

The Messiah

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[0 : 0 0] All right, well next Sunday we are going to be starting a new series working through the Gospel of Luke. But before we get to that, I wanted to take a moment this Sunday to look back into the Old Testament Scriptures.

What did God say before Jesus came about the Messiah? What were some of the expectations that people might have had about the Messiah in Jesus' day if they were carefully listening to the Scriptures of the Old Testament?

The Old Testament Scriptures point to Jesus in countless ways. But for this morning, we're just going to be doing a little sampling of some of them, some of those passages, specifically the ones that talk about the coming of the Messiah.

We start here. What does the title Messiah even mean? The word Messiah comes from the Hebrew, Mashiach, and that word means anointed one.

To anoint someone was to pour oil over their head. And doing that signified that they were being set apart from other people for a special role.

[1 : 1 9] At God's command, Moses anointed his brother Aaron and Aaron's sons to serve as God's priests at the tabernacle just after God led Israel out of Egypt.

Pouring a special oil onto their heads was a visible and tangible symbol that God himself had chosen these men to serve in a particular unique way.

But anointing was also practiced in ancient times at the installation of a king. There's a reference to an anointing ceremony in the period of the judges after Israel had come to rest in the land of Canaan.

And this particular reference from Judges chapter 9 was not a good anointing. There were some men in Israel and they anointed a man named Abimelech and they crowned him as their king.

But Abimelech was a treacherous and murderous man. And God actively opposed him. This man governed Israel for about three years.

[2 : 2 6] And then he was killed. This was a case of some of the Israelites choosing a man for themselves. But he was definitely not God's choice for his people.

Though this is the first time in the Bible that we see this act of anointing, pouring out oil in connection with the selection of a king. Well, sometime after this in Israel's history came the prophet Samuel.

This is about 1000 BC. And God chose Samuel to speak on his behalf to the people of Israel from the time Samuel was a boy.

Maybe you know the story. You can read about it in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel. And there are several references in those books to the anointed one of God.

And none of these references have to do with the priests. They all have to do with a king. In fact, by the time we come to 1 Samuel, we see that the men serving as priests in Israel are corrupt.

- [3 : 37] They're doing all kinds of wicked things. And the eyes of the people in Israel have wandered away from God and away from his tabernacle. And they're looking instead at the gods of the nations around them.
- Nations, and they have rulers, and they have kings. God hints at what is soon to take place in those days through the prophetic prayer of Samuel's mom.
- Just after the birth of Samuel. We can read her prayer in 1 Samuel 2, verse 8. She's praying to the Lord and she says this.
- He, that's God, raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. He seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor.
- So who receives a throne of honor? The poor man that God raises up from the dust.
- [4 : 43] She continues on. He will guard the feet of his faithful servants. But the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness. It is not by strength that one prevails.
- Those who oppose the Lord will be broken. The Most High will thunder from heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth. She concludes her prayer with these words.
- He, that is, the Lord Most High, will give strength to his king. And he will exalt the horn of his anointed.
- The people of Israel, up until this point in the story, have been under the attack. They've been under the dominion of various kings of the surrounding nations for the past 400 years or so, since the death of Joshua.
- And by God's grace, he raised up champions for them. Men who led and judged the people of Israel and even some women. And some of these guys were regional.
- [5 : 49] All of them were temporary and short-lived. Abimelech might have been anointed and named king by those scoundrels who ran with him. But he wasn't much of a king.
- More and more, the people in those days wanted to have a great and powerful king of their own. Like they saw the other nations around them having.
- They wanted to be like the nations around them. Yet even as Samuel is born, Hannah, his mom, prays prophetically at the tabernacle.
- She says, For anyone with ears to hear, God was speaking through Hannah that day.
- He was promising that there was coming a king of God's choosing. A king whom God would anoint. For his people.
- [6 : 57] Well, just a little later on in the story, after Samuel has grown up a bit, God sends this man without a name, at least not in the scriptures, to Eli, the priest at the tabernacle.
- And these are his words to Eli. He says to Eli, this is God speaking through the man, I will raise up for myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in my heart and mind.
- I will firmly establish his priestly house and they will minister before my anointed one. Always.
- There was no king in these days. And yet God says, I'm going to deal with the corrupt priests. I'm going to replace the whole family of the priests that are currently in charge with a man who will be faithful and his sons.
- And they will serve before my anointed one. Again, God speaking of a man of his choosing who is coming. Well, as the story of Israel continues, in the days of Samuel, we see Israel's first king rise to power.
- [8 : 05] A man named Saul. And Saul is indeed anointed by God in the sense that God has Samuel, his prophet, go and pour oil over his head.
- But as the story goes on, we start to see that Saul is more of a king of the people's choosing than of God's. God allows him.

God puts his choice behind the choice of the people. But we start to see that this man is more of a reflection of the people, the kind of king that they are desiring in their faithlessness and not the kind of king that God has in mind for his people.

And so there comes this moment when after Saul disobeys and disregards God for the last time when God rejects Saul as king. And even though Saul continues to be on the throne of Israel and sit there as king, God begins to raise up the king of his choosing.

God sends the prophet Samuel to the little town of Bethlehem. And Samuel is there for the express purpose of anointing Israel's next king.

[9 : 20] But even Samuel is surprised. When he comes to the end of Jesse's sons, having considered all of them, some of them fine-looking men, and God says, Nope.

Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at.

People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. So none of them are the ones that I have chosen, says the Lord.

It's the last, the last son, the youngest son, the least son, the one who is left out in the fields to tend the sheep.

So Jesse sent for him, the youngest son, and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said to Samuel, Rise and anoint him.

[10 : 25] This is the one. So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers. And from that day on, the spirit of the Lord came powerfully on David.

Think back to the words of Hannah as she prayed when Samuel was just a little baby. He raises the poor from the dust, seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor.

There David was, sitting in the dust with the sheep, quite literally. And the rest of 1 and 2 Samuel, these books of the Bible, is the story of how God raised David up from the dust and seated him on the throne of Israel.

And so this is the backstory of this title, Messiah. Messiah. David was God's anointed one, God's Messiah in his day.

He was the chosen king of God and his kingdom became very great. From that time on, every time we read that title, anointed one or Messiah in the Old Testament, almost always it refers to David or to another kingly figure.

[11 : 44] There's a couple exceptions to that, maybe a chosen prophet or a special servant of the Lord here and there. But mostly, that word, anointed one, refers to some kind of king.

And that gets us thinking maybe, where did this whole idea even come from or start in the first place? Of God giving a king to his people.

We might think back to the Garden of Eden where God commanded Adam to subdue the earth and rule over every other living thing. We see there that God's intentions and plan for man were noble.

But we know the story. Adam disobeyed God and he plunged humanity into sin and rebellion. Later on, we see that God begins to build for himself a people as he makes great promises to a man named Abraham and his offspring.

Abraham is promised to become the father of nations. And at times, God subdues and humbles kings under Abraham. And yet, at the end of Abraham's life, he's still very much a shepherd and a nomad living amongst a settled people in Canaan.

[13 : 05] Well, Abraham fathers Isaac and Isaac fathers Jacob. And to Jacob, God gives the name Israel. Israel becomes the father of 12 sons.

And on his deathbed, Israel blesses his sons. By the Spirit of God, he speaks a blessing to each of them. And these were his words to Judah.

The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.

Amen. Could it be that some 800 years before David, that little boy in Bethlehem was even born, that little boy born in Judah, God was already planning something amazing.

a king who would rule over a great kingdom. And then 400 years after that, as Israel was first entering the promised land, God spoke through Balaam, who was not even an Israelite, about a coming king.

[14 : 21] Balaam said, I see him, but not now. I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob. Jacob, a scepter will rise out of Israel.

He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the people of Sheth. This was all part of God's plan long before any of it came to be, to give a king, for God to choose a king for his people.

And David was a fulfillment of all these prophecies that God gave. But then, God adds even more to the promise in David's day.

Not just of a king who will rule, David was that. Not just of a great kingdom, David had that, but he adds the promise of an enduring kingdom.

To David himself, God says this, he says, when your days are over and you go to be with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you.

[15 : 26] one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever.

I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him as I took it away from your predecessor. I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever.

His throne will be established forever. And so, even though we have a Messiah, an anointed one, David, God's saying, it's going to continue, it's going bigger than this.

There's a son of yours that's going to come, and he's going to rule as king forever over an enduring kingdom. I will be a father to him and establish his throne.

The immediate fulfillment of that word was Solomon, the son of David, and his kingdom was truly greater than his father's. Solomon expanded the kingdom by the wisdom that God gave him, but then after Solomon died, the kingdom of David and the kingdom of Solomon became fractured and divided, and it spiraled down.

[16 : 52] The kingdom of David and Solomon became as a memory of the good old days, that golden century to which we long to return. Nations and powers rose around Israel, empires rose up, in fact, God even says, he even takes the credit for raising them up and for using them to punish the people of Israel for their unfaithfulness to him.

The words of the prophets spoken through those days are difficult. They are heavy. God was very angry at how his people turned away from him to all manner of wickedness, and yet, because God is merciful and compassionate and faithful, he was not finished with Israel.

God did not intend to go back on his word. Even through the prophets in those dark days of the kings and through the time of the exile and even afterwards, through the prophets, God spoke again and again and again of a coming anointed one, a coming Messiah.

Listen to the words God spoke through the prophet Micah. This is like hundreds of years after David lived. Marshal your troops now, city of troops, for a siege is laid against us.

They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod. But you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

[18 : 48] Therefore, Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites.

He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

So there's another ruler coming, there's another king of God's choosing, and he's coming out of the little town of Bethlehem. He's a king whose very existence goes back to older times, to ancient times.

for the present, Micah says, Israel will be abandoned for a time. Punishment for sin will come, but then a woman will give birth to a son, and this son of hers will stand and shepherd his flock.

You think back to David, he was a shepherd. shepherd, he will shepherd his flock by the power of God, and his flock will live securely.

[20 : 09] Why? Because his greatness, the greatness of this son born to a woman in Bethlehem, his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

We're talking a global kingdom. Listen to the words God spoke long ago through the prophet Zechariah, again, centuries after David lived, still centuries before Jesus came.

Rejoice greatly, daughter Zion. Shout, daughter Jerusalem. See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly, and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war horses from Jerusalem and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations.

His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. So God's going to make the wars cease.

[21 : 18] He's going to bring lasting peace. He's going to do it through a king who will rule over all the earth and that king is the one who will come to you, Jerusalem, in a lowly manner, riding on a donkey.

Not a war horse, but a donkey. Consider the words that God spoke long ago through the prophet Isaiah. Again, centuries after David lived, still centuries before Jesus came, Isaiah said this, nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress.

In the past, he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future, he will honor Galilee of the nations by the way of the sea beyond the Jordan.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light on those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned.

You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy. They rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

[22 : 39] For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. Every warrior's boot used in battle, and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

For to us, a child is born. To us, a son is given. And the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, of the greatness of his government and peace.

There will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. So God's going to make the war cease, he says, so much so that the warrior will burn his old blood-stained uniform that he was saving in case he needed to go to war again sometime.

[23 : 59] The peace just keeps going. Don't need this anymore. Let's burn it. Why? The peace keeps going because to us, a child is born.

To us, a son is given. And he will rule. The government will be on his shoulders. He will take up the throne of David. He will establish it.

He will uphold it from that time on and forever. And it's going to be a kingdom of justice and righteousness, he says. No more government corruption.

And the light of this is going to peak over the horizon where? In Galilee. By the little path that goes along by the sea north of the Jordan River.

That's where it'll first break. Listen to the words God spoke long ago centuries after David lived, centuries before Jesus came.

[25 : 06] Also from the lips of Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 11. A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse. From his roots a branch will bear fruit.

The spirit of the Lord will rest on him. The spirit of wisdom and of understanding. The spirit of counsel and of might. The spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord.

And he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes or decide by what he hears with his ears.

But with righteousness he will judge the needy. With justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth.

With the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb.

[26 : 13] The leopard will lie down with the goat. The calf and the lion and the yearling together and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear.

Their young will lie down together and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra's den. The young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.

They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Do you hear this? God's going to bring a righteous and just ruler to power, one who will deal with the wicked, one who will bring a peace so deep to this earth that even the dumb animals can feel it.

Even the animals won't dare to harm each other or to harm a child because that's how full of the knowledge of the Lord they will be when this king comes and his presence fills the earth.

[27 : 23] There will be justice, true justice, even for the poor and the needy, the weak and the powerless.

No more bribes, no more corruption, and who will bring all this about? A branch which springs up from the stump of Jesse, the father of David, a man whom God himself will put his spirit upon.

Listen to the words God spoke long ago. Centuries after David lived and centuries before Jesus came, also words of Isaiah from Isaiah chapter 42.

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight. I will put my spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets. a bruised reed he will not break and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.

[28 : 38] In faithfulness he will bring forth justice. He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth.

In his teaching the islands will put their hope. hope. This is what God, the Lord says. God's going to bring something truly amazing about on this earth.

Not just justice for Israel but justice for the nations. And not some sick and twisted form of justice like that proclaimed by a wicked tyrant who simply exterminates everyone who disagrees with him and rules by terror.

but this servant of God will bring forth justice in faithfulness. He will be a ruler who deals gently with the weak and the hurting.

He will be the hope and light of the nations. This passage goes on. I the Lord have called you in righteousness.

[29 : 46] I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison, and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

He himself will be a covenant between God and man. He will be the hope and light of the nations. Who will he be?

He will be the servant of God's choosing. The one in whom God delights. The one upon whom God puts his spirit.

He will be one who opens the eyes of the blind. One more from the prophet Daniel.

Daniel had a great vision given to him by God. Again, this is centuries after David lived and this is centuries before Jesus came. What did Daniel see in this vision?

[31 : 00] In my vision at night, I looked and there before me was one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the ancient of days and was led into his presence.

He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power. All nations and peoples of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

So someone's going to have dominion over all the nations and peoples of every language. It's a dominion that will last forever. It's a kingdom that will never pass away or be destroyed.

And on the throne of this kingdom is someone who has been given authority by God. A sovereign of God's choosing.

Who is it that will rule and reign? It is a son of man whom God will give this to. A king of his choosing. A man of his choosing.

[32 : 10] I think we all know who that person is. But in the weeks and months ahead we're going to be working our way through Luke's account of all that happened with Jesus when he first came. We're going to hear it and see it from Luke's well-ordered account.

And we're going to see how Jesus really is. That one that was foretold. The Messiah that we've been waiting for. The one who came and fulfilled much of what was promised. And the one who will come again and fulfill the rest of what God has promised someday.

Can you imagine what it must have felt like in Israel for the faithful in Israel who had heard all these words of God spoken through the centuries? Can you feel the longing that they would have had for all of this to finally come true?

for God's chosen king, God's Messiah to come. And the years went by. Decades turned into centuries.

After the prophet Micah spoke were 400 years of silence. No word from God, no word from the prophets.

[33 : 23] But then finally as we'll hear next Sunday, God breaks the silence. let's pray. Father in heaven, only you can tell the future and then bring it about.

It's amazing when we look back over your story, how you were hinting at what you were going to do. You were telling of it thousands of years before it happened.

And that there's still more to come. We're in awe. We long for that kingdom that we read about, Lord. And we know that it will be your son on the throne.

I pray that we would all know that, that we would trust it with all our hearts, and that we would live in light of that. Give us strength.

Give us understanding. Give us wisdom. Bless us as we go from here today, Lord, into the world with the news of this king. In Jesus' name, amen.

[34 : 38] Amen.