

He came to power in about 721 B.C., and his reign was marked by a determined opposition to Assyria. By 710 B.C. he was forced to become a vassal of the Assyrian king Sargon II, and although he gained independence for Babylon in 704 B.C., the Assyrians unseated him from power in 703 B.C. It is probable that his communications with Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20:12–19 were meant to achieve a military alliance between Babylon and Judah against Assyria.

**MEROM** A site in upper Galilee from which a stream, called the “waters of Merom,” flows into the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee. Today this is called the Wadi Meron. In the time of *Joshua*, a coalition of northern Canaanite kings gathered their troops at this location in a failed effort to halt the Israelite conquest of Palestine (Josh 11:1–6).

**MEROZ** A town named in *Judg* 5:23 and noted for its failure to take part in the campaign of Barak and *Deborah* against Sisera and the Canaanites. The town was cursed for declining to assist in the war effort.

**MESHA** The king of Moab who led a rebellion against King *Jehoram* of Israel in the ninth century B.C. Jehoram and his allies from Judah and Edom then besieged Mesha at Kir-harseth, but the will of the Israelites was broken when Mesha went so far as to sacrifice his own son atop the walls of the bartlements (2 Kgs 3:4–27). A stone monument called the Mesha Stele was discovered in 1868; in it Mesha celebrates how Moab freed itself from vassalage to Israel.

**MESHACH** The Babylonian name given to Mishael, one of the Jewish companions of *Daniel* taken into exile (Dan 1:7). He was one of the three young men cast in the fiery furnace but delivered by God (Dan 3:23–30).

**MESHECH** One of the seven sons of *Japheth*, son of Noah (Gen 10:2; 1 Chr 1:5; 1 Chr 1:17 also lists a Meshech who is the son of Shem). Meshech is mentioned variously in the Old Testament as a non-Semitic people connected with *Tubal* and *Javan* (*Ezek* 27:13; 32:26) and under the rule of *Gog* of the land of Magog (*Ezek* 38:2–3; 39:1). Some scholars also associate Meshech with the Mushki, a tribe mentioned in Assyrian records and possibly identified with the Phrygians.

**MESOPOTAMIA** (Greek, “between the rivers”) The stretch of land, mostly a plain, that lies between the *Tigris* and *Euphrates* rivers. Mesopotamia was the cradle of several great civilizations of the ancient Near East, including Sumeria, Assyria, and Babylon.

**MESSIAH** The “anointed one,” the Redeemer who is spoken of by the prophets of the Old Testament and whose mission is to bring salvation to Israel and the whole world. In the OT, the term “anointed one”—from which we get the English words “*Messiah*” (Hebrew *mašīah*) and “*Christ*” (Greek *christos*)—was applied to kings, priests, and prophets. Such figures were anointed with oil, water, and/or the Spirit of God, as a means of consecrating them for their particular mission. Alongside these historical figures emerged the hope for a

future king, an eschatological “anointed one,” who would restore the kingdom of Israel and usher in the Messianic age of deliverance from sin, exile, and death. This hope became particularly pronounced after the death of Solomon and the division of the kingdom of Israel (930 B.C.), the scattering of the ten tribes of Israel in the Assyrian Exile (722 B.C.), and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in the Babylonian Exile (586 B.C.). After this time, there was “none to sit upon the throne of David” (*Jer* 36:30), and the hope grew that God would one day send a King and Redeemer, the Messiah. Although orthodox Judaism still awaits the coming of the Messiah, Christianity proclaims that he has already come in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the true Priest, Prophet, and King.

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## I. THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

### A. *Prophets*

In the OT, prophets are sometimes referred to as “*meshiahs*” or “anointed ones.” Anointing was used in order to consecrate them to the task of proclaiming the word of the Lord, although actual accounts of these anointings are rare. For example, the prophet Elisha is commanded by God to anoint Elisha his disciple “to be prophet in your place” (1 Kgs 19:16–21). Moreover, the Psalms identify the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as both “prophets” and “anointed ones.” After describing the hardships of the patriarchs, God says: “Touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm” (Ps 105:15; 1 Chr 16:22), pointing to the fact that the patriarchs were both prophets and “*meshiahs*.”

### B. *Priests*

Anointing also played an important role in the consecration of priests. The book of *Leviticus* repeatedly speaks of “the anointed priest” (Hebrew *hakkōhēn hammāšīah*), which can also be translated “the priest messiah” (*Lev* 4:3, 5, 16; 6:15). In the rite of priestly ordination, Moses pours “the anointing oil” on Aaron’s head in order “to consecrate him” as high priest (*Lev* 8:12). A similar rite is performed on Aaron’s sons after they are washed with water and clothed with the liturgical vestments of the priesthood, suggesting that such anointing was an essential part of their being “ordained” priests (*Exod* 29:1–8; cf. *Exod* 28:41; 40:15). Along these lines, it is worth noting that in a few instances, the term “*messiah*” appears to

be used to refer to the whole people of Israel (Ps 84:10; 89:39, 52). This makes sense given that Israel's original vocation was to be "a kingdom of priests" (Exod 19:6).

### C. Kings

Above all, it is kings who are the most frequently referred to as "messiahs" or "anointed ones" in the OT (1 Sam 2:10; Ps 2:2, 20:6, 28:8, 84:9). The practice of consecrating kings by means of anointing was known throughout the ancient Near Eastern world and is quite clear in Scripture. For example, the prophet Samuel takes a vial of oil, pours it on Saul's head, and says, "Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel?" (1 Sam 9:16). Through this anointing, not only is Saul ordained king, but he is set apart as Israel's savior (1 Sam 10:1). The significance of this anointing is made clear when David refuses to harm Saul because he is "the LORD's anointed" or "the LORD's messiah" (1 Sam 24:6). The visible sign of the oil is meant to signify the anointing of the king with God's Spirit. When David is consecrated as king, "the Spirit of the LORD" comes "mightily" upon him from that day forward, throughout his royal ministry (1 Sam 16:13; Ps 89:20–21). In similar fashion, Nathan the prophet anoints Solomon with a horn of oil outside Jerusalem in the river Gihon (1 Kgs 1:32–45). Intriguingly, King Cyrus of Persia, who authorizes the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon and the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, is also referred to as "the LORD's anointed" (Isa 45:1). Although some find it troubling that a pagan king could be referred to as "messiah," the fact is that Cyrus's act of freeing the Jews and restoring the Tem-

ple accomplish in a preliminary way what was supposed to be carried out by the true King of Israel, the future Messiah.

## II. THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

### A. The New Adam

According to many ancient interpreters, the first prophecy of a future Messiah in the Bible occurs immediately after the Fall of Adam and Eve, when God declares that he will put "enmity" between the serpent and the woman, between his "seed" and "her seed," and that the seed of the woman would "crush" the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15). Although this passage is admittedly mysterious, some ancient Jewish rabbis interpreted this oracle as a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah (see *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*), and Christian tradition has long referred to this passage as the "First Gospel" (Latin *protovangelium*)—the first announcement of the coming Redeemer. In light of this prophecy, the Messiah is sometimes depicted as a new Adam, who will triumph over the serpent by redeeming humanity from the power of Satan and the curse of death, thereby undoing the effects of the Fall (Rom 5:12–17; 1 Cor 15:20–50). Other texts envision a restoration of Eden during the Messianic age of salvation (Isa 11:1–10; 64:17–25; Ezek 36:33–38).

### B. The Seed of Abraham

A second key passage is God's calling of Abraham and his promise to bless "all the families of the earth" through him and his "seed" (Gen 12:1–3; 22:18). Although these texts are not explicitly Messianic, they do point to the fact that the salvation of the world will come through

Abraham's "seed"—that is, through his "descendant." This is significant because this prophecy comes directly after Abraham offers Isaac out of obedience to God, by which "Father" Abraham offers his "only son" whom he "loves" as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah—the same mountain on which the Temple would later be built (cf. 2 Chr 3:1). Again, Christian tradition views Isaac's carrying of "the wood" of his own sacrifice "up the mountain" and willingly offering himself in obedience to the will of his father as a foreshadowing of the Crucifixion of Jesus the Messiah upon the very same mountain in Jerusalem (cf. Heb 11:17–19). Moreover, the OT envisions the promise of universal blessing to be fulfilled in the conversion of the Gentiles during the Messianic age (Isa 66:18–22; Jer 3:15–18; Zech 14:16; Sir 44:21).

### C. The Star of Jacob

The figure of Jacob has two key Messianic prophecies associated with him. The first is found in his blessing of his twelve sons, when he declares that the kingdom ("the scepter") would not depart from his son Judah "until he comes"—a reference to a future king (sometimes translated as the proper Hebrew name *Shiloh*) who would come and be obeyed by all "peoples" (Gen 49:10). In other words, this coming king would rule over a universal kingdom. The second prophecy is from the prophet Balaam's oracle that "a star shall come forth out of Jacob" and "a scepter rise out of Israel"—both images of a future king who would destroy the enemies of Israel by "crushing" their heads (Num 24:17). This latter prophecy, which is clearly Messianic, appears to be drawing on the imagery in Genesis

of the "seed" of the woman crushing the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15).

### D. The Prophet Like Moses

One of the most important prophecies of a future redeemer is Moses's promise that God would one day "raise up" for Israel "a prophet like me" (Deut 18:1–17)—a new Moses. Israel is commanded to "listen" to this prophet, since God declares: "I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him" (Deut 18:18–19). This text clearly refers to a future figure, since the book of Deuteronomy ends by stating that "there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" and who performed such miracles (Deut 34:10–12). So Israel still awaits his coming. Because of this prophecy, it was widely believed in ancient Israel that the future Messiah would be like a "new Moses" who would inaugurate a new and greater Exodus (John 6:14, 25–34; Acts 3:17–26). In fact, biblical scholars have noted striking parallels between the "servant" Moses and Isaiah's suffering "servant" (Hebrew *'ebed*; cf. Exod 14:31; Isa 52:13–53:12).

In light of such connections, later Jewish writings outside the Bible refer to Moses as "the first redeemer" and to the future Messiah as "the latter redeemer" (*Rabban Ecclesiastes* 1:28). Some rabbis even believed that just as Moses had rained down manna from heaven for Israel, so would the Messiah bring new manna from heaven. And just as Moses had made water flow from the rock in the desert, so would the Messiah make rivers of water flow in the desert (*Rabban Ecclesiastes* 1:9). According to the first-century Jewish philoso-

pher Philo, Moses held the threefold office of priest, prophet, and king (*Moses* 2:1–7).

#### E. *The Branch of David and the "Son of God"*

Of all the biblical prophecies regarding the coming of a future redeemer, those that speak of the coming of a future Davidic king are the most famous and the most explicitly Messianic. The foundational text is the prophet Nathan's oracle to David that his "kingdom" would be established "forever" and that his "seed" would rule over it (2 Sam 7:8–16; 1 Chr 17:7–14; cf. Sir 47:11). After the splitting of the kingdom of David under Solomon's son Rehoboam, the scattering of the ten tribes of Israel in the Assyrian Exile (722 B.C.), and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon by Babylon (586 B.C.), God's promise that David's kingdom would last "forever" seemed to be in jeopardy. But in the midst of these tragedies, the prophets foretold the coming of a future Davidic king. Sometimes this figure is referred to as a new "David," who would restore the twelve tribes of Israel and the kingdom (Hos 3:4–5; Jer 30:9, 33:15; Ezek 37:24–27). On other occasions, the future king is referred to as "the branch" or "shoot" of David's house, meaning that he would be an heir to David's throne (Isa 11:1–10; Jer 23:5–6; Zech 3:8). It is also prophesied that as a descendant of David, the future king would be born in Bethlehem, the City of David (Mic 5:2–4). His advent is expected in some texts to be accompanied by a period of tribulation or "birth pangs" (Jer 30:4–9; Mic 4:10, 5:1–3).

One of the central hopes of the OT is that the twelve tribes of Israel would be restored

and redeemed from exile by this future Davidic king. The age of redemption is first and foremost the restoration of the Davidic kingdom (Amos 9:13–15; Mic 4:1–8; Zech 9:9–10). This age is frequently described as an "ingathering" of the scattered tribes of Israel, which will be inaugurated by the Messiah himself (Isa 11:1–11; Jer 23:5–8, 30:9–31:14; Ezek 37:15–28). Like the shepherd-king David, the future redeemer will be a "shepherd" who will gather the scattered "flock" and bring them home to the Promised Land (Mic 2:12–13; Ezek 34:11–25). This redemption from exile will also be a kind of "new Exodus," which will recapitulate Israel's redemption from the Egyptian Exile at the time of Moses (Hos 2:16–17; Isa 11:10–16, 40:1–11; Ezek 20:36–38; Zech 10:6–12). However, just as David and Solomon opened up their kingdom to the Gentile peoples, this new Exodus would mean not only the salvation of Israel but the conversion and ingathering of the Gentile nations (Isa 2:2–4; Jer 3:14–18; Mic 4:1–5; Zech 8:20–23). Just as David had been shown a "law" for all "mankind" (2 Sam 7:19), so too the prophets foretell that in the Messianic age a new "law" will "go forth" from Jerusalem and be written on the hearts of all peoples (Isa 2:1–4; Mic 4:1–4; Jer 31:31–33). Just as God had made a new "covenant" with David, one that was different from the covenant with Moses, so too the prophets speak of a "new" or "everlasting" covenant that would be made at the time of the coming of the Messiah (Jer 30–31; Ezek 37:24–28; cf. Dan 9:24–27).

Along these lines, it is important to note that the common association between the Davidic Messiah and the "Son of God" has its origins in references to the Davidic king as

God's "son" (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:6–7). Although this seems to refer to *adoptive* sonship when it is applied to the historical kings of Israel, there are hints of the *divine* sonship of the future redeemer in other passages. Some appear to speak of a Davidic king whose origin is from eternity before the beginning of time (Ps 110:1–4; Mic 4:2). The prophet Isaiah goes further and refers to the future "son" who will sit "upon the throne of David" as a "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa 9:6). Finally, in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the "Messiah" appears to be referred to as "God" (Hebrew *ʾelohim*) (*11QMelchizedek*).

#### F. *The Heavenly "Son of Man"*

In addition to the prophecies of the Son of God, there is also one key text that refers to the future redeemer as "one like a son of man" (Dan 7:13–14). Although the expression "son of man" (Aramaic *bar ʾenāš*) can mean just "man" or "a human being" (Ps 8:4–8), in Daniel's famous vision of the four beasts, it is used to describe a supernatural figure who comes "with the clouds of heaven" and is presented to God in his heavenly throne room (Dan 7:14–15). This figure is clearly Messianic, since he is given an eschatological "kingdom," an "everlasting dominion" that will not pass away (Dan 7:14–27). Arguably, this person is identified as the "anointed one" (Hebrew *māšīah*) elsewhere in the book (Dan 9:25–26), since both figures come during a time of tribulation that precedes a time of salvation. This suggestion is supported by the fact that the most ancient Jewish interpretations of Daniel understood the "son of man" as the Messiah (4 *Ezra*

13; 1 *Enoch* 46:1, 48:10, 52:4; *Babylonian Sanhedrin* 98a), as of course did Jesus himself (Mark 13:24–27; Luke 17:22–37).

#### G. *The Suffering Messiah*

Alongside the many prophecies of the glorious coming of the Messiah, there are also several important texts that suggest that the Messiah will also suffer and die. The most explicit of these is from the book of Daniel, which explicitly describes the coming of a future "messiah, a prince" (Hebrew *māšīah nāgīd*), who will be "cut off," a Hebrew idiom for being "put to death" (Dan 9:24–27). His death is part of a time of tribulation that will function "to atone for iniquity" and "bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan 9:24). In addition to this, there is Isaiah's famous prophecy of the Suffering Servant, who suffers and dies (is "cut off") as an atonement for the "sin" and "iniquity" of others (Isa 52:13–53:12). Also important is the prophecy of the people of Jerusalem looking upon "him whom they have pierced" (Zech 12:10), a text that both the New Testament and the ancient rabbis interpreted as a prophecy of the Messiah who would be slain (John 19:37; Rev 1:7; *Babylonian Sukkah* 52a; cf. Zech 3:8–9). Finally, the book of Wisdom contains prophecies of a suffering "righteous man" who would be mocked and suffer a shameful death because he spoke as if he were "God's son" (Wis 2:12–20).

#### H. *The Priestly Messiah*

In addition to his royal and prophetic identity, the future redeemer is also sometimes described as a priest. For example, one anonymous prophet speaks of a "faithful priest"

whom God will “raise up” and give authority over the Levitical priests and their descendants (1 Sam 2:35–36). In similar fashion, the prophets sometimes depict the future Davidic Messiah as assuming priestly prerogatives of offering sacrifice or going into the Temple (Jer 30:21; Ezek 46:1–16). This intimate connection between Davidic kingship and the priesthood seems to be rooted in the fact that David and his heirs sometimes acted as priests, not according to the order of Levi, but according to the order of Melchizedek (2 Sam 6:13–17, 8:18; 1 Kgs 8:14; Ps 110:1–4). In later Jewish writings, this expectation of a priestly Messiah is even more explicit (*T. Lev.* 17–18), and the Dead Sea Scrolls speak of “the Messiah of Aaron” (IQS 9:10–11) or depict him as a new Melchizedek (*11QMelchizedek* 2).

### III. THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH

#### A. *The Birth of the Messiah*

The central claim of the early Christian Church is that the Messiah spoken of by the OT prophets has come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. This is particularly evident in the Gospel accounts of Jesus’s birth, which focus on demonstrating his Messianic identity. For example, the Gospel of Matthew begins by providing the genealogy of “Jesus Christ” (or “Jesus the Messiah”) and tracing his lineage back to King David and to the patriarch Abraham (Matt 1:1). Luke’s Gospel goes even further, tracing Jesus’s lineage back to Adam himself, who is called “the son of God” (Luke 3:38). King Herod’s interest in the birth of Jesus is specifically tied to Micah’s prophecy about the future Davidic king being born

in the city of Bethlehem (Matt 2:4; Mic 5:2). Even the events of Jesus’s childhood reveal that he is the new Moses: like Moses, he is saved from a wicked king and later departs from the land of Egypt (Matt 2:13–14; Exod 1–2). At the Annunciation, Jesus is shown to be the awaited Davidic King: Gabriel declares to Mary that her child will sit on “the throne of his father David” and will reign over his everlasting “kingdom.” Like King Solomon, the son of David, Jesus will be called “the Son of the Most High”—the Son of God (Luke 2:32–33; cf. 2 Sam 7:14). At Jesus’s birth, a “star” rises in the East, signaling the advent of a king from the line of Jacob (Matt 2:1; Num 24:17). Similarly, the angels proclaim to the shepherds that the Davidic “Savior,” the “Messiah” has been born (Luke 2:11), and the aged prophet Simeon recognizes the infant Jesus as the “Messiah” whom God had promised he would see before he died (Luke 2:26).

#### B. *The Revelation of the Messiah*

Jesus’s entire public ministry is characterized by his gradual and deliberate revelation of himself as the prophesied Messiah.

Although his disciples would not fully grasp the nature of Jesus’s Messiahship until after the Resurrection (cf. John 20:28), the Gospels report that from very early on disciples such as Andrew suspected that in Jesus they had “found the Messiah” (John 1:41). This declaration follows directly on the heels of Jesus’s baptism by John in the Jordan, during which Jesus is revealed to be both the “Beloved Son” of God (Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22) and the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). Some scholars have sug-

gested that John is identifying Jesus as the Suffering Servant, who is sacrificed like “a lamb” for the sins of others and whose coming is tied to the new Exodus (Isa 52:1–15; 53:7–12). After his baptism, Jesus immediately goes into the desert to undergo a threefold temptation that matches that of Adam and Eve; thus he reveals himself to be the New Adam who has come to undo the effects of the Fall (Matt 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13; Gal 3:6). Jesus also reveals his Messianic identity in his first sermon at Nazareth, when he declares the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy that one who is “anointed” will proclaim release to the captives (Luke 4:16–21; Isa 61:1–2).

In addition to these inaugural revelations, Jesus also showed himself to be the Messiah during the course of his ministry in the land of Israel. In response to John the Baptist’s question as to whether he was “the one to come,” Jesus identified his miracles as signs of the Messianic age of salvation spoken of by the prophets (Matt 11:2–6; Luke 7:18–23; Isa 35:5–6, 61:1; cf. *4QMessianic Apocalypse* 2). In his healings and miracles he also took upon himself the sufferings of the people, showing himself to be the Suffering Servant (Matt 12:15–21; cf. Isa 53). He signaled the restoration of the twelve tribes of Israel in the gathering of his twelve disciples (Matt 10:1–6; 19:28), and he focused his preaching on the coming of “the kingdom of God” (Mark 1:14)—although he stressed that the kingdom he spoke of was “not of this world” (John 18:36). In light of these words and deeds many of those who witnessed his actions wondered if he might in fact be “the Messiah” (John 7:26–31; 10:24). When the Samaritan woman spoke of the coming of “the

Messiah,” Jesus said to her: “I who speak to you am he” (John 4:25). Particularly noteworthy are the numerous passages in which Jesus speaks of himself as “the Son of Man,” a reference to the heavenly Messiah from the book of Daniel (e.g., Matt 10:23; 13:41–43; 16:13–20; 25:31–46; Mark 2:10, 28; 10:45; 13:24–27; Luke 17:22–37; John 1:51; 3:13–15; 5:25–28). These revelations climax in Peter’s confession that Jesus is “the Christ” or “the Messiah” (Greek *christos*), the “Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16), after which Jesus began instructing his disciples that, as the Messianic Son of Man, he must suffer and die and be raised on the third day (Matt 16:21–23; 17:22–23; 20:17–19).

The ultimate public revelations of Jesus’s Messiahship took place during his last days in Jerusalem and in his Passion and death. In his triumphal entry, he deliberately fulfilled the prophecy that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem riding on a “donkey” (Zech 9:9–10). As he taught in the Temple, he revealed that “the Messiah” is more than just the “son of David”; he is both a priestly Messiah and “Lord” (Mark 11:35–37; cf. Ps 110:1–4). At the Last Supper, he revealed himself to be the suffering “Son of Man” whose death would bring the coming of the Kingdom of God, the forgiveness of sins, and the inauguration of a New Covenant (Luke 22:14–30). At the trial before the Sanhedrin, when Jesus was asked by the high priest, “Are you the Messiah?” he responded: “I am” (Mark 14:61–62). Finally, at his Crucifixion, the titulus atop the Cross read: “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” (Mark 15:2; John 19:19). The ironic truth of this revelation of Jesus’s Messiahship is only made clear on Easter morning when “the Christ”

is raised from the dead to enter into "his glory" (Luke 24:26). In his glorious Ascension into heaven, Jesus fulfills the ancient hope for the enthronement of the Messiah when he is seated at the "right hand" of God as "Lord and Messiah" over the heavenly Kingdom (Acts 2:33–36; Ps 110:1–4).

### C. *The Preaching of the Messiah*

After the Resurrection, the early Christians referred to and proclaimed Jesus as Messiah on countless occasions. In fact, the word "Messiah" (Greek *christos*) occurs over five hundred times in the NT. From the very beginning, the heart of Christian preaching was proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah of Israel (cf. Acts 5:42). In Peter's inaugural sermon at Pentecost he proclaims Jesus as both Lord and "Messiah" (Acts 2:36–37). Later on he teaches that Jesus's sufferings fulfilled God's word, spoken through the prophets, "that his Messiah should suffer" (Acts 3:18). Peter also declares that Jesus was "anointed" with the Holy Spirit and with power and engaged in the ministry of freeing others from the devil (Acts 10:38–39). The preaching of other early Christians, such as Stephen, Apollos, and Paul, also focuses on demonstrating and proclaiming Jesus as Messiah (e.g., Acts 7:52–53, 9:22, 18:24–28; Rom 1:3–4, 9:1–5). Indeed, some Christians suffered excommunication from certain Jewish synagogues because they proclaimed "Jesus is Messiah" (John 9:22).

Particularly noteworthy is the book of Hebrews, which was written to fellow Israelites to show that Jesus is not only royal but also a priestly Messiah, according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb 8:1–10:18). Outside the NT,

the early Church's preaching of Jesus as Messiah culminates in Saint Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* (A.D. 150), in which he explains the numerous prophecies of the OT that early Christians saw as fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

### METANOIA See Repentance.

**METHUSELAH** The son of Enoch (Gen 5:21) and the father of Lamech (Gen 5:25). According to Genesis, he is the seventh generation descended from Adam and the grandfather of Noah (Gen 5:3–32). He lived to the age of 969, the longest life span mentioned in the Bible.

**METHUSHAEL** The son of Mehujael and the father of Lamech (Gen 4:18).

**MEUNIM, MEUNITES** A desert people from Arabia or possibly from the village of Meon southeast of the Dead Sea. They are remembered in Scripture as enemies vanquished by Israel in the days of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:1–23), Uzziah (2 Chr 26:7), and Hezekiah (1 Chr 4:41). The name also appears in the list of Temple servants returned from the Exile, but its meaning in that context is uncertain (Ezra 2:50; Neh 7:52).

**MICAH** (Hebrew, "Who is like the Lord?") One of the minor prophets. Micah should not be confused with Micaiah, son of Imlah, a prophet at the time of Ahab of Israel (1 Kgs 22:8). (See *Micah, book of* for details.)

**MICAH, BOOK OF** The sixth of the minor prophets in the Old Testament. Micah exer-

cised his prophetic ministry in the eighth century B.C. during the days of Kings **Jotham**, **Ahaz**, and **Hezekiah** of Judah. Micah attacked the injustice and corruption of priests, false prophets, officials, and people. He also announced the judgment and punishment to come upon Samaria and Judah and foretold the restoration of Israel.

### I. AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

Little is known of Micah except that he came from Moresheth (Mic 1:1; cf. Jer 26:18), a village identified with Moresheth-gath (Mic 1:14) over 20 miles (32 kilometers) southwest of Jerusalem. A contemporary of **Isaiah**, **Amos**, and **Hosea**, Micah was active in Judah before the fall of Samaria (1:2–7) in 722 B.C. and was a witness to the Assyrian invasion of Judah in 701 B.C. led by **Sennacherib**. The only information about the prophet outside the book of Micah comes from Jeremiah, who tells us that Micah's oracles were fairly well known and influential:

*Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height." Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and entreat the favor of the LORD, and did not the LORD repent of the evil which he had pronounced against them? (Jer 26:18–19)*

There is little reason to doubt that the oracles of the book stem from Micah, although it is possible that his disciples are responsible for transmitting them in written form. Critical

scholarship tends to doubt the authenticity of chapters 4–7, but this usually has more to do with a disinclination to accept the possibility of true prophecy than with any literary differences that might point to the text being written at a later time or by a different author.

There is broad agreement that Micah received its final form in the period after the Exile. Its individual oracles, however, date to the time of the prophet himself. Some can be dated before 722 B.C. (e.g., 1:2–7), while others appear to reflect events that happened in 701 B.C. (e.g., 1:8–16).

### II. CONTENTS

*I. Oracles of Judgment on Samaria and Judah (1:1–3:12)*

- A. Statement of Purpose (1:1)
- B. The Judgment upon Samaria (1:2–7)
- C. The Judgment upon Judah (1:8–16)
- D. The Denunciation of Evils (2:1–11)
- E. The Promise for the Remnant of Israel (2:12–13)

*F. The Condemnation of Rulers and Prophets (3:1–8)*

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*II. Oracles of Future Restoration (4:1–5:15)*

A. The Coming Kingdom of God (4:1–13)

B. The Restoration of Zion (5:1–15)

*III. Final Warnings and Encouragement (6:1–7:20)*

A. The Challenge to Israel (6:1–16)

B. The Corruption of Society (7:1–17)

C. God's Love and Compassion (7:18–20)

### III. PURPOSE AND THEMES

Micah shares with his contemporary Isaiah an abiding concern for the moral and spiritual de-