MESSIANISM: A COMMON IDEOLOGY AMONG JEWS
IN THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD

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by
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## ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Cairo Damascus Document</td>
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<td>DSS</td>
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<td>ESV</td>
<td>English Standard Version</td>
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<td>LXX</td>
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<td>NASB</td>
<td>New American Standard Bible</td>
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<td><em>Serekh</em> (or Community Rule)</td>
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<td>TynBul</td>
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MESSIANISM: A COMMON IDEOLOGY AMONG JEWS IN THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD

Introduction

Overarching both Old and New Testaments is the eschatological drama of the messiah, whom God appointed for the final deliverance of his people, Israel. Christians living in an age following the revelation of that messiah, who are also familiar with the apostolic word, would find this observation rather apparent. God reveals in the NT the long expected messiah of the OT, Jesus, the Son of David. However, could one say the same for Jews living in the Second Temple period (586 BCE-70 CE)? Though they possessed the Hebrew Scriptures, did they expect a messiah? Some scholars have characterized the majority of the Second Temple period as a kind of “messianological vacuum” since, in their view, such anticipations were non-existent for over 300 years.¹ Such extremes are without warrant. Though not as extensive as some have claimed, and though manifested in various forms, messianism still remained a common ideology for Jews in the Second Temple period.

Messianism and Its Old Testament Origins

Defined, messianism is a concept that entails the eschatological expectation and coming of a national, Davidic redeemer (i.e. a “messiah”), who will cataclysmically establish God’s kingdom on earth, thus creating peace and eliminating evil. This monarchical, redemptive concept finds its roots in the message of the OT. Early leading figures like Moses and Joshua prepare the people for the Judges, who also prepare the nation for God’s chosen king in Samuel (cf. Deut 17:14-15). David of Judah, a man after God’s own heart, becomes the paradigmatic monarch, especially in light of God’s promise to establish his throne forever and give the Davidic house dominion over all peoples (2 Sam 7:11-16, 44-51). Pre and post-Exilic prophets bear witness to the same (e.g. Isa 9:6, 11:1-9; Ezek 34:22f.; Mic 5:2-4; Zech 3:8; 6:12), as do the “royal” Psalms (e.g. Pss 18:50; 89:3-4, 20; 110:1 [cf. Luke 20:42]). The Davidic dynasty does decline following Solomon’s reign, and finally falls with the destruction of the temple in 586 BCE. However, even following exile, it is obvious to the Chronicler that God’s fidelity to the throne of David stands (2Chr 21:7; 36:22-23). The reader of the Hebrew canon can only anticipate another Davidic king, of whom the NT testifies.

This theological construct of the OT should have left a lasting impact on the Jewish people then seeking to reestablish the nation after exile. If the Chronicler reflects Israel’s desire, then national hope rested in the reign of a promised Davidic king, an

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2Cf. Lawrence H. Schiffman, “The Concept of the Messiah in Second Temple and Rabbinic Literature,” *RevExp* 84 (Spring 1987): 235; William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998), 6-7. Messiah comes from the Hebrew word מְשִׁיחַ, which English literally renders “anointed.” Most often the term applies to God’s appointed man for the offices of priest or king in the HB (e.g. Lev 4:3; 1 Sam 2:10; 12:3; 16:6; 24:7; 26:9; 2 Sam 1:14; 19:22; 22:51; 23:1; 1 Chr 16:22; 2 Chr 6:42; Ps 2:2; 84:10). Later, however, it also applies to the office of a prophet (Isa 61:1).

3See Schiffman (“Concept of Messiah,” 236), who shows the parallel with Psalm 18:44-51.
anointed one, a messiah. Messianism of the Second Temple period, therefore, finds its antecedents here in the messianism of the OT. Although the manner in which the various genres express this hope differs from source to source, the commitment to royal messianic ideology still remains fairly common among Jews in the Second Temple period. This will become more obvious in the following survey of the relevant literature.

Messianism In and Behind the Literature of the Second Temple Period

How much Second Temple literature scholars actually have access to is not reflected here; however, the sources which are dealt with will hopefully prove that messianism was more common amongst Judaism than often allowed. The first two sections deal with the canonization and translation of the OT, and how both activities reflect a fairly constant messianic hope among the Jews. The last three sections address the messianism found in a variety of literature that relied on the OT’s hope. This OT presupposition is fair considering the Jews’ using, reading, studying, translating, and interpreting it during the Second Temple period.

Reflections from the Formation of the Old Testament Canon

Collins argues that texts like the ones alluded to above emphasize “the permanence of the Davidic line, not…an individual king” (Scepter and Star, 23), as does James D. G. Dunn (Jesus Remembered [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 619). This might be the case in some instances; however, other passages in the OT seem to identify a particular, eschatological, Davidic figure (e.g. Isa 9:7; Jer 30:9; 33:15; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hos 3:5). Contra Collins who argues that messianism (i.e. “in the sense of Davidic restoration”) emerged as a response to “the flawed restoration of Jewish kingship by the non-Davidic Hasmonaeans” (Scepter and Star, 40). Though messianic hopes may have increased, this does not deny the fact that Judaism’s Davidic-monarchical roots spring forth from the pre-Exilic era.

So Horbury, Jewish Messianism, 19; Joachim Schaper, “The Persian Period,” in Redemption and Resistance: The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity, eds. Markus Bockmuehl and James Carleton Paget (London: T&T Clark, 2007): 4-6. Contra Collins who argues that messianism (i.e. “in the sense of Davidic restoration”) emerged as a response to “the flawed restoration of Jewish kingship by the non-Davidic Hasmonaeans” (Scepter and Star, 40). Though messianic hopes may have increased, this does not deny the fact that Judaism’s Davidic-monarchical roots spring forth from the pre-Exilic era.

Since the final developments of the Hebrew canon fall within the Persian and Hellenistic periods (538-164 BCE), it is safe to consider the circumstances surrounding and the purposes behind its final canonical form. In other words, the question being addressed is, “Did those who compiled the final books of the OT have an intended purpose to its canonical structure; and if so, does such a process reflect messianism in earlier Judaism?”

John J. Collins has argued extensively that messianism lied dormant in Judaism until the Jews found themselves encompassed by “non-Davidic rulers” during the Hasmonean period and overrun by the Romans under Pompey shortly thereafter (167-63 BCE). Any Jewish concern for a royal messianic king grew out of a reaction to the political strife and religious defilement of that time. Without denying the momentous religio-political consequences of the Hasmonean and Roman eras, William Horbury has seriously challenged this conclusion by giving attention to both the post-Exilic, monarchical context in which Israel lived, and the influence this may have had on the

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7That the final collection of the Hebrew scriptures falls during this period and no later is confirmed by at least two facts. (1) The Writings were collected during and after the Exile (i.e. following 550 BCE), especially under the ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 7; Neh 8-10; cf. Josephus, Against Apion, 1.38-42; 2 Macc 2:13-15; 2 Esdr 14). (2) In the prologue to the translation of his grandfather’s work, Ecclesiasticus, Jesus ben Sira affirms his grandfather’s submission to τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν κατ’ αὐτοῖς ἕκαστρον καὶ τῶν νόμων, the earliest record of the three-fold division of the OT. Ben Sira’s reference to the Egyptian king, Euergetes calls for a dating of no later than c. 132 BCE. His grandfather’s work makes reference to Simon II, high priest from 219-196 BCE. This puts Ben Sira’s grandfather’s understanding of an authoritative OT canon at least two generations earlier, no later than 180 BCE. Cf. Roger Beckwith, who argues for a later date when Judas Maccabeus formed the Prophets and Hagiographa in 164 (The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church, and its Background in Early Judaism [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985], 110-80).

process of editing and compiling their sacred writings. The Jews, already familiar with a
monarchical form of government, also lived in a setting saturated with royal hope during
Persian and Roman rule. Furthermore, hopeful non-Israelite prophecy concerned with the
importance of royal monarchy filled the air they breathed (e.g. the Egyptians’ Potter’s
Oracle, or the Greeks’ Sibylline Oracles). Such political situations from Cyrus to
Alexander (i.e. “national aspirations connected with kingship”) not only shaped, but also
encouraged the manner in which Israel compiled her canon. Thus, as the last few books
of the Prophets are finished (e.g. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi [c. 520-516 BCE]) and
the Chronicler finishes his work (c. 500-450), a specific agenda is readily in mind: the
readers of this compiled document should take note of God’s faithfulness to preserve the
nation of Israel and the royal, messianic line of David. In short, the final structure of the
canon should point to a national messiah. A brief look at the three OT sections will
suffice.

(1) In two places, the Law introduces the eschatological hope of a coming
Israelite king in reference to “the latter days” (Gen 49:10; Num 24:17f). Moreover, in
the Genesis text, Jacob speaks this prophetic word to Judah, the tribe from which David
shall eventually arise (Ruth 4:17; 1 Sam 17:12; cf. Jubilees 31:18). These texts not only

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9 Horbury, Jewish Messianism, 5-63; idem., Messianism Among Jews and Christians: Twelve
Biblical and Historical Studies (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 35-64.

10 Horbury, Jewish Messianism, 26, 37, 42.

11 Ibid., 27-29. Roger Beckwith also affirms a deliberate purpose to the threefold structure of
the OT canon and an artistic grouping to the OT books (Old Testament Canon, 154, 165). See also Brevard
S. Childs, who argues for “canonical intentionality” (Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture

12 On several occasions the Prophets use ~ymiYm (“in the latter days”) to point their
readers to God’s eschatological age of salvation and judgment (e.g. Isa 2:2; Jer 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39;
Ezek 38:16; Dan 10:14; Hos 3:5; Mic 4:1).
bear witness to a coming ruler to whom the nations would be subjected, but also enable
the readers to link this ruler with the establishment of God’s kingdom about which Moses
sings in Exodus 15:17 and Deuteronomy 32-33.\(^\text{13}\)

(2) Following the Law, the Prophets clarify what remained vague about the
coming king. God not only raises up David as this king from Judah (1 Sam 16:13), but
promises to bring another like him after his death (2 Sam 7:12-14; 1 Kgs 2:45; Isa 16:5;
Jer 33:17; Ezek 37:25). Indeed, God promises a coming Davidic king and couples it
together with an eschatological covenant of deliverance for his people (Jer 33:17; Hos
3:5; Amos 9:11-12; Mic 5:2-15).

(3) The Writings carry the same tune of the messianic, Davidic monarchy. This
is especially noticeable when the “royal” Psalms intersperse themselves throughout the
Psalter’s work, bearing witness to God’s coming kingdom and the throne he has
guaranteed to David (e.g. Pss 2; 22; 18:50; 89:3-4, 20; 110).\(^\text{14}\) Ruth proves God’s
providential concern for the Davidic throne (Ruth 4:18-22). Even the Chronicler, writing
under Persian rule, purposefully emphasizes Davidic royalism as he summarizes what the
entirety of the OT canon points towards, namely, the coming king of Israel (1 Chr 5:2 [cf.
Gen 49:10]; 14:2 [cf. Num 24:7]; 2 Chr 6:6; 9:8; 21:7).\(^\text{15}\)

\(^{13}\)Horbury, *Jewish Messianism*, 27. One should also note the prophetic statement regarding the
God-ordained office of a king in Deuteronomy 17:14-15, the nature of which is also eschatological.
Furthermore, one only has to observe the Samaritan woman’s words to Jesus in order to understand that a
messianic understanding of the Pentateuch is in fact possible: “I know that Messiah (Μεσσηά) is coming,
the one who is called Christ (Χριστός); when he comes, he will declare all things to us” (John 4:25). The
Pentateuch alone was the Samaritan’s Bible.

\(^{14}\)Though these Psalms were written prior to the Exile in reference to the kings of the Davidic
line, they were preserved by the post-Exilic Psalter in anticipation of the new and final Davidic king
(Childs, *Old Testament as Scripture*, 515-17).

\(^{15}\)The OT connections outlined in points 1-3 above also seem to be common interpretations
made in other early Second Temple literature, especially with regard to Genesis 49:10 and Numbers 24:17
(e.g. 4Q252 5:1-7; 4Q161 Frs. 8-10; CD2 7:20; 1QSb 5:27-28; 1QM 11:4-9).
Thus, when read in light of each other, the Law, Prophets, and Writings form a coherent testimony of the expected messianic king. Together they construct what Horbury calls a “messianic document.”16 If this is the case, and the canonical process reflected such monarchical aspirations, then messianism was by no means dormant, but still animatedly common to Judaism during the Persian and Hellenistic periods.

Reflections from the Greek Translation of the Old Testament

Still, this places the majority of the canonization of the OT during Persian rule, while overlapping Roman rule by only a century. An argument for common messianism among Jews during the Hellenistic period on a canonical basis alone, therefore, is weak. This moves us to the second observation of this paper; namely, the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek, in certain instances, reflects a deep commitment among Diaspora Jews of the third and second centuries to emphasize messianic hope.

Following the conquest of Alexander the Great (333-332 BCE), monarchy became fundamental to the philosophy and structure of Greek power.17 As during the Persian period, therefore, Jews found themselves in the midst of a culture hungry for royal monarchical rule.18 At the same time as Greek rule increased, and the Jewish culture became further Hellenized, there was also a growing concern among Jews for the

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16 Horbury, Jewish Messianism, 37.

17 For a discussion on “kingship” following Alexander see Everett Ferguson, Backgrounds of Early Christianity, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 190-93.

18 Horbury notes that even though the terminology was not used, the royal monarchical system was very influential on political thought in the Hellenistic period (Jewish Messianism, 47). His claim for such Greek monarchical influence finds support in QL (11QTS ivi-lix), the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (e.g. 1-2 Macc; Sib 3:193; 5:137, 463), and Josephus (Antiquities, 4.223).
preservation and continued use of their prophetic revelation. Hence, they took it upon themselves to translate the Hebrew text, beginning with the Pentateuch, into Greek for the sake of those removed from Palestinian tradition. Project “LXX-Pentateuch” commenced under Ptolemaic rule in Egypt during the third century BCE, while the Prophets and Writings remained unfinished until the earlier parts of the second. In sum, Jews translated the HB into Greek while royal monarchy was of central importance. Such influences linked with their already existent messianic and Davidic understanding of the OT surely affected the manner in which they interpreted the HB. As a result, the LXX itself became for them a “document of Jewish monarchy,” and thus messianic, since the two are inextricably linked. A brief comparison of three texts from the LXX and HB—two from the Law and one from the Prophets—will demonstrate this deliberate emphasis.

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19 The Letter of Aristeas, Josephus (Antiquities, 12.11-77), and Philo (De Vita Moses, 2.25-44) bear witness to these concerns. The yearning for a prophet during this time may also provide evidence for the same (cf. 1 Macc 4:46; 9:27; 14:41; Josephus, Against Apion, 1:8).

20 There is question as to whether or not the Letter of Aristeas is an accurate historical portrayal of the events surrounding the translation of the HB (E. Earle Ellis, Paul’s Use of the Old Testament [Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1981], 16-20). That parts of Aristeas’s account are apocryphal is without question; however, at least five historical facts are present: (1) the Jews (2) began translating the Pentateuch (3) in Alexandria, Egypt (4) under Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 BCE) (5) for purposes of worship in Greek contexts (Ellis R. Brotzman, Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994], 73). Ben Sira’s prologue to Sirach also bears witness of a Greek OT canon in use by Jews prior to 180 BCE (see note 7).


22 Ibid., 79. Cf. Sigmund Mowinckle, He That Cometh: The Messiah Concept in the Old Testament and Later Judaism, trans. G. W. Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 282-83, 417. That the political aspects (i.e. monarchy) and eschatological aspects (i.e. messiah) should not be separated, see Horbury, Jewish Messianism, 6-7; Schaper, “The Persian Period,” 4-6; contra Mowinckle, He That Cometh, 3-10.

23 See Appendix for a comparative analysis of these OT texts. Although more examples could be given, the limitations of this paper do not allow for it. A short list will suffice: (Gen 3:15; 2 Sam 7:16; Isa 7:14; 9:5-6; Ezek 21:30-32; Dan 7:13; Hos 8:10; Amos 4:13; Zech 9:10).
(1) Genesis 49:10 from the HB translates as follows: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet; until Shiloh comes resulting in the obedience of the peoples to him.” As alluded to above, post-Exilic Jews of the fifth and fourth centuries already associated this text with the remainder of the OT canon’s testimony to the God-ordained Davidic monarchy. The LXX translation reveals the same for third century Jewish interpreters. They make it a point to highlight the promised monarchical succession that is intended to come from Judah in Genesis 49:10a (“There will not fail a ruler [ἀρχων] from Judah…”), and deliberately emphasize that the Judahite ruler is the one ruler for whom the nations wait (“…he [that ἀρχων of v. 49:10a] is the expectation of the nations.”).24

(2) Another example of the LXX’s messianic accentuation comes from Numbers 24, vv. 7 and 17. The LXX translates the Hebrew text of v. 7 (“water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters”) as “there shall come forth a man (ἀνήρ) from his seed, and he shall be lord over many nations.” By doing so, the interpreters draw attention to a specific king coming out of Israel that will rule the nations. What is more, this particular king receives an eschatological association in the remainder of the verse. There the Hebrew expresses that the king “shall be higher than Agag,” while the LXX prefers “his kingdom will be exalted above Gog.” Instead of Agag, the LXX portrays this king and his kingdom as having ultimate supremacy over

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24 Horbury, “Monarchy and Messianism,” 109. That they stressed this point for messianic purposes becomes clearer in light of the LXX’s plant imagery of Genesis 49:9 (“…from the bud [or sprout] you went up…”), similarly used later by Isaiah in 11:10 (“…that when the root [or shoot] of Jesse raises up…upon him will the nations hope”), both of which refer to an eschatological day (Gen 49:1; Isa 11:1-10) (Ibid.).
the archenemy of the eschaton, Gog (Ezek 38-39; cf. Rev 20:8). In v. 17, these messianic overtones continue when the LXX again points to a man (ἄνθρωπος), instead of a “scepter” ( βασιλεία), rising up from Israel in the context of the last days (cf. Num 24:14). Like Genesis 49:10, Numbers 24:7 and 17 reflect a monarchical succession that will reach its apex in the final days, a Davidic, messianic nuance indeed.

(3) The interpretive decisions observed in the first two texts underscore the existence of a monarchical type messianism during the third-century translation of the Pentateuch. This third text, from Isaiah 28:16, will show that the same interpretive choices were prevalent during the early second century BCE as well. In this prophetic word, both the Hebrew and the LXX tell of a precious cornerstone which God himself would be laying in Zion. A rather different emphasis, however, occurs toward the end of this verse. The Hebrew states, “Whoever believes [i.e. under the rule of God] will not be in haste,” while the LXX reads, “the one who believes upon him (ἐπὶ αὐτῷ) will not be put to shame.” That an object of faith is included in the LXX’s rendering, rather than faith in and of itself, surely implies a messianic understanding, especially in light of Isaiah 11:10: “The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule over the nations; upon him (ἐπὶ αὐτῷ) will the nations hope” (LXX).

Together these three examples verify that the translators of the LXX had an interest in preserving and emphasizing the monarchical promise that a unique individual

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26 Philo seems to take Numbers 24:7 in the same manner as he footnotes it with reference to a national deliverer: “for a man will come forth, says the word of God, leading a host and warring furiously, who will subdue great and populous nations” (Philo, *De Praemiis et Poenis*, 95).

27 Paul and Peter also see the messianic implications (Rom 9:33; 10:11; cf. 15:12; 1 Pet 2:6).
would arise from Israel, and particularly from Judah, to rule supremely over the nations. Such emphases in the translation of the LXX reflect the messianism of Judaism during the third and second centuries BCE, and thus make it unnecessary for one to argue for its absence prior to the Hasmonean revolt.28

**Messianism and the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha**

These aforementioned arguments expose messianic hopes common to Palestinian and Diaspora Jews from the late fifth to the early second century BCE by observing the ideology driving the canonization and translation of the OT. That such messianic underpinnings were common to Judaism can also be observed in the other literature that appears in the early-second-century BCE to the early-first-century CE. Two sources relevant to this period are the OT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.29 The books included in these resources consist of non-canonical documents reflecting early Jewish traditions of thought, some of which the Christian church accepted as helpful (Apocrypha), while others it largely rejected (Pseudepigrapha).30

As a term, “messiah” (i.e. χριστός) only occurs once in all fourteen books of the Apocrypha (2 Esdr 7:29); however, the late dating of the book in which even this one

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28Heinz-Josef Fabry affirms that messianism exists in the LXX, especially in the Prophets (e.g. Isa 9; 11; 53; Mic 5:2; Zech 9:9; Jer 23:5; Ezek 34); however, overall he does not find a “homogenous” image of the messiah (“Messianism in the Septuagint,” in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures*, eds. Wolfgang Kraus and R. Glenn Wooden [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006]: 193-205. Johan Lust is even more cautious due to the textual-critical problems in the LXX (Johan Lust, “Messianism and Septuagint,” in *Congress Volume Salamanca 1983*, ed. J. A. Emerton [Leiden: Brill, 1985]: 174-91).

29For an extensive argument for messianism in the OT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha see Horbury, *Messianism Among Jews and Christians*, 35-64.

appears seems to discredit its originality.\textsuperscript{31} Nevertheless, this absence of explicit material does not necessarily abrogate the messianic implications found elsewhere in the Apocrypha. Such implications manifest themselves in at least two ways.

First, the interlocking themes unique to messianism are fairly prevalent. For example, in the narrative of 1 Maccabees 4, Judas Maccabeus (166-160 BCE) not only defeats Lysias, but also gladly ascends mount Zion with his army to rebuild its walls and restore the temple (vv. 34-61). This, of course, happens in relation to Judas’ prayer for God to consider them as he did his servant David (v. 30). Later, in chapter 7, Prince Nicanor comes up against Judas at Jerusalem with a large army. However, following the priests’ cry to God for an Assyrian-like deliverance, Judas slaughters them, and in turn sets forth a national celebration (vv. 26-50).\textsuperscript{32} Thus, redemptive hope, national salvation, and divine victory accompanied with judgment are all themes present within this narrative that accord with the divine, monarchical deliverance associated with messianism. The same hope-giving narratives occur elsewhere in the Apocrypha (e.g. Tobit, Judith, 2 Maccabees, 1 Esdras).

Second, there was a large concern for the throne of David, something already shown to be at the core of OT messianism in the HB and LXX. According to Sirach, God ordained the inheritance of the king to remain with the posterity of David alone (45:25; 31:1

\textsuperscript{31}For clarification, these fourteen books include 1-2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (or Sirach), Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah, Prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasseh, and 1-2 Maccabees. James H. Charlesworth argues for no mention of the term “messiah”; however, this is surely due to his inclusion of only thirteen books in the Apocrypha (“From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects,” in The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity, ed. James H. Charlesworth [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992]: 16).

\textsuperscript{32}Though the events of this narrative are peculiar enough to be ‘messianic’, and there is an interesting parallel in 1 Maccabees 3:4 with the kingship of Judah in Genesis 49:9, no argument is being made here for Judas Maccabeus donning a messianic role.
48:15; cf. 47:2, 22; 49:4). In his list of Israel’s key patriarchs, the writer of 1 Maccabees is sure to note David’s throne being one of an “everlasting kingdom” (2:57). The writer of 1 Esdras exaggerates Zerubbabel’s role following the return from exile by portraying him as the wise one who descended from David (3:1-5:6; cf. Ezra 2:2-5:2). Moreover, the remembrance of David stems from God’s faithfulness to him (1 Macc 4:30), David’s own paradigmatic leadership (1 Esdr 1:5, 15; 5:60; 8:49), and their own possession of his writings (2 Macc 2:13).

Though not necessarily messianic in and of themselves, these thematic and Davidic observations within the Apocrypha at least prove that a particular ideology, rooted in the OT and enhanced by the LXX (as seen above), still continued within Jewish thought at this time. The Pseudepigrapha points to the same conclusion, yet unlike the Apocrypha, it makes explicit references to a messiah in at least four books: Psalms of Solomon, Similitudes of Enoch, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch.33 Since the latter two date well into the first century CE, presumably composed in reaction to the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE), they will be excluded here.34

Written against the backdrop of a previously despicable Hasmonean government and an unwanted Roman rule (c. 63-50 BCE),35 Psalms of Solomon articulates a message of hope in the coming reign of a messianic king from David’s line:

“Behold, O Lord, and raise up for them their king, the son of David, in the time known to

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33See Charlesworth, “From Messianology to Christology,” 17; although “anointed” does apply also to priests (e.g. T. Reuben 6:8; T. Levi 8:4; 17:2, 3; cf. Sib 5:68). The other places where “messiah” appears should also be noted: 2 Bar 29:3; 30:1; 39:7; 40:1; 70:9; 72:2; 4 Ezra 7:27, 29; 12:31-34.


35See Collins for the political context of Psalms of Solomon (Scepter and Star, 49-53).
you, O God, that he may reign over your servant, Israel” (Ps Sol 17:21). Through the raising up of this eschatological king, this “anointed one” (17:32; cf. 18:5-7), God will finally deliver the nation of Israel, rightly judge the nations for their wickedness, and establish his kingdom over all (17:22-32). Doubtless, this messianic picture is similar to and emanates from Isaiah’s (e.g. Isa 9:2-7; 11:1-10; 42:1-45:25).

The second pseudepigraphical work antedating 70 CE and including explicit references to a royal messiah is Similitudes of Enoch (or 1 Enoch 37-71). Similitudes portrays a rather unique messianic image. Like Psalms of Solomon, God’s elect people await the appointed day, when God will judge the wicked and gather the righteous to himself through his “anointed” (38:1-3; 48:10; 51:2-3; 52:4). In Similitudes, however, the messianic agent causing the eschatological judgment and salvation to transpire is himself divine, pre-existent, and dons the title, “son of man” (46:2-4; 62:7). This individual’s dominion covers the earth, he is worthy of worship, and judgment comes on those who reject his sovereignty (62:5, 9; 63:11; 69:26-29).

Without question, this recalls the messianic ideology found also in Daniel 7:13-14. Daniel, too, sees “one like the son of

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36 Significant here is Horbury’s observation that the hymnody and prayers of the Psalms of Solomon suggest “that messianic expectations...were communal, not simply idiosyncratic” (“Jewish Messianism and Early Christology,” in Contours of Christology in the New Testament, ed. Richard N. Longenecker [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005], 15).

37 By distinguishing the Similitudes (or Parables) of Enoch, I am accepting the seven-fold division of 1 Enoch. The Book of Watchers (1 Enoch 1-35), upon which Similitudes primarily depends, can be dated at least to the second century BCE according to Qumran fragments from cave 4—though Similitudes itself remains unknown to Qumran (Bauckham, “Apocalypses,” 135-39).

38 Though some have argued that Similitudes presents the “son of man” as only a transcendent figure, and thus a far cry from the human son of David mentioned in other texts, such claims can be put to rest by the noticeable parallels with the divine/human messiah of Psalms, Isaiah, and Daniel (e.g. 1 Enoch 46:1//Dan 7:9; 1 Enoch 47:3//Dan 7:10; 1 Enoch 48:8-10//Ps 2:1-12; 1 Enoch 48:2-6//Isa 49:5-7; 1 Enoch 49:2-3//Isa 11:2-5; 1 Enoch 49:4//Isa 42:1; 1 Enoch 61:10-13//Isa 9:7). Contra George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Salvation without and with a Messiah: Developing Beliefs in Writings Ascribed to Enoch,” in Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era, eds. Jacob Neusner, William S. Green, and Ernest Frerichs (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987): 49-68.
man,” coming with the clouds of heaven, to whom the Ancient of Days grants dominion, a kingdom, and all the peoples of the earth.39

The textual evidence briefly summarized here verifies that the OT apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature contains a Jewish messianic ideology. Again, this confirms that Jews, who were writing from c. 200 BCE-50 CE, were not only familiar with messianism’s framework, but also using it in their work to cultivate national hope for Israel during political/religious crisis.

**Messianism and the Qumran Community**

Another important compilation of literature substantiating the claim that there was a recognizable messianism among Jews during the Second Temple period is the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) of the Qumran community. This sect emerged from a number of the Hasidim (i.e. pious Jews) dissatisfied with the political ambitions of the Hasmonean rulers.40 Together they removed themselves from participation with the broader community, and devoted themselves to an intense study of the OT scriptures. Thus, while the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha merely allude to OT themes, the DSS, dating from c. 150 BCE-68 CE, often quote OT texts and reinterpret its themes. In many cases, their literature reflects their longings, one of which is for political/religious salvation effected by a messiah. At least three aspects at Qumran justify this conclusion.

First, like the Jews before them, entrenched in the HB and LXX, Qumran believed in a royal messiah. In some instances, the DSS present this kingly messiah

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39So Collins, *Scepter and Star*, 173-94. However, there is no need to depend on 4 Ezra 13 as he does. 4 Ezra was written late enough to be affected thoroughly by first century Christians.

40Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 488.
alongside a priestly one (e.g. CD 12:23-13:1; 1QS 9:11; 1Q28a 2:12ff.). One could argue this dualistic understanding takes away from a common messianism at Qumran. This conclusion, however, is unnecessary once one considers Qumran’s own persistent efforts to develop a royal, Davidic, messianic, ideal.\footnote{Cf. Horbury, *Jewish Messianism*, 60. Furthermore, on a grammatical basis, the DSS are fairly vague when referring to the messiah(s) of Aaron and Israel (e.g. CD 12:23-13:1; 14:18-19; 1QS 9:11; cf. 1Q28a ii 11-21) (Collins, *Scepter and Star*, 79). That is, the texts could be interpreted to mean that there is one messiah serving in a priestly and kingly role (esp. in CD 19:10-11; 20:1; 4QD\textsuperscript{3}), or possibly two messiahs, one priestly and the other kingly (L. H. Schiffman, “Messianic Figures and Ideas in the Qumran Scrolls,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992]: 118-19).

42All DSS quotations are taken directly from Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997).} Their works show a devout commitment to the lasting monarchical system, ordained by God in the OT to remain within Judah’s, and thus David’s, progeny. In their commentary on Genesis 49:10, the throne always remains Judah’s and the same royal seed “will not be wanting to David,” for God granted the “covenant of kingship” to him alone (4Q252 Fr. 6).\footnote{All DSS quotations are taken directly from Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997).}

Second, this Davidic monarchy plays a significant role in its relation to Qumran’s understanding of their messiah: this anointed one is a king, descended from the line of *David*, coming in fulfillment of the Prophets’ words. The Lord promised to “raise up for David a righteous branch” (Jer 23:5; 33:15); and Qumran was not bashful about claiming its immanency for their own dire situation (4Q252 Fr. 6). In 4Q174 1:7-13, they make it a point to reemphasize God’s loyalty to David’s throne from 2 Samuel 7:11-14. In doing so, Qumran also links their Davidic hopes with Psalm 2:1-2 in lines 18-19, drawing a specific connection with this individual also being God’s son, thus underscoring Nathan’s word to David: “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son” (2 Sam 7:14 ESV). They also expect this Davidic king to rule in Zion with the
interpreter of the Law (4Q174 1:12-13; 4Q522 ii 7-8)—a messianic emphasis, which Isaiah had already mentioned before the Exile (Isa 2:1-4; 11:1-14; 54-61).

Third, the DSS also reveal that Qumran anticipated an eschatological day in which their messiah would come to save Israel and judge the wicked nations. Otherwise known as the “Prince of the congregation,” “the righteous branch,” or “Adonai’s agent,” Qumran saw their messiah as the one through whom would come the defeat of Israel’s enemies, the subduing of the nations, the ingathering of Israel, the renewal of the covenant, and the setting up of a righteous kingdom (CD 7:18-21; 1Q28b 5:20-29; 1Q33 5:1; 11:4-9; 4Q285 Fr. 5; 4Q376 Fr. 1 iii).^43^ Much like the kingdom of Isaiah’s prophecy (e.g. Isa 61:1 [cf. Matt 11:5=Luke 7:22]), they expected the reign of this royal Davidic king to bring ultimate healing to their nation and restoration to the world (4Q246 i-ii; 4Q521 Fr. 2 ii 1-14); for indeed, only the coming “Branch of David,” whom God would uphold “with the spirit of might” could accomplish this (4Q161 frs. 8-10).

Though hopes for a separate priestly messiah possibly existed at Qumran, it is still safe to affirm that they maintained the same messianic ideals characteristic of Second Temple Judaism. If messianism, as defined above, manifests itself in the interlocking themes of royal monarchy, Davidic lineage, and eschatological anticipation, then the DSS continue in the messianic traditions of the HB, LXX, Apocrypha, and Pseudepigrapha.

**Messianism and the Testimony of the New Testament Gospels**

Chronologically, this brings us into the period of the NT Gospels, which offer eyewitness testimony to the supremely unique messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.\textsuperscript{44} Though there is great discontinuity between the messianic expectation(s) found in Second Temple literature and those of the NT (e.g. the Messiah’s servant lifestyle, atoning cross-death, triumphant resurrection, and delayed Parousia), enough continuity remains to buttress the claims made above. Only the Four Gospels will be addressed here—counting Luke-Acts as one volume—since they tend to display the ideologies of the broader Jewish community at the time of Jesus’ ministry (c. 28-33 CE\textsuperscript{45}).

First, the Gospels reveal a Davidic hope prevalent among Jews that is similar to the messianism noted in earlier literature. Aiming to expose Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, both Matthew and Luke begin their Gospels by including him in the lineage of David (Matt 1:1-17; Lk 1:27; 3:31; cf. 2:4). This “son of David” brings radical physical and spiritual healing to people (Matt 9:27; 15:22; 20:30-31; Mark 10:47-48=Luke 18:38-39), much like Qumran expected of their Davidic messiah (4Q246; 4Q521). Even more intriguing are the anticipations found on the lips of others. After witnessing Jesus heal a demon-possessed man, the crowds wonder, “This man is not the son of David, is he?” (Matt 12:23). Upon his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the crowd shouts “Hosanna to the son of David,” while also knowing of a direct messianic link with a royal Psalm of

\textsuperscript{44}For dating of the Gospels, see E. Earle Ellis, \textit{The Making of the New Testament Documents} (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 319: Mark (55-58 CE); Matthew (60-62 CE); Luke-Acts (63-64 CE); John (85-95 CE). Objections that the Gospels cannot be trusted as historical literature due to the theological agendas of their authors are without warrant. See Richard Bauckham (\textit{Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony} [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006]), who argues that the Gospels represent trustworthy historiography based on the authoritative testimony of real eyewitnesses that remained the primary sources for each Gospel writer’s account.

deliverance (Matt 21:9=Mark 11:10; Ps 118:26).\textsuperscript{46} In another place they recognize from the OT, that the messiah must come from the descendent of David (John 7:40-42). Even the Pharisees are aware of this (Matt 22:42).

Second, the Gospels demonstrate the messiah’s relationship to royal kingship, especially with regard to the preservation of David’s throne. A ruler shall come forth from Judah to shepherd the people of Israel (Matt 2:6=Mic 5:2; cf. Gen 49:10 LXX). God has preserved the throne and the kingship over Israel for David (Lk 1:32, 69; cf. 19:38; John 12:13-15).\textsuperscript{47} Surely Nathanael and Paul were aware of the same (John 1:49; Acts 13:22-41; cf. 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:2-7). There is a pre-understanding in the chief priests’ and scribes’ accusations that the Christ is a king (Luke 23:2). Their charge of blasphemy following Jesus’ quotation from a royal Psalm and the prophet Daniel only highlights this point (Matt 26:64=Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69; cf. Ps 110:1; Dan 7:13). Furthermore, the predominately Jewish crowd of at least five thousand not only perceives that Jesus might be the expected Prophet, but also intends “to take him by force to make him king”—no doubt showing their anticipations for a political ruler (John 6:14-15).\textsuperscript{48}

Third, like the majority of the literature above, the Gospels reveal a messianic ideology that embraces national salvation and final judgment with the coming of the

\textsuperscript{46}That this link between David and Psalm 118 is messianic becomes even more clear in light of the priests’ reaction in Matthew 21:15.

\textsuperscript{47}Especially peculiar here is Matthew’s genealogy. Out of the entire list, only David is emphatically marked τὸν βασιλέα (“the king”) (Matt 1:6).

\textsuperscript{48}In response to Pilate’s (theologically loaded) question, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus responds with the affirmative (Matt 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:3; John 18:33, 37). Then, with great emphasis, all four passion events demonstrate this was indeed the case, though the words “King of the Jews” are heard from the lips of Jesus’ scorners and are written on a sign posted on his cross (Matt 27:29, 37, 42; Mark 15:18, 26, 32; Luke 23:37, 38; John 19:3-21). Could this be emphasizing the same concern with messianic kingship?
Davidic king in the eschaton. There will be a regeneration of all things when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne (Matt 19:28; cf. Dan 7:9-14). Luke’s account shows that Zacharias, a priest, still expected God to deliver Israel from their enemies through “a horn of salvation in the house of David” (Luke 1:71); something also attested by Qumran (1Q28b; 4Q285). With similar expectations, the disciples ask Jesus, “Is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6, NASB). Jesus’ disciples wanted religious and political liberation, immediately (cf. Luke 19:11). The Pharisees and other sophisticated leaders show their anticipations as well (Matt 15:43; Luke 2:25; 17:20; 23:51).

Though obvious distinctions set the Gospels apart, their narrative framework still provides scholars with enough to draw confident historical conclusions. Together, the Four Gospels plainly indicate that Davidic, messianic anticipations not only existed in Judaism during the early parts of the first century CE, but also cohered with a significant amount of Second Temple interpretation.49

Conclusion

If the above observations serve Judaism in the Second Temple period well, then messianism occupied the interests of Jews from the destruction of the first temple

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49This does not mean the NT writers borrowed from these sources in order to proclaim the Christ; instead they went back to the inspired material of the Hebrew OT, from which Jesus taught them all things concerning himself (Luke 24:44-49). In other words, even though similar messianic expectations existed in their surrounding Second Temple context, the apostles used the OT as their primary, if not their only, text that shaped their understanding of the Christ. In this case, we must also remember that their interpretation of the Hebrew OT was post-Easter. The numerous discontinuities between the Gospel writers’ unique messianism, and the variegated messianism associated with other Jews during the Second Temple period, even those Jews mentioned in the Gospels themselves, are accounted for: the former interpreted the OT Christocentrically (i.e. with the person of Christ and his post-Easter revelation as the aim of the OT text), while the latter only attempted to piece various ideals together apart from such new covenant revelation.
(586 BCE) to the fall of the second (70 CE). Messianism originated in the teaching of the OT scriptures prior to the Exile. Following the return from Exile the canonization of the HB and the translation of the LXX kept messianic expectations alive under Persian and Hellenistic rule, not dormant. The OT apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature did not hinder messianism; if anything, it maintained its ideologies during the Hasmonean period. Qumran’s DSS give outright attestation of the longings for a final messianic deliverance from their religio-political turmoil. This then overlaps with the NT’s testimony, which undoubtedly presents many of the same expectations within the broader community of Judaism in Jesus’ day. Messianism, therefore, remained a common ideology among Jews throughout the Second Temple period.
## APPENDIX

### Comparative Analysis of Hebrew and Greek OT Citations

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<th>HB</th>
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