

TLCBiblical.com Video Series
129 The Scheme Of Redemption - 4
The Nature Of The Messiah

1. Intro

The plan to save mankind was put in place before the world was created but as God implemented it He concealed how salvation would be achieved. In preparation for the appearance of the Messiah prophets were inspired to record a variety of details. Some of these were obscure and harder to understand existing in the scriptures as images or types. Others are very plain and denote specific traits and characteristics about the Messiah, his birth, life and death. In this lesson we'll discuss the **Scheme of Redemption Part 4 - The Nature Of the Messiah**.

2. The power of the prophetic word

Many people doubt the credibility of the Bible but as we look at prophetic elements pointing to the Messiah we find more than ample evidence to support the scriptures as the inspired word of God. Contained in the writings of the prophets are statements that specifically note the manner in which the Messiah would come into the world and his life.

In this lesson we'll take a look at Christ's

1. Birth, physical attributes and roles
2. His teaching and miracles as examples of the power of God, and
3. Prophecies detailing specifics about his betrayal, death and resurrection

Let's take a look at each of these

3. The birth & life of the Messiah

The prophet Isaiah wrote over 700 years before the birth of Christ but he supplies us with a number of details concerning the Messiah. One of the most notable of these is a prophecy that would serve as a sign in the future. Isaiah writes, "***Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.***" (Isa 7.14). On the surface we can see that this event would indeed be something to take note of. As we turn to the New Testament we read about Christ's birth.

Luke tells us that the angel Gabriel informed a young virgin named Mary that she was to have a child who would be called the son of the Highest and would sit on the throne of his father David (Luke 1.26-32). The account given in Matthew is somewhat shorter but notes a significant detail. Matthew writes, "***Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost...***" (Matt 1.18). Luke notes that Mary was espoused to a man named Joseph but Matthew

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adds the detail that they hadn't come together yet. This implies that Mary was sexually a virgin and Christ was, as Gabriel stated, conceived of the Holy Spirit. This is exactly what the prophet Isaiah had stated would happen.

In our world today there are many who believe that the proper rendering of the word for virgin is "**young woman**". Translating the word in that fashion doesn't point to anything out of the ordinary at all. Quite the opposite. Young women become pregnant all the time and this isn't an occurrence that would draw any attention as being special. We can ignore the translator's efforts to change the meaning of the word because no matter how you want to render it, there's information in the text that dispels this idea.

As I've noted, Matthew's account is very specific as he states that while Joseph and Mary were espoused, or promised to each other, they hadn't come together. As we review the account further we find that as Joseph is told that Mary is to have a child he's thinking of putting her away when the angel Gabriel speaks to him. Notice what's stated by the angel as he talks to Joseph. Matthew records, "*Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.*" (Matt 1.19-25).

The details are clear. Gabriel informs him that what is happening is of the Holy Ghost. The reasons for this are given and emphasis is placed on the fact that the baby would save the people from their sins. Matthew goes on to note that Joseph did as Gabriel instructed him but there was no physical intimacy between Mary and himself until after Christ was born. When we review these statements it doesn't matter if you change the translation of the word "**virgin**", the fact remains that the couple weren't intimate until after the birth of Christ. This fulfilled the writing of the prophet Isaiah who predicted this event by divine inspiration hundreds of years earlier.

Another detail provided by the prophets is the location of Christ's birth. The prophet Micah tells us where the Messiah would be born. "*But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will*

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he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.” (Mic 5.2-4).

Bethlehem was the site of Rachel’s death as Jacob returned to Canaan from Padan-aram. Here Rachel gave birth to Benjamin dying in the process and was buried there (**Gen 35.16-20**). Bethlehem was also the home of Naomi and her kin and it is there that Ruth who accompanied Naomi home from Moab married Boaz. Ruth was the great grandmother of David who was also from Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem in order to pay taxes commanded by the Romans and there Christ was born fulfilling the prophecy (**Lk 2.1-7**).

Another aspect of the Messiah is found in the writing of Isaiah who speaks of his physical attributes. *“For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” (Isa 53.2).* We have no idea what Christ actually looked like but the statement by Isaiah indicates that there wasn’t anything that would draw people to him simply based on his “good looks”. Artistic representations of Christ through the centuries have rendered the Lord as a soft eyed, long haired individual who appears as though he would never say anything negative to anyone. The reality of what Jesus looked like isn’t important but his features may have been dramatically different than how most would like to view him. Humans have a tendency to see those who are handsome or beautiful as good while anyone who doesn’t measure up to certain standards are judged more harshly. The appeal of Christ was not in how he looked but in what he taught, how he taught and the power that emanated from the truth of his words.

Isaiah also describes an attitude toward the Messiah as he writes, *“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” (Isa 53.3).* As the trial of Christ proceeded even his own followers turned away from him. There may have been some in the crowds that concluded that if Christ hadn’t done something wrong then things wouldn’t have taken the downward turn they did. We can understand this in our own time as public opinion of guilt or innocence is made when an accusation is leveled against someone. As Christ was paraded before the Sanhedrin, Herod, Pilate and finally crucified he was alone. His followers abandoned him. The leaders insulted him even while he was dying and no one stood up to defend him. This may seem strange but God knew the time was such that the Jews would hate and ultimately kill his son. That was part of the plan however and when Christ was on the cross, the darkness, earthquake and splitting of the veil in the temple were open signs confirming exactly who Jesus was.

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On the day of Pentecost as Peter spoke to the multitudes he declared the full identity of Jesus as the Messiah and Christ, or anointed one. Peter states, “*Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*” (Acts 2.29-35). In one powerful statement Peter identifies Christ and shows that he was the fulfillment of the promise to David that there would be one who would sit on his throne forever. He also indicates that this was the plan of God in the fact that Jesus had been raised from the dead and was currently at God’s right hand where he would rule until all enemies were conquered.

Important to note here is that Peter calls their attention to the fact that David was dead and his tomb was with them at that time. The fact that Christ was reigning at the side of his Father and his throne was in heaven reminds us that there won’t be an earthly restoration of the kingdom of Israel. Remember, Christ told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world in **John 18.36**. The eternal kingdom Christ came to build would exist in the hearts and minds of believers and would encompass the entire world. Even the disciples were confused on this point prior to Christ’s ascension in **Acts 1.6**. Christ’s answer to them was that they were to wait in Jerusalem until they received power from God at which time they began to understand the nature of the kingdom, the church. The emphasis in Peter’s statements on the day of Pentecost highlighted the fact that Christ was a king and sat on a throne which fulfilled the promise to David made by God hundreds of years earlier.

Christ’s role in relation to a new law also fulfilled prophecies made by Moses and identifies him as our high priest. Under the Law only those of the tribe of Levi could serve as priests. As we look at prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah we find that a change in the law is definite. The reason for that is explained in the book of Hebrews.

As the writer of Hebrews compares the Law of Moses with the new law, aspects of worship, sacrifices, the physical presence of the tabernacle and temple are all explored. One of the most significant points is a discussion and comparison of Christ and the Levitical priests. First the writer calls attention to the fact that Christ was of the tribe of Judah. “*For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning*

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priesthood.” (Heb 7.14). The chapter discusses and compares the nature of Christ’s priesthood with the foreshadow found in the figure of Melchizedek which I’ve covered in an earlier lesson, but note the reasons for this.

The writer confirms that Christ is a priest and states, *“For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.”* (Heb 7.12). We also find the reason for this change. *“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.”* (Heb 7.26-28). The Law itself was a foreshadow of a better law that was to come. As we read through **Hebrews 7** we find that the Levitical priests were human and therefore subject to sin and imperfection. Christ on the other hand was the son of God, sinless and had been ordained by the Father himself. No other being has this attribute. It was the will of the Father that his son would offer himself for the sins of the world. In that offering he wasn’t only the perfect sacrifice but being raised by God he became the high priest of the faith and will continue in that role forever.

These are only a few of the characteristics and traits of Christ that we could review in prophecy and fulfillment in the New Testament but these provide a good starting point from which we can see that Christ was the son of God. Aside from these attributes was the fact that his presence in the world was with power in the miracles he performed and the knowledge that he had.

4. Teaching & Miracles

As Moses prepared the children of Israel for his death he foretold of a time in the future in which God would send another prophet. *“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”* (Deut 18.18-19). During Jesus lifetime there were those who recognized that he was the one Moses had spoken of. *“Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”* (John 1.45). We see a recognition of Christ as a prophet from God as Nicodemus visits him. *“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”* (John 3.1-2). There was a noticeable

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difference in what Christ did as seen not only in the miracles that he performed but also in the way he taught. Matthew records an observation that illustrates this point. As the sermon on the mount comes to an end Matthew notes, *“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”* (Matt 7.28-29).

The Messiah’s wisdom and authority were characterized by Isaiah, who wrote, *“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears...”* (Isa 11.1-3). This statement not only characterizes the nature of the Messiah’s teaching and power but also notes that he will be a descendant of David in a physical sense fulfilling prophecies we reviewed in the last lesson about the Messiah’s role as a king.

The teachings of the Messiah, while being an example of the wisdom and power of God, would have a unique character. The Messiah would speak in parables as noted in **Psalm 78.2**. Turning to the New Testament we find that Christ spoke in parables to the crowds. When his disciples asked him why he did this Christ answered, *“Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.”* (Matt 13.13-14). Christ continues adding, *“And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”* (Matt 13.14-15).

Christ’s miracles are the greatest statement of who he was and we see that these were foretold as well. Isaiah states, *“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing...”* (Isa 35.5-6). Christ referred to this passage to confirm his identity when disciples from John came to him. *“When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.”* (Luke 7.20-22).

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These are only a few examples that we can find in the prophets concerning the life of Christ. Perhaps the most compelling prophecies are those describing the death of the Messiah.

5. A planned death

In the previous video I reviewed the fact that Christ didn't die prematurely as some think. We examined prophecies that pointed to his death and particularly the fact that he would be lifted up as seen in the foreshadow of the brazen serpent that Moses was commanded to make. As we examine other statements made about the Messiah in the writings of the prophets we find that there are more intimate details concerning how his death would be brought about.

The Messiah was to be betrayed by one that he knew. We can find this in the Psalms. ***"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."*** (Psm 41.9). The night in which Jesus was arrested he ate the Passover with his disciples and informed them that one of their number would betray him. After indicating who this was Christ was approached by Judas. ***"Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said."*** (Matt 26.25). We're told that Judas had conspired with the Jewish leadership to deliver Christ to them. Later, as Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane he speaks of Judas. ***"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."*** (John 17.12).

Christ also spoke of the nature of his death which would involve crucifixion. As he spoke to Nicodemus Jesus notes that the serpent created by Moses foreshadowed his death. ***"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."*** (John 3.14-15). Jesus indicated that Nicodemus should have had a better idea of what was transpiring. In a subtle chastisement Christ stated, ***"Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"*** (John 3.10).

Christ emphasized the need for his death to occur in a later conversation. ***"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."*** (John 12.32-33). In this brief statement we find three pieces of information. First is the fact that Christ's death would be the event that would unite all people. This is a statement of the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham that through him all families of the Earth would be blessed. Up to this time the first two promises God made to Abraham had been fulfilled. The first was that he would have a son. The second was that his descendants would become a great nation and inherit the land of Canaan from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates river. This was fulfilled during the reign of Solomon who expanded the borders of Israel. The last promise to be

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fulfilled was the blessing of all families of the Earth which would be done through the sacrifice of Christ. With the establishment of the eternal kingdom, the church, all mankind could be reconciled to God as one family in Christ. In addition to the fulfillment of these promises Christ also indicates that there was to be a change in the law that would include all people, and he was to be crucified as the means of his execution.

Another prophecy concerning the Messiah recorded by Isaiah, provides specific details of his death. ***“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”*** (Isa 53.12). As we turn to the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion we find that Christ was executed surrounded by two thieves (Matt 27.38). Christ told his disciples that this was to take place only a few hours before he was arrested in Luke 22.37. In the prophecy recorded in Isaiah we find that the Messiah would ***“pour out his soul unto death”*** indicating that his reason for coming into the world was to be offered as a sacrifice. The ultimate reason for this is found at the end of the verse as Isaiah states that he ***“made intercession for the transgressors”***. Without the death of Christ there was no intercession. If there was no intercession there could be no reconciliation of man and God. The death of the Messiah was not an accident, it was part of a greater plan to save everyone who had ever lived and been faithful to God.

One of the more obscure aspects of the Messiah’s death in prophecy is that of how his garments were to be handled. The Psalmist writes, ***“For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”*** (Psalm 22.16-18). As we take a look at what happened when Christ was crucified we find the fulfillment of this prophecy. ***“And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.”*** (Matt 27.35). Comparing these two passages we can find there’s a wealth of detail. Isaiah indicates that the Messiah’s hands and feet would be pierced describing his manner of death as fulfilled in the crucifixion. The Psalmist then notes that as they look on him they would divide his garments and ***“cast lots”*** for them which Matthew confirms in his record of the crucifixion.

These are only a few of the prophecies that we could review but these show that Christ’s death wasn’t an accident. His work on Earth wasn’t cut short by humans or the meddling of Satan. Jesus death on the cross was not only planned but was a necessary part of reconciling humanity with the creator. To demonstrate that Christ’s death was planned we need only look at prophecies that told what was to happen after the Messiah’s death.

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The Psalms provide information regarding God's ultimate plan. We read, "*For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*" (Psm 16.10). The word for "*hell*" here refers to the grave or the realm of departed spirits. In this statement David indicates that while the Messiah was to die, he wouldn't remain in the grave. Christ told his disciples he would rise from the dead on the third day (Matt 17.23, 20.19). The Gospels record the fact that on the first day of the week, the third day after Christ was killed, he arose from the dead (Matt 28.2-6). On the day of Pentecost Peter noted the significance of this in his sermon. Peter recalls the prophecy made by David and tells the multitude, "*He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*" (Acts 2.31-33).

On the day of Pentecost the remission of sins in the name of Christ was preached. The goal of saving mankind that God promised in the garden of Eden and later to Abraham was completed in the death of Christ. Raising Christ from the dead defeated the power of Satan as now all who believed in Christ and are faithful could be saved. It also meant that the redemption of all who had lived before was completed. The death and resurrection of Christ was the necessary and ultimate reason why Jesus came into the world. While this doesn't make any sense to those who reject the scriptures we have confidence in God's wisdom. "*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*" (Heb 4.15-16).

6. Next

In our next video I'll discuss the nature of the kingdom Christ stated he would build and whether we've seen that or not. Join me in our next video when we'll discuss the **Scheme Of Redemption Part 5 - Kingdom Come**.