



The Concept of Time and the Future Perception of Zionism Based on the Messianic Doctrine: Forcing God into the Golden Age

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Abstract

The doctrine of the Messiah in Judaism is a fundamental tenet of faith and the central pillar of Jewish eschatology. The belief that the Messiah will come in the end times to deliver the Jewish people has profoundly influenced Jewish sociology, psychology, and politics. In Jewish theology, time is linear and limited to 6,000 years, which also corresponds to the Hebrew calendar. This concept of finite time, combined with Messianic belief, has shaped the Jewish perspective on history and instilled a deep significance in the calendar. The Hebrew calendar illuminates both the Jewish past and, through the Messianic doctrine, their anticipated future. Jews believe they once experienced a golden age under the Kingdom of David and will live through a similar golden age in the future with the arrival of the Messiah, a descendant of David. Throughout the diaspora, Jews have awaited the Messiah, placing their hopes in this promise. By the 19th century, Zionism emerged, offering Jews the promise of redemption. Taking on aspects of the Messiah's role, Zionism provided a path of salvation through immigration to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state. Except for Religious Zionism, Zionists generally avoided aligning their ideology with Messianic beliefs. However, Religious Zionism framed itself as part of the Messianic deliverance. As Zionism achieved its objectives in Palestine, Religious Zionism began to radicalize, giving rise to Messianic Zionism. Messianic Zionism is apocalyptic, militant, radical, Kabbalistic, war-oriented, and aims to accelerate the end by interpreting contemporary events as the fulfillment of prophecies. Radical Messianic Zionists, believing that all prophecies must be fulfilled by human action for the Davidic Messiah to arrive, use mystical calculations to assert that the end is near. As a result, they pressure the State of Israel to engage in bloodshed and initiate war, seeing these actions not as choices but as essential conditions for Messianic Zionism.

Keywords: Zionism, Hebrew Calendar, Messiah, Apocalypse, Golden Age.

Mesih Doktrini Üzerinden Zaman Kavramı ve Siyonizmin Gelecek Algısı: Tanrı'yı Altın Çağ'a Zorlamak

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Öz

Yahudilikte Mesih doktrini temel bir inanç ilkesi ve Yahudi eskatolojisinin ana direğidir. Mesih'in ahir zamanda gelip Yahudi halkını kurtaracağı inancı Yahudi sosyolojisini, psikolojisini ve siyasetini derinden etkilemiştir. Yahudi teolojisinde zaman doğrusaldır ve İbrani takvimine de karşılık gelen 6.000 yıl ile sınırlıdır. Mesih inancıyla birleşen bu sonlu zaman kavramı, Yahudilerin tarihe bakış açısını şekillendirmiş ve takvime derin bir anlam yüklemiştir. İbrani takvimi hem Yahudilerin geçmişini hem de Mesih öğretisi aracılığıyla beklenen geleceklerini aydınlatır. Yahudiler bir zamanlar Davut'un Krallığı altında altın bir çağ yaşadıklarına ve gelecekte Davut'un soyundan gelen Mesih'in gelişine benzer bir altın çağ yaşayacaklarına inanırlar. Diaspora boyunca Yahudiler umutlarını bu vaade bağlayarak Mesih'i beklemişlerdir. 19. yüzyıl gelindiğinde, Yahudilere kurtuluş vaadi sunan Siyonizm ortaya çıkmıştır. Mesih'in rolünün bazı yönlerini üstlenen Siyonizm, Filistin'e göç ve bir Yahudi devletinin kurulması yoluyla kurtuluş yolu sağladı. Dini Siyonizm dışında, Siyonistler genellikle ideolojilerini Mesihçi inançlarla uyumlu hale getirmekten kaçınmışlardır. Ancak Dini Siyonizm kendisini Mesihçi kuruluşun bir parçası olarak çerçevelemiştir. Siyonizm Filistin'de hedeflerine ulaştıkça Dini Siyonizm radikalleşmeye başlamış ve Mesihçi Siyonizm ortaya çıkmıştır. Mesihçi Siyonizm kıyametçi, militan, radikal, Kabbalistik, savaş odaklıdır ve çağdaş olayları kehanetlerin gerçekleşmesi olarak yorumlayarak onu hızlandırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Radikal Mesihçi Siyonistler, Davud soylu Mesih'in gelmesi için tüm kehanetlerin insan eylemiyle yerine getirilmesi gerektiğine inanarak, sonun yakın olduğunu iddia etmek için mistik hesaplamaları kullanırlar. Sonuç olarak, İsrail Devleti'ne kan dökmesi ve savaş başlatması için baskı yaparlar ve bu eylemleri bir seçenek olarak değil, Mesihçi Siyonizm için gerekli koşullar olarak görürler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyonizm, İbrani takvimi, Mesih, Kıyamet, Altın çağ.

Introduction

The belief in a savior, present across many religions, finds its counterpart in Judaism through the doctrine of the Messiah. In Orthodox Judaism, belief in a "Son of David" Messiah who will arrive at the end of days to deliver the Jewish people is fundamental. Thus, in Judaism, the Messiah is synonymous with redemption and salvation, forming the core of Jewish eschatology. The condition from which Jews anticipate deliverance is exile, a state they believe God has ordained as a form of tribulation with a limited timeframe. The concepts of exile and atonement are fundamental to the doctrine of the Messiah. According to Jewish theology, when the Jewish people have atoned, the exile will end, and God will send the Messiah. At this appointed time, the Jews will return to Eretz Israel under the Messiah's leadership and experience a golden era reminiscent of the Davidic Kingdom. Consequently, the belief in the Messiah connects the past, present, and future, leading Jews to deeply value the concepts of time and history. This messianic belief and the perception of time mutually shape Jewish concepts of time, history, and calendars. The perception of time in Judaism is linear and finite, extending over 6,000 years, which also aligns with the Hebrew calendar. According to Jewish scholars, the 6,000 years began with creation and will culminate in an apocalypse. Toward the end of this period, during the last days, the Son of David will arrive and lead the Jews into an era of peace centered in Jerusalem.

The strong anticipation of a savior in Jewish society has manifested repeatedly, as evidenced by numerous false Messiahs or messianic movements throughout the early centuries, the Middle Ages, and the modern era. The emergence of these messianic events is not surprising, given the religious motivations alongside the reality that Jews in the diaspora faced hostility and significant challenges. For instance, in Europe, Jews contended with anti-Jewish sentiment throughout the Middle Ages and later with anti-Semitism. Consequently, while religious arguments underpin the messianic belief, the long-standing hope for redemption and a savior can also be seen as a practical necessity.

There is a natural connection and relationship between this state of necessity and Zionism. Emerging in the 19th century, Jewish Zionism was a modern Jewish national independence movement that promised salvation to the Jewish people. Between its early appearances in the first half of the 19th century and its institutionalization by the end of the century, Zionism presented itself as a form of salvation, integrating religious doctrines into its ideology. Zionist theorists and leaders advocated that following this political, national, and ideological path was the only way to ensure the survival of Jewish identity, both racially and religiously. However, during this early period, before dividing into various branches, Zionism refrained from presenting itself as a messianic movement, actively avoiding such a portrayal. Thus, Zionism positioned itself as a form of salvation, but one focused on building a bright future rather than a messianic vision of the end times, offering the Jewish people a form of deliverance in the here and now. This self-presentation began to change after the First Zionist Congress, with Zionism's institutionalization leading to various ideological branches, including Religious Zionism. By the first quarter of the 20th century, the rabbis representing Religious Zionism asserted that the Zionist movement aligned with messianic salvation, urging devout Jews to join based on their religious beliefs. Through this narrative, Religious Zionism transformed into a messianic movement, finding support among observant Jews. This interpretation represents one of Zionism's radicalization points, marking the roots of Messianic Zionism and radical religious Zionists. Additionally, these

interpretations show that Zionist Jews approached Zionism with varying degrees of religious commitment. Some Jews supported Zionism based on secular ideas and worldly needs, viewing the ideology as a means of salvation. Meanwhile, others embraced it from a religious perspective, seeing Zionism as a path to spiritual deliverance. These differing views also reveal contrasting perceptions of time within the Zionist movement.

This article focuses on clarifying the nature of the connection and relationship between Zionism and the Jewish doctrine of the Messiah, shedding light on the Zionist perception of time and future aspirations. The study will specifically examine the religious dimension of Zionists' political ideals, their vision for the future of the Middle Eastern region, and the ways religious Zionists radicalized to actualize this vision, impacting their communities in spiritual and mystical terms. The first section will explore the concepts of time and the Messiah doctrine in Jewish theology, establishing a foundational context. The second section will provide an overview of Zionism, concentrating on Religious Zionism. The analysis will then focus on Messianic Zionism's nature, its temporal perspective, emphasis on prophecy, and its tendency to interpret events as signs of the end times. The article aims to present the subject through a descriptive approach, while also attempting to address it from a historical phenomenological perspective.

1. The Concept of Time and the Messiah Doctrine in Jewish Theology

The primary factor shaping the concept of time in Judaism is the Torah. Based on the Torah, Jewish scholars believe that time has both a beginning and an end. Thus, the perception of time in Judaism is linear and finite. This linear time began with God's creation of everything from nothing and will conclude after a specific period. The rabbis adopted this 6,000-year period as their calendar to serve as a reference with three equal ages of 2,000 years. Thus, the 6,000-year lifespan of the world corresponds to the Hebrew calendar and is reflected in the Tanakh. Specific years in the Hebrew calendar align with stories of human expansion, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel. The events pertaining to the Jewish people are the most significant entries in the calendar. It is essential to note that the concepts of limited time and the Hebrew calendar, as shaped by the Tanakh, interact and interrelate with the ideas of redemption and the end times in Judaism.

The great exile, seen as a divine punishment due to the Jews' abandonment of the Torah, marks the beginning of the last 2,000-year period. Although this period began with the adversities of exile and punishment, Jewish scholars have named it the Messianic Age and regard it as the end of times. In parallel, they developed a hope that once the Jews atone for their transgressions, they would be freed from exile and restored to a glorious state, experiencing a golden age like the past. Drawing from certain passages in the Tanakh, such as Joel 3 and Amos 9:11-15, that they interpret as prophecies, scholars concluded that redemption would occur in the end times through a divine messenger. As a result, the doctrine of the Messiah has taken a deeply rooted position in Jewish theology and eschatology, placing the belief in a Messiah at the core of Jewish hopes and expectations for the future. Thus, the Hebrew calendar not only reflects the past but also sheds light on how Jews perceive the present and their expectations for the future.

1.1. The Hebrew Calendar Shaping Time and History in Judaism

Jewish scholars have drawn from the Torah to outline a limited and linear timeline, assigning a lifespan of 6,000 years to the world. In their view, each day of creation corresponds to 1,000 years on Earth, thus the lifespan of the world is 6,000 years.¹ The seventh day of creation, the Shabbat, represents the seventh millennium; however, during this millennium, the world will be desolate and deserted. Scholars categorize the 6,000 years into three ages of 2,000 years each. According to this classification, the period from year 1 to 2,000 is characterized by humanity's failure to understand God and its rebellion, hence this period is referred to as the "Age of Failure."² The next 2,000 years, beginning with Abraham and concluding with the destruction of the Second Temple, is known as the "Age of the Torah." During this age, the Torah adorned the Earth. To illustrate these two ages with examples: in the year 1, the world and the first human were created; Abraham was born in 1948; the First Temple was destroyed in 3338; the Second Temple fell in 3829; and the Great Exile began in 3894. The years 3829 or 3894 also signify the beginning of the third age. The third 2,000-year period is called the "Messianic Age," which will be the final era before the world to come. Towards the end of the Messianic Age, the Messiah will arrive on Earth and will lead the Jews into a golden age like their past.³ An important aspect regarding the lifespan of the world is that it is not definitively set at 6,000 years. Jewish scholars have speculated that this period has diminished due to humanity's sinfulness. In these interpretations, the world's lifespan has been estimated to be a minimum of 4,250 years and a maximum of 5,850 years.⁴

Another significant detail is the duration of the period that will be experienced with the coming Messiah towards the end of the 2,000-year period. There are different interpretations within Jewish tradition regarding this matter. Some rabbis suggest that this period will last for 40 years, others for 60 to 70 years, some for 400 years, and others still believe it will last for three generations.⁵ Thus, there is no clarity regarding the duration of the years lived with the Messiah in the Hebrew calendar, but it is widely accepted that this period will end with the death of the Messiah. Immediately after the Messiah's death, all people on Earth will also die. Following this, the world will remain silent and desolate for seven days. After these seven days, the day of resurrection and reckoning will occur. To provide a contemporary perspective on this topic, it should be noted that in October 2024, the Jews entered their new year, which corresponds to the year 5785 in the Hebrew calendar.

1.2. The Messiah Doctrine in Jewish Theology

The belief in the Messiah is one of the fundamental tenets of Jewish theology and is closely related to the doctrines of exile and atonement. The architect of Orthodox Judaism, Rambam/Maimonides, shaped the fundamental tenets of Judaism in 13 principles, as outlined in his work *Mishneh Torah*. In the Sefer Shoftim section of his book, Rambam stated that anyone who does not believe in the coming of the Messiah is also denying the Torah and, thus, does not have faith. The development and deep-rooted establishment of

¹ *Babylonian Talmud* (used 10 October 2024), BT- Ros HaShanah 31a.

² *Mishnah, Seder Nezikin, Pirkei Avot* (used 10 October 2024), 5: 2, 5:3.

³ BT-Sanhedrin 97a.

⁴ BT- Sanhedrin 97b.

⁵ BT- Sanhedrin 99a.

the Messiah doctrine in Judaism can be attributed to the exiles and hardships experienced, particularly the Babylonian Exile. Jews believe that they were punished with destruction and exile due to their sins, but they also hold that if they repent and adhere to the Torah, they will atone for their sins and eventually experience a glorious period of sovereignty in Jerusalem, both physically and politically. To achieve this, they believe that God will surely send them a savior. This expectation and these thoughts can be seen reflected in the Bar Kokhba revolt, which resonated with some Jews in ancient times. The destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE and the complete expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem by the Romans in 135 CE solidified the belief in salvation and the coming of a redeemer. Jewish scholars have interpreted the numerous promises in the Tanakh that God would deliver His people from exile and restore them to Zion as a divine promise to the Jews. Moreover, because God is just, He will ultimately save the Jews in the future, as He previously rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Throughout the diaspora, defined as a period of atonement, Jews have consoled themselves with the expectation of the Messiah and shaped their religious lives around this belief.

1.2.1. Jewish Sacred Texts Mentioning the Concept of the Messiah

The term "Messiah" is derived from the Semitic root verb "Mašah/Mesaḥ," which means "to anoint" or "to smear with oil." Its complete equivalent in Hebrew is "ha-Mašhi'ah." The term Mašhi'ah means "anointed one," referring to someone consecrated for a specific role, particularly in religious duties, as someone upon whom God has laid His hand to bestow a task.⁶ This term appears four times in the Torah in narratives related to Moses and Aaron. These accounts include information about Moses consecrating certain objects, Aaron being anointed with oil, and the requirement for Aaron's sons to also be anointed.⁷ However, it can be said that the occurrences of the term Mašhi'ah in these narratives do not serve as direct roots for the belief in the Messiah. Yet, Jewish scholars believe that some passages in the Torah, where the term Mašhi'ah does not appear (for example, Genesis 12:5, 15:9-11, 49:8-11), are symbolic narratives that provide insights about the Messiah. Thus, in the rabbinic perspective, the Torah serves as a source for the belief in the Messiah. Additionally, the term Mašhi'ah appears 20 times in the Nevi'im and 14 times in the Ketuvim. From some of these passages, it is understood that the individuals who were anointed as Messiah were special figures chosen and appointed by God, such as prophets, kings, and priests. Among these figures, David, referred to as the Messiah in II Samuel 23:1, is considered the most significant in the context of the belief in the Messiah. It can also be said that individuals who have a close relationship with God are identified as Messiahs.

In several passages where the term Mašhi'ah appears, there are strong narratives that lay the groundwork for expectations of future salvation and the development of the belief in the Messiah. Particularly in the prophetic books following the Babylonian exile, the concepts of salvation and the deliverer are abundantly illustrated.⁸ As read in the books of Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel, two main figures emerge at the center of these narratives: David and the

⁶ Jacques Waardenburg, "Mesih", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2004), 29/306-309.

⁷ *Tanakh* (used 12 October 2024), Leviticus 8:10-12, 16:32, Exodus 30:30, 40:13.

⁸ Isaiah 11:12, 12:2, Ezekiel 36:24-28, Joel 3:17, Obadiah 1:15-21, Habakkuk 3:18, Zephaniah 3:14-20, Zechariah 14:1-21.

Kingdom. The Israelite prophets during and after the exile repeatedly prophesied that God would return the Jews in exile to the Land of Israel, send a king anointed from the lineage of David, and that this king would lead the Jews just as David did, rebuilding the Davidic Kingdom, or Israel. For instance, in Amos 9:11-15, it is stated: “In that day ‘I will restore David’s fallen shelter...and will rebuild it as it used to be... and I will bring my people Israel back from exile...” These passages convey the understanding that the Messiah will elevate the Jews to a golden era of kingship, reminiscent of David’s time. Furthermore, because these books contain both Messianic and prophetic narratives, they are crucial references in Jewish eschatology.

The Talmud and other religious texts also contain substantial information about the Messiah. In the Babylonian Talmud, the Messiah is generally referred to as the “Messiah, son of David,” while in the Jerusalem Talmud, he is called “Son of Judah,” and in the Targums, he is referred to as “King Messiah.”⁹ According to the rabbis in Babylon, the name of the Messiah, son of David, is one of seven elements designed before creation; his name existed even before the sun and will always exist; thus, he will come at the end of days.¹⁰ Additionally, the Messiah, son of David, is depicted as a teacher, prophet, warrior, peacemaker, high priest, and an eschatological king.¹¹

1.2.2. The Identity, Qualities, and Duties of the Messiah

Jewish tradition associates the Messiah with King David, referring to him as “the Messiah, son of David.” In Jewish theology, the Messiah, who will come from the tribe of Judah, is also known by less commonly used names such as Shiloh (*peace-bringer*), Yinon, Hanina, and Menahem.¹² He is one of six individuals who have been blessed with a special *berakhab*, similar to Moses and David, and like all prophets, he is considered innocent and sinless.¹³ Although the Messiah, son of David, is an anointed figure, he is not a supernatural being and will be born and die like any other human.¹⁴ The duties attributed to the Messiah in Jewish tradition are generally as follows: the Messiah, son of David, will be sent by God in the end times to gather the Jews from exile and bring them back to the Land of Israel, defeat Israel’s enemies, establish a theocratic state, reign over the world, govern humanity with the Torah, rebuild the Temple, and establish God’s kingdom on Earth. Therefore, the Messiah, son of David, corresponds to the concept of salvation as a religious and eschatological savior who will lead the Jews into a golden age in the end times. However, it is also important to emphasize that the Messiah, son of David, is merely an intermediary for ultimate salvation. It is not the Messiah who will bring salvation to the Jews; that role belongs solely to God.¹⁵

The Messiah is also at the center of Jewish eschatology. Indeed, the timeframe in which events related to the Messiah occur in the Tanakh is generally defined as the Day of the Lord,

⁹ *The Targum of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch: Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy*, (London: Longman, Green Longman, Roberts and Green, 1865), 19.

¹⁰ BT- Pesachim 54a, Nedarim 39b

¹¹ BT- Sanhedrin 98b-99a

¹² BT- Sanhedrin 98b.

¹³ BT-Sanhedrin 93b.

¹⁴ Mircea Eliade, *Dinsel İnançlar ve Düşünceler Tarihi II* (İstanbul: Kalcı Yayınevi, 2012), 293.

¹⁵ BT- Sanhedrin 51b.

referring to the end times.¹⁶ It should be emphasized that the book of Isaiah is a primary source concerning the Messiah and eschatology. Unlike other texts, this book associates the imagery of salvation and the savior not with the present or near future but with a completely different age. In Isaiah, prophecies about the return of the Jews from exile, the rebuilding of the Temple, and the governance of nations by the Torah are linked to the end times, thereby imparting an eschatological character to the Messiah.¹⁷ This narrative has been repeated, interpreted, and developed by subsequent prophets.¹⁸ Additionally, it is important to note the significant role of the book of Daniel in the context of the Messiah and eschatology. The book of Daniel, notable for its metaphorical narratives, provides powerful eschatological expressions that give the Messiah, son of David, a corresponding form in this regard.¹⁹

1.2.3. The Timing and Signs of the Messiah's Arrival

The Messiah, son of David, will come at the end of the last 2000-year period of the Messiah Age in the Hebrew calendar.²⁰ Jewish scholars believe that the events of creation and exodus provide clues regarding the timing of the Messiah's arrival, focusing on two possibilities: the months of Nisan and Tishri.²¹ Notably, the month of Nisan has been more favored, as it was during Nisan that God delivered the Jews from slavery in Egypt, and it is believed that the Messiah will ultimately redeem them in the future as well.²² These general predictions about the timing of the Messiah's arrival are indeed speculative, as Jewish religious authorities maintain that the exact date of the Messiah's coming is one of the seven things hidden from humanity, making it unknowable and unpredictable.²³ What is accepted with certainty is that the son of David will be sent by God at a time deemed appropriate by Him. Scholars believe that there is wisdom in keeping this knowledge hidden from humans, which is why calculations and predictions regarding the Messiah's arrival are prohibited. Some rabbis have even cursed those who attempt to make such predictions.²⁴ However, these prohibitions have not deterred Jewish mystics, especially after the expulsion from Spain in 1492, who made calculations regarding the timing of the Messiah's arrival and provided specific dates.

In Judaism, it is believed that not only is it impossible to know the date of the Messiah's arrival, but it is also unattainable through human actions. The only qualification for Jews in this context is to fulfill their religious duties. According to rabbinic thought, Jews can achieve atonement by performing their religious obligations, thereby earning God's favor and potentially hastening the arrival of the Messiah. Conversely, failing to perform *mitzvot* (commandments) and engaging in wrongful actions can delay His coming. From a theological perspective, the period of waiting for the Messiah is seen as a time of striving during exile. Jews are called to fulfill all the commandments applicable outside of Eretz

¹⁶ Tremper Longman et al. (ed), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Daniel- Malachi* (Michigan: Zondervan Academic, 2009), 357.

¹⁷ Rodrigo F. De Sousa, *Eschatology and Messianism in LXX Isaiah 1-12* (New York: T-T Clark, 2010), 6-7.

¹⁸ Eliade, *Dinsel İnançlar ve Düşünceler Tarihi II*, 289.

¹⁹ Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel* (Tennessee: B&H Publishing, 1994), 50-51.

²⁰ BT- Megilah 3a.

²¹ BT- Ros HaShanah 11a.

²² BT- Eiruvin 43b.

²³ BT- Pesachim 54b.

²⁴ BT-Sanhedrin 97b.

Yisrael (the Land of Israel). Thus, faith and piety are the sole factors that can facilitate and accelerate the Messiah's arrival.²⁵ This required piety encompasses repentance, charity, prayer, good deeds, and the observance of mitzvot. If Jews wish for the Messiah's coming, they must understand why they are in exile, express remorse, repent sincerely, and engage in acts of charity.²⁶ In summary, Jews must await God's sending of the son of David Messiah by fulfilling their religious duties. This approach is referred to in Jewish tradition as "passive waiting."

In Jewish theology, any actions aimed at hastening the arrival of the Messiah or speeding up the end times are strictly forbidden. Transitioning to an active form of waiting is considered inappropriate, as it reflects a lack of trust in God's decree and an infringement upon His rules. Such actions would only serve to delay the Messiah's arrival further.²⁷ Violating the Sabbath, failing to foster social unity, neglecting mitzvot, and sinning are behaviors that would postpone the coming of the Messiah. Additionally, an increase in the number of individuals turning away from religion, stinginess, neglecting the poor, and instigating wars are all classified as actions that would delay the timing of the Messiah's arrival.²⁸

As mentioned, calculating the time of the Messiah's arrival is not considered appropriate according to tradition. However, some prophetic narratives in the Tanakh provide hints regarding the events leading up to the Messiah's arrival, allowing for an understanding or intuition about its proximity. Jewish eschatology contains numerous insights and interpretations about what the pre-Messiah era will be like and what signs might indicate His impending arrival. These interpretations suggest that in the period just before the Messiah's coming, the world will experience numerous negative developments. Evil will spread across the globe, irreligiosity will increase, sinfulness will reach its peak, and despair will dominate. Believers will be humiliated, the youth will show disrespect, animals will become valued over human life, governments will fall into corruption, prices and consumption will rise, human dissatisfaction will grow, blessings will diminish, diseases will proliferate, scholars will become scarce, refugees will increase, and people will migrate without receiving compassion.²⁹ Natural disasters will escalate, the sun will darken, the waters of the Jordan River will turn to blood, Galilee will be destroyed, and Jerusalem will be in ruins. This prophecy indicates that the world will experience great chaos just before the Messiah's arrival.

These prophetic hints serve as indicators of the Messiah's coming. In Jewish theology, this pre-Messianic era, referred to as "the end of days" or "the end of time," will witness three significant events that will signify the imminent arrival of the Messiah: the war of Gog and Magog, the coming of the Messiah son of Joseph, and the arrival of the Prophet Elijah. According to Jewish eschatology, a war named Gog and Magog will break out before the Messiah comes, leading to the destruction of all nations.³⁰ Although there are varying interpretations regarding this war, it is viewed as one of the birth pains of the Messiah, rather than a conflict in which He will take part. Gog is the king of a land called Magog, located in

²⁵ BT-Sotah 49b.

²⁶ BT-Sanhedrin 97b, BT-Yoma 86b, BT-Shabbath 151b.

²⁷ BT-Sanhedrin 92b.

²⁸ BT-Niddah 13b, BT-Eiruvin 86a.

²⁹ BT-Sanhedrin 97a, BT-Sotah 49b.

³⁰ BT-Sanhedrin 17a, Ezekiel 38-39.

the far north of Israel, and he will unite many nations to attack Israel. As an atheist, Gog will wage war against the faithful, making this conflict a direct rebellion against God.³¹

During this religious war, the Shekhinah (divine presence) will descend to earth, fighting against Gog and his forces, punishing enemies with plagues and floods. The Jewish people will be protected by God during this conflict, while other nations will suffer great losses.³² Ultimately, Gog and his allied enemies will be defeated in the Land of Israel, and following this war, which will serve as part of their atonement, the Jewish people will no longer experience captivity.³³ Moreover, this war will lead many nations to believe in God.

The second significant event will be the arrival of the Messiah from the tribe of Joseph, known as the Messiah son of Joseph. According to some scholars, he is said to come "riding on a donkey" and will be sent to announce the arrival of the Messiah son of David, who will come "amidst the clouds," as well as to prepare the right conditions for His arrival.³⁴ The Messiah son of Joseph will emerge in Galilee and cleanse Jerusalem from Roman occupation. However, afterwards, a figure named Armilus (the Antichrist) will invade Jerusalem, accompanied by ten kings, driving the Jewish people into exile from Zion, killing some and taking others captive, ultimately leading to the death of the Messiah son of Joseph.³⁵ During this period of suffering, the Jewish people will face division, with many abandoning their faith and only a few remaining steadfast in belief. Ultimately, God will destroy Armilus and his army.

The third and final significant event will be the coming of the Prophet Elijah. According to Jewish eschatology, Elijah will be sent by God at the end of days, arriving three days before the Messiah. On each of these days, he will announce different messages: the first day will herald the coming of peace, the second will proclaim the advent of goodness, and the third will declare the arrival of salvation. Elijah will find the 10 lost tribes and bring them to Eretz Israel³⁶. After the arrival of the Messiah, Elijah will become the high priest, teach the new law to the people, and serve as a reconciliator among the Jewish community.³⁷

1.2.4. Messianic Kingdom

When the Jewish people have completed their atonement and, more importantly, at the time determined by God, the Messiah son of David will come. He will arrive in Bethlehem or Hebron, or in a location between the two, and from there, he will proceed to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, the Messiah will wear the crown of kingship and begin his mission to serve humanity. As God's representative on Earth, he will proclaim God's message, teach the Torah, and govern the entire world from Zion with the Law (Isaiah 2:4). He will be the ruler and king of the whole world, guiding all of humanity toward a religious way of life. God will show mercy to all humanity, especially to the Jewish people, through the Messiah, leading to beautiful, positive, and even extraordinary developments during this time. There will be peace and justice throughout the world, particularly in Eretz Israel. Wars and murders will

³¹ BT- Avodah Zarah 3b.

³² BT- Megilah 11a.

³³ BT-Sanhedrin 97b, BT-Megilah 17b.

³⁴ BT- Sukkah 52a-b.

³⁵ Jacob Klatzkin, "Armilus", *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 2007), 2/474-475.

³⁶ Deuteronomy 30:4.

³⁷ BT-Baba Metzia 20a.

cease, weapons of war and oppression will be destroyed, and no one will go hungry. On the other hand, it is worth noting that certain rabbis including Maimonides interpret the Messianic Era as one that will not necessarily bring about extraordinary occurrences, suggesting that the only significant change will be the end of exile, with Jews returning to Eretz Israel and establishing their sovereignty there.³⁸

If we were to list the positive developments that the Jews will experience with the Davidic Messiah; the exile will end, all exiles, including the lost ten tribes, will return to Eretz Israel, they will become the sole heirs of the land, the borders of the promised land will be completed, extending to the Euphrates, Jerusalem will expand, reaching the gates of Damascus, the Kingdom of Israel will be re-established as a theocratic state, regaining its former glory, Jerusalem will be the capital, and the temple will be rebuilt for the third time.³⁹ Once the temple is built, the Shekhinah will once again dwell in the Holy of Holies.⁴⁰ The Jews, due to the coming of the Messiah, will be able to live their religion properly and will attain all the blessings promised to them by God; they will no longer sin and will be wise.⁴¹ Because God will pour His spirit upon them through the Messiah (Joel 2:28-29), the Jews will be freed from their injustices, selfishness, and jealousy; they will conquer their egos and will elevate their souls. There will be no arid land left in Eretz Israel; wine will flow from the mountains, there will be abundance and blessing, no disasters will occur, there will be wealth, wolves will live alongside lambs, and hunger, unhappiness, disease, and infertility will cease.⁴²

All the nations that have oppressed the Jews, especially Rome, will be destroyed. Other nations, if they wish, will also step into a beautiful era like the Jews. Because the Davidic Messiah will introduce God to all people and will enable some to believe. Thus, the nations will believe in and practice the Torah, and the Messiah will be their king and prophet as well.⁴³ Those who do not accept the Torah will be punished. More importantly, the entire family of Abraham, especially the descendants of Ishmael and Esau, will believe in the Torah, thus completing their own atonement and uniting with Israel.⁴⁴

2. The Nature of Salvation and the Time of Salvation in Zionist Ideology

Zionism is a form of Jewish nationalism that emerged in Europe in the 19th century. The term was derived in 1890 by Nathan Birnbaum from the word "Zion," one of the names of Jerusalem in the Tanakh.⁴⁵ Historical data shows that the early seeds of Zionist ideology appeared in the first half of that century. Some Jews, referred to in the literature as "Zionist Pioneers," laid the groundwork for Zionism and became its origins. These pioneers expressed the necessity of Jewish revival in a way that would inspire the theorists and leaders of

³⁸ BT-Berachoth 34b. Menachem Kellner, "And the Crookes Shall be Made Straight: Twisted Messianic Visions, and A Maimonidean Corrective", *Rethinking the Messianic Idea in Judaism*, ed. Michael L. Morgan et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 121-122.

³⁹ Alexander Zephyr, *Rabbi Akiva, Bar Kokhba Revolt, and the Ten Tribes of Israel* (Bloomington: IUniverse LLC, 2013), 36.

⁴⁰ BT- Megilah 29a, Yoma 72a, 77b, Pesachim 5a.

⁴¹ BT- Shabbath 151b.

⁴² Isaiah 35: 6, 32:15, 51:3, 11:6, Joel 2:26, 3:18.

⁴³ Menachem Kellner, *Maimonides on Judaism and the Jewish People* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 39.

⁴⁴ Kellner, *Maimonides on Judaism and the Jewish People*, 38.

⁴⁵ Gideon Kouts, "Zionism", *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 2007), 21/539-540.

Zionism, advocating for the establishment of a new nationalist Hebrew identity, the collective migration of Jews to Palestine, and the establishment of a Jewish state. Their ideals gradually strengthened and spread over time, ultimately being named by Birnbaum. Thus, the institutionalization process of ideology began. In this context, Theodor Herzl is the most significant figure. With the First Zionist Congress he organized in 1897, Zionism gained a specific program, became institutionalized, and developed into a substantial ideology, thus expanding its influence. Therefore, it is appropriate to outline the historical process of Jewish Zionism with the following milestones: Jewish Zionism began with Zionist pioneers in Europe in the first half of the 19th century, was named in 1890, institutionalized in 1897, and became official in Palestine in 1948.

Zionism has promised salvation to the Jewish people. This promise is filled with goals such as creating a Hebrew language revolution, establishing a national Hebrew identity, collectively migrating Jews to Palestine, establishing a nationally independent Jewish state there, and thereby making a return to history. After 1948, it also aimed to protect Jews under the umbrella of a state and to build a prosperous future for them while establishing sovereignty over all the promised lands. It is evident that these promises of Zionism regarding salvation and existence do not carry an eschatological character. From a general perspective, it can be said that these promises indicate that Zionism offers Jews a bright future in political, military, and economic terms in this time and place, without referring to the Messiah, the end of days, or ultimate salvation. However, this does not mean that Zionism does not utilize the belief in the Messiah and the parameters within this doctrine. Secular or non-religious Jews have pragmatically referred to the subtopics, provisions, and prophecies of the belief in the Messiah when necessary, employing this doctrine along with beliefs in the promised land and the chosen people. On the other hand, it should be noted that there are also Zionists who do not fit this generalization. In the early period of Zionism, the religious leaders within the ideology believed that they were living in the end times. Therefore, although Zionism was not directly related to the ultimate salvation that the Messiah would bring for them, it was considered part of that process. It has been observed that this perspective of Zionist religious leaders changed after the first quarter of the 20th century, and Zionism began to be directly associated with the belief in the Messiah. As a result of this connection, a form of Zionism known as Messianic Zionism emerged from Religious Zionism. Messianic Zionism centers on the theme of the end times, seeking to accelerate the end, and attempting to realize the ultimate salvation and the coming of the Messiah through political and military actions. It defines all events as signs and associates them with prophecies, considers the occurrence of wars and negative events as prerequisites, and places great importance on Kabbalah. Messianic Zionism, with its theology, has led to the emergence of fanatical radical religious Zionists and particularly increased their numbers after 1967.

2.1. Definition, Characteristics, and Goals of Zionism

The simplest definition of Zionism is Jewish nationalism or the modern Jewish national independence movement. However, when examining the characteristics, structure, and goals of the Zionist ideology, it becomes clear that its most accurate definition is "theological

colonial nationalism."⁴⁶ Although Zionism was formulated by Jews living in different regions of Europe, who therefore had different backgrounds, the common denominators in this formulation are the concepts of salvation/freedom and anti-Semitism. Despite emancipation, the integration failures experienced by Jews in Western Europe, along with pogroms affecting Jews in Eastern Europe, pushed them to seek an exit or path to freedom, leading to the establishment of their own nationalist ideology. In other words, anti-Semitism and the hope for salvation are the factors that contributed to the emergence of the ideology.⁴⁷ Popular intellectual movements in Europe during the 19th century—such as nationalism, national identity, a return to history, and the concept of the nation-state—can also be listed as factors that led to the emergence of this ideology. Moreover, it is a fact that each of these factors serves as building blocks for Zionism. Indeed, Zionism is an ideology that emerged in Europe, and most of its theorists adopted Western values. To elaborate, a large percentage of the Jews who formulated Zionism were individuals who embraced Western values, felt a sense of belonging to the European countries they lived in rather than to Zion, and sought to escape their Jewish identities to become part of the West. When they were unable to achieve this, they created their own nationalist ideology to gain the approval of Europe. Consequently, the building blocks of Zionism, formulated by Jews with these characteristics, naturally included Western values such as nationalism, colonialism, and hegemony.⁴⁸

In the 19th century, nationalism, a return to history, national identity, and the concept of the nation-state, which were increasingly strengthened by racial theories in Europe, served as a role model for Jews in formulating their own ideology. Zionist theorists, including the pioneers, asserted that Jews, who were suffering various hardships in the diaspora, were an ancient people and that they should have their own land and state. Accordingly, they believed that it was essential for Jews to gain a national character, arguing that the Hebrew revival—and, more importantly, their salvation—could only be achieved through this identity. Zionism, which promises salvation to Jews, has shaped its goals through this vision and mission. The initial objectives of Zionism can be summarized as follows: creating a nationalist Hebrew identity, establishing Hebrew as the national language, collectively migrating Jews to Palestine, and founding a national and independent Jewish state. Thus, Zionism is a people- and land-centered ideology. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that the religious factor played a significant role in the strengthening of Zionist ideology and its ability to achieve its goals. In fact, Zionism was not constructed solely on secular concepts and practicalities; every building block of the ideology has been intertwined with Jewish religious doctrines. This transformation has made Zionism more than just a political thought or form of nationalism; it has turned it into a theopolitics. According to nearly all experts, this move is the greatest factor that distinguishes the ideology and leads it to success.

⁴⁶ Amnon Raz Krakotzkin, "A National Colonial Theology Religion, Orientalism and The Construction of The Secular in Zionist Course", *Etnisizität, Moderne und Enttraditionalisierung*, ed. Moshe Zuckermann (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2002), 312.

⁴⁷ Derek J Pensler, "Anti-Semites on Zionism: From Indifference to Obsession", *Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective: Convergence and Divergence*, ed. Jeffrey Herf (London: Routledge, 2007), 14-25.

⁴⁸ Guy Bajoit, "Siyonizm ve Emperyalizm", *Siyonizm ve Irkçılık*, ed. Türkkaya Ataöv (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilimler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1982), 146-147.

Zionists, like all forms of nationalism, required and placed maximum importance on the concepts of history, people, land, and state. To meet these needs, they turned to the Tanakh in a practical and pragmatic manner, using Jewish religious doctrines. In fact, they found the history they sought for their nationalism, the model of people they sought to create a new Hebrew identity, and the land they sought for migration and state-building in the Tanakh.⁴⁹ Zionists asserted that they were a chosen and sanctified people, tracing their ethnic identity back to Abraham, thus incorporating the belief in the chosen people into their ideology. By also claiming that Palestine, centered around Jerusalem, was their land, they placed the belief in the promised land at the foundation of their ideology. Zionists regarded the Tanakh as a document that narrates Jewish history, establishing their history on an ancient past and asserting that it is a sacred history.⁵⁰ Selectively and judiciously, Zionist historians wrote a glorious history and a golden age for Jews, focusing only on the successes of the Israelites in Palestine as described in the Tanakh, while ignoring the exiles, destructions, and defeats. This historical narrative creates an impression of an unbroken and linear connection from King David to the modern era, that is, to Zionism, for the Jews. Through this constructed history, the Zionists aimed to highlight how organic, ancient, and strong the bond between the Jews and Palestine was, promoting the perception that Palestine is the homeland and property of the Jews.

Moreover, one of the most important objectives of the Zionists was to demonstrate that the Jews had experienced a golden age in Eretz Israel in the past, thus proving that Zionism and the future it would establish would also be bright. Indeed, Zionists selectively focused on the successful periods in Eretz Israel, particularly the migrations of Abraham and the Exodus, as these were directed towards Zion. Thus, by shaping their ideology with the metaphors of “Exodus and Zion,” the Zionists also provided an explanation for their past golden ages. This means that despite various difficulties in ancient times, Jews who migrated to Eretz Israel lived their most glorious periods with King David in Zion, and if they wish to experience such an era in the future, they too must “exit” and go to Zion, like their ancestors.

Zionists, who claim that returning to Jerusalem is a religious duty, argue that this land is the country where their ancestors lived and that it was given to them by God as a perpetual inheritance. They strengthen their claims by stating that God will not go back on His promises as outlined in the Torah, asserting that the land belongs to them and that it awaits their return. They assert that the history of Palestine was written only as long as the Jews lived there and that their return fulfills their duty to the land. In trying to invalidate the divine punishment of exile, Zionists called on the Jews with the slogan “a land without a people for a people without a land,” effectively nullifying the Palestinians and defining them as a historyless and unfortunate mass.⁵¹ In simpler terms, for the Zionists, Palestinians do not exist, and therefore Palestine is empty. This is one of the explanations for why Zionism is characterized as a colonial and hegemonic ideology. As previously mentioned, Zionism is a

⁴⁹ Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 16.

⁵⁰ Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, 14.

⁵¹ Rashid Khalidi, “The Formation of Palestinian Identity: The Critical Years, 1917-1923”, *Rethinking Nationalism in Arab Middle East*, ed. James Jankowski et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 171-191.

colonial settlement movement. As many experts indicate, a settler-colonial ideology implies the eradication of the indigenous population.⁵²

Realizing that they would not achieve success merely by migrating to Palestine, Zionists employed the belief in the chosen people to create a new Hebrew identity. They claimed that the Jews, as descendants of Abraham, are a chosen, superior, and holy people, asserting that this identity can only find meaning and existence in Eretz Israel. To this end, they first initiated a Hebrew language revolution. Subsequently, to create a nationalist identity, they changed the names of every Jew migrating to Palestine to names from the Tanakh, such as Abraham, Joshua, and David. To foster social unity, they referred to the Jews migrating to Palestine as Hebrew initially, and later as Israelis once the state was established. The memories of the Jews who migrated to Palestine were infused with the myths of being a chosen, superior, and even holy people, along with the history written by the Zionists. Thus, Zionism achieved its goal of creating a new Hebrew identity with a nationalist character. This infused memory is, in fact, one of the most significant factors that ensured Zionism's persistence and permanence in Palestine. The kibbutzim, where this new nationalist identity was shaped, also led to the creation of Zionist underground organizations, which were key to establishing a Jewish state in Palestine.⁵³ Over time, it became increasingly evident that some Zionists, whose memories were infused with nationalism and fighting in the kibbutzim, turned to racist and fascist ideologies, particularly after the late 1940s. All these developments mark the emergence of a new Jewish typology, which had not been observed before (except for some events in ancient times). The radical, fanatic, and racist Zionist Jewish typology was born in the kibbutzim established in Palestine. Later, this typology was further influenced by Religious Zionism, resulting in the emergence of fanatic religious racist Zionists.

2.2. The Emergence of Religious Zionism and the Production of Messianic Zionism

Zionism is an ideology formulated by Jews living in various regions of Europe who, despite holding different worldviews and religious beliefs, united on common grounds such as nationalism and liberation. This diversity led to the branching of Zionism into various sub-groups, including "Labor, Religious, Cultural, Political, and Revisionist" Zionism. Especially after 1897, it became clear that the religious and secular views of Zionist theorists were reflected in their versions of Zionism, resulting in a clear division within the movement. While this division slowed down some decision-making processes within the Zionist movement, it ultimately strengthened it. Each branch acted as a complementary and supportive component, enhancing the ideological capacity for action and enabling the movement to appeal to various segments of the Jewish community. The first sub-group that emerged from Zionism is Religious Zionism.

Among the pioneers of Zionism, including figures like J. Alkalai and Z. Kalischer, there are also rabbis who have played a significant role in the movement. Zionist rabbis have not only facilitated the adoption of the ideology within their communities but have also been highly influential within the movement itself. Although the involvement of rabbis and

⁵² Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native", *Journal of Genocide Research* 8/4 (2006), 387-409.

⁵³ Anita Shapira, "Where Has 'the Negation of Exile' Gone?", *Alpayim: A Multidisciplinary Publication for Contemporary Thought and Literature* 25 (2003), 9-55.

religious individuals has caused some discomfort among the secular factions, decision-makers, particularly Theodor Herzl, recognized the importance of rabbinical support and stated that the participation of religious leaders was essential for the movement.⁵⁴ One way this ideology, which is intertwined with Jewish religious doctrines, gained legitimacy was through the revision of religious commandments by rabbis. Zionist rabbis introduced new rulings concerning exile, atonement, and messianic doctrines, most importantly nullifying the “Shaloş ha-Şvuot/Three Oaths” found in the Talmud, to which Jews had adhered for centuries.⁵⁵ These oaths prohibited collective Jewish immigration to the promised land, the establishment of a state, and the establishment of political sovereignty. The Zionist rabbis declared that these oaths had lost their validity in light of contemporary developments. The alignment of Zionism’s objectives with these oath provisions indicates that Zionists viewed Jewish tradition as null and void. At this juncture, the role of the rabbis in mitigating objections was crucial. Zionist rabbis reduced anxieties within their communities regarding the violation of the Three Oaths and messianic beliefs by offering new religious interpretations, thereby encouraging Jewish participation in the movement. They reassured their communities that Zionist ideology was not a messianic movement aiming for ultimate salvation but was rather an effort to save the Jews from extinction. According to their claims, participating in this ideology was the only way for Jews to ensure their continued existence.

Analyzing the role of rabbis in shaping and supporting Zionist ideology up to the first quarter of the 20th century reveals that their motivations were primarily rooted in religious concerns. The effects of emancipation led to the assimilation of Jews, with many abandoning their faith. In response, some rabbis, seeking to adapt to these conditions, established new sects that, like Zionism, disregarded crucial aspects of Judaism. This context made nationalism, nation-states, immigration, and statehood significant concepts for these rabbis, leading them to adopt a Zionist stance. Rabbis who aligned with Zionism believed that if Jews remained in their current circumstances, both Judaism and the Jewish people would soon face extinction. To prevent this, they argued that Jews had no alternative but to become nationalists like other peoples and establish their own state. These rabbis, motivated by this mindset and concern, collaborated with secular Zionists, becoming one of the most vital pillars of the Zionist movement. This collaboration can be interpreted as an attempt by religious and secular Zionists to tolerate one another despite their differences. Zionist rabbis grew weary of other theorists’ secular approaches, which sought to create a Jewish identity detached from religious elements and aimed at establishing a secular state. They realized that their efforts to counter this secular ideology would not succeed.⁵⁶ They believed that this attitude would not lead Jews back to Judaism; instead, the assimilation problem would merely shift, ultimately resulting in the disappearance of Judaism. Over time, as their tolerance for the secular framework waned, rabbis began to formulate their own version of Zionism based on religious beliefs, leading to the emergence of Religious Zionism as the first sub-branch of the movement. Religious Zionism can be described as a movement aimed at

⁵⁴ Michael Brenner, *In Search of Israel: The History of Idea* (United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, 2018), 82.

⁵⁵ BT- Kethuboth 110b-111a.

⁵⁶ Shalom Linker, *Kibbutz Judaism: A New Tradition in the Making* (Pennsylvania: Associated University Press, 1982), 93.

creating a national and religious Hebrew identity, aspiring to establish a state governed by Jewish law (halakha) and characterized by a devout societal structure.⁵⁷

Rabbi Y. Reines, a pivotal figure in the Religious Zionist movement and recognized as the first official rabbi of Zionism, founded the Mizrahi Party in 1902 in Lithuania with the support of other rabbis. This event marked the formal beginning of Religious Zionism. Operating under the auspices of the World Zionist Organization, Mizrahi adopted the slogan "The Land of Israel is for the People of Israel," promising Jews the opportunity to fully live the Torah in Jerusalem and to establish religious Zionist yeshivas in Palestine.⁵⁸ Religious Zionism sought to create a harmonious connection between halakha (Jewish law) and ideology, aiming to secure acceptance of the movement among religious Jews. This effort was, to some extent, successful. It can be argued that Religious Zionism positioned itself as an extension and continuity of halakha, reinforcing the idea that "Zionism is Judaism." The establishment of Religious Zionism can thus be viewed as an attempt to demonstrate that the movement was not only a political and national initiative but also a legitimate religious one.⁵⁹

In Jewish theology, the concepts of salvation and the redeemer correspond to the belief in the Messiah. This dynamic presents a significant challenge for Religious Zionism and has led to internal shifts within the movement. It is useful to divide the relationship of Religious Zionism with the Messianic belief into two distinct periods: one where Zionism is emphasized as a non-Messianic movement and another where it is declared to be a Messianic movement. Until the first quarter of the 20th century, Zionist rabbis repeatedly emphasized that Zionism is not a messianic movement. Including the pioneers, Zionist rabbis claimed that they were living in the end times, asserting that all developments indicated the imminent arrival of the Messiah. Therefore, they argued that the Jewish people needed to fulfill their responsibilities, which was connected to collectively returning to Eretz Israel, or physical effort.⁶⁰ Thus, in their view, the coming of the Messiah required the Jews to be Zionist and to return to Palestine. This can actually be interpreted as the Zionist rabbis moving from a passive waiting for the Messiah in the Jewish tradition to an active expectation. Despite these interpretations, the rabbis insisted that Zionism does not hasten the end, that it has nothing to do with the ultimate salvation brought by the Messiah, and that it is not a messianic movement.⁶¹ They also criticized anti-Zionist rabbis who accused them of rebelling against the Messiah belief and rejected these accusations.⁶² Zionist rabbis stated that they only wished to await the Messiah by returning to Jerusalem and that they did not play a savior role. However, it is also a fact that Zionist rabbis interpreted current social and political developments as signs and issued new religious rulings based on them. For instance, it is known that the Balfour Declaration played a significant role in the dindar Zionists'

⁵⁷ Chaim Weizmann, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann* (Jerusalem: Transaction Publishers, 1984), 46.

⁵⁸ Itzhak Goldshlag, "Mizrachi", *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 2007), 14/389-390.

⁵⁹ Linker, *Kibbutz Judaism*, 93.

⁶⁰ Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948* (California: Stanford University Press, 1992), 33.

⁶¹ David Novak, *Zionism and Judaism: A New Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 235.

⁶² Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 34.

overcoming the “three oaths” rule.⁶³ Furthermore, it is known that some rabbis joined Zionism to hasten the end.⁶⁴

Although Religious Zionism has avoided presenting itself as a messianic movement, it has been viewed as such by Jewish religious individuals because it shares in the tasks of the Messiah and promises salvation. Indeed, Zionism has called upon Jews to embrace the belief in the Messiah and his messianic powers to achieve the concrete realization of salvation.⁶⁵ As a result, some Jewish religious individuals have completely opposed Zionism, while others have welcomed it positively. Consequently, it can be understood that the concerns of anti-Zionist rabbis opposing the ideology from the very moment Zionism emerged were justified. This is because, through the efforts of Rabbi Abraham I. H. Kook, Religious Zionism began to transform into a messianic movement, completing this transformation in a short period. Thus, Messianic Zionism emerged.

Rabbi Kook is a turning point for Religious Zionism. Immigrating to Palestine as a Zionist in 1904, Kook viewed Zionism as a two-part movement: Zionism and Jerusalemism. In his thought, Zionism is the political aspect of the movement and will ensure the physical revival of the Jews, but it is not sufficient on its own. Jerusalemism will provide the spiritual and mystical resurrection of the Jews, and without this resurrection, the physical revival holds no significance. It is a natural consequence that Kook, considered an important religious scholar, made mystical connections while shaping his own ideology, especially given his Kabbalistic background.⁶⁶ Rabbi Kook claimed that they were living in the end of days and that the arrival of the Messiah was imminent; therefore, it was essential for the Jews to return to Jerusalem quickly. In his view, the new settlements established by the returning religious individuals would act as a holy center of attraction, drawing other Jews to Eretz Israel as well as the end of days like a magnet. Kook interpreted Zionism as a sign that the end of days had arrived, asserting that there was a very powerful messianic light within this movement.⁶⁷ According to him, Zionism is a messianic movement that initiates the process of salvation, facilitates the final redemption, and ensures the coming of the Messiah.⁶⁸ According to Kook, when Jews are Zionist, they will take on a messianic mission. That is, Jews must create a center of attraction by being Zionist and immigrating to Jerusalem to draw the Messiah to the world like a magnet. He believed that only God knows why these actions must be taken for the coming of the Messiah.⁶⁹ Drawing mystical conclusions from Jacob's vision (Genesis 28:12), Kook stated that Zionism needs Jerusalem to achieve its goals. Because the ladder they must have for their ascension is on Mount Moriah.⁷⁰ He claimed that by using this ladder, they would achieve their earthly goals and that the state they would

⁶³ Dov Schwartz, *Religious Zionism History and Ideology* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2009), 35.

⁶⁴ Steven V. Mazie, *Israel's Higher Law- Religion and Liberal Democracy in The Jewish State* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), 24-25.

⁶⁵ David Biale, *Gershom Scholem Kabbalah and Counter-History* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 107.

⁶⁶ Abraham Isaac Hakohen Kook, *Orot* (Jerusalem: Maggid Books, 2015), 108.

⁶⁷ Kook, *Orot*, 163-164.

⁶⁸ Yakov M. Rabkin, “Religious Roots of a Political Ideology: Judaism and Christianity at the Cradle of Zionism”, *Mediterranean Review* 5/1 (2012), 84.

⁶⁹ Kook, *Orot*, 161-162.

⁷⁰ Kook, *Orot*, 202.

establish would be the Messianic Kingdom of Israel.⁷¹ Moreover, he made inferences that this kingdom would also benefit other peoples. In his thought, Israel is a blessing for the world in every respect.⁷² However, Kook's statement that Israel is a blessing for the world does not imply that his approach to other peoples is positive or peace-loving. Indeed, it is known that he supported violent actions, bloodshed, and war for the coming of the Messiah, adopting an exclusionary and hostile attitude toward Palestinians and raising and inciting religious Zionists in this context.⁷³

As a result, Rabbi Abraham Kook defined Zionism as a messianic movement, imbuing the movement with eschatological and mystical characteristics, and thus creating Messianic Zionism. For this reason, he is regarded as “the first example of the extraordinary combination of religiosity and Zionism.”⁷⁴ In other words, Kook is the individual who brought forth radical Messianic Zionism. This also indicates that he serves as a root for fanatical religious Jewish Zionists. Indeed, his ideology, referred to as “Kookist theology,” has been carried on by his son and successors, becoming increasingly radicalized over time.⁷⁵ It is an undeniable fact that Messianic Zionism played a role in the establishment, preservation, and continuation of Israel.⁷⁶

Rabbi Kook's ideology was fully realized by his son, Yehuda Kook.⁷⁷ Kook succeeded in establishing a broad community with his father's theology, and with the support of his constituency, he founded the “Gush Emunim/Faith Bloc.” This organization has a vision of resettling all Jews in Palestine and a mission to achieve this, if necessary, through war and bloodshed. Additionally, many radical religious Zionist groups have been established in Palestine, inspired by Kookist theology. All these radical and fanatical groups completely reject universal, humanistic, and liberal values, arguing that Palestine should exclusively belong to the Jews and that Muslims and Christians should not be granted equal rights.⁷⁸ Their goals and doctrines can be outlined as follows: “The messianic fervor attached to the sanctity of a Greater Israel, the construction of the temple in the area of the Muslim holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem, governance of the state by theocracy, and the establishment of Jewish political sovereignty throughout Eretz Israel.”⁷⁹

⁷¹ Kook, *Orot*, 122-127.

⁷² Kook, *Orot*, 113-115.

⁷³ Zvi Zinger Yaron ve Benjamin Ish-Shalom, “Abraham Isaac Kook”, *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 2007), 12/289-293.

⁷⁴ Shlomo Avineri, “Zionism and Jewish Religious Tradition: The Dialectics of Redemption and Secularization”, *Zionism and Religion*, ed. Shmuel Almog et al. (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1998), 4.

⁷⁵ Schwartz, *Religious Zionism History and Ideology*, 77.

⁷⁶ Novak, *Zionism and Judaism*, 244-245.

⁷⁷ Motti Inbari, *Messianic Religious Zionism Confronts Israeli Territorial Compromises* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 21.

⁷⁸ Nur Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism: Invented Tradition, Archaeology and Post-Colonialism in Israel-Palestine* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 138.

⁷⁹ Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism*, 138

2.3. The Perspective of Religious Zionism on Time and the Interpretative Approach of Zionist Rabbis to Prophecies

As previously mentioned, Jewish religious leaders were among those who conceptualized Zionism. The formulation of a nationalist ideology promising salvation to the Jewish community or its support by rabbis appears paradoxical in the context of the belief in the Messiah. However, for Zionist rabbis, this is not a contradiction; rather, in their view, the signs of the times necessitate the Jews' revival through the embrace of nationalism. In fact, according to the rabbis, the belief in the Messiah, in a sense, requires one to be nationalist; therefore, it is not difficult for Jews, who have lived for centuries in isolation, to adopt nationalism. In other words, the belief in the Messiah has provided a very conducive ground for the interaction between the thoughts of rabbis and religious individuals about nationalism.⁸⁰ Furthermore, it seems that the eschatological thinking parallel to the belief in the Messiah has also contributed to this favorable environment. Indeed, the views on time held by the religious leaders who conceptualized or supported the movement, including its pioneering rabbis, are common. In their opinion, the world is approaching the end of the eschatological period; therefore, the arrival of the Davidic Messiah is also very near.

From its first representative to the present day, all Zionist rabbis have believed they are living in the end times, defining social, political, military, and even religious developments as the footsteps of the Messiah. They have thought that the prophecies are beginning to be fulfilled and have claimed that the arrival of the Davidic Messiah is imminent. Some Zionist rabbis including Kook believed that the prophecies should happen spontaneously, considering that the process of the Messiah's arrival has already begun. However, once Religious Zionism positioned itself on a messianic plane, it polished the eschatological character of the movement significantly. In particular, messianic Zionists have closely aligned the movement with the sub-paradigms of the belief in the Messiah, made moves to hasten the end, and supported warfare and bloodshed.

To analyze the perception of time among Zionist rabbis and their method of interpreting signs in the context of prophecies, one must go back to the 1820s. The year 1825 corresponds to 5585 in the Hebrew calendar, marking the beginning of a period when the pioneers of Zionism declared their ideas with messianic enthusiasm. When calculating the future based on the Hebrew calendar from the stated year, it is understood that there is a maximum of 415 years left until the apocalypse in Jewish theology. Therefore, it is entirely normal for all Jewish religious leaders during those years to believe they were living in the end times and to feel excited about the imminent arrival of the Messiah. What is abnormal, however, is that some religious leaders made mystical calculations to provide specific dates, worked towards the fulfillment of prophecies, and issued new rulings that were highly contrary to tradition. Although few religious leaders were exhibiting such behavior in the 1820s, their discourse and actions were influential. These rabbis were the pioneers of Zionism, and their prophetic-sounding rhetoric, combined with secular ideals, effectively permeated the minds of a segment of the Jewish community.

Rabbi Alkalai, a pioneer of Zionism who believed that the era with the son of David Messiah would last 400 years, claimed in the 1820s that they had reached the end of the

⁸⁰ Ze'ev Levy, "Yahudi Milliyetçiliği", *Yahudi Felsefesi Tarihi*, ed. Daniel Frank et al. (Ankara: Hece Yayınları, 2018), 769.

Messianic Age and that all developments were a sign of the Messiah's approach. In his view, the rise of nationalism and the nation-state concept, the decline of empires, and the assimilation of Jews leading them to abandon their religion were indicators of the Messiah's imminent arrival. Evaluating all political and secular developments of his time in this context, Alkalai made mystical calculations and announced that the son of David Messiah would come in 1840. According to Alkalai, the Jews needed to fulfill their responsibilities within the 15 years leading up to the arrival of the son of David Messiah. He believed that the Messiah would not descend from heaven suddenly; rather, the process of redemption would occur in stages, and human action was necessary for this redemption.⁸¹ Rabbi Alkalai asserted that this action must pass through repentance. However, it is understood that his conception of repentance differed significantly from Jewish tradition. According to Alkalai, the Jews could only repent by collectively returning to Eretz Israel.⁸² Any other form of repentance would have no meaning at the end of times. Therefore, as they approached ultimate redemption, the Jews' sole imperative was to return to Jerusalem. Alkalai urged the Jews to take action, advising them not to rely solely on God. Alkalai, who stated that redemption would occur in stages, also found another prophecy, claiming that the son of Joseph Messiah would soon come.⁸³ When the son of Joseph Messiah arrives, he will lead the Jews back to Jerusalem in a nationalist manner. Alkalai's interpretation marks the first intersection of Jewish nationalism with the doctrine of the son of Joseph Messiah, a convergence that would become increasingly intertwined over time. With the return to Jerusalem alongside the son of Joseph Messiah or, as understood, through Zionism, the Jews would strengthen socially, politically, and economically, thus prompting God to send the son of David Messiah.

Another figure who viewed the 19th century with Messianic enthusiasm was Rabbi Kalischer, a pioneer of Zionism. Coming from a well-known Kabbalist family, Kalischer incorporated his mystical calculations into his evaluations of developments in Europe, asserting that the end times had begun and that all signs indicated the footsteps of the Messiah and the warning of a catastrophic end. Nationalism and popular uprisings were among these signs, while the suffering of the Jews and their material successes were the most significant indicators. Kalischer linked the conditions of the diaspora with the Egyptian exile, claiming that like their ancestors, they had suffered for years and had always repented, thus asserting that the time for redemption had come. The greatest evidence of this timing, as highlighted in the Torah (Genesis 14:15), was that some Jews were wealthy enough to buy the world. Although Kalischer was a Kabbalist, he paradoxically advised Jews to abandon their fantastical thoughts and not to expect miracles. He noted that the expectation for God to perform a miracle by suddenly bringing the Messiah to earth was a mistaken belief.⁸⁴ Kalischer argued that action was necessary for the ultimate redemption to begin, emphasizing the need to return to Eretz Israel and asserting that true repentance in the end

⁸¹ Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, 16.

⁸² Getzel Kressel, "Alkalai, Judah ben Solomon Hai", *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 2007), 1/663-664.

⁸³ Shapira, *Land and Power*, 4.

⁸⁴ Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, 16.

times required collective return. Thus, the Jews' return to Jerusalem before the coming of the son of David Messiah was essential for his arrival.⁸⁵

The end-times thinking, calculations, and the Messianic excitement with which these two important pioneers approached the developments of their time represent a significant turning point. Indeed, some rabbis were influenced by this system of thought, adopting, supporting, and eventually developing it over time. This led to the emergence of rabbis eager to take significant steps to hasten the end. The most famous early example in this context was Rabbi S. Mohilever, who supported Hibbat Zion, while Rabbi Kook became prominent during the years when Zionism made a qualified appearance in Palestine.⁸⁶ Kook serves as the most important role model regarding end-times thinking and efforts to hasten the end.

Compared to the previous century, the developments of the 20th century were much more concrete and destructive, significantly amplifying the Messianic enthusiasm among Zionist rabbis, who were eager to associate these events with prophecies. The Bolshevik Revolution, the weakening of the Ottoman Empire, the Balfour Declaration, World War I, the massive destruction caused by the war, the use of advanced technology such as ships, tanks, and planes during this conflict, and Palestine coming under British control were all interpreted as Messianic signs.⁸⁷ It would not be inaccurate to say that Kabbalist Rabbi Kook played a leading role in interpreting these events within the framework of prophecy and shaping public perception.⁸⁸ In Kook's thought, Zionism is inherently a part of God's plan for redemption, having descended from the higher realm to the material realm (*malchut*) as a prophecy.⁸⁹ Drawing from the metaphors of darkness and light, Kook argued that in the end days, a silent movement filled with contradictions, darkness, and light would emerge, striving to bring Israel to the brink of redemption.⁹⁰ This assertion refers specifically to Zionism. In parallel, Kook claimed that Zionism itself was the realization of a prophecy, having already manifested the second great sign in 1882. The waves of *aliyah* that began in 1882 were seen as a powerful indication of the imminent coming of the Messiah and the "visible lights of the end."⁹¹ The third great sign, according to Kook, was World War I, which he described as the "Gog and Magog" war and asserted that it had erupted for the Jews' redemption. He expressed that World War I, having "wonderful and magnificent hope," was a war deliberately initiated by God, presenting a great opportunity for the Jews and necessitating the breaking of the devil's power through bloodshed and loss of life.⁹² Viewed through this lens, it could be said that Kook wanted the war to be exceedingly destructive and bloody. During this opportunity, he urged the Jews to act wisely, achieve tangible successes, gain courage, and most importantly, recognize the signs that God had sent them.⁹³

⁸⁵ Shapira, *Land and Power*, 33.

⁸⁶ Yosef Salmon, "Zionism and Anti-Zionism in Traditional Judaism in Eastern Europe", *Zionism and Religion*, ed. Shmuel Almog, et al. (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1998), 26.

⁸⁷ Schwartz, *Religious Zionism History and Ideology*, 35-79.

⁸⁸ Kook, *Orot*, 150-151.

⁸⁹ Schwartz, *Religious Zionism History and Ideology*, 29-32.

⁹⁰ Kook, *Orot*, 163-164.

⁹¹ Kook, *Orot*, 121.

⁹² Kook, *Orot*, 121.

⁹³ Kook, *Orot*, 2, 121.

Indeed, Kook believed that God intended to demonstrate to the world the uniqueness of the Jewish people through this war.⁹⁴ He stated that while Christians and Muslims walked in darkness, the Jews were being drawn towards the light of the Messiah by fulfilling the Torah. Kook further claimed that the son of Joseph Messiah had already come, completing his mission by bringing the Jews back to Jerusalem.⁹⁵ He associated this figure with Theodor Herzl.⁹⁶ Kook posited that the state intended to be established at the end of the war would represent the Messianic Kingdom of Israel, followed closely by the arrival of the son of David Messiah. He believed that the Jews needed to make significant political and military moves to thrive because only by doing so could they prove they were the Messiah generation and achieve "tikkun olam," allowing them to return to history and ultimately bring forth the son of David Messiah, a crucial element of their historical narrative.

Rabbi Kook, his analyses heavily rooted in Kabbalah, have been characterized as the starting point of Messianic Zionism, which is viewed as radical and revolutionary.⁹⁷ Following Kook, nearly every representative of Religious Zionism has adopted or been inspired by Kookist theology, interpreting contemporary developments through a prophetic lens within the context of the end times. Many have even strived to accelerate the coming of the end. Given Kook's predictions and desires, it is reasonable to say that war and bloodshed were incorporated into the effort to hasten this process. Even though the son of David Messiah did not appear after World War I, Messianic Zionism continued to interpret new developments as signs of the Messiah's arrival and as prophecies.⁹⁸ Significant events that were viewed as major signs following the First World War include the Holocaust, World War II, the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and the occupation of Jerusalem by Israel in 1967.

Messianic Zionists have regarded 1945 as the year in which they hit rock bottom, drawing upon the Kabbalistic teachings of descent and ascent. For these rabbis, the Holocaust is interpreted as a profound sign, marking not only their lowest point but also the beginning of a process of atonement that allows them to rise again. Within this framework, the Holocaust is seen as the first stage of ultimate redemption and an indication that the coming of the Messiah is imminent.⁹⁹ In parallel, devout and mystical Zionists view World War II as a similarly hopeful event—indeed, a necessary one—arguing from a mystical perspective that such bloodshed was essential for the Jewish people to hit rock bottom before they could ascend. While some Zionist rabbis do not believe there is a direct relationship between the Holocaust and ultimate redemption, many key figures within Religious Zionism interpret this event as a prophecy, leading to a general impression among some religious Zionists that the Holocaust is intrinsically linked to their fate. It is certain that those with this impression are the religious Zionists in Palestine, and that the Jews who perished in the death camps did not share the same thoughts as them.

The most radical interpretations regarding the Holocaust come from Y. Kook. According to him, the Jews who did not return to Palestine through the door opened by

⁹⁴ Schwartz, *Religious Zionism History and Ideology*, 35.

⁹⁵ Kook, *Orot*, 141-142.

⁹⁶ Novak, *Zionism and Judaism: A New Theory*, 236.

⁹⁷ Rabkin, "Religious Roots of a Political Ideology", 86.

⁹⁸ Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, 85.

⁹⁹ Schwartz, *Religious Zionism History and Ideology*, 77.

Zionism made a mistake. They paid the price for this mistake in gas chambers and camps. Because they did not return, God's plan was fulfilled, and the Jews died. God wants to return all Jews to Jerusalem, and the Holocaust is a sign sent by God to uproot the exile and is one of the most important stages of ultimate redemption.¹⁰⁰ Kook answers the question of why God signaled to the Jews not with a positive event but with a catastrophe by stating that God's reasoning cannot be understood by humans.¹⁰¹ However, as he understands it, this destruction and death were necessary so that the Jews (referring to the Jews who migrated to Palestine) could regain their ancient character. According to Kook, the Holocaust reminded the Jews of their need to fight and helped them discover their heroism and physical and national characteristics.¹⁰² Analyzing Kook's interpretations reveals that he viewed the Jews who died in the camps as sacrifices for the Jews living in Palestine and believed that Jewish blood was part of the atonement.

Messianic Zionists, who regard the Holocaust and the world wars as part of ultimate redemption, consider the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 as evidence of how right they were in their beliefs. According to them, the war and the death of 6 million Jews were divine operations that completed the atonement and enabled the establishment of the State of Israel.¹⁰³ Consequently, in 1948, religious Zionists experienced great excitement with the belief and hope that the Messiah's arrival was very near. It should be noted that this excitement was somewhat greater than before. Religious Zionists, who analyzed Zionism and the State of Israel as a sacred means, believed that the promises and prophecies were now truly coming to fruition.¹⁰⁴ In the mindset of religious Zionists, a Jewish state is necessary for the Gog and Magog war to occur, meaning Gog must ally with other kings to attack the Jews. As is known, just one day after the establishment of the State of Israel, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon declared war on Israel. This concrete war was considered the first of the three major signs of the Messiah's arrival in the prophetic realm, namely the Gog and Magog war. The second major sign, the Messiah son of Joseph, has long been associated with Zionism, but after 1948, it became identified with the State of Israel. Messianic Zionists, drawing calculations and inferences from Kabbalah, claimed that the Messiah son of Joseph is militaristic and, therefore, that the State of Israel must act aggressively. From another perspective, if the Messiah son of Joseph (i.e., Israel) does not act aggressively, then the Messiah son of David cannot come.

The state has been established, and "kings" have attacked Israel, yet the Messiah still has not come. While religious Zionists experience great disappointment, Messianic Zionist religious leaders attribute the reason for the Messiah's absence to the secularism of society, the secular side of Zionism, as well as the failure to completely conquer all of Palestine, including Jerusalem. These rabbis claim that the Messiah's arrival has been delayed due to the Jewish community's continuous steps forward and backward, attributing it to their own shortcomings and sins. This perspective has further radicalized religious Zionists. For the Messiah to come, all Jews must migrate to Palestine, Jerusalem must be captured, and the territorial integrity of the Promised Land must be ensured, especially by cleansing Jerusalem

¹⁰⁰ Inbari, *Messianic Religious Zionism*, 24.

¹⁰¹ Inbari, *Messianic Religious Zionism*, 29.

¹⁰² Schwartz, *Religious Zionism History and Ideology*, 78.

¹⁰³ Inbari, *Messianic Religious Zionism*, 25.

¹⁰⁴ Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism*, 138

of Muslims and Christians, rebuilding the temple, and making the Jewish community more religious.¹⁰⁵ It is important to emphasize that among the different interpretations regarding the borders of the Promised Land, Messianic Zionists accept the largest map, which extends to the Central Anatolia region of Turkey.¹⁰⁶

By 1967, a significant development occurred that greatly excited Messianic Zionists. As a result of the Six-Day War, the State of Israel occupied Jerusalem and expanded its territory from the south to the north and east. Thus, Messianic Zionists were somewhat satisfied once again.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the expansion of Israel's territory through wars has always been an inspiring indicator for Messianic Zionists and a sign of self-validation.¹⁰⁸ For figures like Y. Kook, Israel fought against demonic forces in the 1967 war and its victory proved that the Messiah's arrival was approaching. In their view, as Jerusalem was freed from impurity and filth, the Jews crossed a threshold where they would declare their absolute sovereignty. However, even after Jerusalem was occupied, the Messiah son of David still did not arrive. This is because not all Jews migrated to Palestine, society did not become more religious, the temple was not built, and those in the Knesset continued to be as filthy as pigs.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, Muslims and Christians were not expelled from Jerusalem.

As a result, the Messianic Zionist perspective on time is very "apocalyptic," aimed at accelerating the end, reading signs, Kabbalistic, militaristic, and bloodthirsty. According to their belief, the emergence of wars, the expansion of Israel's territory, the shedding of blood in this process, and the killing of today's Amalekites and Hamans are essential. More specifically, today's Palestinians are seen as Amalek, and Iranians as Haman, therefore they must be killed. Thus, contrary to Jewish tradition, for Messianic Zionists, the commands to kill given to Moses and Joshua are not relegated to the past; they are current commands. In their view, the killing of Muslims does not fall into the category of murder.¹¹⁰ This form of radicalism, which began with Rabbi Kook's production of Messianic Zionism, poses a significant threat, especially to Muslims and Christians living in the entirety of the promised land, thus in the Middle East. The destructive effects of this radicalism have been experienced greatly, especially after 1948 and particularly after 1967. It is also known that Kookist theology and similar forms of radicalism have been embraced by a greater number of religious Zionists since 1973, thus increasing the population and influence of Messianic Zionism.¹¹¹ This also means that the number of those who view the State of Israel as a Messianic state has significantly increased. Furthermore, Messianic Zionists are pressuring their state to carry out more occupations, commit more murders, and initiate wars. Finally, according to this form of radicalism, anti-Zionist Jews are also in an unforgivable sin because they have waged war against the Messianic state by collaborating with the satanic side.

¹⁰⁵ Inbari, *Messianic Religious Zionism*, 21-22, 32.

¹⁰⁶ Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism*, 159-162.

¹⁰⁷ Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism*, 138.

¹⁰⁸ Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism*, 136.

¹⁰⁹ Inbari, *Messianic Religious Zionism*, 32.

¹¹⁰ Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism*, 158-159.

¹¹¹ Inbari, *Messianic Religious Zionism*, 30.

Conclusion

The perception of time as limited and linear in Jewish theology is closely tied to the belief in the Messiah. This belief suggests a situation from which Jews seek redemption, with both concrete and abstract aspects. The concrete aspect includes the end of exile, return to Jerusalem, and earthly salvation. The abstract aspect involves God's "turning away" and "silence" from the Jews, which forms the religious foundation of redemption. The Messiah's coming will prove God's renewed communication with the Jews. The Messiah's arrival, linked with the end times, has shaped the Jewish understanding of time, history, and the calendar. The Hebrew calendar, constructed with the understanding of limited and linear time in Jewish theology, sheds light on both the past and the future. The Kingdom of David is seen as the golden age, serving as a memory of the past, while the belief in the Messiah offers hope for the future. So, the doctrine of the Messiah is a realm where memory and hope converge, which is a primary reason for directing the Jews toward the timeline and history. According to religious scholars, this golden age will repeat. The reason for this interpretation lies in the fact that Jews, tracing their beginnings to Abraham, also incorporate the time before him into the Hebrew calendar, thereby claiming a period that the Jews did not inhabit. This attitude is, in fact, a product of the belief that even when they did not exist, the center of the world was constituted by the Jews. Similarly, it can be said that rabbis see time, the world, and even God as under their monopoly, just as the narrative of creation in the Torah begins.

The last 2000-year period of the Hebrew calendar is known as the Messianic Age, the time frame in which the Jews awaited redemption. This period is marked by the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE (3829 in the Hebrew calendar) or, according to another view, the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem in 3894. Jews have lived in what they refer to as the end times, believing that as the years pass, the Messiah's arrival nears. By the 1950s, during a challenging period of diaspora, the first seeds of Zionism began to emerge, promising salvation by sharing in the Messiah's role. Zionism sought to end the exile, return Jews to Jerusalem, establish a sovereign state, and re-enter history with power. Religious Zionist rabbis interpreted this as a religious revival, while secular Zionism addressed both political and theological aspects. Zionism gained support from both religious and secular Jews, with secular Zionism focusing on earthly salvation and religious Zionism on spiritual salvation. Secular Zionists embraced an infinite, linear view of time, focusing on worldly power, while religious Zionists, with a limited view of time, believed in resurrection and a kingdom ruled by the Messiah. Despite their differing perceptions of time, both secular and religious Zionists share ambitions for domination and influence, much like the Sadducees and Pharisees of the Second Temple period, who were deeply attached to worldly ambitions and lacked a belief in the afterlife.

The common ground between Zionist rabbis and secular Zionists is the construction of a bright future for the Jews. Zionism believes that achieving this future requires gaining power in many areas, from politics to economics, and if necessary, warfare. Religious Zionism, especially Messianic Zionism, shares this belief. The key term is "war," where the Messiah, end times, prophecies, and signs are all connected. Although most secular Zionists may not believe in the Messiah, they have utilized this doctrine, claiming the Messiah can be represented by a tank or bomb, asserting that Zionism is the light of the Messiah. In contrast, religious Zionism views everything through the lens of the Messiah, time, and prophecy,

doing everything to hasten the end times. Their interpretations of past signs and actions reveal their expectations for the future.

When the first pioneers of Zionism emerged in 1825, religious Zionist leaders believed a 400-year golden age with the Messiah, with 415 years left until the apocalypse. They posited that when the Jews returned to Jerusalem and established a state, three major signs heralding the arrival of the Messiah would occur. Moreover, it was believed that Gog could not attack the Jews before this state was formed. The emergence of Herzl in the 1890s was interpreted as the arrival of the Messiah, the son of Joseph. As Zionism achieved its goals, rabbis interpreted events like the World Wars and the Holocaust as signs of the Messiah's coming. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, coinciding with the Hebrew calendar year 5708, brought ecstatic joy to Kabbalism. This date, also the year of Abraham's birth, served as a pivotal reference point in their calculations, indicating 312 years until the apocalypse.

This remaining time suggests that the period with the Messiah is not 400 years, but a 60-70 year timeframe, with an additional 75-year wait based on Abraham's journey to Canaan at 75. This implies the world's lifespan is 5850 years, not 6000, leaving 142 years until the apocalypse from 1948. Following 1948, several significant events occurred: In 1956, Sara was born, and a war broke out between the State of Israel and Egypt. In 1973, Sara married Abraham, coinciding with the Yom Kippur War. In 1991/92, the Tower of Babel was built, coinciding with the First Gulf War. In 2000, Abraham destroyed idols and was thrown into the fire, corresponding to the beginning of Second Intifada. In 2003, Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeans, coinciding with the Second Gulf War. In 2020, Abraham received the first revelation, and the Abraham Accords were established. In 2023, Abraham left Haran for Canaan, and on October 7, 2023, genocide began in Gaza. The violence in Gaza is significant because it symbolizes Hagar in mystical terms, with radical Zionists believing they must "cast out the handmaiden." These radicals selectively use mystical calculations and sometimes alter the Torah's chronology to fit their agenda.

All these calculations, mystical deductions, and the urgency of Messianic Zionists to hasten the end are within the same framework. Messianic Zionists do not desire the true apocalypse but a golden age in this world. In pursuing this, they are attempting to create an artificial apocalypse for others in the Middle East, as the arrival of the Messiah necessitates war and destruction. Therefore, their goal is not the apocalypse itself, but the construction of a bright future for themselves, while for others, it signifies death, and destruction. This entire belief system illustrates how Zionism, while trying to establish a bright future for the Jews, disregards and violates the past, present, and future of others, even dimming their light. Finally, considering that immigration, statehood, sovereignty, and return to history have already occurred through Zionism, it becomes apparent that even if the Messiah were to come, there would be little left for him to do.

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