

304204 - What Does Messiah Mean?

the question

What is the meaning of the name al-Masih (the Messiah)? Is it of any significance in Islam?
What is the context in which this word is used to refer to 'Isa (Jesus)?

Summary of answer

Messiah is a title of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). He was given this title because Allah purified him of sins or he was anointed with blessings or because when he touched the sick with his hands, they were healed.

Detailed answer

Al-Masih (the [Messiah](#)) is a title of 'Isa, Jesus (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). According to the scholars, he was given this title for several reasons, including the following:

- Because Allah cleansed (*masaha*) him, i.e., He purified him of sins.
- Because he was anointed (*musiha*) with blessings.
- It was said that it is because when he wiped or touched (*masaha*) the sick with his hands, they were healed. (See *Tafsir at-Tabari* (5/409); *al-Hidayah* by Makki (3/1013))

Ibn 'Atiyyah (1/436) said: The scholars differed concerning the derivation of the word [al-Masih](#) .

Some said that it comes from the verb *saha/yasihu*, which means to travel about in the land.

But the majority of scholars say that it comes from the verb *masaha* (wipe; clean; anoint).

They differed concerning the way in which it is derived from the word *masaha*.

Some of the scholars said that he is so called because he walked everywhere in the land and it is as if he wiped it.

Others said that he is so called because he never touched any sick person with his hand but he was healed. According to these two views, the word **Masih** is an active participle.

Ibn Jubayr said: He is so called because he was anointed (*musiha*) with blessing.

Others said: He is so called because he was anointed (*musiha*) with holy oil. According to these two views, the word **Masih** is a passive participle.

Similar to this is the view of those who said that Allah cleansed (*masaha*) him, i.e., He purified him of sins.

Ibrahim an-Nakha'i said: al-masih is as-siddeeq (one who is strong and true in faith).

Ibn Jubayr said, narrating from Ibn 'Abbas: al-Masih is one who has power. He is so called because he was given the power to revive the dead and other signs and miracles. But this is a weak view that is not soundly narrated from Ibn 'Abbas. End quote.

For further information on Allah's Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), please see these answers: [10277](#) and [247475](#) .

And Allah knows best.