

# THE MESSIANIC HOPE OF ISRAEL

Studies in Messianic Prophecy

by

Max I. Reich

1940

## Chapter 1 -

### The Messianic Hope

Messianic prophecy is that view of the future which connects the eventual blessing of our suffering world with *a Person* in whom the ideal Prophet, Priest and King, the three offices with which the name "Messiah," i.e., "anointed," in ancient Israel, is connected, will be realized.

The word *CHRIST* means the same as *Messiah*, being derived from the Greek "*Christos*," the one on whom the anointing has been poured. The Christian confession is that "JESUS is the CHRIST" - i.e., that He is the fulfillment of the messianic hope of Israel, the anointed prophet, priest and king, a fulfillment which goes even beyond the terms in which the hope was first expressed.

But while the hopes of the ancient people of GOD were wrapped up with the appearing of a Person, history, as recorded in the sacred writings of Israel, reveals a messianic purpose running through the ages, gradually unfolding and expanding, until He came who is the solution and key to past history, as He is the Hope of that which is still unborn. Messianic prophecy is of the very web and woof of the history of Israel, as well as the theme of its illuminated seers. Messianic predictions synchronized with the frequent crises in that history. You cannot understand the predictions if you detach them from their historical context. So we must allow to the Jews the right to include the so-called *historical* books of their holy Book with the *prophets*. They divided the Scriptures into Law, Prophets and Devotional Writings, calling them T'nach - combining the initial letters of the three words, *Torah, Nebiim, Chetubim*, a division endorsed by our LORD: **"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake 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"** (Luke 24:44). The Book of Joshua in this way begins the prophetic part of Scripture. It is history written with the perspective which messianic prophecy sets before us (The historical writings are called *Rishonim* or "earlier prophets"; the prophetic writings, *per se*, *Acharonim*, or "later prophets").

To ancient Israel, history was more than a sequence of events, moving, as the heathen philosophers imagined, in vast cycles, coming back again and again to where it began. Long before Herodotus, the so-called "father of history," the Hebrews interpreted it spiritually. They

saw a divine plan and program in history, a divine goal toward which it moves. They called this "The Day of Jehovah," the day of His vindication and triumph; of judgment on the evil now infesting mankind, and the establishment of righteousness and truth in supremacy. The *idea* is found everywhere in the Old Testament, though the *term* seems to have been first used by the prophet Joel.

Along with this hope of JEHOVAH's revelation in glorious power, there was the vision of the coming *Man*. The prophets compared the spiritual Zion to a travailing woman about to bring forth a man-child. In Chapter 12 of Revelation, the idea is transferred to the New Testament. The idea Israel becomes the mother of the Messiah. And this Man brings about in the visions of the prophets the divine good in which history culminates.

It is this prophetic expectation which distinguishes Israel from other nations of antiquity. Israel had a *Hope*. The apostle rightly spoke of the non-Jewish world as the Gentiles which have "**no hope.**" Hence pessimism and despair settled down on the ancient civilization. On the other hand, no Hebrew prophet ever gave up hope, however dark and dismal the present, and threatening the immediate future might seem. The ultimate future was lit up with the glory of the Messianic reign.

The predictive element found in the Old Testament is a striking phenomenon in religious history. It was peculiar to Israel. Not that the foretelling the future was the one thing that marked the prophets. The prophets were the divinely appointed guardians of true religion, especially when the *priests*, who were the *official* representatives of institutional religion, had failed to function according to their priestly vocation.

Moreover the prophets were the incarnate conscience of the nation when the *kings* who reigned over them were tempted to adopt the lower idea of kingship prevalent among their pagan neighbors, proved to be a mere caricature of the divine ideal of a king. Prophecy in Israel had an ethical content. The prophets not merely spoke of the future, but interpreted the past and thus afforded guidance for the present. In this way the prophets Samuel, Gad and Nathan wrote history: "**Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer**" (I Chronicles 29:29). We cannot rightly discern our duty in the present, unless we lay to heart the lessons of the past from which it has sprung.

The prophets of Israel were totally unlike the sooth-sayers or mantis among the pagans. Balaam, whom the king of Moab hired to curse Israel, but who was overpowered by the SPIRIT of the GOD of Israel, confessed to this difference when he exclaimed, "**Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel**" (Numbers 23:23). For the divine Law strictly forbade all such practices:

**"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee"** (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

**"Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God . . . A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them"** (Leviticus 19:31; 20:27).

The heathen prognosticators were in the service of the unclean spirits which acted in and through the whole system of idolatry. The heathen mantis had to force on the condition in which inspiration was obtainable. They often made use of intoxicants to produce a state of exhilaration and frenzy that laid them open to impressions from the gods. Thus St. Chrysostom spoke of them: "This is the peculiarity of the mantis: to be beside oneself, to suffer constraint, to be struck, to be stretched, to be dragged like a madman. The prophet, however, is not so, but he speaks everything with calm understanding, and with sound self-possession, and knowing what he proclaims, so that before the result we can from these things distinguish between the mantis and the prophet." (Homily xxix to the Corinthians).

## **(2) The Growth of the Messianic Hope**

The Old Testament does not merely contain prophecies. It is from first to last a prophecy. It enshrines the progressive revelation of a wonderful hope. Many of its writers lived in days of confusion and disaster. But they express the unquenchable certainty that the sovereign will of GOD would finally triumph. The Psalms, particularly, are full of this triumph of faith. Their last note is: "**Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD**" (Psalms 150:6). This is a prayer begotten of a sure and certain hope.

The nation of Israel was chosen to be the trustee of the divine self-revelation, culminating in the Messiah. The first eleven chapters of Genesis, which cover a longer period than the rest of the Bible, Old and New Testaments put together, give the reason for the call of Abraham and the choice of his seed. They speak of a two-fold fall of man, the one in the garden of Eden, and the one after the Flood, the fall into idolatry.

The Bible has for its preface the story of the creative week culminating in the Sabbath. The preface is also the index, for the History of the unfolding purposes of redeeming love is a story of seven periods. The new creation is foreshadowed by the old. And at every crisis and turning point Messianic prophecy spoke to man.

### *a. From the Fall to the Flood.*

The messianic prophecy speaks of the Seed of the Woman who should with pierced heel crush the head of the Serpent.

### *b. From the covenant with Noah to the tower of Babel.*

A new prophecy! GOD would become *par excellence* "The God of Shem" and would tabernacle with him. Japheth with all his political aggrandizement would have to go to the tent of Shem to find the true GOD. This is a foreshadowing of the Incarnation, by which the Word became flesh and tabernacled among men.

c. *From the tower of Babel to the call of Abram.*

Mankind had become a scattered family and divided into rival nationalities. The promise to Abram was that in his seed would the nations be blessed, which includes the hope of mutual reconciliation and peace. It is thus the promise of a warless world.

d. *From Abram to the oppression in Egypt.*

Jacob, the last of the three elected patriarchs, the root of the olive tree of promise and privilege, on his deathbed announced the coming of *Shiloh* out of Judah, the royal tribe, and that the obedience of the people would be to Him. Thus was the Abrahamic promise clarified and amplified.

e. *The Exodus.*

The divine intervention through the prophetic personality of Moses covered a period of forty years. As the Mediator-prophet was about to pass away, he left behind the promise of another Mediator-Prophet, like unto himself, to whom the people would have to hearken, or forfeit their share in the commonwealth of Israel. The closing words of Deuteronomy, believed (by some - certainly a minority) to have been added by Ezra, as prophecy was about to die out in Israel, confess that up to that date, a Moses-like prophet had not yet arisen. The hope points to the CHRIST, greater than His prophetic predecessors.

f. *The Monarchy.*

When at last the conquest of the land was completed by David, and Zion became the metropolis of a united kingdom, the prophet Nathan was commissioned to reveal the great Messianic pronouncement, that the house of David would not pass till the One who would be David's LORD, as well as son, had appeared, whose kingdom would never be abrogated.

When the monarchy established by David was about to be broken up, and the coming exile began to cast its shadow over Israel and Judah, *the golden age of Messianic prophecy* broke forth. The features of the Coming One were more and more clearly delineated. The place and the manner of His birth, the official, as well as personal glories.

g. *The Exile and the Restoration.*

All the prophets of this period, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, predict *the very time* of Messiah's coming. It would be during the lifetime of the second temple, and His presence in the rebuilt temple would impart to it a greater glory than Solomon's temple contained.

### **(3) The Pre-Incarnate CHRIST**

The story of JESUS the Messiah does not begin with the birth at Bethlehem. According to the prologue to the fourth evangelist the Incarnation of the Divine Word was the climax and not the commencement of the Revelation of the invisible GOD in Him.

He was in the beginning with GOD, the only-begotten in His bosom, the object of His ineffable delight.

By Him were all things created, and without Him was not anything made that was made.

He delights being with the sons of men, His life was the light of men. An illumination of intellect, conscience and spirit proceeded from Him as from their central sun.

When in the fullness of time the Word became flesh and pitched His tent among men, it was in the tents of Shem that His glory shone. He came "**unto his own**," to the vineyard of His own planting in the world His hands had made and which knew Him not. And alas! His own also refused Him - they "**received him not**." He was a homeless stranger here.

Let us dwell upon that expression "His own." Israel was that in a very special sense. Israel was the nation which He had redeemed and trained for many centuries. He had been their Leader and Commander from Egypt down the avenues of time. It is true that His earthly descent was from the stock of Abraham, that Israel was the mother that had brought Him forth. We must say more than that if we would grasp the truth concerning Israel's Messiah. Israel was as much His product as He was the product of Israel. As He is both the Root and Offspring of David, so He is the Origin and Child of His nation. But for Him there would have been no Israel, as He declared through the prophet: "**I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King**" (Isaiah 43:15).

Before His advent there had existed a threefold relationship between Israel and the Messiah. In Israel His coming has been heralded. In Israel His coming cast shadows before. In Israel the Coming One was already *the Present One*. He was the unseen Presence in the Midst. Israel was the sphere of His activities and manifestations. These three faces are the great theme of the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

#### a. His Proclamation in Israel

The Scriptures held as sacred by the Jews show how carefully the coming of the Messiah was prepared for. The Messianic idea is the central topic of the various parts of the Old Testament. It was more than a dead formula handed down by tradition. It was no magical secret imported to the initiated. There was a distinct growth in the unfolding of the Messianic Hope. The glories and perfections of His Person were unfolded from age to age.

The opening chapters of Genesis describe the frustration through sin of the divine ideal concerning man, so that he was thrust out of the garden of innocence into a thorny wilderness to enter a life of terrific conflict with the powers of evil, symbolized by the serpent. But before starting on this age-long conflict he was assured of final victory through the mysterious Seed of the woman who should, though suffering the piercing of His heel, bruise the serpent's head.

#### b. The People of the Messianic Hope

After the emerging of rival nationalities with their confusion of tongues and their corruption

through idolatry and Satanic worship, GOD called out a lonely pilgrim for a better country, that is, an heavenly, in order that he might become the father of the people of the Messianic hope. Abram the Hebrew was the rock out of which that people was hewn. To him was divulged the secret which was never quite lost by his descendants, that through his Seed something wonderful would one day come to all mankind, even through the One whom his grandson Jacob, when on his deathbed, called the "Shiloh," to whom the Gentile nations would yield obedience; recovering their lost unity, and the unspeakable blessing of a just government and a warless world under His leadership. The later prophecies of Moses and of Balaam confirm the previous hints of this glorious Personality who was to arise in Israel.

And lest we should conclude that these hints were realized in David, we find that this very king looked to One whom he called, "LORD," and whom he saw sitting at GOD's right hand, invested with royal and priestly dignity, the greater than David, for whose sake David was chosen in his day.

After the breakup of the monarchy into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and the rapid decline of their national greatness, a succession of prophets were raised up who added many new features to the conception of the Messiah and to the nature of His kingdom.

Thus Joel, by many scholars regarded as the oldest of the prophetic line after the division of the tribes into two kingdoms, foresaw the age of the Messiah, calling it "**the Day of the LORD**," and that it would be characterized as the time of the outpouring of the SPIRIT. We know that afterwards John the Baptist designated the bestowal of the baptism of the HOLY SPIRIT as a Messianic function. Amos, as the time when the fallen tabernacle of David would be raised up again. Hosea, as the time when the rival kingdoms of Judah and Israel would be reunited, after their return to the LORD and to David their king.

The nearer the Exile approached the clearer became the portrait of the Messiah. Micah announces His birthplace; Isaiah, the miracle of His virgin birth. In the later letter of comfort to the exiles of Judah, whose sufferings among the Gentiles were revealed to him at his inaugural vision, he portrays the character of the ideal Servant of the LORD, His sufferings and travail, and the glories that should follow. The prophet Jeremiah, sitting among the ruins of the old covenant dispensation, foretold the coming of the new and better covenant, while Ezekiel describes the process of this spiritual renewing, for the Israel of the New birth alone can "**see the Kingdom of God**," Then to the prophet Daniel was revealed by the angel Gabriel the very time when Messiah the prince would be manifested to Israel, and making an end of sins, bring in everlasting righteousness.

Thus from Abraham till the coming of the Messiah, a period of some two thousand years, the image of the coming One was progressively unveiled. His Face shone out more and more clearly from the pages of the Holy Book of the Old Testament congregation of the LORD.

The very conception of GOD encouraged in Israel by her illuminated prophets must also be classed under the head of Messianic prophecy. For while on the one hand One was spoken of as to come who, though human, would be possessed of Divine names and attributes, such as the royal Babe of Isaiah nine, on the other hand GOD was conceived of as under decidedly anthropomorphic imagery. The nation was not permitted to make an image of the LORD, and yet

how human is His mental image as projected by the prophets! He possesses every human affection. He puts forth effort like a man. He feels pain. "He is a Warrior, sharing His people's battles," to quote from G.A. Smith: "He is a Mother travailing in pangs for Israel's new birth. In all their afflictions He was afflicted, in His love and in His pity He redeemed them. He is man's fellow-sufferer and acquainted with his woes." G.A.S. proceeds: "These are real Old Testament prophecies of the incarnation; GOD manifest in the flesh, entering our moral welfare, in our weakness, at our side, tempted in all points as we are, making the shame of our sin and the misery of our estrangement from GOD His burden, and at the last, as Peter says: bearing **'our sins in his own body on the tree.'**"

### c. His Foreshadowing in Israel

It is an interesting and profitable study to trace out the way in which the first disciples, the apostles, and the church they founded, read the sacred writings of Israel. It is clear that they saw the Messiah not only in the ancient prophecies, but also in the history of the people of Israel and in the institutions which had been set up in the midst of the chosen people. The Epistle to the Hebrews, the oldest apologia for the Christian faith, is full of this line of teaching. And it does not stand alone among the early documents of the new covenant faith. The apostle Paul declared that the ancient ritual of the Jewish people was nothing but a shadow cast before-hand by CHRIST, the true Substance who was about to come: "**Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ**" (Col. 2:17). He calls the first man Adam, the figure of another Adam who was to come: "**For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ**" (Romans 5:17).

He declares that the rock of which the pilgrim hosts in the wilderness drank was CHRIST, even as another apostle, the writer of the fourth Gospel, saw in the tabernacle and in the temple a prefiguring of the flesh which the Divine Logos had taken into union with Himself. The pre-rabbinic religion of Israel was a shadow-picture of the Messiah. Again, if Personality is the key to history, how significant is the divinely recorded history of the Old Testament! What a noble succession of personal types of the coming One presents itself before our eyes!

(1) Adam, head of a fallen race; CHRIST, HEAD of a redeemed race. (Romans 5:12-21).

**"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"** (I Corinthians 15:21-22).

(2) Melchizedek, priest of Salem; CHRIST the eternal PRIEST of a heavenly character.

**"For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him"** (Hebrews 7:1).

**"The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"** (Psalms 110:4).

(3) Isaac, the only-begotten son, born by an act of divine power, contrary to nature, offered as a burnt-offering, and typically raised from the dead; the Only Begotten of the FATHER, whose

birth was a miraculous event, laid on the altar of absolute surrender, obedient unto death, but now highly exalted, far above all heavens.

(4) Joseph, rejected by and separated from his brethren, in the seat of power among Gentiles; CHRIST rejected by and for a season separated from His Brethren according to the flesh, the exalted One in the Gentile Church.

(5) Moses, Mediator of the covenant of works; CHRIST, the mediator of the better covenant of Grace (Hebrews 3:1-6).

(6) David, suffering and reigning; CHRIST, the Man of Sorrows, raised up on high a PRINCE and a SAVIOUR: **"And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it"** (Ezekiel 34:23-24).

(7) Solomon, the Temple-Builder; behold, a greater than Solomon is here who is building a greater and an indestructible Temple. (Psalm 72)

**"The queen of the south shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here"** (Matthew 12:42).

(8) Jonah, passing through a symbolic death and resurrection, preaching repentance to the Gentiles; CHRIST actually dead and risen, sending the Message of repentance and forgiveness to all nations: **"But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"** (Matthew 12:39-40).

And what shall we say of the outward institutions of Israel? What a rich study awaits us here! Does not the remarkable institution of the Sabbath after a week of toil prefigure the rest which only One can offer? Does not the Passover speak of redemption through the blood of the LAMB of GOD?

**"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even CHRIST our Passover is sacrificed for us"** (I Corinthians 5:7)

**"For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken"** (John 19:36).

How significant the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the light of the Saviour's own interpretation? (Numbers 21:4-9).

**"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should**

**not perish, but have everlasting life"** (John 3:14-16).

How can we contemplate the majestic altar ritual of the ancient sanctuary without seeing something of the greater offering of Him who through the eternal SPIRIT offered Himself without spot to GOD? How think of the Jubilee without seeing in it a picture of what He has planned for the weary children of men?

The High Priest, in his official raiment of glory and beauty, points to Him who, as crowned with glory and honor in the heavenly sanctuary, exercises a higher Priesthood. Bold indeed are the words of the apostle Paul when he declares emphatically that the entire history of Israel was typical, and written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come (I Corinthians 10:11).

#### d. His Manifestations in Israel

When our LORD pointed to the ancient Scriptures of Israel, commending them to our careful study, He affirmed that they testified of Him. These words imply far more than is usually deduced from them. It is generally conceded that the Old Testament contains Messianic Prophecies and Messianic foreshadowings. But I hold that the words of the LORD teach that they also record the works and the manifestations of the Messiah in Israel before He came in the fullness of time in the flesh.

Every now and then there appears in the history of the patriarchs and after, at some great crisis in the history of the chosen people, a mysterious Man who is yet more than Man. Suddenly we meet with Him without introduction or subsequent explanation. And His disappearances are as mysterious as His appearances. He bears various names: The Angel of the LORD; the angel of His Presence; the Angel of the Covenant; the Angel in whom is the Lord's Name. He not only acts in the name of the LORD, He is frequently addressed as LORD, as well as called LORD. Divine adoration and reverence are offered unto Him and He receives them.

He appears to Abraham, the father of the chosen family (Genesis 18).

He shows Himself to Hagar, Abraham's fugitive hand-maid who called Him LORD, the GOD that seeth me (Genesis 16:7-13).

He prevents the ultimate sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22:11-13).

He wrestles with Jacob through the night watches, and of Him Jacob declared: "**I have seen God face to face**" (Genesis 32).

The dying Jacob invokes the benediction of "the Angel which redeemed me from all evil" on his grandchildren (Genesis 48:16).

Moses hears His voice out of the burning bush, where He calls Himself the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob (Exodus 3:2-6).

His presence was in the cloud that led Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea and through the

wilderness to the promised land (Exodus 14:19; 23:20-23).

After their fall into image-worship, in connection with the golden calf, the LORD threatens to withdraw and instead sends an inferior angel to be their leader (Exodus 33).

But in answer to the prayer of Moses: **"If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence,"** He places Himself again at the head of the host.

Joshua hands over the command to Him and falls in worship at His feet (Josh. 5).

He appears to the wife of Manoah and says His name is "Secret", or "Wonderful" (Judges 13:3-23).

He appears to Gideon and commissions him to deliver Israel (Judges 6).

David saw Him at the threshing floor of Ornah the Jebusite, the site of the future temple (I Chronicles 21).

Isaiah and Ezekiel saw Him in glory attired on the throne in the heavenly world. The latter declared His appearance was like unto a son of Man.

The prophet Zechariah has a vision of Him as Jerusalem's Intercessor, while Daniel saw Him receiving an everlasting dominion from the Ancient of Days, declaring that He is the unseen champion of the chosen people.

Malachi, the last of the prophets, before the silence of four hundred years of prophetic revelation fell upon Israel, says this mysterious Angel, Israel's unseen and ever present Guardian, would suddenly appear in that very Temple which the returned exiles had build on the site of the former house. For was He not ever the Angel of Jehovah's Presence, the SAVIOUR, who in His love and kindness had redeemed Israel, and had borne the people and sustained them since the days of old:

**"For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old"** (Isaiah 63:8-9).

- the same Angel whom Zechariah calls LORD and who is yet the One sent by the LORD? (Zechariah 1:8, 10-13; 2:8-11; 3:1-10; 6:12-13, 15).

JESUS is that Angel in His incarnate life.

#### (4) History in the Light of the Messianic Hope

We have seen that the Messiah was prophetically proclaimed in Israel, typically foreshadowed, and spiritually manifested. One more point remains to be elucidated. The Messiah was called for by every great crisis in history, both of humanity and of that nation chosen out of humanity to be

the light of humanity.

(a) Beginning at the very beginning, the first crisis was the loss of primeval innocence, the awakening to the grim tragedy of existence, the mystery of suffering, the sense of sin, the shadow of death. Then out of the depths of the divine compassion came the Proto-evangelium, the Hope of ultimate deliverance through the sufferings of the Seed of the Woman.

(b) After the flood came a second fall of man, into idolatry. When he knew GOD he would not retain Him in his knowledge. This made the call of Abram to be the father of a family of faith obligatory. This faith rested on the Promise concerning the Seed through whom the nations would be blessed, by their recovering the lost knowledge of GOD, and also in that divine knowledge their lost harmony.

(c) There was a third crisis when the new-born nation, created by a redemptive act of GOD, divinely taught and led, found itself on the borders of the promised land, about to be bereft of the great prophetic personality through whom its redemption and education had been mediated. Then was revealed the purpose of GOD to send a prophet like unto Moses, a new Mediator, a new Interpreter, a new Deliverer.

(d) When after many vicissitudes Israel had at last achieved national unity under a king, and was actually in possession of the territory promised to Abraham, the prophet Nathan announced the Messianic destiny of the Davidic dynasty. The history of his house would culminate in the Messiah, as the history of humanity in the Woman's conquering seed. Subsequent prophets, who lived in a very different time to that of David, who witnessed the break up of all national hopes, the ruin of throne and temple, the dismemberment and exile of the nation, echo the covenant made with David. It was the anchor of their souls in a dark and stormy day. Thus Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.

(e) The post exilic prophets rather cherished the image of the Suffering Servant, first spoken of by Isaiah. The post exilic Zechariah is full of references to this sublime concept, the noblest of all the noble utterances of inspired prophecy. The sufferings of the nation had brought the spirituality sensitive among the people into sympathy with the ideal of suffering and its redemptive consequences, as being nearer the heart of things than that of a political Messiah, setting up Israel in material prosperity.

(f) After the Exile came the holy experiment to create a godly nation, righteous in the Law and separated to the LORD, with its inevitable disillusionment in view of the fact of the obstinate sinfulness of human nature. This, coupled with the bitter struggle with Hellenistic paganism, its philosophy, and its lower ethical standards, turned the eyes of the saints in Israel to the appearing of the Son of Man out of Heaven. He alone could end the beast rule which had oppressed Israel, He alone could establish the kingdom of Heaven in which their aspirations for righteousness could be satisfied.

(g) Finally, when matters had become acute, when the Roman power had succeeded that of Syria, and its hand lay heavy on the little nation, and the time had come for the temple with its sacrifices and priestly ritual to be destroyed, and for Jerusalem to cease to be the capital of a Jewish nation, and the land of Palestine to be its national home. He came Who is the bruiser of the serpent; the harmonizer of the divided nations; the final and complete Interpreter of GOD;

the true KING of humanity; the Priest whose oblation consists in Himself; the Son of Man, who is the LORD from Heaven; Very Light of Very Light, Very GOD of Very GOD; the outshining of His glory and the express image of His substance.

**"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us" - and is still speaking unto us - "by his Son"** (Hebrews 1:1-2); to whom be glory and dominion forevermore!

#### (5) The Divine Messiah

While the Old Testament puts in the foreground the essential Unity of the Divine Being, it does not teach the unity implied in the modern Jewish doctrine of philosophic monotheism. The unity of the Godhead is too rich in content for that. That the Messiah is to be regarded as GOD must be held, in the light of Old Testament revelation, in conjunction with the fact that He bears divine names, shares divine attributes, and performs divine functions. In other words, the coming of Messiah is the coming of the LORD also. For an example, see Zechariah 2:10: **"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD."** and **"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass"** (Zechariah 9:9).

The writers of the New Testament constantly appeal to the Old Testament for proof of the super-human glory of the CHRIST. The Epistle to the Hebrews cites a number of such passages in Chapter 1 in which the Messiah is seen as having **"a more excellent name"** than the angels who are higher than man, even that of "Son." This shows that the title "Son" is found in Psalm 2 as belonging to the Anointed KING of the end-time, implies His supra-angelic dignity, One who shares the very nature of GOD. And this "Son" is addressed as both "GOD" and "LORD" (Hebrews 1:8, quoting Psalm 45:6-7; and verse 10, quoting Psalm 102:25).

The Old Testament passage, which more than any other is used in the New to buttress the witness of the Apostles to the supra-human exaltation of JESUS, in Psalm 110. In this then followed the example of the MASTER Himself, who confuted His critics by deducing from this psalm the truth of a *heavenly* Messiah, more than David's Son, even his divine LORD, rather than the earthly potentate whom they were expecting (see Matthew 22:41-45). The Messiah transcends, according to the interpretation given on highest authority, the idea of a mere political and military leader. He is One to whom even David paid religious veneration, calling Him "LORD."

The history of Israel as recorded in the Old Testament bears witness to the expectation of a world-Saviour, combined with the revelation of the glory of the LORD. Thus we have the great "Shiloh" prophecy in Genesis 49:10 coupled with Psalm 72:11; the prophecy of the One born in David's city, whose goings forth have been from eternity and who shall be great **"unto the ends of the earth"** (Micah 5:1-4); Balaam's vision of the One who will sway His sceptre over all nations (Numbers 24:17-19); Isaiah, of his Kingdom which has no limits (Isaiah 9:6) who bears the five fold name: **"Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,"** while the name **"Immanuel (God with us),"** given to the wonder-child of Isaiah 7 seems to be an echo of the great Messianic prophecy of Balaam (Numbers 23:21). **"The**

**LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them,"** All through the Old Testament runs the expression, "He comes!" It was this which gave the forward look to the pious Jew. The LORD is coming to judge and to redeem (Psalms 98:9); and One like a Son of Man, who is also "Ancient of days," comes in the clouds of Heaven to administer an indestructible Kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14, 22) of whom another passage declares that "the clouds are the dust of His feet." Sometimes there is before the eyes the Man, who bears the names of Stone, Shepherd, Lion, Prophet like unto Moses, Seed of the Woman, Seed of Abraham, Seed of David, Martyr-Servant, Priest-King, Branch, Son of Man, etc. At other times the LORD Himself fills the entire horizon of the seer. Two stars of first magnitude, appearing distinct, shining in the Heaven of Israel's hope of the future - till finally the two stars are seen blended in one glorious luminary, in the Divine human personality of our LORD, "the LORD our Righteousness," as the prophet Jeremiah saluted Him (Jeremiah 23:6).

Professor F. Godet rightly says: "The idea of the divinity of the Messiah is the soul of the entire Old Testament. There was in the whole of the Old Testament from the patriarchal theophanies down to the latest prophetic visions, a constant current towards the Incarnation as the goal of all these revelations. The appearance of the Messiah presents itself more and more clearly to the view of the prophets as the perfect Theophany, the final coming of the LORD." (Commentary on Luke, English text, Vol. II, page 257)

~ end of chapter 1 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

\*\*\*