

I'm afraid I have been sidetracked from my thread within a thread within a thread, but now want to get back to it. This particular sub-sub-thread is about whether Jesus considered himself to be the Jewish messiah. My view is that Yes he did. But he meant something very specific by that, and it is not what most people (Christians and non-Christians) today mean by it.

Recall what I have tried to show thus far. There were various expectations of what the messiah would be like among Jews of Jesus' day - a political ruler over Israel, a great priest who ruled God's people through God's law, a cosmic judge of the earth who would destroy God's enemies in a cataclysmic act of judgment. All these views had one thing in common: the future messiah would be a figure of grandeur and might who would come with the authority and power of God.

And who was Jesus? For most people of his day, Jesus was just the opposite - an itinerant Jewish preacher from the backwaters of rural Galilee who ended up on the wrong side of the law and was tortured and executed for his efforts. He didn't destroy God's enemies. He was crushed by them.

In establishing that Jesus nonetheless considered himself to be the messiah I have so far made two points:

- Jesus was considered the messiah by his followers after his death, so much so that "Christ" became the most common designation for him. Nothing about his crucifixion, or the belief in his resurrection, would have led anyone to think he was the messiah (since the messiah was not supposed to be raised from the dead, let alone humiliated and crucified). So he must have been called the messiah *before* his followers came to believe in his resurrection. But the question is: did Jesus himself tell his followers this? To get to *that* question we have to consider what we know about what Jesus told his followers in general.
- Jesus' proclamation was all about the coming kingdom of God. He was an apocalypticist who believed that God would soon intervene in the course of history, overthrow the forces of evil, and establish a good (and very real, political) kingdom here on earth. His listeners had to turn to God in preparation for this imminent end.

If that was Jesus' proclamation, why should we think that he thought that he himself was to be the messiah of that coming kingdom? I will give two reasons for thinking so. Both are strong, in my opinion. Together they are especially strong.

First,

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