

The Messiah †††

“I who speak to you am He”

John 4:26

Special Services of Worship

**16 December 2014
Day of the Covenant**

10:00

(No service on Wednesday, 17 December)

21 December 2014

Carol Service

18:30

25 December 2014

Christmas Day

09:00

31 December 2014

Watchnight Service

23:00

Christmas Message

— Christmas 25 December 2014 —

John 14:17

Christmas is a lot of “humbug and ceremony”. It is close to the pagan ceremonies that the Catholic Churches used and to which they gave a Christian content. Today, however, the true Churches as well as the false Churches are reverting back to the pagan habits of the past: the gorging of food, the gulping of booze, the blasphemies of drunkards, the motor accidents, the headache, the filth, the rudeness. While for others, caring, lonely and loving wives and little children, there are only tears and heartache over Christmas.

How can I give my gifts to Him who is not of this World ?

How can I love Him who is not of this World ?

How can I know Him who is not of this World ?

How can I speak to Him who is not of this World ?

How can I worship Him whom I do not know?

How can I Celebrate Christmas without knowing the One whose birthday I am celebrating?

All the above are absolutely impossible. Please humble yourselves and take careful and serious note of what Jesus told us in response to the question Judas (not Iscariot) asked Him. *“If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever — **the Spirit of Truth**. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you. Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus replied, “If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching. My Father will love Him, and We will come to Him and make our home with him. He who does not love Me will not obey My teaching. These words you hear are*

not My own; they belong to the Father who sent Me.” John 14:15-17 & 22-24

Anybody who thinks about heaven and God as something for after life is deluded. They are excluded from heaven if God's Spirit of Truth is not in them. Only those who have the Spirit of God in them will be led by God and only then the above-mentioned passage will be possible. God does not entrust His Spirit of Truth to those who dabble in the Word of God. All those who do not have the Spirit of Truth in them should seek God's face and truly surrender their lives to Him, otherwise they are wasting their time coming to church, while they hope for something to happen one day when they die. Christmas is vital to understanding this. God sent Jesus Christ into the world, He died, was resurrected, He ascended and then at Pentecost He came down to dwell in us.

Anyone who played the game of broken telephone knows that the message that the last person receives is totally wrong. Moreover, preachers know that only 2% of the congregation listen to the sermon. Even communication between a husband or wife is far from perfect. In fact, verbal communication is a very poor form of communication. All that the one person imparts to the other person is of the persona i.e. a mask. However, God broke down all the barriers, that separate us from God in Jesus Christ: *“My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”* But when Christ and the Father lives in you, the communication is totally complete, hence the atonement. This is what Christmas is all about. May it bring us to the point where we are in perfect communication with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But those who are not able to communicate with God, have not received the Spirit of God.

It is therefore necessary for all who read this to ignore what the world says about Christmas. As Jesus told Judas, He is not making himself known to the world, because it is made up of people who are too proud and who have not received the Spirit of Truth. Only those who receive the Spirit of Truth know what Christmas is all about.

May God bless you abundantly with His indwelling Spirit and His life in you this Christmas. May He make that babe of Bethlehem rule in your life and dwell so that eternal life for you is right now. Be content in your heart and mind. Give up the rat race — you do not belong to the world. Enjoy your Lord and Saviour — especially at this time.

— *Rev Fred Shaw*

The Messiah



“I who speak to you am He”

John 4:26

*She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. **Matthew 1:21-25***



A Study from John 4:1-13

Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

John 4:1-3

The Pharisees feared John and consequently hated him. John had already been dealt with but now in Jesus they fear a greater threat. The Pharisees and leaders of the Sadducees and Herodians were little different to professional politicians. They claimed and depended upon popular support for their rival parties. They, like animals, had staked out their territory. They were secure and comfortable with the support they were receiving. They hated each other only because they each wanted all the power for themselves. They had adequately marketed their policies and relied generally on the gullibility of their followers. The Old Testament, religion and reason had served as very useful tools to solicit that support. Religion gave the necessary appearance of integrity and

righteousness. It disguised their selfish greed for power and recognition. Instead they appeared noble and godly as they canvassed for the allegiance of their hearers. Their aim appeared to be more worthy than the serving of their own interests and personal ambitions. Therefor, Jesus was becoming too powerful an intruder and threat to ignore.

Herod the Great murdered all the baby boys in Bethlehem at the time of Christ's birth. He saw on the horizon, in the infant Christ, a threat to his own fame and power. His son, Herod Antipas, added to the multitude of his other sins by beheading John the Baptist for similar reasons.

Are we any different, in intent, when Jesus enters our scene? He is going to expose all our pretenses and hidden agendas. To bring us to the Father He has to rescue us from self-deception and purify us. This is absolutely necessary if we are ever to be fit for eternity with His Holy Father. Before Him nothing is hid. He knows you and me better than we know ourselves. We must not refuse to be humble but must confess our sins in deep contrition and brokenness. If we protest our innocence, reinforce our pride and cover up our jealousy, fear and hate, He will just leave us to our own fate. This is implied in the Greek text “. . . *He left Judea (to their own fate) and departed again to Galilee . . .*” May God grant that none of us are left to our own fate. This will be so if we have considered ourselves too smart to humble ourselves before Him. He alone is our Messiah, “*I who speak to you am He*”. This is the one and the only one who reveals God to us, “*For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*” (Col. 2:9). By this unique revelation, He gives purpose and meaning to life. This is Immanuel, God with us, and to know Him is Eternal Life. (See John 17:1-3).

PURPOSE OF SELECTED BIBLE READINGS FOR THE WEEK

The purpose of these selected Bible readings is to show that the purpose (Telos) of the Messiah was to reunite us with God. The name Immanuel interpreted as ‘God with us’ clearly implies this. The Messiah referred to in the Greek as the Christos and from which we have the English word Christ



means *the anointed*. Here then we have the purpose of the Messiah, the anointed, found in the term Immanuel. In the dark days of Judah's history when she and her neighbours were threatened by the powerful nations of Assyria, Israel (at that time referred to as the Northern kingdom; they had forsaken God and were not any longer the Israel of God) and Syria wanted to form a coalition with Judah (the Southern kingdom of ancient Israel which had Jerusalem as her capital and had until then remained faithful to God) against Assyria. Isaiah called upon Ahaz the king of Judah to put his faith in God. He needed only to ask God for a sign that God would be with him. He refused and Isaiah was blessed with the sign that a virgin would give birth to a son whose name would be Immanuel, indicating that God would be with Judah and she need not fear her enemies. Ahaz instead turned to the king of Assyria and it was that king and his successors that brought ruin and captivity to Judah. The sign, however, remains with the faithful remnant and points to the birth of Christ in whom they and all who trust in Him will find their salvation, their hope. Immanuel would bring about the fulfilment of God's purpose for Israel. Since the time God called Abraham, it had been clear that through his descendants all the nations of the world would be blessed.



BIBLE READINGS:

The Messiah would restore to His people those blessings which were reminiscent of the Garden of Eden. There God was with man (Immanuel) as man walked in fellowship with God.

Monday: Prosperity as a fulfilment of God's purposes

Amos 9:13, Psalm 72:16, Isaiah 4:2, Isaiah 32:15-20, Isaiah 55:13, Isaiah 72:16

Tuesday: Peace as a fulfilment of God's purposes

Isaiah 11:6-9

Wednesday: Human relationships as a fulfilment of God's purposes

Isaiah 32:1-8

Thursday: The Messiah and Adam

Genesis 1:28, Genesis 2:19-20, Genesis 3:13

All the passages referred to above concern the Messianic King and the nature of his rule and kingdom. Here is the real restoration of the first man, who had “dominion” over the rest of created things, but fell when he allowed his dominion to be usurped. Dominion will be restored in the Messiah.

Friday: The Messiah and Moses

Exodus 3:15, Hosea 2:14-23, Deut. 18:15-19 (Moses’s own prophecy is recorded “The Lord will raise up a prophet ‘like me’”), Deut. 34:10 (Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.)

It is not surprising that the Exodus and its leader should impress the mind of Israel and mould her future. The pattern of the first Exodus constituted an eternal revelation of God (Ex. 3:15). The conception of the second Exodus is to be seen as the deliverance by the Messiah from bondage and slavery to sin and Satan.

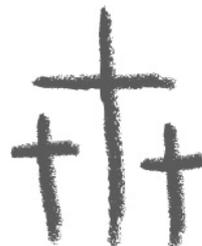
Saturday:

Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 20:33-44

Sunday: The Second Exodus as Messianic

Hebrews 11:24-39

The Messiah



“I who speak to you am He”

John 4:26



A Study from John 4:4-5

“But He needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph”.

John 4:4-5

Having left Judea to their own fate, He needed, in more senses than one, to go through Samaria. The road from Judea to Galilee went through the country of Samaria. There was no other way, except on the other side of Jordan, which meant a long detour. Henry Matthew observes that “the wicked and profane are at present so intermixed with God’s Israel (people) that, unless we will go out of the world, we cannot avoid going through the company of such”. The Messianic hope of Israel was from the beginning that which fulfilled the purpose for her existence as a nation. This was to undo the dreadful, immeasurable and annihilating consequences of the universal fall of man. The fall separated man from God his Creator, thereby destroying the very reason for his existence. The Messiah would restore man’s authenticity to man’s existence and re-establish that fellowship with God for which he was made. Israel had, except for a remnant, forgotten her purpose and privilege. Her privilege was that God had chosen her to usher into the world the Messiah who would bless all the nations of the world by restoring them to the paradise man had enjoyed in the garden of Eden where once he had communed with God.

“I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me”. Genesis 22:17-18

They rejected their Messiah and now He must of necessity pass through Samaria. What a happy day this would be for Samaria and all the Gentile world. Ezekiel, in a potent and allegorical manner, describes the despicable origin and state of Israel in the day when the Lord passed through Jerusalem. *“The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her detestable practices and say, “This is what the Sovereign Lord says to Jerusalem: Your ancestry and birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths. No one looked on you with pity or had compassion enough to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were thrown out into the open field, for on the day you were born you were despised. Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, “Live!” I made you grow like a plant of the field, You grew up and developed and became the most beautiful of jewels’ . . .”* He shows how she was blessed of God but turned from God to serve idols and follow in the filthy ways of her godless neighbours and forgot the One that made her into a nation of substance, *“In all your detestable practices and your prostitution, you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, kicking about in your blood . . .”* (v22). In the same chapter and in verse 55, Ezekiel refers to Sodom and to Samaria: *“And your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to what they were before; and you and your daughters will return to what you were before”.* The Messiah who came to minister to the lost sheep of the house of Israel would now minister to the hated Samaritans, but *“When I passed by thee, I said unto thee, “Live!”*, (Ezek 16:6). Let the world be hushed at this awesome and stupendous moment of all human history. Phillip Brookes captures the deep and immense significance of Christ’s coming in his beautiful Christmas hymn:

O! Little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by:
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light:
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.



BIBLE READINGS:

As with the Prophets so Israel proceeded under the shadow of the promise of the coming great King. Each successive king was acclaimed intentionally in Messianic terms, so as to remind him of his vocation to a certain type of kingship and to express the national longing that at last the Messiah might have come. The prophets also lived under the shadow of the promise; they too had a pattern to fulfil. Each king must be, as best he can, like the king of the past (David) until the coming of the One who is able to reformulate the Davidic type and be the king of the future; so, too, each prophet must be, as best he can, like the prophet of the past (Moses) until the coming of the One who is able to reformulate the Mosaic type and be the prophet, lawgiver and mediator of the future, new covenant.

Monday: *The Messiah and David*

Ezekiel 21:25-27 (Carefully note verse 27)

Genesis 49:8-10 (Carefully note verse 10)

Tuesday:

1 Kings 11:1-13 (Carefully note verses 4 & 6)

1 Kings 14:5-9 (Carefully note verse 8)

1 Kings 15:3 & 11-14

Wednesday:

2 Kings 18:3; 22:2

2 Sa. 7:8-16 (Carefully note verses 15 & 16)

Ezekiel 34:23

Thursday: The Messiah and the Psalms

The expectation is shown particularly by two groups of passages.

The Psalms that depict the character and career of The Messiah. The Messiah King who meets world-opposition and is victorious.

Psalms 2:1-3; 110:1; 45:3-5

Psalms 89:19-27 (Carefully note verses 22-23)

Friday: The activity of the Messiah as the activity of Yahweh (God)

Psalms 2:6 & 8; 18:46-50; 21:1-13 & 110:1-2

Saturday: Psalms that depict the Messiah as he establishes world-rule and based on Zion . . .

Psalms 2:8-12; 18:43-45; 45:17; 72:8-11; 89:25; 110:5-6 and based on Zion - Psalm 2:6

Sunday: The Messiah and the Psalms

Psalms 45:4; 6:7; 72:2-3 & 7; 101:1-8. The Messiah's primary concern for morality.

Psalms 21:4; 45:6; 72:5. The Messiah's rule is everlasting.

Psalm 72:7. His kingdom is peaceful.

Psalm 72:5. Undeviating in reverence for Yahweh.

Psalm 45:2 & 7. The Messiah as pre-eminent among men.

Psalm 72:2-4 & 12-14. The Messiah as the friend of the poor and the enemy of the oppressor.



THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

It is an extremely arrogant mind that assumes that the intelligence and power of the human mind is tantamount to all possible knowledge and power. In this assumption, man demonstrates the reality of his ignorance. The sum total of all human intelligence and wisdom, accumulated since the beginning of time, is still utter foolishness to God.

“Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know Him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength. Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.” 1 Cor. 1:20-25

The Messiah

“I who speak to you am He”

John 4:26



A Study from John 4:4-5 continued

“But He needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph”.

John 4:4-5

We learn from Matthew Henry and Dr Lightfoot that the city of Samaria referred to as Sychar where Jesus met the Samaritan women was probably the same place known in the Old Testament as Sichem, or Shechem. Here the **first conversion** from paganism to Judaism took place; *“All the men who went out of the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem, and every male in the city was circumcised.”* Gen. 34:24. Now, in the same city, the **first convert** to Christ outside of the commonwealth of Israel was made. There is another important connection with this place. Hosea recalls that tragic event recorded in Joshua 7 where in the valley of Achor, Achan and his family were put to death because he disobeyed the Lord. *“There I will give her back her vineyards, and **will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.** There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.”* Hos. 2:15. All of us are guilty of persistently disobeying our Lord and like Achan are under the death sentence. *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Romans 6:23. But on this occasion, Christ was coming to the Valley of Achor as the door of hope. A hope which Achan never had. Christ took our judgement upon

Himself and now, because of Christmas, we can know that our hope and that of every sinner is met in the Lord Jesus Christ: “the **hopes** and fears of all the years are met in Him.”



BIBLE READINGS:

During this week we also explore some of those passages found in the book of Isaiah. In chapters 1 - 37, we find the most sustained treatment of the Davidic-Messianic theme. Chapters 7 - 12 are particularly important, as they form a self-contained unit. From 745 BC onwards, the awakening imperialism of Assyria was threatening all the Palestinian states, forcing them to attend to their security. Aram and Israel (Ephraim) allied themselves for mutual defence and sought the additional strength of a united Palestinian front. Judah, the southern kingdom stood aloof from this Syro-Ephraimite alliance. Pressure was exerted on her in order to force her into the alliance. (It is unnecessary to review the course of the events here but you can find it in passages such as 2 Kings 15:37 - 16:20 and 2 Chronicles 28). In this study, we must concentrate on the Prophet Isaiah's words on this issue. It is clear that he saw the threat as transitory (Isa 7:7 & 16), but the moment as decisive for the future of the people of God. If in the face of this threat, Judah should fail to look to **Yahweh alone** for her security and seek to conclude some worldly part as an additional safeguard, then not only the current king (Ahaz) but also the Davidic dynasty itself would be exposed as faithless. It would have rejected the promises and pleadings of God in a decisive and final way and doom would follow.

Monday:

Psalm 72:7. Under him the righteous flourish.
Psalm 45:17. He is remembered for ever.
Psalm 72:17 He possesses an everlasting name
Psalm 72:15 and is the object of unending thanks.

Psalm 45:2. The Messiah is the recipient of His everlasting blessing from Yahweh.
Psalms 89:28-37; 132:11-12. The Messiah is the heir of David's covenant.

Tuesday:

Psalm 110:4. The Messiah is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek's (not Aaron's) priesthood.

Psalms 89:18; 21:1 & 7; 63:1-8 & 11. The Messiah belongs to Yahweh and is devoted to Him.

Psalms 2:7; 89:27. He is His son.

Psalm 110:1. He is seated at His right hand.

Psalm 45:6. He is Himself divine.

Wednesday:

Isaiah 7:1-25

Isaiah 7:2 & 13 & 17. Isaiah identifies Judah's King Ahaz with the Davidic dynasty.

Isaiah 7:4 Isaiah calls for a policy of total reliance on Yahweh.

Isaiah 7:9. Isaiah warns that the issue of faith will settle the fortunes of the dynasty and nation.

Isaiah 7:10-11. Isaiah offers in Yahweh's name the provision of a sign of such magnitude as would virtually compel faith. Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign.

Isaiah 7:14ff. Isaiah now speaks of another sign, **Immanuel**, wherein the hope of the nation is seen as overwhelmed in the triumph of Assyria. This sign is the Virgin birth of our Saviour and is now only for the few remaining faithful who put their entire trust in God alone.

There is a decisive moment when faith is offered and beyond that offer lies only the doom which comes from unbelief. Does however the faithlessness of the unbelieving Ahaz put an end to the Davidic dynasty as well as the nation? What about the purpose of God which is still tied up with the nation? That purpose is inextricably bound up with the promises of God concerning the nation and the Davidic dynasty. Does God go back on His word? Does the promise of a Davidic

king itself fail simply because Ahaz faithlessly refuses to enter into it? Is God's Messianic plan to that extent dependent on the choice of man? In this section of Isaiah we therefore find him focussing on the figure of Immanuel.

Immanuel

The MANNER of the Birth of the Messiah as a SIGN. A **sign** is used in the Old Testament as a **present persuader of a future confirmation**.

Ex 3:12 is an example: *“So He said, “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”*

The birth of Immanuel as a sign in Isaiah.

In which sense is Immanuel a “sign”?

There are those who reject the notion that the mother of Jesus was referred to by Isaiah as a Virgin on the basis that Isaiah uses the word: “OalmaÆ” for Immanuel’s mother which they say just means *a young woman of marriageable age*. They say that if Isaiah ment *a virgin* he would have used the term: bet_uÆlaÆ. The word OalmaÆ, was, however, never used at that time to refer to a married woman,” (E.J. Young Studies in Isaiah, 1954, p170); the word OalmaÆ is used on eight other occasions in the Bible and at no time can it be assumed that the women is in a married state. There are, in fact, strong and convincing arguments to show that Isaiah used OalmaÆ because it is the nearest word in Hebrew which expresses a *virgin* and that Matthew had no problem in accepting the Greek rendering parthenos (1:23), which means virgin.

Immanuel as the hope of Israel: Isaiah chapters 7-11 form an integrated unit of prophetic teaching in which Isaiah 7:1-9:7 focuses on that hope for the southern kingdom (Judah) and Isaiah 9:8-11:16 on the northern Kingdom (Israel or Jacob). Each section passes through the same four sub-sections: (1) the moment of decision (2) the judgement (3) the remnant and (4) the glorious hope.

Thursday

Isaiah 7:1-17 and Isaiah 9:8 - 10:4: The Messiah and the moment of decision.

Isaiah 7:18 - 8:8 and Isaiah 10:5-15: The Messiah and the judgment.

Friday:

Isaiah 8:9-22 and Isaiah 10:16-34: the Messiah and the remnant

Isaiah 9:1-7 and Isaiah 11:1-16: The Messiah and the glorious hope.

Saturday:

Isaiah 8:8: The wonder-child, Immanuel the possessor.

Isaiah 8:10: Immanuel becomes the security of his people.

Isaiah 9:1-7: Immanuel becomes their royal deliverer.

Isaiah 11:1-16: Immanuel becomes the righteous king.

Isaiah 9:7; Isaiah 11:10: Immanuel becomes a world-ruler.

Sunday: Immanuel retains in each place the element of mystery as to His person.

Isaiah 9:6: Immanuel sits on David's throne.

Isaiah 9:7: Immanuel is also "mighty God".

Isaiah 10:21: Immanuel is referred to in the same terms as Yahweh.

Isaiah 11:1, 10: Immanuel from the stock of Jesse.

As another year passes think on these words . . .

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, “I find no pleasure in them”— before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain; when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim; when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades; when people rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint; when people are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags itself along and desire no longer is stirred. Then people go to their eternal home and mourners go about the streets. Remember him—before the silver cord is severed, and the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, and the wheel broken at the well, and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Everything is meaningless!” The Conclusion of the Matter. Not only was the Teacher wise, but he also imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true. The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one shepherd. Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:1-14

The Messiah



“I who speak to you am He”

John 4:26



A Study from John 4:6-8

Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

We have seen the significance of the valley of Achor which, ran along this city of Samaria. It is also noteworthy that this area where our Lord rested covered the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph and whose bones were buried in it.

“And to you, as one who is over your brothers, I give the ridge of land I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow”. Genesis 48:22 “And Joseph’s bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph’s descendents.” Joshua 24:32.

At the sixth hour when the sun reached its zenith our Lord, weary from his long walk, sat down while His disciples went into the village to buy food. “Matthew Henry comments that Jesus bestowed upon

this place and on this well honours that had never been anticipated throughout the preceding ages. Henry is right, for, while this well had in the course of centuries already given water to multitudes of weary travelers, on this momentous day, at the sixth hour, there was one greater than Jacob at the well who could provide real life-giving water. He then and to this hour dispenses that water to multitudes too great for any man to number.”

The passage has in addition a strong theological message concerning the humanity of Christ. It provides us with an unambiguous reminder that He who said *“I who speak to you am He”* is the Christ. He is the one of whom Moses spoke when he recalled the promise of God Himself: The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet **like me** from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly saying, *“Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.”* *“And the Lord said to me: “What they have spoken is good, “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command Him”.* Deuteronomy 18:15-18: God would come not as on Mount Sinai but in One who would be like we are. He would know weariness and hunger. He who has come as a light to enlighten the Gentiles, is the Messiah. He says to You: *“I who speak to you am He”*. Listen to Him and ask Him for that water that is Life everlasting.

The writer of Hebrews shows in chapter 12 verses 18 to 29 how God is faithful to His promises and that he has spoken to us through one like unto us, but woe unto him who does not heed what He commands:

“You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire: to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.” The sight was so terrifying that Moses said “I

am trembling with fear”.

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken — that is, created things — so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire”.



BIBLE READINGS: The Messiah as The Servant

Chapters 40 - 55 of Isaiah shows the Messiah as the Servant. The Servant is Yahweh’s anointed, and He exercises the royal functions of “judgment” and dominion, He displays prominently the hallmarks of a prophet and extends a ministry to the Gentiles and to Israel, who is the agent in a world-wide revelation (Isaiah 42:1, 3-4) and salvation (Isaiah 49:6), and, not as priest but as victim, voluntarily submits to a death interpreted in the substitutionary terms of the levitical sacrifices (Isaiah 53:4-6, 8, 10-12).

Monday: The Messiah Servant

Isaiah 42:1-4; Isaiah 49:1-6; Isaiah 50:4-9; Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12

Tuesday:

Isaiah 42:1: The Servant is Yahweh's anointed.

Isaiah 42:1, 3-4: The Servant Messiah exercises Royal Functions.

Isaiah 53:12: The Servant Messiah exercises Royal Dominion.

Wednesday:

Isaiah 49:1-2; 50:4: The Servant Messiah displays the true marks of a prophet.

Isaiah 42:1, 4; 49:6b: The Servant Messiah fulfils the purposes of God in seeking to restore to Himself the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Thursday:

Isaiah 41:29; 42:1: Isaiah's awareness of Gentile need and confirmed in Matt. 3:17, Luke 2:8-35.

Friday:

He who is the God of creation and of history and is the only God is also the God of Israel. This constitutes the grounds for a word of comfort to Israel.

Isaiah 40:12-31, Isaiah 41:1-29

Saturday:

He who is the God of creation and of history and of Israel also makes known the plight of the larger part of the created and historical world:

Isaiah 40:1-11; Isaiah 41:8-20; Isaiah 40:18-20; Isaiah 41:5-7, 21-24, 28-29

Sunday:

The Servant is divinely and precisely endowed to fulfil God's redemptive purposes to the larger part of the created and historical world: That is the world other than Israel.

Isaiah 42:1; Isaiah 42:1b, 3b-4. Isaiah 42:10-17: Yahweh confirms this task as His will for His Servant Messiah and commits Himself to its accomplishment.

The Messiah



“I who speak to you am He”

John 4:26



A Study from John 4:9-15

The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” “Sir”, the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?” Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

The woman said to him, “Sir give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Here we find that our Lord Jesus Christ enters into a discourse with a Samaritan woman while His disciples had gone into the village to buy food. Our Lord and his disciples did not sponge on people and neither did Paul. They did not go around hinting for supplies either. They trusted their heavenly Father, in whose service they were employed, to provide for them. They knew that He

provides even for the sparrows and for the lillies of the field. Jesus met this woman as she went about her daily chores. He began to teach her as He often did by referring to the things at hand that are visible and understandable. The Messiah has come to bring us to God. This is the most serious business in life. Significantly, Jesus refused to enter into disputes about matters that are not directly relevant to the salvation of her soul. She wanted to embark upon political and religious issues. She wanted to give vent to her resentment, anger and bitterness. She wanted to prove a point and hoped to be able to revel in showing herself to be more clever than He. What a boost to her ego if she could floor this Jew and show that He was less clever than she. Jesus does not enter into this game. He knows the way of humility for He had condescended to become nothing in order that we might become Children of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He did not come to enter into our petty squabbles or serve our vanities. He came to bring us to God.

James 4:1 says: *“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you?”*

She is quarrelsome and bitterly sarcastic when He — a Jew — asks her for a drink of water. She is possibly afraid to reveal that he actually made her feel needed and flattered. Being a Jew at that time was often a humiliating experience. Not only did the almighty God condescend by being born in an obscure and undistinguished manner, but, by being born a Jew He had made Himself an object of derision. The Jewish nation was regarded as one of the most despicable nations in the Roman Empire at that time.

Her remarks concerning their father Jacob are most revealing. In asking this question she opens up a glorious opportunity to prove the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus Christ. The area is also known in the Old Testament as Shiloh and Shiloh has two very significant references to the Messiah.

- Genesis 49:1-10: The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people (NKJV). This was when

Jacob blessed Judah just prior to his death. He prophesies these remarkable words. Indeed this is precisely what happened on this day when Jesus is obliged to go through Samaria. Ownership of the sceptre no longer rested with Judah, but with the Messiah. He must take His rod and rule and He takes it **from Judah to all the world**. Limited to the Jews in the time of Jacob, it is desegregated by Him to whom it belongs. The Saviour **of the World** is Come. “I who speak to you am He”.

- Psalm 78:60-61: So He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent He had placed among men, and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy’s hand.

This again is a most marvellous pointer to the Messiah: it was at Shiloh that the Israelites had brought the Ark of the Covenant into the battlefield. They were losing the war against the Philistines and instead of repenting for their idolatry, they superstitiously took the Ark into the conflict. They lost the battle and the Ark was captured by the enemy. The Psalmist put this in prophetic context: we see the Almighty God limiting His strength in the incarnation — while we were yet His enemies He died for us. The unrepentant Judah was left to her own fate and Jesus needs to go through the Samaria they despised.



BIBLE READINGS: The Messiah as The Servant in the plight of Israel.

Isaiah 42:18-25: This significant passage must be deeply pondered by all who would understand this central section of the Isaianic literature:

Monday:

Isaiah 42:5-9: The Lord then exposes the plight of Israel.

Isaiah 42:8-19: The nation of Israel is blind and deaf.

Tuesday: The nation of Israel is also:

Isaiah 42:22: Enslaved.

Isaiah 42:23-25a: Under judgement for sin.

Isaiah 42:25b: Spiritually unperceptive.

The Jews today hold that these references to the Messiah refer to the Nation Israel as the Messiah and not the person of Jesus Christ. This a mendacious and convenient post-Christian interpretation. From the above passages and Isaiah chapters 41 to 44, we have sufficient information to conclude that the Messiah cannot be the nation.

Wednesday:

Isaiah 42:3: The Promise that the political needs of Israel will be met according to God's purpose for Israel.

Isaiah 43:1-21: The promise that the spiritual needs of Israel will be met according to God's purpose for Israel.

Thursday:

Isaiah 43:22-44:23: In the Servant Messiah the needs of Israel will be met by Yahweh.

Friday: Yahweh uses the person Cyrus, who does not acknowledge, let alone worship the true God, to fulfil His purposes of freeing His people and brining Babylon down. In this respect, Cyrus is also Yahweh's servant. This, however, ensures that the Messiah Servant will come from the house of Judah from whom the sceptre shall not depart until He to whom it belongs, Christ, comes.

Isaiah 44:24 - 48:22 and Isaiah 46:1-47

Isaiah 48:20 - 22:15: By His servant Messiah, Israel leaves captivity.

Saturday:

The Messiah as the totally Obedient Servant who suffers for the sake of obedience, and the Servant Messiah who is set apart from all others who serve God's purposes and even from the faithful among the people of God.

Zion is:

Isaiah 49:14-26 despondent, and

Isaiah 50:1-3, unresponsive.

In contrast to The Suffering Servant who was obedient even unto death:

Isaiah 50:4-5: The Servant responds to Yahweh.

Isaiah 50:6-9: The Servant responds with buoyant, optimistic faith.

Isaiah 50:10: The Servant becomes the Exemplar of all who would fear Yahweh.

Isaiah 50:11: Apart from His obedient Servant, man is left to his own powers of self-illumination and is under divine disapproval.

Isaiah 52:13: Yahweh commands that we watch, see - “Behold” His Obedient Servant.

Isaiah 51:1, 4, 7: This is in effect the climax of a number of addresses to the faithful.

Isaiah 51:17; 52:1: Seen in their own persons or typified as Jerusalem / Zion.

H. H. Rowley, in his book, *The Servant of the Lord*, points out that Isaiah continues to distinguish the Servant from the remnant **until he stands out in terms “unmistakably individual”** and we might add uniquely so.

Sunday:

Isaiah 52:13-15: The suffering and obedient Servant Messiah internationally triumphant.

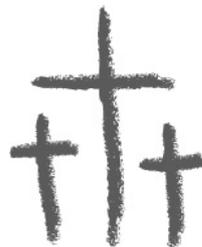
Isaiah 53:1-3: The suffering and obedient Servant is rejected.

Isaiah 53:4-6: The suffering and obedient Servant is our sinbearer.

Isaiah 53:7-9: The suffering and obedient Servant Messiah, voluntarily, the innocent sufferer of lawlessness, consigned to have “his grave with wicked men, but with a rich man in his death”.

Isaiah 53:10:10-12: The suffering and obedient Servant Messiah living yet to see the divine reward.

The Messiah



“I who speak to you am He”

John 4:26



A Study from John 4:9-15 continued

The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” “Sir”, the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?” Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

The following is an extract from the commentary of Matthew Henry.

“Christ takes this occasion to instruct her in divine things: If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldst have asked, v 10. Observe,

First, He waives her objection of the feud between the Jews and Samaritans, and takes no notice of it . . . But He fills her with an apprehension that she had now an opportunity (a fairer opportunity than she was aware of) of gaining that which would be of unspeakable advantage to her. She had not the help that the Jews had to discern the signs of the times, and therefore Christ tells her expressly that she had now a season of grace; this was the day of her visitation.

He hints to her what she should know, but was ignorant of: If thou knewest the gift of God, that is, as the next words explain it, who it is that saith, Give me to drink. If thou knewest who I am. She saw him to be a Jew, a poor weary traveller; but he would have her know something more concerning him that did yet appear.

Note:

- (a) Jesus Christ is the gift of God, the richest token of God's love to us, and the richest treasure of all good for us; a gift, not a debt which we could demand from God; not a loan, which he will demand from us again, but a gift, a free gift, ch 3:16.
- (b) It is an unspeakable privilege to have this gift of God proposed and offered to us; to have an opportunity of embracing it: "He who is the gift of God is now set before thee, and addresses himself to thee; it is He that saith, Give me to drink; this gift comes a-begging to thee."
- (c) Though Christ is set before us, and pursues us in and by his gospel, yet there are multitudes that know him not. They know not who it is that speaks to them in the gospel, that saith, Give me to drink; they perceive not that it is the Lord that calls them.

Note:

- (a) Those that would have any benefit by Christ must ask for it, must ask for it in earnest prayer.
- (b) Those that have right knowledge of Christ will seek him, and if we do not seek him it is a sign that we do not know him. Psalm 9:10
- (c) Christ knows that what they want is the means of knowledge. Mt. 11:21

We would do well to continue with this study, but it is even more important for us to consider the immediate practical ramifications:

Note that this woman went immediately to all the people she could find in her city who would listen to her. She did this because she was convinced that she had met the Messiah. For her this was the greatest day in human history and certainly in her personal life. You should feel similarly if after this study you have become absolutely and completely convinced that Jesus is Christ the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Son of the Living God, and you will no doubt experience a burning desire to proclaim this news to all who will listen.

There is little value in knowing that **she** did it . . . What about **you**?

We are called for full service in the army of Christ to fight against the forces of darkness.



BIBLE READINGS:

Monday: And in all this, the universality of the Servant's redemptive work is not forgotten.

The Call goes . . .

Isaiah 54:1-17: The call goes first to the barren Zion.

Isaiah 54:10: The call is for them to make peace.

Isaiah 54:14, 17: The call goes for them to inherit righteousness.

Tuesday:

Isaiah 55:1-2: The call goes to the whole world to avail itself of free salvation.

Isaiah 55:3: The call is to enjoy the mercies promised to David.

Isaiah 53:2-3: The portrayal of the Servant is straightforward and unified, but the person of the Servant retains its proper element of mystery: **a man among men,**

Isaiah 53:1: who is also “the arm of the Lord”. Aptly, Mowinckel provides the proper emphasis: “Who could have believed what we have heard? Who could have seen here the arm of Yahweh?” For the “arm of Yahweh” is none other than Yahweh himself!

Isaiah 51:9-11: Acting again as he acted at the Exodus and the Red Sea to redeem and ransom.

Wednesday:

The Branch. There is a unified series of predictions under this Messianic label and the following are virtually identical. Yahweh will raise a Branch “for David”. He is a king in whose days Israel will be saved. His rule is marked by judgement and righteousness.

Jeremiah 23:5-6: His name is “Yahweh our Righteousness”, ie “The Messiah”

Jeremiah 33:14 - 18: His name is “Yahweh our Righteousness”, ie “The Messiah”

The second of these passages associates the Branch prophecy with the assertion that the priests shall never want a man to offer sacrifice. This might seem somewhat extraneous were it not for the subsequent use made of it by the same Messianic figure.

Zachariah 3:8: Joshua and his fellow-priests are declared to be a sign of Yahweh’s purpose to bring forth “my servant the Branch”, who will accomplish the priestly work of removing the iniquity of the land in one day.

Zechariah 6:12-13: Zechariah returns to the Branch, who shall grow up in his place, build the Temple of Yahweh, be a priest upon his throne, and enjoy perfect covenanted peace with Yahweh.

The Branch is clearly, therefore, the Messiah in his kingly and priestly offices. He is the fulfilment of Ps. 110, with its designation of the king as an eternal Melchizedek priest.

Isaiah 4:2-6: The Messianic reference of verse 2 is not accepted by all Old Testament scholars but, as these verses agree exactly with the use of the Branch in the passages from Zechariah, it is clear that the Messiah is found here too. He is the Branch of Yahweh, and he is associated with the priestly work of washing away the filth of the daughters of Zion and with the kingly reign of Yahweh in Jerusalem. Here we have in this portrayal of the Branch in one figure what Isaiah elsewhere extended and divided into the work of King, Servant and Conqueror. The New Bible Dictionary states that the “Messianic motifs of humanity and divinity, and of identity and distinction in Deity, are present, for the Branch “belongs to David” and yet is “Yahweh’s”. The imagery speaks of origin and nature: He is “my servant”, and yet his name is “Yahweh our righteousness”.

Thursday: The seed of the woman

Isaiah 7:14 & Isaiah 49:1: the humanity of the Messiah is stressed throughout this study. It is through the mother that the human origin is described.

Mi. 5:3: “She who is in travail”

Je. 31:32

Gen. 3:15: The most notable prophecy regarding the “seed of the woman”, and the most appropriate is contained in this verse. It directly relates to that which made it necessary for a Messiah. The following is an extract from The New Bible Dictionary: “Yet it speaks of the conception and birth of a remarkable child. It has become almost an accepted thing to refuse any Messianic reference here, and to regard the verse as “a quite general statement about mankind and serpents, and the struggle between them. In order to see the force of the promise made in Gen. 3:15 it shows man’s superiority over the animal creation. The Creator graciously instructs the man as to his difference from the mere animals: he can impose his order upon them, but among them is not found any “help meet for him”. His like is not there. But now, in Gen. 3, another phenomenon meets us: a talking animal, an animal which somehow has risen above its station, and presents itself as man’s

equal, able to engage him in intelligent conversation, and even as his superior, able to instruct him in wherein he was formerly misguided, to give him what purports to be correct understanding of God's law and God's person. The serpent speaks as one well able to weigh God in the balances and find him wanting, to discern the inner thoughts of the Almighty and to expose his underhand motives! Even more, he displays open hostility to God; a hatred of God's character, a readiness to destroy his creation-plan, a sneering mockery of the Most High. It is simply not good enough to see in the serpent the spirit of man's irrepressible curiosity (Williams) or any such thing. The Bible knows only one who displays this ungodly arrogance, this hatred of God, and it is no wonder that the serpent in Eden becomes "that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 20:2). But where sin abounds, grace superabounds, and so it is that at the very moment when Satan seems to have scored a signal triumph, it is declared that the seed of the woman will crush and destroy Satan. He will be himself bruised in the process, but will be victorious. The seed of the woman will reverse the whole calamity of the Fall.

Friday:

Dan. 7:1-28: The Messiah as The Son of man.

The essence of Daniel's vision is the judgement scene. Here the Ancient of Days disposes of the worldly and hostile powers. This is similar to Psalm 2. One like a son of man who receives a universal and everlasting dominion is brought, with the clouds of heaven, to the Ancient of Days. This "one" is the Messiah (see verses 18 and 22) to whom judgement is given, and the kingdom is given to the "saints of the Most High". The recipients are the same as those referred to in verses 13-14.

In the Old Testament, it is not the kingdom which fashions the king, but the king who fashions the Kingdom. The beast-kings and their kingdoms with them are the personal enemies of the kingdom of the saints. Equally, the "one like a son of man" receives universal dominion, and the dominion of his people is implicated. Note that the "one like a son of man" is an individual who is the Messiah. Again He cannot be a Nation as the Jews would like to have it. As such, he is a king, opposed by

the world, but achieving universal dominion from the Ancient of Days. In this passage the Messiah is both human and divine which is consistent with how the Old Testament always describes the Messiah.

Saturday:

Dan. 9:24-27: The Messiah as the anointed Prince.

Having begun with the secular “anointed prince” Cyrus, it is fitting to end with the anointed Messiah Himself. This is consistent with my contention that all history is essentially only a “means” and NEVER an end in itself. History is illustrative material, with which we also interact. Events in history act as indicators directing us to that which is too profound and too inexpressible to put into words. It is the shadow that points to the reality. Would to God that men recognise that there is the reality and substance of a real world that casts these shadows. Behind that reality which is the new heaven and the new earth is God. Cyrus, an anointed prince, is a foreshadow of the reality which is THE anointed Prince — the Messiah of God.

The following verses themselves fall into two unequal parts

Verses 24 - 27: Give us a programme to be worked out in history. Verse 24 which stands on its own provides us with a **statement of purpose** and a view of what is to be accomplished. According to S. R. Driver, it begins with a command to rebuild Jerusalem. Verse 25 — a period of 62 weeks follows until the coming of an anointed one, “a prince”. Verse 26 looks to what happens after the sixty-two weeks. Verse 27 brings matters to a “decreed end”.

Three objectives are phrased negatively:

1. To finish transgression
2. To put an end to sin and
3. To atone (to pay the atonement price) for iniquity

And three objectives are phrased positively:

1. To introduce everlasting righteousness
2. To attest the veracity of vision and prophet
3. To anoint a most holy place, a “holiness of holinesses”

This statement gives us a clear understanding of the purpose or Telos of the messianic age: this is the abolition and forgiveness of sin and perpetual righteousness.

We note from verse 24. The period between the decree and the anointed prince is in total 69 weeks (v 25). “*From the issuing of a decree (there will be) seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*”. Stating this as two separate sums “62” & “7” and not just its total “69” marks the period between Cyrus and Ezra-Nehemiah and between them the coming of “an anointed prince” — the Messiah.

During his “week” the anointed one “*empowers a covenant with many*” (verse 27) and causes sacrifice to cease — and this literally happens with the destruction of the Temple in 70AD.

Daniel was instructed to expect one who would mean the end of sin’s long reign, the eternal establishment of righteousness, and the inauguration of true religion. It cannot be disputed that not until Jesus, nor after His birth, has such a whole range of Old Testament visions and prophecies concerning the Telos (Goal or Purpose) been proved and attested as in this one person — The Lord Jesus Christ! He is The Anointed Messiah who could say to the Samaritan woman at the well as He does to you and me today: “*I who speak to you am He*” (John 4:26).

Sunday:

Mk 8:29-33:

At the time of our Lord’s birth, the Telos (Goal or Purpose) of the Messianic promise had all but been lost. That which we found to be so firmly embedded in the Old Testament was altogether foreign, even to Peter. Jesus was not prepared to be identified with the caricature of the Biblical

Messiah that his contemporaries had fashioned for themselves. When Peter confessed: “*You are the **Christ**, the Son of the living God*”. Jesus answered and said to him, “*Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for **flesh and blood** has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*” Peter’s recognition of the Messiah was not according to the spirit of that age. This was not the Messiah the political priests had concocted or what Peter had fashioned for himself. The Messiah he saw was a revelation from God and according to His Word. Jesus went on to teach that He was to suffer and to be rejected. Peter then allowed his own human understanding to guide him. For him, a suffering and obedient servant, was incompatible with his own idea of Messiahship. Jesus rebuked Him: “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offence to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

Note: Jesus commands His Disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ. He was not prepared to have them confuse Him with the Messiah that they were mistakenly looking for.

Mk. 11:1-10; Zc. 9:9f; Jn. 6:15; Lk. 24:26, 46

Here we have Christ openly and deliberately demonstrating His Messiahship. This was to call to mind Zechariah’s prophecy of a humble king, a herald of peace and not of war. But when the excited crowd wanted to make him a traditional nationalistic warrior-king he went away. It was only after His death and resurrection, when a misunderstanding of his mission as one of political liberation was no longer possible, that He referred to his mission of suffering explicitly as that of the Christos.

Acts 2:36

At the centre of the earliest Christian preaching as recorded in Acts is the declaration that Jesus, rejected and crucified by the Jewish leaders, is in fact the Messiah.

From the time of Christ’s death until the beginning of the sixth decade of the 20th century, Christ’s

liberating activity was seldom misunderstood or abused for political objectives. The message is not only, or even mainly, that Jesus was the Messiah while on earth, but that now, exalted to the right hand of God, he is enthroned as the Messianic King (See Ps 110:1), which Jesus alluded to in this connection (Mk. 14:62). Jesus is not a king on David's throne in Jerusalem, but, as David's Lord, the ruler of an eternal and heavenly kingdom, waiting at God's right hand until all his enemies will be placed at his feet. The Messiah whose earthly humiliation was in such striking contrast with the political power of popular Messianic expectation now far transcends that popular hope of a merely national kingdom. He is the one who saves us as Jesus and who, as the anointed one, the Christ and Messiah, unites with the Father. God is with us.

An evening prayer

Let me now rejoice, O most gracious God, in the love Thou hast shown to our poor human race, opening up to us a way whereby we might be delivered from our sin and foolishness.

O God the Father, I praise the great and holy love whereby, when we had utterly gone astray, Thou didst diligently seek us out and save us, sending Thy well beloved Son to suffer and to die that we might be restored to the fellowship of Thy children.

O God the Son, I praise the great and holy love whereby Thou didst humble Thyself for my sake and for the sake of my brethren, consenting to share our common life, to dwell in the midst of all our sin and shame, to endure all the bitterness of Thy most blessed Passion, and at the last to die upon the Cross, that we might be released from our bondage and enter with Thee into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

O God the Holy Spirit, I praise the great and holy love whereby Thou dost daily shed abroad in my unworthy heart the peace and joy of sin forgiven, making me a partaker with all the saints in the blessings of my Lord's Incarnation, of His Passion and Crucifixion, and of His Resurrection and Ascension to the Father's right hand on high.

O holy and blessed Trinity, let me now so dwell in the mystery of this heavenly love that all hatred and malice may be rooted out from my heart and life. Let me love Thee, as Thou didst first love me, and in loving Thee let me love also my neighbor; and in loving Thee and my neighbour in Thee let me be saved from all false love of myself, and to Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all glory and praise for ever. Amen



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