

# THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

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## 1. Dialogue between a Priest and a Rabbi

The Jews refuse to recognize in Jesus the Messiah announced by the biblical prophecies. In the summer of 1972, the priest "P", wanted to have a frank and direct dialogue with the rabbi "R", to understand the possible biblical justifications for this refusal. He took an appointment with the rabbi and went to meet with a group. The rabbi warmly received them. Here are the essentials of the dialogue:

P: There are prophecies that confirm the messianic characteristics of Jesus. Chapter 53 of Isaiah, for example, presents the Messiah as misunderstood, rejected by his people and put to death.

R: I know what you think. Me, I don't interpret!

P: But I am just looking for an explanation, another possible interpretation. I am searching for the Truth. Between Judaism and us there is a man: this Jesus. If he is an impostor, this group and I myself would come and solicit you to become Jews.

The rabbi smiled and said jokingly: In this case, you should be circumcised!

The priest replies: Willingly! You can take off as much as you want!

R: No, really, I do not interpret!

P: Is it because the Jews expected, are expecting still, for a political Zionist Messiah?

R: No, really, I do not interpret! In any case, do not forget that Jesus, on the cross, confessed that God had abandoned Him. Didn't he say: "Eli! Eli! lamà sabachtani?", which means: "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?" If he was the Messiah, God would not have abandoned him.

P: You astonish me, Mr. rabbi! You indeed know the Bible! You know that it is with these same words that David begins his Psalm 22, which presents a righteous man persecuted by a mob that surround him and who "pierce his hands and his feet...", and put him to death etc... Jesus is referred to in this messianic Psalm and asks us to consult it. David did not speak of himself because he was not put to death, and did not have his hands and feet pierced.

R: I do not interpret it as you do.

P: How do you interpret it? Is it about the whole Jewish people? This does not apply to the Psalm.

R: I don't interpret.

P: There is also a prophecy by Micah, in the VIIIth century B.C. This prophet sees the Messiah arising from Bethlehem, specifying that he will come in the future, but "whose origin go back to the distant past, to the days of old" (Micah 5,1).

The priest read this text from the "Jerusalem Bible" (1955 Edition). He drew the attention on the fact that the text announces the Messiah for the future, yet his days go back to the past, from the days of old, and that this reveals the Messiah's **divine nature**. His interlocutor understood the priest's intention and, stood up suddenly, shouting: "Never! What you say here is false! You have falsified the Bible, you Christians! I am going to consult the Hebrew text!"

He returns after few minutes, calmer and rather resigned, in confessing: "Absolutely! What you have read is correct. In Hebrew, there is even more!"

P: More? The priest retorted, wrinkling his eyebrows.

R: Yes, more! It is written: "Whose origins go back to the ancient times (*or former days*), to the days of **Eternity** (*azal*)" and not the days of the past. Your Bible has mistranslated the Hebrew word "azal", which means **Eternity**.

(to note that the French Bibles of Segond, that of Darby and others also translate: "...to the days of eternity.")

P: I should understand then, that the Hebrew Bible gives me double reason! As **Eternity** applies only to divinity. It is for this that the prophet Isaiah, in addressing God, exclaims: "Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down!" (Isaiah 63,19). And God says through Ezekiel: "I am going to look after my flock **Myself**..." (Ezekiel 34,11).

R: I do not interpret, yet I congratulate you for your deep knowledge of the Bible.

P: Well, I allow myself to interpret from the events that correspond to the prophecies. But frankly, I would have preferred a good interpretation to the felicitation.

The biblical dialogue ended there, then the priest added jokingly: "I am not encouraged to undergo circumcision, because you have not convinced me. But do you have an objection to our presence during your Synagogue prayers on a Saturday?"

The group was invited the following Saturday to the Synagogue.

## 2. The Messianic prophecies

It was hard for Jesus to convince the Jewish people who expected a different Messiah. Jesus' death shook those who expected a political messianism. Also, Jesus had to appear to His disciples to explain to them His spiritual and universal messianism. Appearing to the two disciples, filled with sadness and disappointment on their way to Emmaus, He says: "You foolish men! So slow to believe the message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into His glory? Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, He explained to them the passages throughout the Scriptures that were about Himself" (Luke 24,25-27).

The prophecies present the Messiah to come under three forms: He is prophet, priest and king. It is difficult to reconcile among these three qualities because priests came from Levi's tribe, and kings from Judah's. As for the prophets, they were chosen independently of their tribal extraction. The prophecies that permitted to discern the Messiah's identity are those that present Him as a person rejected by his people and put to death. It is in these that we place, above all, our evidence. We succinctly present the others by starting, as Jesus did, with Moses who saw the Messiah as Prophet.

## 3. The Messiah as Prophet

Moses said to the people:

"Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like myself, from among yourselves, from your own brothers; to him you must listen. . ." Yahweh said to Moses: ". . . I will raise up a prophet like yourself for them from their own brothers; I will put my words into his mouth and he shall tell them all I command him. If a man does not listen to my words that he speaks in my name shall be held answerable to this man." (Deuteronomy 18,15-19)

The Jews asked John the Baptist if he were this Prophet: "I am not the Christ" he answered (John 1,21). A little while later, the apostle "Philip found Nathanael and said to him: we have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law and the prophets! It is Jesus..." (Joh 1,45)

After the miracle of the multiplication of bread done by Jesus "the people said: 'this is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world'" (John 6,14). Jesus finally said to those who refused to believe in Him: "you place your hopes on Moses, and Moses will be your accuser ... since it was I that he was writing about..." (John 5,45-46)

## 4. The Messiah as King and Priest

Several prophecies present the Messiah as King:

God says: "I Myself have anointed my King on Zion, my holy mountain... Ask of Me and I shall give you the nations as your birthright, the whole wide world as your possession." (Psalm 2,6-8)

Yahweh declared to my Lord: "Take your seat at my right hand, till I have made your enemies your footstool. Yahweh will stretch out **the scepter** of your power from Zion, you will rule your foes all around you... Yahweh has sworn an oath He will never retract, you are **a priest for ever** of the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110,1-4).

After having presented the Messiah as **king** whose **scepter** of power stretches till the ends of the earth, Psalm 110 also presents Him as **priest**. Two points are to be considered with regards to this Kingdom:

1. This kingdom is not political, but **spiritual**. It is not intended as a Zionist hegemony. Jesus explained it: "My kingdom is not of this world", that is to say the political world (John 18,36-37). This Kingdom is spiritual, and this is the reason why this king is also priest, but "of the order of Melchizedek", both priest and king, and who was not Hebrew (Genesis 14,18-20). Saint Paul comments on this fact in his letter to the Hebrews (Chapters 5 to 7). That is why the prophets declared that God rejects the Jewish political kingdom (1 Samuel 8,5-7 / Hosea 8,4 and see our texts "[The Tragedy of Jesus](#)" and "[Christians and Israel](#)").

2. To God, the Messianic kingdom is **universal**, in the interest of all men. The Messiah is the universal King of pure hearts of all races, nations and languages, and not only of Zionist Jews, who understand that the Messiah is fanatically Zionist, exclusive to them, to their political and material advantage. In fact, God, speaks of the Messiah "His Servant", expressing through the prophet Isaiah: "It is not enough for you to be My servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I shall make you **a light to the nations** so that My salvation may reach the **remotest parts of earth**" (Isaiah 49,6 / Acts 13,47). This Messianic reign is that of God's on humanity, and not the Israeli people's.

The Jewish priests used to offer animal sacrifices to God. Yet, the sacrifice offered by the Messiah was that of his own person for the salvation of those who believe in Him. In doing so, He changed the notion of sacrifice and the priesthood, thus fulfilling the prophecies announcing him as priest according to an order and a rite, both **different from the Hebrew order and rites**: namely those of king-priest Melchizedek.

It is important to underline and to clarify this fact: the Jewish priesthood was according to Aaron's order. Aaron was Moses' brother and the founder of the Jewish priesthood, based on animal sacrifices (see Exodus 28). The fact that the announced Messiah, does not come invested in a traditional Jewish priestly order according to Aaron, but from a non-Jewish Melchizedek order, signifies a radical and upsetting changeset in Jewish traditions. This implies a renewal of the Jewish mentality and conception of the priesthood.

This new "order of Melchizedek" is characterized by the offering of "bread and wine" by Melchizedek to Abraham. Now, the bread and the wine are the symbols of the Messiah's Body and Blood offered in sacrifice to God: "This (*the bread*) is My Body... This (*the wine*) is My Blood, the Blood of the New Covenant poured out for many", Jesus said to His Apostles on the eve of his sacrifice (Mark 14,22-24 / Luke 22, 19-20). The most unbelievable messianic prophecies, distressing and incomprehensible, are those that present the suffering Messiah, rejected and put to death by his own people:

“Who has given credence to what we have heard. . . He had no form or charm to attract us, no beauty to win our hearts. . . He was despised, the lowest of men, a man of sorrows, familiar with sufferings, despised for whom we had no regard. Yet ours were the sufferings He was bearing. . . while we thought of Him as someone being punished and struck with affliction by God. He was being wounded for our rebellions. . . and we have been healed by His bruises. . . having been cut off from the land of the living, at His having been struck dead for his people’s rebellion. He was given a grave with the wicked, and His tomb is with the rich (*Jesus was buried in the tomb of the rich Joseph of Arimathea: Matthew 27,57-60*). . . It was Yahweh’s good pleasure to crush Him with pain. If He gives His life as a sin offering, He will see his offspring and **prolong his life** (*this is a prophecy on Jesus’ Resurrection*), and through Him Yahweh’s good pleasure will be done. After the ordeal He has endured, He will **see the light** and be content. . . (*by his Resurrection*). . .” (Isaiah 53,1-12)

This was how Isaiah saw, centuries before, the Messiah’s tragedy: the rejection by his people, his sacrifice offered to God by him being put to death and Resurrection. That is the nature of his priesthood, totally different from Aaron’s.

David, in Psalm 22, already foresaw, before Isaiah, this tragedy of Christ. Speaking of the suffering Messiah, he sees him groaning, saying:

“Eli, Eli, why have you forsaken me? . . . a herd of bulls surround me. . . lions tearing and roaring. . . a gang of villains closes me in. . . they have **pierced my hands** and my feet and leave me lying in the dust of death. . .”

The prophet Zechariah predicted the Messiah’s return to those who denied Him (*the Jews*) in these terms:

“Over the House of David and the citizens of Jerusalem (*the Jews*) I will pour out a spirit of kindness and prayer. They will look on the **One whom they have pierced** (*Jesus*); they will mourn for him as for an only son. . .” (Zechariah 12,10)

The Book of Revelation, referring to Jesus, confirms this fact which will take place in the end of the times granted to the State of Israel:

“Look, He (*Jesus*) is coming. . . everyone will see Him, **even those who pierced Him**, and all the races of the earth will mourn over Him.” (Revelation 1,7)

These are the essentials of the Messianic prophecies that are applied to Jesus.

We would appreciate arguments contrary to ours, which are able to demonstrate the non-messianism of Jesus of Nazareth. Our faith in Him is open, non-fanatical.

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