

***Trinity – May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024***  
***THE PROMISED MESSIAH***

*Prayer*

Triune God, help us today to understand how each of your persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, worked together to both promise and fulfill your promise of a Messiah, an anointed one.

AMEN

*Trinity*

Having just completed the marathon that is the Athanasian Creed, I'm sure that all of you understand **completely** why we celebrate Trinity Sunday. In preparing for today, I looked at what I did last year and realized that both last year and even as far back as 2003, I focused on unpacking that creed – so I won't do that this year.

*Peter*

Instead, following my pattern of preaching on the Epistle texts for this church year, I'll look at the middle portion of Peter's Pentecost sermon. In fact, it turns out that it's the middle portion of ALL of Peter's sermons. It seems that he, like many preachers, had at least ONE good sermon. However, he had the luxury of being able to preach the same sermon

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over and over because he had a different set of hearers each time he gave it.

*Who was the Messiah?*

Not unlike the welcome that I give each Sunday, Peter's sermon focused on the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, who we recognize as the fulfillment of all of the prophecies in the Old Testament regarding a coming Messiah, an anointed one.

As Jesus explained to his disciples on the road to Emmaus, all scriptures point to Him. There are dozens of specific prophecies; here are just a few:

From the initial promise in Genesis (Gen 3:15):

*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*

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to the major prophets (Isaiah 11:1), such as Isaiah:

*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and  
a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.*

as well as the Psalms (Ps 16:10):

*For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy  
one see corruption*

and finally the minor prophets, (Zech 9:10) including Zechariah:

*I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from  
Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall  
speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea,  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.*

*When and Where was He Promised?*

What does scripture say about the time and place of the Messiah's coming? The short answer is **at exactly the right time and place**. As Paul says in Romans (Rom 5:6):

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*For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.*

And why did Jerusalem at that time fit that description? First, 300 years before Christ, because of Alexander the Great's conquest, Greek was the common language of the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond for almost 2,000 years, from about 300 BC to 1,500 AD. This widespread use of a common language, in which the New Testament was written, was one of the reasons for the rapid spread of Christianity. Second, because of the expansion of Roman rule, they built a system of roads in which Jerusalem was a key crossroads between Europe, Africa, and Asia. This transportation system was also a contributing factor to spread of the Gospel. This combination of circumstances is known as the Pax Romana.

Circling back to those prophecies, two specifics regarding time and place including (Micah 5:2):

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*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*

from Micah. From Hosea we hear (Hosea 11:1):

*When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.*

Referring both to the Exodus of the Jewish national as well as Jesus's return from exile in Egypt during His early years.

*Why Was a Messiah Necessary?*

Why did God promise an Messiah anyway? In verse 29(b), Peter emphasizes that David the King died many years ago and is still dead. And why did he die? Because sin entered the world due to Adam's transgression and along with it came the corresponding penalty, death. And the world hasn't changed much since then – as we confessed moments ago, we continue to sin in thought, word, and deed.

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Paul makes it clear that one of Jesus's roles is as a second Adam, the Messiah promised to undo the damage caused by Adam's original sin.

In his letter to the church at Corinth (1 Cor :15-45-49) he wrote:

*Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.*

*What Did the Messiah Do **For You?***

What Paul summarized in this letter to the Romans (Rom 4:25):

*[Jesus] was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

was preached by Peter as well (23b)

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*this Jesus . . . you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.*

Just so we don't forget, we are included among those lawless men, but despite our betrayal, Jesus has indeed forgiven you and I and paid the penalty for all of our sins.

Further, (31) as he quotes another of the Old Testament prophecies,

*[King David] foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.*

Because Christ is no longer dead, we too can have confidence that our death is merely a passage from this life to life eternal with Christ in heaven.

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Because it is Trinity Sunday, I'll finish by reiterating that the Messiah was promised by the Father, that the promise was fulfilled by Jesus His Son, and that the benefits of Christ's work are given to us through the work of the Holy Spirit through the means of grace – Baptism, God's Word, and the Lord's Supper. Let us give our Triune God thanks and praise for the boundless love that He has shown each of us.

AMEN