

# STRAIGHTWAY

"And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" [Mark 1:18].

## CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

The Witness Outreach of Foundations Bible College  
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### Jesus, "The Messiah"

by Dr. H. T. Spence, President

*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... (Daniel 9:25)*

*We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. (John 1:41)*

One of the great and precious truths that steps forward at this season of the year is the story of the coming of Messiah. The title *Messiah* is a most profound title that portrays Jesus, the Son of God. Its origin and conceptual mutation in the Old Testament is truly a powerful revelation of the divine appointment of our Lord by His Father.

#### The Etymology of Messiah

The etymology of the term Messiah is to be found in the Hebrew language. The Old Testament presents the term as *Mashiah*; it is transliterated in the Greek as *Messias* from which our English word is derived. Of course, the Greek word for Messiah is *Christos*.

In the Old Testament the term Messiah was used for kings and priests, those who were consecrated to their offices by the ceremony of anointing with oil. It applies only to a priest in an adjective form, such as "the anointed priest." In its substantive use it was restricted to a king. Saul was called "the Lord's Anointed." We also see it used to identify David (II Samuel 19:2) and Zedekiah (Lamentations 4:20).

As we peruse the music room of the Bible, the book of Psalms, the king is designated as “mine,” or “thine,” or “his” anointed. In Isaiah 45:1, Cyrus is declared in prophecy as the anointed of God. In Psalm 105, even the patriarchs were called “mine anointed ones.”

Surprisingly, the only time in the Old Testament that the term Messiah is used of the coming, future king (Jesus) is in Daniel 9:25; He is here called “Messiah the Prince.” Therefore, it must be realized that the special title *Messiah* in the Old Testament is never applied to the unique king of the future except in Daniel 9:25. It was the later Jews of the post-Old Testament literary writings who first used the term in a future, kingly context. Today, among the Jews, the book of Daniel is not part of the prophetic readings in the synagogue partly because centuries ago the rabbis were fearful that the Jews would believe this prophecy (Daniel 9:25) to refer to the person Jesus whom they crucified on the cross.

From the perspective of the Old Testament, the Messiah is seen as the instrument by which God’s kingdom is to be established in Israel and in the world. There is this hope of a personal deliverer running through the Old Testament. In the light of this hope, the Jews were a nation that lived in the future. They lived always in the hope of the future; they lived with strong expectations that there were “good times coming.” They looked beyond their sins to when judgment would be gone and the Lord would restore them and their kingdom. From the time of their captivities, they have always been looking ahead to the final era of their history.

Whenever the term *Messianic* was used over the centuries, it was used in a double sense. First, it was a term designating a larger hope, a hope of a glorious future for the nation of Israel. Second, in a narrower sense, it implied the coming of a personal Messiah, one who would be the prominent personality in the perfected kingdom. In today’s Jewish society, the first view is more accepted over the second. Only a remnant of Jews today interprets the use of *Messianic* to imply a personality.

### **Messiah – A King**

We must remember that the chief element of the Old Testament concept of Messiah is that of the King. It was truly believed – and is still believed today – that through the appointment of a king, God would work out His saving purposes for His people. In the Old Testament theocratic government,

## **STRAIGHTWAY**

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the Jews viewed that Jehovah ruled through an individual such as Moses, Joshua, the judges, and kings. The Jews have believed in an everlasting covenant of government given to David in this regard:

And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David (II Samuel 7:11-17).

There is also the promise given to David by God in II Samuel 23, where David gives his final words:

Now these be the last words

of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, the Spirit of the LORD spake to me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow (II Samuel 23:1-5).

Isaiah was the first of the prophets to speak of an extraordinary king to come. The earlier prophets did speak of the restoration of the divisions of the kingdoms becoming as one (Judah and Ephraim) as well as their possessions being restored. However, it was not until the Assyrian captivity that the personality of the king was brought into prophetic prominence as a contradistinction to that of the world powers of the Gentiles. During this time Isaiah gave several prophecies concerning a coming one:

Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings. The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria (Isaiah 7:11-17).

In the above passage, as well as in the two below, the anointed King will be endowed by the Spirit to discharge the royal functions in the kingdom of God. Note this in the prophecy found in Isaiah 9:6,7 as well as 11:2:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David,

and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

Micah, a contemporary to Isaiah, gives a similar passage describing the messianic or anointed king:

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting (Micah 5:2).

The prophecy in Micah 5:3 is a classic one concerning the Virgin Mary:

Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

After such prophecies and the times of these prophets, the messianic concept began to lose its luster in Jewish history for two reasons. First, the throne of David lost much of its power and influence. Second, the figure of the ideal king would not be portrayed

again in its former glory and spiritual color.

### **Messiah and the Time of the Captivity**

Although no mention was made of an anointed king during the days of Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, the hope of a Davidic ruler was kept alive by Jeremiah and Ezekiel:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth (Jeremiah 23:5).

But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them (Jeremiah 30:9).

Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him (Ezekiel 21:26-27).

And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd (Ezekiel 34:23).

And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my

judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them (Ezekiel 37:24).

Yes, the language of Ezekiel implies that it is the ideal Messianic ruler who is predicted in these verses.

It becomes evident in the readings of Scripture after the prophet Ezekiel, and the remaining years of the captivity, that the hope of a preeminent king of David's house disappears. But following the captivity, a prince of the house of David, Zerubbabel, is appointed by Cyrus to be the governor over the city of Jerusalem. The Lord through the prophet Haggai gives a precious declaration to Zerubbabel in Haggai 2:23:

In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

God in this passage declares Zerubbabel to be His signet ring. Zechariah, the younger prophet of that first return, also declares in prophecy:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass (Zechariah 9:9).

This anticipated, anointed King

would not come like a warrior king, but upon the foal of an ass, righteous and victorious, yet lowly and peaceful. After the prophecy of Zechariah there is no mention of the Messianic king in the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi.

### **The Book of Daniel & Messiah**

When one reads the book of Daniel and senses the prophecies contained therein, there is evidence that a number of those prophecies were written to encourage the Jewish people to steadfastness during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. It is in these prophecies that the Messianic hope assumes a new form. Here the apocalyptic idea of the Messiah appears for the first time. The coming ruler-king is represented, not as a descendant of the house of David, but as a person in human form, and beyond human character, through whom God would establish His sovereignty upon the earth. Daniel 7:13-14 states,

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

During the years of the Macca-bees, there was a stirring of fresh

national life with the hope for the coming king to overthrow the Syrians. Even when Pompey captured Jerusalem in 63 BC, this hope for God to send a deliverer from the house of David increased in the hearts of the Jews.

### **The "Messiah" Hope in the Time of Jesus**

At the time of Jesus' birth, there was a great prevalence of the Messianic hope among the Jews. We see from the question of John the Baptist in Matthew 11:3, "Art thou he that should come," that such an individual was expected. The people even wondered whether John himself were the Christ (Luke 3:15). Such a hope was evident in the hearts of those who became disciples of Jesus:

One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ (John 1:40-41).

The Samaritan woman also expressed this anticipation:

The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things . . . Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? (John 4:25,29).

Matthew 21:9 and 22:42 reveal that toward the end of Christ's

ministry, the Jewish nation believed that Messiah would be the Son of David. It also cannot be doubted that "Son of God" was used as a Messianic title by the Jewish leaders (Matthew 26:63), as well as the title "Son of Man" (Mark 8:38). After the Resurrection the preaching of the apostles clearly declared Him the Messiah (Acts 2:36). But the sufferings and death of Christ were enigmatic to the Jews' thinking. The thought of a suffering Messiah who would atone for sin was alien to the Jewish mind. Only after His resurrection and ascension were they led to see how entirely they had misconceived His Messiahship and the nature and extent of His Messianic kingdom. Their searchings of the Old Testament gave them clear evidence of the cross. In the suffering servant they beheld the Messianic king on His way to His heavenly throne, conquering by the power of His atoning sacrifice and bestowing all spiritual blessings (Acts 3:13, 18-21, 26; 4:27, 30).

### Conclusion

As the New Testament unfolded, the writers under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit described additional insights and features of the Messiah in accordance with Jesus' own teachings. He ascended to His Father and became the heavenly king. But all things were not yet put under Him. It was therefore seen that the full manifestation of His Messiahship was reserved for the future, that He would return in glory to fulfill His Messianic office and complete His Messianic reign. Notice Paul's declaration before King Agrippa:

And now I stand and am

judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews (Acts 26:6,7).

To us, as to the early Christians, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). To Him, hidden in the bosom of the ages, all the scattered rays of prophecy pointed; and from Him, in His revealed and risen splendor, shine forth upon the world the light and power of God's love and truth.

This Christmas, as we look back to the historical birth of Jesus, believing Him to be the Messiah-King, may we also look forward to the day when all things will be put under His feet, to the day when His kingdom will be spread from shore to shore, and His peace and word will cover this earth like the waters cover the sea.

May we announce the news to our relatives and friends this Christmas, "We have found the Messiah!" This too is part of our Fundamentalist legacy.

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But The Times On Earth Have Changed;  
Christmas Present Seems So Strange:  
Broken Homes And Sadness Now Fill Our Land.

Christmas Future Will Be Known  
When The Little Ones Have Grown.  
Years Will Tell The Story Oh So Clear,  
Whether Grace And Truth Were Known,  
Or Through Sin Was Life O'erThrown.  
Christmas Future, Will It Bring Comfort Or Fear?

Christmas Past Now Is Gone,  
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Now The Present Christmas Day  
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For The Christmas Message To Be Known Again.

—Dr. H. T. Spence—

**MAY THE LORD RICHLY BLESS YOU AND YOUR  
FAMILY DURING THIS SEASON OF THE YEAR.  
WE LOOK FOR CHRIST TO RETURN—  
PERHAPS TODAY.**

**“But When The Fullness Of The Time Was Come...”**

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman,  
and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head,  
and thou shalt bruise his heel.”  
(Genesis 3:15 – Galatians 4:4)

“Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation  
and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.”  
(Genesis 12:3 – Acts 3:25)

“And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou  
shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him  
for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.”  
(Genesis 17:19 – Luke 3:34)

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the  
thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth  
unto me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth  
have been from of old, from everlasting.”  
(Micah 5:2 – Luke 2:4-7)

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin  
shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”  
(Isaiah 7:14 – Matthew 1:18)

“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,  
upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to  
establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for  
ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”  
(Isaiah 9:7 – Matthew 1:1)

“Thus saith the Lord: a voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and  
bitter weeping: Rachel weeping for her children refused to be  
comforted for her child, because they were not.”  
(Jeremiah 31:15 – Matthew 2:16-18)

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him,  
and called my son out of Egypt.”  
(Hosea 11:1 – Matthew 2:14-15)

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