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Dr. George Sweeting once estimated that “more than a fourth of the Bible is predictive prophecy...Both the Old and New Testaments are full of promises about the return of Jesus Christ. Over 1800 references appear in the O.T., and seventeen O.T. books give prominence to this theme. Of the 260 chapters in the N.T., there are more than 300 references to the Lord’s return—one out of every 30 verses. Twenty-three of the 27 N.T. books refer to this great event...For every prophecy on the first coming of Christ, there are 8 on Christ’s second coming.”

[Today in the Word, MBI, December, 1989, p. 40](#)

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Lesson #3
Of Needles and Threads
The Scarlet Thread of Christ

Focus Verse: Gen 3:15; Luke 24:25-27

Memory Verse

John 14:29 (NLT)

²⁹ I have told you these things before they happen so that you will believe when they do happen.

Does the New Testament support the prophecies of the Old Testament?

Is there a central theme to prophecy? Is it different in the New Testament from the theme of the Old Testament?

Is there a prime secondary theme?

John 20:31 (NIV)

³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Matthew 26:56 (NIV)

*⁵⁶ **But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.** Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.*

Luke 24:25-27 (NIV)

²⁵ He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Luke 24:44 (NIV)

⁴⁴ He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

While not all prophecies are about Messiah, a majority of the Old Testament prophecies are about the coming Christ. The first such prophecy is found in Genesis 3:15:

From now on, you and the woman will be enemies, and your offspring and her offspring will be enemies. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

It is important to remember that while not all prophecies are directly about Messiah, they are all about Jesus in the sense of God's sovereignty and control of events and the relationship of the nations to God.

The "scarlet thread" traces the coming Messiah through Abraham, Judah, and David. Consider:

1. His first Advent

The Fact: Gen. 3:15; Deut. 18:15; Psa. 89:20; Isa. 2:2; 28:16; 32:1; 35:4; 42:6; 49:1; 55:4; Ezek. 34:24; Dan. 2:44; Micah 4:1; Zech 3:8.

The Time: Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:17; Dan. 9:24; Mal. 3:1.

His Divinity: Psa. 2:7, 11; 45: 6-7, 11; 72:8; 102:24-27; 89:26-27; 110:1; Isa. 9:6; 25:9; 40:10; Jer. 23:6; Micah 5:2; Mal 8:1.

Human Generation: Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 21:12; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:14; Psa. 18:4-6; 50:22-23; 89:4, 29-30; 132:11; Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15.

2. His Forerunner

Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1; 4:5.

3. His Nativity and Early Years

The Fact: Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Jer 31:22

The Place: Num. 24:17, 19; Micah 5:2

Adoration by Magi: Psalm 72:10, 15; Isa. 60:3, 6

Descent into Egypt: Hosea 11:1

Massacre of Innocents: Jer 31:15

4. His Mission and Office

Mission: Gen. 12:3; 49:10; Num. 24:19; Deut. 19:18; Psa. 21:1; Isa. 59:20; Jer. 33:16

Priest Like Melchizedek: Psalm 110:4

Prophet Like Moses: Deut. 18:15

Conversion of Gentiles: Isa. 11:10; Deut. 32:43; Psa. 18:49; 19:4; 117:1; Isa. 42:1; 45:23; 49:6; Hosea 1:10; 2:23; Joel 2:32.

Ministry in Galilee: Isa. 9:1-2

Miracles: Isa. 35:5-6; 42:7; 53:4

Spiritual Graces: Psa. 45:7; Isa. 11:2; 42:1; 53:9; 61:1-2

Preaching: Psa. 2:7; 78:2; Isa. 2:3; 61:1; Micah 4:2

Purification of Temple: Psa. 69:9

5. His Purpose

Rejection by Jews and Gentiles: Psa. 2:1; 22:12; 41:5; 56:5; 69:8; 118:22-23; Isa. 6:9-10; 8:14; 29:13; 53:1; 65:2

Persecution: Psa. 22:6; 35:7, 12; 56:5; 71:10; 109:2; Isa. 49:7; 53:3

Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem: Psa. 8:2; 118:25-26; Zech. 9:9

Betrayal by Own Friend: Psa. 41:9; 55:13; Zech 13:6

Betrayal for Thirty Pieces: Zech. 11:12

Betrayer's Death: Psa. 55:15, 23; 109:17

Purchase of Potter's Field: Zech 11:13

Desertion by Disciples: Zech 13:7

False Accusation: Psa. 27:12; 35:11; 109:2; Psa. 2:1-2

Silence Under Accusation: Psa. 38:13; Isa. 53:7

Mocking: Psalm 22:7-8, 16; 109:25

Insult, Buffeting, Spitting, Scourging: Psa. 35:15-, 21; Isa. 50:6

Patience Under Suffering: Isa. 53:7-9

Crucifixion: Psa. 22:14, 17

Offer of Gall and Vinegar: Psa. 69:21

Prayer for Enemies: Psa. 109:4

Cries Upon the Cross: Psa. 22:1; 31:5

Death in Prime of Life: Psa. 89:45; 102:24

Death with Malefactors: Isaiah 53:9, 12

Death Attested by Convulsions of Nature: Amos 5:20; Zech 14:4-6

Casting Lots for Vesture: Psa. 22:18

Bones not to be Broken: Psa. 34:20

Piercing: Psa. 22:16; Zech 12:10; 13:6

Voluntary Death: Psa. 40:6-8

Vicarious Suffering: Isa. 53:4-6, 12; Dan 9:26

Burial with the Rich: Isa. 53:9

6. His Resurrection

Psalm 16:8-10; 30:3; 41:10; 118:17; Hosea 6:2

7. His Ascension

Psalm 16:11; 24:7; 68:18; 110:1; 118:19

8. His Second Advent

Psalm 50:3-6; Isa. 9:6-7; 66:18; Dan 7:13-14; Zech. 12:10; 14:4-8.

Dominion Universal and Everlasting: 1 Chron. 17:11-14; Psa. 72:8; Isa. 9:7; Dan 7:14; Psa. 2:6-8; 8:6; 110:1-3; 45:6-7

What is a biblical mystery?

What is the relationship between the Kingdom, Jesus, and the Church?

The Gospels are the offering of the Messiah to Israel. (Luke 1:31-33; Matt 4:17)

The nation of Israel rejects Jesus as Messiah. (Matt 12)

Jesus then turns to the Gentiles with the formation of the church. (Matt 16:15-19)

As an aside, this presents the platform for the conclusion that the church is not Israel:

Contrast: Matt 21:43; Acts 3:12; 4:8; 21:28; Rom 7:6; 10:1; 11:1-25; 1 Cor 10:32; Gal 3:28; 6:15-16

This present "age" is a mystery (Matt 13:11; Rom 16:25-26; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:9; 3:3-9; Col 1:24-27).

A "mystery" in Scripture is a fact not revealed in the Old Testament, but now revealed in the New Testament.

Matthew 13 presents the various aspects of the mystery of God's Kingdom:

- Proclamation of the kingdom, parable of the sower (13:3-9, 18-23)
- False imitation in the kingdom, parable of the wheat and the tares (13:24-30, 36-43)
- Visible extension of the kingdom, parable of the mustard seed (13:31, 32)
- Corruption in the kingdom, parable of the leaven (13:33)
- The hidden treasure represents the Jewish nation (13:44)

- The pearl can represent the Jewish remnant during the tribulation (13:45-46)
- The parable of the dragnet represents the judgment of the nations at the end of the tribulation (13:47-50)

The letters to the seven Churches (Rev 2, 3) *may* be viewed as paralleling this sequence, but one needs to be careful as to how far this parallel is carried. These letters do not provide a progressive picture of the church in history. All of these churches existed at the same time in history. They picture the spiritual state of churches of all ages, although one type may be more prominent at any given point in time.

The mystery form of the kingdom is NOT the church, since the kingdom relates to Israel.

The millennial kingdom lies in the future and provides the setting on earth of Jesus' rule after His Second Coming.

After today's lesson, have you changed your mind as to the status of Israel's kingdom today?

Or, what will be the state of Israel in the future?
