

The God-Man Concept in the Hebrew Scriptures

There is a strange aspect to the kingship of the Messiah that is revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. Some passages that deal with His reign and His kingdom speak of Him as more than a man. They refer to Him as God. This we call “the God-Man concept.”

1. Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this. (ASV)

Verse 6 declares that a son will be born into the Jewish world who will eventually control the reins of government. Verse 7 identifies Him as the messianic descendant of David. It gives a dramatic description of His reign, which will be characterized by peace and justice. The names given to this child in verse 6, *Wonderful Counselor* and *Prince of Peace*, can be true of a man. However, He is also given names that can only be true of God Himself: *Mighty God* and *Everlasting Father*. Thus, Isaiah prophesies that the Messiah is not to be merely human, but He is also to be God.

The prophecy of Isaiah 9 expands upon what was said two chapters earlier (7:14):

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (ASV)

Isaiah declares that there is going to be a son born of a virgin. He is to be named Immanuel. In the Bible, when a father names his child, it shows the thinking of the parents. However, when God gives a person a name, it represents the person’s very character as only God can foresee. Hence, when God names the child of Isaiah 7:14 Immanuel, the name portrays the actual character of the child. What does “Immanuel” mean? It means “With us, God.” So, here we have a child that is born of a virgin and who is “With us, God” or “God is among us!” The Isaiah 9 passage further clarifies that this Son is a descendant of David, and He is labeled as God Himself. Isaiah clearly portrays the Messiah as the God-Man.

2. Jeremiah 23:5-6

Isaiah is not alone in prophesying this. Jeremiah echoes Isaiah in Jeremiah 23:5-6:

⁵ Behold, the days come, says Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness. (ASV)

Here, too, a descendant of David reigns upon the throne of David, and the character of His reign is described as one of peace and security for Israel. Yet this Davidic king is given the very name of God, which can only belong to God Himself: *Adonai Tzidkenu – Jehovah our righteousness*. This is the very name that God revealed to Moses as being His own personal name: YHVH, I AM. So once again, the future King Messiah of Israel is seen as a man on the one hand, but as God on the other. As with the Sonship concept, the God-Man concept is related to the Messiah's kingship.

3. Micah 5:2

But you, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which are little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of you shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. (ASV)

According to Micah 5:2, the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. However, Micah further states that His *goings forth are from old, from everlasting*. This individual, who is to be born in Bethlehem, has His origins from eternity. Only one person is from eternity past, and that is God Himself. As to His human origin, He was born in Bethlehem; as to His divine origin, He is from eternity. He is both God and man at the same time.

4. Zechariah 13:7

Another passage which brings out this God-Man concept is Zechariah 13:7:

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, says Jehovah of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones. (ASV)

The Hebrew word translated as “fellow” means “my equal.” The verse literally reads: “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my equal, says Jehovah of hosts.” Can a man be equal to God? No. Only God can be equal to God. Again, the Messiah will be both God and man.

5. Psalm 110:1-2

¹ *The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."*

² *The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies."*

(NASB)

The psalmist here is David, the king of Israel. He had no human *Lord*. There was no authority over him except *the LORD*, Jehovah Himself. Yet, in verse 1 of this psalm, David speaks of two lords: "The LORD [Jehovah] said to my Lord . . ." David is speaking of two personalities here: Jehovah and "my Lord." But who could be this Lord, since David had no human over-lord? The only way to understand this verse is to see Jehovah as God the Father and David's Lord as Messiah. It is Messiah, therefore, who is invited to sit at God's right hand.

Implicit within this prophecy is the concept of the God-Man. We know from I Kings 2:19 that anyone who sits at a king's right hand must be equal to the king. Since Messiah is invited to sit at God's right hand, it follows that Messiah must be equal to God. As to His humanity, Messiah is to be a descendant of David, but He is also deity. He has to be in order to sit at the right hand of God. This is further developed in Psalm 80:17:

Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. (NASB)

Israel is here praying to God for deliverance. In verse 17, the One they ask to come and deliver them is at God's right hand. This is the person of Psalm 110, the King Messiah. The title given to Messiah in verse 17 is "the son of man." Since this son of man is sitting at the right hand of God, He must be equal to God. He must be divine. Thus, we have another verse that affirms the deity of the Man-King Messiah, the God-Man.

In conclusion, the God-Man concept entails the following points:

King Messiah is a man:

- A child; a son; born in Bethlehem.
- He is a descendant of King David and will sit on his throne and rule in Israel.
- He is called "the son of man."

In the New Testament, "Son of Man" is a very common messianic title, particularly in the Gospel of Luke.

King Messiah is God:

- He has names that only God can have: Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Immanuel, Jehovah our Righteousness.
- He comes from eternity past.
- He is equal to God; He sits at His right hand.
- His reign will never end.