



When Will the Messiah Come? Week 2
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Maybe asking "When" is not allowed

1. Talmud, Pesachim 54b

Seven things are hidden from humanity: The day of death, the day of comfort, the depth of [Divine] judgment, what is in the hearts of others, how one will profit, when the monarchy of the house of David will return, and when the criminal empire will end.

2. Midrash, Bereishit Rabbah 98:2

Two people had the end revealed to them, and then concealed from them: Jacob and Daniel... Jacob, "That which will befall you in the end of days. Reuven, you are my firstborn." This teaches that he wanted to reveal the end, and it was concealed from him. This may be compared to the dying friend of a king. His children surrounded his bed, and he told them, "Come, I'll reveal to you the secrets of the king." He looked up and saw the king, and said to them, "Be careful of the king's honour." So Jacob looked up and saw the Shechinah standing above him, and he told them, "Be careful of Gd's honour."

3. Talmud, Megillah 3a

The explanation of the Prophets was stated by Yonatan ben Uziel, from the mouth of Chaggai, Zechariah and Malachi, and Israel trembled, a space of 400 *parsah* by 400 *parsah*. A small voice emerged and said, "Who is this who revealed My secrets to humanity?" Yonatan ben Uziel stood up and said, "I am the one who revealed Your secrets to humanity! It is known before You that I did this not for my own honour or for the honour of my family, but for Your honour, to minimize disputes in Israel." He also wanted to reveal the explanation of the Writings, but a small voice emerged and said, "It is enough for you!" Why? Because that would include the end of the Messiah.

4. Talmud, Sanhedrin 97b

Rabbi Shemuel bar Nachmeni cited Rabbi Yonatan: May the bones of the calculators of times disintegrate. People would say, "Since the time has come and he has not come, he is not coming." Rather, wait for him – "Even should he delay, wait for him."

5. Talmud, Sanhedrin 98a

Rabbi Alexander said: Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asked about two competing texts (from Isaiah 60:22) – It says "At its time" and "I will hasten it"! If they merit, I will hasten it. If they do not merit, it will be at its time.

Rabbi Alexander said: Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asked about two competing texts (from Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 9:9) – "He came with the clouds of heaven, like a son of man" and "a pauper, riding on a donkey"! If they merit, "with the clouds of heaven". If they do not merit, "a pauper, riding on a donkey".

6. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings 12:2

Some of the Sages said that before the Messiah comes, Eliyahu will come. All of this and the like, no one knows what will be until it happens, for the matters were sealed by the prophets, and the sages have no tradition for these things. Rather, all is based on the balance of the verses, and therefore there is debate on this. In any case, the order of these events and their minutia are not essentials of faith, and one should not involve himself in *haggadot*.. And one should not calculate ends. The Sages said, "May the bones of the calculators of times disintegrate." Rather, one should wait and believe the general matter, as we have explained it.

7. Talmud, Sanhedrin 97a

Three things come during periods of distraction: The Messiah, Found objects, and Scorpions.

8. Don Isaac Abarbanel (15th-16th century Iberian Peninsula), Maayanei haYeshuah 1:2

For in truth, the Sages did not use the term "calculators of times" other than for those who think themselves wise, who calculate the heavenly orbits and calculations and decree the time of redemption based on this wisdom of theirs. And

when the Messiah does not come based on that calculation they made, they say perhaps he will come at another calculation, at a more remote time... But the Sages did not attack one who investigates and interprets the time based on the words of the prophets and those who speak with Divine inspiration... And this kind of analysis also requires another precondition, whether based on holy text or celestial arrangements, and that is to inform from the start that all that one will say is based on simple logic, and it may not be correct, and so we should wait for him, for he will come and he will not delay... The hearts of people today, based in earth, the sword having consumed their dignity and glory, like us today, how could they manage if not to seek the word of Gd as to when he will come and be seen, to find calm for their spirits, to rest from their struggles, to flee from their troubles...

Type 1: Some predictions are based on activities that depend on us

9. Deuteronomy 30:2-3

And you will return to Hashem your Gd and you will listen to His voice, according to all that I command you today - you and your children, with all your heart and soul. And Gd will return your exile and have mercy upon you, and He will return and gather you from all the nations to which Hashem your Gd had scattered you.

10. Talmud, Sanhedrin 97b

Rav said: All of the times are gone, and it only depends on repentance and good deeds. Shemuel said: It is enough for the mourner that he remains in his grief!

This is like a debate among the Sages of the Mishnah: Rabbi Eliezer said: If Israel repents, they will be redeemed. If not, they will not be redeemed. Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: If they don't repent, they won't be redeemed? But Gd will support a king whose decrees are harsh, like Haman, and Israel will repent, and he will return them to the good...

11. Talmud, Sanhedrin 98a

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi met Elijah, standing at the entrance to the cave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai... He asked him: When will the Messiah come? He said: Go ask him yourself! And where is he? At the entrance to Rome... He went to him.. He said to him, "When will his honour come?" He replied, "Today." [Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi] came to Elijah... he said to him, "He lied to me, saying 'I will come today' and he didn't come!" [Elijah] replied: This is what he said to you: "Today, if you will heed His voice. (Psalms 95:7)"

12. Talmud, Sanhedrin 98a

And Rabbi Yochanan said: The son of David will come only in a generation that is entirely meritorious or entirely guilty. In a generation that is entirely meritorious as Isaiah 60:21 says, "And your nation will be entirely righteous, they will take the land forever." In a generation that is entirely guilty as Isaiah 59:16 says, "And He saw that there was no one, and He was desolate for there was none to intercede [for them], and Isaiah 48:11 says, "For Myself, for Myself I will act."

13. Talmud, Sanhedrin 98a

Ulla said: Jerusalem will be redeemed only via *tzedakah*, as Isaiah 1:27 says, "Zion will be redeemed with justice, and her captives with righteousness."

Rav Pappa said: If the arrogant disappear, then the sorcerers will disappear. If the [bad] judges disappear, the [bad] non-Jewish judges will disappear. As it says...

14. Talmud, Shabbat 118b

Rabbi Yochanan cited Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai: If only Israel would observe two Sabbaths according to their laws, they would be redeemed immediately, as Isaiah 56:4-7 says, "So says Gd, to the eunuchs who guard My Sabbaths... And I will bring them to My holy mountain, etc."

Type 2: Some predictions are based on particular events that are not necessarily of our making

15. Ezekiel 39:1-5 (adapted from Koren tr. c/o sefaria.org)

And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus says the Lord Gd; Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tuval: and I will turn you about, and entice you on, and will cause you to come up from

the far sides of the north, and will bring you against the mountains of Yisrael: and I will smite your bow out of your left hand, and will cause your arrows to fall out of your right hand. You shalt fall upon the mountains of Yisrael, you, and all your bands, and the peoples that are with you: I will give you to the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. You shall fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, says the Lord Gd.

16. Talmud, Sanhedrin 98a

And Rabbi Abba said: There is no end more revealed than Ezekiel 36:8, "And you, mountains of Israel, your branches will give forth and you will bear fruit for My nation, Israel, etc." Rabbi Elazar said: Or than Zechariah 8:10, "For before those days, a person's wages will not exist and an animal's wages will be non-existent, and there will be no peace for the traveller from the foe."... And Shemuel said: All of the prices will be equal [as low prices, due to bounty]. Rabbi Chanina said: The son of David will not come until they seek fish for the ill and none are available, as Ezekiel 32:14 says, "Then I will settle their waters, and I will make their rivers flow like oil," and Ezekiel 29:21 says, "On that day I will cause the horn [of pride] to sprout for the house of Israel."

17. Talmud, Niddah 13b

א"ר יוסי אין בן דוד בא עד שיכלו כל הנשמות שבגוף שנאמר כי רוח מלפני יעטוף ונשמות אני עשיתי:

Rabbi Yosi said: The son of David will not come until all of the souls in the *Guf* are finished, as Isaiah 57:16 says, "For the spirit before Me will [cause] delay, and the souls I made."

Type 3: Some predictions are tied to particular calendar events

18. Mishnah Sotah 9:15 (49a)

In the footsteps of the Messiah, *chutzpah* will increase and wealth will increase, the grapevine will give its fruit and yet wine will be expensive, the government will change to heresy, the place of meeting will be for immorality, the Galil will be destroyed and the Golan will be desolate...

19. Talmud, Sanhedrin 97a

Our sages taught: In the shemittah cycle when the son of David arrives, in the first year the verse "And I will bring rain on one city, and on another I will not bring rain" will be fulfilled. In the second, arrows of hunger will be sent...

20. Talmud, Rosh HaShanah 10b-11b

Rabbi Eliezer said: In Tishrei the world was created, in Tishrei the patriarchs were born, in Tishrei the patriarchs died, on Passover Isaac was born... on Rosh HaShanah the slavery halted for our ancestors in Egypt, and in Nisan they were redeemed, and in Tishrei they will be redeemed.

Rabbi Yehoshua said: In Nisan the world was created, in Nisan the patriarchs were born, in Nisan the patriarchs died, on Passover Isaac was born... on Rosh HaShanah the slavery halted for our ancestors in Egypt, and in Nisan they were redeemed and in Nisan they will be redeemed.

"In Tishrei they will be redeemed" – From "shofar" "shofar". Here it says, "Blow the shofar at the [new] month," and there it says, "On that day the great shofar will be blown."

"Rabbi Yehoshua said: In Nisan they were redeemed and in Nisan they will be redeemed." How do we know? It says, "A night of guardings" – a night that has been guarded since the six days of Creation. And the other? A night guarded from harmful forces.

Type 4: Actual dates

21. Daniel 7:25-26, 8:13-14, 9:24-27, 12:11-12 (Koren tr. c/o sefaria.org)

And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the holy ones of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand for a season and seasons and half a season. But they shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end...

Then I heard one holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that certain one who spoke, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be

trodden under foot? And he said to me, For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be restored...

Seventy weeks are decreed concerning thy people and concerning thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end to sins, and to atone for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint the most holy place. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem until an anointed prince, shall be seven weeks: then for sixty two weeks it shall be built again, with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after sixty two weeks shall an anointed one be cut off, and none will be left to him: and the people of a prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and his end shall be with a flood, and to the end of the war desolations are decreed. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week: and during half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed destruction is poured out on the desolator... And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate be set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Happy is he who waits, and reaches a thousand three hundred and thirty five days.

22. Talmud, Avodah Zarah 9b

Rabbi Chanina said: 400 years after the Destruction, [even] if someone tells you, 'Buy this 1000-dinar field for a dinar,' don't do it. A *braita* taught: 4231 years after Creation, [even] if someone tells you, 'Buy this 100-dinar field for a dinar,' don't do it.

23. Talmud, Sanhedrin 97b

Rav Chanan bar Tachlifa sent to Rav Yosef: I found a man with a scroll... "I found it in the stores of Rome, and in it was written: After 4291 years from Creation, the world will be orphaned – some via wars of *taninim*, some via wars of Gog and Magog. The rest will be days of the Messiah."

24. Talmud, Sanhedrin 97a-b

Rav Ketina said: The world will exist for 6,000 years, and be desolate for 1,000, as Isaiah 2:11 says, "And Gd will stand alone on that day." Abbaye said it would be desolate for 2,000, as in Hosea 6:2, "He will revive us after two days; on the third day He will raise us up, and we will live before Him." We have learned in support of Rav Ketina: Just as the Sabbatical year releases for one year every seven, so the world will release for 1,000 years every 7,000 years, as it says, "And Gd will stand alone on that day," and it says, "A song for the Shabbat day," a day that is entirely Shabbat. And it says, "For 1,000 years are as yesterday in Your eyes, as they pass." It was taught in the yeshiva of Elijah: The world lasts for 6,000 years. 2,000 are empty, 2,000 are of Torah, 2,000 are the days of the Messiah. And due to our great sins, what has elapsed from it has elapsed...

25. Zohar, Midrash haNe'elam I Toldot pg. 139a

Leviticus 25:13 says, "In this (הזאת) Jubilee year, each will return to his lot." When הזאת is complete, which is 5408 (1648), then each will return to his lot, to his soul which is his lot and his portion.