

Is Christ Our Messiah?

Introduction

In Christianity today, our Lord Jesus Christ is often called or referred to as our Messiah. What is meant by *Messiah* and are we applying it correctly to our Lord? In some Bible versions, the word *Messiah* appears often, especially in the New Testament. In others, however, it appears only a few times. Why is this? I believe that this is an instance where it is necessary to investigate how *Messiah* is used in the early Hebrew and Greek texts from which our English Bible was translated to see if this discrepancy is important or not.

As that foundation is set, we will look at what *Messiah* means and if Christ is our Messiah. Brethren, it is important for us to understand how God expects us to know Him and our Lord and how to live each day as believers. Are we to view Jesus as our Messiah and know (i.e., understand, obey, and follow) Him as the One who lived as a man among His people? Or, are we to know our Lord Jesus Christ as the One who died for our sins, was buried, was resurrected, and who returned to His position of glory at the right hand of God in the heavens? Is there even such a difference—am I making something out of nothing? Let us see what Scripture says.

“Messiah” in Scripture

New Testament

Although there are variations among the many English Bible versions (as addressed later), the word *Messiah* appears only twice in the New Testament in the *King James Version* (KJV) and in early editions of the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB).¹ Both occurrences are in the book of John.

One of the two who heard John [the Baptist] speak and followed Him [Jesus], was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which translated means [the] Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is translated Peter [A stone]). (John 1:40-42)²

The [Samaritan] woman said to Him [Jesus], “I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.” (John 4:25-26; see also John 4:29)

The Greek word translated as *Messiah* is *Messias*,³ and it appears only twice—in John 1:41 and John 4:25. That is, *Messias* is not translated any other way. From John 1:41 we know that the word means

¹ Later editions of the NASB replaced *Christ* with *the Messiah* in some verses (e.g., Matthew 1:17; 2:4). Although referring to the same person, I believe this was an incorrect translation change as discussed in this study.

² All references are quoted from the *New American Standard Bible (NASB Side-Column Reference Edition, Copyright © 1996 by The Lockman Foundation)*. Nonbolded words in brackets are either equivalent words from the *King James Version* or, if in italics, were added by me for clarification.

³ *Messias* is the Greek word code number 3323 in both the *Abingdon’s Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (James Strong, Abingdon Press, 1983 printing) and the *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of*

Christ, so *the Messiah* is referring to *the Christ*. And we know from John 4:26 that Jesus confirmed that He was the Messiah who was prophesied to come to Israel.

It is interesting to note that the Messiah was first revealed to or recognized as such by men of Judea—John the Baptist and his disciple Andrew who became a disciple of Jesus. Later, Jesus confirmed to a Samaritan woman that He was the Messiah that she was expecting to come. Why would a Samaritan woman expect the Messiah? I believe that this is a significant sequence of events and I will address it later.

The name *Christ*, or *the Christ*, does not appear in the Old Testament. However, King Herod of Judea knew that *the Christ* (a ruler of Israel) had been prophesied and inquired of the chief priests and scribes as to where this ruler was to be born. They correctly referred to a prophecy of Micah that says that the ruler would come out of Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah⁴ (Matthew 2:1-6; Micah 5:2-4).

Old Testament

As in the New Testament, the word *Messiah* appears only twice in the Old Testament in the KJV and NASB. Both occurrences are in one passage in the book of Daniel.

“Seventy weeks [units of seven] have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.⁵ So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.” (Daniel 9:24-26)

The Hebrew word translated as *Messiah* is *mashiach*,⁶ which apparently is equivalent to the Greek word *Messias*; it is translated as such in the Old Testament only in Daniel 9:25-26. The same Hebrew word also appears 37 other times where it is translated as *anointed*, *the anointed*, *His anointed*, *My anointed*, and *Your anointed*. In these instances, the object of anointing usually is a specific king, whether a king of Israel or a Gentile king (Isaiah 45:1), but sometimes is a priest (or priests) or the nation of Israel. Additionally, at least one use of the word appears to be a prophetic veiled reference to Christ as the anointed of God (Psalm 2:2). Verses such as I Samuel 2:10, II Samuel 22:51, II Chronicles 6:42, Psalm 18:50, Psalm 132:10, and Psalm 132:17 that contain the word *mashiach* are often understood to be

the Bible (The Lockman Foundation, Holman Bible Publishers, 1981). *The Englishman’s Greek Concordance of the New Testament* (George V. Wigram, Hendrickson Publishers, November 2002 printing) was used to find all occurrences of the word in the New Testament.

⁴ The land of the tribe of Judah was part of Judea in the New Testament.

⁵ NASB translators added the word *place*, which suggests that the verse is referring to the anointing of the holy city. The KJV does not have the word *place*, suggesting that the verse is referring to the anointing of Messiah the Prince. I am not certain, but the NASB translation seems to agree with the context of the passage.

⁶ *Mashiach* is the Hebrew word code number 4899 in both the *Abingdon’s Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* and the *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* previously cited. *The Englishman’s Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament* (George V. Wigram, Hendrickson Publishers, May 1997 printing) was used to find all occurrences of the word in the Old Testament.

prophecies about Christ, but their context seems to indicate that they refer to the nation of Israel or its current king (often David) and his descendants as the anointed of God.⁷

The Anointed

The Hebrew word for Messiah, therefore, refers to someone who is anointed. What is meant by *anointed* in a scriptural context? In general, the act of anointing, usually translated from the Hebrew word *mashach*,⁸ involved the application or smearing of oil on a person or object (e.g., an altar) for a specific purpose (Exodus 28:40-41; 29:4-9, 35-37; 30:22-33). When *anointed* is translated from the Hebrew word *mashiach*, it refers not to the physical act of anointing but the consecration of someone or something by God or for service to God as described in the following example verses and passages.

An Anointed King

So he [David] said to his men, "Far be it from me because of the Lord [God] that I should do this thing to my lord [master, King Saul], the Lord's anointed [mashiach], to stretch out my hand against [kill] him, since he is the Lord's anointed [mashiach]." (I Samuel 24:6)

Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse declares, the man who was raised on high declares, the anointed [mashiach] of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel. (II Samuel 23:1)

Thus says the Lord to Cyrus [King of Persia] His anointed [mashiach], whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him and to loose the loins of kings; to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: "I will go before you and make the rough places smooth; I will shatter the doors of bronze and cut through their iron bars. I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden wealth of secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name. For the sake of Jacob My servant, and Israel My chosen one, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor, though you have not known Me."⁹ (Isaiah 45:1-4)

An Anointed Priest

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "This is the offering which Aaron and his sons are to present to the Lord on the day when he is anointed [mashach]; the tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a regular grain offering, half of it in the morning and half of it in the evening. It shall be prepared with oil on a griddle. When it is well stirred, you shall bring it. You shall present the grain offering in baked pieces as a soothing aroma to the Lord. The anointed [mashiach] priest who will be in his place among his sons shall offer it. By a permanent ordinance it shall be entirely offered

⁷ I admit, however, that one or more verses referring to David and his descendants being anointed *might* also have a double meaning. That is, they could also be prophetic about Christ because when Ezekiel prophesied of David sitting the throne forever, he was unknowingly prophesying about Christ (Ezekiel 37:24-28; Matthew 1:1).

⁸ Hebrew word code 4886.

⁹ This is an example of an unsaved Gentile king being appointed (anointed) by God to unknowingly serve His purposes (see also Romans 13:1-7, I Peter 2:13-17, and my study **Governing Authority**).

up in smoke to the Lord. So every grain offering of the priest shall be burned entirely. It shall not be eaten.” (Leviticus 6:19-23)

The Anointed Nation of Israel

“Do not touch My [God’s] anointed ones [*mashiach*, *Israel*], and do My prophets no harm.”
(I Chronicles 16:22)

The Lord is their strength, and He is a saving defense to His anointed [*mashiach*, *Israel*]. Save Your people and bless Your inheritance; be their shepherd also, and carry them forever.” (Psalm 28:8-9)

Christ the Anointed

The name *Christ* is often defined to mean *the anointed one* but our Lord is not directly referred to as such in Scripture. However, because *mashiach* means *anointed*, the translation of *Messiah* in Daniel 9:25-26 can correctly be considered to mean *the anointed* or the anointed one of God. Isaiah also prophesied about Christ whom God has anointed. God did spiritually anoint His Son, as confirmed in Luke 4:16-21, Acts 4:27-28, Acts 10:38, and Hebrews 1:9, consecrating Him to do His work for God the Father (John 4:34; 17:4).

Why are the nations [heathen] in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord [God] and against His Anointed [*mashiach*, *Messiah*],¹⁰ saying, “let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!” (Psalm 2:1-3)

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me [*Christ*], because the Lord has anointed [*mashach*] me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. (Isaiah 61:1-3; see also Luke 4:16-19 and Hebrews 1:8-9)

“For truly in this city [*Jerusalem*] there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You [God] anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined [determined before] to occur.”
(Acts 4:27-28)

“You [*Cornelius*] know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38)

¹⁰ I believe this is a prophecy directly about Christ the Messiah and not the nation of Israel that will also be anointed by God. The full prophecy includes God’s proclamation that He has installed His King (Christ) on Mount Zion and that He is ruling over the nations with a *rod of iron* (Psalm 2:4-9; see also Revelation 2:25-27; 19:15-16). This prophecy, therefore, appears to be about the millennial kingdom (after the tribulation judgments and Armageddon) and the time at its close when *all* the nations will rise up against New Jerusalem and Christ the King of kings (Revelation 20:7-10).

Bible Version Differences

The KJV and the NASB are English translations of ancient Hebrew and Greek texts. Although there are some differences in translated words, phrases, and sentences (i.e., one or the other version may be correct, or more appropriate), the translations are remarkably close with the main differences being that the KJV uses English words and grammar from the time of King James (late 1500s to early 1600s)¹¹ versus the NASB that uses American English from the latter part of the twentieth century. Close examination of these versions indicate that the translators of both versions, who vigorously and commendably tried to be as accurate as possible, occasionally interjected their own interpretations (probably due to traditional Christian teaching or to bias from influences outside of Scripture) thus introducing some error into them.¹² These errors, often incorporated into subsequent Bible versions, are usually discernable through an understanding of the relevant scriptural context in which they occur.

Most English Bible versions, however, have been developed from the KJV or subsequent versions to use modern English words to make them more reader friendly. Therefore, they are interpretations (and some are paraphrases) instead of translations. By doing so opens the door for interpretation errors because the meaning of the original texts can be misunderstood, overlooked, or lost.

In the context of this study, for example, some Bible versions replace most or all occurrences of the name *Christ* with *Messiah*. The name *Christ* is translated from the Greek word ***Christōs*** (or ***Kristos***, Greek word code 5547) and not from ***Messias***, which refers to a title or position of our Lord. Even though *the Messiah* is translated to mean *the Christ* as revealed in John 1:41, I do not believe it is correct to assume that the name *Christ* (from ***Christōs***) should or can be revised as *Messiah*. For example, the name of our Savior is not the Lord Jesus Messiah (I Corinthians 1:1-2; 6:11; Ephesians 5:20), and the Messiah is not in us and we are not in Him—we are in Christ and are members of His body (Romans 8:1, 10; I Corinthians 12:12-13, 27). This may sound picky, but there is a reason why both ***Messias*** and ***Christōs*** are used in Scripture.

Is Christ Our Messiah?

Israel's Savior

There is a difference in the roles between Christ the Messiah, and our Lord Jesus Christ who is referred to as *Christ* (without the definite article *the*), *Jesus Christ*, and *Christ Jesus* in Scripture. Although they are the same person—the Son of God, the prophesied Messiah had to do with Israel's future national savior—He is Israel's Messiah. Therefore, references to *the Messiah* and *the Christ* are titles in

¹¹ King James, who reigned as King James I of England and Ireland from 1603 to 1625 (and previously as King James VI of Scotland beginning in 1567), authorized the translation of the Bible into English that became known as the *King James Version*. This was in response to a Latin interpretation used by the Holy Roman Empire, which exerted power over continental Europe through the Roman Catholic Church.

¹² I realize that this statement is vigorously challenged by fellow brethren who believe that the KJV is the inerrant word of God. However, although the word of God was written by men who were inspired by God through His Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21), it was not translated by inspiration of God but by dedicated people with good intentions who were influenced by their sin nature. Although I do not focus on translation errors, my studies including **Creation—What Does Scripture Say?**, **Adam**, **Noah**, and others demonstrate what I am convinced is some of the interpretational bias introduced into the KJV and subsequent English versions.

the same sense that He will be *King* (Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 27:11; Revelation 19:11-16). The Old Testament prophecies, though veiled (i.e., they were about the Messiah but not explicitly stated as such except in Daniel 9:25-26), were concisely summarized by Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist.

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people [*Israel*], and has raised up a horn of salvation [*Christ the Messiah*] for us in the house of David His servant—as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old [since the world began]—salvation [*deliverance*] from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; to show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father, to grant us that we [*Israel*], being rescued [delivered] from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him [*God*] without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days. And you [*John*], child, will be called the prophet of the Most High [*God*]; for you will go on before the Lord [*Christ*] to prepare His ways; to give to His people [*Israel*] the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise [dayspring, *Christ*] from on high will visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:67-79)

As revealed in this passage, John the Baptist was prophesied to prepare the nation of Israel for its promised Messiah who would save—or deliver—the nation from its enemies and establish its long-promised kingdom. This preparation would include John being used by God to provide the knowledge of salvation to change the people from being disobedient to being righteous (Luke 1:17; 3:1-6; Malachi 4:5-6).

Israel had been waiting for its promised Messiah and kingdom. The Gentile magi went to Jerusalem to find and worship (pay homage to) the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:1-2). Christ indeed came to Israel (Judea in particular) to be their Messiah and King and confirmed that He was both (John 4:25-26; Matthew 27:11). However, Israel rejected Him as their Messiah and King and had Him crucified at the hands of the Roman government (John 1:11; Matthew 27:19-26; Acts 2:22-23; 3:12-15). This was not a surprise to God because these events were prophesied (Psalm 22:16-18; Isaiah 53:4-7)—it was all according to His eternal predetermined plan (Acts 2:22-23; 3:18; 4:27-28). Despite Israel’s rejection of its Messiah, it was prophesied that Israel would, indeed, see the restoration of its kingdom with the descendent of David (Christ) sitting on its throne (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-36; 37:24-28). The prophecies referred to by Peter shortly after Pentecost will be fulfilled when New Jerusalem is established and Christ the Messiah reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14; 19:16; 21:22-27).¹³

“And now, brethren [*men of Israel—Acts 3:12*], I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing [*Israel’s prophesied restoration and redemption*] may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about

¹³ Our Lord Jesus Christ is not the King of kings or Lord of lords today. The passage of I Timothy 6:13-16 is often thought to be about Christ, but is about God the Father who has always been the King and Lord over all (I Timothy 1:17; Psalm 95:3; 103:19; 145:1; Daniel 4:37; Deuteronomy 10:17).

which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time [since the world began]. Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him [Christ] you shall give heed to everything He says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days. It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed [Christ—Galatians 3:16] all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ For you [Israel] first, God raised up His Servant [Son Jesus] and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.” (Acts 3:17-26)

Despite Peter’s offer of the kingdom to Israel, the nation continued to reject Christ as its Messiah and did not repent. The religious leaders of Israel confirmed their rejection by stoning the disciple Steven even though he spoke the truth under the control of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:8 – 7:60). Therefore, Christ the Messiah has not restored His nation and established His kingdom yet. That prophetic plan was interrupted by God when He blinded Israel to His truth and temporarily set the nation aside—a condition that remains to this day (Romans 11:25). Instead, God instituted His dispensation of grace through the Apostle Paul (the apostle of the Gentiles—Romans 11:13; Galatians 1:1, 11-12), His chosen instrument to reveal His eternal plan (Ephesians 3:1-12). When God is finished with this dispensation, He will resume His work with and through Israel as prophesied (Romans 11:26-31).¹⁴

As mentioned earlier, it is significant that our Lord was revealed as the Messiah first to men of Judea and then later to the Samaritan woman. Scripture says that Jesus came only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (i.e., people of Jerusalem and Judea who were not self-righteous—Matthew 15:24; John 1:11) and, in His initial command to His disciples, told them to not proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles or the Samaritans (Matthew 10:5-7). Prior to His ascension, He gave His disciples the order in which the gospel was to be proclaimed (Acts 1:7-8): to Jerusalem, then Judea, then Samaria, and then the rest of the world (i.e., the Gentiles).

This order is significant because the nations of the earth will one day be blessed through Christ and the descendants of Abraham (the nation of Israel) in fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 22:18; Galatians 3:16). After Solomon’s reign, because of his sin against God, Israel was split by God into two kingdoms that became known as Judah and Israel (equivalent to Judea and Samaria in the New Testament). Judah consisted of the tribe of Judah (later joined by Benjamin) and worshiped God in His designated capital of Jerusalem. Israel consisted of the other tribes and worshiped *God* and their idols in their own capital city of Samaria. The nation was split and remained so at the time that Jesus came to earth to minister to His people in Jerusalem and Judea.

In accordance with prophecy, God will restore the twelve tribes of Israel into one nation again (Ezekiel 37:11-23). It will be done first through the salvation of Jerusalem, then Judea, and then Samaria as revealed by our Lord in His instructions to His disciples. I believe this explains the significance of our Lord revealing Himself first to people of Judea and then to the Samaritan woman. She (representing the kingdom of Samaria) was expecting the Messiah because the people of Samaria were Jews, also, and were looking forward to fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The record in the

¹⁴ See my studies **The Mystery (God’s Secret Plan), The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ, The Law of Moses,** and others that explain the setting aside of Israel and the establishment of this dispensation of the grace of God.

book of Acts verifies that Jerusalem never repented, so Israel still awaits its restoration, deliverance, and kingdom.¹⁵

Our Savior

This brings us back to the question whether we are to know and follow Jesus as the man who walked among His people and came to be their Messiah and King, or to know and follow our glorified Lord who died for our sins, was buried, and was resurrected for our salvation and justification (Romans 4:23-25; 5:6-11). Please consider that following passage from the Apostle Paul to the believers in Corinth.

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died [were dead—*Ephesians 2:1-3*]; and He died for all, so that they who live [*believers*] might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we [*believers*] recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. (II Corinthians 5:14-16)

What does it mean that although we have known Christ according to the flesh that we no longer know Him in this way? I believe this is an important point that is not recognized by most believers today. Brethren, we know that Jesus was born to Mary as a Jew, grew up and became a man, preached the gospel of the kingdom, healed all kinds of sickness and even raised the dead, was tortured and put to death on a cross, was raised from the dead by God, and then walked again as a man with His disciples for another 40 days before ascending into heaven. These are all glorious truths that we can praise God for, but is this how we are to *know* Him?

When Jesus was born, grew up, and lived and died (and was resurrected) as a man, He was in a position of humility. That is, He gave up His glorious position with God in the heavens to become a man for our benefit. He not only experienced life as we do, but also was tempted by Satan himself to worship and serve him (Matthew 4:1-11).¹⁶ However, upon His ascension our Lord was glorified by God and returned to His rightful position with God (Ephesians 1:18-23). It is from this position of glory that our Lord Jesus Christ is working for and through us today. It is in this exalted position that we are to recognize and know our Lord.

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)

¹⁵ See my study **The Mystery (God's Secret Plan)** that includes an explanation of God's prophetic plan for Israel.

¹⁶ To my knowledge, Eve was the only other person to be directly tempted by Satan when he did so in the form of a serpent (Genesis 3:1-6). I am convinced that *every* person other than Christ Himself would succumb to a direct temptation by Satan just like Eve did. I believe that God, through His Holy Spirit, prevents Satan from directly tempting us (Romans 8:38-39).

Not only did Christ humble Himself by becoming a man, He became a curse for us and our sin by dying on the cross (Galatians 3:10-14). Is the above passage saying that every knee will bow to Jesus? I do not believe that this is what it says or means. It is true that when Christ is King of kings during His millennial kingdom, the Gentile kings of the earth (all of whom will be unsaved) will go to New Jerusalem and pay homage to Him as their ruler—in a sense they will bow down to Him in some manner of respect but not so as to worship Him (Revelation 21:24; see also Matthew 2:1-12). Brethren, we are not to worship Jesus but, instead, we are to worship God in *the name* of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3-6; 5:20; Romans 15:5-6), just as we are to do all things for God in the name of our Lord (Colossians 3:17).¹⁷ Because of what Christ accomplished for us at the cross, He is our mediator and enables us to worship God through Him (I Timothy 2:5-6).

Furthermore, verse 10 of this passage says that at the *name of Jesus* every knee will bow. Because we are no longer to know our Lord as the man of flesh but as our glorified Lord, I believe the intent of this verse is that all will bow down to God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ as supported by verses 5 and 11 of this passage and in the context of the letter to the Philippians (Philippians 1:1-3, 9-11; 4:19-20; see also I Corinthians 1:2-4, 10; 6:11; Ephesians 1:15-23).

Brethren, this is important. We are often taught to follow Jesus, and the context of that admonition usually is to follow Him and His teachings as He was as a man as recorded in the books of Matthew through John. Jesus came to earth as a Jew to the lost sheep of the house of Israel—He came as their promised Messiah. Even though He was rejected by His people and crucified, He will return as Israel's Messiah at the end of the tribulation judgments and establish His heavenly kingdom on earth (Daniel 7:23-27; Revelation 19:11-16; 21:1-27). He was born under the Law of Moses and instructed His disciples to obey it (Galatians 4:4-5; Matthew 23:1-3). He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, and raised the dead, and He promised His disciples that they would do those things and more (John 14:12-14).

Jesus commanded His twelve disciples to teach repentance and water baptism for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-38). They were to begin their ministry with Jerusalem and Judea, and when they were saved, they were to proceed on to Samaria (thus covering all of Israel) and then the Gentile nations. The gospel they were to teach was that Israel's long-promised kingdom was imminent (Matthew 4:17; 10:7; Acts 1:6-7). As they did so, they were to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons, and were not to take any money, food, or clothing with them for they would be provided for where they went (Matthew 10:8-14; Mark 16:17-18). To obediently follow Jesus, they, and all disciples, were to sell all their possessions so that all of them would have all things in common and not be in any need (Luke 12:22-34; Mark 10:17-21; Acts 2:43-45; 4:32-35).

Please think about these things. Does God expect us to follow our Lord in all these things in accordance with the commandments of Jesus as He ministered in humble form as a man to His people of Israel? Some denominations, independent churches, and Bible teachers teach repentance and water baptism for the remission of sins, but this is not how we are saved today and is not the command we are to obey or teach.¹⁸ Every believer in this dispensation of the grace of God is saved because he or she believes that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead—we are saved by grace

¹⁷ See my study **Who Do We Worship?** that demonstrates that we are to worship God the Father and not our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ See my study **Should We Be Baptized?** that addresses the various baptisms mentioned in Scripture and why Paul said there is one baptism in this dispensation of grace.

through faith apart from any works of righteousness including water baptism (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:8-9).

Furthermore, even though some falsely claim to miraculously heal the sick and cast out demons, no one is raising anyone from the dead. As for the rest of our Lord's commandments listed above, no one is obeying any of them. Nor should we even try. Instead, we are to know Christ as our glorified Lord and follow the Apostle Paul as he followed Christ (Philippians 3:17-19; 4:9; I Thessalonians 1:6-7; 4:1; II Thessalonians 2:15; I Timothy 1:16; II Timothy 1:13).¹⁹

I [Paul] do not write these things to shame you [believers], but to admonish [warn] you as my beloved children. For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I exhort [urge] you, be imitators [followers] of me. (I Corinthians 4:14-16)

Be imitators [followers] of me, just as I also am of Christ. (I Corinthians 11:1)

Please also consider that we are not really disciples—followers—of Christ. We cannot follow Him on a daily basis in the same way that the disciples physically followed Jesus during His ministry (see Acts 1:21-22), nor do the things that He commanded (and empowered) them to do. Because of what He accomplished for us at the cross, we have an even greater position. We are in Christ and He is in us—we are members of His body (Romans 8:1, 9-10; I Corinthians 12:12-13, 27). Our spiritual position this very moment is in Christ at the right hand of God—our citizenship is in the heavens (Ephesians 1:18-23; 2:4-7; Philippians 3:20-21). The disciples at the time of our Lord's ministry on earth were not given these promises. They were to look to the future when they would be on earth in their promised kingdom. His twelve disciples were promised to serve with Christ the King, sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). Brethren, these are not our promises or hope. We are to know our Lord as our glorified and personal Savior and not as our Messiah and King.

Closing Thoughts

I was taught that *Messiah* means *Savior*; therefore, Jesus (or Christ) is our Messiah. However, we have seen that Messiah means *anointed*. As the anointed of God, one of the roles of the Messiah will be to save (deliver) the nation of Israel from its enemies. Another role will be to completely and permanently cleanse His people Israel of their sin (Ezekiel 36:22-28), which will be a process that will include severe judgment (Acts 3:23; Zechariah 13:7-9). Furthermore, another role will be as their King (Isaiah 9:6-7; Ezekiel 37:24-28). However, we know our Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior who died for our sins, was buried, was resurrected from the dead, and who ascended into heaven to return to the right hand of God. Our salvation is by faith (believing) in His work at the cross for us, regardless if we are Jews or Gentiles (I Corinthians 12:12-13; 15:1-4; Romans 10:8-13). None of the prophecies about the Messiah included this work of personal salvation either for the Jews or the Gentiles. Brethren, it is not correct to use Scripture to say that Christ is our Messiah.

¹⁹ See my studies **The Mystery (God's Secret Plan), The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Walk Worthy, Follow Paul**, and others that explain how that believing and following the message, commands, and example of Paul, God's chosen apostle of the Gentiles, is following Christ as God intends us to do.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to earth as Israel's promised Messiah and King—the anointed of God. Israel rejected Him, however, and He is not our—nor anyone's—Messiah or King today. The prophecies concerning the Messiah in the Old Testament, and as confirmed and elaborated upon in the New Testament, were specifically directed to the nation of Israel. God will fulfill all His promises to Israel in due time. However, now is not the time because we are living in the dispensation of the grace of God. God is not working out His prophetic plan through the nation of Israel today (or any other nation) but through individual Jews and Gentiles who believe in the saving work that Christ accomplished for us at the cross.

Now I [Paul] make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (I Corinthians 15:1-4; see also Ephesians 1:13-14)

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him [Christ]. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Romans 5:8-10)

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9; see also Romans 4:4-5)

But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His [God's] grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)

God does not want us to know and obey Jesus as the Messiah and King of Israel and His message of the kingdom to His people of Israel. Instead, He wants us to know and obey our glorified Lord Jesus Christ—as revealed to us through the Apostle Paul—who is at the right hand of God in the heavens and who is the head of the church, which is His body. If we believe the gospel of our salvation, we are members of the body of Christ. As members of His body—and as children of God (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 3:26)—we should walk worthy of, or as befitting, our salvation in Christ.

For this reason I [Paul] too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints [fellow believers], do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling [salvation], what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His [God's] might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and

dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He [God] put all things in subjection under His [Christ's] feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:15-23)

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His [God's] will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. (Colossians 1:9-12)

Therefore I [Paul], the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling [salvation] with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)

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March 2024
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