

READING THE BIBLE LIKE JESUS

SESSION FOUR: THE ANOINTED PORTRAIT

RECAP – THE BIBLE IS:

1. **Human and Divine Literature** – The Bible’s creation, formation, and preservation is a result of God’s people working in partnership with God’s Spirit, which reflects the way God desires to walk and work with us now, in partnership.
2. **Unified Literature** – The Bible is also a unified work and story leading us to one message reflecting God’s desire for our lives too to lead to that same message. Even considering all the diversity of the Bible, every part of the Bible, through this human and divine partnership, is interconnected to show one unified story within. From the Bible’s structure to its words, it is all pointing to something specific for us to discover, which is that the Bible is Messianic literature.

MESSIANIC LITERATURE

Jesus saw the whole message of the Bible leading to one person, the Messiah. And Jesus and the New Testament saw Jesus as that Messiah.

Luke 24:25-27

²⁵ And *then* He said to them, “You foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to come into His glory?” ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the Prophets, He explained to them the things *written* about Himself in all the Scriptures.

John 5:39-40

³⁹ You examine the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is those very Scriptures that testify about Me;

2 Timothy 3:15

¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Luke 24:32-48

⁴⁴ Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

“Jesus had a deep relationship with the Bible, and he saw it as a pointer to Him, a story to prepare the world for what he had come to do.” – Dan Kimball, How Not to Read the Bible, p294

Christ is the English word for *Christos* (Χριστός).

Christos is the Greek word for the Hebrew word *Mashiach* (מָשִׁיחַ) (*Messiah*).

In this sense, it is the same to say that Jesus is the “Messiah,” or the “Christ.” Both these words literally mean *anointed one*. So, when we refer to Jesus as Christ or Messiah, we are saying He is the *anointed one*. And when we say we are *Christians*, we are saying that we are Christ people and Messiah people.

Luke 2:22-32

²⁵ And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Consolation of Israel: Simeon was looking for the *comforter*, the One spoken about in the Scriptures such as in Isaiah. As Simeon says in verses 29-32, he has seen “*Your Salvation..., prepared in the presence of all people..., a light to the nations..., the glory of Your people....*”

Isaiah 40:1-5

¹ “Comfort, comfort My people,” says your God.... ³ The voice of one calling out, “Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God....” ⁵ Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Isaiah 42:1-9

¹ “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations....” ⁶ “I am the LORD... And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations...” ⁸ I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to idols....

Simeon had been looking for the Messiah, the Anointed One, this portrait of the Christ that had been built up throughout the Hebrew Bible. Simeon knew that the Bible led to this anointed one. He knew **the Bible is Messianic Literature. In other words, the whole Bible is a unified story leading to this Anointed One.** Jesus, the Disciples, Paul, Simeon, and others all saw this *Portrait of the Anointed One* in the Scriptures and they all said Jesus was that one.

Do we? Do we see the connections between Jesus and the Messiah portrait, or do we just assume it? Our goal should be to not only understand that the Bible is Messianic Literature but to actually see how the Bible is a unified story leading to Jesus.

A Growing Portrait – The Theme of the Messiah in the Bible

As we work through the story of the Bible, we are following and looking for the Messianic theme which begins in Genesis 1-11. As we do this, the Bible presents a growing portrait of this Messiah figure, but everyone seems to fail, and no solution is found to the original problem presented in the first few pages of the Bible.

FOLLOWING THE STORY:

KEY THEME
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px; text-align: center;">1</div> <div> <p>The plot tension driving the whole biblical story starts with a mysterious talking snake that gets humans to doubt God's goodness and disobey.</p> <p style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">GENESIS 3</p> </div> </div>

While the origins of this being are not described in the Bible, it is presented as a spiritual creature in rebellion against God who is bent on destroying humans.

SEE JESUS' COMMENTS IN
JOHN 8:44; 1 JOHN 3:8

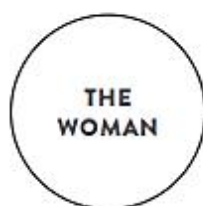
Later biblical authors use various words to describe this being.

<p>THE SATAN "THE ADVERSARY"</p> <p>MARK 1:13; 4:15; ACTS 5:3</p>	<p>THE DEVIL "THE ACCUSER"</p> <p>EPHESIANS 6:11; 2 TIMOTHY 2:26; JAMES 4:7</p>	<p>THE EVIL ONE:</p> <p>MATT 6:13; 13:19; 2 THESSALONIANS 3:3; EPHESIANS 6:16</p>
<p>THE TEMPTER:</p> <p>MATTHEW 4:3; 1 THESSALONIANS 3:5</p>	<p>RULER OF THIS WORLD</p> <p>JOHN 12:31, 16:11; EPHESIANS 2:2</p>	<p style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 10px;">IN REVELATION 12:9 ALL OF THE BIBLICAL IMAGES COME TOGETHER TO DESCRIBE THIS BEING AS THE SOURCE OF EVIL IN OUR WORLD.</p>

Genesis 3

¹⁴ The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; ¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

KEY THEME	God promises that a descendant will come from the line of the woman and destroy the snake, while suffering a fatal wound	GENESIS 3:14-15
2		



This promised descendant is called the “offspring” (*zera* in Hebrew)

זרע

The word *zera*, like the English word “offspring,” can refer to a single descendant (“he”) or a group of descendants (“they”). God’s promise creates an ambiguity that is only resolved by reading further in the story.

The Hebrew word used in Genesis 3:15 to describe the battle between the offspring and the snake is *shuph* (pronounced “shoof”), meaning “to strike/crush.”

שׁוּף

The idea is that the offspring and snake each deliver fatal blows to one another in the battle.

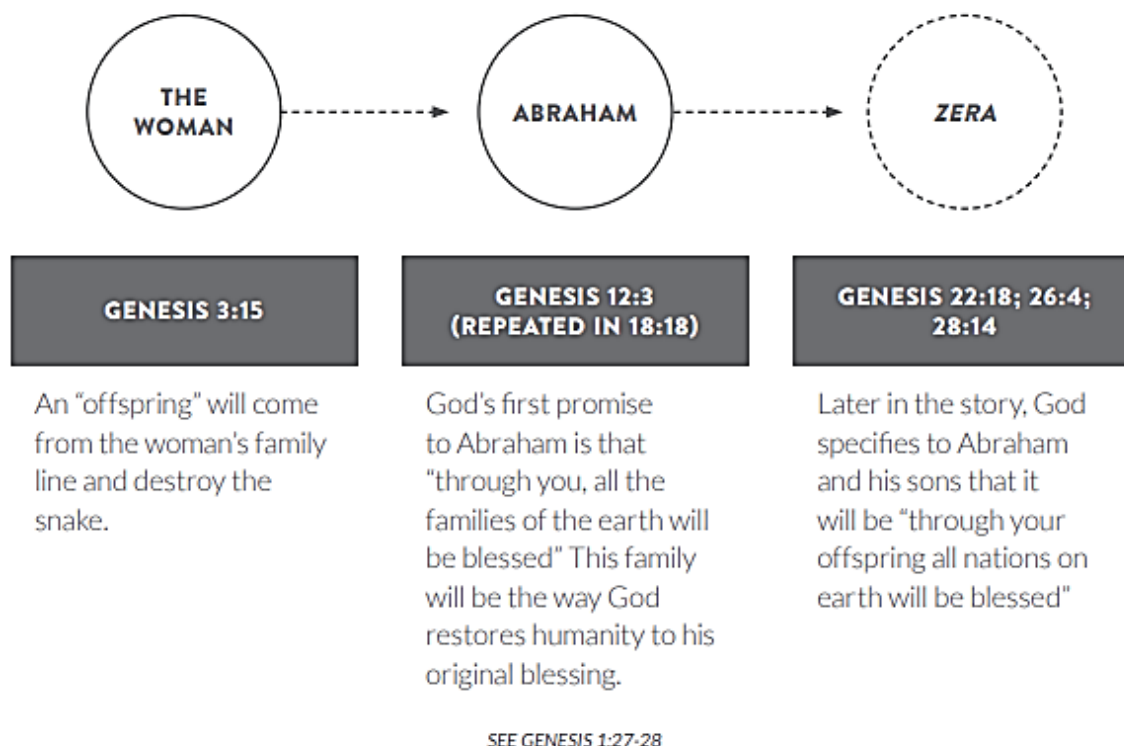
“He (the offspring) will *shuph* your head, and you (the serpent) will *shuph* his heel.”

The story continues through the flood narrative. Just when the world seems to be all dark and hopeless, this person named Noah comes into picture. He is tasked with a mission to save God’s people and mission, preserving this promise that was made. But in reading the full story of Noah, we find out that he is not the One for he is infected with this darkness himself and does not crush the serpent for good. The story continues but creates a larger picture of who is needed to rescue and restore humanity.

Genesis 12:1-3

³ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

KEY THEME	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid white; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">3</div> <div> <p style="color: white; text-align: center;">The story of Genesis traces the promised line of the woman right to Abraham in Genesis 12.</p> </div> </div>
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**Genesis 22:1-18**

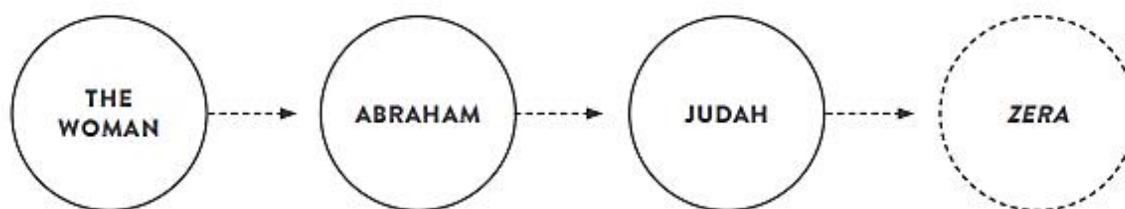
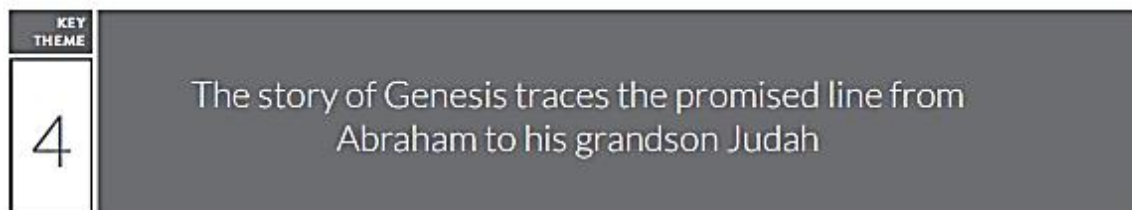
¹⁶ and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

The portrait of the One from the woman, who will crush the snake but also be bitten, grows in the story of Abraham. We now know that He will come from the line of Abraham and will bless all the nations.

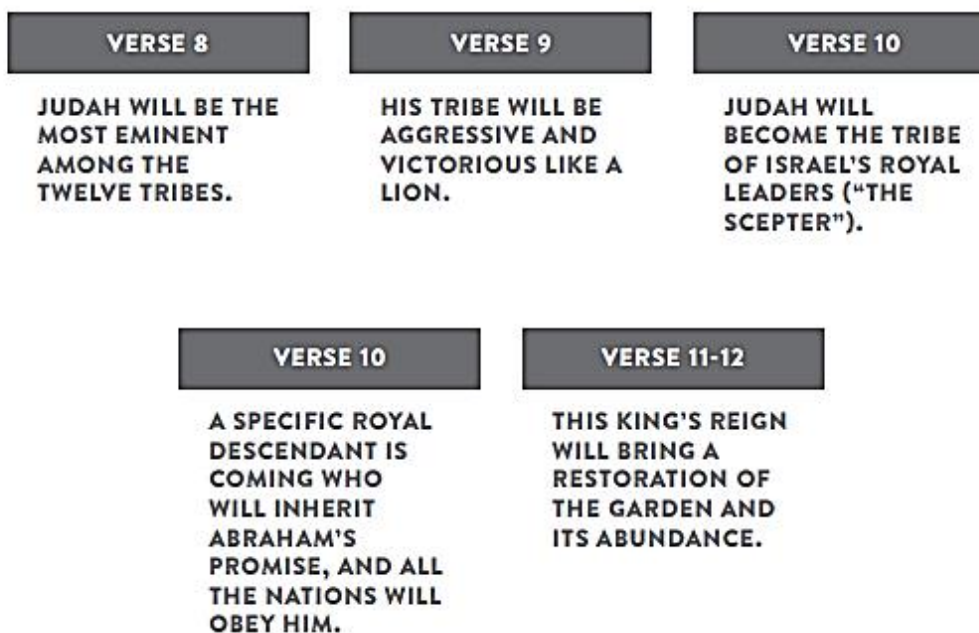
The story continues through Abraham and His family, each person bringing the question, "*Is this Him?*" There are stories like Abraham and Isaac, Melchizedek, Jacob and the ladder to heaven that are full of Messianic hints.

Genesis 49:8-12

¹⁰ “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. ¹¹ “He ties his foal to the vine, And his donkey’s colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes. ¹² “His eyes are dull from wine, And his teeth white from milk.



In Genesis 49:8-12, Judah receives a promise from his father Jacob



The growing portrait now includes royalty. But before we reach the first king of Israel, Israel must come home from Egypt. Following the book of Genesis, the nation has grown large and become enslaved. Then a new character arises.

Could this be the One?

There are three things that make Moses unique so far. He was considered a **prophet** (Deut 18:15). And while he may not have been an official **king**, the people counted him as one (Deut 33:5). And Moses ushered in the covenant with God and His people. Moses stood on the mountain and interceded for them. He was a **priest** (Exod 25-40). If Israel had a checklist for this Anointed One, Moses meets most of these qualifications.

But Moses speaks up later and says:

Deuteronomy 18:15-22

¹⁵ "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.... ¹⁸ I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

Deuteronomy 34:1-12

¹⁰ Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face,

The portrait grows. The one will be and do everything the book of Genesis told us, but He will also be like Moses. What does that mean? Well Moses rescued God's people, spoke face to face with God, ushered in a new covenant relationship with the people, established the priestly system and sacrificial worship to atone for sins, and more.

There are even other passages like this strange one from a pagan diviner or sorcerer who couldn't help but bless Israel:

Numbers 24:15-19

¹⁷ "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.

The message from the Torah? This Anointed One will defeat the snake while taking a blow himself, come from the line of the woman, Abraham, and Judah, rule as a king, be the prophet, priest, and king like Moses, and be associated with a star from Jacob.

Following Israel into the promised land, they start to waver. Idolatry becomes a real problem for them. God raises up judges, but these judges aren't blameless in anyway. In fact, they are terrible people themselves. They are not the One.

Judges 21:25

²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

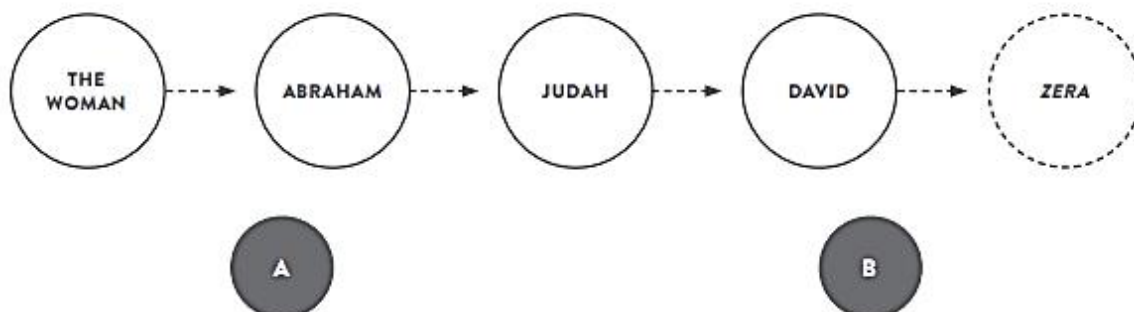
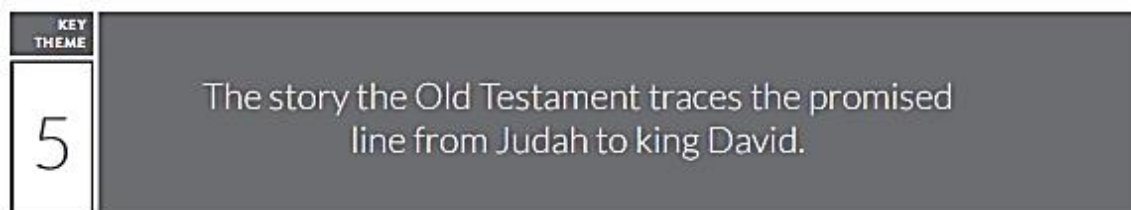
Until... there is finally a king. A king everyone seems to praise and follow!

1 Samuel 16:1-13

¹² So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is he.” ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

1 Chronicles 17:3-15

¹¹ When your days are fulfilled that you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up one of your descendants after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. ¹² He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. ¹³ I will be his father and he shall be My son....



David is chosen to become the head of a royal line that will last forever. God promises to raise up a specific “offspring” (zera) from David’s line who will build a temple and rule as God’s son.

1 CHRONICLES 17:10-14
SEE THE PARALLEL IN 2 SAMUEL 7:11-16



The book of Psalms has many poems that reflect on these promises to David about a coming king.

PSALMS 2, 72, 89, 110, 132

The future king from the line of David will bring God’s justice to all nations.

PSALMS 2, 72, 110

God’s promise to Abraham is linked to this future king from the line of David: “all nations will be blessed through him”

PSALM 72:17

The future king will establish God’s eternal kingdom over all nations.

PSALM 72

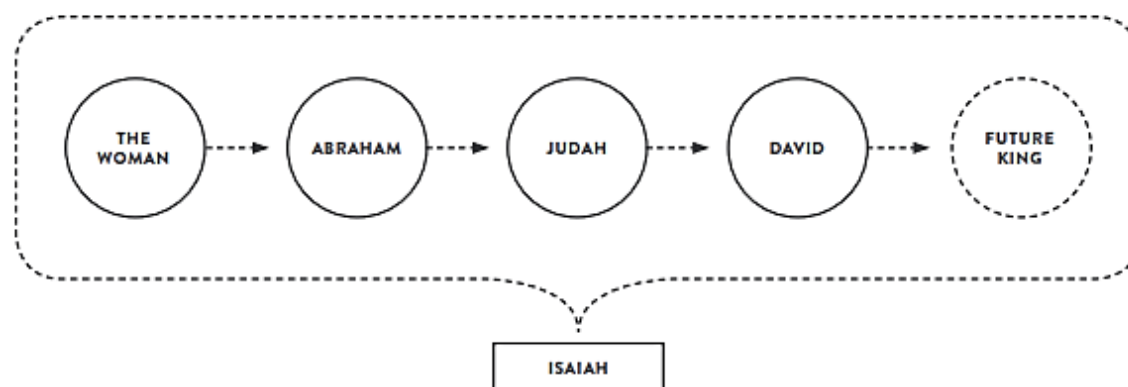
The kingdom of Israel falls. There are no kings left. Is there any hope?

Numerous prophets stand up and say yes, saying the promises are still there.

Jeremiah 33:14-15

¹⁴ 'Behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth.

KEY THEME	The prophet Isaiah takes up the hope of a future king from the line of David and connects it to the ancient promise from Genesis 3:15
6	



God will bring all nations into his future kingdom of peace...

ISAIAH 2:1-4

...which will be ruled by a king from the line of David.

ISAIAH 9:1-7

This king will bring justice and full restoration to God's world.

ISAIAH 11:1-9

However, the king will come back from death to offer forgiveness, healing, and new life to others.

ISAIAH 53:11-12

Isaiah also said the future king would become a suffering servant, who will be rejected by his people and die for the sins of his people.

ISAIAH 42:1-7; 49:1-7; 53:1-10

When the future kingdom of God arrives there will be a new creation...

ISAIAH 65:17-19

...and "dust will be the serpent's food."

*ISAIAH 65:25,
ALLUDING BACK TO THE
SNAKE'S DEFEAT IN GENESIS 3:14*

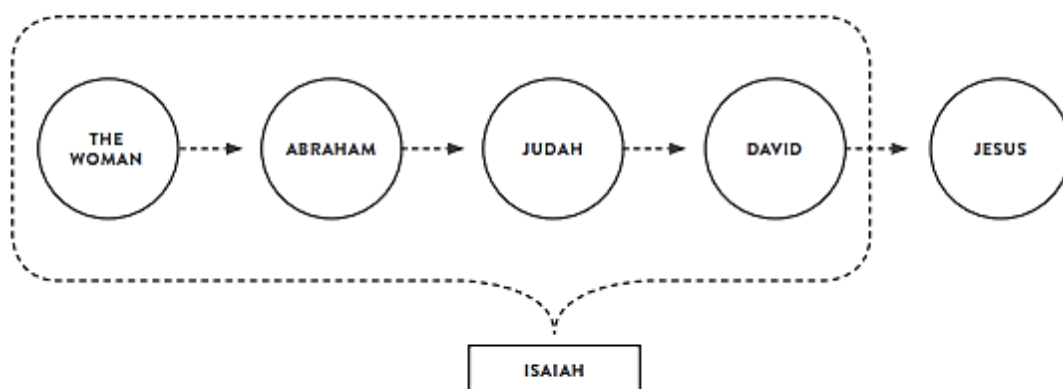
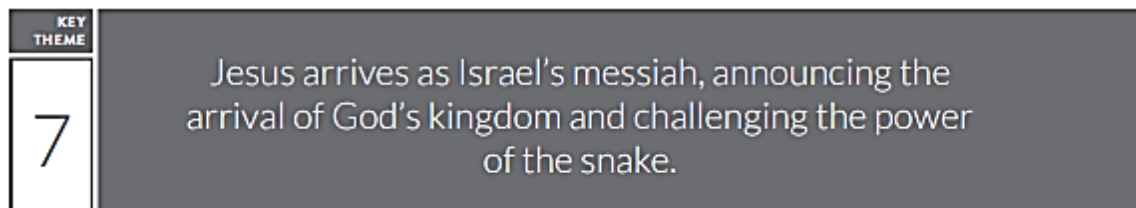
But the Old Testament ends, and the snake-crushing king never shows up....

2 Chronicles 36:23

²³ “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up!’”

Matthew 1:1-18

¹ The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham: ... ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: ...



Jesus overcomes the influence of the snake in the wilderness...

MATTHEW 4:1-11

...and then proceeds to announce the arrival of God's kingdom.

MATTHEW 4:12-17

Jesus' viewed his exorcisms and acts of healing as a challenge to the snake's power...

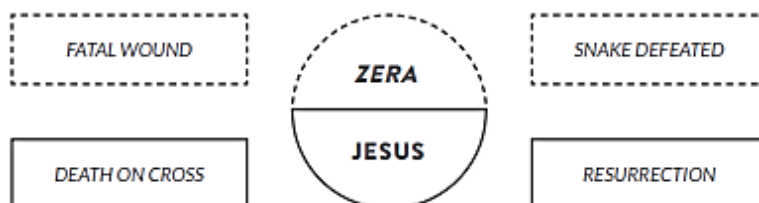
MARK 3:22-27
LUKE 10:17-18

...because he was liberating people from slavery to death and evil.

LUKE 13:16
ACTS 10:38

When the New Testament begins, it introduces us to Jesus of Nazareth, not as some random guy but as someone who comes to fulfill these specific ancient promises.

KEY THEME	<p>On the cross, Jesus received the fatal wound from the snake on behalf of humanity, but then overcame its power by his resurrection from the dead.</p>
8	



THEN	NOW
<p>Those who crucified Jesus unknowingly acted under the influence of the snake.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>LUKE 22:3</i> <i>1 CORINTHIANS 2:8</i></p> <p>Jesus knew that the snake's power was limited, and that it was doomed to defeat.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>JOHN 14:30-31</i> <i>JOHN 12:31-32; 16:11</i></p> <p>Jesus's death was actually his victory: His resurrection robbed the snake of its power over humanity, and he now offers new life to those who trust him.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>HEBREWS 2:14-15</i> <i>1 JOHN 3:8</i> <i>2 TIMOTHY 1:10</i></p>	<p>The New Testament describes Christians as people who trust that Jesus' death and resurrection was for them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-3</i></p> <p>They have, so to speak, died and been raised with Jesus...</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>ROMANS 6:4-7</i></p> <p>...and now have the same power to resist the influence of the snake.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>LUKE 10:17-20</i> <i>ROMANS 16:20</i> <i>JAMES 4:7</i> <i>1 PETER 5:8-9</i></p>

Jesus fits this portrait that has been made and fulfills every part it, going into death on our behalf and coming out as victor with this transforming power for the world! The Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus!

Hebrews 1:1-3

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

HOW DO WE READ THE BIBLE AS MESSIANIC LITERATURE?

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS - How does this story repeat and build upon the garden story in Genesis 1-11? Has the wounded victor won? Or is the snake still in control?



Every story in the Bible is a recycled version of Genesis 1-11 asking the question and furthering the answer of *how God will restore everything through this One!*

TRACE THE THEMES - Trace any theme to this messianic figure. Follow the theme of God's goodness, wisdom, rescue, atonement, priest, prophet, or king. All themes end up leading to the Messianic portrait.



This also can be as simple as looking at the characters in a story, determining their highlighted characteristics, and asking yourself, *why would the author be highlighting this characteristic*. Usually, it is because they want you to connect it to the Messianic portrait!

START WITH JESUS - Work backwards. Start with Jesus and the prophecies and scriptures that the New Testament says He fulfilled! This will help you grow in identifying and following the Messianic portrait in the whole Bible!



Hebrews is a splendid example because this book spends most of its time recalling Old Testament Scriptures to encourage us in and toward Jesus. *Follow the Hyperlinks!*

A FINAL WORD

"What you say the Bible is about will define what you do with it, and what you do with it will decide where you go with this Anointed One."

1 Peter 2:4-12

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Seeing the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus is just the beginning. He wants your story to lead to Jesus too. The invitation is that you might begin to consider how God might be at work in the very ordinary, mundane details of your life all to lead you to Jesus. He wants you to be a Jesus person, a Christ person, a Messiah person. Then, because of this identity, we ought to invite others into this community as well.

PRACTICE – Reading Ruth as part of Messianic Literature