

# The Backstory of Jesus in the Old Testament

## *How the tabernacle, sacrifices, and festivals make up the foundation for understanding the rest of the Bible*

### **An incredibly important truth in a little story that's easy to miss.....the Road to Emmaus**

- As He walked with two followers of his, Luke says they were kept from recognizing who he was.
- They were distraught because Jesus had been crucified, was dead, and buried.
- They were disappointed because they had hoped that Jesus was the Messiah, but a crucified Messiah was not what they expected.
- "And it's the third day!" they said. I imagine Jesus had a hard time not laughing at that.
- Jesus didn't rebuke them, but it says, "***Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.***"  
Luke 24:27
- And several hours later, they recognized Him and He disappears.

### **This is not the only place in the NT the OT is used to explain it**

- In the book of Matthew, passage after passage includes a phrase similar to this one, where it says, "*this was to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah,*" Matthew 4:14
- With a bookkeeper's precision, Matthew continuously footnotes the things Jesus does with statements like this one.
- The Apostle Paul does similar things where, we find statements like this, "*...he reasoned with them from the Scriptures (the Old Testament) explaining and proving the Christ would have to suffer.*" Acts 17:3.
- As Paul went from place to place, he often first went to the local synagogue and started in this way.

### **Pause a minute before continuing**

- We can read passages like these and not think much of them, but we need to realize how extraordinary they are.
- That is because they are part of the body of proof that our Bibles are indeed the very Word of God, written ultimately by One Author, God Himself, consisting of ***ONE STORY from beginning to end.***
- This sets our Bible apart from ALL other religious writings.
- If that is the case, why don't most people see it?

### **They don't see it because of the seemingly small, but dangerous habit of reading the Bible in bits and pieces**

- It is dangerous because if you only read the Bible in bits and pieces (e.g. in a devotional only) you won't see the Bible as a whole by One Author.
- Or if you take the word of "scholars" [and I use the quote marks intentionally as their work is based more on fanciful fabrications than

consistent historical analysis] you might chop the Bible up into totally unsubstantiated “source documents.”

- Such as the now disproven, but for a time quite unsettling, JEDP hypothesis for the Old Testament that suggested that instead of Moses as the author of the Pentateuch, that a variety of authors wrote it at various times.
- Or the Jesus Seminar deciding what parts of the New Testament they feel Jesus “truly said” based simply on what they feel is true.
- In every case chopping up the Bible, reading in bits and pieces results in an incorrect view of it and one that is ultimately dangerous and destructive to your spiritual life and eternal soul.

**The solution to a proper view of the Bible is what we are doing now—reading the Bible in chronological but also**

- Looking at the entire Bible as we read the early parts of it.
- This is not an easy process, but these lessons will help you.
- This is so important because when you SEE, really see and understand the Bible as ONE unified story, when you see how all the parts are woven together,
- And when you pair that with the historical FACTS of the dates when the Bible was written,
- ***The only conclusion you can come to is that the God who exists outside of time is the author of it.***
- ***See the chart on God’s view outside of time to help understand this.***
- ***This chart is included in the handouts and is available at [www.Bible805.com](http://www.Bible805.com).***

**That’s why we talked about Typology last week and why we will discuss it more this week**

- ***Typology is where there is a picture of something early in the timeline of the Bible that, though meaningful in itself, will have a more complete fulfillment, and often additional expansion in meaning later.***
- We will look at the many things in the Old Testament Tabernacle, sacrifices, and festivals that illustrate this.
- Again, only ONE Author, composing the story of the Bible outside of time could accomplish this.
- For a sure foundation, trust in the Bible, our God, and the peace that comes with it is the goal of this lesson. It is not just as an apologetic exercise, but it is for your assurance of what you have committed your life to; for your dark nights of the soul.
- So, let’s get into the specifics.....

**The significance of the fulfillment in the New Testament about the Messiah from *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* by Gleason L. Archer, Jr.**

- ***“In general, we may say that the Old Testament presented the preparation of which the New Testament was the fulfillment; it was the seed and plan of which the New Testament was the glorious fruit.***
- ***“Precisely because Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled what the Old Testament predicted, His life and deeds possessed absolute finality, rather than His being a mere religious sage like many others.***

- *For this reason also the gospel of Christ possesses divine validity which sets it apart from all man-made religions.*
- **Note: *no other religion has predictive prophecy like this and then fulfillment of those prophecies thousands of years later within their sacred books.***
- As Archer says, other books may contain “wise sayings” but none have this millennia of prophetic foretelling and then fulfillment to validate their authority.

#### **The book goes on...**

- *“The New Testament writers viewed the entire Hebrew Scriptures as a testimony to Jesus Christ, the perfect Man who fulfilled all the Law; the Sacrifice and High Priest of the ritual ordinances; the Prophet, Priest and King of who the prophets foretold. . . .*  
***The Old Testament demonstrates that Jesus and His Church were providential, the embodiment of the purpose of God; the New Testament proves that the Hebrew Scriptures constituted a coherent and integrated organism, focused upon a single great theme and exhibiting a single program of redemption.”***

#### **With that as background, let's now look at specifics of how we can understand these books of the Old Testament as the backstory of Jesus**

- Let's look back at the Tabernacle, its furnishings, the sacrifices, and the festivals.
- It is like any other area of knowledge—sports, cooking, various careers, each area has its past heroes, its lingo, its short-cut terms.
- The Bible is no different and the rest of it will refer to the items and events we'll talk about and that are discussed in the early books of the Bible, always with the coming Messiah, Jesus in mind.
- Let's start by looking at why God gave such EXACT instructions on the Tabernacle, its furnishings, and all the regulations surrounding it.

#### **People are innately religious, but the form it takes may not be what God wants**

- Israel needed a God-approved place and way of worship.
- While in Egypt, the children of Israel most likely practiced some type of sacrifice, as sacrificing to Jehovah goes back to the earliest days of humanity.
- Their religion was always spoken of as coming from “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” not from Moses.
- However, it would have been unorganized and not at all what God wanted—the regulations in Leviticus give us a hint of what was going on where it says:
- ***Lev. 17:7 They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols [or to demons] to whom they prostitute themselves. This is to be a lasting ordinance for them and for the generations to come.***
- Sacrificing to demons? What???

#### **The Jewish Quarterly Review, “The Religion of Israel before Sinai” clarifies the background and setting of this verse**

#### **Other evidences of what they previously considered “worship”**

- When Moses didn't come down from the mountain as quickly as they

expected (and it is a pattern that sin often results from impatience) they turned to:

- Making an idol and engaging in “worship” that included eating, drinking, dancing, and “revelry.”
- An assumption could follow that this was the sort of “worship” they were accustomed to, as it was for many pagan societies.
- ***But this is NOT how God wanted to be worshipped and so He gives them specific instructions on what they are to do and where they are to do it.***

#### **First, the Tabernacle**

- A place where God can physically dwell with His people.
- And where they will be reminded of His presence.

#### **Another representation**

**A resource recommendation. These books (and as a reminder, Bible805 takes no advertising or affiliate fees), are the sources of upcoming images I will be showing you and handouts made for classes**

- It is OK to use for classes, please purchase your own and copies of the books here if you do. The two books are:
- ***Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps & Time Lines***
- ***Gospel Light, Reproducible Maps, Charts, Timelines and Illustrations***
- If you are listening to the podcast, please if possible, check out the video on [www.Youtube.com/Bible805](http://www.Youtube.com/Bible805) to see the images that I’ll be discussing though I’ll attempt to describe them.

#### **Arrangement of the Tabernacle**

- The entire structure was 150 ft. long, 50 ft wide, the Holy and Most Holy Place, 35 ft. long, 15 ft. wide
- A football field is 360 ft. long and 160 ft. wide. The entire Tabernacle complex would be a bit less than one quarter size of it.
- Overall it was a large courtyard with a smaller building inside.
- Inside that building was a smaller room, the Holy of Holies, wherein was the Ark of the Covenant.

#### **The Tabernacle furnishings**

- **The Bronze Altar**
- The place of the sacrifices.
- Signified the necessity to shed blood for the forgiveness of sins and it came first because we must be cleansed of our sins to approach a holy God.
- The sacrifices here were a temporary covering of sin, looking ahead to the final sacrifice of Jesus that would completely pay the penalty.
- Though there are many passages through the Bible that refer to it, the book of Hebrews in the New Testament is a detailed explanation of this foreshadowing and fulfillment.

#### **The various sacrifices on the altar**

- **Sin offering**—for sin, Isaiah 53:10, “the Lord makes his life a guilt offering.” specifically pointing to the life of the Messiah; Matt.20:28- “to give his life as a ransom.”
- Also, used as an example of how Christian workers are to be fed from their work. (1 Corinthian 9:9-14 and 1 Timothy 5:17-18 passages). They didn’t burn it all, but kept the best parts of this sacrifice as food for the priests and Levites.

- **Burnt offering**—complete sacrifice, as Jesus gave his all and as our lives are to be.
- This is the sacrifice referred to in Rom. 12:1—giving our lives completely as sacrifices to God.
- **Grain**—sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13), sharing with others, applicable to all believers then and now.
- **Fellowship**—this sacrifice looked forward to sharing life with Christ, Rev. 3:20—more than just salvation from damnation, but a continuing loving relationship, feasting with God—we will see this in the Table of Showbread also.

#### **Other items—**

##### **Bronze Laver—big bowls filled with water**

- The Bronze Laver, the priests had to wash every time they made an offering.
- It illustrated the essential need of purity for God's people as they live and do ministry.
- Going forward, though we are now saved, and a kingdom of priests, we need to be continually cleansed by Jesus, 2 ways to do this:
- One, through the Word of God—Christ said, *“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3).*
- Two, through confession and forgiveness, 1 John 1:9—God's provision for our sin—when we confess, He then cleanses us.
- We are also reminded of Jesus' example of washing the feet of his disciples in John 13—an example of continuing servanthood of all believers.

##### **The Gold Lampstand**

- The only source of light in the Tabernacle.
- Symbolized how the coming Messiah, Jesus would be the light of the World.
- And we are also commanded to be lights to our world and to not hide our light.

##### **The table of Showbread—real bread**

- Fine flour speaks of the sinless nature of Christ.
- Jesus identified as the Bread of Life.
- Speaks also of fellowship, and unbelievably how the Lord desires fellowship with us.
- Rev. 3:20—***Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.***
- Jesus spent a lot of time eating with His disciples and sharing food together is an important part of his church and people.

#### **Other Items**

- The Altar of Incense—Often referred to as our prayers, a vital part of worship.
- The Veil—covering between the Holy Temple and the Holy of Holies.
- The Holy of Holies could not be accessed directly, the High Priest had to enter the Holy of Holies from the side.
- The later veil in Jerusalem was torn apart supernaturally by God after Jesus' death, illustrating that access to God was now free and available to all.

#### **Most significant piece in the Tabernacle was the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies**

- After it was dedicated, only the High Priest could approach it once a year on

the Day of Atonement to sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat (the top of the chest).

- Blood was shed and then sprinkled on it. God could then look with mercy on covered sins—however, this covering of sin was only temporary and had to be repeated again and again.
- In the New Testament, the book of Hebrews makes clear that the death of Christ was the FINAL sacrifice—the final blood shed—and no longer were animal sacrifices necessary.
- Additional note: unlike its representation in popular culture, (and superstitious views of people in the Old Testament that you'll see later) ***the Ark itself was not a vessel of power***—its importance is in what it pictured about the coming, final atonement of Jesus, where His blood would forever cover and pay the price for our sins.

#### **A summary passage, Hebrews 9:11-14**

- But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, . . . .  
<sup>12</sup> ***he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.*** <sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> ***how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.***

**The design of these pieces references the furnishings resembling King Tut treasures—all images from his tomb**

- **God uses contemporary styles and skills for His glory.**
- **His work not a strange otherworldly creation.**
- **And the human creators of the tabernacle pieces were trained in Egypt.**

#### **And then the feasts**

- Following I'll name the feast, its contemporary meaning or reason to celebrate what it meant to Israel, then how it was or will be fulfilled in the life of Jesus and the Church, and then additional comments on it.
- **Passover**—Contemporary meaning/celebration=Redemption from Egypt—*Fulfilled=Redemption through Christ's crucifixion*, the Last Supper was a Passover celebration
- **First Fruits**—Contemporary meaning/celebration=First grain harvest—*Fulfilled=The Resurrection of Christ*, First to rise from the dead and we will also
- **Feast of Weeks or Pentecost**—Contemporary meaning/celebration=Ingathering of the first harvest, the provision of God—*Fulfilled=The coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church*, 50 days after the resurrection

#### **More feasts, a picture of salvation history to completion**

- **Feast of Trumpets**—Contemporary meaning/celebration=Solemn assembly, when trumpets blow to prepare for the Day of Atonement—*Will be Fulfilled=Christ's Second Coming*

- **Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur**—Contemporary meaning/celebration=Solemn assembly for forgiveness—*Will be Fulfilled=Final reconciliation of Israel with the Messiah*
- **Fest of Booths**—Contemporary meaning/celebration=Final Harvest—*Will be Fulfilled=The Kingdom of God on Earth*
- **Sabbath**—Weekly sign of God’s Covenant—*Our rest from our works in Jesus, sign of ongoing grace*

#### **A little more on the Sabbath, the Sabbath Year, and the Year of Jubilee**

- The underlying truth in all of these is that they were to be times to trust God.
- They were supposed to be observed by resting, not working, cancelling debts, returning the land to original owners, and other acts of trust.
- Ultimately, they are illustrations of Grace—God’s totally unmerited favor to us.
- For them and us it is a way to express our trust in God’s grace by merely being still, resting.
- We rest outwardly to signify our inner trust in God’s grace for our salvation.

#### **That is ultimately how the Sabbath was fulfilled in Jesus**

- As He is the final solution to all our striving, all our work to make ourselves right with God.
- ***“Jesus paid it all; all to Him I owe,” says the old hymn and trusting Him completely for our salvation is the true observance of the Sabbath.***
- When Jesus came, **then the meticulous rules are no longer important or necessary—they were a picture of what was to come in Jesus.**
- Trying to observe all sorts of legalistic rules after Jesus came and fulfilled all the Law looked forward to was/is a denial of His life, death, and resurrection (as the book of Galatians explains in more detail) and why the Jews of today try so hard with their Sabbath observances.
- And why they no longer apply to us.
- That’s why it was now OK to heal, to do good, to observe a different day of rest, worship, and praise than strictly the Jewish Sabbath.

#### **What do we learn from all of this**

- All these things truly make up the backstory for Jesus.
- His life, death, resurrection, creation of the church, and return for His people fulfilled and will fulfill what these were pictures of.
- It makes sense to us now—as we see the finished work of Christ, being part of the church, and look forward to his coming return.
- But think how different it would have been to them. . . .

#### **Their previous “sacrifices”**

##### **& “worship” style**

- We mentioned that they “sacrificed to demons” in Leviticus 17:7, sacrifices of fear and pleading for protection—no praise, no thanksgiving.
- When Moses didn’t come back for 40 days and they immediately constructed a golden calf and engaged in drunken immorality.
- What kind of religions were these?
- First, one of fear and placating evil spirits,
- Second, of serving gods they made, of self-indulgence.
- Both approaches are so similar to what many people try today.

### Neither way of worship worked then and doesn't work now

- A groveling fear of God or a worship that is all about me and doing what I want to do; what makes ME feel good—
  - **Neither of these are true worship of our God**, (though many try today), in contrast as C.S. Lewis said:
  - *"I didn't go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity."*
  - And as ancient Israel couldn't serve God in the ways they wanted, we can't either, again as Lewis says:
  - *Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favourite wishes every day and death of your whole body in the end submit with every fibre of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in."*
- **C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity**

### The amazing thing is that when we give ourselves to God, when we worship as He wants, is when we find what we've always wanted, always longed for

- *"The more we let God take us over, the more truly ourselves we become - because He made us. He invented us. He invented all the different people that you and I were intended to be. . . It is when I turn to Christ, when I give up myself to His personality, that I first begin to have a real personality of my own."*
- **C.S. Lewis**
- *"The mold in which a key is made would be a strange thing, if you had never seen a key: and the key itself a strange thing if you had never seen a lock. Your soul has a curious shape because it is a hollow made to fit a particular swelling in the infinite contours of the divine substance, or a key to unlock one of the doors in the house with many mansions. Your place in heaven will seem to be made for you and you alone, because you were made for it -- made for it stitch by stitch as a glove is made for a hand."*
- **C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain**
- **We become what we were created to be, what will make us most happy and fulfilled, when we trust God and follow HIS ways and worship in the way He wants—it's a story that hasn't changed from the earliest days of God calling a people out of Egypt to us today.**

### In closing

- I trust that in this lesson you caught a glimpse of the unity of the grand story of the Bible and how the Old Testament forms the backstory of Jesus—that He wasn't simply an inspiring person who appeared and died a tragic death—but the fulfillment of pictures and promises from the earliest days of the Bible.
- From beginning to end the Bible is the story of the God who loves us beyond all we can imagine, is working out the plot line of redemption for His

creation who turned their back on Him and the perfect world He created for them.

- It's about how God worked through the centuries telling the story, bit by bit, assembling a people, His Word, sending His Son to be the final sacrifice, and calling out a people and *that now includes you and me*.
- ***It is not only Jesus' backstory, but ours as well, and my prayer for all of us is that in our words and actions that we share God's ongoing story of love and salvation truly and well.***

Go to [www.Bible805.com](http://www.Bible805.com) for Links to: Podcasts, blogs, and eBooks,  
Chronological Bible-reading schedules

# Illustration of God's View of Time

This illustration shows how God is simultaneously aware of and knows all of time, past, present, and future and in contrast how we humans only experience one particular point of time.

This illustrates also how God can tell us in the Bible what will happen because He knows all of it in advance of us encountering it on our timeline.

Prophecy is not some mysterious thing, but simply how a caring God communicates what His people need to know.

Links to a podcast and video on this topic are also on [www.Bible805.com](http://www.Bible805.com)

