

Coffee with the Cantor

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Hazzan Rob Menes

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HaMashiach!

What is the concept of the Messiah in Judaism and how does it differ from Christianity?

From Wikipedia

JEWISH MESSIANISM

Messiah (Hebrew: מָשִׁיחַ; mashiah, moshiah, mashiach, or moshiach, "anointed [one]") is a term used in the Hebrew Bible to describe priests and kings, who were traditionally anointed with holy anointing oil as described in Exodus 30:22-25. For example, Cyrus the Great, the king of Persia, although not a Hebrew, is referred to as "God's mashiach" in the Bible.

Historical[edit]

In Jewish eschatology, the term mashiach, or "Messiah," came to refer to a future Jewish King from the Davidic line, who is expected to be anointed with holy anointing oil and rule the Jewish people during the Messianic Age.[1][2][3] The Messiah is often referred to as "King Messiah" or, in Hebrew, המשיח מלך (melekh mashiach), and in Aramaic, malka meshiha.[4]

Orthodox views have generally held that the Messiah will be descended from his father through the line of King David,[5] and will gather the Jews back into the Land of Israel, usher in an era of peace, build the Third Temple, father a male heir and re-institute the Sanhedrin, among other things. Jewish tradition alludes to two redeemers, both of whom are called mashiach and are involved in ushering in the Messianic age: Mashiach ben David and Mashiach ben Yosef. In general, the term Messiah unqualified refers to Mashiach ben David (Messiah, son of David).[1][2]

Talmud[edit]

The Talmud extensively discusses the coming of the Messiah (Sanhedrin 98a, et al.) and describes a period of freedom and peace, which will be the time of ultimate goodness for the Jews and for all mankind.

Tractate Sanhedrin contains a long discussion of the events leading to the coming of the Messiah, for example:

R. Johanan said: When you see a generation ever dwindling, hope for him [the Messiah], as it is written, "And the afflicted people thou wilt save." [II Samuel 22:28] R. Johanan said: When thou seest a generation overwhelmed by many troubles as by a river, await him, as it is written, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him;" which is followed by, "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion."

R. Johanan also said: The son of David will come only in a generation that is either altogether righteous or altogether wicked. in a generation that is altogether righteous, — as it is written, "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever." Or altogether wicked, — as it is written, "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor;" and it is [elsewhere] written, "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it." [6]

The Talmud tells many stories about the Messiah, some of which represent famous Talmudic rabbis as receiving personal visitations from Elijah the Prophet and the Messiah. For example:

R. Joshua b. Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Simeon b. Yohai's tomb. He asked him: "Have I a portion in the world to come?" He replied, "if this Master desires it." R. Joshua b. Levi said, "I saw two, but heard the voice of a third." He then asked him, "When will the Messiah come?" — "Go and ask him himself," was his reply. "Where is he sitting?" — "At the entrance." "And by what sign may I recognise him?" — "He is sitting among the poor lepers: all of them untie [them] all at once, and rebandage them together, whereas he unties and rebandages each separately, [before treating the next], thinking, should I be wanted, [it being time for my appearance as the Messiah] I must not be delayed [through having to bandage a number of sores]." So he went to him and greeted him, saying, "Peace upon thee, Master and Teacher." "Peace upon thee, O son of Levi," he replied. "When wilt thou come, Master?" asked he. "Today," was his answer. On his returning to Elijah, the latter enquired, "What did he say to thee?" — "peace Upon thee, O son of Levi," he answered. Thereupon he [Elijah] observed, "He thereby assured thee and thy father of [a portion in] the world to come." "He spoke falsely to me," he rejoined, "stating that he would come today, but has not." He [Elijah] answered him, "This is what he said to thee, To-day, if ye will listen to his voice." [6]

[VIEWS OF MAIMONIDES\[EDIT\]](#)

Main article: Judaism's view of Jesus

One Jewish understanding of the messiah is based on the writings of Maimonides, (also known as Rambam). His views on the messiah are discussed in his Mishneh Torah, his 14 volume

compendium of Jewish law, in the section Hilkhos Melakhim Umilchamoteihem, chapters 11 & 12.[7]

According to Maimonides, Jesus of Nazareth is not the Messiah, as is claimed by Christians and Muslims.[8]

ANCIENT ISRAEL[EDIT]

Main article: Hebrew Bible

Many of the scriptural requirements concerning the Messiah, what he will do, and what will be done during his reign are located in the Book of Isaiah, although requirements are mentioned by other prophets as well. Views on whether Hebrew Bible passages are Messianic may vary from and among scholars of ancient Israel looking at their meaning in original context and from and among rabbinical scholars.

- Isaiah 1:26: "And I will restore your judges as at first and your counsellors as in the beginning; afterwards you shall be called City of Righteousness, Faithful City." Some Jews[9] interpret this to mean that the Sanhedrin will be re-established."(Isaiah 1:26)
- Once he is King, leaders of other nations will look to him for guidance. (Isaiah 2:4)
- The whole world will worship the One God of Israel (Isaiah 2:11-17)
- He will be descended from King David (Isaiah 11:1) via Solomon (1 Chronicles 22:8-10, 2 Chronicles 7:18)
- The "spirit of the Lord" will be upon him, and he will have a "fear of God" (Isaiah 11:2)
- Evil and tyranny will not be able to stand before his leadership (Isaiah 11:4)
- Knowledge of God will fill the world (Isaiah 11:9)
- He will include and attract people from all cultures and nations (Isaiah 11:10)
- All Israelites will be returned to their homeland (Isaiah 11:12)
- Death will be swallowed up forever (Isaiah 25:8)
- There will be no more hunger or illness, and death will cease (Isaiah 25:8)
- All of the dead will rise again (Isaiah 26:19)
- The Jewish people will experience eternal joy and gladness (Isaiah 51:11)
- He will be a messenger of peace (Isaiah 52:7)
- Nations will recognize the wrongs they did to Israel (Isaiah 52:13-53:5)
- The peoples of the world will turn to the Jews for spiritual guidance (Zechariah 8:23)

- The ruined cities of Israel will be restored (Ezekiel 16:55)
- Weapons of war will be destroyed (Ezekiel 39:9)
- The people of Israel will have direct access to the Torah through their minds and Torah study will become the study of the wisdom of the heart (Jeremiah 31:33)[10]
- He will give you all the worthy desires of your heart (Psalms 37:4)
- He will take the barren land and make it abundant and fruitful (Isaiah 51:3, Amos 9:13-15, Ezekiel 36:29-30, Isaiah 11:6-9)

SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD AND APOCALYPTICISM[EDIT]

The majority of Second Temple texts have no reference to an individual end-time Messiah.[11] Exceptions among the Dead Sea Scrolls include 4Q521, the "Messianic Apocalypse." Other messianic concepts are found in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.[12] Messianic allusions to some figures include to Menahem ben Hezekiah who traditionally was born on the same day that the Second Temple was destroyed.[13]

PRESENT-DAY JEWISH POSITIONS[EDIT]

ORTHODOX JUDAISM[EDIT]

Orthodox Judaism maintains that Jews are obliged to accept the 13 Principles of Faith as formulated by Maimonides in his introduction to Chapter Helek of the Mishna Torah.[citation needed] Each principle starts with the words Ani Maamin (I believe). Number 12 is the main principle relating to Mashiach. The text is as follows:[14][15]

שיבוא יום בכל לו אחכה זה כל עם שיתמהמה פי על ואף, המשיח בביאת שלמה באמונה מאמין אני

Ani Maamin B'emunah Sh'leimah B'viyat Hamashiach. V'af al pi sheyitmahmehah im kol zeh achake lo b'chol yom sheyavo.

I believe with full faith in the coming of the Messiah. And even though he tarries, with all that, I await his arrival with every day.

HASIDIC JUDAISM[EDIT]

Hasidic Jews tend to have a particularly strong and passionate belief in the immediacy of the Messiah's coming, and in the ability of their actions to hasten his arrival. Because of the piousness, wisdom, and leadership abilities of the Hasidic Masters, members of Hasidic communities are sometimes inclined to regard their dynastic rebbes as potential candidates for Messiah. Many Jews, (see the Bartenura's explanation on Megillat Rut, and the Halakhic responsa of The Ch'sam Sofer on Choshen Mishpat [vol. 6], Chapter 98 where this view is explicit) especially Hasidim, adhere to the belief that there is a person born each generation with the potential to become Messiah, if the Jewish people warrant his coming; this candidate

is known as the Tzadik Ha-Dor, meaning Tzaddik of the Generation. However, fewer are likely to name a candidate.

Notably, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson declared often that the Messiah is very close, urging all to pray for the coming of the Messiah, study Torah sources about him, and do everything possible to hasten his coming through increased acts of kindness, and so on. In fact, many Chabad Hasidim still regard him posthumously as the Messiah (See Chabad messianism)

[CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM\[EDIT\]](#)

Emet Ve-Emunah, the Conservative movement's statement of principles, states the following:

Since no one can say for certain what will happen in the Messianic era each of us is free to fashion personal speculation. Some of us accept these speculations are literally true, while others understand them as elaborate metaphors... For the world community we dream of an age when warfare will be abolished, when justice and compassion will be axioms of all, as it is said in Isaiah 11: "...the land shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." For our people, we dream of the ingathering of all Jews to Zion where we can again be masters of our own destiny and express our distinctive genius in every area of our national life. We affirm Isaiah's prophecy (2:3) that "...Torah shall come forth from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

We do not know when the Messiah will come, nor whether he will be a charismatic human figure or is a symbol of the redemption of humankind from the evils of the world. Through the doctrine of a Messianic figure, Judaism teaches us that every individual human being must live as if he or she, individually, has the responsibility to bring about the messianic age. Beyond that, we echo the words of Maimonides based on the prophet Habakkuk (2:3) that though he may tarry, yet do we wait for him each day.

[REFORM AND RECONSTRUCTIONIST JUDAISM\[EDIT\]](#)

Reform Judaism and Reconstructionist Judaism generally do not accept the idea that there will be a Messiah. Some believe that there may be some sort of "messianic age" (the World to Come) in the sense of a "utopia", which all Jews are obligated to work towards (thus the tradition of Tikkun olam).

In 1999, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the official body of American Reform rabbis, authored "A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism", meant to describe and define the spiritual state of modern Reform Judaism. In a commentary appended to the platform, it states:

Messianic age: The 1885 Pittsburgh Platform rejected the traditional Jewish hope for an heir of King David to arise when the world was ready to acknowledge that heir as the one anointed (the original meaning of mashiach, anglicized into "messiah"). This figure would rule in God's

name over all people and ultimately usher in a time of justice, truth and peace. In the Avot, the first prayer of the Amidah, Reformers changed the prayerbook's hope for a go-el, a redeemer, to geulah, redemption. Originally this idea reflected the views of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and the French Positivist philosophers that society was growing ever more enlightened. The cataclysmic events of the first half of the 20th Century smashed that belief, and most Reform Jews saw the messianic age as a time that would probably be far off. Still, we renew our hope for it when we express the belief that Shabbat is mey-eyn olam ha-ba, a sampler of the world to come, when we sing about Elijah, herald of the messiah, when Havdalah brings Shabbat to a close, when we open the door for Elijah late in the Pesach Seder, and when we express the hope in the first paragraph of the Kaddish that God's sovereignty will be established in our days.[16]

MESSIAH BEN JOSEPH

In Jewish eschatology Messiah ben Joseph (Heb.: משיח בן יוסף), also known as Messiah bar/ben Ephraim (Aram./Heb.: משיח בן/בר אפרים), is a mashiach from the tribe of Ephraim and a descendant of Joseph.[1] Jewish tradition alludes to four messianic figures. Called the Four Craftsmen, each may be involved in ushering in the Messianic age. They are mentioned in the Talmud and the Book of Zechariah. Rashi in his commentary on the Talmud gives more details. Rashi explains that Messiah ben Joseph is called a craftsman because he will help rebuild the temple.[2] Nahmanides also commented on Messiah ben Joseph's rebuilding of the temple.[3][4] The roles of the Four Craftsmen are as follows. Elijah will be the herald of the eschaton.[5] If necessary, Messiah ben Joseph will wage war against the evil forces and die in combat with the enemies of God and Israel.[6] According to Saadia Gaon the need for his appearance will depend on the spiritual condition of the Jewish people.[7] In the Sefer Zerubbabel and later writings, after his death a period of great calamities will befall Israel.[6] God will then resurrect the dead and usher in the Messianic Era of universal peace. Messiah ben David will reign as a Jewish king during the period when God will resurrect the dead. With the ascendancy of Rabbinic Judaism the Righteous Priest has largely not been the subject of Jewish messianic speculation.[8]: 87–89 Most Jews believe that the Third Temple will be built during this era.

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

While the Dead Sea scrolls do not explicitly refer to a Messiah ben Joseph, a plethora of messianic figures are displayed.

The poly-messianic Testimonia text 4Q175 presents a prophet similar to Moses, a messianic figure and a priestly teacher. It is dated to the early 1st century BCE.[8]: 89

1QS lists a Messiah of Israel, a prophet and a priestly Messiah of Aaron.[9] 1QS dates from around 100 BCE.[10]

Gabriel's Revelation

Gabriel's Revelation is a stone tablet. The text is written in ink. The inscription is in a poor state of preservation.[11]: 11-12 The meaning of the legible text is still a matter of scholarship.

The text seems to talk about a messianic figure from Ephraim who will break evil before righteousness by three days.[11]: 43-44 later the text talks about a “prince of princes” a leader of Israel who is killed by the evil king and not properly buried.[11]: 44 the evil king is then miraculously defeated.[11]: 45 the text seems to refer to Jeremiah Chapter 31.[11]: 43 The choice of Ephraim as the lineage of the messianic figure described in the text seems to draw on passages in Jeremiah, Zechariah and Hosea.[11]: 48-49 However, Matthias Henze suggest that this figure is not a reference to the Messiah ben Joseph who he believes is a later develop but rather a pseudonym for the Messiah ben David and that Ephraim is simple a metonym in reference to Israel, Israel Knohl disagrees.[11]: 95-96, 108-111

The text seems to be based on a Jewish revolt recorded by Josephus dating from 4 BCE. Both Josephus and Gabriel's Revelation describe three messianic leaders.[11]: 45-46 Based on its dating the text seems to refer to Simon of Peraea one of the three leaders of this revolt.[11]: 47

TESTAMENTS OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, thought by some to be a Christian writing or if Jewish to have had Christian influences.[12] The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is a composition of twelve texts one for each patriarch. The Testament of Benjamin was probably expanded later to include a reference to Messiah ben Joseph by Jewish sources. The Testament of Joseph on the other hand was probably altered by Christians to read that the virgin born Lamb of God from the tribe of Judah rather than the lamb son of Joseph would conquer.[13]

TALMUD

See also: The Messiah at the Gates of Rome

In the Jerusalem Talmud Brachot 2:4, 5a an Arab tells a Jew that the messiah is born. His father's name is Hezekiah and he will be named Menahem. He is not referred to as the Messiah ben Joseph. However some have linked this passage to Messiah ben Joseph. Selling his cow and plough he buys some swaddling cloth and travels from town to town. He travels to Bethlehem where the child is born. All the women are buying their children clothing except Menahem's mother. She says her son is an enemy of Israel because he is born on the day the second temple was destroyed. He tells her that if she does not have money today she can pay later. He says that the child is surely the messiah who will rebuild the temple. When he returns she tells him

that Menahem has been carried by a divine wind up to heaven. He will later return as Israel's messiah.[14][15]: 24, 122

In the Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 98b Menahem ben Hezekiah is also mentioned along with a list of other names of the messiah suggested by different rabbis. Again he is not referred to directly as the Messiah ben Joseph. Menahem's name translates as "the comforter". He is referred to as the leper scholar. The passage states that he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him a leper smitten by god.[6][16]

Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 52a records of a dispute between Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinas and other unnamed rabbis. Rabbi Dosa takes Zechariah 12:10 to apply to the mourning for Messiah ben Joseph, while the rabbis think the mourning is for the evil inclination. The talmudic redactor sides with Rabbi Dosa: the mourning is for Messiah ben Joseph. (Mourning the Evil Inclination, he adds, would be absurd.) It then speaks of how Ben Joseph's death frightens Messiah ben David, so that he urgently prays for his life to be spared.[8]: 79-83

The Jerusalem Talmud Sukkah 5:2 also mentions Messiah ben Joseph.[8]: 90

Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 52b presents the Four Craftsmen. Each may have a role to play in the ushering in the messianic age they are listed as Elijah, Messiah ben David, Righteous Priest and Messiah ben Joseph.[8]: 84[2]

The Talmud uses the Hebrew ben rather than the Aramaic bar when giving the lineage of these messiahs, suggesting a date before 200 CE. Other parts of the passage are Aramaic confusing the matter.[8]: 84 The similarity between 4Q175 and the Four Craftsmen suggest that the Messiah ben Joseph probably existed in some form by the early 1st century BCE.[8]: 87-89

TARGUM

Targumim were spoken paraphrases, explanations, and expansions of the Jewish scriptures that a Rabbi would give in the common language of the listeners.

The common Targum for Zechariah 12.10 is non-messianic. However, In the Jerusalem Targum to Zechariah 12.10, Messiah bar Ephraim is slain by Gog.[17] In the Islamic era Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Exodus 40.9-11, three messiahs Messiah ben David, Messiah ben Ephraim and Elijah are listed. Messiah ben Ephraim's death is not mentioned.[8]: 87[18] The Targum on song of songs 4.5 compares Messiah ben David and Messiah ben Ephraim to Moses and Aaron.[19] All of these Targum refer to Messiah ben Ephraim rather than Messiah ben Joseph[8]: 89 Dating of these Targum is difficult. Dating earlier than the fourth century CE cannot be affirmed.[17][19] The same is true for many of the Midrashim.

Sefer Zerubbabel

Sefer Zerubbabel, also called the Book of Zerubbabel or the Apocalypse of Zerubbabel, is a medieval Hebrew apocalypse written at the beginning of the 7th century[20] in the style of biblical visions (e.g. Daniel, Ezekiel) placed into the mouth of Zerubbabel. It narrates the struggle between Armilus and the Messiah whose name is Nehemiah ben Hushiel ben Ephraim ben Joseph. He will proceed Menahem ben Ammiel identified as the future Messiah ben David. Armilus is thought to be a cryptogram for Heraclius and the events described in the Sefer Zerubbabel coincide with the Jewish revolt against Heraclius.[21] The Sefer Zerubbabel mentions Gog and Armilos rather than Gog and Magog as the enemies.[22]: 60 In the Sefer Zerubbabel a celestial Temple is built in heaven and then lowered to earth.[23]

OTOT HA-MAŠIAH (SIGNS OF THE MESSIAH)

Another medieval Hebrew apocalypse the Otot ha-Mašiah also casts Nehemiah ben Hushiel as the Messiah ben Joseph.[24] It gives a less historically linked account but is also thought to be dated to the beginning of the 7th century.[21] The following texts all mention Nehemiah as the Messiah ben Joseph. They are all similar to 'Otot ha-Mašiah (Signs of the Messiah). The texts all contain ten signs of the coming of the Messiah. Nehemiah will confront Armilos with a Torah scroll in all of them.[22] The texts are 'Otot of R. Shimon b. Yohai[25] and Ten Signs[26]

NISTAROT (SECRETS OF) R. SHIMON B. YOHAI

Dated after the fall of the Umayyad in the 8th century this midrashic Muslim Jewish text is generally positive towards Islam.[22]: 10 Messiah ben Joseph will rebuild the temple but be killed in battle with Armilos. Armilos is described as bald having a leprous forehead and small eyes.[27]

MIDRASH

Messiah ben Joseph has an established place in the apocalypses of later centuries and in the midrash literature.

Pesikta de-Rav Kahana 5.9 here the four craftsmen are listed as Elijah, the King Messiah, Melchizedek and the Anointed for War.[8]: 86

Song of Songs Rabbah also lists the four craftsmen. Here they are listed as Elijah, the King Messiah, Melchizedek and the Anointed for War.[28][8]: 86

Pesikta Rabbati 15.14/15 likewise the four craftsmen are listed as Elijah, the King Messiah, Melchizedek and the Anointed for War.[8]: 86 Pesikta Rabbati reference an Ephraim Messiah

rather that a Messiah ben Ephraim.[8]: 89 It has been argued that this text may not refer to the Messiah ben Joseph but rather to the Messiah ben David.[11]: 95-96

In Saadia's description of the future Emunoth ve-Deoth: viii Messianic redemption, dating from the early 10th century. Messiah ben Joseph will appear in the Upper Galilee prior to the coming of Messiah ben David; he will gather the children of Israel around him, march to Jerusalem, and there, after overcoming the hostile powers, reestablish Temple worship and set up his own dominion.[29]: 301-303 Similarities with the Sefer Zerubbabel suggest that it is likely that Saadia Gaon knew of that work.[22]: 48 After going over this sequence of events Saadia Gaon states that Messiah ben Joseph will only need to appear if Israel does not repent. If needed Messiah ben Joseph will rectify the conditions of the nations. He could be like one who purges with fire the grave sinners among the nations. Or for those who have committed lesser infractions he would wash away those sins with lye.[29]: 304

In Tanna Devei Eliyahu the four craftsmen are listed the same as in the Talmud as Elijah, Messiah ben David, Righteous Priest and Messiah ben Joseph.[8]: 86

Alphabet of Akiba ben Joseph like Pesikta Rabbati the text refers to an Ephraim Messiah.[8]: 89

In a Responsum about Redemption Hai Gaon also asserts that Messiah ben Joseph will be found in Upper Galilee.[30][22]

Midrash Tehillim also refers to the Messiah ben Ephraim.[7][8]: 89

The Midrash Aggadat ha-Mašiah is part of the larger compilation the Lekah Tov. The Lekah Tov was compiled around the turn of the eleventh century in Byzantium. Messiah ben Joseph is described as building the temple. He seemed to have been given priestly functions, as he also offers sacrifices.[31]:96 again Messiah ben Joseph will be found in the Upper Galilee where Israel will assemble.[32]

Also from the eleventh century the Midrash Wayosha mentions Messiah ben Joseph.[33]

Numbers Rabbah 14.1 here the Righteous Priest has been replaced. The four craftsmen are listed as Elijah, Redeemer from David, War Messiah from Ephraim, Messiah from Manasseh.[8]: 86

Yalkut Shimoni 569 lists the four craftsmen as Elijah, Messiah ben David, Righteous Priest and Messiah ben Joseph.[8]: 86

The event surrounding Messiah ben Joseph's death vary. Different accounts give different enemies Armilus, Gog and Magog. After his death what happens to his corpse also varies. His corpse, according to one group, will lie unburied in the streets of Jerusalem. According to the other, it will be hidden by the angels with the bodies of the Patriarchs, until Messiah ben David comes, when God will resurrect him (comp. Jew. Encyc. i. 682, 684 [§§ 8 and 13]; comp.).[34]

Zohar

Following the apocalyptic battles the Messiah enters a pillar of fire which will hide him for twelve months. Some view this figure as the Messiah ben Joseph who has been killed. The text in the Zohar probably does not reflect Moses de Leon's views. The suffering messiah was marginal in his Hebrew writings.[31]:113-114 Several of the Zohar Mishpatim mention Messiah ben Ephraim.[8]: 89

LATER SOURCES

According to Meir Leib ben Yechiel Michael Weiser (the Malbim), the Messiah ben Joseph will be the future leader of the Ten Lost Tribes when they return. The Messiah ben Joseph will initiate union with Judah, who will be led by the Messiah ben David. Later, the Messiah ben Joseph is killed and Messiah ben David will rule over all Twelve Tribes.

Prior to the Malbim, it has been claimed, the Messiah ben Joseph was not considered the future leader of the Ten Tribes, although twice it is mentioned that a part of the Ten Tribes will be found among those who will gather about his standard. The Kol HaTor, written by Rabbi Hillel Rivlin, deals at length with the Messiah ben Joseph and his role in bringing back the exiles and rebuilding the Land of Israel.

JEWISH UNDERSTANDING

Jews do not believe in original sin. It is believed that each Jew individual is responsible to follow the 613 mitzvot to the best of his abilities. Non-Jews are expected to keep the Seven Laws of Noah. When sacrifices were offered in ancient times they were offered as a fulfillment of the 613 mitzvot. Modern Jews instead offer tzedakah a form of charity.[35] Traditionally most common among Ashkenazi Jews, some perform kapparot as a form of tzedakah. On Yom Kippur God judges each individual yearly. If Messiah ben Joseph is killed it is not considered a sacrifice but rather a tragedy that will befall Israel preceding the eschaton. Neither Messiah ben Joseph nor Messiah ben David will remove the requirement to keep the 613 mitzvot.[36] Most Orthodox Jews believe that animal sacrifice will be resumed once the third temple is built.

KABBALAH

ECSTATIC KABBALAH

Abraham Abulafia was the founder of Ecstatic Kabbalah. He seems to have identified Jesus as the Messiah ben Joseph referring to him as “the sixth day” and as Satan.[31]:123[37]:208[38] Abulafia linked Jesus with the month of Tammuz, the month of the sin of the golden calf.[37]:206[31]:123 Abulafia referred to himself as “the seventh day” and the true Messiah ben David. He claimed to be both the Messiah ben David and a Kohen like Melchizedek. His reasoning in doing so was odd. He claimed that his father was of Israel (Tribe of Judah), his

mother a Levi and his wife a Kohen.[31]:94-96 He also identified himself as the priestly angle Metatron.[37]:208

He set out on a messianic mission to Rome to convert the pope to Judaism. The pope ordered him burn at the stake, however the day before he entered Rome the pope died of an apoplectic stroke. Abulafia claimed to have killed the pope by invoking the name of God.[31]:94-96, 371, 59-61, 82-83, 97-98

In one of his later works Abulafia claimed to have been driven mad by Satan but that God had protected him. He claimed that Elijah brought him to Messina where he completed the Otzar Eden HaGanuz. He wrote that but for accidents and fantasies his seven disciples would not have been driven away from him. He hoped that one in particular Rabbi Saadia ben Yitzchak Sanalmapi who he dedicated the work to would forgive him.[39]

Abulafia's writing where condemned by his local Jewish congregation and where not used in Spanish schools. His meditation techniques would influence many later writings and are still studied today. Later writers would marginalize Abulafia's messianic elements.[31]:361 In Ecstatic Kabbalah Metatron is a messianic figure.[40] This tradition predates Abulafia going back to the Book of Parables and 3 Enoch and other writings.[31]:46,48, 72, 86, 88 The earlier Merkabah mysticism also references Metatron.[41]

LURIANIC KABBALAH

In Lurianic Kabbalah Adam incorporated all souls; it is possible for different soul-sections to be given to different people.[42] In addition multiple people can share the same soul root.[43] In the Kabbalistic understanding, the Righteous Priest would be reincarnated as Abel, Seth, Noah and Shem.[42][44] Moses like Adam also incorporated all souls.[42] Messiah ben Joseph was incarnated as Cain he was notably reincarnated as Joseph (son of Jacob) and Jeroboam. Messiah ben David was incarnated as Abel and David.[45]:197 Most of the Messiah ben Joseph claimants have been Kabbalists, or made by Kabbalists. In the Kabbalistic understanding this does not necessarily mean a literal claim of messiahship is being made.

ACADEMIC VIEWS

MAIN ARTICLE: SPLIT OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM

The exact origins of Messiah ben Joseph are a matter of debate among scholars. It has been suggested that Messiah ben Joseph arose out of a Jewish collective memory of Simon bar Kokhba. Others suggest that his origins are older.[46][6]

Some academic scholars have argued to varying degrees that Christianity and Judaism did not separate as suddenly or as dramatically as sometimes thought and that the idea of two messiahs one suffering the second fulfilling the traditional messianic role was normative to ancient Judaism, in fact predating Jesus. Furthermore Jesus would have been viewed as fulfilling this role.[47][48][8]: 91–112[49]

CHRISTIAN VIEWS

TRADITIONAL

Traditional Christians do not believe that Jesus was a candidate for the Messiah ben Joseph. They believe rather that he was the Messiah ben David and that he was of the tribe of Judah and a descendant of David, whereas the Messiah ben Joseph will be a descendant of Joseph from the tribe of Ephraim. Furthermore, some assert that the passages associated with Messiah ben Joseph have no power of redemption.[50] Christians have associated the Four Craftsmen in varying ways with the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse[51][52]

MESSIANIC JEWS

See also: Proselytization and counter-proselytization of Jews

Certain Messianic Jewish groups have associated Messiah ben Joseph with Jesus based on the biblical account in which Jesus's stepfathers name is given as Joseph.[50] Ben in this context literally translates from Hebrew as "son of".

CHRISTIAN KABBALAH

See also: Esoteric Christianity #Modern forms and Hermetic Qabalah

In some modern forms of Christian Kabbalah, based on Lurianic Kabbalah, Jesus is not literal the Son of God but rather a composite being like Adam. In other words a full rectified Adam, in this understanding Jesus is linked with the title Son of Man given in the New Testament. Messiah ben Joseph is part of this entity[53]

In some Christian forms of Ecstatic Kabbalah Jesus is Metatron, Melchizedek, Messiah ben Joseph and Messiah ben David.[54] Often time's incompatible Kabbalists teachings are blended together with Christian, new age and occult beliefs.

MORMONS

Main article: House of Joseph (LDS Church)

Some Mormon groups have associated Messiah ben Joseph with Joseph Smith.[55]

Messiah ben Joseph claimants

Simon of Peraea (killed by the romans in 4 BCE)

Nehemiah ben Hushiel (Killed in Jerusalem 614)

Isaac Luria (1534–1572) Safed Kabbalists claimed that both Isaac Luria and Hayyim Vital were reincarnations of Messiah ben Joseph. However, the world was not yet ready for coming of the messiah.[15]: 29-30[45]:191

Hayyim Vital (1543–1620) In a letter, a sequence of events starting in 1574 is laid out. He is named as the Messiah ben Joseph with Abraham Shalom as the Messiah ben David.[15]: 30

Joshua Heschel Zoref (1633-1700): claimed to be Messiah ben Joseph, with Shabbetai Zvi as the Messiah ben David.[56]

Abraham Miguel Cardoso (1626 – 1706) He was a follower of Shabbetai Zvi. He proclaimed himself Messiah ben Joseph, although later in life he disavowed this claim.[57]

Judah Leib Prossnitz (1670-1750): claimed to be Messiah ben Joseph, with Shabbetai Zvi as the Messiah ben David.[58]

Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810) His followers claimed that he was a reincarnation mostly of Messiah ben Joseph but also of Messiah ben David, it is unclear if he made this claim about himself.[45]: 194-196

Theodor Herzl (May 2, 1860 – July 3, 1904) Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865–1935) referred to him as this Messiah ben Joseph, the one who is helping to pave the way for Messiah ben David.

From onislam.net

THE MESSIAH IN JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM .

Question and answer details

Name of Questioner: Oskar Hasdinor Hassan

Reply date: 2013/10/28

Question: Salam. The Jews did not recognize Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them) as prophets. They claim that the expected Messenger has not yet come. The questions are: who is the Final Messenger the Jews expect; when will he come and why should such a prophet come? Thank you and May Allah bless you.

consultant: Shahul Hameed

Answer

Salam dear brother,

Thank you for your question and for contacting Ask About Islam.

First of all, we need to understand that the Jews do not expect a 'Final Messenger' as the Muslims would call Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They await the coming of the Messiah.

Now the word 'Messiah' (maseeh in Arabic) is used by Muslims to refer to Jesus (i.e., Isa ibn Maryam, peace be upon him). Both the Muslims and the Christians believe that Jesus was really the Messiah expected by the Jews. But the Jews reject this idea, alleging that Jesus was a false Messiah.

In fact the word 'Messiah' is an Anglicized form of the Hebrew word, Moshiach:

Its root word, mashach, is found about 140 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, meaning "to smear, anoint, or spread."

Masach in Hebrew or masaha (= literally to rub, to massage) in Arabic has the meaning of anointing someone in a religious ceremony by putting holy water or oil on them. Priests and kings were anointed when being consecrated to their offices. Prophets were "anointed" by God in the sense that they were specially chosen by God for a specific religious mission.

In fact, the Bible is replete with the "anointed" ones. Although, every prophet of God is an anointed one of God, the title Messiah or its translation "Christ" is exclusively reserved for Jesus the son of Mary in both Islam and Christianity.

But we may say that the title Messiah stands for anyone who has been chosen by God for a significant mission. In Judaism that mission was crucial to them, namely the restoration of the line of King David, or the establishment of the Law of God on earth.

Christians, on the other hand, give a new meaning to the title 'the Messiah' in relation to their concept of the Atonement of the Original Sin by the Son of God. To them, the Messiah is a Savior who suffers and dies for saving sinful man from eternal punishment in hell.

Muslims accept the Jewish belief that there were prophecies about the coming of the Messiah, on the one hand. On the other, they accept the Christian claim that Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary was the expected Messiah, though this is rejected by the Jews. But Muslims reject the Christian concept of Messiah as the Son of God, who was to be crucified to atone for man's Original Sin.

It was during the reign of Emperor Tiberius that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in Judea. When he was thirty years old, preached to the people of Jerusalem and around, claiming that he was the expected Messiah. But a good number of the Jews of the time did not receive him as the Messiah. Those Jews who followed him became his disciples, who later came to be known as Christians.

But immediately after the disappearance of Jesus, a man called Saul of Tarsus (later known as St Paul) appeared on the scene and claimed to be the Apostle to the Gentiles appointed by Jesus in a vision.

He propagated the idea that Jesus was the Son of God, who sacrificed his life to save mankind from sin. The present day Christians hold this belief about Jesus. They have forgotten what Jesus himself had taught about God.

Though Jesus had come in the same line of prophets as Abraham, Moses and David, his followers (i.e., Christians) rejected what Moses had taught about the expected Messiah and raised him to 'Godhead'.

On the eve of Jesus' disappearance from earth, he had told his followers that a "Spirit of Truth" or "Comforter" would come after him to complete the Religion of God. See the following verses in the Gospel of John: 16:

[Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.]
(John 16:7-8)

And,

[I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.] (John 16:12-14)

This prophecy was given a twisted interpretation by the present day Christians. They say that the "Comforter" or "the Spirit of Truth" was "the Holy Spirit", a person in the Trinity, who was none other than God Himself. Thus according to the Christian interpretation, the foretold "Spirit of Truth" was God Himself.

The Muslims believe that "the Spirit of Truth" prophesied by Jesus was the same as "the Prophet like Moses" foretold by Moses in The Book of Deuteronomy. See the relevant verses:

[And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.] (Deuteronomy 18:17-19)

An objective study will show how the qualities mentioned in the prophecies made by both Moses and Jesus are evident in Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), the final prophet of God through whom God completed His guidance for man.

The foregoing means that the expected Prophet mentioned in the Bible (both Jewish and Christian) was none other than Muhammad. The mission of the last Prophet was to complete the Religion taught by Moses and Jesus, indeed by all the prophets sent by Allah Almighty. The moment a Jew or a Christian recognizes this fact, he or she becomes a Muslim.

But the Jews continue to expect the coming of the Messiah, and the Christians believe that the Messiah was the Son of God — indeed God himself — who came in the shape of Jesus of Nazareth some two thousand years ago and was crucified to atone for humanity's sin.

I hope this answers your question. Please keep in touch.

Salam.

From Christianity.stackexchange

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN DEFINITION OF THE MESSIAH?

Christianity is the religion of people who consider Jesus to be "The Messiah".

But what is the Christian definition of "The Messiah"?

Since Christian theology is based on the notion of "The Messiah's" first coming, what are the criteria that one has to fulfill during their "first coming" in order to be regarded as "The Messiah"?

I think there is an assumption behind your question that is not quite right, regarding the Christian conception of "the Messiah". As David Stratton shows in his answer, the Messiah concept is originally Jewish, and Christians believe that Jesus is that very same Messiah, and the fulfilment of various prophecies. But bear in mind that most Christians historically (1) were Gentiles, and (2) lived long after Jesus did. They are not in the position of already believing the Jewish scriptures to contain true prophecy, and then figuring out that they are talking about Jesus - as if they might wake up one day and decide someone else is a better fit. It's more like taking the salvation work of Jesus as basic, and afterwards using that understanding to approach the Jewish tradition. Jesus's Messiah-nature is (pretty much) axiomatic for Christians, and not a conclusion; instead, the facts of his life tell us what "Messiah" ought to mean.

The earliest Christians, at least, were steeped in the concept of Messiah. As we know, there was a pre-existing expectation of a religious-political saviour of some kind, diverse interpretations of exactly what that meant, and many claimants to the title. The first Christians were those who came to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the same person as the expected Messiah, and they explained this with reference to the Jewish scriptures (consider Peter's speech in Acts 2:14-41, for just one example).

I daresay that in many cases, Jewish people, ancient or modern, would regard a lot of these interpretations as wrong or unjustified (though not all: there are several passages that Jews and Christians agree are messianic, even if they disagree on whether they are talking about Jesus). From a Christian perspective, these passages help us to understand who Jesus was - they do not provide criteria against which he should be judged. Remember that Christians read the New Testament as authoritative from the get-go. If it says that's how to understand what Joel wrote, then there you have it. Moreover, it says very clearly that all expectations about the Messiah

are met or exceeded in Jesus (see for example the Letter to the Hebrews). In particular, he is a king, a priest and a prophet - but not in the way people expected - he is the suffering servant, he is representative of Israel, he brings God's truth to the world, he is above the angels, and so on. More than that, he uniquely met and defeated sin in his own person, as "the firstborn of the dead" whose resurrection makes eternal life possible for all people.

There is a "weak" version of Jesus-as-Messiah, where "Messiah" was a useful analogy for explaining what Jesus did, to people who were already familiar with the idea. Consider in opposition Acts 17:16-34, where Paul speaking in Athens uses the language of Greek philosophy rather than Jewish prophecy. The title would then be just one of many attributes or analogies used to describe who Jesus was, as he is elsewhere called the bread of life, the lamb of God, and so on. But this isn't really satisfactory, since it doesn't explain why exactly God would choose to be incarnate in this nation, at this time.

From a Christian perspective, one can understand the entire prior history of Israel, and indeed the world, as leading towards Jesus. This includes the Messiah concept. In other words, the fact that the messianic idea existed should be "explicable" in terms of Jesus. N. T. Wright (Anglican theologian and bishop) writes that for Paul, "In Jesus the Messiah the covenant purpose of the creator for Israel was finally fulfilled" ¹. In this way the universal significance of Jesus is tied in with the religious and political context of his life, and all of these circumstances were arranged by God. Messiah is not an empty or minor title. It is inseparable from the gospel message. And because of this there is no objective checklist within Christianity for deciding whether someone is the Messiah. Christian faith presupposes that Jesus is the Messiah.

Here comes a terrible analogy. Suppose I am expecting my long-lost uncle to show up for dinner. I've never met him, but I have some idea what he looks like (and perhaps my family can't agree on how tall he is, whether his hair is greyish-black or blackish-grey, or whether he sings bass or tenor). When he does arrive and introduces himself, I immediately "know" that he is my uncle, by what he says and the way he looks and moves, even if he doesn't precisely match my earlier expectation. He may show other forms of proof too. But from now on, because I know who my uncle is, I have updated my uncle-concept in the light of my new experience. True, there is a definition of "an uncle" as the brother of one of my parents, but my definition of "my uncle", my idea of who he is, comes from the facts of his existence. My understanding of my family history, and of all the stories in which my uncle featured, has changed now that I have met him. I cherish those stories but I no longer use them as a checklist against which uncle-candidates can be assessed. Analogy ends.

1. N. T. Wright. Romans and the theology of Paul. In Pauline Theology, volume 3, ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson. 1995. James T

I wrote this not because I disagree with David Stratton's answer, but because I thought it was important to add to it by exploring a difference in assumptions between him and Judah, that is hidden in the original question. – James T Dec 19 '12 at 2:30

And a good addition it is. – David Stratton Dec 19 '12 at 2:38

Much of what you wrote does not refer to my question, except for the last paragraph. To paraphrase you: "The Messiah" means to Christians something like "the most adorable one" (and it doesn't alarm them to use it that way since they rarely know its original Hebrew meaning). Christians admire Jesus for other reasons - they believe he atones for their sins. For doing that, they also call him "The Messiah", i.e. "the most adorable one". I truly see most Christians use it like that. They don't regard it as a title that requires qualification by itself - just as a title that shows their admiration – Judah Dec 19 '12 at 4:25

@Judah - IN no circle of Christianity does "Messiah" mean "adorable one". It is, quite literally, the dictionary answer I posted. The promised and expected deliverer of the Jewish People. The term is well-understood and not in dispute. It's one of the few things we all agree on. The Messiah is the one that delivers His people. In Christ's case, He delivers us from sin, and the consequences - eternity in Hell. We DO ABSOLUTELY adore Him FOR that, but that doesn't mean that "Messiah" means adored one any more than the word "Penny" means my beloved pet dog. – David Stratton Dec 19 '12 at 5:16

If you're not willing to accept the actual definition, why ask the question? It's disingenuous. If you don't want the actual definition, and you want more nuance, then ask for it, but it's not constructive to ask a question and reject the (quite literally) textbook definition that's agreed upon pretty much universally within Christianity. – David Stratton Dec 19 '12 at 5:17

A messiah is a saviour or liberator of a people in the Abrahamic religions. From <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Messiah>

Mes·si·ah [mi-sahy-uh] noun

- 1 the promised and expected deliverer of the Jewish people.
- 2 Jesus Christ, regarded by Christians as fulfilling this promise and expectation. John 4:25, 26.
- 3 (usually lowercase) any expected deliverer.
- 4 (usually lowercase) a zealous leader of some cause or project.
- 5 (italics) an oratorio (1742) by George Frideric Handel.

Items 1 and 3 are the general definitions accepted. There have been plenty of messiahs (little m) in the Abrahamic religions. Judaism points to a coming Messiah throughout the Old Testament.

To your specific question:

Jesus is the Ultimate embodiment of the term. He is The Messiah. Christians believe He is the promised one that can deliver us (liberate us) from our sins, and the penalty of those sins.
That's where definition 2 comes in.

There are tons of resources available explaining why we believe that Christ is The Messiah (as opposed to "a messiah"). For example, a list of Messianic prophecies fulfilled by Christ can be found [here](#).

Also there is the fact that He claimed to have power over life and death, then predicted His own death, burial, and Resurrection stating that this would prove His claim, then died, was buried, and was resurrected, therefore proving His claim.

As for His role as liberator - the ability to liberate us from our sins is based on His words, backed up by miracles. Each time He made a claim to have the power that only God could have, such as the power to forgive sins, He backed the claim up with a miracle as a demonstration of His power, authority, and identity.



For "little m" messiah's it could be liberation from bondage (Moses delivering Israel from Egypt, etc.) That's referred to as a type of messiah, not The Messiah.

David Stratton

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Your resources? Define liberator. – Judah Dec 18 '12 at 23:50

It's a non-answer. – Judah Dec 19 '12 at 0:06

When you define any term, and specifically "The Messiah", you are not supposed to use a specific case in your definition (here, Jesus). Saying "The Messiah is Jesus" is not a definition, it's an argument. First define the term (this is my question after all), then you might want to explain why Jesus matches that definition (although it's not what I asked). – Judah Dec 19 '12 at 0:17

The very first part of the answer is the definition of the term - 5 definitions of the term, in fact, followed by the statement that 1 and 3 are the commonly accepted definitions within Christianity. It then goes on to specify how Jesus meets these terms with plenty of supporting links.. Not sure what more you want. I may be misunderstanding the question, but it appears to me that everything you said I should have in the previous comment is right there. I am sorry if I'm misunderstanding what you're asking for. Just trying' to do my best. No offense meant. – David Stratton Dec 19 '12 at 4:58

What is the Christian definition of "the Messiah"?

The answer to the question is elaborate. Why not simply read the New Testament? The answers to your question are there. Of course, we believe one can read the Tanakh and find the answers there, but there is greater understanding achieved when reading the New Testament because Yeshu'a revealed the scriptures to us.

Anyway, we know that the English word "Messiah" (capitalized or not) is simply a loose transliteration of the Hebrew word מָשִׁיחַ (actual English transliteration: mashiach). This word means "anointed," and when used as a substantive, it means "anointed one." "To "anoint" is "to smear oil upon."

Certainly, there are many individuals referred to as mashiach in the Tanakh, whether prophets, kings, or priests. However, we believe that Jesus is the Messiah par excellence because his anointing was greater than all other individuals who received an anointing. Hence, we refer to him as the Messiah rather than a messiah.

Why so?

In Psalms 45:5-6 (A.V.; 45:7-8 Masoretic), it is written,

O' God, your throne is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of equity. You loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, O' God, your God anointed you with an oil of gladness more than your brothers.

שמן אלהיך משיחך עליִך רשע ותשנא צדק אהבת מלכותך שבט מישר שבט ועד עולם אלהים כסאך מחברִיך ששון

Notice we have God being anointed by God with the "oil of gladness" more than his brothers. The oil of gladness is the Holy Spirit (cp. Acts 10:38).

1.The Messiah is God.

2.He is anointed by God the Father.

3.God the Father anoints him with the Holy Spirit.

4.He is anointed more than his brothers (Yeshu'a has the Holy Spirit without measure; cp. John 3:34).

H3br3wHamm3r81

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You are confusing between the etymology and the essence. I don't think the oil is the main thing about being "the messiah" - although the word means "anointed one". It's like saying, the President of the USA is the person who gets to make a speech during the inauguration ceremony - the speech is a symbol, not the essence. Traditionally, Jews were awaiting a King to deliver them from occupation, they were not awaiting a guy who got his hair smeared with oil, since that alone is useless. Oil is just a symbol of being chosen to do the job. But what is the (1st coming) job according to Christians? – Judah Dec 19 '12 at 14:25



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I answered your first question: "But what is the Christian definition of "The Messiah"? He is the anointed one par excellence. The second answer is much too elaborate. Hence, I recommended reading the New Testament, particularly the Gospels. – H3br3wHamm3r81 Dec 19 '12 at 20:11

I do not think people were awaiting a person who got his hair smeared with oil. Everyone can get their hair smeared with oil. They were awaiting someone who would fulfill some expectations - and the oil ceremony was just a formal ritual to symbolize his being the one who would soon fulfill those expectations. You are dwelling on the oil matter, which is just the Hebrew etymology of the term, but not its essence. If reading the NT could solve those questions, there would not be over 40,000 Christian denominations. Please don't beat around the bush. – Judah Dec 20 '12 at 19:33