

The Messiah's Portrait in the Literature of the Second Temple Period

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Introduction

Traditionally it is accepted that at the beginning of the Common Era, the Jewish nation had messianic and eschatological expectations. This can only be accepted to a certain extent, since our sources inform us about such expectations only in connection with Palestine and especially Judea. Furthermore, some events of Jewish history clearly had no messianic and eschatological complexion at all. Thus, for example, it is known that even the anti-Roman rebellion of 66–73 CE had no messianic character. Attempts to explain this fact by referring to the political correctness of authors of the period have been made many times. For example, Josephus' silence concerning the eschatological messianism of the Essenes can be explained by referring to the suspiciousness of the Romans^[1] or the purpose of making Judaism more acceptable to Rome.^[2] The Mishnah's silence can be explained by the same reason and also by conflict with the growing strength of Christianity.^[3] Nevertheless, the Fourth Gospel (written during the same years as the works of Josephus and also several Mishnah texts) is not at all silent concerning the messianic expectations of the Jews of the pre-war epoch. However, after Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 CE, the



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^[1] Amusin 1983:199 (cf. Guthrie 1981:238; Feldman 1996:6); such an opinion is questioned by Amusin 1983:194, since it can be established that by the time of the writing of *J.W.* (after 70 CE) the separatist communities in Palestine had ceased to exist, such as the Qumran, which was destroyed in June 68 CE (Amusin 1977:128; Amusin 1983:19) by the tenth Roman legion (Tantlevskij 1994:34); but the Essenes (Therapeutaes) continued to exist in Roman Egypt.

^[2] Guthrie 1981:238; Robinson 1997:125: "Flavius Josephus did not interpret events of the First Revolt apocalyptically, but rather sought to *hide* the apocalyptic views of the Jews from his audience"; cf. Smith 1999:242: "this was how Josephus wanted them to sound."

^[3] Condra 2002:209, n. 42.

messianic idea turns up more frequently in religious texts in the territory of Palestine.

Jewish and Roman sources of the Second Temple period often mention the messianic expectations of various religious and social groups of Palestine: Dan 9:25; Luke 3:15; 22:67; 24:21; John 1:19, 25; 4:25, 29; 10:24; Tacitus, *Histories* 5.13; Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.4; *Vespasian* 4.5; Josephus, *J.W.* 6.5.4 §311-315; Dio 66.1.2-4; *m. Berakhot* 1:5; *Sotah* 9:15; etc. The first Christian history mentions the apostles' discussions with the Jews about Jesus' messianic status: Acts 2:30-32; 17:3; 18:5.28. Therefore, an understanding of events within Palestine and Jerusalem during Pontius Pilate's governorship, which are described in the Gospels, really depends on knowledge of the rich context of Jewish messianic views of that epoch. For various historical reasons, Judaism before 70 CE is inseparably tied to a messianic idea, which divided the religious powers of Israel into hostile groups in the first century CE. (Despite the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule's* objection: "da? im Judentum der Zeit Jesu eine festgeprägte 'messianische Dogmatik' existierte."^[4]) The social and religious life in Jerusalem and (partly) Palestine was saturated with the anticipation of the imminent coming of the Messiah; at that, Jerusalem as the holy city^[5] was distinguished by a special fanaticism – cf. the outburst of hatred of the crowd in Acts 7:57-59; 21:27-34; 22:22-23; Josephus. *Ant.* 13.13.5 §372 (cf. *m. Sukkah* 4:9; *t. Sukkah* 3:16; *b. Sukkah* 48b); etc.

The religious fanatics' expectation of the impending end was so obvious that before big Jewish feasts (Josephus. *J.W.* 1.4.3

§88: "for it is on these festive occasions that sedition is most apt to break out") a procurator used to leave strategically safe Caesarea^[6] and personally bring into Jerusalem additional troops ("one legion of his army in Jerusalem to curb the revolutionary activity of the Jews" – Josephus. *Ant.* 17.10.1 §251). That was the case usually on Pentecost (Josephus. *Ant.* 17.10.2 §254; *J.W.* 2.3.1 §42-44) or Easter. The phrase used by Jesus' brothers in John 7:3-4 testifies that also during Sukkoth, one of the three important feasts when all males should be gathered in Jerusalem (Dt 16:16), Jews waited for the Messiah. John 10:22-24 shows the same messianic expectation also during Hanukkah. One of Josephus' reports also testifies to the intensification of the religious fanaticism of Jews who pelted King Alexander Yannai with lemons exactly at Sukkoth: *Ant.* 13.13.5 §372; cf. *m. Sukkah* 4:9; *t. Sukkah* 3:16; *b. Sukkah* 48b. Excited and armed (at least with stones) crowds gathered in Jerusalem at the feasts: Pentecost (*J.W.* 1.13.3 §253; *Ant.* 14.13.4 §337-338); Easter (*J.W.* 2.1.3 §10-13; 2.12.1 §224-225). Roman soldiers were dispatched to the temple galleries (Josephus. *Ant.* 20.5.3; 8.11; *J.W.* 2.12.1; 5.5.8 §244); their presence sometimes resulted in clashes with religious fanatics (Josephus. *Ant.* 20.5.3 §105-112; *J.W.* 2.12.1 §223-227). Some consequences of violent tension possibly are referred to in Luke 13:1.^[7]

All of this invites the New Testament scholar to take an intent look at the documentary evidence of that epoch, which was a turning-point in the history of Israel and of the entire Mediterranean region.

[4] Riesner 1981:298; cf. Collins 2001:110–112.

[5] For more details, see Tarasenko 2010:31–33.

[6] For the reasons why Caesarea was safe for the procurators, see Smallwood 1981:146; Bond 1998:7.

[7] Smallwood 2001:163 assumes that the Galileans participated in a protest against a Roman aqueduct, and Freyne 1980:228 points out that even for Galileans Jerusalem was the center of military reestablishment of Jewish independence.

1. Historical assumptions

Since the time of the promises given to Abraham, the Jews have been an expectant people. As early as Gen 49:1 we find the idea of the last days: **בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים** / ἐπ' ἐσχάτω τῶν ἡμερῶν. The knowledge of Yahweh had become the center of biblical (at first the Old Testament) history as well as the center of God's purpose or plan: cf. Exod 6:7; 7:5; Isa 52:15; Rom 15:21. Thus, the whole of Israel's history became a sort of training ground on which God's purpose was being fulfilled. In the end (*eschaton*), the last battle must establish the ultimate triumph of *the God of the Jews* over all the world's kings – cf. Rev 16:14. According to Deut 11:7-17, the existence of Israel as a state with its own economy, which is different from that of Egypt, has been the intention of God and a sign of the faithfulness of the Jews. The land (the main aspect of any state) was promised to Abraham and was not supposed to be merely a goal of the Exodus but also a sign of the faith of the Jewish nation as well as of the faithfulness of God to his promises: cf. Acts 7:3-7; Heb 11:9-10. The eschatological Messianic reign is also linked to inheriting the land.^[8] The eschatological anticipations of the Palestinian Jews were even more intensified after 63 BCE, when the Romans under Pompey the Great took the Temple Mount by storm (Tacitus. *History* 5.9; Josephus. *J.W.* 1.7.4 §149 – “with difficulty [they] succeeded in overthrowing one of the towers”). They were manifested in the appearance of the apocryphal *Psalms of So-*

lomon,^[9] concerning the authorship of which there is no consensus.^[10] Josephus wrote in *J. W.* 1.7.6 §152 concerning Pompey's act of entering the Holy of Holies: “of all the calamities of that time none so deeply affected the nation as the exposure to alien eyes of the Holy Place, hitherto screened from view.” Although Pompey, “because of piety did not plunder the Temple,” still “he made Jerusalem tributary to the Romans” (Josephus. *Ant.* 14.4.4 §73-74).

The image of the defender appeared long before the activity of the prophets (perhaps as early as Gen 3:15).^[11] This image first appeared in Exod 15:13 and then was also relevant in Job 19:25. Throughout the centuries, the Messianic idea changed significantly.^[12] Thus, Isa 45:1 names a pagan *mashiakh* whom God holds by the right hand like his servant (cf. 42:1). But in the first century CE the title “Messiah” acquired a meaning that was different from the Old Testament usage.^[13] In ancient Israel the anointed one was expected to perform some military campaign – cf. 2 Chr 22:7: “Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the Lord had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab.”^[14] But already in Dan 7:13-14 the Messiah is shown as a heavenly ruler (also *1 En* 62:5 ff), and in 9:26 as a martyr whose death is connected with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. Jesus' condemnation of the false shepherd during feast of *Hanukkah* (John 10:22 uses the term ἐγκαίνια of 2 Macc 2:29) may be regarded as a judgment of the *political* salvation of Israel that was popular during

[8] For more details see Schürer 2:531–537.

[9] After 48 BCE (Klausner 1955:317); Alon 1977:5: “at the end of the epoch of the Hasmoneans (the period of Hyrcanus II)”; an author still lives in time of Pompey's death in 48 BCE (cf. 2:26-37).

[10] Klausner 1955:317; Bruce 1972:125; Alon 1977:5; Schnabel 1985:113; Neusner 1993:189; Oegema 1998:106 Atkinson 1999:436–437.

[11] According to the Targum—Neusner 1984: 246-247.

[12] For more details see Tantilevskij 1994:190–191.

[13] Bruce 1977:75.

[14] Fitzmyer 2000:79: “Whenever משיח is applied to figures before 500 B. C., they are historical persons, and in no sense expected or eschatological figures.”

the Hasmoneans and came to grief after all. Their non-Davidic origin likens them to the thief and the robbers (John 10:1).

In the Tanakh the anointed ones were prophets, kings, and priests: Ps 105:15 (= 1 Chr 16:22); Exod 28:41; Judg 9:8.^[15] In the course of time, the Jewish mentality created the Anointed One. According to a widely held view (*Genesis R.* 1.4 [on 1:1]; *b. Pesahim* 54a; *Nedarim* 39b; cf. Mic 5:2; John 12:34): “Six [or seven] things preceded the creation of the world. Some of them were already created when the creation of others had merely been thought of... The name of Messiah was thought of, for it is written, ‘His name will endure as long as the sun’” (Ps 71 [72]: 17).

The term “anointed” was turned from an appellative^[16] into a proper name, a sacral one.^[17] Notice that the evangelists often emphasize that “Jesus is the Christ,” i.e., He is not an anointed king, a priest or a prophet, but the Messiah. After the book of Daniel was composed, the term became the title of Yahweh’s Sent One: *χριστός κυρίου* / *αὐτοῦ* (*Pss. Sol.* 17:32; 18:5, 7), *הַמְשִׁיחַ* (*m. Berakhot* 1:5), *מְשִׁיחָא* (*m. Sotah* 9:15). A Gentile could not now be the Messiah. The major difference between the numerous “anointed ones” of the Tanakh and the Messiah of the New Testament may be expressed in the *understanding* of one’s own goal.^[18] The Messiah of the New Testament is a Jew from the Hebrews, a specialist in the Torah, and a miracle-worker. That is, God will not act from the out-

side through Gentile leaders as in *Sib. Or.* 3:286 (“And then the God of heaven shall send a king”), 652 (“And then from the sunrise God shall send a king”^[19]), but from the inside through the One who was already spoken about in Deut 18:18; cf. Jn. 1:45; *1QS* 9:11. Probably, people really were waiting for a new Davidic king^[20] – cf. Luke 1:32, 69 and Mark 11:10; also *b. ‘Eruvin* 43a, end; *Yoma* 10a; *Ketubbot* 112b, etc. The appearance of John the Baptist with his preaching of repentance disturbed the population of Judea along with its religious leaders who immediately delegated some priests and Levites from their midst to find out his status (John 1:19). It is noteworthy that John from the outset made it clear that he is not the Messiah (John 1:20).

Accordingly, as it usually happens during national collapse, the Jews’ turned their eyes to the “ideal” figure of the past.^[21] A baraita in *b. Berakhot* 48b, end, stated: “If one does not... mention the kingdom of the house of David in the blessing, ‘Who buildest Jerusalem,’ he has not performed his obligation.” For the sages, the Davidic origin of the Messiah was so indisputable that they did not even rule out the return of King David: “If the Messiah-King comes from among the living, his name will be David. If he comes from among the dead, it will be King David himself” (*y. Berakhot* 2:4, 5a); however, according to *b. Sanhedrin* 98a, end: it could be Daniel, “the most desirable man.” The testimony of the Gospels also shows that Jewish eschatological

^[15] For some of the many references, see in Fitzmyer 2000:77; on anointed prophets in the Qumranic literature, see Jassen 2008:316.

^[16] In Mandeism, Hermes (the planet Mercury) also is named “Christ” (Dodd 1953:118).

^[17] Bruce 1977:75.

^[18] Bruce 1994:88: “Who is this Servant? He is manifestly not Cyrus: Cyrus fulfilled Yahweh’s purpose, but not because he recognized and accepted it

as such and not by the way of humiliation and suffering.”

^[19] *OTP* 1:376: “I. e., the Egyptian king”.

^[20] Schürer 2:518–519; cf. Urbach 1975:666: “The belief that the Messiah, who was due to come, must necessarily be of the House of David, was primarily used to reject the claimants to the crown of the Messiah.”

^[21] Mendels 1987:265.

hopes were connected precisely with a descendant of David: Matt 12:23; 21:9; Mark 11:10; cf. the eschatological hymn from the time of the Jewish revolt in Rev 3:7; 5:5.^[22]

Messianic expectations were evoked by the knowledge that a human being is finite and limited not only physically, but also morally and intellectually.^[23] The Hasmoneans turned out to be weak defenders of national interests, and after a civil war between the last of them, the invasion of the Romans, and the fall of Jerusalem in 63 BCE, the ideal ruler in the mind of the author of *Pss. Sol.* 17 could only be the eschatological Messiah. The author of this interesting literary work pursued political goals and did not touch on theological themes.^[24] It must be noted that the author gave little consideration to the Messiah.^[25]

According to *Sib. Or.* 3:46 ff, the end times and the eternal kingdom of heaven will come after the conquest of Egypt by Rome and the civil war of the triumvirates. After the Parthians enter Palestine (cf. an allusion to the Parthian cavalry in the image of locusts in Rev 9:3 ff) the time of the Messiah's coming will begin: "If you see a Persian horse tethered in Eretz Israel look for the feet of the Messiah" (*Lamentations R.* 1.41 [on 1:13]; also *Song R.* 8.13 [on 8:10];

b. Sanhedrin 98b, top). Therefore, the call to be courageous in the end times in Heb 10:36-39 was still urgent.^[26] At that time eschatology implied the expectation of restored justice and judgment according to deeds – cf. Matt 25:31 ff.^[27]

2. Contextual peculiarities

As to the characteristics of the Messianic figure, it must be remembered that Messianic conceptions depended on the environment and the period of their formation.^[28] To paint the Messiah's portrait one needs to consider the following factors: (1) fragmentariness of the sources; (2) contradictions between messianic groups;^[29] (3) alteration of messianic images (ideas) over time; (4) symbolic speech, which is conditioned by either apocalyptic genre. One must also keep in mind the difference between the biblical portrayal of the Messiah and the actual attitude of religious groups to concrete historical figures.^[30] This statement is true in reference to Jesus who was rejected by the Pharisaic movement as a whole: cf. John 7:48; 12:42 and Justin. *Dialog* 17, 137. The schism within Pharisaism (John 7:12; 9:16; 10:19) took place, in all likelihood, between the schools

^[22] According to Bultmann 1954:1.4, Jesus did not share this opinion.

^[23] Amusin 1983:162; cf. Nitzan 1997:132: "A central idea in the thought of the apocalyptic writings of the Second Temple period, and of the *Yahad* community of Qumran, is the belief in an eschatological upheaval that will give rise to eternal change in long standing history."

^[24] Urbach 1987:665: "This document is also unique in respect of what it omits. It does not mention either reward or punishment in the world to come, or the resurrection of the dead, nor does it describe catastrophic scenes"; cf. Wright 1996:484; Oegema 1998:104–108.

^[25] Sanders 1994:296: "He plays the key role only in *Pss. Sol.* 17."

^[26] Gräbe 2000:28: "The experience that many things take place in this world that God does not will,

gives rise to the hope that God will demonstrate his power in a last great conflict, destroying his opponents and saving those who belong to him."

^[27] According to Amusin 1983:161, the Qumranites hold that: (1) "evil is restricted not only by resistance to it and the fighting of Good against it, but also by time itself"; (2) "evil in the world is not at all a legitimate, lawful principle, but an aberration, a defect that will be mended in the 'end times.'"

^[28] Klausner 1955:459; Schürer 2:496–497; Oegema 1998:103.

^[29] Wright 1996:482: "Messianism, it seems, was whatever people made of it."

^[30] Mendels 1987:265: "The Pharisees... were against contemporary messianic figures, but they certainly did not deny the hope of a future arrival of a descendant of David."

of Hillel and Shammai,^[31] and Jesus was rejected by the Shammaites who were revolutionary-minded and represented the majority within Pharisaism until 70 CE.^[32] The peaceful character of Jesus, who preached that His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36) provoked conflicts with the Shammaites (who became famous as religious fanatics).^[33] His accusation in Matt 23:2-35 was addressed *only* to the Pharisees as religious and political radicals, most likely from among Shammai's followers.^[34]

Josephus calls the pretenders to messiahship in the middle of the first century CE^[35] by uncomplimentary epithets (cf. ἀντίχριστος in 1 John 2:18 etc.):

- 1) wicked men (πονηρῶν χειρί), liars (πλάνοι), and deceivers (ἀπατεῶνες) (*J. W.* 2.13.4-5 §258-263);
- 2) false prophet, charlatans and miserable people (*J. W.* 6.5.2-3 §285 – ψευδοπροφήτης, §288 – ἀπατεῶνες and καταψευδόμενοι)
- 3) magician and impostors (*Ant.* 20.5.1 §97 – γόης; 20.8.6 §167 – γόητες and ἀπατεωνής).^[36]

In this time of eschatological tension with its abundance of deceivers (cf. John 1:19-22; 10:24 and 1 John 2:18), every religious group made use of messianic expectations. To understand this it is enough to compare Jesus' warning against other mes-

siahs in Matt 24:5, 23-24 and Yohanan ben Zakkai's appeal in *ARN* B.31: "If there were a seedling in your hand and they should say to you: 'Look, the messiah is here!' Go and plant your tree and after that go forth to receive him." It is relevant to recall the high priests' denial of Jesus (John 19:15) whom the people had just a short while ago wanted to make king (John 6:15), and the resistance of "the whole population" (πᾶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος) of Jerusalem with the procurator Felix to a false messiah from Egypt (Josephus. *J. W.* 2.13.5 §261-63; cf. Acts 21:38).^[37]

3. Sources

The documented conceptions of various Jewish religious groups of the Second Temple period allow one to compose a certain portrait of the Messiah. The Messiah's characteristics are listed below.

1. One who abides forever, i.e. probably having no beginning: *1 En.* 48:2-4; 62:7; *T. Benj.* 11:4; John 12:34; cf. Mic 5:2; perhaps Dan 7:14 (מֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם).
2. Immortal Creator of heaven and earth: *Sib. Or.* 3:35; Jn. 1:3.
3. Prince of light(s): *CD* 5:18; *1QS* 3:20; *1QM* 13:10;^[38] or the Light: *1 En.* 48:4; John 1:4-9; 8:12; 9:5 etc; *Lamentation R.* 1.16.51 [on 1:16] on the basis of Dan 2:22.

^[31] Dodd 1953:80; Meeks 1967:33: "The σχίσμα which Jesus' words produce among the crowd is a familiar motif in John"; some scholars count from three to five Pharisaic schools (Mantel 1961:284).

^[32] Neusner 1971:2.4; Wright 1996:379; cf. Hezser 1997:248 on the ground of (only) *m. Gitin* 4:5 and *Oholot* 5:3-4: "Especially in the Mishnah, in connection with disputes between houses, references to a refusal from a personal opinion seem to be editorial."

^[33] Wright 1996:384; according to Keener 2003:731, "a public dispute over a person... could indicate that person's prominence in the public eye."

^[34] Finkel 1974:134, 136.

^[35] For an overview, see Keener 1999:573–575.

^[36] Evans 2001:61 on the basis of *Ant.* 17.10.8 §285:

"This comment certainly betrays Josephus' cynical attitude toward the liberation movements of the first century."

^[37] This refutes the statement that, "Messianic claimants appeared before the time of Jesus, as they were to do after him, and there is no record of their having been persecuted" (Mantel 1961:268–269); cf. Mendels 1987:264: "all groups within Judaism expected messianism in its biblical form; but they differed in their attitudes toward an actual messiah."

^[38] There are insufficient textual grounds for identifying the Prince of Light with the archangel Michael in Collins 1987:101; Starkova 1996:128, n. 123; Davidson 1992:148.

4. Son of God: *1QSa* 2:11-12; *4Q246* 1:7b-2:1, 5-6; 4 Ezra 7:28-29; 13:37, 52; 14:9; *Sib. Or.* 3:776; *1 En.* 105:2; Matt 16:16; Luke 1:32, 35.^[39]
5. David's heir: *4QFlor* 1:11; *CD* 7:16; *Pss. Sol.* 17:21; Matt 12:23; Mark 12:35; Luke 20:41; *b. Sanhedrin* 98a-b; *Numbers R.* 14.1 [on 7:48].^[40]
6. Chosen One of God: *T. Benj.* 11:4 – "eternal"; *1QpHab* 5:4; 10:12; *4QNoah ar* [4Q534];^[41] *1En.* 39:6; 40:5; 45:3-5; 48:6; 51:3; 61:8; 62:1; Luke 9:35; 23:35; i.e., one continuing the line of God's chosen ones: Moses (Ps 106:23) – Saul (2 Sam 21:6) – David (Ps 89:4) – Yahweh's servant (Isa 42:1); this shows him as king.
7. Shepherd: *Pss. Sol.* 17:40; *1Q165* fr 1+2 [on Is. 40:11]; *1 En.* 90:20 – "the Lord of the sheep"; 4 Ezra 2:34; Matt 15:24; John 10:11; Matt 25:31 (also in eschatological outlook).
8. The maker of signs: John 7:31; 12:18; 20:30-31;^[42] who applies his gifts in the military sphere: *Pss. Sol.* 17:24b ("to destroy the unlawful nations with the word of his mouth"); cf. Isa 11:4; Rev 19:15, 21; also *Pss. Sol.* 17:33; Philo. *Re-*
- wards* 95 ("God has sent to his aid the reinforcement which befits the godly, and that is a dauntless courage of soul and all-powerful strength of body, either of which strikes fear into the enemy and the two, if united, are quite irresistible"); who is able to save the crucified rebels: Matt 27:40-42; Luke 23:39.^[43]
9. King: *Sib. Or.* 3:48 (immortal), 286, 652 (from sunrise; cf. Luke. 1:78); king-priest: *T. Levi* 8:14 (of Judah^[44]); Pss 110:4; John 6:15; Heb 6:20; in the Tanakh any encroachment on sacramental authority by the kings was punished by God: 1 Sam 13:9-14; 1 Kgs 12:33-13:6; 2 Chr 26:16 ff; Josephus. *Ant.* 13.10.5 §292.^[45]
10. Lord: *Lamentations R.* 1.51 [on 1:16] (based on Jer 23:6 and Ezek 48:35); Dan 9:25 (משיח נגיד / "Christ the Ruler"^[46]); Luke 2:11 ("Christ the Lord").
11. Liberator: *Pss. Sol.* 17:23-38; Luke 24:21; Acts 1:6; *Numbers R.* 14.1 [on 7:48] ("the Messiah anointed for war"); *Song R.* 2.33 [on 2:13] (he is only one of the four leading figures: Elijah, the royal Messiah, Melchizedek, and the military Messiah).

^[39] For more details see Tantlevskij 1994:261–266; Bauckham 2006:57–59.

^[40] For thirteen passages from the Tanakh, see Oegema 1998:32–34; also Strack, Billerbeck 2:273–299; cf. Klausner 1946:320: "That the Pharisees admitted the principle that the Messiah need *not* be the son of David only... is obvious from the fact that Bar Kokh-bah was accepted as Messiah."

^[41] About the chosen of God in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Tantlevskij 1994:252–260.

^[42] For more details, see Bauckham 2006:63–64.

^[43] Amusin 1983:265–266, n. 60 on the basis of John 11:47-48: the anti-Roman rebellions were often accompanied by miracles performed by their leaders. In the Gospels there are several implicit references to the miracle-performing ability of Jesus that characterized him as a military leader: (1) casting out of a *legion* of demons that were sent into the swine; (2)

the feeding of the five thousand (cf. 1 Macc 3:17!); (3) turning of water into wine; (4) raising Lazarus from the dead; (5) the authority to call on twelve angelic legions for help.

^[44] Concerning an attempt to emend "of Judah" to "in Judea," see Meeks 1967:152, n. 4.

^[45] As a matter of fact, a king cannot be an effective priest for two reasons: (1) ritual uncleanness (contact with wounded men and corpses); (2) traumas and wounds. (According to *T. Parah* 3:8, Yohanan ben Zakkai used both ways to deprive the high priest of his holiness.) That is perhaps why "king" is never used of the Messiah of Israel in the Qumran texts" (Meeks 1967:151; cf. 165–168).

^[46] Dodd 1953:87; cf., however, Zimmermann 1998:46: "hier ist die spätere messianische Verwendung zumindest angelegt"; see also Condra 2002:218, n. 87.

12. World sovereign: Philo. *Rewards* 95; Philo. *Moses* 1.290; *1QSb* 5:24-29; Tacitus. *Histories* 5.13; Suetonius. *Vespasian* 4.5; *Sib. Or.* 3:652; Josephus. *J. W.* 6.5.4 §311-315; cf. *Deo* 66.1.2-4.
13. Triumphant victor of the eschatological battle: 4 Ezra 13:33-38; Rev 16:14; *1QM*; *4Q161*; *4Q174*.
14. Judge: Isa 2:4; 11:2-4 (absent in *1QSb* 5:24-26); *Sib. Or.* 3:286-287; 4 Ezra 12:32-33; *1QPHab* 5:1, 4; *1QSb* 3:27; *1En.* 45:3; 51:3; 61:8; 62:1-2; Matt 19:28; 25:31; John 5:30; Rev 16:5; cf. *b. Sanhedrin* 93b: “Bar Koziba reigned two and a half years, and then said to the Rabbis: ‘I am the Messiah.’ They answered: ‘Of Messiah it is written that he smells and judges: let us see whether he [Bar Koziba] can do so.’ When they saw that he was unable to judge by scent, they slew him.”^[47]
15. Eschatological High Priest: *4Q541*;^[48] 1 Macc 14:41; *Test. Levi* 18:2; Philo. *Dreams* 1.215 and Heb 8:1-2; 9:11-12, 24 (heavenly High Priest); Heb 9:11 (High Priest-Messiah); *T. Levi* 18:3-4 and Heb 6:20 (the High Priest-King; cf. projection of this title upon the servants of Jesus in 1 Pet 2:9).
16. Renewer of the covenant: *1QSb* 3:26 (of the priesthood; cf. Neh 13:29); *1QSb* 5:21 (of the community itself; cf. Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 9:15).
17. Baptizer: *1QS* 4:21 (in the Spirit; cf. Mark 1:8 par.) *CD* 14:19; Matt 3:14; John 1:25; 1 John 1:9; Heb 9:14.
18. Healer: Isa 53:5/1 Pet 2:24; Mark 1:34; Matt 12:10-11, 22-23; Luke 4:41.
19. Raises from the dead: John 5:21; 6:40, 44, 54; *4Q521* = Matt 11:5; Luke 7:22.
20. Teacher: *CD* 6:11; 7:18; John 4:25; 8:28; 16:30; *Genesis R.* 98.9 [on 49:11] (“he will compose for them words of the Torah... and give them [the Gentiles] thirty precepts”; cf. John 7:35; probably, 1 John 2:20, 27); however, this ministry is only until the messianic Kingdom – cf. Heb 8:11 (based on Isa 54:13) and *Genesis R.* 98.9 [on 49:11] (based on Isa 11:10): “Israel will not require the teaching of the royal Messiah in the future.”^[49]
21. Prophet: 1 Macc 14:41 (“faithful”); *1QS* 9:11; *T. Levi* 8:14 (from Abraham); he will answer hard questions: 1 Macc 4:46; John 4:25; 16:30; *b. Sanhedrin* 93b; cf. Matt 26:68; as in the past, his ministry will be confirmed by miracles: John 6:14; 4 Ezra 13:50.^[50]

These points may be divided into three categories: (1) a divine figure (# 1-4); (2) a chosen warrior and ruler from among David’s heirs (# 5-14); (3) an ideal priest with various functions, which were (almost) uncharacteristic of ancient priests (# 15-21).

4. The Gospels and their context

In determining the Messiah’s portrait it is always necessary to consider political and temporal peculiarities that transformed an obscure biblical image into a concrete personality of historical documents.^[51] This

^[47] Baumgarten 1976:70–71: “The idea of the Messiah acting as a judge over the nations of the world does not appear to be a Christian innovation.”

^[48] For more details, see Zimmermann 1998:247–277.

^[49] For more details, see Riesner 1981:304–330; Neusner 1984:91; Zimmermann 1998:313; Condra 2002:263–269; cf. Nitzan 1997:143 and n. 43.

^[50] For an analysis of the Qumran texts, see Zimmermann 1998:312–417; also Condra 2002:254–256; Bauckham 2006:40–53.

^[51] Wright 1996:482; cf. Bennema 2003:42: “An additional difficulty is that the majority of ‘messianic’ texts ‘merely’ mention *that* a messiah will come, and only a few texts actually attribute *specific functions* to the messianic figure.”

process of adapting ancient texts with their indefinite information to a concrete situation was natural for the religious society of Palestine at the beginning of CE. A phrase in Matt 5:17 appears to be a reaction to this process: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah and the Prophets." Messianic expectations are peculiar precisely to *non*-biblical texts that appeared after the return from the Babylonian Exile. Therefore, the most reliable and complete data about the messianic views of the Jews may be found in documents written in the period between the fall of Jerusalem in 63 BCE and its destruction in 70 CE. Accordingly, the New Testament, as the text of the end of the Second Temple period, reflects common Jewish views.^[52] The later texts were heavily dependent on the political situation.^[53]

In the view of the rabbis as Rome's adherents, eschatology came to appear less and less a divine intervention into earthly affairs and is subject to doubt—cf. 2 Pet 3:3 ff.^[54] Those who calculate the Messiah's coming or the future as such are cursed: *m. Hagigah* 2:1; *t. Hagigah* 2:7; *b. Hagigah* 11b, top; 16a; *b. Sanhedrin* 65b; 97b; *Sifre Deuteronomy* 18:12 §173; cf. Mark 13:32-33; Matt 24:36, 42; 25:1. Rabbi Aqiba's messianic expectations were greeted quite sharply: "Aqiba, grass will grow in your cheeks and he will still not have come!" (*y. Taanit* 4, 68d; *Lamentations R.* 2.4 [on 2:2]).

Furthermore, the abundant apocryphal literature, as well as the whole Tanakh (ex-

cluding Daniel, traditionally dated *ca.* 167–164 BCE), makes no explicit mention of the Messiah (as a king, victor and liberator).^[55] Nor does rabbinical literature discuss this theme very much.^[56] In the Gospels Jesus is portrayed as a prophet and teacher rather than directly as the Messiah. He ordered people not to speak of his status as healer and Messiah: Mark 8:29-30 (Matt 16:20); Mark 1:44; 9:9 (Matt 17:9); 12:15-16. On the contrary, he stressed his own status as a teacher – Matt 23:7-10. Our texts prove that Jesus was known as a *teacher* even before His baptism. Thus, according to Matt 2:16 (Herod died in 4 BCE) and Luke 3:1 (Tiberius came to power in 14 CE), Jesus was baptized at the age of approximately 34–35, and according to Luke 3:23, began His ministry when He was about thirty years old, which in *m. Abot* 5:21 is the canonical age of a beginning teacher. All of this gives to the Messiah's ministry another slant and opens another perspective – to research Jesus' activity as a teacher and prophet or "als prophetischer Lehrer."^[57]

Conclusion

This analysis shows all the complexity of any definition of messianic views within Palestine in the first half of the first century CE. Jewish literature of that time had no systematic approach to theology and, moreover, did not belong to one exclusive group. At that time, as various sources inform us, Israel was a quite a multi-colored religious society. Thus, for example,

sible to avoid all reliance upon the Messiah as an apocalyptic figure"; Oppenheimer 1997; Condra 2002:207–209.

^[55] Dalman 1902:296; Basser 1985:114; Olyan 1987:281.

^[56] For a list of the passages, see Oegema 1998:282, n. 187.

^[57] Riesner 1981:297–298.

^[52] Klausner 1955:241.

^[53] Neusner 1984; Edersheim 1993:121: "The silence of the Apocrypha about the Person of the Messiah is so strange."

^[54] Ginzberg 1922:134; Neusner 1984 *passim*; Neusner 1987b:280: "As to the Mishnah's part of the canon, at the beginning the authors wished so far as pos-

Yerushalmi informs about as many as twenty-four (!) religious groups (*Sanhedrin* 10:6, 29 c.57-62); Eusebius in *History* 4.22.7 also mentions many of them and informs us that among them “there were various opinions... against the tribe of Judah and the Messiah.” Therefore, one can speak only about indistinct and sometimes contradictory ideas of various sects and also about the religious belief of the fanatical crowd with its folk fantasies.

One can state confidently that between 63 BCE and 70 CE (the period of the Roman protectorate between two attacks on Jerusalem) a special role in the Messiah’s portrait was given to his role as national liberator. Only after the catastrophe of 70 CE, as shown in the texts, did the role of teacher begin to prevail.

Against this general background, the Messiah’s portrait in the Gospels contains all or almost all the peculiarities of Jewish

notions about him. Having been written during the Mishnaic epoch, they summarized the rich material of Jewish thought of the previous centuries. In this way, in the reader’s mind they created the impression of the completion of the Divine design and the fulfilment of human expectations. At the same time, the Mishnah and correspondingly the rabbinic literature, on the contrary, avoided this topic and as far as possible levelled its meaning for Israel. Accordingly, the messianic theme automatically disappeared in religious literature after the first century CE, since the New Testament states that the Messiah already had come, been rejected, and promised to return in the indefinite future, and the voluminous rabbinic literature (the Mishnah, the Toseftah, Yerushalmi, Bavli, the tannaitic Midrashes, and the amoraic Midrashes) assigns no special meaning to this topic.

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