

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

MAY 9 - 13, 2022

COMMON
QUESTIONS
ABOUT JESUS APR 24 - MAY 29

MONDAY

Read Psalm 2

The title *Messiah* is not found in the Old Testament even though the concept has its roots there. *Messiah* means simply “Anointed One,” and was primarily a reference to the One who had been anointed as the ruler over God’s people. This is evident in Psalm 2 as the psalmist speaks of the LORD and “*His Anointed One*” (i.e., Messiah; 2:2) and thereafter also refers to Him as “*My King*” (2:6), whom God installed on Zion (i.e., the temple mount in Jerusalem).

The statement in verse 7, “*You are My Son; today I have become Your Father,*” is likely a reference to God’s statement to David through the prophet Nathan regarding his son, Solomon: “*I will be his father, and he will be my son*” (2 Samuel 7:14). The idea that emerges from this psalm is that God’s Anointed One is the divinely-appointed Ruler over God’s people who is in a special relationship—a son-father relationship—with God.

This psalm appears to have been instrumental in the early church’s understanding of Jesus as the Son of God. Peter and John saw the first two verses fulfilled in the conspiracy by Herod, Pontius Pilate, Gentiles, and Jews in Jerusalem against Jesus that resulted in His death (Acts 4:25-27). Paul cites Psalm 2:7 as foundational to his own understanding of Jesus’ identity as the Son of God (Acts 13:32-33). The writer of Hebrews similarly refers to Psalm 2:7

twice as evidence of Jesus' superiority to the angels (Hebrews 1:5) and to Levitical high priests (Hebrews 5:5).

When the Magi were searching for the One who had been born King of the Jews, Herod called together the chief priests and teachers and asked them "*where the Messiah was to be born*" (Matthew 2:1-4). The reply he received was in Bethlehem, based on the prophet Micah's promise that a ruler who would shepherd Israel would come out of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2, 4). The fact that the Magi asked about a king, which Herod interpreted as the Messiah and the religious scholars quoted a promise of a coming ruler, reinforces the understanding of the Messiah primarily as the One whom God anointed to rule over His people.

To recognize Jesus as the Messiah is to recognize Him not only as God's Anointed or the Coming One, but as one's King, the One under whose authority we live.

QUESTIONS

Do we recognize Jesus as our King?

PRAYERS FOR ZOE INTERNATIONAL

January 2022 was Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Pray that ZOE's efforts to bring growing awareness to this horrific evil will lead to greater protection of vulnerable children and rescue of those captured.

TUESDAY

Read **Luke 2:1-20**

What a wonderous sight it must have been for the shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem on that special night. It likely started out rather ordinary: rounding up the sheep, making sure they were all there, perhaps building a fire for warmth and to keep predators at bay. Suddenly an angel appeared shining with the glory of the Lord. The text leaves it up to us to imagine what that looked like, but it is careful to tell us how the shepherds responded: “*and they were terrified*” (Luke 2:9). Given similar reactions to angelic visitations in the Bible, such a response is not surprising. We would likely have responded the same way.

The angel, recognizing the shepherds’ fear, immediately reassured them: “*Do not be afraid*” (Luke 2:10). The angel told the shepherds that instead of terror they should feel joy, for “*I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people*” (v. 10). This sounds too good to be true. What could bring great joy to all the people? Could there be any news that would be equally good for shepherds and rulers and priests and innkeepers and a brand-new virgin mother and her carpenter husband? Indeed, the angel cannot contain such good news: “*Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger*” (vv. 11-12).

This announcement was so packed with wonder that suddenly a great company of angels appeared praising God for His marvelous deeds. This child just born is the Messiah, the LORD'S Anointed, the divinely appointed ruler over God's people, as we saw yesterday. Not only is He the Messiah, but He is also a Savior, One whose salvation was the Good News that would bring great joy to all the people. Even more, He is also the Lord, the rightful Master of all. What could be more wonderful news than this?

After the angels disappeared, the shepherds high-tailed it to Bethlehem to check out their story and, after finding everything to be just as they had been told, spread the word concerning what they had been told about this child, evoking further responses of amazement (vv. 17-18).

QUESTIONS

Are we, like the shepherds, amazed about the Messiah? Do we share the Good News?

PRAYERS FOR ZOE INTERNATIONAL

Ask the Lord to work through ZOE to train more and more people to recognize the signs that a young person is being exploited or at risk of being exploited for profit and take action.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Mark 8:27-33**

Mark tells the story, repeated by Matthew (Matthew 16:13-16) and Luke (Luke 9:18-20), in which Jesus asked His disciples, “*Who do people say I am?*” The disciples responded with the various ideas they had heard from others: “*Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets*” (Mark 8:28).

We can certainly appreciate that Jesus shared some characteristics with each of these responses. Like John the Baptist, Jesus came preaching a message of repentance and the nearness of the kingdom (Mark 1:4, 14, 15). Like Elijah, Jesus performed amazing miracles of provision, healing, and even restoring people to life (e.g., 1 Kings 17). Like the prophets, Jesus spoke the truth even when it made others uncomfortable or resulted in personal harm. No doubt, Jesus understood and appreciated why the crowds would think of Him as such.

While there was an element of truth in each of these responses, they also failed to capture the essence of Jesus’ identity. Jesus, hopeful that His disciples saw that He was more than just another prophet, pressed for their answer to the question: “*But what about you?*” He asked. “*Who do you say I am?*” Peter’s response was as short as it was profound: “*You are the Messiah*” (Mark 8:29). Peter confessed that Jesus was much more than just another prophet in a long line of Hebrew prophets. Jesus is the Messiah, the long-awaited divinely Anointed One.

Peter's response, as simple as it is, was full of meaning. Essentially, he was saying, "You are the One for whom we have been waiting, the rightful Ruler of God's people, our Deliverer and our only hope." Did Peter fully understand what this meant? Not likely, given his subsequent actions—not until after Jesus' death and resurrection. But Jesus recognized the truth of it and the potential backlash the disciples could face for making such a claim publicly, and He warned them not to tell anyone about Him.

Ultimately, it was Jesus' acknowledgement that He is the Messiah that became grounds for His crucifixion by the Jewish leaders. There would be a time and place for the disciples to share this Good News as we see in the book of Acts. But for now, Jesus seemed content knowing that His disciples recognized Him for who He is.

QUESTIONS

Do we recognize who Jesus really is? How closely do we follow Him?

PRAYERS FOR ZOE INTERNATIONAL

Pray for the success of ZOE's many efforts, locally and internationally, to restore the lives of children who've managed, by God's grace, to survive being exploited.

THURSDAY

Read **Luke 24:13-27, 36-49**

The story of the two disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus is familiar to many of us, but still a rather curious story. Cleopas and his friend were discouraged and confused about the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion and the "disappearance" of His body when Jesus Himself, unrecognized by them, joined them on their journey and proceeded to explain what they found so confusing. Luke records Jesus' initial response to them: *"How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?"* (Luke 24:25-26).

This statement by Jesus clearly affirms His self-understanding as the Messiah, albeit a different kind of Messiah from what most of His contemporaries had expected. According to Jesus' understanding of the prophets, the Messiah *had* to suffer the events that had just transpired so that He could then *"enter His glory."* A suffering Messiah must have sounded like an oxymoron to the disciples. The Messiah is supposed to be a conquering ruler, God's agent to set all things right for His people. But according to Jesus, that is not the kind of Messiah the prophets had promised.

Luke then summarizes Jesus' travelogue with the two disciples by stating, *"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself"* (Luke 24:27).

What a biblical tour that must have been. Isaiah 52:13–53:12 comes to mind as one prophetic text that presents a suffering Messiah. No doubt, there were many others.

When the disciples finally recognized their companion as Jesus, they could not contain their excitement and immediately returned the seven miles to Jerusalem to tell the Eleven. While they were still talking, Jesus appeared to all of them again and reminded them of His message: *“This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem”* (Luke 24:46-47). The repetition of this statement about the suffering Messiah underscores its significance for Jesus’ and Luke’s understanding of the gospel.

QUESTIONS

It is perhaps easier to follow a victorious Messiah than a suffering Messiah. What does it mean for us to follow a Messiah who suffered?

PRAYERS FOR ZOE INTERNATIONAL

The mission to prevent child trafficking and to rescue victims is a dangerous one for all involved. So, ask the Lord to protect all of ZOE’s workers from those who seek to profit from trafficking.

FRIDAY

Read **Acts 17:1-9**

The story of Paul's visit to Thessalonica shows Paul taking a similar approach to presenting Jesus as the suffering Messiah as Jesus had taken on the road to Emmaus. Speaking to a mixed group of Jews and God-fearing Greeks, both men and women, Paul stated emphatically, *"This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah"* (Acts 17:3). While some in his audience were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, others became jealous and stirred up trouble for them.

The accusation these troublemakers leveled against Paul and Silas is quite telling: *"They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus"* (v. 7). In some ways, this criticism was spot on. The Jews recognized that the claim that Jesus was the Messiah was a claim that He was God's Anointed Ruler. Taken at face value, this claim was a threat to Caesar's authority and demand for exclusive allegiance. We know from church history that, ultimately, Christians' allegiance to Jesus as their rightful King did undermine Rome's authority.

But it is doubtful that Paul was trying to subvert the power of Rome in his claim that Jesus is the Messiah, especially since he was proclaiming a Messiah who had died, been resurrected, and was now with God in heaven. In Paul's writings, he often argued that Christians should be model citizens, giving government leaders the respect that they deserve as agents of God's providence (e.g., Romans 13:1-7).

Paul's claim that Jesus is the Messiah was fundamentally a claim that God had acted to fulfill His promises to bring salvation to all people and that He had done this uniquely in the person of Jesus. Paul's desire was that all people would recognize Jesus as the Messiah and follow Him as he himself had done.

In this week's devotionals, we have seen the Hebrew concept of the Messiah as God's Anointed One, the divinely Anointed Ruler of God's people. We also saw that Jesus was proclaimed to be the Messiah by an angel, by Jesus' disciples, by Jesus Himself, and finally by Paul. Jesus and Paul consistently emphasized that Jesus is a suffering Messiah, the One who gives Himself for others.

QUESTIONS

Like the Thessalonians in today's story, the question facing us is, "What will we do with this Jesus?" Are we persuaded that Jesus is the Messiah? Are we willing to follow Him in giving ourselves for others?

PRAYERS FOR ZOE INTERNATIONAL

May the Lord strengthen, encourage, and equip the various specialists and caregivers who are working with the five or six girls currently living at ZOE's recovery home here in Los Angeles County.



Glenkirk Church | 1700 Palopinto Ave, Glendora, CA 91741 | 626.914.4833
GlenkirkChurch.org |  **@GlenkirkChurch** |  **Facebook: GlenkirkChurch**