

Messianic Prophecies: The Light

1. Shortly after Mary's purification (41 days after birth [Lev 12:2-4]), the Holy Spirit reveals to Simeon that the infant Jesus was the prophesized Messiah. How does Simeon identify Jesus? What is Simeon referring to when he alludes to several prophetic messianic passages from Psalms and Isaiah?

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. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, then he took Him into his arms and blessed God, and said,

"Now Master, You are releasing Your slave in peace,
According to Your word.

For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

Which You prepared in the presence of all peoples,

A Light for revelation to the Gentiles,

And for the glory of Your people Israel." (Luke 2:26-32, LSB)

Yahweh has made known His salvation;

He has revealed His righteousness in the eyes of the nations.

He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel;

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. (Ps 98:2-3, LSB)

Yahweh has bared His holy arm

In the sight of all the nations,

That **all the ends of the earth may see**

The salvation of our God. (Isa 52:10, LSB)

"I am Yahweh, I have called You in righteousness;

I will also take hold of You by the hand and guard You,

And **I will give You as a covenant to the people,**

As a light to the nations,

To open blind eyes,

To bring out prisoners from the dungeon

And those who inhabit darkness from the prison. (Isa 42:6-7, LSB)

He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant

To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to cause the preserved ones of Israel to return;

I will also give You as a light of the nations

So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." (Isa 49:6, LSB)

2. When Jesus begins His ministry in Galilee, He visits a synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:14-16). Jesus, the son of Joseph of Nazareth, reads a messianic passage from Isaiah and proclaims it immediately fulfilled. What do you observe in this passage? What is Jesus saying about Himself?

And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the scroll and found the place where it was written,

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.
He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set free those who are oppressed,
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”

And He closed the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:17-21, LSB)

The Spirit of Lord Yahweh is upon me
Because Yahweh has anointed me
To bring good news to the afflicted;
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim release to captives
And freedom to prisoners,
To proclaim the favorable year of Yahweh
And the day of vengeance of our God,
To comfort all who mourn, (Isa 61:1-2, LSB)

3. Throughout Jesus’ ministry, the motif of being the Light is understood in the figurative sense representing God’s salvation and the source that could open blind eyes to the good news. What do you observe about Jesus Christ in Revelation and New Jerusalem? How does this affect your understanding of messianic prophecies?

And I saw no sanctuary in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its sanctuary. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. And the nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. (Rev 21:22-24, LSB)

4. Thinking further to develop a full picture, how is the glory of God associated with light? How does this affect your understanding of messianic prophecies?

Then Moses said, “I pray You, show me Your glory!” And He said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of Yahweh before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.” (Ex 33:18-19, LSB)

And the glory of Yahweh dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. And the appearance of the glory of Yahweh was like a consuming fire on the mountain top, in the eyes of the sons of Israel. (Ex 24:16-17, LSB)

Messianic Prophecies: The Light Teacher Notes

One of the challenges in Bible study is to control the immediate urge to interpret the passage by answering the question, "what does it mean?" The key to successful Bible study is careful observation of God's word (i.e. What do you see – such as: what is the definition of words? Is there a literary structure to identify? Are there figures of speech? Etc.) To help the student with observation of the text in this first question, the messianic prophecy is highlighted in bold.

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Ask the student: while the Holy Spirit reveals to Simeon who the Lord's Christ is, Simeon does not call Jesus the Messiah. What does he call the infant Jesus? Share your observations of Simeon's statement. What does Jesus' name mean?

Simeon sees Jesus as God's salvation who has been prepared for humanity. This revelation is figuratively seen as a light to Gentiles, and Jesus' name in Hebrew means, "Yahweh is salvation."

Ask the student: what do you see in the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament? Is the term "light" used in a literal sense or figurative?

Both Isaiah and the psalmist speak of “the salvation of our God” in the context of being visibly seen by the whole world as an expression of “His righteousness.”

To the house of Israel, it demonstrated God’s lovingkindness and faithfulness to the house of Israel in fulfilling a divine covenant – namely the New Covenant. Appointed “as a covenant to the people,” God’s righteous Servant is to “raise up” and “restore the preserved ones of Israel,” and will be a “light of the nations” to “open blind eyes” so that God’s “salvation may reach the end of the earth.”

Ask the student: do you notice how the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament expand our understanding of Simeon’s statement of Jesus Christ?

2. When Jesus begins His ministry in Galilee, He visits a synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:14-16). Jesus, the son of Joseph of Nazareth, reads a messianic passage from Isaiah and proclaims it immediately fulfilled. What do you observe in this passage? What is Jesus saying about Himself?

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Ask the student: how does Jesus see Himself?

Jesus sees Himself as the object of Isaiah’s prophecy: a) anointed by God and the bearer of His Spirit, b) the Messiah who brings the Good News of God’s salvation, c) the Prophet who opens eyes to the truth that sets man free from sin and proclaims freedom in the context of Jubilee.

3. Throughout Jesus’ ministry, the motif of being the Light is understood in the figurative sense representing God’s salvation and the source that could open blind eyes to the good news. What do you observe about Jesus Christ in Revelation and New Jerusalem? How does this affect your understanding of messianic prophecies?

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There is no temple in the new Jerusalem!

God and His Son are effectively the temple (Rev 21:22).

The glory of God powers the lamp of His Son and literally illuminates the city (Rev 21:23; 22:5).

4. Thinking further to develop a full picture, how is the glory of God associated with light? How does this affect your understanding of messianic prophecies?

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It is God Himself who defines what His glory is; it is **all of His goodness**, which is a part of but distinct from His physical person (Ex 33:18-19). This definition encompasses God's divine nature and eternal power with a focus on His absolute moral standard, and these qualities can be visibly seen!

When God's glory comes in contact on earth, it sets apart and sanctifies objects. And when one is in the presence of God's glory for a period of time, there is evidence of its intense luminosity.