

COURSE GUIDE

CRS 302 MESSIANISM

Course Team

Bernard Onyebuchi Ukwuegbu (Rev. Fr, PhD) (Course Developer/Writer) - Imo State Polytechnic Umuagwo, Imost State
Dr. Michael Enyinwa Okoronkwo (Rev. Fr., PhD) (Course Editor) - NOUN
Prof. Athanasius Nwanegbo Amasiatu – (Course Editor)
Bernard Onyebuchi Ukwuegbu (Rev. Fr, PhD) (Course Reviewer) - Imo State Polytechnic Umuagwo, Imost State
Dr. Michael Enyinwa Okoronkwo (Rev. Fr, PhD) (Head of Department) - NOUN



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

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National Open University of Nigeria
Headquarters
University Village
Plot 91, Cadastral Zone
NnamdiAzikiwe Expressway
Jabi, Abuja

Lagos Office
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way
Victoria Island, Lagos

e-mail: centralinfo@nou.edu.ng
URL: www.nou.edu.ng

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INTRODUCTION

CRS 302 Messianism informs you of the major factors that led to the Biblical Messianic Expectation by the Jews. The course will also enlighten you about the hope in the future King as Messiah of the people of Israel. It further teaches you about prophets that perform Messianic roles in Jewish history. In this course, you will learn about the Jewish pseudepigraphal Literature. In the course, you will also learn about Jesus the Messiah, his Ministry, death and resurrection. You will also learn about Jesus the anointed of the spirit, and how he overcame the wicked one Satan beginning from his ministry at Galilee to his resurrection. All these proved that in the Ministry of Jesus the Messiah the kingdom of God has arrived. In the course, you will also study how the early church accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

COURSE AIMS

The aim of this course is to state reasons Israel look forward for messiahs. Among other things, the course:

- Helps you to the study of some Kings who are messiahs of the Jews.
- Assist you to narrate the entire event that lead to Israel to look forward at their kings to deliver them from their various enemies.
- Examine the functions of the messiahs in Israel.

The above stated are the overall objectives of this course. In addition, each unit also has specific objectives. The unit objectives are always included at the beginning of a unit. You should read them before you start working through the unit. You may want to refer to them during your study of the unit to check on your progress. You should always look at the unit objectives after completing a unit. In this way you can be sure that you have done what was required of you by the unit.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of the course, you should be able to:

- Define the term “Messiah”
- Identify messiah as the saviour
- List the Kings that were used as Messiahs by Yahweh for the Jews.
- State when the Lord will bring back his people to himself.
- Discuss the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah.
- Discuss Messiah in the Jewish pseudepigraphal literature

- Discuss the Apocalypse of Weeks.
- Comment on the Qumran Sectarian Literature.
- Explain the Day of the Lord in Paul's teachings.
- Identify the Messianic Age.

These are the wider objectives of this course as a whole. By meeting these objectives, you should have achieved the aims of the course as a whole.

Requirements from Students

To complete this course, you are required to read the study units, read recommended books and read other materials. Each unit contains self – assessments exercises, and at points in the course you are required to submit assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of this course is a final examination. Below you will find listed, all the components of the course and what you have to do.

COURSE MATERIALS

Major components of the course are:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignments
5. Presentation

In addition, you must obtain the material. Obtain your copy. You may contact your tutor if you have problems in obtaining the text materials.

STUDY UNITS

There are fifteen study units in this course. Each unit should take you 2-3 hours to work through. The fifteen units are divided into three modules. Each module contains 5 units.

Each unit includes a table of contents, introduction, specific objectives, recommended textbooks and summaries of key issues and ideas. At *interval* in each unit, you will be provided with a number of exercises or self-assessment question. These are to help you test yourself on the material you have just covered or to apply it in some way.

The value of these self-test is to help you gauge your progress and to reinforce your understanding of the material. At least, on tutor- marked assignments will be provided at the end of each unit. The exercise and the tutor-marked assignments will help you in achieving the stated

learning objectives of the individual units of the course.

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Online Materials

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expectalifeofjesus2001.tripod.com/jc_messianwww.rumormillnews.com/cgi-bin/archivejournals.cambridge.org/article_S00344www.rumormillnews.com/cgi-bin/archivemissionsforum.wordpress.com/2008/04/0...Accessed on 21/04/2011

Messianism: Retrieved from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia on 21st July, 2010. Exodus.tikvaisrael.com/juda.html accessed 21/04/2011

ASSIGNMENT FILE

In this file, you will find all the details of the work you must submit to your tutor for marking. The marks you obtain from these assignments will count towards the final mark you obtain for this course. Further information on assignment will be found in the Assignment file itself and later in this course Guide in the section on assessment.

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The presentation schedule included in your course materials gives you the important dates for the completion of tutor-marked assignment and attending tutorials. Remember, you are required to submit all your assignments by the due date, you should guard against falling behind in your work.

ASSESSMENT

There are two aspects to the assessment of the course. First are the tutor-marked assignment; second, there is a written examination in tackling the assignments you are expected to apply information and knowledge acquired during this course.

The assignments must be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated in the Assignment File. The work you submit to your tutor for assessment will count for 30% of your total course mark.

At the end of the course, you will need to sit for a final three – hour examination. This will also count for 70% Of your total course mark.

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

There are fifteen tutor-marked assignments in this course. You need to

submit all the assignment. The best four (i.e. the highest four of the fifteen marks) will be counted. The total marks for best four (4) assignments will be 30% of your total course mark.

Assignment questions for the units in this course are contained in the assignment File. You should be able to complete your assignments from the information and materials contained in your set textbooks, reading and study units. However, you are advised to use other references to broaden your viewpoint and provide a deeper understanding of the subject.

When you have completed each assignment, send it together with TMA (Tutor-marked assignment) form to your tutor. Make sure that each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the deadline given to the assignment file. If, however, you cannot complete your work on time, contact your tutor before the assignment is done to discuss the possibility of extension.

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

The final examination of CRS 302 will be of two hours' duration and have a value of 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions which reflect the type of self-assessment exercises and tutor-marked assignment you have come across. All areas of the course will be assessed.

You are advised to revise the entire course after studying the last unit before you sit for the examination. You will find it useful to review your tutor-marked assignment and the comment of your tutor on them before the final examination.

COURSE MARKING SCHEME

This table shows how the actual course marking is broken down.

This table brings together the units, the number of weeks you should take to complete them and the assignment that follow them.

Units	Title of works	Duration weeks	Assignment
	Course Guide		
1	Messianism: Meaning & Definitions	1	Assignment 1
2	OT's Allusions to Messianic Expectations	1	Assignment 2
3	Messianism in Early Judaism	1	Assignment 3
4	Messianism in Jewish	1	Assignment

	Pseudepigraphal Works of the First Centuries BCE/ CE		4
5	Messianism among the Qumran Essenes	1	Assignment 5
6	Messianism in the Synoptic Gospels	1	Assignment 6
7	Messianism in Paul & in the Apocalypse	1	Assignment 7
8	Is Jesus the Expected Jewish Messiah?	1	Assignment 8
9	Jesus as the Anointed of the Spirit	1	Assignment 9
10	The Early Christians' Acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah	1	Assignment 10
11	The Messiah of Judaism	1	Assignment 11
12	Jesus & the Messianic Expectations of the First Century	1	Assignment 12
13	Jesus as the Messiah who overcame the Evil One	1	Assignment 13
14	Jesus and the Messianic Age	1	Assignment 14
15	Jesus' Resurrection as definite Proof of His Messiahship	1	Assignment 15

HOW TO GET MOST FROM THIS COURSE

In distance learning the study units replace the university lecturer. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning. You can have and work through specially designed study material at your own pace, and at a time and place that suit you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to a lecturer. In the same way that a lecturer might set you some readings to do, the study units tell you when to read your set books or other material. Just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise, your study units provide exercises for you to do at appropriate point.

Each of the study unit follows a common format. The first item is an instruction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the way you have completed the unit. You should use these objectives to guide your study. When you have finished the units, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If you make a habit of doing this you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course.

The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your set books or from references/further readings.

1. Read this Course Guide thoroughly.
2. Organised a study schedule. Refer to the 'Course overview' for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Whatever method you choose to use. You should decide on and write in your own dates for working on each unit.
3. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. One of the major factors that account for students' poor performance in exams and assignment reason that students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before it is too late for help.
4. Turn to Unit 1 and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit,
5. Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for a unit is given in the 'Overview' at the beginning of each unit. You will almost always need both the study unit you are working on and one of your set books on your desk at the same time.
6. Work thorough the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the unit you will be instructed to read sections from your set books or other articles. Use the unit to your reading.
7. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study material or consult your tutor.
8. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
9. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this Course Guide).

FACILLITATOR/TUTORS AND TUTORIALS

There are 8 hours of tutorials provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, times and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor, as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group. Tutorial can also be received on e-platform. You and your facilitator could exchange e-mail message

where such facilities are available to you and your facilitator.

Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulty, you might encounter and provide assistances to you during the course. You must mail your tutor-marked assignments to your tutor well before the due date (at least two working days are required). They will be marked by your tutor returned to you as soon as possible.

Do not hesitate to contact your tutor by telephone, e-mail, or discussion board if you need help. The following might be circumstances in which you would find help necessary.

Contact your tutor if:

You do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings, you have difficulty with the self-test or exercises, you have a question or problem with an assignment, with your tutor's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

You should try your best to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance to have face to face contact with your tutor and to ask questions which are answer instantly. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a question list before attending them. You will learn a lot from participating in discussions actively.

SUMMARY

As earlier said, CRS 302 Messianism exposes you to the major factors that led to the Biblical Messianic Expectation by the Jews. The course will also enlighten you about the hope in the future King as Messiah of the people of Israel. It further teaches you about prophets that perform Messianic roles in Jewish history. In the course, you will also study how the early church accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

Wishing success in your studies.

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MODULE 1 MESSIANISM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- Unit 1 Messianism: Meaning and Definitions
- Unit 2 Old Testament Allusions to Messianic Expectations
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UNIT 1 MESSIANISM: MEANING AND DEFINITIONS

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- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We are in a very debatable area when we discuss the development in Israel of Messianic ideas which express the hope that a time of salvation will come with the accession of a king of David's line- a time that is often regarded as a last time. At the outset of an influential Essay on the messianic idea in Judaism, Gershom Scholem observed:

Any discussion of the problems relating to Messianism is a delicate matter, for it is here that the essential conflict between Judaism and Christianity has developed and continues to exist.

In this unit, you will be introduced to the meaning and various definitions of the term "Messianism" by scholars. We shall look into the uses of the word in its various contents in the Bible and the Jewish world.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Define the term “Messiah”
- Identify the Anointed Persons
- Discuss God as the Source of Messiah
- Identify Messiah as the Saviour.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Root Meaning

The word messiah, from the Hebrew root *msyh*, literally means “to rub the body or parts of it”, “to stroke it”, mid. “to rub oneself”. When used with oil or fats... it means “to smear, to anoint, to anoint oneself”.... From the basic sense “to rub over” we get such meanings as “to color, to whitewash, to paint.” As a technical theological concept, the Encyclopedia Judaica writes:

The word Messiah, from the Hebrew, *Mashiach* means “one anointed”, hence appointed for a particular function, such as priests, High Priest, kings, even a Gentile {e.g., Cyrus}. Hence, chosen persons were so designated, e.g., the Patriarchs. The term is frequently applied to Israel. What is called the “doctrine of the Messiah” is in reality the belief in progress and hope.... As such, the word is a peculiar theological term and one peculiar to Israel since her oldest neighbors did not know any comparable titles.

A consideration of the different nuances of the concept is beyond the scope of this unit. For practical purpose, we give below few scholarly definitions of both the term and the concept as is employed in contemporary scholarly discourse.

3.2 Definitions

There are several sources for obtaining the definition of the term “Messianism”. Among these are Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, Bible Dictionaries, and textbooks. We give a few examples:

Joseph Klausner defines the messianic hope as “the prophetic hope for the end of this age, in which a strong redeemer, by his power and his spirit will bring complete redemption, political and spiritual, to the people of Israel, and along with this, earthly bliss and moral perfection to the entire human race.”

3.2.1 Wikipedia

Wikipedia encyclopaedia online 7th July 2010, says the term “Messianism” is the belief in a messiah, a saviour or redeemer.

3.2.2 Pictorial Bible Dictionary

Merrill. C. Tenney Pictorial Bible Dictionary explains the term “Messiah” as the “anointed one”. In Israel, both human beings and objects consecrated to sacred purposes were anointed by pouring oil over them. For examples at the period of the dedication of the tabernacle, the building and the vessels were consecrated with oil by Moses. Likewise, Aaron and his sons were also consecrated by him in order for them to serve God as Priests (Exod 30:26-30; 40:9-11). Besides, official persons were consecrated with oil by Moses as he was directed by God in Israel. Prophets were also anointed with oil during their consecration periods. Elijah was ordered by God to consecrate Hazael to be the king over Syria. He was also directed by God to anoint Jehu the son Nimshi to be king over Israel. Elijah was commanded by God to anoint Elisha the son of Shaphat to be prophet who would take after him (Exod 19:16). Prophet Isaiah declares:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me, to bring good tidings to the afflicted: he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound (Isa 61:1).

In the above quotation, Isaiah prophesies of the One anointed by God Himself to be a prophet who would set the oppressed people free from sufferings. In this case, he is seen as the saviour of oppressed people from the hands of their oppressors in Israel.

Furthermore, in the religion of Judaism; priests with their garments were anointed with oil before they assume their official duties in the tabernacle. For instance, God commanded Moses to anoint Aaron and his garments, his sons and their garments for their sacred mission in the worship centre: “*Then you shall take part of the blood that is on the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron and his garments and upon his sons and his sons’ garments, and with him; and he and his garments shall be holy, and his sons and his sons garments with him*” (Exod 29:21).

In the tradition of the Jewish, kings were regularly anointed with oil by prophets whenever they were enthroned, but they were never crown. The main factor for the anointing of kings in Israel was that they reign over godly people. Besides, their anointment drew them

closer to God and keeps their offices sacred on the earth. Below is a quotation from the Bible to support the above statements.

The Lord said to Samuel: *“Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have seen the affliction of my people, because their cry has come to me.”* When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, *“Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall rule over my people”* (1 Sam 9:16).

When Saul sinned against God, He rejected him to continue to rule the people of Israel. God therefore replaced him with David.

The Lord said to Samuel: *“Arise anoint him; (David) for this is he.”* – *Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward* (1 Sam 16:13)

Likewise, when David also committed sin against God, he was rejected as a king over Israel. God ordered Zadok the Priest took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon at Gihon to reign after David. The word of the Lord says: *“Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent, and anointed Solomon. --- All the people said, “Long live King Solomon!”* (1 Kings 1:38-39).

3.2.3 The Lion Handbook

Robin Keeley and Donald (1982) in their *The Lion Handbook of Christian Belief* defined Messiah as anointed. For them, the word “Messiah” is a Hebrew word meaning “anointed” which in Greek is rendered as “Christ”. Anointing, according to the book, was an act symbolising that God had chosen and empowered a person, particularly a king. In the Holy Bible, we have observed that it was God Himself who had initiated the ideal of kingship in the Universe. God promised Abraham that his wife Sarah would give birth to a son and kings of people would come out of he (Gen 16:16).

3.2.4 The Anchor Bible Dictionary

David Noel Freedman and Gary A. Herion (1957) in The Anchor Bible Dictionary Volume K-N illustrated, observed that the term “Messiah” denotes “an anointed person”. It means “the Messiah” and translated “the Christ”. They further stated that the term “Messiah” is

used in connection with agents of divine deliverance expected in the future.

Besides, they said that “messianic” and “messianism” have a wider meaning; they are used in connection with expectations of a definite change in history which is not brought about by a particular future deliverer. Furthermore, they said that “messianic expectation” only denotes the expectation of a redeemer who is called “Messiah”.

3.2.5 Cruden’s Dictionary of Bible

Alexander Cruden (1964) *Cruden’s Dictionary of Bible* defines “Messiah” as the anointed Sovereign Deliverer of the Jews. He further stated that the deliverer had already come at the appointed time. The Jews never believe that he had come but they kept on expecting him in vain up till now. Although Kings such as Saul, David, Solomon and Josiah were anointed and they delivered them from their various enemies but they died. Hence, they could not fulfil the prophecy of the messiah who must not die but is to remain alive. For this reason, the Jews keep on expecting the messiah who will come to conquer wars but remains alive for ever. On the other hand, prophets such as Elijah and Elisa received the unction of God yet they died, therefore, their dead disqualified them as the expected Messiah of the Jews.

3.2.6 The New Bible Dictionary

Douglas J.D. et. al. (1978). *The New Bible Dictionary* states that persons and things were anointed in the Old Testament, to signify holiness, or separation unto God. They cited pillars, the tabernacle, its furniture and shields, priests and prophets that were anointed in the Old Testament. They explained that the act of anointing symbolised equipment for service, and is associated with the outpouring of the Spirit of God. For instance, the Lord said to Moses, *----and of oil a hin; and you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil bended as by the perfumer; a holy anointing oil it shall be.-and you shall anoint with it the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony – you shall consecrate* (Exod 30:23, 29). In complying with the command of God, Moses anointed Aaron and his sons and they were consecrated for the work of God among the Israelites. The uses of anointing oil were also carried over into the New Testament by the early Christians. In the New Testament, the *sick were* anointed so that the Holy Spirit would heal them, because it is believed that the Holy Spirit is the Life giver. For examples, the Scripture says: *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God is with him* (Acts 10:38).

Furthermore, it says, Jesus healed a man with unclean spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum. Before the man was healed by Him, the man saw Jesus and he asked: “*What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God*” (Mark 2:24). *Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him! --- The unclean spirit ---- came out of him* (Mark 2:26). In the aforementioned case, you could notice that Jesus Himself was anointed by God to heal and save human souls on the earth. Therefore, you could also deduce from this unit that anointing played an important role in the saving of human being lives. Whoever was anointed or any object that was anointed became holy among the Jewish.

In the early Church, the sick was anointed by the elders in order for them to receive forgiveness of their sins and also recover from their illnesses in the New Testament. We quote:

Is any among you sick? Let him (the sick) call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven (Jam 5:14).

Furthermore, because it is holy, the anointing oil is reserved exclusively for sacred people and objects. Scripture forbids that it (anointing oil) be poured upon the bodies of ordinary men – it is holy and it shall be holy to you (Exod 30:32). Whoever uses the anointing oil for a common purpose commits crime among the Jewish. The Scripture says: “Whoever puts any of it (anointed oil) on an outsider (non-Jewish) shall be cut off from his people.”

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss one of the deliverers in Israel.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Now that we have succeeded in establishing the framework for understanding the Messiah concept and have given various definitions on “Messiah” and “Messianic” in this unit, we can now go on to discuss in greater detail, how the concept developed in the Old Testament as well as the anointed people who served as or were considered as messiah in Israel. This is what we shall go on to do in the next unit.

5.0 SUMMARY

We have given various definitions of Messiah and Messianic in this unit. We cited briefly that prophets and kings were regarded as Messiah among the Jews. They were all anointed and chosen by God to perform the function of salvation in Israel. For instance, Samuel, Elijah, Elisa, Saul, David, Solomon and Josiah were all chosen by God to save the people of Israel from the hands of their enemies which we shall discuss in the next unit.

6.0 TUTOR- MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Define “Messiah”.
2. What is the significant of anointing among the Jews?
3. Discuss briefly on anointing vessels in Judaism.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 OLD TESTAMENT ALLUSIONS TO MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Various OT passages, often set in the context of Israel's disobedience and exile or possible exile, speak of a time in the future when God would perform a decisive and irreversible saving act on behalf of Israel. In many of these OT passages this act is associated with a single individual, a king from the line of David; he would be the instrument through which God would bring about this salvation.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the record of messianic fulfilment that appears in the Old Testament
- state the concept of the Old Testament messiah
- discuss the messianic idea as expressed in the law, writing and prophets in accordance with hermeneutical principle of progressive revelation.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Concept of the Messiah in the Old Testament

The Hebrew word *mashiach* ("anointed" or "anointed one") is used in the OT to identify a person in special relationship to God. It occurs 38 times in the Hebrew Bible, where it applies 2x in reference to the patriarchs, 6x to the high priest, 1x to Cyrus, and 29x to the Israelite king, primarily Saul and secondarily David or an unnamed Davidic monarch. In these contexts, the term denotes one invested, usually by God, with power and leadership, but never an eschatological figure.

The non-technical use of the term is simply to designate "one anointed" [with oil and/or the Holy Spirit], but especially one who had been set apart by God and enabled for a special task. For example, the term is employed variously with respect to *kings* (Saul): 1 Sam 24:7, 11; 26:9, 11, 16, 23; 2 Sam 1:14, 16 (cf. 1 Sam 2:10, 35; 12:3, 5; 16:6; Psa 28:8), (David): 2 Sam 19:22; 22:51; 23:1; Pss 2:2; 20:7; 84:10; 89:39, 52; 132:10, 17 (cf. 18:51), (Solomon): 2 Chron 6:42, (Zedekiah): Lam 4:20; of *patriarchs*: Psa 105:15; 1 Chron 16:22; *foreign rulers* - Cyrus, the Persian king: Isa 45:1; *Israel*: Hab 3:3 (cf. Psa 28:8); *priests* (Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 16:15; and *prophets* (Psa 105:15; 1 Chron 16:22).

The use of the term *mashiach* with respect to these divinely appointed positions (and particularly those of prophet, priest, and king), allow for the greater embodiment of these offices by a distinctly predicted "Anointed." In this light, the Greater Prophet spoken of by Moses (Deut 18:15), the unending priesthood of Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-20), and the eternally enthroned seed of David (2 Sam 7:12-16; 23:1-3, 5) merge within the growing development of the messianic concept.

The connection of the term "Messiah" as applied to an anointed king appears especially strong, and was used in a prophetic sense of the coming Davidic ruler. Both Second Samuel and the Psalms refer to King David as the "anointed one" (*mashiach*) whose descendants will rule forever (2 Sam 22:50-51 = Psa 18:50-51). In addition, the concept of a universal messiah is seen in texts that give to the Davidic house dominion over foreign nations (2 Sam 22:44-51 = Psa 18:44-51; Psa 2:7-9). In the prophetic writings, the messianic concept has a special reference to God's promised Davidic ruler who will restore Israel to the divine ideal (Isa 9:7; Jer 23:5-6; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:25; Amos 9:11-12). Psalms 2 (vss. 2-6, 7-9) and 89 (vss. 3-4, 20-29) depict a divinely appointed king messiah (or "anointed") who will destroy God's Gentile opponents and as His representative will reign over the

nations. The pre-exilic prophet Isaiah likewise predicts a future Davidic Messiah who will smite Israel's enemies and rule in justice over the nations (Isa 11:1-10). The post-exilic Chronicler also speaks of a Davidic ruler-restorer who will rebuild the Temple, to whom God would be Father without the need for correction, and who will serve as regent in God's kingdom (1 Chron 17:11-14).

It appears that the return to Judah after the exile and the re-establishment of the Davidic dynasty broken by the Babylonian captivity (cf. Zech. 4:7-10), were at first considered not only a national restoration (Ezek 36:24; 37:12), but as a prelude to the expected messianic advent that would usher in spiritual restoration (Mal 4:5-6; cf. Ezek 36:25-27; 37:14). However, despite the efforts of "anointed" priests and prophets, as well as "anointed" foreign rulers who aided the return and rebuilding (Cyrus: Isa 44:28-45:13; Ezra 1:1-11; Darius: 4:5-6:14), the post-exilic community came to realise that the prophetic ideals of restoration had not been met and that spiritual restoration (and the promised "Anointed") still lay in the future. For example, the post-exilic leader and restorer of the Temple, Zerubbabel, although of Davidic descent, could not rule as king under a Persian administration (only as a governor or satrap, cf. Hag 1:1, 14; 2:2, 21). For this reason, Zechariah predicts that the *zemach* ("Branch"), an apparent messianic expression, will build the restoration Temple in the time of spiritual fulfilment (Zech 6:12-14).

If we continue to trace the concept of Messiah through the OT without dependence on the term *mashiach*, we find that not only is there portrayed a royal "Son of David," and a redeemer/restorer of Israel, but also a heaven-sent ruler who is able to bear titles of divinity (Isa 9:6-7) and to restore the whole of the created order (Isa 11:1-2). There is also more elaboration on the priestly role, for Psalm 110 refers to a figure who is a combined King-Priest (cf. Zech 6:9-13), while Isaiah depicts a Priest-Servant, cleansing the Nation through priestly atonement (Isa 52:13-15; cf. Lev 4:6; Ezek. 43:19-20).

Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the concept of the Messiah's coming is reserved in the OT for the Last Days (cf. Jer 33:14-18; Isa 59:16-20). In this period, the messianic advent apparently comes after (and in response to) a time of distress that will come upon Israel (Deut 4:30; Jer 30:4-11).

The technical use of *mashiach* for this predicted figure appears in Dan 9:25 as *mashiach nagid* ("anointed prince" or "Messiah the Prince") and is regarded as the most explicit usage in the Old Testament. However, as presented above, the inexplicit (and infrequent) use of this term in the Old Testament for a distinct prophetic individual does not mean that

Israel lacked a clear concept of the Messiah. It simply means that the technical designation for this concept had not crystallised until late in the Second Temple period. In this regard a figure such as the Danielic "Son of Man"(Dan 7:13) was increasingly seen as messianic as the political situation in the Second Temple period compelled Jewish interpreters to search out Old Testament prophecies to expound the messianic concept.

All this variety in the matter of messianic expectations is merely one detail- though a particularly striking one- of the even greater variety of eschatological expectations current in the two centuries before and after the time of Jesus. To say nothing of mere differences in personnel and program, these expectations run the whole gamut of concepts, from ordinary kingdoms in this world, through forms of this world variously made over and improved, through worlds entirely new and different, to spiritual bliss without any world at all. We shall now consider the various texts mentioned above in details to see what each has to contribute to the gradual development of Messianic Expectations.

3.2 Messianic Passages in the Old Testament

As we have noted above, various passages in the OT, often set in the context of Israel's disobedience and exile or possible exile, speak of a time in the future when God would perform a decisive and irreversible saving act on behalf of Israel. In many of these Old Testament passages this act is associated with a single individual, a king from the descendent of David; he would be the instrument through which God would bring about this salvation.

3.2.1 Eschatological King in the Torah

There are two passages from the Torah that seem to speak about a future eschatological king. The patriarch Jacob prophecies that "The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the staff from between his feet, this is a difficult passage to interpret and no completely satisfactory proposal for the meaning of the Hebrew phrase This is a difficult passage to interpret and no completely satisfactory proposal for the meaning of the Hebrew phrase. The parallel terms "sceptre" and "staff" (Gen 49:10) are symbols of royal authority and power. The tribe of Judah is understood as the royal one. The coming royal from the tribe of Judah would bring his kingship to its climax. The next phrase supports this interpretation: "And the obedience of the peoples is his." This ultimate king from the tribe of Judah will rule over other peoples.

The second passage says that Balaam, son of Beor, prophecies to Balak, king of Moab that "A star will come out of Jacob; a sceptre will arise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the

skulls of all the sons of Seth. Edom will be conquered; Seri, his enemy, will be conquered, but Israel will grow strong. He [a ruler] will come out of Jacob and destroy the survivors of the city" (It is not clear to what the term "sons of Seth" (Num 24:17-19).

This is confirmed by the parallel term sceptre, which a ruler wields as a symbol of authority. According to the prophecy, this ruler who will come from Israel will conquer neighbouring peoples. It is true that David subjugated the nations surrounding Israel, including the Edomites and Moabites and Edomites (2 Sam 8:11-14)

3.2.2 The Psalmist and Royal Ideology

The *textus classicus* for the development of Messianism in the OT remains, of course, the promise of Yahweh to David through the mouth of the prophet Nathan: ***Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me, Your throne shall stand firm forever (2 Sam 7:16)***. From the time of this promise onwards, the Davidic dynasty became the vehicle of covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel. Here also marks the beginning of what scholars like Roland Murphy and Coppens described as Royal Messianism as opposed to Eschatological Messianism. The Book of Psalms, and especially the royal Psalms (Pss 2, 18, 20, 72, 84, 89, 116, etc..) added other features to the picture. More than in 2 Samuel, the King emerged as the defender of his people and became the legal basis for redemption.

Psalm 89 says that the promise of David is everlasting dynasty and Yahweh's would not annul his covenant with David and his descendants. Yahweh says, "I have made a covenant with my chosen; I have sworn to David my servant, I will establish your seed forever and build up your throne to all generations" (Psa 89:3-4) David is called to be the servant of Yahweh (Psa 89:3, 20) and Yahweh says that he has anointed David a king and given him the role of kingship in the earth (Psa 132) Yahweh's promise to David to give him a dynasty is reiterated in Psa 132: "Yahweh has sworn to David, a truth from which he will not turn back: 'Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne'" (132:11). King David is called "servant" and "anointed" (132:10). Similarly, in Psa 132:17, Yahweh promises, "I will cause the horn of David to spring forth." The conditional element of Yahweh's promise to David and his descendants, however, is also restated: "If your sons will keep my covenant and my testimony that I will teach them, their sons also shall sit upon your throne forever.

Prophesying to the northern kingdom in the eighth century at the time of the divided kingdom, Amos says that Yahweh will restore the Davidic dynasty: "On that day I will raise up the fallen tent of David,

and wall up its breaches; I will also rise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old." (Amos 9:11-12) God promised that he would re-establish the unfilled David monarch in Israel.

3.2.3 Micah and the Eschatological Davidic King

Micah prophesied to the southern kingdom during the latter part of the 8th century. In Mic 5:2, he announces that out of Bethlehem is to come a ruler who will rule over Israel. "But as for you, Bethlehem too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you one will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel." Bethlehem is a small town in Judah located some seven kilometres to the south of Jerusalem; it is the town where David and his ancestors originated (1 Sam 16:1). It is clear that this ruler will be more than a human being because he will pre-exist his historical appearance: His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.

3.2.4 Messianic Expectations in Isaiah

Book of Isaiah contains several references to a Davidic king who will appear in the future, dating from the 8th century. As a matter of fact, it was the Isaiah who will set forth clearly what is called messianic expectation. More pointedly here than in the royal psalms, the reference is not just to a Davidic king in the course of empirical history with whose accession the beginning of the rule of salvation is expected in the full sense. But to an outstanding savior of the house of David who represents the last thing in common history. The eclipse of the Davidic Kingdom in 587-586 BCE and the subsequent failure to restore it had its effect on the belief in a Messiah descended from David.

The belief persisted, certainly, but the increasing importance of the Priesthood led certain circles to attribute a messianic role to the descendants of Aaron as well. In the period immediately after the exiles, a shift was noticed in the conception of the figure of the Messiah. The glory of the Messiah was set in contrast to the contemporary inadequacy in the house of David and became increasingly characterized by permanent possession of the Spirit. Unlike the fallibility of the Davidic dynasty, the reign of the expected messiah will combine power, dignity and greatness [Isa 11:3-5] and humility. Roland Murphy was right when he said:

The messianic era is described in terms of the concrete situation in which the nation found itself. During oppression and slavery, the message is one of liberation and dominion. So, in contrast to the darkness of Assyrian captivity of the northern tribes, there shines light for these peoples.

Isaiah 9:5ff. Is the oldest passage to set forth clearly what is called Messianic expectation. More patently here than in the royal Psalms, the reference is not just to a Davidic king in the course of empirical history,

with whose accession the beginning of a rule of salvation is expected in the full sense, but rather to an outstanding saviour of the house of David who represents the last thing in common history. In the period after the exile, there was a shift in the conception of the figure of the messiah. The glory of the Messiah is now set in contrast to the contemporary inadequacy in the house of David. The messiah is characterized by permanent possession of the Spirit. Endowment with the Spirit makes it possible for the Messianic ruler to reign with piety, wisdom and righteousness. Unlike the fallibility of human reign, his reign will combine power, dignity and greatness. His reign will also be characterized by humility. Writing specifically about the Messiah, Isaiah says:

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 counsellor 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 His epithets include some that seem to necessitate the conclusion that this ruler would be more than a human being: "mighty God" and "eternal Father (Isa 9:6-7).

That this future ruler will also have something of a Davidic descent is clear from the phrase: "the throne of David. Isaiah speaks about an eschatological Davidic king who is to appear, Then a shoot will spring from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. This figure, in addition to being from the line of David, will have the spirit of the Lord upon him (11:2). Isaiah prophesies the spirit of Yahweh will rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh." This Davidic Messiah will judge with righteousness – including the destruction of the wicked (Isa 11:3-5) – and will be a sign to the nations. He will reign in a time of unprecedented peace (11:6-9). Isaiah 4:2 speaks of a branch of the Lord, who seems to be the same figure in Isaiah 11).

3.2.5 Jeremiah and the Future Davidic Dynasty

Jeremiah received his call to be a prophet in the latter seventh century and continued after the fall of Jerusalem in 586. The prophet makes references to a descendent of David who would rule over Israel. Jeremiah prophesies, "'Behold, the days are coming,' declares Yahweh, 'when I will raise up for David a righteous branch; and he will reign as king'" (Jer 23:5). God promises through the prophet Jeremiah that he would raise up a "righteous branch" for David, who would

rule as king. Even though he uses a different term. Davidic king will reign over a secure and reunited nation: "In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely" (Jer 5:6a). For this reason, his name will be "Yahweh our righteousness, in this context, "righteousness" means salvation, i.e., Yahweh's covenantal mercy shown to his people through the eschatological Davidic king.

Similar to the prophecy in Jer 23:5-7, Yahweh promises through the prophet that he "will cause a righteous branch of David to spring forth". In spite of the apparent termination of the David dynasty, Yahweh will cause a new Davidic king to appear, symbolised by a branch that springs forth from an apparently dead tree or plant. This is in fulfilment of Yahweh's promise to David. His reign seems to be more expansive than simply over Israel and Judah because it is said of this Davidic king that he will "execute justice and righteousness on the earth" (23:15b). The temporal adverbial phrase "in those days" should probably be interpreted as an eschatological reference, so that what is being described is the appearance of an ultimate Davidic king. When this king appears, it is said that Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety.

3.2.6 Ezekiel on the Davidic king

The prophet Ezekiel was taken captive by the Babylonians before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, and prophesied from Babylonia before and after the destruction. He prophesied the coming of an eschatological Davidic king: "Then I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd." In this passage the prophet says in the name of Yahweh that "my servant David" will be a shepherd over my flock" (Ezek 34:23).

The Israel's future restoration to the land in a state of obedience to the Law, Ezekiel prophesies in the name of Yahweh that "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd" (Ezek 37:24). What he means by "my servant David" is one from the line of David who would rule over a restored Israel. For the eschatological Davidic king to be a shepherd means that his rule will be beneficial for Israel.

3.2.7 Daniel and the Ancient of Days

The particular socio-political circumstances prevailing in the late Second Temple times provided the occasion for the eschatologisation of the messianic expectation. Following the usurpation of the Davidic dynasty and even the Priesthood by the Hasmoneans, there was an

almost unanimous suspicion of the validity and effectiveness of the promise. Taught by their tradition to expect that their God would perform miracles and deliver them from the high-handed King Antiochus IV, the Jews found the contrary happening. When the latter sacked the temple in Jerusalem and massacred a good number of those Jews who failed to worship the idolatrous cult he imposed, many almost gave up hope. But the response of most believing Jews was to search the scriptures for guidance. Surely these, too was part of God's plan since several prophets had predicted a time of terrible troubles during the **Last Days before the great redemption**. Most pious Jews saw themselves as living in that penultimate time of troubles. This marks the climax of Apocalyptic Literatures.

Although the book of Daniel belonged to a much later tradition, we will include it here since it has a place in the canon of the OT. 'In Dan 7:13-14, 22, there appears a prediction that imperial power will come to the grievously persecuted righteous Jews [the Saints of the Most High]. The collectivity of those Saints is there symbolised by a figure described as like a human being or 'Son of Man'. The Book of Daniel 7 reached its final redaction in 167, and one can demonstrate that 7:25 means the prediction would be fulfilled with the coming of the Sabbatical year in Tishri, 164 BCE.

Daniel's "Son of Man" visions sounded the trumpet loud and clear. In Dn. 7:13-14, 22, appears a prediction that imperial power will come to the grievously persecuted righteous Jews.... The collectivity of these Saints is there symbolised by a figure described as like a human being or "Son of Man".... The Book of Daniel 7 reached its final redaction in 167, and one can demonstrate that 7:25 means the prediction would be fulfilled with the coming of the Sabbatical year in Tishri, 164 BCE. Daniel 12:2-3 can be shown to be written before Antiochus IV marched eastward in June 165, and Dan 12:11-12 predicted that the great fulfillment would be completed by August 12, 163, 1335 days after the desecration of the temple altar on 25 Kislev 167.

Inasmuch as I will not affirm or deny Goldstein's position, among the things that stand out loud and clear is the proximity between the time to that of the coming of Jesus. And the many similarities between popular messianic movements and the activities of the group that gathered around Jesus of Nazareth, activities that the Synoptic gospels will record and report.

3.2.8 The Wisdom of Ben-Sira (Sirach)

The work known as the Wisdom of Ben-Sira (or Sirach), composed by a professional Jerusalem scribe whose proper name was *Yeshua'*

(Jesus) about 180 B.C., recorded a prayer for the deliverance and restoration of Israel through divine intervention (36:1-17). While in this prayer God appears to act alone, the expression "the Lord and His anointed" appears later (46:19), with reference to 1 Sam 12:5 (where both figures are mentioned). Still later, Ben-Sirah praises God "who makes a horn to sprout for the house of David and elects the sons of Zadok to be priests" (51:12). These words, most likely based on Psa 132:16-17, present one of the foundational messianic ideas that will be seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls, that of a Davidic and a priestly Messiah.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the inferences to the futuristic Davidic King in Israel in the Torah.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Many passages of the Old Testament spoke about the futuristic Davidic dynasty whose kingship will encompass the tribes of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Many prophets also spoke about the everlasting dynasty of Davidic that will be continued in his descendants. The books of Numbers, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel as well as Daniel and the Wisdom of Ben Sira also spoke of ecstatic prophecies concerning the futuristic appearance of a Davidic king.

The messianic apocalypse also spoke of the anointed ruler who would deliver the people of Israel when he come to Israel. The ruler would be God anointed one for the Jews. Besides, when he arrives, the king would set the captivities free. In all, the concept of the messiah in the Old Testament spoke of the expected Davidic king who would deliver the Jews and restored Israel from captivities when he comes.

5.0 SUMMARY

The OT speaks about the Davidic futuristic dynasty. The Torah, the Psalmist and such prophets as Micah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and others prophesied about the futuristic Davidic king who would save the people of Israel from their enemies. Likewise, the book of Daniel as well as the Wisdom of Ben Sira also spoke about the messiah of the Jews, who, when he comes, would save the people of Israel.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Comment on the following prophets concerning their prophecies on the coming of Davidic king in Israel: Isaiah, Jeremiah and

- Ezekiel.
2. Discuss the Danielic Son of Man in the context of Apocalyptic Messianic Expectation.

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UNIT 3 MESSIANISM IN EARLY JUDAISM

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Continuing along the line of OT passages that you have seen in the last unit, later Jewish traditions lived in the expectation of a single individual, a king from the line of David who would be the instrument through which God would bring about this salvation. In this present unit, we will explore the positions of these traditions

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- state the development of the Messiah concept in this period
- explain the record of messianic fulfilment that appears in later Jewish traditions
- discuss the messianic idea as expressed in the various traditions in accordance with hermeneutical principle of progressive revelation.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Messianic Hopes in Early Judaism

When the Hasmonean dynasty effected national independence (163 B.C.), their priestly rulers at first carefully avoiding assuming the title of "king" (which politically had been reserved for the Seleucid monarchs, and prophetically for those of the true Davidic dynasty). The

failure of the post-exilic community to experience restoration, coupled with a growing spiritual defection among the priestly leaders, exemplified by Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.) acquiring the title of king in addition to that of high priest and the imposition of a cultural Hellenism, provoked the earnest desire in opponent parties (such as the Pharisees and the Qumran sect) for a God-sent ("anointed") King and Priest to restore the legitimate order (Davidic monarchy and Zadokite priesthood). This messianic anticipation became even more pronounced with the loss of Jewish sovereignty through the Roman conquest (63 B.C.) leading to the expectation of a national king who would affect political and spiritual redemption.

Stimulated by oppressive religious and political conditions, this messianic hope during the intertestamental period expressed itself in late Second Temple Judaism through a development of the prophetic concept of messianic deliverance in the eschatological age. Jewish apocryphal and pseudepigraphal apocalyptic literature of this period contains explicit references to the Messiah that will appear at the end of the age to wage the messianic wars, defeat Israel's adversaries, restore the nation and priesthood, and rule on a universal scale.

3.2 The Sibylline Oracles

The Sibylline Oracles are a collection of fourteen Jewish texts attributed to Sibyl, who in the classical world was portrayed as an old woman who received and spoke ecstatic prophecies. There was official collection of sibylline oracles at Rome, which were consulted in times of need. Jews used the literary genre of sibylline oracles in order to present their own views and self-understanding to a non-Jewish readership. Sibylline Oracle may date from Egypt as early as the reign to Ptolemy (fl. 180–145BCE). In the Sibylline Oracles, reference is made to God sending a king to bring war to an end and then God will send a king from the sun who will stop the entire earth from evil war killing some, imposing oaths of loyalty on others; and he will not do all these things by his private plans but in obedience to the noble teachings of the great God. There is little doubt that this is an expression of the belief in the future appearance of an eschatological David king.

3.3 Testament of Judah

The Testament of Judah in its present form is Christian, but they are probably a redaction of pre-Christian, Jewish text. In Testament of Judah 22, reference is made to the future appearance of a king. The patriarch Judah says, "My rule shall be terminated by men of alien race, until the salvation of Israel comes, until the coming of the God of

righteousness, so that Jacob may enjoy tranquillity and peace, as well as all the nations. He shall preserve the power of my kingdom forever. With an oath the Lord swore to me that the rule would no cease for my posterity). This statement by the patriarch is based on Gen 49:10, Jacob's prophecy that "The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the staff from between his feet until he comes to whom it belongs" (see Psa 89:1-4; 34-37).

The original prophecy, however, has undergone some qualification in light of Israel's history, so that now this future descendent of Judah will rule in Israel only after Israel has been ruled by gentiles ("men of alien race") for a period of time. When this future king from the tribe of Judah arises then will the promise of a perpetual kingdom be realised? Allusion is also made to Isa 11:10 ("The root of Jesse will stand as a sign to the nations") insofar not only Israel to benefit from the reign of this future king but also gentiles "so that Jacob may enjoy tranquillity and peace, as well as all the nations." Later in Testament of Judah 24, the appearance of the future king from the tribe of Judah is further described with several allusions to Old Testament messianic prophecies. In his testament, Judah says to his children.

Moreover, Judah tells his children that in the future a "star from Jacob," will arise, which is an allusion to Balaam's prophecy in Num 24:17 "A star will come out of Jacob; a sceptre will arise out of Israel." The reference to "the sceptre of my kingdom" in Judah.

Num 24:5 also has Num 24:17 in view. This future king is also said to be "the sun of righteousness," which represents a messianic interpretation of Mal 4:2 "But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings." It seems that the phrase "sun of righteousness" has become a messianic title. *Judah 24:2* is probably a Christian interpolation – assuming that the whole passage is not a Christian composition – because of the unmistakable allusions to Jesus' baptism.

After quoting from it, the Isaiah from cave four texts gives the following interpretation of (Isa 11:1-5.) On the assumption that the phrase should be reconstructed as David, the author has interpreted the figure in Isa 11:1 in light of Jer 23:5 and 33:15 the previous reference to "prince of the congregation in 4Q161 frg. 2-6, col. 2.16 is also probably a reference to this "branch of David." The reference to the "branch of David" ruling over the people indicates that Ezek 38-39 is brought into relation to Isa 11:1-5. Probably the author interprets Ezek 39:6 "And I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am Yahweh" as the same eschatological event prophesied in Isa 11:4b. The enemies of God,

identified as Magog, are probably the Romans, since in 1QM 11.15-16.

3.4 The Psalms of Solomon

Psalms 17 and 18 of Solomon derive from a first century BCE collection of poems inspired by mainstream Jewish religious ideology with a pronounced anti-Hasmonean political tendency. The title of Psalm 18, as well as verses 6 and 8 [or 5 and 7] mentions God's Anointed who will be raised up on 'the day of mercy and blessing' and will use his 'rod' to instill the 'fear of righteousness'. This prayer, inspired by chapter 11 of Isaiah, is the coming of the 'son of David', described also with words borrowed from the same prophet and explicitly referred to as 'the Anointed:

Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David.... And gird him with strength, that he may shatter unrighteous rulers.... With a rod of iron he shall break in pieces all their substance; He shall destroy the godless nations with the word of his mouth... And he shall gather together a holy people.... He shall have the heathen nations to serve him under his yoke.... And he shall be a righteous king, taught by God.... And there shall be no unrighteousness in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy and their king the Anointed [of] the Lord (17:23-36).

There can be no doubt that for the author of these two prayers the Messiah was not a shadowy figure. His contours follow the traditional image. He was expected to be a king of David's lineage, victor over the Gentiles, savior and restorer of Israel.... His care for the establishment of God's justice reflects the picture of the final ruler portrayed by Isaiah 11 and Jewish Messianic thought in general.

In the Psalms of Solomon, we also encounter the use of the concept of the Messiah in its Greek translation (*christos*). This was used four times but on each of those occasions, there were qualifications. In all, one can conclude that according to the usage we find in this text, God's intervention is sought in a difficult situation. Appeal is made to his faithfulness and promise. There is longing for the institution of the legitimate Lord's anointed on David's throne, who as an ideal king will do God's will in Israel and achieve victory on earth.

To be noted, however, is the fact that the Psalm of Solomon did not refer to the anointed high-priest, and the word Messiah is not used in the absolute sense. The Lord's anointed implies the special relation between the king and God. The thing that distinguishes this anointed one from others of David's line is that he will not disappoint either God or man.

Events at this time also helped in the evolution of the Messianic theme. The events of 63 BCE came as a surprise {1:1-8}. The Psalmist puts himself imaginatively in the place of Jerusalem. He had thought that the wealth and prosperity of Jerusalem and her children throughout the world indicated Israel's righteousness and glory. When the alarm of war sounded, he expected the Lord to deliver the city. He had no idea of the secret sins that stood in the way, sins that had to be punished. Now, he knew a remarkable admission of that consternation that set the whole process of reflection on its way.

More disappointments tested the faith of the Jews in the Age of Wrath. Taught by their tradition to expect that their God would perform miracles, they found none in their own time; knowing that God sent His true prophets to reveal His will to their ancestors, they themselves found fewer and fewer true prophets and finally none at all.

The events of the years from the 170s down to 134 BCE, narrated in 1&2 Maccabees, were epoch-making in the history of the Jews and in the development of Jewish eschatology. In particular, a series of disasters came upon the Jews, contrary to God's promises through the true prophets that nothing of the kind could happen after the return from Babylonian exile [cf. Isa 51:7-8,22; 55:4-10; Jer 30:23-40, 32:37-44]. In 169 BC, King Antiochus IV sacked the temple and Jerusalem; in 167 his commander Appollonius perpetrated a massacre in the Holy City and took large numbers of Jews captive; later in 167 Antiochus imposed upon the Jews an idolatrous cult and made death the penalty for obeying the Torah and for refusing to observe the imposed cult.

The response of most believing Jews to those disasters was to search the scriptures for guidance. Surely, they were part of God's plan. Nevertheless, several prophets had predicted a time of terrible troubles during the Last Days before the Great Redemption. Pious Jews were quick to assume they were living in that penultimate time of troubles. At some point in this group's history, one of its sages crafted the poem about the son of David who would 'reign over Israel' at a time when God should decide. The familiar text need not be rehearsed. It is enough to recall that this king will purge Jerusalem both of its unrighteous rulers and of the nations that trample it. He will then gather the holy people whom he shall lead in righteousness. The emphasis from that point on is upon the manner of his rule and its consequences. His wisdom and righteousness will be such that he can exercise absolute power both over the nations and over the people by his word alone. An absolutely pure and perfect kingdom will result that encompasses the whole world, the glory of which will attract all eyes and hearts forever.

3.5 The Mishnah

The Mishnah mentions the name of the Messiah only once. Scholars are not in total agreement as to the cause of the relative absence of any reference to the Messiah in the earliest Tannaitic writings. Neither 'the paucity of Rabbinic source material for the period nor the polemic against primitive Christianity is enough excuse. It may well be that rejection of Zealot intrigues, opposition to the imminent eschatological expectation of some apocalyptic groups at the time, political considerations, the bad experiences suffered under the Hasmoneans, and the fact that the leading rabbis were primarily interested in the exposition and observance of the Law. All these may have contributed to a situation in which the theme of Messianic expectation was little discussed, if at all among the older Tannaites so long as Judaea maintained some sort of independence.

3.6 Targums and Talmudic Literature

The Targums are Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible. Sometimes in these translations, interpretation of the biblical text can be found, either in the choice of words or in the form of interpretive comments. In these documents, there is a high sense of Messianic expectations. In the Talmudic Lit. and Midrashim, there is frequent mention of the Messiah and his functions and qualities. 'The rabbis do not agree about the name of the Messiah or the details of his appearance on earth. But he was never conceived as a divine figure. Although endowed with special gifts, he is the human king and teacher of the law in the end-time. The author of the salvation manifested in this time is God. The focus of interest is obviously the redemption and glorifying of the enslaved people of God.

In Targum Onkelos and Ps. Jonathan, the term Shiloh in Gen 49:10 is interpreted as a name for the royal Messiah. Targum Onkelos, for example, translates the text as "Until the Messiah comes to whom the kingdom belongs. This fragmentary Aramaic text probably make reference to the eschatological Davidic king and his kingdom, but refers to him as "son of God." In colume 1 line 9, there is a probable reference to this eschatological ruler: ".great will he be called and he will be designated by his name." This figure shall be called by a name, and it is probably the case that the verb "will be called" is a divine passive, so that it is God who the one is calling him by this name. If the antecedent of "he" is this Davidic king, then arguably the clause must have been an appropriate title of this Davidic king.

In col. 2, the following is said of the eschatological Davidic king: "He shall be hailed as the son of God, and they shall call him the son of the most high. The two phrase "son of God" and "son of the most

high" are synonymous (see Luke 1:32: "And [the] son of the most high he shall be called" and Luke 1:35 "the holy child shall be called the son of God"). It is probable that calling the eschatological Davidic king "son" reflects a messianic interpretation of 2 Sam 7:14: "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me" and Psa 2:7 "He said to me, 'you are my son; today I have begotten you.'"

This "son of God" or "son of the Most High" will lead and represent a people, which explain the reference in 2.4: "Until the people of God arises." No doubt this people is restored Israel. In contrast to the temporary but oppressive kingdom that precedes his own, the kingdom of the eschatological Davidic king will be eternal and peaceful: "His kingdom will be an eternal kingdom" (Enoch 105:2).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the sibylline oracles in regard to the coming of the futuristic Davidic king in Israel.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Apart from the testimonies from the OT, the idea of the appearance of a future Davidic king in most of the Jewish traditions that developed immediately after the OT. This includes the testimony of such traditions as the Sibylline Oracles, as well as the traditions behind the Targums and Mishnas of the late centuries BCE and early centuries CE. As with the OT expectations, the idea is also of a king of David's descent who would deliver the Jews and restored Israel from captivities when he comes.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that later Jewish traditions after the Old Testament also speak about the Davidic futuristic dynasty.

- You have also learnt about the contributions of the the sibylline oracles, the Psalms of Solomon, the Testament of Judah and the later Rabbis behind the Mishna and the Targums to the Messianism.
- You have also learnt that according to these traditions, when the Messiah comes, he will save Israel from all her enemies.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Explain the contributions of any two of the following traditions to the Messianism Debate.

1. The Testament of Judah
2. The Psalm of Solomon.
3. The Talmudic Literatures.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 MESSIANISM IN JEWISH PSEUDEPIGRAPHAL WORKS OF THE 1ST CENTURIES BCE/ CE

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 - 3.4 4 Ezra and Diversities in the Messianic Expectations
 - 3.5 2 Baruch and a Temporary Messianic Kingdom on the earth
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- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed the Messianic expectation in later Jewish traditions and the development of the Messiah concept in Early Judaism. This unit will focus on the various concepts and designations of the Messiah within their literary and historical context. Among other things, we shall explore Jewish messianic expectations as documented in the Pseudepigraphal literatures of the first centuries BCE and CE

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain some Jewish pseudepigraphal Literature
- discuss the contributions of the Pseudepigraphal works of the first Century CE to the Messianism debate.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Similitudes of Enoch

Also known as the Epistle of Enoch, the *Similitudes of Enoch* is composed around 40 B.C.E. This text is what remains of a collection of OT texts considered along the lines of their messianic and eschatological significance. The author interprets an abbreviated version

of 2 Sam 7:11c-14a as messianic, on the assumption that God is referring not to Solomon but to David's greatest "son" or descendent, the eschatological Davidic king. In his commentary on this passage, the author explicitly identifies the "son" in 2 Sam 7:11c-14a as the "the branch of David." This means that the author has identified David's "son" in 2 Sam 7:14 with the eschatological Davidic king described metaphorically as the "branch of David" in Jer. 23:5; 33:15.

The *Similitudes* literarily consists of two sections: the Apocalypse of Weeks (*1 En* 91–105) and Enoch's "letter" to his sons (see *1 En* 100:6), which consists of exhortations to the righteous (including his children) and woes to sinners. The Apocalypse of Weeks is contained in the fifth section of 1 Enoch (Chapter 91–104). In 1978, Michael A. Knibb published an updated text of the Ethiopic with a translation informed by the Aramaic fragments discovered in the Qumran Cave. In the Ethiopic manuscripts the order of the Apocalypse of Weeks itself has become somewhat shuffled during the compilation of 1 Enoch but it remains the second half of the Apocalypse (91: 12–17) placed before the first half (93:1-10).

In the Apocalypse of Weeks, the author stated the relation between the eternal heavenly Kingdom of God and the temporal, earthly Kingdom associated with the Messiah which precedes it. This is probably the oldest of the documents which embody this distinction and perhaps dates to the period just prior to the Maccabean revolt because of its lack of a clear reference to that tumultuous time.

The Ethiopic text reads as follows:

And after this Enoch began to speak from the books (93: 1) and Enoch said: 'Concerning the sons of righteousness and concerning the chosen of the world and concerning the plant of righteousness and uprightness I will speak these things to you and make (them) known to you, my children, 1 Enoch, according to that which appeared to me in the heavenly vision, and (which) I know from the words of the holy angels and understand from the tablets of heaven' (93:3). And Enoch then began to speak from the books and said: 'I was born the seventh in the first week, while justice and righteousness still lasted (93:5). And after me in the second week great wickedness will arise, and deceit will have sprung up; and in it there will be the first end, and in it a man will be saved. And after it has ended, iniquity will grow, and he will make a law for the sinners (93:5). And after this in the third week, at its ends, a man will be chosen as the plant of righteous judgment: and after him will come the plant of righteousness forever (93:6).

And after this there will be another week, the eighth, that of righteousness and a sword will be given to it that the righteous

judgment may be executed on those who do wrong, and the sinners will be handed over in the hands of the righteous (91:13).

The important point we want you to know from the Apocalypse of Weeks is the distinction made between a temporal, earthly (probably the Messianic) Kingdom set up in the eighth week and the eternal, heavenly Kingdom of God which appears in the tenth and final week. Charles suggested that within these earlier sections the Messianic Kingdom is eternal and is preceded by the final judgment of God. But Chapters 91 – 104 deal with the Messianic Kingdom that is temporary and is followed by the judgment.

Worthy of note is the fact that scholars have found in *Similitudes* four features for this figure: (1) it refers to an individual and is not a collective symbol, (2) it is clearly identified as the Messiah, (3) the Messiah is pre-existent and associated with prerogatives traditionally reserved for God, and (4) the Messiah takes an active role in the defeat of the ungodly. New Testament parallels with *Similitudes* (e.g., Matt 19:28 with 1 Enoch 45:3 and John 5:22 with 1 Enoch 61:8) may further attest to a mutual dependence on a common Jewish messianic interpretation (or tradition) based on Daniel's vision.

3.2 The book of Jubilees

According to R.H. Charles, the Jubilees is the work of a Pharisee that was written between 135-105 BCE in reaction to the Hellenising spirit which had beset Judaism. The author, in contrast to some of his contemporaries who associated the advent of the Levitical Messiah with the rise of the Maccabees, looked for the immediate advent of the Messianic Kingdom ruled over by a Judahic Messiah, that is to say a Messiah arising out of the lineage and tribe of Judah.

According to Charles, this Messianic Kingdom, although begun with the Maccabean ascension, was to be gradually realised on earth and to be accompanied by a physical transformation of the world corresponding to the ethical transformation of man. He claims that all sorrows would pass and man would live to be 1,000 years old. After death the righteous would enjoy spiritual blessedness for ever (Jubilees 1: 27-29; 23: 26–36).

This having been said, the royal-priestly theme is also evident in the Jubilees' use of the biblical account of Isaac's blessing of Jacob's sons Levi (Jubilees 31:13-17) and Judah (Jubilees 31:18-20). Levi and his son's descendants are depicted as judges and teachers of the Law, ministering in the Sanctuary and executing righteousness (30:18). Judah, however, is said to receive power to be Jacob's help, and through

his righteousness will bring peace for all Israelites. To him it is said: "A prince shall you be you and one of your sons" (30:19-20). In addition, this future Davidic king will be ruler over an Israel that is both a priestly and a royal nation (33:20).

3.3 The 2 (Slavonic) Enoch

A third work that points to the temporary earthly Messianic Kingdom and the Eternal Age to come is 2 (Slavonic) Enoch. This work was a joint work of W.R. Morfil and R.H. Charles. In the 2 Enoch there are two passages that contain the doctrine of a temporary, Messianic Kingdom. The first one is 32:1-33:2. While the second was 65:6-10. Of particular interest to us here is the first passage that has God say to Adam:

And I said to him, 'You are earth, and into the earth once again you will go, out of which I took you from.' 'Then I can take you once again at my second coming.' AND I blessed all my creatures, visible and invisible. And Adam was in paradise for five hours and a half (32:2). And I blessed the seventh day which is the Sabbath day in which I rested from all my doings (33:1). On the eighth day I likewise appointed, so that the eighth day might be the first, the first- created of my week, and that it should revolve in the revolution of 7000 (33:2) so that the 8000 might be in the beginning of a time not reckoned and unending, neither years, nor months, nor weeks, nor days, nor hours like the first day of the week, so also that the eighth day of the week might return continually.

Charles relied so much on this passage in his interpretation of the Messianic Kingdom as corresponding to the rest within the seventh day of creation. This Messianic Kingdom is to be followed, according to Charles, by the eighth day, the Eternal Age to come.

3.4 4th Ezra/Esdras and Diversities in Messianic Expectations

The Messiah figure in the most likely post-New Testament 4 Ezra Apocalypse is important for the study of the New Testament because it provides an invaluable piece of evidence to aid in solving the problem of how the NT writers came to their own messianic ideas. Because of the highly developed messianic ideals we find in 4 Ezra, this theme has become the subject of much discussion.

In 4 Esdras, the Messiah is called the son most likely in dependence on a messianic interpretation of Psa 2 and 2 Sam 7:14. The Messiah is also called the Righteous One, the Elect One, the Chosen One and the Son

of Man (the idea of the son of man derives from Dan 7:13). This pre-existent messianic figure – hitherto concealed in heaven – is destined to appear in the world at end of the age as God’s agent, in order to defeat the enemies and God and Israel and to execute final judgment upon them, the criterion of which is works. The Elect One will also judge Azaz’el and angels under his authority (55; see 61). During this time, the nations will unsuccessfully attack Israel (56). The Messiah shall then dwell on the earth forever with the righteous or elect ones (45; 68.27). Since, in 49:3-4 and 62:2-3, there are allusions to Isa 11:1-6 in the description of him, it is clear that the Elect One is the eschatological Davidic king. Also, the Son of Man is also depicted as “the light to the gentiles,” originally applied to the Servant (Isa 42:6; 49:6).

A consideration of certain passages in the Ezra Apocalypse will help us to shed light on the idea of a temporary, Messianic Kingdom as taught within the Apocalypse so as to determine its implication for the eschatological issues.

Of particular interest here is the third vision of 6:35–9:25, where Ezra is in dialogue with the Angel of the Lord concerning the fate of the righteous and the wicked. Within this larger pericope, the appearance of the Messiah is described in 7:26–30:

For behold the time will come, when the signs which I have foretold to you will come to pass; the city which is not now seen shall appear, and the land which now is hidden shall be disclosed (v. 26).

And everyone who has been delivered from the evils that I have foretold shall see my wonders (v. 27). For my son the Messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him, and those who remain shall rejoice four hundred years (v. 28).

And after these years my son the Messiah shall die, and all those who draw human breath (v. 30). And the world shall be turned back to primeval silence for seven days, as it was at the first beginnings; so that no one will be left.

The above quoted passage speaks of the Messiah who will come and later dies. Because such messiah will not leave forever on this earth, the Jewish race keep on expecting a messiah whom they believe would not die but leaves forever to come to them.

In 7: 31-44 the description of the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment of God is found. Let us examine the vision of the Eagle in 12. In it we will see that Messiah serves as the instrument of God for

judgment that will be passed on the wicked before the coming of a time of joy that will last forever.

And as for the lion that you saw rousing up out of the forest and roaring and speaking to the eagle and reproving him for his unrighteousness, and as for all his words that you have heard, this is the Messiah whom the Most High has kept until the end of days, who will arise from the posterity of David, and will come and speak to them, he will denounce them for their ungodliness and for their wickedness, and will cast up before them their contemptuous dealings (12: 31 and 33). For first he will set them living before his judgment seat, and when he has reproved them, and then he will destroy them. But he will deliver in mercy the remnant of my people, those who have been saved throughout my borders, and he will make them joyful until the end comes, the day of judgment, of which I spoke to you at the beginning (34).

In the above quoted passage, you could note that Messiah did reprove the powers of evil before setting up his Kingdom.

The diversity of messianic expectations in 4 Ezra can be seen as we examine the relationship between the final judgment and the Messianic Kingdom. Michael Stone has pointed out that there is an ambiguity within 4 Ezra as to whether the consummation occurs before or after the Messianic Kingdom. This ambiguity is tied up with the flexibility of the term 'the end'. He states that the end is the Day of judgment. He placed the end immediately before the Messianic Kingdom and thus prior to the Judgment Day in 11:36-39; 6:25; 6:7-10; 5:41 and 14:9 respectively. He organised his thoughts about the future and at one point setting the end prior to the Messianic Kingdom and at another setting it subsequent to that Kingdom. Despite the controversy that his work brings to scholars, one thing is sure, that is, he was able to tell us that Messiah was involved in the execution of the judgment on the earth.

Now let us examine the vision of the figure of man that is referred to as the Messiah in Daniel that is found in 4Ezra in the work of Stone.

And I looked and behold, this wind made something like the figure of man come up out of the heart of the sea. And I look, and behold, that man flew with the clouds of heaven. (1 Enoch 37–71). This passage was influential in the early Church.

I said, 'O sovereign Lord, explain this to me: Why did I see the man coming up from the heart of the sea. He said to me, 'Just as no one can explore or know what is in the depth of the sea, so no one on earth can see my Son or those who are with him, except in the time of

his day' (52). Furthermore, we also noticed in (5) that Ezra did cry out to God as he asked the following question:

'O sovereign Lord', I said, 'who is able to know these things except he whose dwelling is not with men? In this passage, you should know that the author refers to the Messiah that serves as God's agent of action and as such is promoted to the heavenly sphere. (5: 38). The expected Messiah will be revealed for he will bridge the gap between the earthly things and the heavenly things when comes to this universe. The expected Messiah will redeem people when he arrives into the world. This is highlighted in 13 and its reads: The man whom you saw who descended from the sea, that is he whom the Most High will send after many times and through him he will save his creation and he will bring back those who remains on the earth.

3.5 2 (Syrian) Baruch and a Temporary Messianic Kingdom on the Earth

Another major Jewish pseudepigraphal document which teaches a temporary, Messianic Kingdom on the earth is the Syrian Baruch. The book belongs to the 1st century CE and was most likely composed after 70CE. 2 Baruch describes it thus:

And it will happen that when all (Tribulations) that which should come to pass in these parts has been accomplished, the Anointed One will begin to be revealed. And Behemoth will reveal itself from its place, and Leviathan will come from the sea, and it will happen after these things when the time of the appearance of the Anointed one has been fulfilled and he returns with glory, that then all who sleep in hope of him will rise and his dominion will last forever until the world of corruption has ended and until the times which have been mentioned before have been fulfilled. This is your vision, and this is its explanation (40).

The term 'the anointed' is used in the absolute here with reference to a royal figure of the end time. In this time distinction is made between a period of salvation with which the anointed is connected and a more important era in which he plays no part.

In the interpretation of the vision of the cloud rising from the sea (cf. Bar 53) with dark and bright waters that do not relate fully to what is seen, one reads of various plagues that will proceed the reign of the peace with the reign of the Messiah. The Syrian Baruch describes the time of the Messiah in paradisaical colours. Once the Messiah has begun to manifest himself, the two sea-monsters Behemoth and Leviathan will serve as food for those who survive (29:4) and the earth will yield fruit

ten thousand-fold (v.5). In 30:1, something of interest to our discussion is added. The fulfilment of the age of the messiah is expressed as follows: “When the time of the advent of the Messiah is fulfilled and he returns in glory, then all who fell asleep in hope of him will be raised again”. In this passage you have learnt that resurrection will take place before the arrival of the Messiah to this earth.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Narrate the work of Stone in the Apocalypse of Weeks.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you studied both 4 Ezra and Baruch which taught a temporary, Messianic Kingdom along with God’s Eternal Kingdom. It also seems that the seers were able to affirm belief in a temporary, earthly reign of the Messiah alongside belief in an eternal reign of God. You were also taught about Stone who categorized the period of the End time in the Ezra and the resurrection that will take place before the arrival of the Son of Man.

These brief examples, which reveal that the messianic concepts rooted in the Old Testament found development in the later Second Temple period, provided the context for the expression of messianic fulfilment in Jesus as the Messiah, and of the messianic eschatological hope, recorded in the New Testament.

5.0 SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the major points in the unit:

- The Apocalypse of Weeks states the relationship between the temporal and the eternal Kingdom.
- It shows how the world would be judged by the Son of Man. It also teaches that there is resurrection awaiting for every human beings on the earth.
- The Slavonic Enoch makes distinction between the temporary, earthly (Messianic) Kingdom and heavenly, Eternal Age to come.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Comment on the book of Enoch.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 QUMRAN SECTARIAN LITERATURE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Two Messiahs of the Qumran Sect
 - 3.2 The Reception of the Messianic Passages in the DSS Texts
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you studied Messianism in the Jewish Pseudepigraphal Literatures. You have learnt the Apocalypse of Weeks of the second to the first Century BCE. You have also learnt about the book of Jubilees and its commentaries on Messiah as well as the Messianic Kingdom in 4 Ezra. Besides, you were also taught Messianic Diversity which Michael Stone did comment on by setting the end prior to the Messianic Kingdom. You also learnt about the Messianic Kingdom in 2 Baruch. In this unit, you will learn about the messianic concept as developed in the Qumran Sectarian Literature.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the War Scroll of Qumran
- discuss the work of Beckwith.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Two Messiahs of the Qumran Sect

The Qumran Sect, no doubt, had a decided messianic expectation. This is reflected in such texts as *Patriarchal Blessings* (4QP Bless 3): "until the coming of the Righteous Messiah, the sprout of David" (cf. 4QFlor

1-2. 2:11; *4QpIsaa* 8-10:17). The clearly expected "coming of the Messiah of Aaron and Israel" is also found in the *Damascus Document* (CD 19:10; 20:1). As in the OT, the use of the term *mashiach* in the Scrolls may refer to a prophet as "an anointed one" (cf. *IQM* 11:17; CD 2:12; 6:1; *6Q15* 3:4). Also following OT, messianic expressions are applied to a variety of figures (e.g., "Branch of David," "Scepter," "Star"). Some texts speak of "God begetting the Messiah" (*IQSa* 2:12), of the Messiah as a "first-born son" (*4Q369*), while other texts reveal the sovereignty of the messianic-King declaring, "the heavens and earth obey the voice of His Messiah" (*4Q521* line 1), and that the Messiah will "raise the dead" (*4Q521* line 12).

According to the Qumran sect, the two Messiahs (one of Moses and the other of Aaron) are expected as God's instrument in the end time. Their coming is obviously expected on the basis of the covenant which God made eternally with the priestly line of Phinehas (Num 25:12-13) and the royal line of David (2 Sam7:11-16). While no superhuman features occur for certain in relation to either the Messianic high priest or the eschatological Prince, both figures embody the ideal future as seen by the community in an ungodly era. In this future, the true and legitimate priesthood and monarchy will be restored according to God's promise.

3.2 The Reception of the Messianic Passages in the DSS Texts

We shall examine some of the DSS Manuscripts to see what they have to say about the expected Messiah/s

3.2.1 4Q521

The Qumran text designated as 4Q521 consists of 16-18 fragments. Fragment 2, which consists of three columns, is the most important of the fragments. This fragment appears to be a description of the conditions that will obtain at the time of eschatological salvation 2, col. 2, there is a reference to "his anointed." The antecedent of "his" is probably God, since God, identified as lord occurs in line three; the anointed is probably the eschatological David king. The fact that the heavens and the earth obey God's anointed one means that God has put the entire universe under his authority (see Deut 32:1; Isa 1:2; see Psa 146:6).

This fragmentary text refers to God's Messiah (or anointed) whom the heavens and earth will obey. Although what follows is a description of God's eschatological activities, it seems that the Messiah may be the instrument through which some or all of these will be accomplished. Several Old Testament quotations and allusions occur. It is promised

that the Lord will visit the pious, the righteous, the poor and the faithful, terms that refer to those who have obedient to the Law and are destined for eschatological salvation. He will glorify the pious on the throne of the eternal kingdom, which seems to mean that God will give the pious eschatological salvation ("glorify") insofar as he is king ("[sitting] on the throne of the eternal kingdom").

In dependence on Psa. 146:7-8, it is said that the Lord will release the captives, opening the eyes of the blind and makes the blind see, and raise up the downtrodden. This statement describes the conditions that will obtain during the time of eschatological salvation (see Isa 35:5; Psa. 145:14). Perhaps, the Messiah is the instrument through which the Lord does these things.

During the time of eschatological salvation, it is said that the Lord will do wondrous things that have never happened before. In particular, he will "heal the sick, resurrect the dead, and announce good news to the poor.

3.2.2 4Q252

Interpreting Gen 49:10 "The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the staff from between his feet until he comes to whom it belongs" (Jacob's prophecy), the text of 4Q252 says: "Whenever Israel rules there shall not fail to be a descendent of David on the throne. For the "staff" is the covenant of kingship, and the clans of Israel are the "feet", until the Messiah of Righteousness comes, the branch of David. For to him and to his seed was granted the covenant of kingship over his people for everlasting generations". It is clear, therefore, that the author interprets the clause "until he comes to whom it belongs in Gen 49:10 intertextually in light of Jer. 23:5 and Jer.33:15, in which the term "branch of David" occurs": "until the Messiah of Righteousness comes, the branch of David." The unspecified man from the tribe of Judah is to be the eschatological David king whose eschatological appearance is promised in the Book of Jeremiah. This future king is also called "anointed of righteousness" which, as a title, does not occur in the Old Testament or in any other Qumran text.

The author also interprets two words from Gen 49:10 as expressive of his messianic perspective. First, he writes, "The 'staff' is the covenant of kingship. This is a shorthand way of saying that the staff, representing kingship-which will not depart from this unidentified descendent of Judah-is the covenant or promise of perpetual kingship that Yahweh made to David and his descendants (2 Sam 23:5; Jer. 33:19-26; Isa. 55:3-5; Psa. 89). Second, he states, "The clans ("thousands") of Israel

are the "standards" or "divisions) by which he seems to be referring to Israel as the subjects of this future David king.

3.2.3 4Q285

The text known as 4Q285 represents what remains of a work that is similar to the *War Scroll* in its content insofar as both describe the eschatological war. In Isa 10:33-34, it is said that Yahweh will destroy the Assyrian invaders against Jerusalem; this event is compared to the felling of large trees, an impossible task for men but not for God. The author interprets Isa 10:34 as referring to the activities of the eschatological Davidic king, no doubt because of its proximity to Isa 11:1-5. In addition, in an intertextual interpretation, he identifies the Isa 11:1 "shoot from stump of Jesse" with the "branch of David" (Jer 23:5 and 33:15). This Davidic king also seems to be identified as "the prince of the congregation.

Although the text is fragmentary, his role is probably that of a military leader, in particular as the one who would lead Israel against the Romans, known as the Kitten in the Qumran sectarian writings. Reference is made to one whom this Davidic king will slay, but nothing more is forthcoming about this: "And the prince of the congregation, the branch of David, will put him to death. The fact that he is said to be like a shepherd is probably an allusion to Ezek 34:23; 37:24, in which this Davidic king is said to be a shepherd. In addition, Balaam's oracle (Num 24:17) is cited but without interpretation; it is probable that this oracle was understood as messianic by the author.

3.2.4 The War Scrolls

In the War Scroll of Qumran, there is an important parallel to the distinction between a temporary, Messianic Age and eternal Kingdom of God. This is seen within Column 1 of that scroll, where the final eschatological war is described. This war lasted for 40 years and it marked the end of the present Age of Wickedness. It also paved way for the eternal Kingdom of God that follows. The war Scroll provides an interesting parallel to the temporary, Messianic Age of Bliss despite the fact that the 40 years is characterised by an ending battle between the Forces of Good and the Forces of Evil.

Roger Beckwith stated in his work (Qumran scrolls and the date of Daniel, September 6 2010) that the Qumran sect believed in the eschatology. In his work, he tried to discover if the Essenes at Qumran believed in a temporary, Messianic Kingdom and if one can discover such a belief from their sectarian calendar.

Beckwith used the book of Jubilees, wherein the history of the world is arranged into a fifty-jubilee scheme with relevant events in the Jews' life plotted to correspond to key seven – year intervals. Beckwith points out the similarities between the calendar of the book of Jubilees and other sectarian Qumran materials such as The Ages of the Creation (4Q180–181; 11QMelchizedek, the pseudo – Ezekiel Document of Cave 4; and the Testament of Levi 16–18). The point uniting all of these works, and hence invaluable for determining the Essene eschatological calendar, is the periodisation of history from Creation to Consummation into ten jubilee decades each lasting 490 years, or a total of 4900 years. Equally essential was the fact that the Danielic reference to 70 weeks in 9:24-27 was also capable of being similarly schematised into one jubilee decade of 490 years' duration (70 x 7). It is this Danielic reference, coupled with the use of the return from the Exile as catalyst, which enables the Qumran community to interpret the events of the Maccabean Revolt as occurring within the eighth decade of these ten jubilee weeks and postulate thereby the advent of the Messiah with the rampant messianic fervor known to have existed at the time of the birth of Jesus the Messiah.

Having established this fact, we can then move to consider the Essene expectations concerning the end of the world. Beckwith argues from Jubilees 47 -50 that the date is between 974 and 978 CE according to Essene belief. The point to be noted is that we have the final two decades of jubilees taken up with a Messianic Age of 980 years (490 x 2). Following these last two decades we have mention of the final judgment and the New Creation (mostly drawn from the Apocalypse of Weeks 91:1–17).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Who are the Qumran Essenes and what was their thought on the Messiah?

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have learned from this unit that the Essenes at Qumran lived in expectation of the Messiah. You have also learnt that the expected a priestly Messiah and a royal one. You have also learnt how, making use of contemporary Jewish literatures, they tried to calculate the times of the Messianic age.

5.0 SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the major point in the unit:

- Like every other Jewish movement, the Qumran Essenes were

messianic in their orientation.

- They expected two Messiahs: one of David and one of Aaron.
- Among the Qumran Essenes, practically all the OT texts that we have considered in this lecture were also read as messianic.
- The Qumran Essenes distinguishes between a temporary Messianic age and the eternal Kingdom of God that this Age will usher.
- The Qumran Essenes saw themselves as living in the temporary Messianic age.

6.0 TUTOR–MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Comment briefly on the Messianic Idea as developed in the War Scrolls.
2. Discuss Beckwith's use of the War Scrolls to calculate the dawn of the Messianic Age

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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MODULE 2 MESSIANISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Unit 1 Messianism in the Synoptic Gospels

Unit 2 Messianism in Paul and in the Apocalypse

Unit 3 Is Jesus the Expected Jewish Messiah?

Unit 4 Jesus as the Anointed of the Spirit

Unit 5 The Early Christians' Acceptance of Jesus as Messiah

UNIT 1 MESSIANISM IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Christos of the New Testament versus the Messiah of the Old Testament
 - 3.2 Overview of the Occurrence of Christos in the New Testament
 - 3.3 Messianism in the Synoptic Gospels
 - 3.4 Analysis of Specific Messianic Texts in the Synoptic Gospels
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last module, you have learned the origin of the Messiah concept in both the OT and in the traditions and literatures of late 2nd Century BCE Judaism. Especially in the last unit on the Qumran Essenes, we read about the final coming judgment and the functional overlap between any intermediary agent and God himself as that activity is discharged. Judgment gives rise to a number of textual variants and readings among the various editions of the document now available to scholars to study. Within those documents which speak explicitly of a Messiah, the functional overlap between messianic agent and God is so complete that it tends to slide into identification between God and his agent in which the boundaries separating them are breached.

In this first unit of the second Module of this class, you will learn how this idea is carried forward in the various traditions behind the Christian New Testament (henceforth NT). You will also learn how the Messiah concept featured in the Synoptic Gospels as well as learn how to analyse some

specific Messianic Texts.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the NT understanding of the Messiah or Christos
- explore the understanding of Christos in the Synoptic Gospels
- analyse some Messianic Texts in the NT.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Christos of the NT versus the Messiah of the OT

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for us in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared to Kephas, then to the twelve (1Cor.15:3-7).

If NT scholars are right in the claim that this convenient summary of the gospel by Paul was among the oldest credal formulas and even precedes the written gospels, then there is no doubting the fact that the early Christians saw themselves in the light of an older tradition. Paul's basic claim is that the entire "Jesus event" was 'in accordance with the Scriptures'. And by Scripture he meant the holy book of Judaism in whatever canonical form it was used at the time of Jesus. This is more so with the messianic expectation.

Whatever significance is ultimately ascribed to the title "the Christ", "the anointed", one fact is at least certain: the identification of Jesus, not just with a Messiah, but with the awaited Messiah of Judaism belonged to the heart and kernel of the earliest phase of Christian belief. Indeed, the original style "Jesus the Christ" or "the Christ Jesus" became so generally employed and so much part of everyday language that in the Gentile circles evangelised by Paul, it contracted into the double-barreled Jesus Christ and even the shortened "Christ" From indicating a function, it was thus transformed into a personal name.

3.2 Overview of the Occurrence of Christos in the New Testament Books

In various forms, the word Christos [the Greek for Messiah] occurs 529 times in the New Testament, 379 of these being in Paul, 22 in 1 Peter, 37 in Luke's writings [Luke and Acts], 19 in Johannine materials, and others distributed among the rest of the Books. In the Synoptics, it occurred 7 times in Mark, 17 times in Matthew and 12 times in Luke. Let us explore these occurrences in greater details.

3.3 Messianism in the Synoptic Gospels

A ministry such as Jesus' even in its broad outlines would inevitably have raised the question of how to categorise him, even by those who opposed him. It is striking, however, that in the articulation of the identity of Jesus in his life and ministry, little use was made of those passages that speak of the restoration of David's kingdom. Jesus' ministry and teaching as recorded in the synoptic gospels cannot sufficiently serve as the basis for the claim that he is the Messiah. Throughout the first gospel of Mark, we notice, in Jesus, an extraordinary reserved attitude toward messiahship throughout his ministry. It is an increasingly accepted view of Gospel scholarship that Jesus himself did not historically claim to be the messiah and did not unequivocally accept attempts on the part of others to identify him as such. So, the issue of the messiahship of Jesus is one that confronts more immediately at the levels of the Gospel tradition and redaction.

George MacRae has developed a general thesis of the evolution and development of the concept within the Gospel tradition. A brief analysis is as follows:

1. The earliest recoverable strata of the Christian proclamation of the gospel are aware of the claim that Jesus was {is, or will be} the Messiah of Israel; this claim is not the primary focus of their message.
2. The earliest Palestinian Jewish preaching of the gospel probably emphasised the messianic idea, but there is no adequate evidence to support this probability.
3. The further one gets away in time from the earliest preaching, whether Palestine or Hellenistic, the more the issue of Jesus as Messiah gains in prominence.
4. This development takes roughly two forms. 1A movement away from traditional Jewish understandings of the Messiah and his role evidenced in the Gospels of Mark and John; and 2. A movement towards some aspects of the traditional Christian understandings, with an emphasis on the continuity of promise or prophecy and fulfillment, evidenced in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.
5. These trends are not to be explained simply as diverging views of gentile as opposed to Jewish Christians, for the Gospels of Mark and Luke represented mainly gentile concerns while those of Matthew and John arise out of originally Jewish Christian churches.

Locating these within the texts of the Gospels, we see Jesus, at the pivotal moment of the Gospel, alerting that all was not well with the title

when Peter sought to describe him as such. Though he did not deny this outrightly, the following injunction to secrecy, reminiscent of other instances within the narrative of Mark where erroneous interpretation of his identity was likely (8:30; 1:44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36) signals that Jesus is not so keen with such identification. This is the famous **Markan Messianic Secret**, a sophisticated literary device to allow the stories of Jesus' divine power to be told so that the readers, from their post Easter perspective, could perceive the act of God in Christ, but the characters in the story remained blind to Jesus' identity until after the story was over, in order to preserve the necessity of the cross/resurrection for authentic Christian faith.

Bruce offers an explanation for this utter reservation.

The popular association of the title's "messiah" and "son of David" would cause misunderstanding and undesirable troubles if they were publicly claimed. Only when the ministry reached its climax in a victory of a very different kind from that which the Messiah of popular expectation was to win was it possible for such titles, reinterpreted in the light of that event, to be used without connotations that would detract from Jesus' true dignity. The well-known motif of the Markan messianic secret, therefore, belongs to the level of Markan redaction. The Markan Jesus can only be confessed as Messiah only when the concept has been invested with the special Markan understanding of the Son of Man as the one who "must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests (8:31).

The same motif also was at play in the response to the High Priest inquiry in 14:16, and even of the more subtle messianic discussion in chapter 12. We shall see all these in detail later. Suffice it here to state that as far as the issue of identification of the title of Messiah is concerned, Mark is clear that a genuine understanding of the claim should not include the usual political implications that were the standard of popular opinion. But in this, it was Roman imperial power, other than theological demands of a universal mission that lies behind this particular portrayal.

When we turn to Matthew and Luke, we see a drop in the cautionary approach of Mark as long as the issue of the disclosure of the identity of Jesus is concerned. Either both did not need Markan messianic secret, or they presumed it. Because Matthew was writing what, for him, is not an independent story of Jesus but a narrative that is the climax and fulfillment of a larger story, the Biblical account of God and Israel, his Jesus was more open in his self-disclosure. He is the fulfillment of the hopes and promises of all the scriptures. As such, he should be portrayed in the colours drawn from the biblical palette, even when explicit Christological claims are not present.

Thus, in Mark, as Freyne remarked:

We see an aggressive messianisation of the whole career of Jesus, supported by a proof-text technique that claims fulfillment of Hebrew Scripture in the career of Jesus. Jesus was Son of David, even when Matthew wants to say more than that about him as Emmanuel, 'God with us'. As Son of David he is 'the one who is called Christ' [1:17], a claim that even Pilate voices for the Jewish authorities at the trial [27:17&22]. Both the works and teaching of Jesus take on an explicit messianic status [11:2; 23:10]. His coming from Galilee does not disqualify him from the role of the Messiah, since this too was divinely planned and echoed God's activity in and to Israel.

But just as happened in Mark, this Davidic based messianic profession will undergo a reinterpretation. The Christ of popular expectation was conceived as a violent figure that will overthrow the power of evil with righteous force. David, the king, was the paradigm. As the Matthean narrative unfolds, we see a Messiah who though is still the authentic King and God's representative and agent in the inauguration of the Kingdom, does so by suffering and by living his creed of love. He is the true Davidic Messiah, yes. But he is destined for the gentiles as well. In addition, he is the preacher of an eschatological kingdom and the authoritative interpreter of the Law.

Luke, following Matthew, identified Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God. From the onset in his infant narratives, Luke signals that not only is Jesus the Son of David, he is as well Son of Adam, Son of God. More than any of the other, Luke depicted Jesus as really anointed before his public ministry. In the all-important laying down of agenda in Luke 4:18-19, he portrays Jesus as quoting from a combination of Isa 61:1-2 and 58:6. The reference to anointing is clearly an evocation of the etymology of Christos or mashiah. Here, the verbal form 'to anoint' (enchrisen) rather than the noun is used. We get the same idea also from Acts 10:37 where we read that on account of his being anointed with the Spirit or by the Spirit, Jesus went about doing good. What Luke added, by emphasis, is the continual insistence on the necessity of suffering for the messianic mission.

Another Lukan emphasis is the one observed by Freyne:

But for Luke, the role of the Messiah is considerably broadened to include the general prophetic call for justice, even when the demand was itself inspired by the hopes for an ideal Israel associated with the arrival of the Messiah. Nevertheless, Luke broadening of the Messiah's role to that of prophet of justice was inspired by the social circumstances of his own community comprising of rich and poor. It was the social setting

rather than any particular Jewish depiction of that role that shaped his particular presentation of the career of Jesus as Messianic.

3.4 Analysis of some Specific Messianic Texts in the Synoptic Gospels

In Biblical tradition, the confession of Jesus as Messiah is bound up with his days in Jerusalem. Though all the synoptic writers display extraordinary reserve about Jesus' attitude toward messiahship in his teachings, they all agreed that he was executed as the Messiah, the King of the Jews. All unanimously report that behind the trial [s] by the Sanhedrin was the messiah issue. And all equally attest that when this was asked of Jesus, he did not offer any denial. It is in the context of the last days in Jerusalem that the messiah question emerges publicly as a potential estimate of Jesus. "If our task is," in the words of Donald Juel, "to understand New Testament Christianity and the tradition on which it is based, the only course is to begin from the cross as the moment of disclosure and then work forward and backward."

<p>Again the high priest asked him and said to him, 'Are You the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One? Then Jesus answered, "I am; and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62-63)</p>	<p>Then the high priest said to him, "I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus said to him in reply, "YOU have said so. But I tell you: From now on you will see 'the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power' and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt 28: 63-64)</p>	<p>They said, "if you are the Messiah, tell us," but he replied to them, "if I tell you, you will not believe.... But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God". They all asked, "Are you the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am" (Luke 22:67-70).</p>
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One of the impressive features of Mark's passion narrative is its thematic consistency. Jesus is tried before the Jewish court. Mark formulates the entire Sanhedrin proceedings to demonstrate the injustice of the entire trial. Readers knew that the chief priests, elders and scribes have been determined to destroy Jesus for some time. Now they arraigned a formal trial within which witnesses are introduced whose testimonies fit the mold of the claims of messianic pretenders around the time of the Jewish revolt. At the climax of the trial, the crucial charge is presented to Jesus by the High Priest: **Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? I am** was the reply **and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.**

Juel's comment here is noteworthy:

For the first and only time in Mark's gospel, the two titles with which the Gospel began are put together. In keeping with the ironic tone of Mark's narrative, it is Jesus' would be judges who formulate the "confessions" Jesus' unambiguous acceptance of the designation is likewise unparalleled in Mark.... The high priest's formulation is a central moment in the narrative; it introduced the theme of the ensuing conflict and provided the basis upon which Jesus will be rejected.

Scholars like G.K. Barrett argue that such unique occurrence is improbable since it is supposed to have taken place precisely at the moment at which it is inconceivable that any one should believe him. Vermes will conclude that "it was the passion story with its doctrinal tenets that required that Jesus should confess that he was the Messiah; and without doubt, the author of Mark made the Master's words conform to the Church's expectation." The formulation of Jesus answer in Matthew [you have said so], and in Luke [it is you who said that I am], put the responsibility for the framing and answer of the question on the high priest and his colleagues. There is a claim that this form is more primitive. Whatever these equivocal answers mean is also an object of dispute. I agree with Vermes here that the most that can be said about them is that they are equivocal. But to his conclusion that this implies that "Jesus did not claim positively to have asserted that he was a Messiah, even as the result of a direct and solemn charge," I will not totally assent. The canonical text said that he did.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

How many times did the word *Christos* appear in the New Testament and in what distribution?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The NT Books operate from the assumption that Jesus appeared as the fulfilment of OT Messianic expectations. This explains the profuse usage of the term *Christos/Messiah* in the NT. While it is doubtful whether Jesus used the title of himself, the Synoptic Gospels contained multiple evidences that the title was used of him, most of which you have learned in this unit.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that the NT applies the title *Christos* to Jesus. You have also learnt that this title was used of him in the three Gospels that we call Synoptic. You have also learned of the views of different scholars who argue in line with this position. You have also

learned how to come to this position through an analysis of the dialogue between Jesus and the High Priest in the Passion narratives as recorded by the Synoptic Gospels

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give the basic argument made by George MacRae as to the development in the Messianic in the Synoptic Gospels
2. Discuss the contribution of the dialogue between Jesus and the High Priest to the Synoptic Gospels' Messianic Debate.

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UNIT 2 MESSIANISM IN PAUL AND IN THE APOCALYPSE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Messianism in the Letters of Paul
 - 3.2 Paul and the eschatological Day of the Lord
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 - 3.4 Messianism in the Apocalypse of John
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding unit, you have learnt both of the meaning and occurrence of the Messiah Concept in the New Testament, as well as a detailed discussion of its appearance in the Synoptic Gospels. In this unit, you will learn of how the concept was used in the traditions attributed to Paul and in the Apocalypse of John.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to

- discuss the usage of Christos in Paul
- learn the contributions of some scholars on Paul and Jewish messianic expectations
- discuss the various usage of the Day of the Lord in the Pauline Corpse
- explain the contribution of the delay in the Second Coming of Christ to Paul's thought
- evaluate the contribution of the Apocalypse of John to the Messianic Debate.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Messianism in the Letters of Paul

As pointed out in the last unit, the Greek word *Christos*, the equivalent of the Hebrew *Mashiach* appears around 379 times in the Letters of Paul. With reference to the many occurrences in Paul, it is worth remarking that “the noun *Christ*” is used in most cases without a definite article and as such designates a proper name. Sean Freyne offers an explanation: “For Paul, it would seem, the title has been defined by the career of Jesus, especially in his death, and he is not particularly concerned to justify his appropriation of the title in terms of other Jewish expressions or expectations.”

This usage, however, represents an advanced stage in the development of Christological language which must presuppose widespread use of the title in Aramaic speaking circles, probably in the form of the confession “Jesus is Messiah”. This usage is what we find implied in the Synoptic gospels.

3.2 Paul and the eschatological Day of the Lord

This eschatological Day of the Lord is of great importance for the Christian. It is the event which the Christian eagerly awaits, for on that Day, the completion of our redemption, the resurrection of the body, is to be accomplished. The day of the Lord also has cosmic dimensions within the Pauline Epistles, and the whole of the created order awaits it.

It is generally accepted that the OT concept of the Day of the Lord forms the basis of the Christian Parousia (the Second Coming of the Messiah) expectations. The following are Pauline corpus that indicates this eschatological event:

1. Day of the Lord Jesus Christ (Messiah): 1 Cor 5:5
2. Day of the Lord Jesus (Messiah): 1 Cor 1:8
3. Day of Jesus Christ (Messiah): Phil 1: 6
4. Day of Christ (Messiah): Phil 1:10; 2: 16
5. Day of the Lord (Messia) 1 Thess 5:2

3.3 Scholarly Debates on Paul’s Claim of Jesus as the Messiah

To better shed light on the Messianic concept as developed in the Letters of Paul, we shall now consider the contributions of some renowned scholars

3.3.1 Albert Schweitzer

Fewer better discussion on the subject of a temporary, Messianic Kingdom in Paul can be found than the work of Albert Schweitzer. His

Mystical of Paul the Apostle brought the question of Paul's eschatology to the centre of recent scholarly discussion. Schweitzer emphasised the reliance of Paul upon traditional Jewish apocalyptic thought and claimed that Paul adopted the Jewish apocalyptic method with only one significant modification.

This important alteration is, in essence, the introduction of the doctrine of two resurrections. According to Schweitzer, the first participators in the transient Messianic Kingdom clearly have the resurrection mode of existence, and the Elect of the last generation, even if they have died before the beginning of the Kingdom, will be able, through the resurrection, to become participants in it. Traditional Jewish eschatological thought emphasised only the alive-resurrection-motif. In other words, the Jewish eschatological scheme did not initially permit for, nor even conceive of, the advent of the Messiah independent of the glory of the Messianic Kingdom as well.

In Schweitzer's analysis, the death of Christian believers threw the traditional Jewish scheme into disarray and drove Paul logically to postulate a special resurrection of deceased believers into the Messianic Age. Thus, we have a doctrine of two resurrections taught by Paul.

In fact, Schweitzer goes on to explain that the controversies within both the Corinthian and the Thessalonian churches which occasioned Paul's letters have arisen precisely because of this point. The churches reflect the traditional Jewish eschatological belief which associated only the righteous who are alive at the beginning of the Messianic Age as its participants and taught that the resurrection of all men to judgment follows at the conclusion of that Age. In short, the delay of the second coming of the Messiah and the death of believing Christians during that delay necessitated within Paul's thought a doctrine of two resurrections.

For Schweitzer the Messianic Kingdom lies between these two resurrections. He appeals to 1 Cor 15:20-28 for exegetical support of this doctrine, but admits that Paul gave no detailed description of the Messianic Kingdom. Nevertheless, Schweitzer's work is critically important, for he is the first serious scholar to interpret 1 Cor 15:20-28 as essentially a modified expression of traditional Jewish eschatological teaching. In this regard, Schweitzer is quick to point out its parallels with other eschatological writings of first century Judaism.

3.3.2 W.D. Davies

Schweitzer's work was severely criticized by W.D. Davies in his *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*. First of all, Davies disagreed that Paul must be made to conform too closely to current eschatological speculations.

Paul must not be made a slave to first-century Jewish apocalyptic. Instead, Davies tries to emphasise that for Paul the character of his eschatological teaching was more determined by the prime role accorded to Jesus. In response to Schweitzer's analysis of the controversies engulfing Corinth and Thessalonians, Davies argues that they arise out of Pauline teaching itself. Commenting on 1 Thessalonians he says:

The Thessalonians Christians had quite clearly been taught that the transformation of those 'in Christ' into the resurrection mode of existence would soon take place and that without the experience of death. Not only so but, as passages such as Rom 6:1-14 show, the solidarity of Christians with their Lord was such that having died and risen with Christ to life, a second death was unthinkable since they had already passed from death to life.

We should note that Schweitzer and Davies differ in their evaluation of how the doctrine of the second coming (Parousia) of Christ the Messiah is disrupted by the traditional, Jewish eschatological scheme. Nowhere is this disruption clearer than in 1 Cor 15:20-28. At same time, nowhere are the scholarly presuppositions of both Schweitzer and Davies made more visible than in their respective attempts at exegesis of this troublesome passage.

In particular, much discussion is given over in Davies' work to 1 Cor 15:22ff., where he systematically attempts to render invalid a distinction between the future, Messianic Age and the Eternal Age to come, as derived from these verses. In Davies work, the Messianic Age is concluded with the Parousia (second coming) of Christ the Messiah which gives way to the Eternal Age to Come.

3.3.3 Roger Aus on Paul and the Messianic Age

Roger Aus has examined how the final vision of Isaiah 66 have influenced messianic teachings in both Jewish and Christian circles in his work. In particular Isa 66:7 has been shown to lend itself to messianic interpretations. In a similar manner, 2 Thess 1:6-12 also exhibits a number of allusions to this vision of Isaiah 66 and reinterprets them Christologically. In all cases, Aus argues, these messianic interpretations of the OT description of the Day of the Lord are carried along by the way in which the tribulations surrounding God's visitation on earth become readily associated with the messianic woes generally believed to precede immediately the appearance of the Messiah. This allows a strong point of contact to be made with regard to the persecution references in 2 Thessalonians and makes Aus' case for the Christological use of Isaiah 66 in the Pauline letter all

the more plausible.

In Isaiah 2 we have another description of the calamitous events surrounding the Day of the Lord. In verse 10 men are exhorted to hide themselves ‘from the face of fear of the Lord and from the glory of his power’.

1 Thessalonian 1:10 speaks of Jesus as the one who delivers us from the coming wrath. Philippians 3: 20 makes the same inference: “Our commonwealth is in heaven and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself”

This passage teaches that Christians meeting place is in the abode of heaven. There, Jesus the Messiah will give them new body that looks like his glorious one that has power that subject all things to him. This indicates that in the futuristic kingdom to come, Jesus will also continue to be the Messiah of all believers there. And he will give them the body that over power all things.

3.3.4 Cullmann on Jesus as the Messiah in Paul

Cullmann started his discourse on Messianism of Paul with a commentary on Psalm 110:1 that Paul cited in his Corinthian correspondence. The full text of the Psalm reads: The LORD says to my lord: “ Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool”.

This Psalm is relevant to the early Church’s Christological expression on the Messianic Kingdom. It is the OT text always quoted in the NT. Not only does the frequency of its citation register its importance, but the manner in which it is used is highly revealing. It always occurs in passages filled with great Christological wealth.

Of special importance to our study at this point is the relationship the use of the Psalm has with the rule of Christ in the Messianic Kingdom. More precisely, the question arises as to whether the quotation of this Psalm in 1 Cor 15: 20ff is primarily with reference to a future exaltation or enthronement of the Messiah at the Parousia (Second coming) or whether it is primarily speaking of the past resurrection/ascension/exaltation pattern characteristic of most of the NT witness concerning this text. The text runs:

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he

delivers the Kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For *he* destroyed is death (1 Cor 15:20-27). The Gospel of Mark 15:62 also emphasizes the second coming of Christ the Messiah. It reads: “Jesus said, I am; and you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven”. Jesus made it known to the Jews that he was the Son of Man and he would seat at the right hand of God the Father. And from there, he will come in the mist of cloud to the earth to probably take his own people to his Kingdom.

This passage is in line with the aforementioned passage in 1 Corinthians 15 whereby Christ the first fruits of the dead has been raised from death. But at his coming from heaven to the earth, he will be accompanied by those who are his. He will destroy every rule, authority and power. After that he will reign and hand over the Kingdom that he controls to God the Father. As for the Church, she had experienced the present power of the risen Christ the Messiah in fellowship and worship.

In other words, you could deduce from these statements that the Messiah has been exercising his rule in the Church since his resurrection. His exaltation to the right hand of God and his enthronement on the throne in heaven forms the basic belief of the Church in the Universe. For these reasons, Christians continue to worship and serve him. On the other hand, the present rule of the Christ the Messiah was also thought to have its consummation that at times the messianic rule was conceived as a wholly future event. This is factual of 1 Cor 15:20–28. According to Hay: “1 Cor 15: 23 appears to refer to a period between the parousia (second coming), when the limited number of ‘those who belong to Christ (Messiah) will be raised. This idea is akin to the concept of the Messianism in the Book of Revelation 20:4-5) to which we now turn.

3.4 Messianism in the Apocalypse of John

Let us consider the Apocalypse of John and see how it teaches the temporary, Messianic Kingdom that gives way to the Eternal Age to come. Chapter 20:4-6 teaches a temporary, Messianic Kingdom that paves way to the Eternal Age to come. It reads:

I (John) saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given the power to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been executed because they had proclaimed the truth that Jesus revealed and the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or its image, nor had they received the mark of the beast on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and ruled as kings with Christ for a thousand years (the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were over). This is

the first raising of the dead. Happy and greatly blessed are those who are included in this first raising of the dead. The second death has no power over them: they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they will rule with him for a thousand years.

In the above passage, you note that in the vision, John saw the Messianic Kingdom in which there were people to whom the power is given to pass judgment. In the Messianic kingdom, John also saw the spirits of those who were murdered for preaching the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah. All the people that he saw were risen up from death to life. Such people will not experience the second death in the Messianic Kingdom. The people will rule with Jesus the Messiah for a thousand years. And those who were seating on such thrones were also given power to pass judgment on others.

The Seer also saw souls of those who were murdered because of the spreading of the Gospel of the Messiah on the throne of God. Besides, in the vision, John saw some dead persons who were in sheol waiting for their own judgment, suggesting the possibility of individual judgment. Probably, during the period in which the revelation was revealed to John, such dead were still there waiting for their own turn to come when they will be judged. If they are found righteous, then they will move from sheol to the everlasting life which John says that they will come to probably after the periods of thousand years that the judge on the throne might have finished passing judgment on others. Then will come the turns of those who were kept waiting on the sheol waiting for their own judgment will then commences.

If this proposition perhaps is considered by scholars to have hit the point, then, there is the wholly future consummation event waiting for the Messiah to perform. Therefore, one can conclude that the Messiah still has some function to perform in the future Age to come. From this passage too, we also see that the community behind the Apocalypse of John sees an eschatological role for Jesus the Messiah that is similar to that seen in early Judaism.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What factors influenced the development of the Messianic Ideas in Paul and John.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Like in the Synoptic Gospels, the Letters of Paul and the Apocalypse of John also affirms Jesus' messiahship. While Paul developed his idea in the light of the delay in the Second Coming of Jesus, John underscores Jesus Messiahship in the context of his eschatological role in the end

time. Both, however, interpret their thoughts along the lines of messianic expectations that are imbedded within early Judaism.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt Paul's understanding of Jesus as Messiah as well as the scholarly debate on the subject matter. You have also learnt of the understanding of Jesus as Messiah in the Apocalypse of John.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give in details the contributions of Schweitzer and Davies to Paul's Messianic Claims.
2. Discuss the interpresentation of the Day of Lord in line with Aus' thought in this unit.
3. Explain the teaching of John on the intermediary agent and God.

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UNIT 3 IS JESUS THE EXPECTED JEWISH MESSIAH?

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Present State of Jesus' Messiahship Debate
 - 3.2 The Messiah Debate in the Light of Jewish-Christian Dialogue
 - 3.3 Situating Jesus' Messiahship within the Context of OT Expectations
 - 3.4 Christianity's View in its Relations to Judaism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference /Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit we have reviewed the concept of Messianism in the Letters of Paul and the Apocalypse of John. We have also considered the position of some scholars on Jesus' Messianism in these two strands of the New Testament. Paul developed his messianic thoughts in the light of the delay in the second coming of Jesus and John is within the context of early Jewish eschatology.

In this unit, you will learn, through an overview of both Testaments, how, according to the early Christians, Jesus qualifies as the expected Jewish Messiah.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be to:

- discuss the present state of the Jesus' Messiahship debate
- situate the debate within the context of Christian-Jewish dialogue
- evaluate the Christian position vis-à-vis similar claims in early Judaism.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Present State of Jesus' Messiahship Debate

Were the Jews expecting a Messiah or Messiahs at the time of Christ? And did Jesus meet such an expectation? These are questions to which

there are as much polarisation of opinions as there are scholars. Whereas some contend that there is a unilateral and universal expectation, others are of the opinion that such an expectation was at best fluid, and that it was Christianity that sets the messianic agenda.

To the first group belongs people like Klausner for whom “the belief in the Messiah is one of the four good gifts which the people of Israel have left as an inheritance to the entire world”. Along the same line, Sigmund Mowinckle asserts that by the time of Jesus, the Jews were awaiting a Messiah. And for Raphael Patai, ‘from the first century BCE., the Messiah was the central figure in the Jewish myth of the future.

Some will go the extent of claiming not only that a Messiah was expected, but that the expectation was met in Jesus. Bruce, for instance, united all the messianic titles in Jesus:

In Jesus the promise is confirmed, the covenant is renewed, the prophecies are fulfilled, the law is vindicated, salvation is brought near, sacred history has reached its climax, the perfect sacrifice has been offered and accepted, the great priest over the household of God has taken his seat at God’s right hand, the prophet like Moses has been raised up, the Son of David reigns, the kingdom of God has been inaugurated, the Son of Man has received dominion from the Ancient of Days, the Servant of the Lord having been smitten to death for his people’s transgression and borne the sin of many, has accomplished the divine purpose, has seen light after the travail of his soul and is now exalted and extolled and made high.

On the other extreme are those who contend either that the concept of the Messiah was superfluous, or that it was coined by Christians to justify their claims. William Green was convinced that the “primacy of the messiah as a subject of academic study derives not from ancient Jewish preoccupation, but from early Christian word-choice, theology and apologetics. Early Christians, and particularly the earliest Christian writers, had to establish a discourse that made Jesus’ career reasonable, his unexpected death believable, and their audacious commitment and new collective life plausible.” Richard Horsley was more emphatic in his position. According to him:

The very concept of “the messiah” is a product of Christian theological reflection. Early Christians... drew on several different traditions, some of them from the Hebrew Bible or the Septuagint, of historical or anticipated future agents of deliverance in their attempts to express the significance of Jesus. Gradually the many different images and traditions were con-fused into a highly synthetic and dominating concept of Christ. The concept, in turn, had a decisive and formative effect on

both the modern popular and scholarly construction of the Jewish expectation of the “Messiah”. What Christians claimed to “have found” in Jesus determined what Christians claimed had been prophesied by Israelite prophets and or expected by the Jews.

Both of these extremes, no doubt, stand to be opposed. In as much as an over simplified identification of the expected Messiah with Christ is no longer acceptable, since there is even a doubt at a uniformity of expectations; it will amount to a neglect of history to run to the other extreme. At least, Josephus did report while attempting to explain the Jewish revolt of the first century BCE that “what more than anything else inspired the people to rebellion was an ambiguous oracle [likewise] found in their sacred scripture to the effect that one from their country would become a ruler of the world”. And as Tacitus, writing independently says: “The common people interpreted this “mysterious prophecy” in their own favor and would not be turned to the truth even by adversity”.

Rather than go along the lines of any of these extremes, we, in this class, will operate on the assumption that all the varieties in the matter of messianic expectations points to one fact: There was a striking and noticeable eschatological expectation current in the two centuries before and after the time of Jesus that later came to expression in the NT writings.

3.2 The Messiah Debate in the Light of Christian-Jewish Dialogue

There seems to be a growing sense of restlessness in Christian-Jewish dialogue circles. One can see it reflected in recent issues of the National Dialogue Newsletter, which has become an important forum for advocates of improved Christian-Jewish relations. There are repeated suggestions that we need to enter a new stage in the dialogue or find new directions. The question "Where do we go from here?" is, in one form or another, being raised with growing frequency and urgency. There is even talk of a crisis.

As might be expected, the solutions proposed depend very much on how the crisis is perceived. There are those who suggest that so much progress has been made in our efforts toward mutual clarifications, understandings, and trust, that we can now move on to total mutual acceptance as equals in faith. Conversions from one faith to the other do occur but should not be sought or even desired, nor should the idea of affecting each other's theological positions be entertained.

Rabbi Leon Klenicki, in an article titled "Dialogue: From Crisis to

Recognition," viewed the present situation in terms of a time of transition. We have come a long way, but now we must face the challenge of "the next step." He found the answer in recognition of each other "as two different ways, two covenants of peace, two 'ways' to bring the Kingdom." Sometimes it is emphasised that the aim of dialogue is not a process of mutual influence but, rather, to make Jews better Jews and Christians better Christians, to make each side gain a deeper appreciation for the best values in their own faith. Such a laudable goal is hard to argue with, but one cannot help but wonder whether the dynamics of life and faith commitments can be contained within the confines of such neatly designed dialogue agendas. The ferment that is evident in current debates does not suggest that the dialogue can come to rest in what some have called a "theology of equality".

Progress has been made, but profound concerns still remain about what some have referred to as the "ecumenical plumbing problem," namely, the fact that new insights gained at the loftier heights of dialogue meetings are very slow to flow down to the local level. Hence, not much has changed in the preaching, teaching, and practice in local congregations, not to mention theological seminaries. Perhaps not that much has changed either in the general view among Jews about Christianity. That raises the issue of better communication of results thus far achieved. However, some people are not satisfied with that, for they wish to raise deeper questions about the current dialogue process itself, including some of its theological dimensions. There are probings both on how to expand the theological agenda and how to determine the limits of radical theological reconstruction.

Edward H. Flannery, wondered whether the source of some tensions might lie in the fact that we have tended to emphasise "mutualities, especially theological, that manifest a certain unity of Judaism and Christianity", while failing "to confront basic differences, which are also numerous, profound, and permanent". He then warned against raising false expectations about the extent to which churches may be prepared to modify their doctrinal positions, pointing out that faith commitment involved "a basic minimum of doctrinal and moral tenets that are non- negotiable". Earlier, that same year, Michael McGarry had sounded a similar warning, citing as a specific illustration the position of Alice L. and A. Roy Eckardt with regard to the resurrection of Jesus, which, he felt, was "going too far" in dismantling basic Christian doctrine. Both sides of that particular debate have had their defenders and opponents

3.3 Christianity's View in its Relations to Judaism

Although Christianity and Judaism share historical roots, these two religions diverged in the first centuries. Judaism primarily places emphasis on focusing primarily on how to respond to the Mosaic Covenant God made with the Israelites as recorded in the Torah and Talmud. Christianity places emphasis on correct belief, focusing on response to the New Covenant that God made through Jesus, with some denominations believing that salvation comes not by any human action, but by faith alone and God's action. In other words, Jews participate in collective rituals that express their nation's covenant with God. Christians obtain individual salvation through repenting of sin and receiving Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour

Judaism's purpose is to carry out what it holds to be the only Covenant between God and the Jewish people. The Torah, both written and oral, tells the story of this covenant, and provides Jews with the terms of the covenant. The Oral Torah is the primary guide for Jews to abide by these terms, as expressed in tractate Gittin 60b, "the Holy One, Blessed be He, did not make His covenant with Israel except by virtue of the Oral Law to help them learn how to live a holy life, and to bring holiness, peace and love into the world and into every part of life, so that life may be elevated to a high level of kedushah, originally through study and practice of the Torah, and since the destruction of the Second Temple, through prayer as expressed in tractate Sotah 49a: "Since the destruction of the Temple, every day is more cursed than the preceding one; and the existence of the world is assured only by the kedusha...and the words spoken after the study of Torah".

Since the adoption of the Amidah, the acknowledgement of God through the declaration from Yishayah 6:3 "holy, Master of Legions; the whole world is filled with His glory" as a replacement for the study of Torah, which is a daily obligation for a Jew, and sanctifies God in itself. This continuous maintenance of relationship between the individual Jew and God through either study or prayer repeated trice daily, is the confirmation of the original covenant. This allows the Jewish people as a community to strive and fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah: "I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness, and will hold your hand and keep you. And I will establish you as a Covenant of the people, for a light unto the nations" ([Isa 42:6](#)). Israel, henceforth becomes a role model over the course of history, and a part of the divine intent of bringing about an age of peace and sanctity where ideally a faithful life and good deeds should be ends in themselves, not means.

The self-described purpose of Christianity is to provide people with what it holds to be the only valid path to salvation as announced by the apostles of what the Book of Acts describes as The Way. Only in

gentile (non-Jewish) settings is The Way referred to as Christian. According to Christian theologian Alister McGrath, the Jewish Christians affirmed every aspect of then contemporary Second Temple Judaism with the addition of the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, with Isaiah 49:6, "an explicit parallel to 42:6" quoted by Paul in Acts 13:47 and reinterpreted by Justin the Martyr.

According to Christian writers, most notably Paul, the Bible teaches that people are, in their current state, sinful; and the NT reveals that Jesus is both the Son of man and the Son of God, united in the hypostatic union, God the Son, God made incarnate; that Jesus' death by crucifixion was a sacrifice to atone for all humanity's sins, and that acceptance of Jesus as Saviour and Lord saves one from Divine Judgment, giving Eternal life. Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant. His famous Sermon on the Mount is considered by some Christian scholars to be the proclamation of the New Covenant ethics, in contrast to the Covenant of Moses from Mount Sinai.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the Jewish messiah.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Christianity and Judaism share historical roots on messiah as the saviour. However, Judaism looks forward to seeing a warrior messiah who will help them conquer their enemies and restore Israel to her land. The Torah tells the story of the covenant and provides Jews with the terms of the covenant.

According to Christian theologian Alister McGrath, the Jewish Christians affirmed every aspect of the contemporary Second Temple Judaism with the addition of the belief that Jesus was the Messiah. According to Christian writers, most notably Paul, the Bible teaches that people are, in their current state, sinful, and the NT reveals that Jesus is both the Son of man and the Son of God and that Jesus' death by crucifixion was a sacrifice to atone for all humanity's sins, and that acceptance of Jesus as Savior and Lord saves one from Divine Judgment.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you learnt the following.

- Jews believe in warrior messiah
- Christians believe in Jesus as their saviour
- They also believe that God made Christ incarnate as the son of God

- They also believe that he died and resurrected.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

State Christian view of messiah in relation to Judaism

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UNIT 4 JESUS AS THE ANOINTED OF THE SPIRIT

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Jesus the Messiah
 - 3.2 The Galilean Ministry of Jesus the Messiah
 - 3.3 Jesus the Messiah at Caesarea Philippi
 - 3.4 The Passover Meal as the Messianic Meal
 - 3.5 Jesus before the High Priest
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learned that Christianity and Judaism share historical roots on messiah as the saviour. However, while Judaism looks forward to seeing a warrior messiah who will help them conquer their enemies and restore Israel to her land, Christians believe that Jesus is their saviour by the very fact that as God’s incarnate Son, he died and resurrected.

In this unit, you will learn that Jesus is the Messiah who was anointed by the Spirit to save humanity (Jews and Gentiles alike) from their sufferings by overcoming the kingdom of the evil one.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- describe Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews
- Narrate the story of Jesus as the anointed Spirit of God.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Jesus the Messiah

When Jesus the Messiah was baptized in River Jordan, a voice from heaven said to him as he rose from the water: “Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased”. The voice indicates that God has chosen Jesus as the Messiah of Israel. It also shows that God has

ordained Jesus as His own Servant to carry out His plans on the world. At his baptism Jesus was made aware that he was called by God to be the Servant Messiah (Luke 4:21–22). Here, we are reminded of Isaiah’s Servant: ‘I have put my Spirit upon him’ (Isa 42:1). Likewise, the same quotation reminds us of Psa 2:7 that says, ‘He said to me, you are my son, today I have begotten you’

These passages perhaps were revealed by God to both authors to tell about the destiny of Jesus the Messiah prior to his birth on the world. The descent of the Spirit upon Him also indicated that Jesus was the anointed saviour of the Jewish race. When Jesus began his ministry in Galilee, he said: ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near repent and believe in the Gospel (Mark 1:15). The words of Jesus the Messiah was a proclamation that the Jews were living in a quite unique moment of history, and that God was initiating a new era in the record of his dealing with the Jewish.

Half a millennium before, Isaiah in Babylon foretold the return of the exiles. He saw the Jewish race coming back in triumph to Jerusalem with God in their midst and a herald preceding them with the good tidings: “Look, ‘tis the feet of a herald hastening over the hills, with glad, good news, with tidings and relief. Calling aloud to Zion, ‘Your God has become king” (Isa 40 :9f; 52:7)!

In this passage, you could note that Isaiah expected this day of the Lord’s Reign among the Jews to dawn soon. But, in Lord’s providence, the realisation of this great hope was to run underground for five centuries till ‘the appointed time was fully come’. The expected period came in the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius when Jesus appeared in Galilee, saying: ‘The time which Isaiah prophesied has come’.

3.2 The Galilean Ministry of Jesus the Messiah

Jesus, the Messiah, started his ministry in Galilee by announcing that he is sent to ‘proclaim release to the captives’. That is, Jesus assured the Jews that he had come to set them free from their bondages as he began his work in the region of Galilee (Luke 4:18). Jesus compares his mission to the binding of the strong man by a stronger. Jesus the Messiah has assured the people of Israel that the expected time has come for them to see a deliverer who will help them conquer their strong enemies in the earth. When Jesus sent out seventy disciples who were mainly Jews, says: ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven’ (Luke 10:18).

Again, the Jews who were expecting the Messiah to come and defeat their enemies viewed the parables of the Messiah as weapons of war

and his 'mighty works' as signs that indicate that they would be victorious over their enemies through Jesus the Messiah.

In addition to these, the ministry of Jesus at the region of Galilee rings a note of terrible urgency, as though there was a crisis uniquely fraught with blessing or with judgment. To his audience, Jesus said: "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled" (Luke 12:49-59; 13:1-5)! Jesus the Messiah has assured his listeners that he has come to set fire on the earth which would destroy all its inhabitants including the enemies of the Jews.

The ministry of Jesus was armed with God's power, spear-heading the attack against the devil and all his works and calling men, especially the Galileans to decide on whose side of the battle they will be. No man, having set his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62). 'Leave the dead to bury their own dead, but go thou and proclaim the Kingdom of God' (Luke 9:60). 'The Kingdom of God exercises its force' (Matt 11:12). 'If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you' (Luke 11:20). 'Behold I cast out devils and perform cures today and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected' (Luke 13:32).

In the works of Jesus the Messiah, we could see that the Kingdom of God is at war with the Kingdom of evil, with Jesus spearheading the attack. This also fulfilled the saying of John that "The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

3.3 Jesus the Messiah at Caesarea Philippi

Following the ministry of the Messiah that climaxed in Galilee, popular excitement was running very high. Thereafter, probably in flight from the dangerous enthusiasm of his friends, Jesus the Messiah has to withdraw to the north-west area of Palestine (Mark 7:24). However, his Messianic battle that began in Galilee must be finished in Jerusalem (Luke 13:32f.).

Before Jesus moves to the Southern part of the region, the Messiah makes sure that his followers understand the issues at stake. In the solitude of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples: "Who are men saying that I am?" One of His disciples named Peter replied, 'You are the Messiah'. Yes, and Jesus tacitly accepts it, but he goes on to add: "The Son of man must suffer and die before he triumphs".

The word 'Son of Man' is derived from Dan 7:13. Daniel speaks of a mysterious figure who receives a Kingdom from God and is destined to reign as God reigns. By identifying himself with this majestic

figure, Jesus asserts that he himself is the Messiah and the deliverer of the Jews. However, in the same breath, he insists that suffering and death await him. This is because God wills it so for Jesus the Messiah.

To Peter, with his hope set on a triumphant Messiah, the very idea is unthinkable. He rebukes Jesus, only to be himself rebuked with awful severity. This is because Peter conceived the term ‘Messiah’ in human terms, and not as God wills it. Peter thought that Jesus the Messiah would fight the enemies of the Jews and he will not die but live forever. However, Jesus probably means that Peter had found the very thought of suffering Messiah abhorrent. Jesus made it known to Peter that he must travel the road marked out for the Suffering Servant of the Lord. There is no other way, and Peter must be ready to share his destiny (Mark 8: 34).

After six days, another incident occurred that was linked with Peter’s confession. It was on a mountain-top. As Jesus was in prayers, he was transfigured with an unearthly radiance. From the unseen world appeared Moses and Elijah, talking with him about the deliverance which he must accomplish at Jerusalem. Jesus was at the mountain with John, Peter and James. Peter said to Jesus: “Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah” (Mark 9:5). The three disciples of Jesus heard the Divine Voice – the same which had spoken to Jesus at the Baptism – reassuring them: ‘This is my Son, the Beloved listen to him. Here God revealed two Messianic titles of Jesus to the three disciples. He (Jesus) is both the ‘Son’ and the ‘Beloved’.

3.4 The Passover Meal

Jesus the Messiah entered Jerusalem in a ‘lowly pomp’. As Robert Artwell puts it in his 2011 Primrose Hill Lecture Series: “... When he *entered Jerusalem*, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this? Let us go forth, praising *Jesus* our *Messiah*. O Christ, thy triumphs now begin.... He cleansed the Holy Temple whose destruction he has also predicted. In a house at Bethany, a nameless woman, breaking a costly flask of oil, anointed Jesus for his death. On Thursday night, and in the quiet of ‘a large upper room’, Jesus the Messiah met with the twelve disciples for a final meal together (Mark 14: 22 -25, 1 Cor 11:23 ff.).

The Passover itself commemorated the great act of God which initiated the first Exodus and led to Israel’s being marked out as God’s special people by a covenant at Sinai sealed with blood. However, Jesus spoke of the creation of a new Israel that will be assembled in and around his person. But, before this could be achieved, the Son of man

must die as God's Servant to redeem 'the many' (Mark 10:38). The Jews had thought that the Kingdom of God is for them alone and for no other race. By including other races in the Kingdom of God, Jesus, who they thought was their Messiah sent to deliver them from their foes, was no longer the Messiah they have been longing to see. Therefore, the Jews keep on expecting the Messiah who will only make the Kingdom of God available for the race of Israel only and no one else.

In the Passover, as Jesus set apart the bread and wine, he offered his disciples a pledge of the Kingdom of God soon to come through his sacrifice. As the Messiah described the broken bread and the outpoured wine as his body and blood, he is not only claiming to embody that Kingdom, but is representing, in splendid symbol, that sacrifice of his own life for 'the many' which he will soon accomplish. By asking his disciples to eat and drink of the bread and wine, so interpreted, he is giving them a share in the power of the broken Christ.

The new Covenant (Jer 31:31) which must be ratified by the Servant's Death (Jesus the Messiah) having been symbolically inaugurated a few hours before, will be sealed in the blood. Then the work of the Servant Messiah begun in his water-baptism in Jordan, will be consummated by his blood-baptism at Golgotha, that baptism in whose virtue many will share. The event that took place in the Golgotha was a prophetic sign by which Jesus says: 'I pledge you a share in the Kingdom of God soon to come with power by the Servant Messiah's death'. This is another reason why the Jews rejected Jesus' Messiahship and still live till date in expectation of a Messiah. For them, the Messiah is not expected to die but will live forever; and since Jesus was expecting death, he could not be the Messiah for the Jews.

3.5 Jesus before the High Priest

Now let us examine the betrayal and arrest of Jesus the Messiah.

As Jesus stood before Caiaphas the High Priest, the High Priest asked him: 'Are you the Messiah?' 'I am'! replied Jesus; and continuing he added: 'and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven' (Mark 14:61f.). It is Jesus' last unconquerable confession of faith in his Messianic mission, and he concluded it with words from Dan 7:13-14: "one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom" and with a phrase from Psa 110:1: "There came with the clouds of heaven".

Despite his apparent ruin, Jesus foretells his victory. He predicts his vindication and enthronement in the Kingdom of God. He will be

received to the highest place that heaven affords, and this his exaltation and victory will be for his believers a sign that he is the One.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Account for the disappointment of the Jews in the Ministry of Jesus.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have been exposed to the story of Jesus the Messiah and the key to most theology in the OT, especially in the Servant Songs of Isaiah and the chapter of Daniel. You were also taught that Jesus believed the Kingdom of God to be present in himself and his ministry. You also learned that Jesus saw his Messianic ministry from Jordan to Golgotha, as a fulfilment of the prophecies of the Servant of the Lord. In this unit, you have learned the secret of who the Messiah is, and what he must do and suffer.

5.0 SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the major points in the unit:

- The meaning of the Messianic ministry of Jesus the Messiah is one.
- The career of Jesus as the Servant Messiah began from Jordan to Calvary.
- In Jesus, God has acted in his royal power visiting and redeeming the Jews.
- The Kingdom of God is a kingdom where God rules redeemingly through the Ministry of Jesus.
- Because it is not the political kingdom that is being expected by the Jews, the people of Israel were disappointed by the ministry of Jesus the Messiah.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Using the ministry of Jesus from Jordan to Golgotha, establish that Jesus is the Messiah.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 THE EARLY CHRISTIANS' ACCEPTANCE OF JESUS AS MESSIAH

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Apostles Preached Jesus as the Messiah
 - 3.2 Some NT Passages that Point to Early Churches' Acceptance of Jesus' Messiahship.
 - 3.3 The Messianic Implications of Jesus' Teaching on the Kingdom of God
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you have learned that the appointed time has arrived in the ministry of Jesus the Messiah. You have also learnt how all through his ministry, Jesus went about establishing his Messianic credentials. In this unit, you will learn more about how the early Christians in their preachings come to accept Jesus as the expected the Messiah of the Jewish race.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- analyse Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews
- discuss Messiah in the New Testament view.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The First Apostles Preached Jesus as the Messiah

A criptic verse in the Acts of the Apostles summarises all that this unit is all about:

And every day in the temple and at home they (Apostles) did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ/Messiah (Acts 5:42). Jesus was the deliverer of Israel's centuries-old dreaming. In affirming him to be the Messiah, the apostles were endorsing a claim that Jesus

had himself made. Conceptions of the Messiah in contemporary Judaism varied, yet underlying them all was the idea that the Messiah was the divinely-appointed Head of the people of God and the Bearer of his Rule to men. This Jesus, then, they claimed, was no longer a pious hope but a blessed reality. He was known as Jesus of Nazareth whom God had raised from the dead. To be sure, he bore little resemblance to the Messiah of orthodox dreaming. It might even be said that although Jesus clothed himself in the images of Messianic promise, he had, in living them out, literally crucified them. But of the truth of his claim to the title after the Resurrection, his followers had no doubt. This title defined their Master's relation to the age-old hope of Israel. He was its fulfillment.

There might have been several legitimate "messiah claimants" throughout biblical history. However, the Gospel that is preached consistently throughout the NT is about "the Messiah," Jesus Christ. In fact, using the term "Christ" with "Messiah" is in a sense redundant because "Christ" means "Messiah." The message preached by the apostles and evangelists was about the man Jesus Christ fulfilling the promises and prophecies in the OT about the Messiah. "The Gospel of Messiah" was consistently preached immediately after Christ's ascension, throughout the period of the New Covenant, and by the apostle Paul as part of the Mystery of God.

3.2 NT Passages that Point to Early Church's Acceptance of Jesus' Messiahship

John apostle of Jewish, in his Gospel interpreted the Greek word "Christ" (*christos* in Greek) has having the same meaning as the Greek word "messiah" (*messias* in Greek). Writing about the reaction of Andrew after his encounter with Jesus, John writes: "He first finds his own brother Simon, and says unto him, 'We have found the Messiah,' which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus" (John 1:41-42)

The same John also has this to say about the Samaritan woman: "The woman says unto him, 'I know that Messiah comes, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.' Jesus says unto her, 'I that speak unto you am him (John 4:26).'"

These verses demonstrate that the word "Christ" and "Messiah" can be used interchangeably throughout the Gospel of John (John 1:17, 20, 25, 41, 3:28; 4:25, 29, 42; 6:69; 7:26f, 31, 41-42; 9:22; 10:24; 11:27; 12:34; 17:3, 20:31). When one considers the late date of composition of the Gospel of John toward the end of John's life (in the 90s C.E. or even later) and the role that the apostle John had in

completing and finishing the canon of the NT, it also demonstrates that not only were the terms considered interchangeable by John, they were also interchangeable for his audience, and indeed for the entire NT.

With this in mind, in the John 4:26 passage, Jesus admits that He is the Messiah: “I that speak unto you am he [the Messiah].” He makes that admission to a Samaritan woman, not to the Jews during his ministry. He does, however, admit that he is the Messiah at the judgments before the chief priest and Pilate. This is the testimony of Jesus Himself. This is the testimony of the apostle John. This is the testimony of all NT writers who use the word “Christ,” by which they mean Messiah.

Luke wrote his Gospel from the compiled records of eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1). After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples, likely in the Upper Room. At that time, He explained to them about the Messiah, in light of His own resurrection:

And he [Jesus] said unto them, ‘These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.’ Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. And said unto them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ [the Messiah] to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name [the Messiah’s name] among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things (Luke 24:44–48).

The Jerusalem Church named Jesus ‘the Son of God’. By this, they used the title in a Messianic sense; and their usage derived from the Messianic interpretation of Psa2:7. However, “Lord,” seems to have been the more common title of Jesus. If we ask why, the probable answer is that while the first Christians called Jesus God’s ‘Son’, the word belongs to teaching rather than to worship. While they believed in ‘the Son’ (Acts 8:37, which may be original), they confessed him as ‘Lord’.

The title ‘Son of God’ describes Jesus’ relation to the unseen Father. It points to the deepest secret of his being, suggesting one aware that he comes to men from the depth of the being of God. If the first Christian saw in Jesus the Messiah, worshipped him as Lord, and believed in him as the Son of God, they employed yet another title to set forth his saving significance. They called him ‘the Servant of God’ in allusion to the Servant of Isaiah’s great prophecies.

Despite the various ways that people saw whom Jesus was in the early Church as discussed in this unit, he did not meet the Jewish expectation as their Messiah. For the Jewish Messiah is been expect to leave for ever. In Acts 2:23, Peter declares that Christ was ‘delivered up according to definite plan and foreknowledge of God’. Jesus’ death is significantly called ‘hanging on a tree’. This phrase points us back to the ‘accursed by God is anyone who is hanged on a tree ‘of Deuteronomy. On this account, the Jews believed that Jesus could not be the Messiah since his death on the cross is a curse rather than blessing. Where others, especially the early Christians, saw such death as a ransom paid by Jesus the Messiah for them, the Jews saw it as a taboo to their norms and belief. For this reason, they still look forward to seeing the true messiah who will come to them, live forever, and continue fighting and winning battles for them.

3.3 The Messianic Implications of Jesus’ Teaching on the Kingdom of God

Jesus taught the apostles "about the kingdom of God." However, despite the many evangelistic sermons described in the book of Acts, the word *kingdom* is used only eight times in Acts. We cite some of this usage below:

Jesus taught about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). The disciples asked about the kingdom (Acts 1:8). Philip taught the Samaritans about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12). Paul and Barnabas told the Christians in Antioch that we enter the kingdom of God through many hardships (Acts 14:22). Paul argued in the synagogue for three months about the kingdom of God (Acts 19:8). Paul told the Ephesian elders that he had preached the kingdom (20:25). In v. 21 he characterized his message with the terms *repentance* and *faith* and in v. 24 he said he preached “the gospel of God’s grace”; all terms that are equated with the gospel of the kingdom. (Actually, Luke never uses the phrase “gospel of the kingdom”. The only place he uses “gospel of” is here: “the gospel of God’s grace”).

To the Roman Jews, Paul preached "the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus" (Acts 28:23). Again, in Rome, Paul "preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:31). Here, a message about the kingdom is solidly linked to a message about Jesus Christ.

Although Jews believed in the coming kingdom of God and had the OT prophecies of it, Paul argued about the kingdom for three months in the Ephesian synagogue. His concept of the kingdom must have been considerably different than what the Ephesian Jews believed. And no

wonder! Paul's message about the kingdom was coupled with a message about Jesus and grace and faith. That was Jesus' message, too. For 40 days after his resurrection, he taught the disciples about the kingdom. What did this entail? We can go to the Gospel of Luke to see what he talked about during that time. On the road to Emmaus, "he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures *concerning himself*" (Luke 24:27). Later, he summarized his message: "Everything must be fulfilled that is written *about me* in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" (v. 44).

What was written? Here it is in a nutshell: "*The Christ* will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and *repentance* and *forgiveness* of sins will be preached *in his name* to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (vv. 46-47). This is the kingdom message. As George Ladd wrote:

In the days after Jesus' resurrection, he continued to teach them about the Kingdom of God (1:3). We are undoubtedly to understand this to mean that he was instructing them in the relationship between his proclamation of the Kingdom of God and his death and resurrection.

Jesus then reminded his disciples "You are *witnesses* of these things" (v. 48). That brings us back to the book of Acts. What did the apostles preach about? Our next bit of evidence is in Acts 1:8. Jesus told his disciples that they would receive the Holy Spirit, and then he told them what that divine power would enable them to do: "You will be my *witnesses* in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth".

Witness is an important word in the book of Acts. It comes in several forms, both verbs and nouns, all built on the root *martur-*. It refers to a witness in a courtroom, or the testimony that a witness gives in court. We get the English word *martyr* from this Greek root. People who were faithful **witnesses** to Jesus Christ sometimes became **martyrs** for their faith.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Comment on 'the Son of God'.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, your attention has been drawn to the following.

- By now you have been familiar with names of Jesus the Messiah.
- The reasons why the Jews will never believe that Jesus was their messiah.
- You should also know that the early Church regards Jesus as

their Messiah for he died on their behalf.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you learnt the following.

- The Apostles of Jesus Christ preached him as the Messiah
- Jesus had clothed himself in the images of Messianic promise
- He fulfilled the role of Messiahship
- Messiah means Christ in Greek
- The Jerusalem named Jesus the Son of God.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss the title 'Kyrios'.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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MODULE 3 JESUS' FULFILMENT OF JEWISH MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS

Unit 1	The Messiah of Judaism
Unit 2	Messianic Expectations of the First Century
Unit 3	Jesus as the Messiah who Overcame the Evil One
Unit 4	Jesus and the Messianic Age
Unit 5	Jesus' Resurrection as definite Proof of His Messiahship

UNIT 1 THE MESSIAH OF JUDAISM

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
	3.1 Principles of Judaism
	3.2 The Messianic Idea in Judaism
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is the beginning of the third and final module in our study of Messianism. This last module in our Lecture on Messianism is goaled towards establishing that Jesus is the fulfilment of the Messianic expectations in Judaism. We will discuss the Messiah idea in Judaism, learn more about Messianic Expectations of the first centuries BCE and CE, compare these expectations with their fulfilment in biblical history and show how Jesus fulfilled the details of these expectations. We will conclude with a discussion on how early Christians view Jesus' resurrection as a definite proof that he is their Messiah.

In this unit, you will be introduced to some principles of Judaism which will enlighten you to known about the messianic idea in Israel.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the principles of Judaism
- state the messianic idea in Judaism.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Principles of Judaism

The Jewish race profess faith in only one God, Yahweh and in the Torah. They also believed that Yahweh will deliver them from their suffering in the hand of their enemies through a divine king from the dynasty of David in the future. Among the principles of the Judaic faith that help to shed light on the messianic idea include:

1. Belief in the existence of the Creator, who is perfect in every manner of existence and is the Primary Cause of all that exists.
2. Belief in God's absolute and unparalleled unity.
3. Belief in God's non-corporeality, or that He is affected by any physical occurrences, such as movement, or rest, or dwelling.
4. Belief in God's eternity.
5. The imperative to worship God exclusively and no foreign false gods.
6. Belief that God communicates with man through prophecy.
7. Belief in the primacy of the prophecy of Moses the teacher.
8. Belief in the divine origin of the Torah.
9. Belief in the immutability of the Torah.
10. Belief in God's omniscience and providence.
11. Belief in divine reward and retribution.
12. Belief in the arrival of the Messiah and the messianic era.
13. Belief in the resurrection of the dead.

3.2 The Messianic Idea in Judaism

Belief in the eventual coming of the *mashiach* is, as we have seen above, a basic and fundamental part of traditional Judaism. It is part of Rambam's 13 Principles of Faith, the minimum requirements of Jewish belief. In the *Shemoneh Esrei* prayer, recited three times daily, the Jews pray for all of the elements of the coming of the *mashiach*: ingathering of the exiles; restoration of the religious courts of justice; an end of wickedness, sin and heresy; reward to the righteous; rebuilding of Jerusalem; restoration of the line of King David and restoration of Temple service.

Modern scholars suggest that the messianic concept was introduced later in the history of Judaism, during the age of the prophets. They note that the messianic concept is not explicitly mentioned anywhere in the Torah (the first five books of the Bible). However, traditional Judaism maintains that the messianic idea has always been a part of Judaism. The *mashiach* is not mentioned explicitly in the Torah, because the

Torah was written in terms that all people could understand, and the abstract concept of a distant, spiritual, future reward was beyond the comprehension of some people. However, the Torah contains several references to "the End of Days" (acharit ha-yamim), which is the time of the mashiach; thus, the concept of mashiach was known in the most ancient times.

3.2.1 The Mashiach: The Concept

The term "mashiach" literally means "the anointed one," and refers to the ancient practice of anointing kings with oil when they took the throne. We saw this in the first unit of the first module of this class. The mashiach is the one who will be anointed as king in the End of Days.

The word "mashiach" does not mean "saviour." The notion of an innocent, divine or semi-divine being who will sacrifice himself to save us from the consequences of our own sins is a purely Christian concept that has no basis in Jewish thought. Unfortunately, this Christian concept has become so deeply ingrained in the English word "messiah" that this English word can no longer be used to refer to the Jewish concept. For this reason, we will use the "mashiach" throughout this unit.

However, some gentiles used the term "mashiach" to relate to the Hebrew term "moshiah" meaning saviour, because they sound similar, but the similarity is not as strong as it appears to one unfamiliar with Hebrew. The Hebrew word "mashiach" comes from the root Mem-Shin-Chet, which means to paint, smear, or anoint. The word "moshiah" comes from the root Yod-Shin-Ayin, which means to help or save. The only letter these roots have in common is Shin, the most common letter in the Hebrew language. The "m" sound at the beginning of the word moshiah (saviour) is a common prefix used to turn a verb into a noun. For example, the verb tzavah (to command) becomes mitzvah (commandment). Saying that "mashiach" is related to "moshiah" is a bit like saying that ring is related to surfing because they both end in "ing."

The mashiach will be a great political leader descended from King David (Jer 23:5). The mashiach is often referred to as "mashiach ben David" (mashiach, son of David). He will be well-versed in Jewish law, and observant of its commandments (Isa 11:2-5). He will be a charismatic leader, inspiring others to follow his example. He will be a great military leader, who will win battles for Israel. He will be a great judge, who makes righteous decisions (Jer 33:15). But above all, he will be a human being, not a god, demi-god or other supernatural

being.

It has been said that in every generation, a person is born with the potential to be the mashiach. If the time is right for the messianic age within that person's lifetime, then that person will be the mashiach. But if that person dies before he completes the mission of the mashiach, then that person is not the mashiach.

3.2.2 When Will the Mashiach Come?

There are a wide variety of opinions on the subject of when the mashiach will come. Some of Judaism's greatest minds have cursed those who try to predict the time of the mashiach's coming, because errors in such predictions could cause people to lose faith in the messianic idea or in Judaism itself. This actually happened in the 17th century, when Shabbatai Tzvi claimed to be the mashiach. When Tzvi converted to Islam under threat of death, many Jews converted with him. Nevertheless, this prohibition has not stopped anyone from speculating about the time when the mashiach will come.

Although some scholars believed that God has set aside a specific date for the coming of the mashiach, most authority suggests that the conduct of mankind will determine the time of the mashiach's coming. In general, it is believed that the mashiach will come in a time when he is most needed (because the world is so sinful), or in a time when he is most deserved (because the world is so good). For example, each of the following has been suggested as the time when the mashiach will come:

- If Israel repented a single day
- If Israel observed a single Shabbat properly
- If Israel observed two Shabbats in a row properly
- In a generation that is totally innocent or totally guilty
- In a generation that loses hope
- In a generation where children are totally disrespectful towards their parents and elders

3.2.3 What Will the Mashiach Do?

Before the time of the mashiach, there shall be war and suffering (Ezek 38:16). The mashiach will bring about the political and spiritual redemption of the Jewish people by bringing us back to Israel and restoring Jerusalem (Isa 11:11-12; Jer 23:8; 30:3; Hos 3:4-5). He will establish a government in Israel that will be the centre of all world government, both for Jews and gentiles (Isa 2:2-4; 11:10; 42:1). He will rebuild the Temple and re-establishes its worship (Jer 33:18). He will

restore the religious court system of Israel and establish Jewish law as the law of the land (Jer 33:15).

3.2.4 Olam Ha-Ba: The Messianic Age

The world after the messiah comes is often referred to in Jewish literature as Olam Ha-Ba (oh- LAHM hah-BAH), the World to Come. This term can cause some confusion, because it is also used to refer to a spiritual afterlife. In English, we commonly use the term "messianic age" to refer specifically to the time of the messiah.

Olam Ha-Ba will be characterised by the peaceful co-existence of all people (Isa 2:4). Hatred, intolerance and war will cease to exist. Some authorities suggest that the laws of nature will change, so that predatory beasts will no longer seek prey and agriculture will bring forth supernatural abundance (Isa 11:6-11:9). Others, however, say that these statements are merely an allegory for peace and prosperity.

All of the Jewish people will return from their exile among the nations to their home in Israel (Isa 11:11-12; Jer 23:8; 30:3; Hos 3:4-5). The law of the Jubilee will be reinstated. In the Olam Ha-Ba, the whole world will recognize the Jewish God as the only true God, and the Jewish religion as the only true religion (Isa 2:3; 11:10; Mic 4:2-3; Zech 14:9). There will be no murder, robbery, competition or jealousy. There will be no sin (Zeph 3:13). Sacrifices will continue to be brought in the Temple, but these will be limited to thanksgiving offerings, because there will be no further need for expiatory offerings.

Some gentiles have tried to put an ugly spin on this theology, claiming that Jews plan to force people to convert to our religion, perhaps based on their own religion's history of doing exactly the same thing. That is not at all how Jews understand the messianic age. They believe that in that future time, everyone will simply know what the truth is, in the same way that we know that $2+2=4$; and there will no longer be any reason to argue about it. It is much like a situation I witnessed at work once: two computer programmers were arguing loudly and at length about whether it was possible for a user to input data at a certain point in a program. Finally, someone pressed a key and they all saw that nothing happened. Now they knew the truth, end of argument. When mashiach comes, theological truths will be equally obvious to humanity, and there will be no reason to argue about it.

3.3 Is Jesus the Jewish Mashiach?

Jews do not believe that Jesus was the mashiach. Assuming that he

existed, and assuming that the Christian scriptures are accurate in describing him (both matters are still debatable), he simply did not fulfill the mission of the *mashiach* as it is described in the biblical passages cited above. Jesus did not do any of the things that the scriptures said the messiah would do.

On the contrary, another Jew born about a century later came far closer to fulfilling the messianic ideal than Jesus did. His name was Shimeon ben Kosiba, known as Bar Kokhba (son of a star), and he was a charismatic, brilliant, but brutal warlord. Rabbi Akiba, one of the greatest scholars in Jewish history, believed that Bar Kokhba was the *mashiach*. Bar Kokhba fought a war against the Roman Empire, catching the Tenth Legion by surprise and retaking Jerusalem. He resumed sacrifices at the site of the Temple and made plans to rebuild the Temple. He established a provisional government and began to issue coins in its name. This is what the Jewish people were looking for in a *mashiach*; and Jesus clearly does not fit into this mold. Ultimately, however, the Roman Empire crushed his revolt and killed Bar Kokhba. After his death, all acknowledged that he was not the *mashiach*.

Throughout Jewish history, there have been many people who have claimed to be the *mashiach*, or whose followers have claimed that they were the *mashiach*: Shimeon Bar Kokhba, Shabbatai Tzvi, Jesus, and many others too numerous to name. Leo Rosten reports some very entertaining accounts under the heading False Messiahs in his book, *The Joys of Yiddish*. But all of these people died without fulfilling the mission of the *mashiach*; therefore, none of them were the *mashiach*. For the Jews, the *mashiach* and the *Olam Ha-Ba* still lie in the future, not in the past.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain the term "*mashiach*".

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learned that the Jews believed in the thirteen principles of faith. One of the thirteen principles which is relevant to our study is the coming of the messiah to Israel. The term "*mashiach*" literally means "the anointed one," and refers to the ancient practice of anointing kings with oil when they took the throne. The *mashiach* is the one who will be anointed as king in the End of Days.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt of the principles of Judaism that are relevant for the Messiah discourse. You have also learnt about the concept of Mashiach in Judaism, the functions of the expected Mashiach and of the different claimants to the title among whom is Jesus. You have also learnt that contemporary Jews do not accept that Jesus is the Mashiach and still live-in expectation of one.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the term "mashiach ben David".
2. List the principles of the belief of Judaism.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

<http://shalach.org/JewishContentions/Judaism%27s%20Messianic%20idea.htm> Accessed on 25/4/2001

Excerpts from Tracey R Rich: *the Messianic Idea in Judaism*.
Accessed on 25/4/2001

UNIT 2 MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS OF THE FIRST CENTURY AND THEIR FULFILMENT IN JESUS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you have learnt the basic principles of Judaism relevant to the Messiah Discourse as well as the meaning of the Messiah of Judaism. We learnt that the term "mashiach" literally means "the anointed one," and refers to the ancient practice of anointing kings with oil when they took the throne.

In this unit, we will examine scriptural references to the expected messiah. Among other things, we will see how the Jewish race lived in the expectation of a messiah, an ideal king from the Davidic lineage whose reign will bring justice and peace to them in the future. We shall also see, that while the early Church proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah, it is doubtful whether Jesus used the title for himself and the many factors that make such application incongruous to Jesus.

In this unit, we will mostly depend on the contributions of Edersheim who reveals most of these expectations and how they are demonstrated within the context of Jesus. It is not clear exactly how common or universal all of these expectations were, but they did exist and some were common within first century Judaism. Since it is absurd to think that Jews would just give up their faith and dash off to join another religion, we should expect that all of the claims that are made about Jesus by his early followers were present in Jewish expectation.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss Messiah as the king who would restore the Davidic dynasty in Israel
- explain the messianism in the early church
- list the major messianic expectations among the Jews
- discuss their fulfilment in Jesus.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Major Messianic Expectations

The general "qualifications" for Messiah were: descendant of Jesse, of David, through the line to Solomon, through the kings of Judah and finally through Zerubbabel. This means, of course, that he would come from the tribe of Judah. They expected him to free them from the Romans and bring in a great time of world peace and a holy nation.

3.1.1 The king who would Restore the Davidic Dynasty in Israel

The seeds of messianism were sown in the royal theology, which provided legitimacy to the eleventh century B.C.E. reign of David, first as king of Judah in the south; and then of the other tribes in the north, as well. Since his coming to power displaced the ruling house of his predecessor, Saul, David took various steps to consolidate his newly launched dynasty, including recovering as his wife one of Saul's daughters, Michal, and keeping a close eye on surviving members of Saul's family (2 Sam 3–5).

It was therefore more than "convenient" when Nathan the prophet, one of David's close advisers, proclaimed that David's ruling house was by solemn divine covenant an eternal house, which would never end (2 Sam 7; also echoed in Psalms 89 and 132). This ultimate sanction for his dynasty may well have supplied stability to the hereditary monarchy originating from David (though unhappily it did not discourage his own son, Absalom, from attempting a coup against David). Thus, the royal theology functioned in ancient Israel as an ideology to legitimize a newly-founded dynasty.

In many respects, David's reign was the golden age of Israel's history, due in part to his military ability, his own charisma, his popularity and rectitude, his loyalty to Yahweh, and his good luck in coming to the

throne during a period of relative international tranquillity. His successors on the throne for the next four hundred years – Josiah, being a notable exception – lacked, for the most part, the qualities which made David worthy of emulation, or cloning.

It is therefore not surprising that even before the end of the dynasty there should be hopes expressed for the coming of the Messiah, God's anointed, an ideal king, descended from David, who would establish an era of justice and peace (cf. Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-10, that is, if these passages are in fact pre-exilic). This became the classic expectation in Judaism, rooted in certain texts in the Hebrew prophets as Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-10 and elsewhere.

As a matter of fact, the entire chapter 11 of Isaiah is designated by more than one ancient rabbinical source as pertaining to the Messiah. Edersheim demonstrates through several passages of Rabbinical origin that "branch" and "branch of David" are terms specifically designating the Messiah. Of course, this phrase is used often in describing Jesus, and in fact is a pun on the word "Nazareth" since no prophesy of the OT predicts the Messiah coming from Nazareth.

Relevant here is Eisenman and Wisers translation of "Genesis Florolegium" column 5.1: "The Government shall not pass from the tribe of Judah. During Israel's dominion a Davidic descendant on the Throne shall not cease... until the Branch of David comes because to him and to his seed was given the covenant of the Kingdom of his people in perpetuity" (89).(4q252).

With the end of the dynasty in 586 B.C.E., the yearning for a restoration became intense in Judaism. This is understandable, in light of the fact that the exilic period brought not only an end to the dynasty and deportation to a distant land, but the loss of their sovereignty, a sovereignty which would not be restored (except for a brief period under the Maccabees, in the second and first centuries B.C.E.) until the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948.

Beyond these considerations, we should add that the end of the Davidic dynasty also created a theological crisis, as is evident in the following lines, filled with both anger and pathos from the Psalmist:

I [the LORD] will not violate my covenant, or alter the word that went forth from my lips. Once and for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. His line shall continue forever, and his throne endure before me like the sun (Psa 89:34-36)

But now [says the Psalmist] you have spurned and rejected him; you

are full of wrath against your anointed (Psa 89: 38-39)

You have renounced the covenant with your servant; you have defiled his crown in the dust. You have removed the scepter from his hand, and hurled his throne to the ground (Psa 89:44).

The belief in a permanent Davidic dynasty, guaranteed by a solemn promise of the Lord God, had been refuted by history. If God was to be vindicated (to utter a slightly blasphemous phrase, since who would be bold enough to say that God needed vindication?) and his promise realized, it was of the utmost urgency that the Davidic line be restored.

3.1.2 The Reception of the Royal Messianic Texts in the Early Church

It is reasonably certain that the early Church proclaimed Jesus as Mashiac/Messiah/Christ; but it is not too clear what they meant by the title. There is little evidence that early Christians were looking for a political restoration. Among the NT texts relevant for our discussion are the followings:

Romans 1:3: Paul, writing in the sixth decade of the first century, seems to think it important to declare that God's Son "was descended from David according to the flesh," but neither here nor in any other part of his letters does he make a connection with the restoration of the Davidic monarchy.

Luke 1:31-33: The angel's announcement to Mary comes closer to suggesting the classic Jewish model of the Messiah: "[The son you bear] will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." One may compare also Luke 1:69-71. These texts, coming from the ninth decade of the first century, would have stimulated little political excitement among Christians of the empire, who by this time was more interested in settling quietly into the fabric of Roman society.

Mark 10:35-40: The story of an aggressive move by James and John, who seek preferment in Jesus' kingdom, may reflect the possible existence in the early Church, of those who understood his messiahship in terms of restoration of the Davidic monarchy; but the narrative is more about how ambition for high office becomes willingness to suffer with Jesus.

Within the first post-Easter decade or so, "Christ" had become virtually a proper noun. Whether used as name or title, it was applied

to one who was acknowledged by these early Christians as saviour, as a powerful presence in the midst of the Christian community, and as one who would soon return upon the clouds of glory, titles none of which would have been associated with classic messianism.

3.1.3 The Problematics in Applying the Royal Messianic Title to Jesus

Whether his disciples acknowledged Jesus as Messiah during the period of his public activity is uncertain, and it is even more uncertain whether Jesus believed himself called to this vocation. We take the position here that Jesus did not give his followers any encouragement in what he said or did to acknowledge himself as such a leader. Instead, we propose that there are several reasons why he would have found the messianic title incongruous since it suggested too many things that he was not.

1. The messianic title was nationalistic, and thus hardly compatible with the generous universalism which was characteristic of his teaching. A glance at Psalm 2 will show how much chauvinistic baggage the messianic notion was carrying.

Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and his anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the LORD has them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill." I will 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 make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, with trembling kiss his feet, or he will be angry, and you will perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled. Happy are all who take refuge in him (*Psalm 2*)

2. The messianic title was too profoundly influenced by the ideology of the Davidic monarchy to be used of Jesus. This ideology had been effectively refuted by the events of history which brought the supposedly eternal dynasty to a close at the time of the sixth century B.C.E. exile.

Again, messianism was already a spent concept by the time Jesus arrived on the scene, as anachronistic and fanciful (in an

age when Rome was the unchallenged super power) as the lingering hopes in Scottish hearts of the return of Bonnie Prince Charlie to the throne of Scotland. Unless (as seems most unlikely) Jesus had been willing to embrace the Davidic ideology, it is difficult to understand how he would have found the title at all congenial.

3. While we cannot exclude completely the possibility that Jesus was willing to “spiritualise” the messianic title and thus make it acceptable for communicating his self-understanding, we cannot suppose that he would have deluded himself by imagining that the old nationalistic associations of the term would not linger on, to nourish fantasies of a Davidic restoration, or that he would have failed to appreciate that the non-Jewish world would hardly be able to generate much enthusiasm for the notion of a world ruled by a king who was cut from the mold of a tribal leader of old.
4. We may make allowance for the possibility that we have an authentic tradition in which Jesus offers a rather damaging critique of Davidic kingship.

In Mark 12:35-37, Jesus is represented as relativising Davidic ancestry as an indispensable requirement for the Messiah:

How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.”’ David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?

It would be interesting to know if this critique was founded at least in part on his suspicion of the dynastic principle itself. The impression that Jesus was not enthusiastic about the messianic office is reinforced by his noncommittal response to Peter’s messianic declaration (Mark 8:29-33). Jesus does not affirm Peter’s declaration that he is the Messiah, nor does he express approval of Peter for his statement. This apparent indifference is “corrected” by Matthew (cf. 16:15-20), who makes Jesus’ acceptance of the messianic title unmistakable.

Does Jesus’ diffidence toward the standard messianic office reflect his clear-headed understanding that what Israel – and humanity – needed was not some tinkering with political governance or another palace coup, but a more profound change in human self-understanding and in a person’s relationship to God?

5. As has already been implied, messianism did not match the character of Jesus' actions and teachings. From what we can recover of his public activity, we find nothing that point in the direction of messianic ambition.
 - The tradition represents Jesus as proclaiming, not a Davidic kingdom, but God's kingdom as present, especially in his healings.
 - The tradition represents Jesus as sharing his insights as a wisdom teacher, but saying nothing about social change or regime change.
 - The tradition represents him as showing concern for the sick and for those on the margins of society.
 - The tradition represents Jesus as recruiting some followers to assist him in this seemingly innocuous work.
 - The tradition shows him debating his opponents and defending his teachings and his work.

So how could Jesus have used the term Messiah of himself, or encouraged his disciples to do so, without causing immense confusion and misunderstanding? One can only wonder how the Church might have been different, had the title "Christ" not become a proper noun, and Christians not rallied around the messianic concept so persistently; and how different Jewish-Christian relations might have been, had the messiahship of Jesus not become an issue between Jews and Christians.

3.2 Other Sundry Expectations of the Messiah

Apart from Davidic descent, there are are other credentials associated with the Messiah that the NT interpreted as fulfilled in Jesus. We will now describe these in greater details.

1. Decent through the Line of Zerubabel

Haggi 2:23, after describing how their supplies and harvest yields were low and how the Lord would take them back and an abundant harvest will come, makes an apocylptic statement about nations being taken and armies being defeated and then pronounces that **Zerubabel** is his choice and he will "use you like a segment ring". By ending with this statement, after building up to it through description of Messianic times and forgiveness for Israel, Haggai makes Zerubbabel the final focus point in the line of the Messiah.

The same focus on Zerubbabel is continued in the prophecy associated with Zechariah. After writing of Zerubbabel: "What

are you O mighty Mountain before Zerubbabel you will become level ground, then he will bring out the capstone...;" Zechariah goes on to say that Zerubabel will lay the foundation for the temple (cf. 4:7), which indeed corresponds to what happened in reality. According to Edersheim, the Rabbis read this prophesy as a reference to Messiah, a reading that is in harmony with Jesus' claim in the Gospels of being the stone that the builders rejected.

Again, in Zech 3:8, God tells Joshua the priest that he will bring a branch. The Notes to the Oxford Bible (RSV) of Messianic prophesy describes the figure "Branch" as a Davidic figure who is to usher in the Messianic age. The designation 'Branch' is expressly applied to King Messiah in the Targum. Indeed, this is one of the Messiah's peculiar names." Thus, these branch references link Zerubabel to Messiah in some fundamental way. The same also applies to Zech 4:7 that speaks of Zerubabel and the Capstone. As a matter of fact, Zech 4:7 is generally applied to the Messiah, expressly in the Targum; but also in several of the Midrashim. So Zerubabel is clearly linked to Messiah. The fact that literally laid the cornerstone of the temple in history can also have a double meaning, especially since that very verse is interpreted messianically.

2. **Associated with Galilee**

From Isa 9:1-3 we read: "In the future, he will honour Galilee of the gentiles, by the way of the Sea... The people who walked in Darkness have seen a great light..." Edersheim reads this passage messianically and used it to declare the divinity of the Messiah. John Allegro comes to a similar conclusion in his presentation of Isaiah's suffering servant found among the Qumran Essenes behind the Dead Sea Scrolls. Worthy of note is the fact that Allegro was the only member of the original translation team who was neither a Christian nor a Jew, but claimed "neutrality." However, he was criticised by other members of the team as being anti-Christian and sceptical.

In one of their hymns, the sect pictures itself as a pregnant woman suffering the pangs of parturition as she gives birth to her 'firstborn' who is described in terms reminiscent of the Child of Isa 9:6 that will be named the 'Wonderful Counsellor.' Most scholars agree that the passage retains its biblical messianic significance, in which case it appears that the sect believed that out of its suffering would come the atonement for 'the land' of Israel.

3. **A Star will Herald His Birth**

A testimony which seems to us not only reliable, but embodies most ancient Jewish tradition is contained in one of the smaller Midrashim of which a collection has literally been published: the so-called Messiah Haggadda. Here, we read that "... a star shall come out of Jacob' ... 'the star shall shine out of the East and this is the Star of the Messiah'" Edershiem]quotes three other midrashim presented in the same book. Edershiem goes on to document, from the works of Keppler, that a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn did actually occur two years before the birth of Christ.

There is also the star prophecy from Numbers referring to a star out of Jacob and linked to the world ruler at Qumran. Eisenman and Wise document many times the importance of this prophecy at Qumran in the revolt of 66 CE and in the bar Kochba revolt of 135. Indeed, the name bar Kochba itself, means son of the star. Perhaps it could be that though the star in Numbers is the Messiah himself, the notion of a Star as a herald and symbol of the birth of the 'true Star' somehow was prophecied in an oral tradition, or at least transposed.

4. Mystery concerning his seed (Virgin Birth?)

On this, Edersheim writes: "It is not without hesitation that we make reference to the Jewish allusions to the miraculous birth of the Saviour. Yet there are two expressions which convey the idea of, if not super human origin, yet of some great mystery attached to his birth. The first occurs in connection with the birth of Seth R. Tanocum said in the name of R. Samuel: "Eve had respect [regard, looking to] the seed which is to come 'from another place' and who is this? This is King Messiah". The second appears in the narrative of the crime of Lot's daughters. It is not written that we may preserve a seed from our father," but 'seed form our father.' This is that seed which is coming from another place. And who is this? This is Messiah the king".

5. Messiah would be Divine

We find that in the Dead Sea Scrolls, "Sons of Light" already understood the Messiah as the Son of God before Jesus came onto the scene. "He will be called Son of God and they will call him son of the Most High.... His Kingdom will be an eternal kingdom and all his paths in truth and uprightness. The earth will be in truth and will make peace. The Sword will cease in the earth and all the cities will pay him homage." The concept of Son of God existed at Qumran before Christianity, and thus was in Judaism, and was not made up by Jesus' followers. Again, Isa 9:1-3 is quoted as Messianic in Edersheim's list, and at Qumran, the Messiah to come from Seed of Jesse, from Galilee. "The

people who walk in Darkness have seen a great light". This verse in particular is Messianic at Qumran and on Edersheim's list. The same also applies to Isa 9:6: "To us a child is born, to us a son is given, the government will be on his shoulders and he will be called 'wonderful counsellor' Almighty God, Everlasting Father Prince of Peace." "Prince of David" was a Messianic title at Qumran. "Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end... with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever."

This is a verse often quoted by Christians because it speaks of a "Virgin Birth." Most Christians take this as the expectation of the Messiah as born of a virgin, as was Jesus. Yet Modern day Jewish apologists disagree. They say that the child was not born of a virgin, but that the word is mistranslated in chapter 7. But the passage indicates that, while the interpretation fits with the ostensible story of the chapter, the birth of Mahar-Shalal-Hash-Baz" (the child), the passage in verse nine has double meaning.

For not only does it fit with the story in Isaiah, but it was also understood by Rabbis of Jesus' day to herald the Messiah. This can only be the case unless Mahar-Shala-Hash-Baz was to be called "every lasting father, almighty God." "I saiah 9:6 is expressly applied to Messiah in Targum". The Child referred to in Chapter 9 is the Messiah. He will be called "everlasting father, almighty God". While the Jewish expositors would not call the child Messiah, Jesus Christ has been so called!

As further proof that this passage is Messianic, Edersheim also shows that the next verse, 7: "the government shall be on his shoulders," is attested by Rabbinical authorities as Messianic. Whose shoulders shall the government be on? The child in v. 6, the "almighty God."

It is argued by the Jewish apologists of today that nowhere do the scriptures speak of a man being sacrificed for the sins of the people; nor does it speak of a resurrection of the Messiah from the dead. It is not very likely that any Jew of Jesus' day understood what was about to befall him. But it is not true that the Scriptures did not teach these things. When the first followers of Jesus turned to the Scriptures to try and understand what had happened, they saw in them the crucifixion and the Resurrection. They understood this as a fulfilment of Messianic prophesy, though understood *exposit facto*. While this leaves us open to the charge of reading in a meaning that is not there, it

can be argued that it is a sound.

6. Unrecognised by his people (Isa 8:14)

"... he will be a sanctuary but to both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall and to the people of Jerusalem he will be a snare". While this text is not only applicable to Christ, the evangelists refer to the stumbling stone in the Gospels. It therefore makes perfect sense within the context of the story in Isaiah and no one would think it refers to something else. This is more evidence of interspersed Messianic prophecy or "double meaning." It makes sense on one level and then is interpreted on another. Isaiah 10:27 says: "in that day their burden will be lifted from their shoulders; their yoke from their neck." Again, Edersheim quotes rabbinical sources which show that these verses speak of the Messiah.

7. Rejected by the Masses and Imprisoned"

Jewish writings speak frequently of the so-called sorrows of the Messiah (Chebhley shel Mashiech; Sabb.118). These were partly those of the Messiah and partly those coming on Israel and the world prior to coming of the Messiah. This has always been referred to as the period of "internal corruption...". The Rabbis said: His name is "the leper scholar", as it is written: Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God, and afflicted (Isa 53:4).

Ruth Rabbah 5:6 in the fifth interpretation of Ruth 2:14 also makes it refer to the Messiah. "Come hither: approach to royal state. And eat of the BREAD refers to the bread of royalty; AND DIP THY MORSEL IN THE VINEGAR refers to his sufferings, as it is said, But he was wounded".

Similarly, the Karaite Yefeth ben Ali (a 10th century Rabbi) writes on this same Isaiah prophecy: "As to myself, I am inclined, with Benjamin of Nehawend, to regard it as alluding to the Messiah, and as opening with a description of his condition in exile, from the time of his birth to his accession to the throne: for the prophet begins by speaking of his being seated in a position of great honour, and then goes back to relate all that will happen to him during the captivity. He thus gives us to understand two things: In the first instance, that the Messiah will only reach his highest degree of honour after long and severe trials; and secondly, that these trials will be sent upon him as a kind of sign, so that, if he finds himself under the yoke of misfortunes whilst remaining pure in his actions, he may know

that he is the desired one....”.

8. Would be the Suffering Servant wounded/pierced for the people's transgressions

We need not expect that the correspondence between the sin offering of the temple and the crucifixion be one to one. In other words, the temple offering was to be without blemish, Christ was sinless, but why must he also correspond one to one with all the requirements? If so, he would have to be less than a year old. Jewish Apologists often quote injunctions from the Deuteronomical code against human sacrifice and argue that to sacrifice a man for the sins of the people violates the Law of Moses. Obviously, this doesn't apply in the cases of the Messiah, because he was the perfect offering and because it was God's will and God himself as the offering. That being said, the OT clearly teaches that the Messiah will take upon himself the sins of the people.

Surely, he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows and yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted, but 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...the Lord has laid upon him the iniquity of us all, he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth, he was like a lamb to the slaughter...for the transgression of my people he was stricken...*

This remarkable passage clearly teaches that the Messiah would take upon himself the sins of the people, that he would be stricken for them. Moreover, the Jews of Jesus day did expect that. Though they did not necessarily think of it as crucifixion, they did expect that the messiah would be stricken for them in his suffering, which has already been pointed out. Edersheim shows that Rabbinical authorities views these passages as applicable to the Messiah.

Another statement from Yefeth ben Ali: By the words “surely he hath carried our sicknesses”, they mean that the pains and sickness which he fell into were merited by them, but that he bore them instead.... And here, I think it necessary to pause for a few moments, in order to explain why God caused these sicknesses to attach themselves to the Messiah for the sake of Israel... The nation deserved from God greater punishment than that which actually came upon them, but not being strong enough to bear it..., God appoints his servant to carry their sins, and by doing so lighten their punishment in order that Israel might not be completely exterminated”.

Another statement from Yefeth ben Ali said: "And the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." The prophet does not by avon mean iniquity, but punishment for iniquity, as in the passage, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Num xxxii23).

In his list of Messianich passages, drawn from the most ancient sources, Yalkut, Targum, Talmuds, Midrashim, Edersheim interpretes all the passages of the suffering servant as Messianic. These include Isa 53:13: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that bring good news!" Also interpreted as Messianic by the Targum is the verse: "And he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and whith His stripes we are healed". Writing precisely on this verse, R Huna says in the name of R Acha: "All sufferings are divided into three parts, one part goes to David and the patriarchs, another to the generation of the rebellion and third to King Messiah, as it is written (Psa 2:7): "Yet have I set my Kind upon my holy hill of Zion."” Edersheim adds a quotation from the Midrash on Samuel, in which the Messiah indicates that his "dwelling is on Mount Zion and that guilt is connected to the destruction of it's walls."

Further evidences on the wounded (pierced) Messiah include Psa 22:1,7, 14-18; Isa 53:5 and Zech 12:10. A consideration of each of these texts will help to buttress the fact that they were used of Jesus.

Psalm 22

Psa 22:1. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" appears as among the last words of Jesus on the cross. The same also goes for Psa 22:7: "All who see me mock me, they hurl insults..." as well as Psa 22:14-18: "I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint/my heart has turned to wax/...my tough sticks to the roof of my mouth...; they have pierced my hands and my feet ... they divide my garments among them". Collectively, all these references paint a picture of Christ on the cross. The mocking of the crowd, the physical effects of being crucified upon the heart and internal organs, the piecing of hands and feet, and the acts of the soldiers at the cross.

Of course, one can argue that gambling for his clothing is a detail added latter to the Gospel account for verisimilitude, but what are the chances of the effects of crucifixion, a means of execution totally unknown in the time?

The Jewish apologists argue that the verse is wrongly rendered. They say it speaks of animals tearing at the persona, and that the line about piercing hands and feet should really read "like lions my hands and feet," or "lions tear at my hands and feet." This is arguable if one only

goes by the Hebrew text. But the Septuagint (LXX) the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures made in Alexandria before the time of Christ and used as the Bible of the early church, was clear in rendering the incident with the word "pierced". Moreover, they cannot dispute the physical description of crucifixion, its effects upon the heart and internal organs, nor the statement of bones being out of joint, through the beating prior to the resurrection, and the breaking of legs to hasten death.

According to Edersheim, the **Yalkut** views the texts of Psa 22 as Messianic and relates it to Isaiah 9 "using almost the same words of the Evangelists to describe the crowd's mocking behavior at the cross". The verse says "all who see me mock me, they hurl insults shaking their heads." He also shows **Yalkut** links v.15 to the Messiah, and this is the exact verse put forward as a description of crucifixion! "my strength is dried up as a potsherd my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death."

Zechariah 12:10

The New American Standard Bible renders the passage as follows: "I 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". The Hebrew used here for "pierced" means to bore or dig or pierce. It clearly means pierced. Perhaps it could be translated another way, this pierced is clear.

Isaiah 53:8.

The Messiah idea is also behind the Isaianic account of the "suffering servant": "... he was cut off from the land of the living, for the transgression of my people he was stricken, he was assigned a grave with the wicked." One thinks of the two thieves on their crosses crucified on either side of Christ. But in v 11 "after the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied. By his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many and he will bear their iniquities... for he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

There are some telling differences between the MT and the LXX; and as always, the LXX agrees with the DSS on these points. Where the MT does not have "light of life" on v. 11, the DSS and LXX do. And also on v. 11, in place of "his knowledge", the MT has "knowledge of him".

The Jewish apologists claim that the passage in Isaiah (53) speaks of Israel rather than of the Messiah. They argue that all the references to

the servant are in the plural rather than the singular. But this is not the case in the LXX or DSS. Those references are singular. Furthermore, to read the passage as the nation of Israel would necessitate the absurdity of the nation of Israel taking upon itself its own sins in order to be a guilt offering for itself. Let's read it that way: Surely [they] took up their infirmities and carried [their] sorrows and yet [they] considered [themselves] stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted, but [they] were pierced for [their own] transgressions, [they] [were] crushed for [their own] iniquities, the punishment that brought [themselves] peace was upon [they themselves] and by [their own] wounds [they heal themselves]...the Lord has laid upon [them] the iniquity of [them] all, [they were] oppressed and afflicted, yet [they] did not open [their] mouth[s], [they] [were] like a lamb to the slaughter...for the transgression of my people [my people were stricken]

Such a reading, no doubt, loses all meaning. What would be the point? Especially in the line "the punishment that brought them peace was upon them." What sense does that make? It totally loses the meaning of someone who was thought to be unworthy who suffers on behalf of the people, and makes the people themselves their own guilt offering. Moreover, the Jews have never been totally cut off from the land of the living. The actual verse does not have the plural but the singular! "Surely, He took upon himself their infirmities and carried our sorrows and yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted, was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities." It is therefore not without reason that the 16th century Rabbi Elijah de Vidas has this to say on the passage: "Since the Messiah bears our iniquities which produce the effect of His being bruised, it follows that whosoever will not admit that the Messiah thus suffers for our iniquities, must endure and suffer for them himself".

3.3 Fulfilment of the Expectations in Jesus

Below, we will try to demonstrate how the list of expectations expored above correspond to the story of Jesus' life as recorded in the gospels: His birth, his family, the claims to his divine nature and his mission. Jesus meets every one of these requirements; most of them, like his family and the star at birth would have been beyond his control:

- (1) **Descendent of David** (Matt 1:1-22; Luke 3; Rom 1:3)
- (2) **From line of Zerubabel** (Matt 1:12 "And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel...")
- (3) **Born in Galilee** (in Nazerath)
- (4) **Mystery--claims of virgin birth**
- (5) **Star heralds birth--**Kepler proved conjunction of planets in 4BC

- (6) **Son of God--claimed to be**
- (7) **Not accepted by masses**
- (8) **Rejected by the masses:** by crowd in favour of Barabass
- (9) **Manner of his death and mission--**crucified for sins of world and rose from dead.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Comment on one of the Jewish Apologists work on Messiah.
- ii. Discuss the ideal king expected by the Jews in Israel.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The general "qualifications" for Messiah were: descendant of Jesse, of David, through the line to Solomon, through the kings of Judah and finally through Zerubbabel. Edersheim demonstrates through several passages of Rabbinical origin that "branch" and "branch of David" are terms specifically designating the Messiah. The same could also be said of the passages of Hag 2:23, Zech 4:7 and 3:8 with reference to a descent from Zerubabel. The reading of Isa 9:1-3 by the Qumran sect also links the Messiah to the Wonderful Counsellor of Isaiah whose kingdom will have no end. The same is also true of the Isaianic text of 53 that speaks of the one wounded and pierced whose would will vacariously serve for the redemption of Israel. Despite efforts among Jewish apologists to understand these texts otherwise, the odd is heavily in favour of their being messianic and of their being fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt about the following facts:

- The Jewish expected the coming Messiah to restore justice and peace to them in Israel. Besides, Prophet Nathan prophesied about the ruling house of David hoping that the Messiah will come from the house. The Jewish hope that the ideal king would descend from David's house to bring justice and peace to Israel in the future.
- You have also seen Edersheim's exposition of how typical messianic texts from the OT were read and received by and among the Rabbis, in the Targums as well as among the Qumran sects. You have also learnt that such phrases as "branch of David" "suffering servant" who was wounded and pierced" were read as messianic and applied to Jesus.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1. Give the reasons that make it incongruous to apply the Messiah title to Jesus.

2. Write short note on the following: “Zerubbabel”, “Descendant of Jesse” and Sons of the Light.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 JESUS AS THE MESSIAH WHO OVERCAME THE EVIL ONE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Jesus the Messiah and the Dawn of the Kingdom
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 - 3.3 Jewish Objection to the Jesus' Messiahship Claim
 - 3.4 Christian Response to Jewish Objections
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you have learned about the credentials expected of the Messiah in first century Judaism and how these credentials were met or not met by Jesus according to his disciples and the Jews alike. You have also learnt about some of the factors that make calling Jesus the Messiah a little bit problematic.

In this unit, you will learn about how, according to the early Church, the coming of the Kingdom of God began with Jesus as the Messiah and how Jesus actually fulfilled a particular role associate with the dawn of the messianic age: namely overcoming the forces of the evil one.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- distinguish between the work of the Messiah and of the Evil One
- identify the Ministry of Jesus the Messiah in Caesarea Philippi
- describe the power of Jesus the Messiah over the Devil
- explore the Christian claims on Jesus' messiahship along the lines of Jewish expectations.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Coming of the Kingdom began with the Messiah

The coming of the Kingdom began with the activity of Jesus the Messiah. In Matt 12:28 and Luke 11:20, Jesus, the Messiah, speaks very emphatically of the presence of the Kingdom of God that has come upon him in his ministry. In Jesus' own words: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God with finger of God, then the Kingdom of God has come unto you" (Luke 11: 20).

The above quotation was an answer that Jesus the Messiah gave to the Pharisees who had said that he cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Jesus shows the absurdity of the accusation by comparing the power of the devil with that of a kingdom. If one devil should cast out another, the kingdom of the devils would not stand but falls asunder. However, this does not occur. Because of this reason, Jesus the Messiah told them point black that by the Spirit or the finger of God he was able to cast out the devils. The power that he used in casting out devils are of God. Besides, Jesus presence on the earth also means that God's Kingdom has arrived. Therefore, the kingdom of the devil has fallen (Matt 12:29).

Jesus further reminded the Pharisees that the house of a strong man can only be looted after he (the strong man) himself has first been bound. In the same way, the casting out of the devils by the Messiah shows the victory over the devils and thus the break – through by the Kingdom of heaven.

This has already been proved at the temptation of Jesus the Messiah in the wilderness. There can be no doubt that at issue here is Jesus' messianic Kingship. Three times in succession, it is Satan's point of departure. The first one was when the Messiah was fasting and the devil went to him, he said to Jesus the Messiah to turn stones into bread and eat. Jesus replied him that "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God' (Matt 4:3-4). At the pinnacle of the temple, the devil went to the Messiah again, ordering Him to jump down and assuring him that God will send His angels that were in charge of him to bear him up on their hands, if according to Jesus' claim, He is the Son of God. Jesus the Messiah told Satan that "Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'" (Matt 4:6-7).

Jesus the Messiah defeated Satan the second time. Despite the defeat of Satan twice by Christ the Messiah, he still continued tempting him. The devil took Jesus to a very high mountain, showed him all the

kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Then Satan told him that: “All these I will give you’ if you will fall down and worship me”. Jesus’ response was as firm as in the first two instances: “Begone, Satan! For it is written: ‘you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve’” (Matt 4:8-10).

Worthy of note here is that the above dialogue took place between Jesus and Satan, thus signalling that at issue here is a struggle between Jesus and the Evil One. Here Satan appears as “the prince of the world” who opposes God’s kingdom, even though Satan realized that Jesus the Messiah will dispute that power with him in the name of God. Here, then, together with the Messiahship, the Kingdom of God is at issue. At the same time, it appears that the victory over Satan to be gained by the Kingdom of God will be achieved not by power but through obeisance on the part of Jesus the Messiah. Jesus the Messiah must not make an arbitrary use of the authority entrusted to him.

Since the period that Jesus the Messiah started his public ministry, his power and victory over Satan has been demonstrated. Again, when Jesus approached those who were in bondage for deliverance, they cried out in fear. They show that they have a supernatural knowledge of his person and of the importance of his coming. They called him “the Holy One of God”, “the Son of God”, “Son of the most high God”. By this, they recognized his messianic dignity (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; Mark 5:7; Matt 8:29; Luke 8:28, 31 and Luke 4:41). The evil spirit possessing them considered Jesus’ coming to the earth as their own destruction. They also see the Messiah’s arrival as their torment. They feel powerless and try to lengthen their existence in the universe and begged the Messiah not to send them into their place of woe (Mark 1:34; 3:11; 5:7, 10; Luke 4:41; 8:28, 31; Matt 8:29 and Rev 20:3ff.).

All these show that in Jesus the Messiah’s person and coming, the kingdom has become a present reality. The exercise of God’s power over the devil and his rule on the earth by the Messiah indicate the arrival of the kingdom of God. The sending out of the seventy disciples who came back to the Messiah and joyfully informed him of the success of their mission also indicates that Satan power and his kingdom had been rendered useless by the Messiah and his followers on the earth. For these reasons, Jesus accepts the joy of those he had sent out and shows them the background of their power over the devils. But as for the Devil, he has fallen with great force from his rank of power. All miracles that were performed by Jesus the Messiah prove that Satan’s power has been broken and therefore and that the Kingdom of God has come to this world.

3.2 Jesus the Messiah and the Sick and Possessed

Scholars have considered disease as a consequence of Satan's rule. They also considered Jesus' struggle against the Evil one as a fight for the whole physical body to be whole (that is, to be in total good health). For instance, in many cases, demonic possession is mentioned as the cause of bodily disorders. In Matt 9:20, there was a woman suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years who touched the fringe garment of the Messiah from behind and she was healed. For she said to herself: "If I only touch his garment, I shall be made well". There was a man who brought his son to the Messiah for healing. Jesus told the man to bring the child to him.

So, the boy was brought to him. But as soon as the evil spirit saw the Messiah, it convulsed the boy, who fell on the ground, rolled about and foaming at the mouth. Jesus the Messiah rebuked the unclean spirit with the words: "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." The evil spirit convulsed him terribly and came out of the boy. But the boy then looked so much like a corpse that most people that were there said that he is dead. Jesus the Messiah of sick, took the boy by hand, lifted him up, and he arose (Mark 9:24-28).

In the same vein, Luke 13:16–17 reports the healing of the woman who has been bound by Satan for eighteen years. Jesus looses the woman and all the adversaries were put to shame. Even though in this passage, there is no thought of demonic possession, however, Satan is still named as the cause of suffering. These events show you that disease and death belong to the enemy's power. Since the Messiah himself was aware of this, he rebuked diseases from human beings and ordered them to go away from their victims.

Jesus, the Master of the forces of nature, also rebuked winds on the sea. All these events shows that the Messiah has absolute authority in the natural kingdom, over all destructive influences operating in it as a result of sin and of the curse on the universe. This also is a manifestation of the coming of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' activities in the planet. The Messiah penetrates into the territory of the prince of the world and vanquished the hostile powers which destroy the creation. The Messiah is the Ruler, the Lord and the King of nature. Furthermore, the visiting of the Son of Man who is equally the Messiah is to be understood as the long promised delivering of the Israelites which had been looked forward to for a long period has come.

3.3 Jewish Objections to the Christian Claim of Messiah-Fulfilment in Jesus

As we have seen in previous units, the word “Messiah means “Anointed” and is usually used with reference to a person initiated into God’s service by being anointed with oil (Exod 29:7, I Kings 1:39, II Kings 9:3). Originally used of every King and High priest who were always the “anointed of the Lord” (1 Sam 26:11), it later became the classical designation for the expected descendant of King David who will rule Israel during the age of perfection (Isa 11:1-9; Jer 23:5-6, 30:7-10, 33:14-16; Ezek 34:11-31, 37:21-28; Hos 3:4-5).

Among the functions expected of the Jewish Messiah, according to the Jewish Scriptures, are the followings:

Build the Third Temple (Ezek 37:26-28).

Gather all Jews back to the Land of Israel (Isa 43:5-6).

Usher in an era of world peace, and end all hatred, oppression, suffering and disease. As it says: “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall man learn war anymore” (Isa 2:4).

Spread universal knowledge of the God of Israel, which will unite humanity as one. As it says: “God will be King over all the world—on that day, God will be One and His Name will be One” (Zech 14:9).

The Jewish scholar, Maimonides, attempts a delineation of what is expected of the Messiah in his work, the *Mishne Torah*. Among other points, he lists the following points that we have already outlined above as the signs of Messiah:

- Restore the throne of David
- Rebuild the Temple
- Gather the exiles
- Be a descendent of David
- He does not have to perform signs or wonders.

3.3.1 The Jewish Grounds for Rejecting the Christian Claim

The fact that for the Jews, Jesus did not meet up with any or all of these criteria disqualifies him as a candidate for the expected Messiah. Let us review the claims once again and show how Jesus fares with each of them.

1. Messiah as Prophet

Among the thing expected of the Messiah is that he will be the Moses-like Prophet that God promised to send the Israelites to teach them about the things of God (Deut). Jesus, by contrast,

was not a prophet. According to this argument, prophecy only existed in Israel when the land is inhabited by a majority of world Jewry. During the time of Ezra (circa 300 BCE), when the majority of Jews refused to move from Babylon to Israel, prophecy ended upon the death of the last prophets like Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. For the proponents of this view, Jesus appeared on the scene approximately 350 years after prophecy had ended.

2. **Descendent of David**

According to Jewish sources, the Messiah must be descended on his father's side from King David (see Gen 49:10 and Isa 11:1). Jesus, by contrast, was most likely born in Nazareth - the Bethlehem story has no historical foundation, so the proponents of this view. Again, a tribal line cannot be passed on through adoption, so Jesus cannot be "son of David" through Joseph. A tribal line also does not pass through the mother, and even if it did, Mary was not descended of David *through Solomon*.

3. **Absence of Virgin-Birth Requirement**

Again, the Christian claim that Jesus was the product of a virgin birth and that he had no father, if proven, simply disqualifies him from being the Messiah. According to a particular Jewish source:

Nowhere does the Bible predict that the Messiah will be born to a virgin. In fact, virgins never give birth anywhere in the Bible. This idea is to be found only in pagan mythology. To the Jewish mind, the very idea that God would plant a seed in a woman is unnecessary and unnatural.

Continuing, the same author pointed out that the Hebrew term in Isaiah "*almah*" which means a "young woman" is mistranslated as "virgin", a translation he claimed is today widely acknowledged to be a "a pious fraud" and now being corrected as seen in the new Protestant "Revised Standard Version" of the Bible. For this school of thought, Isaiah 52-53 is referring to the people of Israel, not to the Messiah.

4. **The Messiah is Human**

Closely connected with this is the fact that according to the Jews, the Messiah will be born of human parents and possess normal physical attributes like other people. He will not be a demi-god, nor will he possess supernatural qualities. Still on this, our author writes: "Nowhere does our Bible say that the Messiah would be a god or God-like. The very idea that God would take on

human form is repulsive to Jews because it contradicts our concept of God as being above and beyond the limitations of the human body and situation. Jews believe that God alone is to be worshiped, not a being who is His creation, be he angel, saint, or even the Messiah himself’.

5. Messiah and Torah Observance

According to Jewish sources, the Messiah, whenever he comes, will lead the Jewish people to full Torah observance. The Torah states that all commandments remain binding forever, and anyone coming to change the Torah is immediately identified as a false prophet (Deut. 13:1-4). Similarly, Jeremiah prophesies that the Messiah will re-establish Jewish religious law as the law of the land (Jer 33:15).

Throughout the NT, Jesus contradicts the Torah and states that its commandments are no longer applicable. For example, John 9:14 records that Jesus made a paste in violation of Shabbat, which caused the Pharisees to say (verse 16), "He does not observe Sabbath day”.

6. Messiah and the Temple

The true Messiah is expected to restore Israel as a nation and to rebuild her Temple in Jerusalem (Jer 33:18). According to the prophets, the Messiah will establish a government in Israel that will be the center of all world government, both for Jews and gentiles (Isa 2:2-4; 11:10; 42:1).

In the case of Jesus, the very opposite took place. Not long after his death, the Holy Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, Jerusalem was laid to waste, and the Jews went into exile to begin a 1900-year long night of persecution, largely at the hands of the followers of this self-styled Messiah!”

7. The Death of the Messiah

According to *Maimonides*, the Messiah should not die, but Jesus who claimed the title to the role of Messiah died.

In all, Judaism today still rejects Jesus as Messiah, because he failed to fulfill the roles the Messiah was to play according to the tradition of *Scribes, Pharisees, Sanhedrin* and *Priesthood*. For these reasons, Jews keep expecting the true messiah to come in the future. To the Christians’ counter argument that Jesus will fulfill all these in the Second Coming, the Jews respond that their Jewish sources show that the Messiah will fulfill the prophecies outright, and that no concept of a Second Coming exists.

3.3.2 Christianity's Response to Jewish Objections

We have seen in previous units how Christians proved Jesus' Messiahship along the lines of these criteria above. Here, we repeat the arguments for the purpose of emphasis.

For Christians, Jesus' virgin birth, rather than being an argument against his being a Messiah, is actually a proof of it. Matt 1:22-23 fulfills Is 7:14. Jesus' birth in Bethlehem (Matt 2:4-6) is also in fulfilment of Mic 5:2. As for Jesus being of Davidic descent, the account in Luke 3 is in fulfilment of several prophecies (cf. Jer 23:5, 33:17; Ezek 34:23-24; II Sam 7:14; I Chron 17:11-14, 22:9-10; 28:4-6). Jesus' side pierced on the cross (John 19:33-37) is in fulfilment of Zech 12:10. The claim as to Jesus being the Suffering Servant (cf. John 12:37-38; Acts 8:30-35; 1 Pet 2:21-25) is in fulfilment of the prophecies of Isa 52-53. Jesus' divinity – that is, his being God (John 8:58) – fulfils the assertion of Isa 9:6.

To all these we can add the distinctively Christian contributions; like Jesus' assurance of His desire to come to take us to himself after His resurrection to be where he is as well as his assurance that it is the will of His father not to lose any of us entrusted to his care and to ensure that they are raised from the dead on the last day (John 6:38-40). On how the day will be or what it will look like, Paul gave the following summary of the Christian position:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:51-57.)

Having earlier taught to the Thessalonians that those who are living when Jesus comes will not see death (1 Thess 4:16-17), Paul here tells the Corinthians more specifically about those who will not see death when Jesus comes.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

“Satan had bound this woman”. Discuss.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The coming of the Kingdom of God on the earth began with the Ministry of Jesus the Messiah. You should note that from the beginning of the Messiah’s public activity, He had power over Satan. The unit has shown how Jesus the Messiah has set many people free. He rebuked evil spirit that caused suffering for the mankind. For instance, he rebuked the convulsion that troubled a boy whom the parents brought to him to heal, made the evil spirit to depart from him, and raised the apparently dead to life. This also proved that the Messiah has power over the dead.

5.0 SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the major points in the unit:

- Within the scope of the gospel and that of the Jewish expectation of the future, it appears that this “Son of Man “is the Messiah.
- Jesus’ miracles reveal the coming of the Kingdom of God.
- Jesus’ miracles are messianic deeds of salvation, they bear an eschatological character.
- Jesus the Messiah speaks of the coming of the kingdom as a reality that is being fulfilled already during the time of his preaching on the earth.
- Jesus had power over the demons.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Jesus rebuked the wind. Discuss.
2. Compare and contrast the Messiah of the Jewish with the Christian Messiah
3. Give the reasons why the Jews reject the idea that Jesus could be the Messiah

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UNIT 4 JESUS AND THE MESSIANIC AGE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Messianic Age Dawned with and in the Ministry of Jesus
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt that with Jesus the Messiah the dawn of the kingdom was inaugurated. You also learnt that curing of the sick and casting away demons were among the characteristic of the kingdom. You also learnt that despite all these, Jews still have their reservations on the claim of Jesus being the Messiah as well as the answer of Christians to these reservations.

In this unit, we shall discuss how the advent of Jesus marked the dawn of the Messianic Age that connotes the whole salvation of God.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the Messianic Age
- explain God's seed
- state the appointed time
- describe the kingly Rule of God.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Messianic Age Dawned with and in the Ministry of Jesus

According to Jewish tradition, the Messianic period will be one of global peace and harmony, an era free of strife and hardship, and one conducive to the furthestmost of the knowledge of the Creator. The

theme of the Jewish Messiah ushering in an era of global peace is encapsulated in two of the most famous scriptural passages from the Book of Isaiah:

1. Isaiah 2:4.

They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift sword against nation and they will no longer study warfare.

And Isa 11:6-9

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

The Messianic Age means the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is God's seed. It is God regnant and redeeming. It is God's Reign becoming manifestly effective in human affairs. It is God visiting and redeeming his people (Israel), as he had promised long ago. The Kingdom of God began with the Ministry of Jesus the Messiah. The appointed time has fully come. The Kingdom of God has arrived. It was nothing else than the news that 'the one far-off Divine Event' for which they (Jews) prayed, had projected itself into history. What was formerly pure eschatology was now there before men's eyes, the supernatural made visible in Jesus the Messiah.

There is no point saying that 'the appointed time has fully come' if, in fact, the Kingdom is still around the corner? No wonder then Jesus in Luke 11:20 declares that the Kingdom of God has come: "If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon". Likewise, in 11:12, Jesus says: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force".

We see also a similar emphasis in Luke 17:21: ("behold, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you"); as well as in Matt 21:31 (The tax collectors and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you"). Similar notes of fulfilment of the kingdom of God is also seen in such passages as Luke 10:23 ("Blessed are the eyes which see what you see – I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and hear what you hear, and did not hear it"); Luke 12:31 ("The queen of the south will arise at the judgment with the

men of this generation and condemn them (the crowds of Israel); for she came from the ends of the earth (Africa) to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here”).

The same theme is continued in Jesus’ response to the emissaries sent by John the Baptist to inquire about Jesus’ messianic credentials: *“Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offence at me”* (Luke 7:22).

In the last quotation, Jesus the Messiah told his interlocutors to give the testimonies of all the miracles they themselves have witnessed: the blind received their sights, the lame walked, lepers, previously cast out from the midst of the Jews, are now cleansed from leprosy by the Messiah, the deaf have their ears opened, and what is more, the dead are brought back to live from the dead. All the people who witnessed to the Messiah’s miracles and did not take offence on Jesus for doing good at their presence, were also blessed by him. And the fact that these wonders performed by Jesus were beyond human power actually proved that in Jesus the Messiah has come, and the Kingdom of God has arrived in Jesus’ Ministry.

While he demanded faith on the part of the beneficiaries of his wonders, Jesus attributed his mighty works ‘to the finger of God’ (Luke 11:20). The Messiah did regard his mighty works as signs for those who had eyes to see. He also regards them as signs for the presence of the Kingdom. Jesus also believed that the healing of the sick, the exorcism of evil spirits, the restoration of the maimed, the deaf, the dumb and the blind, the forgiveness of sins—all these were ‘works’ of the Kingdom of God in action.

The same also applies to most of Jesus’ parables that always imply ‘an eschatology that is in process of realisation. In the parable of the Sower, the central lesson in the light of the abundant fruits produced by the few seed that fell on the good soil is that God has made a beginning, and that in spite of many failures, the Kingdom of God comes at last’. The same lesson is also behind the parable of the Mustard Seed. Even though the kingdom looks like small seed in your midst (Jews), it will one day become a tree overshadowing the earth.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss Jesus as the real Messiah among the Jews.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit you have studied the ministry of Jesus the Messiah, you saw how he inaugurated the Kingdom of God on this earth. You have also learned that the expected time of the Jews has arrived in the ministry of Jesus the Messiah. He cast out demons by the finger of God, healed several people and raised up many from the dead.

5.0 SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the major points in the unit:

- The appointed time of the Jews has come in the ministry of Jesus the Messiah.
- From the days of John the Baptist until now the expected Kingdom of heaven excises its force among the Jews.
- The parables spoken by the Messiah indicates that the expected Kingdom and Messiah been expected by the Jews has arrived.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. *'From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven excises its force.'* Discuss.
2. Comment on at least three Gospel passages that speak of the dawn of the Messianic Age in Jesus.

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UNIT 5 JESUS' RESURRECTION AS DEFINITE PROOF OF HIS MESSIAHSHIP

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Resurrection as a Sign of the Messianic Age
 - 3.2 Evidences of Jesus' Resurrection
 - 3.3 Factual Supports for the Resurrection Claim
 - 3.4 Arguments Presented to Countering the Resurrection
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit you have learnt how Jesus fulfilled some concrete expectations of the Jewish Messiah: namely, by ushering in the dawn of the messianic age in his ministry.

In this unit, you will learn how one final doctrinal difference, the claim that Jesus rose from the dead, made all the difference in the Messianic expectations of Jews and Christians.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- justify that resurrection from the dead is a sign of the messianic age
- establish that this is true of Jesus
- state arguments and counter-arguments for and against the resurrection of Jesus.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Resurrection as a Sign of the Messianic Age

Of the thirteen Fundamental Articles of Jewish faith outlined by Maimonides, the belief in the resurrection of the dead is very relevant to the development of the messianic idea in late Judaism. In his Mishneh Torah, Maimonides, linking belief in the resurrection

with belief in the advent of the Messiah concludes that so central are both to the essence of Judaism that the one who denies the concept of resurrection of the dead or the one who denies the coming of the Messiah are among those who have forfeited their share in Olam Haba - the Hereafter (*Mishneh Torah Hilkhot Teshuvah 3:6*).

Maimonides goes to great length to emphasize the importance of the resurrection principle: “Resurrection of the dead is one of the fundamental principles in the Torah of our master Moses. There is neither Jewish faith nor any attachment to the Jewish faith, for an individual who does not believe in this”.

Jewish writings also stipulate those forty years after the coming of the Messiah, there will be a resurrection of the dead, and all who are lying in dust will rise to new life. Concerning great tzaddikim, saintly men, it is written that they will rise immediately after the Messiah's arrival. To buttress his position, Maimonides cites two verses in Daniel concerning this matter:

"In truth, this Resurrection [principle], which entails the return of the soul to the body after death, was already mentioned, in no uncertain terms, by Daniel." Thus, he says, `And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. ...' And the Angel said to Daniel, `But you, go to the end of all flesh and rest; and stand in your lot at the end of the days' (Dan 12:2-13).

The *Talmud (Berakhot 64a)* finds a scriptural proof for this concept: “The righteous have no peace, not in this world and not in the world to come, as it is written, "They ascend from strength to strength” (Psalm 84).

What this means is that there are elevations, on a daily basis, for the soul where it enjoys a greater and higher revelation of Godliness. An ascendance of much higher magnitude is enjoyed on each anniversary of the day of the passing of the soul, known as Yahrzeit. The following year the soul rises even higher.

Based on this insight, the sublimity of Godly revelation enjoyed by the souls of our forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for example, and similarly those of Moses and the great prophets, the authors of the Mishnah and the Talmud, whose souls have been in the Garden of Eden for thousands of years, can be instantly appreciated.

The resurrection of the dead comes after the souls having dwelt in the Garden of Eden, must have left the Garden of Eden in order to be re-enclothed in the body. We must conclude that the latter reward, in the form of the resurrection of the dead, is far greater than that of the

Garden of Eden. This comes out very clearly in the following citations:

A king chose two guardians to protect his garden. One was blind and the other a midget. What did they do? The blind man put the midget on his shoulders and through this they were able to eat all the fruits of the garden. The king returned, furious, and questioned them as to what had happened to his fruit. Each one explained to the king how he could not have eaten the fruits on his own due to his own deficiency. What did the king then do? He put the stout man on top of the blind man and judged them as one (*Sanhedrin 91 a,b*).

So, too, says the Talmud, "God brings the soul, puts it into the body, and judges them together as one."

Now, if this is said concerning punishment, it must also be the case concerning reward. Thus, if God wishes to reward the body, it must be done the way the body once existed, synthesised together with the soul. The resurrection of the dead is necessary to reward the body.

In Maimonides is right in the claim that both the one who denies the concept of resurrection of the dead or the one who denies the coming of the Messiah are among those who have forfeited their share in the Hereafter, then establishing that Jesus did actually rise from the dead will be among the definite proofs of his claim to being the Messiah of the Jews.

3.2 Evidences of Jesus' Resurrection

In his *Evidence of the Resurrection*, Josh McDowell made the following audacious remark:

After more than 700 hours of studying this subject, I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is either one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted on the minds of human beings, or it is the most remarkable fact of history.

We argue here that the later is the case. The storyline behind the Jesus' resurrection claim is simple. Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish prophet who claimed to be the Christ prophesied in the Jewish Scriptures, was arrested, was judged a political criminal, and was crucified. Three days after His death and burial, some women who went to His tomb found the body gone. In subsequent weeks, His disciples claimed that God had raised Him from the dead and that He appeared to them various times before ascending into heaven. From that foundation, Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire and has continued to exert great influence down through the centuries.

THE VERIFIABILITY OF HISTORY

EVERY EVENT HAS COLLATERAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND CONSEQUENCES. If this can be said of every event, then it is most true of the Christ-Event. As a matter of fact, the life of Christ made an indelible imprint on all of humanity, yet that this should have happened at all is in itself a miracle. As an author observed:

That this man of poor and uncultivated stock should remake the basis of philosophy and open out to the world of the future an unknown territory of thought; that this simple son of a declining people, born in an obscure district in a small Roman province, this nameless Jew like all those others despised by the Procurators of Caesar, should speak with a voice that was to sound above those of the Emperors themselves, these are the most surprising facts of history.

In our own day and age, we live with these consequences of the life of Christ. Whether we like it or not, he made an indelible mark upon all of humanity. If we deny his existence, not only do we do violence to the fabric of history, but we deny what is presently the case." We give below some factual evidences that argue in favour of the verifiability of Jesus' resurrection.

1. Living Witnesses

The NT accounts of the resurrection were circulated within the lifetimes of men and women alive at the time of the resurrection. Those people could certainly have confirmed or denied the accuracy of such accounts.

The writers of the four Gospels either had themselves been witnesses or else were relating the accounts of eyewitnesses of the actual events. In advocating their case for the gospel, a word that means "good news," the apostles appealed (even when confronting their most severe opponents) to common knowledge concerning the facts of the resurrection.

2. Background

The New Testament witnesses were fully aware of the background against which the resurrection took place. The body of Jesus, in accordance with Jewish burial custom, was wrapped in a linen cloth. About 100 pounds of aromatic spices, mixed together to form a gummy substance, were applied to the wrappings of cloth about the body. After the body was placed in a solid rock tomb, an extremely large stone was rolled against the entrance of the tomb. Large stones weighing approximately two tons were normally rolled (by means of levers) against a tomb entrance.

A Roman guard of strictly disciplined fighting men was stationed to guard the tomb. This guard affixed on the tomb the Roman seal, which was meant to prevent any attempt at vandalising the sepulchre. Anyone trying to move the stone from the tomb's entrance would have broken the seal and thus incurred the wrath of Roman law.

But three days later the tomb was empty. The followers of Jesus said He had risen from the dead. They reported that He appeared to them during a period of 40 days, showing Himself to them by many "infallible proofs." Paul the apostle recounted that Jesus appeared to more than 500 of His followers at one time, the majority of whom were still alive and who could confirm what Paul wrote.

3.3 Factual Supports for the Resurrection Claim

Given the many security precautions that were taken with the trial, crucifixion, burial, entombment, sealing, and guarding of Christ's tomb, it becomes very difficult for critics to defend their position that Christ did not rise from the dead in the light of the following facts:

3.3.1 Fact 1: Broken Roman Seal

As we have said, the first obvious fact was the breaking of the seal that stood for the power and authority of the Roman Empire. The consequences of breaking the seal were extremely severe. The FBI and CIA of the Roman Empire would have been called into action to find the man or men who were responsible. If they were apprehended, it meant automatic execution by crucifixion upside down. People feared the breaking of the seal. Jesus' disciples displayed signs of cowardice when they hid themselves. Peter, one of these disciples, went out and denied Christ three times.

3.3.2 Fact 2: Empty Tomb

As we have already discussed, another obvious fact after the resurrection was the empty tomb. The Disciples of Christ did not go off to Athens or Rome to preach that Christ was raised from the dead. Rather, they went right back to the city of Jerusalem, where, if what they were teaching was false, the falsity would be evident. The empty tomb was "too notorious to be denied." Paul Althaus states that the resurrection "could not have been maintained in Jerusalem for a single day, for a single hour, if the emptiness of the tomb had not been established as a fact for all concerned."

Both Jewish and Roman sources and traditions admit an empty tomb.

Those resources range from Josephus to a compilation of fifth-century Jewish writings called the "Toledoth Jeshu." Paul Maier calls this "positive evidence from a hostile source, which is the strongest kind of historical evidence. In essence, this means that if a source admits a fact decidedly not in its favour, then that fact is genuine".

Gamaliel, who was a member of the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin, put forth the suggestion that the rise of the Christian movement was God's doing; he could not have done that if the tomb were still occupied, or if the Sanhedrin knew the whereabouts of Christ's body.

Paul Maier observes that "... if all the evidence is weighed carefully and fairly, it is indeed justifiable, according to the canons of historical research, to conclude that the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, in which Jesus was buried, was actually empty on the morning of the first Easter. And no shred of evidence has yet been discovered in literary sources, epigraphy, or archaeology that would disprove this statement".

3.3.3 Fact 3: Large Stone Moved

On that Sunday morning, the first thing that impressed the people who approached the tomb was the unusual position of the one and a half to two-ton stone that had been lodged in front of the doorway. All the Gospel writers mentioned it.

Those who observed the stone after the resurrection described its position as having been rolled up a slope away not just from the entrance of the tomb, but from the entire massive sepulchre. It was in such a position that it looked as if it had been picked up and the body carried away. Now, I ask you, if the disciples had wanted to come in, tiptoe around the sleeping guards, and then roll the stone over and steal Jesus' body, how could they have done that without the guards' awareness?

3.3.4 Fact 4: Roman Guard goes Awol

The Roman guards fled. They left their place of responsibility. How can their attrition be explained, when Roman military discipline was so exceptional? Justin, in Digest #49, mentions all the offenses that required the death penalty, and desertion from the duty post ranks high. The fear of their superiors' wrath and the possibility of death meant that guards always paid close attention to the minutest details of their jobs.

One way a guard was put to death was by being stripped of his clothes and then burned alive in a fire started with his garments. If it was not apparent which soldier had failed in his duty, then lots were drawn to

see which one would be punished with death for the guard unit's failure. Certainly, the entire unit would not have fallen asleep with that kind of threat over their heads. George Currie, a student of Roman military discipline, wrote that fear of punishment "produced flawless attention to duty, especially in the night watches."

3.3.5 Fact 5: Grave Clothes tell a Tale

In a literal sense, against all statements to the contrary, the tomb was not totally empty--because of an amazing phenomenon. John, a disciple of Jesus, looked over to the place where the body of Jesus had lain, and there were the grave clothes, in the form of the body, slightly caved in and empty, like the empty chrysalis of a caterpillar's cocoon. That's enough to make a believer out of anybody. John never did get over it. The first thing that stuck in the minds of the disciples was not the empty tomb, but rather the empty grave clothes-undisturbed in form and position.

3.3.6 Fact 6: Jesus' Appearances Confirmed

Christ appeared alive on several occasions after the cataclysmic events of that first Easter. When studying an event in history, it is important to know whether enough people who were participants or eyewitnesses to the event were alive when the facts about the event were published. To know this is obviously helpful in ascertaining the accuracy of the published report. If the number of eyewitnesses is substantial, the event can be regarded as fairly well established. For instance, if we all witness a murder and a later police report turns out to be a fabrication of lies, we as eyewitnesses can refute it.

3.3.7 Fact 7: Over 500 Witnesses

Several very important factors are often overlooked when considering Christ's post-resurrection appearances to individuals. The first is the large number of witnesses of Christ after that resurrection morning. One of the earliest records of Christ's appearing after the resurrection is by Paul. The apostle appealed to his audience's knowledge of the fact that Christ had been seen by more than 500 people at one time. Paul reminded them that the majority of those people were still alive and could be questioned. Edwin M. Yamauchi, associate professor of history at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, emphasises: "What gives a special authority to the list (of witnesses) as historical evidence is the reference to most of the five hundred brethren being still alive. St. Paul says in effect, 'If you do not believe me, you can ask them.' Such a statement, in an admittedly genuine letter written within thirty years of the event, is almost as strong evidence as one could hope to get for

something that happened nearly two thousand years ago." Let's take the more than 500 witnesses who saw Jesus alive after His death and burial, and place them in a courtroom. Do you realise that if each of those 500 people were to testify for only six minutes, including cross-examination, you would have an amazing 50 hours of first-hand testimony? Add to this the testimony of many other eyewitnesses and you would well have the largest and most lopsided trial in history.

3.3.8 Fact 8: Appearance to Hostile Witnesses

Another factor crucial to interpreting Christ's appearances is that He also appeared to those who were hostile or unconvinced. Over and over again, I have read or heard people comment that Jesus was seen alive after His death and burial only by His friends and followers. Using that argument, they attempt to water down the overwhelming impact of the multiple eyewitness accounts. But that line of reasoning is so pathetic it hardly deserves comment. No author or informed individual would regard Saul of Tarsus as being a follower of Christ. The facts show the exact opposite.

Saul despised Christ and persecuted Christ's followers. It was a life-shattering experience when Christ appeared to him. Although he was at the time not a disciple, he later became the apostle Paul, one of the greatest witnesses for the truth of the resurrection. The argument that Christ's appearances were only to followers is an argument for the most part from silence, and arguments from silence can be dangerous. It is equally possible that all to whom Jesus appeared became followers. No one acquainted with the facts can accurately say that Jesus appeared to just "an insignificant few."

3.4 Arguments Presented to Refute the Resurrection

Christians believe that Jesus was bodily resurrected in time and space by the supernatural power of God. The difficulties of belief may be great, but the problems inherent in unbelief present even greater difficulties. The theories advanced to explain the resurrection by "natural causes" are weak; they actually help to build confidence in the truth of the resurrection. We give below some of them.

3.4.1 The Wrong Tomb

A theory propounded by Kirsopp Lake assumes that the women who reported that the body was missing had mistakenly gone to the wrong tomb. If so, then the disciples who went to check up on the women's statement must have also gone to the wrong tomb. We may be certain, however, that Jewish authorities, who asked for a Roman guard to be

stationed at the tomb to prevent Jesus' body from being stolen, would not have been mistaken about the location. Nor would the Roman guards, for they were there!

If the resurrection-claim was merely because of a geographical mistake, the Jewish authorities would have lost no time in producing the body from the proper tomb, thus effectively quenching for all time any rumour resurrection.

3.4.2 Hallucinations?

Another attempted explanation claims that the appearances of Jesus after the resurrection were either illusions or hallucinations. Unsupported by the psychological principles governing the appearances of hallucinations, this theory also does not coincide with the historical situation. Again, where was the actual body, and why wasn't it produced?

3.4.3 Did Jesus Swoon?

Another theory, popularized by Venturini several centuries ago, is often quoted today. This is the swoon theory, which says that Jesus didn't die; he merely fainted from exhaustion and loss of blood. Everyone thought Him dead, but later He resuscitated and the disciples thought it to be a resurrection.

David Friedrich Strauss, himself a sceptic and certainly no believer in the resurrection – gave the deathblow to any thought that Jesus revived from a swoon:

It is impossible that a being who had stolen half-dead out of the sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening and indulgence, and who still at last yielded to His sufferings, could have given to the disciples the impression that He was a Conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life, an impression which lay at the bottom of their future ministry. Such a resuscitation could only have weakened the impression which He had made upon them in life and in death, at the most could only have given it an elegiac voice, but could by no possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm, have elevated their reverence into worship.

3.4.4 The Body Stolen?

Another argument presented against that facticity of the resurrection is the theory that the body was stolen by the disciples while the guards

slept. The depression and cowardice of the disciples provide a hard-hitting argument against their suddenly becoming so brave and daring as to face a detachment of soldiers at the tomb and steal the body. They were in no mood to attempt anything like that.

The theory that the Jewish or Roman authorities moved Christ's body is no more reasonable an explanation for the empty tomb than theft by the disciples. If the authorities had the body in their possession or knew where it was, why, when the disciples were preaching the resurrection in Jerusalem, didn't they explain: "Wait! We moved the body, see, He didn't rise from the grave"?

And if such a rebuttal failed, why didn't they explain exactly where Jesus' body lay? If this failed, why didn't they recover the corpse, put it on a cart, and wheel it through the centre of Jerusalem? Such an action would have destroyed Christianity, --not in the cradle, but in the womb!

3.5 The Resurrection is a Fact

Professor Thomas Arnold was for 14 years a headmaster of Rugby, author of the famous, *History of Rome*, and appointed to the chair of modern history at Oxford. He, as well, was well acquainted with the value of evidence in determining historical facts. This great scholar said: "I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead." Along the same line, Brooke Foss Westcott, an English scholar, said: "raking all the evidence together, it is not too much to say that there is no historic incident better or more variously supported than the resurrection of Christ. Nothing but the antecedent assumption that it must be false could have suggested the idea of deficiency in the proof of it".

But the most telling testimony of all to the fact of the resurrection are the lives of those early Christians. We must ask ourselves: What caused them to go everywhere telling the message of the risen Christ? There were, of course, no visible benefits that accrued to them from their efforts: neither prestige, nor wealth, increased social status nor material benefits. Their actions can be only logically accounted for by their whole-hearted and total allegiance to this "risen Christ."

As a reward for their efforts, those early Christians were beaten, stoned to death, thrown to the lions, tortured and crucified. Every conceivable method was used to stop them from talking. Yet, they laid down their

lives as the ultimate proof of their complete confidence in the truth of their message.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What has Jesus' resurrection to do with the claim that he is the Messiah?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Resurrection of the dead is one of the fundamental principles in the Torah and there is neither Jewish faith nor any attachment to the Jewish faith, for an individual who does not believe in this. So central is this fact to Judaism that Maimonides concludes that both the one who denies the concept of resurrection of the dead or the one who denies the coming of the Messiah are among those who have forfeited their share in the Jewish afterlife. The fact that Christians advocated that Jesus rose from the dead is among the greatest argument that they deployed in their claim that Jesus is the expected Messiah.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt among other things that belief in the resurrection is tied to belief in the Jewish Messiah. You have also learnt how Jesus' resurrection fits him into this pattern. You have also learnt about the many arguments deployed by the early Christians to argue for the facticity of Jesus' resurrection as well as the few arguments deployed to argue otherwise.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. List the evidences for the Resurrection.
2. List and respond to the counter-arguments.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

http://www.livius.org/men-mh/messiah/messiah_15.html Accessed on 25/4/2011