

The Word of Truth Ministry Presents  
#SS02  
Special Full Length Studies

**THIS I BELIEVE**

**That Jesus Is The Christ  
The Son of the Living God**

**Otis Q. Sellers, Bible Teacher**

**AUTHOR'S FOREWORD**

The one who desires to stand as a believer before God must have something of God's truth to believe. This is provided from His Word in this pamphlet. The writer is an independent Bible student and teacher, a Christian individualist, one who believes that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God. Any quotation in this pamphlet that varies from the *King James Version* does so because after careful study the writer is convinced that this is the correct translation. This is to be especially noted in all cases where the definite article (the) precedes the title of Christ.

-----.

It is a commonly held opinion that all who profess to be Christians are infused with the conviction that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It would be good if this were true, but the obvious facts demonstrate that it is not. Some who profess to be Christians actually deny this altogether. They give to Jesus a much smaller role, the founder of a new religion, a teacher of good things. Most professing Christians have neither understanding nor appreciation of what is meant by the descriptive title "**the Christ**" They do not know what is meant by the term "**the Son of God.**" Therefore they do not know what is involved in believing that Jesus of Nazareth is the one and only being to whom can be given these descriptive titles.

In the unbelievable ignorance that prevails throughout Christendom today there are many who think that "Christ" was a family name - that His father's name was Joseph Christ, that He had a brother named James Christ. And there is a still greater number who believe that He is the Son of God because He was God's boy and because God was His father.

There are many who claim Christ as their Savior and acknowledge Him to be their Lord, yet they feel no need of a positive faith that He is the Christ. To them this is of no great importance. But it is so important that one can never qualify as a mature believer in Jesus Christ until he understands what these terms mean, and has the conviction that they are true of this man who walked upon earth 2000 years ago. The central truth of the gospel is that Jesus is the Christ, and he who does not believe this cannot be believing the gospel.

### **Importance of Belief**

The importance of this is seen in the fact that there came a time in the providence of God when the salvation - bringing message of Jesus Christ was no longer to be transmitted by means of commissioned men speaking words given by God as they did during the time described in the book of Acts. It was to be written and to stand written in an inspired book which thereafter anyone could believe and anyone could proclaim. The commission to write came to a man named John, and divine inspiration produced the book commonly called the gospel according to John. Near the close of this book we find the clear statement concerning the purpose for which God , caused it to be written.

**And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book: But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name. John 20:30, 31.**

The plural pronoun "ye" in this verse has no antecedent. This is a common literary device which makes the message applicable to anyone and to everyone that reads it. From what John said, we know that this book was inspired by God with the end in view that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Inasmuch as no such statement is made in connection with any other book in the Bible, then this becomes the most important book in all Scripture in relationship to believing and to obtaining the guarantee of life through His name.

If we desire to qualify as believers in God's sight, then it is to this book we must turn. If we wish to possess the assurance of "life through His name" then this book must be given its proper place in our lives so that it might fulfill the purpose for which it is written. And to qualify as a believer, to be worthy of this designation, the one truth above all others that must be entered into and believed is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

The importance of this was known to all the apostles. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter summed up his first great message to Israel by declaring that **God has made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ"** (Acts 2: 36). In Thessalonica, Paul declared that **"this Jesus, whom I preach unto you is the Christ"** ( Acts 17: 3); and in Corinth he **"testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ"** (Acts 18:5).

All these truths bring us face to face with the great question: What does it mean to believe that Jesus is the Christ? In other words: What will we be saying if we say that Jesus is the Christ?

There are those who tell us that the word *Christ* means *Anointed*. This is most certainly true. Yet this leaves us with the greater problem of defining the word *anointed*. In English the word *anoint* means to smear on oil or to pour on oil ceremonially, but its true significance has long been buried under a great rubbish heap of corrupt religious ideas. Peter declared in the house of Cornelius that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10 :38). **To anoint is to consecrate, to designate, to name, to appoint, to elect.** In the case of David, Samuel anointed him as king in Israel and used a ceremony that involved the use of oil, being so directed of God to do it after that fashion. (1 Sam. 16: 1 ). But Jesus was pointed out, named, or designated, to be the Christ, not by oil, but by the Holy Spirit and power. His works were the proof of His appointment by God.

The problem we face in understanding what it means to believe that Jesus is the Christ can be clarified if approached in this manner. At one point in the ministry of John the Baptist, his strange manners and message caused much speculation. Luke tells of this, saying:

**And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not. Luke 3: 15.**

From other writers we know that they *put* this question to John, and this brought forth the emphatic denial, **"I am not the Christ."** **John 1:20.** And it will help us if we begin our thinking at this point by asking questions such as these: What would John have had to be in order to be the Christ? What things would have had to be true of him if he were the Christ? To answer these questions would be to answer the great question before us: What must one believe about Jesus in order to believe that He is the Christ?

## The Christ is The Messiah

At this point it is necessary to firmly establish an important truth, and this must be established from the Word in such manner that no troublesome doubts will later arise. This has to do with the semantics of this study, and concerns the words *Messiah* and *Christ*. It is well known that the word *Christ* comes from the Greek language and the word *Messiah* from the Hebrew. Since the average student is not expert in handling Greek or Hebrew, he must as a rule depend upon the help of scholars who are more capable in these things. But this is one matter where even the best of scholarship has no right to express an opinion. The relationship between these two words has been settled beyond opinion once and for all by the Spirit of God. This can be stated as follows: Whatever the descriptive title "Christ" means, that is what "Messiah" means; and whatever "Messiah" means that is what "Christ" means. There is not even a shade of difference between these two words. All we can say is that one is from the Hebrew, the other is from the Greek, they are exact equivalents and they mean the same.

The correctness of this can be seen in Andrew's announcement to Simon, "**We have found the Messiah**" (John 1:41), which the inspired writer immediately translates for all readers by saying, "**which is being interpreted, the Christ.**" This truth is repeated in John 4:25 where the Samaritan woman said: "**I know that Messiah cometh**", and which the same inspired writer in a parenthetical statement explains, "**which is called Christ.**"

Thus the complete identity of these two words is established once and for all by the Spirit of God. There is no balance that can detect any difference in the value, weight, or meaning of these two words. The student of God's Word can use them interchangeably without ever losing one grain of truth. Nothing whatsoever in the way of truth would be lost if we should change Peter's confession concerning Jesus. to read, "**Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God**" (Matt. 16:16).

There are probably many who will instantly rebel against this idea, and these will need to overcome their deep-seated prejudices in order to accept the truth. There has been so much talk about "the Jewish Messiah" that many automatically link this word up with the Jews while at the same time linking Christ with the Christians. One writer has said "We have nothing to do with Messiah, our hope is in Christ." To this there is only one answer. If we have nothing to do with the Messiah, then we have nothing to do with Christ. Another speaks about "the Messianic kingdom being the hope of the Jews." He fails to realize that "the Messianic kingdom" is "the Christian kingdom." There is no place in Scripture where the word *Messiah* is limited to His relationship to Israel. His Messianic work is in behalf of all men. The Messianic kingdom will embrace "all nations." Israel has no special claim upon the One who bears the name of Messiah. The Samaritan men had the truth straight when they said, "**we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world**" (John 4:42).

There are probably many who would react with great indignation if **Ephesians 2: 5 - 7** should be paraphrased to read:

**Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with the Messiah, (by grace are ye saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Messiah Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Messiah Jesus.**

However, strong reaction against unfamiliar truth is always to be expected, and one and all are challenged to demonstrate from Scripture that the paraphrase above does any damage except to arouse *our* prejudices and jar our complacency.

But let no one think that this writer has any plan to do away with the word "Christ" and to substitute "Messiah" in its place. I intend to let the Scriptures stand as written, but I do insist that these terms are of identical value and no damage is done when such substitution is made. **I do not believe that we can ever enter into a true understanding of the Greek word *Christ* until we understand and embrace the idea that it is identical in every respect with the Hebrew word *Messiah*.**

The complete identity of these two terms is the strongest link between the Old Testament and the New. This is a tie that many try to weaken, and some would sever altogether. But the lover of truth will determine to leave it just as strong as God has made it.

There are many who talk strongly about believing the Bible who seem to become quite reticent when brought face to face with some of its definite statements. They mumble about it being a "question of interpretation." But there is no such question here. The interpreting has been done by the Spirit of God. "We have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted, the Christ." The greatest scholars can add nothing to this. The submissive believer will acknowledge it to be final and absolute truth.

### **The Expectation of the Christ**

In the organic unity of the Old Testament the single theme is that the time will come when God will take the reins of government into His own hands and impose His beneficent and benevolent rule upon the earth. And in all times and under all conditions God held out to men the prospect of living upon the earth in the day when He governs. This is the glorious destiny that was ever before men, the "one hope" that was revealed to them by the prophets of God. The results of this divine intervention is to be so glorious that the prophets dipped their pens in the rainbow as they described the blessings of that day.

After the entrance of sin and death into the world and the adverse judgments that were pronounced as a result, God made it known immediately thereafter that Satan would not be permitted to exercise his power in human history forever. All that ever flowed out of him is to be overwhelmed and washed away by one who is referred to in Gen. 3: 15 as the seed of the woman. Thus the first promise of victory to come centers in a person. And as these promises multiply and enlarge it is always plain that they are to be realized and brought to fulfillment by one ordained, designated, and elected by God - **God's Anointed One, the Messiah.**

The promise that One was to appear upon the earth who would be God's Messiah is a golden cord of truth that is woven throughout the entire Old Testament revelation. The expectation of the Messiah was generated in the hearts of men by the message of the Hebrew Scriptures, Genesis to Malachi. And while this hope grew dim in the hearts of some, it was always alive and was never lost. **Thus, to say that Jesus is the Christ is to say that He is the Messiah promised and predicted in the Old Testament.**

When the New Testament is examined it will be seen that the fact of a Messiah and the expectation of a universal kingdom of God by means of the Messiah were never questioned. The intensity of this great Messianic hope can be felt as one carefully reads the four gospels. This hope existed among all parties, sections, classes, and schools in Israel, and was expressed in their waiting for a Jewish .Messiah-King who would rule over a world which He Himself would convert to God. This is seen in many passages.

**When Jesus was born in Bethlehem there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east and are come to worship Him" (Matt. 2 : 2).**

The appearance of these men caused great excitement in Jerusalem, and the news of their search was brought to Herod. This troubled Herod greatly, for he knew that the "King of the Jews" they spoke about was the long awaited Messiah. He knew quite well that this in time would lead to the dethronement of the alien house of Herod which had usurped the throne of David. This bloody despot could not tolerate even the thought of this and he determined to end this threat to his throne at once. His first move was intended to confirm his own ideas, so he gathered together all the chief priests and scribes of the people and demanded of them "where the Christ should be born." Without hesitation they gave the answer:

**In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, are not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel. Matt. 2: 5-6.**

In this we see the understanding of these "chief priests and scribes" that at some point in the history of Israel one would be born who would be the Christ. And they knew quite well that the one who qualifies for this office must be a king, a sovereign, a monarch, that is, one who rules supreme. He must also be "the governor", that is a leader who leads his people as a shepherd. And he must be born in Bethlehem. Sad it is indeed to recall that the general conception which the leaders in Israel had formed of the Messiah differed entirely from the one presented by Jesus of Nazareth. The Messiah in their minds could not be of lowly birth, neither could he be a Nazarene. But these were human conceptions and were contrary to the divine picture.

### **Bringer of Salvation**

A fruitful source of information about "the Christ" is found in the brief but inspiring record of the man Simeon. This man was a resident of Jerusalem, he was just and devout, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. To him it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit, "that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord, Christ" (Luke 2:26). At the time the parents of Jesus brought Him into the temple to have done for Him the ceremony which the law required, Simeon was led by the Spirit of God to this spot. Upon seeing the child he took Him into his arms and declared:

**Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Luke 2:29-32.**

The word *salvation* in this passage is in the Greek an adjective, and even though it is substantivized it remains an adjective nevertheless. One essential rule concerning adjectives is that they cannot stand alone in a sentence. If they seem to be standing alone it is because of an ellipsis, the omission of a word which should be obvious from what has been said. Many expositors recognize the adjective and the ellipsis here but mistakenly try to supply it by bringing in ideas which are not in the context; as, for example, Moffitt, who renders. it "saving power", and Lenski- "saving gift."

The adjective *soterion* here means "salvation-bringing", as all lexicons agree (see Liddell and Scott, Cremer, Abbot-Smith, Thayer, Bullinger). Thus what Simeon actually said was "**mine eyes have seen your salvation-bringing**", which prompts us at once to: inquire "salvation-bringing what"? To this there can be only one answer, "salvation-bringing Christ!" The only word that can be supplied from the context is *Christ*.

In this we have confirmed what we already knew from the Old Testament – He who *is* the Christ must be the bringer of salvation. He must be able to fulfill every requirement of the great salvation that God had long promised. The one who is the Christ must be able to rescue, to deliver, and to make safe the world. He must be able to do the same for the nations, for Israel, and even for the individual.

The salvation-bringing Christ must suit the needs of "all the peoples", which is what is meant by "prepared before the face of all the people." Furthermore he must be a light that will provide a revelation for the nations and be the glory of God's people Israel. If he cannot qualify in all these things, then he cannot be the Christ.

### **Savior of the World**

An important revelation concerning the character of the one who is the Christ is found in the meeting of Jesus with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. In conversation this woman said to Him: "I know that **Messiah** cometh, which is called Christ: when He is come, He will tell us all things"

(John 4:25), and this statement was answered by Jesus by saying: "**I THAT SPEAK TO THEE AM HE.**" (John 4:26). This caused the woman to quickly leave and return to the city and say to the men there:

***Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? John 4:29.***

There is more to this simple statement than meets the *eye*. He who would fill the office of God's Christ must be able to discern the totality of the lives of every man. **He must be able to judge the living and the dead as a prelude to the establishing of His sovereignty upon and over the earth (2 Tim. 4: 1). Every creature must be manifest in His sight and all things must be naked and bare before his eyes (Heb. 4:13). He must be of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor decide by what His ears hear, but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth (Isa. 11:3,4).**

This woman's report to the men of Samaria was the beginning of faith within them. So they came to Jesus and begged Him to stay for a time with them, and He remained with them two days. This resulted in many more believing because of His own word. They then made this remarkable confession to the woman who first told them of Him:

**Now we believe, not because of your saying: for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world. John 4:42.**



Their understanding of the mission of the Christ is the true one. He is to be, He must be the Savior of the world. This is a work which is greater than His original creation of the world. He did not need to die to create, but He must die if the world is to be saved. The world today is desperately ill, so seriously ill that many wonder if it can be saved. Since man has completely failed to redeem the world in spite of all the progress he has made, many are inclined to feel that there is no hope. The world that God created, that which makes up the total environment in which man lives, becomes increasingly inhospitable to all who live within *it*. The effects of sin and death in the world are cumulative, and the present state of things is such that some are inclined to accept as final the Satan-created and man created evil in the world.

But the Bible presents another picture. It never speaks of the end of the world (*kosmos*) in spite of the erroneous translations that seem to say this. It speaks of the salvation of the world, and declares. this will be done by God's Christ.

In order to save the world the one who is the Christ must remove that principle of sin which came in by the first man. And He must also remove all its effects, eliminating all that is sinful and sorrowful, renovating and transforming the human race. This task seems so utterly impossible that many professing Christians doubt that it will ever be done. But it is the promise of God that it will be done by the one who fills the office of the Christ. He will save the world. This is what David had in mind in his great Psalms of thanksgiving when he said:

**Fear before Him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, the Lord reigneth. I Chron. 16:30, 31.**

**Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. Psalm 33: 8.**

**The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith He hath girded Himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved. Psalm 93: 1.**

**Say among the nations that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: He shall judge the peoples righteously Psalm 96: 10.**

All this must be accomplished by the Christ. It brings to mind the great declaration of John the Baptist concerning Jesus:

**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 1: 29.**

## The Elect of God

When Jesus of Nazareth hung upon the cross the rulers in Israel derided Him saying:

**He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be the Christ, the chosen of God.**

**Luke 23: 35.**

This ridicule has reference to Isa. 42: 1 (*see* also Matt. 12: 18) where the promised Messiah is said to be the elect (chosen one) of God. For in order to be the Christ it was necessary for Him to be the elected one of God. Whenever an office is to be filled, whenever a work is to be done, whenever a purpose is to be accomplished, someone must be elected in regard to these things. It is even as in the office of the high priest - "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called (named) of God" (Heb. 5 :4). In the New Testament the Greek word translated "choose" or "elect" always has the same meaning as when we use it in a political context. We elect presidents, governors and mayors. Our elections, are to an office and have in view the performing of special services for the city, state, or nation.

Men may assume the title of "the Christ" but none will ever fill the office and complete the work of the Christ save He who is elected of God. The election of Jesus of Nazareth to this office was publicly announced by God when there came a voice out of the cloud saying:

**This is My beloved Son: hear Him. Luke 9:35.**

When He hung upon the cross the rulers of the Jews were anxious to make it appear that His suffering there demonstrated that He was rejected by God, not elected by Him. They were quite willing to reject the obvious *truth* that according to the prophets these sufferings were a *proof* of His election by God to be the Christ, the one who will bring into fulfillment every promise of Messianic times. As Peter declared in his second message after Pentecost:

**But those things which God before had announced by the mouth of all His prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled. Acts 3: 18.**

And in Thessalonica, Paul divided his message into two parts: Firstly, opening up and placing before them that the Christ must suffer and rise from among the dead; and, secondly, that this Jesus whom he was proclaiming unto them is the Christ (Acts 17:3).

Thus while the rulers in Israel refused to believe that Jesus was the Christ because He suffered at the hands of men, Paul and Peter knew from the words of the prophetic scripture that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer. No false ideas stood in the way

of their acceptance of a suffering Messiah.

### **A Widespread Conviction**

From the facts set forth in the four Gospels it is seen that the expectation that one would appear who would be God's Christ was a conviction held by all classes in Israel. There is no record that anyone questioned this idea. Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, priests, rulers, people, sinners and saints all held firmly to this hope. Even the Samaritans held this belief, and there is evidence to indicate it was held by men of other nations. And without exception they believed that the Messiah was to be an individual, not the Jewish nation or people as many Jews now insist. This is seen in Herod's question and in the Sanhedrin's answer as recorded in Matthew 2 :4-6.

Among all classes in Israel, the Messiah, or to say it in Greek form, the Christ, was to be one designated and appointed by God to bring into fulfillment every glorious promise made in the Scriptures. In this they were in full harmony with the truth of God as set forth from Genesis to Malachi.

### **Fulfiller of the Promises**

The careful student of the Old Testament soon becomes familiar with the marvelous promises that are made there, and he realizes quickly that these have to do with the one, great, central idea that flows all the way through - the expectation of Messiah-King who would bear rule over a world of men that He himself has converted to God.

As the pages of the Old Testament are turned, one reads of a time to come when the entire flow of satanic evil will be overwhelmed by a greater flow of righteousness from one who is the seed of the woman, even Christ (Gen. 3: 15). He goes on to read of a time when all the ends of the earth will remember and be turned to the Lord (Psa. 22 :27); when all the earth will fear the Lord and all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him (Psa. 33:8); when the meek will inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11 :9); when God's judgments will be in the earth and the inhabitants of the earth will learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9); when the eyes of the blind, will be opened and the ears of 'the deaf' be unstopped; when the lame will leap as a hart and the tongue of the dumb sing (Isa. 35 :5, 6); when the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all flesh will see it together (Isa. 40: 5 ); when God will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, put His law in their inward parts and write it upon their hearts (Jer. 31: 27, 33); when God will fulfill His great promise to Israel to seek them out, bring them out from all peoples and all countries and bring them to their own land, and to set one shepherd over them, even David (Eze. 34:11-24); when out of Bethlehem will

come One to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting (Micah 5 :2); when the Lord will be king over all the earth (Zech. 14:9).

These are but a part of the marvelous promises that God made through the prophets of Israel. These promises embrace all nations, they promise special and' unique blessings for Israel, they concern the earth, they promise salvation for the world, for the nations, for Israel, and for the individual. And yet all the way through them is found the strain that *every* one of these promises will be fulfilled by one designated by God. This one was to be the Christ, yes, God's Christ, even the Messiah. It would be through Him that divine government is to be established, not only in Israel, but over *every* nation, even the entire earth. This is all summed up in Isaiah's great prophecy, concerning Messiah, the King.

**For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Isa. 9: 6, 7.**

In this passage the word "name" stands for character, and the statement "His name shall be called" means "His character shall be described as being." A man's name is what others can say of him that is true, or the things he can say of himself. A false name (reputation) is related to false claims. Here we see a combination and blending of the divine and human personality of the one who is to assume *every* responsibility in connection with the government of this world and those who live in it. He is the "child born" and He is also the "mighty God."

Thus it can be seen that when one believes that Jesus is the Christ he is believing that the one born in Bethlehem 2000 years ago is the one who will bring every divine promise into complete fulfillment. Not one prophecy of coming glory will ever be fulfilled apart from Him. All these promises are individualized in Him. He alone is the one who can bring Messianic times upon the earth.

There are some who think otherwise. Chief Rabbi Marcus Melchoir of Denmark recently declared: "Whether Messiah is a person or an assembly is of minor importance. I believe that Messianic times would come if the United Nations were made Messiah. "

These words indicate that this Rabbi believes that there must be a Messiah, and they reveal a longing for the "Messianic times" that are delineated in such great detail in the Old Testament. But they sound as if he had grown weary in this hope, and feels that the United Nations could be the Messiah if all people would accept it as such. This of course would mean that every nation must surrender its sovereignty and allow

the United Nations to become supreme over all the earth, to place their hope in this company of men and let it become Savior, Lord, and King.

Rabbi MeIchoir's remarks were made in an address to a student group in Oslo. He said that Hebrew theology never speaks about the Messiah as a person as much as about "the very conception" of a messiah. This is probably true of Hebrew theology but it is not true of the Old Testament. Melchoir added that he hoped to experience the Messianic age in his own lifetime.

We can sympathize with the Rabbi in this expectation. I too expect to experience the Messianic eon in my lifetime. This expectation is based upon my personal relationship to Jesus Christ. However, if the coming of these times upon the earth are delayed much longer I may spend some time in the state of death and enter into them by means of resurrection. For it was in direct reference to the beginning of the Messianic age that the Lord Jesus Christ said:

**I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall by no means be dying in respect to that eon. John 11: 25, 28.**

When the Lord said this to Martha, He added the question, "**Believest thou this?**" She exclaimed in answer: **Yea, Lord: I believe that thou are the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. John 11:27.**

In this she states the sum and substance of her faith, and she also states the sum and substance of all that the Bible reveals concerning God's Son. In the words "the Christ, the Son of God" she embraced and epitomized all that the Bible says concerning Him. None can improve upon her confession. It includes all that anyone can ever say about Jesus.

Martha was one disciple who accepted and confessed all that Jesus said about Himself. Even though some did not believe, ridiculing His claim that He was the Christ and charging Him with blasphemy for calling Himself "the Son of God", yet there were many who did believe. With the emphatic "I" (*ego*) Martha put her faith in direct contrast with the unbelief of the Jerusalem Jews, some of whom were in her house at that very moment (John 11 :45, 46). .

Other disciples did not hesitate to confess their belief that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Matthew reports that in answer to the question from Jesus, "**Whom say ye that I am?**" Peter speaking for the little band declared, "**Thou are the Christ the Son of the living God.**" **Matt. 16:16.**

These men followed Jesus and became learners at His feet because of their belief that He was the Christ, that is, that He was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. **"We have found the Messiah" said Andrew (John 1:41); "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" said Philip (John 1 :45); "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou are the King of Israel", declared Nathanael (John 1 :49).** This faith increased in strength during the three years they followed Him.

But an event took place which shook their faith to its very foundations. The One in whom they had believed was arrested, tried, and put to death. He had told them to expect this but they would not listen (Matt. 16:21, 22). His death seemed to bring an end to all their hopes - hopes that could not be resurrected apart from the resurrection of the one in whom they rested. This was too much for them to believe. We sense their sorrow and bitter disappointment when two of them met up with the resurrected Jesus and not knowing it was He, said:

**But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre: and when they found not His body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive. Luke 24:21-23.**

Thus they spoke, putting their entire story into words and stating their entire problem. This is what He had asked them to do, and now He presents a full solution of all their problems and perplexities.

**Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24:25-27.**

A. T. Robertson says: "Jesus found Himself in the Old Testament, a thing that some modern scholars do not seem able to do."

The resurrection of Jesus was something the Pharisees felt might take place (Matt. 27 :62-66). When it took place they needed quickly to explain it away (Matt. 28: 11-15) . But it became such an undeniable event, being fully attested to by "**many infallible proofs**" (Acts 1: 3), that the denials ceased and new arguments against Him arose. These persist even to the present time.

Today, intelligent Jews readily admit the historical facts concerning Jesus - that He was born, lived, taught, and died. They even admit that He was a great teacher, but they insist that it was impossible for Him to have been the Messiah (the Christ) inasmuch as 2000 years later He has not yet accomplished one thing that Messiah was supposed to do. They point to the fact that all the evil and malignant conditions that

afflicted the world at the time of His birth are still afflicting the world today. In view of these undeniable facts they ask, "How then could He be the Messiah (the Christ) promised in the Old Testament?"

Many ingenious ideas have been devised in Christendom to explain this apparent failure. Some Christians tell us that we completely misunderstand the prophecies of the Old Testament which speak of a divine government established upon the earth having political and physical aspects. They insist that the Bible speaks of a "spiritual kingdom", or the perfect reign of God in heaven, and that it is wrong to expect the literal fulfillment of any Old Testament promise.

There are others who will point to certain advances made in human progress as being things accomplished by Jesus Christ and then insist that we are seeing the advance of the kingdom of God upon the earth. They point to such mundane things as the establishment of the Israeli government in Palestine as being a fulfillment of the great prophecies of God. The total believer in the Word of God cannot go along with these ideas.

There are many who believe that the day is coming when God will take the reins of government into His hands and fulfill every promise in the Old Testament, but they insist that it requires a second coming of Christ to the earth in order for this to be accomplished. This is deceptively simple, and those who hold it rigidly fail to see what a mixture of blessing and wrath this would bring upon the earth. For if **when He comes He takes vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power"** (2 Thess. 1 :8, 9), then the overwhelming majority of mankind would be wiped out in a destruction akin to what would take place if all nuclear weapons were exploded at the same time. If the second coming of Christ takes place first, then all of God's wonderful promises to the world, to the nations and to Israel will never be fulfilled.

This writer takes second place to no man in believing that Jesus Christ will come again and be personally present upon this earth for a thousand years. Nevertheless, he just as firmly believes that Jesus Christ will remain in His present place seated at the right hand of God until His enemies have been made His footstool. This submission will be accomplished by a process of divine government (1 Cor.: 15 :25), and this government will be carried on from the great seat of government which is in heaven (Psa. 103:19).

### **God's Present Purpose**

The only idea that will stand the test of all Scripture is that our God is now accomplishing a purpose during which all His promises in regard to Messianic times are suspended and in abeyance. Nevertheless, what He is doing now is essential to the

accomplishing of His great purpose in that day when the government of God over all men will be established. Succinctly stated it can be said that **God's present purpose is to write into the history of mankind a complete record of the grace that is inherent in His character.** This is being done by means of a dispensation or administration of grace in which every act of God is one of love and favor to the undeserving. During this time all of His government or kingdom purposes are in abeyance.

This explains God's long toleration of evil. It explains the seeming failure of Jesus of Nazareth to bring into fulfillment all the promises that centered in the Christ. We live in a time when if God cannot act in grace He will not act at all. At present all His works are secret and untraceable. But the record of what He is now doing will someday be made available to selected men so that all the world can know He is indeed the God of every grace. In the kingdom of God mankind will be infinitely richer in the knowledge of God because of the record He is now writing. His demonstration of grace is taking place now. The understanding and appreciation of it belongs to the future.

### **The Day of Christ**

The phrase "Messianic times", which is often found in Christian and Jewish theology, expresses a Biblical truth. The New Testament name for these times is "the day of Christ" Even as Jesus said to the Jews:

**Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it. and was glad. John 8:58.**

This "day" that Abraham saw was a long period of time. It was the day of Messiah, the day of Christ, the day in which all families and nations upon the earth would be blessed.

Paul speaks of the Messianic times and relates these to the *epiphaneia* of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 6:14, 15). This word means a favorable intervention, and is definitely related to the assumption of divine sovereignty by Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 4: 1) in that day when He takes to Himself His great power and reigns. In the meantime we who now believe that Jesus is the Christ will live looking *for* that blessed expectation, the favorable intervention (*epiphaneia*) of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13). .

**The End SS02**