



The Son of David

Genesis 12:2-3; Isaiah 42:1-9; 9:6-7

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When I was child, our family received an electronic game called The Electronic Detective for Christmas . It consisted of a game console which amounted to a tiny green digital screen and a few buttons. It was a glorified Clue. The point of the game was to solve a murder which had been committed by one of the game's characters. Each character was represented by a card, with basic information about them such as where they worked, hobbies, and the like.

During the course of the game, you could interview the different characters by asking them a series of prepared questions which were selected via the buttons on the console. From the answers to those questions, the players were able to gather the necessary clues to solve the crime.

At the beginning of the game you were given basic information such as who was murdered, where the body was found, and possibly the murder weapon (if I remember right). Then as the game progressed you were given more and more information and you tried to guess the identity of the murderer by asking the different suspects where they were at the time of the crime or what they saw in the vicinity of the crime.

That is a favorite game from my childhood. I actually had three favorite games: Risk, Monopoly, and Electronic Detective - War, greed, and crime. Oh, the things that fascinated me as a little raging heathen!

Discovering the identity of the Messiah during the Old Testament era was kind of like a game of Electronic Detective. In the beginning they were given some really clear, essential pieces of information. They knew that the Messiah would come through the woman, apart from the man, and He would suffer, but would be victorious over Satan (**Genesis 3:15**). Then, as history unfolds and the redemptive plan of God began to take shape, they were given more and more information. More clues were revealed and they saw pictures, types, illustrations, foreshadows,

promises, and prophetic pictures. By the end of the Old Testament revelation, they essentially possessed 39 books which constituted a profile of the coming Redeemer.

For us, identifying the Messiah is not like a game of Electronic Detective. It is more like watching *Columbo*. Most are probably familiar with Detective Columbo, the bumbling detective dressed in a wrinkled raincoat, suit jacket and shirt. More often than not, he looked as if he had just crawled out of bed, having slept in his raincoat. Columbo always seemed more interested in keeping his cigar lit or finding a pencil than he did in finding the murderer.

Yet Columbo always seemed to know. You don't know how he knows, but he knows. From the minute that the murderer shows up on the scene, Columbo seems to have an uncanny ability to pick him out of a crowd. It is almost as if he were sitting on the couch with you, watching the first part of the show!

What made *Columbo* unique was the **absence** of mystery. The who, what, where, when, why, and how of the murder was always revealed at the beginning of the show. Nothing was left to the imagination. I always found myself engrossed in Columbo, not to find out the identity of the murderer, but to see how Detective Columbo would catch him. The show holds interest by allowing you to see how Columbo takes the clues and makes the connection to the perpetrator.

For most of us, we come to know Christ as Savior and Lord without ever having to piece together the clues from the Old Testament regarding His identity. There is little mystery for us since the Messiah has been revealed in the flesh and taken up into glory (**1 Timothy 3:16**). What I do enjoy now is taking the time to go back and look at the clues which were given and observe how they connect to Him.

Last year at this time, this column focused on the very

first promise of a Redeemer in Scripture from **Genesis 3:15**. This, the second in this series, will focus on the Old Testament teaching concerning the *humanity* of the Messiah. To spend time reflecting upon the humanity of the Messiah might at first seem pretty elementary. You're thinking, "Wow, Jim you're really bordering on profound. There is nothing new there. I want a refund! Of course we know Jesus was a man."

Yet there are good reasons for visiting such foundational truths. First, there is much about the Messiah's work, office, and person that are directly linked to his humanity. For instance, without the humanity of Jesus Christ, our salvation would be impossible. If the Savior were not one hundred percent human, he could not stand in your place. He had to be a second Adam. He had to be the head of a new race, a new man, a new humanity. He had to act as a representative in our stead. If he were not man, he could not act as that representative. He had to take the form of a servant and come in the likeness of men. He had to be fully human in order to be a substitute for other men and women.

Charles Hodge, in his 3 volume systematic theology, writes on the humanity of Jesus Christ, "God as God, the eternal Logos, could neither be nor do what our necessities demand. Much less could any mere man, however wise, holy, or benevolent, meet the wants of our souls. It is only a Savior who is both God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever, who is all we need and all we can desire. As God He is ever present, almighty and infinite in all His resources to save and bless; and as man, or being also a man, He can be touched with a sense of our infirmities, was tempted as we are, was subject to the law which we violated, and endured the penalty which we had incurred."¹

God could not come as an angel, an animal, a spirit, a half human, a mongrel being, or any other kind of being and accomplish the work of salvation which involved Him standing in our place as us, taking the wrath of God for us, and justifying us, paying our penalty, and identifying with us in His work of salvation. His humanity was essential to our salvation.

Second, it is not really the divinity of Christ that is amazing, but the humanity of Christ. If God enters human history as God, showing up in a glorious spirit form, manifesting all of His perfections, that shouldn't shock us. That would not be unexpected, but if God should enter human history as a man--that is mystery. That is amazing! That is marvelous beyond words. Yet that is what happened!

¹ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology, Vol. II* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 396.

For the sake of time and brevity, we will look at just three things from the Old Testament which showed that the coming Redeemer would be a man.²

The Lineage of the Messiah Shows His Humanity

See: **Genesis 12:2-3; 17:19; 49:10; Is. 9:7**

It is fitting that we should begin with the lineage of the Messiah, seeing how that is where Matthew and Luke both begin their gospels. In order to prove that Jesus was the Christ, they showed that He was genealogically qualified to be the Messiah. That is why the genealogies of the gospels are important. They establish that Jesus Christ had the proper genealogical credentials, fulfilling the predictions that pertained to the ancestry of the Redeemer.

Genesis 12:2-3 is after the time of the flood. The earth was being repopulated, and though we are only 9 chapters removed from **3:15** (the first description of the Redeemer) we have fast-forwarded about 2,000 years of human history. Chapter 3 simply describes the Redeemer as a descendant of Eve, but **Genesis 12**, narrows down the field of candidates substantially.

From among all the people on the face of the earth, the Lord spoke to Abram (**v. 1**) and promised that in Abraham "all the families of the earth will be blessed" (**v. 3**). So this Redeemer would be born into history as a descendant of Eve, through Abraham.

Next you could turn to **Genesis 17:19**. After Abraham tried to make the promise of God come true by having relations with Sarah's handmaid, which resulted in the birth of Abraham's firstborn son Ishmael, Abraham was pretty confident that Ishmael would be the one through whom God would fulfill His promise. But not so. God promised Abraham in **17:15** that *Sarah* would bear a son for him. Abraham said in verse 18, "**Oh, that Ishmael might live before you!**" In other words, "Lord, bless this one. Use this one. I have a son, let the promise come through him."

Verse 19, "**No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.**" God went on to say, Ishmael I'll bless, but "**My covenant I will establish with Isaac, who Sarah will bear to you this time next year**" (**v. 21**).

That narrows it down even further. From Eve, through Abraham, through one particular line of descendants from Abraham as opposed to another--through Isaac.

² To assert the full humanity of Jesus is not in any way to diminish His deity. We can say that Jesus was both fully God and fully man. He was one Person with two distinct natures; perfect Deity and perfect humanity in one Lord Jesus Christ (Person).

Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. From which of the two would come the Messiah's line? God did not leave that up to chance, a guess, or even a human decision. Rather the line was determined by sovereign election (**Romans 9**). But when the boys were still in their mother's womb, the Lord told Rebecca, "the older shall serve the younger" (**Genesis 25:19-24**). God declared, "Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated" (**Malachi 1:2-3**).

Through craft and deceit, Jacob ended up receiving the blessing and being established as the one with whom the covenant would be fulfilled--all in fulfillment of the plan and promise of God.

Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. But Jacob! He had two wives and two concubines (and a whole houseful of strife) and by the time we get to **Genesis 35**, we find that Jacob had twelve sons. We sense the need for more information and to have the field narrowed a bit more.

In **Genesis 49:8-10**, Jacob was at the end of his life in Egypt. His sons came before him and he gave prophetic blessings to each of his sons, who would become the separate heads of the twelve tribes. Of particular interest to us is the promise given to Judah, beginning in verse 8, "**Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples**" (**Genesis 49:8-10**).

Judah was promised strength and pre-eminence within the nation. Look again at verse 10, "**The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes and to Him shall be the obedience of the peoples.**" The word "Shiloh" means "*the one whose it is.*" So the NIV accurately translates it, ". . . till the One to whom it belongs, comes."

In other words, the rule of the nation will not depart from the tribe of Judah, until from Judah comes the One to Whom the scepter (rule, staff) belongs. When He comes, then to Him shall be the obedience of all the peoples."

Think back to the promise given to Abraham. In Abraham, "all the nations shall be blessed." That blessing would come through Judah specifically, through this One who would rule with the scepter and to whom all nations would render obedience.

You can see how the OT systematically narrowed down the possibilities. The Messiah would come through Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, then Judah.

Now, Judah had a lot of descendants. In time, God would narrow it down again to one man--David. David was a descendant of Judah (**Matthew 1:1-6**). A promise was given to David that his house, his seed, his throne would be established **forever**. The promised Kingdom, the King, the Redeemer, Shiloh, to whom the scepter belonged, would come through David.

You can read this in **2 Samuel 7:16** where God says to David, "**Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.**" David had a number of sons and so the Lord narrowed it down even further to Solomon. Other passages which speak of this King and the Kingdom are *numerous*. You can check out **Isaiah 9:6-7** and **Psalms 89** for starters.³

The Old Testament promised that a Redeemer King would come through a woman (Eve), then through Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, then Judah, then David, then Solomon. The simple fact that we can trace his lineage demonstrates that he would be born into the normal flow of human history as a man.

The Suffering of the Messiah Shows His Humanity

See: Ps. 40:6-8; Is. 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-10; 52:13-53:12.

Isaiah wrote before the fall of the southern kingdom to Babylon, warning the people of the consequences of their disobedience and indicting them for their sin. In the latter part of the book, the Lord contrasted the nation of Israel as the servant of God, with One Whom God would send, One Who would be a perfect Servant.

The nation was chosen to be the servant of God. They were to do the will of God, obey Him perfectly, and to bring salvation to the nations. Did they do that? No. They failed. They fell into sin, immorality, and idolatry. How could the promises made to the nation possibly come to pass when the nation was so disobedient and failed to do what God set them apart to do?

The Lord, through Isaiah, introduced us to this One called "The Servant." Chapter 42:1 says, "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights." Isaiah 42 is one of four "Servant Songs." in the larger section of Isaiah. These four songs speak of this One whom the Lord would raise up Who would be the perfect Servant -

³ If you want a systematic study of the theme of "Kingdom" through both the Old and New Testaments, I would **highly** recommend the book *The Greatness of the Kingdom* by Alva J. McClain.

the Redeemer, the Messiah.⁴

Isaiah promises that this Servant would be successful, unlike the nation who failed. This Servant, on Whom the Spirit would rest would be successful in bringing salvation to the ends of the earth and justice to the nations.⁵

The fourth and final Servant Song is in **Isaiah 52:13-53:12** where the Servant is seen to suffer as a substitute for sinners and “bear the sins of many.” This is the Suffering Servant Song where “His appearance was marred more than any other man.” He grows up. He has no particular majesty or great appearance. He was not necessarily going to be a handsome, regal, extraordinary person.

He would suffer and be despised and forsaken by other men. He would be a man of sorrows. See the humanity. He would be stricken and smitten by God. This Servant would suffer and not for His own sins, but for the sins of others. He would be pierced. He would be crushed. He would be chastened in place of us. He would be oppressed and afflicted. He would not open His mouth, and would be cut off from the land of the living. He would die and His grave would be assigned with the wicked.

You are familiar with the predictions. He would be an ordinary man who would appear like an ordinary man, who would suffer and die like an ordinary man. He would be buried like an ordinary man. His suffering service to God in bearing the sins of men shows that he was human.

He came to render perfect obedience to God on our behalf. He came to be obedient even to the point of death, even death on a cross. Quite appropriately Paul says, “He took the form of a servant” and came as a man and died. He was human. It is because he was human that he was able to die in your place. That is the whole gospel right there in **Isaiah 53**.

The Rule of the Messiah Shows His Humanity

See: Genesis 49:10; Micah 5:2; Psalm 89.

We could turn to hundreds of passages from the Old Testament, but to keep it simple, we only need to go back in the book of Isaiah to **Isaiah 9:6-7**, a familiar passage to us, especially at this time of the year when we read these verses on the many Christmas cards which we receive.

Isaiah 9:6-7, “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His

4 The Servant Songs do not speak of a group of people, or the nation, but of one particular person. The pronouns bear this out as you read through the section - Isaiah 42:1-9. This is an obvious reference to the coming Messiah.

5 The Servant is also mentioned in **Isaiah 49:1-6; 50:4-10**, and comes to a climax with the amazing prophecy in **Isaiah 52:13- 53:12**.

shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.”

Notice again the humanity, the birth. He will be a son. He will be born as a child. He will not appear in time as if from Heaven or another world out of the clouds. He would be born and grow up as a child in normal flow of humanity. There were some in ancient times who thought the Messiah would come in the clouds of Heaven. Isaiah predicts that He would come as a child, born.⁶

These next words hearken back to what we read of Judah in **Genesis 49:10** about the rule not departing from Judah, **“The government will rest on His shoulders.”** In other words, “He will rule.”

The phrase *“the government will rest on his shoulders”* is a figure of speech that pictures a kingly robe which a ruler would wear. It means, “He will rule and administer a government.” In those days, the king would wear a royal robe. It was the king’s robe. If the person wore the king’s robe then it was said that “the government rested on his shoulders.” That is the figure of speech used here by Isaiah to say that the Messiah would rule over a government.

It is not an allegorical, figurative, or spiritual rule. The text says in a very straightforward and simple way, “The government will rest upon His shoulders.” Look at Verse 7, **“There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace. On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness, from then on and forever more.”**

That promise has not yet come to pass, but it will! Just as literally and certainly as the promise that he would be born a child. We can’t interpret half the verse literally and half the verse spiritually. Just as he came the first time to literally fulfill the prophecies, these promises will literally be fulfilled. The rule and reign of the Messiah was the hope of the Old Testament prophets and saints. He will establish again, as a descendant of David, the Davidic Kingdom, in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, and rule as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. The government will be His, Peace will be the outcome, justice, righteousness, and blessing will be the foundations of His throne and the characteristics of His

6 You will notice that the text also describes the Deity of Christ with the words “Mighty God, Everlasting Father.”

Kingdom and rule!⁷

You may say, "But Christ did not establish the Messianic Kingdom. There is no throne of David today."

That's right. God did not promise an uninterrupted monarchy, but rather an uninterrupted kingly line from which the Messiah would come. When the Messiah would come, He would establish forever David's throne. That hasn't happened yet. It will. Because God has promised that this Messiah will do it. That is the Hope of Israel. It is still our Hope.

This child that was born, a branch from David's line, would be called Prince of Peace. The government would rest on his shoulders. He would rule as a king and a prince as a son of David's line. Another proof that he would be human.

How?

How would it be possible for the Messiah to suffer and die and yet rule and reign? Those are seemingly contradictory and perplexing promises. If the Messiah were to die after or during His rule, how could His Kingdom be an everlasting Kingdom? If He dies prior to His reign, how could He reign.

As with Columbo, we know the key details before we even get to the end of the story. The answer is in the Resurrection. Death no longer has dominion over Him. He will die no more. He died once for sin, the just for the unjust. He is now immortal, glorified, exalted. Now He can rule and reign forever! He will!

How can I know this? Because Isaiah promised in verse 7, "**The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.**" God will intervene in human history to accomplish this. We don't establish the Messiah's rule. We don't bring this to pass. It is the LORD alone who will do this. This will be God's work. He will accomplish it; He will bring it to pass. Oh, I can't wait!

Without Wax-



⁷ Hundreds of passages speak of this rule. See for instance Micah 5:2; Psalm 89:4, 36-37; 2 Samuel 7:16 and Jeremiah 33:15-21.

Spurgeon on the Incarnation of Christ

"Our Lord Jesus Christ is, in some senses, more completely man than Adam ever was. Adam was not born; he was created as a man. Adam never had to struggle through the risks and weaknesses of infancy; he knew not the littlenesses of childhood, - he was full-grown at once. Father Adam could not sympathize with me as a babe and a child. But how man-like is Jesus! He does not begin with us in mid-life, as Adam did; but He is cradled with us, He accompanies us in the pains, and feebleness, and infirmities of infancy, and He continues with us even to the grave."

"If God loves us so much as to become man, then the blessings which he intends to bestow must be incalculable."

"He that made man was made man."