

## Evidence that Jesus Christ is the Messiah

Matthew McGee

Acts 18:24 tells us of a man named Apollos, who was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures". Apollos used the scriptures to convince many Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. Acts 18:28 says, "... he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ." This was in about 53 AD, around 20 years after Christ's crucifixion. Since the vast majority of the portion of scripture commonly called the "New Testament" had not yet been written, it is apparent that when Acts 18:24 refers to "the scriptures", it is referring to the portion of scripture commonly called the "Old Testament".

There are at least four reasons that provide evidence that the 39 books of the Old Testament date back to a time long before Jesus Christ's earthly ministry:

1. It was proven by the finding of the dead sea scrolls, which include the Old Testament writings and predate Christ's earthly ministry.
2. Even those of the Jew's religion, who do not believe Jesus Christ is the Messiah, agree that these 39 books were written prior to 300 BC.
3. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures, was initiated in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 BC). Obviously, the Old Testament had to have already been written in order to have been translated.
4. Jesus Christ and the various New Testament writers frequently quoted from the books of the Old Testament.

Some skeptics have tried to contend that there must have been some collaboration between the many writers of the Bible. However, there were many Old Testament prophets scattered over a 1000-year period who have given detailed descriptions regarding the same events which have proven to be accurate. So the skeptics' charges of collaboration are not at all credible.

Abundant evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ is revealed through the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies and through symbols (also called types or shadows) of Jesus Christ. Thus, we can see how the coming of the Messiah was all in God's plan and was foretold in the Old Testament.

---

### Fulfilled Prophecies

The following prophecies concerning Jesus Christ were given in the Old Testament during the time frame of approximately 1700 BC - 400 BC. These prophecies were fulfilled hundreds of years later, during Jesus Christ's life on earth. Each of the prophecies listed below are followed in parentheses by the scripture references for both the prophecy and the fulfillment.

1. He would be born of a Virgin (Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:18).
2. He would be of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10 and Luke 3:23, 33).
3. He would be of King David's seed (Jeremiah 23:5 and Luke 3:23, 31).
4. He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1).
5. He would be a prophet (Deuteronomy 18:18-19 and Matthew 21:11).

6. He would teach with parables (Psalms 78:2 and Matthew 13:34).
  7. He would be preceded by a messenger (Isaiah 40:3, Malachi 3:1, and Matthew 3:1-2).
  8. He would enter Jerusalem on a colt (Zechariah 9:9 and Luke 19:35-37).
  9. He would be betrayed by a friend (Psalms 41:9 and Matthew 26:47-50).
  10. He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12 and Matthew 26:15).
  11. He would be forsaken by His disciples (Zechariah 13:7 and Mark 14:50).
  12. The money would be thrown in the temple and used to buy the potter's field (Zechariah 11:13 and Matthew 27:5-7).
  13. He would be accused by false witnesses (Psalms 35:11 and Matthew 26:59-60).
  14. He would be silent before His accusers (Isaiah 53:7 and Matthew 27:12-14).
  15. He would be beaten by his enemies (Isaiah 50:6, 53:5, and Matthew 27:26).
  16. He would be spit upon and beaten (Isaiah 50:6 and Matthew 27:30).
  17. He would be struck in the head with a rod (Micah 5:1 and Matthew 27:30).
  18. He would be mocked (Psalms 22:7-8 and Matthew 27:29, 31).
  19. His hands and feet would be pierced (Psalms 22:16, Luke 23:33, and John 20:25).
- Note that this was predicted hundreds of years before crucifixion was invented.
20. Men would gamble for His clothing (Psalms 22:18 and John 19:23-24).
  21. He would intercede in prayer for His transgressors (Isaiah 53:12 and Luke 23:34).
  22. He would suffer thirst (Psalms 22:15 and John 19:28).
  23. He would be offered gall and water (Psalms 69:21 and Matthew 27:34).
  24. He would cry, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me!" (Psalms 22:1 and Matthew 27:46).
  25. He would be cut down in His prime (Psalms 89:45 and 102:23-24).
  26. None of His bones would be broken (Exodus 12:46, Psalms 34:20, and John 19:32-33).
  27. They would look upon Him whom they had pierced (Zechariah 12:10 and John 19:34).
  28. He would be executed with thieves (Isaiah 53:12 and Matthew 27:38).
  29. He would be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9 and Matthew 27:57-60).

Note that the majority of these prophecies concern the death of Jesus Christ and the events surrounding it. This is especially interesting considering the fact that none of Christ's disciples realized that Jesus Christ was going to die.

In Luke 18:33, Christ, referring to Himself as "the Son of man", told His disciples what would happen to Him, "And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again." That would have been pretty easy to understand, but God hid the saying from their understanding. The next verse, Luke 18:34, says, "And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

Despite the fact that Jesus Christ had told them plainly, His disciples still did not realize He was going to die and rise again. The Jews knew from the Old Testament prophecies that the Messiah would be a King that would reign over Israel forever. So they naturally assumed (incorrectly) that the Messiah must never die. Not even His disciples knew about Christ's death, and the Old Testament prophets would have known even less. So there would be no reason for the Old Testament prophets to have written anything about the death of the Messiah, except for the divine hand of God who knew the future. The prophets themselves did not even understand that they were writing of the Messiah's death.

Now we come to two of the most interesting prophecies:

#### Messiah to come to His temple

The Messiah, being preceded by a messenger (John the Baptist) will suddenly come to His temple. Malachi 3:1 says, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in ...." The Roman army destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD, and the temple has not yet been rebuilt in all these 1900 plus years. Many non-Christian Jews have been looking for the Messiah to appear for centuries. But this passage makes it clear that the arrival of the Messiah could not have taken place between 70 AD and the present.

#### Daniel's Prophecy of the 70 Weeks

While the prophet Daniel was captive in Babylon in about 538 BC, God revealed the prophecy of Israel's 70 weeks to him in Daniel 9:24-26. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (Israel) and upon thy holy city (Jerusalem), to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off (killed), but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary (the temple) ...." In this prophecy, the following sequence of events are revealed.

A. There would one day be a commandment to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, which the Babylonians had destroyed years earlier. This was fulfilled in 445 BC by Artaxerxes, king of the Medo-Persian Empire (465-424 BC), nearly a century after the prophecy was given. See Nehemiah 2:1-8 for the account of how Nehemiah asked Artaxerxes for the permission and the means to rebuild the ruins of the city of Jerusalem. In Nehemiah 2:1, we see that this took place "... in the month Nisan (the first month of the Hebrew calendar which occurs in early spring), in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king (445 BC) ...."

B. From the giving of this commandment to the Messiah would be 69 weeks of years (seven plus threescore and two) after which the Messiah would be cut off (killed). This was fulfilled when Jesus Christ was crucified on the 14th day of Nisan (the passover) of 32 AD, right on schedule.

Here is how the calculation of the 69 weeks of years works: Weeks of years are sevens of years, and seven times 69 is 483 years. But we know from the detail of the seventieth week provided in the book of Revelation, that these years are 360 days rather than the years on our present calendar which, figuring in leap years, are approximately 365.25 days.

Revelation 12:14 describes the second half of the tribulation as "a time, times, and half a time" ( $1 + 2 + 1/2 = 3 \frac{1}{2}$  years). Revelation 12:6 says this is "a thousand two hundred and threescore (1260) days", and Revelation 13:5 says it is "forty and two months". Since  $1260 / 42 = 30$  and  $1260 / 3.5 = 360$ , we know that in this prophecy, God is counting months as 30 days each and years as 360 days each. Since the tribulation is a part of the 70 weeks of Daniel's prophecy, we know that the 360-day years must be used. So to see how many of our years this is, we calculate  $483 * (360 / 365.25) = 476$  years, 0 months, and a few days. Moving forward from the 445 BC date, this brings us to the early spring of 32 AD ( $476 - 445 + 1 = 32$ ), when Jesus Christ was crucified. The one must be added to account for the fact that there is no "year 0". The year after 1 BC was 1 AD. The calculation here is somewhat simplified and shows that at a minimum, the prophecy was accurate to within a very few days. Some scholars have used additional evidence for the difficult task of calculating this prophecy to the exact day. To do this, they have to know the day of the month that the commandment of Artaxerxes was given plus the astrological history of moon phases as viewed from Jerusalem, since the months of the Hebrew calendar are based upon observance of the moon phases. As for me, I am more than satisfied to know that the prophecy was accurate to the month 5796 months in advance ( $12 * 483 = 5796$ ), but readers who are inclined to pursue the more detailed calculation to the exact day are welcome to do so.

Now one might wonder why God didn't use our 365.25-day years in His prophecy? We cannot be certain, but perhaps He was using the same number of days per year that the earth had when He created it. We know from Genesis 7:11 and 8:3-4 that a calendar with 30 day months was used before the great flood. It may be that in the catastrophe of the flood, the earth's rotational speed was increased slightly. One way this could happen would be if the earth's density were increased due to the tremendous seismic activity and the collapse of the water canopy which God used to trigger the flood. Genesis 7:11-12 says, "... all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." This increase of density would have increased the earth's rotational speed by reducing its moment of inertia in the same way that spinning ice skaters spin faster when they pull their out-stretched arms in closer to their bodies. If the period of the earth's revolution around the sun did not change, then there would be more days per year after the great flood than there were before the flood. Now let's continue to the next event in the sequence of the Daniel 9 prophecy.

C. The people of the prince which is to come will destroy Jerusalem and the temple. This was fulfilled by Titus and the Roman Empire in 70 AD. In the war with the Jews, the Roman army besieged and destroyed Jerusalem, burned the temple, and killed more than one million Jews.

It is interesting to note that when this destruction was prophesied in 538 BC, Jerusalem and temple had not even been rebuilt yet. The part of this prophecy regarding the "prince which is to come" concerns the AntiChrist who must come from the revived Roman Empire in the future tribulation which will be the seventieth week of the prophecy (Daniel 9:27).

There are several amazing things about this prophecy: It accurately predicted the time of Jesus Christ's crucifixion, more than 500 years before it happened. It sandwiched His death between two future events (A and C) which have both been very well documented in history. Both of the events came true even though they were prophesied hundreds of years in advance. When one considers that this prophecy amazingly predicted events A and C above, then believing that it was also correct on event B does not exactly require a leap of faith.

---

## Symbols of our Lord Jesus Christ

One important concept that we see frequently in the text of scripture is the use of people, objects, or events of a story (usually in the old testament) to serve as metaphors that foreshadow future people, objects, or events. Usually, it will foreshadow Jesus Christ or something that Jesus Christ would later do. Now I want to be clear that whether it is person or an object or an event, it is real. Just because a person in a Bible story is used as a metaphor to foreshadow Christ, that does not mean that the person never really lived. Or just because an event is used as a metaphor to foreshadow something that Jesus Christ would later do, that does not mean that the event never really took place, and so forth. So these are real people, objects, or events that foreshadow real things. Both the subject and the object of the metaphor are real.

There are several different terms that bible teachers and students may use to describe these occurrences in the Bible text. I have heard them called metaphors, shadows, symbols, or types. What term one chooses to use is not nearly as important as just understanding the concept itself.

Paul uses the term "shadow" in Colossians chapter 2. There he explains how Jesus Christ, by His sacrifice on the cross, removed the burden of the Mosaic law and, "took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (verse 14). Then Paul writes in verses 16-17, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Notice how Paul contrasts the body itself with the shadow that is made by the body.

Paul gives us the analogy of comparison between an object or person and its shadow. Think about how much information you can gather from seeing a shadow compared to seeing the actual object or person. When you look at person, you can generally tell the person's approximate height, weight, age, skin-color, hair-color, hair-length, eye-color, whether the person is male or female, and maybe some indication of the person's health and strength. But what can you tell from their shadow alone? You can tell their location and depending on the angle of the light, perhaps a rough idea of the person's size or shape and maybe whether they are male or female. But you usually cannot tell much more than that. Likewise, the old testament shadows provide just a rough idea of whatever they are foreshadowing.

Hebrews 8:1-2, "... We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Verse 5 explains how both the high priests of the earthly tabernacle and the tabernacle itself were but shadows of the heavenly High Priest and tabernacle. They "... serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."

Hebrews 10:1 "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."

Referring to how the tabernacle and the things in it under the law are to be purified with the blood of calves and goats, Hebrews 9:23-24 says, "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us ...."

There are many types or symbols in the Old Testament that have remarkable similarities to Jesus Christ and the events of His life. These show us that the birth, ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ were all laid out in a divine plan long before the events recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John took place. Among these types and

shadows are: (1) the brazen serpent, (2) Isaac, (3) Joseph, son of Isaac, (4) Jonah, (5) the scapegoat, (6) the sacrificial, passover lamb, and (7) the rock (8) the veil of the temple.

## 1. The Brazen Serpent

After the children of Israel left Egypt and were wandering in the wilderness, Numbers 21:4-6 tells how, "... they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread (the manna that God gave them daily). And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died."

Verses 7-9 tells how this dire situation was remedied. "Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

This was a real even that literally took place, but it also served as a symbolic foreshadowing of the real saving power that came through Christ's crucifixion. The snake represents sin, and the snakebitten person is like a lost person who is dead in their sins. Those bitten by the serpents needed a Savior. Jesus Christ became sin for us when all our sin was placed upon Him on the cross. He became like the brazen serpent.

Jesus said in John 3:14-16, "... as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up (on the cross): That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Just as the snake was lifted up on a pole in the wilderness, Christ was lifted up on the cross. All who believe that He gave His life for their sin and rose from the dead, will be saved from the results of their sin.

## 2. Isaac

Isaac paralleled Jesus Christ in many ways. Both were children of promise. Isaac was promised to Abraham, whereas Jesus Christ was promised to Israel. Both were born in a way that is against nature. Isaac was born to a previously barren woman who was way past her child-bearing years. Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. They were both mocked by their kindred. They were both to be sacrificed. As Abraham and Isaac journeyed to the mountain, Isaac had to carry the wood upon which he would be offered (Genesis 22:6). In the same way, Jesus Christ had to carry His own cross up to Calvary. Both Jesus Christ and Isaac were seemingly forsaken by their Fathers, and neither put up a fight.

Hebrews 11:17-19 says, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." The Greek word translated as "figure" here is "parabole", which is usually translated as "parable". This passage conveys that the sacrifice of Isaac served as a metaphor or shadow of the then future sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

### 3. Joseph, son of Jacob

Joseph also foreshadowed Jesus Christ in many ways. Both were beloved of their fathers and sold by their jealous brethren. Joseph was thrown into prison, and Jesus Christ was put into a tomb. Joseph emerged from the prison to be exalted on Pharaoh's throne. Jesus Christ rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father. Joseph then dispensed grain to starving Egypt and to the other nations of the world. Jesus Christ became the bread of life for a dying world. Joseph got a Gentile bride after being exalted, as Jesus Christ will get a Gentile bride, the church (2 Corinthians 11:2). Joseph got his Gentile bride during the time of rejection by his brothers and before the famine, just as Jesus Christ will get His bride while being rejected by Israel and before the great tribulation. Although Joseph knew his brothers at their first meeting, they did not recognize Him until they met the second time. Likewise, Israel, as a nation, will not recognize Jesus Christ until He comes the second time. God had Joseph sold into slavery so that he could eventually save all his brothers (Genesis 45:4-5), just as Jesus Christ was put to death to save the world from sin.

The Old Testament scriptures provide us with many shadows, or types, that have remarkable similarities to our Lord Jesus Christ and the events of His life. These confirm that the plan for our Lord Jesus Christ was determined long before the events of His earthly ministry took place. These shadows also stand as evidence that Jesus Christ truly is the Messiah that the ancient prophets foretold would come. Among these shadows are (1) the brazen serpent, (2) Isaac, the son of Abraham, (3) Joseph, the son of Jacob, (4) Jonah, the prophet, (5) the scapegoat, (6) the sacrificial, passover lamb, and (7) the rock which Moses struck.

In this article, we will take a close look at the life of Joseph, the son of Jacob, and see how the events of his life foreshadowed Jesus Christ.

1. Both Joseph and Jesus Christ were beloved of their fathers. Genesis 37:3 says, "Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours." In Matthew 17:5, the Father says of Jesus Christ, "... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ...."
2. Both were sold by their brethren. Joseph was sold into slavery for 20 pieces of silver in Genesis 37:28. "Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt." Jesus Christ was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. Judas Iscariot met with the chief priests in Matthew 26:15, "And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver."
3. Joseph was thrown into prison (Genesis 39:20). Jesus Christ was placed into a tomb (Matthew 27:59-60).
4. Joseph emerged from the prison to be exalted to the right hand of Pharaoh. Jesus Christ rose from the dead to be exalted to the right hand of the Father. "Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon ..." (Genesis 41:14). Later in that same chapter, Genesis 41:39-41 records, "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou ... I have set thee over all the land of Egypt." This foreshadowed what Jesus Christ would do when He rose from the dead and was exalted to the right hand of God. Ephesians 1:18-20 says, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know ... the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe ... Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."
5. Joseph received a Gentile bride after being exalted. "And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On ..." (Genesis 41:45). Jesus Christ will receive a predominantly Gentile bride, the church. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:2, "... I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Also see Ephesians 5:31-32.

6. Joseph received his Gentile bride during the time of rejection by his brothers and before a great famine. Similarly Jesus Christ will get His bride while being rejected by Israel and before the great tribulation.

7. Through Joseph, God saved not only Egypt and Israel, but all the nations of the world from starvation during the seven year famine. Genesis 41:56-57 says, "And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands." This foreshadowed Jesus Christ becoming the bread of life for a world which was hopelessly lost. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, "... The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."

8. Although Joseph knew his brothers at their first meeting, they did not recognize him until they met the second time. "And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him" (Genesis 42:7-8). Stephen says in Acts 7:13, "And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren ...." Likewise, Israel will not recognize Jesus Christ until He comes to them for the second time.

9. God had Joseph sold into slavery so that he could eventually save all his brothers. Genesis 45:4-5 records, "And Joseph said unto his brethren ... I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life." This was a shadow of the sacrifice that would one day be made by Jesus Christ. He was put to death to save the world. Romans 5:8-9 says, "... while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

10. Joseph forgave his brothers who sold him into slavery. Genesis 50:20-21 says, "... ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." Likewise, Jesus Christ forgave His brethren who crucified Him, saying "... Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do ..." (Luke 23:34).

All of these striking similarities show us that the plan for the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ was ordained of old. This foreshadowing stands as evidence that Jesus Christ is who He said He is, the Son of God.

#### 4. Jonah

About 900 years before the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, God commanded the prophet Jonah to go and preach to the Ninevites. The Ninevites were Gentiles who were enemies of the nation of Israel. Jonah disobeyed God and tried to flee by ship, but God did not let Jonah get away. Jonah 1:17 says, "Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." After this, Jonah obeyed and went to Ninevah, as God had commanded.

About 900 years later, this account of Jonah is referenced again by Jesus. Some of the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus to give them a sign, saying in Matthew 12:38, "... Master, we would see a sign from thee." But Jesus replied to them in verses 39-41, "... An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."



So just as Jonah spent three days in the belly of the great fish, Jesus Christ was crucified, was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and rose from the dead on the third day. Also after being released from the belly of the whale, Jonah extended God's word to Gentiles in Nineveh. Likewise, the preaching of the gospel of grace did not go forth to the Gentiles until well after Jesus Christ had risen from the dead.

## 5. The Scapegoat

Under the law of Moses in ancient Israel, once each year, all of the sins of the people were placed on the scapegoat. Leviticus 16:10 says, "... the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness." Leviticus 16:21-22 further explains that, "... Aaron (the high priest) shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."

The scapegoat taking on the sins of Israel was also a shadow of the way that all of the sins of the world were placed upon Jesus Christ on the cross. Isaiah 53:6 says, "... the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." In 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 Paul wrote, "... we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he (God) hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 1 Peter 2:24 tells of Jesus Christ, "... Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree (the cross) ...."

## 6. The Passover Lamb

Jesus Christ was the sacrificed passover lamb of God (Exodus 12:46 & John 19:32-33). The lamb had to be without blemish, which was analogous to being without sin, and was to have no bones broken (Exodus 12:46 & John 19:32-33). When the destroyer (angel of death) went through Egypt killing the firstborn of all the Egyptians, he looked upon the sides and tops of the doors of the Israelites. When he saw the blood of the sacrifice, he did not enter. Likewise, Christians are protected by the sacrificial blood of Jesus. Like the lamb, He was crucified on the Passover (John 18:28). After a sacrifice the Old Testament priests could not be touched until they delivered the blood of the lamb into the Holy of Holies into the presence of God. After His resurrection, Jesus Christ, like Old Testament high priests, could not be touched prior to taking the sacrifice (His blood) into the Heavenly Holy of Holies (John 20:17).

## 7. The Rock

When the children of Israel were about to die of thirst in the wilderness, God commanded Moses in Exodus 17:6, "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."

Likewise, when Jesus (the Rock) was crucified (smitten) the Holy Spirit (water) was poured out that the people might have eternal life. After the miracle in the wilderness described above, Moses and the children of Israel later had another similar incident in the wilderness. Since Jesus Christ would be a sufficient sacrifice after only being sacrificed once, God commanded Moses in Numbers 20:8 to speak to the rock instead of striking it again, "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink."

But when Moses went to the rock, he was angry with the people, and said to them in Numbers 20:10, "... Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" Notice his reference to himself and Aaron, "we", as though they were the ones getting the water from the rock, and not God. Numbers 20:11 continues, "And Moses lifted up his hand, and

with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also."

But Moses had disobeyed God, exalting himself, and going against the symbol of Christ, as though denying that one sacrifice was sufficient. In verse 12 "... the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." So Moses and Aaron were not allowed to enter the Promised Land, dying before the children of Israel crossed the Jordan River.

## 8. The Veil of the Temple

After the children of Israel left Egypt, God gave instruction for how they were to construct the tabernacle. The most holy place of the tabernacle, where the ark of the testimony was set, was to be divided from the rest of the temple, hidden from view by "... a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work ..." (Exodus 26:31). No one could go into this most holy place behind the veil except "... the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people ..." (Hebrews 9:7). Except for this one ritual by one man once per year on the Day of Atonement, the veil hung there for some 1500 years or so, separating sinful man from holy God.

But that changed when Jesus Christ was crucified. Matthew 27:50-51 says, "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake ...." The veil was not torn from bottom to top, the way men could do it, but from top to bottom, as only God could do.

Paul explained in Hebrews 10:18-20 that, "... there is no more offering for sin (no longer any blood sacrifice to be made). Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest (the most holy place) by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ...." Christ's body was like the veil. When the veil was torn in two, it opened the way to the most holy place. Likewise, when the body of Christ was torn by the crucifixion, that perfect sacrifice opened the way to God for sinful man.