

What Are You Waiting For?

Jewish and Christian
Interpretations
of Messiah

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The Context: Israel's Hopes During the Exile

- Israel will be forgiven
- A renewed covenant and people of God
- 'Life from the dead' i.e. 'resurrection'
- 'Kingdom of God', not of the Gentiles
- Israel will be vindicated over its enemies
- Messiah: A King who rebuilds the Temple
- 'His law will go forth from Zion'
- The nations will be drawn to Israel's God

Diversity in First Century Judaism

<p>High Identification with Jewish culture</p>	<p>The Essenes in the Dead Sea region defined Jewishness around physical separateness and waiting for the Temple to be cleansed.</p> <p>The Pharisees, lawyers and scribes defined Jewishness around aspects of the Mosaic Law, i.e. Sabbath-keeping, ritual and racial purity.</p> <p>The military movements kept trying to recapture Jerusalem</p>	<p>The priests kept up the Jerusalem Temple's sacrificial system but had to work the Roman system to do so. The Temple had been refurbished by King Herod (a non-Jewish Edomite appointed by Rome) and staffed by non-Levitical priests.</p>
<p>Low Identification with Jewish culture</p>	<p>The Samaritans were half-Jewish and were rejected by mainstream Jewish society. They would/could not worship in Jerusalem.</p> <p>The sinners and prostitutes were not welcomed into the synagogue and mainstream Jewish society.</p>	<p>The Sadducees changed their beliefs about resurrection and made political alliances with Rome for land.</p> <p>The tax collectors became part of the Roman taxation machinery and were seen as traitors to the Jewish nation.</p>
	<p>Low Assimilation with Greco-Roman culture</p>	<p>High Assimilation with Greco-Roman culture</p>

Military Messianic Movements

163 BCE – 135 CE

- **163 BCE: Judas Maccabeus** recaptures Jerusalem and cleanses the Temple, providing the model for a resistance tradition
- **40 BCE: Hezekiah** leads revolts and skirmishes. He was put down by Herod the Great. Samaia the Pharisee objects to this.
- **4 BCE: Young men**, as Herod lay dying in 4 BCE, pull down Roman eagles from Jerusalem, who were then killed on Herod's orders. They were supported by the teachers Judas ben Sariphaeus and Matthias ben Margalothus (War 1.648-55; Ant. 17.149-66).

Military Messianic Movements

163 BCE – 135 CE

- **3 BCE: ‘A countless multitude’** from all over Palestine, especially Judea itself (Josephus). Another violent revolt occurred the following Passover, which was renewed at Pentecost (War 2.1-13; 39-50; Ant. 17.206-18; 250-64). They laid siege to the Romans and besieged the commander himself in the palace. At this, anarchy broke out in Palestine (War 2.55; Ant. 17.269, referring to ‘continuous and countless new tumults’), including a revolt by Herod’s veterans and one by Judas, son of Hezekiah.

Military Messianic Movements

163 BCE – 135 CE

- **6 CE: Judas/Theudas the Galilean** (War 2.118, Acts 5:37), probably the same person as Judas the son of Hezekiah (see N.T. Wright, *New Testament and the People of God*, p.180). Judas, together with Zadok, a Pharisee, headed a large number of Zealots. Judas proclaimed the Jewish state as a republic recognizing God alone as king and ruler and His laws as supreme. The revolt continued to spread, and in some places serious conflicts ensued. Josephus calls this the most serious incident between Pompey's conquest of Palestine (63 BCE) and the fall of Jerusalem (70 AD). Two thousand Jews were crucified. Judas was called *Messiah*.

Military Messianic Movements

163 BCE – 135 CE

- **'The Samaritan'** led a group of armed followers and ended up in guerilla warfare.
- **The unnamed prophets** of War 2.258-60/Antiquities 20.167b-8 are subsumed under the general brigandage noted in Antiquities 20.167a.
- **'The Egyptian'**, according to War 2.262, intended to force entry to Jerusalem, overpower the Roman garrison, and set himself up as a tyrant.
- **The unnamed prophet** of Antiquities 20.188 appeared in the context of widespread brigandry ('prophets' and their followers entertained dreams of violent revolution).
- **Jonathan the Weaver** (War 7.437-50) had, according to Life 424f., aroused an uprising in Galilee.

Military Messianic Movements

163 BCE – 135 CE

- **~28 CE: The Galileans** Pilate crushed at Jerusalem, mingling their blood with their sacrifices (Lk.13:1)
- **30 CE: Barabbas** and the revolt in which he took part (Lk.23.19; in John 18.40 Barabbas is described as a lestes, 'brigand'). Presumably the two lestai crucified alongside Jesus count as well.
- **40's CE: The sons of Judas the Galilean**, Jacob/James and Simon (Ant. 20.102), continued their father's insurrection. They were crucified in the late 40s by Roman governor Tiberius Julius Alexander.
- **The 'common people'** who were punished along with Eleazor ben Deinaeus; in War 2.253, Josephus says the number of them was 'incalculable'.
- **Jesus ben Ananias** enters Jerusalem on the Feast of Sukkot and decries the Temple; the governor interrogates him but later releases him.

Military Messianic Movements

163 BCE – 135 CE

- **Brigands** reported in War 2.264f.; these may be the same ones who are mentioned in 2.271, but in the earlier passage it appears that the revolutionary fervor was far more widespread than a small group.
- **66 CE:** The Sicarii, the 'dagger men,' led by Menahem, another son or grandson of Judas the Galilean (War 4.198, Ant. 20.186f., etc.). The Sicarii forced their way into the Temple and then burned the houses of Ananias, Agrippa, and Bernice, and the Record Office with the records of debt. Menahem broke into the armory at Masada, distributed arms, and returned to Jerusalem as 'king' over the revolutionary forces. Menahem was called *Messiah*.

Military Messianic Movements

163 BCE – 135 CE

- **67 – 70 CE:** John of Gischala and his followers (refs. in NTPG 177 n. 54).
- **69 CE:** Simon bar Giora is captured after the revolt of 66 – 70 and brought to Rome; executed in Rome in 71.
- **132 – 135 CE:** Bar-Kochba and the Jewish uprising which was crushed at Masada. Bar-Kochba was called *Messiah*.

The widespread view of the Jewish community in this time period is that Messiah would be **an individual**, not a community, nor a ‘time period’.

Messianic Hope Through Family

40 BCE:

Hezekiah

6 CE:

Judas ben Hezekiah

(Judas the Galilean)

40's CE:

Jacob and Simon

sons of Judas the Galilean

66 CE:

Menahem

another son or grandson
of Judas the Galilean

When one was defeated, Messianic
expectations were placed on his relative

Why Did This Not Happen?

30 CE: **Y'Shua (Jesus) of Nazareth**
quasi-messianic movement
crucified by the Romans

31 CE: **James of Nazareth**
brother of Y'Shua
leader of Jewish Christians

Must the Messiah be Military?

- ‘Swords into plowshares’
 - Isaiah 2, Micah 4
- A violent movement?
- A reconciliation movement?
 - 20th century non-violent resistance movements based on Jesus: Leo Tolstoy in Russia, Ahn Chang-Ho in Korea, Gandhi in India, MLK in U.S., Aquino in Philippines, Solidarity in Poland, TRC in South Africa, Velvet Revolutions in Eastern Europe

Must the Messiah Rebuild the Temple?

- Is it possible that Tabernacle and Temple were God's Plan B, not Plan A?
 - Tabernacle: See literary structure of Torah
 - Temple: See 2 Samuel 7
 - 'Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come [Rome] will destroy the city and the sanctuary.' (Daniel 9:26)
- God wanted to live *with* and *in* His people, to make them His living Temple
- God wanted a 'Temple people', not a 'people with a Temple'

Diversity in First Century Judaism

<p>High Identification with Jewish culture</p>	<p>The Essenes in the Dead Sea region defined Jewishness around physical separateness and waiting for the Temple to be cleansed.</p> <p>The Pharisees, lawyers and scribes defined Jewishness around aspects of the Mosaic Law, i.e. Sabbath-keeping, ritual and racial purity.</p> <p>The military movements kept trying to recapture Jerusalem</p>	<p>Jesus agreed that Jerusalem and the Temple were corrupt. He cleansed the Temple to symbolize its end. Jesus said he is the new Temple: God meets humanity in him; being 'in him' is the only way for Jews and Gentiles to come together.</p>
<p>Low Identification with Jewish culture</p>	<p>The Samaritans were half-Jewish and were rejected by mainstream Jewish society. They would/could not worship in Jerusalem.</p> <p>The sinners and prostitutes were not welcomed into the synagogue and mainstream Jewish society.</p>	<p>The Sadducees changed their beliefs about resurrection and made political alliances with Rome for land.</p> <p>The tax collectors became part of the Roman taxation machinery and were seen as traitors to the Jewish nation.</p>
	<p>Low Assimilation with Greco-Roman culture</p>	<p>High Assimilation with Greco-Roman culture</p>

The Claim of Jesus Followers

- Israel is forgiven, the Exile is over
- A renewed covenant and people of God
- 'Life from the dead' i.e. 'resurrection'
- 'Kingdom of God', not of the Gentiles
- Israel is being vindicated over enemies
- Messiah: The King is rebuilding the Temple people
- His law is going forth from Zion
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