

# 14 Biblical Puzzles for Jewish Readers

1. Why do the heavens and the earth have **generations**? (Genesis 2:4) How do the “generations” (*toledot*) delineate God’s promise of a chosen “Seed” (*zera*), Mashiach? (Ruth 4:18- 2 Samuel 7:12-16).

2. Who are the **sons of God**? (Genesis 6:2). How can any created being share the glory of God as a “son” of God?

- Who is God addressing when He says: “I said, “You are **gods**, sons of the Most High, all of you.”? (Psalm 82:6).

3. What does God mean when He promises to **raise up David’s Seed** long after David is dead? (2 Samuel 7:12) What precedents define the legality of this redemptive act?

- Yibbum (duty): Judah *raises up Seed* (Genesis 38:8)
- Geullah (redemptive privilege): Boaz *raises up Seed* (Ruth 4:10, 14)

4. How can Mashiach be raised up from David's line of kings after **Jeconiah's** entire line was **cursed**? (Jeremiah 22:30, 23:5-6).

5. What **died** when Adam and Eve ate the **fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil**, and why did it result in fear and shame in God's presence? (Genesis 3: )

- Why does even the **Torah not reverse this** "dead" and fallen condition of fear and shame? (Exodus 20:18-19)
- If the Israelites were **powerless to worship** and even have **faith** under Pharaoh's threat of death due to their "broken spirit" and "harsh slavery" (Exodus 6:9), what power do they have to reverse the Serpent's dominion ("head") (Genesis 3:15) and his rule of spiritual "darkness" and "death" over the earth? (Isaiah 9:2).
- Why is only **Mashiach the source of light** in a land of "darkness" and the "shadow of death"? (Isaiah 9: )

6. As the One God, why does God act as a **plural unity** rather than a **singularity** or a pantheon?

- As God who **anoints** and God who is **anointed as Mashiach** (Psalm 45:6-7)
- As God who **commands** and God who **obeys** the command to make the *expanse* (Genesis 1:6-7)

- As God who **exists** as a plurality (Elohim) but **acts** in perfect oneness (bara) (Genesis 1:1).
- As God who **confers** with God and who shares an “image” and “likeness” as “us” (Genesis 1:26; 3:) and who says that man has become like “one of us”—in what sense is the Lord God an “us”—who are the members of this “us”?
- But, this plural unity of God is **not a pantheon** of individualistic gods, as Israel had first imagined Elohim to be, calling for “Elohim asher yeleku” (Exodus 32:1).

7. Why does God promise Israel a “**Redeemer**” (Isaiah 59:20) if Israel has no need of a Mashiach to save them from their sins—that is, why must Israel rely on God and His Redeemer and not Self-redemption by keeping the mitzvot? In his 70 weeks of prophecy, why does the Lord God promise that only the Mashiach, the “**anointed one**” who is “**cut off**” and “have nothing” in order to accomplish redemption for Israel (Daniel 9:24, 26):

- To “**finish transgression**” (24)
- To “put an **end to sin**”
- To “**atone for iniquity**”
- To “bring an **everlasting righteousness**”
- So that only in **Mashiach, the “Righteous Branch”** whom the Lord God “raises up” for David (Jeremiah

23:5) will Israel be made righteous, for he is “Yahweh Tzedekenu,” “The Lord is our Righteousness.”

7. How can the **One God** (Deuteronomy 6:4) be an isolated and indivisible **singularity** when Man and Woman are called to be “**basar echad**” (Genesis 2: ), a unity of two beings rather than an obliterative singularity?

8. How can the **Most High God** call another a “**son,**” implying that He shares His nature with that which is by nature not-God?

- That God would share His “**image**” and “**likeness**” with man (Genesis 1:26);
- The **line of Adam** who “saw that the daughters of man were attractive” (Genesis 6:2).
- The **Mashiach** (Psalm 2:2), whom the kings of earth oppose along with the “Lord,” for God says of him: “You are **my Son**, today I have **begotten you.**” (Psalm 2:7).
- The “**sons of the Most High**” who are also called “Elohim” (Psalm 82:6).

9. How can mere humans, “**man**” and “**the son of man,**” be lifted up to take positions of glory in the heavenly realm with God?

- That the **Son of David** (2 Samuel 7:12) would be called the “son” of God Himself (2 Samuel 7:14);

- That **Mashiach, the Son of David**, would be “begotten” of God to be called the “Son” of God? (Psalm 2:7);
- That humanity’s Heir, “**the son of man**” (Psalm 8:4) would be honored with God’s “glory and honor” and given “dominion” over all God’s works so that “all things” are put under his feet (Psalm 8:6).
- That a “**son of man**” would come before the Lord, the “Ancient of Days” accompanied by the “clouds” of heaven’s hosts (Daniel 9:13-14) to be given a “kingdom” and “everlasting dominion” (14), the same Kingdom promised to Mashiach, the “Seed” of David (2 Samuel 7:16).

10. How can a mere human, **the Mashiach**, the Son of David, be given the honor and power of God as **the “Lord”** and the **“Lord of hosts”**?

- The “**Lord of Hosts**” (Zechariah 2:8, 11) sends Mashiach as “the Lord of Hosts” to be a protective “**wall of fire**” and heavenly “**glory**” around Jerusalem (5) to reclaim God’s “glory” among the “nations” (8) and to “dwell” in the midst of Jerusalem (11).
- God appoints and raises up Mashiach as the King to be “served” by the people of Israel as “**The Lord their God and David their king**” (Jeremiah 30:9).
- Mashiach, born as the “son” and “child” given to Israel (Isaiah 9:6) is given the **name of God**:

“Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace” (6).

- Mashiach, who comes to Jerusalem as the “**King of Glory**,” is also called “the **Lord of Hosts**” (Psalm 24:10).

11. How can the Mashiach promised to David be **both the Son of David**, his heir (2 Samuel 7:12) **and also the Son of God**, his heir (2 Samuel 7:14) to inherit an everlasting house, throne, and Kingdom? (2 Samuel 7:12-16).

12. How does the promised **Davidic Mashiach** fulfill the mission and profile of the Redeemer if he is “Seed” raised up as was Perez and Obed before Him? Specifically, the **redemptive mission**:

- To “**Raise up**” and adopt the “**name**” of his fathers? (Ruth 4:10)
- To “**build**” the “**house**” for his fathers? (11; 2 Samuel 7:11;13);
- To be a “**restorer of life**” (14-15; 2 Samuel 7:14).

13, How can **Mashiach and his mission** belong exclusively **to Israel** (2 Samuel 7:12-16)

- if he is promised as a blessing to all nations as **Abraham’s “Seed**” (Genesis 22:18),

- if he secures peace for all people as **Noah's "Seed"** (Genesis 9:9-11),
- and if he is to free all of Adam's generations as **the woman's "Seed"** (Genesis 3:15)?

14. Why **is Mashiach "disciplined"** or injured—**"pierced"** in his service to the Lord?

- Mashiach, **the son of David**, is **"disciplined" for "iniquity"** even though he is God's "son" (2 Samuel 7:14);
- Called **"Israel,"** Mashiach is **God's "servant"** to bring back "Jacob" and **gather "Israel"** (Isaiah 49:5) by "wisely" carrying the "sorrows" of his people to be **"pierced for"** their "transgressions" (Isaiah 53:4-5) by giving himself as a "guilt offering" to "bear their iniquities" (11). Though he is "slaughtered" like a "lamb" (7) **and** "cut off" from the living (8) to be buried in a "grave" (9), the Lord's servant shall be revived to "see his offspring" (10).
- Having been **"pierced"** by the Gentiles (Psalm 22:16) and laid in the "dust of death" (15), the Lord's servant raises up many "brothers" with whom he praises the **Lord's** name in the "congregation" (22).
- Finally, the "house of David" and "Jerusalem" will realize that they are the ones who have **"pierced"** their own Savior, and they will recognize and mourn for him as their lost "Firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10).

(Note: As the Jewish commentators noted, this “pierced one is the Mashiach.” It makes no sense to say that it is the “evil inclination” (for, why mourn?) or the slain of Israel (for, why would the House of Judah slaughter its own people?). Again, close reading shows that it is the “House of David” which has “pierced” this Saving One.)