

5 Mysteries of Jesus Hidden in the Old Testament

No child likes to go to the doctor's office, but I do have one fond memory of the waiting room—the *Highlights* magazine! I would immediately turn to the Hidden Pictures page. How many items could I find? In a similar way the Old Testament has “hidden” pictures of Jesus. He doesn't just show up for the first time in a manger in Bethlehem. He is in the Bible from the beginning! How many pictures of Him can we find? Here are five:

1. **At creation:** When we consider the account of creation, we tend to think of only God the Father. Yet when God is about to create man, He declares, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen.1:26a). Who is included in “our”? John, the Gospel writer, gives us the answer: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were created through Him, and without Him nothing was created that was created” (John 1:1-3). We know that “The Word” is Jesus, who “became flesh and dwelt among us”(John 1:14b)
2. **With Abraham:** In Genesis 14, Abraham had just succeeded in battle when he was greeted by Melchizedek, the king of Salem, who had a few interesting characteristics. First of all, he was both a priest of the God Most High and a king—unheard of anywhere else in the Old Testament. His name means “king of righteousness.” He was from Salem, which means “peace.” In other words, he was a king of righteousness and peace. He brought to Abraham bread and wine, and he blessed Abraham. Abraham felt compelled to give him a tithe. Does this remind you of anyone else? Jesus is both King and Priest. Jesus is the King of righteousness and the Prince of Peace. Jesus

broke bread and wine with His disciples to remind them of His body and blood which would be sacrificed for them. Jesus gives blessings to those who believe, and is alone worthy of our worship and our tithes. While scholars have debated whether Melchizedek was the pre-incarnate Christ, at the very least, we can agree that He was a “type,” or picture, of Christ.

3. **In prophetic words:** Isaiah speaks of the Messiah’s birth of a virgin, and that He would be both man and God: “For to us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). How can one born, also be Mighty God? Isaiah was of course referring to Jesus. Micah tells us that He would be born in Bethlehem. Genesis and Numbers provide His lineage. Other prophets describe His betrayal, His persecution, and His mission to save us from our sins. The Old Testament includes many prophecies of Jesus—recorded hundreds, and in some cases, thousands of years before His actual birth. These prophecies all provide pictures of Him before He was born of a virgin, in Bethlehem, and of the forecasted lineage.
4. **In the fiery furnace:** Daniel 3 depicts one of the most exciting pictures in the Old Testament. Three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, were thrown into a furnace of fire because they would not worship the king of Babylon and his idols. King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished that his own men, who had put this trio in the furnace, perished in the fire, and asked what happened to the three offenders. “He declared to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.” He answered and said, “But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are

not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods" (Dan. 3:24-25). Who was the fourth man? Why did He have the appearance of a son of gods? Could He have been Christ?

5. **As "the" Angel of the Lord:** The Old Testament mentions the article "the" several times, before "angel of the Lord." Is it possible that this angel was the pre-incarnate Christ? In every instance where "the angel of the Lord" appears, He speaks with the authority of God, and the listener assumes His divinity. For instance, "the angel of the Lord" appeared to an Egyptian slave girl in Genesis 16:2; to Abraham in Genesis 22:11; to Moses in Exodus 3:2. Moses also "hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God." (Ex. 3:6c) We may never know this side of heaven if "the angel" was the triune Person of the Godhead, Christ, but it certainly seems possible. After all, Jesus Himself said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58).

The Old Testament includes many more illustrations, types and foreshadowings of Christ, but they are not hidden images. And just as children can't "un-see" the hidden pictures in the *Highlights* issues once they find them, we can't "un-see" Jesus once we find His images in the Old Testament. How will we respond? Will we deliberately choose to revert to blindness or open our eyes to the enormity of God's gift to us? I believe that for those with eyes to see, the Old Testament illustrations are there to assure us of the divinity of Christ. He is One with God. God reveals to us that Jesus has been there from the beginning, and we can thus have the hope and assurance that He will be with us always to the end of the age. He is indeed, "the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (Rev. 22:12-13), "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

Amen. {eoa}

Carole Schryber was an attorney in New York who gave up the practice of law to devote herself to studying and teaching Scripture. Her talk, Genesis to Revelation in 60 Minutes, was the impetus for the book HIStory in 30 Days: Genesis to Revelation. She regularly speaks and teaches at her home church, McLean Bible, in the Washington D.C. area, in addition to other churches. She was the associate teaching director of Community Bible Study, which serves more than 400 women weekly. She is a wife and mother of three grown children. Her weekly blog can be found on her website .