

Dr. Anthony J. Tomasino, Judaism Before Jesus,

Session 14, Jewish Messianism

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This is Dr. Anthony Tomasino in his teaching on Judaism before Jesus. This is session 14, Jewish Messianism.

So, for our last lecture here, we're going to talk about really the series of events which really kind of sets the stage for the New Testament world. The events and the ideas which lead to the development of Jewish Messianism, the belief in the Messiah, and the different forms that Messianism took at the end of the intertestamental period and in the early Roman period. So, let's look first at the situation that now exists.

How have the Jews responded to the Roman conquests? Well, they haven't exactly been thrilled to their toes with what has happened. Of course, we have known and heard about all of the turmoil with the struggles between Herod and the Hasmoneans and with the people continually escaping from the Roman prisons etc., etc. We have also heard that we've got taxes that keep going up and maybe keep going down.

Do taxes ever go down? I'm not sure. But for these people, the taxes kept going up because the Roman generals who were over their country were doing a lot of milking the land for everything they could get out of it to feed their soldiers. Now, just a brief aside here.

We talked quite a while ago about the tax farming system and all the corruption that was involved in the tax farming system. And all that left tax collectors with a very bad image in Judea in this period. But I need to point out something that oftentimes is neglected to be mentioned.

Augustus dramatically reformed the tax collection system. Because of the laws that Augustus passed, tax collectors were not able to take a lot of graft like they had been in the past. There was no incentive to extort more money for taxes.

Because of Augustus' reforms, tax collectors still had a bad reputation in Jesus' time, as we can tell from the Bible. But they were not necessarily the bad, rotten, very evil, awful people that we usually think of as tax collectors. In fact, sorry if that runs anybody's sermons, but the fact is, no, guys like Matthew were not just evil, deplorable people on the government's take.

Anyway, yes, taxes were going up, and there was a large influx of disenfranchised people. I already mentioned that.

The fact that the Romans were requiring the Jews to give back the Greek cities that they had conquered. And because they were giving these back to the Greek residents, a lot of Jews had to flee. These Jews were arriving in the doorsteps of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem was facing a swelling population of refugees.

And these people are living on the streets, and they're begging in the streets. And already the people, of course, are paying all their extra money into taxes. And so you have to imagine that the misery level was just going like this during this time.

You've got the whole outrage, the blow to national pride. They had been a free people. For the first time in centuries, they had been a free people.

They had been conquered by the Assyrians. They had been conquered by the Babylonians. They had been conquered by the Greeks.

And then suddenly they were the ones conquering. And now all that had changed again. They were back under the yoke of the Gentiles.

What a blow to their personal pride and their sense of nationhood. There was resentment against the Hasmoneans. The Hasmoneans had taken offices that they were not traditionally qualified to hold.

The office of high priesthood, the office of king. Of course, there was resentment against Herod—a great deal of resentment.

And then there is this factor that plays into this whole thing. An understanding that Daniel's vision of the four kingdoms was being fulfilled right in their day and age. Now, scholars typically when we read the vision of the four kingdoms in Daniel 7, we read about the procession of kingdoms.

Then, we read in Daniel chapter 8, where one of those kingdoms is identified as being the kingdom of Greece. These kinds of things. Josephus talks about how when Alexander the Great arrived in Jerusalem, the high priest showed him a copy of the book of Daniel and said, see right there, it's talking about you, man.

Well, the coming of the Romans required a little bit of reinterpretation on their part. Because if ever a kingdom seemed to be great and terrible and mighty and crushing everything under its feet, it seemed to be the Romans. And what's more, this is kind of remarkable, in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, they seem to have noticed this little point.

The word for crush, one of the words for crush in Hebrew, and this is used in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, is *ramas*, which sounds an awful lot like Rome. So yeah, the

Romans were the fulfillment of prophecy right before their eyes. And of course, what happens to that fourth kingdom in the book of Daniel? The fourth kingdom is slain at the coming of the Son of Man, and its body is destroyed and given to be burned.

And so, the people of Jerusalem and Judea have got their copies of the book of Daniel close at hand, and they're saying, it's happening, it's happening, right like Daniel predicted it. My, how times have stayed the same. Really? You know? But anyway, believing that the end of the age is coming, a lot of Jews are becoming obsessed, obsessed with the idea that the Messiah is about to make his appearance.

Now, I should point out, first of all, that not all Jews believed in the Messiah. You know, the Sadducees probably had no use for the Messiah. And a lot of probably your common Jews living their everyday lives weren't all that considered, all that obsessed with the notion of the Messiah.

But among many of the Jews, many of the people in Jerusalem, the idea of a deliverer who would come and set them free from the power of Rome and make them a great people again, was very attractive. And what's more, not just attractive, it was something that their scriptures had promised was going to happen. So, they were excited and sitting on the edges of their seats.

So, let's go back to the beginning and talk about where this whole messianism thing comes from. Let's talk about the biblical roots here, shall we? The word Messiah comes from the Hebrew term Mashiach, which simply means anointed. Or we could say smeared, which is actually more accurate.

But Mashiach was a term that could be applied to basically anybody who had been anointed for office. So, in the Old Testament, the priests, when they had the anointing oil upon them, were Mashiach; they were the anointed ones. A prophet could be referred to as an anointed one.

In the book of Psalms, there's a verse that says, speaking of Father Abraham, it says, God warned them and told them, touch not my prophets and do my anointed ones no harm. So, Abraham is being identified as an anointed one, a Mashiach. And then of course, the anointed one par excellence was the king.

And when they would designate somebody to be the king, they would place the anointing oil upon their head. So, quite literally, they were anointed with a special oil, which represented the Holy Spirit coming upon them and making them fit for the office of king. The phrase the Messiah does not appear as a messianic title as in the Old Testament, which, you know, wrecks the several titles of several good books called something like the Messiah in the Old Testament.

There is no such thing as the Messiah in the Old Testament. The phrase my anointed one appears, the phrase anointed appears, and the phrase anointed of the Lord appears, but the phrase the Messiah as a technical term for a coming deliverer, never appears in the Old Testament anywhere. It first appears in the intertestamental period as a title for this Davidic king.

And it's actually not in the early intertestamental period. It's actually fairly late in the intertestamental period that we begin to see this phrase, the Messiah, used as a technical term for the coming deliverer. So, foundations of this messianic hope.

Well, how do we go from the Messiah as the king who's got this anointing oil on his head to the Messiah as being this deliverer who's going to come someday? Well, really, the basis for this idea is to be found in the second Samuel chapter two, chapter seven, rather than verses 11 through 16. The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you. I've quoted this before already.

Okay. This is God speaking to King David through the prophet says, when your days are over, and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my name.

Okay, okay, we're talking about Solomon here, right? Obviously, right? Okay. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. Now, forever is a funky word in Hebrew, you know, and probably a better way to translate this or to think about this is perpetually, right? The idea here is that there is no foreseen end to this.

So, God says, I'm establishing his reign, perpetually, I don't, I'm not saying he's going to reign 20 years, and then we're cutting them off. Okay. So, I will be his father, and he will be my son.

When he goes astray, I will discipline him with a rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men, but my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure perpetually before me. Your throne will be established perpetually.

So, God promises David that he will have perpetual kingship. And we see this played out in the history of the Old Testament when the kingdom splits after the reign of King Solomon. The Northern Kingdom has a number of different dynasties that rise and fall, founded by various people.

But in the Southern Kingdom, the kingdom of Judah, each king who then succeeds is one of the line of David. And so, just as God promised, he maintained that line perpetually. But did he? Because there's this little thing called the Babylonian exile when the kingship was taken away.

And in fact, in the book of Psalms, we read in the Psalms or laments where they say, God, what happened to your promise? What about that promise you made to David, saying that you would establish his reign perpetually? When are you going to come and fulfill your promise to us? And so there was a lot of frustration about that kind of thing. The prophets begin to look. That's kind of hard to read, isn't it? Yeah, the prophets begin to look forward to that day when God is going to bring about this, this new kingdom of David. And really, it actually starts at the time when the kingdom begins to split very early on in this period.

After the division of the Israelites into two nations, the kingdom of Israel in the north and the kingdom of Judah in the south, already the prophets are starting to say, God is going to raise up a new David who's going to pull the kingdom back together again. Isaiah nine, there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish in the former time. He brought contempt to the land of Zebulun, the land of Naphtali.

This is Israel, the northern kingdom says, but in the latter time, he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. These are the three administrative districts of the northern kingdom of Israel. Great will be his authority, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom.

So, the initial hope here is, even while the kingdom is still in existence, the prophet Isaiah here is predicting a king is going to come who's going to bring the nation back together again. Hosea has a very similar kind of statement. He says, afterward, the Israelites shall return and seek the Lord, their God and David, their king.

They shall come in awe of the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days. So once again, this prediction that God is going to bring the nation back together and set a single king over the peoples. The subjugation and eventual fall of Judah did not really quell these hopes, not immediately at least.

Ezekiel speaks about how God is going to set up one shepherd, his servant David. And here, of course, we're talking about a king like David who's going to exercise the kind of authority that David did over all the people of God. He shall feed them and be their shepherd.

I, the Lord, will be their God and my servant David shall be prince among them. In Jeremiah 23, the days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous branch and he shall reign as king and deal wisely and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days, Judah will be saved.

Israel will live in safety, and this is the name by which he will be called: The Lord is our righteousness.

So even after Jerusalem has been taken captive by the Babylonians, the prophets are still predicting the coming of this Davidic king who is going to reunite the peoples and bring glory and righteousness to Judah. Even near the end of the Old Testament period, the prophet Zechariah still speaks these kinds of terms. The Lord will save the tents of Judah first that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be exalted over that of Judah.

On that day, the Lord will shield the inhabitants of Jerusalem so that the feeblest of them on that day shall be like David and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the Lord at their head. And on that day, I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. So here again, we have this prediction of the restoration of David's kingdom.

Now, in some Old Testament texts, it seems like the hope for the restoration of a Davidic king is maybe starting to wane a little bit. Instead, rather, God himself is the one who is going to be bringing the deliverance to his people. In Malachi, we read about the messenger of the covenant.

And who is this messenger of the covenant preparing the way for? Not for the Messiah, not for David. He is personally preparing the way for the Lord. In Daniel, when Daniel is told that there is going to be a day of great distress for the people, he's told not that the Messiah will come then and deliver the people, but rather the archangel Michael shall stand up and defend his people and deliver them from their distress.

Isaiah 59, which is probably one of the later texts in the Old Testament, also talks about the Lord bringing his justice himself. This is kind of a remarkable passage. Justice is turned back.

Righteousness stands at a distance, for truth stumbles in the public square, and uprightness cannot enter. Truth is lacking. Whoever turns from evil is despoiled.

The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, and he was appalled that there was no one to intervene. No king.

So, his own arm brought him victory, and his own righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness like a breastplate. This is the Lord here.

He wore a helmet of salvation on his head. He put on garments of vengeance for clothing and wrapped himself in fury as a mantle. According to their deeds, so will he repay.

Wrath to his adversaries, requital to his enemies, to the coastlands he will render requital. So those in the west shall fear the name of the Lord, those in the east his

glory, for he will come like a pent-up stream that the wind of the Lord drives on, and he will come to Zion as redeemer to those in Jacob who turn from transgression, says the Lord. So, according to Isaiah 59, who is going to rescue Israel? Who is going to be their savior? The Lord himself.

Now, when we get to the intertestamental period, we don't have a lot of texts actually from the early intertestamental period, but what we find is that those texts produced during the Hasmonean age don't even mention the idea of a Messiah. It's almost as if they've given up. Almost as if they're not thinking anymore of those promises to David.

In a way, this can explain what happened during the Hasmonean period. If the people had really been clinging to the hope that the only legitimate king for Judah was a king of the line of David, they would have never allowed the Hasmoneans to take over. But maybe it had come to a point where they're saying, oh, that was for the old days, that was for the old days.

We're living in a new time now. Who knows? But at any rate, what we can see is that the faith in the restoration of the Davidic dynasty seems to have faded. But let's talk about the return of the Davidic king here, shall we? In most of the intertestamental period, this Davidic Messiah makes no appearance.

And in the books of the Apocrypha, we don't see very much about the reference to a coming Davidic king. But after the fall of the Hasmonean dynasty, and really probably actually near the end of the Hasmonean dynasty, we're already beginning to see some longing for the return of the king, for the return of the true king. And you can probably understand why, given what we know about the Hasmoneans at this point.

At this point, it seems like kingship is no longer legitimate. Even though these people are expanding the kingdom, even though they're making conquests and growing the nation like David had in the days of old, they're corrupt. They're not leading the nation in righteousness.

And so probably it's already starting near the end of the Hasmonean period of saying, well, you know what the problem is? These guys aren't on David's line. They have no right to be kings. So, hope for a Davidic Messiah.

The Psalms of Solomon is a collection of 18 Jewish texts, written probably sometime after the coming of Rome. We don't know exactly when. There are various dates which are assigned to these things, and lots of confusion about it.

The Psalms of Solomon is an interesting text. It was one of those texts that was lost for quite a while, but then we found that it had been preserved by the Ethiopic

church. God bless those Ethiopians, you know because they saved a whole lot of stuff for us.

One of the things was the Psalms of Solomon. However, one of the earliest manuscripts we actually had was from the 17th century, when it was discovered. It had been quoted.

We had seen it quoted in some of the early church fathers, but we didn't have a copy of the thing until we discovered that the Ethiopians had squirreled one away and also had discovered some other copies of the thing. But the Psalms of Solomon explicitly repudiate the Hasmoneans. In Psalm of Solomon 17, verses 4 through 10, you, O Lord, chose David to be king over Israel.

And you swore to him concerning his descendants forever that never should his kingdom fail before you. But for our sins, sinners rose up against us. They assailed us and thrust us out.

What you had not promised to them, they took away from us with violence. Okay, so this is obviously being written in the name of somebody who considers himself a descendant of David, right? They in no way glorified your honorable name. They set up a monarchy.

They laid waste to the throne of David in tumultuous arrogance. But you, O God, cast them down and removed their descendants from the earth in that there rose up against them a man who was alien to our race. Can you say Pompey? Also, we see here in this same text, the Psalms of Solomon, a real longing for the legitimate Davidic monarch.

Behold, O Lord, raise up unto them their king, the son of David, at that time known to you, O God, in order that he may reign over Israel, your servant, and gird him with strength that he may shatter unrighteous rulers, and that he may purge Jerusalem from Gentiles who trampled her down to destruction. Wisely, righteously, he shall thrust out sinners from the inheritance. He shall destroy the arrogance of the sinners as a potter's jar.

So here is a text being written probably sometime around 50 BC or so. Some people are saying that it is now the first century AD. Who knows? But at any rate, sometime right around before the time of Jesus, we hear this text expressing this longing for the coming of the true Davidic king, a theme that we haven't seen in a very long time in Jewish literature.

He shall gather together a holy people whom he shall lead in righteousness, and he shall judge the tribes of the people who have been made holy by the Lord his God, and he shall have the Gentile nations to serve him under his yoke, and he shall purge

Jerusalem, making it holy as of old. So, we've got this text of Psalms of Solomon, but they're not the only ones who are longing for this Davidic Messiah at this point. We also see this hope in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in a number of scrolls, in fact.

The Davidic Messiah is not a major theme in the Dead Sea Scrolls, but it is a theme. It is definitely there, and in some scrolls, it is prominent. For instance, 4Q Florilegium.

4Q Florilegium is really a collection of texts that talk about the Messiah, the Son of David. He is the branch of David. Well, we already read that passage, which spoke about that in the book of Isaiah.

He shall rise up with the interpreter of the law to rule Zion at the end of time. So this is a collection of texts that they quote the text, and then they give us the interpretation, and in this case they interpret every one of them as referring to the Messiah, the Son of David. In the War Scroll, we have this fellow called the Prince of the Congregation.

Clearly, this is the same guy, the Messiah, and it is the Prince of the Congregation who is going to lead the people in conquest against the nations. Now, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Davidic King has to kind of share his thunder, and I'll talk about that in a minute, but once again, we see that this hope for a descendant of King David to come and legitimately rule over the people of Israel has reasserted itself here in the time before the coming of Jesus. The most prominent quality of this Davidic Messiah is going to be the fact that he is going to lead them in war.

Unconquerable is his might. The Davidic Messiah is going to conquer the Gentiles. He's going to restore Judah to its rightful place as the premier world power.

And, of course, during this period we see a number of warlord figures who kind of arise who are very likely inspired by this understanding of the role of the Messiah. A little bit later, we're going to see that there are several people in this period who claim to be the Messiah, and this is going to continue on really up until 135 AD with the Bar Kokhba rebellion, a fellow by the name of Simeon Bar Kokhba, who was nicknamed Bar Kokhba, which means the son of the star. He led a great rebellion against the Romans as well, and he was hailed to be the Messiah, the coming king in his day.

So, the notion that this prophesied king was going to come and was going to lead the people not just into independence, I mean, that's only step one. Step two is then they're going to go and they're going to defeat these other nations, and they are going to become the rulers of the world, and all the other nations are going to have to answer to Israel now. I mentioned the fact that in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Messianic king has to share his thunder.

Well, there is another understanding of the Messiah, and it is not necessarily incompatible, though sometimes it seems that it does kind of displace the idea of the Messianic king. This is the idea of a Messianic priest. The Testament of Levi.

We talked about the Twelve Apostles. I just mentioned the Twelve Patriarchs. I just mentioned that briefly a while back.

The Testament of Levi talks about a ruler coming forth from the tribe of Levi who is going to become the righteous priest and lead all the people to righteousness. Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls also put a big emphasis on the role of this eschatological priest, this guy who is going to set things right by teaching righteousness, by making atonement for the people. So that role of atoning, that role of teaching is emphasized with this particular Messianic figure.

So, where did this notion come from? Well, this one also has some biblical roots, really. The Hasmonean rule certainly gave some impetus to it, but Zechariah chapter six seems to have been an inspiration for this way of thinking. See, Zechariah chapter six is kind of a remarkable, well, let's say a remarkably difficult passage, particularly to try to sort out the Hebrew.

My feeling is, reading through it, that it has been perhaps retouched a little bit and not particularly expertly. But at any rate, it's hard to say looking at it from our perspective. But in Zechariah chapter six, we've got this passage where the high priest Joshua sort of figures at the center of this thing.

Zerubbabel, the descendant of King David, also figures in Zechariah in this book. But in Zechariah chapter six, it's almost like Zerubbabel disappears. Instead, his position and the honors that were being accorded to Zerubbabel are now being placed upon the high priest.

It says, take silver and gold, make an ornate crown and sit it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Well, why are we putting a crown on the head of the priest? The priest had his own headdress, and it wasn't a crown. Then say to him, thus says the Lord of hosts, behold, a man whose name is Branch, for he will branch out from where he is.

Wait a minute, that's a messianic title. That's the title of the Davidic king, not the title of a high priest. Okay, see where we're confused here? See why I'm confused here? He will build the temple of the Lord.

Now, in the book of Zechariah, we're already told that God says to Zerubbabel, you're going to build my temple. But here, it sounds like they're saying that Joshua, the high priest, is the one who's going to build the temple. Yes, it is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will bear the honor and sit and rule on his throne.

Thus, he will be a priest on his throne, and the council of peace will be between the two offices. So, it almost sounds like what this text is saying is that Joshua, the high priest, is also going to take the authority of a king. And that might well have, you know, justified the kind of actions that the Hasmoneans were doing.

Maybe that's what their thinking was. Hard to say. The notion that there would be two messiahs, a kingly messiah and a priestly messiah, pops up in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

And this has been a little bit controversial because it's not especially explicit. But it is quite clear that there are texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls where one person seems to be acting in the capacity of a king, and there is another person who is acting in the capacity of a priest, and both of them seem to have equal power, though different offices. So, the king and priest appear together in the community rule.

They're both sitting at the table having dinner together, you know, and they've got the preeminence over the table. But the priest seems to actually have more honor at this meal than does the prince of the congregation, the king. The king's role is primarily to defeat the enemies of the Jews.

He's the guy who's going to lead the people out in battle. He's the guy who's going to conquer the nations. He's the guy who's going to become the monarch over everything.

The priest's role is to lead out all the assemblies, to judge the people, to procure atonement for their sins by righteous sacrifices and good deeds. So, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, there seems to be this division of labor and this idea of not one, but two messiahs. Now, in addition to these very human figures, both the Davidic messiah is understood in almost all these texts as being completely human, almost.

The messianic priest is understood as a human being. In almost all these texts, we have these human messiahs, but there are other texts which have some different ideas. And these are the supernatural messiahs.

Again, some of these ideas are inspired by the Book of Daniel: angelic messianism. First Enoch and 11Q Melchizedek are found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

I really wish I could talk more about First Enoch because it's such a fascinating text. But in First Enoch, the deliverer, the messiah, the king who is going to deliver Israel from its enemies is very clearly envisioned as being a great, mighty angel. And 11Q Melchizedek is one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, kind of a fragmentary text, but clearly the scenario which it is envisioning is Michael becoming incarnate and leading his people in victory over their enemies.

Where does this come from? Book of Daniel, Daniel chapter 7 and Daniel chapter 12, particularly. We read in the Book of Daniel that at that time, Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of great distress such as not has happened from the beginning of the nations until then.

But at that time, your people, everyone whose name is found written in the book, will be delivered. So Michael is going to come to the rescue at the time of the great distress of the people of the Lord. Is he going to become incarnate or is he going to fight like an angel? We don't know exactly how they were understanding that.

It's kind of interesting because this notion of the angelic messiah, of the incarnation of Michael, resurfaces again and again as a heresy throughout history. There is actually a very prominent Christian group today that believes that Jesus was the incarnation of the archangel Michael. Do a little research if you're interested in knowing who that is.

Son of man, Daniel chapter 7. So, in Daniel chapter 7, you know, Daniel sees this vision. In my vision at night, I looked. He's seen the four kingdoms rise and become horrible, including kingdom number four, this one that is great and horrible and tramples all the nations and everything.

And he sees this little mouth, which has a big mouth that speaks blasphemies and all this wonderful stuff. It says, and then in my vision at night, I looked, and before me was one like a son of man. Now, what does one like a son of man mean? Well, the first things he saw were four things that looked like animals.

Now he sees something that looks like a human being. So that's what it means, one like a son of man. Coming with the clouds of heaven, he approached the ancient of days and was led into his presence.

He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power. All peoples, nations, and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away.

And his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Now, an angel goes on to interpret this vision for Daniel. And the angel tells Daniel that one is like a son of man. Well, he doesn't really tell him explicitly, but he says that in those days, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom.

And his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. His dominion shall know no end, which seems to imply that the son of man that Daniel saw earlier in his vision is kind of an avatar, if you will, of the kingdom of God. But that's not the way it was read later.

The rise of the Roman empire clearly meant the coming of the son of man is imminent. You've got this mighty empire crushing all the nations. You've got people like Pompey marching into the holy of holies.

You know, Daniel talked about the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place. Could that be referring to Pompey himself, maybe? You've got all these things that seem to be conspiring to show that this vision is coming to pass in their very day. And so, they're sure that if the great fourth beast is there, the son of man cannot be far behind.

The son of man comes after this fourth world empire has appeared. The empire certainly seems to fit Rome. The notion of identifying the son of man with the appears first in the book of First Enoch, probably about 100 BC.

The book of First Enoch is a composite text. It consists of five different books. Some people have said that it's actually modeled after the Pentateuch, which is also five books.

But there are some sort of different kind of messianic imagery in the different books. They are not written by the same person. They are not written at the same time.

But in one portion of First Enoch, we see this son of man image reinterpreted as referring to a human being possessing supernatural powers. And even more so, fourth Ezra. Fourth Ezra is a later text written around 90 AD, clearly written after the destruction of the second temple.

But in 4 Ezra, we have again a vision of the Messiah being interpreted based upon the son of man vision in the book of Daniel. So this Messiah in fourth Ezra is definitely a supernatural figure. He destroys his enemies by breathing fire upon them.

And now he has the power to turn back the armies, not by using the force of arms or weapons, but rather by his simple commands. He is able to turn the tides of war and so on. So the son of man imagery from the book of Daniel comes into a new kind of light in these passages here.

Now furthermore, interestingly enough, Enoch himself in the book of First Enoch is identified as this son of man. Now, many of you are probably familiar with the story of Enoch and how he became such a prominent figure in Judaism. However, the book of Genesis, which devotes three verses to him, says that Enoch walked with God, and he was no more for God took him.

Well, Jewish traditions grew up around this guy saying, what does it mean for God to take him? Did God take him maybe for a few visits first before he took him

permanently? According to Jewish tradition, Enoch saw all kinds of visions of heaven. But being such a righteous man, he gets accorded this lofty status in Jewish tradition. We have this place where, in the book of Enoch, Enoch tells you that you are that son of man.

So, Enoch himself will be reincarnated as the son of man and reincarnated as the Messiah who will come and deliver Israel in the last days. How about this title, son of God? This is kind of a tricky one. Now, for some time, it was assumed that the title son of God was a Jewish title for the Messiah.

And reason being, of course, because it's the main title used of Jesus in the New Testament. So, the assumption was that Jews recognize that their Messiah would be the son of God. One problem with that theory is that there was no evidence in any pre-Christian texts of the Messiah being called the son of God.

Now, here's the thing. We have that passage from 2 Samuel where we're told that God says to David, your son, I'm going to make him my son. And we also have passages in the Psalm which speak of the king as being God's son.

So, the idea of the king as the son of God is not certainly out of the question. But it didn't figure greatly in the thinking in terms of what the role and the person of the Messiah was all about. In the ancient Near Eastern texts, the son of God was often a title for kings.

And in Israel, it might well have been a title for the king. In 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 2, Psalm 2 has that wonderful verse: the Lord says, you are my son this day, I have begotten you. And no doubt, these are part of the foundation for the idea that the Messiah was God's son.

It appears as an attribute of the Davidic Messiah in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, but not as a title as in the New Testament. Now that's kind of an important distinction. I know it doesn't sound very important, but it kind of is.

See, the question here that arises is, where did Christians come up with this title for Jesus of calling Jesus the son of God? Did it come from Judaism? One of the things that was announced was that a text had been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls that refers to the Messiah as the son of God. There were all kinds of celebrations, and finally, we had it. Finally, we have our proof that this is the son of God. And there were some very prominent Christian and Dead Sea Scrolls scholars who were celebrating this as the nail in the coffin, or as what we might call the smoking gun.

Well, not so fast, because further evidence, further examination of that text kind of indicates that it was probably being misread. And the figure who's being called son of

God in that text is probably not the Messiah, but rather is a person who persecutes the people of God. He shall be called the son of God.

He's going to rule over all the kingdoms, but he also wages war against God's people. This is an interpretation of Daniel 7. And I believe it is a text which is applying the images from Daniel 7, particularly the images of that arrogant little horn who speaks blasphemies against God, and taking those and applying them to the Roman emperor who also called himself the son of God. So, Augustus, this is one of his main titles.

He is the son of God. Subsequent emperors of Rome also are called the son of God. When do Jews start calling the Messiah the son of God? I believe really the earliest evidence is in the Bible, in the New Testament itself.

It's not the only evidence, however. In 4 Ezra, the title used for the Messiah repeatedly is my son the Messiah. That's sort of like, you know, my son, the doctor.

No, my son is the Messiah, but this is God speaking. So, God is constantly referring to the Messiah as his son in that particular text. But really, there is a question, and one of the theories which was popular among the Germans back around the late end of the 19th and early 20th century was that the Christians began to call Jesus the son of God as a way of kind of undercutting the claims of the Roman emperors.

You know, the Roman emperors are saying, we are the son of God. And the Christians respond by saying, hey, we've already got our son of God. He's Jesus.

And so it's very likely that it wasn't so much the Jewish texts that were inspiring the use of son of God as a title, but rather what the Romans were doing, which inspired the use of son of God as a title. That theory was abandoned some decades ago. I'm officially reopening the book on that one because I think it makes sense.

Anyway, so what can we say? The appeal of the Christian faith, really, and the way that the real genius, we might say, of the Christian faith was the way that it managed to combine a number of these messianic expectations in the person of Jesus. Jesus, of course, is depicted as being the son, the descendant of David, the son of David. He is the Davidic Messiah, who will one day conquer the nations when he comes in his second coming.

He is the supernatural priest, the high priest who makes atonement for us by offering his own self as the sacrifice. Jesus is, furthermore, that son of man. And this is, of course, the title that he uses for himself frequently.

Now, oftentimes, when Jesus refers to himself as the son of man, he's talking about being human in his humility. He says at one point when they ask him, hey, where are you staying? He says, well, you know, the birds have their nests, and the foxes have

their holes, but this son of man has nowhere to lay down his head. And again, what does it mean there? It means human being.

But then we get to that trial of Jesus, where they're saying, tell us, are you the Messiah or not? And he says, finally, I am, and you shall see this son of man coming with power and great glory. And there, Jesus sort of spills the beans and says, I am to be identified with that figure from the book of Daniel, who does away with the kingdoms of this world and who has an eternal, everlasting kingdom. So we see in Jesus the fulfillment of so many of these different threads being brought together.

Jesus and the way that he was presented were certainly not incompatible with the messianic ideas of the time. It might make us wonder why Jesus was rejected. It wasn't because of his claims, his claims of his supernatural origins or his claims of being Messiah. There was no law against claiming to be the Messiah in those days.

Why was Jesus rejected? It seems that they had nothing really to do with his theology. They just thought he was the wrong person. Furthermore, they didn't like the idea that they'd have to wait for this kingdom to come.

This kingdom that they were expecting, that they were anticipating, they were thinking that their Messiah was going to come and bring it to pass in their lifetimes by this glorious campaign that they were going to wage against the Romans. And alas, alas for them, not so alas for us, Jesus had a different goal in mind, of course. And his plan was to establish a kingdom that is not of this world, an everlasting kingdom in a way that no kingdom of this world can ever be, a kingdom which shall know no end.

This is Dr. Anthony Tomasino in his teaching on Judaism before Jesus. This is session 14, Jewish Messianism.