

WINNING JEWS TO CHRIST

A Handbook to Aid Christians in their Approach to the Jews

by

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

HOW TO IDENTIFY THE MESSIAH

(The final argument with the average Jew, especially the one who has some leaning toward tradition and ancient Jewish culture)

I. WHAT MORE COULD JESUS HAVE DONE THAN HE DID TO PERSUADE THE HIGH PRIESTS AND THE OTHER LEAERS THAT HE WAS THE TRUE MESSIAH?

It was the time when the Messiah was anxiously expected. **“And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem”** (Luke 2:38); **“And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not”** (Luke 3:15); **“When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?”** (Luke 7:20).

Hard-pressed by the cruel Roman conquerors; split among themselves into contending sects; with a perplexed confused leadership; the people as a whole were as scattered, straying sheep, waiting for the true shepherd to lead them unto green pastures; waiting for a sign from God that He had not forsaken them, waiting for a new revelation, a new message, waiting for comfort, for love.

They knew that the time was ripe for the Redeemer to come; Daniel, the **“greatly beloved”** (Daniel 10:10-12), had foretold the fixed time for it. There was a rumbling also in the heathen world. There, too, it was felt that something somewhere was going to happen, that a divine person was about to appear and save the world.

At that momentous time Jesus came. John (the Elijah who was to precede the Messiah) witnessed to the people that followed him, that this Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus Himself claimed to be the Messiah; His deeds, His whole life affirmed that He was the Messiah.

All the prophecies of the Torah pointed out that He was the Messiah. The people felt that He was the Messiah, the expected Comforter, the Redeemer.

There was opposition only from one side, from the cowardly, egotistic, blind “ruling” class. They may be compared to some of the chief priests such as those mentioned in II Chronicles 36:14-16: **“Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy”**; or, those whom Isaiah had in mind when he lamented, “. . . **O, my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths”** (Isaiah 3:12).

And these leaders succeeded in splitting and scattering the people even more than they were previously, they succeeded in driving them away from Jesus who so wanted to gather them into His fold: **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”** (Matthew 23:37).

Again, what could Jesus have done more than He did to make those leaders confess the truth of His Messiahship?

II. HOW COULD THE MESSIAH BE IDENTIFIED TODAY BY THE JEWS?

The Jewish people as a whole still expect the coming of the Messiah. The observant Jew still prays for His coming, and he daily declares his belief in His coming, very soon. Now suppose that somewhere (let us say in Jerusalem) a man known or unknown, suddenly appears and claims that he is the long expected Messiah. How could he prove his claim? By what could he be identified? By what could he prove that he is of the lineage of David? There is no Jewish family in the world now that could produce any legal document to show that he is the offspring of King David. Would miracles performed by him convince the leaders that he is the Messiah? Probably not.

Rambam (Maimonides) who formulated the creedal statement of the Messiah and made it incumbent on every Jew to believe in it, asserted that there would be nothing supernatural about the Messiah’s coming, that he would only redeem Israel from foreign yoke and establish peace. He does not say how the Messiah will achieve that without any supernatural means. However, unlike Rambam, who was a rationalist, the people believe that the Messiah will perform many great miracles in establishing the Messianic Age.

Now suppose he performs miracles. Would that cause the people to believe in him? He may win to his side the extreme Orthodox Jews of Jerusalem if he adapts himself to their ways, in which case the rest of the people would have nothing to do with him. If he would not agree to all their ways, they would declare that he works his miracles by the power of Satan, and they would reject him and endeavor to destroy him. Other people would say that he is only a trickster, or a magician. What else could he do to prove his Messiahship? What could he do to persuade the leaders to relinquish their government posts and let him rule over them?

Suppose they did let him rule, what next? What would he initiate? What new things would he introduce? How would the Jews in Israel and in Diaspora react? How would the Arab world react? etc.

I only want to show that the Jewish leaders of the present day would not recognize anyone who would now come and claim to be the expected Messiah, since he could not produce any more proof of his Messiahship than did Jesus before the high priests of old, but much less.

Now, to all the evidences that were before the people during Jesus' life on earth, there are added the evidences of His death and resurrection, the evidences of history, the evidences of hundreds of millions of people who have been acclaiming Jesus as the Messiah, although not all have been following in His footsteps. What more evidence could any person now bring forward to prove his Messiahship?

The only thing for the Jew to do is to read carefully the story of the life of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament, where he will see that not the leaders who condemned Him were right but that He of whom Moses and the Prophets wrote was in the right. Because Jesus, and He alone, can easily be identified as the One of whom they prophesied: the Messiah — Redeemer of mankind.

Here are some of the identification marks of the promised Messiah:

He Was to Be

(According to Old Testament Prophecy):

I. *The Seed of woman who would bruise Satan's head:*

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

II. *Of Abraham's Seed:*

“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy SEED . . .” (Genesis 17:7).
See also Genesis 22:18; 21:12; 28:14; 12:1-3.

III. *Of the House of David:*

“I will set up thy seed and establish his kingdom for ever” (II Samuel 7:12, 13). See also Genesis 49:10; Psalm 132:11; 2:12; 89:3,4; 110:1,2; Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:17,20,21.

This Prophecy Was Fulfilled in Jesus

(According to the New Testament):

I. **“. . . God sent forth His Son made of a woman . . . to redeem . . .”** (Galatians 4:4).

“. . . For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (I John 3:8).

II. **“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as to many: but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ”** (Galatians 3:16). See also John 11: 51, 52 and Hebrews 11:17-19.

III. **“Of David's SEED hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus”** (Acts 13:23). See also Acts 2:29,30; Matthew 1:1; 22:42-45; Mark 11:9, 10; 12:35-37; Luke 1:31-33; Romans 1:3,4; Revelation 5: 5; 22:16.

IV. *Preceded by a Messenger:*

“Behold, I will send my messenger; he shall prepare the way” (Malachi 3:1). See also Isaiah 40:3.

V. *Born of a Virgin:*

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7: 14).

VI. **“Now, Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea”** (Matthew 2:1).

VII. **“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep and am known of mine”** (John 10:11-16). See also John 10:27, 28; Matthew 15:24; Mark 14:27; I Peter 2:25; Hebrews 13:20.

VIII. **“And he shall send Jesus Christ, for Moses truly said, A prophet shall the Lord our God raise up like unto me”** (Acts 3:20-22).

IX. **“Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek”** (Hebrews 5:5,6). See also Hebrews 4:14-16.

X. **“ . . . Thou sayest that I am *King*. To this end was I born”** (John 18:33,37).

“The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David” (Luke 1:32,33). See also Matthew 28:18; John 1:49; Revelation 11:15.

IV. **“He shall go before him to make ready a people for the Lord”** (Luke 1:17). See also Matthew 3:1, 3.

V. **“Now . . . when his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost”** (Matthew 1:18; see also Matthew 1:21-23).

VI. *Born in Bethlehem:*

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

VII. *The Shepherd:*

“He shall feed his flock like a *Shepherd*: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (Isaiah 40:11). See also Psalm 23:1-4; 80:1; Zechariah 13:7; Ezekiel 34:23,24.

VIII. *The Prophet:*

“The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a *Prophet* like unto me: unto him ye shall hearken” (Deuteronomy 18:15).

IX. *The Priest:*

“Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:4). See also Zechariah 6:13.

X. *The King:*

“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 . . .” (Zechariah 9:9). See also Psalm 2:6; Jeremiah 23:5, 6.

XI. **“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord”** (Luke 2:11). See also Matthew 1:21; Romans 11:26; 11:27; John 3:14, 15; Acts 13:23; 4:12; Hebrews 9:12; Galatians 4:4, 5; I Peter 1:18-21; Revelation 5:9.

XI. *The Redeemer:*

“And the Redeemer shall come unto Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 59: 20). See also Isaiah 19:20; 45:15; 44: 22,23; 49:6-10; Hosea 1:7; Jeremiah 33:16.

XII. *The Sacrifice:*

All the passages in the Old Testament which predict the humiliation, suffering and death of the Messiah as the Sacrifice and atonement for the sins of mankind were exactly fulfilled in Jesus. Isaiah chapter 52 and particularly 53 give a clear picture of the promised Messiah: hated, despised, reviled, rejected, condemned and executed as a criminal — all this as a sacrifice to atone for the sins of the world. And all this was fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus to the minutest detail.

Let us have some comparison between the prediction in the Old Testament and the fulfillment in the New Testament:

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah, Chapters 52 and 53

A. *A Stranger:*

“I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children” (Psalm 69: 8).

B. *A Stumbling Stone:*

“A stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel” (Isaiah 8:14).

C. *Hated:*

“Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth” (Isaiah 49:7). Also Psalm 69:4; 2:1, 2.

D. *Reproached:*

“The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me” (Psalm 69:9).

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

compare with the Four Gospels

A. **“He came unto his own and his own**

received him not” (John 1:11). Also John 7:3, 5.

B. **“They stumbled at that stumbling stone.**

As it is written, Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Romans 9:32, 33).

C. **“ . . . but now have they both seen and**

hated both me and my Father . . . the word written in their law. They hated me without a cause” (John 15:24, 25). Also Acts 4:27.

D. **“For even Christ pleased not himself, but**

as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me” (Romans 15:3).

E. *Mocked:*

“All they that see me laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him, seeing he delighted in him” (Psalm 22:7, 8).

F. *Smitten:*

“They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod, upon the cheek” (Micah 5:1). Also Isaiah 50:6; 53:4; Zechariah 13:6, 7; Lam. 3:30.

G. *Spit Upon:*

“. . . I hid not my face from shame and spitting” (Isaiah 50:6).

H. *Crucified:*

“They pierced my hands and my feet” (Psalm 22:16).

I. *Like Transgressions:*

“He was numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

J. *Suffered for our sins:*

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . . he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities . . . the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:4-6). Also Isaiah 53:8, 12; Daniel 9:26.

K. *Resurrection:*

“Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10). Also Psalm 49:15; 71: 20; Isaiah 25:8.

E. **“They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads . . . Likewise also the chief priests mocking him with the scribes and elders, said . . . he trusted in God: let him deliver him”** (Matthew 27:39-44). Also Matthew 26: 67,68; Mark 15:14, 19.

F. **“And took the reed and smote him on the head”** (Matthew 27:30). Also Matthew 26:67, 68; Luke 22: 63; Mark 14:27; 15:19; John 1:3.

G. **“And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him”** (Mark 14:65).

H. **“They crucified him”** (John 19:18). Also John 20:25.

I. **“And with him they crucify two thieves. And the scripture was; fulfilled which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors”** (Mark 15:27, 28).

J. **“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”** (John 1:29). Also Matthew 20:28; Hebrews 9:28; 10:10; I Peter 3:18.

K. **“He is not here, but is risen . . . And their eyes were opened, and they saw him; and he vanished out of their sight . . . The Lord is risen indeed”** (Luke 24:6, 31, 34). Also Acts 2:31; I Cor. 15:5-9; (and in Matthew, Mark, and John).

I have quoted but a few of the numerous predictions and fulfillments in regard to the Messiah. Anyone who would wish to have more identification marks as to the Messiahship of Jesus will find them throughout the New Testament and compare them with the Old Testament. This wonder of Prophecy and its fulfillment, centuries later, has amazed all Bible students. I shall quote here the words of one of these students who, in a way, expresses the feelings of all who stood baffled at this miracle:

“Centuries before Christ was born His birth and career, His sufferings and glory, were all described in outline and detail in the Old Testament. Christ is the only Person ever born into this world whose ancestry, birth-time, forerunner, birthplace, birth-manner, infancy, manhood, teaching, character, career, preaching, reception, rejection, death, burial, resurrection and ascension were all prewritten in the most marvelous manner centuries before He was born.

“Who could draw a picture of a man not yet born? Surely God, and God alone. Nobody knew 500 years ago that Shakespeare was going to be born; or 250 years ago that Napoleon was to be born. Yet here in the Bible we have the most striking and unmistakable likeness of a Man portrayed, not by one, but by twenty or twenty-five artists, none of whom had ever seen the Man they were painting.” - Canon Dyson Hague

In short, Jesus, and He alone, has produced the perfect credentials and thus established His identity as Messiah-Saviour. No one before Him or after Him has done that; nor could there be anyone in the future able to do it.

~ end of chapter 17 ~

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