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Messianic speculation in Israel, 1938.

MESSIANIC SPECULATION IN ISRAEL

Three factors contributed to the spread of the Messianic belief in Israel: the loss of national independence and the attendant deprivations, the will to live dominantly and triumphantly as a rehabilitated people in its national home, and the unfaltering faith in divine justice by whose eternal canons the national restoration was infallibly prescribed. (Helplessness in the face of overwhelming odds, a masterful love of life, and an unyielding hold upon the basic morality underlying all national experiences constituted the physical, psychic and ethical elements out of which the Messianic faith was fashioned. The Messianic ideal was a group conception into which political aspirations, religious imperialism and moral vindications merged.

In the beginning the Messianic ideal was temporal and political, colored by that intense mystico-religious imperialism of the nation which was the legacy of prophetism. The ideal evolved into supernaturalism as the task of national redemption and universal conversion appeared progressively more difficult of accomplishment through human effort alone. While the human character of the Messiah and his religio-political mission were never entirely lost sight of, certain miraculous potencies were added to his personality in proportion to the nation's realization of its own impotence. Only the cataclysmic intervention of a ~~div~~ divinely endowed being, at the moment of the nation's deepest degradation, could destroy the wicked powers which oppressed it, restore the people, cleansed by suffering, to its ancient glory and rebuild the broken harmonies of the world. The nation could not save itself -- except through repentance. Moral purification could prepare the way for the advent of the redeemer. But only as a penitent sinner could Israel play a part in the drama of its national salvation.

Messianism thrives on suffering. It is its soil and sap. And in Israel suffering was continuous throughout the centuries, if only the suffering which derives from the consciousness of the loss of national independence and a national home. The Jews never forgot, even when others did not cause him to remember, his exile.

Also he never forgot the divine promise of Redemption! In his darkest hour he never doubted it. He knew his exile to be penance and atonement -- a long and dreadful penance and an unprecedented atonement. But he also knew that in a world of providential justice no penance can be everlasting.

Begin ✓ Prior to the first century, ^{C.E.} the Messianic interest was not excessive, (although such ~~a~~ great historical events as the conquest of Persia by Alexander, the rule of the Ptolemies and the Seleucides, the persecutions under Antiochus, the revolt of the Maccabees, and the Roman aggression find their mystic-Messianic echo in the apocalyptic writings of the first two pre-Christian centuries.)

✓ The first century, however, especially the generation before the destruction, witnessed a remarkable outburst of Messianic emotionalism. This is to be attributed, ~~as we shall see~~, not to an intensification of Roman persecution but to the prevalent belief induced by the popular chronology of that day that the age was on the threshold of the Millennium. (explain). - July 12/11 88

✓ In the procuratorship of Cuspius Fadus (44 C.E.) ^a the false prophet Theudas appeared, "and many were deluded by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to make any advantage of his wild attempt but sent a troop of horesmen out against them, who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive and cut off his head and carried it to Jerusalem. The Romans' severity was undoubtedly due to the fact that Teudas either entertained Messianic notions himself or announced himself as the Messiah. The Messianic hope, of course, always implied the overthrow of the Roman power in Palestine.

✓ The movement gained headway under the procuratorship of Felix (52-60 C.E.).

Numerous outbreaks are reported. "There were such men as deceived and deluded the people under the pretense of divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government; and these prevailed with ~~the~~ the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, as pretending that God would there show them the signals of liberty; but Felix thought the procedure was to be the beginnings of a revolt; so he sent some horesmen and footmen, both armed, who destroyed a great number of them." An Egyptian prophet, undoubtedly an Egyptian Jew, now appears on the scene, whose short Messianic career brought sharp reprisals upon the Jews.

✓ When Jesus came into Galilee, "spreading the gospel of the Kingdom of God and saying the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at haand," he was voicing the opinion universally held that the year 5000 in the Creation calendar, which is to usher in the sixth millennium -- the age of the Kingdom of God -- was at hand. (It was this chronologic fact which inflamed the Messianic hope of the people rather than Roman persecutions. There is no evidence anywhere to show that the political fortunes of the people in the second quarter of the first century of the common era -- the period of many Messianic movements -- were in any degree lower than those in the first quarter, in which no Messianic movements are recorded.)

✓ Jesus appeared in the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate (26-36 C.E.). The first mention of the appearance of a Messiah in Josephus is in connection with the disturbances during the term of office of the procurator Cuspius Fadus (c.44 C.E.). It seems likely, therefore, that in the minds of the people, the Millennium was to begin around the year 30 C.E.

✓ Be it remembered that it is not the Messiah who ~~br~~ brings about the Millennium; it is the inevitable advent of the Millennium which carries along with it the Messiah and his appointed activities. The Messiah was expected

around the second quarter of the first century C.E., because the Millennium was at hand. Prior to that time he was not expected, because according to the chronology of the day the Millennium was still considerably removed.

✓ The central theme of the preachment of Jesus and of John the Baptist, whom Jesus hailed as the Elijah who was to announce the advent of the Millennium, as well as of the disciples of Jesus, was repentance. (The day of repentance will precede the actual Millennium. Thus The Assumption of Moses, which was probably written during the very lifetime of Jesus, states: "And receive thou this writing that thou mayest know how to preserve the books...until the day of repentance in the visitation wherewith the Lord will visit them in the consummation of the end of the days." (1.17-18). Only those who would repent would be spared the purging and cleansing process antecedent to the Millennium -- "the wrath that is to come.")

✓ Jesus' essential mission was apocalyptic, not prophetic. He was more of the mystic than the moralist. His impassioned concern was not to reconstruct society but to save it from the winnowing and retributive judgment which was imminent in the van of the approaching Millennium. He sought to save men from the birth-throes of the Messianic times. The ethical counsel which he gave to his followers was for a world in extremis. It was to help them survive the terrors to come and to be worthy of the perfect Kingdom, the new order of existence which the Millennium would usher in. The Kingdom will be not the moral achievement of men but the pre-ordained act of divinity. The whole epic of Jesus must be read in the light of this millenarian chronology of his day, or it remains unintelligible.

(Passionately did Jesus strive to convey this message of the impending crisis to the people. Ardently he strove to warn them of the approaching catastrophe. He was profoundly perturbed and impatient because the people did not seem to realize it: "Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the

earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know/^{not}how to interpret this time?" Though he would not, because he could not definitely state the exact hour of the coming of the Kingdom and advised against speculation upon the subject, he nevertheless was completely overwhelmed by the thought of its nearness; "And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation (i.e. cannot be ascertained through the popular methods of calculation). Neither shall they say, Lo here! or there! but lo, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." "Verily I say unto you, there are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

✓ The crash and doom of the world was at hand and therefore there was no longer time for the ordinary pursuits of life, for its commonplace, commerce and traffic, for concerns about food, raiment, and shelter: "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink?, or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" The end is approaching! The unquenchable fires of Judgment are upon us! Therefore, "Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness." A man must disencumber himself of all those things which are likely to keep his mind and soul entangled in the affairs of this perishing world. Wealth, Jesus felt, would of all things prove the most difficult obstacle in the way of men's preparation for the Kingdom. Wherefore he counsels a rich man who seeks after the perfection which will admit him into the Kingdom: "Seel that which thou hast, and give to the poor." There is no time to waste. A disciple cannot be spared from the desperately needed ministry of proclamation even long enough to go and bury his own father. Jesus does not permit himself the enjoyment of even a moment's relaxation in the bosom of his family. He is convinced that many could be saved from the impending doom, but that there were too few "laborers for the harvest."

✓ Jesus' attitude toward the Law was determined by his views concerning

the approaching end. He did not oppose the Law in part or in whole. He did not seek to abrogate it. He did not wish to substitute for it. It was not necessary. The incoming Millennium would of itself do away with the Law entirely. This was the view commonly held by the contemporaries of Jesus. However, "until all things be accomplished," the Law must be obeyed. Not, however, as most men obey it, formally and mechanically, but with a soul-searching intent and intensity, so that it may prove a real help to that spiritual lustration required for initiation into the Kingdom. Jesus' real attitude to the Law is admirably summed up in Matt. 5.17-20:

✓ "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I come not to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. But I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

✓ Jesus proceeds to indicate what he means by a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. In no instance does he call for a new Law or the abrogation of the old Law, but for the correct "intensive" attitude toward the existing Law.

(Why should men fulfil the law with such inner intentness? Not that they will thereby bring the Kingdom about. The Kingdom comes through the grace of God, not through the wrks of men: "For it is your Father's good pleasure ~~to~~ to give you the kingdom." Its advent is pre-ordained in the cosmic scheme. It is inevitable. It cannot be hastened or retarded. But those who will fulfil the Law in truth and in sincerity will be spared the "pangs of the Messianic

times" and will be privileged to enter the Kingdom.

✓ Similarly was Jesus' attitude toward the government determined by his apocalyptic premises. He was not a revolutionist. He did not attempt to deliver his people from the yoke of Rome. He counseled no political action. It was no longer necessary. The Millennium was near and Rome would be crushed by a power greater than that of man. Her doom was sealed, even as the doom of all malefactors of society. Therefore until the hour of universal reckoning is come, "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

✓ The thought of the approaching end dominates almost all the writings of the New Testament. Paul was as much convinced of the imminence of the new order as Jesus. So were those to whom Paul addressed himself. Like Jesus, he advised his followers not to speculate about the apocalyptic "times and seasons" of Daniel. The great cataclysm is at hand, but it will come "as a thief in the night," and no one can know the exact hour.

(Paul never assumed that Jesus would bring the Kingdom about. Jesus merely proclaimed the gospel of repentance in view of the world's approaching crisis. His death and resurrection were in the eyes of Paul the supreme proof of his divine commission to make this proclamation. It further established beyond a doubt that he was the Messiah, awaiting the pre-ordained moment of the actual inauguration of the Kingdom to reappear. Jesus may have doubted his own Messiahship and may have looked forward to the coming of the Son of Man -- the real Messiah. If he believed himself to be the Messiah, he clearly did not make this the essential part of his proclamation. Paul, however, was certain that Jesus was the Messiah. The vision which had come to him of the resurrected Jesus proved to be the all-compelling fact in his life. So that Paul proclaimed not only the imminence of the end but Jesus as the Christ, who is soon to reappear with the advent of the Millennium. It followed, therefore, that one's

preparation for the Kingdom must include not only the intensive ethical self-discipline preached by Jesus but also ~~xxx~~ an acknowledgment of the Messianic role of Jesus. Thus a dogma of faith was added to a code of conduct. This is the vital distinction between the gospel of Jesus and the gospel of Paul. Paul was keenly aware of this distinction. He baptized not according to "John's baptism," which was "the baptism of repentance," but "in the name of the Lord Jesus." To Paul it was insufficient to know "only the baptism of John.")

When Jesus died his disciples and followers continued in their profound convictions touching the imminence of the Kingdom. This was now coupled with another conviction, that Jesus would return with the coming of the Kingdom, to complete his Messianic work. Their chief prayer was their Master's prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," and their motto as summarized in the Didache was, "Watch for your life's sake; let your lamps not go out, and your loins not be relaxed, but be ready; for ye know not the hour in which our Lord cometh."

As the crisis approached in the life of the nation with the sack of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, the Messianic excitement of the people was at fever heat. While the Temple was burning a prophet appeared announcing that the Messiah was at hand. ("A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day that God commanded them to get up upon the Temple and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants (i.e. the Zealots -- the militant patriots) to impose upon the people, who denounced this to them that they should wait for deliverance from God.")

(Josephus also recounts a Messianic calculation popularly held at the time of the destruction based upon "an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how 'about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.'" Josephus applies this prophecy

to Vespasian.

(Tacitus recounts the high Messianic expectation, based upon an authoritative tradition, held at the time of the destruction: "The majority were deeply impressed with a persuasion that it was contained in the ancient writings of the priests that it would come to pass that at that very time, that the East would renew its strength and they that should go forth from Judea should be rulers of the world." So also Seutonius: "A firm persuasion had long prevailed through all the East that it was fated for the empire of the world at that time to devolve on someone who should go forth from Judea. This prediction referred to a Roman emperor, as the event showed, but the Jews applying it to themselves broke out into rebellion."

Rabbis and laymen of the first and the early half of the second centuries generally believed that they were living at the close of the fifth millennium -- the last millennium before the thousand years of peace which were to close this mundane cycle. This fact seems generally to have been overlooked by scholars who unconsciously employ the present Creation calendar, which did not make its appearance until considerably later. (There are but two references to the Creation calendar in the Talmud, 'Ab. Zar. 9b (4231 A.M.) and San. 97b (4291 A.M.) The latter date is given in connection with R. Joseph bar Hiyya (4c.) The next mention of a Creation date is found in the Baraita of R. Samuel, where the date 4531 A. M. or 771 C.E. is given.)

The Messianic hopes were rife in Israel at this time, not only because the people were suffering under Roman oppression, but also because their chronology led them to believe that they were on the threshold of the Millennium. There did not, of course, exist as yet a fixed and authoritative tradition regarding the age of the world. For some centuries thereafter this subject was debated, among Jews as well as among Christians, but it is evident that the men of the first and the early part of the second centuries had an approximate

idea of the place of their age in the creation cycle. They were very near the year 5000!

The Rabbis generally believed on the basis of the Biblical Creation week, that "The world will last 6,000 years and will be in chaos 1,000". The thousand years prior to the destruction of the world (5000-6000) would be the years of consummation and universal blessedness.

(The closing chapter of the apocalypse IV Ezra gives a very explicit date: "And I did so in the seventh year of the sixth week of 5,000 years of the creation, and three months and twelve days." The author of this apocalypse anticipated the swift approach of the "Consummation of the times." The writer of the original source of IV Ezra, living just 35 years after the destruction, believed in the imminent collapse of the Roman Empire and the speedy restoration of Israel. In answer to the perplexed Salathiel (Ezra), who could not reconcile Israel's suffering with the justice of God, the angel replies: "If thou survive, thou shalt see, and if thou livest long, thou shalt marvel, for the age is hastening fast to its end." The final redactor of IV Ezra, living in the early reign of Hadrian (c. 120 C.E.) expected the Messiah to come during or directly after the reign of this emperor.)

(II Baruch, a composite work of the latter half of the first century, clearly expresses this same thought regarding the age of the world, and the expectations of an early denouement: "For truly my redemption has drawn nigh, and is not far distant as aforetime." "And at that time, after a little interval, Zion will again be builded." "For the youth of the world is passed, and the strength of the creation already exhausted, and the advent of the times is very short....and the pitcher is near to the cistern, and the ship to the port." In 28.2 the writer seems even to give a cryptic date, which, however, is undecipherable: "For the measure and reckoning of that time are two parts a week of seven weeks.")

(Josephus, too, gives clear indication that the men of his generation took their age to be at the close of the fifth millennium. His Antiquities, which give an historical account from Creation to the year 66 C.E., cover an itemized period of approximately 5,000 years. He wrote the first book of his Contra Apionem (93 C.E.) to substantiate his claim of the great antiquity of the Jewish people. He writes: "Those Antiquities contain the history of 5,000 years, and are taken out of our sacred books." Josephus, in his writings, largely presented the accepted Pharisaic view of his day.)

✓ ~~So that~~ the Rabbis, immediately following the destruction, believing themselves to be in the final cycle of the fifth millennium, thought that the "days of the Messiah" would last ³⁰⁻⁴⁰ 40, 60 or 70 years, and expected the Messiah to come during the second century; to be more exact, within the first half of the second century; for it is very likely that the destruction of the Temple was soon regarded by them as the beginning of this Messianic age -- the terminus a quo. The Messianic age was to begin at a time when the fortunes of the people were at their lowest ebb. It was quite natural, therefore, for them to assume that "on the day when the Temple was destroyed the Messiah was born." If this is correct, the Messianic age, beginning with the destruction of the Temple and lasting 40, 60 or 70 years would culminate in the years 110, 130 or 140 C.E. The Bar Kochba revolution was, in a sense, the political upthrust of these perfervid Messianic expectations, based on the Millenerarian chronology of the early second century, the immediate occasion being Hadrian's ^{persecutions} ~~prohibition~~ of circumcision, and his avowed intention to restore the Temple as a shrine for Jupiter Capitolinus.

✓ The collapse of this movement at the close of the putative fifth millennium prompted the Rabbis not only to project the Messianic date to a more distant future, but also to revise their notion of the Creation calendar. They were living not at the close of the fifth but at the close of the fourth

millennium. (The people need not despair of the Messiah. He is still to come. He may come at any time within the fifth millennium, not necessarily at its close; perhaps in 4231 A.M. or 4250, or 4291.) The Messianic age has actually begun with the destruction of the Temple but before its final denouement 365 or 400 years or more may elapse.)

✓ Following the frustration of the Messianic hope in the second century, the next Messianic date seems to have been generally, though not exclusively, placed about four hundred years after the destruction, somewhere in the fifth century. The Rabbis no longer pointed to a date in the near future, but projected it into a relatively distant future. The Bar Kochba disaster had taught them a bitter lesson. The figure 400 was quite naturally fixed upon as it corresponded with the number of years of the first exile -- the Egyptian. The principle was laid down that the final redemption would be exactly like the first redemption.

✓ As the fifth century approached the Messianic expectation became vivid and intense. That century witnessed the final scenes in the decline and fall of Rome, mistress of the world for six hundred years. (It was a distraught and turbulent century, seething with unrest, marked with the swift movements of barbarian peoples upon Rome; the invasion of Alaric, king of the Visigoths, and the sack of Rome (410 C.E.), the migration of the Vandals through Spain and their conquest of Africa under Gaiseric (430 C.E.), a second sack of Rome by these Vandals (455 C.E.), and another invasion of Italy by Attila and his Huns (452 C.E). The year 476 C.E. witnessed the end of the Western Empire. Such times are favorable for prophecy and high hopes.) ✓ Israel saw in these successive misfortunes which befell her ancient enemy 'the footprints of the Messiah.' ("A certain general (Roman) asked one of the men of Beth Silanus, 'Who will rule the kingdom after us?' The man brought blank paper and took a pen and wrote upon it, ' and after that came forth his brother, and his hand

(Jacob's -- Israel) had hold of Esau's (Edom-Rome) heel.'" The ascendancy of Israel will follow swiftly upon the decline of Rome. The Christian world, too, believed that the fall of Rome would bring Antichrist on earth and usher in the end of things.)

(In the fifth century these hopes reached their fever point. The Empire was breaking up; the long anticipated collapse was about to take place. Furthermore, the conditions of the Jews in the fifth century were most unfavorable. Palestinian Jewry touched bottom in its political and economic fortunes. Roman oppression was intensified. Under Theodosius II. the patriarchate was abolished (C. 425 C.E.). The few remaining schools were closed. The latter half of this century likewise saw a turn for the worse in the condition of the Jews in Babylonia, now the greatest center of Jewish life. A period of persecution and forced conversions set in. Sherira Gaon mentions the fact that "in the year 781 of the Seleucid era (469 C.E.) all the schools in Babylon were shut down and the Jews were handed over to the Magians.")

✓ The Messianic expectations so widely held were not without their historical consequence. During the middle of the fifth century a pseudo-Messiah actually did appear in Crete, who bore the name of Moses. He won a following among the Jews of Crete. On the day appointed for their departure for Palestine, Moses led them to a promontory overlooking the sea, and commanded them to throw themselves into the sea, in the hope that the waters would part for them as they did in the days of the first redeemer, Moses. It is said that many perished.

(Pari passu with the spread of Messianic hopes amongst the Jews was the spread of second adventist hopes among the Judeo-Christians and Pagan-Christians. The Christians of the first century were, of course, compelled by the very death of Jesus and his failure to bring about the Kingdom, to ~~not~~ postulate his resurrection and his return -- an early return. Quite naturally they turned to

the Bible for corroboration even as they had turned to it for confirmation of their faith in the Messiahship of Jesus, and for correspondence between the prophecies in Scriptures and their fulfilment in Jesus. The Bible soon became in their hands an apocalypse, prophetic of the whole epic of the Messiah Jesus. (In this regard they anticipated the Jewish Messianic speculators, whose major effort to make of the Bible a Messianic book did not take place until the second century and especially until after the collapse of the Bar Kochba insurrection.)

(The writings of the New Testament bespeak the same profound conviction as regards the immediacy of the advent and the establishment of the New Jerusalem, as do the Jewish apocalypses and the sayings of the Rabbis of the first and second centuries.)

The early Christian Church borrowed not alone its entire apocalyptic paraphernalia, already completely developed in apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic literature, from Judaism, but also the very method and matter of Messianic chronology. It too turned to the locus classicus - the Book of Daniel - for the key to the solution of the mystery, and it too employed pseudo-historical chronology and hermeneutic methods in pursuit of the solution. In fact, the early Christians made more extensive use of the Book of Daniel than did the Jews, both in establishing the Messiahship of Jesus and in discovering the time of his second advent. The Book of Daniel was their strongest argument. Athanasius (4 c.) declared: "Perhaps with regard to the other (prophecies) ~~be~~ they (the Jews) may be able to find excuses and to put off what is written to a future time. But what can they say to this, (the prophecies of Daniel), or can they face it at all? (From the second century on the Church turned also to the Revelation of John.)

(The New Testament writers took the prophecies of Daniel to apply to their own times. "The Fourth Kingdom and the Fourth Beast" are Rome. The Son

of Man who came with the clouds of heaven is Jesus. The Book of Revelations actually paraphrases Dan. 12.7: "And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he lifted up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven and swore by Him that liveth forever, that it shall be for a time, times and half a time." Revelation reads: "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven and swore by Him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer."

The meaning of the author is clear. The prophecy of Daniel refers to his (the author's) time. The time, times and half a time are already exhausted. There shall be no longer be (time". The impending advent of Christ will fulfil the prophecy.)

✓ The failure of the Messiah to appear in the fifth century dampened the ardor of Messianic speculations, for a considerable period of time. In fact, such speculations are not in evidence until after the meteoric rise of Islam and its phenomenal sweep through Asia and Africa.

✓ But the remarkable victories of the Arabs and the crumbling of the Persian and the Byzantine Empires before their irresistible onslaught set aflame anew the Messianic hopes. The hope was generally entertained that the Arabs would accomplish what the Persians had failed to accomplish -- the overthrow of Edom, entrenched in Rome and Byzantium. (It was also fervently hoped that they would break the power of Persia, thereby delivering the Jews from the religious intolerance of the Sassanian dynasty.) Following these mighty upheavals it was hoped that the Son of David would appear.

✓ The four centuries (600-1000 C.E.) produced at least three pseudo-Messiahs: (1) Abu Isa Al-Ispahani, (2) Serene, and (3) the disciple of Abu Isa, Yudghan. They also witnessed a revival of interest in the Lost Ten Tribes,

which is a concomitant of Messianic speculation.

✓ The terrible tragedies which came upon the Jewish communities of North-western Europe in the wake of the successive Crusades - the most devastating in the millennium which followed the destruction of the Temple - find their reflex in the intensified Messianic expectations of the time.

✓ The hordes of the First Crusade (1096 C.E.) swept over the Jewish settlements between the Rhine and the Moselle and laid them waste. Especially did the communities of Metz, Speyer, Worms, Mayence, Cologne and Treves suffer at the hands of the plundering, massacring mobs. Some four thousand Jews were slain or suicided. (The black terror of those days speaks to us out of the Selihot, Kinnot, and memoirs which have come down to us.

Strange to say, the very year 1096 -- the year of the First Crusade -- was fixed upon generally as the year of Redemption.)

✓ The Crusades broke the spirit of the Jews in Germany. Their social and political life was sadly worsened and their intellectual life declined. A depressing sense of hopelessness and homelessness gripped them; asceticism and superstition grew apace. All this is fertile ground for Messianic dreams.

(Again, a mystic emotionalism preceded and attended the Crusades in the Christian world, which could not but infect the Jewish world. The Millenarian hopes, which flared up in Christendom the year 1000, continued without abatement for a long time thereafter, and played a not inconsiderable part in precipitating the Crusades. It was believed that Palestine must come into the possession of the Christians before the second coming of Christ, and inasmuch as his second coming was at hand, the conquest of Palestine should be swiftly accomplished. Throughout the centuries of the Crusades, Christendom was strangely agitated by high Millenarian hopes. The whole world was on tiptoe with expectancy, awaiting vast transformations. Israel was no less expectant.)

As a result of the untoward circumstances of the people and the consequent aroused Messianic interests, the last quarter of the eleventh and the whole of the twelfth century ^{and thirteenth} abound in pseudo-Messiahs and in abortive Messianic movements. (Heretofore (up to 1000 C.E.) the Messiahs hailed from Asia Minor, Babylon and Persia. With the shifting of the center of Jewish life to the Mediterranean lands, the pseudo-Messiahs now come from Western Europe as well.)

(The period is rich in Messianic speculation. Even the philosopher Gersonides is enticed. Hailing from these times are the speculations of at least eight men, and we have scattered references to still others. These eight men are: (1) Nahmanides, (2) Isaac Halevi, (3) Abulafia, (4) The author of the Zohar, (5) The author of Sefer ha-Temunah, (6) Gersonides, (7) Bahya ben Asher, (8) Joshua ibn Shoeib.)

This period likewise presents the names of at least three pseudo-Messiahs, of whom the above-mentioned Abulafia was one. (Under the influence of the Kabbalistic exegesis, popularized by Mahmanides and his followers, in which numerical and literal mysticism -- Gematria and Notarikon -- is freely employed, the technique of Messianic computation begins to show a marked leaning in that direction. The method of arriving at a date becomes far more involved and supersedes the simpler and the more direct method of the earlier calculators.)

✓ From the middle of the fourteenth century to the close of the fifteenth century, a period of almost 150 years, we ^{again} have very few Messianic calculations. The failure of the Messiah to appear around the year 1358, the date so confidently predicted by outstanding leaders of thought such as Rashi, Nahmanides, Levi ben Abraham, Abraham bar Hiyya, Gersonides, Bahya and others, as well as his failure to appear in 1403 when he was similarly predicted by great authorities, was a terrible blow to the Messianic speculators and discouraged for a long time to come further essays in this field. In place of Redemption, the middle of the fourteenth century brought with it the devastating Black Death and

frightful tragedies in the camp of Israel.

(This period seems to yield but one pseudo-Messiah - Moses Botarel -- although the age did not lack in great tragedies, such as the expulsion of the Jews from France (1394) and the bloody persecutions in Christian Spain (1391).)

✓ The sixteenth century is an outstanding century of Messianic interest, speculation and adventure. It follows the catastrophic expulsions of Jews from Germanic provinces in the last decade of the fifteenth century. *and from Spain* In Italy, too, the conditions of the Jews changed for the worse as the sixteenth century advanced. The first ghetto was established in Venice; Jewish economic activities were restricted; and a rigorous censorship of Hebrew books was instituted.)

✓ The age was one of unrest and confusion. The exiles from Spain and Portugal, uprooted and impoverished, crushed and humiliated, moved in a world of physical and spiritual confusion. (In the midst of the overwhelming catastrophe, paralleled only by the tragedy of the expulsion from Palestine, their intellectual life, which at no time in the last two hundred years had been very vigorous, was completely submerged. The uncertainty of their lives and fortunes, the wanderings through many lands to find a place of refuge, and their complete emotional prostration made them put their faith in any rumor of hope, however fantastic, which promised sudden and certain relief.)

✓ Many of these exiles were persuaded that the terrible persecutions which they had experienced were the birth pangs of the Messianic times.

✓ The political conditions of Europe also contributed to the Messianic complex. The period was one of Turkish ascendancy. From the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 to the conquest of Hungary, almost one hundred years later (1547), the power of the Turk in Europe ~~had~~ had been steadily increasing. It was the age of Mohammed the Conqueror, and Suleiman the Magnificent.

The Turk was crashing at the battlements of Europe, and Christendom stood in awe of him. This condition could not but kindle the apocalyptic dreams of an harassed and suffering people. Many Jews, especially those living in Christian lands, had long regarded the downfall of Rome as preliminary to their deliverance.

(The Rabbis had declared that one of the signs of "the latter end" would be the conquest of Rome by Persia, and it was generally accepted at this time that Persia was Turkey.)

✓ The rift in Christendom, too, fed these Messianic illusions. The Reformation cleft the heart of Christendom in twain. Wars and confusions set in. Vast millennial hopes swept over the Christian world. (The same "enthusiastic" tendencies which predominated in the primitive Church now made their appearance in the new reformed Church. There was the same emphasis on the freedom of the soul in Christ, on the gift of illumination and prophecy as within reach of the faithful, on pacifism and communism, and the same intense expectation of the Second Coming. The Anabaptist movement, which spread through Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Holland immediately after the rise of Protestantism, aimed at the reestablishment of primitive Christianity in doctrine and practice, and was steeped in mysticism and in millenerian dreams.)

✓ The Protestant communities were anticipating the fall of Papal Rome - the fourth Beast - Babylon - as the prelude to the drama of the Second Coming and the Thousand Years' Reign of Christ. The leaders of the Reformation in the sixteenth century - Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, Tyndale and numerous others - regarded the Pope as the Antichrist, the "man of sin" of the Apocalypse, and the Roman Church as Babylon. The overthrow of Papacy and the Catholic Church, which they regarded as imminent, would usher in the glorious millennium.

✓ The repercussions of the great struggle in the Christian world were felt in the ghettos of Israel. (Thus Joseph d'Arles, follower of Molko, entertained great hope that the Protestant Reformation would dismember Christendom

and destroy Rome. The seeming break-up of Christendom, the decline in the power of the Papacy, added to the victorious advance of the Turk, led many to feel that they were actually living in the period of the great denouement of the Messianic drama.)

✓ The discovery of the New World, too, inflamed the imagination of men. Columbus himself believed that his discoveries were the fulfilment of prophecy. The successful explorations in the new continent and the accounts brought home by travelers and Conquistadores gave rise to the most fantastic rumors. The Jews quite naturally looked to the newly discovered lands as the possible home of the long Lost Ten Tribes, whose existence no one doubted, concerning whose whereabouts vague reports had drifted in through the centuries since the dispersion, and whose return to Palestine was, in the minds of the people, preliminary to the complete restoration of the whole of Israel.

✓ The Messianic expectations of this century, (which are given classic expression in the writings of Abarbanel,) rise in successive up-thrusts through the succeeding 150 years, until they reach their climax, and, in a sense, their final defeat in the Shabbetai Zebi movement.

(Messianic speculation suffered no abatement in the seventeenth century. This century also witnessed its most tragic consequences.)

✓ As the year 1648 approached -- the Anno Mirabile - the great year heralded by the Zohar and many subsequent teachers, the national fever mounted. Fantastic hopes engulfed the whole of Israel, from Safed to London, from Morocco to Poland. (The Rabbis of Palestine sent an encyclical prayer to be recited at dawn and in the evening in all the lands of the Diaspora, the recitation to be accompanied by lamentation and penance, asking for the restoration of the Kingdom of David and for the remission of the travail-pangs of the Messianic times. Another pastoral letter was dispatched from Palestine to the Diaspora, urging upon all men to forego strife and dissension and to cultivate peace and good will,

in preparation for the imminent advent of the Messiah. Numerous pamphlets on the correct practice of repentance, based on the tradition of Luria, were
✓ widely circulated and read.) Men prayed and castigated themselves, knowing that the great day was at hand.

✓ In Amsterdam, Manasseh ben Israel, believing that the end was nigh, petitioned Cromwell to permit the return of the Jews to England, in order that their universal dispersion might thereby be accomplished -- a condition precedent to their Redemption.

(In the seventeenth century the stage was set for a great Messianic movement. Politically the conditions were propitious for such a movement.
✓ Mystically the people had been prepared for it.) Even the Christian world was in the grip of a millennial frenzy.

(The outstanding political events of the century were the Thirty Years' War, which closed in 1648, and the Cossack Rebellion, which began in 1648; the former unsettled the life of German Jewry and impoverished it; the latter crushed and decimated Polish Jewry in one of the most horrible tragedies of history.)

(The Shabbetai Zebi movement found Polish Jewry bleeding, broken, intellectually and spiritually exhausted, steeped in Messianic lore, eager to receive any message which promised swift and miraculous surcease from its suffering.)

(The Shabbetian movement appealed particularly to the Jewish communities of Germany and Poland, whose tribulations were greater than those of all other Jewish communities, though it was widely heralded in the Sephardic communities as well.)

(As far as Christendom ^{was} is concerned, the seventeenth century was one of vast confusion and conflict. Mystic sects increased in number and in volume and superstition was rampant throughout Europe among Catholics and Protestants

alike. The Thirty Years' War disorganized the whole intellectual life of Europe.)

(The mystic movements which began in Western Europe simultaneously with the Reformation continued throughout the seventeenth century, and they were all filled with apocalyptic intoxication.)

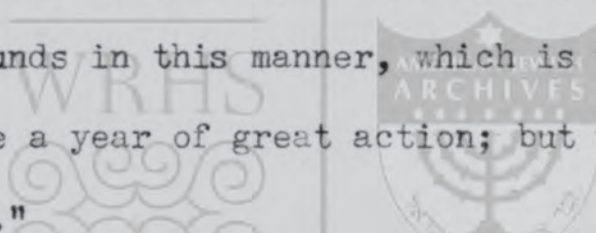
In the middle of the seventeenth century England was rent by religious and civil warfare. It was in the midst of a vast political and spiritual turmoil. A twofold struggle raged: Parliament against the King, Puritanism against the Established Church. The political and religious issues were not kept apart. Characteristic of nearly all the national struggles of the seventeenth century was the manner in which these two were invariably embroiled. In England the political conflict was envisaged as a great drama of spiritual salvation. When wars take on such a religious mood and bias they release an inordinate emotionalism and enkindle incredible Messianic hopes. For half a century a goodly section of English society was enthralled by this religio-political romanticism.

The Puritans were among the more conservative of the enthusiasts who were anticipating epochal changes. Numerous sects of extremists sprang up whose doctrines were quite like those of the Anabaptists, to whom the religious and political upheavals of the Reformation gave rise on the Continent a century before. A contemporary print which caricatures the diversity of religious sects in England toward the middle of the seventeenth century enumerates among them Adamites, Libertins, Anti-Scripturians, Soule-Sleepers, Anabaptists, Familists, Seekers and Divorcers. Most of these sects were profoundly Messianic.

All the Messianic speculation of the day was related in an essential way to Israel, for the Scriptural apocalypses upon which they were all based were Jewish apocalypses, in ~~the~~ which the restoration of Israel to dominion and glory was a central motif. Thus the Messianic hope of Christian England

in the seventeenth century and that of universal Israel converged. (From it there devolved some very important historical events.)

When the Shabbetai Zebi movement swept over Europe in the year 1666, it stirred England profoundly. Under date of February 12-20, 1666, Pepys writes in his Diary: "Here I am told for certain what I have heard once or twice already of a Jew in town, that in the name of the rest do offer to give any man 10 pounds to be paid 100 pounds, if a certain person now at Smyrna be within these two years owned by all the princes of the East, and particularly the grand Signor as the King of the world, in the same manner we do the King of England here, and that this man is the true Messiah. One named a friend of his that had received ten pieces in gold upon this score, and says that the Jew hath disposed of 1100 pounds in this manner, which is very strange; and certainly this year of 1666 will be a year of great action; but what the consequences of it will be, God knows."



Reform

① Prophetic Optimism - פנימי אופטימי

Anabasis - Glorious future -

② Defeat - Eschatological - Beyond Bourne

② Israel (under prophetic vision) - " 328

③ "Zion" as Sp. Center - Mission

Israel's God - God of Mouth and

Hand - פיה ויד - יד ופה

④ Under Defeat - Israel not westward -

But Beneficial -

③ Restoration - after 1st + 2nd Dispersion

Return - Remnant = Jewish State

④ Davidic Dynasty - " מלך

④ Under later Esch. development - Biblical

① " פה - Judgment Day - " אלה
Evil + Evil-doers destroyed.

② Elijah would appear to announce the
advent of the Age - which would usher
in Messianic

THE BROTHERHOOD OF TEMPLE ISRAEL OF SAINT LOUIS

Extends to you a Cordial Invitation
to attend the

Third Annual Institute of Judaism

For Clergy and Religious Educators

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1938

at Temple Israel

Kingshighway and Washington Avenues



THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS WILL BE DISCUSSED

- A. "The Concept of Messiah in Judaism."
- B. "The Democratic Theme in Judaism."
- C. "The Jews of Germany, Poland and Roumania."

MORNING SESSION, 10:15 O'CLOCK AT TEMPLE ISRAEL

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS - - - Ferdinand M. Isserman
Rabbi of Temple Israel

Chairman - - - - - - - Rt. Rev. William Scarlett
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese
of Missouri

ABBA HILLEL SILVER, D. D., Litt. D.

Rabbi — The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio

will speak on

“THE CONCEPT OF MESSIAH IN JUDAISM”



INSTITUTE SPEAKER

Rev. Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, who is the speaker at the third Annual Institute on Judaism, is one of the most distinguished American rabbis, and a nationally known religious leader. He is a graduate of the Hebrew Union College and of the University of Cincinnati, and was awarded an honorary degree by Western Reserve University. He is the Rabbi of The Temple in Cleveland, Ohio and has held and holds many important offices in civic and religious organizations, both local and national. He is first vice-president of the Zionist Organization of America, and chairman of the United Palestine Appeal. During the world war, he was decorated by the French government. He is the author of “Messianic Speculation in Israel,” “The Democratic Theme in Judaism,” and “Religion in a Changing World,” which was a selection of the Religious Book of the Month Club. Rabbi Silver is one of America’s most noted and ablest pulpiteers. He is as scholarly as he is eloquent. The Institute is fortunate in having him as its speaker this year.

THE INVITED CLERGY ARE TO BE THE GUESTS OF
THE BROTHERHOOD OF TEMPLE ISRAEL AT LUNCHEON
TO BE SERVED IN THE
RABBI LEON HARRISON AUDITORIUM

**LUNCHEON SESSION 12:15 O'CLOCK
AT TEMPLE ISRAEL HOUSE**

Chairman - - - - - **Mr. Irving Edison**
Vice-President of the
Brotherhood of
Temple Israel

INVOCATION - - - - - **Rev. Dr. Hugh O. Isbell**
President of the Ministerial Alliance
of St. Louis

GREETINGS - - - - - **Rev. Dr. Paul Press**
President of the Church
Federation of St. Louis

RABBI ISSERMAN
will speak on

"THE JEWS OF GERMANY, POLAND AND ROUMANIA"

A motion picture of Jewish Customs and Ceremonies produced by the children
of the religious school of Temple Israel as a project of a class
studying Jewish ceremonies will be shown.

AFTERNOON SESSION, 2:00 P. M.

Chairman - - - - - **Rev. Dr. Ivan Lee Holt**
Pastor of St. John's M.E.
Church, South

RABBI SILVER
will speak on

"THE DEMOCRATIC THEME IN JUDAISM"

Following the addresses, there will be time for questions and discussion.

The morning session will be held in the Temple proper, and the luncheon and
afternoon session will be held in the Rabbi Leon Harrison Auditorium
of Temple Israel House at Kingshighway and Washington

**KINDLY FILL OUT THE ENCLOSED
CARD INDICATING WHICH SESSIONS
YOU PLAN TO ATTEND. INFORMATION
ABOUT YOUR ATTENDANCE AT LUNCH-
EON IS ESPECIALLY DESIRED AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE.**

THE BROTHERHOOD OF TEMPLE ISRAEL IS PLEASED TO
HAVE THE FOLLOWING CLERGY AS COOPERATING
SPONSORS OF THE INSTITUTE ON JUDAISM

- REV. DR. GEORGE A. CAMPBELL,
Pastor of the Union Avenue Christian Church
- MR. PERCIVAL CHUBB,
President of the American Ethical Union, and leader emeritus
of the St. Louis Ethical Society
- REV. DR. WM. CROWE,
Pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church
- REV. DR. GEORGE R. DODSON,
Pastor of the Church of the Unity
- REV. DR. TRUMAN B. DOUGLASS,
Pastor of the Pilgrim Congregational Church
- REV. DR. WILBERT DOWSON,
Pastor of the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church
- REV. DR. GEO. M. GIBSON, Jr.,
Pastor of the First Congregational Church, Webster Groves, Mo.
- REV. DR. IVAN LEE HOLT,
Pastor of the St. John's M. E. Church, South
- REV. DR. HUGH O. ISBELL,
President of the Ministerial Alliance of St. Louis and pastor
of the Kirkwood M. E. Church
- REV. DR. C. OSCAR JOHNSON,
Pastor of the Third Baptist Church
- REV. DR. JOHN W. MAC IVOR,
Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church
- REV. FATHER W. F. MULLALLY,
St. Mary's Magdalen Church
- REV. DR. PAUL PRESS,
President of the Church Federation of St. Louis, and Pastor of
Frieden's Evangelical Church
- REV. DR. S. D. PRESS,
President of the Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Mo.
- RT. REV. WILLIAM SCARLETT,
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri
- REV. DR. SIDNEY E. SWEET,
Dean of Christ Church Cathedral
- REV. DR. GEORGE H. TOLLEY,
Pastor of the Second Baptist Church
- REV. DR. T. B. UBER,
Pastor of the Reen Memorial Church
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