

Jason Upchurch - Christology & Pneumatology - Christ Jesus - John 1:35-51

This morning we're returning to our look at Systematic Theology. We're under the larger umbrella of Christology and Pneumatology - the doctrines of Christ and the Holy Spirit. And really in this umbrella we'll look at other aspects of the spiritual world as well.

This morning I want drill down on the word Christ. When we say Christ, what does that mean? We worship and adore the Lord Jesus Christ. And sometimes we say something so often we don't even realize what we're saying and why it's such a big deal.

I was sitting around the dinner table last week talking to the kids and I said something like "At the end of the day, what matters is God's approval." And one of my kids said: What do you mean by "at the end of the day?" And I responded: "It means when all is said and done." Blank stare. So I had to try to explain not 1 but 2 turns of phrase that we use all the time.

I think we do that with the word Christ. We use it a lot without thinking about what it means. Most of us probably know this, but Christ is not Jesus's last name. He would have been called Jesus Bar-Jospeh, which means Jesus the Son of Jospeh. Or Jesus of Nazareth, referring to his hometown.

Christ refers to the role Jesus fulfilled. Just like president or commissioner or prime minister are roles and an individual fills. In the Bible we see roles like prophet, priest, king. We also see that Israel was anticipating someone to come and fulfill a role that they called Messiah. Or Christ.

The Word Christ means anointed one. When you anoint someone you pour oil on their head as a sign that they've been chosen by God for a purpose.

You remember when Samuel went and anointed Saul king? What did he do? He took a flask of oil, poured it on Saul's head and that was the way God designated Saul to be king in Israel. Same thing happened with David. Same thing happened to priests to show that they were selected, chosen by God, to the priesthood - they were anointed with oil. **Ex. 28:41, 29:7**

Prophets were a little different. They weren't anointed with oil. They were anointed with something else. Or, more accurately, someone else. What were they anointed with? The Holy Spirit.

Which is important because Jesus wasn't anointed with oil. What was he anointed with? The Holy Spirit. That's one way that we know for sure Jesus of Nazareth, son of Jospeh, was the Messiah. The Christ. The anointed one, chosen by God for a specific role.

We call ourselves Christians which means little Christs. And we too are anointed, aren't we? Anointed by the same thing Jesus was anointed with - not oil, but the Holy Spirit. So Jesus Christ means Jesus, the anointed one.

By the way, that's why the NT often refers to Jesus either as Jesus Christ but also Christ Jesus. Because Christ is his title. Christ is the Greek word for anointed one, Messiah is the Hebrew word for anointed one - they mean the same thing in different languages.

Now, I know that sounds like a lot of detail there, but this is so foundational to who we are it's in the very name we profess. Followers of Jesus are called Christians. And we believe in Christianity.

Our identity revolves around this very specific role that Jesus fulfilled.

Acts 11:26: Barnabas went and found Saul - who was still new to the faith - and they went Antioch and taught for a year and that's where believers were first called Christians.

Why? Because especially in the early church, what the apostles and believers had to do was convince people - Jews especially - that Jesus was the Christ. That he was the guy that everyone was looking for. He fulfilled all the prophecies and promises of God in the OT.

That's why at the end of John's gospel John says the reason he wrote his whole gospel was so that we would know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And that by believing we would have life in his name. **John 20:30-31**

So in order to have eternal life, to have forgiveness of sins we need to understand the role of Jesus as Christ, as Messiah.

1 John 2:22: Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?

If you deny that Jesus is the Christ - the OT Messiah - you're a liar.

1 John 2:22: Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the anti-Christ, he who denies the Father and the Son.

We kind of blast over that. But salvation is based on our conviction that Jesus is the Messiah. And anyone who denies that is the anti-Christ.

If you don't think Jesus is Messiah, you're anti-Messiah. There is no other Messiah, no other person who could possibly be Messiah other than Jesus. So if you deny Jesus filled that role, you reject the role itself.

And we often hear the word "antiChrist" referring to an end time figure, but John makes it clear that the antichrist is the one who denies Jesus is the Messiah.

And let me tell you, what's always amazing to me is that Gentiles believing this. Why would pagan gentiles care about the promises given to a Jewish people? Really, I think about my own salvation. I would die to defend Jesus is Messiah. Why? Like the OT is not my circus, not my monkeys. I have no native connection to it. Why do I believe?

Because God's purpose of election stands, and the great mystery of the gospel is that Gentiles who have no native connection to the OT covenants and promises believe with all our heart that the Messiah is Jesus. Wild. Oh the depths and riches and wisdom of God, amen?

So here's what we're going to do. I want to unpack this little section for us and why it's important. Then I want to go through some specifics of what all it meant that Jesus was the Christ.

This little section in John 1 is really a turning point in salvation history. John assumes the virgin conception of Jesus, and the deity of Jesus - that was all the first part of the chapter. What he's concentrating on is showing Jesus is Messiah. **Read 29-34**

Ever wonder why John is baptizing people? Turns out he's doing 2 things. First, he's calling Israel to repentance to prepare them for the Messiah to come on scene. He's the voice in the wilderness telling people the king is coming. Prepare the way of the Lord. That's what the other gospels mostly focus on.

But the apostle John gives us a little insight: there was a second reason John the Baptist was baptizing. **Read 31**

He came baptizing so that the Christ might be revealed. It turns out God had not told John who the Messiah would be. He didn't know it was Jesus. John did know that Jesus was a very holy and godly man. In the other gospels when Jesus wants to get baptized John's like: you don't need to be baptized by me, I need to be baptized by you! John knew Jesus was godly. He just didn't know he was God!

Well, God had secretly told John that when he's out baptizing there's gonna be a guy who has the Spirit of God come down on him like a dove and that's the Messiah. That's how he'll know. **Read 32-34**

So now, Jesus knows and John knows that Jesus is the Messiah. And so John starts telling people to follow Jesus. Which brings us to the whole situation we read earlier with Andrew and Simon Peter and Phillip and Nathaniel.

Now, before I read the account again, notice there are a few things that connected Jesus to being the Messiah. Notice in **Vs 41** that's the issue. We've found the Messiah (which means Christ). Israel was looking for the guy. They were looking for Messiah and especially with John out preaching that he was preparing for him, there was a huge Messianic fervor.

So what were some giveaways that a person was Messiah? **Read 35-42**

1 - Supernatural anointing by the Spirit - which John and Jesus alone saw.

2 - The Messiah would be the Lamb of God - he would take away sins. There was a priestly function of Jesus that would actually bring forgiveness. And when you're talking lambs and taking away sin that can mean only 1 thing: death and sacrifice.

3 - There's a divine ranking of Messiah - John says Jesus ranks before me. Well, John is older, so technically in the Jewish mind John would rank higher. But he doesn't, why? Because as God, Jesus is eternal. There is a superiority of Messiah that people expected.

4 - The Messiah would be God in the flesh. That's the whole first part of the chapter we skipped. And we'll talk about that more at length in a future sermon when we cover the dual natures of Jesus. That he is truly God and truly man in one person. But Messiah was to be God.

5 - That he would fulfill what Moses and the prophets wrote about. **Read 43-46**

Now, at this point it's funny. Because Phillip tells Nathaniel that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. And then Nathaniel takes a potshot at Nazareth. What good is that town? Nazareth is catching strays. Why does he do that? Were they rival football teams? No. Because Nathaniel knows his OT. Where was Messiah to come from? Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2: out of Bethlehem would come a ruler to shepherd the people of God. Matthew quotes that for why Jesus was born there.

Nathaniel isn't skeptical because he has a grudge, he's skeptical because he knows his Bible. Jesus was a mystery because Nathaniel didn't know Jesus's actual birth town, he just assumed it.

6 - Messiah was to be Son of God. **Read 48-49**

Alright, so we don't know all of what happened here with the fig tree thing. But Nathaniel was doing something under the fig tree and whatever he was doing was an opportunity show his true character. And seems like maybe he was alone or at least there were not witnesses. Whatever he did or didn't do was in secret and no one could have known.

It'd be like if a person came to you in a field, no phone or anything and offered you a bunch of money to tell a simple, white lie. Or something like that where no one would know, no one could see. You'd be rich. It's just you and them and God. And you didn't fail. And then later someone said: Oh yeah, I saw you in the field with the briefcase of money. You're an honest man.

How in the world would they know unless...they were God? And that's why Phillip cries out that Jesus is the Son of God. That's a divine title putting Jesus on the same level as the Father.

His first interaction goes from biblically-warranted skepticism to worship. Because Jesus proved his omniscience.

And because Jesus is Messiah, Phillip says, well then you must be divine as well. Which means, the Messiah was promised to be the Son of God.

Psalms 2 says he's the Son.

2 Samuel 7:14 says he would be a Son.

7 - King of Israel. **Read 49**

So what Israel was looking for in the Messiah was a king. In fact, that part was the problem with many people who rejected Jesus because they thought his main goal would be to establish an earthly Kingdom right away.

But Jesus says my kingdom is not of this world - or not like this world. Jesus establishes a heavenly Kingdom that influences every earthly kingdom and will one day fill the whole world.

But he is a King, and he's a king now. He told Pilate he was a King and he's reigning right now on David's throne in glory. And one day he will come to consummate his Kingdom and rule over all creation on the new earth.

But the kingly expectation was there.

8 - Jesus would do a bunch of miracles. **Read 50-51**

This is great because Jesus does one act to show his omniscience to Phillip. Now, think about this. Phillip was already a skeptic. Jesus is from the wrong location so he can't be the Messiah. But when Jesus mentions the fig tree situation it is so utterly amazing and astounding that Phillip not only drops the skepticism, but worships him immediately. Whatever that was was amazing. Truly jaw dropping and impossible unless Jesus did an amazing divine miracle.

And Jesus says **Read 50**

You're gonna believe because of that little thing? Wait til you see what's coming. It's going to be so obvious it's going to be like Jacob watching angels go up and down on ladders to heaven. I'm going to show you the full array of the glory of God. And that's exactly what Jesus did.

All the miracles in all of the Bible pale in comparison to what Jesus did in his ministry. **Turn to John 7:25-31**

This is Jesus in Jerusalem. There's sort of a buzz around his being there. He's already had run ins with the religious authorities but the people love Jesus. And the argument they're having is about whether or not Jesus is really the Christ. Is he actually the one. Maybe the religious authorities know he because they're not opposing him. **Read 25-31**

Why are they believing that Jesus is the Christ? Because they know the Christ will come and do miracles. And Jesus is doing miracles. Loads and loads of miracles. So many miracles that no one can possibly imagine someone doing more miracles than Jesus is doing.

Acts 2:22 On the day of Pentecost Peter says to the group of people listening: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works, and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst that you yourselves know.

They knew it!

And then Peter concludes the sermon: Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

Jesus's miracles proved he was the Christ.

He was a non-stop miracle worker and he does the most fantastic miracles that can be in ways that can't possibly be disproven. In fact, some of the miracles are so obvious the only possible explanation his enemies give is that he must be doing them by Satan's power because they are legitimate miracles.

Why do they do that? Because they hate Jesus.

So here we go: In John 1 we see that the Christ

- 1- would be supernaturally anointed by the Holy Spirit
- 2 - He would be the Lamb of God
- 3 - He has a divine rank
- 4 - He's God in the flesh
- 5 - Fulfill what Moses and the prophets would say
- 6 - He's the Son of God, in distinction to God the Father.
- 7 - King of Israel
- 8 - Miracle worker

Jesus threads that needle.

Okay, let's talk about the concept of Messiah from the OT. **Turn to Psalm 2**

Psalm 2 is a Messianic psalm talking about the Lord Jesus and his triumph over the nations. It's one we're familiar with and one that specifically mentions a Messiah.

We don't have time to look up all the promises and prophecies of Jesus. Honestly you could just go ask AI to give you a list of promises.

Crush the head of the serpent Genesis 3.
Child of Abraham, David - Matthew's genealogy.

I just want to look at 2 passages here in the OT that specifically point to the one to come as Messiah - anointed. **Read 1-3**

So this is the state of the nations of the world. They hate God and they hate his anointed one - that's the word Messiah. **Read 4-6**

Alright so what do we see here about Messiah? Messiah has authority. That authority was given by God. The world, for the most part, hates Messiah.

But we also see here Messiah is a king. The Jews in Jesus's time weren't wrong. Jesus is a king, they just didn't understand the full purpose and plan of God. **Read 7-9**

What's Messiah going to do? He's going to conquer the whole world. All the nations will be the heritage of the King Messiah. All nations will bow down to him.

Let me ask you: where has the gospel gone? To all the nations. This is how we know that the gospel will go forward and the world will worship Jesus.

By the way, this is every Post Millennial's favorite OT passage. You know Jeff Foxworthy: you might be a Red neck if? Well, you might be a Post Millennial if this psalm is underlined in 3 different colors in your Bible. I just have 1 color because because I'm an optimistic amillennial. But look at the command in light of Jesus rule.

Read 10-12

Who should bow down to Jesus? Kings, rulers, those in authority, nations. Whatever your political persuasion is it better include space where rulers acknowledge and bow down to Jesus because if they don't they will be crushed by his wrath.

But they will be blessed - and their nations will be blessed - if they turn and take refuge in him. Rulers should lead their people to Jesus. Even the nations that rage against him.

Now, you read that, and you get why the Jews were expecting a King. **Turn to Daniel 9:25-26**

Remember, the word Messiah means anointed one and in the OT it's usually used for people other than Jesus. It just means the person God has chosen. But Psalm 2 and Daniel 9 are the 2 explicit places he is called Messiah. Sometimes in **Isaiah 53** he's called the Suffering Servant. In Genesis 3 he's called the seed of the woman. He's called Abraham's offspring. He has many designations, but it culminated in the title of Messiah.

Here in Daniel remember that the Jews are in exile in Babylon. Daniel prays for his people in the midst of all that and he receives a vision from Gabriel about 70 weeks. Remember that?

I'm not going to get into the weeds of interpreting the weeks. Every end times view has a different take on what these weeks mean, do they represent years precisely, or are they just figurative amounts of time? Lots of questions.

I don't want to get too lost in the weeds, but in the midst of that whole thing is mention of an anointed - a Messiah - who is cut off. And then right after him a prince comes that destroys the whole city and makes it desolate which happened in 70AD with Titus destroying Jerusalem. **Read 24-27**

Alright, so there's a timeline around an anointed one, a Messiah. That Messiah comes after 69 weeks and 2 things happen. First, his presence ends transgression, puts an end to sin, atones for iniquity, and brings in everlasting righteousness, and creates a covenant. Who's the only person who does that? Jesus.

Jesus is the anointed one - the Messiah - who brings that all in. And second he's cut off. When was that? At his crucifixion.

Isaiah 53:8: He was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people.

This is Jesus the Messiah. The Christ.

The high priest of our faith.

The Son of God whom we worship.

The King of Universe.

Our Sovereign Anointed One.

Pray