

The Messianic Hope

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At the time of the Ascension, **the Apostles still did not comprehend that Jesus would NOT fulfill the popular Messianic expectation** (At1:6). Jesus had specifically told them that he would not fulfill the popular expectation (Lk:18:31b,33b-34). During his ministry, Jesus made every effort to disassociate himself from the popular expectation (Jh6:15). However, **Jesus did explicitly affirm that he was the Messiah** (Jh18:33,37aβ).

The Popular Expectation: The popular literature was full of the Messianic expectation – this is what the average person was familiar with. The **Old Testament prophecies** of the role of Israel in the World Tomorrow were mistakenly believed to apply to the First Advent (Is40:1–2, 41:8–13, 60:10–14). The **“metaphor of violence”** contributed to the notion that the Messiah would be a “warrior king” (Mc4:13, 5:8–9, Is41:14b–16, 52:7). The **“wise men from the east”** were explicitly looking for **“the King of the Jews”**, and King Herod was not unaware (Mt2:1-4). The priests and Levites from Jerusalem interrogated John the Baptist over the appearance of the Messiah (Jh1:19-21,25). **Common people were expecting the Messiah** (Jh3:1-2a, 4:7,9a,10,25-26).

Jesus’ Reaction to the Expectation: On several occasions, Jesus performed miracles out of mercy for the individuals’ suffering and then **enjoined the recipients to NOT tell others** (Mk1:40-45). A notable exception was in the country of the Gerasenes on the east side of the Sea of Gallilee. This was part of the Greek area known as the “Decapolis”. Because **there was no Messianic expectation among the Greeks**, Jesus wanted the miracle proclaimed (Mk5:1-2,8,19-20). Following the miracle of feeding 5000 people, Jesus deliberately escaped the crowd because of their Messianic desire to make Jesus King (Mk6:41-42,45a,46b, Jh6:14-15).

The Remnant Community: Since the return from exile in 538BC, God had carefully prepared and maintained a group of **True Worshipers**, “the remnant community”, to be ready for the First Advent – the community in which the Messiah, as a child, could grow up. They were ready – when **Joseph** observed that Mary was pregnant, he readily accepted the explanation (Mt1:20-25). When **Mary** herself was told of the impending pregnancy, she questioned how it could be possible, but immediately accepted her responsibility (Lk1:34-35,37-38a). The “remnant community” was expecting the Messiah – just like everyone else. The difference was **they were guided by the Holy Spirit**, and **they accepted that Jesus was the Messiah** regardless of the popular expectation. When John the Baptist was born, his father **Zechariah**, issued a prophecy clearly identifying the Messianic expectation (Lk1:67-73a,76-77). Through his words and actions, **Jesus clearly identified himself as the Messiah** (Lk2:46-50, 4:16-21, Jh8:14,23,28, 10:24-25,30,37-38, 18:33-37).

The Expectation Lived On: The actions of the **Apostles** on many occasions demonstrated that they **did NOT understand that Jesus would NOT fulfill the popular Messianic expectation** (Mk9:33-34, 10:13-14,35-37, Lk9:52-54). Jesus is explicit in teaching the disciples that in spite of his Divinity, he must suffer death – but, he will be restored to life – there will be a resurrection after three days (Mk8:31-32, 9:30-32, Lk18:31-34). **The reality of what Jesus told them did NOT fit their preconceptions**, so they could NOT understand.

Perceptions versus Reality: Not even the Apostles could break away from the popular concept as late as the time of the ascension (At1:6-8). **Only through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit did the teaching of Jesus began to come into focus**. After Pentecost, Peter was able to look past his preconceptions and understand the reality Jesus’ teaching (At2:17-21). Looking to the Second Advent, **we want to avoid the mistakes of everyone looking to the First Advent**: the Jews never learned, even the “remnant community”, True Worshipers, could NOT see past their preconceptions. The Holy Spirit was required to understand. Only looking back could Apostles understand events of First Advent. The Second Advent will be no different. **Any preconceived notions we may have about “how” and “when” things are going to happen, will almost certainly be wrong** (Mt24:36,43-44).

What, NOT When or How: We have the guidance of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and we have the complete revelation from God in the completed Bible: in particular, **the Book of Revelation**. Prophecy tells us **“what is going to happen”** – but **never “when” or “how”**. Elaborate speculations regarding “when” and “how” are a fool’s game (Mk13:28-29, Rv1:1a, 19). **When we observe the “things” occurring, God expects us to recognize them** (Rv3:11a, 22:6,20).

The “Jews” of Jesus’ day were expecting the Messiah. The “remnant community” of True Worshipers was expecting the Messiah. **The popular expectation was a “warrior king”** to establish Israel as the dominant nation on earth. Jesus made every effort to disassociate himself from the popular expectation. Because they were guided by the Holy Spirit, the “remnant community” accepted Jesus as the Messiah. But **even the Apostles could not see the fallacy of the popular expectation**: their **preconceptions prevented them from understanding the truth**. We must NOT make the same mistake with regard to the Second Advent. **The Bible tells us explicitly “what” will happen, but NOT “how” or “when”**.

The material is based on the document “**The Three Pillars of Revelation**” available at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/>.

The PowerPoint slides are located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/presentations>.