

MSB 209

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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THE TWO MESSIAHS

by Milton B. Hammond

In the days when John the Baptist came preaching, "Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt. 3 :2), the Jews had been looking forward to the coming of the One predicted by Moses and the prophets who was to be their Messiah, even the One called the Prophet by Moses (Deut. 18:15). By the time Jesus arrived on the scene, 400 years of time had passed without any prophet from God to warn them and admonish them. The last prophet had been Malachi and he promised that Elijah was to come and set the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. The Jews had been awaiting their Prophet, or Messiah for a 1000 years and were eager to see His day, expecting to be regathered and rescued, as promised so often in the books of the Prophets. They didn't take careful note of an obscure passage in Isaiah 53 which presents a humble, obedient servant, a submissive Messiah who does the will of God and becomes the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." What they expected was the exalted, mighty, majestic and governing Messiah of Isaiah 9:6-7. The Jews had been scattered all over the earth and it seemed that God had abandoned them and it was hard to have faith in His promises. The Jews wanted to see God restore the nation of Israel to her land and take His vengeance on all who knew not Him. They were aware of the many passages in which Jehovah establishes His Kingdom with the Jews as the foremost nation on earth, but they were not prepared to meet the Messiah who came teaching love, joy, peace and repentance.

Almost all of the synagogues had at least a scroll of the Book of Isaiah and the Psalms, as well as the Pentateuch. The Old Testament was rich in the prophecies of the Messiah and the people, who were patriots of Israel, desired to see the Messiah set up His kingdom in which they would be dominant among the nations. When John the Baptist came preaching "baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins," the Jews asked him if he were Elijah, or the Prophet, or the one Moses said was to come. He denied these titles, but confirmed that he was the one **"crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord"** (John 1 :23)

When Jesus came into the world, He was from unheralded parentage, also preaching, **"Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"** (Matt.4: 17). Jesus came to earth teaching the Law of Christ, based on the Law of Israel, which is the Law of righteousness. He also came performing many wonderful miracles and other signs, speaking to the people in parables which were hard to understand. We know He had to be obscure, because He had to come to earth to die on the cross, becoming the sacrifice that would take away the sins of the world (Isa. 53). We know that in spite of that, large numbers of the people believed in Him just because of the marvelous works He had done. The table that follows gives some of these seemingly conflicting prophecies of the majestic Messiah and the humble, obedient Messiah.

The One they expected was a strong ruler:

Psa.2:9: He will break them (the nations) with a rod of iron and ...
Psa.22:28: For the kingdom is the Lord's and he is governor among ...
Psa.67:4: Thou shalt judge the people righteously and govern the ...
Isa.9:7: And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name ...
!sa. 52:10: The Lord hath made bare his arm in the eyes of all nations ...

The One who came was an obedient and loving person:

Isa.42:1: Behold my servant whom I uphold ... he shall not cry, nor...
!sa. 42:3: A bruised reed he shall not break, smoking flax he will not ...
!sa. 53:2,3: He has no form nor comeliness,... He is despised and ...
!sa. 53:5: He was wounded for our transgressions ...
Isa.53:9: He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death ...
...

Thus Jesus Christ became a Messiah the Jewish leaders and people were not ready to accept, in spite of Isaiah's prophecies. They had a difficult time believing in Him because of their own predetermined ideas of how He would set up His Kingdom. He didn't have the royal robes and bearing of a man ready to seize power and become king, ruling with power and majesty. He didn't come with armies and mighty supporters ready to do His will and place Him on the throne. Instead He came as man, obedient to the will of God and humble in bearing, but not without real truth and strong opposition to the leaders in Israel. For all their study, the scriptures remained unclear to them, when Christ came as servant and submissive Messiah, who did the will of God, speaking only the words He received of the Father and doing only the works He was given of His Father. What they expected was the exalted, mighty, majestic and governing Messiah of Isaiah 9:6-7.

The triumphant entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem was the sign that many people had been waiting for--they had great expectations of his making bold moves to take over the government and become the ruler or King over them. Yet, it was not like men's idea of majesty, for He came on a donkey (Matt. 21: 5), accompanied not by armies, but by the sincere and hopeful common people of the nation. Christ made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-44) and Luke 19: 11 says: "And while they heard these things, He added and spoke a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear." But He had given several warnings to His disciples that He had to die for the sins of the people. Luke 9:44,45 and Luke 18:31-33 has Jesus predicting His mistreatment and death at the hands of men. The Pharisees already had plans underway to kill Him (John 11:47-53, 55-57; and Luke 20: 19, 10) and made a contract with Judas Iscariot to hand Him over (Luke 22:2-6). John 12:20-50 provides some of Christ's teachings after His triumphant entrance, addressing the Jewish multitude and some Greeks. In John 12:34 (NASV), it says: "**The multitude therefore answered Him, We have heard out of the Law that Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, The Son of Man must be lifted up?**" They still thought His rescue was to be immediate, yet His bearing and words caused many to doubt Him. They did not understand that He had to die and be raised again before the Kingdom could come. In John 12:37 (NASV), it says: "**But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him.**" The people, and even His own disciples were totally blind to the humble/servant Messiah. They didn't understand that He was the promised

"Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). John 12:38-40 (KJV) continues, **"That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes and should not understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."** Jesus had come to die on the cross for the sins of the world and nothing was allowed to stand in the way of His work. The Messiah the Jews awaited was there, but He had to remain unrecognized by the leaders.

To see the contrast in the two Messiahs more vividly, the reader should read the first two chapters in the book of Hebrews. The first chapter places Jesus Christ in the position of the mighty, triumphant Messiah who created all things and who is honored and glorified by God above all the angels and heavenly host. In my own brief paraphrase, it starts like this (Heb. 1: 1-4): "God, Who in times past, in a piecemeal and varied fashion, gave to our forefathers many different glimpses of truth in the words of the prophets, has now, in these last days, given us the truth in the Son. Through the Son God made the eons, and to the Son He has ordained that all creation shall ultimately belong. This Son, radiance of the glory of God, flawless expression of the nature of God, Himself the upholding principle (or power) of all that exists, having effected in person the cleansing of men's sins, took His seat on the rights of the Majesty on High--thus proving Himself, by the more glorious name He has been given and which is His portion, far greater than all the angels of God." This is the same Jesus who as Jehovah Messiah is called in Isaiah 9:6: "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." This is the One the Jews were looking for and He had been present among them as the Son of Man. Again, in my own paraphrase, it says in Heb. 2:5: "God did not put the future world of men under the control of angels, and it is this world we are talking about." Then in Hebrews 2:9, after a reference to Psalms 8:4-6, it says: "What we see is Jesus, after being made a little lower than the angels, and so subject to pain and death, in order that He should, by God's act of grace, taste of death for every man, and now crowned with glory and honor." For the Jew who so much desired to see his Messiah, Christ became a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedek" (Heb. 5:6). In a Theocratic Kingdom, this high priesthood was the symbol of kingship or rule over the nation. But the people needed a new attitude as summarized in my paraphrase of Hebrews 10:8-9: "After saying that God has no pleasure in

sacrifice, offering or burnt offering made according to the Law, Christ says, **'Lo I am come to do Thy will.'**

Hence He has dispensed with the old order of sacrifice by establishing a new order of obedience to the will God." As Hebrews 9:22 says, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission (of sins)." Hence Jesus' death on the cross fulfilled this requirement and permitted His spilled blood to be a propitiation for the sins of every man in the world. In the 40 days after His resurrection, His followers began to understand that Christ had to die and be raised again as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Jesus often described Himself in a form hard for the Jews to accept. For instance, in Matt. 12:18-21 (KJV), He refers to Isa. 42:1-4: "Behold My servant, whom I have chosen; My beloved in whom My soul is well pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show justice to the Gentiles (nations)." This is the servant Messiah who was providing an example in His life for His followers.

The simplest single description of the two Messiahs in the Old Testament is given in Psalm 113:5,6 (NASV) which says, "**Who is like the Lord our God, who is enthroned on high, who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.**" It presents the Messiah as God who humbles Himself and cares about what goes on in heaven and on earth. Likewise, Paul says in Phil. 2:5-11, (which I have paraphrased) "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a robbery, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond servant and being made in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those among the mighty ones, those great on earth and the lowly on earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

END

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