



The Messiah Has Come

1

Key Theme

- God is faithful to His promises.

Key Passages

- Luke 2:21–35; John 1:40–42; Hebrews 1

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Connect the coming of the Messiah in the Old Testament with His arrival in the New Testament.
- Describe Simeon's response to the arrival of the Messiah.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Write on the board, "Did God reveal anything during the 400 'silent years'?"

Have students work on memorizing the memory verse with a partner.



Studying God's Word

We first read about the Savior and God's plan to redeem a people for Himself in Genesis 3. He was foretold by the prophets throughout the history of the Old Testament. And the people waited 4,000 years for His arrival. God's people longed for their Messiah to come. And finally, in God's appointed time, He was born. The people rejoiced, and the writers of the New Testament confirmed that Jesus was the Savior the prophets of old had told of.

Study the Prepare to Share section.

Go Before the Throne.



Activity: Connecting the Testaments

Students will take a closer look at the formatting of their Bibles, noting the handling of Old Testament quotes in the New Testament.

Student Guides

Bibles with cross-references or study notes

Pencils



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages listed above along with this background.

Through the prophet Amos, God had declared to His people, “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God, “that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11). This judgment came about during the 400 years of silence that followed the prophet Malachi. There were no prophetic words from God to the people.

God had closed the Old Testament by confirming His promise to His people through His prophet Malachi that one day the Messiah—the Messenger of the Covenant—would come (Malachi 3:1). For a remnant of the Jews who understood the message of the prophets, such as Simeon (Luke 2:25–32), this was a message of hope as they waited expectantly for the Savior who would deliver them from their sins. It seems that the majority, however, were looking for national deliverance and restoration, as is seen by the question of some of Jesus’s own disciples in Acts 1:6: “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

God’s people had already been waiting a very long time for this promise of the Messiah to become reality. In fact, God first mentioned this good news nearly 4,000 years earlier in the Garden of Eden when the serpent was told that a Seed of Eve would bruise his head (Genesis 3:15). We hear of it again when the Lord promised that Abraham’s descendants would outnumber the stars in the sky and that in his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 22:17–18). The covenant continued with Abraham’s son Isaac (Genesis 26:4). Then it passed to Isaac’s son Jacob when God said to him that a company of nations would proceed from him, and He assured him of the land that He had given Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 28:13). The promise continued on through the tribe of Judah to David (Genesis 49:8; Revelation 5:5). God promised David a throne that would last forever (2 Samuel 7:16). And from the line of David, Jesus, the only eternal King, would enter the world as a helpless babe to one day sit on the throne of David (Luke 1:32–33).

Shadows and pictures of the Messiah are woven throughout Old Testament history. This history, these accounts, and the glimpses of God’s plan of redemption help to prepare us for the fuller truth revealed in

the New Testament—the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, the promised one who is the Light of the world.

The New Testament letter to the Hebrews triumphantly proclaims Jesus Christ as the revelation of what was anticipated by the prophets of old. The writer of Hebrews, in the first two verses, expressed that God, who spoke in times past by the prophets, has now spoken through His Son. Then, the Son is richly described as the heir of all things, the one through whom God created the universe, and the express image of God, upholding all things by the word of His power and seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having purged our sins (Hebrews 1:2–3).

Another account in the New Testament that reveals Jesus as the promised Messiah is in the book of Luke. Simeon was a devout man in Jerusalem, “waiting for the Consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25). The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die before he witnessed the Lord’s Christ. When Jesus was brought into the Temple as a baby to be dedicated to the Lord, Simeon rejoiced that the Lord had, in Jesus, revealed to him the salvation promised for thousands of years (Luke 2:30–31). Simeon’s response to Mary and the baby was based on his knowledge of the Old Testament. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he confirmed that this child was destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel. His mother would be grieved because of Him, and the thoughts of many hearts would be revealed by their response to Him (Luke 2:34–35). Simeon knew this was the Christ, and he believed.

Simeon’s reaction to the Christ shows the joy of one who had been faithful to God, had studied the Scriptures of old, and had waited for the revealing of God’s plan. He was now overjoyed at seeing the promise of salvation through the Messiah in the flesh and was content to die, knowing that his own salvation would be accomplished through this precious little child.

Simeon grasped the fullness and richness of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, through the revelation of the Holy Spirit and the Old Testament Scriptures. Like Simeon, our study of the Old Testament and the promises of God to redeem His people coupled with the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit will allow us a richer delight in Jesus Christ—His life, His death, and His Resurrection. Study and meditation on the Old Testament can guide us to a more complete joy in the hope, comfort, peace, grace, and forgiveness we find throughout the pages of the New Testament in the life of our Savior.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Without the history of the Old Testament, the New Testament narratives are hard to understand. If Jesus just showed up and died on a cross, no one would understand why He came. God was pleased to reveal His plan, but it was slowly revealed over thousands of years with increasing clarity (Romans 3:2). Why did God take so long to bring the Savior into the world? Why did God allow 400 years to pass between Malachi and Matthew? We can only answer these questions by trusting that God did as He pleased (Psalm 115:3) in His perfect timing—the “fullness of the time” described by Paul in Galatians 4:4.

Many have suggested that the “fullness of the time” described by Paul is tied, in some part, to the rise of the Roman Empire. Because of the common use of the Greek language and the roads and trade routes that connected the remotest regions of the empire, the message of reconciliation could spread widely and quickly. Combine that with the relative peace that accompanied the period around the birth of Christ (the *pax Romana*), and you have a culture that could effectively be reached with news that the Messiah had finally come.

As we turn from the Old Testament to the New Testament, the manuscript language moves from Hebrew to Greek. In the Hebrew Old Testament text, we find Jesus described as *meshiyach*, or Messiah. The basic meaning of Messiah is “anointed one” and refers to priests and others who were set apart for service to God through an anointing. In the New Testament we see that the Greek word used to describe Jesus is *christos*, or Christ. This Greek word also means “anointed” and is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *mashiach*, or Messiah. Some misunderstand the title of Christ given to Jesus in the New Testament to be part of His name. It is not His name, but proclaims His position as the anointed one of God.

Jesus confirmed His position for us and for the Jews of Nazareth when He read in the synagogue from the book of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor . . .” (Luke 4:18). The Samaritan woman at the well confirmed her knowledge of the Messiah, who is called Christ (John 4:25) as did Andrew who proclaimed, “We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated, the Christ)” (John 1:41). These references to Jesus—the Messiah, the Christ—found through all of

Scripture confirm the truth of who Jesus was and why He came. Confirmation of this sort builds the believer’s confidence in the living Word of God.

Your own confidence will increase as you grow in studying the Bible. Passage cross-references can be a tremendous help as you read and study God’s Word. There are almost 300 references to the Old Testament in the New Testament. In most Bibles, a quotation from the Old Testament will be set in italics and often set apart as a block quote. The publisher of your particular Bible, no doubt, has a unique format. It would be worth your while to become familiar with it. It is usually explained in the introduction or preface.

Using the Bible this background was written from, Old Testament quotations can be found in Luke 4:10 and 4:18–19. These verses are set in quotes and block text, setting them apart from the rest of the text. This tells us that these verses are quoted from the Old Testament. These verses are accompanied by a small number or letter that refers to a footnote identifying the passage(s) quoted. Your personal study of Scripture will be richer if you become familiar with the study helps your Bible has included for you.

The Bible is the inerrant, infallible, and living Word of God. It is worthy of serious study. It tells of the Savior, who was born of a woman in the fullness of time. As we drink deeply from the record we have of His existence from eternity past, His life on earth, and the hope we have of joining Him in eternal glory, we will be filled with awe, wonder, and anticipation for what is in store for us as believers.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Precious Lord, Messiah, I cannot help but marvel at your sovereignty and faithfulness as I study your Word for this lesson. I celebrate the miracle of my Savior, God, born to a virgin, in the fullness of time. I pause to drink deeply from your Word which is the record of your existence from eternity past, your life on earth, and the hope of eternal life with you. I rejoice with Simeon at the depth and breadth of your love for me—for us—that you would be my salvation and bring your revelation to all people. Help me teach these same truths to my students this week. To you be all the glory!



Review

This lesson begins a transition from our study of the Old Testament to the study of the New Testament. We have talked about the first 4,000 years of history from creation. We used the 7 C's of History as a big-picture framework to talk about that history.

? Who can give us a summary of those C's that cover the Old Testament? *Creation, Corruption, Catastrophe, Confusion.*

After those four, we covered a lot of territory between Genesis 11 and the end of Malachi, bringing us to the last three C's we will discuss in the New Testament: **Christ** came to die on the **Cross**, and we look forward to His Second Coming and the **Consummation** of all things. *Refer to the Seven C's of History poster.*

Today's lesson is an introductory look at the New Testament and a celebration of

the arrival of the Messiah. We have been talking about Jesus in the shadows of the pages of the Old Testament. Now we get to see Him in the flesh, walking among us, and offering Himself for us. The scarlet thread of Christ that we saw woven through the Old Testament draws its color from the blood of Christ shed for us on the Cross. *Refer to the Scarlet Thread poster.*

As we left the book of Malachi, we knew that the Messiah was coming and that there would be another who would announce His ministry. Though only one page separates them in our Bibles, remember that we are moving about 400 years into the future as we move from Malachi to Matthew. Our study today will be a mix of celebration and practical application as we introduce the New Testament.



➤ Write on the board, "Did God reveal anything during the 400'silent years'?"



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

We left the book of Malachi looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. During this period of time, there were Jews recording history, but nothing was recorded through any prophets. Though we have no written records of revelation from God during this period, the text we are about to look at has an interesting nugget in it. Let's read Luke 2:21-35 together. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

Luke 2:21-35

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? Where have we entered the storyline of redemptive history? *This passage begins eight days after the birth of Jesus and follows from there to His presentation in the Temple.*
- ? Who are the main characters in this narrative? *Joseph, Mary, Jesus, and Simeon.*

- ? **What two Jewish practices are mentioned in this passage?** *The circumcision of a male on the eighth day and the presentation of the firstborn male at the Temple.*
- ? **What phrase is used twice to refer back to the practices in the Temple?** *"said/written in the law of the Lord" in verses 22 and 24.*
- ? **What does Luke do to help his readers understand these practices?** *He quotes from the Old Testament to explain them. This is important because he is writing to Theophilus, a Greek who may be unfamiliar with these Jewish customs.*
- ? **Whom do Mary and Joseph encounter in the Temple?** *Simeon.*
- ? **How is Simeon described?** *He was a just and devout man, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.*
- ? **What was Simeon waiting for?** *He was waiting for the Consolation of Israel, also referred to as the Christ.*
- ? **How did he know to wait for the Christ?** *He was told by the Spirit that he would not die until the Lord's Christ had come. He was waiting for the Seed promised to Eve and Abraham.*
- ? **How did Simeon know the infant in the arms of this couple was the Christ?** *Joseph and Mary were probably not the only couple at the Temple that day, so it was by the Holy Spirit's guidance that Simeon knew Jesus was the Christ.*
- ? **What did Simeon do with the infant?** *He took the child in his arms and blessed God.*
- ? **How did Simeon describe the child in his blessing?** *He referred to the child as salvation for all peoples, a light to the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel.*
- ? **How did Joseph and Mary respond to Simeon's blessing?** *They marveled at what he said.*
- ? **When Simeon turned to bless Joseph and Mary, what future prophecy was given about Jesus?** *The child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that is spoken against (rejected).*
- ? **What specific prophecy was spoken about Mary?** *Simeon told her a sword would pierce her soul.*
- ? **What is the meaning behind this phrase?** *It is most likely pointing to the grief she will face at the foot of the cross. John 19:25 places her there, though it doesn't specifically tell us about her grief.*

Discover the Truth

Simeon glorified God and blessed Him for bringing the Messiah to His people. I doubt Simeon was whispering in their ears as he proclaimed these glorious truths. I imagine he was jubilantly exalting God and reveling in the moment for which he had waited such a long time. Simeon was holding his Messiah in his hands!

- ? **What attribute of God is demonstrated in the arrival of the Messiah?** *Faithful. God kept His promise to bring the Messiah.*

The infant in the arms of the couple is referred to in several different ways in this passage: Jesus, the Consolation of Israel, the Lord's Christ,

FAITHFUL

John 1:40–42

God’s salvation, a light to the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel. But all of these have the same basic meaning—Savior. We take “Messiah” from the Hebrew word *mashiyach* which was transliterated into the Greek as *messias*. It means “anointed one” in the Hebrew and is used only twice in the New Testament. *The NASB does use the English word in Matthew 1:1, 1:16, 1:17, 2:4, but the Greek word in these verses is christos, not messias.*

Open up to John 1:40 and let’s read the words of Andrew, speaking to his brother about Jesus. *Read John 1:40–42.*

- ? What title does Andrew apply to Jesus? *The Messiah.*
- ? What explanation is also given by John in the comment in the parentheses? *He translated the Hebrew into Greek; the Messiah is the Christ.*

The arrival of this Messiah, the Christ, was expected by the Jews. Passages like Daniel 9:25–26 and Isaiah 25:9 created this expectation. The coming of the Messiah, the Christ, was clear from the Old Testament, but the exact details of His coming were not. We will look at more of the details surrounding John the Baptist in a few weeks, but there were certainly many clear indicators from the records of the prophets.

Simeon, however, had a direct revelation from God about the coming of the Christ. He knew that he would not die until his Savior arrived. But today was the day where he found joy in the fulfillment of God’s promise to him. We get to participate in Simeon’s joy as we read the text and then realize that his Savior is also our Savior. Simeon held Christ in his hands, and we can rejoice with him in the light that went out to the Gentiles to bring us salvation, as well as the Israelites.





Connecting the Testaments

MATERIALS

- Student Guides
- Pencils
- Bibles with cross-references or study notes

INSTRUCTIONS

You will be helping the students understand how their Bibles reference the Old Testament in the New Testament. Familiarize yourself with your own Bible's study notes and cross-references as an example and have several copies of Bibles with cross-references available for students who may have a plain text Bible.

Some of you have been using your Bibles for decades, and some of you for only a short time. Some of you have Bibles that have lots of tools built into them, and you may not even know they are there. We are going to look at some of those tools today in the light of our transition to the New Testament.

Open your Bible back up to Luke 2:22–24. I'll bet that there are some distinctions in the text you are looking at.

- ? **What differences do you notice?** *There are likely italics and quote marks around the text quoted from the Old Testament and possibly some way of noting where the passage is quoted from.*

In your Student Guide, you will find an activity called Connecting the Testaments. I would like you to work in small groups to examine the first chapter of Hebrews so that you can become familiar with your

own Bible's formatting when it comes to Old Testament quotes. After that, we will look at the meaning of that passage, as well.

Work around the room helping the students identify the cross-references and other formatting features of their Bibles. Encourage those who are familiar with these notes in their own Bibles to explain them to those who are not. If some students have electronic Bibles on a tablet or phone, the references are often hyperlinked to jump directly to the reference or pull it up in a smaller window.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

I trust you have seen the helpfulness of understanding how to use the cross-reference tools that are found in your Bible. It may be helpful for you to go to the introduction to your Bible and read the notes from the translators or publisher about how your Bible is organized.

- ? **What passages were quoted in Hebrews 1:5?** *Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14.*
- ? **Which books of the Old Testament does the writer of Hebrews quote from in chapter 1?** *Psalms (vv. 5, 7, 8, 10–12, 13), 2 Samuel (v.5), Deuteronomy (v. 6).*

It is important for you to know how to use the tools in your Bible to get the most out of your study. As we continue studying through the New Testament, we will continue to see how the writers of the New Testament refer to and rely on the truths in the Old Testament.



READ THE WORD

To wrap up the teaching today, let's look at Hebrews 1, which you have already read through, and examine how the text speaks of the Messiah.

Have someone read the passage aloud.

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? **How did God speak to people in the past?** *He spoke at various times and in various ways through the prophets.*
- ? **What is this a reference to?** *The record of the prophets in the Old Testament is in view.*
- ? **How has God spoken since then?** *He has spoken through His Son.*
- ? **How is the Son described?** *Heir of all things, Creator of the worlds, the brightness of God's glory, the express image of God's person, upholding all things by His powerful word.*
- ? **What has the Son accomplished to allow Him to sit at the right hand of God?** *He has purged our sins.*
- ? **What comparison is made between the Son and the angels?** *The Son is better than the angels, being the very Son of God and not just a created being.*
- ? **How does the writer prove this point in verses 6 and 7?** *The angels are told to worship the Son while their role is as ministers.*
- ? **How does verse 10 connect to verse 2?** *Jesus is described as the Creator in both of these passages. The writer is clarifying and affirming a truth that was in the Old Testament, but was not as clearly understood.*
- ? **What key truth can we conclude about Jesus from this chapter?** *Jesus is God and is exalted above all His creation.*

Discover the Truth

Jesus is better! That is a major theme of the book of Hebrews. The writer used passages from the Old Testament that were clearly speaking of the Messiah as the Creator God. God was proclaiming these truths through the words of the prophets for hundreds of years. But the Son of God came in the flesh and revealed truth to us in a way that it had not been known to that point.

We are the recipients of many blessings because of what Jesus has revealed to us. Right now, He is sitting at the right hand of God waiting for the time when He returns to judge the world in righteousness. We should be grateful to God for living in these times when we have the revelation of God's truth in Jesus Christ here in our hands.





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

As we turn our attention to the New Testament, we need to be mindful of all of those things we have learned through our study of the Old Testament. From the fuzzy promise of a Savior in Genesis 3 to the prophecy of John the Baptist in Malachi, God was pointing forward to the coming of the Messiah. Here we are in our study, and we should be rejoicing in our ability to look into these truths.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? **As you think about the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament, how does the thread of redemption help you understand the purpose of each?** *The New Testament only makes sense with the background of the Old Testament. Jesus brings forgiveness of sins, but we learn about the origin of sin in Genesis. In the New Testament we find Israel, the Temple, and John the Baptist. The explanation for each of these things comes from the Old Testament.*
- ? **How can you use the Seven C's of History to help others see the connections between the Old and New Testaments?** *The Seven C's offer a big picture framework for understanding the past, present, and future. This can be a helpful tool to think about biblical history. For example, the original perfect Creation will one day be restored in the Consummation of all things. The Corruption that was brought by the first Adam is reversed in the death of the Last Adam on the Cross. Discuss other aspects the students identify.*
- ? **What is one key aspect of the account of Simeon's blessing of the infant Jesus you can use to encourage yourself or others this week?** *Discuss various aspects including: Simeon was trusting in God's promises; Simeon trusted in God to bring salvation through the Messiah; God has sent His salvation in Jesus, and we can rest in that truth.*
- ? **How might you use the cross-references and Old Testament quotes found in your Bible to enhance your personal study of the Bible?** *Discuss various answers.*
- ? **How can you use what you have learned about the connections between the Old and New Testaments to teach or encourage someone else in your life?** *Discuss various answers, directing students to training their children or others they know who may not understand many of these connections or the tools available in various study Bibles.*





MEMORY VERSE

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Praise God for being faithful to always keep His promises in His perfect time.
- Thank God for giving us the whole Bible—the Old Testament and the New Testament—which is a treasure that teaches about Him.
- Ask God to help us study the Scriptures, trust in His promises, and apply His truth to our lives.