



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

BIBLE FOUNDATIONS

Old Testament Pictures of God's Plan of Redemption

How the Old Testament Prepares the Way for Jesus

The Short Answer

Jesus does not suddenly appear in a story that had nothing to do with Him. From Genesis onward, the Old Testament progressively reveals God's plan to rescue sinful humanity and restore what sin has broken. The Old Testament contains promises about the coming Messiah, but it also contains people, events, institutions, sacrifices, covenants, and patterns that prepare readers to understand what Jesus would eventually accomplish. After humanity's fall into sin, God provides a covering. Noah and his family are rescued through judgment. Abraham is told that God will provide the sacrifice. At Passover, a lamb dies and God's people are delivered. Israel is brought out of slavery. God provides bread from heaven and water in the wilderness. A bronze serpent is lifted up so dying people can look and live. Animal sacrifices teach that sin brings death and that forgiveness requires atonement. A high priest enters the Most Holy Place with blood on the Day of Atonement. The tabernacle shows God's desire to dwell among His people. Ruth introduces the idea of a kinsman-redeemer. God promises David an enduring kingdom. Isaiah describes a Servant who suffers for the sins of others. Jeremiah promises a new covenant. Ezekiel speaks of cleansing, a new heart, and God's Spirit. Even Israel's return from exile shows that God's judgment does not have the final word. Not every Old Testament person or event should be treated as a secret prediction of Jesus. Some connections are explicit in the New Testament; others are strong patterns or useful analogies. Taken together, the Old Testament tells one remarkable story: Humanity needs redemption. God promises redemption. God provides redemption. And the story ultimately leads to Jesus Christ.

Genesis 3:15, 21 • Genesis 22:1-18 • Exodus 12 • Leviticus 16-17 • Numbers 21:4-9 • 2 Samuel 7:8-16 • Hebrews 5-10

Opening Memory Anchor

The Old Testament does not tell a different salvation story. It prepares the way for the Savior.



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PART ONE

BEGINNER GUIDE

1. WHAT DOES “REDEMPTION” MEAN?

To redeem means to rescue, release, or recover through the payment of a price or the action of a redeemer. The Bible uses redemption language in several settings. A person might be redeemed from slavery. Property might be redeemed. A family member might act to preserve another family member's inheritance. Most importantly, Scripture develops redemption into a major description of what God does for His people. God redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt. Read Exodus 6:6. The New Testament then uses redemption language to describe what Jesus accomplishes for sinners. Read Ephesians 1:7 and 1 Peter 1:18–19. Humanity is trapped by something far greater than political oppression. Sin separates people from God. Sin brings guilt. Sin produces corruption. And sin leads to death. Human beings cannot redeem themselves from that condition. God must provide the rescue.

Memory Anchor

Redemption is God's rescue of people who cannot rescue themselves.

2. DOES THE OLD TESTAMENT REALLY POINT TO JESUS?

Yes—but this needs to be understood carefully. After His resurrection, Jesus spoke with two disciples traveling to Emmaus. Luke says: “Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” Read Luke 24:13–35. Later Jesus told His disciples that everything written about Him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Read Luke 24:44–47. Jesus therefore teaches His followers to read the Old Testament as part of the story that leads to Him. But that does not mean every object, number, person, or event secretly symbolizes Jesus. Responsible Bible reading asks: Does the New Testament explicitly make the connection? Does the larger biblical storyline establish a strong pattern? Or is the proposed connection merely an interesting analogy?

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO OLD TESTAMENT PICTURES

EXPLICIT NEW TESTAMENT CONNECTION

The New Testament itself identifies the Old Testament connection. Example: Jesus compares His crucifixion with Moses lifting up the bronze serpent. This is the strongest category.

STRONG BIBLICAL PATTERN

Scripture develops a repeated theme that clearly contributes to the larger story fulfilled in Jesus. Example: God's promise of an enduring Davidic King.

POSSIBLE THEOLOGICAL ANALOGY

Something resembles an aspect of Jesus or the Gospel, but Scripture does not establish the connection clearly enough to call it certain. These observations may be helpful. They should not be presented as though Scripture explicitly teaches them.

Memory Anchor

Jesus is truly revealed throughout the Old Testament. That does not give readers permission to make every Old Testament detail symbolize Jesus.

3. WHERE DOES THE REDEMPTION STORY BEGIN?

The redemption story begins with a good creation that becomes broken by human sin. Read Genesis 1–3. God creates humanity in His image. Adam and Eve live in fellowship with God. But they rebel against Him. Sin enters the human story. Shame appears. Relationships fracture. Death enters the world. Humanity is driven from Eden. But even while announcing judgment, God gives hope. Read Genesis 3:15. God speaks of future conflict between the serpent and the woman's offspring. The serpent will strike His heel. But the serpent's head will ultimately be crushed. Christians have historically recognized this as the Bible's earliest glimpse of the coming victory over evil. The verse does not explain the entire Gospel. But the storyline has begun. The serpent will not win forever.

Memory Anchor

The Bible's redemption story begins immediately after humanity's rebellion.

4. PICTURE #1 — GOD PROVIDES A COVERING

After Adam and Eve sin, they recognize their nakedness and attempt to cover themselves with fig leaves. Read Genesis 3:7. Their own covering is inadequate. Later: “The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” — Genesis 3:21 God provides what they could not adequately provide for themselves. Some Christians see the death implied by the garments of skin as the first picture of substitutionary sacrifice. That is possible. But Genesis does not explicitly call this event a sacrifice or say that the animal died as an atonement for Adam and Eve. Therefore the strongest point should remain the one Scripture clearly shows: Human beings attempted to cover their shame. God Himself provided their covering. That pattern will become increasingly important as Scripture unfolds.

5. PICTURE #2 — NOAH AND THE ARK: RESCUE THROUGH JUDGMENT



Read Genesis 6–9. Human wickedness becomes widespread. God announces judgment through the flood. But God graciously provides a means of rescue. Noah does not invent his own escape plan. God tells Noah what He is going to do and provides instructions for the ark. Noah and his family pass safely through the judgment. The New Testament later refers to Noah and the flood when discussing judgment and salvation. Read 1 Peter 3:18–22 and 2 Peter 2:5. The flood story establishes a recurring biblical pattern: Sin brings judgment. God provides rescue. God preserves His people through judgment. The ark should not be turned into an elaborate allegory in which every piece of wood or measurement represents something about Jesus. The larger pattern is enough. God provides the way of rescue.

6. PICTURE #3 — ABRAHAM AND ISAAC: GOD WILL PROVIDE

Read Genesis 22:1–18. God tests Abraham by telling him to offer Isaac. This is especially shocking because Isaac is the son through whom God's covenant promises are to continue. As Abraham and Isaac travel toward the mountain, Isaac asks: "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answers: "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering." — Genesis 22:7–8 At the decisive moment, God stops Abraham. Isaac does not die. A ram is provided instead. The ram dies in Isaac's place. Abraham names the place: "The LORD Will Provide." This passage becomes an extraordinary picture within the biblical storyline: A beloved son. A sacrifice. A substitute. God's provision. Yet an important distinction remains. Genesis 22 is first about Abraham's faith, God's testing, Isaac's preservation, and God's covenant faithfulness. The New Testament does not simply say: "Isaac was Jesus." But the pattern becomes striking when the Gospel is revealed. At Calvary, there is no substitute that takes Jesus' place. Jesus is the Son who gives His life. God provides the sacrifice humanity needs.

Memory Anchor

On Abraham's mountain, God provided a substitute. At Calvary, God provided His Son.

7. PICTURE #4 — PASSOVER: THE LAMB AND DELIVERANCE

Read Exodus 12. Israel is enslaved in Egypt. God announces a final judgment against Egypt. Each Israelite household is instructed to sacrifice a lamb without defect. Its blood is placed around the doorway. When judgment passes through Egypt, the households marked by blood are spared. Then Israel leaves slavery. Passover combines several themes that become central to redemption: Slavery. Judgment. A lamb. Blood. Deliverance. Freedom. This connection to Jesus is not speculative. The New Testament explicitly connects Jesus with Passover. John the Baptist announces: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" — John 1:29 Paul writes: "Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed." — 1 Corinthians 5:7 Jesus is crucified during Passover season. The pattern reaches its fulfillment. Israel was delivered from slavery in Egypt. Through Jesus, sinners are delivered from the deeper slavery of sin.

8. PICTURE #5 — THE EXODUS: GOD BRINGS HIS PEOPLE OUT

The Exodus becomes one of the Old Testament's defining acts of redemption. God repeatedly reminds Israel: He brought them out of Egypt. He broke Pharaoh's power. He led them through the sea. He brought them toward the land He had promised. Read Exodus 14–15. Israel did not defeat Egypt through superior military power. God rescued them. The Exodus becomes such an important redemption pattern that later prophets describe future restoration using Exodus-like language. Read Isaiah 11:15–16 and Hosea 2:14–15. The New Testament continues the pattern. Jesus comes out of Egypt. Read Matthew 2:13–15. At the Transfiguration, Luke even describes Jesus' approaching death using a Greek word that can mean "departure" or "exodus." Read Luke 9:28–31. The first Exodus delivered Israel from Pharaoh. Jesus accomplishes the greater redemption from sin and death.

9. PICTURE #6 — BREAD AND WATER IN THE WILDERNESS

After leaving Egypt, Israel enters the wilderness. The people cannot sustain themselves. God provides. He gives manna from heaven. Read Exodus 16. He provides water. Read Exodus 17:1–7. These events reveal God's provision for people who depend upon Him for life. The New Testament makes remarkable connections with Jesus. Jesus says: "I am the bread of life." Read John 6:25–59. Paul also refers to Israel drinking from the spiritual rock and says: "that rock was Christ." Read 1 Corinthians 10:1–4. Paul's purpose is not to encourage uncontrolled symbolism. In fact, the surrounding passage warns Christians to learn from Israel's failures. The wilderness story shows God's provision—and the danger of receiving God's blessings while responding with unbelief. Jesus is not merely another temporary provision. He is the One who gives eternal life.

10. PICTURE #7 — THE BRONZE SERPENT: LOOK AND LIVE

Read Numbers 21:4–9. Israel rebels against God in the wilderness. Venomous snakes come among the people. Many Israelites are bitten. The people confess their sin. God tells Moses to make a bronze serpent and place it on a pole. Anyone who has been bitten can look at it and live. This is one of the clearest Old Testament pictures of Jesus because Jesus Himself makes the connection. Read John 3:14–17. Jesus says: "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up." The Israelites were dying. God provided the means of life. They had to look toward God's provision. Jesus says His own lifting up will bring life to those who believe. The connection is explicit.

Memory Anchor

The dying Israelites looked at God's provision and lived. Sinners look in faith to Christ and receive eternal life.

11. PICTURE #8 — SACRIFICE AND THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

The Old Testament sacrificial system teaches something humanity desperately needs to understand: Sin is serious. Read Leviticus 1–7 and 16–17. Different sacrifices served different purposes within Israel's covenant worship. They should not all be flattened into exactly the same meaning. But blood, sacrifice, substitution, cleansing, forgiveness, and atonement become major biblical themes. Leviticus 17:11 explains the significance of blood in atonement. Life belongs to God. Sin brings death. In portions of Israel's sacrificial system, the life of a sacrificial animal is given in connection with the worshiper's guilt and cleansing. The pattern teaches both the costliness of sin and God's provision of atonement. On the Day of Atonement, described in Leviticus 16, the high priest enters the Most Holy Place. Sacrificial blood is brought before God. Israel's uncleanness and sins are dealt with ceremonially. Two goats become especially important. One is killed. The other symbolically carries Israel's sins away into the wilderness. Together they portray atonement and removal of guilt. But this ceremony must happen repeatedly. Year after year. That repetition reveals its limitation. Hebrews explains that animal sacrifices could not permanently solve the problem of sin. Read Hebrews 9–10. They prepared God's people to understand the sacrifice that could. Jesus offers Himself. Once for all.



12. PICTURE #9 — THE TABERNACLE: GOD DWELLS WITH HIS PEOPLE

After the Exodus, God tells Moses: "Have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them." — Exodus 25:8 Read Exodus 25–40. The tabernacle teaches both nearness and separation. God desires to dwell among His people. But sinful people cannot casually enter His holy presence. There are: Priests. Sacrifices. Washings. Holy places. A veil. A Most Holy Place. Restricted access. God is near. Yet sin creates a barrier. Then John introduces Jesus with extraordinary language: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." — John 1:14 The wording carries the idea of tabernacling among humanity. Jesus is God dwelling among His people. At Jesus' death, the temple curtain is torn. Read Matthew 27:50–51. Hebrews explains that believers now have access to God through Christ. Read Hebrews 10:19–22. And the biblical story ultimately ends: "God's dwelling place is now among the people." — Revelation 21:3 Eden. Tabernacle. Temple. Jesus. New creation. God's redemption restores His people to His presence.

PART TWO

WANT TO GO DEEPER?

INTERMEDIATE

13. PICTURE #10 — RUTH AND THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER

The book of Ruth gives readers a very human picture of redemption. Naomi returns to Bethlehem after devastating loss. Her husband and sons have died. Ruth, her Moabite daughter-in-law, remains with her. Eventually Boaz acts within Israel's family and property customs as a redeemer. Read Ruth 2–4. The Hebrew concept behind the family redeemer involves a close relative acting to protect family interests, property, inheritance, or vulnerable relatives. Boaz acts willingly and honorably. He uses his position and resources to bring security and restoration to Ruth and Naomi. Christians have long recognized similarities between Boaz's role and Christ's redemption of His people. The analogy is meaningful: A redeemer acts for someone in need. The redeemer bears a cost. The redeemer restores what was endangered or lost. But Scripture never explicitly says: "Boaz is a type of Christ." Therefore every detail of Ruth should not be turned into a hidden prophecy. The connection becomes even more significant in another way. Boaz and Ruth become ancestors of David. Read Ruth 4:13–22. And David's line ultimately leads to Jesus. Read Matthew 1:1–6.

14. PICTURE #11 — DAVID AND THE PROMISED KING

God's redemption plan increasingly focuses upon a coming King. Read 2 Samuel 7:8–16. God promises David that his house and kingdom will have an enduring future. But David is not the perfect king. Neither is Solomon. Neither are the kings who follow them. The history of Israel and Judah demonstrates repeatedly that even God's people cannot be permanently rescued by ordinary human rulers. Some kings are wicked. Some are faithful. All are sinners. The prophets therefore begin looking toward a greater Davidic King. Read Isaiah 9:6–7; Isaiah 11:1–10; Jeremiah 23:5–6; Ezekiel 34:23–24; Micah 5:2–5. Then the New Testament opens: "Jesus the Messiah the son of David." — Matthew 1:1 Gabriel tells Mary that God will give Jesus "the throne of his father David." Read Luke 1:26–33. Jesus is not merely another king in David's dynasty. He is the promised King whose kingdom will never end.

15. PICTURE #12 — ISAIAH'S SUFFERING SERVANT

Isaiah 52:13–53:12 provides one of the Old Testament's clearest portraits of redemptive suffering. It belongs to a larger group of passages often called the SERVANT SONGS. These are commonly identified in Isaiah 42:1–9; Isaiah 49:1–6; Isaiah 50:4–9; Isaiah 52:13–53:12. Together they develop the figure of the LORD's Servant and His mission. Read Isaiah 52:13–53:12 carefully. The Servant is rejected. He suffers. But His suffering is not merely unfortunate. Isaiah repeatedly describes Him suffering for others. He is: Pierced for transgressions. Crushed for iniquities. Punished so others receive peace. Associated with a guilt offering. Bearing the sins of many. Yet after His suffering, He is vindicated. The New Testament repeatedly applies Isaiah 53 to Jesus. Read Matthew 8:16–17; Luke 22:37; Acts 8:26–35; 1 Peter 2:21–25. This is much stronger than a possible resemblance noticed centuries later. The New Testament explicitly identifies Jesus as the One in whom Isaiah's Servant prophecy finds fulfillment. The sacrificial patterns of the Old Testament are converging upon a Person. The sacrifice will not ultimately be an animal. The Servant Himself will bear sin.

Memory Anchor

The Old Testament sacrifices teach the pattern. Isaiah reveals the suffering Servant. Jesus becomes the once-for-all sacrifice.

16. PICTURE #13 — THE NEW COVENANT

Israel's history exposes another problem. External laws alone cannot transform a rebellious heart. God's commands are good. The human heart is the problem. The prophets therefore promise something greater. Read Jeremiah 31:31–34. God promises a NEW COVENANT. His law will be written on hearts. His people will know Him. Their sins will be forgiven. Read Ezekiel 36:22–28. God promises: Cleansing. A new heart. A new spirit. His Spirit within His people. The New Testament explicitly connects Jesus with this promised covenant. At the Last Supper Jesus takes the cup and says: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." Read Luke 22:14–20. Hebrews quotes Jeremiah 31 extensively. Read Hebrews 8. Jesus does not merely improve the old sacrificial system. Through His death He establishes the promised new covenant.

17. PICTURE #14 — EXILE, RETURN, AND RESTORATION

Israel's story eventually reaches catastrophe. The northern kingdom falls to Assyria. Judah later falls to Babylon. Jerusalem is destroyed. The temple is burned. The people experience exile. Sin has consequences. Yet God promises restoration. Read Jeremiah 29:10–14 and Ezekiel 36–37. Eventually Persia conquers Babylon. Cyrus permits Jewish exiles to return. Read Ezra 1. The temple is rebuilt. Jerusalem's walls are rebuilt. The return demonstrates God's faithfulness. Judgment does not cancel His promises. But something is still incomplete. The people return to the land, yet the full glory of the promised kingdom has not arrived. Sin remains. Foreign empires still rule. The Davidic king is not restored to his throne in Jerusalem. The prophetic books continue looking forward. The Old Testament closes with expectation. God's people still need complete restoration. They still need the promised King. They still need final redemption. The return from exile therefore becomes another important part of the larger biblical pattern: SIN → JUDGMENT → EXILE → GOD'S MERCY → RETURN → RESTORATION → WAITING FOR SOMETHING GREATER.

18. WHAT IS BIBLICAL TYPOLOGY?



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Typology is the recognition that God has woven patterns into biblical history that anticipate greater realities later in His redemptive plan. A “type” is an earlier person, event, institution, or pattern that corresponds to something greater later in Scripture. The later fulfillment is sometimes called the “antitype.” The terminology sounds complicated. The idea does not need to be. PASSOVER LAMB → CHRIST

OLD COVENANT SACRIFICES → CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

HIGH PRIEST → CHRIST OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

TABERNACLE / TEMPLE → GOD DWELLING WITH HIS PEOPLE, FULFILLED CENTRALLY IN CHRIST

BRONZE SERPENT LIFTED UP → CHRIST LIFTED UP

DAVIDIC KING → JESUS THE ETERNAL KING The safest typology is typology Scripture itself establishes. Patterns strongly supported by the larger biblical storyline can also be recognized. But readers should avoid turning imagination into doctrine.

19. WHAT ABOUT MELCHIZEDEK?

Melchizedek deserves special attention because the New Testament itself develops the connection extensively. Read Genesis 14:18–20. Melchizedek appears briefly as King of Salem and priest of God Most High. He blesses Abraham. Abraham gives him a tenth of the spoils. Then Psalm 110 introduces a striking promise concerning the coming royal figure: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” Read Psalm 110. Hebrews 5–7 explains the significance. Jesus' priesthood does not depend upon descent from Aaron. He is a priest “in the order of Melchizedek.” Hebrews develops Melchizedek as a biblical pattern demonstrating the superiority and permanence of Christ's priesthood. This does not mean Melchizedek was necessarily Jesus appearing before the incarnation. Some Christians have proposed that view, but Hebrews presents Melchizedek primarily as one who RESEMBLES the Son of God and whose biblical presentation provides a pattern for understanding Christ's priesthood. The clearest conclusion is: Aaron's priests died and were replaced. Jesus lives forever. His priesthood does not end. Read Hebrews 7:23–28.

Memory Anchor

The old priests repeatedly served. Jesus is the eternal High Priest who never needs replacing.

20. HOW CAN SOMEONE TELL WHETHER AN OLD TESTAMENT PICTURE REALLY POINTS TO JESUS?

Use a simple three-level test. LEVEL 1 — DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT SAY SO?

This provides the greatest confidence.

Passover → Christ — 1 Corinthians 5:7

Bronze serpent → Christ — John 3:14–15

Isaiah's Servant → Christ — Acts 8:32–35; 1 Peter 2:22–25

Melchizedek → Christ's priesthood — Hebrews 5–7

High priest / sacrifices → Christ — Hebrews 4–10 LEVEL 2 — DOES THE BIBLICAL STORY DEVELOP THE PATTERN?

Examples include Davidic kingship, Temple and God's dwelling, Exodus and deliverance, Covenant. These themes develop across many books and converge upon Jesus. LEVEL 3 — IS IT MAINLY A RESEMBLANCE?

This requires the most caution. A preacher or reader may notice interesting similarities between an Old Testament person and Jesus. Some may be spiritually useful. But resemblance alone does not establish inspired typology.

Memory Anchor

The clearer Scripture makes the connection, the more confidently the connection can be taught.

21. WHAT ABOUT JOSEPH?

Joseph is another person Christians frequently connect with Jesus. Read Genesis 37–50. Several similarities are striking. Joseph is rejected by his brothers. He suffers unjustly. God remains with him. He is eventually exalted. The brother who was rejected becomes God's means of preserving the family alive during famine. Stephen even emphasizes Joseph's rejection and God's presence with him in Acts 7:9–14. These themes resemble a larger biblical pattern: God's chosen servant is rejected. God vindicates him. God uses the rejected one to bring deliverance. That pattern reaches its greatest expression in Jesus. But Scripture never says: “Joseph is a type of Christ.” Therefore individual similarities should not be turned into predictions. Joseph's story legitimately contributes to the larger biblical pattern of rejection, suffering, providence, exaltation, and deliverance. The resemblance is meaningful. The details should still be handled with restraint.

22. WERE OLD TESTAMENT BELIEVERS SAVED DIFFERENTLY?

No one has ever been saved by personal moral perfection. And animal sacrifices did not independently possess the power to erase human sin. The Old Testament repeatedly emphasizes faith, grace, mercy, repentance, and trust in God. Abraham “believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” — Genesis 15:6 Paul later uses Abraham as a major example of justification by faith. Read Romans 4. Hebrews 11 describes Old Testament believers living by faith. They did not possess the same historical knowledge available after Jesus' death and resurrection. Abraham could not explain the crucifixion using the knowledge available to the apostles. But salvation has always depended upon God's grace rather than human achievement. The sacrifice of Jesus is the decisive basis of redemption. Read Romans 3:21–26 and Hebrews 9:15. Old Testament believers trusted the God who promised. New Testament believers look back upon the One in whom God's saving promises have reached their fulfillment.

23. WHY COULDN'T ANIMAL SACRIFICES PERMANENTLY REMOVE SIN?

Hebrews answers directly: “It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” — Hebrews 10:4 If those sacrifices had permanently perfected worshipers, they would not have needed to continue. But they were repeated. Day after day. Year after year. Their repetition taught Israel both: God provides atonement. Sin requires substitution and cleansing. And: A greater solution is still needed. Animal sacrifices belonged to the covenant system God established for Israel. They were not meaningless. But they were never the final destination. Jesus offers the sacrifice they could never provide. Himself. Read Hebrews 10:10–14. One sacrifice. Once for all.

24. WHY DOES REDEMPTION INVOLVE BLOOD?

This can sound disturbing to modern readers. Why would forgiveness involve blood? The biblical answer begins with the seriousness of sin and the sacredness of life. Read Leviticus 17:11. Blood represents life. Sin is not merely a mistake. It is rebellion against the holy God who gives life. The



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consequence of sin is death. Read Genesis 2:16–17 and Romans 6:23. The sacrificial system teaches that reconciliation with God is costly. Life is given in connection with atonement. The worshiper learns that sin cannot simply be treated as though nothing happened. But the Gospel does not present God as demanding suffering from someone else while remaining distant. In Jesus, God Himself provides the sacrifice. Christ willingly gives His life. Read John 10:17–18. The cross reveals both: The seriousness of sin. And the extraordinary depth of God's love. God does not save by pretending sin does not matter. He deals with it.

25. DID JESUS ABOLISH THE OLD TESTAMENT?

Jesus says: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets." Read Matthew 5:17–20. He came to fulfill them. Fulfillment is therefore a better category than simply saying: "The Old Testament was canceled." Jesus fulfills the sacrificial system. He fulfills the priestly pattern. He fulfills the Davidic promise. He establishes the new covenant. He fulfills the Scriptures concerning the Messiah. The book of Hebrews explains that Christ's once-for-all sacrifice means the old covenant sacrificial system no longer functions as the means by which God's people approach Him. The shadow has given way to the reality. Read Hebrews 8–10. Christians should therefore neither return to the old sacrificial system nor dismiss it as useless. It teaches readers why Jesus' sacrifice matters.

26. DID GOD CHANGE HIS PLAN WHEN ISRAEL FAILED?

No. Scripture does not portray Jesus as God's emergency solution after previous attempts at redemption failed. The biblical story progressively reveals one redemptive purpose. Human beings fail repeatedly. Adam fails. Humanity before the flood fails. Israel fails. Priests fail. Judges fail. Kings fail. But God's promises continue. The failures reveal why humanity cannot save itself. God remains faithful. The New Testament describes God's redemptive purpose as reaching back before creation itself. Read Ephesians 1:3–10 and 1 Peter 1:18–21. Jesus is not Plan B. The Old Testament progressively prepares humanity to understand God's plan fulfilled in Him.

27. WHY DID GOD REVEAL THE PLAN GRADUALLY?

God could have explained the entire Gospel in Genesis using New Testament vocabulary. He did not. Instead, Scripture records progressive revelation. That means God reveals His purposes increasingly clearly across biblical history. Earlier revelation is true. Later revelation adds clarity. Consider how much meaning the word "Lamb" carries by the time John the Baptist says: "Look, the Lamb of God." A reader who knows the Old Testament has already encountered Abraham's sacrifice, Passover, daily sacrifices, the Day of Atonement, Isaiah's suffering Servant, and centuries of sacrificial worship. The Gospel arrives within a vocabulary God has been building across generations. The Old Testament teaches readers how to understand the cross.

THE REDEMPTION STORY — GENESIS TO JESUS

**CREATION → FALL → PROMISE → COVERING → ARK → ABRAHAM AND ISAAC → PASSOVER → EXODUS →
WILDERNESS → BRONZE SERPENT → SACRIFICES → PRIESTHOOD → MELCHIZEDEK → TABERNACLE →
KINSMAN-REDEEMER → DAVIDIC KING → SUFFERING SERVANT → NEW COVENANT → RETURN FROM EXILE →
JESUS → CROSS → RESURRECTION → NEW CREATION**

Memory Anchor

One Bible. One unfolding redemption story. One Savior.

THE GOSPEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT PICTURES

Every major Old Testament picture exposes some part of humanity's need. Adam and Eve need covering. Noah needs rescue from judgment. Isaac needs a substitute. Israel needs deliverance from slavery. The dying Israelites need life. Sinners need atonement. Worshipers need access to God. The vulnerable need a redeemer. God's people need a righteous King. The guilty need someone to bear their sin. Hard hearts need transformation. Exiles need restoration. No single Old Testament picture says everything. Together they build a vocabulary of redemption. Then Jesus comes. He is the promised offspring who defeats the serpent. He is the Passover Lamb. He accomplishes the greater Exodus. He is the Bread of Life. He is the One lifted up so those who believe may live. He is the once-for-all sacrifice. He is the Great High Priest whose priesthood never ends. He is God dwelling among His people. He is the Son of David. He is the suffering Servant. He establishes the new covenant in His blood. He dies for sinners. He rises from the dead. He brings His people home to God. The Old Testament does not reveal every detail at once. But from beginning to end, God's redemptive purpose is moving toward Jesus.

Memory Anchor

God promised. God provided. Jesus fulfilled. Redemption is accomplished in Christ.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

1. READ THE OLD TESTAMENT AS CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE. — Do not treat it merely as background information before the "important" New Testament begins. It is part of the same redemptive story.
2. LOOK FOR THE ORIGINAL MEANING FIRST. — Before asking how a passage connects to Jesus, understand what the passage meant within its own biblical setting.
3. LET SCRIPTURE ESTABLISH THE CONNECTIONS. — Give greatest confidence to connections the New Testament explicitly identifies.
4. DO NOT FORCE SYMBOLISM. — Not every rope, doorway, color, number, tree, stone, or person secretly represents Jesus.



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5. NOTICE REPEATED THEMES. — Watch for sacrifice, deliverance, covenant, priesthood, kingship, God's presence, judgment, mercy, restoration, and redemption.

6. READ HEBREWS. — Hebrews is one of the clearest biblical guides for understanding how Old Testament worship, priesthood, sacrifice, covenant, and Melchizedek point toward Christ.

7. NOTICE HUMAN FAILURE. — The repeated failures of biblical people are not interruptions in the story. They demonstrate humanity's need for a Savior.

8. NOTICE GOD'S FAITHFULNESS. — People repeatedly fail. God repeatedly keeps His promises.

9. LET THE OLD TESTAMENT DEEPEN THE GOSPEL. — Words like Lamb, sacrifice, covenant, redemption, priest, kingdom, and atonement become richer when their Old Testament background is understood.

10. KEEP JESUS AT THE CENTER. — The goal is not to become clever at finding hidden symbols. The goal is to understand more clearly the Savior Scripture actually reveals.

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

1. What does redemption mean?
2. Why is Genesis 3:15 important to the biblical redemption story?
3. What can be confidently said about God's covering of Adam and Eve, and what should not be claimed with certainty?
4. What redemption pattern appears in Noah's ark?
5. What does Abraham say God will provide in Genesis 22?
6. How does the ram function in relation to Isaac?
7. Why is Passover one of the strongest Old Testament pictures of Jesus?
8. What makes the Exodus such an important redemption pattern?
9. How does Jesus connect Himself with bread from heaven?
10. How does Jesus interpret the bronze serpent?
11. What did the sacrificial system teach Israel about sin, substitution, and atonement?
12. Why did the sacrifices have to be repeated?
13. What did the high priest do on the Day of Atonement?
14. What does the tabernacle teach about God's presence and human sin?
15. What does a kinsman-redeemer do?
16. Why should Christians be cautious about calling every detail of Boaz's story a prophecy of Jesus?
17. What did God promise David?
18. How does Isaiah 53 describe the Servant's suffering?
19. How does Isaiah 53 fit within the larger Servant passages in Isaiah?
20. What does God promise in the new covenant?
21. Why was the return from exile a genuine restoration but not the end of the redemption story?
22. What is biblical typology?
23. Why is Melchizedek important in Hebrews?
24. What aspects of Joseph's story resemble a larger pattern later fulfilled in Jesus?
25. What is the safest way to identify an Old Testament type of Christ?
26. Were Old Testament believers saved by a different way than Christians?
27. Why couldn't animal blood permanently remove sin?
28. Why does biblical redemption involve blood?
29. Did Jesus abolish the Old Testament or fulfill it?
30. Why is Jesus not God's "Plan B"?
31. How does knowing the Old Testament deepen understanding of the Gospel?

REVIEW

1. What is redemption? — God's rescue and restoration of people who cannot rescue themselves.
2. Where does the biblical redemption story begin? — In Genesis, immediately following humanity's fall into sin.
3. What early promise appears in Genesis 3:15? — The serpent will ultimately be defeated through the woman's offspring.
4. What did God provide Adam and Eve? — Garments to cover them.
5. Does Genesis explicitly call those garments a sacrifice for sin? — No.
6. What did God provide Noah? — A means of rescue through the flood judgment.
7. What did God provide instead of Isaac? — A ram.
8. What protected Israelite households at Passover? — The blood of the Passover lamb according to God's instruction.
9. Who does Paul explicitly call "our Passover lamb"? — Christ.
10. What great Old Testament act becomes a major picture of redemption? — The Exodus.
11. What did God provide Israel in the wilderness? — Among other things, manna and water.
12. What Old Testament event does Jesus explicitly compare with His being lifted up? — The bronze serpent.
13. What annual ceremony is described in Leviticus 16? — The Day of Atonement.
14. Could animal sacrifices permanently remove sin? — No.
15. Who entered the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement? — The high priest.
16. Why was the tabernacle built? — So God would dwell among His covenant people.
17. Who acts as the family redeemer in Ruth? — Boaz.
18. Does Scripture explicitly call Boaz a type of Jesus? — No.
19. What covenant established the expectation of an enduring Davidic King? — God's covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7.
20. Which Old Testament chapter famously describes a Servant suffering for the sins of others? — Isaiah 53.
21. Which other chapters contain major Servant passages? — Isaiah 42, 49, and 50.
22. Which prophet explicitly promises a new covenant? — Jeremiah.
23. What does Ezekiel promise alongside cleansing? — A new heart, a new spirit, and God's Spirit within His people.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

24. What did the return from Babylon demonstrate? — God's faithfulness and mercy after judgment.
25. Was the return from exile the complete fulfillment of every redemptive hope? — No.
26. Who was Melchizedek? — King of Salem and priest of God Most High.
27. Which New Testament book develops Melchizedek as a pattern for Christ's priesthood? — Hebrews.
28. Does Hebrews require the conclusion that Melchizedek was Jesus before the incarnation? — No.
29. What major pattern can be seen in Joseph's story? — Rejection, suffering, God's providence, vindication, exaltation, and preservation of life.
30. Does Scripture explicitly call Joseph a type of Christ? — No.
31. What is typology? — A biblical pattern in which an earlier person, event, or institution anticipates a greater later reality in God's redemptive plan.
32. What is the strongest basis for identifying a type? — An explicit New Testament connection.
33. Were Old Testament believers saved by their moral perfection? — No.
34. Why were sacrifices repeated? — They could not permanently perfect worshipers or finally remove sin.
35. What sacrifice did Jesus offer? — Himself.
36. How often was Christ's decisive sacrifice offered? — Once for all.
37. Is Jesus God's backup redemption plan? — No.
38. What does the Old Testament progressively prepare readers to understand? — God's redemption ultimately accomplished through Jesus Christ.

KEY MEMORY ANCHORS

- The Old Testament does not tell a different salvation story. It prepares the way for the Savior.
- Redemption is God's rescue of people who cannot rescue themselves.
- The Bible's redemption story begins immediately after humanity's rebellion.
- On Abraham's mountain, God provided a substitute. At Calvary, God provided His Son.
- The dying Israelites looked at God's provision and lived. Sinners look in faith to Christ and receive eternal life.
- The Old Testament sacrifices teach the pattern. Isaiah reveals the suffering Servant. Jesus becomes the once-for-all sacrifice.
- The old priests repeatedly served. Jesus is the eternal High Priest who never needs replacing.
- The clearer Scripture makes the connection, the more confidently the connection can be taught.
- One Bible. One unfolding redemption story. One Savior.
- God promised. God provided. Jesus fulfilled. Redemption is accomplished in Christ.

QUICK REFERENCE — MAJOR OLD TESTAMENT PICTURES OF REDEMPTION

Picture	Connection	Teaching Point
1. GOD PROVIDES A COVERING Genesis 3:21	STRONG PATTERN / POSSIBLE ANALOGY	Human shame cannot ultimately be solved by human effort. God provides the covering. Do not call Genesis 3:21 an explicit sacrifice for sin.
2. NOAH AND THE ARK Genesis 6–9	STRONG BIBLICAL PATTERN	Judgment comes. God provides rescue. The New Testament uses Noah and the flood in discussions of judgment and salvation.
3. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC Genesis 22	STRONG BIBLICAL PATTERN	The beloved son. God provides a substitute. Do not claim every detail is an explicit prophecy of Jesus.
4. PASSOVER Exodus 12	EXPLICIT NEW TESTAMENT CONNECTION	A lamb dies. Blood marks God's people. Slaves are delivered. 1 Corinthians 5:7 identifies Christ as our Passover Lamb.
5. THE EXODUS Exodus 12–15	STRONG BIBLICAL PATTERN	God brings His people out of slavery. The New Testament develops Exodus-like themes around Christ's redemption.
6. BREAD AND WATER Exodus 16–17	EXPLICIT / STRONG NT CONNECTION	God sustains His people in the wilderness. John 6; 1 Corinthians 10.
7. BRONZE SERPENT Numbers 21:4–9	EXPLICIT NEW TESTAMENT CONNECTION	Dying people look at God's provision and live. Jesus applies this event to Himself in John 3:14–15.
8. SACRIFICE / DAY OF ATONEMENT Leviticus 16–17	EXPLICIT NEW TESTAMENT CONNECTION	Sin, blood, substitution, sacrifice, cleansing, and atonement. Hebrews 9–10 develops the fulfillment in Christ.
9. TABERNACLE / GOD'S PRESENCE Exodus 25–40	STRONG BIBLICAL / NT PATTERN	God dwells among His people, but sin restricts access. John 1:14; Hebrews 9–10; Revelation 21:3.
10. KINSMAN-REDEEMER Ruth 2–4	THEOLOGICAL ANALOGY / STRONG REDEMPTION THEME	A qualified family redeemer acts to restore those in need. Scripture does not explicitly call Boaz a type of Christ.
11. DAVIDIC KING 2 Samuel 7	EXPLICIT MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT	God promises an enduring royal house. Jesus is explicitly identified as the Son of David and eternal King.
12. SUFFERING SERVANT Isaiah 42; 49; 50; 52:13–53:12	EXPLICIT NT FULFILLMENT	The Servant fulfills God's mission and bears the sins of others. The New Testament repeatedly applies these passages, especially Isaiah 53, to Jesus.
13. NEW COVENANT Jeremiah 31; Ezekiel 36	EXPLICIT NT FULFILLMENT	Forgiveness. New heart. God's Spirit. Jesus establishes the new covenant in His blood.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

Picture	Connection	Teaching Point
14. EXILE AND RETURN Jeremiah 29; Ezra 1	STRONG BIBLICAL RESTORATION PATTERN	Sin brings judgment. God restores His people. The historical return is real but leaves the larger redemption story awaiting completion.
MELCHIZEDEK Genesis 14; Psalm 110	EXPLICIT NEW TESTAMENT TYPOLOGY	King and priest. Hebrews 5–7 explicitly develops Melchizedek as a pattern for Christ's eternal priesthood.
JOSEPH Genesis 37–50	STRONG THEOLOGICAL PATTERN / ANALOGY	Rejected. Suffers. Vindicated. Exalted. Used by God to preserve life. Scripture does not explicitly call Joseph a type of Christ.

SCRIPTURE READING PATH

Genesis 1–3 — Creation, fall, judgment, promise, and covering
Genesis 6–9 — Noah, judgment, rescue, and covenant
Genesis 12:1–3 — God's promise through Abraham
Genesis 14:18–20 — Melchizedek
Genesis 15 — Abraham believes God's promise
Genesis 22:1–18 — Abraham, Isaac, and God's provision
Genesis 37–50 — Joseph's rejection, suffering, exaltation, and preservation of life
Exodus 6:1–8 — God promises redemption from Egypt
Exodus 12 — Passover
Exodus 14–15 — The Exodus through the sea
Exodus 16–17 — Bread and water in the wilderness
Exodus 25:1–9 — God desires to dwell among His people
Exodus 40 — God's glory fills the tabernacle
Leviticus 16 — The Day of Atonement
Leviticus 17:11 — Life, blood, and atonement
Numbers 21:4–9 — The bronze serpent
Ruth 2–4 — Boaz and redemption
2 Samuel 7:8–16 — God's covenant with David
Psalm 22 — The suffering righteous one
Psalm 110 — King, Lord, and priest in the order of Melchizedek
Isaiah 9:1–7 — The promised King
Isaiah 11:1–10 — The Branch from Jesse
Isaiah 42:1–9 — The LORD's Servant
Isaiah 49:1–6 — The Servant and the nations
Isaiah 50:4–9 — The obedient suffering Servant
Isaiah 52:13–53:12 — The suffering Servant who bears sin
Jeremiah 23:5–6 — The righteous Branch
Jeremiah 31:31–34 — The new covenant
Ezekiel 34:23–31 — The promised shepherd
Ezekiel 36:22–28 — Cleansing, new heart, and Spirit
Ezekiel 37 — Restoration and life
Ezra 1 — Return from exile
Matthew 1:1 — Jesus, Son of David
Luke 1:26–33 — Jesus receives David's throne
Luke 9:28–31 — Jesus' coming "departure"
Luke 22:14–20 — The new covenant in Jesus' blood
Luke 24:13–47 — Jesus and the Old Testament Scriptures
John 1:1–18 — God dwelling among humanity
John 1:29 — The Lamb of God
John 3:14–17 — Jesus and the bronze serpent
John 6:25–59 — The Bread of Life
Romans 3:21–26 — Redemption and Christ's sacrifice
Romans 4 — Abraham and faith
1 Corinthians 5:7 — Christ our Passover Lamb
1 Corinthians 10:1–13 — Israel's wilderness experience and Christ
Hebrews 4:14–16 — Jesus the Great High Priest
Hebrews 5–7 — Jesus and the priesthood of Melchizedek
Hebrews 8 — Jesus and the new covenant
Hebrews 9–10 — Sacrifice, priesthood, blood, and fulfillment
1 Peter 1:18–21 — Redeemed by Christ's precious blood
1 Peter 2:21–25 — Jesus and Isaiah's suffering Servant
Revelation 5 — The Lamb who was slain
Revelation 21–22 — Redemption completed in the new creation

FINAL SUMMARY

The Old Testament is filled with pictures of redemption. They do not all function in exactly the same way. Some are explicit prophecies. Some are institutions God established. Some are historical events that create patterns repeated later in Scripture. Some are people whose roles resemble aspects of God's greater redemptive work. And some connections are explicitly identified by the New Testament itself. Responsible Bible study respects those differences. But when the entire Old Testament is viewed together, a remarkable storyline emerges. Humanity rebels. God promises. Humanity cannot cover its own shame. God provides. Judgment comes. God provides rescue. Isaac needs a substitute. God provides one. Israel is enslaved. God redeems. Death threatens at Passover. A lamb dies. Israel enters the wilderness. God provides bread and water. People are dying from serpent bites. God provides a way to look and live. Sin separates people from God's holy presence. God establishes sacrifice and priesthood.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

The priesthood itself points beyond temporary priests toward one whose priesthood will never end. God desires to dwell among His people. He establishes the tabernacle. Ruth and Naomi face loss and vulnerability. A redeemer acts. Joseph is rejected yet eventually becomes God's instrument for preserving life. Israel needs faithful leadership. God promises David an enduring King. The sacrificial system continues year after year. Isaiah announces a Servant who will bear the sins of many. Israel repeatedly breaks covenant. God promises a new covenant. He promises cleansing. A new heart. His Spirit. Israel experiences judgment and exile. God brings a remnant home. Yet the story remains unfinished. Then Jesus comes. He is not an interruption in the biblical story. He is its fulfillment. He is the promised offspring. The Lamb. The greater deliverer. The Bread of Life. The One lifted up. The sacrifice. The eternal Great High Priest. The Son of David. The suffering Servant. The mediator of the new covenant. The risen King. Through His death, sinners are redeemed. Through His resurrection, death is defeated. Through His Spirit, God gives new life. And Scripture looks forward to the day when redemption reaches its final visible completion. The curse will be gone. Death will be gone. God's people will see His face. God will dwell with them forever. The Bible begins with humanity losing access to God's presence in Eden. It ends with redeemed humanity dwelling with God in a renewed creation. Between those two scenes runs one great story of redemption. The Old Testament prepares the vocabulary. The promises build expectation. The sacrifices reveal the cost. The priests reveal the need for a mediator. The kings reveal the need for a righteous ruler. The prophets announce what God will do. And the Gospel reveals the Savior. Jesus. The Old Testament does not tell a different salvation story. It prepares the way for Him.

Memory Anchor

From Eden to the Exodus. From sacrifice to priesthood. From David to the prophets. From exile to restoration. The story keeps moving toward God's answer to humanity's greatest need: Jesus Christ. The Redeemer.