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THIS study is concerned with what is known theologically as Messianic Christology. More simply, it is a survey of all the messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures which were fulfilled at the First Coming of Messiah. The Orthodox Jewish interpretation does not, of course, expect Messiah to come twice, but rather – as will be seen later – expects two Messiahs each coming once. This study is presented from a Messianic Jewish perspective, and it will be shown that these Hebrew prophecies were fulfilled in the life of Yeshua (Jesus) and cannot be fulfilled in any other way. First, however, by way of introduction, we shall look at the New Testament and see how Jesus and His disciples dealt with this subject.

New Testament Usage

The Gospels make it very clear that Jesus' death took the apostles by surprise. Their confusion arose largely because of their lack of knowledge concerning the full program of the Messiah. They had fully expected Jesus to overthrow their enemies and establish His Kingdom on earth. They were very familiar with the prophecies concerning this aspect of the messianic program. What they had failed to grasp was that Messiah had to come twice: first to suffer, and, then, later to come in victory. The purpose of His First Coming was quite different from the purpose of His Second Coming.

In order to substantiate the purpose of His First Coming, Jesus does not ask His disciples to simply believe, but refers them back to the authority of their own Hebrew Scriptures – what is now called the Old Testament. One example of this is Luke 24:25–27, 44–48:

^{24:25} And He said to them, "O 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 enter into His glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. ...
...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 should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; ⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ "You are witnesses of these things. ..."

(NASB)

Here, on the Emmaus Road, in one of His resurrection appearances, Jesus reproaches His disciples for not knowing *all* that the Prophets spoke – including the prophecies concerning His suffering and death. They had no difficulty believing the prophecies which presented Messiah as a reigning King who would restore Israel to her former glory. They had great difficulty in accepting those prophecies which foretold of Messiah's suffering and death. The fact that the disciples were so distraught by Jesus' arrest and execution shows that they were really in a state of unbelief. We are told that Jesus began with the Law of Moses, moved on to the Prophets and went through all of the Hebrew Scriptures, showing the disciples all of the things concerning Messiah. He was, then, able to prove that His death and resurrection were perfectly in accordance with Scripture and essential to His work – proving His Messiahship.

From the most ancient sources to modern rabbis, Jewish teachers have always divided the Scriptures into three sections: The Law, The Prophets and The Writings. We see here (particularly in verse 44) that Jesus does the same. The Writings are sometimes referred to only as "the Psalms," Psalms being the first book in the Writings. Jesus systematically covers all Scripture, revealing to His disciples all things

concerning Himself. "All things" include prophecies of the Second Coming (which are still to be fulfilled), as well as prophecies concerning the First Coming (which were being fulfilled at the time that Jesus was speaking). By bringing together prophecies from all three sections of Jewish Scripture, Jesus is able to prove that it was necessary for Him to be killed, buried and raised again on the third day.

Jesus' followers learned their lesson well. Later on in the New Testament, after Yeshua's ascension, we see that the disciples repeatedly justified and authenticated Jesus' Messiahship to Gentiles as well as Jews using only the Hebrew Scriptures. The first example is Acts 8:26-39:

^{8:26} But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Arise and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.) ²⁷ And he arose and went; and behold, there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship. ²⁸ And he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." ³⁰ And when Philip had run up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this:

"HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH. ³³ "IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO SHALL RELATE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH."

³⁴ And the eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself, or of someone else?" ³⁵ And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. ³⁶ And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" ³⁷ [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] ³⁸ And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him. ³⁹ And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing.

(NASB)

This is the famous story of the Ethiopian eunuch who is reading the prophecy of Isaiah 53. Philip is sent to him to explain the meaning of the prophecy. We read in verse 35 that "beginning from this Scripture" Philip "preached Jesus to him." Beginning with Isaiah 53, a passage which will be examined later in this study, Philip is able to present the Messiahship of Jesus. The Ethiopian eunuch is so impressed by the way in which Jesus' suffering and death fits Isaiah's description of the Messianic Person, that he is convinced and immediately becomes a believer.

The second example is Acts 17:1-4:

^{17:1} Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ." ⁴ And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a great multitude of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women.

(NASB)

Here, we see that Paul's procedure in the synagogue was to expound on the Scriptures, meaning the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and specifically the messianic prophecies

Genesis 3:15

The Seed of the Woman

^{3:15} 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. (NASB)

^{3:15} וְאִיבָה אֶשֶׁת בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה וּבֵין זַרְעֶךָ
וּבֵין זַרְעָהּ הוּא יְשׁוּפֵךְ רֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תְּשׁוּפֶנּוּ
עַקֵּב: ֵס

MESSIANIC prophecy begins as early as the third chapter of the Book of Genesis. It is no surprise that the very first messianic prophecy should occur within the context of the Fall. If sin had not entered the world, there would never have been a need for a redeeming Messiah. After the Fall, God curses the serpent who had caused the Fall, and declares enmity between the serpent and womanhood. This enmity is to extend to the Seed of the Woman and the seed of the serpent. The Seed of the Woman refers to Christ, the Messiah, and the seed of the serpent will be the Antichrist. (A discussion of the Antichrist lies beyond the scope of this study, but see *The Footsteps Of The Messiah*, pages 135–146, for further details.)

The Prophecy

This, the first messianic prophecy, declares that the Messiah's descent or genealogy will be reckoned after a woman, not a man. This immediately runs contrary to the biblical norm. There are many genealogies in Scripture: Beginning with the earliest in Genesis five and 10, through the first nine chapters of I Chronicles, to Matthew one and Luke three (among many others), virtually all of them are lists of men's names. Legal descent, national and tribal identity, were always taken from the father, never from the mother (The sole exception to this is found in Ezra 2:61 and Nehemiah 7:63). It is very rare that a woman's name would be included at all unless she figured very prominently in Jewish history, and even then she would warrant only a passing reference.

The fact that Moses traced this genealogy through the woman tells us that there will be something very different about the Messiah, something that necessitates tracing His ancestry through His mother, not His Father. Moses gives no explanation here, and none will be given for several centuries until the time of the Prophet Isaiah – when he will prophesy (in chapter 7) that Messiah is to be born of a virgin and have no human father.

Genesis 3:15 states that Messiah will crush the head of the serpent, that is, Satan (Revelation 12:9, 15; 20:2). In the process Satan will manage to wound the heel of Messiah, but will be unable to prevent his own destruction. The bruising of Messiah's heel took place at Jesus' crucifixion – painful but, in the eternal sense, not fatal. The crushing of the serpent's head began with Jesus' death and resurrection, a point made in Hebrews 2:14–18. Romans 16:20 sees the crushing of Satan's head as still future and, so, his final destruction will not come until he is thrown into the Lake of Fire, as described in Revelation 20:10.

As well as hinting at the virgin birth, this verse also emphasizes the humanity of the Messiah. Messiah, the Redeemer, will not be angelic nor simply divine, but will be a man. It also lays the groundwork for the Messiah to be the God-Man.

These ideas are further developed in subsequent prophecies.

Genesis Four, Five and Six: Early Echoes of the Promise

These understandings about Genesis 3:15 come from our own historical perspective with the light of full revelation we have from the Scriptures. But how was this verse understood by those who first heard it? There are three passages in the following chapters which offer some clues as to the thinking of three significant individuals concerning the meaning of Genesis 3:15. A study of these passages shows that though the virgin birth would not be understood until Isaiah, the expectation of a God-Man Redeemer was understood.

Genesis 4:1

A literal translation of the Hebrew text for Genesis 4:1 would read:

And the man knew Eve his wife, she conceived and bare Cain and said "I have gotten a man: Jehovah."

וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת-חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד אֶת-קַיִן וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי אִישׁ אֶת־יְהוָה:

This is exactly the same sentence construction as in the next verse:

Again she bare his brother: Abel.

וַתִּסַּף לָלֶדֶת אֶת-אָחִיו אֶת-הָבֶל

Few Bible translators really understand what Eve is saying here, which is why our English translations do not read as given above. Eve has clearly understood from God's words in Genesis 3:15 that the serpent will be defeated by a God-Man. She obviously thinks that Cain *is* Jehovah. Her basic theology is correct: Messiah would be both man and God. Her mistake is in her application of that theology. She has assumed that Cain, her first child, was the promised God-Man. That she quickly realized her mistake is evident at the birth of Cain's brother whom she names Abel, meaning "vanity."

It is interesting to see how different scholars have dealt with this verse at different times. Most English translations read, "I have gotten a man with *the help of* Jehovah." The words "with the help of" were added by the translators to avoid giving a reading which was unacceptable to them. But the Hebrew does literally read, "I have gotten a man: Jehovah." This is actually the same construction as the Hebrew for the immediately preceding words, "and she bare: Cain." The common English translation is not based on the Hebrew text but on the Greek *Septuagint* which reads "through God." This was followed by the Latin Vulgate which also reads "through God."

The *Jerusalem Targum*, an Aramaic translation, reads, "I have gotten a man: the angel of Jehovah." The rabbis gave a reading here which is much closer to the original Hebrew text. The *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* reads, "I have gotten for a man the angel of the Lord." Another Aramaic translation is the *Targum Onqelos* which says "from before the Lord." These Aramaic translations and paraphrases are seeing what the Hebrew is saying and the supernatural implications of it. In Christian theology the Angel of Jehovah is seen as the second person of the triune God (something which is discussed