

JESUS - THE JEWISH MESSIAH ?

WE have at the beginning of this leaflet to beg forgiveness for the terrible way the Jewish people have been persecuted and let down by people who ought to have known better — the Church. True followers of Jesus read with distress and sadness the history of the Jewish people with all the betrayals they suffered.

What does the Hebrew Old Testament say about the Messiah? It speaks of a divine Person and of a suffering Servant. It says that the Messiah is to come of the line of David, while the Temple was still standing, after seventy weeks (70x7) of years following the decree to rebuild Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah.



Jesus said that he had to come twice — once as suffering Servant and a second time to save the Jewish people (who will be under attack from an invasion from the far north) and to take up his rule of the world.

WHAT DID JESUS MEAN BY THE SUFFERING SERVANT?

JESUS said he had come not to be served but to serve, and to give his life to redeem many people. He said he was the suffering Servant of Isaiah who was wounded because of our sins, beaten because of the evil we did . . . Of whom the Lord says, “It was my will that he should suffer; his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness . . . My devoted Servant, with whom I am pleased, will bear the punishment of many and for his sake I will forgive them”.

Jesus did not have to die, he volunteered to die so that our sins could be forgiven. He said, “The Father loves me because I am willing to give up my life, in order that I may receive it back again. No one takes my life away from me. I give it up of my own free will. I have the right to give it up, and I have the right to take it back. This is what my Father has commanded me to do”.

Jesus claimed a unique relationship with G-d. He said that G-d was his father. He assumed divine authority — to forgive sins, to give life and to judge the world. This is what led to his crucifixion — for a man to claim divine honours was to the Jewish leaders blasphemy. They did not understand their scriptures with all their hints of the coming of a divine Person, because he came as a Servant and not in the way he will return as conquering King.

But G-d vindicated his claims and did so by the great sign of his being raised from death. The Good News was promised long ago by G-d through his prophets, as written in the Holy Scriptures. It is about his Son, our Lord Jesus the Messiah: as to his humanity, he was born a descendant of David; as to his divine holiness, he was shown with great power to be the Son of G-d by being raised from death. Through him G-d gave me (Paul) the privilege of being an apostle for the sake of the Messiah, in order to lead people of all nations to believe (trust in) and obey (him). Jesus said, “The Messiah must suffer and must rise from death three days later, and in his name the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem”.



G-D'S LOVE FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE IS SHOWN IN TWO WAYS.

FIRSTLY he sent Jesus to free them from sin—from the condemnation that results from failing to obey the Law with its strict demands. He did this by living a life of perfect obedience and then volunteering to suffer the death and condemnation that disobedience deserves, so that, when a person trusts in Jesus for forgiveness, his sins are forgiven because Jesus has been punished instead of him. Just as Abraham was accepted as righteous by G-d because he trusted G-d and not because he obeyed the Law so a person who trusts in Jesus for forgiveness is accepted as righteous by G-d.



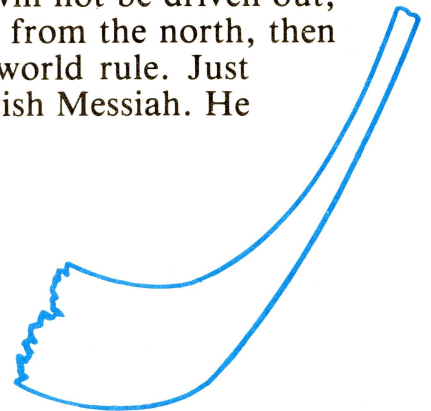
He is trusting in the effectiveness of the sacrifice that G-d has offered on his behalf through the death of his Son Jesus.

He is then expected to follow his Messiah by living a morally good life but without the fear of condemnation that results from trying to be made right with G-d through obeying the Law — because no one (except Jesus) is able to obey the Law perfectly.

The Hebrew-English New Testament says — When G-d promised Abraham and his descendants that the world would belong to them, he did so, not because Abraham obeyed the Law, but because he believed and was accepted as righteous by G-d . . . For no one is put right in G-d's sight by doing what the Law requires; what the Law does is to make man know that he has sinned. But now G-d's way of putting people right with himself has been revealed. It has nothing to do with law, even though the Law of Moses and the prophets gave their witness to it. G-d puts people right through their faith in Jesus the Messiah. G-d does this to all who believe in the Messiah, because there is no difference at all: everyone has sinned and is far away from G-d's saving presence. But by the free gift of G-d's grace all are put right with him through Jesus the Messiah, who sets them free. G-d offered him, so that by his death he should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven through their faith in him.

SECONDLY G-d shows his love by starting to fulfill his promises made long ago through his prophets, that he would regather his people whom he had scattered over the world because of their unfaithfulness to him, and resettle them in their own land again. It is promised that they will not be driven out, and that when finally they are invaded by a huge force from the north, then their Messiah will come to save them and set up his world rule. Just before this happens, Jesus will be recognised as the Jewish Messiah. He will then rule over them forever like King David.

For the sake of any Arab who may read this paper I say that although G-d has willed that the Jewish people return to their land, yet G-d cares very much about everything that happens to the Arab people, and it is not to be assumed that G-d automatically approves of everything Israel does.



THE accuracy of the Bible (which I am asking you to read) can be checked. From the many manuscripts available the text of both the Hebrew Old Testament and the Hebrew-English New Testament can be ascertained extremely exactly. From the very great accuracy of the historical references all through the Bible it is shown that the events were recorded at or near the time of their occurrence by people who must therefore have been knowledgeable. The Bible's scientific statements are accurate and its prophecies are fulfilled exactly (there are many prophecies about towns and nations in the Middle East). Also the legal rules for evaluating evidence show the Bible in a very favourable light. For example, they show that it is impossible to invent significant history without the fraud being detected.