

Christos

- A. *Christos* (χριστός) belongs to the following word group:
1. *Chrio* (χρίω) (verb), “to anoint, to appoint.”
 2. *Antichristos* (Αντιχριστος) (noun), “antichrist.”
 3. *Chrisma* (ξρῖσμα) (noun), “anointing oil, anointing.”
 4. *Christianos* (Χριστιανός) (name), “Christian.”
- B. Classical
1. *Christos* is a verbal adjective.
 2. Christ is derived via the Latin *Christus* from the Greek *Christos*, which in the LXX and the NT is the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic *meshiha*.
 3. *Christos* is related to the verb *chrio* which means “to rub, to smear,” or “to anoint” when used of fats or oil.
 4. It is related also to *chrisma*, the oil used for anointing.
 5. *Christos* identifies that which has been thus smeared or anointed.
 6. In the NT it is used only as a noun, either as an appellative (“the Anointed One, the Christ”) or a personal name (“Jesus Christ” or “Christ”).
 7. Because it is Aramaic equivalent (*meshicha*), it corresponds to the Hebrew *mashiach* and denotes someone who has been ceremonially anointed for an office.
 8. The Greek transliteration of *meshicha* is *Messias*, which like *Iesous* is made declinable by the added -ς.
 9. Outside of biblical literature and tradition *christos* is used only as an adjective, never as a personal title.
 10. In classical Greek it is used of anything that was rubbed on externally (*pharmaka christa* or *epichrisma*, “salves, ointments”).
 11. The Greeks used another word for “anointing,” *aleimma*, which is from *aleipho*.
 12. Basically the word describes a thoroughly secular, everyday process, and has no religious undertones at all.
 13. It characterizes an object or a person as rubbed or smeared with whitewash, cosmetics, paint etc., and in given cases anointed.
 14. It is anything but an expression of honour.
 15. Where it refers to people, it even tends towards the disrespectful.
 16. This is certainly the reason why, on the one hand, in non-Christian circles *Christos*, in its reference to Jesus, was soon confused with the Greek name *Chrestus* (pronounced *Christos* with long I), and why, on the other hand, the Jewish translator of the Bible, Aquila, thought it right in the Greek version of the OT to render *mashiach* or *meshiha*, not by *christos* but by *eleimmenos* from *aleiphein* which, unlike *chrein*, always means to anoint.
 17. In any case, the meaning of the root is an essential condition for *christos*, as used of Jesus of Nazareth, to have been able so disproportionately quickly and so completely to acquire the character of a proper name.
 18. Nevertheless, one must not overlook in this connection the fact that the Hebrew verb *mashach* for which *chrein* is the LXX equivalent, seems to be fundamentally connected with fat or oil in the sense of to grease with oil.
 19. In light of this background it may seem striking that the translators of the LXX chose *chrio* as the replacement of the verb *mashach* and the adjective *christos* for *mashiach*.
 20. Consequently, we note that the designation *christos* for the Messiah was not originally a Christian understanding.
 21. Rather, it was adopted from the OT, and thus, the term itself would not have been offensive to Jewish ears.
- C. LXX
1. In the LXX *christos* is a translation of the Hebrew *mashiach*, “anointed” or “Messiah,” which is related to *mashach*, which also means “to rub, anoint,” or “spread” a liquid.
 2. The Aramaic form of the same word is *meshach*, and in Greek this is transliterated as *messias*.
 3. *Mishchah*, “anointing oil,” is also a related term.
 4. *Mashach* can be used in rather common contexts:
 - a. painting a house (Jer. 22:14).
 - b. smearing oil on a shield (Isa. 21:5).
 - c. anointing of people for special service or office such as priest (Ex. 29:7; Lev. 4:5, 16; 6:22; 21:10), prophet (1 Kings 19:16), and king (1 Sam. 2:10; 12:3; 16:6; 24:6; 2 Sam. 12:7; 19:21).

- d. The person who experienced such anointing was often called “the Lord’s anointed” (1 Sam. 26:9; 2 Sam. 23:1).
 5. In the OT 2 office bearers are expressly described as *mashiach* i.e. as anointed with oil:
 - a. High priest
 - b. King
 6. The most reference in the OT is to the anointing of the King..
 7. The rite of anointing was performed on the high-priest in the post-exilic community in Judah.
 8. The anointing never became a rite of initiation into the prophetic office.
 9. The prophet is discharged a specific task assigned to him by Yahweh Himself.
 10. He is anointed for this.
 11. Thus the act of anointing confers power.
 12. Perhaps the Spirit of Yahweh is regarded as the “matter” of anointing and if so, the gift of the Spirit and the anointing are one and the same.
 13. Possession of the Spirit is permanent and hence the rite confers a character *indelebilis*.
 14. In the OT, oil signified the presence and power of God the Holy Spirit, thus the Messiah or Christ was One Who was totally and completely controlled, guided and empowered by God the Holy Spirit.
 15. The Messiah is characterized by permanent possession of the Spirit.
 16. This enables or empowers Him for the Messianic Ruler to reign with integrity and wisdom.
 17. Hamilton suggests a 4-fold significance to such anointing (“*mashach*,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1:530):
 - a. separation unto God.
 - b. authorization from God.
 - c. divine enablement.
 - d. the coming Deliverer.
 18. It was probably because of his role as a deliverer of God’s people, selected by the Lord for His purpose, that Cyrus, Gentile emperor, was given the title of “messiah, anointed” (Isa. 45:1).
 19. However, long after Cyrus, God’s people were still promised Messiah the prince, the One to fulfill all of the Biblical promises (Dan. 9:25-26).
 20. Because the anointed one of the Lord was considered especially holy by virtue of his sacred office, it was dangerous to attempt to harm him (2 Sam. 1:14; 1 Chron. 16:22; Psa. 105:15).
 21. In Israel, the title applied to the king (1 Sam. 2:10, 35; 16:6; 26:9, 11; Psa. 2:2; 18:50).
 22. The king in fact was considered to be God’s representative on earth and administered God’s kingdom to Israel.
 23. The office and authority of the king, therefore, were of divine origin.
 24. The future Messiah in the OT is portrayed as both God and a human being.
 25. As God the Messiah would directly intervene in human history and would come in perfect power to establish His kingdom over all the earth
 26. As a Man the Messiah would politically, militarily and socially deliver Israel from its enemies.
 27. Thus, the view in the OT saw God as directly and personally interrupting human history in the end time.
 28. God Himself would save and lead His people and would accomplish this through a human instrument.
 29. Thus, in the God-Man Jesus we distinctly note this internal unity and relationship.
 30. The Person of the Saviour, only gradually drawn in the pages of the OT, was called Messiah according to Judaism, despite the fact that the OT almost never uses this appellation for the future ruler of the kingdom of God.
 31. The expression “*anointed of the Lord*” appears in connection with a future Mediator of salvation in Psalm 2:2 and Daniel 9:25.
 32. When this Mediator of salvation is called Messiah, it is tied to the fact that the king of Israel, as the Lord’s anointed, more than anyone else was the instrument of God’s kingdom of earth.
 33. The expectation of a future salvation was closely tied to the Davidic kingship (2 Sam. 7:12; Psa. 89:4, 5, 20f.; Isa. 11:1; 55:3; Jer. 23:5; 30:8f.; 33:15; Ezek. 34:23; 37:24; Amos 9:11).
 34. So the Messiah or Christ would be a Person who was totally and completely controlled, guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- D. NT
1. The noun *Christos* appears 579 times in the NT.
 2. 379 of these being in Paul alone, 22 in 1 Pet., 37 in Luke’s writings (Luke 12 and Acts 25), 19 in John’s writings and the others distributed among the rest of the books.

3. It is used in various formulas or technical phrases in the NT:
 - a. *Iesous Christos* (Ἰησοῦ Χριστός), "**Jesus Christ.**"
 - b. *Kurios Iesous Christos* (Κύριὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστός), "**Lord Jesus Christ.**"
 - c. *Christos Iesous* (Χριστός Ἰησοῦς), "**Christ Jesus.**"
 - d. *Christos* (χριστος), "**Christ.**"
 - e. *ho Christos* (ὁ ἀνδ χριστος), "**the Christ.**"
4. This word is used for the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth.
5. It emphasizes the soteriological aspects of His voluntary substitutionary spiritual death on the cross.
6. *Christos* is a technical word in the Scriptures for the Messiahship and Uniqueness of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ in hypostatic union as the Spirit-filled, God-Man.
7. It designates Jesus of Nazareth as the One Who provides salvation for all mankind.
8. The word designates the humanity of our Lord as the promised Saviour for all mankind.
9. As a result of the humanity of Christ fulfilling the Messianic requirements by obediently executing the Father's will and voluntarily subjecting Himself to spiritual death on the cross as the Substitute for all of humanity, God the Father has promoted the humanity of Christ in hypostatic union to the highest ranking position in the cosmos and has awarded Him the sovereign rulership over all of creation and every creature.
10. On the basis of the word's OT and Jewish history, *Christos* is first of all a designation of function.
11. The word refers to a predication applicable to a figure from Israel's own history or from the eschaton.
12. The predication also makes an assertion concerning majesty.
13. The word acquires a titular character especially where *Christos* represents or replaces the proper name.
14. Where *Christos* is used with *Iesous*, it is not simply a proper name, but rather an epithet (cognomen); the predicative character does recede, but the titular meaning is preserved in its entirety, even when other statements of a titular character are added.
15. Hence, *Iesous Christos* is not simply a double name.
16. The word *Christos* in the NT was often used as a title rather than simply as a proper name.
17. The incarnate Son of God acquired this title *Christos* by means of His voluntary substitutionary spiritual death on the cross.
18. The word is often used along with the article as a title identifying the fact the humanity of our Lord is the Messiah and is the unique theanthropic Person of the entire cosmos.
19. It can be used without the article to emphasize His character and relationship with believers.
20. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* writes, "*christos*, 'anointed,' translates, in the Sept., the word 'Messiah,' a term applied to the priests who were anointed with the holy oil, particularly the high priest, e. g., (Lev. 4:3,5, 16). The prophets are called *hoi christoi Theou*, 'the anointed of God,' (Ps. 105:15). A king of Israel was described upon occasion as *christos tou Kuriou*, 'the anointed of the Lord,' (1 Sam. 2:10,35; 2 Sam. 1:14; Ps. 2:2; 18:50; Hab. 3:13); the term is used even of Cyrus, (Isa. 45:1). The title *ho Christos*, 'the Christ,' is not used of Christ in the Sept. version of the inspired books of the OT. In the NT the word is frequently used with the article, of the Lord Jesus, as an appellative rather than a title, e. g., (Matt. 2:4; Acts 2:31); without the article, (Luke 2:11; 23:2; John 1:41). Three times the title was expressly accepted by the Lord Himself, (Matt. 16:17; Mark 14:61-62; John 4:26). It is added as an appellative to the proper name 'Jesus,' e. g., (John 17:3), the only time when the Lord so spoke of Himself; (Acts 9:34; 1 Cor. 3:11; 1 John 5:6). It is distinctly a proper name in many passages, whether with the article, e. g., (Matt. 1:17; 11:2; Rom. 7:4, 9:5; 15:19; 1 Cor. 1:6), or without the article, (Mark 9:41; Rom. 6:4; 8:9,17; 1 Cor. 1:12; Gal. 2:16). The single title *Christos* is sometimes used without the article to signify the One who by His Holy Spirit and power indwells believers and molds their character in conformity to His likeness, (Rom. 8:10; Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:17). As to the use or absence of the article, the title with the article specifies the Lord Jesus as 'the Christ'; the title without the article stresses His character and His relationship with believers. Again, speaking generally, when the title is the subject of a sentence it has the article; when it forms part of the predicate the article is absent."
21. Bauer, Gingrich and Danker have concluded from their research of the word that it had a 2-fold meaning and usage (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* pages 886-887):
 - a. As an appellative *the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ.*
 - b. As a personal name.
22. *The NewThayers Greek-English Lexicon* lists the following (pages 672-673):
 - a. Of the Messiah, viewed in His generic aspects [the word, that is to say, being used as an appellative rather than a proper name].

- b. It is added, as an appellative ('Messiah', 'Anointed') to the proper name *Iesous*.
23. Louw and Nida list the following (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* volume 2):
- a. In the NT, titles for Jesus as the Messiah - 'Christ, Messiah' (but in many contexts, and especially without an article) (543).
 - b. (The Greek translation of the Hebrew and Aramaic word 'Messiah') a proper name for Jesus - 'Christ' (page 832).
24. Moulton lists the following meaning from his research (*The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* pages 439):
- a. *The Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah* (Mt. 1:16, 17; Jn. 1:20, 25, 42).
 - b. Frequently meton. *Christ, the word or doctrine of Christ* (2 C. 1:19, 21; Ep. 4:20).
 - c. *Christ, a truly Christian frame of doctrine and affection* (Rm. 8:10; Ga. 4:19).
 - d. *Christ, the church of Christ* (1 Cor. 12:12).
 - e. *Christ, the distinctive privileges of the Gospel of Christ* (Gl. 3:27; Phlp. 3:8; He. 3:14).
25. Ferdinand Hahn makes the following comment regarding the word's usage in the NT, he writes, "The question whether *Christos* in the NT is a title or a name needs to be specified more closely. On the basis of the word's OT and Jewish history it is first of all a designation of function. The legitimate appropriation of a commissioned task is associated with the motif or act of anointing (even where the anointing ritual recedes or is only figurative). The word refers to a predication applicable to a figure from Israel's own history or from the *eschaton*. The predication also makes an assertion concerning majesty. This is especially the case where it is used of a concrete person within the context of confessional statements with *su ei* or *houtos estin*. Here the predication acquires titular character especially, where (*ho*) *Christos* represents or replaces the proper name, as occurred with *ho huios tou anthropon*. Where *Christos* is used with *Iesous*, it is not simply a proper name, but rather an epithet (*cognomen*); the predicative character does recede, but the titular meaning is preserved in its entirety, even when other statements of a titular character are added. Hence nowhere is a simple double name presupposed" (*Exegitcal Dictionary of the New Testament* volume 3, page 479).
26. The noun signifies that Jesus of Nazareth was unique as the incarnate Son of God and totally and completely controlled, guided and empowered by God the Holy Spirit as the Servant of the Father.
27. The noun *Christos* signifies the 3-fold offices held by our Lord:
- a. *Prophet*
 - b. *Priest*
 - c. *King*
28. The Hebrew title *Meshiach*, "**Messiah**," that is found in the OT is translated by the Greek NT term *Christos*, "**Christ**" and thus the 2 are synonymous with each other.
29. One of the fundamental doctrine found in the NT is that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah-King of the OT prophecies.
30. He is confirmed as Messiah no less than 280 times in the NT.
31. The double title Jesus Christ is actually an acknowledgement that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.
32. This was the oldest Christological acknowledgement of a Jewish background.
33. From the Gentile perspective, however, the title was so unfamiliar that "**Christ**" was soon regarded as more a proper name.
34. The noun *Christos* is a title applied to Jesus of Nazareth and emphasizes the fact that He is unique as undiminished deity and true humanity in 1 Person forever and that He was totally and completely controlled, guided and empowered by God the Holy Spirit during His 1st Advent in order that He might, serve the Father by defeating Satan in the angelic conflict, fulfill the righteous requirements of the Mosaic Law, and provide salvation for all His fallen moral rational creatures (human and angelic beings).
35. The word is frequently used metonymically in the NT for the word or doctrine of Christ.