

# A Journey with Christ the Messiah

## Identifying the Messiah

### John 1:9-16

#### INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing a new series that I have entitled *A Journey with Christ the Messiah*.

The word "Messiah" means "Anointed One." It is the name given in the Old Testament prophecies to the promised Deliverer who would someday come to the people of Israel as their great Savior and Redeemer. This Deliverer was to be "anointed" as Prophet, Priest, and King by God Himself.

During Old Testament times, the Jews continually anticipated the arrival of their Messiah. The scriptures were written so they could identify the Messiah when He arrived. Christ did arrive on earth to His own people, the Jews, and fulfilled every detail that had been prophesied by the prophets.

But they were looking for a temporal leader who would dazzle them with an earthly kingdom. They expected a Victorious Christ who would overthrow all injustice and unrighteousness and set up his glorious kingdom on earth.

When Christ came they did not recognize the fact that He was fulfilling the scriptures and they would not accept their own Messiah. They did not understand that the reign of Christ was in a spiritual kingdom. They had interpreted the prophecies as an earthly reign. They did not understand that the Christ would actually come twice. Christ's second coming will be as the Victorious Christ. They did not understand that Christ would come as a Suffering and Sin-bearing Christ during his first coming.

Christ continued to preach to them and even worked miracles among them as no other man did so that their unbelief was without excuse. But they were blinded by their beliefs and still rejected Him. He was not meeting their expectations.

Unfortunately, some are still looking for the fulfillment of these Old Testament promises in the future, when the "Messiah" will come to establish a world kingdom of peace and justice centered around the chosen nation, Israel.

On the other hand, the group of Jewish believers who became the first founders of Christianity, **were** convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was their promised Messiah. The name "Christ" is the Greek equivalent of "Messiah," so that the name **Jesus Christ really means "Jesus the Messiah"**. They preached this truth with such conviction and power that not only many Jews, but later, a still greater number of Gentiles, believed Jesus was the Christ, the Lord and Savior of all mankind. They had good reason for such faith. As we have discussed in the last few messages, The Old Testament Messianic prophecies

were found to be uniquely fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. There are hundreds of these prophecies, so that the possibility of their accidental fulfillment by any ordinary man is completely ruled out by the laws of probability. Some of the prophecies are so framed, in fact, that they eliminate their fulfillment by anyone living after the first century A.D. No rational conclusion seems possible except that Jesus is all He claims to be - Messiah, Savior, Lord, Son of man and Son of God.

Let's continue the journey!

## All Stand and Read Scripture

John 1:9-16 (NASB)

<sup>9</sup> There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

<sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> John \*testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" <sup>16</sup> For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

As we prepare to continue this journey, let's bow in a word of prayer.

## Prayer

The purpose of the New Testament is **not** to "PROVE" that Jesus is the Messiah. The purpose of the New Testament is to "PROCLAIM" that Jesus **IS** the Messiah, our Savior, who offers salvation from our sin as a free gift and reconnects us with God the Father, the Creator of all things through Christ.

I would like to reveal today how the apostles and early Christians knew that Jesus was the Messiah and how **WE** know that Jesus is our promised Savior and Messiah!

We will look at the evidence that the apostles used to prove to themselves and others that Jesus was the Messiah. All of us who accept the New Testament to be a true record of events should be clear on what that evidence was for the apostles. This message, this morning, will explain what that evidence is **for us** who must accept scriptural accounts on faith.

## BODY:

### I. THE SEARCH FOR THE MESSIAH.

The leaders of the Jews knew somewhat about the Messiah from the Scriptures, but they were unclear about His birth and many other things:

Matthew 2:1-4 (NASB)

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Where is He who has been born **King of the Jews**? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” <sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and **all Jerusalem with him**. <sup>4</sup> Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the **Messiah was to be born**.

**All Jerusalem** was troubled about the report of the star of the King, not just Herod. Herod himself correctly identified the “**King of the Jews**” as the Messiah. The Pharisees also had some basic understanding about the Messiah:

Matthew 22:41-42 (NASB)

<sup>41</sup> Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question: <sup>42</sup> “What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?” They \*said to Him, “*The son of David.*”

Many people wondered if John the Baptist was the Messiah. Luke explains what John said when the people asked him directly whether he was the Messiah:

Luke 3:15-16 (NASB)

<sup>15</sup> Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ, <sup>16</sup> John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

The Samaritan woman who spoke with Jesus by Jacob’s Well understood the same concept:

John 4:25-26, 29 (NASB)

<sup>25</sup> 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.” <sup>26</sup> Jesus \*said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.”

Note also that Jesus admitted directly to her that He was the Messiah as she said. In verse 29 she ran to the men and said <sup>29</sup> “Come, see a man who told me all the things that *I have done*; this is not the Christ, is it?”

Jesus instructed several people not to proclaim that He was the Messiah after He had confirmed that He was the Messiah or after He performed a miracle because it was not time for it to be revealed to everyone. This caused confusion among the Jews. Later Jesus responded to a direct question of the people in Jerusalem during the feast of the dedication:

John 10:23-26 (NASB)

<sup>23</sup> it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. <sup>24</sup> The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, “How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.” <sup>25</sup> Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me. <sup>26</sup> But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep.

## II. THE REVEALING OF THE MESSIAH.

However, Jesus did teach that He was fulfilling scripture and He performed miracles to testify that what He was teaching was of God.

In the Sermon on the Mount, He said that He did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, which was a reference to the Old Testament Scriptures, but to fulfill them.

Matthew 5:17 (NASB)

<sup>17</sup> “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Jesus did indeed make it clear to people that He **was** the Messiah. He did this by the works, the signs and miracles, that He performed. After Jesus resurrected Lazarus, Jesus was teaching about the impending death of the Son of Man and was questioned by Jews and some Gentiles.

John 12:32-37 (NASB)

<sup>32</sup> And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” <sup>33</sup> But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. <sup>34</sup> The crowd then answered Him, “We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up?’ Who is this Son of Man?” <sup>35</sup> So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. <sup>36</sup> While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.”

These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them. <sup>37</sup> But though He had performed so many signs before them, *yet* they were not believing in Him.

When people correctly identified the Messiah with the Son of Man. Jesus did not disagree with them. Neither did He encourage them. When they began to associate Him directly with the Messiah, He withdrew because it was not yet time for that to be proclaimed. That time came after the resurrection.

After feeding the 5,000, Jesus asked His disciples who the people thought He was. Their answer is found in...

Matthew 16:13-21 (NASB)

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup> And they said, “Some *say* John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup> He *said* to them, “But who do you say that I am?” <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” <sup>20</sup> Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

<sup>21</sup> From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

The apostles knew **from that time** that Jesus was the Christ, even though they could not yet prove it or even fully believe it. They did not understand that the Messiah needed to suffer, die, and be raised from the dead. That proof of Jesus' teachings about those events came **after** the resurrection.

### III. THE PROCLAMTION OF THE MESSIAH.

John tells us in his gospel that the scriptures were written to **proclaim** Jesus as the Messiah so that we may believe.

John 20:29-31 (NASB)

<sup>29</sup> Jesus \*said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed *are* they who did not see, and *yet* believed."

<sup>30</sup> Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but **these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.**

Jesus Himself had warned the disciples that the Messiah must suffer. When Jesus appeared to the disciples **after** His resurrection He reminded them of His suffering and spoke to them about the future:

Luke 24:44-48 (NASB)

<sup>44</sup> Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." <sup>45</sup> **Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,** <sup>46</sup> and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things.

Not only did the Jews think that their Messiah would NOT suffer, neither did they think their Messiah would be crucified and die. This very idea of a crucified Messiah was a major problem to all Jews.

**Jesus' resurrection was the ultimate PROOF that Jesus is THE Messiah. The apostles knew this to be so because Jesus told them it would happen BEFORE the crucifixion, even though they did not believe Him. Then AFTER His resurrection He took care to explain all of the prophecies from the Old Testament that He fulfilled. He finished this teaching just before His ascension into heaven.**

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that He appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; <sup>7</sup> then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; <sup>8</sup> and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

The apostles' eyewitness experience with the resurrected Jesus was **the final proof — the final evidence** — that Jesus **was** the **true** Messiah of God, the Son of God, and Savior of all mankind!

This is why so many in the crowd at Pentecost understood immediately what they had done and were so emotionally stricken by what Peter had revealed to them. **They had participated in killing the prophesied Messiah of God!**

Acts 2:36-38 (NASB)

<sup>36</sup> Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”

<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” <sup>38</sup> Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

About 3,000 souls accepted Peter's declaration that Jesus was their Messiah and their Lord. They repented, were baptized, and received the Holy Spirit that day.

## **CONCLUSION:**

In the man Jesus Christ, or Jesus of Nazareth, every single prophecy was fulfilled exactly and specifically the way it was given. There was not a single variation or contradiction.

There is, in fact real, historical and scientific proof that Jesus is, in fact, the Son of God.

But even with all of this proof, there will always be those who discount it and refuse to believe what their own eyes and ears tell them to be true. There will always be those who refuse to believe in God and obey his commands. There is nothing that will convince them He is real.

So be it, but the fact they do not believe in Him will never nullify the truth and eventually they will discover that, indeed He is alive, when they stand before Him in judgment. Many people (scientists, agnostics, even atheists) have started out to prove that the Bible is false and that God does not exist, only to become believers as they uncovered fact after fact that proves the existence of God.

It becomes a matter of choice. Either you will believe the irrefutable evidence or you will not. Many will simply be touched of God and believe by faith without the need for proof. Others will need more concrete proof.

But we are promised one thing in the scriptures. The scriptures say, "**All who seek Me,**" (speaking of God), "**shall find Me.**"

If you do not know Christ as your Lord and Savior, I invite you to come forward this morning and place your faith in Christ and be immersed in the waters of baptism for the forgiveness of your sins.

**He is Lord!**