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Telephone: 503 292 4352

• Internet: www.askelm.com •

E-Mail: askoffice@askelm.com

Christ and Messiah

by David Sielaff, October 2005, Updated May 2023

Read the accompanying "[May 2023 Newsletter](#)"



I was asked the question: How did the apostles know that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ? How do WE know that Jesus is our Savior and Messiah? What evidence did the apostles have to prove to themselves and others that Jesus was the Messiah, Lord, and Savior? Answers to these questions are in the Scriptures. All who accept the New Testament as a true record of events should know that the evidence was for believers in the 1st century AD and for us today who accept on faith those scriptural accounts.

The word "Christ" simply means "anointed." Its usage in the Greek Scriptures indicates that the person the word refers to was anointed by God to fulfill an office or a particular purpose. Anyone who was anointed for a specific purpose was a form of a *christos* or christ (small "c") in the biblical sense. In Hebrew, the term would be *mashiach* or "messiah." In the Old Testament a variety of anointings took place. Every person anointed was a *mashiach*. The Greek of the New Testament uses the word *messias* twice, a transliteration of *mashiach*.

The term "Christ" (*Christos* in Greek) is a translation of the Hebrew word *mashiach*, and both mean "anointed."¹ The word Christ means Messiah and the words can be used interchangeably in translation. This is stated by the apostle John in his Gospel when he made editorial comments for his readers:

"He [John] first finds his own brother Simon, and says unto him, 'We have found the MESSIAS,' which is, being interpreted, THE CHRIST [Messiah]. And he brought him to Jesus."

• **John 1:41–42**

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

"The woman says unto Him, 'I know that MESSIAS [Messiah] comes, which is called CHRIST:

¹ A "transliteration" of a word is the use of corresponding letters of a different alphabet with the result occasionally sounding similar to the word in the original language. The "translation" of a word from one language to another uses a different word with the same meaning. The Greek Old Testament (LXX) uses *christos* 6 times. In 1 Samuel 2:10, 35; Psalm 2:2, and 20:6 most English translations of *christos* in the LXX is "anointed."

In the King James Version, the Hebrew of Amos 4:13 is translated as "thought," but the Greek LXX clearly has *christos*.

For Daniel 9:25 the Hebrew *mashiach* is translated as "Messiah" in the King James Version. The Greek LXX is problematic for this verse.

when He is come, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus says unto her, ‘[I that speak unto you am He.](#)’”

• [John 4:25–26](#)

Note also, Jesus admitted directly to her that He was the “Messiah” as she said. Later she ran to the men and said “**Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ [the Messiah]?”** (John 4:29). In both John 1:41 and 4:25 *messias* is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew *mashiach* (which in turn is translated into English). It is perfectly proper, therefore, to substitute the term “Messiah” every time “Christ” occurs in the New Testament with reference to Jesus as Messiah. This was the understanding of the people of Jesus’ time, and it was the intent of the biblical writers to communicate that fact to their readers..

This is what I will show you for the rest of this article. The meaning of many verses with the word “Christ” will be revitalized in your mind. It will seem as if you are reading these verses for the first time. No matter whether the books and epistles were written originally in Hebrew or Greek, the full meaning and idea of “Messiah,” and Jesus’ fulfillment of His role as “the Messiah,” is clearly expressed by the term “Christ.”

I am not suggesting you write “Messiah” every time “Christ” occurs in the New Testament (although you might wish to do so).² However, it would be wise for you to think “Messiah” every time you see the word “Christ” in any New Testament writing. In particular, you should think “Messiah” when the audience of the biblical writer includes Gentiles, such as Luke’s Gospel, Acts, the epistles of Paul, and Hebrews.

“Jesus Christ” and “Christ Jesus”

In fact, it would be proper to understand the phrase “Jesus Christ” as “Jesus the Messiah” or “Jesus the Anointed” every time the phrase occurs. And, when you consider that the personal name “Jesus” itself is Greek for the Hebrew name “Joshua,” and Joshua means “YHWH saves,” you have a powerful statement, filled with meaning. In fact, the simple phrase “Jesus Christ” expresses the literal idea: “YHWH saves [through] the Anointed [One].”

The reverse, “Christ Jesus,” can be understood as expressing: “the Anointed of YHWH saves.” These expressions are precisely what the terms and phrases mean. God accomplished this work of saving mankind through His anointed One, Jesus Christ, who performed it through His birth, life, crucifixion, death, and resurrection.

In the following pages I cite several verses that use the word “Christ,” and I will insert the word “Messiah” next to it to give a full understanding of the verse. You will often see: “*[Christ](#),” with an asterisk before it. This indicates when the Greek text has a definite article with “Christ.” It points out when a definite article is present in Greek, but not translated by the King James Version. A definite article in Greek is used in a similar fashion as in English.³ We can gain additional insight into the importance of Jesus being the Messiah.

If you survey all occurrences of “Christ” and insert “Messiah,” you would gain a complete education as to what the New Testament writers understood the Messiah to be as they were taught by Jesus Himself before and after His resurrection. It also informs us of how the Jewish people, the religious leaders, Samaritans, Romans, devils, John the Baptist, Martha (sister of Lazarus), and the apostles all expected (rightly or wrongly) the Messiah to be. Remember, the apostles held many of the same views as the Jewish leaders and people until after the resurrection of Jesus.

John the Baptist

Many people wondered if John the Baptist was the Messiah. The priests and Levites asked him:

² English translations are not wrong in using “Christ” for the Greek word *Christos*. Indeed, that is how the Greek texts read. However, your mind should get into the habit of thinking “Messiah” every time you read the word “Christ.”

³ See the biblical Greek educational webpage, “Lesson 4 | The Greek Article and Pronouns” where it is pointed out that “**The definite article is generally used to indicate a specific thing or set of things (e.g. “the book” as opposed to “a book,” etc.).**” The presence of a definite article in Greek is important. There is a reflexive sense of the Greek definite article which does not concern us here. There is no indefinite article in biblical Greek that corresponds to our word “a” as in “a dog.”

“And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, ‘I am NOT the Christ [the Messiah].”

• *John 1:19–20*

Luke explains what John said when the people asked directly whether he was the Messiah:

“And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ [the Messiah] , or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I comes, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost [Spirit] and with fire.”

• *Luke 3:15–16*

The Jewish People

Let me give other examples where people wondered whether Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ. During His ministry Jesus did not want the people to be told who He was, until after His resurrection.

“Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ [the Messiah].”

• *Matthew 16:20*

The people spoke among themselves about Messiah just after Jesus taught in the Temple:

“Then said some of them of Jerusalem, ‘Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaks boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ [Messiah]? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ [Messiah] comes, no man knows whence he is. ...;

And many of the people believed on him, and said, ‘When *Christ [the Messiah] comes, will he do more miracles than these [miracles] which this man has done? ...’

Others said, ‘This is the Christ [the Messiah].’ But some said, ‘Shall *Christ [the Messiah] come out of Galilee? Has not the scripture said that *Christ [the Messiah] comes of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?’”

• *John 7:25–27, 31, 41–42*

Jesus later responded to a question of the people in Jerusalem at the feast of the dedication (Hanukkah):

“Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, ‘How long do you make us to doubt? If you be the Christ [the Messiah], tell us plainly.’

Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me [as Messiah]. But you believe not, because you are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.’”

• *John 10:23–26*

Jesus made it clear to them that He was the Messiah. He did so by doing good works as well as by signs and miracles that He performed. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He taught about the impending death of the Son of Man and was questioned by Jews and some Gentiles (Greeks). A voice from heaven spoke and Jesus spoke about His being **“lifted up.”**:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’ This he said, signifying what death he [Jesus] should die. The people answered him, ‘We have heard out of the law that *Christ [the Messiah] abides for ever [for the age]: and how say you, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?’

[after replying to them ...] These things spoke Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them. But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him:

• *John 12:32–34, 36–37*

When the people identified the Messiah with the “Son of Man,” Jesus did not disagree with them. Neither did He encourage them. Again, however, 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 His resurrection.

The Apostles Knew Jesus Was the Messiah

After feeding the 5,000 but before the transfiguration, Jesus asked His disciples who the people thought He was. I cite the passage from Matthew, but it is also found in Mark 8:27–31 and Luke 9:18–22:

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, ‘Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?’ And they said, ‘Some say that you are John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.’

He says unto them, ‘But whom say you that I am?’ And Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered and said unto him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.’

... Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ [the Messiah]. From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”

• **Matthew 16:13–17, 20–21**

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

The Jewish Leaders

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

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, ‘Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.’

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where *CHRIST [the Messiah] should be born.”

• **Matthew 2:1–4**

All Jerusalem was troubled by the report of the star of the King, not just Herod. Herod correctly identified the “King of the Jews” as the Messiah. Decades later the Pharisees gave their understanding of the Messiah:

“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, ‘What think you of *CHRIST [the Messiah]? whose son is he?’ They say unto him, ‘The Son of David.’”

• **Matthew 22:41–42**

The entire discussion from Matthew 22:41 to 23:10 is about the Messiah and how He supersedes the scribes and Pharisees. The scribes also knew the Messiah was to be the Son of David.

“And Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, ‘How say the scribes that *Christ [the Messiah] is the Son of David? [then referencing the Messianic Psalm 110:] For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit you on my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool. David therefore himself calls him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.’”

• **Mark 12:35–37**

“And he said unto them [to the Sadducees and scribes], ‘How say they that *Christ [the Messiah] is David's son?’”

• **Luke 20:41**

The Trial of Jesus

Jesus was asked at His trial by the high priest if He was the Messiah. Note in the various Gospel accounts how it is presented, each with different features and emphasis. Note also how Messiah is identified both as the Son of Man (John 12:34) and as Son of God (quoting Psalm 110). Each account adds information:

“But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, ‘I adjure [solemnly command] you by the living God, that you tell us whether you be the CHRIST [the Messiah], the Son of God.’”

Jesus said unto him, ‘You have said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall you see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.’”

• **Matthew 26:63–64 (Mark 14:61)**

“But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, ‘Are you the *CHRIST [the Messiah], the Son of the Blessed?’ And Jesus said, ‘I am: and you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest rent his clothes, and said, ‘What need we any further witnesses?’”

• **Mark 14:61–63**

“And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, ‘Are you the CHRIST [the Messiah]? tell us.’”

And he said unto them, ‘If I tell you, you will not believe: And if I also ask you [if I am Messiah], you will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter [referring to Psalm 110] shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.’”

Then said they all, ‘Are you then the Son of God?’ And he said unto them, ‘You say that I am.’ And they said, ‘What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.’”

• **Luke 22:66–71**

Before Pilate, members of the Sanhedrin council mocked Jesus again:

“And they began to accuse him, saying, ‘We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is CHRIST [Messiah] a King.’”

• **Luke 23:2**

At the crucifixion site the chief priests mocked him still further:

“Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, ‘He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let *CHRIST [the Messiah] the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.’ And they that were crucified with him reviled him.”

• **Mark 15:31–32**

A Suffering Messiah?

The idea of a suffering Messiah was shocking to the Jewish people. It was a bitter concept for them to understand and accept. Below are several verses about the suffering of Messiah and how we suffer with Him. Look up the following verses and note the full context of each, particularly who is speaking or writing. It was Jesus the Messiah who suffered, not some spiritually abstract Christ concept that all too many Christian theologians teach today. Read the context surrounding each of these verses. (Matthew 16:20–21 has already been quoted on page 4 above). Beginning with the Gospel of Luke:

“Ought not *CHRIST [the Messiah] to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? ... And said unto them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it behooved *CHRIST [the Messiah] to suffer,

and to rise from the dead the third day.”

• *Luke 24:26, 46*

“But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that *CHRIST [the Messiah] should suffer, he has so fulfilled.”

• *Acts 3:18*

“That *CHRIST [the Messiah] should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.”

• *Acts 26:23*

“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ [Messiah] which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of CHRIST [Messiah], and the glory that should follow.”

• *1 Peter 1:11*

“For even hereunto were you called: because CHRIST [Messiah] also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps.”

• *Peter 2:21*

“For CHRIST [Messiah] also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

• *1 Peter 3:18*

“Forasmuch then as CHRIST [Messiah] has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.”

• *1 Peter 4:1*

“But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of *CHRIST’S [the Messiah’s] sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. If you be reproached for the name of CHRIST [Messiah], happy are you; for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: on their part He [Messiah] is evil spoken of, but on your part He [Messiah] is glorified.”

• *1 Peter 4:13*

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of *CHRIST [the Messiah], and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed ...”

• *1 Peter 5:1*

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with *CHRIST [the Messiah]; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

• *Romans 8:17*

“For as the sufferings of *Christ [the Messiah] abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by *CHRIST [the Messiah].”

• *2 Corinthians 1:5*

“For unto you it is given on the behalf of CHRIST [Messiah], not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.”

• *Philippians 1:29*

See also Hebrews 2:9 and 13:12 which talk about Jesus needing to suffer to fulfill all the requirements of the Old Testament for sin with His blood. The “Messiah” is “Christ.” Christ is the Messiah of Israel.

A Crucified Messiah?

Jesus Himself said 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:

“And he said unto them, ‘These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.’”

Then he opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ [the Messiah] to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name [in the name of the Messiah] among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.’”

• **Luke 24:44–48**

The Jews did not think their Messiah would suffer, nor did they think the Messiah would be crucified and die. The idea of a crucified Messiah was a major problem to all Jews (as it was to Peter in Matthew 16:22). The apostle Paul makes clear, referencing Isaiah 8:14–15:

“But we preach CHRIST [Messiah] crucified, [1] unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and [2] unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, CHRIST [Messiah] the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

• **1 Corinthians 1:23–25**

Paul states as a fact that Jesus, the crucified Messiah (“**Christ crucified**”), is both “**the power of God, and the wisdom of God**” while He is a stumblingblock to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. The reality of the Messiah’s crucifixion is problematic for them both.⁴

The Messiah, according to Paul and Christ both, was prophesied by God to suffer horribly, to be crucified, to die, and to be raised from the dead. All those events needed to occur so that repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Peter’s Proclamation at Pentecost

The *ekklesia* of God began at Pentecost. Prior to that feast day the apostles were instructed by Christ to stay at Jerusalem (Luke 24:48–49). As the primary witnesses of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the apostles were to expect “the promise” of the Father which would endow them “**with power from on high**.” After several other periods of instruction, the apostles saw Jesus ascend into heaven from the Mount of Olives. They did as instructed and waited in Jerusalem (Acts 1:12–14). The Holy Spirit came upon them as promised (Acts 2:1–4) with a loud blast that sounded like an extremely loud noise (Acts 2:2).⁵ A crowd formed, and Peter spoke to the assembled Jews:

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, ‘You men of Judaea, and all you that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel’ ...”

• **Acts 2:14–16**

Peter goes on to relate the prophecy from Joel 2:28–32 which tells of end-time events, some of which were partially fulfilled in the last Passover period and 40+ days later at that moment. (Read the passage in Joel and compare it to Acts 2:17–21.)

Proof of the Messiah

Then Peter continues and shows them that Jesus was the Messiah:

“You men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as you yourselves

⁴ The word “**stumblingblock**” that Paul used can also be translated “snare” and is most often translated “offense” in the King James Version. The Greek root noun is *skandalon* from which we get our English word “scandal” and “scandalous.” It is one of several words Paul uses to describe the blindness of Israel in Romans 11:7–11 (see particularly verse 9). A crucified Messiah was both a scandal and an embarrassment to the Jews.

⁵ Acts 2:2: “**a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house.**” The word “sound” in Greek is *echos*.

also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you [you Jews] have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: [He] Whom God has raised up ...”

• **Acts 2:22–24**

Many of the miracles, wonders, and signs that Joel predicted were occurring in their midst at that time. Everyone knew that wonderful things had happened and were happening (including resurrections of the dead to physical life: Matthew 27:52–53; Mark 5:35–43; and John 12:17). Peter then talks about a prophecy of King David that he directly applied to Jesus:

“For David speaks concerning him [referring to Jesus, Acts 2:22],

**‘I foresaw the Lord always before my face,
for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved’:
Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad;
moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:
Because you will not leave my soul in hell [hades],
neither will you suffer your Holy One to see corruption.
You have made known to me the ways of life;
you shall make me full of joy with your countenance.’”**

• **Acts 2:25–28**

Who is David speaking about? Peter explained, directly quoting from Psalm 16:8–11 under inspiration of the Holy Spirit that he and the others received minutes earlier. David was not — and could not be — speaking of himself. David spoke about the Messiah. Everyone, including the apostles before Jesus’ resurrection, believed that David was speaking about himself in the future. However, the correct explanation of this Scripture must have been taught by Jesus when He explained to Peter and the apostles how the Old Testament prophecies applied to Himself (read again Luke 24:44–48 above). How can we know this? We can be certain because Peter explains to the Jews how the Psalm 16:8–11 passage cannot apply to David:

“Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day.

Therefore [David] being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up CHRIST [Messiah] to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ [Messiah], that his [Messiah’s] soul was not left in hell [hades], neither his [Messiah’s] flesh did see corruption. This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.”

• **Acts 2:29–32**

David being dead, buried, and in his grave for nearly 1,000 years (evidenced by David’s closed tomb, visible to everyone) is Peter’s proof that the Psalm 16 passage did not apply to David. Therefore, Psalm 16 applies to someone else. It applies to the Messiah, who Peter identifies as Jesus.

Many of those standing before Peter were present at the teaching, crucifixion, and death of Jesus. Peter bears witness, along with the other apostles, that Jesus was resurrected, unlike David. To whom does Psalm 16:8–11 apply? Peter said that passage applied to **“the fruit of his [David’s] loins, according to the flesh.”** It applied to the Messiah. David, as an anointed King of Israel, and a prophet of God, foresaw the resurrection of the Messiah from the dead in this Psalms 16 passage. Peter gives more proof in Acts 2 below.

That Messiah Was Made Known

Peter states that the Davidic prophecy applies directly to Jesus. Then Peter cites Psalm 110 as further evidence that Psalm 16 refers to Jesus. The full meaning of Psalm 110 (known to all Jews as applying to the Messiah) and its significance was shown by Jesus who said that this Psalm referred directly to Himself as the

Messiah. This was only fully realized by the apostles after His resurrection when He explained the scriptures to the apostles.

In Matthew 22:42–46, Mark 12:35–37, and Luke 20:41–44 Jesus spoke to the Pharisees and instructed them from Psalm 110 that the Messiah is both David’s son and God’s Son. (Again, this will be a valuable self-study for you.)

Peter continues immediately from Acts 2:31 where the Messiah is seen to fulfill Psalm 16:

“This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore [Jesus] being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost [Spirit], he has shed forth [poured out] this [rushing, trumpeting noise], which you now see and hear.

For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he [David] says himself [quoting Psalm 110], ‘The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit you on my right hand, Until I make your foes your footstool.’ Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom YOU [Jews] have crucified, both Lord and CHRIST [Messiah].”

• Acts 2:32–36

Did you catch the last declaration of Peter? David is not ascended into heaven, but Jesus did ascend, and He is seated at the right hand of God the Father. **“God has made that same Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”** Jesus’ resurrection proves Him to be the one about whom David prophesied! Peter uses:

1. David’s prophecies of Psalms 16 and 110, as well as Joel’s prophecies,
2. the fact that David did not (and has not yet) ascended into heaven,
3. the crowd’s witness to the death of Jesus, and now viewing the flames of fire (proof of the Spirit),
4. the resurrection and appearances of Jesus by Peter, other apostles, and disciples.

This information was presented as evidence that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah who rose from the dead.

God Opens The Minds Of The Jews

Peter’s words struck a chord in the minds of the listeners. God’s Holy Spirit allowed them to receive the truth of God spoken by Peter. Many in the crowd understood immediately and they were emotionally struck by what Peter said and by the implications of what they had done. They participated in killing the Messiah!

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked [pierced] in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, WHAT shall we do?’

Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ [Messiah] for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost [Spirit].”

• Acts 2:37–38

As Christ said in Acts 2:8, the Holy Spirit entered the apostles and disciples with power with an audible sound attracting the crowd. God’s Spirit opened the minds of those who heard Peter’s words. Their hearts were pierced, and they begged for more information. They repented of their participation and support for the crucifixion of Jesus. They accepted Peter’s declaration that Jesus was their Messiah and their Lord.

Three thousand souls were baptized, and received the Holy Spirit on that day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41). Jesus’ resurrection to glory was the ultimate proof that He is the Messiah of God. See my article [“Christ as High Priest”](#) and Dr. Martin’s article [“The Book of Hebrews.”](#)

King David was an “anointed” King of Israel, a “messiah,” who wrote the prophecies of Psalms 16 and 110 about his glorious descendant for all Israel to read. But King David was not the expected Messiah told about in the Old Testament prophecies. He was to be a Prophet, a Priest, and a King of Israel. David was a type of that Messiah.

Peter said David was **“both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day”** (Acts 2:29), Peter

stated boldly that the prophecy of David must apply to Jesus as the Messiah who was NOT in the grave.⁶ The Messiah had been killed. Then the Messiah had been resurrected by God.

“You will not leave my soul in hell [*hades*], neither will you suffer [allow] your Holy One to see corruption.”

• **Acts 2:27 (quoting Psalms 49:15, 86:13)**

The apostles and all the disciples were witnesses to the Messiah’s resurrection as the apostle Paul tells us:

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that

Christ [Messiah] died for our sins according to the scriptures;

And that he [Messiah] was buried,

and that he [Messiah] rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

And that he [Messiah] was seen of Cephas,

then [seen] of the twelve:

**After that, he [Messiah] was seen of above five hundred brethren at once;
of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.**

After that, he [Messiah] was seen of James;

then of all the apostles.

And last of all he [Messiah] was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”

• **1 Corinthians 15:3–8**

These eyewitness experiences of the apostles and disciples with the resurrected Jesus was the definitive evidence that Jesus was the true Messiah of God, the Son of God, and Savior of all mankind.

After Pentecost

Acts 3:14 tells that all Jerusalem knew about the **“miracles and wonders and signs”** that Jesus performed in their midst. Remember, these public acts by Jesus were so powerful that the people wondered if Jesus might be the Messiah (John 7:25–27, 31, 41–42, 10:22–26). Similar miracles were performed by the apostles after Pentecost. Peter preached to the Jews at the Temple, just before he and John were arrested by the Sanhedrin:

“And [you Jews] killed the Prince of life, whom God has raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

... And now, brethren, I wot [know] that through ignorance [1] you did it, [2] as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ [Messiah] should suffer, He has so fulfilled.

... And He shall send Jesus Christ [Messiah], which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

... Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

• **Acts 3:15, 17–18, 20–21, 26**

The apostle Paul spoke in Damascus, Syria immediately after his conversion and healing of blindness:

“And straightway he preached Christ [“Jesus” is in the Greek, not Christ] in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. ... But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which

⁶ See my December 2006 article, [“The Location and Future Discovery of King David’s Tomb.”](#)

dwelt at Damascus, proving that this [Jesus] is very Christ [Messiah].”

• *Acts 9:20, 22*

Still later Peter restates the fact that the apostles were witnesses of the resurrected Christ and they interacted physically with Him. Note the message Peter gave to the Gentile Roman centurion Cornelius and his family about Jesus (Acts 10:36). Peter specifically mentions Jesus’ anointing by God:

“How GOD ANOINTED JESUS of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost [Spirit] and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. We [the apostles] are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they [the Jews] slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after He rose from the dead.”

• *Acts 10:38–41*

Peter then tells about the apostles’ commission to preach and certify that Jesus is the one testified to by the prophets (Acts 10:42–43). Cornelius and **“all those hearing”** immediately received the Holy Spirit.

When the apostle Paul went to Thessalonica, he taught the Jews in the synagogue:

“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that CHRIST [Messiah] MUST NEEDS HAVE SUFFERED, AND RISEN AGAIN FROM THE DEAD; and that this JESUS, whom I preach unto you, IS CHRIST [Messiah].”

• *Acts 17:2–3*

The evangelist Apollos taught this same teaching in Greece:

“For he [Apollos] mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was CHRIST [Messiah].”

• *Acts 18:28*

Before King Agrippa Paul told of his conversion and his preaching:

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: [1] That *CHRIST [the Messiah] SHOULD SUFFER, and [2] that HE [the Messiah] SHOULD BE THE FIRST THAT SHOULD RISE FROM THE DEAD, and [3] [the Messiah] SHOULD SHOW LIGHT UNTO THE PEOPLE, AND TO THE GENTILES.”

• *Acts 26:22–23*

The apostle Paul wrote in Hebrews regarding the Messiah, the Christ (2 verses among several):

“But CHRIST [Messiah] being come AN HIGH PRIEST of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle

... For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall THE BLOOD OF *CHRIST [the Messiah] , who through the eternal [aionian] Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause HE [the Messiah] IS THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

... So *CHRIST [the Messiah] was once OFFERED TO BEAR THE SINS OF MANY; and unto them that look for him shall HE [the Messiah] APPEAR THE SECOND TIME without sin unto salvation.”

• *Hebrews 9:11, 13–14, 28*

The proof of the Messiah in Acts chapter 2 was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The apostles knew this to be so because Jesus told them it would happen before His crucifixion, even though they did not believe Him. 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.

Days after the ascension, Peter and the apostles received the power of the Holy Spirit in a very public way which attracted a great crowd. Peter's choice of Old Testament passages must have been those that Jesus explained fully. They became the basis of the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of the Messiah.

The Messiah As Son of God

There is one more key point I want to emphasize before I close, and I will have you look up the verses for yourself. There is a direct and intimate connection of the phrase "Son of God" with Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, as is abundantly shown in Matthew 16:16, 26:63; Mark 1:1; Luke 4:41; John 6:69, 11:27, 20:31; Acts 8:37, 9:20, 2 Corinthians 1:19; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:13; 1 John 5:20; 2 John 1:3, 9.

Read them for yourself.

Titles designated by God are important. Almost all the titles of Jesus relate to His role as Messiah, directly or indirectly. Throughout the New Testament several terms are used for the titles of Jesus, all of which apply to Him at this moment (only a few references are cited for each):

- Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1–2, 14–15).
- Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 1:1; John 20:31).
- Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah (John 1:41 and 4:25).
- Jesus is the Anointed of God. (Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27, 10:38; Hebrews 1:9)
- Jesus is the Son of Man (Matthew 17:9).
- Jesus is the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2–4).
- Jesus is the priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 6:20).
- Jesus is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:23–25).
- Jesus is the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:23–25).
- Jesus is your Savior (Luke 2:11; 2 Timothy 1:10).
- Jesus is your elder brother (Romans 8:29).
- He is now the model of what you and I shall be (Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

He is all those things and more, at this moment, with multiple titles and offices (common for ancient rulers) that together complete the various manifold roles that God the Father has given to Him to accomplish. He has fulfilled every role and every title, all to the glory of God the Father. He has also been given the privilege of speaking in the name of YHWH with all its power and glory (Philippians 2:9–11; Zechariah 14:3–9).

Evidence of Messiah and Your Faith?

The primary evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus was the fact that, in conjunction with His preaching and the signs and miracles He performed, Jesus was resurrected from the dead after three days and three nights in the tomb. The chain of proof leading to your faith is as follows:

- The resurrection is the primary evidence of Jesus' Messiahship.
- Their eyewitness of Jesus' resurrection, along with His preaching and miracles proved to the disciples that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah.
- Their preaching and writings (as Scripture) are their witness to their contemporaries and to us today.
- Our belief (a gift from God our Father) **"that Jesus IS THE CHRIST [the Messiah]"** is what makes us to be born of God now, begotten of God:

“Whosoever believes that Jesus is the CHRIST [the Messiah] is born of God: and every one that loves him that begat [meaning the Father] loves him also that is begotten of him.”

• 1 John 5:1

Those who do not believe the Messiah was crucified, the Gospel of Messiah is a stumbling block (a scandal, an embarrassment) to Jews, and foolishness to Gentiles — at this present time (1 Corinthians 15:23–25).

Who Is An Antichrist? Who Has the Spirit of Antichrist?

On the negative side of things, those who do not believe Jesus is the Messiah have a label placed upon them by the apostle John, who declares and explains simply who is an antichrist (anti-Messiah).

“Who is a liar but he that [1] denies that JESUS IS THE CHRIST [the Messiah]? He is [the] antichrist, that [2] denies the Father and the Son. Whosoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father.”

• 1 John 2:22

So, anyone WHO DENIES JESUS IS THE MESSIAH can be identified as antichrist and are false believers. These are highly inflammatory words by John, yet later in the same epistle John returns to the subject of the antichrist and false prophets:

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try [test] the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know you the Spirit of God:

EVERY SPIRIT that confesses that Jesus Christ [Messiah] is come in the flesh is of God: And

EVERY SPIRIT that confesses NOT that Jesus Christ [Messiah] is come in the flesh [that person] is NOT of God:

and this is that SPIRIT OF ANTichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. ...

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God.”

• 1 John 4:1–3, 15

Understand what the apostle John is saying. These are not labels I put on anyone.⁷ In fact John commands it! The verb “try” or “test” is in the imperative mood. The apostle John says to do this! It is a command to test the spirits of those who would teach you. It is not just a suggestion. It is imperative that you should do to know and understand whether that person “is of God” or “is NOT of God.” It is not an attack on that person or on their integrity. It is done so you can know whether this person is a brother or sister in Christ, or whether you can help and assist this person with his or her understanding about Jesus as Messiah.

The antichrist and false prophet labels are what the apostle John applies to anyone who (1) denies that Jesus is the Messiah and (2) denies that Jesus as the true Messiah came in the flesh. We (not just the 1st century *ekklesia* or the apostles) are to test the confessions of people.

Using love and wisdom, John empowers you to ask anyone and challenge that person directly with love, how else can you test them? This is the case particularly if they claim authority or knowledge as a minister, priest, rabbi, imam, teacher, professor, or scholar, or even a friend, or relative. You should ask if he or she believes [1] that Jesus was the Messiah resurrected from the dead and [2] that Jesus came in the flesh (i.e., that Jesus existed). You can judge by their answer the depth of their belief and understanding.⁸ You may be

⁷ While we might hesitate to ask such questions, the apostle John had no hesitation. He grew up with Jesus, witnessed His ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, wrote his Gospel and recorded the visions of the Revelation near the end of his life.

⁸ An honest person will give a straight answer. Remember, a crucified Messiah is a stumbling block to Jews, foolishness to Gentiles. No one wants to be scandalized or thought foolish. They will tell you the truth! Those who would lie to you are outwardly religious people, “**For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, TRANSFORMING THEMSELVES into the apostles of CHRIST [Messiah]**” (2 Corinthians 11:13), to be judged according to their works and their fruits (Matthew 7:15–21, 12:33; Luke 6:43–45). See Dr. Martin’s article “[How to Identify False Prophets.](#)”

surprised! This may offer an opportunity for you to teach them (for which we should always be ready, 1 Peter 3:15).

The Purpose of the New Testament

The purpose of the New Testament is not to “prove” that Jesus is the Messiah (although it does prove that fact). The purpose of the New Testament is to **PROCLAIM** that Jesus was and **is the Messiah** (the Christ), the Son of God, the Savior of all people, who brings the salvation of Israel, the world, and all things into a reconciled state with God the Father, the Creator of all things through Christ. We who believe without seeing Him are blessed of God. Toward the end of the Gospel of John, Jesus spoke to Thomas:

“Jesus says unto him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.’

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through his name.”

• *John 20:29–31*

Conclusion

It was not my intention to teach you anything you did not already know. No doubt you knew everything I present in this article. Perhaps you misplaced this understanding in the corners of your mind. I sought to bring your attention back to the significance of the term and title “Christ.” It is a title filled with meaning and importance which is used with precise care and intent by every New Testament writer. Jews throughout history, and even today, have had difficulty accepting that evidence. Christ’s resurrection is the key.

After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD the Jews clearly understood that Jesus was a significant person who appeared to have a relation to Suffering Servant of Isaiah chapters 52 and 53. The Talmudic rabbis knew Jesus Christ was the Messiah. See the article by Dr. Martin, “[The Strange Ending to Sotah](#).” Remember, the Gospel is a stumblingblock to the Jews. To the Gentiles it is foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:23–25).

It is my hope that when you read or think about the term “Christ” you will think “Messiah” because this is good and proper to do. Jesus is not just the Jewish Messiah of the Old Covenant, but He is the Messiah of the Jews and Gentiles of the New Covenant as well. He is also the Messiah of we who understand the Mystery of God in its full glory. Read what Paul wrote about the Messiah in the epistle disclosing the Mystery:

“That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in *CHRIST [the Messiah], both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him [God our Father] who works all things after the counsel of his own will: [Why?] That **WE should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in *CHRIST [the Messiah].”**

• *Ephesians 1:10–12*

The role of Jesus Christ in coming to earth as Paul expressed it was for Him to gather and exalt mankind so that each and every human being can (and will) become members of the very Family of God — become Elohim themselves. As the apostle Paul says, we who are in Christ and who first trusted in the Messiah have this as our inheritance, our legacy, our gift from God through His Son Jesus the Messiah.

Try this exercise: Read the Book of Ephesians, but note the verses where the word “Christ” occurs (use a concordance to find them, there are 45 occurrences in 42 verses). Read those verses aloud, insert the word “Messiah” where “Christ” occurs. It will deepen your understanding of those passages. If you find it useful, do the same for Philippians, Ephesians, and Colossians, as well as First and Second Timothy. Together, these teachings by the apostle Paul are the most advanced teachings of Scripture, the final revealed Mystery of God.

David Sielaff, May 2006, 2023