

Ignite: Prophecies About Christ

Objective: By the end of the lesson the student will understand the Holy Spirit helps us understand the truth of Christ in scripture.

Bible Verses:

Psalms 22:1, 18

Matthew 27: 35, 46

Matthew 2:14-15

Hosea 11:1-2

I Kings 13:1-3

II Kings 23:15-17

Matthew 16:15-17

Luke 24:18-19, 25-27, 45

Romans 11:25

Zechariah 14:1-4

Essential Question? Why do Jews not see Christ in Old Testament prophecies that Christians do see Him in?

Opening:

Read Psalm 22:1, 18. Christians believe these scriptures are prophecies about what would happen to Jesus Christ during His crucifixion (Read Matthew 27:35, 46). These scriptures are prophetic and do relate to Christ's crucifixion. But long before Christ came on the scene the Jews understood the scriptures in Psalm 22 to pertain to incidents in the life of King David and some believe the life of Queen Esther too. How can we be sure who is right?

Teacher Note: Make sure all scriptures are read out loud in the class by student volunteers.

Content:

There are over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament that have some relation to Jesus Christ. But we also need to remember that Jewish religious authorities had interpretations of these scriptures long before Jesus ever came on the scene.

Let's take a look at another example that seems to support the Jewish perspective on how to interpret these scriptures. In Matthew 2:14-15 we read about Jesus being called out of Egypt by His Father. Matthew says the prophet (Hosea) spoke of this. The scripture Matthew is referring to is Hosea 11:1. The problem here is Hosea calls God's son Israel and not Jesus Christ. In Hosea 11:2, it is clear Hosea was speaking about the nation of Israel because Jesus never sinned by worshiping a false god (Baal) like Israel did. How can we make sense of this? Is it possible that Hosea's prophecy has two meanings? Yes!!

Some prophecies have one single meaning. A good example of this is I Kings 13:1-3. This was written about 900 B.C. and it pertains to the reign of King Josiah. The prophecy was fulfilled in II Kings 23:15-17 in about 600 B.C.

But some prophecies can have a dual meaning. In Matthew 24 Jesus explains what will occur at the end of the age. But He was also addressing some things that would occur in 70 A.D. when the temple was destroyed by the Romans. Many bible commentaries agree on this. The point is this is just one example of duality in prophecy. There are many other examples.

But there is more to it than just duality to prophecy. Another major reason we (Christian's) know what prophecies pertain to Christ and Jews don't is because God reveals it to us through His Holy Spirit. Notice the exchange between Peter and Jesus in Matthew 16:15-17. Peter knows Jesus is the Son of God when many did not. Jesus explains that Peter knew this because God had revealed it to him. God reveals things to us by His spirit working in our minds.

Notice another example of this. In Luke 24:18-19 two followers of Jesus meet the resurrected Christ and don't even realize it. They think Christ was just a prophet. In Luke 24:25-27 Jesus has to explain to them what the Old Testament scriptures had prophesied about Him. They had not understood before His resurrection. Luke 24:45 makes it clear that Christ had to open the minds of His disciples to who He really was after the resurrection. Christ (has the holy spirit) did it for the disciples and God's Holy Spirit does the same thing for us once we repent and get baptized.

The reason the Jews don't understand the dual nature of their own prophecies is because God has blinded them to this truth (Romans 11:25) for a period of time. But in the future all will recognize and understand the truth of God's word.

Independent Practice:

Ask the students to think of another reason why the Jews don't see Christ mentioned in some Old Testament prophecies. Give them a little time to think about it and see what they say. You can use Zechariah 14:1-4 as one example of what the Jews were expecting from the Lord. They thought when Messiah came He would immediately fight to set up His kingdom. They are not aware of Christ's first coming when He lived like a lamb. This is another reason the Jews are in the dark...they expected a conquering King rather than a lowly lamb.

Close/Reflect

Since the religious authorities in Jesus' time were unaware of His presence we need to make sure we are constantly studying the scriptures to show ourselves approved. We don't want to be caught off guard when Jesus finally does return for the second time.

Any final comments or questions?

Sources: Christ in the Old Testament, The Church of God International, 1999.