

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM? NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTOLOGY

Introduction:

Christianity – not about a place, religion – but a person – the HISTORICITY of Jesus is assumed on this course – which leads to:

Important Question: “Who do you say that I am?”

QUESTION OF HIS DIVINITY AND HUMANITY!

Matthew 16:14-16 (New International Version)

¹⁴They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ,^[a] the Son of the living God."

John 20:31 (New International Version)

³¹But these are written that you may^[a] believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The NT writers wanted to communicate who Jesus was!

Three things from John's summary:

- a) **Point of Jesus – is salvation! ‘Life in His Name’ – God's plan through Him;**
- b) **He is the “Christ” – the continuity of God's activity through Him**
- c) **He is the “Son of God” – more than any other title – His divinity**

“Christ” & “Son of God” – summarise the Christian claims about Jesus.

Jesus did not use these titles personally (they had to work it out!) – but He did not deny when called them (Matthew 16:13-16, Matthew 26:63-64, Luke 22:70).

Jesus did use another term – ‘Son of Man’ (ref from Ezek 2:1, Daniel 7:13)

An important question related to how the New Testament presents Jesus, is that of what kind of Messiah the Jews expected. More than 400

Old Testament passages were taken by ancient Jewish teachers to speak of the Messiah (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 2:2; 22:7, etc.). New Testament writers clearly quote Old Testament passages that Jews had regarded for centuries as messianic and apply them to Jesus. Acts 2:35–36 and 13:33 are two examples. In the latter reference, Paul explicitly states that the resurrection of Jesus was a fulfillment of Ps. 2:7.

Perhaps the dominant lesson for us that is taught in the concept of Messiah is that God's grace overcomes man's depravity. **Throughout the whole Old Testament there is the emphasis that God will reverse the effects of the fall through a redeemer who is prophet, priest, and king.** This is grace and the theme of the Old Testament. Further, when we think of Jewish understanding then and now, we are reminded of the nation's spiritual hardening. **They wanted a king-messiah for national hopes, but did not want a sin-bearer.**

JESUS – THE MESSIAH/CHRISTOS:

1. Old Testament Expectation:

“Messiah” – Hebrew for ‘Anointed One’ (denotes Kingship) – not a Divine title (Greek – Christos) – they tended to understand Him in political terms – a King from the line of David (a conquering King!).

A general term for ‘anointed one’ (Saul – 1 Sam 24:6, Cyrus – Isaiah 45:1)

OT Passages promising the Messiah: 2 Sam 7:16, Psalm 2, 45, 72, 89, Isaiah 32:1, 45:1, Jeremiah 23:5. Ezekiel 37:24-25, Isaiah 42-53

There are other prophecies, all of which were fulfilled by Jesus Christ: His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14); His birth in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2); His sacrificial death (Isaiah 53:5); His crucifixion (Psalm 22:14-18); His bodily resurrection (Psalm 16:10); and many others. All of these unite in their witness that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:31).

Exercise 1 –

1 – Old Testament Expectation – Messiah

Look up the following OT passages reflecting the Messianic hope? – in what ways does the life & ministry of Jesus fulfil these?

Genesis 3:15, Psalm 2:1-2, Jeremiah 23:5-6

The Jews expectation was (and still is) of a conquering King ‘after David’ - How do the following passages reflect the true Messiah?

Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 53, Psalm 22:14-18, Psalm 16:10

2. New Testament Reaction:

Messiah/Christos – speak of Christ’s Kingship – but not in the way that the Jews expected. Yet not in a Divine way:

- **Jesus was seen by many at the time to be a liberator – to get rid of the Romans;**
- **He was not the ‘warrior’ Messiah many expected;**
- **The fact that He suffered and died was a big deal – against their expectation of a conquering King;**
- **The Gospel writers freely use the term ‘Christ’**
- **In Peters and Pauls preaching – they ‘argued from the scriptures’ (Acts 2, Acts 9:22)**

Discussion: The Kingdom:

What do you think the Kingdom language and statements of Jesus would have stirred up in the listeners? Matthew 20:20-23

EXERCISE 2

2 - New Testament Reaction:

How do the following verses reflect the understanding of the people Jesus spoke to and the Gospel writers?

Mark 8:27-29, Matthew 1:1, Matthew 22:41-43, Luke 2:11, John 1:41

Perhaps we would expect the hopeful followers of Jesus to attribute the title 'Christ' to Him – but what do the following verses say about the attitude and understanding of Jesus' opponents?

Matthew 2:1-12, Matthew 26:68, Matthew 27:22, Mark 15:32, Luke 23:2

What do the following verses say about the understanding of the other New Testament books/writers to Jesus as the 'Christ'?

Acts 2:36, Acts 3:18, Acts 5:42, Acts 17:2-4, Romans 1:6, Romans 5:6

What impact did the following Kingdom verses have on the listeners? Can you recognise the 'realised' ("now") and eschatological (future) Kingdom statements of Jesus?

Matthew 3:2, Matthew 4:17, Matthew 4:23, Matthew 6:10, Matthew 12:28, Mark 11:9-10

What do the following New Testament verses say about the understanding of the Messianic verses in the Old Testament?

Romans 9:1-5, Acts 2:22-28, Compare Acts 8:32-33 with Psalm 2:1-2, Psalm 22:1 with Matthew 27:46, Romans 15:3 with Psalm 69:9, Hebrews 5:5 with Psalm 2:7 & Psalm 110:4

3. Jesus' Response to the title of 'Messiah'/Christ:

Jesus seldom used this title –wanted to deflect away from a political agenda! (John 6:14-15).

Jesus' Agenda:

- **Jesus recognised that He was ushering in the Kingdom – Matt 12:28, Mark 1:15, Luke 17:21;**
- **His actions and words claimed the title – Mark 11:1-10, 14:61-62;**
- **He accepted the title from His close disciples – Mark 8:29;**
- **The rest of the NT gives the title to Him – 1 Cor 1:1-2, Heb 3:6, 1 Peter 4:1**

THE KEY THING IS THAT 'MESSIAH' ESTABLISHES JESUS' REDEMPTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE – AS THE FULFILMENT OF GOD'S PLAN!

EXERCISE 3 –

3. Jesus' Reaction to being called the Christ:

What do the following verses say about Jesus' reaction to being referred to as the Messiah/Christ?

Matthew 16:13-17, Matthew 16:20, Mark 9:41, Luke 4:41, Luke 24:26, John 4: 25-26, John 11:25-27, John 17:3