

## Prophetic Comparisons: Moshiach, Mahdi and Messiah - Part 1

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Jewish Moshiach ben David, The Mahdi, Shi'a & Sunni Muslims, Twelve Imams, Twelvers, Muhammad al-Mahdi, The Occultation, Momen Moojan, The Ulama, Lord Maitreya, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Hadith Regarding The Mahdi's Battle Against Masih al-Dajjal, Jesus Serving As Mahdi's Deputy?, Jesus Will Enforce Islam?, Armilus Fights Against Moshiach ben David And Takes Jerusalem, Aspects To Identify al-Mahdi, Islamic Beast And False Prophet, Signs Which Will Precede al-Mahdi's Arrival, Tyrant Sufyani, al-Yamani To Be The Forerunner To al-Mahdi, Muqtada al-Sadr And His Radical Mahdi Militia, Muhammad's Ties To Mecca And Medina, Infidel American Military In Saudi Arabia, Osama bin Laden Condemns Saudi Leadership And Loses His Saudi Arabian Citizenship, War And Destruction In Syria, The Heavy Toll On Iraqis Resulting From 2003 American Invasion And Afterwards, Eschatological Mindset Of People Living In The Middle East

As I point out in the series called "2012: New Age Deception and Psychobabble", just as certain Christians who embrace the Futurist theological perspective long for and patiently await the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and believe that His arrival may possibly be imminent, there are likewise certain Orthodox Jews who sense the urgency of the times, and who eagerly anticipate the arrival of their messiah, who they refer to as "Moshiach ben David", or Messiah, son of David.

Similar to Christian doctrine, the aforementioned Orthodox Jews believe that Moshiach ben David will usher in great changes, and will inspire people to return to the Laws of God. Furthermore, they also believe that a third temple will be built during his anticipated soon-coming reign. However, the Jews do not believe that Moshiach ben David will be of divine origin as Jesus is. Rather, he will merely be a great human leader. If you wish to learn more about this Jewish figure, please consider reading the series "The Kings of the North and the South".

While some Christians may be familiar with the Jewish belief in an eschatological figure called Moshiach ben David, what many do not know, is that within Islamic eschatology, there also exists a strong belief in the long-anticipated return of a great Muslim leader and messiah which the Hadith refer to as "al-Mahdi". While both the Shi'a -- or Shi'ite -- and the Sunni branches of Islam embrace this particular doctrine, it appears to be more pronounced amongst the Shi'ite Muslims, than amongst the Sunni Muslims, and their specific beliefs concerning al-Mahdi are not exactly the same.

According to the beliefs of the Shi'a branch of Islam, there have been exactly twelve divinely anointed leaders of Islam, since the religion was founded by Muhammad during the early 7th Century. These twelve ordained leaders are referred to as the Twelve Imams. The actual number of ordained leaders who have presided over Islam since its founding by Muhammad is a matter of dispute between the different branches of Islam. In fact, it is this very argument which resulted in the split, and the formation of the Sunni and the Shi'a Islamic sects.

At any rate, because of the fact that the Shi'ites embrace this belief concerning there only being twelve imams, they are sometimes referred to as the Twelvers. The Twelver branch of Shi'ite Islam is prominent in Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Lebanon and Bahrain. There are also large minorities in the countries of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

So exactly what is the origin of the Islamic belief in the return of the Mahdi? According to Shi'ite Islamic doctrine, the Twelfth Imam -- Muhammad al-Mahdi -- was born in 869 AD. However, at the young age of five, after presiding over his father's funeral prayer -- his father, Hasan al-Askari, was the Eleventh Imam -- Muhammad al-Mahdi suddenly disappeared. This occurred in 874 AD. Shi'a Muslims believe that he was hidden by God, and are convinced that Muhammad al-Mahdi has been alive ever since that time, but that he has been in occultation. That is, he has been hidden from public view. They refer to this act of being hidden as "ghaybat".

Shi'as likewise believe that Muhammad al-Mahdi -- the Twelfth Imam -- has been waiting, according to God's decree, for the right time when he should return to lead the Islamic nations, and the world. It is their belief that just as the world is currently filled with injustice, oppression and tyranny, he is going to fill the Earth with peace and justice. Of course,

you need to understand that the way in which al-Mahdi intends to do this is by converting the entire world to Islam, by the sword if necessary. According to different sources, al-Mahdi will rule the earth for a period of five to nine years. While he is commonly known as al-Mahdi -- or the Guided One -- this prophesied Islamic leader is likewise known by the following names within the Shi'a branch of Islam:

- Al-Muntathar - the Awaited one
- Al-Qa'im - the Rising one
- Sahab az-Zaman - the Master of the Age
- Imam az-Zaman - the Leader of the Age
- Wali al-'Asr - the Guardian of the Era, or  
- the Guardian in the Twilight [of man]
- Al-Hujjah - the Proof [of Allah's justice]

In his 1985 book entitled "An Introduction To Shi'i Islam", Baha'i scholar Momen Moojan suggests another possible way in which to interpret the meaning of the Mahdi's occultation. According to Moojan, it may mean that al-Mahdi is currently on the Earth "among the body of the Shia", but that he is simply "incognito". Moojan also mentions that "numerous stories" exist which describe al-Mahdi "manifesting himself to prominent members of the ulama". The word "ulama" refers to the body of Muslim legal scholars who are recognized as having specialized knowledge concerning Islamic sacred law -- or Shari'a -- and Islamic theology. As I read Moojan's comments concerning al-Mahdi appearing before some members of the ulama, I was reminded of stories I read a number of years ago regarding how the so-called Lord Maitreya also made certain sudden and mysterious appearances before some people, such as in Nairobi, Kenya. Whether or not these two individuals are related in some way, I honestly do not know.

If you are one who keeps abreast of the news and developments in the Middle East, then you may already know that there has been much talk within the Islamic world in recent years that the return of the Mahdi is imminent. A previous president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was particularly vocal about this. In fact, according to one particular video which I saw online a number of years ago, it was claimed that Ahmadinejad was in contact with the Mahdi at that particular time. Whether or not this was simply Western propaganda, I really do not know.

What I also found interesting concerning Ahmadinejad, aside from his brash manner and his obvious hatred of Israel, the United States and Great Britain, was the fact that according

to the Wikipedia website, Ahmadinejad's mother -- Khanom -- was a Seyyede. This is an honorific title that is only given to those individuals who are believed to be direct bloodline descendants of Muhammad himself. I believe that "Seyyede" is the feminine form of the word "sayyid", which means "lord" or "sir". Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the name Ahmadinejad means "from the race of Ahmad", which is also one of the names that is given to the Islamic prophet, Muhammad.

So, as we have seen, just as some Christians believe that the time of the return of Jesus Christ may be near, and just as the Orthodox Jews believe that Moshiah ben David may soon make his appearance as well, many Muslims likewise believe that the time of the Mahdi's arrival could be just around the corner. Obviously, it is no coincidence that the three major monotheistic faiths of the world all have this same hope and expectation regarding their respective messiahs, at the same time. So it may very well be that something major may soon happen which will astound, and perhaps even mesmerize, the world. Please note that I made the previous statement in the year 2011. As I update this article eleven years later in 2022, expectations among these three major religions is still running high.

The reason why I say this is simply this: The expectations of the believers of each of these three faiths concerning what each of their messiahs will do is very different. In the case of the Islamic Mahdi, the Hadith -- a collection of traditions which contain the sayings of Muhammad -- state that the Mahdi, with Isa -- the Islamic name for Jesus -- working by his side, will destroy an evil figure whose name is Masih al-Dajjal. In our English language, Dajjal is transliterated as "the False Messiah", "the Deceiving Messiah", "the False Prophet" or "the Great Deceiver". In other words, he may possibly be the Muslim equivalent of the Antichrist or the False Prophet. Again, this obvious similarity to our own Christian beliefs does not seem like a coincidence to me.

Some Muslims believe that al-Dajjal will make his appearance somewhere between Syria and Iraq, and that he will raise up a great army from the people whom he has deceived. Having done this, al-Dajjal will then wage war against Jesus Christ, who, according to Muslim belief, will be leading the Army of the Righteous. Now, before you get all excited and say "Wow! That sounds very similar to what we Christians believe!", let me tell you how this story ends. Muslims also believe that while Isa -- or Jesus -- will return, He will not be in charge. In

other words, He will supposedly serve under the leadership of the Mahdi as his "deputy". Furthermore, this Islamic version of Jesus will tell everyone that they must submit to Islam, or else be destroyed. So much for being in agreement with our Christian beliefs.

As it turns out, Futurist-leaning Christians and Muslims are not alone in their belief regarding an end-of-age Antichrist type figure. Within Jewish eschatology, there also exists an individual who is a type of anti-Messiah figure. He is known as Armilus. Armilus is said to be an evil king who will rise to power at the end of time. Armilus will persecute the Jews, and conquer the city of Jerusalem. The Jews who embrace this doctrine believe that Armilus will fight against Moshiach ben David, until he is finally defeated by the Hand of God, or perhaps by Moshiach ben David himself.

As I noted earlier, the belief in the coming of the Mahdi is shared by both Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims alike. According to the Wikipedia website, amongst other things, they believe the following concerning the Mahdi:

1. He will be a descendant of Muhammad through the Fatimah line. Fatimah was a daughter of Muhammad by his first wife Khadijah bint Khuwaylid. Muhammad had no sons who survived to adulthood, which is why all of Muhammad's descendants trace their lineage through Fatimah.
2. One of the Mahdi's parents will be descended from the Hasan line, while the other one will be descended from the Hussain -- or Husayn -- line. Hasan and Hussain were two of Fatimah's three sons. She also had two daughters.
3. The Mahdi will bear the same name as Muhammad.
4. The Mahdi will precede the return of Jesus Christ. From what I have read, Muslims believe that after the Mahdi has been in power for several years, Jesus will descend from Heaven, supported by angels on his left and his right sides, in Damascus, Syria.
5. The Mahdi's coming will be accompanied by the raising of a "Black Standard". This belief appears to originate with a tradition which states that Muhammad said that the advent of Imam Mahdi would be signaled by "Black Standards" proceeding from the northeastern Iranian province of Khorasan. While in modern times Khorasan only pertains to the Iranian province,

historically, it has consisted of a larger region which has included not only the northeastern portion of Iran, but also northern Afghanistan, as well as the southern regions of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

6. The Mahdi's coming will be accompanied by the appearance of the one-eyed Antichrist; meaning, I suppose, al-Dajjal.

7. There will be a lunar, as well as a solar, eclipse within the same month of Ramadan at the time of Mahdi's appearance.

8. A star with a luminous tail will rise from the East before the coming of al-Mahdi; possibly meaning the appearance of a notable comet.

9. He will establish the Caliphate. Muslims consider Muhammad the first Caliph, or "deputy of God". Caliphs represented the chief civil and religious ruler in Islamic society, and were regarded as the legitimate successors of Muhammad. They first ruled from Baghdad until 1258 AD, and then from Egypt until the Ottoman conquest in 1517. The title was then held by the Ottoman sultans until it was abolished in 1924 by Mustafa Ataturk, who, as I have noted before, established the modern, secular nation of Turkey.

10. He will fill the world with justice and fairness during a time when the world will be filled with oppression. Of course, this sounds very similar to what we find in the Book of Revelation, where Jesus defeats the Beast and the False Prophet at the Battle of Armageddon, and then sets up His Father's righteous Kingdom on Earth during the Millennium. We also need to realize that everything that Imam Mahdi will supposedly do, will be based upon Shari'a, or Islamic, law.

11. Imam Mahdi will have a broad forehead, a prominent nose, and a natural mascara will ring his eyes.

12. Imam Mahdi's face will shine upon the surface of the Moon. I have no idea what this means. If I were to take a guess, I would suggest that perhaps Muslims believe that an image of al-Mahdi's face will somehow appear in the surface features of the Moon, just as people sometimes imagine the so-called "man-in-the-moon".

13. The name of the Mahdi's representative will begin with the first letter of a prophet's name and a verse of the Qur'an --  $\text{س}$  -- which is the English equivalent of the letter

"y".

Now, as Bible-believing Christians, we all know that Jesus would never command that everyone worship Allah, or else be killed by a Muslim sword. Therefore, I think that it is safe to conclude that if the Mahdi were to appear at some time in the future, and if this "Isa" were to appear several years after him, and work with him as his "deputy", he would not truly be Jesus Christ. Rather, this individual would be a deceptive impostor who may simply claim to be Jesus Christ.

In a sense, the Jewish Moshiach ben David and the Islamic al-Mahdi will both fulfill similar roles. In other words, it is my understanding from the research that I have conducted, that they will both be political and military leaders. From examining the Books of Daniel and Revelation, we also know that the Beast is likewise a political and military leader, and that he too has a spiritual leader -- the False Prophet -- who promotes his cause, and convinces people to pledge their allegiance to the Beast.

So it seems to me then, that if this Islamic pair consisting of al-Mahdi and "Isa" were to actually appear on the world stage at some point in the future, certain Futurist-leaning Christians may possibly interpret them as being the Beast and his False Prophet, who are found in the Book of Revelation. Please refer to the article "Who is Who?: Defining Important Prophecy Terms", as well as "Who Hindered the Antichrist?", for an expanded explanation concerning how I personally view and understand these two Biblical terms.

So exactly how will Muslims know when the Mahdi is about to make his grand appearance in the Middle East? According to Dr. Moojan Momen, who is an Iranian-born Baha'i scholar who now resides in England, certain signs or omens will precede the arrival of the Mahdi. These omens are reported as being the following:

1. Before the Mahdi's arrival will come the red death and the white death. The red death is regarded by Shi'a Muslims as meaning death by the sword, while the white death is viewed as some kind of a plague.
2. Several figures will appear before the appearance of the Mahdi. These include the one-eyed Antichrist -- or Masih ad-Dajjal, who we discussed earlier -- as well as the Sufyani and the Yamani. The term "Sufyani" refers to an evil tyrant

who, according to Muhammad, will originate from Damascus, and who will in fact rule over Syria. It is interesting to note that in my article "The Kings of the North and the South", I mention that the king of the north appears to be a leader of Syria. While the King James Bible uses the phrases "king of the north" and "king of the south", as I have mentioned in previous articles, in certain other Bibles, it actually says Syria and Egypt by name.

To continue, the Sufyani will spread corruption and crime in the Earth, and will also send one of his armies to destroy Imam Mahdi. However, Muslims believe that this army will be swallowed by the Earth. Ultimately, the Sufyani will suffer military defeat at the hands of the Mahdi's army in the "Battle of Kalb". He will then be captured and executed in Syria under a tree, according to Shi'a Muslim belief.

Concerning the term "Yamani", I found it more difficult to fully understand this word, because different online Islamic sources appear to say different things about him. The term "al-yamani" actually means "the Yemenite". Some sources seem to suggest that Yamani and the First Mahdi are one and the same person. Another source suggests that al-Yamani will be the commander of the Black Standards of the east, which we discussed earlier, as well as the primary forerunner of the Imam Mahdi.

In this regard, I am reminded of how John the Baptist was chosen by God to prepare the way before Jesus. Looking at it from a Futurist theological perspective, some Christians may view al-Yamani as the False Prophet who prepares the way for the political and military leader who is known in the Bible as the Beast. In other words, if one adopts a Futurist point of view, the Mahdi and the Yamani could be seen as the Beast and the False Prophet, and not the Mahdi and Isa. Now, if the False Prophet is really a spiritual leader as the Bible seems to indicate, and if one embraces Futurism -- meaning certain Bible prophecies are yet to be fulfilled at some point in the future -- then it would seem that the Isa figure better fits the image of a False Prophet, than al-Yamani, who seems more like a military figure than a spiritual leader.

Of course, assuming that these Islamic prophecies are even trustworthy -- I will leave it to you to decide -- then maybe neither Isa nor al-Yamani is the Biblical equivalent of the False Prophet. Perhaps one of the influential Islamic clerics fulfills the role of the False Prophet. I do find it rather



interesting that the militia which is loyal to radical Iraqi Shi'ite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr was in earlier years called the Mahdi Militia, or the Mahdi Army. The successor of the Mahdi Militia is called the Peace Companies, which is still a powerful armed group in Iraq.

But why would they choose a name like Mahdi Militia? Do his members by chance believe that Muqtada al-Sadr is al-Mahdi? Or is this name based on the fact that they believe that they are preparing the way for al-Mahdi? If that is the case, does this mean that they view their leader, Muqtada al-Sadr, as al-Yamani, who is the forerunner to al-Mahdi? At this current time, al-Sadr is the leader of the Sadrist Movement, which is an Iraqi Islamic national movement which receives major support from all across Iraqi society; particularly from the Shi'ite poor in the nation. For his part, Muqtada al-Sadr is very well-entrenched in Iraqi politics at this current time. It has also been reported that he began studies to become an ayatollah, which will give him even greater power, respect and influence in Iraq.

Allow me to remind you again that Shi'a beliefs state that al-Yamani will arrive from the northeast bearing the Black Standard. Well, perhaps it is just a coincidence, but it just so happens that al-Sadr returned to Iraq in 2011 after having spent four years in exile in Iran, which is in fact located to the northeast of Iraq. al-Sadr had vowed to never return to Iraq until the American occupation of his country ended.

Interesting indeed! Muqtada al-Sadr is still relatively young at this present time, and radical at heart; although in more recent years, he has endeavored to convey the image of being a moderate. In a word, al-Sadr is exactly what young, radical Muslims were looking for in an inspiring leader to lead them against the forces of the invading American "infidels". From the very start in 2003, cleric al-Sadr was strongly opposed to foreign intervention in his country, and the occupation of Iraq. In fact, his Mahdi Militia was the first to resist the American-led forces there.

The third sign which will let Muslims know when the Mahdi is about to make his grand appearance in the Middle East is the following:

3. The Muslims will throw off the reins and take possession of their land, throwing out the authority of the foreigners. This sounds very much like everything I just described to you

in point number two above, concerning radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. It is interesting to note that in his first public speech after returning from his four-year exile in Iran, he made it absolutely clear to the government of then Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, that he and his followers expected al-Maliki to carry out his pledge to have all U.S. military forces removed from Iraqi soil by the end of 2011, as had been agreed upon by the two governments.

In his fiery speech about a decade ago, al-Sadr referred to the United States, Israel and Great Britain as "our common enemies". He also let al-Maliki know in no uncertain terms that, should he fail to carry out his pledge, al-Sadr's people "have the political means" to apparently remove al-Maliki from power.

Of course, at the time, no one who understood the situation in Iraq, really anticipated that all American forces would leave the country by the end of 2011. The main excuse which was being offered was that Iraq simply was not yet ready to defend itself against foreign aggressors. Then the Islamic State raised its ugly head, and the total withdrawal date kept being moved forward until Barak Obama's presidency.

When I wrote the original version of this article in 2011, the question that was on my mind at the time was exactly how far the American government would be willing to go in order to solve their problem with al-Sadr. An assassination attempt perhaps? After all, his Mahdi Militia was in open conflict with American occupational forces. Let me remind you that by that time, with their doctrine of so-called "regime change", the American government and the American military had already demonstrated that they wouldn't hesitate to forcefully remove any foreign leader from power, who they deemed as standing in their way, and being an obstacle to achieving American objectives in the Middle East.

While nothing happened in that particular year, eight years later on December 7, 2019, an armed drone attack targeted Muqtada al-Sadr's home in the southern holy city of Najaf. According to news reports from that year, al-Sadr was out of the country at the time and in Iran. The drone attack caused little damage to al-Sadr's home, and resulted in no loss of life either. To my knowledge, it has never been revealed who initiated the assassination attempt against al-Sadr.

Concerning the idea of Muslims throwing off the reins of the

"infidel" foreigners in their lands, allow me to also remind you that America's military presence in Saudi Arabia has also been diminished in recent decades. As you may already know, many devout Muslims find it extremely offensive and a serious insult to their faith, that the "infidel" Americans are in Saudi Arabia at all, being as it is the very nerve center of the Islamic faith. Saudi Arabia is the home of both Mecca and Medina. Mecca -- or Makkah -- was where Muhammad was born and first proclaimed Islam; and Medina is his burial place.

In fact, as you may already know, it is in large part because the al-Saud dynasty permitted American military forces into Saudi Arabia, that Osama bin Laden both condemned and turned against the Saudi leadership. They in turn disowned him, and took away his Saudi passport, even though he was born there to a very rich Saudi family.

4. There will be a great conflict in the land of Syria, until it is destroyed. Is it possible that this is predicting that peace between Israel and Syria will never be achieved, and that they are headed towards a major conflict which may also involve the United States? Of course, another possibility is that this is referring to the fact that the Mahdi's army will defeat the forces of Sufyani in Syria, as we saw earlier.

5. Death and fear will afflict the people of Baghdad and Iraq. A fire will appear in the sky and a redness will cover them. This certainly sounds like it could be a reference to the 2003 American invasion of Iraq, and the assault on the city of Baghdad, which relied heavily on shock and awe. As I have mentioned to my readers before, literally hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives were negatively affected by American aggression during that unjustified and ill-conceived war.

Many thousands of Iraqis died, or were maimed for life, or lost their manner of making a living. The country's economy was destroyed, its military was destroyed, its infrastructure was destroyed, and its public services were destroyed. Sadly, very little of this information was ever clearly and honestly shared in American mass media. All that most Americans ever heard about was the 4,000 or so American soldiers who lost their lives during that prolonged conflict.

Now, if I were a devout Muslim, and I was aware of all of the aforementioned omens which would signal the soon arrival of al-Mahdi, I too might become quite convinced that his advent was imminent. Consider these facts. The world witnessed the

1979 Iranian Revolution which saw the overthrow of Shah Reza Pahlavi. This was soon followed by the eight-year Iran-Iraq War which left an estimated five hundred thousand to up to a million people dead, and hundreds of thousands more wounded.

To make matters worse, next we have Saddam Hussein's wicked oppression of the Iraqi people, and his genocide against the Kurds. It was also Saddam who lobbed SCUD missiles at Israel, and who initiated an invasion of Kuwait, claiming that it was historically a part of Iraq, which was in fact true. Saddam's invasion then led to Operation Desert Shield, which was later followed by Operation Desert Storm in 1990-1991. Last of all, we arrive at the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. In light of all of that death and destruction, any religious Muslim would probably hope for the soon arrival of their prophesied messiah, in order to bring an end to all of the madness, and restore peace and justice upon the Earth.

So having this information in our hands helps us Christians to acquire a much better understanding of what the mentality is currently like in the Middle East, and what eschatological expectations may be going through the minds of devout Muslims in that area of the world. If we step back for a moment and take a look at the entire picture, what we can observe is a serious spiritual battle of deception shaping up possibly in the near future. This battle for the hearts and minds of the people of the Middle East is going to be waged between the spiritual leaders of the three main monotheistic religions: Moshiach, Mahdi and the Messiah.

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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Prophetic Comparisons: Moshiach, Mahdi and Messiah - Part 2

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Events Following The Moshiach's Arrival, John The Baptist Was The Prophesied "Elijah" And The Forerunner To Jesus Christ, Moshiach ben Joseph Will Be Forerunner To Moshiach ben David, Temple Worship Restored, Armilus Or Gog And Magog Will Fight Against Jerusalem, Jewish Interpretation Of Word "Messiah" Jewish Expectations Of Jesus, Restoration Of David's Kingdom, My Kingdom Is Not Of This World, The Greater Israel Doctrine, Comparisons Concerning Jesus Christ, Moshiach ben David And Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi, Different Endtime Interpretations, Muslim Schism, American Television Show "To Tell The Truth", Jesus Is Our Only Mediator And Only Way To Obtain Salvation, A Name Which Is Above Every Name, "Endtime Game", One Real Messiah & Two Impostors, Will The Real Messiah Please Stand Up, Jesus Has Overcome Death And Hell, Our Promised Victory Over Death And The Grave, Ask And It Shall Be Given To You, Spirit Of Truth, God Cannot Lie, Closing Remarks, Reading List

Continuing our discussion from part one, let us now turn our attention again to Jewish beliefs. If we accept the word of the Orthodox Jews, their anticipated political savior known as Moshiach ben David is going to win political and military battles for Israel. He will inspire the Jews to repent and to return to God. In Judaism, this process is referred to as "teshuvah". Furthermore, Moshiach's presence will result in the re-establishment of Jewish temple worship. Lastly, said Orthodox Jews believe that the arrival of this great leader will result in the Law of God proceeding from Jerusalem, and filling the whole world with justice and peace.

What I haven't explained to you yet, is that there is still another very interesting parallel between Christian beliefs, Jewish beliefs and Muslim beliefs concerning these different spiritual leaders. As I mentioned earlier, most Christians know that John the Baptist was the forerunner to Christ. He prepared the way for Jesus. As I explain in other articles, such as in the lengthy series "Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets of God?", John carried the spiritual anointing of the Prophet Elijah, as had been prophesied concerning John in such Books as Isaiah and Malachi. Even Jesus revealed that John was the prophesied "Elijah" -- or Elias in Greek -- in the Gospels. Consider these sample verses:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the

way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."

Malachi 3:1, KJV

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Isaiah 40:3, KJV

"And if ye will receive [it], this is Elias, which was for to come."

Matthew 11:14, KJV

As it turns out, according to certain Jewish eschatological beliefs, Moshiach ben David will also have a forerunner. His name is Moshiach ben Joseph, or Messiah, son of Joseph. This belief states that at some point in the near future, Moshiach ben Joseph will appear on the scene as the leader of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. Under his command, they will march to Jerusalem; and after overcoming certain hostile forces there, he will re-establish temple worship on Mount Moriah, and set up his power base. In other words, in this scenario, Moshiach ben Joseph re-establishes temple worship even before Moshiach ben David arrives on the scene. At the very least, his taking control of East Jerusalem and Mount Moriah will then allow Moshiach ben David to re-establish temple worship, once he makes his appearance. Again, this is according to Orthodox Jewish beliefs.

Once Moshiach ben Joseph gains control of all of Jerusalem, Armilus -- who is the evil Antichrist figure that I mentioned earlier -- will march against Jerusalem, and lay siege to it. During the course of the war which ensues, Messiah ben Joseph will be killed. Some rabbinical sources say that the body of Moshiach ben Joseph will remain unburied in the streets of Jerusalem. Another view is that his corpse will be hidden by the Angels with the bodies of the Patriarchs, until Moshiach ben David arrives and resurrects him.

In other rabbinical sources, it is stated that rather than Armilus arriving to wage war against Moshiach ben Joseph, it will be Gog and Magog, as per Ezekiel chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine. These chapters inform us that Gog and Magog will be miraculously defeated by God, which would help to explain other rabbinical sources which state that prior to

his death, Moshiach ben Joseph will initiate a union between the Lost Ten Tribes and Judah, which will be led by Moshiach ben David, or Messiah, son of David. With the death of his forerunner -- Moshiach ben Joseph -- Moshiach ben David will then rule over all Twelve Tribes, and Judaism will eventually become the one true religion of the world, as the Law of God is taught from Jerusalem, the world capital.

Allow me to remind you again that when non-Christian Jews use the word "moshiach" -- or "mashiach" as it is also spelled -- they are NOT referring to a messiah of Divine Origin such as Jesus Christ. To those Jews who even accept the concept of a messiah, he is an earth-born human being who will obtain both political and military victories for Israel. Furthermore, as we have already seen, he will re-establish Jewish sacrificial worship in a rebuilt temple on Mount Moriah -- or the Noble Sanctuary if you prefer -- and likewise establish Judaism as the world religion. The anticipated Jewish messiah isn't seen as being the Son of God or the Savior of the world. He will not be Jesus Christ returned in the flesh.

I feel that it is important to reiterate this point, because Christians who are not familiar with Orthodox Jewish beliefs may be erroneously led to believe that when a Jew speaks of the messiah, he is referring to THE Messiah -- that is, to Jesus Christ -- when he most certainly is not. If one is not aware of this fact, he can easily become deceived. On the other hand, when a Messianic Jew refers to the Messiah, it's my understanding that he is referring to Jesus Christ. So please make sure that you are aware of the difference that exists between believing and non-believing Jews when they use the word "messiah".

Continuing with our discussion regarding the Jewish view of the word "messiah", as I point out in articles such as "The Kings of the North and the South", this non-Christian view of the word "messiah" is exactly what the Jewish radicals, such as the Zealots, and other common Jews were anticipating during the First Century, when Israel was subjugated under Roman rule. When Jesus spoke of the coming Kingdom of God, they erroneously thought that He was referring to the actual physical revival of the kingdom of David, and the defeat of the Romans. It is probably for this very reason that Peter and the other Disciples were shocked to hear Jesus speak of His coming Betrayal and Death in Jerusalem. They apparently assumed that Jesus was going to remain on Earth, and become the new king of Israel. It is for this reason that we find

verses such as the following in the New Testament:

"And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."  
Luke 19:11, KJV

"Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."  
Mark 11:10, KJV

". . . Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."  
Acts 1:6-7, KJV

So as the previous verses make rather clear, what Jesus was planning to do, and what the Jews assumed that He was going to do, were two very different things. They wanted Him to declare Himself the new king of Israel, defeat the Romans, and re-establish the kingdom of David. But, as I mention in other articles, Jesus' primary concern at that time was not with re-establishing David's kingdom on Earth. Jesus had a far more important goal; and that was to open the way to Salvation, and to restore the path to the true Kingdom of God. Thus, towards the end of the Gospel of John, we find the Lord saying the following to Pontius Pilate:

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."  
John 18:36, KJV

Today, two thousand years later, the Orthodox Jews continue to look for the very same kind of a messiah. In other words, as I point out in "The Kings of the North and the South", their "moshiach" will be a direct descendant of David who will once and for all deliver them out of the hands of their Arab and Muslim enemies who currently surround their nation, and fulfill all of the things which I have described in this article. They are looking for a restoration of the ancient kingdom of David, according to prophecies such as this one:

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise



up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:  
That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the  
heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that  
doeth this."

Amos 9:11-12, KJV

If you do not fully understand what the previous verses mean,  
please refer to part three of my seven-part series entitled  
"The Fruits of Disobedience", where I discuss the concept of  
a "Greater Israel".

In contrast to the prophetic scenario which is derived from  
Jewish eschatological beliefs, Islamic eschatological beliefs  
inform us that it is really al-Mahdi -- the Guided One -- who  
will be victorious in battle. The Muslims believe that he too  
will rid the world of injustice, oppression and tyranny; and  
with the help of "Isa" -- or Jesus -- will fill it with peace  
and justice. However, he'll accomplish his goals by the edge  
of a Muslim sword, and Shari'a -- or Islamic law -- will then  
become the basis for global law, and NOT Jewish law according  
to the Torah. That is, the five books of Moses.

We have likewise seen that al-Mahdi will be preceded by a  
forerunner by the name of al-Yamani -- that is, the Yemenite  
-- who may possibly originate in, or at least proceed from,  
northeastern Iran. Just as the Jewish forerunner Moshiach ben  
Joseph will fight against the evil Armilus, we are told that  
al-Mahdi will fight against such characters as the one-eyed  
Antichrist-like Masih al-Dajjal, as well as against the evil  
tyrant Sufyani.

Finally, as many Christians know, Futurist teachings convey  
the belief that our Lord, Savior and Messiah, Jesus Christ,  
will return soon, and will likewise be victorious in battle,  
when He subdues and defeats the Beast and the False Prophet  
at the great and terrible Battle of Armageddon, and utterly  
destroys their ungodly armies. Afterwards, He will establish  
His Father's Kingdom upon Earth, and rule in Righteousness  
during the Golden Age of the Millennium.

If we were to make a comparative chart of the eschatological  
beliefs of these three religions, it would look something  
like the following:

Jesus Christ	- Christian Messiah
Moshiach ben David	- Jewish messiah
Muhammad al-Mahdi	- Islamic messiah

- John the Baptist - Jesus' forerunner
  - Moshiach ben Joseph - Moshiach ben David's forerunner
  - al-Yamani - Muhammad al-Mahdi's forerunner
- 
- Jesus - defeats the Beast and the False Prophet
  - Moshiach ben David - will be victorious over Armilus
  - Muhammad al-Mahdi - will defeat Masih al-Dajjal and Sufyani
- 
- Jesus - will establish Kingdom of God on Earth
  - Moshiach ben David - will establish worldwide Judaism
  - Muhammad al-Mahdi - will establish global Islamic empire

Before continuing with our discussion, I think that it is important to point out that the information which I have presented here concerning Jewish and Islamic eschatological beliefs is very basic. The reason for this is simple. Just as there are many different points of view concerning the correct interpretation of prophetic events from a Christian perspective, in similar fashion, if one delves into Jewish eschatology, or Islamic eschatology, he will find the exact same thing occurring. In other words, Jewish rabbis do not always fully concur with each other with regards to the previously described prophetic events. The same can likewise be said for Islamic scholars who don't always see eye-to-eye on every single point concerning the proper interpretation of the Hadith, and the events that deal with the return of Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi.

In fact, as I mentioned earlier, this is precisely why there is a schism between the Sunni and the Shi'ite Muslims. They are unable to even agree on who are the real successors to their prophet Muhammad. Thus, if Jewish rabbis and Islamic "ulama" are divided concerning their own beliefs, it should not come as much of a surprise to you then that my grasp of their beliefs, particularly their eschatological beliefs, is even more limited. If you are interested in performing a much closer examination of the rabbinical writings, as well as the writings of the ulama, you will find plenty of free resources online which are at your disposal. Trust me when I say that it will take you days, weeks or longer to absorb and comprehend it all.

So again, my goal in writing this article is to simply give you a basic picture of how some of the prophetic beliefs of these three faiths compare with each other.

In thinking about this situation regarding three religions and three leaders -- Moshiach, Mahdi and the Messiah -- I am reminded of an old television program that I used to watch as a young boy. It was called "To Tell the Truth". The gist of the show was that there was a panel of four celebrities, along with three contestants. After asking the contestants a series of questions, the celebrities had to try to correctly identify which of the three contestants was truly engaged in the unusual occupation or experience that had been described to the celebrities. Two of the contestants were impostors, while the third one was the real deal. The impostors were allowed to mislead, or even lie to, the celebrities, while the real contestant was obliged "to tell the truth"; thus, the name of the show "To Tell the Truth".

No doubt you can see how this show relates to our discussion regarding Moshiach, Mahdi and the Messiah. One of these three is telling the truth when he claims to be the real Savior and the Messiah, while two of them are deceptive, lying impostors. Obviously, being as I am a Bible-believing Christian writer, it should be clear to you which of the three I believe is the true Savior and Messiah. Being as I already amply explain in considerable detail in other articles why I believe in Jesus, I am not going to belabor the point here. However, allow me to share just a few verses with you, in case you are one who has not yet embraced Jesus Christ. Consider the following verses which plainly reveal to us the status of Jesus Christ:

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

John 14:6, KJV

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Acts 4:12, KJV

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"

1 Timothy 2:5, KJV

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

John 6:37, KJV

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

John 10:28, KJV

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Philippians 2:9-11, KJV

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

Romans 14:11, KJV

Thus we can plainly see that if Jesus is the only Savior and Messiah of the world, the only Mediator between God and man, and the only bestower of Eternal Life, whose Name is above every name, then obviously, He cannot be below, or even equal to, al-Mahdi and Moshiach ben David. Jesus' status is in fact far above theirs, for He alone died for the sins of the whole world. Thus, when the symbolic "Prophecy Game" concludes, and one of the three contestants must stand up, tell the truth and reveal his true identity, Jesus Christ will surely be the only one standing. Everyone will have no doubt then, that He has told the truth all along, and that He has truly won the "game". Why is this? Well, because as Jesus told us almost two thousand years ago, not only has He already overcome the world, but He has in fact overcome death and hell itself.

Consider these verses:

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33, KJV

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Revelation 1:18, KJV

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

Revelation 20:14, KJV

Thus, as the Apostle Paul was inspired to write concerning our own coming victory over death and hell, that is, over bodily decay in the grave:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Corinthians 15:51-57, KJV

So what about you dear reader? Has your spiritual hunger led you to seek for the truth? Have you asked all of the correct questions? Have you been able to see through the deception of the two impostors, and identified the one and only Messiah? Jesus promised us that if we search for the truth with all of our hearts, God will give us what we desire, and He will not disappoint us. Consider the following verses:

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened . . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Matthew 7:7-8, 11, KJV

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Matthew 21:22, KJV

If you are still not sure in your heart that Jesus is who He says He is, then I encourage you to read more of my articles concerning the subject of Salvation, and the nature of Jesus Christ, such as "Is Jesus the Only-Begotten Son of God?", and "Message to the World". As you will see, these articles are filled with many Scriptures that will reveal to you the true nature of Jesus Christ. I have no doubt that God's Word will lead you to all truth. That is, if your heart is truly open to the Voice of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not deceive you, or lie to you, because as Jesus Himself tells us, he is the Spirit of Truth, as we see by the following verses:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

John 14:16-17, KJV

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:26, KJV

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:"

John 15:26, KJV

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

John 16:13, KJV

As I explain in other articles, the Spirit of Truth proceeds from God the Father Himself; and as the Scriptures also make abundantly clear, God is not a man that He should lie. God always tells the truth, and His written Word will reveal to you the plain truth concerning His dear Son, Jesus Christ. Again, please consider the following verses:

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

Numbers 23:19, KJV

"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

Romans 3:4, KJV

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

Titus 1:2, KJV

It is my hope and prayer that upon reading this article, you

will begin to question anything in your life which has led you astray, and away from the truth and Salvation that can be found in Jesus Christ alone. If you have been deceived by the lying spirits of any false religion which has denied the Divinity of Jesus Christ, or has denied the atoning Sacrifice which He made for our sins, I earnestly pray that the scales will fall from your eyes, that your spiritual vision will be fully restored, and that you will clearly see the Light that is found in Jesus Christ alone. For He indeed is the one true Light of the world.

With these thoughts I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you have found it to be both informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this article, or which contain topics that are related to this article, and which are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server.

2012: New Age Deception and Psychobabble  
Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets of God?  
Is Jesus the Only-Begotten Son of God?  
Message to the World  
The Fruits of Disobedience  
The Kings of the North and the South  
Who Hindered the Antichrist?  
Who is Who?: Defining Important Prophecy Terms

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