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FLAG: Wednesday

HEAD: The Scriptures Reveal Jesus

SUBHEAD: Christ is revealed in both Old and New Testaments

By David Thomas

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How does the Bible show us Jesus? It turns out the answer to this question is quite expansive and interesting. It is also encouraging and potentially life-changing.

A most obvious place to catch a glimpse of Jesus in the Bible is in the Gospels—in the stories told about Him. Anyone who has read the Gospels knows that there are many stories about the things Jesus did and said. We look at the things Jesus did, and by observing them, we learn about Him. We can also learn from what He said. By observing both of these elements, we can learn how we should act. Let’s see in what ways the Bible tells us about Jesus:

**His Story**

First, we can read the narratives about Jesus. The narrative of Jesus and the woman caught in adultery, for example, is probably one of the better-known stories about Jesus. It is found in John 8. When we read it carefully, we see that the whole scenario was clearly set up to trap Jesus.

The scene portrayed is a disturbing one: the hard faces of the accusers, the total fear and embarrassment of the woman, the curiosity of bystanders, and Jesus in the middle of it all.

The most telling thing in this story is the reaction of Jesus to the woman that comes at the very end of the story. He did not condemn her, scold her, point out her sins, or delight in pointing out her failures. He did not dismiss her as no longer eligible for inclusion in the life of the community. Rather, he was kind to her. He acted as redemptively as possible. He had in mind the best course of action toward restoring the woman to the more noble state God attributed to humans at the very beginning.

Ellen White’s commentary in *The Desire of Ages* on the effect of Jesus’ kindness is heartening: “Her heart was melted, and she cast herself at the feet of Jesus, sobbing out her grateful love, and with bitter tears confessing her sins. This was to her the beginning of a new life, a life of purity and peace, devoted to the service of God.”1

In this story, we learn not only how Jesus behaved in the face of wrong, but also how He worked things around so as to be as redemptive as possible. We learn that kindness often opens the way for transformation. We learn also of Jesus’ power to transform lives; that He is always looking for opportunities and ways to do so.

**His Words**

Second, we can take a close look at the sayings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. Here we look at what might be called the short, pithy sayings of Jesus rather than the larger lessons He taught. One example of this category: “The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45, ESV).2

Here is a foundational truth about life: what we put into our innermost being—the heart—ends up being manifested in public. If we school ourselves in the ways of goodness and righteousness, that’s what comes out of us. If we give ourselves to evil and wrongdoing, that’s what our lives will produce. It almost goes without saying that those who desire to be in the kingdom will be very careful about the things they give their time and attention to, for those things end up being transformative.

**His Identity**

Third, we can learn about Jesus is by reflecting on what He said about Himself. These statements are significant, for through them we learn about Jesus’ self-perception. There are quite a few of these personal statements, particularly in the Gospel of John.

In John 5:17, 18, Jesus says*,* “‘My Father is still working, and I am working too.” (CEB).3 For this reason the Jewish leaders wanted even more to kill him—not only because he was doing away with the Sabbath but also because he called God his own Father, thereby making himself equal with God” (verse 18, CEB). Here is a very clear statement that Jesus made about Himself. By reading it, we learn directly from Jesus who He was.

Jesus tells us that He is not an ordinary human being like the rest of us. Rather, He has direct links to eternity, to God, whom He called His Father. That Jesus meant that He was divine is clearly seen by the reaction that came from those who heard Him. They understood very well what He was saying, and thought His self-description to be so blasphemous, so offensive, that they wanted to kill Him.

This self-revealing statement made by Jesus is one place we find support for the Christian belief in the divinity of Jesus, a truth that is essential to His ability to bring us redemption.

**His Sermons**

Fourth, we can learn a lot about Jesus from His more expansive teachings recorded in the Bible. Some of these teachings were conveyed by way of parables, many of which are well known even to this day. One that is not so well known but has a wonderful lesson is the one found in Luke 18:1-8.

It is about a widow, one of the most powerless members of that society, and a judge who turned out to be unjust. This judge refused to do right by the poor widow, so she, intending to obtain justice, kept going back to the judge, petitioning him to act on her behalf until he, out of a desire to simply to be rid of her, settled the issue in her favor.

This is an interesting parable, not just because of the tension produced by the inequities in social standing and power in the story, but because of the lesson it teaches by way of contrast. The message is that we ought to be, not like the judge, but rather like the widow. And the lesson? It is stated quite clearly right at the beginning of the parable: “To show them that they should always pray and not give up” (verse 1, NIV).

From this parable, we learn that persistence, perseverance are characteristics or qualities valued by Jesus. We are encouraged that if we are careful to develop persistence, it will serve us well as we navigate the rough-and-tumble lives we have to live on Planet Earth. So often even a little trouble sets us to doubting and whining, wondering if God cares for us anymore. Here we see that prayer and persistence are a great combination for helping us endure. Through this parable and others, we learn of Jesus.

We could, of course, look at any number of Jesus other parables with good effect, but we continue searching out an answer to our initial question, “How does the Bible show us Jesus?”

**The Testimony of Others**

Fifth, we can also learn about Jesus by looking into the comments made by those who were with Jesus, and who, in consequence, developed opinions about Him. This evidence is significant because it comes from those who were present and saw Jesus in real life.

One of the most profound and engaging comments in this category is the one made by John the Beloved Disciple in John 1:1-3. To a lot of people, this formulation of words is challenging because the language tends to sound a little funny. But it reveals an enormous truth*: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (verse 1).

John, having been with Jesus, seeing Him at work, having listened to His teachings, observing all this in light of established Scripture, came to the remarkable conclusion that Jesus was God, something that flies in the face of anything that we would consider normal. The evidences were so profound that John came unavoidably to this conclusion.

From this episode we learn a lot about Jesus. He was not just another human being. He was, to use His own words, the Son of God. That was clearly understood by those who associated with Him.

The ways mentioned thus far in our attempt to understand how Jesus is revealed in the Bible are quite plain and not so difficult to trace. They teach us about Jesus in rather obvious and clear ways.

**His Prophecies**

Finally, we can go to another place in Scripture where we can learn of Jesus that is a bit more complicated, but one that can give us lots of added insight. It emerges from the discussion of the concept of a Deliverer, or Messiah.

Christians claim that in the person of Jesus we have the fulfillment of the many and various promises—particularly in the Old Testament—about a coming Messiah. When we link Jesus to these promises, we have an abundance of information that is truly engaging: information that goes all the way back to the book of Genesis where that first promise was made to Adam and Eve after they sinned, a promise made obtusely to them via the curse that was placed on the serpent: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspringand her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel”(Gen. 3:15, ESV)*.*

Here in its most embryonic form, is an inkling of the first promise of many about deliverance, through Jesus, from the curse that came with sin.

In various ways the Bible tells us about Jesus. The Bible is a grand book with many strains of thought, but one central theme. God has acted decisively in history in the person of Jesus Christ, through whom we have redemption. Let us be among those who persistently believe!

*David Thomas, D.Min, is dean of the School of Theology at Walla Walla University, College Place, Washington, United States.*

**Payer Suggestions:**

1. Pray for persistence in reading about Jesus in His Word, so that we may know our Savior.

2. Pray for a desire to study the Bible with the intentionality that brings a better knowledge of Jesus.

3. Pray for an ensuing love of Jesus that will compel us to tell others about Him.

(Endnotes)

1Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 462.

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