



“Preaching Jesus: As The Christ”

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We’re in the midst of a series of lessons we call *Preaching Jesus*. In our last time together, we talked about preaching Jesus as the Son of God. How Jesus was called Immanuel, or *God with us*, speaking to His deity. He entered into time and space through the portal of woman and was God in the flesh. We talked about why that is the crucial foundation of the Christian faith. But Jesus was also called *the Jewish Messiah, the Christ*, and this tells us even more about who Jesus was and is.

When the evangelist Luke wrote to Theophilus about *the things surely believed among us* as he put it in the KJV, he told him of the birth of our Savior and of the words the angel declared to the shepherds who were watching their flocks that night.

Luke 2:10-11 “And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

This son of Mary and foster son of Joseph was given the name *Jesus*, which is the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Joshua*, which means *savior*. But here, God gave Him the title of *the Christ*. Christ is not His name so much as it is a description of who Jesus is. Were you to meet Jesus along some dusty road in Palestine or along the shores of Galilee in the first century, He might’ve introduced Himself to you as Jesus of Nazareth. But here, God introduces Him to the shepherds and to all of the world as Jesus the Christ, and to those Jews who believed in Him in that day, He WAS Jesus the Christ. To His people today, He is the Christ. But just what does that mean? What significance does that have?

As God’s Son, Jesus occupies the most unique and important office of any person in heaven or earth. As we’ve already illustrated in our current sermon series, many people don’t understand the person or the work of Jesus. When the Bible calls Him *the Son of God*, it is telling us of His deity and divine nature. He was not a man with Godlike characteristics or powers; He was God in human flesh. He was The God-

man. God manifested Himself to mankind and provided something that could not be found on this earth—that is, a perfect, unblemished sacrifice to atone for and take away our sins. If you don't believe that, then you haven't believed and obeyed the gospel.

John 8:23-24 “And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”

But the Bible also says that He is the Christ and that term when spoken by a Jew in the first century had great meaning. It should have great meaning to us as well. When Peter made his famous confession in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he said this:

Matthew 16:16 “And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

To better understand the powerful implications of that statement and confession, we should begin by defining the word itself. The word *Christ* is the Greek form of the Hebrew word *Messiah* and both words mean *Anointed*. Therefore, when the Bible speaks of Jesus as the Messiah or the Christ, it is calling Him Jesus the Anointed One. That is packed with meaning when you understand some things about the Jews living under the Old Testament. When Jesus called Andrew to be His disciple, the Bible says that Andrew ran and found his brother Simon.

John 1:41 “He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ).”

Andrew happily believed that Jesus was finally at last the Promised and Anointed One from God. Later, Jesus met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well.

John 4:25-26 “The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.””

Both of these instances give us a glimpse into the expectation and yearning that the Jews had down through the ages for the Messiah to come.

Throughout the 1500-year history of the nation of Israel, the people clung to that promise of the Messiah. One who would come and be anointed by God to rule over them. The Old Testament is filled with Messianic prophecies. The Jews looked for the Messiah to come and be their ultimate king and ruler. For example, Moses described Him in this way.

Deuteronomy 18:18-19 “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.”

The prophet Nathan later told David that the Messiah would one day rule over His kingdom and sit upon His throne forever (**II Samuel 7:12-17**). Isaiah said the government would rest upon His shoulders and that He would govern with justice and righteousness (**Isaiah 9:6-7**). Jeremiah pictures Him as the righteous branch descended from David who would reign as king in **Jeremiah 23:5-6**. Micah declared

that one born in Bethlehem would come forth to rule the nation (**Micah 5:2**). The **Psalms** are full of Messianic predictions and foreshadowings picturing Messiah as one who would bring victory and triumph to God's people. Were one to closely follow the Old Testament writings, they would expect the Messiah to be born in a particular place, in a particular time, and do or experience a number of things throughout His life on earth, and finally die and arise again.

So, why then did the nation reject Jesus when He finally came claiming to be their Messiah and Christ? Why did they fail to see that He was this Anointed One? For one reason, an ignorance or misunderstanding of their own scriptures about the Messiah. You see, when these prophecies were given, a series of geopolitical events unfolded that ended up shaping the people's common image of what the Messiah would be when He came. You may remember that the Jews were carried off into Babylonian captivity for seventy years several hundred years before Jesus was born and the nation was never the same after that. They spent hundreds of years being dominated by one world power after another until at last Rome took control, placing its heavy yoke of taxation upon the Jewish people. They had spent so long being occupied and subjugated by other empires until their expectation of Messiah shifted from that of a spiritual leader and king to an earthly one. So, they were now looking for an impressive, militant figure to arise and free them from the Romans and make them a sovereign nation once again.

But this was never the mission of the Messiah. They eagerly anticipated a prophesied figure who would not only come from the lineage of David, but who would be like David in restoring Israel and ruling the world. Jesus came to deliver them from a much greater bondage than Rome or any other earthly, tyrannical power. He came to deliver them from the power of the devil and sin, which ironically, they did not see themselves in bondage to.

You know, people are much the same today. What Rome was to the Jews of Jesus' day, our earthly and temporal problems are today. While the people were preoccupied with the political situation they were in and with their difficulties of life, they were woefully oblivious to the real issue that doomed them and that was their sin and their broken relationship to God. Many today look to Jesus as the Messiah or deliverer from their earthly trials or problems—health, finances, political oppression, economic or social inequality. But Jesus came on a much greater, more encompassing mission. His office as the Messiah or the Christ doesn't speak to earthly things, but spiritual and heavenly matters--the things that truly matter.

Luke 19:10 **""for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."**

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath and read scripture to the people.

Luke 4:17-20 **"And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD. Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.""**

Jesus read these words from **Isaiah 61**, which was a prophecy of the coming Messiah, but their true meaning was lost upon those who heard Him that day. In fact, they ended up throwing Him out of the synagogue in their city. Note that Jesus says, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me*, meaning *the Lord has anointed Me*. He is saying, I am the Christ. The practice of anointing was a very important ritual in the religion of the Jews. Throughout the Old Testament dispensation, those who were set apart by God for positions of leadership were anointed with oil as a symbol of their authority. Oil was poured upon the head to indicate that God had chosen that person and set them apart for the work assigned to them.

There were three positions in particular for which a person was anointed in the Old Testament: prophets, priests, and kings. One who was a prophet of God was often anointed as such. This meant that the man had the authority given him by God to prophesy the word of the Lord to them. He was set apart as a prophet of God. He had God's sanction as a prophet. Because God had anointed him as such, the people were to listen to him and accept his words as being the word of God. There were many prophets in the nation of Israel, beginning with Moses himself who gave them the law to follow.

Deuteronomy 18:15 **"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,"**

But not only were prophets anointed; so were priests. Priests served God in the temple in the Old Testament dispensation on behalf of the people. In particular, a high priest was anointed to serve in this high office and to enter into the most holy place on behalf of the people to offer the blood of atonement to God, who dwelt in that sacred chamber. He did this once each year. Nobody else had the right or privilege to enter that place except the high priest. Spiritually speaking, it was the highest and grandest office of the Old Testament economy. When a new high priest was selected, he was anointed as a way of setting him apart to intercede on behalf of the people before God.

John 14:6 **"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."**

Hebrews 4:14-16 **"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."**

That's a wonderful assurance. Today, we have no earthly priest to stand between us and God, but we do have a heavenly high priest who, having lived on earth as a man can represent us and intercede for us before God. Who, as God, represents God to us. Friend, there is no other way to enter the presence of the holy God but by the work and mediatorship of Jesus Christ, our high priest. God anointed Him to fill that role as the Christ. That's why no other religion will do. That's why Christ is the only way to God and to heaven. That's why we emphasize that, and the word of God does as well. That's why Christianity is so exclusive in saying that Jesus is the only way to heaven because He is our great high priest. To declare Him the Christ is to say that. He is God's anointed high priest, the one and only, who can enter heaven and mediate between us and a holy God.

They also anointed kings in the Old Testament. Their investiture was marked by anointing with oil and they were shown to be selected by God to rule over the people. You recall when David refused to kill Saul when he had the chance, calling him *God's anointed*.

I Samuel 24:6 "And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD."

Even though Saul was a sinful man who was doing a great injustice to David, David recognized that Saul wore the crown of Israel and he respected the authority that represented. He was God's anointed. God had placed him there. Now, Jesus is not a cruel or unjust king. He is a king of righteousness and peace. David was later anointed king by Samuel after Saul and David was a good king who ruled the nation well. His reign marked the glory days of Israel. Even way back then, God promised that He would one day raise up another king to sit upon David's throne. That is, a king who would have David's kingdom conferred upon Him. In the fullness of time when Jesus entered this earthly realm, God anointed Him before the people to be their king, which office He occupies today. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He rules and reigns as king right now at the right hand of God. Just as He right now occupies the office of priest and prophet.

Now, you may be asking when and how did God anoint Jesus? When did God set Him apart as prophet, priest, and king? When was He officially set forth before the people as their Messiah, their Christ? When the apostle Peter was sent to the house of the Gentile, Cornelius, to preach Christ to he and his household, he said these words:

Acts 10:34-43 "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ--He is Lord of all--that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

Notice that he said this began in Galilee after the baptism of John. You recall that Jesus Himself was baptized of John. He, unlike all others, had no sin to remit, but He was submitting to the righteous command of God and He identified His ministry and mission with John's when He was immersed by John in the Jordan River. The record tells us of this so beautifully.

Matthew 3:16-17 "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

For the first thirty years of His life, Jesus lived an ordinary but sinless life. He grew from a child to manhood, working as a carpenter among the people. He was simply one of them. But when He was immersed by John and came forth from the waters of baptism, the Holy Spirit in great symbolism came down upon Him. Like the oil that anointed prophets, priests, and kings for all of those ages before Him,

the Holy Spirit was now anointing Him as our prophet, our priest, and our king. Our prophet—meaning that as the Christ, we are to listen to and obey Him. As our priest, we're to look to Him in obedient faith for the forgiveness of our sins. As our king, we are to submit to Him as the ruler of our hearts and our lives.

You see, that's what we mean when we call Him Jesus Christ. He is the chosen and anointed one of God sent to earth to teach us. He died to redeem us, He was resurrected to free us, He went back to heaven to intercede for us, and He sits at the right hand of God to rule over us. Have you acknowledged Him as the Christ? Have you come to believe in Him as the Son of God and the Christ that God sent to this earth and anointed to be prophet, priest, and king? Have you submitted to His lordship and His rulership? Have you been baptized according to His instruction for the remission of your sins and thus been saved and entered into His kingdom?

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