

MANUSCRIPT FOR PUBLICATION

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Finding Jesus in the Old Testament

Dr. Charles P. Baylis¹

Introduction: Jesus in the Old Testament

Almost every evangelical is aware of the claim that Jesus fulfilled hundreds of prophecies from the Old Testament. Some would even more zealously avow that the Old Testament is *all* about Jesus. Contrariwise, some in the academic community would argue that there are no distinct “original intent” prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament.²

All evangelicals would agree that the New Testament authors aver that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament passages. Yet the views vary immensely as to how these writers came to their conclusions. Some would claim that these inspired authors independently informed (i.e., added to, complemented, changed) the original intent of the Old Testament simply because they were given additional divine insight, and/or used a unique (e.g., “second temple Judaism”³) hermeneutic to “Messianically” reinterpret Old Testament texts.⁴ On the other hand, others hold that the Old Testament texts predicted a single unique Messiah in their

¹ Dr. Charles P. Baylis is a Professor of Bible Exposition at Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas. His discussion of the Biblical Story explaining the plan of God centered in Jesus can be found at www.BiblicalStory.org.

² Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, (New York: Abingdon, 1954) sees eschatology appearing quite late in the Jewish OT history (after the fall of the monarchy) and thus an eschatological national Messiah would also be late. Also see Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The One who is to Come* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) who also proposes a late developing concept of Messiah.

³ “Second temple Judaism” is a period of time prior to and during the time of Jesus (515 BC to 70 AD) in which it is proposed that a unique hermeneutic was used which does not correspond to the traditional normal, grammatical, historical, hermeneutic. For the purposes of this study, what is proposed is that Jewish writers interpreted Old Testament texts to be more Messianic than could be obtained by their explicit original intent and this led to the increased Messianic expectation during the time of Jesus and the apostles. Following that line of thought they would propose that the apostles and Jesus used this hermeneutic to reinterpret the original meanings of Old Testament texts more Christologically. For a discussion of the varied approaches using this methodology see Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975). See also, *Jesus, the Messiah*, by Gordon Johnston, Herbert Bateman IV, Darrell Bock (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012). In a summary of their approach it states in the Introduction, “So it should not come as a surprise that second temple interpretive approaches to the First Testament are often reflected in the Second Testament.”

⁴ For a short summary of views see Darrell Bock, “Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 142 (July 1985) 209-23. Also see a broader survey of alternative approaches from that presented here, in “The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments,” Edited by Stanley E. Porter, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

originally intended meaning and the New Testament authors simply referenced that meaning.⁵

While this article cannot interact with all the individual explanations as to how Jesus is found in the Old Testament, it should be stated that some views can be eliminated solely by establishing one basic tenet.

When a New Testament author alludes to the Old Testament to “prove” Jesus is the Christ, he must use the original intent of the passage or it would not meet the definition and purpose of “prophecy.” If, as an eyewitness of Jesus’ words and works, the apostle must reinterpret Old Testament texts to “fit” the One he eye-witnessed, then it could not be a valid “proof.”⁶ This is the logical fallacy of circular reasoning, where the premise assumes the conclusion. This type of reasoning, as such, is considered illegitimate even in contemporary secular debate societies. Thus, the use of the Old Testament by the New Testament authors must be using its original intent to be foundational for “proof.” Isaiah stated that the purpose of prophecy, understood in its original intent, was to validate (“prove”) the later event or person as being according to God.

³ "I declared the former things long ago and they went forth from My mouth, and I proclaimed them. Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. ⁴ "Because I know that you are obstinate, And your neck is an iron sinew And your forehead bronze, ⁵ Therefore I declared *them* to you long ago, Before they took place I proclaimed *them* to you, So that you would not say, 'My idol has done them, And my graven image and my molten image have commanded them.'

(Isaiah 48:3-5)

He speaks similarly in Isaiah 42 when referencing the Servant of YHWH to come.

"Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one *in whom* My soul

⁵ In this group are Elliott Johnson (“Dual Authorship and the Single Intended Meaning of Scripture,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 143:571 (July 1986), Walter Kaiser (“Toward an Exegetical Theology,” (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) and “The Messiah in the Old Testament,” Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), and Paul Feinberg (*Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments*, (Wheaton: Crossway Publishing, 1988) among others.

⁶ Among those who see this inconsistency is Paul Feinberg. Feinberg comments on those who advocate reinterpretation of OT passages by NT writers, “Moreover, since the original meaning is not a part of the fulfillment on the reinterpretation view, there is raised the additional question of the integrity of God. How can God be truthful and change the meaning of his promises? All of this is simply to say that the fulfillment must be in keeping with the OT prediction . . . the meaning of the OT must not be changed.” (Paul Feinberg, *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments*, (Wheaton: Crossway Publishing, 1988), p. 120).

delights. . . .⁹ "Behold, the former things have come to pass, Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim *them* to you."
(Isaiah 42:1, 9)

It is the purpose of this study to show that the Old Testament⁷ is to be read in its literary form, as originally intended. That form is narrative, or more specifically, dramatic plot, a genre used by authors to develop a single unique purpose. That single purpose in the narrative of the Old Testament is simply that God's intention in history was that His character would be represented (i.e., "imaged") throughout the physical universe through one Man (Genesis 1:26, Psalm 2, 8). That Man is revealed in the New Testament as Jesus of Nazareth (Hebrews 2:5-9).

Thus, when Jesus appeared on the scene, the sequence of the historical Biblical plot had come to the point that the preparation for His identification was complete, and the ultimate Messianic mission was ready to begin. His words and works then testified to the fact that He was this ideal "image of God," who had been anticipated by the Hebrew Scriptures to come in the "fullness of time" to deliver His nation and the world.

⁴ But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

(Galatians 4:4-5)

⁴⁵ Philip found 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)

John states that he eye-witnessed Jesus as the fullness of what began in Genesis 1 ("the beginning"), the expression⁸ of the character of God (i.e., eternal "life") in a Man.

"What was from the beginning (*i.e.*, *Genesis 1*), what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and

⁷ This is, of course, regarding the narrative of the Old Testament that contributes to the historical movement of the plot. Other books must fit into their place in the plot developed by the narrative.

⁸ The "image" of God is all that God's character is, expressed, or represented, into the physical world. Thus, when God expressed His desires through His Word at creation, that expression (that One) became a Man in order to fully represent God. This is stated in John 1:1,14, "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word became flesh . . ." Colossians 1:15-20 reflects a similar message.

touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life (*i.e., the revelation of God's character*)-- and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us"

(1 John 1:1-2)

Jesus stated the *Torah* was the proof of His Messianic identity as it predicted His appearance.⁹

³⁹ "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me . . . ⁴⁶ "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

(John 5:39, 46-47)

The Old Testament as Dramatic Plot

The Old Testament movement consists of a collection of sequential¹⁰ stories. As a collection it must fit into one of two possible categories of narrative. One type is episodic plot (a collection of isolated, or loosely connected, episodes, *i.e., anthology*) and the other is dramatic plot (a sequential movement of events to a single climax with a single purpose; *i.e. drama*).¹¹ Knowing the form of the Biblical stories is absolutely essential for correct interpretation since these forms are disparate in the way that they communicate meaning and thus disparate in the way they must be interpreted.

Episodic Plot (Anthology)

Episodic plot is a collection of individual events tied together loosely by a common theme (e.g., separate events with a common character), often referred to

⁹ If Jesus reinterpreted (added to, complemented, changed) the *Torah* then the *Torah* became His words and His statement became a form of circular reasoning. But if the original meaning of the *Torah* points to Him and His words, then it becomes foundational proof.

¹⁰ Stories are assembled according to the author's purposeful selection, and while roughly chronological, may be assembled for a sequence that varies from strict chronology (e.g., flashbacks).

¹¹ A discussion of the differences in "dramatic" plot (they use the term "unified plot") and "episodic plot" can be found in "A Glossary of Literary Terms," p. 295, by M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2012). These titles and their related categories are defined here for the purposes of this specific study since throughout literary studies definitions vary. Other titles for dramatic plot or similar concepts are dramatic structure, progressive plot, unified plot, and others, although specific definitions of the same titles may vary in actual usage.

as anthology. Each event contains a completely encapsulated moral or ethical meaning apart from the rest of the events in the compilation. Because each individual story has its own independently identifiable message, the whole collection may have as many individual meanings as the number of individual stories.

Dramatic Plot (Progressive Plot)

The other type of historical narrative is called dramatic¹² or progressive plot. Many separate events are strung together to build and develop into the whole of a single progressive unified plot with a single purpose. Each event cannot be interpreted separately since its function is limited to simply contributing a small part to the movement, and thus the message, of the larger story. The event appears, like a scene in a play, contributes its incomplete part, and then disappears as the story moves on to the next event.

Misunderstanding the Type of Narrative

If the narrative is episodic, then the interpreter must study each story on its own. He does not have to know the stories that precede or follow,¹³ and in fact will introduce error if he tries to link them together in a single progression as in a dramatic plot.

If the narrative is dramatic plot, however, then he must read the story from the beginning, reading each story in sequence as it builds the plot. Only when he has realized the whole of the story will he be able to make an accurate conclusion about the single overall lesson to be learned. He may then return to the individual stories to understand them based solely on their unique, but partial, contribution to the whole.¹⁴

¹² Dramatic plot is identified differently than episodic plot primarily in that the scenes or events are strictly ordered, moving to a single climax, contributing to a single overall message.

¹³ One of the identifying factors of episodic plot is that frequently the stories can be reordered without affecting the interpretation.

¹⁴ Hebrews 11 makes the point that in each of these events the specific character played out a unique contribution to the Biblical story. Yet their part was never complete in itself, but anticipated the ultimate King and Kingdom (i.e., the end of the story). These men and women knew how the story would end (and could have been by any reader of the Pentateuch) since it had been prophesied. Thus they walked by faith that the promised kingdom would come only through resolution of the return of Christ and the bodily resurrection. The reader of Hebrews, based on the testimony of the apostles that the King had arrived, must also walk by faith since he also must wait for that final resolution in the final coming of Messiah, the resurrection, and the eternal earthly kingdom.

More importantly for this study, since the Bible is dramatic plot, then the whole story has one purpose, one goal, and one message. The job of the interpreter, then, is to determine this single message. If he isolates the stories he will necessarily incur error since the individual event is included only as part of the overall plot.¹⁵

Interpreting (and misinterpreting) the Old Testament

Thus one must interpret individual stories only based on the unique part they play in the whole of the progressive plot.

For instance, to find the message of the story of Noah and the Ark (Genesis 5:28—9:29) the reader must interpret it as part of a dramatic plot. As an individual story it does not contain enough information for correct interpretation on its own.

The story itself originates at Noah's birth in 5:28 and continues to his death in 9:29. The story begins with Noah's father, Lamech, pronouncing the hope for his child's life. This pronouncement by a parent over their child, like Eve's statement at Cain's birth (4:1), sets the individual story off in a precise direction, that is, to find out if the parent's hope comes to pass. Lamech's hope is that his son will be the One who will give them comfort arising "from the ground which the Lord has cursed" (מִן־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אָרְרָה יְהוָה) (Gen 5:29, see also 8:21).

In order to know to what Lamech is alluding one must access the earlier buildup of the plot. If this is not recognized the interpreter will ignore this allusion as unimportant or input his own biased perception¹⁶ to the story. This allusion in 5:29 is to Genesis 3:17 where God had cursed the ground due to Adam's sin. (Note the repetition of the words for "curse," "ground," and "sorrow").

¹⁵ It would seem to some that it might be possible that one could know certain things about good and bad behavior from individual stories. While one would know that David was good and Goliath was bad because David was on God's side and Goliath was opposing Him, one cannot define what that "good" or "bad" is without knowing the earlier parts of the story. Without knowing the rest of the story, one does not know what "good" part David plays in this story, that is, what is this "good" that requires killing real men on behalf of God. Or stated another way, what is the justification for this God to execute judgment through David on Philistines? When one knows the rest of the story it is realized that David is playing his part as an anointed anticipation of an ultimate Messiah, one who will execute judgment on unbelieving men much greater than David conquered in that small valley in Israel.

¹⁶ This perception may be based on whatever the interpreter feels is important in his own world; e.g., historical background, theology, contemporary situation, archaeological background, need of his audience, etc.

"This one will give us comfort from our work and from the sorrow (וּמֵעֲצָבוֹן) of our hands *arising* from the ground (הָאֲדָמָה) which the LORD has cursed (אָרַרָהּ)."

Genesis 5:29

"Cursed (אָרַרָהּ) is the ground (הָאֲדָמָה) because of you; In sorrow (בְּעֲצָבוֹן) you will eat of it All the days of your life."

(Genesis 3:17)

Not only is Lamech alluding to a removal of the curse, but also alluding to One unique human who will come to remove it. This also refers to earlier in the plot (3:15, two verses before the "curse of the ground" reference in 3:17), where God prophesied that His New Adam would appear, judge the old creation and create a new one.

There are other statements in the story that also require definition from earlier in the plot sequence. For instance, how was it that Noah "found favor with God" (6:8), "walked with God," or was declared to be a "righteous man" (6:9). Since these are the attributes that separated Noah from those who would be destroyed, it is important for the reader to be able to ascertain exactly how it was that Noah endeared himself to God.

Thus the story must be seen, not as a separate moral event in an anthology, but part of a dramatic plot. If it is not seen as such, error will ensue, since it is included solely as a unique contribution to the larger story.

However, when properly viewed as an event in the larger developing narrative, one can see that the story of Noah is playing out, in part, the Genesis 3:15 promise that a "new Adam" would come and execute judgment on all the followers of the serpent. Yet this judgment and escape that Noah provides is only part of the prophecy of Genesis 3:15. For instance, the serpent does not strike Noah, nor does Noah strike the serpent. Thus the reader, while seeing part of the prophecy of 3:15 played out, looks past that event with great expectation to the One who will be greater than Noah and completely fulfill that prophecy.

Jesus references the story of Noah in that original intent, that is, as picturing His ultimate judgment of unbelievers.

³⁷ "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. ³⁸ "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

(Matthew 24:37-39)

The author of Hebrews also recognizes that Noah knew he was only playing a part on the way to the ultimate judgment and deliverance in the Christ.

⁷ By faith Noah, being warned *by God* about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. . . ³⁹ And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

(Hebrews 11:7, 39)

Denial of the Old Testament as Dramatic Plot

Unfortunately, many in the academic community aver that these events are a collection of isolated stories as opposed to dramatic plot. These scholars assume the impossibility that one inspired author (God) intended one historically dramatic plot (“metanarrative”) and recorded it through the hands of human authors.

For instance, source critics through the years have rejected the unity, and consequently the cohesive progressive plot of the Bible. Instead, they argue that the Old Testament text as it now stands was actually several separate texts that have been stitched together by later authors/redactors.¹⁷ Thus, interpretation was restricted to identifying the boundaries of the source text and the extra-textual, motive of the later author (e.g., “*Elohist*” in Genesis 1, “*Yahwist*” in Genesis 2), thus removing it from any possibility of playing a necessary part in a unified sequential plot.

Another means of breaking up the text apart from the dramatic narrative is by claiming that some events are solely etiological. These etiologies are stories inserted into the narrative for the single purpose of explaining why things are “the way they are” in the author’s historical situation. These, by nature, do not contribute to the continuity of the dramatic narrative, but are interpreted based on a non-contextual, historical perception of the author.¹⁸

¹⁷ This is commonly referenced as the Documentary Hypothesis or the JEDP theory commonly associated with Julius Wellhausen. For a discussion of modern critical theories refer to Eugene Merrill, *An Historical Survey of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), p. 24-28.

¹⁸ Some examples of these proposed etiologies isolated from the context are Genesis 3:15 (why women fear snakes), Genesis 2:24 (why sons want to leave their fathers and mothers to marry), or Genesis 18—19 (why salt pillars exist in the Dead Sea). To have an etiology it must be a part of a purposeful contribution to the narrative context. For instance, Genesis 32:32 explains why Israel does not eat the sinew of the hip, yet the story is still an integral part of the contextual development.

But it is not only the academic community that subtly (or sometimes boldly) denies a unified progressive plot. Many in the evangelical community, focusing on “me-centered,” contemporary relevance, insist on “application” or “self-help” as the goal of their interpretive process. Thus they have errantly assumed that each of the individual Bible stories has a self-contained applicable moral principle. All too frequently pulpits of evangelical America utilize this type of preaching, bookstores stock this type of writing, and small group Bible studies pursue this type of application, sharing their own insights on “what it means to me.” The preacher, writer, or study group, isolates each story and inserts his or her own criteria into the story. Thus, they make the text relate to the audience they seek to engage. Frequently these errant applications duplicate those of the secular world since it is frequently from that sphere that the interpreter has obtained the information he inputs into the event.¹⁹

A well-known example of errantly isolating a story for the purpose of “me-centered” application is the story of David and Goliath. Here the preacher or writer inserts his own meaning and tells the listeners that they, like David, can conquer anything (envy, greed, lust, financial difficulties, etc.) that opposes their progress on the way to a spiritual (or physical) goal if they have faith (or endurance, patience, or some other trait). The preacher might make the five smooth stones represent some secular method or attribute that one needs (leadership, boldness, friendship, etc.) to accomplish their goals (i.e., kill their symbolic giants). Yet the story gives no indication that this real historical killing of a 9-1/2 foot man is symbolic of the elimination of one’s envy or lust (not to mention that it doesn’t work) or other self-help success methods. Certainly the author did not include the five smooth stones to award the reader control over the meaning and application of his God-revealed, inspired passage. The result is that some self-imagined “God wants you to be successful” (or some similar) misguided promise is errantly turned into an infallible principle in which the audience can believe. Of course, since by isolating the event and inputting his own philosophy, the interpreter becomes the source of the message, not God.

Again, since this story of David is only a part of the larger dramatic plot, it does not contain enough information to interpret correctly. When seen in the larger dramatic plot, David is playing out the details of the Genesis 3:15 Messianic prophecy of the Coming One. Thus the reader can look past David for a greater than David. David’s role as conqueror is not something granted to the average Israelite, and certainly not to today’s Christian. But it is something that will come true in Jesus,

¹⁹ These secular inputs are fairly widespread in the evangelical community and include, for example, secular psychology, business, administration and leadership principles from Jesus, Nehemiah, et.al.

who will execute more God-opposing Gentiles than David ever contemplated (Zechariah 14:1-4, Revelation 19:11-21).

The Development of the Single Purpose in Dramatic Plot

One of the most important things to understand about dramatic plot is the single purpose that it develops and the means by which that purpose is accomplished. Typically in the setting of the story, the main character (i.e., hero) reveals his goal. Subsequent to that, a conflict will interrupt this purpose. The main character will then respond to rectify the situation (overcome the conflict, called the rising action). It is important to recognize that his plan to overcome the conflict guides the movement of every event in the rest of the story. All events and discourses will contribute to this single movement to resolve the conflict and accomplish the original purpose through a unique climax, until the denouement is reached at the end. There are no events that do not contribute to the movement to that single purpose.

The Old Testament as Historical Narrative in Dramatic Plot Form

As dramatic plot the *Torah* begins in the setting with God's "good" desires revealed in Genesis 1—2. As is typical of this type of narrative, almost immediately an antagonist enters and brings a conflict that is designed to halt God's purpose (3:1-8). This then is immediately followed by God's plan of how He will overcome the conflict (Genesis 3:14-24). Then, in dramatic narrative form, the story unfolds in sequential events, through a unique climax and resolution, with its sole purpose to bring about God's plan and restore His original desires.

Characters and the Historical Plot of the Old Testament

Like all narratives, characters carry the plot of the Old Testament. The obvious fight between "good" and "evil" throughout the narrative is sourced in the character of God ("good") and Satan ("evil").

The "Good" Character, The "Hero," God (Genesis 1:1)

The Main Character of the *Torah*, indeed of the whole Bible, is the "good," the infallible character, the supernatural Hero, God ("In the beginning, God . . ." 1:1). This "good" character introduces His desires early in the plot (the setting, Genesis 1—2). The reader recognizes that God must ultimately obtain

them since He is . . . God. He alone will sovereignly and purposefully unfold this history unalterably toward its goal.²⁰

God's Purpose: To be represented by man on the earth (Genesis 1:26).

The desires (i.e., character) of God, revealed at the beginning, are that His “good” character is represented (“imaged”²¹) throughout the universe, ruling over the animal realm.

“Let us make man in our image and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

(Genesis 1:26)

“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

(Genesis 1:28)

The “Evil” Character: The Serpent (Genesis 3:1).

The plot continues unfolding, introducing the “evil” character, the antagonist. By definition the antagonist diametrically opposes the “good” character’s expressed desires. And this is exactly what happens based on the antagonist’s direct question regarding God’s speech, “has God said . . .?” His expression of what is true is then a direct contradiction to God’s “truth” statement, “you shall not surely die . . .” (3:1,4).

Because he is the opposite of God’s “good” character (i.e., “truth”), the expression of the serpent’s character is, by definition, the opposite of “truth.” It is what is known as the “lie,” brought forth for the purpose of deception.

The Serpent’s Purpose: To be represented by man on the earth (Gen. 3:1-6).

²⁰ God’s sovereign guidance of this story is seen specifically in events such as God’s choice of Jacob over Esau before the boys were born (Genesis 25:23). Paul references this in Romans 9:10-13 to make the point of God’s sovereign control of history.

²¹ The “image” here is the “representative” of God, that is the character of God expressed through man. Here, the image is specifically referencing to one who represents God’s desires on earth. The ultimate Image is Christ who is the full representative of God in the physical realm. Psalm 2 expresses this case as the Christ, the Son, the King of Israel, acts on behalf of God on earth. For a discussion of “image” see Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 1, Genesis 1—15, Gordon J. Wenham, “Image and Likeness.” (Dallas: Word, 1987), p. 30-31,

Of course, it ~~is~~ should be obvious to the reader that this serpent must be more than simply a serpent. This serpent “speaks²²,” as well as interacts in the “theological realm,” something the reader should know, by reading earlier in the narrative, is not inherent with serpents made to operate solely in the physical realm.

First of all, this serpent is surprisingly cognizant of God’s revealed desires (“theology”). In the natural realm (i.e., the Genesis 1 creation) only the man and the woman had been created with the ability to perceive God, an attribute that was given as part of the “image” (Genesis 1:26). Man had been equipped with this characteristic in order to rule over animals on behalf of God (1:26,28). Animals had no image, and thus had no ability to perceive God’s desires. God illustrates this purposely in 2:20 when He parades all the animals in front of Adam with the stated goal of searching for a helper to represent God. Since animals could not perceive God’s character (i.e., no “image”), they could not “help” man to rule, and thus “there was not found a helper corresponding to him.²³” Yet, within a few verses, the author reveals that this beast of the field, the serpent, could understand God’s voice and His expressed desires. Thus this serpent was more than that which could be found in a solely physically created being. It had to be “super” natural, the supernatural “evil” antagonist to God whose name, revealed later, was Satan.²⁴

The reason that Satan became a serpent was to oppose God’s command that man was to rule over the animals (1:26, 28). By becoming an animal, Satan could then tempt man to listen to him, reverse the rule and dominate man.

The “Conflict:” Satan reverses the rule, and man represents him.

By submitting to the serpent, man became the representative of Satan’s desires, not God’s. Thus, man would now be as “evil” (deceive, lie, kill) as his mentor,²⁵ the serpent, representing Satan’s character throughout the created domain.

²² This serpent had to have speech so that his character could be expressed through lies and deceit. God’s character was known through His speech (Word) in Genesis 1--2. Speech is the means by which one’s character is known (see Matthew 12:33-37).

²³ Of course, it goes without saying that animals were also physically unable to be a mate with man.

²⁴ The Book of Job, which may be dated rather early (refer to John L. Alden in The New American Commentary, Vol. 11, “Job,” p. 25), reveals Satan as the unseen supernatural being who administers suffering on a righteous man to tempt him to abandon His trust in God. This is exactly what is attributed to the practice of the serpent in Genesis 3:15.

²⁵ This is total depravity. By inheriting Satan’s character, man became hopelessly locked into his own (inherited from Satan) perception. This is the nature of man’s “knowing good and

God, the Main Character, the Hero, now has a massive conflict to overcome. The man who was to represent His desires in this creation was now representing His enemy. The creation was now dead, under the rule of Satan.

The Response: The Unfolding Plan (Genesis 3:14-24)

This is the most important part of the story for the purpose of interpreting the rest of the narrative as God will now reveal what He is going to do to regain His desires of 1:26, 28, and by doing so will reveal the depth of His character in response to the conflict²⁶.

The Main Character, God, will now act to overcome²⁷ this antagonist and the conflict. He will act according to His “good” character. All the events to follow this conflict and subsequent plan will move exactly according to that plan (expressed desires, character) of God until the original purpose is accomplished in the final resolution and denouement.²⁸

This plan is detailed in Genesis 3:14-24. In it God will not abandon, or alter (as in some theological systems), His original desires, that is to be represented by a man in the physical universe (i.e., God’s kingdom on earth). His

evil.” Man would be the determiner of right and wrong for himself from his own perception instead of God’s perception (and determination) of good and evil. For additional discussion on this issue refer to Gordon Wenham, in Word Biblical Commentary, “Genesis 1—15,” (Dallas: Word, 1987) p. 63-64.

²⁶ This is an important concept that runs throughout the Bible. It is only through conflict that one’s character is truly seen. This is seen in Deut. 8:6 (God testing Israel’s faith through suffering), James 1:2, 1 Peter 1:6 (testing of a believer’s faith through suffering). Thus God’s character will be seen in its depth, as He will move to sacrifice His only Son to substitute for this rebellious creation. It is in this act of ultimate sacrificial love for God’s enemies that the extent of the love of God will be seen (Romans 5:1-11, 44-51, also see Matthew 5:43-48). John states exactly this, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

²⁷ Note the use of this word in John’s gospel (16:33), 1 John (7 times), Revelation (17 times), typically related to the prophesied striking of the serpent by the Seed of the Woman (17:14) and by those who trust in Him participating through trust in Him (e.g., 2:7, 12:11). Note also its rebellious use by the seed of the serpent, the “beast” in Revelation 11:7, who “overcomes” God’s two witnesses of Christ by striking them.

²⁸ The resolution is when victory is realized, which is the Second Coming of Christ in Revelation 19--20. The denouement is the result of the resolution and is the eternal earthly kingdom in Revelation 21:1—22:5.

desires were that His character would be implemented eternally on earth,²⁹ and since Genesis 1 it was sent unalterably on that course.³⁰

Judgment on the Serpent by the New Adam: (The “Seed of the Woman”)

“He (the New Adam) will strike you (the serpent) on the head”

Genesis 3:15

God moves, as might be expected, to destroy His antagonist, as well as his followers, and the whole of this creation (3:17; “the ground”). God will establish a New Adam, who will execute that judgment and establish a new creation. Jesus confirms exactly this in John 5.

²¹ "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. ²² "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,

(John 5:21-22)

This final³¹ resolution of the story is detailed in the Apocalypse of John.

² And he laid hold of the dragon, **the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan**, and bound him for a thousand years;³ and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not **deceive** the

²⁹ Frequently some views errantly advocate that man will live in heaven forever based on the English translation of “οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν καινὴν” (“new heaven and new earth,” Rev. 21:1). But the rest of the verse states that this new heavens and earth is a replacement for the first “heaven and earth,” using the same Greek words found in the LXX. In Genesis 1:1, the use of “heavens (שָׁמַיִם) and earth” in Genesis 1:1 is actually referring to the “skies and earth” (see Genesis 1:7-8 where God defines “heaven” (lit.”heavens;” שָׁמַיִם) as the expanse above the water (and earth), i.e., “skies”). Thus, Revelation 21:1 is referencing the new physical universe as “the new skies and new earth,” which is where the redeemed will live forever in their resurrected physical bodies.

³⁰ This is the foundation of pre-millennialism, that is, that God’s original desires were not altered in the least by Satan’s attack. Thus, man’s eternal existence on earth is not replaced by an eternal existence in heaven (e.g., living on earth as some temporary training for living in heaven). Man’s eternal dwelling is not heaven, but earth, not in some non-physical body, but a renewed resurrected physical body.

³¹ The strike on the head of the serpent was established judicially at the cross and resurrection. The final delayed removal of the serpent occurs in Revelation 20. Christ overcame the serpent through His ultimate act of obedience, that is, going to a death that He did not deserve at the command of the Father (John 16:33, 1 John 5:4, Revelation 12:11). Thus He has the right to execute the failed serpent and will do so after a delay.

nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. . . .¹⁰ And the devil who **deceived** them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Revelation 20:2-3,10

A Delay before the Judgment of Satan and his followers:

“There will be enmity between you (the serpent) and the woman³² (the bearer of the “Seed,” the New Adam) and between your seed (followers of the serpent, the deceived) and her “Seed” (the Messiah)

Genesis 3:15

This prophesied judgment of Satan would be delayed. During that delay, the conflict would continue between God and Satan. During that delay God would move in the Old Testament to bring forth the “Seed of the Woman.” As the Seed line proceeds in the Old Testament, Satan will use his tactics of deception, persecution, and death to prevent this Messianic Judge/Deliverer from appearing. At the Christ’s arrival in the Gospels, Satan tries deceit and persecution, but when he fails, he moves to execute the Messiah.

Revelation 12 is probably the most succinct description of the opposition by Satan (identified as the serpent of old in 12:9) to the coming of Christ (12:4) and His followers (12:12-13,17).

And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

³² Genesis 3:16 states that this woman’s desire would be for “her Man” (*Heb.*: “אִישָׁאָהּ”, most translations render this “her husband.”). “Her Man” refers back to the “He” (“Seed of the Woman,” 3:15) who will strike the serpent. The rest of 3:16 states that “her Man” will “rule over you.” Thus Eve specifically will desire to bear her own 3:15 Deliverer and Ruler. (Credit is given to Dr. David Klingler, Associate Professor of Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary, who first explained this translation and exegesis of “your desire shall be for your Man, but He shall rule over you.”)

Thus, following this progressive plot, she then hopes for this Messianic appearance in 4:1. As she bears Cain she states, “I have born a “man” (*Heb.*: “אִישׁ”), *YHWH*. In addition, the text of 4:1 alludes back to 3:16 by using the same three words for “conception,” “bear,” and “man.” As the story progresses in the Old Testament, the nation Israel is this image of the woman who desires to bring forth her Ruler and Deliverer (cf. Revelation 12:2,5 for the description of the Old Testament story). Her “sorrow” (*Heb.*: אֲכָזָב) in bringing forth children is due to the criteria in 3:15. Her children will choose either to identify with the serpent or with the New Adam. If they follow the serpent she will obviously have sorrow. If they follow Messiah they will suffer at the hands of the followers of the serpent. Ultimately she will have sorrow as they will kill “her Man,” that is Jesus.

(Revelation 12:4)

The Serpent will kill the New Adam

“Yet you shall strike³³ him on the heel³⁴.”

(Genesis 3:15)

The “strike” on Messiah is revealing far more than what meets the eye. By “striking” this New Adam, it implies that the serpent failed in his primary attack, that of deception, and thus had to kill Him. And that is exactly the case as he attempts to deceive Him (Matthew 4:1-11) and fails. He then moves to kill Him through His representatives, the Jews (Matthew 26:4).

Jesus confirmed that Satan was operating through the Scribes and Pharisees as they tried to kill the Messiah (the serpent’s strike in Genesis 3:15). They were in the long line of those who had followed Satan, the head serpent, and attacked the righteous throughout the Old Testament.

³¹ "So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. . . . ³³ "You serpents, you seeds of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? ³⁴ "Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, ³⁵ so that upon you may fall *the guilt of all* the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

(Matthew 23:31, 33-35)

⁴⁰ "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, . . . ⁴¹ "You are doing the deeds of your father." . . . ⁴⁴ "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he

³³ The “strike” on the “heel” of the Seed of the woman is the same word as the Seed of the woman’s “strike” on the head of the serpent. It is a double execution. This paradox of the double strike explains much. While Satan was striking the Messiah, the Messiah’s obedient death justified Him as the obedient Representative and declared the serpent’s judicial death in his failure to overcome the Messiah. The resurrection then validated Jesus as the Son (see Romans 1:4). The serpent’s final execution would be delayed until Revelation 20.

³⁴ “You” is the serpent (Satan) who will strike this New Adam (“Him,” a 3rd person masculine singular pronoun) on the heel. The heel is where serpents strike their deadly blows. In contrast to the serpent’s successful deceit and resultant death of the first Adam, Satan must kill the New Adam, thus indicating the serpent’s failure to deceive Him.

speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

(John 8:40,41,44)

The New Adam would die unjustly as a sacrifice for the old creation.

²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

(Genesis 3:21)

In an earlier passage (3:7) Adam and Eve had moved to cover themselves with fig leaves (3:7) in a deceptive³⁵ attempt to cover their sin. In 3:21 God replaced their coverings with the skin from an innocent animal. The narrative is playing out the innocent “striking” of the New Adam in Genesis 3:15 in a symbolic lesson. Like this innocent animal, God had prophesied an innocent New Adam would have to die unjustly at the hands of Satan to “cover” the sin of Adam and Eve, as well as the whole of the old creation.

God’s illustrative action is played out by Abel seven verses later (4:4), as he sacrificed firstborn animals, demonstrating his hope³⁶ in the coming substitution of the Genesis 3:15, 21 Messiah to come. The author of Hebrews expositis this narrative,

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the witness that he was righteous, God witnessing of his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.”

(Hebrews 11:4).

The Unfolding Story of the Old Testament is According to Genesis 3:14-24

Following God’s announcement of “how” He will overcome this serpent through the coming “Seed of the woman,” the story must unfold according to that plan until it is completed as prophesied. In dramatic plot these unfolding events can only be understood as seen through the literary glasses of God’s plan related in Genesis 1—3, as well as Genesis 12:1-3 (Abrahamic Covenant).

³⁵ This action by Adam and Eve demonstrated they were now representing the character of Satan as they tried to deceive God by covering themselves with leaves.

³⁶ Faith is always based on the revealed character (i.e., promise, desire) of God. The author of Hebrews use of “by faith” in chapter 11 indicates belief in a prior, specific revelation of God given earlier in the plot. Abel’s faith refers to God’s act of covering Adam and Eve in 3:21 with the skin of an innocent animal, which pictured the Genesis 3:15 substitutionary death of the Messiah.

Nota Bene: At this point God's purpose of Genesis 1:26 to be "imaged" throughout a physical creation will be accomplished solely and uniquely through the coming New Adam, who will represent His character precisely (i.e., have His character). Thus, the story is totally about God's movement toward the Son (Old Testament) and the arrival of the Son and the establishment of His righteous rule (New Testament).

Physically: A Genealogical Line that anticipates the Messiah

In order to trace the path to Messiah, the genealogical line (i.e., *toledot*) is given. From Eve came Seth, Enoch, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, and ultimately the Christ, Jesus. As the narrative unfolds, this genealogical spine will be the physical path on which the righteous One must appear.

Image: The Coming Genesis 3:15 Ruler.

As that plan plays out, God will establish "rulers" and representatives (i.e., anointed ones) who will implement character traits of the ultimate Coming One as revealed in Genesis 1--3. These rulers **MUST** be seen through the glasses of Genesis 1:26 and 3:15-16 to understand their role and function. The interpreter cannot read his own perception into any character or event, but only from the definition of "good" and "evil" traits as defined by the revealed character of God in these deterministic revelations.

The Coming One (Gen. 3:15-24) and the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3)

In Genesis 12:1-3 God establishes the promise to Abram, the creation of the nation, Israel, to mediate blessing to the Gentile nations. This blessing is none other than the deliverance promised in the coming "Seed of the Woman." Thus, the promise of Genesis 1:26 and 3:15-16 merges with the Nation, Israel. This nation is to desire to bear, and then trust, in this Messiah to rule over them³⁷. This blessing of Messiah is the very message they are to carry to the Gentiles.

" . . . I will bless you . . . and make you a blessing . . . and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

(Genesis 12:2-3)

³⁷ While Eve is the individual woman of Genesis 3:16 who desires to bear her Ruler, Israel is the national woman, due to her desire to bear the Messiah who will deliver and rule over her. The interpretation of Genesis 3:16 is referenced in Revelation 12:1-5.

Thus the promises are complete and the story continues to unfold. The nation must first trust in this Messiah within them. But Satan will deceive them, as he did Eve. They will then reject this coming Deliverer. This is the Old Testament dramatic plot unfolding, that is, God pursues Israel to convince them to accept their deliverance in the Coming One, and then to minister that message.³⁸ Adam and Eve were to rule over the Satanically indwelt animal, but submitted to it instead. Now similarly, the nation Israel is to rule over the Satanically deluded Gentiles, but will submit to the deception of their women (cf. Deuteronomy 7:3) and their gods.

Cain and Abel: The Seed of the Serpent executes the Righteous One

Looking through the glasses of God's plan from Genesis 3:15, God begins to bring forth His Seed. But Satan will oppose this, and so deceives (4:7) Cain into killing the undeceived one, Abel (4:8). God, undeterred, continues the hope of the "Seed" in Seth (Genesis 4:25-26).

Noah: The Seed executes judgment on the followers of the serpent.

The serpent continues his deceit resulting in the wicked world of Genesis 6:1-2³⁹. Noah, like the 3:15 Seed of the Woman to come, administers God's judgment on these followers of the serpent while delivering the righteous (believers in the hope of the Seed) into a new creation.

³⁸ This is also the story of the Gospels. In each of the Gospels, Jesus comes to Israel to reveal Himself to them so they can accept Him (Matthew 10—12) and then take the message of the Messiah to the Gentiles according to the Abrahamic Promise of Genesis 12:3. Yet Israel fails to accept Him, and Jesus, the perfect Israelite, takes the Gospel to the Gentiles through the chosen Jewish apostles (Matthew 28:19).

³⁹ Due to lack of space the specific evil of the wicked world will not be discussed here. However, the dramatic narrative plays out the serpent's deceit once more, as the wicked world responded exactly as Eve had done. This is evident from the repetition of words from Eve's statement in 3:6 by the sons of God (i.e., men, as images ("sons") of God (1:26)) in 6:2. Eve "saw" (Heb., רָאָה) that the tree was "good" (Heb., טוֹב) and she "took" (Heb., לָקַח). These sons of God also "saw" (Heb., רָאָה) that the women were "good" (Heb., טוֹב) and "took" (Heb., לָקַח) them. While most English versions render the Hebrew טוֹב in 6:2 as "beautiful", it should be translated as "good" so as to see the author's literary parallel to Eve in 3:6 and contrast to God's statement in Genesis 1 that He saw that His creation was "good." Suffice it to say these men did not share how God "saw" the purpose of women as stated in 1:26, 2:18-24, and reflected in 1 Peter 3:7, that a wife is "a fellow heir of the grace of life . . ." They preferred instead to see them through the eyes of their own desires, and perversely called their desires "good." While the sons of God saw the daughters of men as "good," the narrator tells the reader, "YHWH saw that the "wickedness" of man was great on the earth . . ." (6:5).

Isaac: The Sacrificed Genesis 3:15 Seed of Abraham to Deliver the Nation

Abraham (representing future Israel) recognizes from **God's promise** (Genesis 3:15-24) that One of his seed must be sacrificed to deliver his nation according to the promise. Thus, he is willing to act as the father of his nation to implement the picture of the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 by sacrificing **his** only son. Yet because the ultimate human sacrifice to be fulfilled by of the Messiah could not be Isaac, God provided a ram in the bushes. Thus when viewed through the glasses of the promises in Genesis 1—3, 12, the reader can see past Isaac to the ultimate son of Abraham, to the sacrifice of Messiah required for national blessing.

Joseph: The Genesis 3:15 Rejected One, Delivers Israel and the Gentiles

In Genesis 37, God chooses Joseph to be the one to deliver his brothers. Joseph receives this revelation in a dream and reveals it to the brothers. The brothers, however, are deceived and reject their God-chosen deliverer. But God supernaturally delivers Joseph so that he might subsequently deliver his Jewish brothers from famine as well as bless the Egyptian Gentiles.

If this story was isolated as if in an anthology, the reader might errantly think that Joseph was a “tattle-tale” when he told on his brothers (37:2), or an egotist when he elevated himself over them due to his dream (37:5-10). But that is because the reader had not seen the story of Joseph as only a contributing part in a dramatic narrative. Thus, because there is not enough information he had mistakenly forced his own perception into the story by relating Joseph to his own situation.

But since this is dramatic narrative, the interpreter must see through the glasses of the promises in Genesis 1—3, 12. Thus, instead of a “tattle-tale,” Joseph is seen as a man of the truth against his serpent-deceived brothers. And instead of an egotist, Joseph is one who received the true revelation of God and faithfully reported it to his brothers for their good, even though he would be persecuted for it. Telling them that revelation was for their good as he was the one through whom God would deliver them. And ultimately God brought the truth of the dream to pass as the brothers bowed down to Joseph (42:6, 43:26, 43:28) in order to be delivered by him.

Thus, looking through the eyes of the revelation of Genesis 1:26, 3:15, 12:1-3, the reader can see beyond Joseph and his brothers to the ultimate Deliverer, who would reveal God's choice of Himself to Israel, be rejected, yet be supernaturally delivered so as to return and save His repentant nation, as well as bless the Gentiles.

Moses and the Passover Lamb.

As God moves on to unfold history, Joseph dies and Israel is without a deliverer. Absent a deliverer, Satan moves to deceive Egypt to oppress Israel. He tries to kill their male babies (Exodus 1), hoping to stop a deliverer from emerging. But God again acts to supernaturally bring forth a Genesis 3:15 deliverer in Moses (Exodus 2), to execute judgment on Egypt and deliver Israel. In doing this he pictures a Greater Moses (see Deut. 18:15) who will deliver Israel from the Gentiles (Zech. 14:1-4). This deliverance will not be through an animal type lamb, but a human Lamb (John 1:29,36, Revelation 5:6⁴⁰) as Genesis 3:15, 21, pictured the future sacrifice of Messiah.

David, the Genesis 3:15 King

Following the genealogical line of the Seed to the Books of Samuel brings the reader to David. Through the glasses of Genesis 3:15, the reader can see David as the righteous ruler (executor of God's judgment), who establishes dominion through Israel over the Gentiles in the Land of Canaan from the City of Jerusalem (2 Samuel 1—10). In David's execution of Goliath (1 Samuel 17), God demonstrates to David that God will through him, like the coming righteous King, execute a mighty judgment on the Satanically controlled Gentiles. Of course, like all the other partial representatives of God's Coming One, David's representation is not as great as Messiah's will be. Nor can David be the Genesis 3:15, 21 sacrifice for the nation.⁴¹

The Ultimate King:

In the Old Testament the nation waits for the Genesis 3:15-16 One to come, a sacrificed Messiah greater than Isaac, a rejected Deliverer greater than Joseph, a Prophet Leader greater than Moses, as well as a human sacrifice greater than the Passover Lamb. He will be a greater king than David or Solomon.

The Serpent's continuing attack on the Line of the Ruler (and His followers)

As Genesis 3:15 unfolds, the serpent, as promised, will continue to deceive God's anointed ones in order to stop the coming of Messiah.

⁴⁰ There are 29 references in Revelation to Jesus as the Lamb.

⁴¹ The sacrifice of Genesis 3:15 was continued and represented exclusively in the priestly office in the Old Testament. It was separated from the ruler function in the Old Testament. The prophecy of the sacrifice (and Priest) would come together ultimately in One Man, the ultimate Davidic Ruler of Psalm 110:1, who would be the Priest like Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4). Isaiah 40—66 describes the Davidic Servant Warrior King, who would also become the sacrifice in Isaiah 53.

- **Abraham:** The serpent deceives Abraham as he pursues the Seed through his own efforts (Genesis 12—21).
- **Joseph:** Satan attempts to derail Joseph's God-ordained rule by deceiving his brothers to reject and persecute him (Genesis 37), while he also tempts Joseph through Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39).
- **Moses:** Satan deceives Moses as he becomes angry and fails to represent the mercy of God by striking the rock twice (Numbers 20:1-13).
- **David:** Like the serpent deceived Eve, he tempts David to commit adultery with Bathsheba. Like Eve, who "saw" the fruit was "good" and "took" it, so David "saw" that Bathsheba was "good to the eye exceedingly" and sent men who "took" her (2 Samuel 11:1-4). As mentioned previously, this is also similar to the men of Genesis 6:2 who also "saw" women as "good" from their own perspective (not God's) and "took" them.⁴²
- **The Ultimate King:** As he did to the first Adam, Satan will attempt to deceive the ultimate Ruler (Matthew 4:1-11). Failing to deceive Him, he will then kill Jesus (Genesis 3:15 "the strike on the heel"). But that proves useless as God resurrects Him so He can return to rule.

The Character of God ("image") in God's New Adam.

The Law:

In the Law, God's character is revealed. Only Messiah, the New Adam, would be able to represent (i.e., "image," Genesis 1:26) that character completely. All others will be unable to represent that character and would have to turn to the hope of Messiah's substitution represented in the sacrifices of the Law.⁴³

¹⁷ "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

(Matthew 5:17-18)

⁴² The author of 2 Samuel 11:1-4 is alluding to Eve (Genesis 3:6) and the wicked world (Genesis 6:2), since these three Hebrew words occur in the same scene only in these three passages in the Old Testament.

⁴³ Note that the sacrifices pictured, as part of the Law, the sacrificial, merciful, character of God to come in His Messiah.

Wisdom in Proverbs:

Wisdom, as the expression of the character of God, is personified in the “Woman Wisdom” in Proverbs 1—9. The father exhorts the son to embrace this “Woman Wisdom” in chapters 1--9. Like the Law, this wisdom will be manifest ultimately only in the New Adam.

²² "The LORD possessed me (i.e., “wisdom”) at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. ²³ "From everlasting I was established, from the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth.”

(Proverbs 8:22-23)

“⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;”

(Proverbs 9:10)

⁸ "Prize her (i.e., the woman wisdom), and she will exalt you; She will honor you if you embrace her.

(Proverbs 4:8)

The contrast to the “Woman Wisdom” is the “Woman Folly” (9:13-18). She is the expression of the serpent’s character (deceit) on the son as she cries out for him to come to her. The fools, mockers, sinners, and the strange woman, are all the followers of the serpent as they are deceived, and like their father, the serpent, try to deceive the son from following the Woman Wisdom.

¹³ The woman of folly is boisterous. *She is naive and knows nothing.* ¹⁴ She sits at the doorway of her house, On a seat by the high places of the city, ¹⁵ Calling to those who pass by, Who are making their paths straight: ¹⁶ "Whoever is ¹naive, let him turn in here," . . . ¹⁸ But he does not know that the dead are there, *That* her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

(Proverbs 9:13-18)

¹⁰ My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent.

(Proverbs 1:10)

¹⁶ To deliver you from the strange woman, from the adulteress who flatters with her words

(Proverbs 2:16)

The Righteous Sufferer in The Psalms:

Genesis 3:15 stated that there would be a delay in the implementation of righteousness (wisdom) of God on the earth and the removal of evil. During this time the Righteous One would unjustly suffer and even die. During that delay, those whose hope is in the ultimate Righteous One would also suffer at the hands of the serpent and his followers.⁴⁴ The Psalms are characterized by the statement (or similar), “How long . . .” (will the delay be until the serpent and his followers are judged by Messiah; Psalm 6:3, 74:10, 94:3, as well as others).

- **The Lament Psalms:** The Genesis 3:15 obedient New Adam is the ultimate One who suffers unjustly at the hands of the followers of the serpent during the delay of judgment. Those who identify with this ultimate New Adam also suffer unjustly due to their identity with Him.⁴⁵ Yet they express their confidence in God’s ultimate deliverance.
- **Psalm 22:** Describes the unjust suffering of the Messiah at the hands of evil ones, yet His ultimate deliverance by God.
- **Psalm 118:** Describes the victory of the ultimate, but formerly rejected, Deliverer of Israel over the Gentiles.
- **Psalm 2:** Like Genesis 3:15 there is a single Anointed One who is to represent God on earth (the Christ, Psalm 2:2). When seen through the glasses of Genesis 12:1-3 He will righteously judge the Gentiles on behalf of God (the Son; Psalm 2:7).
- **Psalm 110:** As in Genesis 3:15 there will be a delay in the judgment. David’s Ruler (110:1, the ultimate King of Israel) will wait at the right hand of the Father (110:1) until He returns to execute the enemies of the Son.

The Single Purpose of the OT – Anticipate the Image of God’s Character

The Old Testament is in the form of dramatic narrative and as such demonstrates the single purpose of God. That single purpose is that God will be represented in the physical universe solely and totally through His Christ (Genesis 1—3, 12:1-3). Thus the Old Testament moves with one focus toward the appearance of His Christ who will express everything on behalf of God.

⁴⁴ Recall that the woman in 3:16 desired to bear her Man but would have sorrow. Thus, those who desire Messiah will also have sorrow due to the attacks by Satan (see Rev. 12:11,13,17).

⁴⁵ See also Revelation 6:9 where the saints under the altar in heaven cry “how long.” They are waiting in heaven to return with Christ who will avenge their deaths at the hands of the serpent. (See also Luke 18:1-6 where believers of this age cry a similar prayer.)

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life--² and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--

(1 John 1:1-2)

⁸ . . . the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

(1 John 3:8)

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

(Revelation 21:3)