

A Handle on Messiah pt 4: The pedigree of the Messiah

We are coming to the conclusion of our short series getting a handle on the Messiah. We have seen that from the whole of the Old Testament that God has promised a special person, who would be anointed (that is what the words Christ and Messiah both mean) to be a prophet, priest and King, and that he would be the turning point of the fortunes of Israel. We also saw how God gave some remarkable predictions which were fulfilled literally and sometimes even referred to things which weren't even in existence at the time of writing, most recently we saw that the ultimate purpose for this person was that the first time he came, he would come as a suffering servant who would bear the sins of others and make peace with God available to sinful mankind.

There is just one other thing to look at in our studies and that is the ancestry or family tree of this Messiah – he had to be a descendent of Abraham and King David. We have already seen the genealogy in the New Testament. It is important that this is recorded in the Bible because it was a way of the scribes and teachers of the law, along with the priests to check out his lineage, it wasn't enough that he fulfil all of the Old Testament prophecies – even though that was really important, they also needed to tick all the boxes...

The prophecies said he must be a descendant of David and heir to his throne

Isaiah 9.6-7 which we heard in the reading said

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. ***He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom***, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

There are other passages in 2 Samuel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah which state this, as well as the necessity for him to be born in David's home town of Bethlehem. Because the religious leaders of Jesus day knew this they were able to find out if Jesus really was the Messiah, look what happens in John 7:

John 7:28 Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my

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own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, 29 but I know him because I am from him and he sent me." 30 At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come. 31 Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, "When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?" 32 The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him. 40 On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely this man is the Prophet." 41 Others said, "He is the Christ." 42 Still others asked, "How can the Christ come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" 43 Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. 44 Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

One of the reasons this is important, is that even though statistically the possibility of someone fulfilling even a fraction of the 330 prophecies Jesus did are astronomical, when you add in the factor of his lineage, it becomes impossible for anyone but the one person, Jesus to fit the bill. The Jewish leaders knew this; they had the documents to prove it. What you may not realise is that just over 30 years after Jesus had died, the Romans completely destroyed the city of Jerusalem, the burned down the temple, the slaughter was on a massive scale, with the streets literally running with blood – and all of the records of genealogies were lost: if it had not been for the copies that were made by Matthew and Luke, there would be no way of verifying the pedigree of the Messiah – God in his wisdom preserved this family tree so that people can still check it out and find the truth.

Our culture is not one that is terribly bothered about this, although in recent years there has been more interest through genealogy websites and programmes like 'who do you think you are'. However, in other cultures, especially Arab and Muslim nations you hear stories of people who come to faith in Jesus simply through studying the genealogies and finding that through Abraham and David came God's Messiah, Jesus.

The NT passage that we had as a reading sums up the importance of Jesus' pedigree:

Rom 1:2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a

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descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

We come full circle, the gospel, the good news that we have been learning about is:

- Promised beforehand by the prophets
- Regarding Gods own Son
- Who had to be a descendent of David
- Who would die and be resurrected
- Which would prove he is Christ – the Messiah
- Who is Lord of all

So this *Christmas*, let us remember that Christ is the Messiah, and he is the one anointed and appointed by God to be our king and our saviour, and that the hope and trust we put in God is never disappointed. Amen.