

Messianic Prophecies

A Series for Advent



Student Workbook

A 3-WEEK BIBLE STUDY BY JOHN N. OSWALT

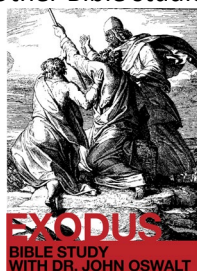


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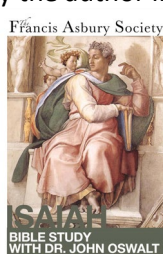
For information about these or other Bible study materials, contact:

FRANCIS ASBURY SOCIETY
PO Box 7
Wilmore, KY 40390
859-858-4222
800-530-5673
fas@francisasburysociety.com
www.francisasburysociety.com

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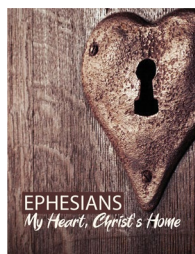
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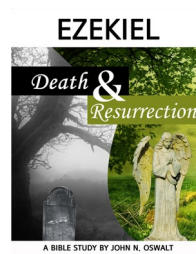
Isaiah



*Covenant on the
Ground: 1 & 2 Kings*



*Ephesians: My
Heart, Christ's Home*

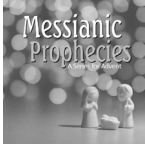


*Ezekiel: Death &
Resurrection*



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HE THAT COMES

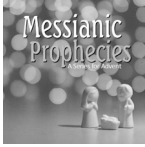
Malachi 2:17 – 3:6

Background: the book of Malachi was almost certainly written between 450 and 400 BC. The prophet, whose name means “My Messenger” (perhaps a penname) may have been a contemporary of Nehemiah and Ezra because the problems he confronts are the same that they did. The people had been back from Babylonian exile for nearly a hundred years, but they were still struggling to recover a sense of identity. They were only a province in the mighty Persian empire; they were not independent; they had no king or army. Who were they? But finally, after the ministries of these three (prophet, priest, and “king”) they realized that they could be what Exodus 19:6 had called them to be hundreds of years earlier: a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.

- In the book, the people display a very insolent attitude toward God. If he makes a promise or even a declarative statement, they respond with skepticism. The prophets had not only predicted the return from exile, but they had also predicted the coming of a golden age when Jerusalem would be the center of the world with all the nations flowing to it – with their money! So, when the return did happen, against all the odds, they expected that golden age. But it didn’t happen. The result was a skepticism that had to be overcome. God addressed it with a promise of his coming.
 - In chapter 1 God condemns the people for their pagan attitude toward sacrifice: do the rituals right and you should get what you want. But the Biblical attitude is that it is your heart attitude that matters and that the ritual is only a symbol of that attitude. The people’s cheap and deformed sacrifices told what their real heart attitude was.
1. Verse 17 raises several questions: Why did their attitude make God tired (rather than, say, angry)? Why would they say that God is pleased with those who do evil? How do they think God shows his pleasure? What is their understanding of “justice”?
 2. According to 3:1 how many people are coming? Look at 4:5, and then look up Matthew 11:7–16. Who is this messenger?
 3. The Gospels are following the Septuagint when they say “... prepare the way before *you*.” But according to Malachi who is it the messenger proclaims? What three descriptors are used of him? What is the significance of each of these? (Note that the first is not “LORD,” the code for the divine name, but “Lord”).

4. In the light of 2:17 (and also the background above) what were some of the things the people were clearly expecting the Coming One to do for them? What will he do according to verses 2–4? What will be the result? What will be the importance of that?

5. If not the action of verses 2–4, then what (verse 5)? There are four actions (the fourth is expanded) specified. What are they and what do they all have in common?



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SIGNPOSTS OF HIS COMING

Various Scriptures

A. Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 6:13

Background: In Heb. “seed” can be both singular and collective, but the Septuagint specifies that it is singular here (as Gal 3:16 takes it).

1. Notice the order of the questions and the judgments in Genesis 3:9–19. Where does the judgment on Satan fall?
2. How is this judgment appropriate in view of what Satan had done? What do we learn about the Savior here?
3. What connection do you see between the two passages?

B. Genesis 49:10

Background: The book of Genesis began with blessing for the human race, but disobedience turned the blessing to curse. But chapters 12–50 show the way to blessing, and it is appropriate that chap. 49 is devoted to blessing.

1. What does this verse tell us about the character and nature of the coming one?
2. What happened in 44:27–44 that might explain why the fourth-born fathers the Savior?

C. Numbers 24:17–19

Background: Again, notice the context of blessing. Baalam is supposed to curse Israel, but he can only bless. In the Sumerian script, the first written script in the world, the pictogram

for deity is a star *. Edom, in particular, symbolizes the fallen world's hostility to God and his salvation.

1. What does this vision tell us about the character and nature of the coming one?

D. Deuteronomy 18:15–19

Background: Notice the context in v. 14: pagans listen to sorcerers or diviners for a word from God. The Hebrews once heard the actual voice of God at Sinai but were terrified by it.

1. What does this vision tell us about the character and nature of the coming one?

E. Isaiah 4:2; 11:1; 53:2; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah 3:8; 6:12

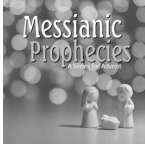
Background: The Heb. word is *tsemakh* “branch” in all but Isaiah 11:1 where it is *khoter* “rod,” and 53:2 where it is *yoneq* “sucker” and *shoresh* “root.”

1. What do the common features of these words tell us about the character and nature of the coming one?

F. Micah 5:1–5

Background: Written about 730 BC, the northern kingdom, Israel, is about to fall to the Assyrian empire and go into exile, and Judah will be severely threatened. The leadership of both Israel and Judah is deeply compromised.

1. What do we learn about the character, nature, and function of the coming one from this passage?



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THE KINGDOM OF THE CHILD

Isaiah 7:10–17; 8:16 – 9:7; 11:1–10

Background: The time was about 735. The empire of Assyria, after a period of dormancy, was on the march toward its ultimate goal of Egypt. The little countries of Syria, Israel, and Judah stood in the way. Syria and Israel decided that the only defense was for the three countries to form a coalition. The king of Judah, Ahaz, didn't want to, probably because of what the Assyrians would do to them if the coalition failed. So, Syria and Israel decided to depose Ahaz and force Judah to join. Ahaz decided to purchase the help of Assyria to attack Syria and Israel (which it planned to do anyway!). These three passages are to be understood against this backdrop.

A. Isaiah 7:10–17

1. Why was Ahaz reluctant to ask God for a sign that would prove God could be trusted to deliver him and his country from the Syro-Israelite threat?
2. What is the immediate significance of this sign (verses 15–17, age 12 is the age of accountability)?
3. Three factors point to a long-term relevance for the sign: its description in verse 11, the ambiguous term describing the mother; it is neither “young woman” nor “virgin” but a young woman of marriageable age (who would be a virgin if unmarried), and the name of the child. What will show that God is really with us? What kind of birth is going to be required for that to happen?

B. Isaiah 8:16 – 9:17

1. What kind of deliverer would Ahaz be looking for? Now, look at these references in chapters 7–11 (7:3, 14; 8:3; 16, 9:6; 10:19; 11:6, 8). What do these references suggest to us about the nature of the deliverer God will bring? What point is being made?
2. What have the people described in 8:19–22 refused to do and what have they done and what is the result? How does this relate to us and our times?

3. What will God's response be to this choice and this result (9:1–7)? What does this response say about God's character and nature?

C. Isaiah 11:1–10

1. What is the nature of the kingdom described here? How does this compare with the usual kingdoms of earth?
2. What are the characteristics of this king in comparison to those of "normal" kings?
3. What explanations are given in the passage for these kinds of behaviors?



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Wilmore, KY 40390
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800-530-5673
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www.francisasburysociety.com