

## **Biblical narratives, messianic hopes and religious radicalism: Jewish fundamentalism in our time**

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The paper examines the contemporary scene of Jewish fundamentalism, focusing on its two major wings: the separatist Ultra-Orthodox, and the more culturally accommodating but politically radical Zionist Orthodox Settlers and would-be Temple Builders. Both those segments of Judaism have been demographically and institutionally on the rise in the last generation and have made their impact on the political scene, changing the character and image of Judaism as a whole. The essay comes to offer an historical and sociological context to the formation, development and growth in numbers and importance of the two camps. It points to the diversity within the two camps and relates to major institutions, leaders and theological concepts. It also examines the meaning of the term fundamentalism in late modern Judaism and points to the fact that while there are obvious differences between the Ultra and the Zionist Orthodox, there are also striking similarities. These demonstrate themselves, among other features, in the centrality of scriptural narratives to the two groups, including the idea of holding a special place in God's plans for humanity, and the idea of the imminent or eventual arrival of the messianic times.