



# THE GIFT PROMISED: *Hope in the Messiah*

The Gift of Jesus the Messiah, though in many ways surprising, did not appear out of nowhere. He was the fulfillment of a plan—God’s plan—to restore the perfection that had been lost when people decided to disobey God’s instructions for life. God made a good and beautiful world filled with good and beautiful creatures. But the people God put in this world rejected the plan God had for them, breaking their relationship with God.

But God, in his love, set out to re-establish his relationship with the lost human race. The Old Testament of the Bible records the story of how God chose Abraham and his descendants, the nation of Israel, to set the stage for the coming of his greatest gift—Jesus the Messiah—our hope. In the following Old Testament passages, watch as God’s promised restoration unfolds.

## **Sin and Its Curse**

GENESIS 3:14-19

*This account in Genesis, the book of beginnings, records the consequences Adam and Eve suffered for disobeying God—consequences we still suffer today. Their disobedience led to our separation from God, the one who made us, and to our alienation from the rest of God’s once-perfect creation. It led to intense pain in childbirth, to*

*difficult toil in working the soil, and ultimately to death. But even as God leveled his curses against his broken creation, we are told that the woman's offspring would someday crush the serpent's head. This message foreshadows the promises made more explicit in later Scriptures of a Messiah or deliverer who would someday save us from the destructive power of sin. From the beginning of history, God promised a great gift—the birth of a child who would overcome sin and crush Satan, the deceiver.*

So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you will be punished. You are singled out from all the domestic and wild animals of the whole earth to be cursed. You will grovel in the dust as long as you live, crawling along on your belly. <sup>15</sup>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. "

<sup>16</sup>Then he said to the woman, "You will bear children with intense pain and suffering. And though your desire will be for your husband,\* he will be your master. "

<sup>17</sup>And to Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse on the ground. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. <sup>18</sup>It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. <sup>19</sup>All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return. "

3:16 Or *And though you may desire to control your husband.*

## **The Promise to Abraham**

GENESIS 22:15-18

*Though the book of Genesis records how a good world was broken by sin, it doesn't leave us in despair. It tells us how God chose an obedient man named Abraham to father a special nation through whom the entire world would be blessed. God gave Abraham a son named Isaac, who was born to him and Sarah in their old age. It was through Isaac that Abraham expected God's promises of blessing to be fulfilled. But when God asked Abraham to offer his son back to him, God returned his son with this amazing promise. God would give Abraham many descendants through whom the entire world would be blessed. This promise was ultimately fulfilled in the gift of Jesus the Messiah, who was among Abraham's descendants.*

Then the angel of the LORD called again to Abraham from heaven, <sup>16</sup>“This is what the LORD says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your beloved son, I swear by my own self that <sup>17</sup>I will bless you richly. I will multiply your descendants into countless millions, like the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. They will conquer their enemies, <sup>18</sup>and through your descendants,\* all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.”

## **The Promise to David**

2 SAMUEL 7:8-16

*One of Abraham's descendants was David, and God continued his promise of blessing and restoration through David's family. God promised that David's royal line would carry on forever, a promise eventually realized in 22:18 Hebrew seed.*

*the birth of Jesus the Messiah. David's earthly dynasty of kings ended four centuries after his reign, but Jesus, one of David's direct descendants, was the ultimate fulfillment of that promise (Luke 1:30-33; Acts 2:22-36). Jesus will reign for eternity—already in his spiritual kingdom and, after his return, in the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21).*

“Now go [Nathan] and say to my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I chose you to lead my people Israel when you were just a shepherd boy, tending your sheep out in the pasture. <sup>9</sup>I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies. Now I will make your name famous throughout the earth! <sup>10</sup>And I have provided a permanent homeland for my people Israel, a secure place where they will

never be disturbed. It will be their own land where wicked nations won't oppress them as they did in the past, <sup>11</sup>from the time I appointed judges to rule my people. And I will keep you safe from all your enemies.

“‘And now the LORD declares that he will build a house for you—a dynasty of kings! <sup>12</sup>For when you die, I will raise up one of your descendants, and I will make his kingdom strong. <sup>13</sup>He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup>I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will use other nations to punish him. <sup>15</sup>But my unfailing love will not be taken from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed before you. <sup>16</sup>Your dynasty and your kingdom will continue for all time before me, and your throne will be secure forever.’”



## **Immanuel—God Is with Us!**

ISAIAH 7:10-16

*The prophet Isaiah spoke this message to Ahaz, one of King David's descendants, centuries before the birth of Jesus. Matthew, the Gospel writer, quoted Isaiah 7:14 to show that this prophecy was fulfilled through the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:23), who had a son named Jesus. This child was truly Immanuel, meaning, "God is with us. " When Jesus Christ was born, God came to live among people as a human, present with us as never before.*

Not long after this, the LORD sent this message to King Ahaz: <sup>11</sup>"Ask me for a sign, Ahaz, to prove that I will crush your enemies as I have promised. Ask for anything you like, and make it as difficult as you want."

<sup>12</sup>But the king refused. "No," he

said, “I wouldn’t test the LORD like that.”

<sup>13</sup>Then Isaiah said, “Listen well, you royal family of David! You aren’t satisfied to exhaust my patience. You exhaust the patience of God as well!

<sup>14</sup>All right then, the Lord himself will choose the sign. Look! The virgin\* will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel— ‘God is with us.’ <sup>15</sup>By the time this child is old enough to eat curds and honey, he will know enough to choose what is right and reject what is wrong. <sup>16</sup>But before he knows right from wrong, the two kings you fear so much—the kings of Israel and Aram—will both be dead.

## **Hope in the Coming Messiah**

ISAIAH 9:1-2, 6-7

*The prophet Isaiah spoke of a child who would become Israel’s deliverer and*

7:14 Or *young woman*.

ruler (9:6). Matthew quoted these verses in describing the ministry of Jesus (Matthew 4:15-16). The territories of Zebulun and Naphtali represented the northern kingdom but were also the territories around Galilee where Jesus grew up and often ministered. That is why the people would see "a great light." In a time of great darkness, God sent a light who shined on everyone living in the shadow of death. He is both "Wonderful Counselor" and "Mighty God," born to establish his eternal Kingdom and to deliver all people from their slavery to sin.

Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will soon be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be

filled with glory. <sup>2</sup>The people who walk in darkness will see a great light—a light that will shine on all who live in the land where death casts its shadow.

\* \* \*

<sup>6</sup>For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. And the government will rest on his shoulders. These will be his royal titles: Wonderful Counselor,\* Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>His ever expanding, peaceful government will never end. He will rule forever with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David. The passionate commitment of the LORD Almighty will guarantee this!

## **A Ruler from Bethlehem**

MICAH 5:2-5a

*Centuries before Jesus' birth, the prophet Micah predicted the coming of an eternal ruler, "whose origins are*  
9:6 Or *Wonderful, Counselor.*

*from the distant past." The prophet also predicted that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of this ruler. This promised eternal King, a descendant of King David, did come to live as a man. Although he was eternal, Jesus Christ entered human history as a baby born in the town of Bethlehem. And though he died on a Roman cross, he rose from the dead to his present heavenly reign, and he will rule throughout eternity.*

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village in Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past. <sup>3</sup>The people of Israel will be abandoned to their enemies until the time when the woman in labor gives birth to her son. Then at last his fellow countrymen will return from exile to their own land. <sup>4</sup>And he will stand

to lead his flock with the LORD's strength, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. Then his people will live there undisturbed, for he will be highly honored all around the world. <sup>5</sup>And he will be the source of our peace.

## **The Suffering Servant**

ISAIAH 53:1-12

*This chapter from Isaiah expands on the promises of the Messiah, who would suffer for the sins of all people. Such a prophecy, given long before Jesus' birth, is astounding! Who would have believed that God would choose to save the world through a humble, suffering servant rather than a glorious king? The idea is contrary to human pride and worldly ways. But God often works in ways we don't expect. It was revealed in this passage that the Messiah's strength would be*

*shown in humility, and Jesus Christ lived this out to perfection.*

Who has believed our message? To whom will the LORD reveal his saving power? <sup>2</sup>My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, sprouting from a root in dry and sterile ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.

<sup>3</sup>He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way when he went by. He was despised, and we did not care.

<sup>4</sup>Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows\* that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God for his own sins! <sup>5</sup>But he was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten

53:4 Or *Yet it was our sicknesses he carried; it was our diseases.*

that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed! <sup>6</sup>All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the guilt and sins of us all.

<sup>7</sup>He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.

<sup>8</sup>From prison and trial they led him away to his death. But who among the people realized that he was dying for their sins—that he was suffering their punishment? <sup>9</sup>He had done no wrong, and he never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.

<sup>10</sup>But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and fill him with grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have a multitude of chil-



dren, many heirs. He will enjoy a long life, and the LORD's plan will prosper in his hands. <sup>11</sup>When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of what he has experienced, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins. <sup>12</sup>I will give him the honors of one who is mighty and great, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among those who were sinners. He bore the sins of many and interceded for sinners.

## **Good News for the Oppressed**

ISAIAH 61:1-9

*Long after the prophet Isaiah recorded this message, Jesus read it to demonstrate that he was the promised Messiah. After reading the first two verses, Jesus stopped and said, "This Scripture has come true today before your very eyes!"*

*(Luke 4:21). The people had witnessed Jesus' ministry to the poor and oppressed, a ministry that had been predicted centuries earlier! Through his acts of mercy, Jesus was demonstrating his power over sin and its painful consequences. These were blessings of God's Kingdom and the promised Messiah's rule, blessings that we can partake of today by making Jesus the Lord of our life.*

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, because the LORD has appointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to announce that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. \* <sup>2</sup>He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the LORD's favor has come,\* and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies. <sup>3</sup>To all who mourn in

61:1 Greek version reads *and the blind will see.* 61:2 Or to *proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD*

Israel, \* he will give beauty for ashes, joy instead of mourning, praise instead of despair. For the LORD has planted them like strong and graceful oaks for his own glory.

<sup>4</sup>They will rebuild the ancient ruins, repairing cities long ago destroyed. They will revive them, though they have been empty for many generations. <sup>5</sup>Foreigners will be your servants. They will feed your flocks and plow your fields and tend your vineyards. <sup>6</sup>You will be called priests of the LORD, ministers of our God. You will be fed with the treasures of the nations and will boast in their riches. <sup>7</sup>Instead of shame and dishonor, you will inherit a double portion of prosperity and everlasting joy.

<sup>8</sup>"For I, the LORD, love justice. I hate robbery and wrongdoing. I will faithfully reward my people for their  
61:3 Hebrew *in Zion*.

suffering and make an everlasting covenant with them. <sup>9</sup>Their descendants will be known and honored among the nations. Everyone will realize that they are a people the LORD has blessed. ”