

Episode: Other Letters Series No. 11

Narrator: Paul

Primary Scriptures: Acts 18:24-28

Story Summary: The early Christian leaders proved Jesus was the Messiah

Location: Israel

Time: 30-70 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Acts 18:28

Messiah is a word based in Hebrew meaning “the anointed one.” Its Greek equivalent is “Christ.” At the time of Jesus, the Jews were looking for a messiah, a person who would come to deliver their nation from the Romans and restore the glory of King David’s reign, Israel’s golden age. They believed a messiah would come based on their interpretation of certain Old Testament scriptures. Looking at the New Testament, you can find that Jews were also expecting other attributes in a Messiah: a teacher, will do miracles, and live forever. The Jews of Jesus’ time had a very clear image of what they expected from a Messiah.

Acts 18:28 says Apollos proved from the Scriptures that Jesus as the Messiah. Acts 9:22 says Paul baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving Jesus is the Messiah.

Proving something requires a very high standard. The early Christian teachers had only the Old Testament scriptures to use as a standard. First, they agreed with their Jewish opponents that the Messiah would be a teacher, he would do miracles and would live forever. The first two were easy because everyone agreed that Jesus was a teacher and undeniably did miracles.

They maintained that the Messiah was meant to deliver salvation in a spiritual way, not necessarily just a physical way. It may not have been what the Jews wanted to hear, but the Old Testament scriptures clearly dealt with spiritual freedom more than physical freedom.

So, the New Testament is very clear the early Christian leaders could prove Jesus was the Messiah. But, it never says they could prove Jesus was the Son of God. Instead, they had to take on the task of completely educating their hearers about the true nature of God. Prior to the teachings of Jesus, God had revealed himself as God, the Lord. Yes, he did have a spirit nature as revealed as early as Genesis 1, but people saw themselves as having a spirit nature, too, so that was easy for them to accept.

Jesus revealed himself as the Son of God, and the early Christians finally understood what came to be known as the Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, and

God the Spirit. This knowledge came from revelation by Jesus, from God himself. It did not come from deciphering the Old Testament. In fact, Paul indicated God kept it a mystery until it was time to be revealed.

The consistent theme throughout the New Testament is that people have to come to faith in Jesus as the Son of God. They have to take the testimony of Jesus and others that Jesus is the Son of God. They have to accept the revelation from Jesus himself that he is the Son of God.