

Foreshadowing of Jesus

Crosswalk Series

Calvary Baptist Church of Holland

Sunday, March 22nd 2015

Pastor Paul L. Davis

Key Thought: Jesus is the focal point of history.

The focal point of everything we do is Jesus Christ. He is the focus of our worship. He is the focus of our praise. He is the focus of our hope. He is the focus of our salvation, faith, and trust. It truly is “all about Jesus.” As a result, shouldn’t the main pursuit of our life be to know him? The Apostle Paul’s desire was “*that I may know him and the power of his resurrection*” (Philippians 3:10). Paul’s desire should be ours as well.

Last week we discussed an interesting story that Jesus told in Luke 16. There was a rich man and a poor man named Lazarus. Both men died. The poor man was taken to Abraham’s side. The rich man was buried, and was tormented in hell. While there, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off with Lazarus at his side, so he called out, “*Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.*” But Abraham said no because there was a great chasm between heaven and hell. Then the rich man begged, “*Father, then send him to my father’s house— for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*” And this is the part I want us to catch: *But Abraham said, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.” And he said, “No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.” He said to him, “If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.”* (Luke 16:19–31)

This passage reveals an important truth, specifically about the Old Testament: It is powerful. The information, stories, and history are so compelling that when understood, it will transform your life even more powerfully than if you were to see someone raised from the dead right in front of you. God’s Word contains within it everything you and I need to believe and put our faith in Jesus Christ.

In this series we are getting to know Jesus better in three ways. We are understanding him better **historically**, as a person who actually lived in time and space. We are understanding him better **theologically**, as the second person of the Trinity. Lastly, we are understanding him better **prophetically**. Jesus did not just “pop” into history; he was foreshadowed all through the Old Testament. That is where we continue this morning—in our quick survey—exploring glimpses and shadows of Jesus in the Old Testament.

Last week we saw Jesus powerfully in **the Pentateuch**—the first five books of the Bible. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy were all written by Moses. The Jews call it the Torah (instruction). These five books were given by God to Moses at Mt. Sinai. The Pentateuch is what Jesus was talking about when he said, “*You have Moses and the prophets.*” The Pentateuch is the *Moses* part, and it forms the foundation for everything else in the Bible. If you struggle understanding the Bible, it is probably because you have not read the Pentateuch. Everything we know about Jesus begins here and grows from here.

We started in Genesis last week. Let me walk us through a crash course in the history of Genesis to bring us where we will begin today. Genesis starts with creation, fall, flood, Tower of Babel, Abraham, Ishmael/Isaac, Esau/Jacob, 12 sons of Jacob, Joseph going to Egypt, then *all* the Jews go to Egypt. That brings us to Exodus.



Exodus

The Book of Exodus is the second book of the Bible, and it describes how the Israelites became enslaved to the Egyptians and how they were delivered from Egypt through the power of Yahweh God.

The Messiah will be the Passover lamb

God delivered the Israelites through 10 plagues designed to contrast the power of Yahweh against the power of the Egyptian pantheon of gods:¹

1. Water into blood
2. Frogs
3. Lice
4. Flies
5. Diseased Livestock
6. Boils
7. Thunderstorm of Hail and Fire
8. Locusts
9. Darkness

The tenth plague was different. Listen to what God was going to do:

“Thus says the Lord: ‘About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again.’” (Exodus 11:4–6)

Turn with me to Exodus 12. In this chapter God tells his people to protect themselves against the Angel of Death by sacrificing a lamb and spreading its blood on the doorposts of their houses. *“For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord.”* (Exodus 12:12)

Verse 13 is the glimpse: *“The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.”* God said that when he saw the blood he would “pass over” and not permit the “destroyer” (Exodus 12:23) to enter. Any home without the blood would have the first-born struck down.

In February 2004, *Time* magazine ran an article entitled, “Why It’s So Bloody.” It was an article addressing Mel Gibson’s movie “The Passion of the Christ” and why it was so gruesomely bloody. The author dislikes Gibson’s portrayal of Jesus’ suffering because to him the gospel is about “joy, astonishment and love.”² Yet down through history— from the blood of lambs spread onto the doorposts till the crucifixion of Christ—believers have been obsessed with blood. We sing about it, we say things like we are “washed in it.” In communion we even say that we drink it. Why blood? The simple answer is because God takes sin seriously. God is holy, pure, perfection in righteousness. He cannot let sin go unpunished, so in the Old Testament God required the blood of lambs, goats, and other animals to temporarily “cover” (Heb. 10:4) sins. The death of the animals *temporarily* atoned for the sins of the people.

¹ Hilyer, Douglas *The New Bible Dictionary* Second Edition Tyndale House Publishing 1987.

² Van Biema, “Why It’s So Bloody. Gibson’s movie is theologically in tune with the times—the 1300s” *Time Magazine* March 2004.

Jesus became the perfect and ultimate sacrifice. His blood was shed on the cross and it is available for any who would trust in Jesus' death for the forgiveness of sin. *And when God sees our faith in the blood of Christ, He will pass over us.* In other words, we will not be judged. Romans 8:1 says that in Jesus there is no condemnation—sins are covered by his blood. He has become the Passover lamb for us. *"Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."* (1 Corinthians 5:7)

Leviticus

The third book of the bible is Leviticus. Its title comes from the tribe of the Levites who were chosen by God to be his priests. Most of the book describes how God wanted his people to worship him and most importantly how they could have their sins forgiven (Lev. 4-5).

The Messiah will be our Great High Priest and atoning sacrifice

Leviticus reveals Christ as our Great High Priest. Leviticus 8-10 goes to great lengths to describe the office and role of a great high priest, emphasizing how holy and pure he had to be as the intermediary between God and the people. We see Jesus fulfilling this prophecy in the book of Hebrews, specifically in Hebrews 4:14-5:10. *"Therefore he (Jesus) had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."* (Hebrews 2:17)

God designed the office of high priest to picture the role Jesus accomplished for us. The priest was the intermediary between God's holiness and man's sinfulness. The priest interceded for man—he walked into the "Holy of Holies" where God's presence was manifested and made what was called "intercession" on the people's behalf. Literally, his job was to step between God's holiness and wrath against sin and the people who deserved his judgment and through blood to "intercede." Jesus takes that Old Testament role and fulfills it himself through his own death. His death intercedes on our behalf and makes a way for us to be right with God. Hebrews 4:15-16 discusses how much better Jesus the Messiah is as a high priest than the Old Testament priests: *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."* (Hebrews 4:15)

In the Old Testament, it was the high priests' job to constantly atone for the sins of the people. They sacrificed goats, rams, lambs, and bulls. Their blood was sprinkled on what was called "the Mercy Seat"—the place where God's holiness resided. The blood of the animals temporarily atoned for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16 & 23:26-32). Listen to what was written about Jesus as the high priest in Hebrews 9:

*But when Christ appeared as a high priest... 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.** For if the blood of goats and bulls... sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 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.* (Hebrews 9:11-14)

So when you read through the book of Leviticus (and you should!) and you see all of the ceremony and liturgy, don't think to yourself, "This is boring." Think to yourself how much better Jesus is than having to live up to all the requirements of the law. Think to yourself how powerful Jesus' death was to replace all of the ritual. Think to yourself:

There is a redeemer, Jesus, God's own Son
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One



Jesus my redeemer, name above all names
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, oh, for sinners slain

Thank you oh my Father for giving us Your Son
And leaving Your Spirit 'til the work on Earth is done³

Numbers

I want to finish this morning with the book of Numbers because I think, of all the books in the Pentateuch, it contains the most powerful picture of how one puts their faith in Christ. This picture is found in Numbers 21 and is only five verses! **The Messiah will be lifted up for our healing:**

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live. (Numbers 21:4–9)

Listen to that last sentence. If that isn't a picture of Satan, sin, and the fall, I do not know what is. The Serpent bit mankind when Eve gave in to temptation. From that time man has been plagued with the effects of sin. Listen to what Jesus says about himself in John 3: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:14–16)

Salvation is as simple as looking to Christ. Have you looked to him? Do you understand that you can be saved right now by believing that Christ died for your sins? Jesus shed his blood for you. He paid for your sins (I Peter 1:18-19) with his blood. His sacrifice fulfilled all of the Old Testament requirements. You can be forgiven through his blood. Will you believe that? Will you believe that Jesus took your place on the cross? That he suffered what you deserve? That he took your penalty? The Bible says if you believe that what Jesus did paid the full price of your sins, there is nothing left to pay or to join or to do—your belief is counted as righteousness.

We have not yet even scratched the surface. Are you beginning to see why Jesus desired us to look for him through the writings of Moses? Remember, the Pentateuch was written thousands of years before Jesus was born, yet he so perfectly fulfilled the pictures that Moses gave us of the coming Messiah. Next week we are going to explore the prophets. You will be amazed at how dozens of men over hundreds of years and in three different languages picture one amazing Messiah. I can't wait.

³ Green, Keith © 1982 Birdwing Music (ASCAP)/Ears to Hear Music (ASCAP)(both admin. by EMI CMG Publishing).

