



WHAT DOES YOUR

FUTURE HOLD?

**The
Chosen
People**



SPECIAL EDITION

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

In one sense, there's really no such thing as "the future"—since the moment we get there, it becomes the present! But when we imagine events that may come to pass and their impact upon us, we feel a little thrill of anticipation and even, if we are honest, some fear. The unknown is unnerving. Would we want to know the future if we could? Perhaps—and perhaps not!

In a way, our view of the future shapes the way we understand our lives in the past and present. I grew up in a Jewish home in New York City, attended Hebrew school, became Bar Mitzvah and observed the Jewish holidays. Although my enthusiasm for day-to-day Jewish observance soon flagged, I always strongly identified as a Jew. *I knew being Jewish mattered.* It mattered not only for me or for my people, but also somehow for the whole world and its destiny, which was fully known only to God. Like many of my peers, I was interested in knowing more about God, but was not finding the answers in traditional Judaism. Maybe you have had the same sort of experience?

Although I deeply respected religious Jews (and experienced all the guilt that came with that respect), I did not think that becoming more religiously observant was the answer. Yet I did know that if I were to find some type of meaningful spirituality, it would somehow have to be consistent with my Jewish identity. This plagued me as I worked my way through myriad religious formulations—from Hinduism to Buddhism to meditation and even a brief foray into Hasidism. Nothing seemed to satisfy my soul or make any sense in the big picture!

An Unexpected Avenue of Faith

When I was 19, after what seemed to be an eternity of searching, a Jewish friend of mine told me about his new faith in Jesus—who he said was the Messiah. I was horrified that a Jewish person would become part of the one religion that was anathema to every Jew. In my opinion, which was based upon the way I was raised, all the bad things that had ever happened to the Jewish people had happened as a result of Christianity. Therefore, it was uncharted and forbidden spiritual territory for young Jewish people like me. I found myself accusing my best friends (there were now two of them who believed Jesus was the Messiah!) of being traitors and of renouncing their right to call themselves Jewish. But soon it became clear to me that what they had discovered was far different from what I had expected. They told me over and over again that their faith in Yeshua (Jesus' Hebrew name), was all about a relationship and unlike anything I would associate with the dry concept of "religion."

I was impressed by their conviction, but I had serious reservations. "Not believing in Jesus" was one of the ways I defined myself as a Jew. In addition, I was brought up in a home that still lived in the shadow of the Holocaust, and I was deeply influenced by the assertion that Christians were responsible for this tragedy. After all, Christianity

was the majority religion of Germany! Religious Christians in Germany should have at least opposed Hitler's efforts. (I was later to find out that many did, and some lost their lives doing so.)

This was really difficult to accept! So I watched and waited and witnessed the way my friends' lives changed before my eyes. For one, they began to identify more with their Jewishness rather than less. After my anger died down, I began to take a new look at Yeshua to see if what they now believed could possibly be true.

After some time, I finally did understand that Yeshua was the Jewish Messiah. He reconnected me to my Jewish identity and faith in a dramatic way that is hard to explain. Once I began to understand our Scriptures as God's voice to mankind, I found myself returning to my Jewish roots. As a result, I became more and more connected to the Jewish people and to God Himself! It was indescribably soul-satisfying, and this new joy of knowing the Creator of the universe slowly began to change my entire life for the better!

Our Present in Light of God's Future

I was still plagued by a variety of questions. I wanted to understand what God had to say about the future of the world so that I could better understand the present. I was eager to find out what the Bible said about where we were headed as a people and as a planet.

Recently, I have been reading a book by my British friend, Tony Pearce. He is a Gentile who loves the Jewish people and has written a book entitled *The Messiah Factor*, which answers many questions about believing in Yeshua from a scholarly and Jewish perspective. The following articles are excerpts from this fine work. In fact, if you do not believe in Jesus and you want to read the whole book, we will send it to you for free! It is really worth your time.

The position of Jewish people—especially our scholars—that Yeshua is not the Messiah is supported by a list of reasons that have been developed for many centuries. I hope you will objectively study them, as well as the case for the other side. Then you can make your own decision about Yeshua.

Regarding the future—does it really matter? Somehow, deep down, we know that it does! Can we help but wonder what the outcome will be when we see the current events in the world? We want to know where history is going and when we will get there.

Most people wonder about these things, although few admit it to each other. None of us really wants to believe that we live in a random universe that has no particular direction or meaning. Believing this would undermine one of our most essential needs as human beings—the need for hope. We must believe there is some purpose to our existence and some direction to our future.

I hope Tony's words about the future will both encourage you and help you think in new ways about our world's future—as well as your own.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President, Chosen People Ministries



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NO PEACE NO MESSIAH

One day, I was deep in discussion with my Jewish friend when he exclaimed in an exasperated tone, “Your Jesus can’t be the Messiah, because there is no peace in the world!”

I responded that Yeshua came the first time to provide atonement for our sins in fulfillment of Scripture’s prophecies of the Suffering Servant—and that He will soon come again to judge the world in righteousness and bring in the promised age of peace and justice.

My friend challenged me, “Where did you get this idea of a ‘Second Coming’? Was it because Jesus did not succeed the first time that he needs another try? The Bible doesn’t say anything about the Messiah coming twice.”

Perhaps my friend had been reading Rabbi Kaplan’s book, *The Real Messiah?* which states, “The main task of the Messiah was to bring the world back to God and to abolish all war, suffering and injustice from the world. Clearly, Jesus did not accomplish this. In order to get around this failure, Christians invented the doctrine of the ‘Second Coming.’ All the prophecies that Jesus did not fulfill the first time are supposed to be taken care of the second time around. However the Jewish Bible offers absolutely no evidence to support the Christian doctrine of a ‘Second Coming.’”

This is a traditional Jewish response to the question of whether Yeshua could be the promised Messiah. It is obvious that there has not been universal peace in the days since Yeshua came—but does this necessarily mean that Yeshua is not the Messiah prophesied in the Jewish Bible? Let’s consider the question.

A Problem for Rabbinic Judaism

If we look to rabbinic tradition, we can see that the rabbis too have had difficulties with this issue. Although the prophets painted a clear picture of the Messiah reigning and bringing about the redemption of Israel, the end of war and universal knowledge of God (Isaiah 2:1-4, Isaiah 11:1-9, Ezekiel 40-48, Daniel 2:44, Zechariah 14), there is another set of prophecies that speak of the Messiah suffering as an atonement for sin (Psalm 22, Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Daniel 9:25-26, Zechariah 12:10). How do the rabbis reconcile these two seemingly contradictory depictions of Messiah?

One intriguing possibility, which can be traced to the third or fourth century CE, is that there are two Messiahs—one called “Messiah son of Joseph,” who suffers and dies; the other called “Messiah son of David,” who rules and reigns. The suffering Messiah is given the name “Son of Joseph” because He suffers rejection and humiliation like Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 37-41). The reigning Messiah is given the name “Son of David” because He reigns in triumph like King David.

An Alternative View

So *are* there two Messiahs—or do the Prophets describe the same

Messiah who is coming on two different occasions with two different aims? Let us examine the latter view.

The accounts of Yeshua's life in the New Testament point to the conclusion that He is the Messiah who fulfills all the prophecies. The New Testament writers also teach that Yeshua will come again in person at some unspecified date in the future. The New Testament, therefore, teaches two comings of the same Messiah. This is not just an incidental doctrine, but is integral to the whole message of the New Testament.

This does not imply that Yeshua failed the first time and is coming back to try again. Rather, it points to different aims for each coming. Yeshua fulfilled the Messianic prophecies of the Suffering Servant through His sacrifice to atone for the sins of the world. He fulfilled other Messianic prophecies as well: He was born to a virgin (Isaiah 7:14) in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) and He preached a message of good news to the poor, bringing release to those in captivity to sin and sickness (Isaiah 61:1-2). He was executed as a transgressor—although without sin Himself—prayed for those responsible for His death, was buried in a rich man's tomb and rose again from the dead on the third day (Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, Zechariah 12:10, Psalm 16:8-11).

When the Messiah Yeshua returns in power and glory, He will be revealed as the longed-for Messiah, Son of David. He will bring an end to the conflict which will be raging over Jerusalem, threatening the world with destruction (Zechariah 12-14, Revelation 16-19). He will destroy the world system responsible for corruption and wickedness on earth and for the end-time tribulation (Jeremiah 51, Revelation 18) and He will set up a godly kingdom from Jerusalem, bringing peace and justice to the nations of the world (Isaiah 2:1-4, Revelation 20:4-6).

The fact that Yeshua did not bring lasting peace at His first coming does not disprove the possibility that He is indeed the promised One of Israel. Rather, it is part of God's plan that Messiah would come once to die for our sin, bringing salvation and forgiveness to all who believe, and later return as Judge and King. The view of two comings of Messiah with two distinct aims as described in the New Testament fits perfectly with the two distinct "portraits" of the suffering and reigning Messiah found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Yeshua Himself stated that His first coming was not the "end of the story." He said,

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17-18).

There is one Messiah who would come twice—and that Second Coming could be very soon!



ARE WE LIVING IN THE END OF DAYS?

Because of the return of the Jewish people to Israel and the crisis in the Middle East, many people today are interested in what the Bible says about the Messiah and the end of days. In an article posted in the summer of 2002 on the Jewish website Aish.com, Rabbi Wilson wrote,

“We are living in very turbulent times, to say the least. Whereas only two years ago the world and the people of Israel were optimistic about a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict, today that optimism has been replaced by fear and depression—fear of unbridled and senseless terrorism, and depression from what appears to be a no-win situation for the State of Israel.

“Now, more than ever before over the last 50 years, the Jewish people, and even the world in general, need a savior. We need someone who can, somehow, perhaps even mystically, bring about more than just a tenuous cease fire between two warring peoples. We need someone who can, once and for all, bring an end to all human conflict, especially in the Middle East. And, if someone can do that—a tall order—then perhaps he would also be able to destroy whatever other evil exists in the world. As he engineers this long-dreamed-of world peace, let him make unethical and immoral behavior a thing of the past, too. In other words, this savior, if he is truly a savior, should usher in a permanent utopian society where virtuous living is second-nature. And what shall we call this modern-day hero of Biblical proportions? In Judaism, he has always been called ‘Moshiach’ (Messiah), ‘the anointed one,’ because as a Jewish king he is to be anointed upon taking office.”

The Prophet Zechariah Speaks About Current Events

Zechariah, a Jewish prophet from the 6th century BCE, has some amazingly up-to-date information on current events! He describes a global conflict over the status of Jerusalem, a question that will affect not only the countries of the region, but also the whole world:

“And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.”

(Zechariah 12:3)

Zechariah prophesied that in the last days of this age, there would be a worldwide crisis focused on the Arab-Israeli conflict and on the question of who rules Jerusalem. This is already a main area of global concern; more UN resolutions have been passed on this issue than on any other. According to the prophet, the Middle East crisis would



capture the attention of the whole world in the last days, and the search for a peace settlement would be of prime importance. Today, a “quartet” composed of the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the UN (representing all other nations) is attempting to negotiate a peace plan for the Middle East.

From attacks on Israel’s territory to global antisemitism, we can see the nations of the earth gathered together against Israel today—just as the prophet Zechariah said. Psalm 83:4 also describes the surrounding nations wanting to eliminate Israel: *“Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.”*

According to Scripture, the armies of the world will eventually gather together against Jerusalem to fight. When this happens, God says, *“I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”* (Zechariah 12:10)

The “one who was pierced” is Yeshua, who came once to die and will return to bring peace to Israel and the world. In that day, Yeshua will fulfill the prophecies of the reigning King Messiah—just as He has already fulfilled the prophecies of the Suffering Servant Messiah (see Isaiah 53).

“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it...For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:2-4)

How close are we to the fulfillment of these prophecies? It is clear that a “world full of enemies” surrounds the nation of Israel! There is little hope for negotiations, and most Israelis and Americans are not optimistic about the possibilities of human success. The prophet Zechariah’s description of a coming epic battle for the very future of Israel seems to be more possible now than ever before.

How close are we to the End of Days described in the Bible? I would say we are very close. We should not, of course, attempt to set a date, but we do need to get ready...and turn to the Lord before He returns to us.

What about your future?

We are grateful to Tony Pearce for allowing us to use his excellent book and make editing changes as needed for the purposes of fitting as much information as possible into our format.

I will pour on
the house of
David and on
the inhabitants
of Jerusalem
the Spirit of
grace and
supplication;
then they will
look on me
whom they
have pierced
and mourn for
him as one
mourns for his
only son...

Zechariah 12:10

Maybe, Just Maybe, It Is True

There has been an unmistakable revival of interest in ancient texts. The phenomenal success of *The DaVinci Code* a few years back and the astonishing number of Kabbalah centers springing up like mushrooms is ample proof that there is a yearning for life's meaning that no amount of modern knowledge can satisfy. And we have a disquieting suspicion afoot that the ancients had something we may have overlooked.

Perhaps it's time to take a look into a collection of ancient texts from which many have drawn priceless knowledge. It's called the Bible.

The meaning which we crave, whether we are aware of it or not, is built into the fabric of the universe. But how are we to discern it?

Rather than decipher some code or puzzle to figure out the future, our Creator has given us a plainly marked path to follow and someone dependable to show us the present. It is none other than the Messiah of Israel—Yeshua (Jesus) whom the Hebrew Scriptures foretold and the New Testament revealed.

Look Before You Leap

It is said that faith requires a leap. But it's always good to scope out the terrain first. The Bible has some signposts to look for:

MAKING THE CASE FOR MESSIAH

- 1) Everyone needs God's forgiveness.
"For in Your sight no one living is righteous."
(Psalm 143:2)
- 2) God has provided a means through which we may be reconciled to Himself.
"Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions, You will provide atonement for them." (Psalm 65:3)
- 3) The Messiah is God's provision for our forgiveness.
"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)

What Should I Do About It?

There is only one thing to do. Receive the gift of forgiveness God offers by accepting Yeshua as your Messiah. You can do this, right now, by praying: "Messiah Jesus, I receive You now as my Lord and ask You to guide and empower me to become Your true follower. I accept the atonement You made for my sins, and Your free gift of forgiveness. Help me turn from falsehood and follow You in truth."

"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12)

I am Jewish and want to know more about Yeshua (Jesus). Please send me the FREE book, *The Messiah Factor*. 3141F

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