

# The Messianic Hope

The dependency of the NT on the Old and “The Gospel according to Abraham”

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## 1 Introduction

The foundation of the New Testament is the Old Testament. It is *not* merely nice to know the extras, it is the verification that the Gospel is from God, and *not* the creation of people.

### 1. The New Testament dependence

#### (a) The Gospels

**Matthew** Anchored in the Old Testament in the first breath: “...son of David, son of Abraham.” How important are these two names? Are the prophetic of things to come?

**Mark** “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God as it is written in Isaiah the prophet...” also in the first breath.

**Luke** A gentile, much different beginning. Yet, you are starting to be pushed to the Old Testament for understanding *Aaron* and the priestly functions and sacrifices. If that is too subtle, note the prophecy about the coming of John is straight out of the book of Malachi “And he will go before the Lord in the Spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of their fathers to their children...” (1:17, see Malachi 4:5-6). Luke is thoroughly anchored in the OT in the first chapter.

**John** Sounds like Genesis 1 at its start. If that is too subtle, the witness who was sent from God to testify about the Light says “in the words of Isaiah the prophet, ‘I am the voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’” ” Again, anchored in the first chapter.

#### (b) The book of Acts

is the history of the expansion of the early church from Jerusalem to Rome. Peter’s first sermon begins in 2:14 – he is into the prophets (Joel) by 2:16.

#### (c) The Epistles

**Romans** Begins the NT collection of the Epistles (generally ordered by decreasing length). Paul’s exposition of the Gospel is in the OT in the first breath: “. . . set apart for the Gospel of God – the Gospel He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures.”

**Hebrews** Overwhelmingly dependent on the OT. Key figures and institutions include Moses, Abraham, Melchizedek, Levi, the hall of faith (ch. 11) lists one OT figure after the other, the sacrifice, the high priest, the tabernacle, . . .

**1 Peter** “Concerning this salvation. . .” (1:10).

#### (d) What Jesus explicitly taught

**Luke 16:19-31** *The Rich Man and Lazarus*: Moses and the prophets are more foundational for the man’s five brothers than someone sent back from the dead to warn them of the coming fate of those who reject God’s kingdom.

**Luke 24:25** Jesus told his own disciples that they were foolish and slow to believe all that the prophets had spoken. . . what had they spoken? About the sufferings of the Christ so He began with Moses and the prophets, and explained to them what the scriptures said concerning Himself.

**Luke 24:36** Jesus is dealing with doubts about His physical resurrection. One way was to prove He was physical and not a ghost. But next, to deal with their doubts, He took them back to the OT Scriptures in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, the three divisions of the Hebrew OT.

**Matthew 5:17** “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

**John 5:39** “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about Me.”

## 2 Verification of the Truth of the Gospel

The verification of the Truth of the Gospel is set on these pillars.

1. Revelation of God, the prophetic word (see Deut 13, 18:9-22; Isaiah 41:21-23, 48:1-6) Consistent both forwards and backwards.
2. The miraculous.
3. Eyewitness/reliable records. God’s works are done in History. Jesus will not be sent over and over again into a laboratory (that would put the control into man’s hands).
4. Personal experience of the divine work (subject matter of 1 John – written so that you may *know* you have eternal life v.5:13).

### 2.1 Comparison with other “proof” techniques

Can you “prove” the Gospel? When I hear the term proof I think of the following techniques (do any apply?).

**Mathematical proof** *Theorems* derived from *axioms* by application of *formal logic*. Theorems are only as true as the axioms.

$$\text{Premises} \xrightarrow{\text{logic}} \text{Conclusion.}$$

Numerous reasoning techniques were developed by the Greeks: Formal deduction (*e.g.*, modus ponens), proof by contradiction, mathematical induction, . . .

**Scientific method** Observation, hypothesis, experimentation. A hypothesis, after repeated experimentation, may become a *theory* (perhaps even a *law*). A *scientific theory* must meet the following criteria:

- Must have *predictive* power that is *quantifiable* and *repeatable*.
- Must be *falsifiable*, i.e. there must be some experiment or possible discovery that could prove the theory untrue.

Note that in science, unlike popular usage, the term “theory” is somewhat synonymous with “fact.”

**Direct Evidence** Eye witness accounts. Generally weak but becomes stronger in numbers and when combined with *corroborating evidence*.

**Circumstantial evidence** Evidence used to convict someone in a court of law. *Forensic evidence* can be stronger than direct, eye witness accounts since it admits to scrutiny.

### 2.2 General and Special Revelation

1. Psalm 19:1-6, Romans 1:19-20. Creation as witness to the existence and character of a Creator.
2. Psalm 19:6-14. God explicitly making Himself known through revealed Law. The predictive power of prophecy verifies truth (Isaiah 41:21-23).

## 2.3 Faith

- *Faith*, a belief and hope in the unseen (Hebrews 11:1-3), is necessary to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Belief in His existence and character as one who rewards those who seek Him is the hallmark of the Christ follower (Hebrews 11).
- Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness through faith (Genesis 15:6).

## 3 Allegories and Types

1. An *Allegory* is a story in which people, things, and happenings have another meaning, often used for instruction. The word *type* is borrowed from the Greek *tupos* (e.g. Rom 5:14), which is a mark formed by a blow or impression, hence a figure image.
  - A *type* is a model of some reality which is yet to appear, a *prototype* of that which is yet to be developed and revealed.
  - An *antitype* (Gk. antitupon) is a thing resembling another, its counterpart.
2. In Scripture, a type is a divinely purposed anticipation which illustrates its antitype. Types occur frequently in the OT. The antitype, or fulfillment of the type, is found generally in the NT. A type can be a person (e.g. Adam, Melchizedek, . . .), a place (e.g. Egypt, . . .), a thing (e.g. the brazen serpent – Num 21:8, John 3:14; Jacob's ladder – Gen 28:12, John 1:51), an event (e.g. the rock in the wilderness – Ex 17:6, 1 Cor 10:4), an office (e.g. prophets, priests, kings), or an institution (e.g. Passover).

## 4 The Gospel according to Abraham

1. Abraham is a *major* player in the Old and New Testaments (approximately 268 verses reference him).
2. How could we describe his role?
  - (a) He is the one with whom God's covenant with Israel was originally given.
  - (b) Friend of God: James 2:23, 2 Chr 20:7, Isa 41:8.
  - (c) Paul, James, and the author Hebrews use him as the key example of someone who lives by faith. Both Paul (Rom 4, Gal 3) and James (James 2:23) make use of the watershed verse in Gen 15:6.
  - (d) He was the "father" of the Jewish nation ("Ab" is "father," "ram" is "high," "raham" is "of multitudes"). God told him, though he was childless that his descendants would be as the stars in the sky, as the sand of the sea shore.
  - (e) This father has a promised son (the type)
    - i. Gen 11-21 covers 25 years to that child's birth. Gen 21-22 is another 13 to 20 years while Isaac grows old enough to carry the wood up the mountain.
    - ii. The information that God gives Abraham is progressive. When the time is full the child is born.
    - iii. The child is miracle born – Sarah is past child bearing age.
    - iv. This son, is Abraham's son, the only son, whom he loves Gen 22.
    - v. Isaac gives himself up in obedience to his father.
    - vi. The place where the sacrifice is to take place is the mountains of Moriah. Where is that? That is where the temple will be built (2 Chr 3:1-2), where Jerusalem is.

Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." – Gen 22:2

- vii. God provides a substitute sacrifice. Abraham's son is spared. A ram is the substitute. The statement is that God Himself will provide (note future tense: "will provide" not "has provided").
  - viii. Abraham called that place "God will provide" mountain. This saying persisted to the time of Moses (approx 600 years later).
- (f) This Father has a promised Son (the antitype)
- i. At the very beginning of Jesus' ministry (His baptism), what does God say about Jesus? **This is my son**, whom I love. Same thing on the Mount of Transfiguration: This is my son. Same in John 3:16, Matt 3:17, Matt 17:5, Mark 1:11, Mark 9:7, Luke 3:22, Luke 20:13, Gen 22:2.
  - ii. Where does Christ die? He dies in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah. Jesus says he **must** die there (Matt 16:21). Why "must"?
  - iii. Animal sacrifice spans the interval between these two events. Animal sacrifice was *not* instituted on Mt. Moriah, but on Mt. Sinai. These mountains are not easily confused. A possible interpretation would be that animal sacrifice would be the accepted placeholder between what Abraham did in obedience to God and what God offered as a sacrifice.
  - iv. The Event with Abraham takes us on a walk through the Gospel. It was recorded in promise form, passed on by word of mouth (or perhaps in some other written form) until recorded in Genesis at the time of its writing. It then was part of the scriptural heritage.