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**Fitzmyer, Joseph A.**

***The One Who Is to Come***

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Properly speaking, the concept of the Messiah or the Coming One belongs to the genre of Old Testament theology; yet it is also true to say that perhaps no concept such as Messiah has been so glibly interpreted or misunderstood. Messiah is one of the most popular and most contested terms in Christian reflection, with many often reading the concept back into early Old Testament texts. In this magisterial work, Joseph Fitzmyer has carefully and comprehensively contradicted this misreading, tracing the emergence of messianism to a much later date—the second century B.C. This work begins with a linguistic discussion of the term *Messiah* and seeks to address its use and misuse; it then seeks to demonstrate the gradual emergence of the idea of a future, dynasty-continuing David, then moves on to examine the use of the term *Messiah* or *Anointed One* in Dan 9, which many scholars believe to be the latest text in the Hebrew Bible. It also explores the use of the term in the Septuagint and extrabiblical Jewish writings, as well as the New Testament, Targums, and the Mishnah.

At the outset, it may be noted that, Fitzmyer has intended that his work should be seen as an update to the seminal work by Sigmund Mowinckel, which was entitled *He That Cometh* and has had a great influence among scholars of all persuasions. However, it is to be seen not only as an update but also as a corrective to that work, in that it grants a greater understanding to a number of passages that Mowinckel treated and that in this current work are elucidated more correctly. The problem for Fitzmyer is how such titles as “Son of Man,” “Son of God,” and “Servant of the Lord” were used in a messianic sense in

pre-Christian Judaism, that is, in the Old Testament, or in other pre-Christian Jewish writings. Fitzmyer's object at the outset is, therefore, to review the data that has been brought forth by Mowinckel and others in order to put them into a proper historical perspective, so that one can see how the biblical tradition about a Coming One gradually developed in pre-Christian Judaism and fed into the Jewish tradition about a coming Messiah. Part of the important evidence for doing so is to be found among the Dead Sea scrolls, and it should be noted that only a small portion of this data would have been available to Mowinckel, whose work was published in 1951. Thus, the evaluation of this evidence in chapter 7 of this work is a very important contribution to the consideration of this topic.

In the second chapter of this work Fitzmyer has provided a very helpful breakdown of the occurrences of the term משיח as follows:

#### Kings

- A king in a generic sense or an unnamed king of the Davidic dynasty: 1 Sam 2:10, 35; 16:6; Pss 2:2; 20:7; 84:10; possibly 28:8
- Saul called משיח יהוה in 1 Sam 24:7, 11; 26:9, 11, 16, 23; 2 Sam 1:14, 16
- David (as a historical king): 2 Sam 19:22; 22:51; 23.1; Pss 18:51; 89:39, 52; 132:10, 17.
- Solomon (with David?) 2 Chr 6:42
- Zedekiah Lam 4:20
- Cyrus, king of Persia Isa 45:1
- Priests המשיח הכהן Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:15
- Prophets/patriarchs 1 Chr 16:22; Psalm 105:15
- The special case of Dan 9:25, 26

This list is important, since it is the basis for the remainder of the work in as far as it relates to the biblical material. Thus, chapter 4 is entitled "Old Testament Passages That Reveal a Developing Understanding of the Davidic Dynasty," while chapter five is devoted to the special case of Daniel 9. 25, 26. The Septuagint gets its turn in chapter 6 is introduced by the helpful observation that "Some of the interpretations in the LXX may antedate the book of Daniel discussed in chapter 5," so that readers are directed to that chapter before proceeding with this chapter.

By far the longest chapter in the work is devoted to the extrabiblical writings of the Second Temple period, and it is in this chapter that the evidence from Qumran is discussed. In this chapter, the first of the extrabiblical writings to be considered is that of the Similitudes of 1 Enoch. This followed by the texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are divided into two parts: "Qumran Texts Which Speak of Two Messiahs"; and "Qumran Texts Which Speak of One Messiah." This will be a great aid to those who seek to trace the

Messianic doctrine at Qumran. The discussion about the Qumran texts is brought to a close by a consideration of two important works: *The First Messiah: Investigating the Saviour before Jesus*, by Michael Wise; and *The Messiah before Jesus: The Suffering Servant of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, by Israel Knohl.

The work is brought to a conclusion by two further chapters that deal with “The Use of the Messiah in the New Testament” and “The Use of Messiah in the Rabbinic Writings.”

Without doubt this is a magisterial piece of research that is destined to become a standard work. It has been brought to a conclusion with three indices: ancient writings, authors, and subjects. Strangely and sadly, it does not have a bibliography, although many works are referred to by note throughout the volume in accord with the standard procedure. It is a great addition to the theologies of both the Old and New Testaments, and it is a work that will repay further study.