They Expected the Messiah to do these Things



There is an old Jewish explanation about the coming of the Messiah. It goes something like this: *The Messiah should have come in the year 4,000, but because of the sin of Israel, He delayed His coming.* The religious Jews expected the Messiah to come at about the Biblical year 4,000. They based this on the creation sequence equating one day as a thousand years. At the end of the fourth day and beginning with the fifth day God made living creatures. The Messiah was to make us *new creatures*! I have always taught that the Messiah came in the year 4,000 but, because of the sins of Israel, we were blind to His coming.

It turns out that my Jewish brethren had many expectations about the coming Messiah. Yeshua came to fulfill the prophecies (where their expectations originated), but He did not meet all of their expectations. He completed some prophecies in ways they never imagined. Even the disciples who believed in Him were amazed as to how the fulfillment happened. John, the writer of the Gospel, explained that the Holy Spirit later revealed what really had happened and why.

One thing is clear. No one had perfect expectations to match the prophecies of the Messiah's coming. As a result, many, especially in leadership, rejected Yeshua's testimony and deeds because He did not meet their expectations. In the end Yeshua did fulfill the prophecies and continues to do so to this day.

We are another generation with expectations of the Messiah's return. Do our expectations match the prophecies of His second coming? Or, do we have expectations that will not be met by the Messiah when He returns? Let us examine more fully what they were anticipating the first time. It could well temper our own expectations and help us to see how God fulfills His own word.

Some have said that the Jews expected a Messiah that would be a military leader like King David who would lead Israel out from under foreign oppression such as the ancient Romans. Some have said that the Messiah is not a person but is more of a *golden age* for Israel where everyone would prosper and men would be at peace with one another. But I would like to examine 34 specific expectations of

the people in the day when Yeshua came, based on the prophecies as they understood them at that time. Let us consider those expectations and compare them to what Yeshua did and did not do. Because of the large number and explanations needed this article is divided into two parts. Part I will address the first expectations and Part II will address the remainder.

1. They expected that He would be a son of David (the tribe of Judah).

According to the prophecy, the Messiah was to be of the birth lineage of David. This is why the Gospels of Matthew (Matt 1:1-17) and Luke (Luke 1:27, 69, 2:4) give special attention to the birth parents of Yeshua, tracing back to King David.

2. They expected that He would be the Son of God.

The term *Son of God* had a variety of meanings to the Jews. In one sense everyone that is part of this creation could be called a son of God. But the title of the *Son of God* had to do with the House of God and God's own authority. Just as Joseph was sent by Jacob to check on the welfare of the flock and his brethren, he was under the authority of his father and therefore was performing his duties as the Son of Jacob. Yeshua's use of this expression is tied directly into the expression "My father sent Me." Being the *Son of God* equates the son as being equal to God. This is why those in religious leadership resented and disputed Yeshua (the Messiah) as making Himself equal with God. Peter's answer to Yeshua's question of "Who do you say that I am?" not only serves as a confession of faith but reflects the expectation of who the Messiah was to be.

And Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Matthew 16:16

A parallel expression to the Son of God is the title *Son of Man*. This expression was first given by the prophet Daniel and Yeshua used it repeatedly of Himself. The people expected the Messiah to be a Super-Man type figure, able to heal and teach as no man had done before. Yeshua referenced this expression when He wanted the people to take note of His deeds as being the deeds of God (the deeds of the Messiah).

I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven <u>One like a Son of Man</u> was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him.

Daniel 7:13

3. They expected that He would be born in Bethlehem.

When the wise men of the East came seeking more information on the birth of the Messiah, they were told to search for one born in Bethlehem. This was the birthplace of David and since the Messiah was to be the son of David, it followed that his birth would be in the same community.

Has not the Scripture said that the Messiah comes from the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?

John 7:42

However, the question could be asked, "Why didn't the religious leadership who answered the wise men travel with them to see if the Messiah was in fact born at that time?"

Part of the answer can be found in this question. "If they found a child (and there were many) how would they know that this child was the Messiah?" The evidence of the wise men traveling from the East was a typical thing. Everyone was looking for the Messiah to come. The evidence of a particular star fell within the spectrum of foreign wisdom, like the prophecy of Balaam associated with the future Messiah.

I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; a star shall come forth from Jacob, and a scepter shall rise from Israel, and shall crush through the forehead of Moab, and tear down all the sons of Sheth.

Numbers 24:17

4. They expected that He would come to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is the city of the King. The Messiah is to reign from Jerusalem; therefore, the Messiah must come to Jerusalem and make Jerusalem the centerpiece of His kingdom.

...the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

Matthew 5:35

This is part of the reason why the religious Jews were not all waiting in Bethlehem for the Messiah. Everyone expected the Messiah to present Himself in Jerusalem.

5. They expected Him to "console Israel" and "redeem Jerusalem."

The prophet Isaiah, in the final 27 chapters of his book, speaks of the consolation and redemption that the Messiah would bring. Virtually all New Testament doctrines can be traced to those same chapters. In fact, the New Testament primarily quotes Isaiah. A man named Simeon and a woman named Anna, who were devout and waiting for the Messiah in the temple, gave powerful testimonies of their anticipations from Isaiah's prophecies.

When Joseph and Mary first came to the temple in Jerusalem with Yeshua, they encountered both of them. According to their testimonies, Simeon was looking for the *consolation of Israel* and Anna was waiting for the *redemption of Jerusalem*. Isaiah said it this way.

How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices, they shout joyfully together; for they will see with their own eyes when the Lord restores Zion. Break forth, shout joyfully together, you waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God.

Isaiah 52:7-10

6. They did not expect He would "come up from Egypt."

The Gospel of Matthew details the early escape of Yeshua and His family from the threats of King Herod. The journey to Egypt and then the return to Nazareth accomplished that but it also set the stage for a prophecy many did not expect – the Messiah had come up from Egypt. This followed the pattern of Joseph when his bones were brought out of Egypt at the exodus and later buried in the land of Israel. The story of Joseph is the Messianic model and the beginning of the story of redemption of the Jews. Matthew explains it this way.

And he arose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed for Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod, that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "Out of Egypt did I call My Son."

Matthew 2:14-15

This exact phrase "Out of Egypt did I call My Son" is found in the prophet Hosea.

When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.

Hosea 11:1

However, the context of Hosea is primarily about Israel as God's firstborn son coming out of Egypt. There is a much stronger prophecy and its resulting fulfillment in the overarching pattern of Joseph in being rejected by his brethren, sold for a price, thrown into the pit and coming out of the pit, rising to the position of world leadership. In like manner, Yeshua followed the Joseph pattern, even coming physically out of Egypt as Joseph's bones did.

7. They did not expect He would be called a "Nazarene" and despised.

The Messiah was highly regarded among the religious Jews; therefore, they did not expect that He would be from the town of Nazareth or be despised as prophesied by Isaiah.

He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Isaiah 53:3

However, the disciples did see this prophecy and Matthew in his gospel spoke plainly of the expectation of being despised and forsaken. In fact, Matthew emphatically states it as so.

...and came and resided in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Matthew 2:23

Being called a *Nazarene* was recognized as being called despicable. Here is the problem and why the Jewish religious leaders did not expect the Messiah to be a Nazarene. First, there is no Old Testament reference to Nazareth anywhere. There is no Scriptural quotation that says the Messiah was to be from the town of Nazareth. They did not expect the Messiah to be despised. The point is clearly made in the Gospel of John when the religious leaders disputed the witnesses who spoke so highly of what Yeshua had said.

They [the religious leaders] answered and said to him [the witness for Yeshua], "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee."

Nazareth was in the region of Galilee. So, why did Matthew say there was such a prophecy?

The answer is found in two places: a person from Nazareth was a despised person (remember Nathaniel's question, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"). Secondly, the prophecy did say that God would do something wonderful in the Galilee region.

But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

Isaiah 9:1

8. They expected that He would rise up as one of their countrymen.

This expectation arose from the messianic themes of Joseph (he was one of the brothers) who rose to rulership of the whole family of Jacob. God also gave Moses the direct prophecy of the Messiah to rise among Israel and be like Him (God).

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet [the Messiah] like Me [God] from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

Deuteronomy 18:15

This was an extended prophecy based on the people hearing God's voice at Mount Sinai then agreeing to listen to whatever God said to Moses. God promised to send *a prophet like Him* from the *mountain* (heaven) who would speak the word of God directly to the people.

9. They expected that He would have a name that meant "salvation."

The Hebrew name Yeshua means *salvation*. It is more than a play on words that the Messiah's name matches the very work that the Messiah was to do.

And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Yeshua [salvation], for it is He who will save His people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21

It also simplifies for all of us when we call for God's "salvation"... whether we realize it or not we have called upon the Messiah's name to accomplish that salvation.

And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered [saved];

Joel 2:32a

Isaiah gives us one of the most powerful examples of how the Messiah's name becomes the focus for calling upon the Lord's name and His salvation.

Behold, God is my salvation [Yeshua], I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation [Yeshua]. Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation [Yeshua]. And in that day you will say, "Give thanks to the Lord, call on His name [Yeshua]. Make known His deeds among the peoples; make them remember that His name [Yeshua HaMashiach] is exalted."

Isaiah 12:2-4

10. They expected that He would be the Messiah the "anointed One."

The Prophet Daniel is the only Hebrew prophet to use the entitled term *Messiah*. The title comes later in his prophecy after he has shown the *Son of Man* given the kingdom by the Ancient of Days [Almighty God]; therefore, the Messiah is He who receives the authority of the kingdom.

I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him [One like the Son of Man] was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

Daniel 7:13-14

Isaiah is the prophet who defines the work of the Anointed One.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to

bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord,

Isaiah 61:1-2

This is why John the Baptist's message, "for the kingdom of God is at hand," was a message of the coming Messiah. This is also why the Jewish leadership accused Him of wanting to be the King of the Jews. This is what Messiah *the anointed One* means.

11. They expected that He would be preceded by Elijah and the Prophet.

Two specific prophecies spoke of those who would precede the Day of God's judgment and the Messiah's kingdom – a prophet like Moses (to support the greater exodus of Israel from all of the nation back to the promised land) and Elijah the prophet (to restore the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).

I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you [Moses], and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

Deuteronomy 18:18

Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

Malachi 4:5

This expectation is why the messengers from Jerusalem asked John the Baptist who he was.

And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

John 1:19,21

12. They did not expect that He would be preceded by "one crying in the wilderness."

Once the messengers determined that John the Baptist was not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet that would be like Moses, they asked him to explain himself. It is clear that the religious leadership did not see the prophecy of Isaiah

40 to be that explicit. John the Baptist explained himself by saying he was the fulfillment of Isaiah's words.

A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Isaiah 40:3-5

It is worth noting that Isaiah 40:6-8 was fulfilled in the days of the Apostles and verses 9-11 will be fulfilled in the last days.

13. They expected He would show the same signs as Moses (water, healing, and the staff).

When Moses was commissioned by God at the burning bush to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, he asked a couple of key questions. The first dealt with the anointing that Moses would receive from God.

But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?"

Exodus 3:11

God answered this question by assuring Moses that He would be with him and that he would bring the children to the same mountain to worship the Lord. The second question dealt with answering the question should Moses be questioned about God's name.

Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?"

Exodus 3:13

God answered the question of His name by telling Moses to announce Him as "I AM" and explain that His name was YHVH. The third question dealt with how would the children of Israel believe that Moses was sent from God to them, especially if someone challenged the testimony of Moses.

Then Moses answered and said, "What if they will not believe me, or listen to what I say? For they may say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you."

Exodus 4:1

God gave Moses three signs: his staff that could become a serpent (Exodus 4:2-4), the instant healing of his leprous hand (Exodus 4:6-7), and turning water from the Nile into blood (Exodus 4:8-9).

When Yeshua began His public ministry He performed the same signs that Moses had done, thus proving like Moses that God had sent Him.

Yeshua turned water into wine (the same as blood) at the wedding of Cana. John's Gospel tells us that the disciples saw this as the first confirming sign that Yeshua was the Messiah.

This beginning of His signs Yeshua did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

John 2:11

Yeshua gave the second sign, again in Cana, when a distraught father sought His help for his sick son in Capernaum. Yeshua did not travel to Capernaum; He simply stated that this would be a sign and announced, "Your son lives." The father returned to Capernaum the next day hearing from others that his son was suddenly well.

So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Yeshua said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed, and his whole household. This is again a second sign [the signs of Moses] that Yeshua performed, when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

John 4:53-54

The third sign of Moses was his staff. Not only could it be turned into a serpent, but God directed Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it upon his staff when fiery serpents bit the complaining Israelites in the camp in the wilderness during the exodus. Yeshua compared His own death of being raised on a cross to the staff of Moses being raised up, explaining it this way:

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.

John 3:14-15

Yeshua therefore said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM..."

John 8:28a

There was a sign placed above Yeshua at the crucifixion when He was lifted up like the staff of Moses. It read "Yeshua of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The first four letters of this script in Hebrew was the spelling of God's name given to Moses at the burning bush—YHVH. The religious Jews wanted the sign changed, but Pilate refused.

14. They expected that He would give sight to one born blind, heal one born lame, give hearing to one born deaf, and cleanse the incurable leper.

The expectation was very great that the Messiah would be able to do many healing miracles, but upon deeper reflection they concluded that the miracles of the Messiah would have to be beyond the healing work of a physician. Instead of giving sight to a man who had become blind, He would have to give sight to one who had never seen, someone born blind. The same was said of the lame person. Leprosy was incurable, so healing would be a miracle. These miracles Yeshua did.

In particular, the disciples questioned the nature of the sin that had caused a particular man to be born blind. Yeshua corrected them and explained how that particular man was there to help reveal the Messiah when He gave him his sight.

When Yeshua healed the lepers, He instructed them to go the temple and perform the law of the cleansing of the leper with the priests as a testimony to the priests.

When John the Baptist was imprisoned before his death, he sent a messenger to Yeshua asking for confirmation of Yeshua. His question and Yeshua's answer were given this way.

Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples, and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" And Yeshua answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me."

Matthew 11:2-6

John the Baptist knew what was expected of the *Expected One*. Yeshua's answer would have been direct and even more profound than just saying, "Yes, I am the Messiah."

15. They expected that He would be able to calm the waves and the wind.

One of the attributes of God is that He is the Creator. As Creator, He must have authority over all of creation. This would include all the elements of energy and matter, fire, wind, water, and natural elements of the Earth. This power and authority over creation is explained by the prophet Isaiah.

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and marked off the heavens by the span, and calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, and weighed the mountains in a balance, and the hills in a pair of scales? Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as His counselor has informed Him?

Isaiah 40:12-13

Even the Psalmist has reflected on God's authority over the wind and the waves.

He caused the storm to be still, so that the waves of the sea were hushed.

Psalms 107:29

More so, it is from the wisdom of Proverbs that this attribution of the Creator is also equated with God's Son (the Messiah).

Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His son's name? Surely you know!

Proverbs 30:4

There were many who expected the Messiah to have this kind of authority – God's authority, yet even the disciples of Yeshua were taken aback when they actually saw Him exercise that authority.

And they came to Him and woke Him up, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And being aroused, He rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"

Luke 8:24-25

16. It was expected that He would raise the dead.

The idea of the resurrection from the dead, that someone could be raised from the dead, was a serious point of contention between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees believed in it and Sadducees didn't. At the heart of this issue was God's own title of Himself. "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Now we all know just as they did in the first century that these three fathers had lived and died, being all three buried at Machpelah in Hebron; yet, God referred to Himself as the Eternal Living God, not God of the dead. By sheer logic, this means that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are somewhere and alive, maybe not in the mortal bodies we live in at the moment, but the inference is clear. There is a life after mortal death, and God is the source of that life.

Furthermore, God has promised His followers, including the three fathers, that the promised land would be theirs in the future with the Messiah. If this is true, and it is, then the Messiah will have be able to raise the mortal dead to bring them all into His kingdom.

The Jews expected the Messiah to raise the dead—those who would inherit the kingdom—at the end of the ages. In fact, this is the traditional teaching of the Feast of Trumpets. God will sound a great shofar and the dead will be raised.

Abraham certainly believed in God's power to resurrect when he promised the lads who helped him and Isaac haul the wood to the sacrificial site (Mount Moriah) of Isaac. Abraham knew that God wanted him to offer up Isaac on an altar, yet He told the young men that he and Isaac would return to them.

And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you."

Genesis 22:5

Abraham was going to obey the Lord and slay Isaac, but he believed that God would then have to bring Isaac back to life to keep His promises concerning Isaac.

Yeshua spoke directly of this kind of faith, the faith that Abraham had concerning the return of Isaac, when he returned to Bethany to raise His friend Lazarus from the dead. Yeshua told Lazarus's sister Martha that He would raise Lazarus from the dead. Martha could not believe it would be that same day, so she related the normal Jewish expectation of the resurrection.

Yeshua said to her [Martha], "Your brother shall rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

John 11:23-24

But then Yeshua said something that only God could say...

Yeshua said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies,"

John 11:25

I am sure you know the rest of this story. Yeshua then proved His own words by raising Lazarus from the dead! This was the final miracle that broke through apathetic unbelief. Everyone started believing that He was the Messiah while the decision was made to kill Him.

Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs [like raising Lazarus from the dead]. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

John 11:47-48

The High Priest Caiaphas made the decision.

...it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish."

John 11:50

17. They expected that the Messiah would ascend to heaven and descend to earth.

When the children of Israel camped at the base of Mount Sinai they watched Moses ascend and descend the mountain several times. The encounter at Mount Sinai is really the birth of the *nation* of Israel. Moses served as the mediator of God's covenant (the Torah, Law of God) with Israel. This was by design. The Apostle Paul explains the mediation roles of Moses and the Messiah.

Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator [Moses], until the seed [the Messiah] should come to whom the promise had been made.

Galatians 3:19

It was a picture of the ultimate mediator between God and the whole world. This is the work of the Messiah.

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Messiah Yeshua,

I Timothy 2:5

Therefore, the Messiah was to be the One who ascended and descended just as Moses had done at Mount Sinai, only the Messiah's ascension would be between heaven and earth. This concept of the Messiah's movements is shared in the following prophecies.

Who has ascended into heaven and descended?

Proverbs 30:4a

This was also the basis of Yeshua's answers to Nicodemus' questions when he didn't understand the concept of being born again. Yeshua referenced the prophecy of the Messiah ascending and descending.

Yeshua answered and said to him [Nicodemus], "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things? If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man."

John 3:10,12-13

This concludes Part I of the article. As we have seen so far, the past resulted in some believing in Yeshua and some rejecting His claim to be the Messiah. It is clear that a full understanding of all of the prophecies mixed with a teachable heart was crucial to judging the matter correctly. Part II will add an equal number of other prophecies and expectations concerning the Messiah's first coming. Part II will be in the September 2010 issue of *YAVOH - He is Coming!*

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