

What has God done?

The Old Testament

1. Since the fall of man through Adam and Eve's sin, God has always acted in love and justice.
 - a. God's holiness demanded a penalty for Adam and Eve's sin, which He pronounced upon them after they sinned (Genesis 3:16-19).
 - b. However, God showed mercy to them by a) not immediately taking their lives and b) preventing them from living apart from Him forever by eating of the tree of life, which would have allowed them to live in their sin forever (Genesis 3:22-24).
 - c. God also foreshadowed His promise of a Savior by making clothes from animal skins for them (Genesis 3:21).
 - i. Why is this significant? Because Adam and Eve had never seen death or bloodshed before. God provided a sacrifice to cover up their shame, since they became aware of their nakedness after they sinned. In essence, God covered up their shame by doing something they had never seen or conceived of, by making a sacrifice so they wouldn't be ashamed anymore.
2. Using the global Flood, God exercised His wrath upon sinful man, but showed His love and mercy by not wiping man out altogether.
 - a. **Genesis 6:5** "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
 - b. **Genesis 6:13** "Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth."
 - c. **Genesis 6:8-9** "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. ⁹These are *the records of* the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God."
 - i. God demonstrates His love and mercy to those who put their faith in Him and live in obedience to Him.
 - ii. 2 Peter 2:5 tells us Noah was "a herald [preacher] of righteousness," meaning God used Noah to tell the world to repent of its sin or face the consequences.
 - d. The global flood and the salvation of the few that believed God is also a foreshadowing of the judgment upon those who rebel against God, and the salvation of those who believe God's word and obey His commands.
3. The departure (exodus) of the Israelites from Egypt to the land God promised them showed God's justice upon those who disobey Him and His grace and mercy upon those who follow and obey Him.
 - a. God heard the cries of the Israelites, who were oppressed and living as slaves in Egypt (Exodus 2:23-25).
 - b. God called an Israelite Moses to be the one who would lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt to freedom in the land promised to their forefather Abraham by

God (Exodus 3:7-10).

- c. Moses went to the Israelites and shared with them God's plan of redemption and showed them signs to prove his statements, and the Israelites believed him and worshiped God (Exodus 4:29-31).
- d. Moses went to Pharaoh and told him God said to let His people go, or else face "great acts of judgment" (Exodus 7:4). Over and over, Pharaoh hardened his heart in self-centered pride and refused to listen to God despite receiving multiple warnings, witnessing signs from Moses, and incurring increasingly severe punishments throughout the land of Egypt and himself (Exodus ch. 7-12).
- e. Pharaoh finally relented and let the whole nation of Israel go. Even then, Pharaoh changed his mind and pursued the Israelites with his army to destroy them. God demonstrated His love to His people through supernatural protection, and destroyed the army of Pharaoh (Exodus 14).
- f. God repeatedly offered mercy to Pharaoh if he would have simply believed and obeyed God's commands to let His people go. In the end, Pharaoh was responsible for his own destruction, and God was absolutely just in judging him.
- g. The historical account of the Exodus from Egypt served as a foreshadowing of God's faithfulness and ultimate salvation to those who love Him and believe His word. Egypt would be symbolic of sin, and God showed that it was only by His power and mercy that Israel, and all those who will believe Him, will be freed from slavery to sin and brought to a Promised Land.

God's Promises

1. Everything in the Old Testament was meant to point humanity to God's ultimate act of justice and love through Jesus Christ.
 - a. **Psalm 53:3** "They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one."
 - i. The OT identifies our main problem as a spiritual one: sin.
 - b. **Habakkuk 1:13** "You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong..."; **Proverbs 11:21** "Be assured, an evil person will not go unpunished..."; **Psalm 37:38** "But transgressors shall be altogether destroyed; the future of the wicked shall be cut off."
 - i. In His holiness, God cannot allow sin and transgressions to go unpunished.
 - ii. Because of God's holiness, there must be a payment for sins which could only be satisfied through death. The Law prescribed animal sacrifices for sin, since "without the shedding of blood there can be no remission [forgiveness] of sin" (**Heb 9:22b**), but these sacrifices had to be done over and over, and could never fully remove sin.
 - iii. A sacrifice needed to be something pure and innocent. If it had impurity, it could not bear sin (Give example of a murderer trying to pass his sentence on to another murderer)
2. God promised a perfect, eternal sacrifice for the sins of Israel and the world.

- a. **Isaiah 53:5-6, 10-12** “But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all... he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.”
- i. God demonstrated His love for man by providing the only perfect sacrifice that could truly take away sin: Himself. It would be no accident, nor was it something God had to do, but wanted to do out of His love for us.
 - ii. The sacrifice had to be pure, innocent, and sinless.
 - iii. God’s servant, the Messiah (Anointed One), would endure the worst suffering of anyone in history as the sins of the world, of ALL mankind, were taken from us and transferred to Him. Because we deserved to die for our sins and be cut off from God, the Messiah had to die and be cut off from God.
 - iv. The sacrifice of the Righteous One was made to make us righteous before Him. That is, He would see those who believed in the Messiah as pure and holy as the Messiah Himself.
 - v. Consistent with every other act of love in the OT, God did something only He could do to demonstrate that HE is God.
3. The Bible prophesied that the Messiah would also be resurrected from the dead and return to Heaven.
- a. **Psalm 16:10** “For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.”; **Isaiah 52:13-15** “Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. ¹⁴As many were astonished at you—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—¹⁵so shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.”
 - i. These verses specifically point to the resurrection of the Messiah.
 - ii. Other OT passages and prophecies imply the resurrection, such as Isaiah 53.
 - iii. The resurrection and eternal life of the Messiah would prove His deity. Others had been resurrected in the Bible, only to die again at a later date.
4. Well over 300 prophecies about the Messiah were given throughout the OT, thereby increasing the odds to astronomical numbers that the prophecies could be fulfilled

randomly.

The New Testament

1. Jesus fulfilled each of the prophecies above, and many more
2. The Person and Life of Jesus
 - a. Jesus demonstrated that He was fully human.
 - i. Jesus aged and developed from a baby, to a child, to a teen, to an adult just like you and I do, demonstrating His humanity (Luke 2:52). He spent much of His life working as a carpenter (Mark 6:3) and lived like we do. He ate, drank, slept, got tired, got hungry, felt joy, sadness, and pain just like you and me.
 - ii. Jesus then went by Himself to the desert to fast and pray for 40 days before starting His ministry. At this time, Satan tempted Him when Jesus was physically weak and hungry. Each time Satan tempted and tested Jesus, Jesus responded using God's word and obeyed God rather than giving in to Satan and taking the easy way out. This tells us a few things:
 1. Jesus prayed and was dependent on God, showing His humanity.
 2. If God's word was authoritative for Jesus, it is authoritative for us and we can trust it completely.
 3. If Jesus was obedient to God's word, we need to be obedient to it, even at our weakest moments.
 - b. Jesus was declared to be the Son of God in many ways.
 - i. Jesus was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), a miracle that had never happened before. God Himself caused Mary to conceive and have a baby. His miraculous incarnation and birth was a testimony that He was both God and man, since He was not conceived naturally. He was born in the town of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), a real town that still exists today, giving historical and geographic evidence for His existence.
 - ii. Jesus knew at a young age that He was the Son of God (Luke 2:41-51), and did not merely discover it or become it at some point in His life.
 - iii. He began His ministry at about age 30 (Luke 3:23). His ministry started with Him getting baptized for repentance, not that He needed it, but so that He could identify Himself with man. However, at His baptism, heavens opened, God the Holy Spirit descended upon Him to enable Him for His work, and God the Father announced that Jesus was His beloved Son (Luke 3:21-23). In other words, Jesus baptism identified Him as both man and God.
 - iv. He performed miracles. He healed sickness (Luke 4:38-39; John 4:46-54; Matthew 8:5-13; etc), He cast out demons (Mark 1:21-28; Matthew

8:28-34; Matthew 9:32-34; etc), He had power over nature (Matthew 8:23-27; Luke 5:1-11; Mark 6:45-52; etc), He prophesied about people and events (Luke 22:55-62; Matthew 24:1-2; Matthew 20:17-19; etc), and raised people from the dead (Luke 7:11-17; Luke 8:41-56; John 11:1-46).

- v. He obeyed God's commands perfectly and lived a sinless life (John 8:46; 1 Peter 2:22; Hebrews 4:15).
 - vi. He declared He was God (John 8:58), was equal to God the Father (John 10:30, 33), and accepted worship (John 20:28; Matthew 2:11; Matthew 14:33).
3. Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection
- a. In spite of the overwhelming evidence of His deity, Jesus was hated by the Jewish religious leaders.
 - i. He exposed their love of tradition over the commandments of God (Mark 7:1-13). The laws and traditions created to interpret God's law became so extensive, complicated, and burdensome that they ended up contradicting and nullifying God's law itself.
 - ii. He pointed out their hypocrisy and threatened their religious system (Matthew 23:1-36).
 - iii. They feared the loss of their position and power (John 11:47-48).
 - iv. They resented that more and more people were following Jesus and believing in Him (John 12:17-19).
 - v. Ultimately, they did not believe or understand God's word and the prophecies about the Messiah (John 6:41-65; John 7:14-24; John 8:12-59), and rejected Jesus as Messiah and God. Therefore, they sought to kill Him (John 5:18).
 - b. Jesus' trial, crucifixion, and burial
 - i. Jesus knew and prophesied multiple times to His disciples that He would be betrayed and handed over to the Jewish authorities to be crucified. Not only that, but He prophesied that He would be buried and rise from the dead three days later (Matthew 16:21; Matthew 17:22-23; Matthew 20:17-19).
 - ii. It was no accident that He was going to be killed, but rather He knew it was part of God's plan to redeem and save man and He willingly came to earth to give His life to save the lost (John 10:16-18; Matthew 20:28).
 - iii. Jesus knew He would be betrayed by Judas, one of His disciples (John 13:18-30). The OT prophesied that Jesus would be betrayed by someone close to Him (Psalm 41:9).
 - iv. On the night of His betrayal, after eating the Passover meal, He went with His disciples to a nearby garden. There, He prayed in anguish, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:36). Though He knew why He came and what was going to happen to Him, His sorrow, distress, His pleading to God at this hour gives us a glimpse of the suffering He would

- endure. Yet, in spite of all this, He knew salvation could be accomplished in no other way, and willfully submitted Himself to the will of the Father.
- v. Judas arrived with an armed crowd of people, who seized Jesus and took Him to the Jewish authorities. There, they put Him on trial and seeking any reason to put Him to death. Some people attempted to make up lies about Him to find some reason to put Him to death, but their stories didn't agree. Even so, Jesus made no attempt to defend Himself. The high priest asked Jesus if He was the Messiah and the Son of God. Jesus testified to this, and the council declared Him guilty of blasphemy and deserving of death.
 - vi. Jesus was then led bound to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. Pilate could find no reason to put Jesus to death, since the Jewish leaders wanted Him put to death in accordance with their own ruling, not the ruling of the Roman government. He attempted to release Him, but the Jewish rulers and the crowd demanded He be put to death. Wishing to appease them, he gave in to their demands and ordered Jesus, whom He found innocent of all charges, to be crucified.
 - vii. Before Jesus was crucified, He was mocked, beaten, and flogged with whips by Roman guards, and humiliated by the crowds. He was forced to carry His own cross to where He would be crucified, but was so battered and marred that someone had to carry it for Him. What little mercy they showed was in a mixture of wine and myrrh that was meant to dull the pain, but Jesus refused; He wanted to be fully conscious at this time.
 - viii. He was then stripped down and nailed to the cross, secured to the wood with nails through His hands and feet. The Wikipedia article on crucifixion describes its purpose : "Crucifixion was often performed in order to terrorize and dissuade its witnesses from perpetrating particularly heinous crimes. Victims were left on display after death as warnings to others who might attempt dissent. Crucifixion was usually intended to provide a death that was particularly slow, painful (hence the term *excruciating*, literally "out of crucifying"), gruesome, humiliating, and public, using whatever means were most expedient for that goal." As they crucified Him, "Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"" (Luke 23:34). The crowds continued to mock Him as He hung there, between two other crucified criminals.
 - ix. The Bible records that from about noon to 3pm, darkness fell over the whole land (Mark 15:33). At 3 o'clock, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" As Jesus bore the sins of the world, God turned away from Him. Jesus was cut off from His Abba, His Father. They offered Him sour wine, this time intended to keep Him alert, which He drank. Then, raising Himself up with whatever energy He had left, with His last breath, Jesus cried out, "Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit! It is finished!" (Luke 23:46; John 19:30) With that, the Temple curtain that remained closed for all but one day a year, when the high priest would

enter to make a sacrifice for the sins of Israel, the barrier between man and the presence of God, was torn in two, wide open for the whole world. God's wrath was satisfied. It was finished.

- x. The day Jesus was crucified was a special Sabbath, and out of respect for the Jewish people and their faith, the Romans would take the bodies of the crucified down instead of leaving them to hang. Those who were still alive would have their legs broken so that they would die of asphyxiation quicker. When the Romans came to Jesus, they surprisingly found He had died. To make certain He was truly dead, they pierced His side with a spear, and out flowed water and blood. Some of Jesus' disciples asked to carry His body away, and they took Him and wrapped Him up in cloths and laid Him in a new tomb.
 - xi. The Jewish priests, concerned that Jesus' followers might try to take His body away and claim He had risen from the dead, asked that the tomb would be secured. A massive rock was rolled in front of the tomb and sealed, and Roman soldiers stood guard outside to prevent anything from happening.
- c. Jesus' resurrection and ascension
- i. Three days after Jesus was buried, early in the morning, some women who followed Jesus went to see the tomb. The exact chronology of the details and events between the 4 Gospels is a bit difficult to figure out, but between them they record that a massive earthquake had occurred, and when the women came to the tomb, they expected to see the stone still in front of the tomb. Instead, they found the stone rolled away, the guards were apparently lying knocked out on the ground from fear, and an angel of the Lord told them that Jesus wasn't there, but that He had risen. Looking inside the tomb, they found it empty, just as the angel told them. The angel then told them to go find Jesus' disciples and tell them the good news, that He was alive!
 - ii. The disciples didn't initially believe the report. Peter and John ran to the tomb to see for themselves. They too saw that the tomb was empty, but while John apparently believed Jesus had risen, Peter simply marveled. None of the disciples up to this point understood the Scriptures or the significance of these events.
 - iii. After that, Jesus appeared to them on multiple occasions, showing that He had indeed risen from the dead. Even then, some didn't immediately believe. Thomas refused to believe until he touched the holes in His hands and side. When they did believe, they were overcome with joy and worshipped Him. For 40 days after His resurrection, He showed Himself to His disciples, and 1 Corinthians 15 states that He appeared to more than 500 believers. He taught His followers why He had to die and rise from the dead, and people finally understood and believed Him.
 - iv. When Jesus resurrected, He received a new, glorified body. While people

could still touch His skin, He wasn't limited by our natural world. Some people's eyes were kept from recognizing Him until He revealed Himself to them (Luke 24:15-16; John 20:14-16), He was able to appear seemingly or actually out of nowhere, even in locked rooms (Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 26), He vanished before their sight (Luke 24:31), and many other things. Furthermore, Jesus' glorified resurrection body gives us a taste of what those who believe in Him will one day experience for themselves (1 Corinthians 15:35-56).

- v. After 40 days of appearing to his followers and telling them about the kingdom of God, Jesus gathered His disciples for one final message. He commanded them to take all they had been taught and seen and believed, and, through the indwelling and power of the Holy Spirit which He promised to His believers, declare the message of salvation to all people (Acts 1:1-8), that those who confess Jesus is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead will be saved (Romans 10:9), and to make disciples of all nations. After Jesus gave them those final last words, He was lifted up to Heaven to the right hand of God the Father, where He lives and rules today. One day, He will return from Heaven to judge the world and rule on the earth to establish His kingdom over the whole world (Revelation 19:11-21). Before this happens, the message of the Gospel must and will reach every corner and all nations of the world (Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 24:14).