



4. The Fall and Promises of a Savior

As 75-year-old Abram packed his bags, his family questioned his sanity. He had received a vision from God, saying “Leave your country; your people and your father’s household, and go to the land I will show you.” His loved ones asked, “Why? Why you; why now? Are you sure this wasn’t just some crazy dream?” But Abram was very sure, because in that vision God had also given him a promise so wonderful he could scarcely believe it. “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you. . . .and one day, through your descendants, all nations on earth will be blessed.” It was the unlikeliest of promises, especially when made to a childless 75-year-old man whose wife was infertile. And yet, against all hope, Abram in hope believed and set out for the land of Canaan.

As 80-year-old Abram lay awake in his tent, he began to wonder if he was indeed crazy. He wasn’t getting any younger, and since the vision 5 years ago, his wife Sarai had shown no sign of being pregnant. How could God’s promise possibly be fulfilled? As Abram tossed and turned, unable to sleep, suddenly the LORD appeared to him a second time. “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” God then led Abram outside, where a dazzling array of stars winked down from the dark Near Eastern sky. “Count the stars - if indeed you can count them. So shall your offspring be. . . .”

As 100-year-old Abraham held his newborn son in his arms, tears rolled down his cheeks. God had kept his promise after all, and had brought about a miracle that anybody on earth would have said was impossible. As Abraham looked at the baby in his arms, his heart swelled with hope that God would keep the rest of his promises too. The promise of a land to call his own. The promise of a mighty nation made up of his own descendants. And above all, the promise of another baby boy, who would come to save his people from their sin.*

(adapted from Genesis 12 and 15)

This lesson focuses on the origin of sin, God’s gracious plan of salvation, and the way he made that plan known to his people throughout the period we have come to call “The Old Testament.”

* A new name, meaning “father of many,” which God gave to Abram

WHERE DID SIN COME FROM, AND WHAT DID GOD DO ABOUT IT?

Read Genesis 2:15-3:7.

If God created a perfect world, then where did sin come from? It didn't originate with God, but was brought into the world by a fallen angel called Satan, or the devil. (Revelation 12:7-9.) He came to the garden in the form of a serpent and convinced Adam and Eve to rebel against God.

Romans 5:12 *Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin.*

Romans 8:22 *We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

God's perfect world was now broken, but he refused to destroy it and start over. Instead, as soon as Adam and Eve fell into sin, God revealed his plan to save them.

Lamentations 3:22 *Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.*

Ezekiel 33:11 *As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.*

Read Genesis 3:8-24.

Genesis 3:15 is a particularly special verse. With this single promise, God vowed to both restore mankind's relationship with God and destroy the work of Satan.

Genesis 3:15 *The Lord God said to the serpent... "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*

Take a closer look at the verse, and identify to whom each pronoun is referring:

"I"

"he"

"you"

"your"

"your offspring"

"you"

"hers"

"his"

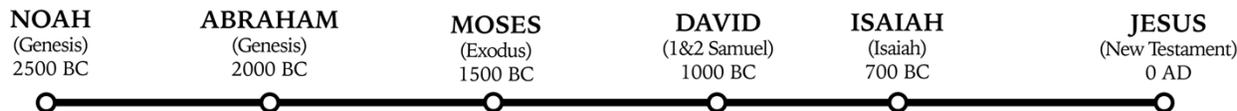
God promises a human, singular, male descendant, with the power to defeat the devil. The only person who fits this description is _____.

1 John 3:8 *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

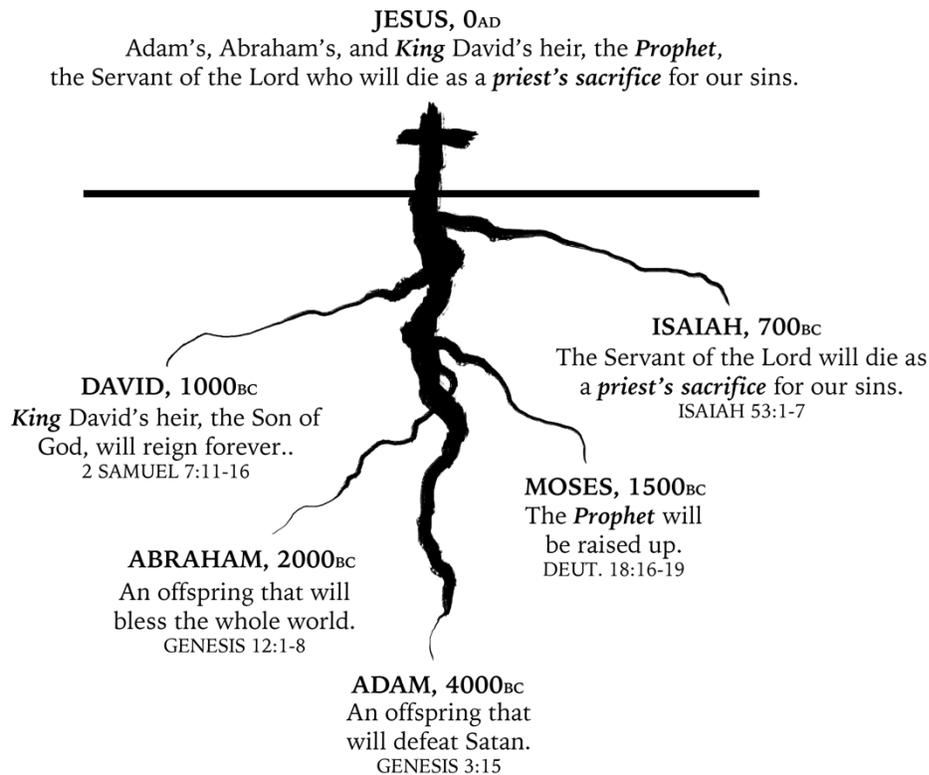
WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?

God had promised that a special person would come from Adam and Eve's family. God eventually made that family into a **people**, or nation. The Old Testament is the history of that nation.

Take a few minutes to walk through the timeline of Old Testament History, focusing on both **God's people** and their **movements**.



Now discuss five major **promises**, or prophecies, of a Savior which God made to his people along the way. All these promises would eventually be fulfilled by the coming of Jesus Christ.



TAKING IT DEEPER...

From the early chapters of Genesis through the end of the Old Testament, there is much we can learn about God.

- What do we learn about the value he places on people?
- What do we learn about his promises?
- What do we learn about the way he works through even wars and other political events to accomplish his will?

Evaluate the statement: “There are many religions older and more authentic than Christianity. Jesus was alive around 30 AD, but Hindus and Buddhists have texts and teachers dating from hundreds or even thousands of years before Jesus.”

OPTIONAL: Discuss “Why did the Israelites Have So Many Special Laws?” - Appendix, p. 97

OPTIONAL: Discuss the “How Did the Old Testament Laws Point to Jesus?” - Appendix, p. 98

FOR NEXT TIME...

Read the account of the worldwide flood (Genesis 6-8) and bring any questions to our class next week.