

The Ministry of Christ – Introduction

Asaolu O. S. (asaolu@yahoo.com), Lagos, Nigeria

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Definition: Christ means the Messiah or Anointed Saviour and refers to Jesus of Nazareth while Ministry means work, service or servanthood.

Preamble: The theme is about how Jesus served and serves as Prophet, Priest and King. It will highlight as roles as Teacher, Redeemer, Mediator/Intercessor and Ruler in the Kingdom of God.

This requires a study of the purpose, plan, and person of Jesus as well as his activities especially from his public presentation at the baptism by John until His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. This Intro shall focus on the purpose and plan of God about Christ.

Thesis: The purpose of God precedes the beginning or has been from eternity; it is to express his love, wisdom, power and glory unto creation.

Ephesians 3:9-11 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord

1 Corinthians 1:27-30 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

1 Corinthians 2:7-10 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Thus, the coming of Christ into the world was not an accident or contingency but was carefully planned and executed -1 Peter 1:16-20. God foreknew that the man He would create would sin or fall and has designed a plan of reconciliation ahead, an opportunity to express His divine attributes. **Note:**

- The Bible reveals that God created all things by His word –Gen 1; Jn 1:1-3 (or pre-incarnate Jesus Christ)
- When mankind sinned in Eden, God pronounced that “*the seed of the woman*” would defeat the enemy and suffer a little in doing so –Gen 3:15
- God began to unfold His plan for a coming Saviour through the prophets e.g. through Abraham (Gen 17:1-5; 18:18), through Isaac (Gen 26:1-4) and through Jacob (Gen 28:10-14; **49:9-10**). Via Moses (Deut 18), Isaiah (7, 9, 40, 53, 61), Micah (5), Zechariah (9,12,13), Psalms (16,22, 89), etc.

Through those inspired men, prophecy was given on where and how the Christ would be born, how he would grow, live and suffer opposition, how he would teach and heal the people, die and be raised to establish a new covenant which would cover both Israel and the Gentiles.

Thus Jesus said to the Jews: “*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*” - John 5:39

Peter corroborated this testimony.

1 Peter 1:10-13 *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

The Christ was no ordinary prophet but is God in human form (John 1:14, Romans 9:5). It was therefore both appropriate and befitting that he should have a fore-runner to prepare the way before him or to announce and get the people ready for His earthly ministration. Isaiah 40 and Malachi 3 foretold of the messenger sent ahead, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, to turn the hearts of the people and prepare them ready for the visitation of God. John the Baptist was the wayfarer.

John 1:19-30 *And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.*

It was divinely appointed that the Messiah should come during the reign of the Roman Empire.

Galatians 4:3-5 *Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Conclusion: We have established the need for Christ and what He was meant to achieve by coming into the world. The next lesson should highlight how he was born of the virgin Mary, grew in favour with man and with God, how he was declared unto Israel at water baptism, and how he overcame temptations after his ministry commenced with fasting and prayers.