

533 Is Jesus the Messiah

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God's Answers to Life's Questions

Throughout the history of Israel, they have looked for a Messiah, an anointed One to restore the kingdom of Israel to its glorious days under David and Solomon. The Messiah was to be a descendant of David, and his kingdom was to last forever. For the Jews, the Messiah was the hope of Israel that God would bring them back to a place of power and prominence. Who was to be this Messiah? Is Jesus the promised king? Did he fulfill the prophecies and does He have a kingdom?

In the ancient days of Israel, God appointed that certain prophets, priests, and kings would be anointed, so that all the people would see that this person has God's approval and support. In 1 Kings 19:16 God told Elijah, you shall anoint Elisha "as prophet in your place." God had Samuel to anoint Saul with oil as the first king over Israel and then later to anoint David. God chose David over all the others in Israel to be king in Saul's place. Perhaps you remember the story of Samuel coming to the house of Jesse. When Samuel saw Jesse's oldest son Eliab, he thought he was surely the Lord's anointed.

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God *sees* not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Sam. 16:7) God chose David because of his heart. David put his confidence in God and faced Goliath, when every other person was fearful—even King Saul. David was the sweet psalmist of Israel who loved God and was blessed by Him. Toward the end of David's life, God made a promise to him that one of his descendants would always be on the throne of Israel.

Nathan the prophet brought God's promise found in 2 Sam. 7:12-16, "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."

The word Messiah is a Hebrew term and is transliterated in Greek. It means "anointed" and speaks of one who is chosen with the approval of God for a particular service. The word Messiah is translated (not transliterated) thirty-nine times in the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, by the Greek word, "*Christos*," or our word, "Christ." When Andrew learned of Jesus, he first found his brother Simon and said, "We have found the Messiah (which translated means Christ)" (John 1:41). From the days of John the Baptist, Jesus was recognized to be the Messiah.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached about Jesus. He said, "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. "And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat *one* of his descendants on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses." (Acts 2:29-32) Peter was proclaiming that the crucified and risen Christ was Jesus of Nazareth!

He concluded, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36). The final descendant of David to sit on the throne was Jesus the Christ, the Messiah. Of his kingdom there would be no end. The angel Gabriel said to Mary, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." (Luke 1:30-33)

Now if Jesus is the King, when will he sit on his throne? Peter answered that when he said, "God has made Him both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Jesus is already Lord and Christ. In Matthew 28:18, Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." How can you have more authority than "all" authority? Paul said that God "raised Him (Jesus) from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:20-23).

Many people have the notion that one day in the future Jesus will reign; in reality, Jesus is reigning right now. We do not have to wait to someday be in the kingdom; we can be in the kingdom now, today! Paul said in Colossians 1:13-14, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the *kingdom* of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Paul wrote the church at Colossae and called it a kingdom. You see Paul entered the kingdom, when he received the forgiveness of his sins. Paul also entered the church when he received the forgiveness of his sins. The church is the kingdom. Jesus said, in Matthew 16:18-19, "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. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Now why would Jesus build a church and give the keys to the kingdom if they were two different things? My friend, the kingdom today is the church.

Now we might ask the question, here, how do we know Jesus really is the Messiah? The apostles said he was, but how do we link Jesus to the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament? Well, let's consider those prophecies.

First, the Messiah was to be a descendant of David. When you examine the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1, you find that Jesus is a direct descendent of David through Joseph and in Luke 3 that Jesus is a direct descendent through Mary. Either way Jesus fits the prophecy of being a son of David.

Second, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Micah 5:2, "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity." Jesus was indeed born in Bethlehem, and a star marked the way for the Wise men. When Herod wanted to know where this new king of the Jews was to be born, the chief priests and scribes knew that it was little Bethlehem, the "city of David." Let me ask a question here. How many people get to pick where they will be born and to what family? Why, no one. God did this.

Third, we consider the death of Jesus. The Bible predicts Jesus would die by crucifixion. Psalm 22:16 written by David a thousand years before Jesus spoke of the piercing of his hands and feet. How did David know that? Isaiah predicts the Messiah in his death would be numbered with the transgressors (Isaiah 53:12). How did Jesus orchestrate being crucified between two thieves? Psalm 22:18 tells us they would divide his garments among themselves and cast lots for them. How did David know, unless God was behind the prophecy and could see its fulfillment a thousand years before the time?

Fourth, how does one arrange to fulfill the prophecy of being betrayed for thirty pieces of silver? (Zechariah 11:13; Matthew 27:3-10). Not 25 or 29 or 31, but 30 pieces! How is it that the Roman soldiers did what was common in breaking the legs of the two thieves on either side of him, but fulfilled the prophecy by not breaking the legs of Jesus (Psalm 34:20; John 19:33). Did these Roman soldiers know this prophecy? No. These prophecies were made by the foreknowledge of God, who could see what would happen and could really predict the future.

Fifth, how is it that Jesus came forth from the grave? How could this man who was beaten, scourged, crucified and wrapped in burial clothes rise again and appear before many witnesses? David predicted in Psalm 16:8-10 his flesh would not decay, that his soul would be brought up from Sheol, the grave (Psalm 30:3). Matthew 16:21 says, "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." Jesus knew where, how, and when!

It might be possible to fake some predictions, but how do you fake these things? How does a man arrange to be born into the right family at the right time in the right place? How does he manage to live the right life? How does he manage to be betrayed for the exact amount of money? How does he manage to die the right death, between the right people, watching others gamble over his clothes and fail to break his bones? How does he manage to rise from the dead at the predicted time and to appear to hundreds of people who knew him and would die for him?

Jesus is who He claimed to be! He fulfilled these and dozens of other prophecies made by God's prophets hundreds of years before he was born. Because he is who he claimed to be, you can trust him with your soul. You can believe in Him and give your heart and life to Him. Paul said in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Does the Lord Jesus, who fulfilled prophecy and rose from the dead live in you?

Are you a Christian? Jesus is truly unique. He is the only one ever to fulfill prophecies made hundreds of years before his birth. He truly is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). There is no other way to come to the Father. He is the Son of David and the Son of God. Trust Him and serve Him. Don't ever think that anyone else can replace Him, because no one can. Only He can be the Messiah. Only He can save you. Only He can take you to heaven. But He won't take you, unless you are willing to follow Him. Don't say, "no" to Jesus but give yourself in faith to Him.

Trust Him with your heart and soul. Repent of every sin; turn away from every evil and only do the will of the Lord. Be willing to confess Jesus as Lord and Christ to anyone who asks. And be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins, just as they did from the very beginning.

There comes a point in time when people have to make a decision. They can't continue to hesitate between two opinions. Either Jesus is Lord or He is not. Either He fulfilled the prophecy or He did not. Either He arose from the dead or He did not. Jesus said this about being the Messiah, "I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he (the Messiah) you will die in your sins." (John 8:24). I don't know where you are in your spiritual journey, but I challenge you to look at Jesus again. This time look at Jesus himself in the Bible—not what people think or say about Him.

Take one of the four books—Matthew, Mark, Luke or John—and study for yourself. Read it through, hear His own words, think about His message, and find out who Jesus is. The word of God itself has the purest message about Jesus. Find out about his birth, his miracles, his teachings, his death, and his resurrection. See how he fulfilled all that Moses and the prophets wrote about Him. Jesus said, "If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority." (John 7:17) Find out by hearing the Lord and leading the life.

If you are not going to church anywhere, why not visit one of the churches of Christ near you. If you have a Bible on the shelf that you haven't read in a while, why not begin reading it. If you haven't prayed much lately, why not take some time to talk to the Lord. Ask him to help you find the truth. Don't get sidetracked by the pop psychology religions or the Christian entertainment industry, go to the Bible to find the truth.

We're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven. All the expenses are paid by your friends at Concord Road Church of Christ in Brentwood, Tennessee. If you are in our area, we'd love to meet you. Worship with us some Sunday at 9 am or 6 pm. You are always welcome and wanted. If you cannot visit us, there is a wonderful congregation of the churches of Christ near you. We'd love to hear from you. Until next week, we remind you to look to God for all your answers. God bless you and we love you from Concord Road.

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