

Previously, we studied Jesus' identity as the Christ, or the Messiah. The titles 'Christ' and 'Messiah' both mean Anointed one. Anointing refers to pouring oil on someone or something, signifying that God has put his Spirit on them to perform a specific task. In the Old Testament, the tabernacle and the priests were anointed, but the most prominent figures who were anointed were the kings. Eventually, the Anointed one came to refer to the king in the line of David. Understanding God's promises to David and his royal descendants is crucial to understanding what it means for Jesus to be called the Messiah.

Being the Christ is one of the most central aspects of Jesus' identity, with both the Old and New Testaments stressing this truth repeatedly. Look at Mark 10:46-52, which speaks of a time when a blind man recognized Jesus as the Christ: **"And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way."** In this account, Jesus is travelling with a large crowd to Jerusalem from Jericho, and along the way, he heals blind and believing Bartimaeus. Notice what Bartimaeus calls him, "Son of David." Was not Jesus the son of Mary and the adopted son of Joseph? Where does king David fit in? In past times, as we see in the Bible, someone could be called the son of a past, prominent ancestor who was not the direct father. So, Bartimaeus is confessing that Jesus is the descendant of the greatest king of all Israel, David the son of Jesse.

Fairy tales and history books tell us that it is important for a king to have a rightful claim to the throne. The prince or princess must have proof that he or she is directly related to royalty. The same is true in the Bible for the king of Israel. Only those who were descended from David could rule as the king of Israel. So in saying Jesus is the Son of David, Bartimaeus is saying that Jesus has a right to rule over the nations.

In 2 Samuel 7:1-17, The LORD sets David and his offspring apart to be the only legitimate rulers who could sit on the throne in Jerusalem. In this passage—which you should read—David wants to build a house, or a temple, for God. However, God responds, saying that he is going to build a house, or a household, for David. The LORD says that he will make David famous and will establish his kingdom forever. God promised that he would always be faithful to David's sons, but if they disobeyed him, then they would be punished. This promise to David, known as the LORD's covenant with David, becomes very important throughout the rest of the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms and Prophets.

After David died, many of the kings that ruled after him were evil and led the rest of Israel into sin. The LORD sent them prophets who told them to repent and warned them of God's anger, but they persisted in their ways. Eventually, God punished them by sending the Assyrians and Babylonians to conquer them and take them as their slaves. At this time, Israel's hope seemed to be gone. They had no king from David's line, no land, and no temple; they were exiles. Would God ever pity them again? Would he be faithful to his promises to David about establishing his kingdom forever?

Ezekiel prophesied to these exiles that God indeed is faithful and was going to restore the nation. He said, **“My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd...I will set them in their land...and I will be their God, and they shall be my people”** (Ezekiel 37:24-27). The LORD promised that he would bring them back to the land and set up a king from the line of David. When this king—this Anointed one—would come, all would be restored: they would be purified and obedient before the LORD.

At the time of Jesus, there was no king from the line of David ruling. The Jewish people longed for the Messiah to come and reign on David's throne. So, when Jesus, who is a descendant of David, begins to perform miracles and teach astonishing things, many people recognized him as the Son of David, the rightful king. This largely what is meant by being called the Messiah: He is the savior from the line of David, anointed to be king forever.

Since you are not a Jew, you may have a hard time feeling really excited about this stuff. But the wonder of the New Testament is that even the Gentiles (non-Jews) can be included into this kingdom. You and I can be a part of this kingdom ruled by God's chosen king, the Lord Jesus Christ. We can be welcomed into this kingdom where justice and kindness is abundant, where God dwells, and where people can be purified of their sins. Jesus has offered himself as

the sacrifice for our sins, that we might be washed and purified of our crimes and evil deeds. He freely gives his Spirit to dwell in those who have faith in him, so that they can have sweet fellowship with God and power over temptation. By submitting yourself to this King, you will be included on the good side in this greatest story ever told, having your name written in the Book of Life. However, if we refuse him, if we think that this kingdom is make-believe, if we think we do not need to enter into his kingdom, then we set ourselves as his enemies. And if we make ourselves enemies of the Son of David, then we will be defeated and cast into outer darkness forever, apart from the glory and rich kindness of God.

So, listen to Bartimaeus, and follow his example. Spring up from your sin and follow Jesus always.