

**JOHN 1:40-44****THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD 'CHRIST'**

Key : The text being expounded is in bold typeface, illustrative Scripture quotations are in italics, explanation of the text and of the supporting quotations are in normal typeface

**v40. “One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother”.** John the Baptist, preaching alongside the River Jordan, has revealed to two of His disciples the identity of the Lord. He is the One whom all Israel has been waiting for. John has made Jesus known to the two men, as he sees Jesus walking nearby. The two disciples have then followed Jesus, and have spent the day at the His lodgings, learning precious truths from His lips. One of the two is Andrew. His heart has been deeply moved as the Lord has expounded the Scriptures to him. Andrew now realises that He has been speaking to none other than the promised Messiah.

**v41. “He (Andrew) first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ”.** Having spoken to the Lord Andrew desires first of all to tell his brother, Simon. His discovery is too glorious to keep to himself. He identifies Jesus to Simon by the title ‘Christ’. Messiah is Hebrew, Christ is Greek, and they both mean, 'The Anointed One'. So Christ is the specific word used to identify Israel’s long awaited Deliverer. Therefore, the word itself must be of deep significance.

*“The angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).* Here we see that the angels identify the birth of the Lord to the shepherds by using the specific title of Christ, just as Andrew would one day do to Peter. So ‘Christ’ is a crucial word. The child born at Bethlehem is unique, because He is the Christ, the promised Anointed One. We need to explore the ramifications of this word. Firstly, it speaks of being anointed to kingship. The kings of Israel were appointed to their office by means of a ceremony comprising anointing with oil. This was an outward sign of receiving the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfil their office. Israel was awaiting the coming of a specific anointed king in the line of David. This awaited king was called THE Messiah, THE Anointed One. This is the identity of the child of Bethlehem. He is anointed with power, but what exactly is He anointed to do?

*“There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots : and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:1-2).* This is what the King whom Israel was expecting will be like. He will be anointed with the Holy Spirit, empowering Him to rule with all wisdom. He will be a descendant of Jesse, who was David's father, and will occupy David’s throne. That is why He will be born in Bethlehem, David’s ancestral city. So the Messiah is anointed to be King of the Jews.

*“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews?” (Matthew 2:1-2).*

*(The angel Gabriel to Mary), “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David : And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:32-33).* Here we learn that the word ‘Christ’ implies a form of kingship different from that of any earthly king. This king will reign for ever, and not just over the Jews.

*“And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:15-16).*

*“He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (1 Corinthians 15:25).* The whole world will have to acknowledge their subjection to this King.

**Point No. 1. The Messiah is anointed to reign for ever**

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18).* Our Lord, reading from Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth, applied this passage to Himself. As He began His public ministry, He declared Himself to be anointed by the Holy Spirit, empowering Him to preach a message of deliverance. This is what makes Him to be ‘the Christ’. All men are captive to sin and to Satan, having corrupt natures, and needing God’s mercy and forgiveness, but if they come to Christ in meekness and brokenheartedness, declaring to Him their need, He will deliver them.

*“Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin ... (but if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:34,36).*

*“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips” (Romans 3:10-13).* Man in his fallen state, with a corrupt heart and defying God, is not the sophisticated free-thinker he imagines himself to be, but he is rather a slave to the corruptions of his heart.

*“I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 7:23-25).* ‘The Christ’, then, is the great Deliverer from sin. He is anointed to release men from captivity to the power of sin over them.

**Point No. 2. The Messiah is anointed to deliver men from captivity to sin**

**v41. “We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ”.** Andrew realises that he has now found the One of whom the prophets spoke. Full of awe and wonder he goes to tell his brother Peter.

**v42. “And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone”.** Cephas is Aramaic and Peter is Greek, and both words mean a stone or rock. So the Lord gives Simon a new name, indicative of the rock-like character that he would come to assume. In a very real sense, everyone who meets Jesus Christ, repenting of sin and believing in him, receives a new name, for Christ causes such a one to be born anew, and to receive a new nature in the power of the Holy Spirit. The old corrupt heart is removed, and the believer is transformed from a lover of sin into a lover of holiness. Those who come to Christ, instead of being forsaken of God, are adopted as God’s own children, and receive a brand new status.

*“He that overcometh ... I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem ... and mine own new name” (Revelation 3:12).* So the Christ is anointed to make men new, giving to believers a new heart, a new citizenship and a new name.

*"If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17).*

*"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:5-7).* Man in his natural, fallen state needs to be made new, or else he is eternally lost.

**Point No. 3. The Christ is anointed to make men new**

**v43. "The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. v44. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter".** So 3 of those who would become apostles come from the fishing town called Bethsaida.

*"Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! ... it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgement, than for you" (Matthew 11:21-22).* So this hometown to 3 apostles would nevertheless prove to be a place of general unbelief and hard-heartedness. Peter, Andrew and Philip, then, were not typical of the town's population. We have here a demonstration of the principle that "many are called, but few are chosen". Those who follow Christ will not be in the majority. Only a few truly believed in him, when he was here on this earth. The Gospel, then, separates men from one another. To follow Christ means separation between believer and unbeliever, between sheep and goats. So the Christ is anointed to separate men into two distinct and diverse categories. Now this will surprise many. Surely Christ comes to bring men together? It is true that the Christian seeks to love his neighbour, and live peaceably with all, but the heart of fallen man is such that it is innately hostile to God and his commandments. Light and darkness cannot coexist. There is, then, inevitable division between and unbeliever

*(When Jesus was 40 days old), "Simeon ... said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also). (Luke 2:34-35).* Mary's own heart would one day be pierced with grief, as she would see her son crucified through the malice of men towards him. Indeed, within two years of his birth, she and Joseph would be fleeing to Egypt, because Herod sought Jesus's life.

*"This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel" (Luke 2:34).* Christ causes men either to rise or to fall, to be saved or to be eternally lost, to be exalted to heavenly glory or to be cast down to hell.

*"This child is set ... for a sign which shall be spoken against ... that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35).* By their attitude to Christ men reveal the true state of their hearts before God. Christ, then, creates division, between those who are in God's kingdom and those who are not, between those who are born again, and those who are still dead in their sins.

*"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34).* When the angels said to the shepherds, "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men", they spoke of peace between man and God, of God's good will to sinners; they did not mean union between nations and individuals, for men can be united in unbelief and wickedness. The Christ creates division between those who believe the truth, and those who do not.

**Point No. 4. The Christ is anointed to separate sheep from goats**

**v41. "... We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ".** Andrew had met the most significant Person who has ever walked upon this earth. He just had to tell others that he had met the Christ.

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD 'CHRIST'**

- 1. The Christ is anointed to reign for ever**
- 2. The Christ is anointed to deliver men from captivity**
- 3. The Christ is anointed to make men new**
- 4. The Christ is anointed to separate the sheep from the goats**