

## The Christ

Last Sunday we studied the **anointing** and today we'll be studying the **anointed One** – the Christ. The Greek word used is '**Christos**' (Anointed One), and its Hebrew counterpart is the word "Messiah," a term applied to the priests who were anointed with the holy oil, particularly the high priest, (Leviticus 4:3,5,16). The prophets are called 'hoi christoi Theou', "**the anointed of God**," (Psalm 105:15). A king of Israel was described upon occasions as 'christos tou Kuriou', "**the anointed of the Lord**," (1 Samuel 2:10,35; 2 Samuel 1:14; Psalm . 2:2; 18:50; Habakkuk 3:13).

"Messiah" means the one anointed by God and empowered by God's Spirit to deliver His people and establish His kingdom. In Jewish thought the Messiah would be the king of the Jews, a great leader who would defeat their enemies and usher in a golden era of peace and prosperity. Later, as the Jewish people struggled against their political enemies, the Messiah came to be thought of as a political, military ruler.

From the New Testament we learn more about the Jewish people's expectations. They thought the Messiah would come soon to perform signs and wonders and deliver His people (John 7:31), after which He would live and rule forever (John 12:34). Although Jesus was the Messiah, He did not want it known publicly. Jesus did acknowledge that He was the Christ, but He never referred to Himself as the Messiah, except privately to His disciples (that is, until the crucifixion).

The reason for this is that Jesus' kingdom was not political but spiritual. Therefore, if Jesus had used the title "Messiah" the people would have thought that He was a political king. But Jesus knew all too well that the Messiah, God's Anointed One, was to be the **Suffering Servant** mentioned in **Isaiah 52** and **53**. The fact that Jesus was the "crucified deliverer" was a stumbling block to most of the Jews. They saw the cross as a sign of weakness and failure, so they totally rejected the concept of a crucified Messiah.

However, the message of the early church centred around the fact that the crucified and risen Jesus is the Christ (the Anointed One). They were convinced that this was the power and wisdom of God in operation (1 Corinthians 1:23,24). John wrote, "**Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?**" (1 John 2:22). By the time the apostle Paul started his ministry the title "Christ" had changed to include proper name. It became associated with the Lord's personal name 'Iesous', and therefore, "Christ Jesus" was the order of preference.

When the church moved into Gentile soil, the new converts lacked the Jewish background for thoroughly understanding the title "Anointed One" and it lost much of its significance. With the exception of the Greek Orthodox church (who continue in this custom), the same would apply to many believers today. We may have lost the true significance of being called Christians (those who belong to and follow after the Anointed One). Furthermore, the reality is this, by following the Anointed One we follow after the anointing 'personified'.

The title 'hoi Christos', "the Christ," is not used of Christ in the inspired books of the Old Testament. However, in the New Testament the word is frequently used in reference to Jesus as "the Christ." Sometimes the single title 'Christos' is used without the name 'Jesus', and it signifies *the Anointed One, who by His Holy Spirit and power indwells believers and moulds their character in conformity to His exact likeness* (Romans 8:10; Galatians 2:20; 4:19; Ephesians 3:17). Therefore, the title 'Christos', when used without the name 'Jesus', stresses the Lord's divine character and His personal relationship with believers. The Anointed One has an anointing from God to transform you and me into His likeness - to make us just like Himself.

The title **Christ**, when joined to the Lord's personal name **Jesus**, is also very significant. Either as Christ Jesus or Jesus Christ. But note the order of Name and Title invariably changed according to the order of the person's experience with Jesus. Therefore, all the men who had accompanied Jesus during His earthly ministry used Name and then Title (**Jesus Christ**), because this was the order of their experience. They knew Him first as Jesus and then after His resurrection they learnt that He was the Messiah. But Paul got to know Him in the glory of heaven (Acts 9:1-6), and his experience, being the reverse of the disciples, caused him to use Title and then the Name (**Christ Jesus**). Quite simply, "Christ Jesus" suggests His grace and "Jesus Christ" suggests His glory. Yet, either way He is the **Anointed One**.

Three times Jesus acknowledges that He is the Christ. Three times the title 'ho Christos' was expressly accepted by the Lord Himself. So, let us now closely examine these instances:

In **Matthew 16: 15-17** when speaking to Simon Peter, He says this, ***"But what about you? Who do you say I am?"*** Simon Peter answered, ***"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*** Jesus replied, ***"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."***

Jesus began by asking His disciples what other men were saying about His true identity. Their replies showed clearly that, to the average person, Jesus was just one among many. Good but not the Best, Great but not the Greatest. A prophet but not the Prophet. This view would never do as it undermined His authority and surrounded Him with faint, insincere praise. If Jesus was just another man of God, He was a fraud because He had claimed to be *equal* to God the Father.

Notice how Jesus quickly turns the question toward the disciples and asks, ***"But who do you say I am?"*** This draws out of Simon Peter the historic confession, ***"You are the Christ (the Anointed One), the Son of the living God."*** The Lord then pronounces a blessing on Simon. But this fisherman had not arrived at such a conclusion, with regards Jesus, through intellect or human wisdom; it had been supernaturally revealed (imparted) to him by God the Father.

To understand fully the significance of Jesus expressly accepting that He is the Christ (before His disciples), we must understand the importance of what follows next. Jesus turns to Peter and says, ***"And I also say to you that you are Peter (Petros), and on this rock (Petra) I will build My church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."***

Jesus has just acknowledged that He is the "Anointed One," and then He immediately declares something so profound that many scholars have overlooked its true purpose. The big question has always been, "Who or what is the rock?" The first word 'Pedros' literally means a 'stone', so if Peter was the person Jesus was intending to build His church on, Ephesians 2:20, which says that the church is built on Christ, the chief cornerstone, is inaccurate. Also, Christ is spoken of as a 'Rock' in 1 Corinthians 10:4, and I believe this is a direct link.

You must remember that Jesus wasn't talking to Gentiles but Jews. So, the Lord used an old Hebrew illustration - "a rock." The figurative use of the word "rock" in Hebrew scriptures always symbolised Deity - God Himself. Therefore, when Jesus declares, ***"On this rock I will build My church,"*** I believe He was saying, "On this revelation concerning Deity - upon revelation of who the Christ is - I will build My church." How can we be sure of this? Well, the Lord ends His proclamation with, ***"...And the gates of hell***

**will not prevail against it.**” Well, we know that the Anointed One (the Messiah) was sent to deliver God's people.

And we also know that this takes an anointing from God to defeat the devil. Therefore, Jesus was letting us know that when He (God's Anointed Son) builds His church, there will be an “anointing” on the church that all of hell shall not be able to resist. Here we see the Anointed One declaring that *revelation concerning the Anointed One* would be the foundation of the church, and not even hell itself would be able to stand against a church that's abiding in this truth concerning God's Anointed Son. Hence, the “rock” is the truth, revealed by God Himself, regarding the Anointed One - the Christ.

In **Mark 15:61,62** the high priest asks Jesus directly, saying to Him, **“Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”** Jesus responds saying, **“I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”** Again, Jesus acknowledges that He is the Christ. But also, we can see clearly that “the Christ” is revealed in power and splendour and glory! The Anointed One is seated at the right hand of God, and His divine anointing flows to (and in) His church through the Holy Spirit. Securing victory and abundant life for all who believe that Jesus is the Christ.

Finally, when conversing with the Samaritan woman at the well, in **John 4:25,26**, Jesus again admits that He is the Christ. The woman said to Him, **“I know that the Messiah” (called the Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.**” And Jesus declared, **“I who speak to you am he.”** As this woman listened to the Lord, she was somehow made to think of the coming Messiah. The Holy Spirit had probably stirred up within her a desire that the Messiah should come. But there must have also been something about Jesus, and how He conducted Himself, that brought this to her mind. She expressed a confidence that when the Anointed One came He would teach all things. In this one statement, the Samaritan woman showed a clear understanding of the great purposes of Christ's coming.

Then, Jesus responds and He literally says, **“I who speak to you am the Anointed One.”** He was announcing to her the startling truth that the One who was speaking to her was the Christ - the Anointed One for whom she had been waiting. God Himself!

Today, God speaks to us by and through His word, and His word is “anointed” to teach us all things. However, how many of you are still waiting for the Anointed One to come and fulfil His word? How many of you are waiting for the Anointed One (the Christ) to inhabit your tragic circumstances? How many of you are looking into the distance trying to see the Anointed One riding out to secure your victory?

Well, Jesus want's to tell you exactly what He told the Samaritan woman, **“I who speak to you am He - the Anointed - the Christ!”** The One standing before you is the Christ! He promised never to leave you or forsake you. He said, “I will be with you always, even to the end of this age.” So stop looking beyond the truth!