



Jesus - The Jewish Messiah?

Friday 16th April 2010

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Overview

- Unprecedented times
- Literature review
- Diversity within Judaism
- Yet... Jews agree on NO to Jesus!
- Different expectations???
- Christian view of Messiah
- Jewish expectations of Messiah
- Not this alone... Anti-Semitism...Maimonides, spiritual blindness...
- Current thought... Zionism, Schneerson, Dabru Emet, pluralism, yet intervention 1 day!

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Messiah and Christianity **(Starting-point Assumptions)**

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Christian views of the Messiah

- Hebrew Bible refers to a spiritual saviour
- Evidenced in selectively culled passages from the Book of Isaiah

"The young woman is with child, and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." [Isa. 7:14]

"He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." [Isa. 53:5]

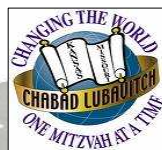
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A Wide Variety Of Messianic Thought In Judaism

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A Variety of Thought in Judaism

- Orthodox
- Conservative
- Reform
- Liberal
- Zionist
- Kabbalist
- Secular



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Some Examples...

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A graphic of a grey road with white dashed lines, curving from the bottom left towards the top right. The text 'No longer waiting for Messiah?' is centered at the top.

No longer waiting for Messiah?

‘With the rise of science and secularism, the fervent conviction has lost its force for many modern Jews. No longer does it seem conceivable that a divinely appointed redeemer will arise to deliverer the Jewish nation and bring about the transformation of history.’

{Dan Cohn-Sherbok: The Jewish Messiah}

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Messiah will intervene one day?

'With the strongest antecedents in the Bible, the doctrine of the Messiah was developed, elaborated upon and given a variety of interpretations throughout Jewish history, but its basic affirmation is that human history will find its fulfilment here on earth.'

{Louis Jacobs: A Jewish Theology}

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Religious Agnosticism...

'A degree of religious agnosticism is called for here. We must be frank enough to admit that we simply do not know what will happen in the Messianic Age... We must leave it to God who alone knows all secrets.'

[L. Jacobs: The Jewish Religion]

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Religious Pluralism...

'The idea that Judaism does not have absolute truth now permeates much of Jewish thought. There are many religions, so many ways of seeing God. So much of what has been taught down the centuries is due to human perception rather than about who God really is.'

[D. Cohn-Sherbok: The Jewish Messiah]

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But United On One Issue...

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Jesus is not the Jewish Messiah

'There is no universally recognized standard or authority in Judaism...I believe in Jesus. Many Jews believe in Buddha, or Krishna, or nothing at all. Who tries to stop them from being Jewish? Why should I be treated differently?'

{C. Harris-Shapiro: Messianic Judaism}

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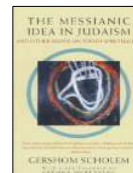
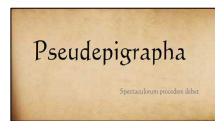
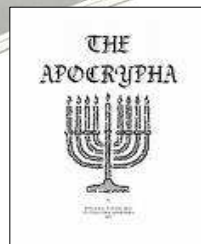
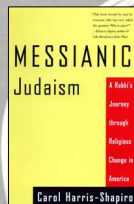
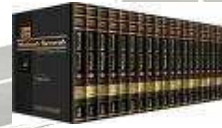
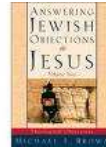
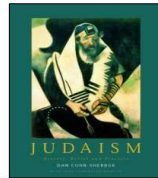
So, ANYTHING goes, apart from Jesus

- Jewish Renewal Movement has incorporated elements of Eastern worship and meditation into their own religious practices.
- Jewish rabbis met the Dalai Lama, and Jewish Buddhists made up the minyan.



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Messiah a consistent “hot topic” ...



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Messiah... Fundamental to Judaism

“One of the fundamental tenets of Judaism is the belief in the Messiah, the Saviour who is to come, redeem the people of Israel from their suffering in exile, lead them back to Jerusalem, and establish the rule of peace over all the nations of the world... From the first century BCE, the Messiah was the central figure in the Jewish myth of the future.”

{R. Patai – The Messiah Texts}

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Messiah and Judaism

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“Messiah” in Judaism Defined

“In Jewish messianic tradition and eschatology, *messiah* refers to a leader anointed by God, and in some cases, a future King of Israel, physically descended from the Davidic line, who will rule the people of a united tribes of Israel and herald the Messianic Age of global peace. He is not considered to be divine, and is not considered to be the Christian Jesus. In standard Hebrew, The Messiah is often referred to as "the Anointed King.”

~ Wikipedia ~

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There have been many “Messiahs”

The Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures):

- David
- Saul
- Solomon
- Emperor Cyrus

The Qumran community:

- Three different messiahs were awaited daily. [see Qumran Scroll, “Manual of Discipline”, column 9, line 11].

The Talmud knows at least two:

- Messiah ben Joseph
- Messiah ben David

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Biblical Evidence for Messiah

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Biblical Evidence of Messiah

- Not explicit in Torah
- Abraham promised a 'great nation'
- Inheritance of the Land
- Jacob - descendants that will bless others

'Although these verses do not express a clear conception of the Messiah, they form the background to the evolution of the doctrine of the deliverance of the nation.'

(Dan Cohn-Sherbok - The Jewish Messiah)

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Biblical Evidence of Messiah

- **David** - descendants to reign over Israel forever and his throne to be secure.
- **Hosea** - exile to Egypt but after repentance there will be mercy and they will return and there will be prosperity in the land ...perfect peace.
- **Isaiah** - God will triumph eventually, but calamity will come first. Yet nations will come and worship and there will be no more war...
- **Isaiah** - a child, called "prince of peace".
- **Ezekiel** - ingathering from countries scattered, valley of dry bones, servant David as prince forever.

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Biblical Evidence of Messiah

- **Isaiah** - servant who will bring salvation, who will be mocked, will proclaim liberty to captives, & bring peace.
- **Haggai** and **Zerubbabel** - a new temple and faithfulness of God.
- **Zechariah** - God's mercy after the exile; redemption.
- **Malachi** - messenger will be sent to prepare the way, Elijah will be sent before the terrible day of the Lord.

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Biblical Evidence of Messiah

'The Book of Psalms depicts the king as the Anointed of the Lord; he is placed by the Lord on his throne, proclaimed as his son, and appointed to maintain righteousness and justice throughout the land. Through his actions he conveys divine blessing to his people, fertility to the soil, and victory over foreign powers. Ruling over the entire world, his throne is established for all time.'

{Dan Cohn- Sherbok - The Jewish Messiah}

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Useful Extra-Biblical Texts

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Apocrypha

Jewish works during 2nd temple period,
written under Hasmonean empire.
Not very Messianic as these were
prosperous times...

Ben Sira

House of David will last forever.
Coming of Elijah in Messianic Age;
Jews as light to the Gentiles

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Pseudepigrapha

After devastation of the temple [70AD]

Apocryphal Baruch

Exiles will return; Zion will be re-established
in magnificence

II Maccabees

Eternal life; reward and punishment;
resurrection of dead in bodily terms

Wisdom of Solomon

World to come; eternal life; divine
retribution; immortality

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Pseudepigrapha

The Ethiopic Book of Enoch

'...severe affliction will come on the world:
the destitute will abandon their children,
pregnant women will miscarry, and
mothers will cast suckling away'

Messiah described as 'white bull with large
horns'.

'Messiah existed before the creation of the
world. His dwelling place is under the
wings of the God of Spirits where the elect
shall pass before him.'

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Rabbinic Teaching...

Redemption will come through 'charity, repentance and the observance of Jewish law'

- **Messiah ben Joseph** – engages in battle with Gog and Magog, enemies of Israel, and will be killed. Will be mourned as a hero, as he is lost in battle. This war will be one of worst evils to befall mankind.
- **Messiah ben David** – victorious, judgement, and reward of eternal bliss or everlasting punishment. Yet the King Messiah will come to bring messianic kingdom on earth. Legends surround his nature.

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Messiah, coming soon?



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Why Can't They See Him?

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He Doesn't Meet Expectations

'If a King arises of the House of David, meditating in the Torah and performing precepts like his father David, in accordance with written Torah and the Oral Torah, and if he will compel all Israel to walk in the way of the Torah... and wage the wars of the Lord... he is the Messiah.

If he succeeds in rebuilding the temple and gathering the dispersed ones of Israel... beyond doubt he is the Messiah.'

(Yad Melakhim 11:4)

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Some Texts Marginalised

'Pseudepigrapha... like the Apocrypha, were unknown in Jewish literature until the Renaissance period. Apart from the circles of historians and objective scholars, all these works are largely ignored by Jews today. By the same consensus by which they were excluded from the Bible they have been made to seem, if not heretical, not quite right in Jewish eyes so that rarely, if ever, will one find quotations from them, in say, books of devotion.'

[L. Jacobs]

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Spiritual Blindness...

"God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day." And David says:

"May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling-block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent for ever."

Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fulness bring!

[Romans 11:8-12]

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Pseudo- Messiahs...



Judah Maccabee



Yeshua ben Joseph



Shimon bar Kochba

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Pseudo- Messiahs...



Shabbatai Zevi

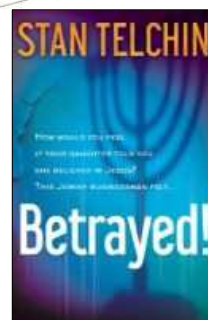
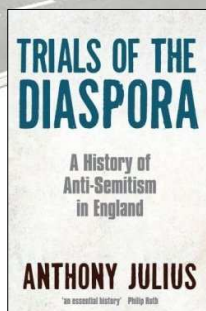


The "Ultra-Orthodox" Chasidic Rabbinic Movement

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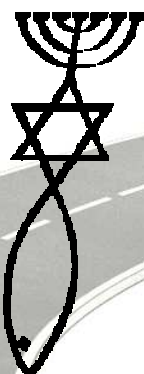
Christian Anti-Semitism

- Our CD, our DVD...
- And some useful books...



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Christian Anti-Semitism



'Jews have served Christians for centuries as the examples of "those who killed / rejected Christ," the bearers of values antithetical to Christianity, and even as representatives of Satan himself. In turn Jewish literature used the figure of Esau as the carnal, violent, rather stupid brother of Jacob to portray Christians and their persecutions of the Jews.'

{C. Harris-Shapiro – Messianic Judaism}

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Messianic Jews - the *new* Enemy?

'Messianic Jews are looked upon with suspicion, by Liberal Christian Churches, accepted only partially by some evangelical organizations, and are considered pariahs by the American Jewish community...you can't consider yourself part of our people, proclaims the Jewish community, if you are actively working to eradicate us spiritually.'

[C. Harris-Shapiro - Messianic Judaism]

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Jewish Heritage / Tradition as an obstacle to Messiah

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Maimonides' 13 Articles



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Maimonides' 13 Articles

1. The existence of God
2. God's unity
3. God's spirituality and incorporeality
4. God's eternity
5. God alone should be the object of worship
6. Revelation through God's prophets
7. The preeminence of Moses among the prophets
8. God's law given on Mount Sinai
9. The immutability of the Torah as God's Law
10. God's foreknowledge of human actions
11. Reward of good and retribution of evil
- 12. The coming of the Jewish Messiah**
13. The resurrection of the dead

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Article 12 – “The Messiah”

“And this is to believe that in truth that he will come and that you should be waiting for him even though he delays in coming. And you should not calculate times for him to come, or to look in the verses of Tanach to see when he should come.

The sages say: The wisdom of those who calculate times [of his coming] is small and that you should believe that he will be greater and more honored than all of the kings of Israel since the beginning of time as it is prophesied by all the prophets from Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, until Malachi, peace be upon him.”

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Article 12 – “The Messiah”

“And he who doubts or diminishes the greatness of the Messiah is a denier in all the Torah for it testifies to the Messiah explicitly in the portion of Bilam and the portion of “You are gathered (towards the end of Deut)”. And part of this principle that there is no king of Israel except from the house of David and from the seed of Solomon alone. And anyone who disputes this regarding this family is a denier of the name of God and in all the words of the prophets.”

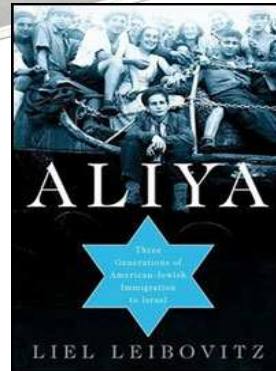
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Zionism Replaces Messiah?

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Zionism Replaces Messiah?

Restoration of Israel as fulfilment of
messianic hope...



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But, not for all...



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Dabru Emet
(`Speak the truth`)

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Dabru Emet

- In 2000 a small interdenominational group of Jewish scholars met.
- They produced a Jewish Document, called Dabru Emet [lit. 'Speak the Truth']
- It is a Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity.

It takes the position that Christian worship is not a viable option for Jews.

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Dabru Emet

1. Both worship the same God.
2. Both seek authority from the same book – Tanakh/Old Testament.
3. Christians respect claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.
4. Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah.
5. Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon.
6. The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture.
7. A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice.
8. Both must work together for justice and peace.

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Jesus - The Jewish Messiah?

Yes, for sure..!

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Jewish "Basic Instruction" In Messiah

Excerpt taken from a Hebrew Manuscript
from 1466 CE, number 1,048, Harley 5686
in the British Library

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These Are Unprecedented Times

- Rise of Messianic Judaism
- Rise of Christian Zionism
- Jews investigating Christianity
- Reclaiming the historical, Jewish Jesus
- Dialogue like never before
- Gentiles celebrating Biblical feasts...
- Israel established in the Land since 1948

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A Future Hope...

“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

“The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.
And this is my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.””

~ Romans 11: 25-27 ~

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Mourning for the One They Pierced

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.”

~ Zechariah 12:10 ~

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Jesus - The Jewish Messiah?

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