

The Hope of the Messiah

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The Jewish Messiah (“anointed one”) is a central figure in the faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. He is God’s appointed human representative of his kingdom on earth. The Messiah both teaches us how to live in a kingdom way, and is the ruler of that kingdom.

There is much about this person that we know from the monotheistic scriptures, but even more that we undoubtedly do not know. Yet understanding his ways is vital to understanding God because he makes personal to us the hand of God in our physical world. We also do well to live as he would instruct us because one day his heavenly kingdom will be made manifest in the earth and all that opposes it will be swept away.

This paper introduces this servant of God, and urges you to welcome his kingdom and seek your place in it.

Importance of the Messiah

The sacred scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam describe the beginnings of our world in beautiful terms. It was a garden paradise called Eden that was filled with creatures living together in harmony. God himself walked in his creation, and placed man and woman there to steward it on his behalf. There was no death, suffering, or struggle. Our first ancestors lived simply and joyfully, like little children, and brought pleasure to their God as the Creator-Father.

Unfortunately, a rebellion broke out in the heavens where some number of angels decided to exercise their right of independence and pursue their own kingdom apart from God’s. They were thrown out of the highest heaven and at least some appeared on the earth. There they seduced God’s people to disobey God’s instructions and pursue their own ways apart from God’s will. Thus, the rebellion had spread from heaven to earth. Over the years, the perfection of Eden was lost, animals became both a threat and a source of food, and survival became the dominant concern of man.

It is a wonder that the Creator did not destroy his work and start over. We can see from nature’s ways that the earth has been purged several times in ice ages, floods, desertification, and meteor strikes. Life has had to restart in various places repeatedly. It has never been completely destroyed, and man has been given in various places and times the opportunity to start over. Yet evil was never fully subdued, and always returned to corrupt the creation.

God could not destroy evil because he gave us, angels, and all intelligent beings the right of free choice. He did so because there is little satisfaction in forced allegiance. As a parent, God wanted his children to freely choose love and obedience. To help them understand good and evil, he gave each people group a set of rules for living against which they could compare their own behavior. He laid out both blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience, and bound himself to the same covenantal contract. Man now had no excuse other than his own will for not choosing a holy life.

God codified laws of living for the Hebrew people in their Torah, and later added revelation through the prophets, psalms, and various writings that together became the Tanakh. No other people group on earth so completely preserved such a divine covenantal contract in written form. Its major commandments remain for us today a standard against which all people can measure their behavior.

For millennia now, man has made choices about his behavior that resulted in some mix of good and evil. But the day is coming when God will put an end to the current arrangement. He will introduce a new chapter in which the Messiah figures prominently and ushers in a new order in which evil is forced out. This is the future hope of the world. A new kingdom will be established on earth headed by the human Messiah who, sent by God, will have authority to rule the earth from the earth. All those who have freely chosen obedience before God are presumed to be given a place in this new kingdom serving the Messiah and each other. Some aspects of the original Eden, and perhaps our notion of “heaven”, are also assumed to be restored in this time of peace and plenty.

Some believe that the Messiah will judge all people and nations on God’s behalf prior to his appearance on earth, and that only those found acceptable in his sight will join him in the new kingdom. There are a variety of opinions regarding the fate of those that are not judged to be faithful. It is in this future kingdom that our faithfulness in this lifetime will be rewarded.

Messiah of Judaism

The Jewish Messiah is known from a combination of the sacred scriptures of the Tanakh, and from a collection of commentaries in the post-Biblical Talmud. These describe two Messiahs; one that suffers and is rejected by his people (Mashiach Ben-Yosef), and one who reigns from Jerusalem as the head of the nations (Mashiach Ben-David). Mashiach is the Hebrew word for Messiah. The same word in Greek is Christos, from which we get “Christ”.

There are numerous prophetic discourses and songs in the Tanakh that are understood to refer to a future Messiah. Here are several:

Messiah for all nations

God promises the patriarch Abraham that God will bless all people through a single, future descendent. He reiterates this message much later through the prophet Isaiah.

"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." [Genesis 22:18]

He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." [Isaiah 49:6]

Messiah as descendent of King David

God promises King David that his offspring would become a dynasty that would rule over Israel forever despite future sin that God foreknew. Beginning with David's son Solomon, Israel understood that it would enjoy God's blessing so long as it lived under the Lord's anointed one. In this sense, every future king was to be a Messiah. Solomon seemed to be such a prototype and was given the honor of constructing the Lord's temple in Jerusalem.

"When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, 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 will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took {it} away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." [2 Samuel 7:12-16]

Following Solomon's death, Israel became increasingly apostate, divided into two contesting kingdoms, and faced a series of exiles that seemed to negate the promise given to David. God responded to the nation's lawlessness with a curse against King Jehoiakim that prohibited any future king in David's bloodline from sitting on the throne.

"Thus says the LORD, 'Write this man down childless, A man who will not prosper in his days; For no man of his descendants will prosper Sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah.' " [Jeremiah 22:30]

Yet there would be one exception.

'Behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 'In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. 'In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is {the name} by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness.' '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 before Me to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to prepare sacrifices continually.' " [Jeremiah 33:14-18]

With this seemingly contradictory combination of prohibition and promise, the Israelites no longer looked to their kings for a Messiah, but rather to some future person who would be specially anointed to the role by God.

Messiah as Glorious Servant

The messianic leader desired and expected by the Israelites was to be a victorious political, military, and/or religious figure. The Zealots were expecting a warrior, the priestly class a legalist, the Essenes an ascetic, and mystic sects a divine concept rather than a man. On one thing they agreed. The Messiah was to place Israel first among the nations. He represented a just king who would rule over an age of peace and Godly revelation.

"I [Balaam] see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth. "Edom shall be a possession, Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession, While Israel performs valiantly. "One from Jacob shall have dominion, And will destroy the remnant from the city." [Numbers 24:17-19]

"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the {very} ends of the earth as Your possession. 'You

shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.' "Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish [in] the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! [Psalms 2:7-12]

Messiah as Suffering Servant

There is also substantial prophecy describing a Suffering Servant of God. He was assumed by the Israelites to be a different person from the Glorious Servant since the suffering described seemed so incompatible with a victorious leader.

Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no {stately} form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. [Isaiah 53:1-3]

"So you are to know and discern {that} from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince {there will be} seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end {will come} with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined." [Daniel 9:25-26]

Jews are unclear what purpose God will have in sending his Suffering Servant. Additionally, Jewish orientation has always been to living a good life in this world, and their prophetic tradition is thus oriented to this earth. It is unknown to them what role the Messiah may have either in the world they go to after death (sheol) or a new world to come (olam haba) they may inhabit in the future.

Messiah of Christianity

Christians agree with the Hebrew prophecies. But whereas the Jews are still awaiting their Messiah(s), Christians believe that the man Jesus already came to earth some 2,000 years ago as the Suffering Servant, presently performs a ministry of intercession for us in the heavens, and will return to earth at the end of this age as the Glorious Servant. He will thereupon rule for a new 1,000 year "messianic age".

Messiah as God's hand in the earth

The apostle Paul wrote that Jesus was the first being created by God, and that all subsequent work in the earthly realm was done through him. He created the earth on behalf of God, and will judge the inhabitants of the earth on his behalf as well. Christians believe that Jesus was a human incarnation of God in the same way Hindus see the avatar Krishna.

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. [Colossians 1:13-20]

Messiah as Guilt Offering

Certain aspects of the Hebrew's law related to cleansing the people from the sin which separates man from his holy God. Forgiveness (atonement) was obtained by sacrificing an animal as a sin or guilt offering. There were several reasons for this. First, animals were a form of wealth and the person was expected to give something up to show how sorry he was for offending his God. Second, sin causes a spiritual separation from God that is just as real as physical death. In his wisdom, God decided that death could only be avoided through the substitution of another life. A sinful life can only be redeemed by substituting another that is sinless. Since all human beings have great value in God's sight, an animal is used. Third, the blood of every creature represents its life, and when its blood is spilled, its life is given up. Killing an innocent creature forced the sinner to face the severity of his indiscretions and be honest about his repentance.

"He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. "Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. "Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the LORD fell, and make it a sin offering. "But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat..."Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat." [Leviticus 16:7-10, 15]

Unfortunately, humans are unable to keep from offending God. We do so anew every day, and so continuous, on-going repentance and sacrifice was required to keep the people righteous in God's sight. It was for this reason that the tabernacle and temple were constructed to be a central part of the life of the people. The Jews built and then lost their temples on two occasions; 586 BCE and 70 CE. The Jews have not had a temple for the last 2,000 years of their dispersion, although many expect that a new one will eventually be constructed now that Israel has been restored as a nation.

The blood of animals is symbolic of the blood of substitution that only God can provide, since it is only he who can forgive offenses against him and his law. Christians believe that the purpose of the Suffering Servant having come was to be the true and complete sin offering on behalf of all people. It was no less than God offering up his own blood to himself, in order to fulfill his own law of redemption and sin forgiveness (justification).

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke {was due?} His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting {Him} to grief; If He would render Himself {as} a guilt offering, He will see {His} offspring, He will prolong {His} days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see {it and} be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many. As He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors. [Isaiah 53:4-12]

Because the temple animal sacrifice was operating in Israel until 70 CE, the Israelites did not know what to make of this messianic passage given through their prophet Isaiah around 700 BCE since a human guilt offering seemed inappropriate and barbaric.

The priest Zechariah wrote that Israel will be led one day by God to recognize its part in "piercing" the one who was sent to suffer as their guilt offering.

"I [God] will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn." [Zechariah 12:10]

Jesus and Prophecy

Jesus fulfilled many of the messianic prophecies during his first visit to earth. Here are just a few that illustrate how unlikely a coincidence it would be if Jesus were not truly the Messiah who had been prophesied.

Prediction	Tanakh	Gospels
Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1
Preceded by a messenger	Isaiah 40:3	Matthew 3:1-2
Enter Jerusalem on a colt	Zechariah 9:9	Luke 19:35-37
Betrayed by a trusted friend	Psalm 41:9	Matthew 26:47-50
Hands and feet pierced	Psalm 22:16	Luke 23:33
Wounded	Isaiah 53:5	Matthew 27:26
Spit upon and beaten	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67
Sold for 30 pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:15
Betrayal money thrown away	Zechariah 11:13	Matthew 27:5-7
Silent before his accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 27:12-14

Crucified with thieves	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38
Three days in the grave	Johah 1:17	Matthew 12:39-40

Christians believe that Jesus will fulfill the remaining messianic prophecies of the reigning Glorious Servant during his next coming at the end of this age. It was because he did not fulfill their expectation of a Glorious Servant that Jesus suffered and died at the hands of the religious authorities during his first visit. How ironic!

Messiah of Islam

Although Prophet Muhammad is the central figure in Islam today, it will not be so once the Messiah has come. Muhammad was clear that Jesus (Arabic = "Isa") is this person.

(Remember) when the angels said: "O Maryam (Mary)! Verily, Allah gives you the glad tidings of a Word from Him, his name will be the Messiah Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam, held in honor in this world and in the Hereafter, and will be one of those who are near to Allah." [Noble Qur'an. 3:44]

But what does Islam know of the Messiah? The Qur'an reveals that this man did miraculous deeds while on earth and was raised up by Allah into the heavenly place where he is presently awaiting the end times. The Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith #3264 comments that Isa as "Messiah" will descend before the Day of Resurrection as the just Islamic ruler. Some believe that he will defeat a False Messiah and Anti-Christ to complete the establishment of worldwide Islam.

It is related from Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "By the One who has my soul in His hand, the time is soon coming when the son of Maryam will descend among you as a just judge. He will break the crosses, kill the pigs and remove the jizya-tax. There will be so much money that there will be no takers for it, and a single prostration will be better than this world and what it contains." Then Abu Hurayra said, "Recite if you like, 'There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him before he dies; and on the Day of Rising, he will be a witness against them.' (4:159)" [XLIX: 3264]

The Messiah must not be confused with the Al-Mahdi. This is a separate person who will come before the re-appearance of the Messiah for the purpose of unifying the Muslim faith and preparing it for battle against the False Messiah and the unbelieving forces of the world. Sunnis believe this person will appear in Medina, Saudi Arabia and then lead from Damascus, Syria. Shi'a believe he is *Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Ali* the 12th and final Iranian Imam born in 869 CE who was taken into hiding at the age of 5 years old.

Muhammad disagreed with the Jews over Jesus' identity as the Messiah, which he believed to be so. He disagreed with the Christians that Jesus is a physical incarnation of God himself who was indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Muhammad saw him as merely a human being whose created soul was empowered from a distance by Allah's will. Islam also differs from both Jewish and Christian belief, supported as it is by historians like Flavius Josephus, that Jesus was killed by the Roman authorities. Islam does not accept that any of Allah's messengers could be physically killed by another person.

These are important differences, but they miss the main point. Jesus in his ministry always pointed his followers back to the Creator, known to Jews as YHWH and to Arabs as "Allah". The Messiah has an important part in blessing all humans of every faith who turn to the Creator and are submitted to him in honest repentance. By whatever means and spiritual laws Allah has chosen to call and reward his believers, his mercy and compassion is a great gift of love. For the Muslim, believing in and honoring Messiah Isa also honors Allah.

Characteristics of the Messiah

Combining what we know about the Messiah from the sacred writings of these faiths, we are presented with a very unique person. The Messiah is at once the servant and ruler of all mankind. He is both the sacrificial atoning lamb, and God's very right hand in the earth. He is unlike any leader we have ever known, and will serve as king in an age unlike any that people have experienced since the time of Adam in Eden.

This is not a political, religious, or military leader such as we conceive. The Messiah is a leader after God's own heart, one who carries absolute power and uses it in pure love. His power is incorruptible and forever consistent because of that love. He is not moved by money or authority, because he already has all of both. His motivation is fulfilling God's desire for a creation that honors and loves its Creator back. To that end, the Messiah was sent by God to do some things of which no other human being is capable.

Servant and Intercessory High Priest

Above all, the Messiah is a servant of both God and man. He does just what God instructs him, in perfect obedience, and that includes loving all people. The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would serve people in many ways, but especially as a great healer. Jesus fulfilled this messianic prediction.

Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah. [Isaiah 35:5-6]

And He [Jesus] answered and said to them, "Go and report to John [the Baptizer] what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. [Luke 7:22]

In another form of healing, the Messiah was also understood to in some way take on the burden of the world's sin through the suffering he would endure. As we saw in the verses from Isaiah 53 above, the Messiah would "bear their iniquities". Christians believe that Jesus fulfilled this during his first visit by earning the place of high priest for all people. This had a specific implication in Israel. The human high priest performed the sacrifices and offerings before God on behalf of the people, and through that action God granted forgiveness. Jesus, by offering himself as the fulfillment of the required sin sacrifice became the ultimate high priest and the final source of sin forgiveness for everyone.

The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. [Hebrews 7:23-27]

The word "intercession" means standing in the place of another. An intercessor commits to do for someone else what they cannot or will not do for themselves so that God's purposes can be accomplished. For example, if a person has financial needs, the intercessor would first meet as much of that need as he is able, and then petition God for the remainder that is required. Jesus interceded for sin by dying a physical death in place of the sinner's spiritual death. He therefore obtained a claim on God to supply the forgiveness that was needed by all whose *sin he bore*.

Jews do not generally accept that such a ministry could be performed by any man, although they remain unsure of Isaiah's prophetic meaning. Muslims do not believe that any person can make sin intercession on behalf of another since everyone will be required to stand alone before God's judgment seat.

King and Glorious Servant Leader

There are many prophetic passages in the Tanakh which gave Israel hope for a victorious leader like King David who would establish forever Israel as a land of blessing. Here are only a few. Clearly, their fulfillment remains in the future.

"I also shall make him {My} firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth. "My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, And My covenant shall be confirmed to him." [Psalms 89:27-28]

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." "The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, {saying,} "Rule in the midst of Your enemies." Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You {as} the dew. 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 in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations, He will fill {them} with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country. He will drink from the brook by the wayside; Therefore He will lift up {His} head. [Psalm 110:1-7]

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of {His} government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. [Isaiah 9:6-7]

Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse [Messiah], Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious. Then it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar,

Hamath, And from the islands of the sea. And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. [Isaiah 11:10-12]

He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." [Isaiah 49:6]

"Behold, {the} days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.' " [Jeremiah 23:5-6]

"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and {men of every} language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed." [Daniel 7:13-14]

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout {in triumph,} O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you also, because of the blood of {My} covenant with you, I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. [Zechariah 9:9-11]

Righteous Judge

The Messiah will be granted the authority to judge all people and nations. Despite having such delegated authority from God, his judgment will always be perfect and never corrupted by such absolute power.

For zeal for Your house has consumed me, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. [Psalms 69:9]

Then a shoot [Messiah] will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist. [Isaiah 11:1-5]

"Behold, My Servant [Messiah], whom I [God] uphold; My chosen one {in whom} My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. "He will not cry out or raise {His voice,} Nor make His voice heard in the street. "A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. "He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law." Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it And spirit to those who walk in it, "I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison." [Isaiah 42:1-7]

Relationship and Commitment

The Messiah will remain a mystery until his appearance at the end of the age as the ultimate authority on earth. He will be a righteous judge of our hearts toward God, a wise leader that will bring peace to the world, and God's delegate in all other matters related to our realm. He will be a man, but must have the divine spark of God and his Ruach (Holy Spirit) within him to accomplish all that has been prophesied.

Jesus came to earth in the general time frame anticipated by the prophet Daniel and performed many of the supernatural wonders expected of the Messiah. He also fulfilled the prophecies related to the Suffering Servant. If he is indeed the Messiah, then he will return at the end of the age as a very different servant having authority that will be recognized by every person.

The coming of the Glorious Servant will mark the Last Day of this age, and has been anticipated since the time of the Jewish prophets. Yet only recently has an event occurred which fulfills a key requirement given by Jesus, who was also a messenger. He foresaw the destruction of Israel by the Romans in 70 BCE, which occurred nearly a generation after his death. He also saw that Israel would subsequently be restored as a nation after a long dispersion. This finally occurred in 1948. He indicated that the generation alive at that time would still be living on the Last Day. (Matthew 24:32-34) Additionally, the prophet Daniel tells us that a third temple (or portable tabernacle) is to be erected and the sacrifice reinstated in Israel shortly before the end of our present age. We await this final event, even as the City of David, which served as the final resting place of the Tabernacle and Ark, is excavated today south of the Temple Mount.

Dear reader, the time is close. The righteous judge will be returning soon. And he promises a wonderful new age for those that choose to follow the ways of God and his Messiah. Those who reject him will suffer a spiritual death sentence because they will not have been cleansed by his sacrifice. They will not be reconciled with their Creator. Now is the time to call upon God, seek his face, turn away from lawlessness, and enter into the joy of his fellowship.

The Jewish prophet Isaiah and the Christian apostle John both were given a vision of a new world to come. It is worth the journey.

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem {for} rejoicing And her people {for} gladness. "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying." [Isaiah 65:17-19]

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." [Revelation 21:1-4]