

EIGHT VIEWS OF JESUS AS MESSIAH

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1. Orthodox Jews:

Among followers of Judaism, Jesus is viewed as having been the most influential, and consequently the most damaging, of all false messiahs. However, since the traditional Jewish belief is that the messiah has not yet come and the Messianic Age is not yet present, the total rejection of Jesus as either messiah or deity has never been a central issue for Judaism.

Judaism has never accepted any of the claimed fulfillments of prophecy that Christianity attributes to Jesus. Judaism also forbids the worship of a person as a form of idolatry, since the central belief of Judaism is the absolute unity and singularity of God. Jewish eschatology holds that the coming of the Messiah will be associated with a specific series of events that have not yet occurred, including the return of Jews to their homeland and the rebuilding of The Temple, a Messianic Age of peace and understanding during which "the knowledge of God" fills the earth." And since Jews believe that none of these events occurred during the lifetime of Jesus (nor have they occurred afterwards), he was not the Messiah.

2. Unitarians:

Unitarian Christians believe that Jesus was inspired by God in his moral teachings, and he is a savior, but he was a normal human being and not a deity or God incarnate. Unitarianism does not constitute one single Christian denomination, but rather refers to a collection of both extant and extinct Christian denominations, whether historically related to each other or not, which share a common theological concept of the oneness nature of God.

3. Jehovah Witnesses:

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus is God's "only-begotten Son", and that his life began in heaven. He is described as God's first creation and the "exact representation of God", but is believed to be a separate entity and not part of a Trinity. Jesus is said to have been used by God in the creation of all other things. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Archangel, Michael, "the Word" of John 1:1, and wisdom personified in Proverbs 8 refer to Jesus in his pre-human existence and that he resumed these identities after his ascension to heaven following his death and resurrection. They also identify him with the "rider of the white horse" at Revelation 6 and 19. His birth on earth was accomplished when he willingly allowed himself to be transferred, by God, from heaven to the womb of the virgin, Mary. While on earth, Jesus was executed as a sacrifice to atone for mankind's sins, becoming the "eternal father" to the human family.

4. Mormons:

In traditional Christianity, as expressed in the Athanasian Creed, God is conceived both as a unity and a Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are described as three persons of one uncreated divine being, equally infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. Though modern Mormons share with traditional Christianity a belief that the object of their worship comprises three distinct persons, Mormon theology disagrees with the idea that the three persons are the same being.

Mormons are constrained by the language of the Book of Mormon to regard the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as "one", but consider this a social unity rather than ontological. Mormons since the time of Joseph Smith have regarded God as plural. They regard God the Father as the biblical god Elohim, and they believe that the Son,

a distinct being, is both Jesus and the biblical God Jehovah. The two of them, together with the Holy Spirit, are believed to form a heavenly council which Mormons call the "Godhead". They are "one" in the sense of being lovingly united in purpose or will, a view sometimes called social Trinitarianism. Unlike traditional Christians, modern Mormons generally regard the Son as subordinate to the Father.

Mormons since the 1840s have believed that God is changeable. They believe that the Father (like the Son) was twice "born"—once as a spirit, and again as a mortal man. After he lived a mortal life, Mormons believe that the Father died, was resurrected, and achieved his godhood along with at least one wife whom Mormons refer to as the Heavenly Mother. Some believe that the Heavenly Father and Mother gave birth to the spirits of humanity through a sexual union. Modern Mormons believe that Jesus, the Son, was the first born of these spirits.

While Mormons might agree with the statement that the Father and the Son are "uncreated", their understanding of "creation" differs from that of traditional Christianity. Mormons do not believe, as do traditional Christians, that God created the universe ex nihilo (from nothing). Rather, to Mormons the act of creation is to organize or reorganize pre-existing matter or intelligence. Traditional Christians consider God to be a "necessary being", meaning that he cannot not exist, while all other creations are "contingent beings". In Mormonism, by contrast, every god and human is equally a necessary being.

The Mormon sense of "eternal" differs from that of traditional Christians, who believe that God's eternal nature exists outside of space and time. Some situate the Mormon God within space and time. However, Mormon scripture states that "time is measured only unto man." They believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are co-eternal, but they also believe that all of humanity is co-eternal with the Father in the sense that the underlying spark of all intelligence has always existed (in space and time) and never was created.

Mormons believe that God is scrutable through revelation, and anthropomorphic, in that he has a physical body of flesh and bone. Although Mormons do believe in traditional Christian notions that God is omnipotent and omniscient, modern Mormons also believe that "even God's omnipotence must conform to the attributes of truth and wisdom and justice and mercy".

5. Roman Catholics (perhaps expressed differently, but typical of most Protestants):

The Catholic Church holds that there is one eternal God, who exists as a perichoresis ("mutual indwelling") of three hypostases, or "persons": God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit, which together are called the "Holy Trinity".

Catholics believe that Jesus Christ is the "Second Person" of the Trinity, God the Son. In an event known as the Incarnation, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God became united with human nature through the conception of Christ in the womb of the virgin Mary. Christ, therefore, is understood as being both fully divine and fully human, including possessing a human soul. It is taught that Christ's mission on earth included giving people his teachings and providing his example for them to follow as recorded in the four Gospels. Jesus is believed to have remained sinless while on earth, and to have allowed himself to be unjustly executed by crucifixion, as sacrifice of himself to reconcile humanity to God; this reconciliation is known as the Paschal Mystery. The Greek term "Christ" and the Hebrew "Messiah" both mean "anointed one", referring to the Christian belief that Jesus' death and resurrection are the fulfilment of the Old Testament's messianic prophecies.

The Catholic Church teaches dogmatically that "the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, not as from two principles but as from one single principle". It holds that the Father, as the "principle without principle", is the first origin of the Spirit, but also that he, as Father of the only Son, is with the Son the single principle from which the Spirit proceeds. This belief is expressed in the Filioque clause which was added to the

Latin version of the Nicene Creed of 381 but not included in the Greek versions of the creed used in Eastern Christianity.

6. A Son Twice Birthed

A growing number of Christians believe that Jesus is God's "only-begotten Son", and according to Proverbs 8, his life began in eternity before anything was created. It also is believed that he was birthed and raised by the Father as a separate being, and given the name Michael, which means "who? the One like God." (What God creates is not God, but what God births is God). He is the image of the invisible God, and because all things were created by him and for him, Colossians 1:15-17, he is referred to as "everlasting Father," Isaiah 9:6. He is called by many titles, as the Word: John 1:1, Wisdom: 1Corinthians 1:24 and the "arm of Yahweh:" Isaiah 53:1. The understanding of the Son of God as Michael and Jesus is represented figuratively as two piles of bread, Leviticus 24:5-9, two cherubs on top of the ark, Exodus 25:18 and two witnesses, Revelation 11:3-4. It is also believed that the Apostolic Church had this truth, John 17:3; 1Corinthians 8:5-6; 2John 1:3; that it became corrupted and covered up, and will generally remain hidden until the last generation when God will stir His people to once again enlighten the world. The Son volunteered to give his life for the people of the world, and the Father sent him as a gift of love, not to condemn anyone, but that everyone would have a chance to be saved through him, John 3:16-17.

7. Pentecostal, Oneness:

Oneness Pentecostalism (also known as Apostolic or Jesus' Name Pentecostalism and often pejoratively referred to as the "Jesus Only" movement in its early days) is a category of denominations and believers within Pentecostalism which adhere to the nontrinitarian theological doctrine of Oneness. The movement first emerged in America around 1914 as the result of doctrinal disputes within the emerging Pentecostal movement and claims an estimated 24 million adherents today.

Oneness Pentecostalism derives its distinctive name from its teaching on the Godhead, which is popularly referred to as the Oneness doctrine. This doctrine states that there is one God, a singular divine Spirit, who manifests himself in many ways, including as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This stands in sharp contrast to the doctrine of three distinct and eternal persons posited by Trinitarian theology. Oneness believers baptize in the name of Jesus Christ, commonly referred to as Jesus' name baptism, rather than using the Trinitarian formula.

Advocating a non-traditional view of God, Oneness Pentecostals find in modalistic monarchianism of the fourth century a historical predecessor that affirmed the two central aspects of their own convictions:

1. There is one indivisible God with no distinction of persons in God's eternal essence, and
2. Jesus Christ is the manifestation, human personification, or incarnation of the one God.

Oneness theology specifically maintains that God is absolutely and indivisibly one. It equally proclaims that God is not made of a physical body, but is an invisible spirit that can only be seen in theophanies (such as the burning bush) that he creates or manifests, or in the person of the incarnate Jesus Christ. In the person of Jesus, one sees the last, best, and complete theophany of God (Colossians 2:9 KJV: "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily").

Oneness Pentecostalism rejects all concepts of a subordination, duality, trinity, pantheon, co-equality, co-eternity, or other versions of the Godhead that assert plural gods, plural beings, divine "persons", individuals, or multiple centers of consciousness within that Godhead. It equally denies all concepts of Jesus as anything other than fully God and fully man, together with all teachings that assert that he was merely a "good man," or only a sinless man, high priest or prophet, rather than God himself. Oneness doctrine declares that Jesus Christ

is the only begotten Son of God, but that this happened only when he was born from Mary on Earth. It rejects the view that any person can "obtain" the status of God whether by works or by grace, maintaining that Jesus Christ did not "obtain" his status, but rather that he is the one, eternal God himself manifested in the flesh according to the Oneness Pentecostal interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:16, as is rendered in the King James Version.

8. Christadelphians:

God: Christadelphians believe that God is the creator of all things and the father of true believers, that he is a separate being from his son, Jesus Christ, and that the Holy Spirit is the power of God used in creation and for salvation. They also believe that the phrase Holy Spirit sometimes refers to God's character/mind, depending on the context in which the phrase appears, but reject the view that we need strength, guidance and power from the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life, believing instead that the spirit a believer needs within themselves is the mind/character of God, which is developed in a believer by their reading of the Bible (which, they believe, contains words God gave by his Spirit) and trying to live by what it says during the events of their lives which God uses to help shape their character.

Jesus: Christadelphians believe that Jesus is the promised Jewish Messiah, in whom the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament find their fulfilment. They believe he is the Son of Man, in that he inherited human nature (with its inclination to sin) from his mother, and the Son of God by virtue of his miraculous conception by the power of God. Although he was tempted, Jesus committed no sin, and was therefore a perfect representative sacrifice to bring salvation to sinful humankind. They believe that God raised Jesus from death and gave him immortality, and he ascended to Heaven, God's dwelling place. Jesus had no existence prior to his conception by the virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit.

Summary of views of Jesus:

1. Jesus not the Messiah, but a false one.
2. Savior, but a normal human being. Not a deity.
3. He had a beginning in heaven as a created being & Son of God.
4. Father & Son separate beings, each twice born - as spirit & as human; Father, Son & Holy Spirit all separate.
5. Trinity of co-equal, co-eternal persons, triune in one God - God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit.
6. Father & Son separate beings, the Son being born in eternity as the divine Son and again as a human being.
7. One God, a singular divine Spirit, who manifests himself in many ways, including as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Jesus is the manifestation, human personification, or incarnation of the one God.
8. Jesus is the only begotten of the Father, but had no pre-existence prior to his birth in Bethlehem.

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things be? And, What is the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age? And answering, Jesus said to them, See that not any leads you astray. For many will come in My name, saying, I am the Christ. And they will cause many to be led astray. Matthew 24:3-4 LITV

Will you be led astray? Or, will you personally investigate the various teachings to see which fits scripture?