

## 摘 要

《圣经》是有史以来最令人瞩目的文学著作，被誉为西方文学艺术的渊源，并且《圣经》也早已成为英语世界社会结构的一部分。但目前大部分中国人对《圣经》仍很陌生，很多人误以为《圣经》是一本故事集，而非一本内容连贯的书。本文着力阐释了《圣经》的连贯性。通过对《圣经》贯穿始终的主题“救赎”、其中心人物“耶稣基督”、其关于自身连贯的充分内证，进行多角度的阐释与探讨，力图清楚地告诉读者：《圣经》从首卷《创世记》到末卷《启示录》，向人展示的是一幅完整的画面，蕴含着一个渐进展开的故事——上帝对人类的救赎。

关键词：《圣经》；主题；救赎；耶稣基督；连贯性

## **Abstract**

The Bible has often been called the most remarkable piece of literature the world has ever seen. It has had a tremendous effect on the writings of a great number of authors the world over and has become part of the fabric of society in the English-speaking world. Most Chinese, however, are unacquainted with the Bible and hold the misconception that the Bible is simply a collection of unrelated stories rather than one coherent book consisting of many individual parts. The present work expounds the coherence of the Bible, otherwise known as Scripture. Research of the Bible through the exploration of (a) its main theme (God's redemption of humankind from evil), (b) its central character (Jesus Christ) and (c) abundant evidences of coherence within the text itself will show clearly that the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is one integrated coherent book, containing one continuously unfolding story—God's redemption of humankind.

**Key words:** Bible; theme; redemption; Jesus Christ; coherence

# 哈尔滨工程大学 学位论文原创性声明

本人郑重声明：本论文的所有工作，是在导师的指导下，由作者本人独立完成的。有关观点、方法、数据和文献等的引用已在文中指出，并与参考文献相对应。除文中已经注明引用的内容外，本论文不包含任何其他个人或集体已经公开发表的作品成果。对本文的研究做出重要贡献的个人和集体，均已在文中以明确方式标明。本人完全意识到本声明的法律结果由本人承担。

作者（签字）：冯宇

日期：2006年11月10日

## **Acknowledgements**

**I am indebted to Associate Professor Sun Dadan for the supervision of this thesis. Her warm encouragement, patient instructions and careful corrections have been helpful.**

**I also want to express my deep, heartfelt thanks to my precious friends, the wonderful gifts from above, Todd and Joylynn Blake, for their dedicated life in China, their pure-hearted friendship and their support in my thesis writing.**

**At the same time, special thanks go to my friends Jennifer Shelton and Ginny Hrushka, for their friendship and support in the practice of my English and in the refining of my thoughts. Also, I am especially grateful to my husband for his valuable advice and affectionate support.**

**Finally, I should extend my gratitude to Professor Yu Liyan, who has offered sensible suggestions on the format of my thesis and has willingly undertaken its supervision in the thesis's final stages.**

## Chapter 1 Introduction

The Bible is considered by many people to be the most remarkable piece of literature the world has ever seen. It has outsold every other publication; it has been translated into more languages than any other, and has become part of the fabric of society in the English-speaking world. It is a book-making book. It is literature which provokes literature.

The first and most notable fact regarding the influence of the Bible on English literature specifically is the extent of that influence—it is literally everywhere. Someone has observed that if every Bible in any considerable English-speaking city were destroyed, the Book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library. There are works devoted especially to showing how much the Bible has influenced almost all the great literary writers. Take the Bible out of English literature, and one would find the English literary tradition highly altered. For example, English poet and essayist Alfred Lord Tennyson used over 300 quotations from the pages of the Bible. It has been calculated that Shakespeare has over 500 ideas and phrases taken directly

from the pages of the Bible. Charles Dickens said: “It is the best book that ever was or ever will be in the world” (Connolly 2).

Because of the Bible’s great influence on English literature, the more one knows the Bible, the more one understands English literature. For those not familiar with the Bible, their understanding of themes and references in English literature will, in many respects, be only cursory. In China, because generally only churches sell Bibles, few students have exposure to the Bible’s rich literary tradition. It is true that collections of biblical stories can be found in bookshops; however, these collections largely contribute to the misconception that the Bible is simply a collection of stories rather than a thematically integrated whole. Such a misconception hinders English literature teachers and students from understanding and appreciating the influence of this great book on other English literary works.

It is hoped that this study will help persons form a more accurate and instructive conception of the Bible. To this end, the intention of this study is to exposit the coherence of the Bible; that is, this study aims to enlighten English literature teachers and students to the fact that the Bible is a well-integrated, complete book.

Examining the Bible as a literature is not new. Biblical criticism, form criticism, higher criticism, lower criticism, and tradition criticism are just some of the formal approaches to studying the biblical text. This study will follow the standard literary research method of examining the text itself for evidence of internal and thematic coherence and of consulting various scholars for assessments of the Bible's coherence. This study will focus on what are considered the major elements in any literary piece—that is, (a) theme, (b) character development, and (c) internal literary devices—to uncover the coherence of the piece. Specifically, then, this study will examine (a) the theme of the biblical story, (b) the central character of Jesus, and (c) other prominent elements in the biblical story that are woven throughout the text in both Old and New Testaments. In this way, as with other literary studies, the internal coherence of the piece (in this case, the Bible) will be determined.

Before examining theme, character, and internal elements, it is useful to be briefly acquainted with the physical make-up of the Bible. To begin, there are sixty-six separate books bound in this one volume called the Bible. These books were written by forty writers over a period of almost 1600 years, separated by a distance of some 1500 miles. Though the Bible was written by forty writers, over

a period of sixteen centuries, and in many different places, it is one Book. It bears witness to one God, it tells one continuous story, and it speaks of one theme—God’s plan of redemption (McDowell 27).

It is the book of Genesis that the record of the Creation and “Fall” of humanity exists to show that humans have the capacity for and are in need of redemption.

Next is the promise of the Redeemer, who will offer the restoration of harmonious relationship between God and his Creation. Then follows an elaborate system of sacrifices and offerings, and these represent pictorially the nature of redemption and condition under which salvation is realized. At the commencement of the New Testament are the four Gospels; they set forth the basis of redemption, namely, the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Redeemer.

Following the four Gospels is the book of the Acts. By showing that the works of Christ, the Redeemer, are more than adequate in producing the great results of salvation in all persons, not merely those in the Jewish community, among whom the “Messiah” (deliverer/redeemer) was promised to and lived among, the book of Acts illustrates again and again the power of redemption. Finally, in the book of Revelation is presented the final and future goal of salvation—those who are redeemed dwelling with God in perfect union and communion. Thus, one sees that



though a large number of different people were employed in the writing of the Bible, their productions are not independent of each other. In contrast, they are complementary and supplementary parts of one great whole.

In order to further explore the Bible's coherence, this study also focuses on the central character—Jesus Christ. While on the surface the Old Testament seems to have little to do with the historical person of Jesus, when one looks deeper, one sees people who foreshadow Christ throughout the Old Testament; people such as Moses, Aaron and David. Similarly, Old Testament structures, rituals, feasts and prophecies foreshadow Christ. The Old Testament contains at least 300 prophecies about the coming Messiah—Jesus. Then there are typical offices like those of the prophet, the priest and the king, all roles later ascribed to Jesus. Additionally, unfamiliar structures were erected, such as the Tabernacle, and sacrifice rituals were demanded and repeated. Strange conventions were observed; the Passover required a slaughtered lamb; the Day of Atonement needed an exiled goat. All of these observances revealed elements of God's redemptive plan to be ultimately realized in Jesus and the body of believers he commissions to carry on his work (McDowell 56).

The following chapters will expound the overarching theme of the Bible, will show the centrality of Christ within that theme, and will present evidence to support the idea of thematic coherence through internal biblical features. The findings and conclusions based on these chapters will then be restated in the Conclusion. Through this logical progression of study, one may learn the coherence of the Bible.

## Chapter 2 The Theme of the Bible

This chapter will explore the construction and main theme of the Bible (Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation) to find that this theme is present throughout the text, from book one to book sixty-six.

### 2.1 An overview of the Bible's Components

#### 2.1.1 Matters of Composition

At first glance, one phrase that might identify the Bible is that it is a book of extensive variety. First, the Bible does not have a single original language, but three. Generally speaking, the first two-thirds of the Bible (the “Old Testament”) were written in the ancient languages of *Hebrew* and *Aramaic*. The last third of the Bible (the “New Testament”) was written in the common language of the day—*Greek*.

The Bible was also written in a wide variety of *literary styles*, including: poetry, historical narrative, song, romance, didactic treatise, personal correspondence, memoirs, satire, biography, autobiography, law, prophecy, apocalypse, parable and

allegory. This variety of literary styles comes as no surprise when one discovers the Bible's variety of *authors*. In its present form, the Bible was written by more than forty men from every walk of life, including kings, military leaders, peasants, philosophers, fisherman, tax collectors, poets, musicians, statesmen, scholars, and shepherds. Specifically, just a few of the authors include Moses, a political leader and judge who was trained in the universities of Egypt; David, a poet, musician, shepherd, and warrior who became the most celebrated king of the Israelite nation; Amos, a herdsman; Joshua, a military general; Nehemiah, a cupbearer to a foreign king; Daniel, a prime minister; Solomon, a king and philosopher; Luke, a physician and historian; Peter, a fisherman; Matthew, a tax collector; Paul, a rabbi; and Mark, Peter's secretary.

These authors' works span about a fifteen hundred year period in a variety of locations, including three continents—Asia, Africa and Europe. Within these continents, a variety of places and moods are represented. For example, Moses wrote in the wilderness, Jeremiah in a dungeon, Daniel on a hillside and in a palace, Paul within prison, Luke while traveling, and John while in exile on the isle of Patmos. As one might suspect, their writings represent their different times and different moods. Some write from the heights of joy; others write from the

depths of sorrow and despair. Some writings are composed during times of certainty and conviction; others during days of confusion and doubt. In sum, the perspectives of Biblical writings may be said to span the variety of human occupation, experience and feeling.<sup>1</sup>

### **2.1.2 Arrangement**

The Bible is made up of sixty-six books and has two major divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament is composed of thirty-nine books and the New Testament has twenty-seven books. Within each of the Testaments, there are three general sub-categories into which the books are arranged. In the Old Testament, the first seventeen books are *historical* books,<sup>2</sup> the next five books are *poetical* books<sup>3</sup> and the next seventeen books are *prophetical* books.<sup>4</sup> Altogether, the Old Testament is the story of God and the Hebrew people, their poets and prophets. Viewed as part of the whole Bible, the Old Testament describes the story of the first covenant between God and humankind, wherein God teaches humankind about himself, his ways, and his requirements. From the Old Testament, one learns not only the story and parameters of the first covenant, but also one learns that a second covenant is

needed (and planned), because humankind simply cannot fulfill the requirements of the first covenant (Anders 19).

The New Testament tells the story of this second covenant. It describes its induction, explains its meaning, and tells people who accept its terms how they must live. It also explains how people who live under the second covenant should understand the Old Testament. The New Testament represents both a restriction and an expansion of the Old Testament's strictly Jewish Holy Scriptures. The content of the New Testament is more restricted in character focus to a single person—Jesus. It is an account of the birth of Jesus, his life and ministry, and the ministry of his disciples, which was carried on after him. At the same time, New Testament content may be considered more expansive in the scope of its readers; for it is addressed to not only Jews but also to “Gentiles”.<sup>5</sup>

In terms of canonical arrangement, the first five books of the New Testament are *historical books*,<sup>6</sup> the next thirteen books are letters composed by the apostle Paul who is an early antagonist but later follower of Jesus. These letters are known as the *Pauline Epistles*,<sup>7</sup> the remaining nine books are known as *general epistles* because they were letters penned by a variety of other authors.<sup>8</sup>

Because the Bible contains so many books by so many authors, one might expect the same variety in its stance on various issues. However, commentators have observed that, in its address of hundreds of sensitive topics, the Bible, in fact, evidences an amazing degree of harmonious opinion. From Genesis through Revelation, biblical writers take a surprisingly consistent stance on such matters as marriage, divorce and remarriage, homosexuality, adultery, obedience to authority, truth-telling, character development, parenting, the nature and revelation of God. One may observe that, in spite of its diversity, the Bible indeed evidences a surprising unity, as F.F. Bruce observes:

The writings themselves belong to a great variety of literary types. They include history, law, religious poetry, didactic treatises, lyric poetry, parable and allegory, biography, personal correspondence, personal memoirs, and diaries, in addition to the distinctively biblical types of prophecy and apocalyptic [...]. For all that, the Bible is not simply an anthology; there is a unity which binds the whole together.

(Bruce 88)

In fact, the Bible presents a single, unfolding story: God's redemption of human

beings. The Old Testament tells humankind about itself and God, and tells humankind that it needs a Savior and what the Savior is like. The New Testament tells humankind that Jesus is the very Savior which the Old Testament speaks about, and explains how all of God's purpose to save humankind works. In sum, Norman Geisler and William Nix describe the unity of the Bible this way: "The 'Paradise Lost' of Genesis becomes the 'Paradise Regained' of Revelation. Whereas the gate to the tree of life is closed in Genesis, it is opened forevermore in Revelation" (Geisler 24).

## **2.2 An Overview of the Bible's Theme**

In recognizing the underlying unity of the Bible, Bruce observes that just as "Any part of the human body can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body...any part of the Bible can only be properly explained in reference to the whole Bible" (Bruce 89). In other words, although there are a variety of smaller stories, a proper understanding of these stories is only had when one reads them in the context of the overall theme. This theme may be stated most simply as the plan of redemption. For, indeed, in the Bible the plan of redemption is central and fundamental. According to Bruce:



We see that though a large number of human media were employed in the writing of the Bible, yet their productions are not independent of each other, but are complementary and supplementary parts of one great whole. We see that one sublime truth is common to them all, namely, man's need of redemption and God's provision of a Redeemer". (90)

Other scholars agree that the theme of the Bible is "redemption". However, they emphasize that redemption is one of four main parts in understanding the Biblical narrative. Biblical scholar Gordon Fee says the narrative is best described as "God's own story" (Fee 14). For the Bible makes the astonishing claim that it is not just among the many works of literature that express humankind's search for God and attempts at redemption. Rather, the Bible claims it is *God's* story. For this reason, many readers call the Bible "God's Word". It is the account of *his* search for human beings, a story told in four basic parts: *Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation*. Fee explains that in this story, God is the divine protagonist; Satan is the antagonist; and the creation, especially humankind—God's people, is the agonist (those in trouble as well as causing trouble). In this grand narrative, redemption is the plot resolution (14).

A brief overview of the narrative's progression may be stated as follows:

In Genesis is recorded the Creation and Fall of man [...]. Next we find the promise of the Redeemer, for man requires having before him the hope and expectation of a Savior. Then follows an elaborate system of sacrifices and offerings, and these represent pictorially the nature of redemption and the condition under which salvation is realized. At the commencement of the New Testament we have the four Gospels and they set forth the basis of redemption, namely, the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Redeemer. Next comes the book of the Acts which illustrates again and again the power of redemption showing that it is adequate to work its great results in the salvation of both Jew and Gentile. Finally, in the Revelation, we are shown the ultimate triumphs of redemption, the goal of salvation—the redeemed dwelling with God in perfect union and communion. (Pink 67)

### **2.2.1 Creation**

Since the Bible is to be taken as *God's story*, it does not begin, as do other

religious stories, with a hidden God, whom people are seeking. On the contrary, the biblical narrative begins with God as Creator of all that is. It opens with “In the beginning, God [...]” (Genesis 1:1). This simple opening indicates that God is to be understood as being *before* all things, that he is the *cause* of all things and that he is therefore *above* all things, and that he is the *goal* of all things. He stands at the origin of all things as the sole cause of the whole universe, in all of its vastness and intricacies. Due, in part, to this simple opening in Genesis, the entire Bible presents all creation and its history as having the eternal God as its final purpose and consummation.

Further in the opening of Genesis, readers are told that humanity is the crowning glory of the Creator’s work. Human beings are characterized as being made in God’s own likeness, those with whom he could communicate, have relationship, and in whom he could delight. Throughout the Bible, humans are assumed to be persons who may know the pleasure of God’s presence, love, and favor. Created in God’s image, humankind thus uniquely enjoyed the vision of God and lived in fellowship with God. Nonetheless, they were *created* beings and were thus intended to be dependent on the Creator for life and existence in the world. This part of the story is narrated in Genesis 1-2, but it is repeated or echoed in scores of

ways throughout the whole narrative.

### **2.2.2 Fall**

The second major part of the biblical story is a long and tragic one. It begins in Genesis 3, and the dark thread runs through the whole story almost to the very end (Revelation 22:11, 15). This long saga tells that man and woman coveted more “godlikeness” and that in one awful moment in history they chose godlikeness over against mere creatureliness, with its dependent status. They chose *independence* from the Creator. But because humans were not designed to live autonomously, the result of their choice was what biblical theologians call a “Fall”—a colossal and tragic separation from God and his goodness and perfection.

Made to enjoy God and to be dependent on him and to find fulfillment in being loved creatures, humans came under God’s wrath and thus came to experience the terrible consequences of their rebellion. The calamity of the fall is threefold:

First, humans are shown to have lost *vision* of God with regard to his nature and character. Guilty and hostile, humans projected that guilt and hostility onto God.

They say God is to blame: “Why have *you* made me thus?” “Why are *you* so cruel?” are some of the plaintive cries that run throughout the history and songs of the race. The Bible describes a long and sordid history of people who became “idolaters,” creating gods in the image of man and beast. New Testament writer, the apostle Paul, puts the human condition (after the Fall) this way:

Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal human beings and birds and animals and reptiles [...]. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised”.

(Romans 1:22, 23-25)

In exchanging the truth about God for a lie, humans saw God as full of caprice, contradictions, hostility, lust, and retribution (all projections of themselves). But the Bible repeatedly represents God as *not* like humans’ grotesque idolatries. Indeed, if the truth of God is hidden, Paul says, it is because humans became slaves to the “god” of this world, who darkens minds, so that humans are seeking God but not able to find him (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The second effect of the Fall, after humans lost their vision (understanding) of God, was that humans then began to distort—and blur—the *divine image* in themselves. Instead of being loving, generous, self-giving, thoughtful, merciful—as God is—humans became miserly, selfish, unloving, unforgiving, spiteful. Created to image (represent) God, instead humans learned to bear the image of the Evil One, God’s enemy.

The third consequence of the Fall was humans’ loss of the *divine presence*. Relationship and fellowship with God was lost. In place of communion with God, humans suffered the awful consequences of brokenness, alienation, loneliness, and pain.

Under the tyranny of “sin,” the rebellion against God to which humans were enslaved, humans found themselves unwilling and unable to come to the living God for life and restoration. In turn, humans passed on to generation after generation their “fallenness” in the form of every kind of broken relationship with one another.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, the Bible represents humans as initially exalted in unique relationship with

God, then tragically fallen from that relationship into sin, ignorance, and desperation. Both the Old and New Testaments testify to there being an awful distance between humans in their sinfulness and God in his perfection. For humans, the Bible uses images such as sheep going astray (Isaiah 53:6; 1Peter 2:25) or rebellious, know-it-all children (Luke 15:11-32). Humans are at enmity with God and are worthy of his wrath and judgment.

### **2.2.3 Redemption**

The Bible emphasizes that God is a holy and just God, whose moral perfections burn against sin and creaturely rebellion. In addition, however, God is also characterized as a God full of mercy and love—and faithfulness. The Biblical story says that God pitied—and loved—his creatures, whose rebellion and rejection of their dependent status had caused them to fall so low and thus to experience the pain, guilt, and alienation of their sinfulness.

But how to get through to humans, to rescue them from their wrong views about God and from the despair of fallenness; how to get humans to see that God is “*for us, not against us*” (Romans 8:31); how to get the rebellious humans not just to surrender to God but to willingly change sides (from Evil to God’s) and thereby

once again to discover joy and meaningfulness—these matters are what the biblical story's third and main part is all about.

The third (and longest) part of the Biblical theme tells how God set about redeeming and restoring the fallen creation so that he might reverse the effects of the fall; that is, so that he might restore the lost vision of God, renew in humans the divine image, and reestablish relationship with him. Additionally woven throughout this part of the Biblical story is also the sub-plot of humans' continuing resistance.

Thus, further in Genesis, the Biblical story describes that God came to a man of faith, Abraham, and made a covenant (sacred promise) with him—to bless him and, through him, to bless the nations (Genesis 12-50). God's covenant with Abraham was extended to his offspring, “Israel,” who, hundreds of years later, had become slaves.<sup>10</sup> Through Moses, the first of his prophets, God freed the “Israelites” from their slavery and made a covenant with them at Mount Sinai. God promised that he who had rescued them from slavery in Egypt would be their Savior and Protector forever, and that he would be uniquely present with them among all the people of the world. But God insisted that the Israelites would also



have to keep covenant with him, by letting themselves be reshaped into his likeness. Thus, God gave the Israelites his “law” as his gift to them, both to reveal what he is like and to protect them from one another while they were being changed (reshaped).<sup>11</sup>

But the story continues by describing how the Israelites rebelled over and over again and looked on his gift of law as a form of taking away their freedom. As shepherds who were being brought into an agricultural land (in the book of Joshua), they were not sure their God—a God of shepherds, as they supposed—would also help the crops to grow, so they turned to the agricultural fertility gods (Baal and Ashtoreth) of the peoples who surrounded them.

So they experienced several times of oppression and rescue (Judges), even while some of them were truly taking on God’s character (Ruth). Finally, God sent them another great prophet (Samuel), who anointed for them their ideal king (David), with whom God made another covenant, specifying that one of his offspring would rule over his people forever (1-2 Samuel). But alas, the story goes bad again with the people’s rebellion (1-2 Kings; 1-2 Chronicles); so God, in love, sends them prophets (Isaiah—Malachi), singers (Psalms), and sages (Job;

Proverbs; Ecclesiastes). In the end, the people's constant unfaithfulness is too much, so God at last judges his people with the curses that he had long ago promised in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. Yet even in the experience of curses (Deuteronomy 30), there is promise for the future (e.g., Isaiah 40-55; Jeremiah 30-32; Ezekiel 36-37). God promises there would be a new "son of David"—a Messiah—and an outpouring of God's Spirit into people's hearts so that they would come to life and be transformed into God's likeness.

After hundreds of years of God's silence, the New Testament opens with a remarkable announcement. Humans are told of the greatest event of all—that the great, final "son of David" is none other than God himself. The Creator of the cosmos comes to be present on the human scene in the likeness of a human. Born as the child of a peasant girl, during a time of his people's oppression, Jesus the "Son of God" lived and taught. And finally with a horrible death, the Son of God himself suffered all the curse and consequence of humanity's rebellion. Then, with a death-defeating resurrection, Jesus defeated all the powers that prohibited humanity from being restored to relationship with him.

Here is the heart of the story: A loving, redeeming God restored humans' lost

*vision* of God by becoming human himself, so that humans could plainly see what God is truly like. By his crucifixion and resurrection, God made possible humans' being restored to the image of God (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18). And through the gift of his Spirit, He became *present* with humans in constant fellowship.

The genius of the biblical story is that it tells about God himself: a God who sacrifices himself in death out of love for his enemies; a God who would rather experience the death humans deserved than to be apart from the people he created for his pleasure; a God who himself bore human likeness, experienced creatureliness, and carried humanity's sins so that he might provide pardon and reconciliation; a God who would not surrender humans, but who would pursue them—all of them, even the worst of them—so that he might restore them into joyful fellowship with himself. The Biblical God is a God who, in Jesus, has so forever identified with his beloved creatures that he came to be known and praised as “the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ”(1 Peter 1:3).

The Bible affirms that it is *God's* story—a story of his love and grace, mercy and forgiveness—and that is how the Bible also becomes the human story. The story

tells that humans deserve nothing but get everything. Actually, the Bible expresses is that humans deserve hell but get heaven; they deserve to be obliterated, but instead they get God's tender embrace. The Bible says humans deserve rejection and judgment but instead get to become God's children, to bear his likeness, to call him *Father*. This is the story of the Bible, *God's story*, which at the same time is also meant to be the truth of the human story.

#### **2.2.4 Consummation**

Because God and the human story has not yet ended, the final part of the Biblical story has not been fully realized, but readers can know from what has been written how the Bible expects current history to end. The Bible promises that what God has already set in motion through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit are finally going to be fully realized: eternal life will be fully granted to those who have accepted Jesus and eternal damnation will be the end of those who rejected him. This is what the final episode (the book of Revelation) is all about—God's final conclusion of the story, when his justice brings an end to the great Antagonist (the Evil One whom the Bible calls "Satan") and to all who continue to bear his image (Revelation 20) and when God, in love, fully restores his creation as part of a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation

21-22).

This final realization of the Biblical story was indicated by Jesus, standing at the tomb of his friend Lazarus. Jesus told Lazarus's sister Martha that Jesus himself was her hope for life now and for the life to come: "I am the resurrection and the life", he told her, "anyone who believes in me will live, even though they die, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25-26). And then he proceeded to validate what he had said by raising Lazarus from the grave (John 11:25-26).

Jesus himself became the final verification of those words by his own resurrection from the dead. The Bible says that since he himself is Life—and the author of life for all others—the grave could not contain him. Biblical writers say that Jesus' resurrection not only validated his own claims and vindicated his own life on earth; it also indicated the "beginning of the end" for death itself. Jesus' resurrection is therefore presented throughout the remainder of the New Testament as the guarantee of life for all those who receive him and his message.

## **Chapter 3 The Centrality of Jesus**

Chapter Three examines the central figure of Christ to find that His character and work are anticipated in the beginning of the Bible, described in the middle, and explained and exalted in the end; thus, the central character of Christ is relevant to an examination of the Bible's coherence.

### **3.1 Culmination of Biblical Narrative in the Person and Work of Jesus**

As discussed in the preceding chapter, it is because of this guarantee of life to all who believe in him that Christ dominates the whole revelation, thus convincingly demonstrating the unity and progress of the Biblical revelation.

The most important among all the people described in the Bible, the leading character throughout is the one, true, living God made known through Jesus Christ. Regarding the presence of Christ throughout the Bible, scholars have commented that in the Old Testament, the Law provides the "*foundation for Christ*," the historical books show the "*preparation for Christ*", the poetical works *aspire to*

Christ, and the prophecies display an “*expectation*” of Christ. In the New Testament, the Gospels record the historical “*manifestation*” of Christ, the Acts relate the “*propagation*” of Christ, the Epistles give the “*interpretation*” of him, and in Revelation is found the “*consummation*” of all things in Christ”.<sup>12</sup> From cover to cover, the Bible is Christocentric. Biblical scholar Graham Scroggie expresses this “Christocentrism” (Christ-centeredness) in the following:

In the Old Testament Christ is predicted; in the Gospels he is present; in the acts he is proclaimed; in the Epistles he is possessed; and in the Revelation he is predominant. The Bible presents Christ as the focus of all history, prophecy, and type. Divine revelation converges in him in the Old Testament, and emerges from him in the New Testament. Both parts of Biblical revelation—Old and New Testaments—meet in him; the one part as preparation, and the other, as realization. In this view, all parts of the Bible, from books to verses, constitute a progressive revelation of redeeming love; God and man meet in the One who is the God-Man. (Scroggie 31-32)

### 3.1.1 The Life of Christ

In order to understand and appreciate the centrality of the Christ figure in Biblical literature, it is helpful to first be acquainted with basic facts about Jesus' life and his work. Jesus was born and lived during a period of internal social unrest. While the Roman Empire ruled most of the known western and middle-eastern world in relative peace, the Jewish population (particularly that portion living in Palestine) resisted Roman dominion, under the clear pretext that a Jewish nation was ruled by God, not by a pagan power. Various Jewish sects had arisen to defend what each considered Jewish distinctiveness by either rebelling against or accommodating Rome.<sup>13</sup> In this atmosphere, anticipation of a Messiah (national deliverer) was intensified, as was conflict over various self-proclaimed upstart "messiahs" who inevitably agitated relations between the Jews and Rome. Into an obscure, rural town, yet part of a region known for political and revolutionary activism, an unexpected announcement about the Messiah came.

According to the narrative of the New Testament gospels, about 2000 years ago God sent a messenger—an angel—to a young virgin in the town of Nazareth named Mary. The angel told Mary that by God's power, she would conceive and bear a son. When Joseph, Mary's fiancé, learned that she was pregnant, he nobly sought to simply dismiss her privately.<sup>14</sup> However, an angel appeared to Joseph



also and informed him that the child Mary was carrying was part of a cosmic, divine plan; and Joseph was instructed to continue with plans to marry her.

After some months, Joseph, along with his new bride Mary, went to Bethlehem (the so-called “City of David”) to register for a Roman-ordered census. While in the over-crowded city, Mary gave birth to Jesus in a stable, and she laid him in an animal feeding trough (“manger”) because there was no vacancy in the local inn. In the countryside, unassuming shepherds received an angelic birth announcement, informing them that the world’s savior had arrived that night, and they hurried into town to witness this miracle. Later, sages from the East (called “wise men”) received word of the important birth through their astrological readings. They traveled far to find Jesus and bring homage gifts to him, the supposed newborn “King of the Jews.” The wise men questioned the Jewish King Herod the Great where they might find this new king. Then, Herod, a wicked, self-important puppet king for Rome sent soldiers to exterminate all children in Bethlehem under the age of two. After being visited by the wise men and warned by an angel of the impending danger for Jesus, Joseph took his family as refugees into Egypt. Only after Herod died did they return to Israel to raise Jesus in their hometown of Nazareth (Matthew 2: 1-6; Luke 2:1-20).

Jesus grew up in Nazareth. The Bible gives little information about his childhood. Gospel writers do include one incident that occurred when Jesus was twelve. He was taken to Jerusalem for Passover; yet, when they left Jerusalem, his parents discovered Jesus was not with the caravan of relatives and neighbors. They returned to the city and desperately searched for Jesus for days, until finally finding him at the temple. Jesus had been with the religious teachers, who were amazed at his understanding of the “Holy Scriptures” (the Old Testament). When Mary and Joseph reprimanded him for the worry he had caused, the adolescent Jesus replied, “Why were you searching for me? [...] Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house” (Luke 2: 49)?

Jesus learned and worked in the trade of carpentry until he was thirty; then, his public ministry began.<sup>15</sup> At the start of his ministry, Jesus went into the wilderness to be baptized by the popular, controversial, and eccentric prophet John the Baptist. John preached, “The kingdom of God is at hand” (Matthew 3:2); therefore, people must repent (turn away from) their sins and show their repentance through baptism. Although Jesus had not sinned, he was baptized by John as a means of introducing and authenticating his ministry as being from God. When Jesus came up from the water, gospel writers say that the Holy Spirit of

God descended upon Jesus, and God spoke, saying, "This is my beloved son"(Matthew 3:17).

After Jesus baptism, he retreated further into the wilderness for a time of spiritual testing and preparation. At the end of forty days, Jesus emerged from the wilderness to initiate his public ministry. His message was to reveal God; his mission was to restore fellowship between God and humanity. Jesus accomplished his mission in his word and his work. Through his words, he challenged the people to live a life of genuine righteousness, not one of external hypocrisy like many of the religious leaders. Through his works, he validated his authority to speak as God and to be taken as the Messiah by performing astounding miracles of healing and affecting the natural environment.<sup>16</sup> Jesus attracted large crowds and a lot of attention, both positive and negative. The religious leaders became profoundly jealous of him and began stirring up animosity toward him. This *growing rejection* resulted in a progression in Jesus' ministry pattern. He began to focus more attention on the mounting opposition from the religious leaders, warning them of the seriousness of their attitude. At the same time, He began setting aside more and more time for the twelve disciples whom he had chosen, preparing them to carry on without him.<sup>17</sup> Also, he began challenging the larger

crowd of followers to “count the cost” of following him.

The Jews became more and more polarized about Jesus, either following him enthusiastically or resenting him deeply. In the volatile atmosphere of the festival time of the Passover when Jesus and many other Jews were in Jerusalem, the religious leaders were finally able to stir up enthusiasm for Jesus’ crucifixion. Betrayed by one of his twelve disciples, Jesus was seized and tried on demonstrably inconsistent and false charges. After a series of trials and punishment, Jesus was condemned to death at the request of the crowd. He was crucified on Friday and buried that night. Then, the gospels say that Jesus resurrected from the dead on Sunday and later appeared to many believers, instructing them to share his teachings with others. Finally, the gospel accounts say that Jesus was taken up into heaven with a promise to return again someday.<sup>18</sup>

### **3.1.2 The Mission of Jesus**

The Bible says that God has a comprehensive plan to save humankind. The plan revolves around the prophetic mission and the accomplished work of Jesus Christ. God sent one whom the Bible calls “His only begotten Son,” Jesus Christ, on a mission: to *reveal God* and to *redeem sinful men*.

One of the four gospels giving account of Jesus' life opens with the following: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3). Jesus Christ is characterized as the Word of God. He is the very communication of God, and the revelation of God to man.

Part of Jesus' being the communication of God is located in his revealing the nature of God. The New Testament book of Colossians describes this revelation and mission of Jesus by saying of him:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones of powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to

reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

(Colossians 1:15-20)

This passage makes clear that New Testament writers saw Jesus as not only the long-expected Jewish Messiah; but more than that, Jesus was considered to share the closest possible relationship with the God of the universe—to be, in fact, a full human extension of God himself. In Jesus' life as a man, the nature of God was revealed in its most tangible, knowable way. Thus, the deity to whom all generations and cultures have searched and longed to know is claimed to be revealed in Jesus Christ.

Above all other attributes, Jesus revealed the nature of God as being one of Absolute Love. This characterization is an important one because the Bible opens with a clear representation of God as loving. He creates the world, considers its *good*, and shares an intimate relationship with humans. Of course, the story of this intimacy is not sustained as humans choose to break relationship with God through disobedience. From that time on, the story of God's dealings with humanity include justice and punishment as well as compassion and forgiveness.

Still, as the Hebrew sacrificial system demonstrates, a fully reconciled relationship between God and his creation was never sustained through animal sacrifice or through law-keeping.<sup>19</sup> A more permanent solution was needed for humans' tendency to rebel and become gods to themselves. Thus, the New Testament says that God sent Jesus to be the final reparation of this broken relationship. One of the most well-known and quoted verses from the Bible states: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:16-17). The same writer explains this expression of God's love through Jesus in another epistle: "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10).

Jesus performed many acts of compassion and loving miracles. Describing his own mission, Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim

the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4: 18-19). Yet amidst his numerous miraculous acts of gracious love, New Testament writers—and Jesus himself—say that none exemplifies his love so well as Jesus' sacrifice, his innocent death on the cross.<sup>20</sup> "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us" (1 John 3:16). In other words, in the New Testament, God shows his love by sending Jesus Christ to this world specifically to die for human's sins. Jesus was born to die. Tellingly, Jesus often foretold his own death.<sup>21</sup> In fact, if one searches the historical records of Jesus' life, one finds fifty-five passages in Matthew, twenty-four in Mark, forty-four in Luke, and seventy-five in John—all referring to the sin problem and the salvation of individuals, subjects which implicitly include the sacrificial death of Jesus.<sup>22</sup>

From this conception, Jesus was characterized as the Savior of humankind. When Joseph was troubled about Mary being with child, an angel settled his fears and announced the child's name to be "Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). At the introduction of his earthly ministry by John the Baptist, Jesus was presented as "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Christ himself made clear his mission from the very first when he announced, "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of



Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:14-15).<sup>23</sup> Also, Jesus said of himself, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10). “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

In short, Biblical writers and Jesus himself characterize Jesus’ primary mission as the redemption of sinners through his sacrificing himself (Colossians 4:4, 5). This was what the gospel was all about—the death, burial and resurrection of Christ “according to the Scriptures” (I Corinthians 15:3, 4). This phrase—*according to the Scriptures*—is repeatedly used in the New Testament to connect the mission of Jesus to the long-term plan of God that had been pronounced throughout the Old Testament through prophecies, religious rituals, and personal archetypes. Any one familiar with Scripture would conclude that Christ’s coming was for Him to be God’s ultimate means of salvation for a lost and dying world. Although a mysterious spiritual truth still discussed among scholars, the Bible’s claim that Jesus accomplished humanity’s redemption through his death on the cross is central to biblical doctrine. In his death, Jesus is presented as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and humanity’s justification before God is said to be made sure by Jesus’ literal, physical resurrection from the dead.<sup>24</sup>

### **3.1.3 The Teachings of Jesus**

To reveal his redemptive mission to a lost world, Jesus Christ proclaimed the truth with his teachings and affirmed his authority through many miracles that reached out to people's physical and spiritual needs. The teachings of Jesus have had more world-wide influence than any other aspect of the life of Christ. It is impossible to read the Gospels without getting a sense of the intensity and passion of Jesus' teachings. He spoke with authority on spiritual matters, often leaving his detractors speechless and appearing foolish. Many of his teachings are disturbing and confront people in their comfort and complacency. He spoke of loving God above all other things and of caring about other people as much as one cares about oneself. He regularly spoke about the "kingdom of God" (also called the "kingdom of heaven") and about eternal life; yet, in these messages, Jesus often taught with sermons and parables that were enigmatic to most.

In his parables pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, Jesus described the kingdom by comparing it to the effects of sowing good seeds into various kinds of soil. He also compared the kingdom of God to the following: a tiny grain of mustard seed which would grow into a large tree; to leaven hidden in meal; to a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found with joy and then bought at the cost of everything

he had; to a merchant who, finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it; and to a net thrown into the sea. He compared the kingdom of heaven to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son and invited all people, but they would not come; to ten virgins, five wise and five foolish, who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom; to a man who called his servants to account for the talents which he had entrusted to them. To his disciples Jesus partially revealed the secrets of the kingdom, but to the public he spoke always in parables.<sup>25</sup> Jesus said that it was not easy to enter the kingdom. One must be like a child, showing that quality of obedient acceptance. For a rich man it was particularly difficult, so that Jesus compared a rich man entering the kingdom to a camel going through a needle's eye.

Many of the parables were difficult for the disciples to understand and had to be explained. However; some of Jesus' parables, in addition to being interesting stories with spiritual truth, also contained practical lessons for life. The overall effect of Jesus' parables was that they presented the deep truths of reality in unexpected lessons using commonplace illustrations.

In addition to his parables, Jesus spoke straightforwardly about keeping the spirit

of God's law that morally superseded the meticulous external rule-keeping of the religious leaders. Jesus delivered his most famous sermon on a mountain. The "Sermon on the Mount" is the most acclaimed sermon Jesus ever preached. "The Lord's Prayer," the "Beatitudes," and the "golden rule" are all a part of this sermon. The Sermon on the Mount is in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew. It may be divided into three general sections: beatitudes (declarations of blessedness), ethical admonitions, and contrasts between Jesus' ethical teaching and Jewish legalistic traditions.

The Beatitudes are teachings that begin with "Blessed are [...]." These statements were meant to both comfort suffering believers and to surprise listeners with the types of persons God finds acceptable and those who will experience the reward or result of their condition. For example, Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:7-8).

Following on the beatitudes, Jesus presents the new laws, comparing the old law of Moses with the new law of Christ. While the requirements of Christ, in some respects, contrast Mosaic law, Jesus was careful to state that his message was not

a rebuttal but a fulfillment of God's intentions, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17). It would have been impossible for listeners to escape the significance of Jesus' claims; for just as Moses brought the law of God from a mountain, Jesus sat on a mountainside delivering his message. The new laws of Jesus serve as a summary of Christian principles whose standards are so high that some have considered them unattainable. For example, reflecting on Mosaic Law and tradition, Jesus says:

You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. [...] You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. [...] You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:27-28, 38-39, 43-44)

Followers of Jesus, in fact, admit that demands such as these cannot be met in one's own power; thus, they claim that the Spirit of Christ himself must indwell and empower every believer.<sup>26</sup>

Jesus also teaches the proper motives for fasting and offering gifts and what believers' attitudes should be concerning the use of money. Jesus gives reasons to avoid worry and assurances of God's loving care of his children. Also, Jesus issues warnings regarding the dangers of false teachers and hypocrisy. To stress the importance of practicing what has been taught, Jesus also presents a parable of the wise and foolish builders.

Jesus' teachings reveal who man is and who God is, and by accepting these truths, one becomes free. Jesus proclaimed, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32). More than this, however, Jesus claimed to not simply point to the truth; he said he was the Truth and the only way to know God: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him" (John 14:6-7). Thus, in his teachings, Jesus not only revealed the fullness of God's requirements; he claimed to be the way to

meet these requirements and thus have relationship with God.

### **3.2 Archetypal Forerunners of Jesus**

Jesus is the focal character in the Bible. In fact, many of the leading personages of the Old Testament give remarkable indications of what would be Jesus' character and earthly ministry. Of the many persons in the Old Testament who may be seen to prefigure Jesus, no two of them represent him from exactly the same viewpoint. Each one contributes to the picture and expectation of the Christ, but all are needed to give a complete delineation.

Generally, the way each person contributes to the picture of Christ is through a trait that stands out with peculiar distinctness. For example, Noah is regarded for his faithful testimony amidst a generation of unbelievers; Abraham is remembered for his profound faith in God; Isaac is an example of submission to his father; Joseph stands out for his love for his brothers; Moses exemplifies unselfishness and meekness; Joshua shows courage and leadership; Job, fortitude and patience; Daniel, fidelity to God; Paul, zeal in service; John, spiritual discernment; and so on. One scholar finds these other examples of Christ-types in various characters:

Adam typified Jesus' Headship; Abel who offered a more excellent Sacrifice; Abraham as "Head of many nations"; Isaac as the "Seed of Promise"; Joseph loved by his father; Moses as a Prophet and Faithful Servant; Aaron as High Priest, Joshua as the Captain of salvation; Samuel as the Faithful Prophet; David's reign and throne; Elijah as the Miracle-worker; Jeremiah as the despised and rejected Servant of God; Daniel as the Faithful Witness for God; Jonah as the One raised from the dead on the third day. (Pink 57-63)

Each character demonstrates an attribute which was perfectly revealed in Jesus.

Of Jesus' relation to admirable biblical characters, one writer notes:

In him all their perfections were properly poised and balanced. He was meek yet regal; He was gentle yet fearless; He was compassionate yet just; He was submissive yet authoritative; He was Divine yet human. Add to these the fact that He was absolutely 'without sin' (Hebrew 4:15) and his uniqueness becomes apparent".

(38)



The remainder of this chapter will focus on the three offices that dominate the Old Testament and that were clear types of the Jewish Messianic expectation: that of Prophet, represented by Moses; that of Priest, represented by Aaron; and that of King, represented by David.

### 1 Moses – A Type of Christ

Moses, probably more than any other Old Testament figure, is an “all-round” type of Christ, from his humble birth to his special ministry of deliverance. The following chart represents the correlations that may be drawn between the life of Moses and the life of Christ.

Comparisons between Moses and Jesus	In Old Testament	In New Testament
Both had edicts issued at birth for destruction of all male children—Pharaoh issued order during Moses’ time. King Herod issued order during Jesus’ time.	Exodus 1:22	Matthew 2:16
Both had peculiar beds—Moses had a basket in the bulrushes. Jesus was placed in a manger in a stable.	Exodus. 2:3	Luke 2:7
Both were miraculously saved from death by “Egypt.” Pharaoh’s daughter rescued Moses. Jesus’ family fled to Egypt to escape Herod’s orders.	Exodus. 2:3	Matthew 2:13
Both were divinely chosen deliverers and expressions of God’s mercy toward people.	Exodus. 3:7-10	John 1:29; 3:16
Both left high, exalted positions to suffer with and for Israel. Moses took on the life of a slave. Jesus took on the life of a human.	Exodus 2: 11-15; Hebrews 11: 23-29	Philippians 2:5-8
Both were alone with God forth days and	Exodus 24:18	Matthew 4:2

nights. Moses met with God in the wilderness. Jesus also was consecrated to God in the wilderness.		
Both were discredited by members of their own family.	Numbers 12:1	John 7:5
Both endured murmurings against them and their mission.	Exodus 15:24	Matthew 7:2
Both were almost stoned.	Exodus 17:4	John 8:59
Both established God's Law. Moses brought the first covenant between God and his people. Jesus brought the final covenant between God and his people.	Exodus. 34:27-32	Matthew 5:17,18
Both had relatively direct contact with God.	Exodus 33:11	John 12:28,29
Both served as advocates before God for people.	Exodus 17:17; 32:11-14	John 2:1
Both were prophets.	Exodus 18:15-19	Acts 3:22,23
Both instituted God's plan of deliverance through the shedding of blood.	Exodus 12:1-13	Hebrew 9:11-15
Both led people out of bondage. Moses led children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt. Jesus led children of God out of bondage to sin.	Exodus 14:26-31	John 8:36; Galatians 4: 4,5
Both opened new dispensations of God's relation to humanity: Moses—the Law, Christ—Grace and Truth	Exodus 20:1-17	John 1:17
Both established rituals of commemoration. Moses instituted the observance of Passover. Jesus instituted the observance of the Lord's Supper.	Exodus 12:14	Luke 22:19
Both were characterized as faithful servants of God.	Numbers 12:7	Hebrews 3:1-5 John 8:29

## 2 Aaron—A type of Jesus

Not only was the Jewish Messiah expected to be a national deliverer in the

tradition of Moses; he was also expected to operate in a priestly position. That is, he was supposed to stand as a holy representative of the people before God. A popular Messianic psalm foretold the unique priestly nature of the Messiah, admitting that although he would not descend from the priestly tribal line (the “Levites”), he would be “a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:4).<sup>27</sup> The New Testament writer of Hebrews assumes this reference directly in his description of Christ’s priestly service:

Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. [...] No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.” And he says in another place, “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”  
(Hebrews 5:1, 4-6)

The following chart further delineates comparisons between the priestly identity and service of Aaron and that of Jesus.

Comparisons between Aaron and Jesus	In Old Testament	In New Testament
Both offered sacrifices for sin. Aaron, as high priest, was commissioned to make proper sacrifice for sin. Similarly, Jesus was chosen to make the proper sacrifice for sin by becoming the sacrifice.	Leviticus 16:11,15	Hebrews 9: 7,11-14, 24-28; 12:24
a. Called of God	Hebrews 5:4; 8:3	1 Timothy 2:5
b. Clothed	Leviticus 8:3	1 Corinthians 1:30; Revelation 19:8
c. Crowned	Leviticus 8:9	Hebrews 2:7
d. Anointed	Leviticus 8:12	Acts 10:38
e. Consecrated	Exodus 30:30 Leviticus 8:23-27	Matthew 3:17 John 3:34
Both were representatives before God for the people.	The name <i>Aaron</i> means "Enlightener"	John 8:1,2
a. A revealer of God		
b. Holy things entrusted to his care	Numbers 18:8	Hebrews 8:1,2
c. Had a ministry of redemption	Numbers 18:15	Ephesians 1:7
d. His seed was also blessed	Numbers 18:19	Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 2:10; Romans 8:32

### 3 David—A type of Jesus

While features of Moses' life and Aaron's service were clearly precursors to Jesus as the Messiah, the individual by whom most Jewish Messianic expectations were shaped by was the glorious King David. As a national leader, David typified a humble servant leader raised to power by God and used to drive out enemies and establish the security, peace, and glory of the nation. It was, in fact, due to these national aspirations that many Jews took offense to the suggestion that Jesus was

the famed Davidic Messiah. A poor son of a carpenter who led no national uprising nor offered political deliverance could not be the fulfillment to the long-expected Davidic Messiah. However, as seen in the chart below, Jesus in fact fulfilled the Davidic tradition in clear, albeit unexpected, ways. Tellingly, the heavenly messenger who announced to Mary Jesus' conception said:

Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end". (Luke 1:30-33)

In the gospels, Jesus is carefully presented as being a legitimate descendant of the Davidic line as well as being the fulfillment of the Davidic Messianic promise. The following chart represents the correlations that may be drawn between the life of David and the life of Christ.

<b>Comparisons between David and Jesus</b>	<b>In Old Testament</b>	<b>In New Testament</b>
Both Jesus and David are connected to Bethlehem. David's father was from there, and Jesus was born there.	1 Samuel 16:1	Matthew 2:1

Both Jesus and David amazed elders when they were small children. In Jesus' case, he astounded the elders in the temple with his advanced knowledge of the Scriptures. As for David, he amazed others when he was able to slay the giant Goliath.	1 Samuel 17:23-49	Luke 2:41-52
Both David and Jesus came seemingly "out of nowhere" and rose to power, thus making others fear them. Saul wanted to kill David out of jealousy, just as the high priests wanted Jesus dead for they feared that he knew too much.	1 Samuel 16:10-13; 18:10	Luke 4:32; Matthew 26:59 Mark 15:10
Both were known for their justice and righteousness.	2 Samuel 8:15	Luke 4:17-19; Acts 2:29-31; 10:38
Affiliation with both of them meant suffering for their followers.	1 Samuel 22:23a	John 17:14; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 2:21; 4:12-14
Affiliation with both of them also meant ultimate safety.	1 Samuel 22:23a	John 10:27-29; Colossians 3:3b
There was a time when David, though "a man after God's own heart," was rejected and despised as a servant of the people, the same as was Christ.	1 Sam.22:23	Acts 10:38
David rebukes Saul for thinking he was a threat to him. Jesus rebukes high priests for thinking he was a threat to them.	1 Samuel 24:11	Mark 14:48
Both David and Jesus met their turning points at the top of their "career." Just after David had gained power as king, he then met his turning point when he had his affair with Bathsheba. When Jesus had become very popular among the people, it was at this point that he was put on trial.	2 Samuel 11:3-27; 12:9-10	Luke 19:47-48; 3:13-46
As Christ was betrayed by his close follower Judas, so David was betrayed by his own son, Absalom, when he sought to usurp the throne, and as Judas went out and hanged	2 Samuel 15-18	Matthew 26:47-50; 27:5

himself, so was Absalom hanged.		
David expresses hope that he will prevail, but recognizes it's the Lord's decision to make. Jesus' also surrenders his fate to God's will.	2 Samuel 15:25-26	Mark 14:36

When one considers the dissimilarity of these typical persons to one another; when one notes that they had little in common with each other as leaders; when we remember that each of them represents some peculiar feature in a composite archetype; one discovers a literary phenomenon which is truly remarkable. Moses, Aaron, David, and numerous other prominent biblical characters are each deficient when viewed separately; but when looked at in conjunction, they form a harmonious image of the Messiah's identity, mission, and work. Old Testament archetypes, when taken together, give a complete representation of Jesus' miraculous birth, his peerless character, his life's mission, his sacrificial death, his triumphant resurrection, his ascension to heaven, and his ongoing work among his followers.

## **Chapter 4 Evidences of Thematic Coherence**

This chapter will present the literary evidences for coherency throughout the Bible. Namely, Jewish sacrifices, the tabernacle, Jewish feasts, and prophecies will be examined as prominent features in the Biblical text and culture. As these elements are introduced and emphasized in the Old Testament, their intentions are shown to be fulfilled and reflected in the New Testament. Thus, the internal elements of the Bible are proven to be relevant to a study of the Bible's coherence.

### **4.1 Sacrifices**

#### **4.1.1 Ritual and Purpose of Sacrifice**

Due to the archetypes of Jesus present within the Old Testament, it is essential to understand more of the Jewish history, traditions, and culture that dominate the Old Testament narratives.

Under the Old Testament, after God delivered the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, God called Moses up to Mount Sinai to receive his instructions.

It was at Mount Sinai that God gave Moses his law which included the Ten



Commandments; the pattern of the Tabernacle and also the sacrificial system. God had sovereignly delivered the Israelite people from slavery and brought them to Sinai; he promised to make them his own “treasured possession” out of all the nations on earth (Exodus 19:5). The Jews would therefore be for him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:6). That is, their role as a “kingdom” was to serve as God’s priests for the world and to do so they must bear his likeness “be holy, because I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44, 45).<sup>28</sup>

For people who knew only slavery and Egyptian culture for centuries, God reconstituted them into a totally new people on the face of the earth. The Israelites needed direction as to *how* they were to be *God’s* people—both in their relationship with each other and in their relationship with God. They needed to be given God’s definition for their unique culture so that they would abandon the ways and culture of Egypt, and so that they would not adopt the ways and culture of the new peoples they would encounter (especially idolatry).

One of the primary definitions God gave the people was justice. Suffering as slaves in Egypt, the Israelites were well acquainted with injustice. God wanted them to understand the parameters of justice. The first point to be made was that

sin (wrongdoing) deserves punishment. All sin is an offense against God. God revealed to his people through the animal sacrifices that the one who sins against God does not deserve to live. But he also provided a procedure by which the sinner might escape death: a substitute's blood could be shed. Thus God offered to accept the death of another living thing—an animal—in place of the death of the sinner among his people. The sacrificial system of the law incorporated this procedure into the life of Israel. It was necessary part of the survival of the people. The people understood that “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22).

The sacrificial system set an important standard for Israel. It indicated the covenantal relationship between her and God. The covenantal nature of these sacrifices appears in three ways: First, the sacrifice is a *gift* on the part of the worshipers to God; second, some of the sacrifices imply fellowship on the part of the worshiper with God; third and most importantly, sacrifice functions as a way of healing a break (caused by sin) in the relationship with God—sacrifice serves as a form of *atonement*.

The sacrificial system was based upon 5 kinds of offerings or sacrifices. There

were three “voluntary” offerings: the Burnt Offering, the Grain Offering and the Peace Offering. These three were “fragrant” offerings to God. He was pleased when they were performed by an individual who decided he wanted to bring such an open-hearted offering to God as an expression of his love and thanksgiving to God. The fragrant offerings portrayed what is acceptable to God. They were designed to express gratitude to God for his mercies and blessings (Leviticus 1-3).<sup>29</sup>

The other two are “mandatory” offerings: the Sin Offering and the Trespass Offering. They are offered for atonement for sin (Leviticus 4:1-3; Numbers 28:3-8). The Sin Offering was made by those who had sinned unintentionally.<sup>30</sup>

The Trespass Offering was the offering for committing a violation against God (Leviticus 5:14-19). This offering was always an unblemished ram (Leviticus 15, 18; 6:6). In the sacrificial system, no sin could be overlooked. Even for ignorance or inadvertence, it was necessary for a sacrifice to be given (Leviticus 5:15).

#### **4.1.2 Fulfillment of Sacrificial Intent in Jesus**

In Psalms 40:6, God said that he did not desire sacrifice and offering, and he did not require burnt offering and sin offering, neither does he delight in burnt

offerings (Psalms 51:16). If God did not desire sacrifices, then why were sacrifices a major part of Old Testament worships? A pivotal key in understanding the meaning of the sacrifices is in their fulfillment by Jesus Christ. Hebrews 10:1-14 well uncovers God's redemptive plan through Jesus who would serve as a permanent sacrifice for sin. Hebrews explains that the laws of sacrifices and offerings were a shadow of good things to come—the “good things” were Jesus' taking the place of the sinner in death and, through his sacrifice, paying the penalty of sin with his own blood.

The sacrificial orders presented in Leviticus 1-7 are fulfilled by Jesus Christ. He fulfilled both the voluntary and mandatory offerings, first, by remaining in perfect obedience to God and therefore being acceptable to him. Jesus never sinned. He did not please himself (Romans 15:3), but kept himself spotless before God (Hebrews 9:14). New Testament writers say that he “made himself of no reputation, taking on the form of a servant” (Phillipian 2:7). Like the fragrant voluntary offerings, Jesus was said to have offered himself in complete obedience as “a sweet savour,” acceptable and well pleasing to God (Mark 1:11). Then, to redeem sinners from the penalty of sin (I Peter 1:18-19, Hebrew 9:28), like the animals for the Sin and Trespass Offerings, Jesus took their sins on himself and

offered himself in their stead, bearing in his own body their penalty. He made this offering of himself to free people from the penalty for sin (Romans 6:7, 23; I Peter 2:24) in fulfillment of the sin and trespass offerings.

The Old Testament sacrificial system made clear that human's sins have separated them from God (Isaiah 59:2). Since all have sinned, all must die (Romans 5:12; Hebrews 9:27). But, in the New Testament, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as a sin offering for sinners was said to give all men a chance to repent and become acceptable to God (II Peter 3:9).

## 4.2 Tabernacle

Biblical scholar Luke Timothy Johnson writes: "One of the most important contexts for the development of Jewish symbols was worship. In worship, after all, the convictions of religion come alive and a community expresses its identity in myth and cult" (Johnson 58). The first designated place for the expression of Jewish identity through worship was the tabernacle. The name *tabernacle* means "dwelling," and although it was essentially an enormous, portable tent, this structure was intended to be the location of God's dwelling among his people, the Israelites. While the structure was most commonly called the *Tabernacle* (Exodus

25:9), it was also referred to as the *Tent of Meeting* (29:44), because it was there that God met with his people, and the *Tabernacle of Testimony* (25:21), because there the tables (testimony) of the Law were kept. The subject of the Tabernacle dominates the latter portion of Exodus, with specific instructions concerning the Tabernacle's form and purpose given seven times. The tabernacle was rife with symbolism for both immediate acts of worship and for what Christians would come to consider the climax of God's plan in Jesus Christ.<sup>31</sup>

#### 4.2.1 Components of the Tabernacle

The tabernacle was a wood-framed, rectangular structure with three major compartments: the Outer Court, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (also called the *Holy of Holies*).

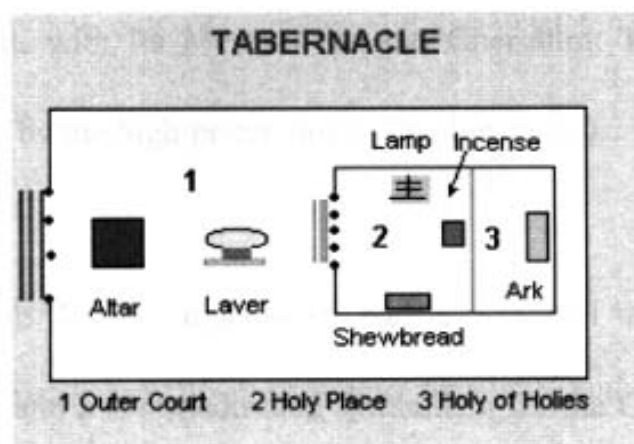


Fig. 1. Tabernacle graphic is from <http://www.biblenews1.com/grace/gracea.htm> .

The Outer Court was the largest part of the tabernacle layout, encompassing the other two compartments. It was walled by thick fabric and unroofed. In this large, open courtyard were two pieces of tabernacle furniture—the Brazen (bronze) Altar and the Laver (wash basin). This large Outer Court was accessible to all Jewish persons for worship and sacrifice.

Inside the Outer Court, was a smaller rectangular structure which comprised the Holy Place (at the anterior) and the Most Holy Place (at the posterior). This rectangle was walled and covered by heavy fabric, and the two Holy sections were separated by a thick curtain. In the Holy Place were the Golden Lampstand, the Table of Showbread and the Altar of Incense. This area was accessible only to priests. In the Most Holy Place, the most restricted section of the Tabernacle, was the Ark of the Covenant, with its Mercy Seat and Cherubim. This area was accessed only once a year by the high priest alone (Exodus 25-31).

Each article of furniture in the tabernacle had ceremonial and symbolic significance for the Jews and a foreshadowing symbolism for the Christian faith. According to the law which God delivered to the Israelite people through Moses, the means of forgiveness and acceptance before God was for the people to give

acceptable offerings. Thus, the components of the Tabernacle all served this end; that is, everything in the Tabernacle facilitated the nation's ability to make acceptable offerings to God for the purposes of receiving forgiveness of their sins, of restoring and of maintaining the people's relationship with God.

In the Outer Court, the Brazen Alter or burning offering alter, made of heavy boards and overlaid with heavy plates of brass, served as the place where the community regularly brought their unblemished animals to God. These "perfect" (innocent) animals were said to be substitutionary sacrifices meant to take the place of the people in receiving God's just judgment for their wrongdoing. Upon the Brazen Alter, the animals were completely consumed by fire.

Also part of ritual sacrifice in the Outer Court was priestly cleansing, which took place at the Laver. As a polished brass vessel, the Laver's use was to, like a mirror, reveal uncleanness, and also to hold water for cleansing. Here, the priests washed their hands and feet everyday, so that their ministry at the Altar and in the holy place might be acceptable to the Lord. If washing at the Laver was omitted, death resulted (Exodus 30:20).



In the enclosed Holy Place, the first need for the priestly ministry was light, for all natural light was shut out of this sacred place. To give light, a one-piece, six-branch Lampstand was fashioned out of pure gold. Pure olive oil was burned in the lamps continually for practical and symbolic reasons. The oil represented God's Spirit which is never extinguished and which brings light into darkness.

Also symbolic of God and of his requirements was another article in the Holy Place—the Table of Showbread. On this table were placed twelve loaves of flat bread, called “showbread,” for what they were showing, or representing. These loaves first showed that God is the supplier of all things; he is the one who brings bread from the earth. Next, the twelve loaves (representing the twelve Israelite tribes) were placed fresh every Sabbath, showing that the people recognized God as their supplier, and so they would return to him the first and best of their weekly crops. Practically, food, as well as light, was needed by the priests who ministered in God's presence; therefore, when the time came to replace the bread with what was freshly baked, the other loaves were eaten by the high priest and priests in the holy place.

In addition to light and food, scent was an offering made to God in the Holy Place.

Perpetual incense was burned upon the Golden Altar by the high priest, symbolizing God's perpetual and pervasive presence and representing the prayers of his people that lifted before him like incense. A crown of gold and four horns adorned the top of the altar, and upon the horns, once a year, the high priest sprinkled blood as another form of sin offering for the people. The Altar was placed directly in front of the curtain to the Most Holy Place with the Golden Lampstand on the left and the Table of Showbread on the right.

Behind the forbidding curtain, in the Most Holy Place, is where God's presence was said to dwell. The Ark of the Covenant was the only piece of furniture in this sacred spot. The Ark was a chest overlaid with gold and adorned with two golden angels (called Cherubim) which bowed before God and symbolically guarded the Ark's contents. Inside the Ark were kept the tablets of the Law which had been given to Moses to establish God's requirements for relationship with Israel. "The Mercy Seat" was a lid of pure gold made to cover the Ark, and thus to cover the Law within.<sup>32</sup> Above the Mercy Seat, between the Cherubim, God manifested his presence in the Most Holy Place. The Mercy Seat was thus considered part of God's throne.

Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the high priest alone was permitted to enter this highly restricted area. If his heart and body were properly purified, he was permitted as a representative before God for the people. If not, he would fall dead in God's presence (Exodus 30:20). As a confession of the people's sin and a plea for mercy and forgiveness, the high priest sprinkled the blood of designated animals upon the Mercy Seat.<sup>33</sup>

#### **4.2.2 Embodiment of Meaning of Jesus**

The Tabernacle was central to Israel's social, political, and religious identity, as its intentional placement in the center of the Israelite camp indicates. Through the Tabernacle's symbol and ritual, Israel understood what her rightful relationship to God was. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that understanding the Tabernacle is a *necessary* part of understanding the people from whom the Bible comes. In addition, without knowledge of the Tabernacle and its typical meaning, much of what the New Testament tells of Christ himself and his ministry is little understood.<sup>34</sup>

The New Testament book of Hebrews explains that the Tabernacle was designed to reveal, through object lessons, God's plan of forgiveness and redemption for

every believer. For its clear example of biblical unity, the following passage is worth quoting at length:

Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, [...] when everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry out their ministry. But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. [...] When Christ came as high priest [...] he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then,

will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Hebrews 9: 1-3, 6-7, 11-14)

In light of Jesus' work, it may be said that every piece of the Tabernacle furniture, in fact, the entire Tabernacle and all its appointed ministries, illustrate Jesus' work of redemption accomplished for all believers. In the Old Testament, the Tabernacle was the place where God met man. In the New Testament, Jesus is claimed to be the one person in whom deity and humanity meet (Colossians 1:15-20). The Tabernacle is a type of Jesus Christ; indeed, everything in the Tabernacle points forward to his Person and work. Specifically, it may be recognized that the recorded events and the elements surrounding Jesus' death in the New Testament are no accident. There is intentional coherence between the Old Testament Jewish understanding of accessing God in Tabernacle ritual and the New Testament report of what Jesus said and did.

The Brazen Altar typified Jesus Christ's death on the cross. When an animal was sacrificed upon the Altar, it was symbolically carrying and receiving the judgment

for the sins of the people. In the same way, Jesus was referred to as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The only acceptable animals for sacrifice upon the Brazen Altar were those without flaws (Leviticus 22:21). Jesus was said to be flawless; that is, he was said to have committed no sin (II Corinthians 5:21). The Altar itself was built so that it could endure the devouring fire of God’s wrath. As such, it is a type of Christ as the *only* One who was able to bear the wrath of God against sin and the sinner. God met men and righteously judged all of their sins and reconciled them to himself, having made peace by the blood of the cross, so that men may come acceptably into his holy presence.<sup>35</sup>

At the Tabernacle’s Laver, priests had to cleanse themselves before offering sacrifices. “Bath” or “washing” is the Greek word for “laver”.<sup>36</sup> The Laver may be considered a type of Christ and his word, by which men are said to be cleansed (John 15:3; 17:17). On the night before his death, Jesus told his disciples that if they were to have a part of him (take part in his ministry) that he must wash them, specifically their feet, which he said was enough for full body cleanliness (John 13:3-10). The daily washing of the hands and feet of the Tabernacle priests foreshadowed the sanctification or cleansing of men through Christ. Often,

Christ's work is said to "wash away" sins for one (Acts 22:16). Also, baptism (through sprinkling or immersion in water) is a common Christian rite, instituted by Christ himself (Matthew 28:19) to indicate one's appropriation of Christ as a sacrifice for his sins. Ephesians 5:25-26 says, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word."

Leaving the Outer Court to come into the presence of God, one must pass through the Holy Place. Jesus indirectly likened himself to the Holy Place in a variety of ways. First, he said that "No one comes to the Father [God] except through me" (John 14:6). As the Golden Lampstand illuminated a dark place, Jesus claimed to be the Light of the world (John 8:12; Revelation 21:22, 23). The Lampstand with its main stem and six branches also typifies Christ's people, his church, for the lamps foreshadowed those who "declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9).

The loaves on the Table of Showbread are typical of Christ presenting himself to God as food for man. On the night before his death, Jesus instructed his disciples to partake of the bread he offered, saying, "This is my body" (Matthew 26:26). In

so doing, the disciples affirmed that they were entering a “new covenant” between God and humans made possible through Jesus. Also, the priests’ eating of the showbread in the holy place is typical of the experience which people enjoy, as they live in fellowship with Jesus Christ, who declared: “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty” (John 6:35, 48, 51).

Throughout the scriptures, prayers are compared to aromatic incense that goes up to God. The Altar of incense represents Christ, whose Spirit is said to make intercession on behalf of believers before God. The offering of the perpetual incense in the Tabernacle by the high priest typifies Jesus’ ever-living intercession on humanity’s behalf (Hebrews 7:25-28). Hence, on the night before his death, as a representative of humanity before God, Jesus offered up a lengthy prayer for his immediate followers and for those that would believe their testimony (John 17). As a cloud of incense must cover the Ark’s Mercy Seat, so Christ, the High Priest, entered with his own blood into the presence of God for men with this cloud of incense—his intercessory prayer of John 17 and also his cry for God’s mercy on the cross, saying, “Father, forgive them[...]” (Luke 23:34).



The sacred Ark was the vessel in which the Law was kept; it was the location of God's manifested presence, and it was the most guarded and hallowed spot in Jewish worship. During Jesus' lifetime and for hundreds of years prior, the Mosaic Law was the Jewish nation's most important means of relationship with God. Keeping the law meant that one was keeping covenant (relationship) with God. However, no one was ever able to keep the law perfectly. Every year, therefore, the high priest had to enter into the Most Holy Place and sprinkle the blood of a sacrificed animal over the lid (Mercy Seat) of the Ark which covered the law, thereby symbolizing that the requirements of the law were covered (satisfied). With its blood, the sacrificed animal paid for the people's infractions.

On the surface, Christ may be likened to the Mercy Seat as one who has covered the Law, or satisfied all the claims of the Law as a man; for he, being born under the Law, perfectly obeyed it (Galatians 4:4,5). Jesus himself said, "Do not think I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17). On a deeper level, however, Jesus did more than perfectly obey the Law. He was said to stand in the place of all those who could not obey it perfectly. His blood was symbolically poured over the Mercy Seat to pay for the sins of the people.

Perhaps the clearest continuity between Old Testament ministry in the Tabernacle and the New Testament work of Christ comes to light in a dramatic note at the moment of Jesus' death. Matthew writes: "And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split" (Matthew 27: 50-51).<sup>37</sup> When Jesus died, the heavy curtain which forbade entrance into God's presence in the Temple (the permanent Jewish worship spot, subsequent to the Tabernacle) was split. The significance of this event is later explicated in Hebrews: "Therefore, brothers, [...] we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body" (Hebrews 10:19-20). In other words, rather than entrance into God's presence being strictly limited (to only the high priest and only once a year), all believers may now "draw near to God" (Hebrews 10:22) through the authorization of Jesus' own blood. Just as the blood of an innocent animal paid for the sins of the people and served as the priests' authorization into God's presence, so Jesus' shed blood, symbolically spread upon God's mercy, satisfies God's holy justice. The perfect sacrifice of Jesus himself is considered the once-and-for-all fulfillment of God's plan of redemption. Jesus' death—the purity of his sacrifices—has given people access to God.

Romans 3:19-25 well describes God's redemptive plan which was first symbolized in the ministry of the Tabernacle with the requirements of the Law and later fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus:

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness apart from the law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. (Romans 3:19-25)

Thus, the Bible's continuous theme, that is, God's making a way for relationship with human beings through redemption, is represented in the Tabernacle and fulfilled in Jesus. In the Old Testament, relationship to God is shown to be secured

through Tabernacle components and procedure. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is shown to be the embodiment of all the Tabernacle represented; he is the structure, the furniture, the sacrifice—everything needed for relationship to God.

### **4.3 Feasts**

As found in Leviticus 23 of the Old Testament, approximately three months into Israel's journey from Egypt to the land that God promised them, God called Moses up to Mount Sinai to give him and the nation of Israel his Laws. In addition to the moral law, the Ten Commandments, God also gave Israel the ceremonial law. Embedded within the ceremonial law was the establishment of seven important feasts. Each feast was to be celebrated at a specific time of the year in commemoration of a specific event. One of the main purposes of these feasts was that they were to serve as vivid reminders for the people of Israel of who God is and of all that he had done for them. Later, New Testament believers came to see that not only were these feasts important for remembering; but also they were important for foreshadowing Christ.<sup>38</sup> Because of their relative importance to both Jewish custom and to New Testament theology, two feasts—the Passover and the Day of Atonement—will be examined here.

### **4.3.1 Passover**

Passover was the first and most important of the seven feasts that God commanded his people to celebrate. On the fourteenth day in the first month of Jewish calendar, the Passover supper was to be observed, meaning this festival usually occurred in March or early April. It was a time of great joy as its purpose was to commemorate the exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, the event that marked the beginning of the Israelite nation and defined them as God's people (Genesis 15:13,14; Exodus 12). Passover was a time of thanking God for his redemption. This feast was instituted to remind the people of how God's wrath "passed over" them when the destroying angel came to slaughter all the first born of Egypt (Exodus 12:12, 13).

#### **1 Practice and Purpose of the Feast**

Again and again the Israelites were told by God to remember his deliverance of them as an encouragement to their continued faith in him.<sup>39</sup> How could all the Israelites, young as well as old, literate as well as illiterate, best remember God's deliverance? God commanded an annual reenactment of the first Passover. Through this object lesson, God had his people employ all five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching) to powerfully remember the story of their

deliverance. During the Passover feast, the head of the household would recount in great detail the story of Israel's deliverance and explain the significance of all the aspects of the Passover observance. The following description will clarify the significance of the more important elements of the Passover ceremony.

The object lesson began with the Passover lamb. Each family was to select from its flock the most attractive and healthy, male, one year old lamb. A four-day period of close observation around the house followed to make sure the animal was healthy and perfect in every way. At the end of four days, after the family would have become fond of the young lamb, the lamb would be killed. The sacrificial death of the lamb, which they would eat as part of the Passover meal, taught a painful lesson: God's holiness requires that sin be judged, and the price is a costly one. Still, the lesson was also a meaningful one about God's mercy; for, it was because of the shed lamb's blood over the doorposts that the Destroyer had "passed over" Israelite homes on the night of their Egyptian deliverance; and it was because of the shed lamb's blood that God's wrath passed over them yearly. In other words, the lamb was a symbol of the fact that in God's mercy, God provides a way of escape or redemption from his judgment (Exodus 12:3-10).

God instructed the Israelites to eat the Passover lamb with bitter herbs (Exodus 12:8). The bitter herbs represented the bitterness of the bondage Israel had experienced in Egypt. In the Bible, Bitterness is often symbolic of death. Hence, the bitter herbs also reminded them that the Hebrew firstborn males only lived as a result of the Passover lambs' death.<sup>40</sup>

Unleavened bread was also part of the Passover meal (Exodus 12:8). Unleavened bread does not contain yeast and thus does not rise. Such bread was an appropriate reminder of the haste of the Hebrews' departure from Egypt; for, on the night before their deliverance, the bread was not given time to rise. Also, it became customary during Passover time to remove all leaven from the house, a symbolic way of removing the "puffiness" (arrogance, pride) from one's soul. Then, the morning before Passover, a formal search of the house is undertaken, and any remaining yeast was burned. Because of this observance, Passover is also known as "The Feast of Unleavened Bread." During the Passover meal, the father would take the middle of three unleavened cakes, break it, pronounce a blessing, and distribute half of the broken unleavened bread among the members of his family while hiding the other half under a cloth until the end of the meal. The hidden piece was saved to be the last thing eaten so that the taste of the bread of freedom

would linger in mouths.

## **2 Satisfaction of the purpose in Jesus**

Reviewing the New Testament, one finds that the Passover might be understood as a foreshadowing of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ would make on behalf of those in spiritual bondage. Some may wonder why Jesus is spoken of as the “lamb” (John 1:29, 36; 1 Peter 1:19) or why he talks about bread as his “body” or of a “new covenant” in his “blood” (1 Corinthians 11:23-25). The key to unlocking many of these important themes is to realize that they are all aspects of the ancient feast of Passover, which was considered fulfilled in Christ.

The death of the innocent Passover Lamb parallels the death of Jesus who was claimed to provide ultimate redemption from the penalty of sin. First, the Passover lamb was marked for death. Isaiah 53:7-8 prophesies that the long-awaited Messiah would be led like a lamb to the slaughter and that he would die for the people’s transgressions. In the New Testament, the book of First Peter picks up this reference by saying that Jesus Christ was chosen before the creation of the world to die as a sacrifice for sin. Second, the Passover lamb was carefully scrutinized to make certain it was perfect. Deuteronomy 15:21 says that a flawed



animal was not an acceptable sacrifice for sin. This, again an Old Testament Passover reference, is assumed by the author of First Peter when he describes Jesus as “a lamb without blemish or defect” (I Peter 1:19). Through his three-and-one-half-year public ministry Jesus demonstrated to the Jewish nation that he was perfect in heart and deed. Even at Jesus’ criminal trial, the Roman governor Pilate said he could find no fault in him. Hebrews 4:15 declares that Jesus had been tempted “in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.” Hence, Jesus is the embodiment of the flawless Passover sacrifice. Third, the Passover lamb was roasted with fire. In the Bible, fire is often symbolic of God’s judgment. Isaiah 53 foretold that the Messiah would bear God’s judgment for the sins of others and be numbered among the transgressors. Second Corinthians 5:21 proclaims of Jesus that “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” As a result of Jesus’ assuming the penalty of humanity’s sin, he suffered God’s judgment on the cross; leading him to, at his death, quote a well-known Psalm of lament: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me” (Matthew 27:46)? Like the Passover lamb, Jesus is represented as enduring the fire of God’s judgment. Finally, in portrayal of Jesus as the ultimate Passover lamb, John 19:32-36 offers the otherwise obscure note that Roman soldiers did not break Jesus’ legs as they did the two men crucified

beside him; for, as all Jews readily remember, none of the Passover lamb's bones were to be broken (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12).<sup>41</sup>

The Israelites were often instructed to remember their former slavery and what God had done to deliver them. Remembering God's faithfulness and deliverance was a crucial part of the Hebrew identity and religion, and over and over in the Old Testament, the people are reprimanded for their forgetfulness. Psalm 78 is just one example of lengthy remembrance instruction. During Passover specifically, eating bitter herbs dipped in a salty sauce was a way to keep their memory of their past slavery alive and, therefore, to treasure their freedom. In the New Testament, the language of slavery and freedom is recast to describe the work Christ performed on his people's behalf. The bondage to which people are enslaved is sin, and the deliverance Jesus brings is freedom from sin and judgment.

The unleavened bread has a twofold symbolic reference. First, the breaking of the bread symbolized the "breaking" (the crucifying) of the Messiah's body. In Matthew 26:26, Jesus himself makes this symbolic reference to himself: "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.'" Elsewhere in the gospels, Jesus

further references his body as bread when he says, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty” (John 6:35). Like the broken unleavened bread, Jesus body was “broken” (crucified). Second, leaven often symbolizes sin in the Bible. For example, the apostle Paul urged the Corinthian believers: “Get rid of the old yeast [...]. For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:7, 8). Hence, the unleavened bread is not only a symbol of Christ’s broken body but also of his sinlessness.

The blood of the lamb protected Israel from judgment on Egypt during the plague against the firstborn sons of Egypt. Interestingly, Jesus, God's firstborn, was arrested and condemned the night after the Passover meal, just as the firstborn sons of Egypt long ago. His blood protected men, and he, himself, took on the condemnation which was upon men who sinned as it was on the Egyptians. Jesus brought a new covenant for forgiveness of sins through the atonement by his own blood, the shedding of his blood for the remission of sin. Matthew 26:27-28 tells “Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it,

all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

The significance of the Passover also is seen in the fact that it changed Israel's reckoning of time. God commanded the Israelites to count the month of their deliverance as the first month of their religious year (Exodus 12:2). It was as though God were saying, “The Passover is so significant that you are to rearrange your calendar on account of it.” In a similar fashion, today Christians (and much of the world) reckon time B.C. and A.D., before and after the coming of the Christ.

### **4.3.2 Day of Atonement**

Leviticus chapter 16 is the primary Old Testament passage that deals with the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement, especially as they relate primarily to the high priest and the offerings that were to be presented before the presence of God. The Day of Atonement occurred on the 10th day of the 7th month of the Jewish (religious) calendar. It was the most solemn day of the year.<sup>42</sup>

### **1 Practice and the Purpose of the Feast**

On the Day of Atonement, as with other holy rituals, the priest of Israel made offerings for sin. He offered a bullock for his and his household's sin; and he offered a ram as a burnt offering (Leviticus 16:3). However, unlike any other day, the high priest was to take two young goats on behalf of the people of Israel and come into the holy place with them (Leviticus 16: 1-5). After the sins of the nation had been confessed over the goats' heads by the high priest, one goat was slain (and offered after the manner of the daily sacrifice) and the other goat, the "scapegoat," was taken away into the wilderness, symbolically bearing the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:7-22).

Atonement means covering (for sin) which refers to the animal sacrifices that were offered at the Day of Atonement. A key characteristic of the Feast Day of the Day of Atonement was for the Jewish people to "afflict their souls" (Leviticus 23:27) which means for them to humble themselves and reflect on and be sorry for and ask God's forgiveness for their sins over the past year. God took this mourning for sin very seriously and as in this passage commanded that anybody that didn't mourn for their sins (afflict their souls) was to be cut off from their people (Leviticus 23:29).

## **2 Fulfillment of Sacrificial Intent in Jesus**

The sacrifices of this day, or any day, could not take away sin nor make the people perfect (Hebrews 10:1, 2, 4); but they were a feature of the law of which not one jot would pass away until all should be fulfilled (Matthew 5:18). These sacrifices were to be repeated yearly, keeping Israel conscious of sin (Hebrews 10:3) until the better sacrifices came. These are the sacrifices pictured by the bullock and the goat—Christ and his church, by which those sanctified by way of them, would be made perfect forever (Hebrews 10:14).

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the Holy Place of the Tabernacle to offer ceremonial sacrifices for the forgiveness of the people was a direct fore-picture of Jesus Christ, our High Priest: “We do have such a high priest, who set down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heavens; and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man” (Hebrews 8:1, 2). “When Christ came as high priest [...] he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, [...] He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:11-12).

The sacrificed goat of the two goats is a symbol of Jesus Christ. The blood of the sacrificed goat was taken by the high priest sprinkled on the atonement cover, or mercy seat, of the Ark of the Covenant depicts the blood sacrifice of Jesus, our “High Priest” entering the presence of God to make atonement for humanity once for all time (Hebrews 9:23-28).

The second goat, the Scapegoat was both a sin bearer (Leviticus 16: 21) and a sin remover (Leviticus 16: 22), which looked forward to the fulfillment in Christ. In the New Testament, Christ became the bearer of all his people’s sins: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree” (1Peter 2:24); “so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people” (Hebrews 9:28). Christ, bearing the sins of the people, *removed* them far away from their midst: “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29); “But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin” (1John 3:5); “And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins” (Romans 11:27).

#### **4.4 Prophecies**

Sacrifices, the Tabernacle, and feasts in the Old Testament foreshadow Jesus and thus testify to the Bible’s coherence. Additionally, Biblical prophecies also testify

the continuity of the Bible.

One of the unique and fascinating aspects of the Bible is its measure of accurately fulfilled prophecy. Roughly one quarter of the Bible is widely regarded to contain passages which foretell events and mandate conditions on future activities, many of these focused on the Jews' expected Messiah. The Old Testament contains at least 300 prophecies about the coming Messiah—sometimes made hundreds of years in advance—that are claimed to be fulfilled in Jesus. Some of the most obvious prophecies fulfilled by Jesus include the expected Messiah's miraculous birth, his sinless life, his many miracles, his death and his resurrection.<sup>43</sup>

In the following table are prophetic statements about the Messiah in the Old Testament and their fulfillments in Jesus in the New Testament:

Old Testament Prophecy	Subject	New Testament Fulfillment
Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."	"seed" (born) of a woman	Galatians 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law.
Genesis 12:3 "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."	descendant of Abraham	Matthew 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.
Isaiah 9:7		Luke 1:32,33



<p>Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.</p>	<p>heir to the throne of David</p>	<p>"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."</p>
<p>Psalm 45:6, 7; 102:25-27 Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.</p> <p>In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.</p>	<p>anointed by God and eternal</p>	<p>Hebrew 1:8-12 But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."</p>
<p>Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."</p>	<p>born in Bethlehem</p>	<p>Luke 2:4,5,7 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.</p>

<p>Isaiah 7:14                  “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel (meaning “God with us).”</p>	<p>born of a virgin</p>	<p>Luke 1:26,27,30,31                  In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.”</p>
<p>Isaiah 40:3-5                  A voice of one calling: “In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”</p>	<p>a way prepared for the Messiah by a forerunner</p>	<p>Luke 3:3-6                  He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: “A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God’s salvation.’”</p>
<p>Psalm 2:7                  I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”</p>	<p>declared the Son of God</p>	<p>Matthew 3:17                  And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”</p>
<p>Isaiah 61: 1-2                  The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to</p>	<p>brings deliverance to people</p>	<p>Luke 4: 17-20                  The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners</p>

<p>proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn.</p>		<p>and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.</p>
<p>Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.</p>	<p>rejected by his own people</p>	<p>John 1:11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Luke 23:20-21 Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"</p>
<p>Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.</p>	<p>triumphal entrance into Jerusalem on a (donkey's) colt</p>	<p>Mark 11:7,9,11 When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.</p>
<p>Psalm 41:9 Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.</p>	<p>betrayed by a close friend</p>	<p>Luke 22:47,48 While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"</p>
<p>Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so</p>	<p>silent to accusations</p>	<p>Mark 15:4,5 So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of." But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate</p>

he did not open his mouth.		was amazed.
Isaiah 53:12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.	crucified with malefactors	Mark 15: 27, 28 They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled which says, "He was counted with the lawless ones."
Psalm 69:9 For zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.	was reproached	Romans 15:3 For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."
Psalm 22:1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?	forsaken by God in judgment	Matthew 27:46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
Psalm 34:20 He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.	suffered no broken bones	John 19:32,33,36 The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken."
Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for	was pierced	John 19:34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.

<p>him as one grieves for a firstborn son.”</p>		
<p>Psalm 16:10 Because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. Psalm 49:15 But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself.</p>	<p>would not end in death</p>	<p>Mark 16:6 “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.”</p>
<p>Psalm 68:18 When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men, even from the rebellious- that you, O LORD God, might dwell there.</p>	<p>ascended to God</p>	<p>Mark 16:19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Ephesians 4:8 This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.”</p>

Throughout the Bible, therefore, one may see a pattern of prophetic utterance and fulfillment. While some prophecies seem hardly attended in the writers’ minds as they write about events that fulfill them, other prophecies are carefully recited to make the occasion of their fulfillment clear. Above all, the prophecies concerning the Messiah are the most noteworthy for their unprecedented numbers of fulfillment in the life of Christ and in the events that followed.

## Conclusion

From Genesis to Revelation one can detect that the Bible is in a real sense a unity. It is not a collection of fragments, but has an organic unity. It has a coherent story to tell from beginning to end. In other words, there is plan, purpose, and progress.

As stated throughout the present work, the underlying theme of Scripture is *Redemption*. This theme is set in the center of a context that establishes the need for redemption, the occasion of redemption, and the effects of redemption. In other words, the Bible opens with a narrative about the goodness and intent of Creation. Then, very soon, the beauty and wholeness of Creation is fragmented by humanity's rebellion against God. Human nature and all of creation *fall* into sin and separation from God. The remainder of the Old Testament testifies to humanity's need and God's plan of salvation. In the Old Testament is the anticipation of his redemption in symbols, feasts, archetypes and prophecy. Then, in the New Testament is the realization of redemption in the life and work of Jesus Christ and the explanation of it in the writings of the apostles. Of the Redemptive theme running throughout the Bible and of Jesus as the central character in this

story, one writer expresses the following:

**Christ is the focus of all history, prophecy and type. As running through all British Navy rope there is a scarlet thread, so running through all the Bible is the saving purpose, making the whole Bible an unfolding divine plan of redemption. Into the plan all the details fit at each stage of its unfolding, so that each and every part of the Bible, whether history, or literature, or type, or prophecy, or law, or grace, is part of the design of God to reconcile to himself, by the sacrifice of his Son Jesus Christ, a fallen and rebellious race. (Scroggie 32)**

**In the end, one of the simplest yet most profound testimonies to the Bible's unified character is how the Bible concludes. Themes and features that were clearly present in the Bible's opening narrative in Genesis are revisited and brought to full resolution in its closing book of Revelation. For example, in Genesis, when the human couple chooses to rebel by partaking of the "knowledge of good and evil," the consequences of their actions are described as follows:**

**[God said] "He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take**

also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:22-24)

The passage poetically describes how access to abundant and eternal life is denied to those who have rebelled against God. When Jesus came, he repeatedly spoke of bringing life, offering life, being life, being the “bread of life,” the doorway to life. The gospels are full of such references to Jesus, because of his sacrifice, reopening access to life in God.

In the closing and highly symbolic book of Revelation, the image of the “tree of life” is represented in the context of God, through Jesus—“the Lamb”, bringing all spiritual and earthly history to its fulfillment. Describing a prophetic vision of this fulfillment, the old apostle John writes:

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as



crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of the lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22:1-5)

Thus, in the Bible, the tree of life that is denied soon after the opening of human history is re-offered at the close of history. With images such as “curse,” darkness, and death to reference humanity’s sin and creation’s need of redemption, John says there will be no more. Through Jesus, the need of salvation is cured, and the nations are ultimately “healed.” The Bible, therefore, proves itself to be a coherent work of literature and spiritual truth, tracing the creation, the fall, the redemption, and finally the consummation of all things—accomplished through its central character, Jesus Christ.

## Notes

1 Josh McDowell, A Ready Defense (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993) 27-28.

2 Historical books of Old Testament include: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.

3 Poetical books include: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon.

4 Prophetic books include: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zechariah and Malachi.

5 A term used for anyone who is not Jewish.

6 Historical books of New Testament include: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts.

7 Pauline epistles include: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon.

8 General epistles include: Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude and Revelation.

9 This theme of broken relationships appears throughout Genesis 4-11.

10 The record of these events is found in the book of Exodus.

11 These events and the law are found in Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

12 Norman Geisler and William E. Nix, A General Introduction to the Bible (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968) 29.

13 Philip Yancey, The Jesus I Never Knew (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995) 56-58.

14 In those days, a pregnancy out of wedlock was more than a social embarrassment; it was cause for stoning—the Jewish form of capital punishment.

15 This is recorded in Luke 2:39-52, Matthew 13:55-57 and Mark 6:3.

16 Some of the healings of Jesus include curing blindness, deafness, muteness, lameness, skin diseases, internal disorders, and even resurrecting persons from death. Instances of his affecting the natural environment include the obedience of wind and waves during a storm, the withering of a tree, the transforming of water into wine, the multiplication of small amounts of food to feed large crowds, and his walking on water (John 9:1-7; Mark 7:32-35; Matthew 4: 24; 8:2,3,16; 12:22; 15:30,31; 21:14; Luke 13:11-13; John 11:17-44; Matthew

8:24-27; 14: 17-21; 15:33-38; 25; 21:19; John 2:3-9).

17 The disciples were men Jesus selected as companions. They had different backgrounds. Jesus chose fishermen, a tax collector, a political activist (called a “zealot”), a twin, a pair of brothers, and others. They traveled with Jesus as he preached. After Jesus died, they taught others about him.

18 This is recorded in Matthew 26-28, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-24 and John 18-21.

19 This Hebrew sacrificial system will be discussed in fuller detail in the following chapter.

20 See John 14:12-14.

21 See Matthew 12:40, 16:21, 17:22, 23, Mark 8:31, Luke 9:22, 44, 18:31-33 and John 12:23-33.

22 Robert T. Boyd, World’s Bible Handbook (Grand Rapids, Michigan: World Publishing, 1991) 371.

23 For an account of the episode in Hebrew history to which Jesus is referring, see Numbers 21:4-8.

24 See Romans 3:24-25, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:3-5 and 2:24.

25 See Mark 4:11.

26 Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me

and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

27 Melchizedek was an Old Testament priest to whom Abraham—the father of the Jewish nation—paid homage. Melchizedek is described as “priest of God Most High” (Genesis 14:18).

28 While Moses was away, a critical problem of idolatry came among the children of Israel, who remained down on the Plain. The tribe of Levi showed itself to be definitely on the Lord’s side at that time (Exodus 32:25-28). (Levi was the tribe to which both Moses and Aaron belonged.) As a result of their taking sides with the Lord, the tribe of Levi (the Levites) was selected to take care of the Tabernacle of the Testimony (Exodus 38:21). As a whole, the Levites became responsible for “the service of the work of the Tent of Meeting”; the Tabernacle (Numbers 4:3). “I have taken the Levites from among the Israelites in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman. The Levites are mine” (Numbers 3:12). Aaron and his sons were ordained as priests to represent God to the people served in the tabernacle in offering sacrifice (Exodus 39:41).

29 W. Graham Scroggie, The Unfolding Drama of Redemption (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1998) 497.

30 Sins are of personal weakness as opposed to sins committed in defiant

rebellion against God.

31 Scroggie, 168.

32 See Exodus 16:34, 30:6 and Leviticus 16:13.

33 Boyd, 57-63.

34 Boyd, 57.

35 Further study has been done on the five kinds of offerings which were made on the Brazen Altar (Leviticus 10:1-7) and how they all pointed typically to Christ, the sum and fulfillment of them all (Hebrew 10:1-17). Jesus is considered the offering which God provided, by and through whom sinful man is forgiven and accepted in the Father's holy presence (John 1:29, 14:6).

36 Boyd, 60.

37 Two other gospel writers also record this event. See Mark 15:38 and Luke 23:45.

38 Zola Levitt, The Seven Feasts of Israel (Dallas: Zola Box, 1979) 1-2.

39 For example, Deuteronomy 5: 15, 6: 11,12, 8:2.

40 Max E. Anders, 30 Days to Understanding the Bible (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1988) 189.

41 Anders, 189.

42 Levitt, 2.

43 McDowell, 56.

Works Cited

- Addington, Gordon L. Discovering the Bible. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003.
- Anders, Max E. 30 Days to Understanding the Bible. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1988.
- Anderson, Christopher. Annals of the English Bible. London: William Pickering, 2003.
- Boyd, Robert T. World's Bible Handbook. Grand Rapids, Michigan: World Publishing, 1991.
- Bradley, Bill. Purified Seven Times: The Miracle of the English Bible. Pennsylvania: Revival Fires Publishing, 2000.
- Bruce, F. F. The Books and the Parchments. Westwood: Felming H. Revell Co., 1963.
- Connolly, W. Kenneth. The Bible, Its Translators and Their Sacrifices. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996.
- Fee, Gordon D. How to Read the Bible Book by Book. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2002.



Frye, Northrop. Words with Power: The Bible and Literature. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1990.

Fuller, Daniel P. The Unity of the Bible. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992.

Geisler, Norman L. Christian Apologetics. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1994.

Geisler, Norman L. and Nix, William E. A General Introduction to the Bible. Chicago: Moody Press, 1968.

Levitt, Zola. The Seven Feasts of Israel. Dallas: Zola Box, 1979.

Lightfoot, Neil R. How We Got the Bible. Grand Rapid, Michigan: Baker Books, 2003.

McDowell, Josh. A Ready Defense. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993.

Pink, Arthur W. The Divine Inspiration of the Bible. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996.

Scroggie, W. Graham. The Unfolding Drama of Redemption. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1998.

Strobel, Lee. The Case for Christ. Grand Rapid, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. Nashville: International Bible Society,

1973-1984.

White, James R. Scripture Alone: Exploring the Bible's Accuracy, Authority, and Authenticity. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House, 2004.

Yancey, Philip. The Jesus I Never Knew. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.

## 攻读硕士学位期间发表的论文和取得的科研成果

[1] 冯宇. 福克纳小说中的圣经原型对人性的探索. 哈尔滨学院学报. 2006 .

(5)

[2] 孙达丹, 冯宇. 《圣经》的连贯性阐释. 外国文学评论. 审稿中