

Jesus Christ Is Truly The Messiah Who Would Come.

Text: Matt 11:2-10

Suggested Hymns:

13, 12, 18, 848, 9

- 1) Because His Person Exactly Answers To The Description Of The Promised Messiah
- 2) Because His Deeds Exactly Correspond To The Deeds That The Messiah Was To Perform
- 3) Because He Was Preceded By The Fore-Runner Who Was To Go Before The Messiah.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Matthew 11:2–10, ² *And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples ³ and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”*

⁴ *Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ⁵ The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”*

⁷ *As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses.*

⁹ *But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ For this is he of whom it is written: ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.’ (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

“Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”

That is the question which John the Baptist has two of his disciples ask Christ. The purpose of this question was to ascertain whether Jesus was the promised Messiah.

But why did John the Baptist have his disciples ask Jesus that question? Did he himself doubt whether Jesus is the Messiah?

Many commentators offer this explanation. They say, When John the Baptist was brooding in his gloomy prison cell, when he found that his earthly life was drawing to a close, when Jesus did not come to his rescue, his faith was shaken, he began to doubt whether he had not made the greatest mistake of his life when at the river Jordan he testified that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah and pointed at Him with his finger, saying, ***“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”***¹

But it is hardly credible that God’s appointed fore-runner of the Messiah would so utterly fail in his mission as to doubt the truth of what God Himself had told him to say.

And does not Christ say in our gospel that John the Baptist is not a reed shaken with the wind? What does that mean but that he is not a man given to doubts and wavering opinions?

We therefore accept Luther’s explanation. Luther says, *“It is certain that John has Christ asked for the sake of his disciples.”* Not because he himself doubted, but because his disciples doubted, so John put this question to Christ.

This explanation also conforms to what we are told of John’s disciples in the third chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. There they are reported as coming to John the Baptist and saying, ***“Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified — behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!”***² They did not seem to like it that all the people went to Jesus. They had heard John bearing witness of Jesus, but as yet did not have the confidence in Jesus which they should have had.

To this day there are people who either do not at all believe in Christ Jesus as the promised Messiah, or doubt whether Jesus is He who would come.

The first class, who openly reject Christ, are the Jews and unbelievers. The Jews are to this day expecting the promised Messiah to come, and the unbelievers discredit the clearest Bible statements concerning Christ.

The second class, those who doubt whether Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah, are such as claim to be Christians, but are not made divinely certain in the faith. They do not openly reject Christ as do the Jews and unbelievers.

They hear the Gospel like the disciples of John the Baptist. But they are as the reed shaken with the wind. When any supposed arguments and proofs against the Gospel are placed before them, their faith is shocked and they begin to doubt.

Let us consider with help of God's Holy Spirit that *Jesus Christ Is Truly The Messiah Who Would Come*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Jesus Christ Is Truly The Messiah Because His Person Exactly Answers To The Description Of The Promised Messiah

What was Jesus' answer when John's disciples had asked Him, "*Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?*" Does He say, 'No, I am not He, John the Baptist ought not to have sent you to Me?' No! He silently admits that He is the promised Messiah and says to these two men, "*Go and tell John the things which you hear and see.*"

Jesus Christ is truly the Messiah, who would come, and that is attested, in the first place, by the fact that His person exactly answers to the description of the promised Messiah.

In the Old Testament God has given a full description of the Messiah's person, and so perfectly that description corresponds with Jesus' person, that nobody can look for another, if he sincerely accepts and believes the clear words of Scripture.

In the Old Testament God has so perfectly portrayed the Messiah that everybody should have known Him when He came. In the Old Testament God stated the time when the Messiah would come, the place where He would be born, and the family and people from whom He was to descend. And who is it that answers to this description exactly, in every detail? Nobody in this world except Jesus Christ.

As to the time when the Messiah was to come, had not Jacob, the patriarch, spoken the prophecy, "*The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes?*"³

And had not the sceptre departed from Judah, had not the Jews ceased to be an independent people, had not the Romans conquered and subdued them and made of Judea a Roman province when Jesus came?

Furthermore, Daniel had given the prophecy in Daniel 9:24, ²⁴ ***“Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.***

And what is Daniel saying? As the context shows, he is saying that in seventy weeks, not of days, but of years, that is, in 490 years, counting from the rebuilding of the temple after the Babylonian captivity, the Holy One in Israel, the Messiah, would appear.

And what do we read in the books of history? How long after the reconstruction of the temple was it when Jesus came? It was about 490 years, as everybody can ascertain for himself.

And as to the place where the Messiah was to be born, had not Micah prophesied in Micah 5:2, ² ***“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting?”***

And was not Jesus born in Bethlehem? But there were two villages called Bethlehem. One was in the land occupied by the tribe of Zebulun and the other in Judah. Now, that there might not be a mistake, the prophet points out Bethlehem in the land of Judah; and was not Jesus born in that Bethlehem?

And, finally, as to the family and people from whom the Messiah was to descend, had not the prophets announced that the Messiah would descend from king David? Did not Isaiah, for instance, say in Isaiah 11:1, ¹ ***There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him?”***

Now, Jesse was king David's father. And did not Jesus Christ descend from the house and lineage of David? But at the time of Christ there were many others that descended from king David, and to avoid mistakes God added another prophecy to point out the very person among those descendants.

He had His prophet Isaiah exclaim in Isaiah 7:14, ¹⁴ ***Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,***

and shall call His name Immanuel. And do not the holy evangelists inform us that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary? And since He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, is He not Immanuel, that is, God and Man in one person?

We see, Christ's person exactly answers to the description of the promised Messiah. He is the Messiah, and none other.

2. Jesus Christ Is Truly The Messiah Because His Deeds Exactly Correspond To The Deeds That The Messiah Was To Perform

The second reason upon which we base our faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah who is to come, is, because His deeds exactly correspond to the deeds which the Messiah was to perform.

What deeds was the Messiah to perform according to the prophecies of the Old Testament?

In the first place, He was to perform the greatest miracles which the earth had ever seen. In the thirty-fifth chapter of his prophecies Isaiah says of the Messiah and of His time, ⁵ *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.* ⁶ *Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing.*⁴

Jesus refers to this very prophecy when He gives answer to John's disciples, saying, ⁵ *The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up.* Jesus is saying, How can you doubt whether I am He that would come? Do you not see that I am performing exactly those deeds which the Messiah is to perform?

And to this day Christians can challenge the world to show them a man in the entire history of the world who so perfectly came up to all the requirements of the promised Messiah as did Jesus of Nazareth. Let unbelievers search the books of history and point out a man who did the miracles that Christ performed. It is folly to dispute those miracles.

They are recorded not only in the New Testament; an account of some of these miracles is to be found even in the contemporary writings of the enemies of Christianity.

But no other man did the world produce who in his own name and by his own authority healed thousands of the sick by means of his simple word and will, opened the eyes of the blind, restored to the deaf the power of hearing, gave to the dumb the power of speech, and to the lame the use of their limbs, and even called back into the land of the living those that were entombed.

The four Gospels of the New Testament are almost one continual narrative of divine miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, and, as St. John informs us in John 20:31, *³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

According to the prophecies of the Old Testament the Messiah was to perform another great work. He was to proclaim the Gospel, the glad tidings of the forgiveness of sins.

In Isaiah, chapter 61, we read, the Messiah Himself being the speaker, *¹ "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound."*⁵

Christ refers to this passage of the Old Testament when He adds *and the poor have the gospel preached to them.* Christ is saying, *Do you not hear that I am preaching the Gospel, the glad tidings, which the Messiah is to proclaim?*

And if we examine the records of the New Testament, we find that Jesus was almost constantly surrounded by the meek, and the brokenhearted, and distressed, proclaiming to them the Gospel, speaking words of eternal life.

And did not Christ Himself perform the great work of the redemption which the Messiah was to perform and upon which He was to base His proclamation of liberty to the captives?

Read the 22d Psalm and the 53d chapter of Isaiah, where the Messiah's suffering, death and resurrection are described, and compare the history of Jesus' holy passion! See how these prophecies in their minutest details were fulfilled in Christ Jesus! Nothing is missing. Jesus' deeds exactly correspond to the deeds which the Messiah was to perform.

Christ therefore says, “*⁶ And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.*” Blessed is the person who is not offended in Christ’s lowliness and humiliation!

Blessed is the person who receives Christ as the promised Messiah who would come, as the heavenly Prophet who proclaimed to us lost and condemned sinners the Gospel, as the great High-priest who upon the altar of the cross brought the great sacrifice of His life for our sins, as the King of kings and Lord of lords!

3. Jesus Christ Is Truly The Messiah Because He Was Preceded By The Fore-Runner Who Was To Go Before The Messiah.

The third reason upon which we base our faith in Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah is, because He was preceded by the same fore-runner who was to go before the Messiah.

God had arranged that a fore-runner would precede the Messiah, a man who would prepare for Him the way, call attention to Him, and point Him out to the people as the promised Messiah.

Isaiah speaks of that fore-runner when he says in Isaiah 40:3, *³ The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God.”*

And Malachi, the last of the prophets, alludes to that fore-runner, saying in Malachi 3:1, *¹ “Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” Says the LORD of hosts.*

And at the end of his prophecies the same prophet says, *⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.*⁶

Did not such a fore-runner as the one described by the prophets precede the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Who was that forerunner? It was John the Baptist.

We, therefore, read in our Gospel, *⁷ As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to*

see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

⁹ But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'

After the departure of those two disciples of John who had asked Him whether He was the promised Messiah, Jesus addresses the people concerning John and tells them, *You must not think that John no longer takes me for the Messiah. No; he is not a reed shaken with the wind. He does not revoke his testimony concerning me. Neither must you think that John would come out a changed man in speech and appearance were he to be pardoned by king Herod and leave the prison.*

No; he is not a man in soft clothing as worn by those who are in kings' houses. He remains the same preacher of repentance, clad in a robe of camel's hair. Nor must you think that John is but a common prophet. He is more than a prophet. He is the second Elijah promised to come. He is the man of whom the prophet wrote that he should prepare the way before me. He is the Messiah's fore-runner.

How, then, can anyone doubt whether Jesus Christ is really the promised Messiah? Did not the promised fore-runner go before Him? Did not John the Baptist precede Him in the spirit and power of Elijah and do exactly what the Messiah's fore-runner was to do?

Did he not prepare before Him the way, declaring, ²⁷ *It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose?*⁷ Did he not bear record that Jesus is the Son of God ?

Let all the Jews and unbelievers and all the enemies of Christ say what they may. Their arguments against Christ are unfounded. Jesus Christ is truly the Messiah who would come.

As we have seen, His person exactly answers to the description of the Messiah given in the Old Testament. His deeds exactly correspond to those

deeds which the Messiah was to perform, and He was preceded by the fore-runner who was to go before the Messiah.

Let us, therefore, lift up our heads in triumph and rejoice in our faith which is so well founded that even the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and sing praises to our beloved Saviour and King, in whom all the promises of God are, Yes and Amen, to the glory of our God. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ John 1:29

² John 3:26

³ Genesis 49:10

⁴ Isaiah 35:5-6

⁵ Isaiah 61:1

⁶ Malachi 4:5

⁷ John 1:27