

Messiah series pt 1: The promised Messiah

Bible reading Luke 24.13-27

There are two phrases in that passage that I want to use as a launch pad into this short series on the Messiah:

v. 21 where the disciples say they were hoping that Jesus was going to be the one who would redeem Israel, and v. 25-27 where Jesus replies that everything in the OT scriptures pointed to him as the Messiah.

You see, the Jewish people in OT expected someone from God to gather them all back to the land of Israel and bring restoration. There were many promises in the OT.

Nevertheless the nation of Israel went through many trials, they were taken into exile, persecuted and by the time of the NT they had Roman forces occupying their land, marching in their streets.

Now, would you give up? Rationalise the promises away? Some did, but others became even more fervent in their hopes.

When we study about the Messiah we learn, not just about Jesus as he relates to the Jews, but also the principles for our own lives - can we continue to hope when all seems lost? Will God fulfil his promises? Can we trust his words? These are important questions to answer, so let's get started;

Firstly, this anticipated 'someone' from God had many titles and names in the OT – he was called Branch, root of Jesse, Son of Man, Servant of the Lord, Emmanuel: all of these are very meaningful and give us insights into this one who was to come, but a strong contender for the favourite title was 'Messiah' the word means 'anointed one' – this is the word that in Greek is translated 'Christ'

Let's set the scene and gain an understanding of what the Bible means by this:

There were three specific jobs you could only do if you were anointed, and you weren't allowed to anoint yourself!

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Anointing was when someone took a horn of oil (goat or even bull horn) and poured it over your head, it symbolised Gods power being poured upon them.

The first is King: 1 Samuel 10.1, 16.1, 12-13,

Then Samuel took the flask of oil, poured it on his (Saul's) head, kissed him and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you a ruler over His inheritance?"

1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons.".... **12** So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." **13** Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

The second is Priest: Exodus 40.12-15

12 "Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting and wash them with water. **13** "You shall put the holy garments on Aaron and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister as a priest to Me. **14** "You shall bring his sons and put tunics on them; **15** and you shall anoint them even as you have anointed their father, that they may minister as priests to Me; and their anointing will qualify them for a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations."

The third is Prophet: 1 Kings 19.15-16

15 The LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; **16** and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.

The thing about Messiah, this special anointed one, is that he would fulfil all three roles; he would be prophet, priest and King

In Deut 18.15, 18-19 God tells the people that he will raise up a prophet from among them who would be even greater than Moses.

Zechariah 6.12-13 God says this man will be a priest who sits upon a throne, and Psalm 110.1,4 says that he will be a king and a priest.

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Now the Bible makes it clear that Jesus is this man – when we say Jesus Christ, Christ is not his second name, but the title of Messiah, we are recognising that he is God's anointed one, and that, - even as we have already sung in 'how sweet the name of Jesus sounds' – he is prophet, priest and king. We will explore this further in the next few weeks, but if you can't wait, I refer you back to the 'what is the gospel' series talks 4 and 6; there is a special download page with notes and powerpoints, thanks to Shawn.

We will look during the next few weeks at some of the specific descriptions, prophecies and predictions about who this special someone would be – the Bible describes his place of birth, his family tree, what kind of person he would be, as well as describing the benefits of his rule – strangely though there are also prophecies of the nature of his death.

In all there are over 330 specific and direct prophecies about this Messiah in the Old Testament (there are about another 140 passages and verses that relate to Jesus, which are not prophetic) that and it is important that we learn about some of them for the following reasons:

- 1) we will see that only one person could ever fulfil all the criteria, and we know who it is
- 2) The Jewish leaders and teachers would be able to identify who he was (John 7.40-42) ⁴⁰ Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet." ⁴¹ Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? ⁴² "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"
- 3) we will see how literally God treats his own promises, which will help us to
- 4) Discover how realistic it is to put our faith and hope in God and his Word.
- 5) Do you remember how, in our opening passage Jesus directed his disciples to the writings of Moses, the prophets and 'everything in the scriptures that referred to him'? This subject will help us approach the OT with more confidence and enthusiasm, because we will find 'Christ in all the scriptures' as the old book said.

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This series will take us into advent, which is traditionally a period of waiting and preparation, hopefully we will see that the trials, suffering but also patience and hope of the people of Israel in waiting for the coming of Messiah, is a good model for us – even though things can seem to go wrong, and answers seem slow in coming, we have a foundation for hope because God's answer is never late, and Gods purposes are all wrapped up in Jesus. John 4.25-26

25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." 26 Jesus *said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."