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INTRODUCTION

On a Sunday afternoon about 2,000 years ago, Cleopas and his friend were making the seven-mile walk from Jerusalem to a town called Emmaus. A very ordinary-looking man joined them and asked what they were talking about. It seemed like a strange question as one event had dominated most people's conversations that weekend: Friday's execution of the very popular Jesus, son of Joseph from Nazareth.

They were very sad, they said, because this man was so good, so powerful and so obviously sent by God that they thought he was going to do amazing things for the Jewish people. The fact that Jesus' body was now reported missing just added to their sadness, as if their grief and sense of loss was now being insulted by grave-thieves.

But their fellow traveller was not as clueless as they first thought. When they told him how sad they were, the first thing he did was call them 'foolish' because they didn't understand that all this was supposed to happen to the Messiah but that it would end well.

'And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself'¹. You see, their fellow-traveller wasn't just a random guy – he was Jesus himself, but they didn't realise until later on that evening.

This book will take us into that conversation Jesus had with Cleopas and his friend and what he was trying to help them understand. We will go on a tour of some of what 'Moses and all the Prophets' said about Jesus. Who were they talking to? What did it mean to those people? How was any of it about Jesus?

Different people have different ideas about how many prophecies in the Old Testament are about Jesus. One suggestion is that there are 353 prophecies regarding the coming of Jesus. I have chosen thirty for the purposes of this book.

My prayer is that as you see the prophecies God inspired his prophets to make, you will see what God has done through Jesus, and you will want to know him.

1. Luke 24:27



PROPHET/DATES – WHO WAS GOD’S MESSENGER, TAKING THE PROPHECY TO THE PEOPLE, AND WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?



PROPHECY MADE & PROPHECY FULFILLED – DIRECT QUOTES FROM THE BIBLE OF THE PROPHECY ITSELF AND ITS FULFILMENT. SOMETIMES THE BIBLE RECORDS MORE THAN ONE EXAMPLE OF THE ORIGINAL OR THE FULFILMENT AND IN THOSE SITUATIONS I’VE QUOTED JUST ONE.



THEN AND THERE – WHAT THE PROPHECY MEANT TO THE ORIGINAL HEARERS



PROPHECY FULFILLED – HOW JESUS FULFILS THE PROPHECY



SCARLET THREAD – HOW DOES THIS PROPHECY FIT IN WITH WHAT GOD IS SAYING ABOUT HIS ‘ONE STORY’? THE STORY OF HOW HE IS SAVING PEOPLE FROM SATAN AND KEEPING THEM SAFE TO BE WITH HIM FOREVER?

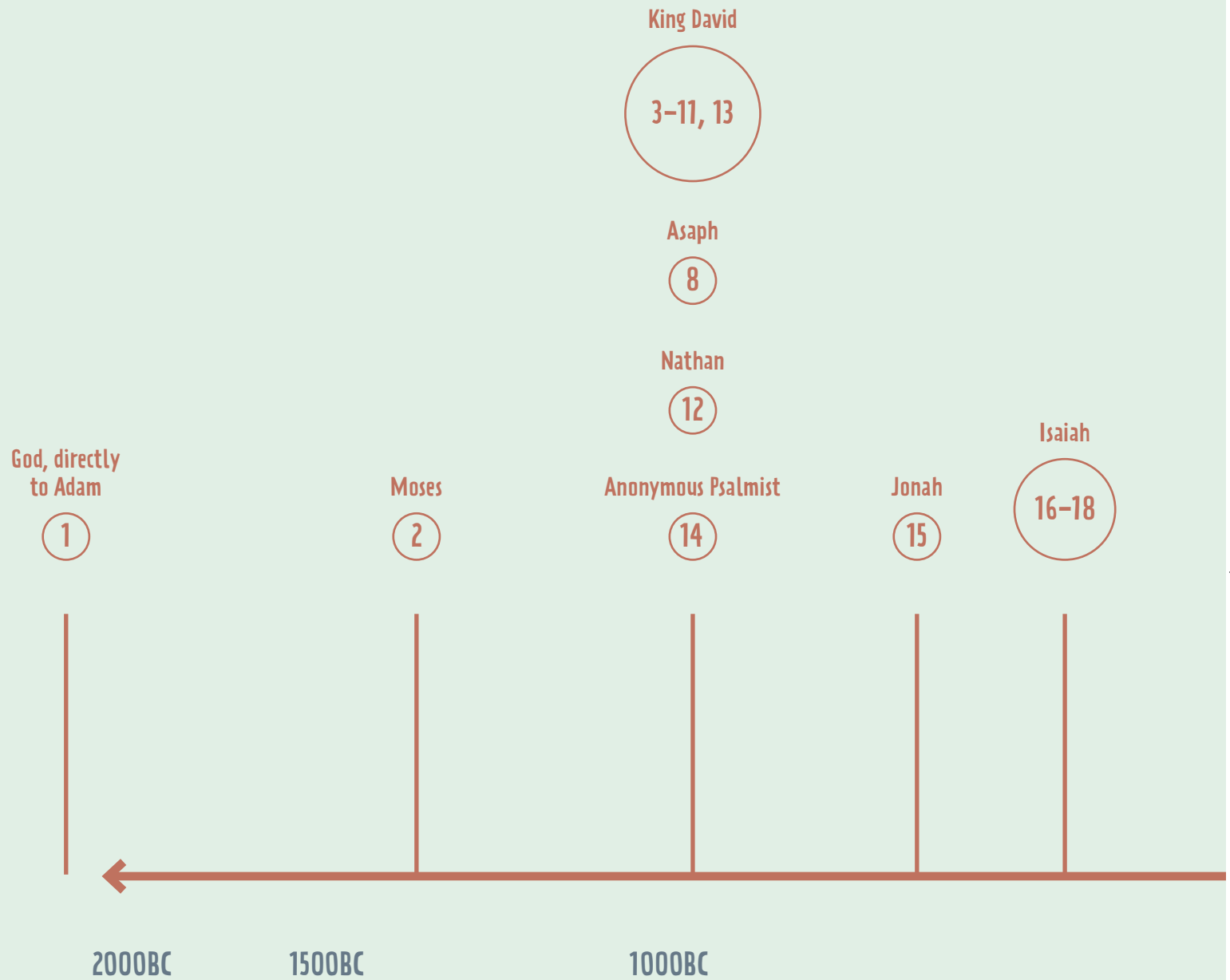


APPLICATION – SO YOU’VE LEARNED ABOUT THE PROPHECY, THE FULFILMENT, AND HOW IT TIES IN TO GOD’S ONE STORY ... BUT WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR YOU?



PRAYER – THERE ARE MANY THINGS YOU COULD PRAY ABOUT AFTER LEARNING ABOUT ONE OF THESE PROPHECIES. THE PRAYER GIVEN IS AN EXAMPLE OF SOMETHING YOU COULD PRAY IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE JUST LEARNED OR BEEN REMINDED OF.

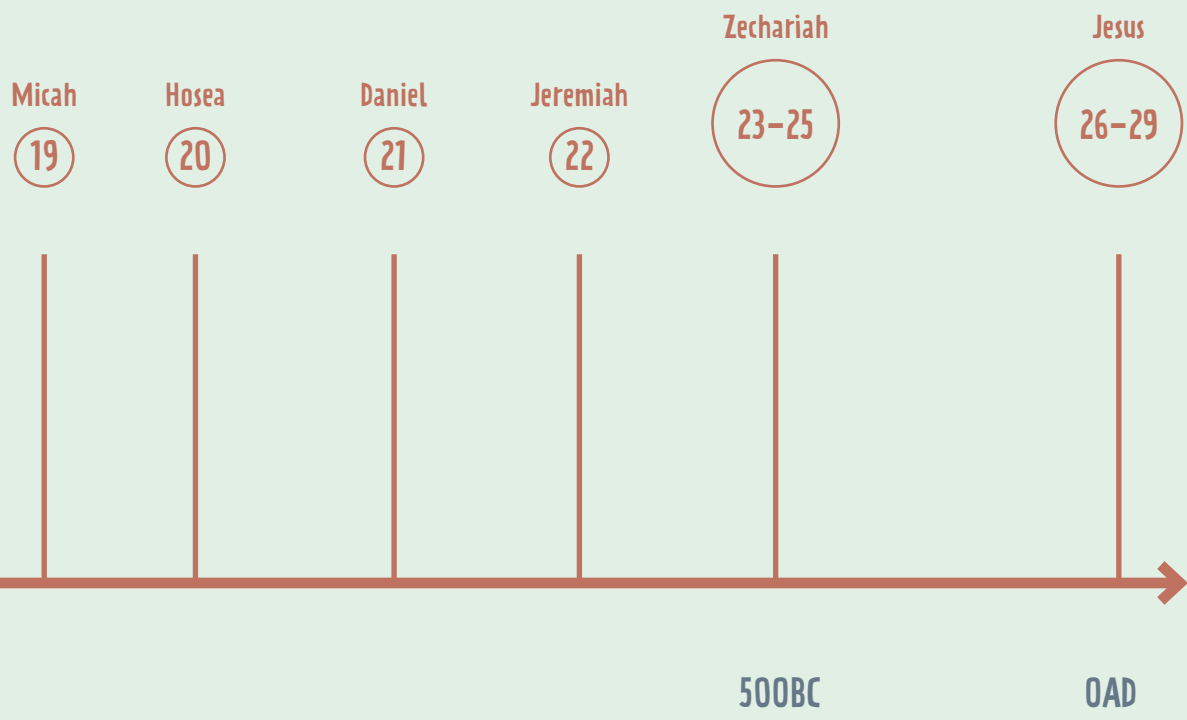
PROPHECY TIMELINE



Words: These are the biblical authors.

Circled Numbers: These refer to the chapters in the book.

Timeline scale varies.







FROM THE FALL TO KING DAVID





1

JESUS: HE DEFEATED THE DEVIL'S WORK



PROPHET/DATES: God, directly to Adam and Eve after the first sin. Date unknown.

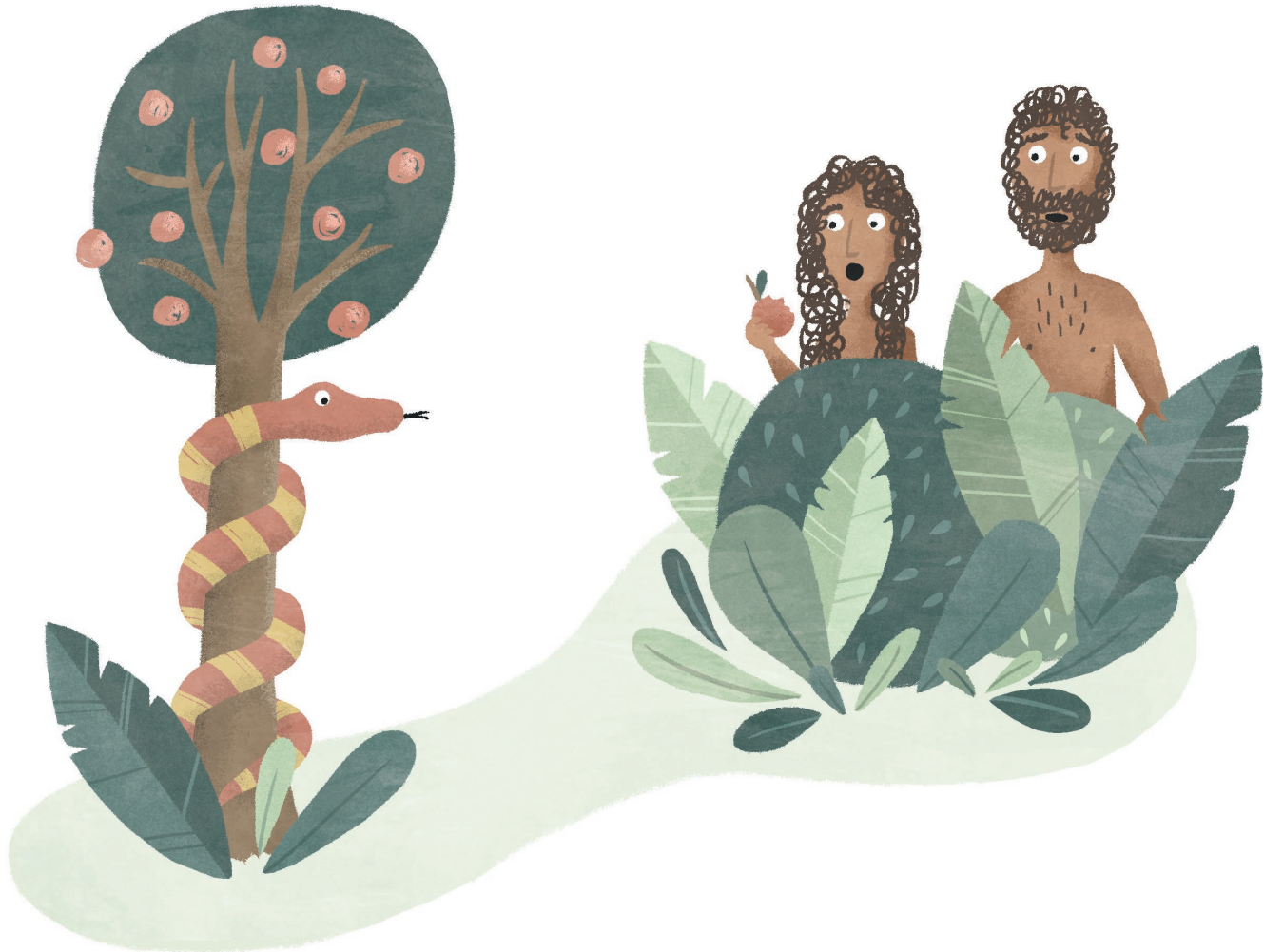


PROPHECY MADE: God said to the snake, 'And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel' (Genesis 3:15).



THEN AND THERE: The best news in history came right after the worst thing that ever happened. Evil entered the world for the first time when Adam and Eve ate the fruit that God told them not to eat, after Satan tempted them. God's promise to defeat Satan and evil came right after that.

Satan is symbolised by the snake, and all people are represented by 'the woman' (Eve). When it talks about the 'offspring' of 'the woman' it's mainly talking about all people, but especially Jesus – God himself – who was born of a woman and who, according to this prophecy, would one day crush Satan. It couldn't be talking about an ordinary person because Satan is stronger than all of us. Satan even convinced Adam and Eve





that God was holding back his best from them and they should disobey him. If Satan convinced them of a great nonsense like that, it's no surprise that we so often give in to the lies of temptation.

However, God in his great mercy didn't wait around and leave Adam and Eve thinking that no good could ever come because of what they had done. Even though their sin brought the curses of death and pain into the world, God would one day provide someone who would completely defeat Satan. However, Satan would cause great pain to people and even to the promised 'offspring' – the 'great somebody' who would defeat Satan.



PROPHECY FULFILLED: '... the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work' (1 John 3:8).

See also: 'Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil' (Hebrews 2:14).



SCARLET THREAD: We now know the name of that great promised 'somebody': Jesus. He was the only person ever born who could defeat Satan completely because although Jesus came to earth as a man, he is still also God.

Why do you think that Jesus came to earth? What was he hoping to do or to achieve? This verse tells us: 'to destroy the devil's work'. The devil's work is to get as many people to suffer as much as possible, and he does that mainly by trying to keep people away from God; away from forgiveness, away from knowing Jesus, away from having joy in their lives.

God promised through the prophets that he would send someone to take the punishment for our sins, because that is the only way we could be saved and be able to have a good relationship with God.



APPLICATION: Thank God that he kept his promise to send someone – born of a woman – who would 'crush Satan's head' to destroy his work. Thank God for Jesus.

Did you know that God is stronger than the devil? Jesus has already destroyed the devil's big plan to keep everyone away from God, and when Jesus comes again the devil won't be able to do *anything* to *anyone* any more.



PRAYER: God, thank you that through Jesus' perfect life, his death and being raised again to life, that the devil's work has been destroyed and anyone can have free forgiveness of their sins. Please help everyone to know that. Amen.



2

JESUS: A PROPHET LIKE MOSES



PROPHET/DATES: Moses, 1400 BC – God’s instructions to Moses about living in the Promised Land.



PROPHECY MADE: ‘I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name’ (Deuteronomy 18:18-19).



THEN AND THERE: The Israelites were in the desert during their forty years of wandering when God gave Moses a lot of instructions about how the people should live when they finally arrived in the Promised Land and made it their home. God told them that they needed to obey him. They were not to be like all the people around them.

God promised through Moses that he would send a prophet who would speak God’s exact words to the people. It was crucial for them to listen to him and obey him.

Over the next 1,000 years God spoke to his people mainly through angels and prophets. The people could tell who the real prophets were because when they predicted the future, it came true. When they made a prediction that didn’t come true ... well, then the people knew they were dealing with a false prophet who was not from God. Also, many of God’s prophets performed miracles, which proved God was with them.

Many of the prophecies were important messages from God for the people then and there. Sadly and often, the people refused to listen and God had to punish them for it, until one day God sent the ultimate prophet – the only person in history who always spoke the perfect words of God. That man was Jesus.



PROPHECY FULFILLED: ‘For Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people”’ (Acts 3:22-23).

‘After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself’ (John 6:14-15).



SCARLET THREAD: God’s people had been waiting, not just for a prophet like Moses, but *the* prophet like Moses. When Jesus came a lot of people began to wonder. ‘Is this the guy?’ Part of the way through Jesus’ ministry people thought maybe he was, but most had the wrong idea of what to do about it. Jesus did not come to rule over them like an earthly king – he came to save them from their sins. Sometimes Jesus had to just go away into the countryside on his own so they couldn’t force him to become king.

Can you imagine anyone wanting to force you to rule over them? No, me neither. But that’s what they wanted to do to Jesus.





The apostle Peter was thinking about this on the day of Pentecost when he was talking to the crowds about who Jesus was. He was trying to help them understand that all the prophecies they read about in the Bible came true in Jesus. Even this *really* ancient prophecy from nearly 1,500 years earlier, which came through Moses.

Peter said this because he wanted to remind the people about the last bit of the prophecy: that people *must* listen to what *the* prophet said so that they could be saved from their sins by trusting in Jesus.



APPLICATION: If you went to the doctor and they took your temperature, you would listen very carefully to what they said next because you know that they know more than you about bodies and illnesses. For example, if they said you had an infection and needed to take some medicine, you would do as they told you.

Jesus knows more than you, me, and everyone else about how to be in a right relationship with God the Father, so we must listen carefully to what he says and do what he says. How do we know? Because God the Father himself tells us so in these verses. And the most important two things that Jesus says we must do is to say sorry to God for being a sinner and ask him for forgiveness.

Do you ‘listen’ to what Jesus says by reading about it in the Bible, and then obeying it? Do you trust Jesus as much as you trust your doctor?



PRAYER: God, thank you that the prophecy through Moses came true in Jesus. Please help me to obey what Jesus said, to ask you to forgive my sins, and to be really sorry for my sin. Amen.



JESUS: A PRIEST LIKE MELCHIZEDEK



PROPHET/DATES: King David, around 1000 BC.



PROPHECY MADE: “The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: “You are a priest for ever, in the order of Melchizedek”” (Psalm 110:4).



THEN AND THERE: The psalms were mainly songs of sadness, worry, praise, thanks or happiness. The psalm writers were usually creating poetry rather than prophecy, but when King David wrote Psalm 110 he was giving people – in poetry form – a prophecy direct from God.





King David may have been talking, in the first instance, about his son, Solomon, who would become king before David died. Usually the son of the king only took over once the king was dead, but Solomon became king while David was still alive, when David handed the kingdom over to him and knew that God would be with him. Melchizedek was a famous king from Abraham's time, who was also a priest. He was very highly respected, so when David compared his son to Melchizedek he was saying his son would be important to the people and God would be greatly respected.



PROPHECY FULFILLED: 'In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father." And he says in another place, "You are a priest for ever, in the order of Melchizedek"... Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever' (Hebrews 5:5-6; 7:3).



SCARLET THREAD: This psalm is not just about David and Solomon. Psalm 110 is also a prophetic message from God the Father to God the Son, telling him about the glories and victories that are coming to him, including the defeat of all his enemies. The Jews knew – even in Old Testament times – that this was talking about the Messiah.

Jesus was the great High Priest; he offered the sacrifice to God that would be for the salvation of God's people, as well as being the sacrifice itself! At the same time he was and is the King of all those who put their trust in God to have their sins forgiven. In the Old Testament, only one person had ever been King and High Priest, and that man was Melchizedek; he and Jesus are linked by having both those titles.

Melchizedek didn't literally live forever on earth and have no parents, but we don't hear of his birth or death, or his parents or children, so the writer of Hebrews links him to Jesus. Melchizedek was a 'type' of Jesus, like some other Old Testament figures such as King David. That means Melchizedek had things in common with Jesus about who he was and what he did. Melchizedek is used by God to help us understand more things about Jesus.

The most important way that Melchizedek and Jesus are linked is that both of them were priests, and not from the tribe of Levi as was required of all other priests but superior to them. Melchizedek was a priest before Levi was born, and Jesus is a priest forever.



APPLICATION: When people make promises there are at least two things that can go wrong. First, they might change their mind later and decide to go against their promise. Or they might not be able to keep their promise even though they try.

We know God is able to keep his promises and in this verse he reminds us that he will, because there is no chance he would change his mind. Wouldn't it be great if people were like that! Sadly we are not, but it is wonderful to know that God is.

Jesus made the once-and-for-all sacrifice so that no more need to be offered. If we are trusting him for the forgiveness of our sin, Jesus is still our High Priest. His sacrifice means we are still forgiven, and he is still representing us to his Father in heaven – asking the Father to help us and to forgive our sin.



PRAYER: Thank you, God, that Jesus is a King forever and our Great High Priest, ruling in heaven and talking to you for us. Amen.



JESUS: REJECTED BY HIS BROTHERS



PROPHET/DATES: King David, around 1000 BC.



PROPHECY MADE: ‘I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother’s sons’ (Psalm 69:8 ESV).



THEN AND THERE: King David was in a terrible situation. Many times in his life people tried to kill him, or take over the country, or take over as king and this was one of those times.

Earlier in the psalm, David said he felt like he was drowning. This means that things were so awful he felt helpless, that however much he tried to fix the situation, everything just got worse. It felt as though he was so deep in water that he was starting to go under the water. In this verse he is saying that not only are his enemies against him (which he expected and was prepared for), but he had been abandoned even by those closest to him – his own brothers. That might have been a reference mainly to his ‘brother’ Jews – that is, his fellow-countrymen whom he had served as king, and not just his siblings.

Do you know what it feels like when people are against you or are being mean to you? It can make a huge difference when you have your family or friends to back you up, to give you comfort, or defend you. But imagine if those people who were supposed to defend you just abandoned you. You would feel terribly alone and the meanness of other people would feel worse.





PROPHECY FULFILLED: ‘Jesus’ brothers said to him, “Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.” For even his own brothers did not believe in him’ (John 7:3-5).



SCARLET THREAD: Galilee was in the north of the country, where Jesus grew up. It was a mountainous area with not many big towns so if you wanted to be famous you wouldn’t stay there long. Especially if your own family didn’t support you! It would be a bit like growing up in a village in the desert, or a tiny island that didn’t get visitors. If you were from a place like that and people thought you wanted to be famous they might say, ‘Hey, you should move to Los Angeles, Paris, or London! You would get many more followers if you lived there!’ That must have been so discouraging for Jesus. His own brothers, who’d lived with him all their lives and had never seen him sin, who knew the miracles that he’d done, did not believe that he was God.

His brothers said this soon after a lot of Jesus’ disciples had left him (not some of the twelve special disciples – Jesus had many other disciples also²).

Jesus knew how King David felt! As well as his brothers not believing in who Jesus was, his disciples didn’t understand who he was for three years and one of his best friends – Peter – pretended that he didn’t even know Jesus after Jesus got arrested.

We may never know what it feels like to be that lonely and abandoned by those closest to us, but Jesus did and although he could have escaped the bad situation any time he wanted, he stuck with it. Why? Because by sticking with the plan, by obeying his Father, he was loving his Father and loving us because Jesus’ obedience means that we can be saved from our sins.

And Jesus didn’t just feel rejected by his brothers – he also felt rejection from his own Father while he was on the cross, but we’ll read about that in another chapter.



APPLICATION: How would it feel if your own family didn’t support you? If they seemed to prefer other people to you or refused to even believe that you were part of the family? King David’s brothers did not support him as king, and Jesus’ brothers did not believe he was God.

Most parents love their children very much and give up a lot for them, but there is only one person who will always love us perfectly, and that is God. Even if everyone else falls away from us and doesn’t support us any more, God will always be there.

So we should stick with Jesus. It doesn’t matter how many other people don’t seem interested in Jesus any more, we must always stick by him – not because he needs us to defend him, but because we need him to defend us and stick by us. We need to stick by him like a baby needs to stick by their parents – he does everything for us and loves us more than anyone else.



PRAYER: God, thank you that Jesus stuck with the plan to love and obey you, and to love us. Thank you that he didn’t give up when his own brothers didn’t believe in him and gave him bad advice. Please help us to stay with you always and love you, because we know that you will never abandon us. Amen.

2. The word ‘disciple’ just means ‘follower’. So everyone who followed Jesus was called a ‘disciple’. When we use the word we are usually referring to one of the twelve special disciples that Jesus told to follow him, and who were his close friends.

* The picture opposite shows King David being pursued by his enemies. Throughout the book David is portrayed by the artist in the same kind of clothes in each illustration: a striped tunic, sometimes with a crown. Look at pages 24, 28, 30, 34, 38, 42, 44.



JESUS: HIS BONES WERE NOT BROKEN



PROPHET/DATES: King David, around 1000 BC.



PROPHECY MADE: ‘The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken’ (Psalm 34:19-20).

“[The Passover lamb] must be eaten inside the house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones” (Exodus 12:46).



THEN AND THERE: King Saul of Israel wanted to kill David the shepherd boy, even though David had done nothing wrong and didn’t want to hurt Saul. David ran away to Gath (one of Israel’s enemies) and pretended to be mad in the hope that King Abimelech of Gath would just leave him alone. That worked for a while but then they told him he had to go, so because nowhere was safe for him to be seen, he went and hid out in a cave.

This psalm was written while David was in Gath. What would you write a song about if your own king was trying to kill you and you were staying with your enemy pretending to be mad so that he didn’t kill you? Maybe you would be angry, or sad, or depressed, or lonely, or scared, or full of worry. Probably you would be a little bit of all those things.

It is amazing that the first line of this psalm is David saying that he will praise God at all times. He then tells people how great God is, and how he protects and saves his people. David obviously had a great amount of trust in God even at the very worst time.





This section of the psalm is David reminding people that no matter how bad things get, God is always there to rescue them. In the Old Testament when God's people were obeying him he didn't let their enemies defeat them. Throughout David's life God rescued him or the Israelites during wars and other difficulties, so when he said that God protects his people, he knew what he was talking about! If the people only knew one story about David before he was king, it would have been how young David defeated the giant Goliath with only a sling and a stone from the river.

When David wrote about no bones getting broken, the people would have understood that as being picture language describing how God's protection is perfect.

The Exodus verse is from God's instructions to his people for the festival of the Passover when God rescued them from Egypt. It adds to the picture that God is building for his people of the perfect sacrifice – the animal to be used had to be one that had nothing wrong with it at all, like a bad eye, or a limp.



PROPHECY FULFILLED: 'But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken ..."' (John 19:33-36).



SCARLET THREAD: God had been building the picture in the Old Testament of the need for a perfect sacrifice. Then he sent that perfect sacrifice: Jesus. Jesus was God on earth, perfect in every way, completely without sin. Before Jesus was killed, the soldiers beat and did other awful things to him, but no bones were broken. The criminals crucified with him had their legs broken to make them die sooner, but because Jesus was already dead, they left his legs alone. The prophecy was coming true in every way. It seems like such a little detail, but it gives us an important lesson about the perfection of Jesus.



APPLICATION: What's the most scary situation you have been in? When I was a teenager I was stuck down a cave with a group of friends. What made it worse was that it was my fault because I was the leader! It got so bad that I was thinking, I might get injured by these big rocks, but I'm going to have to do *something* to get us out. Fortunately that wasn't necessary because someone came to rescue us – thank God, no-one was hurt!

The biggest trouble we can have is from Satan who wants to take people away from God, but God will never let that happen to his people.³ In the Old Testament God showed his love with promises to protect his people from their enemies on earth. God shows his love now with promises to protect us from Satan if we repent and put our trust in God.



PRAYER: Thank you, God, that you kept your promise to provide a perfect sacrifice for sin. Help us to trust you that you have done all the work so that we can have free forgiveness. Help us to remember that you will always protect your people, no matter what. Amen.

3. 'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 8:38-39).

