

Connect the OT and NT

Our goal is to connect the promises of God in the Old Testament with the coming of Jesus in the New Testament. The difficulty in this lesson is that it is thematic. This means that we will use a repeated pattern to develop the lesson. With such a broad theme, how do I select which Old Testament promises to teach? And then, once I know my content, HOW do I teach it?

We are going to use the very first verse of the New Testament, Matthew 1:1 as our connection point with the Old Testament: “The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” God made the promise to Abraham that first, He would make a great nation out of his descendants and second, that One of them would be a blessing to the whole earth. (Gal. 3:16) Later, God further elaborated that Abraham’s descendants would be like the stars: too numerous to count! Abraham was childless when the promise was made, and he never saw the fulfillment in his lifetime—but he believed God, and the Old Testament shows how God was fulfilling that promise. When we come to the lowly shepherd, David, a thousand years after Abraham, God made him the king of the great nation and promised a descendant who would be king forever. David never saw the fulfillment of an enduring kingdom in his lifetime—but he believed God’s promise. By the end of the Old Testament history, we see the failure of David’s kingly line, but through the prophets God gave numerous clues about His coming Savior. He did this so that His people would be ready, so they could identify the false messiahs, and so they could be assured Jesus was the Promised One from God.

Through these details we can see the Basic Teaching that: God will keep His word no matter how long it takes in sending His Son to redeem a people for Himself and establishing His Kingdom on earth. And I want my students to respond to this by resting their full assurance on the promises of God that Jesus is the foretold Savior.

Here is how I would develop this lesson:

I would start with establishing a timeline of how long ago Abraham and David lived. Since Abraham is about an equal number of years BEFORE Christ as we are AFTER Christ, my first question would ask the students what year we are in and write that on the board. From what event are we counting? The birth of Jesus. I have my students look at the page in their Bible just before Matthew 1 that says “New Testament,” and explain that this was all written AFTER Jesus came. Then I have us imagine that we are at the time of Jesus and we are going BACK into the history before Jesus. I am now near the very beginning of the Bible (Genesis 12) and I start storytelling about God’s call and promise to Abraham.

Because this is a repeated theme that God’s promises took much longer than the lifetime of the person receiving the promise, I used this helpful rhyme and repeated it after each main section:

“(Abraham) lived, and then he was DEAD. But GOD was still doing just what He said!”

“(Moses) lived, and then he was DEAD. But GOD was still doing just what He said!”

“(David) lived, and then he was DEAD. But GOD was still doing just what He said!”

“(The prophets) lived and then they were DEAD. But GOD was still doing just what He said!”

I included the hand motions as if the sun were rising when we said “lived” and as if the sun were setting when we said “dead.”

I include Moses only because he is half-way between Abraham and David and gives the Law to God's people, but I don't develop any details except that God is still keeping His promises to Abraham.

When I come to the time of the prophets, I shift from the promise theme to the "clues" theme. The kingdom of David had become corrupt and the people needed a Savior to bring them back to God. God was going to tell where His Savior would be born, how He would live, what He would do, how people would treat Him, how He would die, and even where He would be buried! I ask the students why God would give these clues. Usually the students can think of answers that cover the main ones I'm trying to bring out.

I would conclude with the song Faith is Just Believing What God Says He Will Do, which reinforces the main truth of the lesson and teach the memory verse John 5:39b: "It is (the Scriptures) that bear witness of (Jesus)."

Strong Hands Enterprises, LLC 2021

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