**Week beginning 15th October 2023 SMALL GROUP NOTES**

Acts 2:36-41

**‘Church membership: repentance, baptism, belonging’**

There are a number of important subjects to choose from in just these few verses!

**Read Acts 2:36-41**

1 **Peter declared that God has made Jesus ‘both Lord and Messiah’.**

 Explain what you think the crowd who were listening understood by these two titles.

 [If you would like to do a fuller study of the meaning of ‘Messiah’ see over the page.]

2 **Jesus had been arrested and crucified.**

 Look back at 2:23, together with 2:36.

 How would you explain *who* was responsible for Jesus being put to death?

3 **If you were asked how a person ‘qualifies’ for baptism, how would you answer?**

 How does a church leader decide to agree to baptise a person who requests this?

4 **How does baptism relate to church membership?**

 You can find guidance on this from 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 3:26-29.

5 **If you are asked what ‘repentance’ means, *how* do you reply?**

 Can you suggest synonyms? How do you define the word? Is this a once-for-all event?

 How does repentance continue to be part of a Christian’s life?

6 **What changes happen in our lives when we receive God’s gift of ‘forgiveness’?**

 Does Psalm 32:1-2 help you think of different aspects of forgiveness?

7 **How would you explain ‘the gift of the Holy Spirit’?**

 Does Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus in John 3:1-8 help to understand this?

8 **What do you think it would take in our society today for several thousand people**

 **to respond to the gospel?**

**For prayer**

Pray for our church to know the Lord’s help in making the gospel of Christ clear to all.

Pray for the agenda & spirit of our church meeting on Wednesday.

Pray for guidance through the whole process of appointing new leadership for our church.

Pray for Simon & Dala, Andy & Sarah, & Jung – all facing challenges in their families’ lives.

Pray that guests at Alpha come regularly; & pray for the group discussions each week.

God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and **‘Messiah’**.

*Messiah* comes from the Hebrew word *mashiach* and means “anointed one” or “chosen one.”

In Greek this is *Christos* or, in English, *Christ*.

So “Jesus Christ” is the same as “Jesus the Messiah.”

Anointing with oil was a sign that God was setting apart that person for a particular role.

In the Old Testament, people were anointed as prophets, priests, or kings:

Aaron as the first high priest ([Leviticus 8:12](https://www.bibleref.com/Leviticus/8/Leviticus-8-12.html)). Elijah anointing Elisha ([1 Kings 19:16](https://www.bibleref.com/1-Kings/19/1-Kings-19-16.html)).

Samuel anointing Saul and later David as kings ([1 Samuel 10:1](https://www.bibleref.com/1-Samuel/10/1-Samuel-10-1.html); [16:13](https://www.bibleref.com/1-Samuel/16/1-Samuel-16-13.html)).

But the Old Testament predicted a coming ‘Rescuer’, chosen by God to redeem Israel ([Isaiah 42:1](https://www.bibleref.com/Isaiah/42/Isaiah-42-1.html); [61:1–3](https://www.bibleref.com/Isaiah/61/Isaiah-61-1.html)). This ‘Rescuer’ the Jews called the Messiah.

Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah ([Luke 4:17–21](https://www.bibleref.com/Luke/4/Luke-4-17.html); [John 4:25–26](https://www.bibleref.com/John/4/John-4-25.html)).

In the New Testament, we see proof that Jesus is the Chosen One:

“These [miracles] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” ([John 20:31](https://www.bibleref.com/John/20/John-20-31.html)).

Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the living God” ([Matthew 16:16](https://www.bibleref.com/Matthew/16/Matthew-16-16.html)).

The ultimate evidence that Jesus is the promised Messiah, is His resurrection from the dead.

The Jews of Jesus’ day expected the Messiah to redeem Israel by overthrowing the rule of the Romans and establishing an earthly kingdom (see [Acts 1:6](https://www.bibleref.com/Acts/1/Acts-1-6.html)). Only after the resurrection his disciples began to understand what the prophecies in the Old Testament really meant. (see [Luke 24:25–27](https://www.bibleref.com/Luke/24/Luke-24-25.html)).

The Messiah was “anointed” first to deliver His people *spiritually*; that is, to redeem them from sin ([John 8:31–36](https://www.bibleref.com/John/8/John-8-31.html)). He accomplished this salvation through His death and resurrection ([John 12:32](https://www.bibleref.com/John/12/John-12-32.html); [John 3:16](https://www.bibleref.com/John/3/John-3-16.html)). Later, Jesus the Messiah will deliver His people from their physical enemies, when He sets up His Kingdom on the earth (see [Isaiah 9:1–7](https://www.bibleref.com/Isaiah/9/Isaiah-9-1.html)).