

Concerning the Magnificent and August Names and Titles of the Messiah in the Old Testament.

by John Gill

The speaker, John Gill, analyzes several prophecies in the Old Testament that describe the magnificent and august names and titles of the Messiah, and argues that these prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Psalm 110:1, Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 11:2, Isaiah 53:10, Jeremiah 23:6, Micah 5:5, Haggai 2:7, Zechariah 6:12, Ephesians 2:14-17

Topics: "Prophecy Fulfillment", "Names of the Messiah"

Description

John Gill expounds on the magnificent names and titles of the Messiah found in the Old Testament, emphasizing their significance and the prophetic nature of these designations. He argues that titles such as 'Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace' from Isaiah 9:6 are exclusively applicable to Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, rather than historical figures like Hezekiah. Gill also highlights the prophetic implications of names like 'The Lord Our Righteousness' from Jeremiah 23:6 and 'The Branch' from Zechariah 6:12, asserting that these titles affirm the divine nature and mission of Jesus. He addresses objections from Jewish interpretations, reinforcing the belief that these prophecies point directly to Christ's identity and work. Ultimately, Gill concludes that the fulfillment of these prophecies in Jesus provides a foundation for Christian faith and understanding of the Messiah.

Transcript

The Prophecies Respecting the Messiah

CHAPTER XIII.

Concerning the magnificent and august names and titles of the Messiah in the Old Testament.

I thought to have concluded this account of the prophecies of the Old Testament, respecting the Messiah, with the preceding chapter; but observing some prophecies left unconsidered, which contain some of the famous names and titles of the Messiah, I thought it necessary to take notice of them, and especially, seeing they are objected to, by the enemies of Christianity: I have already, in the course of this work, considered several of the names and titles of the Messiah, by which he is called in the prophecies, as that

of Shiloh, the Savior or Peace-maker, Genesis 49:10 Immanuel, or God with us, Isaiah 7:14 Messiah the Prince, Daniel 9:21 the desire of all nations, Haggai 2:7 all which several titles serve to set forth the greatness of his person, as well as his very great usefulness to mankind, as do also the following ones, which I now intend to consider; and shall begin, First, With Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

The ancient Jews applied this prophecy to the Messiah. Their ridiculous traditions, recorded in their Talmud, of God's desire to make Hezekiah the Messiah, and Senacherib, Gog and Magog; and that saying of R. Hillel's, [1] "That Israel should not have a Messiah, because they enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah," shew plainly that that they were under a conviction of this prophecy's belonging to him, though they foolishly attempt to wrest it to Hezekiah, whom they are therefore obliged to make the Messiah.

The Targum manifestly refers those words to the Messiah, as do also others of their ancient and later [2] writers; though others of them would have Hezekiah intended, [3] who are herein followed by Grotius, and the author of The Scheme of Literal Prophecy, who says "The words are manifestly spoken of him;" but Hezekiah surely can never be this rly this new-born babe, as the word properly signifies, when he was at least nine or ten years of age, when this prophecy was given forth; nor can any reason be assigned, why he should, in such a peculiar and unusual manner, be called ןb a son; nor can it be said of him that he was that great light which shined upon the inhabitants of Galilee; nor was his birth the occasion of so great joy, as the birth of this child is said to be; nor can it with any justness be said of Hezekiah, that of the increase of his government and peace there was no end, seeing his government extended only to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin his reign was but twenty-nine years, and that for the most part attended with affliction, oppression and war; besides, the august titles, here used, cannot be ascribed to him, or to any mere creature whatever; for as R.

Sol. ben Melech on the place observes, they are drbty lal μyywnb "the names of the blessed God," which Kimchi and Jarchi acknowledge, and therefore are forced to transpose the words thus, and he who is the wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, shall call his name, The Prince of Peace; so that only this last is the name of the child, and all the rest are the names of God, who calls him so. But this reading is a violent distortion of the text, and if such a method was allowed of, we should be left to a very great uncertainty in the sacred writings.

"It is contrary to the use of the scripture, (as a learned man observes, [4]) that the word wmc, his name, should be placed before the name of him that calleth, when every where else it is placed between the name of him that calleth, and him that is called; so that that name which follows the word wtç, his name, is always ascribed to him that is called, and not to him that calleth, as appears from Genesis 16:15, Genesis 21:3, Genesis 23:14, Exodus 2:22, Ruth 4:17, 1 Samuel 1:20, 2 Samuel 12:5."

This reading is also contrary to the very syntax of the words, for if they were to be read thus, there should have been ta the sign of the accusative case, before μwlç rç the Prince of Peace, to have distinguished it from those several nominatives; whereas there is not: It is moreover contrary to the accents, for there is only a Tiphca on r[yba the everlasting Father, which is no distinguishing accent, especially in propositions; and often idle and does not distinguish at all, but serves only to carry on the sentence to the next member.

It would have appeared more plausible, if the stop had been made at rwbg la the mighty God; for a Sakeph Katon is there, which is an accent of far greater power, but this would not answer their end; for

they would be under an equal difficulty, in applying the title of the everlasting Father to Hezekiah, as that of the mighty God. Besides, what reason can be given, why the great God should have so many titles and epithets given unto him, and that only at the giving of a name to a young Prince?

What was there in Hezekiah that should require this, especially when we consider, that when God has either given new names to persons, or changed their old ones, who were as famous as ever Hezekiah was, and as much in the divine favor, yet he never used such a way of speaking as this. What the Jews think will much help them in this sense and reading of the words, is, that *arqyw* is in the active, and not in the passive form, and therefore should be rendered, and he shall call his name, etc. and not as we render it, and his name shall be called, etc. on which account, [5] they are ready to charge us with a corruption of the text.

To which I answer, it is true, the word is in the active form; but yet, nothing is more frequent in the Hebrew language, than for verbs active of the third person, to be used passively, when the nominative is not expressed; and this is the very manifest sense of this word in many places; see Genesis 16:14 2 Samuel 2:16 Isaiah 62:2. Besides, this word is rendered in the passive sense, in this very text, both by the Targum, and by several versions made by the Jews themselves; [6] though, if we understand the word actively, it no ways prejudices the application of those several names to the Messiah; for it is very easy to supply the nominative case, either thus, Jehovah, or God the Father shall call, etc. or thus, and every one shall call his name Wonderful, etc.

From the whole it appears, that all, and every one of those titles, belong to one and the same person, even to the child or Son, here spoken of, which Aben Ezra acknowledges to be the true sense of the words; but how they can, with any justness, be applied to Hezekiah, or be thought to be manifestly spoken of him, I cannot apprehend; for will it be sufficient to say, with the above same Jewish writer, that he was called Wonderful, because of the miracles which God wrought in his days; Counsellor, because he consulted with his princes about keeping the passover in the second month, 2 Chronicles 30:2. the mighty God, because he was strong and powerful; the everlasting Father, or Father of Eternity, because the kingdom of the house of David was continued somewhat longer for his sake; and the Prince of Peace, because there was peace in his days?

Surely it cannot be thought sufficient to entitle him to the name of Wonderful, that God did, in his days, and for his sake, cause the sun to return ten degrees; nor could he be called so on the account of his eminent virtues, which did not shine more brightly in him than in many others. Nor is it enough to say, that he was the Counsellor, because he took counsel with others, but was not a counsellor of others, often wanted counsel himself, and therefore sometimes acted a foolish part, as in the case of his shewing the ambassadors of Babylon all his treasures; much less could he be called the mighty God, or the strong One, because of his might, power, and prowess in war, when we read but of one single exploit of his, of this kind, which could be any indication of it, and that is, his smiting the Philistines unto Gaza, and the borders thereof; 2 Kings 8:8 Though afterwards we read, that the King of Assyria came and took all his fenced cities, and obliged him to pay a considerable tribute to him; nor ought he to be called the everlasting Father, or Father of Eternity, who himself lived but four and fifty years, and the regal power of his posterity, in a few years, ended in Zedekiah; nor can I see how he can well be called the Prince of Peace, who was frequently distressed and oppressed by his enemies, his reign was chiefly spent in war, and can be supposed only to enjoy peace towards the close thereof.

But now the whole prophecy, and the several names given to this child, well agree with the Messiah; it is he, whose conversation in Galilee of the nations would make it glorious, as has been elsewhere observed, at whose coming light would shine upon the inhabitants thereof; whose birth would produce a joy like the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil; whose deliverance of people from the yoke of slavery, would not be effected in a common way, but as in the day of Midian, when Gideon, in such an incredible and extraordinary manner, delivered the Israelites: for this victory which he, the Messiah, was to obtain over all his enemies, would not be, like the victory of other warriors, attended with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, but would be *ça tlbam hprçl htyhw* like to the burning of devouring fire, effected suddenly, in a moment, and without any noise, blood, or wounds; which same person, being placed upon the throne of David, would bear the government upon his shoulder, wield the scepter in righteousness, and increase the peace of all his subjects.

He might well be called Wonderful, because he was to be born of a virgin, Isaiah 7:14 Counsellor, because the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, was to rest upon him, Isaiah 11:2. the mighty God, because the Adon, the mighty Lord, who sits at God's right hand, and rules in the midst of his enemies, having obtained a compleat victory over them, Psalm 110:1, 2, 5, 6 the everlasting Father, because he was to see his seed, and to prolong his days, Isaiah 53:10 the Prince of Peace, because he was to be the man, the peace, who was to speak peace to the Heathen, abundance of which was to be in his days, Micah 5:5, Zechariah 9:10, Psalm 72:3, 7.

Now, how well also these names suit the Messiah, Jesus, is easy to observe, who may well be called Wonderful, on the account of his extraordinary and wonderful conception and birth, as well as on the account of the many surprising miracles which were wrought by him; and if we regard him both as God and man, having two natures, human and divine, united in one person, he will appear to be *alp*, a wonder, a miracle. With as good reason also may he be called Counsellor *megalhv boulhv aggelov*, the angel of the great counsel, as the Septuagint reader it, who was always with God; was privy to all his designs, counsels and purposes; was consulted by him in all the works of his hands, as creation and redemption; is the wisdom of God, and has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in him, and therefore a very proper person to give advice and counsel to his people.

No less does he deserve the title and character of the mighty God, who has spoiled principalities and powers, subdued all his and his people's enemies, procured everlasting salvation for sinners, and is able to save, to the uttermost, them that come unto God by him; very agreeably may he be called, the everlasting Father, or the Father of the age to come, *pathr tou mellontov aiwnov*, as the words are rendered by the Septuagint: for the *hbh ulw[* the world to come, God has not put in subjection to angels, (Hebrews 2:5.) but has made it the care and charge, and put it under the government and conduct of his Son, Jesus Christ, at whose coming this new age, or world, began, and therefore he may well be called the Father of it.

And, to conclude this, nothing can more fully and aptly express the temper of his mind, the nature of his work, and the diffusive blessings of his goodness to the sons of men, than when he is called the Prince of Peace. These things being considered, the author of The Scheme of Literal Prophecy, with Grotius and the Jews, will have little reason to conclude, that these "words are manifestly spoken of Hezekiah," but rather conclude, that they are manifestly spoken of Jesus the Messiah; nor will the Jew have any reason, [7] in that audacious and insulting manner, to say, as he does, "That it is impossible that Jesus should be called by those names; for, says he, how can his name be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, when a foolish disciple of his knew his counsels, even so as to deliver him unto his enemies?"

And how can he be called the mighty God, who was slain? Moreover, how can he be called the everlasting Father, who died before he had lived out half his days? Besides, how can he be called the Prince of Peace, in whose days there was no peace, for as he himself testifies, saying, I am not come to give peace on earth, but a sword?" all which, with what spite and malice, want of truth, as well as with what folly and ignorance they are spoken, may easily be collected from what has been already said concerning Jesus, and the application of this prophecy to him.

I proceed, Secondly, to consider, Jeremiah 23:6 where we have an account of another of the Messiah's names, the words are these, In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name, whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness. The person intended in those words, is undoubtedly the same, who in the preceding verse is called, The Righteous Branch, and is promised to be raised up unto David, which not only the Targum understands of the Messiah, and therefore thus paraphrases it, I will raise up unto David, Messiah the righteous, but also many other Jewish writers. [8] Grotius, indeed, would have Zerobabel intended, but that cannot be, for though Zerobabel was a branch of David's family, yet he never was king over Judah and Israel; nor were those people in such a very safe, secure, and prosperous condition, in his days; and though he was no doubt a righteous person, yet was he not so by way of eminency, nor was his name The Lord our righteousness, neither can any reason be given; why he should be called so.

But every thing agrees well with the Messiah, who was frequently promised, and always expected as a king, in whose hand the pleasure of the Lord should prosper, and by whom justice and judgment should be executed in the earth; for righteousness was to be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins; Israel was to be saved in him with an everlasting salvation; he was to be just, or righteous, in himself, and to bring in everlasting righteousness for others, whereby he was to justify many; so that it is no wonder, that his name should be called, The Lord our righteousness, which name the Messiah Jesus well deserves, seeing he is become the end of the Law for righteousness, to every one that believes, and is of God, made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Abarbinel thinks that *wnqdx hwjy*, The Lord our righteousness, is not the name of the Messiah, but the name of God, who calls the Messiah the righteous Branch; but this sense is contrary to the natural position of the words, and can never be supported without a violent torturing of the text. R. Saadiah Gaon is for separating *hwjy* the Lord, from *wnqdx* our righteousness; he is willing to allow, that *wnqdx* our righteousness, is the name of the Messiah, but then he would have *hwjy* Jehovah to be the name of God, who calls him so; but such a division of the words is contrary to the accents, which R.

Aben Ezra opposes unto him, and says, that he would never have attempted such a division of the words, and had he observed that the accent *Tiphca* is upon *warqy* he shall call him, or he shall be called, which divides it from *hwjy*, Jehovah, and that the accent *Merca* is upon *hwjy* Jehovah, which unites it to *wnqdx*, our righteousness; this observation sufficiently confirms our version of this text. There is one thing more I would just observe, before I dismiss this prophecy, and that is, that the word *warqy* which we translate passively, shall be called, is in the active form, and may be rendered, shall call him, as it is both by the Targum and Septuagint, though, as has been observed on the preceding prophecy, verbs active of the third person, when the nominative to them is not expressed, as here, are often used passively; but if the active sense should be insisted on, it is easy to supply it, either thus, everyone shall call him, etc. or thus, God shall call him, etc. or thus, as Kimchi and others, Israel shall call him, The Lord our righteousness.

From the whole it appears, that this prophecy belongs to the Messiah, and admits of a very easy application to Jesus. Thirdly, The next prophecy of this kind, which I shall consider, is Zechariah 6:12. And speak unto him, that is, to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, Thus speaketh the Lords of Hosts, saying, Behold the man, whose name is the Branch, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. The same person is spoken of under the same title and character in chapter 3:8 For behold I will bring forth my servant the Branch, which the Targum paraphrases thus, Behold I will bring forth my servant the Messiah; and has been so understood by many Jewish interpreters. [9] I have, in considering the former prophecy, observed, that the Messiah is called the righteous Branch in Jeremiah 23:5. as he is also in chapter 33:15 and in Isaiah 4:2 it is said, In that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious; which the Targum renders thus, At that time the Messiah of the Lord shall be for joy and glory: and so Kimchi expounds it of him.

Once more, the Messiah is in Isaiah 11:1 called, a Branch, which should grow out of Jesse's root. Thus we see, that this name, the Branch, is very frequently given to the Messiah, and perhaps, some reference is made to this name in Psalm 132:17. where it is said, There will I make the horn of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for mine Anointed. And it is certain the Jews have so understood it, [10] who, in their prayers for the Messiah's coming, frequently express themselves after this manner, [11] "O God make the horn of thy servant David to bud, and ordain a lamp for the son of Jesse, thy Messiah, in haste, in our days."

The author of The Scheme of Literal Prophecy indeed says, from Grotius to White, "That Esay, Jeremy, and Zechary, do not, by their use of the term branch, mean to signify the Messias; but the Jews in captivity in one place, namely Isaiah 4:2. Hezekiah in another, Isaiah 11:1. Zerobabel in three other places, namely, Jeremiah 23:5. Zechariah 3:8 and 6:12." though he offers nothing in proof thereof. As to Isaiah 4:2. it is much more likely that the Messiah is intended than the Jews in captivity; for what great beauty and glory appeared in them, even when they returned from thence?

Nay, this branch of the Lord, and fruit of the earth, is manifestly distinguished from them that are escaped from Israel, and him that is left in Zion. The beauty and glory predicted of this branch, best agrees with the Messiah; as do also the blessings promised in the following verses; such as the sanctification, washing away the filth, purging the blood of God's people, and the protection and glory of them. That Hezekiah cannot be intended in Isaiah 11:1. I have already proved in a preceding chapter; for he must be born some years before this prophecy was given forth; and that Zerobabel is not Jeremy's righteous Branch in chapter 23:5.

I think I have sufficiently made appear; and shall now attempt to prove, that the Messiah, and not he, is intended by Zechary, when he says, Behold the man, whose name is the Branch. The Targum reads it, Behold the man, whose name is the Messiah. Jarchi says, there are some who interpret it of the king Messiah; which interpretation R. Abendana strenuously contends for; [12] and which is the sense of some of their ancient writers; [13] and that it is the true sense, may be pretty easily collected from the context.

This person was to be both a king and priest; he shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne. Zerobabel was neither king nor priest, the Messiah both. This person was to build the temple of the Lord, and to bear the glory: Not a third temple, which the Jews vainly expect; nor the second temple, built by Zerobabel, from whence so much glory did not arise to the builder of it, it being mean and contemptible, in comparison of that of Solomon's; but the church of God, which is the temple of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth, which was to be built in a very glorious manner, in the days of the

Messiah, and was to consist of Jews and Gentiles; for they that were afar off, that is, the Gentiles, were to come and build in the temple of the Lord, and so the counsel of peace was between them both; that is, Jew and Gentile, which was exactly fulfilled by the Messiah Jesus, who made peace between them both, incorporated them both into one building, of which he himself is the corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also, (Ephesians 2:14, 17.) that is, ye Ephesians, ye Gentiles, are builded together, with the Jews, for an habitation of God through the Spirit; and now he bears all the glory of it.

Once more, this person was not as yet grown up out of his place, but it is promised that he should, which cannot be true of Zerobabel, who was already grown up, and had been for some time actually engaged in building the second temple, as appears from Haggai's prophecy. The Messiah then, and not Zerobabel, is the person intended, whose name may well be called the Branch, by way of eminency, he being the most glorious branch of David's family, who also was to spring from thence, when that family was only like a root in a dry ground; all which well agrees with the state of that family in the times of Jesus, and with that very mean appearance, which he made, when he, this branch, first budded forth from thence.

The Septuagint here render the word *hmx*, the Branch, by *anath*, which properly signifies the rising of the sun, or that part of the heaven where the sun rises, and so may respect the Messiah as the sun of righteousness, who was to arise with healing in his wings. [14] Hence Zacharias in his song, calls the Messiah Jesus (Luke 1:78.) *anath ex uyouv*, the day-spring from on high, who hath visited us: and from hence, perhaps, *Oriens* was used for a name of the Messiah: and it is not without some shew of reason, that some [15] have thought this to be the meaning of the word in Tacitus, when he says, [16] *Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis continero, eo ipsi tempore fore, ut valesceret oriens*, "many were persuaded that in the ancient books of the priests were contained a prophecy, that at that time the east should prevail."

In fine, the Messiah is the man whose name is the Branch, so often spoken of by the prophets, so much expected by the Jews, and who budded forth in the person of Jesus. I shall conclude all with the words of Zacharias, (Luke 1:68 etc.). Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us; that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. ENDNOTES:

[1] Talmud Sanhed. fol. 98 2. & 99. 1.

[2] Debarim Rabba, fol. 196 col. 3. likewise R. Jose Galilaeus praefat, in Echa Rabbati in Alix's Judgment of the Jewish Church, etc. p. 44 & Maimon. in Maji Synops. Theolog. Jud. loc. 8 de Messia, p. 121. Vid, Reuchlinum de aste Cabalae, lib. 1. p. 745.

[3] Jarchi, Kimchi & Aben Ezra in loc. Lipmann. Carmen memor. vet. Nizzach, p. 87. R. Isaac Chizuk, Emun. par. 1. c.

[4] Frischmuth. in Wagenseil. Carmin. Lipmann. Confut. p. 516

[5] Isaac Chizuk, Emun. par 1. c. 21.

[6] *hymç yrqtaz Targ kai kaleitai to onoma auto , Sept. kai eklhqh to onoma autou, Aquila. kai klhqhsetai to onoma autou, Symmach.*

[7] Isaac Chizuk, *Emun. par. 1. e. 21.* Much to the same purpose objects the author of the old Nizzachon, p. 86

[8] Kimchi & R. Sol. ben Melech in loc. R. Isaac Chizuk, *Emun par. 1. c. 42.* who also interpret The Lord our righteousness, of the Messiah in verse 6 and so it is likewise understood by R. Jochanan in Talmud, *Baba Bathra, fol. 75. col. 2.* by R. Aba bar Cahana in *Echa Rabbati, fol. 58 col. 2.* by R. Saadiah Gaon in *Daniel 7:13.* and by *Bereshith Babba in Genesis 25:6 in Galatin de Areanis, C. V. lib. 8 c. 3.*

[9] Vid. Kimchium & Aben Ezram in loc.

[10] Vid. R. Sol. ben Melech. in *Miclol. Yophi in loc. & Kimchium in loc.*

[11] *Seder Tephillot, fol. 278, 1. & 285. 2.* See Bishop Chandler's *Defence of Christianity, p. 221, 222.*

[12] In not. in *Miclol Yophi in loc.*

[13] *Joshua in Echa Rabati, 58 col. 2.*

[14] Which is understood of the Messiah by Kimchi, and R. Tauchuma, in *Allix's Judgment of the Jewish Church, p. 44, 64.*

[15] Hammond on *Luke 1:78* Bishop Chandler's *Defence of Christianity, p. 28, 246.*

[16] *Hist. lib. 5. c. 13.*

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