Messianic Expectations in the New Testament

What Role Did the First Christians Assign to Jesus?
Messianic Expectations in the Scrolls

- **The Righteous One / the Messenger (Malachi)**—the prophet promised by Moses would prepare the people for the end times as the first sign.
- **The Prince of Light**—the Davidic king who would lead the sons of light in the final battle and establish the Kingdom of God.
- **The Priestly Messiah**—the Interpreter of the Law—a co-leader who would purify the altar of God.
- **The Prince of Heaven**—Enoch / Melchizedek as the Son of Man would be the final judge.
Another Popular Messianic Template

• A family of righteous warriors (like the Maccabees) would drive out the Romans and restore the nation to greatness.

• In Jesus’ day, Simon the Galilean and Judas, a renegade Pharisee, began the rebellious zealot movement continued by his sons and grandsons under the slogan, “No kingdom but God’s, no LORD but Yahweh.”
Other Messiahs (Deliverers)

• A foreign king, similar to Cyrus the Great of Persia (Isaiah 45: 1), would help the Jews regain their independence.

• “Lord of the Sabbath:” A righteous leader would restore the Jewish tradition of a Jubilee Year – every 50\textsuperscript{th} year debts were forgiven (usufruct), slaves released, and farm land was returned to its original owners. 35-36 A.D. was the Jubilee Year.
Is Jesus Really the Kingly Messiah of Christian Orthodoxy?

- Paul (Romans 15: 12), Luke, Matthew and His family claim He had a Davidic heritage.
- In Mark, others call Him “son of David,” but He never accepts the title for Himself.
- In a world in which there were numerous claimants to the traditional messianic titles, Jesus never referred to Himself as the “Son of David” or as “King of the Jews.”
Jesus as the Priestly Messiah -- a “priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek”

See Hebrews 7:1 – 10: 25

- Melchizedek means “King of righteousness.”
- Melchizedek is not a Jew but a “son of God.”
- Jesus has “become a priest, not according to a legal requirement . . . but by the power of an indestructible life.”
- “But when he (Jesus) had offered (himself) for all time as a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God . . . .”
The Timing of the End of Days

And this thing [the return of Melchizedek] will occur in the first week of the Jubilee that follows nine Jubilees. And the Day of Atonement is the end of the tenth Jubilee, when all the Sons of Light and the men of the lot of Melchizedek will be atoned for [and rewarded] . . . For this is the moment of the Year of Grace for Melchizedek. And he will, by his strength, judge the holy ones of God, executing judgment as it is written in the Psalms of David. . . And your Elohim is Melchizedek, who will save them from the hand of Belial. 

Scroll 11 Q 13
Who is the Messianic Messenger – Jesus or John the Baptist?

• Luke 1: 76-79: Zechariah’s Blessing of John: “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins….”

• Although Christian orthodoxy says John was the Messenger, there are hints in the gospels that the first Christians assigned this role to Jesus, who, like Elijah, was a wonder-working prophet from Galilee.
In John, Jesus is the Mosaic Prophet, the Messenger of the New Covenant

She (Samaritan woman at the well) said, “Sir, I perceive that you are a/the prophet . . . .”

Jesus said to her,” Woman, believe me . . . the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth . . . . God is spirit . . . .” The woman said to him, “I know that [the] Messiah is coming; when he comes, he will show us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”  John 4: 19-26
Jesus as the Mosaic Prophet in one of the earliest Resurrection Stories

Luke 24: 18-21: (the Road to Emmaus Story)

“Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that happened in these days . . . Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a great prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people? . . . We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.”
Jesus as the Righteous One, the Prophet

- Peter: “But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you . . .” Acts 3: 14
- Stephen to the Sanhedrin: “You are a stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have betrayed and murdered . . . .” Acts 7: 51-54
Jesus as Elijah, the Messenger of the New Covenant

And this is the testimony of John (the Baptist), when [asked], “Who are you?” He confessed . . . , “I am not the Christ.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are You the prophet?” And he answered, “No.” They said, “Who are you . . .?” He said, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ’Make straight the way of the Lord . . . .”’ John 1: 19-23

-- John is waiting for the return of Elijah at the spot where he ascended into Heaven.
The Adoptionist Theology of the Scrolls applied to the New Testament

• Luke 3: 22: Jesus has a vision of heavenly acceptance at his baptism by John: “This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased (\cite{Psalm 2:3}).”

• In John, it is the Baptist who has the vision of Jesus as the “lamb of God”-- “God’s kid”

• Jews had no concept of a corporeal god who could enter into a union with a woman – that was a pagan ideal for heroic origin.
The Theology of the Gospel of John:

• The Holy Spirit, not Jesus, was the messianic force of history – the heavenly Adonai that would come to earth to rule.

• Jesus was the Righteous One, the end time prophet of God’s word whose role was to prepare the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit. His suffering was a necessary part of the birth pangs of the Spirit.
What Role Did Jesus Expect?

- Mark 8: 31: “And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed . . .”
- Mark 9: 12: “the Son of man should suffer many things and be treated with contempt.”
- Mark 9: 31: “the Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill him . . . .”
- Mark 10: 33: “Behold, we are going to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles, and they will mock him . . . .”
- Mark 10: 45: “For the Son of man also came . . . to give his life as a ransom for many.”
Messianic Expectations (continued)

• Matthew 11: 2-6. “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”
• Mark 8: 27: “Who do men say that I am?” . . John the Baptist . . . Elijah . . . One of the prophets. . . But who do you say that I am?”
• Mark 14: 61-62. “Are you the Christ, the son of God?” Jesus answered . . . “Hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of power.”
• (Stephen said) “Behold I see the heavens open and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.”
Jesus as “a/the Son of Man”

And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified . . . .” The crowd answered him, “We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?” John 12: 23-34

--Paul (1 Cor. 15:3) says that Jesus “died for our sins according to the scriptures.” Where is it written that a/the Messiah must die?”
The scriptural test of the Righteous One

Let us lie in wait for the Righteous One . . . Because he opposes our actions . . . He professes to have knowledge of God and calls himself a child of the Lord. . . And boasts that God is his Father.

Let us see if his words are true, and let us test what will happen at the end of his life; for if the Righteous One is [truly] God’s son, the Lord will help him, and deliver him from the hands of his adversaries. Let us test him with insult and torture, that we may find out how gentle he is, and make a trial of his forbearance.

Let us condemn him to a shameful death, for according to what he says, he will be protected.

Wisdom of Solomon 2: 12-20
The End of the Righteous One

Isaiah 53: “He was despised and rejected by men . . . Surely he has borne our griefs . . . Yet it was the will of the Lord to . . . put him to grief . . . . When he makes himself an offering for sin . . . the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand . . . . By his knowledge shall the Righteous One, my servant, make so many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities.”
Is Calling Himself a/the “Son of Man” really a messianic or apocalyptic claim?

• “Son of man” is the name used by the prophet Ezekiel when he was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

• “Son of man (bar Nasha)” literally means “son of Adam.” It is a term used often in the OT for mankind – i.e., non Jews (the sons of Abraham).

• It was also a derogatory term for a mamzer – one conceived out of wedlock and thus forbidden to marry, own property, or worship in the Temple – Was Jesus an outcast in Jewish society who was forced to find God on his own?
All 4 Gospels contend with problems regarding Jesus’ origin:

- Mark 6: 3: “Is this not . . . the son of Mary?”
- John 8: 30 – 42: The Jews replied, “We are Abraham’s descendants . . . Abraham is our father . . . We are not base-born . . . .”
- John 8: 48: The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan (mix breed) and have a demon?” “I am not possessed,” Jesus replied . . . .