

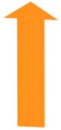
SEVEN ARROWS



What does this passage say?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What does this passage tell us about man?



What does this passage demand of me?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

MATTHEW 1:6-17



Beginning a book with a genealogy (and the entire New Testament) may seem strange. Matthew, writing to an audience descending from the ancient Israelites, believed the details of this genealogy were the most important clues to who Jesus is and what He came to do. The focus of the genealogy is on two individuals: Abraham and David. Now that you have a solid grasp of the story of the Old Testament, you should know why. Both Abraham and David received the covenant promises from God, through which God described His plan to save sinners and fix the world. God told both Abraham and David that the One who would come to fulfill these promises would emerge through their families. The fact that Jesus came from the line of Abraham and David proves that Jesus is the answer to God's plan. Along the way, Matthew also listed other various individuals through whom God brought Jesus to the world. This group contains the names of some notorious sinners, and some people we know nothing about. God proves that no one is beyond the reach of His mission in the world.

LUKE 1:67-80



Zechariah's prophecy is a summary of the story of the Old Testament. Because God's Spirit filled him, Zechariah uniquely understood that Jesus would be the answer to every promise made by God. First up, John the Baptist would come before Jesus and prepare the people for His birth. John would be the last in a long line of people God raised up to point forward to the coming of Jesus. Zechariah referred to God's covenant-the promise He made with Israel beginning in Genesis. Remember, this covenant promise was not based on the obedience of Israel, but God pledged His love to the nation and committed to bring about a plan for their salvation. Beginning with John and then through Jesus, God would break the silence of the past 400 years with the birth of His Promised One. Sadly, the ones who should have been looking for Jesus' coming would reject Him and miss His offer of salvation.

LUKE 2:1-21



Jesus was born in the city of David, and angels declared His identity right from the start. Even as a baby lying in a manger, Jesus was actually the Savior of the world. Through Him, God brought salvation to His people. Jesus is also the Christ, a word which means “anointed One.” Like a king in the Old Testament, He was chosen by God to lead His people. And He is the Lord, the one who deserves the allegiance of all people. The angels, knowing all this, praised the glory of God. They knew of God’s greatness, and the fulfillment of His promises to His people only heightened the sense of His glory. Once the shepherds saw Jesus, they also sang of the glory of God and told others about the Savior. Even today, those who know and love Jesus give glory to God for the hope He offers by telling others of His saving work.

MATTHEW 2



God protected Jesus in much the same way as He protected the firstborn children of Israel at the time of the Passover. A jealous king wanted Jesus dead, but God took care of His Promised One by providing a way of escape through Egypt. God delivered His Son, like the nation of Israel, from Egypt and brought Jesus out to begin His saving work. Each of these steps in Jesus' life was perfectly predicted by the prophets of God writing in the Old Testament. They knew the location of Jesus' birth and the place where He would live at the outset of His ministry. Not only are the details predicted by God, but they are designed by God as another way to show who Jesus is. Jesus' life followed the pattern of the nation of Israel, but there was a major difference. Jesus effectively accomplished what Israel was never able to do—His life perfectly reflects God's image to the world.

GALATIANS 4:1-7



Paul compared the relationship between people and God in the Old Testament to the relationship between slaves and slave masters. Slaves must obey the master's rules, and when they don't, they're punished. This type of relationship provides little hope for people who keep sinning, so God changed the nature of the relationship. At just the right time, God sent Jesus to the world. He was born under the old pattern, but He obeyed God completely. Faith in Jesus frees slaves from the burden of the law because they trust in Jesus, who obeyed the law on their behalf. They become sons, not slaves. As sons, all God's people from every nation receive the benefit of every promise God made to His people. The blessings God promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David are given to all those who have faith in Jesus' perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection.