

## What Did Jesus Teach about His being the Messiah?

First, we need to consider the people to whom Jesus was teaching. First, they were mainly Jews who lived in Judea and Galilee the early part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD. As such they should have known from Daniel 9 (the prophecy of seventy weeks) that the Messiah was supposed to come in their generation.<sup>1</sup> Also, the people respected John the Baptist and they knew that he had said that the Messiah was come and that Jesus was that Messiah:

John 1:26 “I baptize with water,’ John replied, ‘but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.’”

John 1:32-36 “Then John gave this testimony: ‘I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.’ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God!’”

Furthermore Jesus Himself had indicated that He was fulfilling Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. We know He did it in Nazareth early in His ministry:

Luke 4:16-21 “He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’”

He also told the disciples of John the Baptist to report the works He was doing to reassure John that he hadn’t misinterpreted what he had seen at John’s baptism of Jesus:

Matthew 11:2-5 “When John heard in prison what Christ was doing,<sup>2</sup> he sent his disciples to ask

---

<sup>1</sup> Using that understanding several false Messiah’s had already come in that generation.

<sup>2</sup> The question here is: What was it that Jesus was doing that provoked this question from John the Baptist? Jesus had been teaching and performing miracles for nearly two years. Had his teaching changed? No. Had his miracles changed? No. What he was doing was sending out His disciples two by two to teach. Why would this have caused John to question? The answer is that John, like most of the Jewish world, and even Jesus’ own disciples did not understand that the Messiah would have two advents. Before He came as the King, he had to come as the Sacrifice.

him, ‘Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?’<sup>3</sup> Jesus replied, ‘Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk,<sup>4</sup> those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.’”<sup>5</sup>

Included in the thinking of the crowds were all the dozens of miracles that Jesus performed daily.

Besides that, there was still the lingering memory in some of the people of the message that the angels had delivered to all the shepherds outside of Bethlehem the night of Jesus’ birth.

So, in spite of the fact that before Jesus’ trial, He never flat out declared publicly that He was the Messiah and the Son of God, the crowds accepted His authority to teach. What He taught impressed them with His ability to understand passages in Scripture that most didn’t understand. This was apparent from the time of His youth:

Luke 2:45-47 “When they (*Joseph and Mary*) did not find him (*twelve year old Jesus*), they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.

Later, during His ministry, it was clear that how Jesus interpreted Scripture was different from how most of their teachers taught it.

Matthew 7:28-29 “When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.”<sup>6</sup>

---

*John could not understand why if Jesus, as the Messiah, was soon to be revealed in all His glory and power as the King, He was training his disciples to minister in times of hardship. If He was to soon be revealed as the King, that kind of ministry would be totally unnecessary. The Church today, certainly does not envision that kind of ministry during the Millennium.*

<sup>3</sup> *Remember, that although we can look back, after the fact, and see that the Cross was prophesied time and again in the Old Testament, it was not clear before the fact. That was God’s intention. That was why Satan unwittingly played a large part in bringing about the Cross and His own condemnation. He thought if He could prevent Jesus from becoming God’s King, He could thwart God’s plan (1 Corinthians 2:8 “None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”)*

<sup>4</sup> *Isaiah 35:5.*

<sup>5</sup> *See Isaiah 29:18, Isaiah 35:5-6, and Isaiah 61:1*

<sup>6</sup> *The Greek word translated by the NIV as “authority” is the Greek word ἐξουσία {eks-ü-sē’-ä} which is perhaps better understood as “power,” particularly as related to the power of words or ideas. This was because Jesus understood the Old Testament which their teachers did not. I believe that the phrase “and not as their teachers of the law” isn’t meant to contrast Jesus’*

In a private interview with Nicodemus Jesus had said this about the understanding of the teachers of Israel:

John 3:5-13 “Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water <sup>7</sup> and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’<sup>8</sup> The ~~wind~~ Spirit breathes wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony.<sup>9</sup> I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?

Jesus taught Grace, the teachers of Israel taught works. There has always been strong impulse in man to substitute their works and their thoughts for Gods’ works and thoughts. This was the temptation which Satan presented before Eve when he wanted her to eat of the forbidden tree, called “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” This is the account in Genesis:

Genesis 3:4-5 “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,<sup>10</sup> knowing good and evil.”

After the fall of Adam and Eve, the LORD had promised that He would send a redeemer who would open the way to fellowship with Him. That fellowship could only be claimed by faith in God and God’s promise. This was what Jesus was trying to make clear to His generation. The fact that Jesus Himself would be the vehicle of God’s Grace was only gradually revealed by His life, and finally revealed by His death and resurrection.

The fact that salvation by grace through faith in God’s coming redeemer had been made clear in the record of Abraham:

---

*power in teaching with that of the teachers of the law. I believe it is meant to contrast Jesus’ interpretation of the Law with theirs. He saw the Law as pointing to Grace. They saw the Law as demanding man’s works.*

<sup>7</sup> *The living water of John 4:10, John 7:37, Revelation 7:17, Zechariah 14:8, Jeremiah 17:13.*

<sup>8</sup> *1 Peter 1:23*

<sup>9</sup> *In this passage Jesus uses the first person plural “we” and “our.” Jesus never spoke of himself in the plural anyplace else in the scripture, and he didn’t here. He was speaking of the testimony of Himself and the Holy Spirit.*

<sup>10</sup> *How like the original sin of Satan was the temptation of man. **Isaiah 14:14** “I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”*

Genesis 15:6 “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”<sup>11</sup>

The Book of Job, which was written about the time of Abraham, also made it clear:

Job 19:25-26 “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.”

Psalms made it clear that what God desires is for us to trust in Him:

Psalms 33:20-21 “We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.”

Psalms 3:5-7 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.”

Psalms made it clear that the LORD Himself would be our redeemer:

Psalms 19:14 “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

Psalms 78:35 “They remembered that God was their Rock, that God Most High was their Redeemer.”

Isaiah 41:14 “Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you,” declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.”

Isaiah 43:14 “This is what the LORD says-- your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.”

Isaiah 44:6 “This is what the LORD says-- Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.”

Isaiah 47:4 Our Redeemer--the LORD Almighty is his name-- is the Holy One of Israel.

By the end of Jesus’ life His disciples had come to believe that He was qualified to be their redeemer, but they never understood how He would accomplish it.

Luke 24:20 “The High Priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we (*Jesus’ disciples*) had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.

---

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in James 2:23, Galatians 3:6, and Romans 4:3

They hadn't understood when Jesus had explained to them why He had to die.

John 16:7-11 "But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away.<sup>12</sup> Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.<sup>13</sup> When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;<sup>14</sup> in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer;<sup>15</sup> and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."<sup>16</sup>

The detailed content of what Jesus taught is covered in all of the various lessons and sermons that are recorded in the Gospels. All of the lessons recorded are condensed summaries of the actual lessons he taught. Although many of the lessons are only recorded once or twice, they were probably taught many times and in many places.

---

<sup>12</sup>There are at least two reasons for this. First, Jesus had to die to atone for our sin. Second, as wonderful as it must have been to walk with the incarnate Jesus Christ, the indwelling Holy Spirit will imbue them an understanding about what they had seen in Him so that they could walk according to that truth. They will all grow immensely in their faith after He is gone.

<sup>13</sup> It was after Jesus' ascension that the Spirit was given.

<sup>14</sup> All sins have been paid for except the sin of unbelief in Christ.

<sup>15</sup> The perfect righteousness of God had been truly on display for the first time in the life of Christ. After He is gone, the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ's righteousness in the hearts of men.

<sup>16</sup> After the death of Christ, the ultimate judgment of Satan and all who belong to his world is assured. That world will be fairly warned. This verse clearly implies that Jesus' death on the Cross figures into Satan's final judgment, and the angelic conflict which has raged from eternity past. It is clearly not just Satan's sin that condemned him (that occurred long since), but also the demonstration of God's grace and mercy on the cross.