

Exploring Jesus

Week 2: The Messiah of Israel

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“Who do you say that I am?”

“Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi, and on the way he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that I am?’ And they answered him, ‘John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.’ He asked them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered him, ‘You are the Messiah.’” Mark 8:27-29

Messiah = Christ = Anointed One

Why is Israel essential to God's plan of salvation?

“Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’” Genesis 12:1-3

How does the Old Testament witness to the hope for a Messiah?

“Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts:...Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.’ In accordance with all these words and with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.”
2 Samuel 7

What were first century Jews expecting the Messiah to do?

Jews had been governed by foreign powers since the exile (587 BC) but had seen some success in revolutionary activity in the past (Judas Maccabeus in 167 BC).

Zealots, Essenes, Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees had somewhat different expectations and acted accordingly.

Land, Temple, Torah

The Messiah would usher in a new age of prosperity and peace in which Israel would inhabit the land in freedom, everyone would live according to Torah, and God's glory would fill the temple.

How does Jesus both fulfill and confound Messianic expectations?

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’” Luke 4:18-21

“Are you the one who is to come, or are we to expect someone else?” Luke 7:19

Land, Temple, Torah redefined

“In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, ‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.’ Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.” Mark 15:31-32

What was Jesus' life like as a first century Jew?

Torah, relationship with parents, trade, singleness...

Why is Jesus' Jewishness so important?

Jesus' Jewishness is central to his identity.

“I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means!” Romans 11:1

What does Jesus' identity as Israel's Messiah mean for us, his 21st Century followers?

We are branches grafted in.

We are not the Messiah

But we are Christians = Little Christs = anointed by the Holy Spirit