultimately, the Old Testament prophets foretold that the Savior of the world would come from this humble farming community. “Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

It is remarkable that Jesus, who is the Bread of Life, was born in Bethlehem, which means “house of bread.” Oddly enough, He was also placed in a manger, a trough for feeding animals grain. “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6:32, 33). It is no accident that we see Jesus born in the “house of bread.”

Strangely, the book of Ruth begins with a severe famine in Bethlehem. Imagine that—a famine in the house of bread. The

scarcity forces Naomi and her family to withdraw east to the land of Moab, where there is still food and work. It was a similar famine in Israel that drove Abraham to Egypt and Isaac to the land of the Philistines. In the years that followed, Naomi's two sons married Moabite girls.

Then, while Naomi and her family were sojourning in Moab, they were decimated by tragedy. The Bible does not say exactly how it all happened, but, one by one, her husband and two adult sons died. When the famine in Israel was finally over, Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem from Moab. She encouraged her widowed daughters-in-law to return to their Moabite families. Her daughter-in-law Orpah reluctantly decided to stay with her people. Ruth, on the other hand, felt great compassion for Naomi and ardently insisted on going with her unfortunate but godly mother-in-law. This is when Ruth uttered those often quoted and classic lines of devotion ...

“Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me” (Ruth 1:16, 17).

Ruth's words powerfully represent the prayer of every believer when they commit to follow Jesus.

When they returned to Bethlehem nearly penniless, it was during the time of the barley harvest. The remainder of the love story relates how Naomi's family is redeemed, all set against the backdrop of a rich harvest. It is likewise against the backdrop of sowing the gospel seed that the church finds redemption. “He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest”” (Luke 10:2).

So in this classic story, Ruth does not so much represent Jesus as she is a symbol for the New Testament church. She is faithfully out in the field each day harvesting fallen sheaves of grain in the field of a man named Boaz, who is the son of Rahab. Boaz is the one who represents Christ. He is the merciful landowner who makes sure his servants provide for her, just as Jesus sustains the church.

Naomi lost her property after leaving Bethlehem and had to depend on the kindness of Boaz to glean from his fields. He bestowed this grace abundantly. Yet she still had to go out and gather grain.

Likewise, God had provided for the children of Israel in the wilderness, but they also had to go out and gather the manna. All of us may receive grace from Christ, but we must seek it through prayer and faith.

When Boaz speaks with Ruth, he describes her by saying, “All the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman” (Ruth 3:11). These are the same words used by Solomon when he describes the “honorable wife,” which is a clear type of the church, the bride of Christ. “Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies” (Proverbs 31:10). Like Jesus, Boaz invites Ruth to dine with his family and gives her bread and wine (Ruth 2:14). It reminds me not only of the Last Supper, but also of the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven (Revelation 19:9).

A Kinsman Redeemer

Boaz, a righteous, strong, and loving man, is the Christ-like hero in the book of Ruth. In fact, his name means “strength.” He was a wealthy landowner in Bethlehem, a benevolent farmer concerned for his workers’ welfare and a man with a sense of family responsibility. This led him, according to the Jewish law, to redeem Naomi’s land, as a near relative through marrying Ruth (Leviticus 25).

The operative word that begins and ends [chapter 3](#) is “rest.” Boaz would not rest until he found rest for Naomi and Ruth. Jesus invites us to come unto Him for rest. And our Savior does not rest while looking for His wandering sheep. “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Eventually, the redemption of this destitute family is resolved and their property restored through the birth of a baby boy. Even Obed is a type of Jesus, for he was a baby of promise born in Bethlehem. Both the births of Obed and Jesus bridge the “outcast” world with heaven. We also see a connection to the Messiah in Obed’s name, which means “servant.”

“Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles” (Isaiah 42:1).

Ruth 4:12 also speaks of Obed as the “seed” and Ruth as “the woman.” These are the same words used in Genesis 3:15 to describe

the coming Messiah and the church. Furthermore, in verse 15, Obed is called “a restorer of life,” like Jesus, and he ultimately becomes the grandfather of King David. As her predecessor Rahab, Ruth was a Gentile that came to love the Hebrew God and became a mother in Israel and ancestor of our Lord (Matthew 1:5).

Finally, we see pictured in this poignant story a widowed Jewess and a widowed Gentile both coming to Bethlehem, where they find compassion and redemption. Naomi is a symbol of the Jewish church and Ruth a symbol of the New Testament, or Gentile believers who come to find refuge under the wings of the God of Israel (Ruth 2:12). Ultimately, both women place all of their hopes in a baby of promise. Both Jews and Gentiles come together in Christ, the bridge between heaven and earth.

I’d like to close this section with a passage from *Morning and Evening*, a classic devotional book by Charles Spurgeon. This comes under the heading of June 10. The theme is “Christ in all the Scripture—these are they that testify of Me.” It’s a beautiful masterpiece of scriptural metaphors:

“Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega of the Bible. He is the constant theme of its sacred pages; from first to last they testify of him. At the creation we at once discern him as one of the sacred Trinity; we catch a glimpse of him in the promise of the woman’s seed; we see him typified in the ark of Noah; we walk with Abraham, as he sees Messiah’s day; we dwell in the tents of Isaac and Jacob, feeding upon the gracious promise; we hear the venerable Israel talking of Shiloh; and in the numerous types of the law, we find the Redeemer abundantly foreshadowed. Prophets and kings, priests and preachers, all look one way—they all stand as the cherubs did over the ark, desiring to look within, and to read the mystery of God’s great propitiation. Still more manifestly in the New Testament we find our Lord the one pervading subject. It is not an ingot here and there, or dust of gold thinly scattered, but here you stand upon a solid floor of gold; for the whole substance of the New Testament is Jesus crucified, and even its closing sentence is bejeweled with the Redeemer’s name. We should always read Scripture in this light; we should consider the word to be as a mirror into which Christ looks down from heaven; and then we, looking into it, see his face reflected as in a glass—darkly, it is true, but still in such a way as to be a blessed preparation for seeing him as we shall see him face to face. This volume contains Jesus Christ’s letters to us, perfumed by his love. These pages are the garments of our King, and they all smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. Scripture is the royal chariot in which Jesus rides, and it is paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem. The Scriptures are the swaddling bands of the holy child Jesus; unroll them and you find your Saviour. The quintessence of the word of God is

Christ.”

I get biblical goose bumps reading this! It sums up our faith so well. Our faith should be strengthened as we see how magnificently He is reflected everywhere in Scripture. And yet we neglect the Bible so much. Would you like to get to know Jesus a little better, love Him better, and serve Him better? If He knew every detail of Ruth’s life, if God could turn her tragedy to triumph, can He also orchestrate your life so that it will reflect Him too? Just give yourself to Him today and He will bring you safely home.

CHAPTER 8

Jonathan: The Noble Prince

Almost everyone is familiar with the historic ship *Titanic*. On April 14, 1912, this huge vessel, which some called “unsinkable,” steamed across the Atlantic toward New York on its maiden voyage. Her captain, on his final passage before retirement, was encouraged to break a speed record while making the crossing. Of course, after striking an iceberg, the ship went down in a matter of hours. Out of the 2,200-some passengers, only 711 were saved. Since then, there have been many books written and movies made about the tragedy. But oddly, in one case, the story of the *Titanic* seems to have been written *before* the ship was even built!

This fictional story of particular interest was written by a merchant seaman named Morgan Robertson. His book was about an “unsinkable” passenger liner that sank while carrying elite people of the time. The ship in Robertson’s story was called the *Titan*, and the book was titled, *The Wreck of the Titan*.

The events in this made-up story have amazing parallels to the *Titanic*. Here are a few: The fictional *Titan* was 800 feet long; the *Titanic* was 882 feet long. The *Titan* was 90 feet wide, which would have been enormous for the day; *Titanic* was 92 feet wide. Top speed for the *Titan* was 25 knots; top speed for the *Titanic* was 23 knots. There were 19 watertight compartments on the *Titan*; *Titanic* had 16. Both ships had three propellers. Passenger capacity on the *Titan* was 3,000; *Titanic* held 3,250. The number of people aboard the *Titan* was 2,000; there were 2,228 passengers on the *Titanic*. The *Titan* had 24 lifeboats; only 20 were on the *Titanic*.

The *Titan* sailed from England to New York on April 10. Both ships were built to be unsinkable. Both ships were encouraged to break speed records. Both ships sank after striking a pyramid-shaped iceberg that had just overturned 400 miles from Newfoundland. Mostly well-to-do or famous people were on the *Titan* and the *Titanic*. Only about

half of the passengers on each ship survived. Both ships had an inadequate number of lifeboats.

Robertson's book was never published. Each time he gave it to a publisher, they told him the events that he wrote about were too far-fetched to ever happen. It was simply too unbelievable. By the way, his book was written in 1898—13 years before the Titanic was built! Was Robertson's book just a phenomenal coincidence or a bizarre prophecy? That's difficult to know, but sometimes I think God tries to tell us things in advance just to let us know that He sees all of history.

Courageous and Unsinkable

“One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you” (Joshua 23:10).

President Andrew Jackson used to say, “One man with courage makes a majority.” It's even truer that you and God together always constitute a majority. This was the attitude of our next hero of faith.

It is easy to spot the life of Jesus foreshadowed in Jonathan, the oldest son and crown prince of Saul, Israel's first king. Jonathan's name means “gift of Jehovah,” reminding us of the famous verse, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son” (John 3:16).

Jonathan was a man of great courage, faith, and action. The Philistines had gathered to fight with Israel, but King Saul hesitated to meet the challenge. He feared his army was too small and kept waiting for reinforcements. “Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men” (1 Samuel 14:2). Yet while his father was sitting with his councilors, wringing his hands, endlessly contemplating battle, prince Jonathan, still a young man, decided to stop talking about it and got up to fight.

“Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, ‘Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.’ So his armor bearer said to him, ‘Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart’” (1 Samuel 14:6, 7).

When God fights with you, numbers do not matter, weapons do not matter—faith in God is the largest deciding factor. In strategic military terms, a frontal attack up a hill presents the worst possible odds for success in a battle. But this is exactly what Jonathan and his assistant did! “Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them” (1 Samuel 14:13).

In this skirmish with the Philistines, Jonathan and his armor bearer killed 20 guards. This remarkable victory created a panic in the camp of the enemy and inspired the army of Israel to attack and rout the Philistine oppressors. It all began with the faith and courage of Jonathan when he chose to put his life on the line, climb the hill, and face the enemy head-on. This reminds me of when Jesus, with the help of Simon bearing His cross, scaled the heights of Golgotha to defeat the enemy that had been enslaving His people.

An even more striking example in which Jonathan makes me think of Christ is connected with one of the most famous stories in the Bible. When all nine-and-a-half feet of Goliath began to threaten, taunt, and intimidate the armies of Israel, I’m certain Jonathan offered to fight the menacing giant, but King Saul, fearing he might lose his favorite son and heir to the crown in the contest, would not permit it.

Then Jonathan watched with all the armies of Israel as a young, unknown shepherd boy boldly ran out with nothing but a sling to fight and defeat the armor-clad colossus. Following David’s stunning victory over Goliath, Jonathan was not jealous or resentful, but delighted. After the battle, Jonathan quickly sought an opportunity to visit with David. The two brave young men instantly bonded and became lifelong friends, sharing their deep faith and love for God.

At that first meeting, Jonathan felt inspired to do something very touching. Carefully consider these words bursting with meaning: “Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt” (1 Samuel 18:3, 4).

Wow. Every word in this verse says something about what Jesus does for us when we come to Him. Let’s break it down:

- Jesus makes a covenant with us because He loves us as His own soul (Hebrews 7:22)
- Christ gives His royal robe of righteousness to cover our filthy rags (Zechariah 3:4)
- Jesus gives us the armor of God to protect us in battle from Satan (Ephesians 6:11)
- He gives us the sword of His Word to conquer temptation (Hebrews 4:12)
- Jesus gives us the bow of His strength (2 Kings 9:24)
- And He gives us the belt of truth (Ephesians 6:14).

This Old Testament verse reminds us that Jesus loves us; He makes a covenant promise to cover our sin and give us power to go forward.

A Selfless Intercessor and Encourager

As time went by, King Saul became increasingly jealous of David's success in battle and popularity among the people. Saul even tried to kill the young hero. Yet at every opportunity Jonathan would plead and intercede as a mediator between his father and David. "Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father" (1 Samuel 19:4). In the same way, Jesus ever lives to intercede for us with His Father (Hebrews 7:25).

When David was discouraged while hiding in dark caves like an outcast from the wrath of Saul, Jonathan came to encourage him. "Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God" (1 Samuel 23:16). Are you thankful that Jesus comes to us in our darkness and separation to strengthen and encourage us in God?

What is even more amazing to me is how Jonathan was willing to trade places with David and give up his throne. Doesn't this describe how Christ treated us?

"He said to him, 'Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that.' So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house" (1 Samuel 23:17, 18).

Jonathan, like Jesus, left the palace, went to an outcast, made a covenant that he would reign with him, and then returned to the palace. Though strong and brave, Jonathan was also meek. He was willing to abdicate the throne because he believed it was God's will for David to be king. Jesus was also exceedingly strong yet very meek (Matthew 11:29).

A Sacrificial Prince

Another great battle unfolded between the Philistines and Israel. The enemy amassed an enormous army, but God had withdrawn from Israel because of the sins of King Saul and the people. Distressed by demons, Saul became so pitifully wicked he even asked the advice of a witch before this decisive battle. Though Jonathan knew that by following his deranged father into battle he would likely be slain, he still obeyed. Sadly, that's exactly what happened. "The Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons" (1 Samuel 31:2).

It makes me sad to even write this, but they took the body of that noble prince and hung him between heaven and earth on the walls of Beth-shan. Yet even this gruesome picture tells of our precious Savior. Like Jonathan, Jesus submitted to His Father's will and went to the cross to die for the sins of man. Jesus and Jonathan died at the hands of pagans. Christ also hung between heaven and earth. And just as Jesus' friends boldly came and took His body down from the cross and buried it, so also did friends of Jonathan bravely recover his body.

"Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days" (1 Samuel 31:11-13).

David received the sad news of Jonathan's death with a broken heart. He penned a lament in song, writing of his dear friend:

"How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan was slain in your high places. I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me; your love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women" (2 Samuel 1:25, 26).

Because of His wonderful love for us, Jesus died on a high place

called Calvary. It seems Jonathan willingly died that David might be king. We know Jesus freely chose to die that we might live and reign with him. “If we endure [suffer], we shall also reign with Him” (2 Timothy 2:12).

CHAPTER 9

David: The Shepherd, King, and Poet

“So it was, whenever they went out, that David behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed” (1 Samuel 18:30).

When you hold a Bible, you have in your hands the most sacred and priceless document in the world. As we consider the evidence of Jesus throughout the Scripture, the many echoes of His life, it helps us recognize that God has complete control of history—so that the lives of these real Bible characters could foreshadow the future life of Jesus.

Regarding Luke 24:27, the Christian commentator Ellen G. White writes, “There is one great central truth to be kept ever before the mind in searching the Scriptures, Christ and Him crucified. Every other truth is invested with influence and power corresponding to its relation to this theme.” In other words, every doctrinal truth in the Bible draws its critical mass from the story of Jesus. She goes on to say,

“It is only in the light of the cross that we can discern the exalted character of the law of God. The soul, palsied by sin, can be endowed with life only through the work wrought out on the cross by the Author of our salvation. The love of Christ constrains man to unite with Him in His labors and sacrifice. The revelation of divine love awakens in them a sense of their neglected obligation to be light bearers to the world and inspires them with a missionary spirit. This truth, ‘Christ in all the Bible,’ enlightens the mind and sanctifies the soul. It will banish unbelief and inspire faith.

“When Christ in His work of redemption is seen to be the great central truth in the system of truth, a new light is shed upon the events of past and the future. They are seen in a new relation and possess a new and a deeper significance. The Old Testament is as verily the gospel in types and shadows as the New Testament is in unfolding power.”²

I couldn’t agree more. The Old Testament is also the gospel. You first read about the New Testament in the Old Testament. You first hear the words of the New Covenant in the works of Moses and Jeremiah. Finally,

“The New Testament does not present a new religion. The Old Testament does not present a religion to be superseded by the new. The New Testament is only the advancement and unfolding of the old. Abel was a believer in Christ as verily saved by His power as were Peter and Paul. Enoch was a representative of Christ as surely was the beloved disciple, John. That God who walked with Enoch was our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He was the Light of the world then just as He is now. The truth for this time is broad in His outlines, far reaching, embracing many doctrines, but these doctrines are not detached items which mean little. They’re united by golden threads forming a complete whole with Christ as the living center.”³

David ... Beloved Sons

There is more than one person named John in the Bible. There’s more than one person named Moses. There’s even more than one person named Jesus in the Bible. But there’s only one person in the whole Bible called by the name *David*, who, despite his sins and mistakes, is one of the most outstanding types of Jesus we find in Scripture. David’s name is found 1,066 times in the Word, more than any other name. There’s more said about him than any other Bible character—more than Moses, more than Elijah, more than Joseph.

In many ways, the Bible could be the story of David; he is such a pivotal character in Scripture. In fact, even the last chapter in the Bible talks about David! “I am the Root and the Offspring of David” (Revelation 22:16). So you shouldn’t be surprised to learn that there are a myriad of parallels between David and Jesus.

David’s name means “beloved,” and he was beloved by many of his people and beloved of God. Jesus, likewise, is the beloved Son of the Father. When Jesus was baptized, God said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). The Song of Solomon, which is really a beautiful metaphor of Jesus, speaks of the bridegroom in these terms: “My beloved is mine, and I am his” (2:16).

David and Jesus are both connected with the town of Bethlehem. “Now the LORD said to Samuel, ... Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons” (1 Samuel 16:1). Jesus, of course, is a king born in Bethlehem. Even though he grew up in Nazareth, God orchestrated the divine history so that Bethlehem was His birthplace.

You also find that David was the youngest son of an ancient father. We read in 1 Samuel 17:12, “Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse, and who had eight sons. And the man was old, advanced in years, in the days of Saul.” Jesse was an old man; David was the son of his old age. Our heavenly Father is the Ancient of Days. In Daniel 7, one like the Son of Man—Jesus—comes before the Ancient of Days, the eternal God.

Keepers of Flocks

David was a good shepherd. Even more than that, David was a *sacrificial* shepherd. As he prepared to go out and fight Goliath, David once told King Saul, “Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth” (1 Samuel 17:34, 35). More than once David risked his life to save his father’s sheep.

That reminds us, of course, of Jesus, our sacrificial Good Shepherd who snatches us from the jaws of the lion—the devil—who goes around roaring and seeking whom he might devour (1 Peter 5:8). Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Sometimes you might feel like the lion’s next lunch, but Jesus can save you because He’s a good, brave, and sacrificial shepherd.

It takes more courage than you might think to put your life on the line for a sheep. When we lived up in the hills years ago, I used to have three goats. One day one of them disappeared and I had no idea why. At that point I wasn’t very smart about country life; I had grown up in New York City. A few weeks later, another one disappeared, and I thought it must have wandered off and joined a neighbor’s flock.

Then one dark night while I was sleeping, I heard a startling loud bang. It sounded as if the house had been hit by a wrecking ball. I jumped up and heard our remaining goat, Libby, frantically bleating—more like screaming. The sound was slowly getting farther away, so I figured that a bear or mountain lion might have her. I considered dashing out into the dark and getting my .22 from the pickup parked in the yard, but then I thought, “I want to save her, but I don’t especially want to die; I’m not going out there in the dark to try to

shoot a hungry bear with a .22.” Of course, hitting a bear with a bullet from a .22 would only serve to make it mad. I finally did manage to get the bear in the daytime, but it was too late for the goat.

Whenever I read the story about David going after a bear that took his sheep, I think, “Wow! He really was a heroic shepherd—or he was crazy.” Although I felt sorry for Libby, I wasn’t going to lay down my life even for my last goat. But David killed a bear with a stick; Jesus, the good Shepherd, defeated the devil with the cross.

Anointed but Misunderstood

Both David and Jesus were anointed. The word Christ, *christos*, means “anointed” in Greek. Messiah means “anointed” in Hebrew. David first appears in the Bible when Samuel anoints him. Because he was the youngest of his brothers, Samuel was hesitant at first. When Jesus came to John the Baptist to be baptized, John was also reluctant, saying, “No, you need to baptize me.” But Jesus said, “Let it be so for now.”

In 1 Samuel 16:13, we read, “Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.” Thus David began his ministry after his anointing. When did Christ begin His ministry? At His baptism, the Holy Spirit came down upon Him in the presence of several future disciples. Then Christ began to teach and to preach.

After Jesus was anointed, He fought with the devil in the wilderness. After David was anointed, he fought with a giant in the wilderness. You might recall how a battle raged between the Israelites and the Philistines during the time of King Saul. Since David’s brothers were there, Jesse wanted to check up on them. “Then Jesse said to his son David, ‘Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried grain and these ten loaves, and run to your brothers at the camp ... see how your brothers fare, and bring back news of them’” (1 Samuel 17:17, 18). David is sent from the old father to seek the welfare of his brothers, and his father sends bread too. Jesus also comes from the Father to us, and He brings Bread, doesn’t He?

When David arrived to care for his brothers, did his brothers say, “Oh, David, we love you. It’s so good you came; thank you so much”?

Did they receive him joyfully, or did they misunderstand his mission? First Samuel 17:28 says, “Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab’s anger was aroused against David, and he said, ‘Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle.’” Eliab falsely accused David of being a negligent shepherd. David came seeking his brothers’ welfare, and they totally misunderstood his heart and mission.

Jesus was also misunderstood by His brothers—not only His own people, but even His own family. Christ had at least four half-brothers and two half-sisters (Mark 6:3). Notice the parallel between David and Jesus. Speaking of Jesus: “For even His brothers did not believe in Him” (John 7:5). Did David’s brothers later believe? They did. As a matter of fact, they became part of his army of mighty men. Likewise, Jesus’ own brothers eventually believed in Him and His mission and became part of His leadership.

Stones and Swords

While David was with his brothers on the battlefield, he saw Goliath—who for 40 days came out before the battle line in the wilderness to defy and taunt the armies of God to give up. After the anointing of Jesus, He also went out to the wilderness for 40 days. He battled with the devil, the giant of evil, who tempted Him to end His mission of salvation.

What did David use to bring down the giant? A stone. The Word of God is that stone, the same rock that brings down the giant image in Daniel 2. Christ is the Word, and the Word is also described as the Rock. Think about this: The Ten Commandments were written on stone; that is what’s used to bring down the giant. Jesus met every temptation with the Word and finally said, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve’” (Matthew 4:10).

Likewise, “David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him,

and cut off his head with it” (1 Samuel 17:50, 51). Goliath was initially knocked out with a rock. He was unconscious, but David dispatched him permanently with Goliath’s sword.

Isn’t it interesting that David takes Goliath’s own sword to destroy him? The cross that the devil used to kill Jesus is the weapon that destroyed the devil. In crucifying Christ, the devil said, “We’re going to use this cross to kill Him.” But Jesus used the cross as a sword to destroy the devil. The devil’s weapon was turned back upon him. Satan’s cross killed Satan!

I love the part of this story after David kills the giant. The Philistine army was gathered on one mountainside watching their champion, and all the Israelites were on another mountain feeling afraid. All that divided them was the Valley of Elah. I imagine a lot of people in his own army were betting against David. Did this young whippersnapper really think he was going to be able to take down the giant? They probably had pretty big odds going that David was about to get squashed. They didn’t have a lot of confidence in the shepherd boy from Bethlehem.

Goliath, of course, came out full of bluster. He had an armor bearer holding his shield. Then all of a sudden, the armies saw David run toward the giant. They probably couldn’t hear all the conversation going on between Goliath and David, but they saw David throw down his staff, load up his sling, and snap a stone at the giant. Unexpectedly, Goliath staggered, wobbled, and crumpled to the ground with an inglorious thud. The bigger they are, the harder they fall.

David then ran up to him without any hesitation. When the armor bearer saw Goliath go down, he likely just dropped the shield and ran for his life. David then took the large iron sword of the giant and chopped off Goliath’s head.

I imagine both armies stared for several moments in disbelief. The Israelites had been watching this unfold, thinking, “This is going to be bad.” Then the tables radically turned and their whole disposition changed. A great shout of joy went up. David’s victory became their victory. They didn’t just stand there, of course; they got involved in the battle. David led them against the Philistines, and they chased down the enemy and experienced a great victory.

This story is for us. When Jesus said, “It is finished,” He defeated the devil. At that moment, the tables turned on Satan. With His sacrifice on the cross and His resurrection, Jesus won. The devil’s doom was sealed. The victory of Christ became our victory; we don’t just stand around, of course; we follow our Captain into battle as overcomers!

Champions in Exile

After David killed Goliath, he stripped the enemy of his armor. “David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent” (1 Samuel 17:54). The Bible tells us that Jesus stripped the armor from the devil.

“If I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils” (Luke 11:20–22).

Before salvation, you and I are captives of the devil. But Jesus liberates us, taking away Satan’s armor. Were it not for Christ, mankind would have no power to resist the enemy. But there’s now a crack in the devil’s armor and, because of Jesus, he is defenseless. You and I can experience victory over Satan just as David had victory over Goliath.

After David won the battle over the Philistines, he followed Saul for a short while serving as his armor bearer. But one day when returning from a battle, Saul hears the women singing, “Saul has killed his thousands, David his ten thousands.” He begins to brood and is consumed with jealousy, even though he should have rejoiced.

Soon Saul became so envious of David’s popularity that he tried to kill him. David was not accepted by his own people because of their leader’s jealousy. He had to work as an exile. Jesus also had to work as an expatriate from Jerusalem because of the jealousy of the priests. When people began to follow Jesus (instead of the scribes, lawyers, and Pharisees), these religious professionals became very resentful. Even Pilate knew that Jesus had been handed over because of envy. Christ worked mostly in small towns outside the centers of power. He often ministered to the poor. When Jesus was persecuted in one city,

He went to another. He lived like an exile from Jerusalem because of jealousy.

From Outcasts to Mighty Men

How well would it work to raise up a church by saying, “Let’s see if we can assemble all those who are in debt, all who are distressed, all who are discontented, and build up a church from them”? Would you market your church with that kind of a motley crew? Probably not.

Yet these were the kinds of people who gathered around David (1 Samuel 22:2). They were the outcasts of society. They were debtors, distressed, and discontented. They didn’t like the way things were going, but all of a sudden David became a captain over them—kind of like Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest. David became the leader of about 400 men, and they were changed from an undisciplined crew of agitated rebels to a formidable army of “mighty men.”

Of which kind of people is the church composed? The apostle Paul describes them:

“You see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are” (1 Corinthians 1:26–28).

Think about it. Samuel went to pick a king and asked Jesse to bring out his sons. Jesse got the seven older, taller ones and left the day-dreamer, David, out with the sheep. David was sunburned, maybe not as burly as some of his brothers. He was a poet out in the field, swinging his sling and playing his harp.

Samuel looked at the tall, dark, handsome brothers of David and thought, “Wow! They do look like majestic material. Surely the Lord’s anointed is before me. One of them is going to be anointed.” But which one did God choose? The one you’d never think would succeed. Isn’t that how God often operates?

Jesus walked by the lake and saw crusty fishermen. There’s one bombastic, opinionated fellow named Peter, who was always telling the tallest stories. Jesus said to him, “Follow me, I’ll make you a fisher

of men.” Wouldn’t you normally go to the seminary in Jerusalem to get your preachers? Why would you go to a fishing village in Capernaum?

Now, I’m not seeking to disparage trained preachers who went to seminary; I share this to encourage you that God can use *you*. Don’t think, “I’m in debt,” or “I’m not formally educated or sophisticated enough.” Follow Jesus and make Him your captain. Look at what He did with the 12 disciples—turned the world upside-down, overthrew paganism in the Roman Empire and replaced it with Christianity. Look at what Jesus and David did with their rough crews of fishermen and troubled outcasts. They built kingdoms, dynasties, and empires! They became legendary mighty men.

Attention to Family

As you study the life of David, you see that, like Jesus, he took time to care for his parents. When he realized that he had a price on his head, that King Saul was going to hunt him everywhere in the land of Israel, David knew his parents were in danger. After all, King Saul had killed a whole village of priests just because of David.

Notice what he did: “David went from there to Mizpah of Moab” (1 Samuel 22:3). David had a great-grandmother, Ruth, who was a Moabite. Jesse was related to Ruth, so the Moabites took him in. David arranged for his parents to live with the Moabites. “You’ll be safe there,” he told them. “You won’t be safe in Israel.” David continued to spend time in Israel, but he wanted to make sure to care for his parents.

What was one of the final things that Jesus did on the cross? He cared for His mother. He said to John, “Son, behold your mother. Woman, behold your son.” (See John 19:26.) What He meant was, “Take my mom into your house and care for her.” Even in their distress, the two thought of the ones they loved. Jesus still tenderly cares for His family. We are adopted into His family when we accept Christ (Galatians 4:5).

Nearly Stoned by Their Own

Both Jesus and David were threatened with stoning by their own people. While David and his mighty men were off fighting battles, all the families of David's mighty men were living in the small town of Ziklag. In their absence, the little town was attacked by the Amalekites, and all the wives and children of David and his army were carried away with the plunder. When David and his men returned to the smoking ruins of Ziklag, all the mighty men realized they had lost their families. They blamed David: "Look, we followed you from place to place, and you had this bright idea that we'd go out and fight with the Philistines. Now we come back and our families are gone." They were very discouraged, brokenhearted, and angry. They were ready to stone David (1 Samuel 30:6).

Does that sound familiar in the life of Jesus? People were ready to stone Him as soon as something went wrong. It's recorded a few times in the New Testament where people took up stones to kill the Messiah (John 8:59; 10:31).

Merciful to Enemies

Another unusual characteristic that you see in the lives of David and Jesus is that they were kind to their enemies. More than once David was very merciful to King Saul, who was aggressively seeking to kill him. When David had opportunity to destroy Saul, David's captain, Abishai, wanted to do the job for him. "But David said to Abishai, 'Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?'" (1 Samuel 26:9).

James and John wanted to bring down fire from heaven on the Samaritans who were unkind to Jesus. Like David, Jesus took a different stance: "He turned and rebuked them, and said, 'You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them'" (Luke 9:55, 56).

You might also remember that when David was fleeing from his son Absalom, a vicious Benjamite by the name of Shimei was out cursing David and throwing stones. Once more Abishai basically said to David, "Let me go cut off the head of this dead dog." David responded, "Let him curse." (See 2 Samuel 16:5–10.) David turned the other cheek.

David had the meekness of Christ, a forgiving heart even when his own son was trying to kill him. David said, “Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom” (2 Samuel 18:5). When Abner joined Saul in trying to kill David, David later forgave Abner (2 Samuel 3:20, 21). When Amasa joined Absalom in trying to kill David, after the battle, David was willing to forgive him (2 Samuel 19:13). Likewise, Christ forgave those who were seeking to end His life—and even those who eventually crucified Him.

The Winning Team

David had a mighty man in his small army by the name of Eleazar. One day they were fighting against the Philistines, who vastly outnumbered them on the battleground of barley. David’s other mighty men and soldiers retreated because they saw that they were losing ground. They thought, “Let’s retreat to a better position.” Everybody retreated, except David and Eleazar. They stationed themselves on a hill and fought back to back (1 Chronicles 11:12–14).

I’m sure it was an amazing sight. Can you picture David and Eleazar standing back to back and fighting as a team? They must have whipped their swords around like harvesting scythes, mowing down the enemy. The Bible says they fought so long that Eleazar’s “hand clave to his sword” (2 Samuel 23:10). What does a sword represent? The Word of God. He saw his fellow soldiers flee. They abandoned David. But he said, “I’m not going to abandon my captain. If you stick with David, you won’t lose.”

When you stand by Jesus, who is your Son of David, you are always a majority. You don’t have to be afraid of losing; like David, Jesus never lost a battle. When you’re tempted and attacked by the devil, stick with Christ and you’ll win. Hang on to your sword. Stand by Jesus and you can take on a whole army of Philistines and be victorious! Remember this Bible verse: “Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you” (Leviticus 26:8).

An interesting Bible passage telling us how much people were committed to David makes me think of Jesus and the church. Notice the words of the Israelites: “All Israel came together to David at Hebron, saying, ‘Indeed we are your bone and your flesh’” (1

Chronicles 11:1). Likewise, Jesus tells us that we are His body. The Bible confirms, “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually” (1 Corinthians 12:27). What an incredible similarity! We need to be like Eleazar—stick with our Commander and we’ll be on the winning team.

Betrayals and Prayers

Someone once said, “Betrayal can only happen if you love.” Both David and Jesus had the capacity for great love, and each experienced the bitter heartache of betrayal. David was “stabbed in the back” by a close friend, Ahithophel, and, when his treachery backfired on him, Ahithophel committed suicide.

Of course, Jesus was also betrayed by a close friend, Judas, and it also boomeranged. There are some who speculate that Judas didn’t think Christ would allow Himself to be killed. Judas thought that Jesus would perform a miracle and deliver Himself, believing he could force Christ onto the throne of Israel. Then, he reasoned, he could be treasurer and everyone would give him credit. But his strategy blew up in his face. When Judas was in the temple and saw that they were really going to execute Christ, that Jesus was doing nothing to save Himself, he threw the money down and cried, “I have betrayed innocent blood.” He then went and hung himself.

Isn’t it also interesting that both David and Jesus were betrayed by a close friend in Jerusalem? Ahithophel was the close counselor and friend of David but was disloyal to him and joined with the rebellion of Absalom (2 Samuel 15:12). That’s what happened to Judas when his own greed drove him to partner with the devil.

After David realized that his son was seeking to kill him and take the crown, he crossed the Kidron Valley. “All the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over. The king himself also crossed over the Brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the wilderness” (2 Samuel 15:23). Those who followed David crossed the Kidron with him. When Jesus was being betrayed, He also crossed the Kidron Valley. Those loyal to Jesus crossed over with Him. “When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered” (John 18:1).

By the way, the Kidron Valley is where the blood ran during the Passover. So when Christ crossed the Kidron during Passover, He passed over the very trickle of blood flowing from the temple that represented the sacrifice He was about to make. Talk about type meeting antitype!

After Jesus crossed the Kidron, he wept as he ascended to a garden on the Mount of Olives. In His agony, He also expressed a willingness to die for His people. He purposed to do God's will. Jesus said, "Not my will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42).

Notice how David left Jerusalem after his betrayal. King David "went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot" (2 Samuel 15:30). In fact, just a few verses earlier, we read what David prayed to God in that garden: "If He says thus: 'I have no delight in you,' here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him" (2 Samuel 15:26). David was totally surrendered to the will of God, just like Jesus who prayed, "Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will" (Mark 14:36).

David wept on the Mount of Olives, concerned for the fate of Jerusalem. On another occasion, Jesus wept on the Mount of Olives over Jerusalem's ominous future (Matthew 23:37).

Showdowns and Sacrifice

There was an epic battle in Israel when Absalom gathered his army against his father David and the loyal forces of the now-aged king. In the conflict, both groups claimed to serve Jehovah. David and his mighty men divided into three groups, who went out against Absalom. The rebellious son was slain in the battle.

In Revelation you find that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit take on the threefold entity of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet. In the last days, two contradictory sides will both claim to be Christian. You'll have the beast and his image, which is a counterfeit, going against the true God and His people.

Absalom was strikingly handsome and once lived in the palace. He was the favored son of David. Lucifer, in a similar way, was beautiful from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. He rebelled against the King of the universe, leading angels into rebellion. Someday there

will be a final showdown between the devil, his angels, and the humans who follow them. They will stand against Christ and His army. The battle that took place in David's time in Israel is a parallel for this coming final battle. Who won the earlier battle? David and his forces!

Did David rejoice when Absalom was slain? "The king was deeply moved, and he went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: 'O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place. Oh, Absalom, my son, my son'" (2 Samuel 18:33). David was willing to die as a substitute in the place of his rebellious children.

Was Jesus willing to die in the place of His rebellious children and take our place? Yes. Jesus says, "I'm willing to perish that you might not perish." There will come a tragic day—just as when David heard of Absalom's death—when we will mourn those who are slain. There will be a time of deep sadness when we get to the kingdom and discover people missing who we thought would be there. But after the 1,000 years, God will wipe the tears from our eyes (Revelation 21:4).

Return of the Kings

Now let's review another important detail I don't want you to miss: David fled from Jerusalem because of the treachery of a rebellious son. Finally, there was a showdown between the forces loyal to David and those following Absalom. When this "battle of Armageddon," so to speak, was fought to reclaim the kingdom, David returned as the unchallenged king. He was a king who had been basically rejected, but a king who came back victorious. When the nation was kidnapped, some stayed behind but remained loyal to David. They were the minority. Others turned on him when it was convenient. When he came back, he rewarded those who were loyal and judged those who had been unfaithful. (See Luke 19:27.)

Because of Satan's influence, the true Son of David, Jesus, has been rejected by the world He made and redeemed. There will soon be a final battle, and He is coming back victorious to reward everyone according to their works (Revelation 22:12). Those faithful servants will live and reign with Him in the New Jerusalem. I want to be there with Him, don't you?

Faulty but Forgiven

The Bible says, “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will” (Acts 13:22). Of course, we know that the heart of Jesus was also perfectly in tune with the Father. But there is one obvious difference between Jesus and the Old Testament types of Him. Jesus never sinned or needed forgiveness. On the other hand, while David had a heart after God’s, he made many mistakes. You know about David’s affair with Bathsheba—a big failure. The Bible also tells us about David moving the ark inappropriately; someone died because of that. It also records David’s pride in numbering Israel. Once he lied and pretended to be insane, drooling on his beard and acting crazy. Despite these major transgressions, David was fully forgiven because he fully repented.

David definitely had his character flaws, but consider how God viewed him. First Kings 14:8 says, “You have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes.” When God looks back on David’s record, He says, “I only see the *good* of David, because David ended well.” More important, because of the mercy and sacrifice of Jesus, David is viewed as forgiven, victorious, and perfected.

You might stumble or fall along the way in this race, you might even have had a bad start, but you can still have a good finish. The final record that God makes regarding David says, “He followed me with all his heart.” Because David had a sacrificial love and repented of his sins, God said that David was a “man after His own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14).

There is no one else in the Bible quite like David. How often do you find an individual with such a complex character? In one picture you see David on a hill with his sheep, wistfully strumming his harp, being poetic and melancholy, and the next moment you see him on a battlefield wielding an oversized sword and hacking off a giant’s head. Then you see him sitting as a judge and administrator. Those characteristics aren’t usually found in the same person.

David was a poet, a shepherd, a soldier, a king, a judge, a builder, an administrator, and a dreamer. He had a very complex personality with many facets, but they all give us different views of Jesus, another

complex character, the true Son of David. Christ is a lion and a lamb, a shepherd, a priest, and sacrifice all wrapped up in one!

² Ellen G. White, *That I May Know Him* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing), p. 208

³ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 10

Job: Suffering in the Spirit

John Milton is considered one of the greatest English-language poets, a literary genius who wrote the classic poem “Paradise Lost.” If you want to have your mouth fall open, take the first page or two of “Paradise Lost” and read it. The profound thoughts are deep and sublime and rooted in Scripture. Besides English, Milton spoke Latin and German fluently and parts of several other languages; he was a brilliant man. This epic poem talks about the fall of man and is 186 pages long, with thousands of lines. It’s even more amazing that Milton wrote his entire piece when he was blind!

When you read the book of Job, you’re studying literature that surpasses even Milton’s “Paradise Lost.” Job is a tremendous book of poetry relating the extreme highs and lows of a godly man. It addresses suffering, justice, and the purpose of man. His unique story was likely penned by Moses while in the wilderness of Midian. It is probably the oldest book in the Bible, written before Moses penned Genesis.

How do we know? For one thing, Job lived to be more than 200 years old. God added another 140 years to his life after his great trial. The only other time in history when people lived this long was around the time of the Tower of Babel. For instance, Terah, the father of Abraham, lived for 205 years.

The book of Job talks a lot about speech. In all 42 chapters, it never makes one reference to writing. Indeed, Job lived before mankind needed to inscribe truth with the written word. During his day, people’s minds were so keen and retentive that everything was passed on verbally. They had virtually photographic memories. The book of Job is incredibly profound in its arrangement of words.

Most important, the experiences of Job mirror the life and teachings of Jesus. All through the book, you find allegories and references to Jesus’ life. It would take a long time to cover all the parallels in the

entire book, so let's consider for now some of the high points dealing with the life of Christ, particularly His sufferings. Remember that when studying "types," the counterpart or "antitype" is merely a shadow. Although it's not an exact replica, there are great similarities. As you read about Job, an antitype, everywhere you see silhouettes of Christ, the true type.

A Real Person

Job is not a fictitious character. Some people read about his lifespan, the battle between good and evil that transpires, and conclude, "It must be a fictitious allegory." But if you believe the Bible, then you must listen to what other Bible writers tell you. For instance, Ezekiel says that Job was a real person. "Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,' says the Lord GOD" (Ezekiel 14:14). Ezekiel lumps Job in with Noah and Daniel, so if you believe they were real, you should probably believe that Job also was a real person.

The book of James adds, "We count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful" (James 5:11). Thus, the New Testament also refers to Job as a real person.

The main reason I believe that Job is real is because his life mirrors the life of Jesus in marvelous ways, principally in the sufferings of Christ and the sacrifice that Jesus made. Like Melchizedek, the priest without beginning or end, we don't know where Job comes from. He suddenly appears out of history with no record of his ancestors, and then he disappears. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, but without beginning or end. He's eternal.

Servant-Kings

From the very first line of the book of Job, we discern similarities between Job and Jesus. "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil" (Job 1:1). The Bible extols the *almost*

sinlessness of Job. Job was not perfect; he was a man, and the Bible says, “All have sinned” (Romans 3:23). But he was certainly a righteous man. Of course, Christ was completely sinless. Peter says that Christ “committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth” (1 Peter 2:22).

Defending his righteousness, Job says, “My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the commandment of His lips” (Job 23:11, 12). Jesus similarly said, “I have kept My Father’s commandments” (John 15:10). In addition, Job says, “I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12). Doesn’t Jesus say, “Man will not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”? (Matthew 4:4). You can hear the echoes, can’t you?

Job and Jesus are both called servants of God. Job 2:3 tells us, “The LORD said to Satan, have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man?” Jesus is also identified as a suffering servant (Isaiah 42:1; 53:3, 4). Jesus Himself said, “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). Here we see another strong correlation between Job and Jesus.

In the life of Job, we also see many God-like characteristics. For instance, “His possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East” (Job 1:3). He was a king in his own right by the standards of the day. He was extremely wealthy. Christ is our King; He owns “the cattle on a thousand hills” (Psalm 50:10), along with the entire universe. The Bible speaks of Job as the greatest of the people of the East. Jesus is going to return from which direction? The prophecy in Revelation says He will come from the east.

Because of his awesomeness and divine-like qualities, Job was highly revered by the people of his region. “When I went out to the gate by the city, when I took my seat in the open square, the young men saw me and hid, and the aged arose and stood; the princes refrained from talking, and put their hand on their mouth” (Job 29:7–9). They had tremendous respect for him. Job also served as a judge for his people. “When the ear heard, then it blessed me, and when the eye saw, then it approved me; because I delivered the poor who cried

out, the fatherless and the one who had no helper” (Job 29:10–12). Job was also Christ-like in the way he helped others and in the way he lived. “The blessing of a perishing man came upon me, and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban” (Job 29:13, 14).

Christ wore a robe of righteousness and brought justice and help to others. Listen to how these verses about Job sound just like the work of Jesus while on earth—“I was eyes to the blind, and I was feet to the lame. I was a father to the poor, and I searched out the case that I did not know” (Job 29:15, 16). He also “broke the fangs of the wicked, and plucked the victim from his teeth” (Job 29:17). Jesus broke the fangs of the serpent. Many of these verses describe Job before his trial and sufferings. Don’t these remind you of Jesus? It’s as if you could have inserted Christ’s name in the place of Job’s because it perfectly mirrors His attributes.

Battleground

The book of Job depicts a great controversy between the forces of good and evil. It describes a day when the sons of God, leaders of unfallen worlds, go to present themselves in a celestial assembly. Satan also went uninvited; he claimed to represent this world. God said to him, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth?” (Job 1:8). In effect, God was saying, “The whole earth is not yours. I still have someone who serves and worships me down there.” Satan basically replied, “The only reason he serves you is that you’ve protected and blessed him.” (See Job 1:9–11.)

It is important to remember that God can hedge in, protect, and bless His people. Indeed, if it weren’t for the hedge of angels that the Lord has surrounding us, we’d quickly perish from the withering attacks of the devil.

Notice how the devil accuses Job before the Lord. Remember, the devil is called the “accuser of our brethren” (Revelation 12:10). At this point, God withdrew His protection from Job. I believe He did this in order to save future generations. Christ was also accused in an assembly of leaders. And we know that God withdrew protection from His beloved Son that Jesus might become our sacrifice.

You might ask, “Who is saved by Job’s sufferings? Is Job a sacrifice for sin?” No! But what I am suggesting is that God allowed Job to go through these trials so that he might become a powerful testimony to encourage hundreds of generations after him. Job teaches us about the faithfulness and love of the Lord. He shows us how to survive trials. His story reminds us how God sometimes allows the devil to trouble even good people for a redemptive purpose. “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God” (Romans 8:28).

I’m not trying to simply pique your interest by showing you bits of trivia in the similarities between Job and Jesus. What I really want you to notice is how their sufferings teach us how to approach the difficulties in life. We all have gone through trials and sufferings. In the book of Job, God pulls aside the veil; you can see the devil in the background as the accuser (Zechariah 3:1). The great controversy between good and evil is played out in the book of Job. The devil comes accusing; God defends. The devil challenges God; God takes up the challenge. The devil concentrates all the forces of hell to try to get Job to abandon his faith.

The great controversy is also being fought in your life and in your heart. When you get the victory because of your faithfulness, God says, “Have you considered my servant, [insert your name]?” When we fall, the devil points his finger and accuses, “They don’t really love you, God. They’ll curse your face as soon as they don’t get their way. You take away their money or their health, and they’ll shake their fist at you.” To some degree, the experiences of Job are acted out countless times daily around the world in the lives of God’s professed servants. I want the victory that Job had; don’t you?

Suffering in the Dump

After first being struck by financial ruin and devastated by the loss of his family, Job’s physical sufferings began. Many of his ailments were much like those experienced by Jesus. The Bible says, “So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” (Job 2:7). Perhaps you’ve seen somebody suffering through an agonizing form of cancer; it hurts to see a person writhing in pain.

One summer my dad sent me off to camp in the Florida Keys. To this day I don't know exactly what happened, but the back of my calf swelled up with a boil that was so bad—just one boil—that I remember laying in my bunk and rolling back and forth crying, “The pain, the pain, the pain.” The doctor said it looked like a spider bite, but he wasn't really sure. He lanced it and, aside from a scar, I survived.

But this was only one boil; Job was *covered* with painful, loathsome boils. They smelled and oozed. He sat down in the city dump and picked up a broken piece of pottery to scrape himself. Flies buzzed around him; they were in his eyes and wounds. That's pretty grotesque, I know, but the Bible is pretty graphic here. Job's situation actually paints a picture of the sufferings of Christ and reveals to us the ugliness of sin.

I don't want to rush past this point. Remember that Job is seated in the dump. Where were city dumps in Bible times? Typically outside the walls. Where did Christ suffer for us? “Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate” (Hebrews 13:12). They took our precious Lord “out to the dump,” so to speak, where He suffered indescribable agony.

Forsaken by Friends

Job was forsaken by his friends. They came from afar and at first supported him. But as they beheld the magnitude of his suffering and loss, their attitudes changed. They essentially said, “Anyone suffering like this must be getting what he deserves.” Job laments, “He has removed my brothers far from me, and my acquaintances are completely estranged from me. My relatives have failed, and my close friends have forgotten me” (Job 19:13, 14). His brethren in the town where he lived stopped coming to visit him. They turned from him.

Was Jesus also forsaken? We know His family often failed to be supportive. John 7:5 says, “Even His brothers did not believe in Him.” And Jesus' friends left Him in His hour of trial. “Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled” (Matthew 26:56). Even those closest to Him kept their distance in the early hours of His suffering on the cross. Luke 23:49 says, “All His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these

things.” Of course, we know that before Jesus died, the three Marys and the disciple John came to the foot of the cross, but those who knew Him best stood far off during most of the hours that He hung on the tree.

Even Job’s wife forsook him. When he was suffering in the dump, she came along and said, “Why don’t you just curse God and die?” (See Job 2:9.) Remember, all of his family had died except his wife. We can understand her anguish, but perhaps the devil spared her so she could come to Job with a final dose of discouragement and say, “Why don’t you just give up?”

Sometimes the devil uses those closest to us to dishearten us most. It doesn’t always mean they’re bad people, but it does happen. The devil even used Peter against Jesus. Peter once went to Jesus saying, “You don’t really want to die on the cross. This is not God’s plan for you.” Jesus answered, “Get behind Me, Satan” (Matthew 16:23). He said that to Peter! It didn’t mean that Peter was the devil, and it doesn’t mean your friend or family member is the devil. The enemy just tries to use those close to us to increase our stress and discouragement when we’re already down. So be patient with your relatives who do this, and don’t be a wet blanket to someone who needs your support.

Just before His sacrifice, Jesus took three of His disciples—Peter, James, and John—with Him into the garden of Gethsemane. He then began to be troubled and deeply grieved (Mark 14:33). He asked Peter, James, and John to pray with Him. They started to pray for Him but then lost interest. While Jesus was agonizing and sweating blood, His friends went to sleep. They ultimately turned away from Him, left Him, and denied Him. How many friends came to “help” Job? There were three of them, and they were almost as helpful as the three disciples of Christ.

Here’s an interesting translation of something Job said to his friends: “You would even cast lots for the orphans, and barter over your friend” (Job 6:27 NASB). Did they cast lots around Jesus? Did Judas “barter” Him for 30 pieces of silver? Job knew how Jesus felt.

Falsely Accused

Job is falsely accused of evil. Though he is a perfect and upright man, what did they say about him? In Job 22:5, his friend says, “Is not your wickedness great, and your iniquity without end?” That was the very opposite of God’s testimony about Job.

Was Jesus falsely accused of evil? The Bible says,

“Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, ‘This fellow said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days”’” (Matthew 26:59–61).

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, the people said, “The reason you’re suffering is because of your wickedness. God has abandoned you.” (See Matthew 27:39–43.)

We don’t know how long Job suffered in the dump. It might have been weeks. It’s hard to imagine going through that kind of suffering for a long period of time. But things changed drastically in the way people treated him. When things were going well, Job was so highly respected that people stood up for him when he walked by. Now, instead of expressing pity or compassion, they said, “God has forsaken you,” and they spat on him. “They abhor me, they keep far from me; they do not hesitate to spit in my face” (Job 30:10).

In Matthew 26:67, we read of Christ, “Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands.” Have you ever had anyone deliberately spit in your face? It happened to me once, and it’s a horrible feeling. You never forget something like that. Finally, Job says, “They gape at me with their mouth, they strike me reproachfully on the cheek” (Job 16:10). In one messianic prophecy in the Old Testament, it says of Christ, “They gape at Me with their mouths” (Psalm 22:13). And, of course, Jesus was struck on the cheek many times: “And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face” (Luke 22:64).

Seemingly Abandoned

Furthermore, Job felt abandoned by God. Job 13:24 says, “Why do You hide Your face, and regard me as Your enemy?” And in Job 30:20, he laments, “I cry to You, but You do not answer me.” When

Jesus hung on the cross, He called out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Mark 15:34).

Have you ever felt abandoned by God? As we look at the sufferings of Christ and Job, we must remember that as Christians we will also suffer when we follow Jesus. We also experience persecution. There will be dark days when we will be tested. God will seemingly withdraw that hedge of protection and we will wonder, “What have I done? Why is this happening to me?”

I’ve gone to visit people in the hospital and, word for word, that’s what they have said: “Doug, why is God doing this to me?” They feel abandoned. One such person was a church member I’d known for years who was suffering from shingles. He was over 100 years old, and this was his final illness. When I got to his hospital room, I saw a strange man shriveled up in the bed, writhing in agony. I went back out and asked the nurse where they had taken my friend. They assured me, “That’s his room.” I went back in and looked at him, and I didn’t even recognize him. I felt so sorry for him, and I remember holding his hand as he was suffering. He kept saying the same thing, “Why won’t the Lord let me die?”

This kind of suffering doesn’t mean God doesn’t love us; it means there is a devil out there who hates us. Why does God allow us to go through pain and trials? It’s through constant irritation that an oyster produces a pearl. It’s through pressure and heat that a lump of coal turns into a diamond. It’s through fiery trials that God purifies His church. It’s the hot iron and hot water that get the wrinkles out of the garment, the wedding dress of God’s bride.

In the books of 1 and 2 Peter, you can read more about why God allows suffering. Our characters are purified through these things, but He never withdraws His love. If you suffer, it doesn’t mean Jesus doesn’t love you. He still loved Job. The Father still loved His Son. But they suffered nonetheless for the greater benefit of others.

Ridiculed in Suffering

Job says, “God has delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over to the hands of the wicked” (Job 16:11). Christ was likewise turned over to the hands of the wicked, a demon-possessed mob, in

fact. After Jesus' trial, Pilate "delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away" (John 19:16). A major part of Jesus' suffering happened before He ever got to the cross, when the mob got hold of Him.

Was Jesus physically disfigured? Isaiah's prophecy about Christ says, "Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" (Isaiah 52:14). Christ was so mercilessly abused that He was barely recognizable. When Job's friends first came to mourn with him, the Scripture says, "When they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept" (Job 2:12).

Job was stripped of his clothing. After his physical suffering began, he tore his robes. He went out to the dump and removed his clothes so he could scrape his boils. He prayed, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).

The Scripture says of Christ, "They stripped Him" (Matthew 27:28). At the cross, Roman soldiers gambled for His clothing. John 19:24 says, "They said therefore among themselves, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,' that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: 'They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.'" They took everything away from Jesus to make it even more humiliating for Him.

Job 16:20 says, "My friends scorn me; my eyes pour out tears to God." Later Job says, "I am their taunting song; yes, I am their byword" (Job 30:9). He's talking about being ridiculed. The people mocked Job, saying, "Job, if you're so righteous, why doesn't God help you?"

In the Psalms we find this prophecy about Christ: "All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 'He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him'" (Psalm 22:7, 8). Jesus was bitterly mocked during His sufferings.

"Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, "I am the Son of God"' (Matthew 27:41-43).

Christians who go through trials sometime feel embarrassed because they think, “If I’m doing everything right, God will prosper me financially. If I follow the Bible’s health principles, He will take care of me physically.” Yet sometimes Christians lose their wealth, health, friends, and jobs. They feel confused and discouraged and think, “Lord, when the lost out there see my suffering, how can I tell people how wonderful it is to be a Christian?”

In reality, God’s people are often better witnesses when they go through suffering. Where is Christ the greatest witness? Isn’t it at the cross? If you suffer patiently, it speaks powerfully to those who are watching you. Sometimes I have come away from hospital rooms with my faith strengthened by the unshakable faith of suffering saints. They say, “God knows why this is happening. I trust Him.”

When you go through trials, don’t be embarrassed and think God has abandoned you. Say, “Lord, how can I be a witness for you through this trial?” Like Noah, Joseph, and Job, we’re not always saved *from* the storm; we are often saved *through* the storm. It is through many tribulations that we enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). In every trial you go through, remember that God is either using it to refine you or to reach others through your experience ... and sometimes both.

Classed with Sinners

Job was identified with the wicked. “What man is like Job, who drinks scorn like water, who goes in company with the workers of iniquity, and walks with wicked men?” (Job 34:7, 8). What about Jesus? In His ministry, He was criticized for associating with “sinners.” “The Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them’” (Luke 15:2). They even accused Him of working for the wrong side: “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons” (Matthew 9:34).

Even as He gave Himself in sacrifice for us, Jesus was crucified between two thieves. These men were rebellious co-conspirators with the murderer Barabbas (Matthew 27:38). Thus, in His death, He was identified with sinners: “They made His grave with the wicked” (Isaiah 53:9).

Job said, “He has stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head” (Job 19:9). Did Jesus lay aside His glory and crown when He came to earth? Hebrews 2:9 says, “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.” Further, Christ “made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:7, 8).

Dark Moments, Ultimate Trust

There are moments of intense darkness in both the story of Job and of Jesus. Job 10:21, 22 says, “Before I go to the place from which I shall not return, to the land of darkness and the shadow of death, a land as dark as darkness itself, as the shadow of death, without any order, where even the light is like darkness.” Notice the three times the word “darkness” is mentioned.

When Christ was in Gethsemane, it was dark. The next day when Jesus was on the cross, when the sun should have been shining, the sky became dark. Matthew 27:45 says, “From the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.” This was supernatural darkness, not as when clouds obscure the sun, but something like the thick darkness that came upon Egypt during the plagues—an eerie, unnatural darkness as the righteous suffer. And when Christ died and was laid in the tomb, it was the darkness of death. Have you had some dark days when the light of God seems totally eclipsed? Remember that the sun does not cease to shine on cloudy days and God does not stop loving you even when all feels gloomy and dark.

I love the comparison between Job’s and Jesus’ victorious faith as you approach the end of the book. There are times when Job’s faith vacillates; you can see he’s thinking, “Why why why?” But his faith prevails triumphantly as he declares: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15). No matter what happened, Job hung on. Jesus asked as well, “Why have You forsaken Me?” But Christ prevailed on the cross. He cried out, saying, “Father, into Your hands I commit My

spirit” (Luke 23:46). At that moment, He knew His mission was complete. It is the greatest triumph ever.

Merciful Mediators

When you near the end of the book of Job, you see the tide turning. A great discourse occurs between God and Job. The Lord speaks audibly to Job, just as He did with Christ. Then God proclaims that Job is innocent and that his friends are wrong.

Have you ever had an hour of need when your friends left you hanging? Sometimes it’s the end of a friendship. Let’s face it: If our friends let us down, we’ll often say, “Forget you. I really needed you. I don’t want you as a friend anymore.” That’s not what Job did. He not only forgave his friends, but he interceded for them. He became their intercessor. Jesus likewise intercedes with God for us, who are responsible for His death. He is our intercessor.

Furthermore, Job serves as a mediator-priest. In the beginning of the book, we find him offering sacrifices for his family. Job 1:4, 5, tells us that his sons would visit together and celebrate with feasts. After the feasting, Job would offer a sacrifice in case they had gotten carried away and dismissed God in their hearts. At the end of the book, he even offers a sacrifice for his friends. God tells Job’s friends,

“Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has” (Job 42:8).

It is through the name of Job that his friends are forgiven. Isn’t that just like Christ? Jesus is our intercessor. He prays on our behalf, “Father forgive them, they know not what they do.” We pray to God, but we do it in Christ’s name. It is through the merits of Christ that we are forgiven. Romans 8:34 says, “Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

Defeating the Leviathan

We find another fascinating detail at the end of the book of Job. In

the beginning, Job doesn't understand what's going on. He's blind-sided by all the plagues—losing his family, his wealth, his health. He says, “Why has God done this to me?” But by the end of the book, God shows him who is really behind all the trouble.

The Lord talks about the creation, about birds and bees, but suddenly, in Job 41, after all that has happened, God dedicates an entire chapter to a serpent monster called “leviathan.” Why? Who is this scaled creature? “Out of his mouth go burning lights; sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke goes out of his nostrils, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes” (Job 41:19, 20). “He beholds every high thing; he is king over all the children of pride” (v. 34).

Who do you think the leviathan represents? Who is king over the children of pride? Here's the key:

“In that day the LORD with His severe sword [the Word of God], great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; and He will slay the reptile that is in the sea” (Isaiah 27:1).

Sound familiar? Revelation 12 speaks of this dragon. “And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon” (v. 3). Revelation 12:9 says, “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan.” In Revelation 13, a horrible beast with seven heads and ten horns comes up out of the sea and is given power by the dragon. So there is a pattern for describing Satan—a dragon, serpent, and leviathan—who comes out of the sea.

Some believe the leviathan was a sea creature that's now extinct. Scholars widely disagree on this point. Others say it's a giant crocodile; still others say it might have been some prehistoric creature. Nobody really knows. But it is described as an enormous sea monster that no fisherman could ever catch or tame.

God tells Job, “You can't defeat Leviathan without Me. He's the one who is behind your suffering. He's the one who brought fire down from heaven and burnt up your crops, who destroyed your family, and who sent your sickness. By yourself, you can't defeat the devil.” The Lord's ultimate message is, “I am the One who can destroy Leviathan, the king of pride, from your heart and someday from the universe.” And don't forget God's prediction to John: “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone” (Revelation 20:10).

Resurrected Hope

Another beautiful facet in the story of Job is the lesson to hang on and have patience. In the end, Job is doubly blessed. In a sense, he goes through a type of resurrection. First we see him in the dump. He's lost everything, covered with boils, and literally dying. It looks terminal. Then after his intense suffering, God heals him and restores all of his wealth with interest. Job receives twice as much as he had before. Plus, he lives another 140 years beyond that experience.

Likewise, Christ suffers and dies, but He rises from the grave. Job's health is returned to him double. Jesus' glory is also returned, and then He ascends to heaven. Job's friends even return to Him. Everything comes back to both Jesus and Job. Just as the book of Job ends on a happy note, so does the story of the gospel.

When you consider the scope of Job's life, how long did his trials last out of the 200 years he lived? Maybe a few weeks? If we compare our average episodes of suffering in this life with eternity, they aren't equal. Our trials cannot match the glory, joy, happiness, blessing, and riches that God will give us for all eternity.

The book of Job is not a sad book. It's a deep account with heavy experiences. It begins by speaking about a perfect man and ends talking about a happy, blessed man. In between, we see God's blessing and protection. The devil attacked Job, but the righteous man clung to his faith. In the end, he is blessed forever.

Our world started out perfect until the devil got involved and brought in a period of suffering. But then Jesus stepped into the picture. He lived a perfect life, suffered on our behalf, and now intercedes for us. We know now it will all end well with "a new heaven and earth" (Revelation 21:1).

The sufferings of Job and Jesus are worth reflecting on. The Bible warns us that it is through tribulation we enter the kingdom of God. The church has gone through many trials, but the Bible speaks of a great tribulation called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7). Daniel 12 explains that when Michael stands up, there will be "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time" (verse 1). Christ says, speaking of that time of trouble, "He who endures to the end shall be saved" (Mark 13:13).

As you read the story of Job, God invites you to have the faith of Job. When he lost his friends, his family, his people, his money—everything—all he had was his God. Everybody is going to experience, to some degree, the same isolation that Jesus and Job experienced. At some point, we might have every earthly support removed so that all we have left to lean on is Christ. You won't be hanging on to a little bit here or a little bit there; the only thing you're going to be able to rest your faith on is Jesus.

Second Timothy 3:12 says, "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." If we resolve to live holy lives, you and I will be attacked. You might be going through an attack right now. Don't give up your faith. Remember this verse, "Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful" (James 5:11).

There's a blessing to be found in every trial, so don't be discouraged. Hang on as Job did and you'll come forth on the other side. One day God will speak to you face-to-face, just as He talked with Job. Your character will be purified; your nature will be like Christ's. And in the end, we win over the Leviathan.

I see Jesus so clearly in the book of Job. To me it really is holy ground. Job's story profoundly expresses Christ's love for us through the sufferings He endured. Jesus took the disease and loss caused by all our sins on Himself. It brought Jesus down into darkness and pain. Christ chose to be cast outside into the "dump," so to speak, because He loves us so much. The intense humiliation, wretchedness, and trauma we deserve He placed upon Himself. He doesn't want us to be in torment for even a moment. I trust a God like that; don't you?

CHAPTER 11

Elijah: Prophet of Fire and Rain

“We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

I remember as a kid growing up in New York City having a number of celebrity sightings. I was awed when I crossed paths with Ed Sullivan one day; my family watched his popular program every week, and there he was in the flesh. Another time I stared speechless when I went into a dressing room in a Manhattan clothing store and ran into Ringo Starr from the Beatles. (I couldn't believe he had to actually try on his clothes like everyone else.) I once met the “secret agent” Robert Vaughn (*The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*) in an elevator and panhandled from Sonny Bono in Palm Springs. I couldn't wait to tell my friends, “Guess who I saw!” Seeing some renowned personality is admittedly exciting.

Yet how much more exciting it is to have a “Jesus sighting.” If someone were to ask me “Have you ever seen God?” I think I might actually be tempted to say “yes.” Let me quickly clarify—I have had no glorious burning revelations of the Almighty. I would describe them to be more like little flashing epiphanies. I don't mean like some tourist in Scotland who confuses a floating log with the Loch Ness Monster either. My experiences have been more like pulling up to a traffic signal and looking at the passenger in the car beside you. Suddenly you recognize a friend. You know it's them, but then the light changes and they're gone.

If you've had this experience, you know what I'm talking about. It's something like the two discouraged disciples walking on the dusty road to Emmaus when a stranger joins them. After they invite Him to their home, their eyes are opened and they realize *it is Jesus*. Then He disappears. Or like when King Nebuchadnezzar springs from his throne because he briefly sees one like the Son of God walking among the flames of the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:25).

Well, I especially have had frequent “Jesus sightings” while reading the Old Testament. It’s like the rotating beam of a lighthouse, which illuminates a ship on the water. I see Jesus consistently flash through the lives of Bible heroes as they sail by. Paul once explained that we now only see a glimpse of the Lord “through a glass, darkly” (1 Corinthians 13:12 KJV), but someday soon we will see Him face to face.

Elijah

Did you know there are three prophets now in the presence of God? Elijah is one of them. (The other two are Enoch and Moses, whom we’ve already discussed.) There are many similarities between Elijah and Jesus. For instance, both performed many miracles and both had a ministry that reached to the Gentiles. As we now look at this renowned prophet, I trust you’ll see many more interesting comparisons.

About 20 chapters in the Bible deal with Elijah and his replacement Elisha, from 1 Kings 17 all the way to 2 Kings 13. The Scriptures tell about the lives, miracles, and adventures of this incredible prophetic team. Elijah and Elisha were like relay racers with a baton to pass. There was actually a bit of overlap between their ministries. In the next chapter, we’ll look at Elisha, but let’s now turn our attention to the life of Elijah.

The last prophecy in the Old Testament says, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet” (Malachi 4:5). Before John the Baptist was born, an angel said that he would come in the spirit and the power of Elijah. Actually, before John, someone else received a double portion of Elijah’s spirit—Elisha. He was the first one to come in the spirit and power of Elijah. John the Baptist came later. Would anyone else come in the spirit and power of Elijah?

After the transfiguration on the mountain, when Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ, the disciples asked Jesus about Elijah. Christ said, “Elijah is coming.” Did this mean the past, present, or future? Follow the different time frames mentioned by Jesus in this passage:

“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Indeed, Elijah *is* coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah *has come* already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man *is also about to* suffer at their

hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist” (Matthew 17:11–13, my emphasis).

Jesus confirms that John the Baptist was the one who came in the spirit and power of Elijah. But there is a future example too. Christ said, “What they did to John, they’re about to do to Me.” So there are parallels between the lives of Elijah and John the Baptist and Jesus. All of them brought a strong message of revival, and all were persecuted for that message.

Fearless Before Rulers

Like Jesus, Elijah was fearless when talking with people—whether commoners, priests, or kings. The first time Elijah appears in Scripture, he marched right into the presence of King Ahab. Somehow he got through the security forces surrounding the king; that was quite impressive since ancient kings were heavily guarded, as one could assassinate a king if he could get close enough. If you had a gift to bring to the king, you had to stop 50 paces from him, had your gift examined, and then they’d show it to the king. If you tried to get too close to the king, the bodyguards would violently stop you.

It was pretty miraculous that Elijah passed right through the royal security. Jesus also had the ability to slip through a crowd without being detected, such as the time when an angry mob was about to push Him over a cliff (Luke 4:28–30). Standing boldly before the king, Elijah pronounced, “As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word” (1 Kings 17:1). After this abrupt declaration, while they were all in a stunned stupor, Elijah somehow slipped out and they couldn’t find him, even though they searched the whole country. Leaders could not trap Jesus either, until His time came to be placed in their hands.

Ministering to Gentiles

From the time of Elijah’s declaration to Ahab, there followed three-and-a-half years of drought and famine. During this period God miraculously provided for His prophet. For a while Elijah camped by a brook and was fed by ravens. Then God directed Elijah to go to Zarephath, the region around Tyre, and stay with a Gentile woman, a

widow, who would take care of him. What does this woman represent? The Gentile church.

Christ began a new ministry after He returned to heaven, a message that went beyond the Jews to the Gentiles. As a matter of fact, by the end of the first century, there were more Gentiles reading the Bible than Jews. A transition happened. The gospel now went to this Gentile bride.

Elijah first met this Gentile woman at the gate of the city. She was gathering sticks for a fire. They were in the midst of a famine, which had gone on for years, so nobody had any food. Elijah called to her, “Can you please get me a drink of water?” Jesus also asked a Gentile woman for a drink of water (John 4:7). As the woman was going to get his drink of water, Elijah added, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand” (1 Kings 17:11).

She replied, “As the LORD your God lives”—she could tell from his attire that he was a prophet—“I’m gathering a couple of sticks right now, and I’m going to make my last meal, and my son and I are going to die, because all we’ve got is one handful of flour in the bottom of the barrel. And we’ve got a little bit of oil to make the bread, and that’s all we have.” (See 1 Kings 17:12.) Have you heard the expression, “scraping the bottom of the barrel”? That’s where it comes from.

This widow was beyond despair. She believed she and her son would soon die. But Elijah said, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son.” That would take a lot of faith, but Elijah promises, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth’” (vv. 13, 14).

I find it interesting that Jesus also performed a miracle for a Gentile woman in the same territory of Tyre. Remember the woman whose daughter was afflicted with a demon? Christ said, “It’s not appropriate to give the children’s bread to the dogs.” But the woman wouldn’t give up. She responded, “Even the dogs get the crumbs that fall from the children’s table.” Jesus told her, “Great is your faith,” and He healed her daughter (Matthew 15:21–28).

This was an analogy of how Christ was going to break the insulation

around the Jewish nation and take the gospel to the Gentiles. Whoever believes in Christ becomes a child of Abraham. This also comes through in the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well.

Multiplying the Bread

Through Elijah, the Gentile woman was supplied with the ingredients to make life-sustaining bread that did not run out. Christ also multiplied bread miraculously. In that instance, did He tell the disciples, “Take that little boy’s bread and give it to the people”? No, He said, “Bring it to Me first.” When they did, Jesus blessed it, and then the miracle happened. We should also bring our bread to Jesus, whether it’s the bread you have in your wallet or purse or the bread of the Word of God. When you study your Bible each morning, pray, “Lord, this is just ink on paper unless You perform a miracle and multiply it and feed my soul.”

Have you ever had a meal on your plate and said, “I’m enjoying this food so much that I’m going to eat only half of it”? After eating the first half, you might turn around and say, “Oh, it’s still so good. I’m going to cut the second half and also make it two.” That’s sort of what the woman of Zarephath did. She kept reaching in for only half of the flour, but it was always enough. It never got to the end until the rain came. We see the power of Elijah foreshadowing the power of Christ to multiply bread. For the remainder of that famine, every day the woman took the wooden lid off that barrel, and when she reached in, there was more flour.

While Elijah was staying with this widow, her son suddenly died from an unknown illness. Elijah carried the boy to the upper room and fervently prayed. The boy resurrected (1 Kings 17:17–22). Jesus also resurrected the son of a widow (Luke 7:11–16).

Here’s a final thought on this hospitable lady. Elijah stayed with this Gentile woman and her family because he was being hunted and had no place of his own. Jesus once said, “The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Matthew 8:20). Yet Christ did find refuge in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus because He also had no place of His own.

Fire and Rain

Jesus was not afraid to confront false prophets and priests. In fact, it sealed His doom when He said, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” (Matthew 23:13). Elijah also confronted false prophets on Mount Carmel. They plastered his name on a wanted poster. Jezebel, the wicked queen, threatened his life, and her army scoured the land searching for him.

When Elijah gathered everybody on Mount Carmel for that big divine showdown, he said, “Come near to me” (1 Kings 18:30). So the people came near to him. There was a revival as a result. Jesus says, “Come to Me ... and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). With Elijah and Jesus, there’s a great victory on the mountain.

There was a face-off on Mount Carmel between the true God and the counterfeit god. In Jesus’ day religious leaders substituted the truth with a counterfeit gospel. Christ constantly had to say, “You have heard that it was said ..., but I say to you ...” (Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43). They had completely distorted the truth with man-made laws and traditions. Jesus pulled all that aside, and they hated Him for it. It led to a big showdown on a mountain.

Elijah’s confrontation took place on Mount Carmel when the fire of God fell and accepted his sacrifice. Christ’s was on Mount Calvary. When Jesus said, “It is finished,” the Father accepted the sacrifice of His Son. It was a tremendous victory.

God’s presence was seen when Elijah prayed on the mountain; the heavens parted and fire came down. After years of drought, Elijah prayed again and there was a great rain. Fire and rain come down for Jesus as well. After three-and-a-half years of Christ’s ministry, He promised that God would send the Holy Spirit to the disciples (John 14 and 17). It was a great rain, and the disciples were baptized with tongues of fire. “Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God’” (John 3:5).

There’s another correlation with the coming rain. Do you recall how Elijah ran from persecution after the rain came? In the same way, after Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on the church at Pentecost, it launched the believers into a time of running from persecution (Acts

2:1-4).

Fed by Angels

One day, when Elijah was exhausted from running and was feeling depressed, an angel brought him water and special food. A lot of research is done for triathlon athletes to answer the question, “What is the best diet for having the greatest endurance?” They ought to find out what that angel fed Elijah! “He went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God” (1 Kings 19:8). And there God spoke to him. Jesus was also in the wilderness and fasted for 40 days and 40 nights, and after He defeated temptation, an angel came and ministered to Him and fed Him.

Passing the Baton

After the victory at Mount Carmel, Elijah was threatened by Jezebel and ran all the way to Mount Horeb. Here God not only revealed Himself to Elijah—remember the earthquake, fire, and still small voice?—but also instructed him to go and anoint his replacement. He was to pass the baton to a young man, the wealthy son of a farming family. His name was Elisha. The Bible says Elijah “found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth” (1 Kings 19:19).

Elijah’s call to Elisha would mean that the latter would forsake his livelihood and give himself completely to God’s prophetic work. Let’s try to picture what Elisha was asked to give up as a farmer. Today, a big John Deere tractor could easily cost \$200,000. Some of the giant, triple-wheeled machines are so large they can pull 30 or more feet of plow equipment behind them. Inside those big rigs are GPS units, air conditioners, and even televisions. The farmer just relaxes, watches TV, and at the end of the rows the GPS autopilot turns the unit around for the farmer. That’s how they get those perfect lines.

Back in Bible times, most farmers typically had one mule to pull a plow. If you had a pair of oxen, you were wealthy. If you had 12 pair of oxen—a John Deere in Bible times—you were very wealthy. So Elisha’s family was well off, yet he was a very spiritual young man. On the other hand, Elijah was so poor that he lived out by a creek and

was fed by ravens. He didn't have a lot. But the old prophet came along and said to the young man, "Look, because you love the Lord, I've got good news—you get to follow me, but you must leave all of this behind."

Isn't that what Jesus did with the apostles? He said, "Are you willing to leave your family business, your father's boats and nets? Follow me, and I'll teach you to fish for men." Elijah did with Elisha the same thing that Jesus did with Andrew, Peter, James, John, and Matthew. To Matthew, Jesus said, "Leave your tax booth with all your money and follow me."

Elijah gave Elisha a sign of his calling by casting his mantle over the young man's shoulders. Have you ever heard the expression "the mantle fell upon him"? It means someone else is now the successor. It comes from this story. It meant to Elisha, "God has chosen you to train as an apprentice and follow after me. You're to do my work and finish what I've started." Christ first called and then trained others to carry on His work for Him after He returned to heaven. The mantle of Elijah is also like a robe; in a sense, it can represent the righteousness of Christ that empowers us to fulfill His mission.

Innocent Man Murdered

In another story involving Elijah, found in 1 Kings 21, we read of a good man, Naboth, who lived in Samaria. He owned a beautiful vineyard not far from the king's palace. King Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard, but according to Jewish law, it was to go to Naboth's posterity; it wasn't to change hands between the tribes. So when Ahab said, "Hey, I'd like to buy your vineyard," Naboth replied, "Your Highness, you know I'd like to help, but the law of Moses says this is to go to my descendants; it stays with our tribe, and I can't sell it to you."

Covetous Ahab was furious and frustrated. He wanted it and couldn't stop thinking about it. So with the help of Jezebel, he orchestrated a scheme to get false witnesses to accuse Naboth of blaspheming God, religion, and government. They took him out of the city and executed him. An innocent man was killed so that they could seize his vineyard.

What does the vineyard represent? In Isaiah [chapter 5](#), we're told that it is a symbol for the people of Israel. Jesus even told a parable about a stolen vineyard and a son of the real owner—representing Christ—who is killed, paralleling what happened to Naboth (Matthew 21:33–40). After the crime, Elijah confronted King Ahab and told him, “You’re going to suffer the same fate as Naboth, because you killed an innocent man.” Naboth, who was falsely accused and killed outside the city, is a type of Christ in Elijah’s pronouncement.

Carried by Angels

One of the greatest miracles in Elijah’s life was the manner in which he ascended to heaven. Second Kings 2:1 says, “It came to pass ... the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind.” Christ once told His disciples, “I’ll not always be with you; I’m going away.” They asked, “Where are you going?” Christ warned them in advance that He would be ascending to heaven (John 14:1–5).

Elijah also told Elisha and his other disciples in advance, “I’m going away” (2 Kings 2:9). Elisha travelled with him as Elijah made his final visits. In Gilgal, he taught the people the Word because he was about to ascend. From Gilgal they traveled to Bethel, then on to Jericho. And then Elijah went down toward the Jordan. He stopped at different locations to visit and strengthen all the sons of the prophets before he ascended to heaven.

After Christ rose from the dead, He visited the disciples on different occasions and places to strengthen them in the Word before He ascended to heaven. He then sent them His Spirit. Not too many people have ascended to heaven miraculously, but Jesus and Elijah did.

Finally, Elijah went to the Jordan River, which is a symbol of death. What comes to mind when you think of the Jordan? Baptism is a symbol of death, burial, and resurrection. How do most people get from this life to the other side? They go through death. Before the children of Israel went into the Promised Land, they had to cross the Jordan River. Before most people are going to get to the heavenly Promised Land, they’ve got to go through the Jordan.

When Elijah came to the edge of the river, he took off his mantle

and struck the water with it. The river parted miraculously, and Elijah and Elisha went over on dry ground, meaning they didn't get muddy. They went over and came up clean on the other side. In the same way, like the robe of Elijah, it's only the righteousness of Christ that makes it possible for us to cross over death and be clean on the other side.

Return of the Elijah Message

Will Elijah come again before Christ's coming? Are there "last-day Elijahs" God is sending to prepare a people for crossing over to the Promised Land? For one thing, the Bible teaches there are going to be 12 times 12,000 last-day apostles, called the 144,000 (Revelation 14:1). I think there is going to be another army of Elijahs in earth's final days. Indeed, God says Elijah will come again. There is more than one application of these prophetic words:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse" (Malachi 4:5, 6).

Before the seven last plagues sweep across the world, God is going to send the final Elijah message. In the same way John the Baptist came to prepare the world for Jesus' first coming, God is going to have an army of Elijahs and John the Baptists to prepare the world for the second coming of Jesus. Some of them are likely walking the earth right now.

Mantles Left Behind

After Elijah and Elisha crossed the Jordan River, they walked and talked together in the same way that Jesus did with the disciples before ascending to heaven.

"So it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, 'Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?' Elisha said, 'Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.' So he said, 'You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so'" (2 Kings 2:9, 10).

As they continued walking along into the wilderness and talking together, suddenly the heavens were parted, chariots and horses of fire came down, and a whirlwind took Elijah up to heaven. As Elisha was watching, he fell down on the ground and exclaimed, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” (v. 12).

Elisha saw Elijah go up. We must likewise see Jesus lifted up before we can be filled with His Spirit. Christ said, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself” (John 12:32). And what fell down from Elijah as he went up? His mantle; his robe. What’s the only thing that Jesus left behind intact when He ascended to heaven? His blood-stained robe, a symbol of His righteousness provided to cover our sin.

Elijah also had a son—an adopted son, you might say—in Elisha. Consider these points: What did Elisha ask for before his master ascended to heaven? A double portion of Elijah’s spirit. Was he being greedy? Actually, the Jews were required to give their firstborn sons a double portion of their inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17). Elisha walked away from his earthly parents, his earthly inheritance, and said, “Elijah, I want the only inheritance you can give me; I want your spirit.” They had a father-son relationship. That’s why, when Elijah went to heaven, Elisha said, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horseman therefore!”

In the lives of these two Spirit-filled prophets, you see the love of the father for the son and the son for the father. How willing was Elijah to give his spirit to Elisha? How willing is Jesus to give His Spirit to you? How much does our heavenly Father love us in that He gave His Son? “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13).

The book of James tells us that Elijah was a man subject to the same passions as you and me. He struggled and wrestled with sin and temptation just like we do. And yet he prayed, and the heavens held their rain for three-and-a-half years. He prayed again, and the rain came pouring down. That leads me to think that you and I could pray for the rain to come down. I’m not talking about easing a local drought; I’m speaking about the Holy Spirit. God will send the rain if we ask. The same God who heard the prayers of Elijah and Elisha will hear our prayers. “Ask the Lord for rain in the time of the latter rain.

The Lord will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, grass in the field for everyone” (Zechariah 10:1).

“We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

CHAPTER 12

Elisha: A Man of Miracles

I've always enjoyed looking through kaleidoscopes. It's still fun for me to adjust it back and forth and look at beautiful images that form in multiple facets of light, especially when you aim at an object with lots of color and interesting shapes. Though the picture is somewhat fragmented by the kaleidoscope, it is still dazzling to the eye.

The Old Testament presents a kaleidoscope of Jesus. Wherever you look, it's not an exact representation, but there are many beautiful pictures of Christ, facets of His character and sacrifice. We've just considered a few of the many ways in which Elijah is a shadow of Jesus; now let's look more specifically at his Spirit-filled replacement, Elisha.

God Saves

As the fiery chariot carried away the prophet Elijah, Elisha fell to his knees and tore his clothing, signifying that "we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). In the brightness of the heavenly escort, he felt his own unworthiness. But after the chariot had faded away, Elisha took up the mantle of his predecessor. What do we do when we accept the righteousness of Christ? We admit that we're sinful, that "all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags." We then put on the robe of Christ.

What was the condition on which Elisha would receive the double portion of Elijah's spirit? He had to see Elijah ascend. Scripture says, "Elisha saw it" (2 Kings 2:12). The disciples also saw Jesus ascend into the clouds. And of what did those clouds consist? Psalm 104:3, 4 says, "He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, Who makes the clouds His chariot, Who walks on the wings of the wind, Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire." Many Bible translations agree that it says, "Angels, clouds, fire, chariot." Those clouds of light the disciples saw receiving Jesus were angels.

In the Old Testament, writers referred to clouds of angels as chariots and horses of fire. Of course, angels are not galloping around on horses as they go to and from the earth. In Bible times, chariots pulled by horses were the fastest and most powerful transportation they had, so it was an apt symbol for angels. It was a band of these heavenly beings that came to take Elijah up, and it was also a shining band of angels that came to receive Jesus.

By the way, Jesus' name in Hebrew is "Yahshua," which means "Jehovah saves." Elisha's name in Hebrew is "Elshua," which means "Elohim, God saves." Elisha's name and Jesus' name are very similar. And so were their amazing lives.

The Double Portion

Did Elisha get a double portion of Elijah's spirit? Yes. He took up the mantle of Elijah, struck the water of the Jordan River, and it parted (2 Kings 2:14). The sons of the prophets saw Elisha and responded, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha" (v. 15). Fast-forward to the time when the apostles stood before the Sanhedrin. What did people say about them? "They realized that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). They were so Spirit-filled that others saw Christ in their lives. The Spirit of Jesus rested on the apostles after Pentecost.

In the same way, if you and I follow Jesus the way Elisha followed Elijah, if we say, "As surely as the Lord lives, I'm not going to leave You, I'm not going to forsake You," He will likewise never leave us. Elijah said to Elisha, "You can stay here, but I've got to go." But Elisha responded with a vow, "I'm not going to leave you." Because Elisha faithfully stuck with Elijah, he received a double portion of Elijah's spirit.

Who are the ones to be baptized with the Holy Spirit in the last days? Will it be those who half-heartedly go to church when it's convenient—or the ones who are sticking close to the Lord? Followers who are passionately connected to Christ will receive the baptism of the Spirit when that latter rain comes. It will happen in the same way God baptized Elisha with a double portion of the Spirit and just as the former rain was poured out on the apostles at Pentecost.

God is surely going to send the latter rain in the last days, but not

everybody will receive it. The sons of the prophets who stayed on the other side of the Jordan and watched from a distance—they did not gain a double portion. As Elisha went through the Jordan with Elijah, so also must we pass through the waters that symbolize death to self. As Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ” (Galatians 2:20). We must die and be buried with Jesus; we must see Him “lifted up,” then we will be filled with the Holy Spirit. The symbolism here is very strong. After Elijah and Jesus ascended to heaven, the Spirit came down.

Water Miracles

As Elisha began his ministry, the sons of the prophets decided to build a new school. They asked Elisha to go with them. “And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees” (2 Kings 6:4). As one of the men was chopping down a tree, the axe head flew off and splashed in the Jordan River, sinking to the bottom. The young man “cried out and said, ‘Alas, master! For it was borrowed’” (v. 5). *What am I going to do? I don’t have money to buy another one.* “The man of God said, ‘Where did it fall?’ And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float. Therefore he said, ‘Pick it up for yourself’” (vv. 6, 7).

Have you ever seen iron float? There’s a lot of iron floating in San Francisco Bay—all those mothballed Navy ships. But in Bible times, they didn’t have iron ships. Iron did not float. So in this incident, we see something floating on water that’s not supposed to float on water.

It’s also interesting that Elisha threw in a stick. That’s what Moses did to make the waters of Marah sweet. In both cases, that piece of wood was a symbol of the cross. What provides power to do the impossible—for iron to float and bitter waters to become sweet? It’s the power of the cross.

There are other miracles involving water in Elisha’s life. One occurred at the ancient spring of Jericho. I’ve actually drunk from that spring; it’s still flowing there today and irrigates the city of Jericho. When I was young and would go riding around in the desert in the summer with my buddies, sometimes we’d get thirsty and go look for springs. We knew to take a small taste of the water first, because some of those springs tasted like sulfur or were poisonous.

In Elisha's day, the Jericho spring produced plenty of water, but it was so sulfuric they couldn't drink it. So his disciples said to him, "This water is abundant, but we can't drink it and we can't water the crops with it; it kills everything it touches." So Elisha took a vessel of salt and poured it into the water. The water was transformed at that moment, becoming sweet. The Bible says, "The water remains healed to this day" (2 Kings 2:22). This miracle was recorded in history, and yet you can still taste the evidence of it to this day.

Why did Elisha use salt to sweeten the waters? Perhaps to illustrate the message that those who follow God will change what is around them. Remember how Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth"? Salt represents Christianity, which makes the waters drinkable. When Christ is in the water, it truly becomes Living Water.

Here's another Elisha water miracle: The kings of Israel and Judah are about to be attacked by their enemies; they are surrounded by the armies of the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, who trekked through the desert near the Dead Sea to engage in battle (2 Kings 3). The Dead Sea, of course, is in one of the hottest, driest, and lowest deserts in the world.

When the battle is delayed, the army of Israel runs out of water. In those days, armies took cattle with them—that was their canned food. But the cattle had no grass to eat and no water to drink; the animals were dying. So the soldiers asked Elisha, "What do we do?"

The prophet did something unusual. He said, "Bring me a musician." So they found someone who could sing and brought him to Elisha. The Holy Spirit descended upon the minstrel, who began to sing. They listened closely to his words: "Make this valley full of ditches." So the kings of Israel and Judah had the soldiers start digging ditches—not foxholes, just ditches. During the night, after the men had gone to sleep, the ditches filled up with water. The army and the animals all had plenty to drink the next day.

In the meantime, the enemy saw the water from a distance; the rising sun reflected on it as red—it looked like blood. They said to themselves, "The kings of Israel and Judah got mad at each other, and they fought, and we see their blood shimmering in the sand."

Thinking the armies of Israel and Judah were an easy target, they went to attack them. But they were not prepared to meet refreshed

armies. The Israelites and the people of Judah attacked the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites. In the confusion of their retreat, the enemy armies turned on each other and self-destructed. Then the Israelites plundered them. It makes me think of the power we have over our enemies. When we take in Jesus, the Living Water, He gives us victory over our enemy, Satan.

Bread During Famine

Just as there was a famine during the time of Elijah, so also there was a famine during the time of Elisha. The latter said, “The Lord has called for a famine, and furthermore, it will come upon the land for seven years” (2 Kings 8:1). Did you realize that during the ministry of Christ, there were seven years in which He worked especially to reach the Jewish nation? That’s three-and-a-half years in person, then another three-and-a-half years through the disciples after He ascended to heaven. During this second period, they preached specifically to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. After Stephen was stoned, the gospel went to the Gentiles. That seven-year period marked the end of the 490-years prophecy found in Daniel [chapter 9](#). It was a time of spiritual famine, because most Israelites rejected the gospel.

During the time of famine in Elisha’s day, there is a story of bread and a miracle that might sound similar to another story in the Bible.

“Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, ‘Give it to the people, that they may eat.’ But his servant said, ‘What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?’ He said again, ‘Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: “They shall eat and have some left over.”’ So he set it before them; and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD” (2 Kings 4:42–44).

The story of Elisha multiplying bread is from the Old Testament—but does it sound similar to a New Testament story? Jesus once asked His servants (disciples) to feed a multitude with barley loaves. But there were not enough. Yet not only did Christ multiply the bread, but there were also leftovers (John 6:9–13). Jesus repeated the same basic miracle, which emphasized His power to supply all of our needs with the true Bread of Life.

Never-ending Oil

Not only does bread multiply in Elisha's ministry, there's also a multiplying of oil. What does the oil represent? The Holy Spirit. (See 1 Samuel 16:13 for an example.) There's an interesting story about oil in 2 Kings 4. A widow approaches Elisha and begs, "My husband died, and I have a debt I can't pay. The creditor has basically taken everything in the house. He's getting ready to take my two boys as slaves because I can't make my payments." In Bible times, you couldn't just file for bankruptcy. If you couldn't pay your debts, they could take your children to be their slaves to work off the debt. The woman asked, "What am I going to do?"

Elisha said, "What do you have?" Have you heard that phrase used elsewhere in Scripture? In Mark [chapter 8](#), the disciples went to Jesus and said, "We need to send the people home because they're hungry and they have nothing to eat."

He answered, "Then you give them something to eat."

They said, "We don't have anything."

Jesus said, "What do you have?" Indeed, consecrate your resources to God and see if He doesn't bless what you *do* have. Your personal gifts and talents, your finances, whatever you have—dedicate them to God and He can work a miracle of multiplying them for His kingdom.

Now let's go back to the story of Elisha and the widow. When Elisha asked what she had, the widow replied, "All I have in the house is a little jar of oil." Why did she save that for the last thing? Olive oil was a basic commodity. It was used for healing (anointing), for food (bread making), for beauty (cosmetic), for light in their lamps, and for heat. The widow wanted her children to be well; she wanted them to be beautiful. She wanted them to be illuminated; she wanted her children to be fed. She wanted them to be warm. The woman needed oil.

What does a woman symbolically represent in the Bible? The church. Should we have oil in our church for all those reasons? Yes! And I'm not talking about common cooking oil in a cupboard. I'm speaking about God's Spirit.

The widow agreed to consecrate the little oil she had left. Elisha then commanded her to have her boys go throughout the community

and borrow empty vessels, any kind of vessel, and bring them into her house. I always picture these kids going up and down the streets in the neighborhood with their red Radio Flyer wagon, filling it up with empty vessels. They brought them into the house and stacked them all around the room, filling up the empty house.

Then Elisha said, “Shut the door, then pour the oil from the little vessel you’ve got into the empty vessels.” So she started pouring ... and the oil just kept on coming. It probably looked like a magician’s trick. “Where is all that oil coming from? How can that be?” It reminds me of the toy baby bottle I saw as a kid—when you tipped it up, it kept bubbling up with imitation milk and never seemed to stop. She poured and poured, and it just kept on coming. She said, “Well, that one’s full; bring another one.” That new container also filled up, and on and on until the house was full of vessels brimming with oil.

So what does this all mean? It is a description of how a church grows. Every member has a measure of the Holy Spirit, and when each person witnesses for Christ, they are pouring out the oil of the Spirit into the lives of others. When we invite our neighbors to come hear about Jesus, those who don’t have Christ are like empty vessels. In fact, without Jesus we are all like vessels of clay in the hands of God, who is the Master Potter. We should invite our friends into our homes for Bible studies. And God will multiply our efforts beyond our biggest dreams. When we share Jesus, we will never run out of oil.

The woman then asked Elisha, “Now what?”

The prophet instructed, “Go sell the oil. Pay your debt. You and your sons will be free and live on the surplus.” More leftovers! I love this about Jesus. King David said, “You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over” (Psalm 23:5). The disciples had 12 baskets of extra bread after Christ multiplied what they had.

Jesus blesses us exceedingly, abundantly beyond what we can imagine (Ephesians 3:20). There’s an overflow; there are leftovers. That’s good news, isn’t it? You’re not going to run out of God, especially if you share Him with others. He’ll open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing so that you’ll not have room enough. That means leftovers, right? At Pentecost Jesus opened the windows of heaven and filled His disciples to overflowing with the Spirit, till their lives spilled over into the streets of Jerusalem and the New Testament church was born.

Lepers Healed

One day a leper went to visit Elisha. The sick man was a powerful and wealthy Gentile general by the name of Naaman, the head of the Syrian army. This officer had a Jewish servant girl who knew about Elisha's kindness and encouraged her master to seek healing for his terminal leprosy (2 Kings 5).

When Naaman and a small entourage of soldiers arrived at the prophet's home, Elisha sent his servant out with a short message, "Go wash in the Jordan River seven times, and you'll be clean." The stunned general was furious because the prophet did not come out and speak to him personally. Furthermore, he was indignant that the prophet implied he needed to bathe seven times! Perhaps it all seemed too simple. His pride was offended. In a rage the diseased general turned away from Elisha's house and began to ride back to Damascus.

Let's pause here and think for a moment about the disease of leprosy. It's a deadly malady that causes slow death. It's contagious. It begins by destroying the nerves in your extremities. Your loss of sensation prevents you from detecting damage on yourself. Leprosy is a perfect illustration for sin. It numbs your heart to the things of God and destroys your conscience (1 Timothy 4:2). The answer to sin is to die to self, which is what baptism is all about. You might say Naaman needed to be baptized! That's what the Jordan River represents—death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:4).

Sin is like leprosy. At first you're convicted of sin by your conscience, but the longer you stay in a life of sin, the more you lose your sense of conviction. When sinning doesn't bother you anymore and you have no desire to repent, you are in a state of completely losing your salvation. Your heart becomes hard; the disease of sin has devoured you like leprosy.

The proud general Naaman hesitated to carry out the prophet's instructions. He reasoned, "The rivers of Damascus are much clearer and cleaner than the waters of the Jordan." That was likely true, but God had said, "Wash in the Jordan." To reach Damascus, Naaman had to ride right by the Jordan River. As he did, Naaman's soldiers rode alongside him and said, "Look, master, if the prophet had asked you to do something difficult, you'd do it, right?" He agreed. "So why not wash?" they implored. So Naaman humbled himself, rode down to the

river, and took off his armor and clothes. He went into the muddy water of the Jordan and began to dip down, dunking himself and scrubbing with each immersion.

Elisha told Naaman to wash seven times. If the commander had washed five times, it wouldn't have worked. God seems particular about numbers. Like when He told Joshua to march around the city of Jericho seven times, did the walls fall down after four times? What about the Sabbath day? He *didn't* say He would bless "whatever" day we decide is convenient to set aside for rest and worship. God said the *seventh* day is the Sabbath, and He means what He says. He expects us to obey.

One, two, three, four, five, six times Naaman dipped. Nothing changed. But when Naaman came up the seventh time, his skin was very different. His leprosy had evidently ravaged his skin, perhaps even taken some of his fingers or toes, because the Scripture says, "His flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child" (2 Kings 5:14). I'd be rich if I could develop a skin cream that would give women skin like a little child's skin. Wouldn't you like to be upholstered like a little child again?

Can you imagine the scene? After this general washed in the Jordan the seventh time, he came up, and his soldiers said, "What a miracle! Your leprosy's completely gone and your skin looks really ... pretty. Can we touch it?" Can you imagine that?

What do you think Naaman's experience at this point means? It's describing a new person in Christ. A Christian is a soldier with baby skin. Even though you are born again, you're a soldier. Naaman's "baptism" in the Jordan River happened in the same waterway where John the Baptist first introduced baptism. It was in the Jordan that Jesus was baptized as an example for you and me (Matthew 3:13). Christ healed Naaman the leper, just like He later healed many other lepers during His ministry. Jesus heals not only physical leprosy, but He also removes the disease of sin from our hearts.

Jesus' last commands to His followers before returning to heaven were to go to the world and teach others about the gospel, baptizing people. Baptism symbolizes a cleansing from their leprosy of sin and being born again with the faith of little children (Matthew 18:3). But we, like Naaman, must humble ourselves, repent of our sins, and long to be washed from our iniquities in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation

7:14).

At the end of this amazing story, Elisha was betrayed by a close friend for silver. Naaman tried to pay for his healing, but Elisha refused to take the money because salvation is a gift of God. However, his greedy servant Gehazi chased after Naaman, lied, and took the silver. Gehazi ended up with the leprosy of Naaman because of his covetousness. Likewise, because of his money-hungry heart, Judas sold the Savior for silver and ended up hanging himself after betraying Christ.

Mercy for Enemies

Another amazing experience where we can see the parallel shadows of Jesus in the life of Elisha is when this Spirit-filled prophet singlehandedly captured an entire army. It began when, early one morning, Syrian soldiers surrounded Elisha and his servant in the little country town of Dothan. Alarmed, the servant asked, “What are we going to do?”

Elisha answered, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them” (2 Kings 6:16).

The servant looked around, puzzled. But Elisha pleaded, “LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see” (v. 17). God opened the young man’s spiritual eyes, and he saw that the mountains surrounding Dothan were covered with God’s angelic army, “horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”

The Bible says, “The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them” (Psalm 34:7). Throughout Jesus’ early life and ministry, God’s angels watched over the Son of God; otherwise, Satan’s demons would have destroyed Him.

Then Elisha prayed again, and the whole Syrian army was struck blind. Elisha found their lead horse and started to guide the army toward Samaria, the capital of Israel. He led these blind enemy forces inside the city. They were all greatly confused; since they couldn’t see, they had no idea what was happening. I can picture the watchmen on the wall of Samaria saying, “There’s an army approaching.” As the army gets closer, they say, “Elisha is signaling for us to open the gate.

It looks like they're surrendering." Elisha led in the whole army.

Perhaps you remember the story of Sergeant York from World War I, who received the Congressional Medal of Honor for single-handedly capturing 132 German soldiers? Well, Elisha captured a whole army by himself!

After they closed the gates, Elisha prayed for their sight to return. Then the terrified Syrian soldiers realized they were trapped inside a hostile city. With the Israelite soldiers poised on the surrounding walls ready to release a hail of arrows, the king of Israel asked Elisha, "Shall we kill them? Now, give the word—ready, aim, fire, and we'll completely wipe them out." But Elisha answered, "No, you've already captured them. Feed them, give them something to drink, and free them and send them home. Show them mercy."

Didn't Jesus once speak about how to treat our enemies? "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Paul echoes the teaching of Christ: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink" (Romans 12:20). Elisha practiced what Christ preached when he showed mercy to the Syrian soldiers.

Resurrected Sons

It's interesting that both Elijah and Elisha stayed with Gentile women and resurrected their young sons in upper rooms. Was this a coincidence? How many people resurrected boys in the Old Testament? Only two—Elisha and his predecessor Elijah. What do you think the resurrection of the boys represented? It's hard to miss the obvious relation to the coming Son of God, who would die and be resurrected. Jesus first appeared to the apostles in an upper room after His resurrection. In an upper room, Christ inaugurated the New Covenant with bread and wine. Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on the church in an upper room.

The fact that both these boys were the sons of Gentiles perhaps foreshadowed that the New Testament church would expand beyond the Jews. After Elisha resurrected a boy, the son of a Shunammite mother, he presented him to her and said, "Take up your son." Jesus

also resurrected a boy, the son of a widow, who was on his way to be buried. Jesus said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” Then he presented the boy to his mother (Luke 7:11–15).

One reason we recognize Jesus as the Spirit-filled Messiah is by the sheer multitude of miracles He performed. John 7:31 says, “When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?” The people in Jesus’ time wondered, “This Man has done more miracles than Elijah and even more than Elisha (who did twice the number of miracles as Elijah). Will the Messiah do even more than all of these?” Of course, the answer is “yes!”

Giving Life Through Death

Space does not permit me to address all the ways in which Elisha reminds me of Jesus. But allow me to show you one final area; it is connected to the old prophet’s death. The king of Israel visited him during his last days. Elisha told King Joash, “You can still have victory against the Syrians.” He then commanded, “Open the window and fire an arrow. Have faith in God’s victory!” Then Elisha told the young king, “Take your arrows and beat the ground.” The king only struck the ground three times, and “the man of God was angry with him, and said, ‘You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it! But now you will strike Syria only three times’” (2 Kings 13:19).

Christ encourages us to have more faith and zeal. When we believe all things are possible, we will experience more victory, even in the face of trial. It’s interesting to consider that even though Elijah went to heaven on a fiery chariot, Elisha, who received a double portion of Elijah’s spirit, grew old and sick like everyone else and ultimately died. He had a long life of ministry and miracles.

Even though you might have a double portion of the Holy Spirit, it doesn’t mean you won’t have difficulties or get sick. Even the apostle Paul, who was filled with the Spirit, became ill with something—a thorn in his flesh that wouldn’t go away (2 Corinthians 12:7). We all have challenges. So don’t get discouraged in this life if you grow old or feeble. God can still give you a double portion of His Spirit. “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day” (2

Corinthians 4:16).

There's a final story about Elisha that shows us Christ. What's amazing is that this event took place *after* Elisha died and was buried. You might say he performed a miracle from the grave. (Talk about being full of the Holy Spirit!)

After Elisha was buried, another funeral procession came near his grave. At that same moment, the mourners noticed in the distance a band of enemy raiders roaming the country looking for trouble. The grieving people basically said, "We've got to run for our lives, but we don't want to be disrespectful to the dead—what should we do? We can't stay out here and finish this funeral." Near the cemetery they decided, "Here's the grave of Elisha. It's got a lid on it. If we move the stone aside, we can drop this body in. Then we'll come back later." So they moved aside the stone and lowered in the body of their dead friend. When his body touched the bones of Elisha, he yelped and came back to life! (2 Kings 13:20, 21).

Just think of it! Elisha was so Spirit-filled that even after his death, he still communicated life. Now, if that's not a type of Christ—I don't know what else could be! This story teaches what Jesus does for you and me. When we embrace the death of Christ, taking hold of that sacrifice by faith, and if we are symbolically buried with Christ—it will infuse us with new life. "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Even after Elisha died, God wanted people to remember this faith-filled prophet. So also we should never forget the power of Christ that came through His death on Calvary.

CHAPTER 13
Solomon:
A Wise and Glorious King

Many years ago, a man named Stan Caffy married his girlfriend Linda. As often happens when two people combine households, they agreed to clear out a few extra things from their lives to make more space for the other person. Stan's garage had been serving as his workshop, where he repaired bicycles, so he had collected all the typical stuff that comes with a shop. But among the other things that they were ferreting through was an aged picture of a U.S. document on the wall. Linda said, "You've got to get rid of that."

However, 10 years earlier, Stan had bought this duplicate of the Declaration of Independence and had it framed. He argued, "I like it. It's like an historical document."

She said, "You know it's just a cheap copy, and it's got to go." She won the argument. So they took it out of the frame, rolled it up to save some space, and piled it in the car with the other things they planned to donate to a thrift store.

Fast-forward one year later. Michael Sparks is a music engineer who went to the thrift store in his spare time. He rummaged around and found a pair of salt-and-pepper shakers and some candlesticks; he also found a rolled-up copy of the Declaration of Independence. He asked the owner, "What do you want for this?"

The proprietor said, "Oh, give me \$2.75," which was actually 75 cents more than Stan had paid for it 11 years earlier.

When Michael got back home, he unrolled the document and went to pin it up on the wall. He spent several days looking at it closely and eventually thought, "You know, this looks like it could be pretty old, even though it is just a copy." So he got on the Internet and did a little research and found some clues. He ultimately discovered that he had one of only 37 remaining copies of the Declaration—200 originals had been commissioned by John Quincy Adams, but they had only been able to find 36 intact. He had number 37. After it was

authenticated, which took a year, he had it carefully preserved in glass. He next had it auctioned in South Carolina. Bidding began at \$125,000; it concluded at more than \$477,000.

How do you think Stan and Linda Caffy felt? Do you wonder what happened to their marriage? Stan actually said, “Well, if I hadn’t donated it to the thrift shop, it’d still be hanging up in my garage.” Stan didn’t recognize the awesome value of the revered document he once owned because he had never looked closely enough. Well, I wonder how many of us don’t realize the treasure we have in our Bibles because we don’t look a little deeper?

Sometimes even those not familiar with the treasures of God can recognize the awesome wisdom and power of the Creator. Such was the story of a foreign queen who once came to visit the wisest man who ever lived.

Solomon was the brilliant son of King David. He built the most glorious of all Israel’s temples. He is a type of Christ in several ways. First of all, his name means “peaceful.” He was the son of peace. Jesus is the “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Moreover, both Jesus and Solomon are called “sons of David” (Matthew 1:1).

Solomon represented the pinnacle of the kingdom of Israel. Never in their history did God’s chosen nation have more glory, wealth, prosperity, and peace than during that generation—40 years of Solomon’s reign. His era is actually a type of the heavenly kingdom. Jesus even referred to the opulent time of Solomon, saying in Matthew 6:28, 29, “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

In 1 Chronicles 17, we find an amazing prophecy by Nathan the prophet. In it, he foretells that the son of David is going to build the temple of the Lord. “It shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever” (1 Chronicles 17:11, 12).

Who is Nathan talking about? Is he speaking of Solomon or Jesus? Of course, David did have a son named Solomon who built a physical

temple. But I believe this is a dual prophecy. Yes, it foretold of David's son, Solomon, who is a type of David's other son, Jesus. Christ said He came to build a temple made without hands—that is, the church, which is the body of Christ (Mark 14:58). Jesus' throne, however, is the one that would be established forever.

Like many others before him, Solomon messed up toward the end of his life. His kingdom was split as a result and, years later, his temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. But the kingdom, the throne, and the temple of Jesus, the Son of David, will last forever.

The Queen of Sheba

Let's return for a moment to Solomon's glory days. When the Queen of Sheba, the queen of the South, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, she came seeking truth. Notice the parallels between her visit and Jesus. First Kings 10:4, 5 says, "When the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built," ... did Jesus build a house? ... "the food on his table," ... did Christ have unique food on His table? ... "the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel," ... did Christ have servants and also come as a servant? ... "his cupbearers," ... did Christ give a cup to His disciples? ... "and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD" ... did Christ said, "I am the door."

All the things mentioned in this passage are what Christ used as symbols of Himself. The items presented by Solomon spoke deeply to the queen. After she saw these things, "There was no more spirit in her" (v. 5). The word "spirit" here means "breath." It was a breathtaking experience; she didn't know what to say. She came from afar with hard questions; Solomon answered them. She saw his wisdom; she saw the truth. She eventually responded,

"It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. Happy are your men and happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness" (1 Kings 10:6–9).

Do you want to be a happy servant in Christ's kingdom? Follow your Solomon—Jesus—and you'll be happy. God so loved the world that He made Solomon king and Jesus King. Right? Through Christ came the greatest growth to God's people. In one generation, it went from primarily a few Jews to thousands of Gentiles; the gospel was carried beyond literal Israel to spiritual Israel; that is, to Christ's bride being drawn from heathen nations. That's why Jesus said the queen of the South [Sheba] will be in the kingdom, and she'll rise up in judgment against the nation of Israel because she came to hear the wisdom of Solomon and believed.

Who were the primary voices that ended up accepting Jesus and spreading His message to the world? Was it mostly the Jews? Only a handful of God's chosen people believed. On the other hand, the Gentiles (like the Queen of Sheba) basically said, "This is the wisdom we've been looking for," and the New Testament church exploded. Consider this passage:

"When the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.... On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, 'It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us: "*I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.*"' Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:42–48, my emphasis).

The Queen of Sheba sought for and rejoiced in the gospel truth. The promise of God is that if you search for the truth, you will find it. The queen's response to the temple reminds me of what Paul says, quoting Isaiah, in 1 Corinthians 2:9: "As it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.'" Solomon's kingdom during the glory of his time was so great that silver wasn't counted for anything; it was like plain old stones because everything was made of gold. Can you imagine living in a kingdom like that? They wouldn't need a financial bailout, would they? Solomon's glorious golden kingdom is a miniature picture of Jesus' kingdom paved with gold.

We have not been told half of the glory of Christ's kingdom that is coming.

Song of Solomon

You can even see the vivid types of Christ in the poetic book Song of Solomon. Some think this is an “R-rated” book in the Bible, but it is actually telling us about Jesus and His bride—Christ's love for His church and her love for her Beloved, the Savior.

True, it's also a love story between Solomon and, many think, Abishag the Shunammite, that beautiful concubine of David's old age that he never knew intimately (1 Kings 1:1–4). But in spiritual terms, it's really a love story between Christ and the church. In Song of Solomon 3:6, 7, we read, “Who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke,”—God brought His people out of the wilderness with a pillar of smoke—“perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchant's fragrant powders? Behold, it is Solomon's couch, with sixty valiant men around it, of the valiant of Israel.” Notice the words “myrrh and frankincense.” In other chapters, you find other hints that describe Jesus—“lily of the valley,” “rose of Sharon,” “chief among ten thousand,” etc. Some of these phrases are found in familiar hymns as descriptions of Christ.

Wisdom in Proverbs

The wisdom of Solomon also finds a strong parallel in the life of Jesus. Of Solomon, the Bible says, “Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt” (1 Kings 4:30). Christ, at the age of 12, was brought to the temple by His earthly parents. Here we find the story of Jesus astounding the greatest scholars in Israel with His knowledge and perception of Scripture. Luke says the teachers were “astonished at His understanding and answers” (Luke 2:47). Then note the words that follow: “Jesus increased in *wisdom* and stature, and in favor with God and men” (v. 52, my emphasis). Here is a clear connection between Solomon and Christ.

The book of Proverbs, written by Solomon, also points us to Jesus.

It is interesting that Christ often spoke in parables. The Greek word for “parable” in the New Testament is translated as “proverb” in the Old Testament. Like Solomon, Jesus was a teacher of wisdom. In fact, some Bible scholars see a connection between “wisdom” as spoken in the book of Proverbs and Christ Himself. In other words, Jesus embodies the wisdom of the book; He personifies wisdom.

A compelling example is the description of wisdom speaking in Proverbs 8. Here’s just one slice of this chapter that tells of creation ...

“When He prepared the heavens, I was there, when He drew a circle on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep” (vv. 27, 28).

It sounds as if Jesus Himself is speaking in this passage. Not only was Jesus the Creator (Hebrews 1:2), but Paul actually describes Christ as the “wisdom from God” (1 Corinthians 1:30). He also describes Jesus “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3). Even the gift of Christ’s life can be compared to this wisdom. “If any of you lacks wisdom [Jesus], let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

Truly in the life of Solomon, we find the image of Jesus reflected in so many ways: in the great temple that was built, in the visit of the queen, and even in the amazing wisdom of this ancient sage. When we live by the wisdom of Solomon, we are actually living like Christ. Certainly we will find joy in finding Jesus. “Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding” (Proverbs 3:13). Have you found Jesus?

CHAPTER 14

Jonah: A Sign of a Prophet

Pointers are a special breed of hunting dogs used to locate game when hunters are out in the wilderness. The name “pointer” comes from the dog’s uncanny stalking instinct to point by freezing and aiming its muzzle and body like a spear toward the game. With their keen hearing, sight, and smell, they act like a compass, helping the hunter more accurately locate the direction of prey that might otherwise be obscured by trees, terrain, or tall grass.

Like these faithful hunting dogs, many of the Old Testament stories and characters are “pointers” helping us find and identify Jesus, the greatest treasure of all. For instance, Jonah is another famous Bible character who points us to Christ. In fact, Jesus especially identified the prophet Jonah as a type of Himself when He said,

“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here” (Matthew 12:39–41).

Here Jesus clearly tells us that Jonah is a type of Christ. Now, we must remember that every little detail in the life of an Old Testament character doesn’t necessarily parallel the life of Jesus. We know “wrong-way” Jonah ended up going the right way, but it was only after

he experienced a terrifying storm and an unpleasant detour through the digestion apparatus of a giant fish. Let’s face it: Sometimes God sends storms to turn us around, too, doesn’t He? Though there are reflections of Christ in the experience of Jonah, we know that when Jonah ran from God he was decidedly *unlike* Jesus.

Think about it like this: We have all seen relatives eyeing a photo of a new baby in the family. Someone will say, “Why look, he has his

father's eyes and mouth and smiles just like him." But someone else will respond, "True, but everything else looks just like his mother." That's how it is with these imperfect Bible characters. The similarities are clear, but there are often obvious differences. Still, the DNA of Jesus runs throughout Scripture. Just keep this in mind: Where these Bible characters failed, Jesus succeeded!

In what ways was Jonah like Jesus? One part of Jonah's escape-from-God story tells of him sleeping in the bottom of a boat during a storm. That doesn't happen very often in the Bible. He even had to be awakened and told they were about to perish. "Arise," the captain said to Jonah. "Call on your God ... so that we may not perish" (Jonah 1:6).

During a storm on the Sea of Galilee, the disciples had to find Jesus. "He was in the stern, [the bottom of a boat] asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?'" (Mark 4:38). What a thing to ask Jesus! Of course, Christ cares. He came from heaven and died for us so that we would not perish (John 3:16).

Speaking of perishing, what did the ship's crew need to do in order to survive and find peace in the storm? They had to sacrifice Jonah by throwing him overboard. At first they were trying to figure out why this storm had come upon them. People ask the same thing today; many wonder why there's so much trouble in this world. You might say that it is Jesus' fault. Here's what I mean: The devil hates Christ, and the best way for Satan to "get back" at Jesus is to attack us. In the same way, the storm was Jonah's fault.

The sailors eventually cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. Just pause here and ask yourself, "Were the soldiers who sacrificed Jesus casting lots at the cross?" Yes. "Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: *'They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots'*" (Matthew 27:35, my emphasis; see also Psalm 22:18).

The sailors knew Jonah was running from God, and they were terrified. Jonah told them, "If you want peace, you must cast me into the sea." If Jonah knew they were not going to survive unless he went overboard, why didn't he just "walk the plank" or jump in on his own? He said, "No, you've got to take responsibility for throwing me in; you must offer me." This parallels the messianic prophecy: "When

You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days” (Isaiah 53:10).

They didn’t want to throw him over, but Jonah insisted that sacrificing him was the only way to stop the storm. They even tried to row away from the storm, but the sea only got more tempestuous. (Remember when the disciples of Jesus also tried to row their way out of a storm?) Finally, the pagan sailors cried out to God, “Please do not let us perish for this man’s life, and do not charge us with innocent blood” (Jonah 1:14).

That verse really rings a bell, doesn’t it? Notice how the sailors spoke of Jonah’s innocent blood. When Judas delivered Jesus into the hands of his enemies, he confessed, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood” (Matthew 27:4). Pilate also declared Jesus innocent. Two times he said, “I find no fault in Him” (John 19:4, 6). Listen to what happened next:

“When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, ‘I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.’ And all the people answered and said, ‘His blood be on us and on our children’” (Matthew 27:24, 25).

So the desperate sailors picked up Jonah and heaved him overboard. Instantly they had peace; the sea was calm. When Christ spoke during the storm on Galilee, was there peace? “Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ And the wind ceased and there was a great calm” (Mark 4:39). Likewise, a supernatural peace comes into our lives when we accept Jesus as our sacrifice; we’re no longer alone.

Three Days and Three Nights

Before addressing the principle meaning behind Jesus’ reference to the “sign of Jonah,” I first want to explain the time interval of “three days and three nights.” People frequently ask what this means in connection with this familiar text in Matthew 12. Because of a simple misunderstanding, this particular passage has managed to cause major confusion, frustration, and even division among laypersons, clergy, and scholars alike. By first dealing with the popular “three days and three nights” conundrum regarding the story of Jonah, we’ll be able to

peacefully proceed through the rest of this wonderful study.

Jesus said that the “Son of Man [will] be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40). It is commonly assumed “the heart of the earth” means in the tomb. Most people rightly believe that Jesus died Friday and rose Sunday. Noting this, no matter how you cut it, Jesus was not in the tomb for three nights—even though Scripture distinctly says “three nights.”

I’ve even met some folks who felt that the Bible could not be trusted because of this supposed discrepancy. Others attempt to accommodate the “three nights” verse by adopting the belief that Jesus died on Wednesday or Thursday. Still others reason that Jesus did not really mean three literal nights. Frankly, it’s very sad to see Christians expend so much energy struggling to explain something that the Bible clearly explains itself! The problem is not in “the three days and three nights” at all. The problem springs from assuming that the phrase “in the heart of the earth” means the tomb. Whenever we attempt to gather the meaning of a passage in Scripture, we must compare it with other similar or related passages. This allows the Bible—the inspired Word—to interpret itself. Since the term “heart of the earth” is found only in Matthew 12, and nowhere else in Scripture, we need to find similar verses to reference.

The phrase “in the earth” or “in earth” appears 66 times in the King James Bible, but none of these refers to the grave. For instance, in the Lord’s Prayer, we read, “Thy will be done *in earth* as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10, my emphasis). Does this mean for God’s will to be done in the tomb as it is in heaven? Of course not. Rather, it means His will among the people of earth—the nations of the earth—in the world—as it is done among the angels in heaven.

In the second commandment, we read, “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth” (Exodus 20:4). We easily recognize here that “in the earth beneath” does not mean in the grave, but rather in the world. Jesus also says, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). Does that mean they will inherit the tomb? I think you get my point.

In Matthew 12:40, the word “heart” comes from the Greek word *kardia*, which is where we get the word “cardiac.” According to

Strong's Concordance, *kardia* means the heart (i.e., thoughts or feelings [mind]); it also can mean the middle. Additionally, the Greek word for “earth” is *ge*. It literally means the solid part or whole of the terrain on the globe (including the occupants in each application)—including country, ground, land, or world.

So the phrase “in the heart of the earth” can easily be translated as “in the midst of the world”—or in the grip of this lost planet—that Jesus came to save! In other words, in Matthew 12:40, the Lord is telling His disciples that just as Jonah was in the belly of a great fish, so the Son of Man would be in the central clutches of the world. Let's consider more on this topic.

The Hour Has Come

The life of Jesus is marked by several pivotal moments. When He turned 12, He became aware of His life calling as the Lamb of God and His special relationship with the Father. Then at His baptism, Jesus began His life of public ministry. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15).

But when exactly were the sins of the world placed upon the Lamb of God? Was it when He died on the cross or when they laid His body in the grave? The answer is neither. These were part of paying the penalty for sin—having died on the cross and been placed in the tomb, His suffering had ended. Was it when they drove the nails into His hands? That was certainly part of it, but the starting point was actually *before* the crucifixion.

According to Hebrew law, the sins of the people were placed upon the Passover lamb *before* it was slain. During the Last Supper, with the bread and grape juice, Jesus sealed His new covenant to be the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. Soon after the establishment of this new covenant at the Last Supper, Jesus began bearing our guilt, shame, and penalty.

It's worth mentioning that Jesus died during the Passover festival. During that week, thousands of sheep were sacrificed in the temple so that a literal stream of blood was flowing from the Temple down to the Kidron brook and, eventually, flowing into the Dead Sea. After the Last Supper, Jesus crossed over the stream of blood on His way to

Gethsemane. “When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered” (John 18:1). Jesus went through the Jordan when He began His ministry, and He crossed the bloody Kidron when He began His sufferings.

Then in the garden of Gethsemane, He prayed an intense prayer of surrender three times. On that Thursday evening, Jesus prayed in agony, sweating drops of blood. He said, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). From that moment on, Christ had sealed His surrender, fulfilling His destiny as the guilt-bearer for the fallen race. Soon after, the mob came and carried Him away.

At that point, Jesus was a captive of the devil. For the first time in eternity, communion between the Father and the Son was interrupted. The scissors of our sin cut the cord that had always linked Jesus to His Father. He was in “the heart of the earth,” or more clearly, “the depths of the world.” Just as with Jonah in the fish, there appeared to be a total and hopeless darkness that surrounded the world’s Redeemer.

Here are five Bible verses in which Jesus refers to Thursday evening as “the hour,” meaning a pivotal transition time in His ministry:

“He came to His disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners’” (Matthew 26:45).

“He came the third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners’” (Mark 14:41).

“When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him” (Luke 22:14).

“Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone” (John 16:32).

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You” (John 17:1).

Hell’s Headquarters

A distinct change took place the hour Christ was betrayed into the “hands of sinners”—or, we might say, “into the hands of the devil.” Something different happened. Before this point in Jesus’ ministry, every time a mob tried to capture or stone Him or hurl Him off a cliff, He passed unharmed. He slipped through their fingers. This is because He was innocent before the Father, and, therefore, under divine angelic protection. His hour had not yet come; it was not yet His time to suffer for the sins of the world. But after that hour—Thursday evening—when the past, present, and future sins of the world were placed upon the Lamb of God, then it was time.

Sometimes we forget that the penalty for sin is not just death; there is also punishment or suffering that is perfectly measured out according to our works (Luke 12:47; 2 Peter 2:9). Jesus came to take our total penalty—the suffering and the death (Romans 6:23). When exactly did He begin to bear the sins of the world? It was actually long before the cross.

After Jesus rose from the dead, the angels told the women at the tomb: “Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again’” (Luke 24:6, 7). What verse could be clearer about the three days and three nights? Jesus’ sufferings began when He was placed in “the hands of sinful men,” then after three days and three nights, He would rise.

Jesus’ “three nights” began Thursday evening in Gethsemane. From the moment He started bearing the penalty for our sins, Jesus was in the heart of the earth, or more accurately, the headquarters of hell. Soldiers beat Him. The crowds spat on Him. He was dragged from one trial to another—from the high priest to Pilate, from Herod back to Pilate, and then finally to Golgotha. He was in the clutches of this evil world, the clutches of the devil, who is the prince of this world (John 16:11).

Remember that Jonah was not stationary while he was sequestered in the great fish, as with a dead person in a tomb. Rather, he was like a living captive in a mobile submarine, to go wherever the fish took him. When the fish went up, he went up; when the fish went down, he went down. In like manner, Jesus was a captive of the devil and his minions. Satan had complete control of the demon-crazed mob that took Jesus from place to place, heaping abuse, insult, and physical

punishment upon our Redeemer. When He suffered the punishment and penalty for our sins, He was “in the heart,” or in the midst, of this lost world.

Imagine how Jonah must have suffered during his ordeal as a captive in the pitch-black belly of the great fish. Three days in that slimy, stench-filled darkness must have seemed like an eternity. (Have you ever considered that if Jonah could survive alive in that fish’s digestive abyss, he might not have been the only creature still alive and squirming around in there?) Yet the suffering of our Lord was infinitely greater than that of the famous wayward prophet. How much Jesus must love us to willingly endure all in order to spare us the miserable fate of the lost!

And so Jesus was “in the heart of the earth,” or in the grip of the enemy, over a period of three days and three nights—Thursday night, Friday night, and Saturday night. He rose on Sunday morning. It is a miracle that Jonah survived being swallowed by the leviathan, just as the resurrection is a miracle.

Preaching Repentance

Jonah was assigned to preach to Nineveh, an exceedingly great city. We don’t know exactly where the fish burped him out, but it was probably farther north, since the boat was on its way to Tarshish and the storm blew them north. Wherever he landed on the shore, he must have travelled at a full gallop three days to Nineveh. Then about 12 hours later, he began to preach.

So three days and nights after Jonah was thrown into the sea, he came up from the water. After a three-and-a half-day journey, he then began to preach—his message was that in 40 days the city would be destroyed unless they repented.

What was the first message Jesus gave when He began to preach? To repent. After Jesus came out of the waters of the Jordan, He preached three-and-a-half years and prophesied that in a generation, 40 years, Jerusalem would be destroyed. That’s why Jesus said, “Jonah is a sign to this generation.”

The difference, of course, was that the Ninevites repented. Sadly, a prophet greater than Jonah was also in Israel—the Messiah—but there

was no repenting. Nineveh was not destroyed after 40 days because the people repented. Jerusalem was destroyed after 40 years because they did not repent.

Jonah, imperfect as he was, still reflected Christ. Like David and Samson, this reluctant prophet had his flaws but is still a type of Jesus. Even though Jonah turned and ran, God still loved him and used him for a divine purpose. His life gives us a glimmer of Christ that we just can't miss. That gives me courage and hope. Though we all make mistakes, we can still represent Jesus. If you see Jesus in Jonah, then others can see Him in your life as well, if you invite Him into your heart.

CHAPTER 15

Daniel and Nehemiah: Servants in a Foreign Land

For nine months, between 1898 and 1899, two infamous man-eating lions of Tsavo terrorized workers employed in the construction of a railway bridge in Uganda. As the death toll rose, construction was brought to a virtual standstill. You can understand why the workers refused to continue until protection could be provided. Finally, the reign of terror was brought to an end when Lieutenant Colonel J.H. Patterson succeeded in tracking and killing the two lions, which by that time had devoured more than 100 men! (There is a great debate over the exact number.) The stuffed lions are now on display at the Field Museum in Chicago. Yet even more deadly was a Bengalese tigress in the Nepalese region of India close to the Himalayas. Before being shot, she was reported to have killed and eaten 436 people around 1907.

However, the all-time record for man-eating goes to a vicious lion that has devoured even more than all these others combined—Satan. The Bible says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Samson killed a lion with his bare hands; David might have used a stick. But Daniel survived without a scratch, a whole night, surrounded by a ravenous mob of lions! Let’s turn now to the story of a famous prophet who reflects Christ in his life. Then we’ll consider another civil servant, Nehemiah, in a foreign land. First, let’s step into the lion’s den!

God’s Wise Judge

Daniel’s name means “God is judge” or “God’s judge.” Several times throughout his prophetic book, Daniel pronounces judgments. Of course, Jesus is our ultimate Judge. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done

in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Daniel was also legendary for his wisdom. When no one was found that could decipher the cryptic “handwriting on the wall,” the queen mother recommended Daniel. “There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him” (Daniel 5:11). “And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm” (Daniel 1:20). Daniel was very wise.

Like Samson, the wisdom of Daniel is a fitting type of Jesus. Officers sent to arrest Christ returned empty-handed and amazed, saying to the priests, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” (John 7:46). “Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!” (Mark 6:2).

Daniel was of royal blood and a eunuch (Daniel 1:3). God told King Hezekiah, “Some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon” (2 Kings 20:18). Daniel never married; you never read of his wife or children. He was principally married to the people of God and lived as their advocate and intercessor in the palace. Daniel is like Jesus, who never married and is portrayed as our royal intercessor before the Father and One married to the church (Ephesians 5:25; Hebrews 7:25).

It’s interesting to note how Jesus frequently quoted from the book of Daniel, presumably hoping His followers would be reading it. “So when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not” (let the reader understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Mark 13:14).

Liberated from Lions

Probably the most brilliant example of how Daniel reflects Jesus is found in the famous story about the lion’s den in Daniel [chapter 6](#). When the Medo-Persian King Darius conquered Babylon, he was

immediately impressed with Daniel. As the king built his new administration, he was inspired with Daniel's faithfulness. Darius, a heathen king, recognized that Daniel was filled with wisdom and the Spirit of God. He was so impressed with his honesty and faithfulness that he thought of setting Daniel over the whole realm as prime minister.

That plan did not sit well with the other leaders in the kingdom. They became jealous that King Darius was going to take a Jewish captive and make him their boss. In their resentment, they plotted to get rid of God's prophet.

Why did the religious leaders want to eliminate Jesus? Weren't they jealous when Christ said He was the Son of God? Weren't they jealous of His position? Were they angry with Jesus because of His badness ... or were they threatened by His goodness? We can see similarities between Daniel's experience and Jesus' experience. Political leaders in Darius' kingdom were upset because Daniel was an "honest" politician. They were threatened by his goodness; it made their badness stand out.

Spies were set up to follow Daniel. Christ also had spies following Him around. They, too, were sent by His enemies to try to catch Him doing something illegal. What were the reports? When the spies followed Daniel around, they found no flaws in his conduct. "He was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him" (Daniel 6:4). If you ever worry about how perfect you ought to be, try having spies follow you around all day! By God's grace, Daniel, who was human like all of us, lived a faithful life. We can have Daniel's experience if we seek to be obedient to God. And again, what did Pilate say twice during Jesus' trial? "I find no fault in Him at all" (John 18:38). No one could find any error or fault in Jesus either.

The Babylonian politicians eventually said, "The only way we're going to get rid of Daniel is to create a law that contradicts the law of his God. We have to trap him on religious grounds." They knew that he consistently prayed three times a day. Jesus also had a life of prayer—He rose up early in the morning to pray; He prayed in the middle of the day when He fed the multitudes; in Gethsemane, he prayed in the evening.

The Babylonian politicians succeeded in getting King Darius to sign a law forbidding prayer directed at anyone except the king. It didn't

take long for them to nail Daniel. The prophet was praying just before he was arrested. Jesus was also praying just before He was arrested.

When Darius found out that he had been duped, he “was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him” (Daniel 6:14). But he couldn’t change the law. Daniel [chapter 6](#) mentions often that the laws of the Medes and the Persians could not be changed (vv. 8, 12). Once Daniel had been caught, the only way forward was for him to go to the lion’s den—to face his penalty. Christ also faced the penalty of sin. He prayed, “Father, if there’s any other way, let this cup pass from Me.” But for you and I to be saved, there was no other way because we’ve all broken the law and God’s law cannot be changed.

For Daniel, there was no way out. The Bible says King Darius didn’t want to execute Daniel. Did Pilate want to execute Jesus? More than once, he tried to free Him. Darius also labored until the going down of the sun to deliver Daniel (v. 14). What time of day was Jesus executed? At the going down of the sun.

Daniel’s Resurrection

“Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords” (Daniel 6:17). Was a stone placed on Christ’s grave and was there a government seal? Yes. “Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him” (v. 18). Darius was deeply troubled and unable to sleep. What were the Father in heaven and His angels doing while Christ was in the tomb? Were they celebrating? No, they were silent during that time.

The Scripture says, “Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions” (Daniel 6:19). What time of day did Jesus rise? Early in the morning. In fact, Christ’s disciples and some of the women came to His tomb “very early in the morning” (Luke 24:1). Both Daniel and Jesus escaped the lions and came out alive.

Was Daniel innocent? It’s interesting that when the king put him into the lion’s den, he said, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you” (Daniel 6:16). But when he went to get Daniel

from the lion's den, he was not quite as confident. The Scripture says, "When he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, 'Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?'" And this voice came echoing out of the lion's den, "O king, live forever! My God has sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him" (Daniel 6:21, 22). Those are Daniel's words: "I was found innocent." Jesus was also innocent.

Often in Scripture the lion and serpent are symbols of Satan. "You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot" (Psalm 91:13). The lions could not keep Daniel; the lion—the devil—could not keep Jesus in the grave. They both came out alive.

In the last days, God's people will face a similar test as Daniel. We will have to choose between obeying the law of God and the law of man. Daniel made his devotional life a priority. He refused to close his windows and stop praying. In the same way as Daniel was delivered through the lion's den, God will send angels to bring His faithful children through the time of trouble, which is soon coming to our world.

Nehemiah—Restoring the City of God

"Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem" (Psalm 51:18).

Theodore Roosevelt was one of the most beloved U.S. presidents in history. One reason for this was his practice of boldly charging in to change what he knew needed changing. As police commissioner and later governor of New York, he would disguise himself and roam the streets at night to see firsthand the real needs of the city. He also wanted to make sure the police were awake and doing their jobs. He is known as a leader who broke up corruption in government, built the Panama Canal, and established national parks. Once "Teddy" (he actually didn't like this nickname) was focused on the right thing, he would never back down.

A dramatic case in point illustrates this man who was like a bull moose. Just before a campaign speech in Milwaukee, Wisconsin,

Roosevelt was greeting the public. Suddenly an angry saloonkeeper, John Schrank, shot the president at close range in the chest. Schrank's .32-caliber bullet, aimed directly at Roosevelt's heart, failed to mortally wound the president. The bullet's force was weakened by two items in the breast pocket of Roosevelt's heavy coat. One was his eyeglasses case, and the other was a bundled manuscript that contained his evening speech. It was a good thing that his speech was lengthy!

Schrank was immediately arrested, but Roosevelt, who suffered only a minor wound from the attack, went on to deliver his scheduled discourse with the bullet still in his body. He pulled the torn and bloodstained manuscript from his breast pocket and spoke for nearly an hour before he allowed his attendants to rush him to the hospital.

Roosevelt reminds me of another great single-minded, biblical governor and a type of Christ—the leader Nehemiah. Like Jesus, Nehemiah came from the palace as a representative of the king. He interceded with the king for his people, crossed the desert to build up the city of God, and sought the welfare of His people. He built up the gates and walls of Jerusalem to give them protection. Nehemiah was a determined governor who was not easily swayed from his calling. He is like Christ in many ways.

Like Roosevelt, Nehemiah also went out secretly at night to survey the needs of the city firsthand (Nehemiah 2:12). But the enemies around the Jews in Jerusalem did everything they could to keep the city from being restored. The devil does the same thing today in trying to break down God's church. In the story of Nehemiah, the enemies of the Jews used every trick in the book to stop him. They threatened, they ridiculed, they mocked—anything to break down the morale of God's people. No tactic was untried. But Nehemiah would not be deterred. He persisted until he repaired the walls.

In Scripture you will often find a threefold enemy alliance against God's people. We see this in the story of Gideon. The Amalekites, the Midianites, and the people of the east were a threefold alliance. It's the same in the book of Revelation, where a counterfeit trinity fights against God: an evil union of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet.

In Nehemiah's story, the enemy alliance is Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab. They sent a message to Nehemiah that basically

said, “Look, we’ve disagreed long enough. Why don’t you come down to the Valley of Ono and let’s talk about it? Let’s negotiate. Let’s compromise. We can find some middle ground.”

The devil is using that same strategy with the church today. “Let’s compromise. We’ll work with you. We’ll help you build up your church. You just adopt some of our ways, and we’ll adopt some of your ways.” The enemy tries to neutralize the power of the church through compromise with the world.

It’s interesting that the enemies said, “Come *down* so that we can talk about this. Come *down*.” Nehemiah responded, saying, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?” But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner” (Nehemiah 6:3, 4).

When Christ was on the cross, there were those who said to Him, “If you’re the Christ, *come down*. We’ll believe you; we’ll talk about it.” You can read their call to Christ to come down off the cross in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Four times it was recorded, and four times He essentially gave them the same answer of Nehemiah. “I’m doing a great work. I’m not coming down.”

Christ’s great work was to offer Himself as a sacrifice for us. Because our lives were at stake, Jesus wouldn’t budge. And just like Christ, Nehemiah came from the king to seek the welfare of his people. He led them in revival, he turned them back to the Word of God, he armed them for battle, and he interceded for their forgiveness. During this whole time, he refused to take payment (Nehemiah 5:14–18). His life and service were a sacrificial gift.

I read how years ago that when the Standard Oil Company was prepared to establish itself in Indonesia, company executives sought for a qualified manager for their Indonesian operations. They were informed that the best-qualified man for the position was a certain missionary. He knew the language, roads, and customs. So they offered him a high-paying position to leave his mission station and work for the oil company. The missionary declined. Those seeking his service were surprised by his refusal, so they decided to raise the offer. Still the missionary declined. Finally they said, “If the salary we have named isn’t large enough, just name your salary. We’ll pay it.”

The missionary kindly replied, “No, the pay is certainly large, but the job just isn’t big enough.” Nehemiah left the lavish comforts of the palace of Persia to do the work of God. He did a work just like Jesus. Are we willing to follow in their steps and give ourselves to the work of building up God’s church, even if it means sacrifice?

CHAPTER 16

Esther: Sacrificial Courage

“She was a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance” (1 Samuel 25:3).

History is peppered with examples of brave young women who stepped forward to rescue others, and in some cases rescuing a whole nation. During the Lewis and Clark expedition, it was Sacagawea, a young Shoshone Indian girl, who saved the epic adventure more than once. We read about Rahab the harlot. Then there was Clara Barton, who boldly strode out upon bloody Civil War battlefields to tend to the wounded and dying; she later formed the Red Cross. And there was 18-year-old Joan of Arc, leading the armies of France to several important victories. In 1 Samuel 25:3, we can read about Abigail bravely intercepting David, who was bent on destroying the foolish man Nabal.

Among the leading ladies in the Bible, Esther stands out as a beautiful heroine of selfless courage. The book of Esther has many powerful analogies of Christ and the gospel, yet it is also something of an inspired enigma. For example, you do not find the word “pray” in the book of Esther, nor do you even read the word “God.” It talks about fasting, but it doesn’t mention prayer. It frequently refers to the providence of God and the deliverance of God, but you do not find the name of “God” or “Lord” anywhere in the book.

Why is this? Probably because this sacred history was written while the Israelites were slaves and captives in the land of Persia. No one was allowed to pray to anyone aside from the national deities or king. If they had included the name of God or praying to their God in this book, it might have been destroyed. So the book was very carefully written to show the providence of God and the way in which the Lord answers prayer—preserving the story for future generations like us.

Esther is also the only Old Testament book not found in part or whole among the Dead Sea scrolls. Some believe it’s because the early Essene Jews, those very devout rabbis, said, “The holy name of God

doesn't appear in the text, so it must be stored with the other books." But I'm very glad it's in the Bible. I believe it's just as inspired as the rest of the sacred canon—one reason is found in the powerful ways you find the story of Jesus throughout the book of Esther.

Esther and the Church

In the book of Esther, there are many types of Jesus and also figures that speak of the church. We have repeatedly seen that a woman is often a symbol in the Bible for a church. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her" (Ephesians 5:25). "I have likened the daughter of Zion to a lovely and delicate woman" (Jeremiah 6:2).

We can think of Esther as a type of the church. Along this same line, her uncle Mordecai can be understood as a type of Jesus. For example, following an ancient beauty pageant, this very beautiful but poor Jewish girl, Esther, was chosen as the new queen of Persia. She was then separated from her only family, her uncle Mordecai, who had raised her. Mordecai then basically said to Esther, "Look, I can't get inside that pagan palace, but Esther, you can. You will be the representative of your people in there. You will show your beauty there in that palace."

Jesus is not in the world now, but He says to His people, "I've sent you into this pagan world to let your light shine." As Christ's church, we are to represent the beauty of Jesus in this lost world, just as Esther's beauty was a light in a foreign kingdom.

You will also remember that Mordecai refused to break the commandments of God by bowing down to the king's treacherous friend Haman. Because of that defiance, proud Haman, who perfectly represents our arch nemesis, the devil, wanted to exterminate all of Mordecai's people, the Jews.

The devil likewise wanted Jesus to bow down to him (Matthew 4:8, 9). And because Jesus refused to worship Satan, the devil vented his wrath on Christ and all of His people, the church. The Bible teaches that in the last days, there is going to be another similar death decree to annihilate all of God's people because we refuse to break His commandments, because we won't compromise and worship the

beast. “The dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17).

Will all of God’s people be miraculously delivered when this crisis comes? Yes, the Scriptures teach that just as God has stepped in to rescue His people so many times in the past, the Lord will again intervene.

“At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book” (Daniel 12:1).

The Intercessor

Before there was deliverance, there was intercession. Esther first went in before the king to mediate for the lives of her people. This required her to put her life on the line because no one was permitted to enter the presence of the king uninvited. To do so would mean instant death ... unless the king showed mercy and held out his golden scepter. Willing to risk everything to save her people, Esther said, “If I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16). Like the true church of Jesus, Esther was willing to pour out her life to save others.

Meanwhile, Haman planned to kill Mordecai. He built a tall gallows (sometimes called a gallows *tree*) because he was going to hang this hated Jew between heaven and earth. That was also the devil’s plan for Jesus, to hang Him between heaven and earth on a “tree.” All through the story of Esther, you see shadows of the cross and Jesus revealed!

Haman tricked the king of Persia into signing a death decree to exterminate the Jews. When Mordecai heard about the decree, he went to the gate of the palace, mourning and fasting with his clothes torn. He conveyed a message to Esther in the palace that she must intercede to the king for God’s people. (It reminds me of how the church must plead with God for the lost.) At that very moment, God did something extraordinary. At this point in the story, Ahasuerus, the king of Persia, has a restless night and is unable to sleep. As he laid there wide awake, he thought, “You know, it’s really boring when my

attendants read the chronicles to me.” So he said to his sleepy servants, “Why don’t you read the chronicles to me? Maybe it will put me to sleep.”

So they brought in the record books of the kingdom and began to monotonously read the official court minutes. The king was probably just drifting off to sleep when the scribe read the words, “And there was an assassination plot ...”—the king must have opened an eye when he heard that—”... to kill King Ahasuerus, and Mordecai revealed the plot and saved the king.”

I can picture the king sitting up in bed, saying, “That was a close call. Did we ever do anything for that guy Mordecai to thank or reward him?” They searched the records and discovered no gratitude was shown for Mordecai’s bravery. So the king decided, “That’s not very kingly. I have got to do something to reward this man.”

Just at that moment, while the king was pondering what to do for Mordecai, Haman walked into the room to ask the king to sign a death decree for none other than Mordecai! Before Haman had a chance to ask the king to sign the death sentence, the king said, “I’m glad you’re here, Haman. I need to ask you a question. What should I do for the one I want to honor?”

Haman, like Satan, was so self-centered that he thought to himself, “Who would the king want to honor more than me?” So he answered, “Well, get the king’s horse, that majestic white stallion, and put the king’s gilded saddle on it. Then put the king’s royal robe on the one you want to honor, and then put the king’s jewel-studded crown on his head. Then get a noble prince to walk in front of him shouting, ‘Thus shall it be done for the one whom the king wants to honor,’ and parade him up and down the street of the capital city.” (See Esther 6:8, 9.)

Haman wanted to be king; his words betrayed what was deep in his heart. If he had lived much longer, he would have probably tried to assassinate Ahasuerus. I’m reminded of what is in the heart of the devil. Do you remember the description of Lucifer when he rebelled in heaven? He said, “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:14). The devil wants to be the king of the universe, even if it means assassinating the one whom the King honors.

Can you imagine the look on Haman's face when the king said, "That sounds good to me. I tell you what: I want you to do everything that you just suggested"—Haman was probably smiling at this point, until he heard the king suddenly say—"to Mordecai the Jew." I would love to have a video of Haman's dumbfounded expression when he heard these words. Talk about a reversal! The Bible says, "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12). Jesus humbled Himself, and He will be exalted. The devil who exalted himself will be humbled.

The book of Esther has many other fascinating twists and turns, but when you reach the end of the story, you see the great exaltation of Mordecai. All the enemies of God are killed. The people of God are delivered, just like when Jesus comes in the last days when the beast will attempt to annihilate the church.

Persecution and Exaltation

This might be a good place to mention an interesting time period in the beginning of the book of Esther, a period also mentioned in other places in the Bible: 42 months. The first part of this period is the reference to "the third year" of the king's reign (Esther 1:3), and the second part speaks of a feast lasting 180 days (v. 4). Since the Jewish year had 360 days, 180 days equals one half of a year. So from the beginning of Ahasuerus' reign until the end of this special feast, the length of time equals three-and-a-half years, or 1,260 days, or 42 months. All three represent the same timeframe.

At the beginning of the reign of this Persian king, a pagan queen, Vashti, sat on the throne next to the king. At the end of the 42 months, when the king tried to "show off" the queen and she refused to obey his command, she was disposed. Then a faithful Jewish woman was found and crowned the new queen. This story and timeframe remind me of the notorious time period during which the beast in Revelation 12 persecutes the church. It also is the same amount of time Jesus preached before being crucified. Perhaps God is speaking to us through the story of Esther, to not only warn the church, but to encourage us that there is a good ending—the enemies of the Lord will be destroyed and God's people will be saved!

Esther 8:15 says, "Mordecai went out from the presence of the king

in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.” We know that when Christ is glorified, there’ll be great gladness. Revelation is full of such glorious songs of rejoicing (Revelation 7:12).

We also read, “Mordecai was great in the king’s palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for this man Mordecai became increasingly prominent” (Esther 9:4). Besides the king, no one was greater in the palace than Mordecai. Notice that many of the types of Christ in the Bible became second to the king. Christ’s authority is second only to the authority of the Father. We see this also with Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon. These types often go from the prison to the palace. Mordecai transitions from rags at the king’s gate to robes in the king’s palace. Christ went from the rags of this world to the right hand of the Father, didn’t He?

Esther 8:16 says that, in the end, “The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor.” That’s exactly how God will bless His people when Jesus returns.

CHAPTER 17

Stephen: Full of Faith and Power

“Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:8).

I’m fascinated by space exploration. I really enjoyed following news on the now-retired Space Shuttle program and continue to be awed by the International Space Station. I’ve dropped as many hints as I dare that if anyone knows anybody of influence who thinks there ought to be a pastor in space, I’m available. A couple of tourists have gone up to the space station, but it’s about \$20 million a ticket ... and I can’t afford that just yet.

The International Space Station (ISS) is the largest manned object ever sent into orbit. It encompasses about 43,000 cubic feet of living and working space. It’s roughly the size of two Boeing 747s on the inside. Assembling the complete station required a total of 45 launches—36 from the United States and 9 from Russia—and 1,700 hours of space walks. The station is visible to more than 90 percent of the world’s population.

One night while camping in Nevada under the stars with a friend, I saw something pass through the sky and asked, “What was that?” My friend said it was the space station. I thought he was kidding. He handed me a pair of binoculars. What I saw looked like a square star. He assured me it was the space station and explained that it circles the earth every 92 minutes.

The space station is also the most expensive manmade object ever built. The United States’ participation alone has been estimated at \$96 billion—a figure that nearly equals the cost of all the Apollo missions combined. The construction of the space station is a collaboration of 100,000 people, hundreds of companies, and 16 nations spread over four continents.

It’s amazing to consider, as you look up at this incredible masterpiece, that it’s one of the greatest technologies in the world just floating up there in the heavens. What you’re really looking at is the

combined effort of people from all over the world reaching for the stars. That's a great analogy for our need to turn toward God!

Interestingly, parts of the station are from different countries. When they put it together, it all had to fit perfectly. If the Russians decided to use a different measurement on the seal that connects the chambers than what the Americans used, it would have caused a pressure leak that could have killed the astronauts. They needed to collaborate to ensure that all those different components from all those different countries really were unified in one design.

Like the different parts of the ISS, when you read through the Bible, you will see different “sections” of the Son of God all coming together in Christ. There is a collaboration going in Scripture, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that brings it all together in showing us a clearer picture of Jesus.

I'm now going to jump to an example from the New Testament to show you that, even here, you find types of Jesus outside the Gospels. Of the many examples, the one I have chosen to focus on is Stephen. This Bible character has always been one of my family's heroes. One reason we picked that name for son number three is because we were inspired by the example of this Spirit-filled deacon, a bold preacher who was willing to lay down his life for the truth.

Brought to Trial and Executed

When Jesus was taken before the Sanhedrin, He openly told the judges about Himself. What followed was a mockery of a trial, after which He was unjustly condemned. Then Jesus was taken outside the city and executed. While He was being murdered, Jesus prayed for their forgiveness. These same elements find themselves repeated in the story of Stephen.

The Scripture says, “Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:8). Stephen preached, the church grew, and his enemies were threatened by him. Because of his preaching, he was arrested. Three-and-a-half years after Christ, Stephen was brought to the Sanhedrin—the same group who condemned Jesus.

In one of the most incredible sermons of the New Testament,

Stephen recounts the history of the Jewish nation. He speaks about many of the same Bible characters we have covered in this book. He shows how they all represent Jesus. He then proclaims Jesus as the Christ who was sent from God.

His sermon was so clear and convicting that the men of the Sanhedrin were outraged. They gritted their teeth and actually plugged their ears. Filled with rage, they dragged him outside the city. The leaders didn't even wait for the Romans to get involved. They laid down their garments and picked up stones and killed him. After he died, his friends carried him off and buried him.

Both Stephen and Christ were charged with blasphemy based upon false evidence. The Bible says of Stephen, "Then they secretly induced men to say, 'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God'" (Acts 6:11). So also, at Christ's trial, it was said, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think? They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death'" (Matthew 26:65, 66). False witnesses were involved in both instances.

It is interesting that Christ had just spoken of them someday seeing "the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (v. 64). Notice what is said of Stephen before he was stoned: "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!'" (Acts 7:55, 56). That's a strong mirror of Christ's words!

As Stephen was being murdered, he spoke his last words: "And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'" (v. 59). He also cried out, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin" (v. 60). Then Stephen died. Once more we see the strong connection to Christ's words on the cross before dying. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). So also, "When Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.' Having said this, He breathed His last" (v. 46). Both died, as it were, in the hands of God.

There are more incredible parallels between Stephen's experience and that of Jesus'. Garments are mentioned in both of their executions. Christ's robe was at the foot of the cross, gambled away

by those who killed Him. Garments were also left by the executioners of Stephen; they lay their clothing at the feet of a man named Saul, whose name was later changed to Paul, the great apostle. And just as Jesus' friends carried Him off and buried Him, so Stephen's friends tenderly carried him away for burial. We can see so many reflections of Jesus in Stephen's life, as well as other Bible characters, if we will only keep our eyes on Christ.

For his 12th birthday, a boy's parents bought him a fairly expensive helicopter ride through the Grand Canyon. After the trip, the family asked how he enjoyed the scenery. The pale young man confessed he barely looked out the window. He was more than a little nervous they might get lost or run out of fuel, so he kept studying the pilot's instruments and never looked much at the spectacular panorama. That's a bit like people who are so fascinated by the doctrines of Scripture that they miss the fact that the Bible gives us such a clear picture of Jesus.

Not all the types of Christ in the Bible come before the time of Jesus. Stephen mirrors the life of Jesus and he came after Christ returned to heaven. That means that you and I can reflect the life of Jesus too. All of these characters in the Bible, once they surrendered themselves to Christ, began to reflect different aspects of His character. He shined through them. The purpose for the plan of salvation is that we might be restored to the image of God, that Jesus might reproduce His image in us.

Together we have considered a few of the shadows, types, analogies, and parallels where Jesus can be seen in the Bible's stories. As you have read, you might have thought of others I missed. What I don't want any of us to miss is the central truth that the power and providence of God is omnipresent throughout all Scripture. The entire Bible is truly a "Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:1).

Back in the days of the California Gold Rush, miners panned rivers searching for riches. When they found a little gold dust, they didn't immediately dash off to town to cash in. They kept on panning because they knew if they found gold dust, then they might eventually find some flakes or nuggets that had rolled down the hill—bigger pieces that hadn't been pounded into dust yet. And nuggets from the hillside often lead to a vein in the mountain, which in turn might eventually lead to the mother lode, the source of all the dust, flakes,

and nuggets! Would you rather have the dust or the “mother lode”?

As we’ve considered these characters in the Bible, we’ve been looking at a few gold flakes and scattered dust that all ultimately point us to Jesus, who is the “mother lode.” It is my desire that you have found Christ in these chapters. My wish is that He is your Pearl of Great Price, a precious ruby of wisdom, a priceless treasure, for which you’re willing to lay down everything in order to receive.

It is my prayer that as you read your Bible, you will not only have a new “double vision” and see Jesus in all of Scripture through the lives of patriarchs, prophets, and kings, but that you follow these “shadows of light” until you find yourself kneeling at the cross, giving your life to the One who is exalted from Genesis to Revelation.

But before concluding this amazing adventure, I want to point out one more special shadow of Christ in the Bible that is not a person—but a thing. We’ll do that in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 18

Jesus: In the Temple

“I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Revelation 21:22).

Frank Lloyd Wright is probably the most famous of American architects. During his 70-year career, he produced well over 1,000 designs, ranging from banks, homes, resorts, and office buildings to museums and churches. For some reason, Frank’s mother, Anna, always believed he would be a great architect—even before he was born. When her son was just a small child, Anna hung pictures of famous buildings around his bed and further inspired his ability by giving him wooden blocks and cardboard geometric shapes to build with. Incredibly, Frank Lloyd Wright began college at age 15 to study engineering. By his early 20s, he was the head designer for a Chicago architectural firm. Incredibly, America’s most respected architect never attended architecture school. Whenever Wright was designing, he was guided by the principle “form and function are one,” uniting the natural location with the materials and function of the structure. Most of his famous buildings still survive today and are easily identified by a trained architect, as Lloyd seems to have infused his own unique personality into every edifice he designed.

Did you know the Bible speaks of a unique structure that reflects the very person and ministry of its designer—Jesus? I’m referring to the sanctuary tabernacle, the temple of God.

It has been shown that one of the most successful methods of memorization is through picture association. The Lord frequently uses this teaching technique because He knows He created humans as visual creatures. This is one reason Jesus taught using parables. Picture stories help people understand and remember the many abstract principles of salvation by associating them with visual images. With this in mind, the Hebrew temple should be classified as “exhibit A” of this visual-learning principle.

Our previous chapters have been dedicated to highlighting different *people* who are types of Christ, or whose lives are symbols of Him, but I would now like to invite you to join me in considering this notable inanimate *object* in the Bible, a clear type and symbol of Christ. The Old Testament sanctuary was not only a building that reflected Jesus, it was also a microcosm of God's genuine sanctuary in heaven—a three-dimensional illustration of the plan of salvation.

There were three principal temples built by the Israelites. The first one was the portable tabernacle, built during the time of Moses when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness. Using the wealth his father King David had amassed, Solomon spent seven years building the second temple, the most majestic of them all. After the Babylonians destroyed that one, the Jews rebuilt the temple on a more humble scale during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

While different in magnitude and materials, all three of these temples shared the same basic design. And as mentioned, the Bible tells us that God was the chief architect of this structure, which is absolutely erupting with spiritual meaning. As Moses was on Mount Sinai and God was communicating to him various laws and statutes, considerable time was also spent in providing the many specific design details for the furniture and dimensions of the tabernacle. "See to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain" (Exodus 25:40).

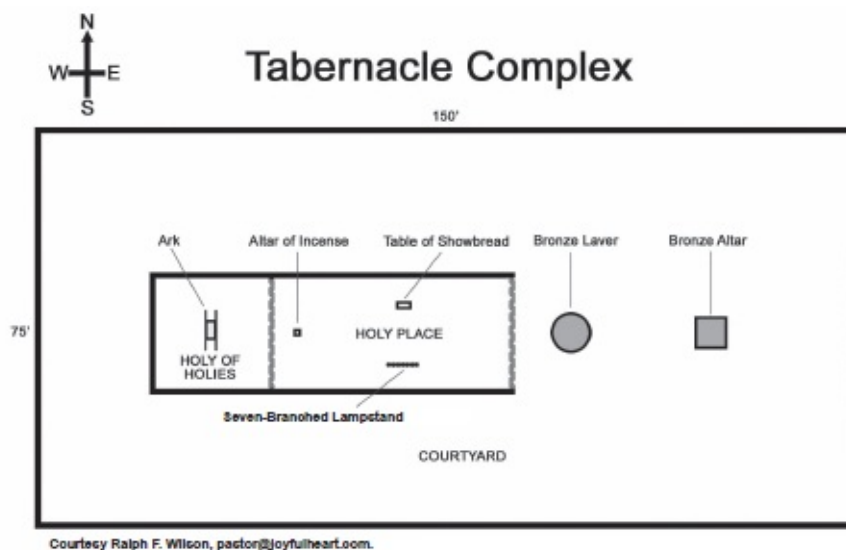
A Divine Design

We can know this subject deserves our special attention when we remember that the blueprints for this unique structure were given to Moses by God Himself—and every aspect of this notable building and its services tells us something about Christ and the plan of salvation.

After confessing his amazement at the mysterious ways in which God has dealt with humanity, King David finally declares he understood it after entering the temple: "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end" (Psalm 73:17). He also wrote, "Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary" (Psalm 77:13). In other words, God's way, the plan of salvation, is revealed in the earthly sanctuary. Everything in it or connected with its services was designed

to be a symbol of Jesus—or depicted something about His ministry in saving us.

This building must have been a priority to God, because after He led the children of Israel out of Egypt and across the Red Sea, instead of guiding them north directly to the Promised Land, He led them south to Mount Sinai. While Israel was encamped at the base of this famous mountain, God delivered to them His perfect law—the Ten Commandments. He also gave them instructions to build an ingenious portable rectangular temple, with the stone tablets containing the law at its very center. This was the place where they would offer their sacrifices and the priests would intercede on behalf of the people. It was in this tabernacle that God would speak with Moses and manifest Himself in a magnificent pillar of smoke that would shade the camp from the burning heat during the day and illuminate it at night with its amber glow. We cannot fully comprehend the plan of salvation until we understand the basics of the sanctuary and its services. It was a huge, dramatized object lesson explaining the process of salvation.



So picture it with me: The tabernacle consisted of a large rectangular, tent-like structure with two central rooms covered by a multi-layered roof. This was surrounded by a courtyard (150 feet by 75 feet) with gold plated panels about seven feet in height.

The first thing you saw when you entered the courtyard was the large altar of burnt offerings (Exodus 27:1–8). This is where the various clean animals were sacrificed. This altar represented the sufferings of Christ—from the garden of Gethsemane where His agony began to the final moments He endured on the cross, when He

declared it was finished and breathed His last. Of course, the sacrificial animal, a lamb in most cases, represented Jesus, the ultimate sacrifice (John 1:29).

Next in the courtyard you would encounter the laver (Exodus 30:17–21; 38:8). It was a very large bronze washbasin located between the entrance of the holy place and the altar of burnt offerings. There the priests washed their hands and feet before entering the sanctuary or offering a sacrifice. The water represented baptism, cleansing from sin, and the new birth. We need to be washed daily in His Word to cleanse ourselves, so that we can serve and minister before Him.

We can see this where Paul said Jesus loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless (Ephesians 5:25–27). And most important, Jesus is the Living Water (John 7:38).

Notice that before you could leave the courtyard and continue your journey toward the holy of holies, the dwelling place of God, you had to pass the fire and water. Jesus said that unless we are born of the water and the Spirit (fire), we cannot enter the kingdom (John 3:5). We need both the water and the fire baptism. Likewise, before the children of Israel could leave Egypt, they offered the Passover lamb. As they began their journey, God met them in a pillar of fire and led them through the Red Sea. You could say they were baptized in the fire and the water (1 Corinthians 10:1–4).

Jesus in the Holy Place

Leaving the courtyard and moving on into the first room, or the holy place, of the sanctuary, you would find yourself surrounded with golden-paneled walls. Inside this gleaming room, there were three golden articles of furniture. On the right you would see the table of showbread (Exodus 25:23–30). There, 12 loaves of unleavened bread were neatly stacked into two piles and replaced with fresh bread every day. Of course, there were 12 tribes in the Old Testament and 12 apostles in the New Testament that were to feed the church the fresh bread of life. This represented Jesus, “the living bread which

came down from heaven” (John 6:51). We need the Word—or bread of God—daily to remain spiritually viable. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

On the left side in the holy place was a large seven-branch candlestick made from one solid piece of hammered gold (Exodus 25:31–40). This likewise represented Jesus, who is the Light of the world (John 9:5; 1:9). The olive oil that kept the lamps burning symbolized the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:1–6; Revelation 4:5). Keep in mind, like the showbread, the candlestick also represented the Word of God, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105). This light also represents the work of the church in the world. Jesus said, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they ... glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16).

Next, directly before the veil, or curtain, to the holy of holies was the golden altar of incense, which was about waist high (Exodus 30:1–8). This represented the prayers of God’s people, which are made fragrant by the incense of Jesus’ merits and mediation (Hebrews 5:7). Our prayers are made acceptable because they are presented in Jesus’ name (John 14:13–14).

So in the first room of the sanctuary, the holy place, we find the three weapons of victorious Christian living. One, the bread—every believer needs daily devotions and time in the Word of God. This is how Jesus met every temptation, by claiming the promises of God and saying to the enemy, “It is written.” Two, the incense—we need time in prayer. Paul said we should pray without ceasing, meaning that we live in an attitude of prayer. King David and Daniel set aside three specific times a day as prayer time (Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10). Three, the light—determine every day to be a witness for God. Pray and search for opportunities to share your faith with others through word, example, or literature. Choosing to witness for Christ is part of your conversion process (1 Timothy 4:16).

Jesus Beyond the Veil

Separating the holy place from the most holy place, or holy of holies, was a very special veil, a curtain:

“You shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen; it shall be made with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman. You shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, their hooks also being of gold, on four sockets of silver. You shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there within the veil; and the veil shall serve for you as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies” (Exodus 26:31–33 NASB).

You might remember that when Jesus died on the cross, something extraordinary happened to this veil, which separated the most holy place from the common priests working in the holy place. Luke 23:45 says, “The sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two.” (See also Matthew 27:51 and Mark 15:38.)

The death of Jesus marked the end of the purpose of the earthly sacrificial system and the physical temple on earth. This is why Jesus, when He walked out of the temple for the final time, said to the religious leaders, “Your house is left to you desolate” (Matthew 23:38). The Jewish feast days and annual Sabbaths were “a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Colossians 2:17).

Next, passing into the most holy place, another gold-paneled room, you would find only one object—the ark of the testimony, also called the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:10–22). This was the radioactive core of Hebrew worship. The word “ark” means container. It was a large rectangular chest of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Attached to the lid of the chest were two figures made of solid gold, angels with their wings spreading over the ark. The cover of the ark was called the mercy seat (Exodus 25:17–22), where God’s presence dwelt. This spot symbolized God’s throne in heaven, which is likewise located between two angels, or cherubim (Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 6:1, 2). This is where the fiery Shekinah glory of God would appear and the Lord would communicate with Moses.

What made this golden ark so precious was that it was designed to be the container for the Ten Commandments—the holy law spoken by God’s voice and written by His finger on two stone tablets. It was called the ark of the covenant because the Ten Commandments were the foundation of that covenant. “He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone” (Deuteronomy 4:13). And, of

course, the new covenant is where God writes these same words in our hearts as opposed to on stone (Hebrews 8:10).

The mercy seat was above the commandments, which signified that as long as God's people confessed and forsook their sins (Proverbs 28:13), mercy would be extended to them through the blood that was sprinkled on the mercy seat by the priest once a year on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:15, 16). That blood represented the blood shed by Jesus to bring all people forgiveness and cleansing (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:22). "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11).

Sacrificing animals was necessary to help people understand that without the blood of Jesus shed on the cross, there could be no forgiveness of sin. The shocking truth is that the punishment for sin is death. Since all of us have sinned, we should all die—and we would have died except that Jesus gave up His perfect life in death to pay for our sins.

Did you know that the sinner brought his own sacrificial animal and slew it with his own hand? (Leviticus 1:4, 5). When he placed his hands on the head of the animal and confessed his sins, the sins were symbolically transferred from the sinner to the lamb. Thus, the animal became guilty and had to pay the death penalty. This represented Jesus willingly bearing our sins.

The whole disturbing process was meant to impress upon people the solemn truth that sin caused Jesus' death. Thus, they looked forward to the cross for their salvation, while we look back to the cross for our salvation. Yes—all are saved by the cross.

Now, one male individual in Israel was arrayed in pure, regal garments to stand as the intercessor between God and man. This was the high priest who, of course, represented Jesus our High Priest. "We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man" (Hebrews 8:1, 2).

Over his heart, the earthly high priest wore a golden breastplate studded with 12 precious gems. This represented the 12 tribes of

Israel—and the church, resting heavy on the heart of our Mediator, who ever lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). In addition, two onyx stones engraved with the names of the 12 tribes rested on the shoulders of the high priest, to “bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders as a memorial” (Exodus 28:9–12).

On his head, the high priest wore a pure white turban with a golden placard that said, “Holiness to the Lord” (Exodus 28:36). Of course, Jesus is the only man who ever lived a perfectly holy and pure life.

Jesus Is In—and Is—the Temple

Well, there’s so much more I could write about this subject; it’s deep and vast enough to deserve its own book. So in summary, consider how the sanctuary reflects Jesus. He is the foundational cornerstone upon which the entire building rests (Ephesians 2:20).

Moreover, there was only one doorway into the sanctuary, and there is only one door to salvation and heaven—Jesus said He is that door (John 10:7). Jesus is also the living water in the laver and the light that burns on the seven candles. Jesus died to send the oil of the Spirit to illuminate our hearts, and He is the showbread of life on the golden table. His very name gives our prayers incense before God; He is the rock on which the law is written. He is the high priest and the lamb; it is His blood offered that cleanses us from sin and saves us from its power. Jesus was God in the tabernacle of flesh dwelling with us—Emmanuel!

The last Jewish temple was destroyed by Roman armies in AD 70. Jesus prophesied this would happen when He said, “I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Matthew 24:2). But the truths surrounding the sanctuary are still very relevant for us. God still has a sanctuary in heaven where Jesus is completing His final work of intercession and atonement as our High Priest. Furthermore, Jesus has a temple on earth—His people. “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Witnesses at Christ’s trial declared, “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands’” (Mark 14:58). Jesus was a

carpenter, and He built a house—“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body” (John 2:19–21).

You and I are the living stones in the temple He has built on earth, and Jesus is the cornerstone.

“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame’” (1 Peter 2:4–6).

When Jesus was 12 years old, He made His first trip to Jerusalem for the Passover. While visiting with friends and relatives, surrounded by the crowds and ceremonial commotion, Mary and Joseph actually lost track of Jesus. Searching frantically among the worshiping throngs, they finally found Him after three days. Where did they find Him? In the temple, and He can still be found in the sanctuary today (Luke 2:46).

CHAPTER 19

Living Tapestries

“They beat the gold into thin sheets and cut it into threads, to work it in with the blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and the fine linen, into artistic designs” (Exodus 39:3).

The longest tapestry in the history of the world, woven between 1377 and 1382, was the *Apocalypse Tapestry*, which depicted scenes from the book of Revelation. Originally 459 feet long, only 100 feet of it survives today. What’s left of this medieval French piece of art is currently displayed in the Château d’Angers. It was originally made of six sections, each 78 feet wide and 20 feet high, comprising 90 different scenes. Many of these works originated from Arras, France, a famous textile town in the 14th and 15th centuries that specialized in fine wool tapestries sold to decorate castles all over Europe.

Sadly, very few of these grand tapestries from the Renaissance Era survived the French Revolution. Hundreds were burned to melt down the little gold threads that were often woven into them. How tragic that these grand Bible messages in fabric were sacrificed for a few melted drops of yellow ore!

Yet it’s even more tragic that millions read the Bible today and only walk away with a narrow thumbnail of the majestic message they could have if only they would pause, stand back, and look until the threads merge and disappear. They would soon gaze upon the whole wondrous spectacle of salvation. The Bible is a panorama of Jesus, with a scarlet thread of redemption intertwined through sacred history. Throughout the Bible stories with their colorful characters and objects, the life of Christ is embroidered. They are living tapestries. I appreciate how these writers explain this beautiful facet of faith:

“Oh, Jesus! thy power, thy grace, thy justice, thy tenderness, thy truth, thy majesty, and thine immutability make up such a man, or rather such a God-man, as neither heaven nor earth hath seen elsewhere. Thy infancy, thy eternity, thy sufferings, thy triumphs, thy death, and thine immortality, are all woven in one gorgeous tapestry, without seam

or rent.”⁴

“The truth for this time is broad in its outlines, far reaching, embracing many doctrines, but these doctrines are not detached items which mean little; they are united by golden threads, forming a complete whole, with Christ as the living center.”⁵

An unknown writer once penned:

“This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be saved, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to sustain you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler’s map, the pilot’s compass, the soldier’s sword, and the Christian’s charter. Here Paradise is restored, Heaven opened, and the gates of Hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of joy. It will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents. It is the Book of Books—God’s Book—the revelation of God to man.”

Christ in Every Book

“Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me” (Psalm 40:7).

Christ is the theme of the entire revelation of God. He is promised in Genesis, revealed in the law, prefigured in its history, praised in its poetry, proclaimed in its prophecy, provided in its Gospels, proved in its acts, and prevailed in its revelations. He is seen in every book of the Bible. Take a journey through the halls of Scripture and on every wall you will see a portrait of Christ.

In Genesis, Jesus is the Seed of the woman and coming Shiloh

In Exodus, the Lamb slain for sinners

In Leviticus, our High Priest

In Numbers, the Star of Jacob

In Deuteronomy, the Prophet like unto Moses and the Great Rock

In Joshua, the Captain of the Lord of Hosts

In Judges, the Messenger of Jehovah

In Ruth, our Kinsman Redeemer and Faithful Bridegroom

In 1 Samuel, the Great Judge

In 2 Samuel, the Princely King
In 1 Kings, David's choice
In 2 Kings, the Holiest of all
In 1 Chronicles, the King by birth
In 2 Chronicles, the King by judgment In Ezra, the Lord of heaven
and earth
In Nehemiah, the Builder
In Esther, our Mordecai
In Job, our Daysman and our Living Returning Redeemer
In Psalms, the Son of God and the Good Shepherd
In Proverbs, our Wisdom
In Ecclesiastes, as the One above the sun
In Song of Solomon, the Great Lover of the church, the One
Altogether Lovely
In Isaiah, the Suffering and Glorified Servant
In Jeremiah, the Lord our Righteousness
In Lamentations, the Man of Sorrows
In Ezekiel, the Glorious God
In Daniel, the Stone cut without hands, the Son of God, and the
Messiah
In Hosea, the Risen Son of God
In Joel, the One who pours out the Spirit
In Amos, the Eternal Christ
In Obadiah, the Forgiving Christ
In Jonah, the Risen Prophet
In Micah, the Bethlehemite
In Nahum, the Bringer of good tidings
In Habakkuk, the Lord
In His holy temple

In Zephaniah, the Merciful Christ
In Haggai, the Desire of All Nations
In Zechariah, the Branch
In Malachi, the Son of Righteousness with healing
In His wings
In Matthew, the King of the Jews
In Mark, the Servant In Luke, the Perfect Son of Man
In John, the Son of God
In Acts, the Ascended Lord
In Romans, the Lord our Righteousness
In 1 Corinthians, our Resurrection
In 2 Corinthians, our Comforter
In Galatians, the End of the law
In Ephesians, the Head of the church
In Philippians, the Supplier of every need
In Colossians, the Fullness of the Godhead
In 1 Thessalonians, He comes for His church
In 2 Thessalonians, He comes with His church
In 1 Timothy, He is the Mediator
In 2 Timothy, the Bestower of crowns
In Titus, our Great God and Savior
In Philemon, the Prayer of crowns
In Hebrews, the Rest of the faith and Fulfiller of types
In James, the Lord Drawing Nigh
In 1 Peter, the Vicarious Sufferer
In 2 Peter, the Lord of Glory
In 1 John, the Way
In 2 John, the Truth

In 3 John, the Life

In Jude, our Security

In Revelation, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Lamb of God, the Bright and Morning Star, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. ⁶

John Spencer once illustrated it like this:

“Christ is full and sufficient for all his people. He is bread, wine, milk, living waters, to nourish them; he is a garment of righteousness to cover them; a Physician to heal them; a Counselor to advise them; a Captain to defend them; a Prince to rule; a Prophet to teach; a Priest to make atonement for them; a Husband to protect; a Father to provide; a Brother to relieve; a Foundation to support; a Root to quicken; a Head to guide; a Treasure to enrich; a Sun to enlighten; and a Fountain to cleanse.” ⁷

Putting It All Together

Professor W.G. Moorhead of Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary said that one day, before returning home from a trip abroad, he bought his children a gift that he hoped would also be educational—a cardboard map of the world. But before giving the map to his daughters, he cut it into many odd pieces like a puzzle. When he gave it to his two girls, he said, “Now, if you can put this together you will learn more about world geography than if you studied a book.”

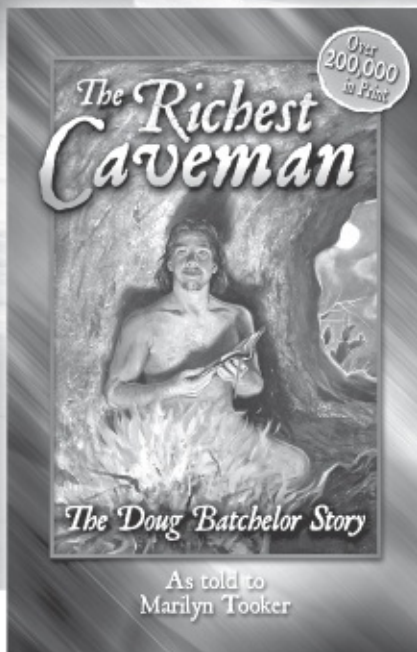
They worked very patiently, but at last one of them rose to her feet frustrated, saying, “I cannot put it together; it is too hard!” The great Bible teacher admitted it was an awful jumble. They had a part of North America in South America and many other geographic blunders. Suddenly, however, the older of the two girls, still on her knees, discovered that the other side of one piece of the map was a depiction of a man’s hand. Curious, she quickly turned over more pieces and soon discovered part of a face. Evidently, the vendors had printed the map on the back of a recycled poster. The older girl’s fingers worked rapidly as she turned over every piece of the map; she called to her sister, saying, “Come back! There is a man on the other side. Let’s put him together first, then we will understand the map.” Almost instantly, said the father, the figure of the man was completed. And when the map was turned over—every river and lake, every mountain and road, was in the proper place.

This is the secret of true Bible study! Put the Man together first. Jesus in Genesis is the same Jesus in Revelation. There is only one name that binds the entire Bible together—Jesus Christ. Throughout this book, I have attempted to present many features of the Man, the great Type and Image of every piece of the Bible, so that you can more clearly see the map of Scripture and be blessed and educated.

My prayer is that your eyes may be opened to behold Jesus, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

- 4 Charles Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening* (Whitaker House, Revised edition, 2001), entry for June 21.
- 5 Ellen G. White, *That I May Know Him* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing, 1964), p. 208
- 6 Most of this list created by Pastor James Hayes of Peoria, Arizona, and enhanced by others.
- 7 John Spencer, *Things New and Old* (London: William Tegg, 1869), p. 72

▶▶ MORE BY DOUG BATCHELOR



The Richest Caveman

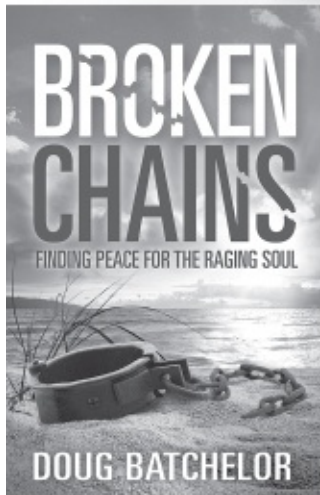
The Doug Batchelor Story

ONLY
\$10⁹⁵

The extraordinary true story of Doug Batchelor, son of a millionaire father and show-business mother. Find out how God turned a rebellious teenager living in a cave as a hermit into a tremendous soul-winner for Jesus Christ. While remaining down-to-earth, Pastor Doug recounts the many miracles of God that led him to where he is today—teaching people all over the world about the Bible and the love and salvation of Jesus.

\$10.95 (AF-RCM)

▶▶ MORE BY DOUG BATCHELOR

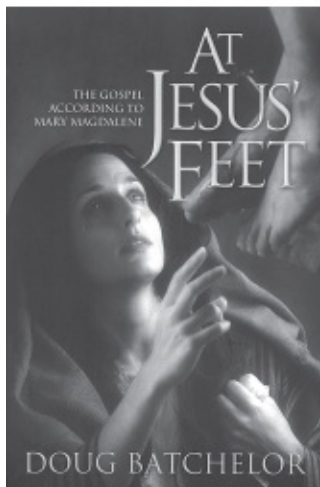


Broken Chains

Finding Peace for the Raging Soul

Are you tired of falling short day after day in the same sins? You don't need to despair any longer—Jesus can help you break those chains! Based on the extraordinary account of the raging demoniac, this inspiring book by Pastor Doug Batchelor unfolds the power of God to liberate and transform souls bound in the murkiest depths of sin.

\$10.98 (BK-BCR)



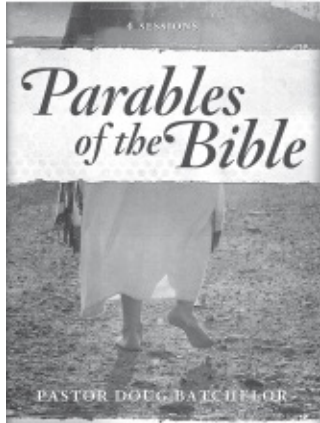
At Jesus' Feet

The Gospel According to Mary Magdalene

An imaginative retelling of the gospel through Mary Magdalene's eyes. Pastor Doug Batchelor's original insights paint a vivid portrait of a gentle Savior who invites us, like Mary, to sit at His feet. Reveals the true power of God's offer of salvation to transform lives and opens up new understanding of Bible teachings that will amaze and delight you!

\$13.98 (BK-AJFH)

▶▶ MORE BY DOUG BATCHELOR



Parables of the Bible DVD

Doug Batchelor invites you on an inspiring and enriching exploration of four of Jesus' most iconic lesson stories, with fresh insights from his own unique perspective. While opening the door of understanding to what these stories meant to those who heard them firsthand, he also shares how these timeless lessons of faith can be a practical guide in your everyday experience with God. Join Pastor Doug at the feet of Jesus to rediscover His most beloved stories of faithful living. (Four hours on two DVDs)

\$15.95 (DV-POB)



ONLY
\$7.95

Lake of Fire DVD

What is the purpose of hell-fire? When and how does it happen? And what can you do to avoid it? Join Bible teacher Doug Batchelor for a riveting, two-part scriptural study that will address these questions and more, and discover answers that will astound you. Find reassurance in the Bible that those who trust in God don't need to fear the end of the world.

\$7.95 (DV-LOF)

How to order—Call **800-538-7275** or visit



AFBOOKSTORE.COM

Your one-stop shop for Christian resources

Prices subject to change.