

TEXT: Mark 14:60-62

THEME: Jesus—The Christ

Dear Fellow-Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb:

In these Sundays of Lent our theme is “Jesus—Name Above Every Name.” Today, on trial before the high priest Caiaphas, our Lord claims another name. He is JESUS—THE CHRIST.

So, Jesus is his first name and Christ is his last name, right? Well, not exactly. Jesus is the very human name which the angel gave to our Lord before he was born. Jesus in the Greek language of the New Testament is the same as the name Joshua in the Hebrew language of the Old Testament. Jesus—or Joshua—means: *“The Lord is salvation.”* There were a lot of little boys named Jesus or Joshua in the land of Israel. But in the case of our Savior, this name had special significance, because Jesus IS the Lord who brings salvation. **“You are to give him the name Jesus,”** said the angel, **“for he will save his people from their sins,”** (Matthew 1:21).

But what about this name Christ? Today we hear it come up at the trial of Jesus before Caiaphas the high priest in Mark 14, **Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” “I am,”** said Jesus. **“And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”**

What is this name we so often use for our Savior—the Christ? *Christos* in the language of the New Testament means “the Anointed One.” The term in the Old Testament for the Anointed One is Messiah. Men were anointed, usually with a precious oil or ointment, when they were inducted into some special office, when they were commissioned for some special task by God. In the Old Testament, as our confirmation students learn, there were three offices which were entered into by this ceremony of anointing—Prophet, Priest, and King. In Sundays still to come, we will consider each one of these offices individually. Each one of these offices—Prophet, Priest, and King—foreshadowed the ultimate Prophet, Priest, and King—the ultimate Anointed One—the ultimate Messiah or Christ—our Savior Jesus.

So when we refer to our Savior as Jesus Christ, we are referring to the office he holds as our Prophet, Priest and King. When we call Jesus the Christ, we are professing that this Jesus of Nazareth is the Anointed One long foretold on the pages of the Old Testament, the Messiah God’s people were waiting for. Christ is not Jesus’ last name, but his title.

So why when he came did so many not receive him? Why, when he came, did they murder their own Messiah? Why does Caiaphas tear his priestly robes in sanctimonious horror? It was because he wasn’t what they had in mind. He wasn’t what they were hoping for. The Jews had long ignored the prophecies of a suffering servant who would humble himself and bear their sin. They felt they did not need and they did not want a Savior from sin. They wanted the Lord’s Anointed to be to them what Caesar was to the Romans. They wanted

the good old glory days of David back, an earthly kingdom. They wanted the Christ, the Messiah to be to them what they wanted him to be. Jesus would not be that. So they plotted to get rid of him.

But none of this changes the importance of the question and the importance of the answer in our text: “**Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?**” Answer: “**I am.**” What a shame, we say that they did not want Jesus as their Messiah, as their Christ. What a tragedy that they still look for some other Messiah to come to them. What a numbing judgment that there will be no other Messiah than the One they have rejected.

But those who gathered in the shadowy chambers of Caiaphas’ house were not the last to want some other Messiah, some other Christ, some other Anointed One, some other Man of the hour. Jesus Himself warned of false christs who would arise and deceive many. The Scriptures warn of the great Antichrist as it arose at Rome and of many antichrists—“anti ” not just in the sense of against Christ, but in the sense of “in place of” Christ. For every false christ tries to take Christ’s place in our lives.

We may think of false messiahs in recent times—the Rev. Moon and his unification church, David Koresh who called himself the lamb of God, Jim Jones whose mindless followers followed him all the way to the poison purple Kool-Aid in Guyana back in the 70’s, the Hare Krishna movement, scientology, new age philosophy, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Joseph Smith and the Mormons. All these are, or were, considered anointed ones, messiahs, christs—by their followers.

Some look for messiahs or christs in the entertainment world. How many groupies out there need to get a life instead of looking for Elvis at Burger King, instead of worshipping the memory of some dead movie star, instead of clinging to the latest tweet from some twit of an immoral rock, hip-hop, or TV star with a brain addled by drugs and booze?

It isn’t that people don’t want a messiah, a christ, an anointed one. The tragedy is that they are looking for the wrong kind of christ. They want someone or something else to be to their empty hearts and disappointing lives what only Jesus can be to them. The voice from heaven has made it clear: “**This is my Son whom I love, with him I am well pleased. Listen to HIM.**” (Matthew 17:5) There is no other christ, there is no other messiah and there is no other anointed one who can do for you what Jesus can do, who can be to you what only Jesus can be—your one and only Savior from sin and eternal death in hell, your one and only Savior who gives you life to the fullest here on earth and forever in heaven.

People sometimes spend their whole lives waiting for their ship to come in, for the messiah of some personal happiness to descend on them, for some paradise on earth to arise. All along, they have missed the coming of the One who will never disappoint them, the One who has already died to save them and give them life to the fullest—now and forever.

Early on in Jesus’ ministry, he sat down at Jacob’s well on a hot day and struck up a conversation with the town trollop, a woman who had gone through five husbands and didn’t bother getting married to the one she was with now. Jesus told her so. Jesus did not condone her sinful lifestyle. Jesus did not say what she was doing was okay because it

gave her pleasure, or was convenient, or because she planned to get married down the road. Jesus did not condone her sin. But he told her also about living water, about One who would satisfy her thirsty soul with a spring of water welling up to eternal life. He told the woman about One who could satisfy her empty heart and hollow life. The woman replied: **“I know Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us” (John 4:25).** It was to this woman that Jesus replied: **“I who speak to you am he” (v 26).** She left her water jar at the well. She hurried back into town to tell folks: **“Come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (v 29).** By the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, you and I know the answer. Jesus IS the Christ. And now you know exactly what THAT means. Amen.