



WHO WAS JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The Word

These days there are many religions in the world. Prophets play a role in these religions. Prophets are people who think they know God's thoughts, and they proclaim these thoughts to the world around them. Jesus is recognized in some religions as a prophet like this. There is however a big difference between Jesus and other prophets who have received a word from God and shared it. What is that difference? What Jesus says about Himself is very clear.

What does Jesus say about Himself and Abraham?

Joh 8:52-58

Prophets receive revelation but do not know God in His entirety. Jesus says He knows God and existed before Abraham did. In other words, Jesus existed before He was born on earth.

What is said here about Jesus?

Joh 1:1-4,10,14

Heb 1:1-3

Jesus is here called the word of God. The word did not have a body in heaven. Jesus received his body only when he appeared on earth. At creation we see that everything was created by God speaking.

The angel of the Lord

In the NT a few words are used which actually have the same meaning such as the word, the Son, the image and expression of God. All of these words refer to Jesus. What you could actually say is that Jesus is the revelation of the 'invisible' God. But what do we discover in the OT? Was Jesus only there at creation or are there other moments when He is in heaven or on earth?

In the OT we can see that the angel of the Lord appeared at various times.

Gen 16:7-10,13

In this story the angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar. The angel says: 'I will give you many descendants.' Hagar acknowledges in verse 13 that it is Adonai (the Lord) who spoke to her.

Fire

When did the angel of the Lord appear to Moses and what was so special about it?

Ex 3:2-5

Ex 3:6

Who does the angel say he is?

Ex 14:19,20

How did the angel of the Lord appear in this story?

Joshua entered the promised land, but before he started the battle he encountered a man. Who did this man say he was and what was Joshua's reaction?

Jos 5:13,14

Image of God

Col 1:15-18

Here we read that Jesus is the image of God. You see in all the above mentioned examples that Jesus was there from creation as the word that created all things. After that He repeatedly came to earth as God's representative. He introduced Himself each time as God. The Jesus of the NT has always been there, but not always as man on earth.

Covenant

There is one more important moment which needs mentioning. God often reveals Himself in the Bible as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But what has Jesus to do with this?

As we have read, satan ruled over the earth because mankind listened to him instead of God. But God wanted to break satan's reign and set people free. This was only possible if someone lived righteously. For Jesus righteousness means that God the Father reigns in His heart and that He does what He hears the Father say. By this satan would lose dominion because he holds no authority over this person.

In Abram God found a man who was righteous by his faith. Abram did what he heard God say. That is why God chose to set the world free from satan's reign through the descendants of Abram. That is why God wanted to make a covenant with Abram. This became a blood covenant which would last forever.

Gen 15:1-6

In this story we read that God promised Abram many descendants, protection, blessings and peace. He did this because Abram trusted God! Now God is going to make a covenant with him.

Who appeared among the dead animal halves?

Gen 15:9,10,17,18

Jesus calls himself the light of the world. In the OT we see God also appearing as fire, a light, a torch. This story is very important because here God promises that Abram would receive the inheritance which God meant for man and that he would conquer his enemies.

Jesus is also present at the making of this covenant.

Later when Abram received a new name, that of Abraham, he had a child named Isaac. When this boy was 13 years old Abraham had to sacrifice this son. Abraham listened to God and was on his way to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah. Just as he was about to stick the knife in the boy, the angel of the Lord appeared.

Gen 22:11,12

The angel saw that Abraham listened and did not withhold his son from God. Through this act of faith, and because of the covenant, God would give His only son as a sacrifice. The son of God would bring forgiveness and set people free, beginning with the line of Abraham. How? We will learn about that in the next chapter.



EXERCISE:

Read the story of Abram in Genesis 12-22. Write down what you notice about how Abraham walked with God. Write down how Abram met God and what happened after their encounter.

Tell your mentor how you see Jesus at this moment in time. What do you believe about Him? What questions do you have about the person Jesus?

Ask your mentor how he/she got to know Jesus and what Jesus means to them.

PRINCIPLE 8

Jesus was present in the Old Testament as the word of God, the fire of God, or the Angel of the Lord.



Joh 8:52-58

52 At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death." 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?

54 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me." 55 Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

57 "You are not yet fifty years old", the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"

58 "I tell you the truth, Jesus answered, before Abraham was born, I am!"

John 1:1-4,10,14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all men.

10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Hebrews 1:1-3

1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Genesis 16:7-13

7 The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. 8 And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered. 9 Then the angel of the Lord told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." 10 The angel added, "I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count." 11 The angel of the Lord also said to her: "You are now pregnant and you will give birth to a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your misery. 12 He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers." 13 She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me, for she said, I have now seen the One who sees me."

Exodus 3:2-5

2 There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up." 4 When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." 5 Do not come any closer, God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

Exodus 3:6

6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

Exodus 14:19-20

19 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, 20 coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.

Joshua 5:13-14

13 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

14 "Neither", he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"

Colossians 1:15-18

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Genesis 15:1-6

1 After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." 2 But Abram said, "O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." 4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body - will be your heir. 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Gen 15:9,10,17,18

9 So the Lord said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon."

10 Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half.

17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. 18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates -."

Genesis 22:11-12

11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied. 12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."