

RESOURCE 7.2

What might teachings about the Messiah mean to Jewish people?

Rabbi Joseph Meszler is the spiritual leader of Temple Sinai in Sharon, Massachusetts. In addition to being a congregational rabbi, he is an author, activist, and educator. His social justice work has led him to many interfaith partnerships.

Below is an extract from a blog he wrote on the Reform Judaism website, 'Do Reform Jews believe in the Messiah?': reformjudaism.org/learning/answers-jewish-questions/do-reform-jews-believe-messiah

What does Rabbi Meszler say about the idea of Messiah here?

How does Rabbi Meszler link the messianic age and *tikkun olam*?

How does Rabbi Meszler say Jews can bring Torah into the world?

How might Reform Jews pursue *Tzedek*?

Reform Judaism teaches that, in partnership with God, it is up to us to make the world into a place of peace and justice, and that we cannot wait nor do we expect a personal Messiah. We bring Torah into the world when we strive to fulfill the highest ethical mandates in our relationships with others and with all of God's creation.

Partners with God in *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), we are called to help bring nearer the messianic age. We are obligated to pursue *tzedek* (justice and righteousness), and to narrow the gap between the affluent and the poor, to act against discrimination and oppression, to pursue peace, to welcome the stranger, to protect the earth's biodiversity and natural resources, and to redeem those in physical, economic and spiritual bondage.

Rabbi Meszler comments that Jews should for a personal Messiah.

For him, belief in Messiah means

Key words

Messiah	In Hebrew, the <i>Moshiach</i> , a figure who many Jews believe will restore Israel to new-found glory. The word ' <i>Moshiach</i> ' means 'anointed one', and it refers to someone who is descended from King David who was anointed with oil as king.
Messianic age	Many Reform Jews speak about a time of peace which humans and God will bring about, rather than a literal Messiah.
Tikkun olam	Repairing the world. A Jewish belief that humans can help in making the world better.
Tzedek	The Jewish value of justice.