

Shi'loh a name for the Messiah

In the Bible, rabbis and other Jewish thinkers have interpreted "Shiloh" as a name for the Messiah, a symbol of peace, or a reference to a biblical town.

Shiloh as a name for the Messiah-In traditional Jewish thought, "Shiloh" is a name for the Messiah. The name is derived from a word meaning "to be at rest, without care".

In Genesis 49:10, "Shiloh" is associated with the word sheh-LOH, which means "his". his suggests that the Jewish leadership belongs to the Messiah.

Shiloh as a symbol of peace

The name "Shiloh" may be translated as "Tranquility Town".

The letters of "Shiloh" also evoke the words sheel-YAH, which means "placenta" (birth of a new era), and shah-VAH, which means "serenity".

Shiloh as a reference to a biblical town

The Ark of the Covenant was carried into war against the Philistines from the temple at Shiloh. The town of Shiloh's main synagogue was designed to replicate the original Mishkan from the Bible.

The Rabbis (BT Sanhedrin 98b) suggest that Shiloh may be a name – but a proper name, that borne by the Messiah. Saadia Gaon (882-942, Baghdad) suggests that Shiloh is a poetic form of shelo – i.e. “that which is his”, alluding to monarchic rule.

“Until Shiloh comes”: this alludes to the King Messiah” – Midrash Genesis Rabbah 98.8, ibid 99.9

“The Messiah’s name is Shiloh” – Midrash Lamentations Rabbah I.16.51

The Targums [Ancient Aramaic translations and paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible] are almost unanimous in giving “Shiloh” a Messianic interpretation for they rendered Genesis 49:10:

Until the Messiah comes whose is the Kingdom” – Targum Onkelos

“Until the time King Messiah shall come, whose is the kingdom” – Targum Jerusalem

“Until the time King Messiah shall come whose is the kingship” – Targum Neofiti I

“Until King Messiah shall come, the youngest of his sons” – Targum Ps. Jonathan or Jerusalem I

The world was created for the sake of the Messiah. What is this Messiah’s name? The school of Rabbi Shila said: His name is Shiloh, for it is written: until Shiloh comes. (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b, Rabbi Johanan)

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