

Fil-Am Community Church  
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He is the Messiah

John 20:31

Have you heard of Sun Myoon Moon? He was a Korean who founded the Unification Church. He came here to the US years ago and started preaching about his beliefs and that's when he became well-known. His family converted to Christianity when he was young but in 1954, when he was 34, he founded the Unification Church which was based on conservative, family-oriented teachings from new interpretations of the Bible. Moon believed that Jesus was divine but not God. He believed too that Jesus role was to marry in order to create a pure family that would have begun humanity's liberation from its sinful condition. When Jesus was crucified before marrying, he redeemed mankind spiritually but not physically. That task was left to Moon, who married his second wife Han, in 1960. He said that he was the modern-day Messiah who God assigned to save the world.

How about Apollo Quiboloy? He is the Executive Pastor and Founder of a Philippine religious sect called The Kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Name Above Every Name. He was a Pentecostal who later claimed he had visions of God who he said appointed him as the Son of God and Messiah. He has a large following in southern Philippines and has amassed great wealth.

Many claim to be the Messiah today. But taken in light of Scripture, are they really what they claim to be? Jesus says *“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”*

Mark 13:22

As we continue our series on who Jesus is, one of the ones that seems to be most identified in today's culture is this title, "Messiah." Why not? People are looking for someone who will deliver them.

People are tired of what's going on in the world – the wars, the natural disasters, economic uncertainty, and what-have-you. And so, people are asking – "Who will save us? Where is the Messiah?" Even Jews are still waiting for the Messiah. If only people knew that the Messiah has already arrived in the person of Jesus.

But what does it mean to say Jesus is the Messiah? And what makes Him different than others, like Sun Myung Moon or Apollo Quiboloy, who have made that claim?

In John 20:31, this is what we read. Let's read together, "*But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*" (NIV) Other versions say "Jesus is the Christ" instead of "Jesus is the Messiah". What's the difference? No difference except for spelling. Messiah and Christ means the same thing – "Anointed one." Christ is the English equivalent of the Hebrew for Messiah. Thus, Christ is not the last name of Jesus. When I was small, I thought that was so.

This anointed one – this Messiah/Christ – was the description the Jews used to sum up the prophecies in the Old Testament that declared God was sending "somebody". And that somebody was going to fix everything that was wrong in Israel. And so, the Messiah was someone anointed by God to do a special task.

In Jeremiah 23:5, for example, there's a prophecy: "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land."

In Isaiah 11:2-5, there's another one: "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 power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the 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.

And then, in Micah 5:4-5a God declares, “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. And he will be their peace.”

So, the coming Messiah was going to fix everything for God’s people, because: 1. He would reign wisely; 2. He would be righteous; 3. He would help the needy and poor; 4. He would shepherd the flock; 5. and He would give God’s people security and peace.

The problem was, the Jews had taken to seeing this coming Messiah to be kind of like Rambo and armed to the teeth with a whole lot of military hardware. And after having spent decades under the iron fist of Rome they weren’t looking for peace... they were itching for war.

By the time of Jesus – the anticipation of a coming warlord type of Messiah had reached a fever pitch. In their minds, if the real Christ/Messiah would just stand up – Israel could throw off the chains of the hated Romans. And thus, false Messiahs began to pop up all over the place.

There was Hezekiah, the “brigand”, that was executed by Herod; then there was his son Judas the Galilean; and then Judas’ brother Menahem; then there was

the prophet Theudas; And after him an Egyptian Jew who was put to death by the procurator Felix.

Then there was another Jew who led his followers out into the wilderness at the time of Festus, and last, but not least, Simon bar Kochba whose revolt was quelled in A.D. 135.

All these SUPPOSED Messiahs led their followers to senseless deaths. And why? Because they weren't real Messiahs. They hadn't been sent by God. And they hadn't come to fulfill God's true purpose for His Messiah. In fact, though these false Messiahs may have had legitimate reasons for fighting against Rome, whatever success they would have had would have paled compared to what Jesus offered. These men only came to be warlords or military leaders. Jesus came to be far more than that.

As I said, Messiah or Christ means "Anointed One". And Anointing was a special honor that God gave only to three kinds of people in the Old Testament: Prophets; Kings; and Priests

The anointing of the men in these offices indicated that God was "recognizing" them as those who represented Him before His people.

This ultimate Messiah – this final "anointed one" – was to represent all three offices:

First, as Messiah,

1. Jesus came to be our prophet. This had been predicted by Moses back in Deuteronomy 18:15 where he said of the Messiah: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him."

When Jesus fed the 5000 with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread, people made the connection. In John 6:14-15 we're told: "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, 'This is of a truth that prophet that should come into

the world.’ When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.”

And in Acts 3:19-23 Peter preached to the crowd that gathered after he healed the cripple at the Temple and he explained that Jesus was the prophet Moses had spoken of: *“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you— even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.’ (Acts 3:19-23)*

Now – a prophet was a man who called God’s people to holiness and purity in their lives. That’s why, when Peter introduced Jesus as the prophet mentioned by Moses, Peter begins his message by calling the people to “REPENT!”

Jesus as Messiah is our prophet. He calls us to “repent” – to change, to live our lives in more purity and holiness. But not everyone is comfortable with that.

Some time back I read about a preacher who condemned several TV shows by name from the pulpit... one of which was “Two and a Half Men”. The preacher essentially said that no Christian that loved Jesus would ever watch such shows.

Later that week, he happened to be in the basement of the church building as a ladies Bible study was going on. And he just happened to be listening in as one of the woman huffed.

“That preacher thinks he can tell me what shows to watch! Well, I never! I’m just as good a Christian as he is and if I want to watch “Two and a Half Men” I do just that!”

Now outside of the fact that the preacher was right... and she was sinfully wrong... her attitude toward the preacher really reflects her attitude toward Christ. She only wanted holiness or purity in her life when she felt it to be “reasonable.”

If she didn't think it was reasonable – neither a preacher nor any minister - nor even Christ Himself would be able to convince her that HER standards were not the right standards.

Her attitude reminds me of the story of the young preacher who believed a false doctrine. Another preacher confronted him with Scripture that proved it was false doctrine, the young man responded: "I don't know what that verse means, but it doesn't mean what it says!"

When people get to that point in their “religion” – where they stop listening to Jesus as prophet, who demands holiness and purity in life, and instead wants Jesus only to meet their needs, then they put Jesus in a box. They take him out when they need and put him back in when they don't. These people want Jesus around... they just don't want to LISTEN to Him.

But the Bible says we need to listen to Jesus. When Peter, James and John were up on the Mt. of Transfiguration, a bright cloud surrounded them “and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” Matthew 17:5

So, first Jesus came as Messiah to be our Prophet – to call us to purity and holiness. Secondly – as Messiah

2. Jesus came to be our King.

This ramps up our relationship to Jesus a few notches. When you and I became Christians we pledged our loyalty and lives and possessions to our King. We called Him Lord and Master. You and I gave Jesus full authority over our – not just our TV viewing, but also our books, our homes, our Families.... Whatever!

Now you can do that with confidence with Jesus. Because He's the Messiah. He's not going to hurt you... but you wouldn't want to give that kind of authority to just ANY King.

One of the problems with the kind of Messiah the Jews of that day were looking for was that they saw such a ruler as a mortal man. Mortal men have one inherent flaw... they all ultimately die. And as benevolent as their dictatorships may be, eventually they are going to be replaced by leaders who aren't as interested in the common good anymore.

I read about a man who said – “The most effective form of government is a benevolent dictatorship... and I am willing to volunteer for the job.” In reality, very few dictatorships are truly benevolent.

Just Consider The Rulers Of Jesus' Day:

\* 1st there was Augustus, the emperor in Rome when Jesus was born. He was the first Roman Emperor and was known to have taught his people that he was a god/ a deity.

\* He was followed by Tiberius: the Roman Emperor during Jesus' ministry. He was influenced by a bad advisor and he put to death many of his rivals.

\* Herod the Great: Was the merciless ruler in Israel. He led Israel in some impressive building projects, but he wasn't a safe man to be around. He was insanely jealous of his position and had his sons murdered because he saw them as being threats to his throne. And of course he had the babies in Bethlehem slaughtered because he'd learned of the potential king that had been born there. Rome regarded Herod as too powerful, so when he died, his kingdom was divided up among his three sons. One was immoral (Herod Antipas who had John the Baptist beheaded). The second, Archelaus, was insane (Archelaus). And the third, Philip, was incompetent.

Now notice the contrast between THOSE kinds of Kings... and Jesus:

- \* Those Kings were born in palace, Jesus was born in a stable
- \* Those kings were outrageously wealthy, Jesus was born in poverty and never had many possessions
- \* Those Kings thought themselves gods, Jesus was God
- \* Those Kings put their rivals to death out of fear, Jesus allowed Himself to be put to death for others out of love
- \* Those Kings listened to bad advisors, Jesus listened to His heavenly Father
- \* Those Kings were suspicious, Jesus was forgiving
- \* Those Kings built buildings, Jesus built disciples
- \* Those Kings abused power for themselves, Jesus used power for others
- \* Those Kings abused people, Jesus healed people
- \* Those Kings...well, their kingdoms no longer exist, But Jesus Kingdom will last forever

As you can see – Jesus was far superior to the rulers of His day. In fact, He’s far superior to the rulers of our day. One of the fallacies of our society is to believe that if we can just get the right man or woman into office – that will solve all our problems. There are Christians who believe that the right politics will ultimately save our nation.

But the sad truth is – all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

And the ONLY ruler you’ll ever be able to totally count on is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Jesus didn’t come as our Messiah just to rule and reign over us. He didn’t come to abuse us or take advantage of us. He came to guide, protect and lead us in triumph. He came to be a servant King, who would change lives for the better... for eternity.

So, as Messiah, Jesus came to be our Prophet and our King. These are two significant roles of Messiah that Jesus fulfilled when he was on earth. One last role that Jesus fulfilled as Messiah is the third point of this message.

### 3. Jesus came to be our High Priest.

In the OT - High Priests had one principal responsibility. They had to offer a sacrifice once a year for the sins the people had committed. If the High Priest ever failed to do this sacrifice, the people's sins would NOT be forgiven. They would die in their sins. They would die without hope. They would die without God's forgiveness.

But there was a problem with the sacrifices THOSE High Priests offered up. Hebrews 10 tells us "...it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." Hebrews 10:4

The bulls and goats hadn't done anything wrong. It wasn't their fault these people had sinned. And they hadn't volunteered to be sacrificed for ANYBODY. But God used the imperfect nature of those sacrifices to point FORWARD to a greater sacrifice. A sacrifice that would take care of sins for all time. A sacrifice whose blood was so pure and holy that it could heal our sinfulness, remove our guilt and shame and allow us to live in the joy of God's presence... rather than in the fear of our past.

That was what Jesus accomplished in becoming our High Priest. He not only offered up the perfect sacrifice. He WAS the perfect sacrifice.

I'm going to stop at this point because I'd like to talk about this some more at length and we don't have the time to do that. In fact, this is a lead-up to the next part of our message series. Next week, I'd like to talk about Jesus as our High Priest.