



Aim of lesson

Following last week’s lesson, to confirm that God always intended to send Jesus Christ as saviour of the whole world.

Bible background

Life of Joseph – Genesis 37-45; Isaiah 53; Psalm 22; Micah 7

Preparation required

Familiarise yourself with the key aspects of Joseph’s life.

Outline of lesson

There are at least two different ways in which the life and work of the Lord Jesus Christ is prefigured in the Old Testament:¹

1. Sometimes the life experiences of an individual in the Old Testament mirrors the experiences of Christ. This individual is said to be a ‘type’ of Christ. Sometimes we use the word ‘shadow’ or ‘echo’. Use whichever you or your class are most comfortable with but make sure they know the expression ‘type’ as this is most widely accepted in Christadelphian circles.
2. Sometimes an Old Testament prophet would speak directly about God’s plan to send a Messiah to save his people from their sins.

This lesson will take just one or two examples of each in detail although it is important for the students to realise that there are numerous cases in the Old Testament.

Joseph as a type of Christ

The students should already have a working knowledge of Joseph’s life - revise it briefly with them perhaps making a chart of the key events.

Joseph was a saviour for his people through his provision of food during the famine years (don’t plough through all the detail if the young people are already familiar with the message). He was also rejected by his brethren, whom he later forgave. The key text is Genesis 45:7 in which Joseph himself says ‘but God sent me ahead of you to preserve you for a remnant on earth and save your lives by a great deliverance’.

The table below shows the main points of comparison between the life of Joseph and the life of Christ.

The students could go through the equivalent table in the their books filling in the blanks.

Joseph	Jesus
Beloved of his father	This is my beloved Son
A predicted ruler (dreams)	The Messiah – King of the Jews
Rejected by his own brethren	He came to his ownbut his own did not receive him
Sold for 20 pieces of silver	Sold for 30 pieces of silver
Put into a pit	Laid in the tomb
Pit later found empty	Raised on the 3rd day
Went into a far country	Ascended into heaven
A faithful servant (to Potiphar)	Made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant
Tempted but sinless (by Potiphar’s wife)	Tempted in every way as we are – yet was without sin
Innocent but paid the price of sin (in prison)	He was numbered with the transgressors
Exalted to glory and power – 2nd only to Pharaoh	All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me

¹ It may be worth talking to the students about the expressions ‘Old Testament’ and ‘New Testament’. We use them to refer to the two sections of our Bibles. However, they come from 2 Corinthians 3:14 (in the AV), where the contrast is between the law of Moses (the old covenant), and the covenant of grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. Which, Paul points out, is actually older (Galatians 3:17).

Joseph	Jesus
Appointed to save the world from famine	God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son
Provides bread for hungry	I am the bread of life
Nations come to him and they are saved	In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free....all one in Christ Jesus
Marries a Gentile wife who joins his family	His bride has made herself ready
Sons of an Egyptian wife given an inheritance with Israel	Jews and Gentiles inherit the kingdom together

Messianic Prophecies

There are many to choose from but Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 would probably be good starting points. Ask the students to read the chapter/s together and encourage them to work out for themselves how they could refer to the Messiah.

Isaiah 53

Certain phrases like 'despised and rejected by men'; 'bear the sins of many'; 'pierced for our transgressions'; 'assigned a grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death'; - all these are very clear predictions of what actually happened.

It might be interesting at this point to note that this is the passage the Ethiopian was reading in Acts 8 and that Philip used the chapter to explain to him the good news of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 22

'scorned by men'; 'all who see me mock me'; 'poured out like water'; 'I can count all my bones'; 'they divide my garments... and cast lots for my clothing'.

Once the students have established the truth of the prophecies it is important to make them realise that the rest of these scriptures are going to be fulfilled too e.g. v27 'all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before him, for kingship belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.'

Relevance to our lives

God is always at work in the lives of ordinary men and women although they may not be aware of it at the time. Joseph, for example did not understand why he spent 2 years in prison but he continued to trust in God. He became a saviour and foreshadowed the life of Christ.

The many Messianic prophecies show us that God has always been planning a way of salvation for us. The detail of the prophecies and their exact fulfilment can give us confidence in the rest of scripture.

Extension activities

- You might like to look at Micah 7 as a Messianic prophecy. Jesus quotes verse 6 in Luke 12:51 and applies it to himself - so look at some other verses. Note particularly:

v2 brother (AV and NIV)	He came to his own
v3 ruler; they all conspire together (NIV)	Herod, Caiaphas and Pilate
v5 a neighbour, a friend	Judas Iscariot
v6 family	Jesus' family were against his ministry

Then note how Micah turns it all around:

v7 confidence in God	Jesus did not sin but he suffered for our sins of the world and God did bring him out into light.
v8 I will rise, The LORD will be my light	
v9 I have sinned, I will bear the Lord's wrath.	

- Some more references to Jesus in the Old Testament:

Genesis 3:15	Jesus would be human, son of a woman and would 'defeat' sin
Isaiah 61:1,2	People of all kinds came to him; he preached
Isaiah 35:3-6	Healed people, deaf, lame, blind
Psalm 69:19-21	Despised and rejected, gave him vinegar and gall
Psalm 16:10,11	Jesus would rise from the dead.