

## 3—Why Jesus Christ?

In many promises scattered throughout the Bible—God says he will be with us, act for us, save us, give us an inheritance, and peace. But now, all these promises are gathered up into one. He will send us a King to implement them.

- ❑ Israel's King David is promised a dynasty that will last forever (2 Sam. 7:12-19).
- ❑ David is humbled deeply. And it should humble us all.
- ❑ We have no reason why God should make any promises to us at all, let alone one that guarantees us a King who will put all his promises into full effect.

God's promises are truly amazing.

- ❑ They are all made to people he can't trust!
- ❑ They are his powerful word drawing us back to know and rely on him—to discover that he is worthy of our love.

Further prophecies concerning God's King fill out the picture.

- ❑ He will also be a priest (Psalm 110). We need more than a leader to solve problems. We need someone to bring us to God.
- ❑ He will be God's Son. And the idea that any power could frustrate his purpose is laughable (Psalm 2).
- ❑ As Israel's history deteriorates, God's promises about his King get richer and fuller. God's ruler will be called 'Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6).
- ❑ Through him, the whole earth will be given peace, and will know God (Isaiah 11:1-9).

This son of David is, of course, Jesus Christ.

- ❑ When Jesus is born, there is great joy (Luke 2:8-14).
- ❑ All the things God will do to save our broken world and damaged lives are now going to happen (Luke 1:67-79).
- ❑ Someone has come who can deal with this world, and with us—given our capacity for deceit and distrust.
- ❑ He will be greater than David—his 'lord' in fact (Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44-46). He will sit beside God until all opposition is overcome.

Everyone needs to decide if Jesus is this Christ or Messiah.

- ❑ Like Peter (Matthew 16:15-16).
- ❑ Or Jewish leaders (Matthew 26:63-64).
- ❑ Treasuring God's promises begins with believing that Jesus is the King.

Everyone needs to desire and come under Christ's reign (Matt. 6:10, 33).

- ❑ His kingdom is near (Matt. 4:4). Jesus is taking charge.
- ❑ No one can guarantee anything unless they can make things happen.
- ❑ God making promises can stir up resentment—as it did with the Jews.
- ❑ When Peter speaks at Pentecost, he accuses the Jews of killing their anointed Leader and King. But God has raised him up. They need his forgiveness—urgently (Acts 2:32-38).
- ❑ His mercy must expose us to bless us.

- ❑ This is the kingdom we are transferred into when we believe (Col. 1:13).

Jesus is not only the Son God has promised. He is the one who says 'Yes' to everything God has promised (2 Corinthians 1:20).

- ❑ We are slow to believe and reticent to trust. Not Jesus! He wants God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- ❑ He makes sure these promises come true for all who believe in him.
- ❑ It's Christ's 'Yes!' that enables us to say 'Amen!' We learn from him that God means what he says, wants to do us good and can bring about what he has promised.
- ❑ Every promise God makes in the Old Testament is based on what Jesus will do. And in the New Testament, all God's promises are based on what he has done.
- ❑ Apart from him, all the promises would be empty words.
- ❑ Notice how confident Paul is when he says this. Because God's promises are being fulfilled in Christ, he can be definite in making promises to other people. The reliability we need to make a good future comes from what Christ does.

Jesus has taken into account our preference to trust ourselves, our ungratefulness and resentment. And, he comes to us, raised from the dead, with the offer of new life.

- ❑ We may be comforted by promises we read in the Bible. But then, if we imagine that these promises will be fulfilled because we are nice people or because we feel good when we read them, we are deceived.
- ❑ We need what Christ does to receive what is promised.

Peter at Pentecost announces that this promise of new life is addressed to 'as many as God calls' (Acts 2:39; Romans 15:8).

- ❑ We can hear all the promises Christ came to fulfil and be persuaded that God really means to do us good.
- ❑ For example, we can read Psalm 37:4: 'Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart'.
- ❑ We can hear the same thing from Jesus: 'If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you' (John 15:7, 16).

This is the message that must be announced to the world.

- ❑ It promises forgiveness through Christ's death, and the renewal of hope through his resurrection (Acts 13:23, 32, 38; 26:6).
- ❑ Our life is now full of hope. We can be what we really are because of 'the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus' (2 Timothy 1:1).
- ❑ Instead of being subject to the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15), we are liberated by the expectation of life and resurrection.

No wonder the promises of God needs this coming King.

- ❑ Jesus has taken charge of our self-sufficiency and troubles and fears.
- ❑ He has taken charge of implementing the purpose of God for us.
- ❑ And he has led us into the meekness of trusting in him.

The promise of God's kingdom must be our desire and goal.

- ❑ Jesus draws attention to this when people try to make him their king after he miraculously feeds 5000 people (John 6:26-27).

Jesus Christ is God's answer to his own promises.

- ▣ The whole world is designed to hold together because of him (Ephesians 1:10).
- ▣ As lovers of Christ, we can look at the world with hope rather than with gloom.
- ▣ There's lots here that makes us groan, but we can see that these troubles are like a mother's pains in child birth (Romans 8:22-23, 28). Something good is coming!