

John1_Notes

Studying the Life of the Messiah

Messiah comes from the Hebrew word *mashiach*, which means "the anointed one."

In ancient Israel, kings and high priests (and other things and places) were anointed to specify their sacred or set-apart character.

God instructed Moses to produce special anointing oil, which consisted of olive oil mixed with certain spices in the proper proportions (**Exodus 30:22-33**). It was used at the time to anoint the Tabernacle and its utensils (such as the ark, altars and Lamp Stand), and to anoint Aaron and his sons. The Talmud states that the original oil produced in the desert, though only 12 logs (about 1 gallon), miraculously lasted for all of Israel's history and exists in its full quantity today (Mishna Tractate Horayot 11b).

This special anointing oil was hidden away by King Josiah towards the end of the First Temple era – when he hid the Ark of the Covenant and a number of other sacred items, knowing that the Temple was soon to be destroyed.

The rabbis asserted that In the End of Days the oil will be revealed from its hiding place – together with the Ark and other items – and both the future High Priest and the Messiah, the future king of Israel, will be anointed with it.

Some History

The spirit of prophecy was taken away from Israel after the ministry of the prophet Malachi. That's where we left off.

Persian rule gave way to Alexander the Great and rule by his generals after his death. The Greek Seleucid dynasty controlled Judea and Syria from 322 B.C. on.

After Antiochus Epiphanes forbade Jewish worship and practice, a revolt broke out in 167 B.C.. Led by Judas Maccabaeus, the Jews defeated the Greek Seleucid army, and for a time, Judea controlled its own destiny. (We read about this during the feast of Hanukkah every year).

For about 100 years the Hasmonean dynasty kept Judea independent, while squabbling among themselves over who would hold the throne and the high priesthood.

The Roman general Pompey captured Jerusalem in 63 B.C., ending Jewish independence and turning Judea into a Roman-dependent state. The Parthians pushed back the Romans and granted Judea a brief period of autonomy. But then Rome took over again and appointed Herod the Great as a client king in 37 B.C.

Anticipation of the Messiah

Under Roman rule, life was harsh, and longing increased for a deliverer, the Messiah, who would defeat Israel's enemies and restore the kingdom.

During the time of Jesus' ministry, they knew that the time period for the coming of Messiah predicted by Daniel - the 70 weeks of years - was about to run out.

- **Daniel 9:24** - "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

25 "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26 "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Testament of Levi and another document that scholars call Pseudo-Ezekiel - dated to around 146 B.C. - show that the Essenes expected the time of Messiah to begin in AD 2 or 3 - about when Jesus was born.

The Rabbinical Belief in Two Messiahs

Some Messianic scriptures, like **Isaiah 53**, tell of a humble Messiah, who arrives riding on a lowly colt or donkey. He is wounded for the sins of His people and ultimately gives up his life.

Other scriptures picture a victorious and powerful King who defeats Israel's enemies and restores their kingdom. He arrives in mighty clouds of glory.

The rabbis couldn't make sense of these seemingly contradictory versions. So they proposed two different messianic figures - Messiah ben Joseph, who comes in gentleness, and Messiah ben David, who comes in power.

Of course, Christians see one Messiah - Jesus - but two comings - who comes first in humility and peace, who is persecuted, rejected and ultimately killed, giving his life for

the sins of His people, but is then resurrected and ascends to Heaven, only to return in the future a second time in power and glory.

Studying the Gospels

The story of Jesus' life is recorded in four gospels - named for His disciples Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. "Gospel" means "good news" or "important news."

Although Jesus came as the Messiah of His people the Jews, his sacrifice on the cross was for all the people of the world.

It's remarkable that the words of the prophet Isaiah are etched into the wall outside the United Nations building. They describe a vision of the peaceful world that all peoples yearn for, which the Messiah will bring; "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (**Isaiah 2:4**)

In studying the Gospels, besides using recent research and archaeological discoveries, we will draw on research by Alfred Edersheim, an Austrian Jewish convert to Christianity, and John Lightfoot, both biblical scholars from the late 1800s, Edersheim wrote "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah." Lightfoot wrote "A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica."

Their valuable findings show us how the rabbis and sages in Jesus' day and earlier interpreted the scriptures.

- **John 5:39** - "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me".

In fact, there are 456 passages and verses that the rabbis commented on as referring to the Messiah.

We will base our examination of the life of Jesus on the Gospel of Luke, supplemented by the other gospels.

We'll also be drawing from "A Harmony of the Gospels"
<https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/harmony/index.cfm>

Back Before the Beginning

But we have to start with a passage from John, often referred to as the more "spiritual" Gospel.

It takes us back to before the creation.

John 1:1- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and

without him was not any thing made that was made."

John 1:4 - "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

Jewish tradition had hinted about the pre-existence of the Messiah.

The Babylonian Talmud (Pesachim 54a) lists seven things created or conceptualized before the foundation of the world: the Torah, repentance, the Garden of Eden, Gehenna, the Throne of Glory, the Temple, and the name of the Messiah

Citing **Psalms 72:17** ("His name shall endure forever and has existed before the sun"), the sages emphasized that it was the "Name" or divine concept of the Messiah that preceded creation.

Pesiqta Rabbati describe God as viewing the Messiah and his generation before creation, then hiding him under the Throne of Glory until the appointed time.

"From the beginning of the creation of the world king Messiah was born, for he entered the mind (of God) before even the world was created" (Pesikta Rab. 152b)

- Earlier apocalyptic and pseudepigraphal works like 1 Enoch (dating to roughly the 2nd century BCE) spoke of the "Son of Man" or Messiah being chosen and hidden in the presence of the Lord before the creation of the world.

"and the Word was God"

It's remarkable that some rabbinical commentary assigns God's name to the Messiah. The Tetragrammaton, YHWH, unpronounceable except by the High Priest on day a year on Yom Kippur. In referencing it, Jews would instead use the word *Adonai* or Lord.

A midrash on **Psalms 21:3** -

No one would dare don the crown of a human king, but in the future the Holy One, blessed be He, will place His crown upon the head of King Messiah. What is the crown of the Holy One, blessed be He, like? The crown of the Holy One, blessed be He, is of the finest gold, as it is said: His head is of the most fine gold (**Song of Solomon 5:11**), and it is also written about Him elsewhere: Thou settest a crown of fine gold on his head (**Isaiah 21:4**).

- Midrash Tachuma, Vaera 8:2

In Midrash Tehilim (Psalms) it is written that God calls the Messiah by His name. And what is His name? The answer given is: "YHWH, Man of War" (**Exodus 15:3**). And about the Messiah we read: "And that is His name by which He will be called: YHWH, Our Righteousness."

Midrash on Lamentations, commenting on **Jeremiah 23:6** - prophecies of the future

Son of David: "And this is the name whereby he shall be called: The Lord Our Righteousness (Adonai Tzidkenu)"

In Midrash Eichah 1 it says about this verse: "What is the name of the Messiah King?" Rabbi Abba Bar-Kahana said: 'The Lord' is his name, and that is the name by which He will be called, The LORD, Our Righteousness".

"All things were made by Him."

"The Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters." This was the Spirit of Messiah as it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him (Genesis Rabbah 1:2,)." "

"The light of life"

Edersheim - in Yalkut on Is. lx., the words 'In Thy light shall we see light' (**Psalms 36:9**) are explained as meaning, that this is the light of the Messiah, - the same which God had at the first pronounced to be very good, and which, before the world was created, He had hid beneath the throne of His glory for the Messiah and His age. When Satan asked for whom it was reserved, he was told that it was destined for Him Who would put him to shame, and destroy him. And when, at his request, he was shown the Messiah, he fell on his face and owned, that the Messiah would in the future cast him and the Gentiles into Gehenna. Whatever else may be inferred from it, this passage clearly implies not only the pre-existence, but the premundane existence of the Messiah.

- **Revelation 13:8** - "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

- **Revelation 22:5** - "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

- **John 8:12** - "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Resources

Alternative theories on the 70 weeks of Daniel

<https://www.torahclass.com/lessons/old-testament/daniel/lesson-28-ch9/>