

# King, Prophet or Priest

The Messiah in the Old Testament

# Messianism in Judaism?

“Messianism has a more important place in the study of Christianity than in a comprehensive description of ancient Judaism. The Torah, rather than the messiah, is central to traditional Judaism, and one might argue that Paul's rejection of the Law precipitated the separation of Christianity from Judaism.

# Messianism in Judaism?

“The traditional assumption, at least in Christian circles, has been that messianic expectation was ubiquitous and had a consistent form. Consequently, the question of whether Jesus was the messiah admitted of a clearcut answer. There has been a growing recognition in recent years that this view of the matter is heavily influenced by Christian theology.

# Messianism in Judaism?

“In modern parlance, the word ‘messiah’ refers at the minimum to a figure who will play an authoritative role in the end time, usually the eschatological king. The Hebrew word, however, means simply ‘anointed’ and does not necessarily refer to an eschatological figure at all.

A King

# A King...

“Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches down, he stretches out like a lion, like a lioness—who dares rouse him up? ...

# A King...

“...The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and the obedience of the peoples is his. Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine and his robe in the blood of grapes; his eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.

# Hard to translate

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# Messianic?

“

...The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, **until tribute comes to him**; and the obedience of the peoples is his. ~~Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt~~

**until Shiloh comes (NKJV)**

**until he to whom it belongs shall come (NIV)**

# A King again

“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near—a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the borderlands of Moab, and the territory of all the Shethites. Edom will become a possession, Seir a possession of its enemies, while Israel does valiantly. One out of Jacob shall rule, and destroy the survivors of Ir.

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# Ex eventu?

“Balaam's oracle [...] has rightly been attributed to the early monarchy, and taken as a celebration of the victories of one of the early kings. The promise in the "Blessing of Jacob" [...] surely presupposes the rise of the Davidic dynasty. *Ex eventu* predictions of this sort were a form of royal propaganda: the right of the king to rule was guaranteed by the promise of the deity.

# David and the Temple

2 Samuel 7:1–16

# Messianic Promise

“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.

# Messianic Promise

“When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings. But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.



# Ex eventu?!

“A [...] difficult problem is presented by the predictions of a future ruler in the books attributed to the eighth-century prophets.

# Change of tone

“On that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen, and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; in order that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name, says the Lord who does this.

# Knows of the exile

“But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days. ...

# Knows of the exile



Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,

in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth;

# Knows of the exile

“and he shall be the one of peace.  
If the Assyrians come into our land  
and tread upon our soil,  
we will raise against them seven shepherds  
and eight installed as rulers.

# Kings are passed

“A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

# Too different

“The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.”

# Too different

“The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.”



# Too different

“For thus says the Lord: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, and the levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to make grain offerings, and to make sacrifices for all time. The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: Thus says the Lord:

# Too different

“If any of you could break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night would not come at their appointed time, only then could my covenant with my servant David be broken, so that he would not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with my ministers the Levites.

Septuagint

# A messianic king

“

...The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, **until tribute comes to him**; and the obedience of the peoples is his. **Binding** is fast to the vine and his donkey's colt

until the one laid away may come to him,  
and he is the expectation of nations

# A man

“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near—a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the borderlands of Moab, and the territory of all the Shethites shall become a possession, Seir a possession of its enemies, while Israel does valiantly. One out of Jacob shall rule, and destroy the survivors of Ir.”

man

# Random messianism

“For lo, the one who forms the mountains,  
creates the wind,  
reveals his thoughts to mortals,  
makes the morning darkness,  
and treads on the heights of the earth—  
the Lord, the God of hosts, is his name!

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messiah

Prophet and Priest



# A prophet or The Prophet

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: “If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.” Then the LORD replied to me: “They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people;

# A prophet or The Prophet

“I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die.”

# A prophet or The Prophet

“You may say to yourself, “How can we recognize a word that the LORD has not spoken?” If a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD but the thing does not take place or prove true, it is a word that the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; do not be frightened by it.

# Elijah

“Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.

# Two Messiahs

# Zechariah's fifth vision

“Then he said, “These are the **two** anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

# A Priest & a King



The Lord says to my lord,

“Sit at my right hand

until I make your enemies your footstool.”

The Lord sends out from Zion

your mighty scepter.

Rule in the midst of your foes.

Your people will offer themselves willingly

on the day you lead your forces

on the holy mountains.

# A Priest & a King

“From the womb of the morning,  
like dew, your youth will come to you.

The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind,  
“You are a priest forever according to the order of  
Melchizedek.”

The Lord is at your right hand;  
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.



# A Priest & a King

“He will execute judgment among the nations,  
filling them with corpses;  
he will shatter heads  
over the wide earth.  
He will drink from the stream by the path;  
therefore he will lift up his head.

# The Messiah in the Old Testament

- Messianism does not seem to play a large role in Judaism
- ‘Messianic’ prophecies before the exile seem to refer to David
- Messianism seems to develop after the exile due to cognitive dissonance between promises and reality
- Messianic expectations seem to be pluralistic