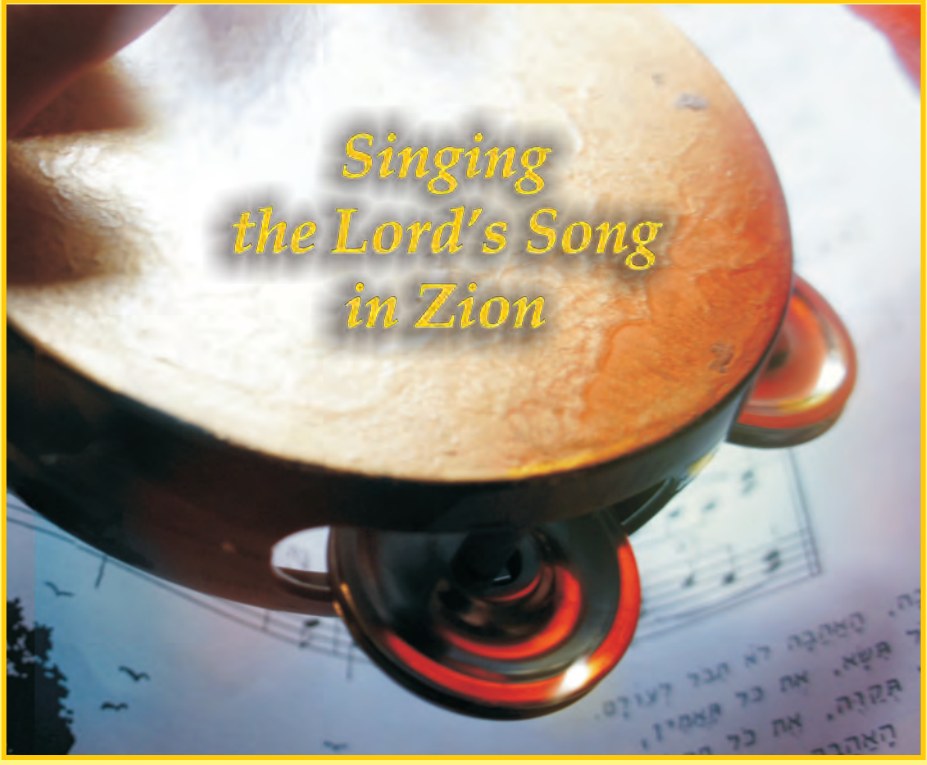
MISHKAN

A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People | *Issue 68/ 2011*



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A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People

Issue 68 / 2011

Editor: Jim R. Sibley

Pasche Institute of Jewish Studies · A Ministry of Criswell College

***Mishkan* issue 68, 2011**
Published by Pasche Institute of Jewish Studies,
a ministry of Criswell College, in cooperation with
Caspari Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies,
CJF Ministries, and Finnish Lutheran Mission

Graphic design: Diana Cooper
Cover design: Heidi Tohmola
Printed by Evangel Press, Nappanee, Indiana, USA
ISSN 0792-0474

Subscription Rates
One-year print $40; one-year print Israel resident $36;
one-year digital $25; one-year combo (print and digital) $50

Subscriptions and back issues: Criswell College
4010 Gaston Avenue, Dallas, TX 75246 USA
www.mishkanstore.org
mishkan@pascheinstitute.org

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Mishkan is a quarterly journal dedicated to biblical and theological thinking on issues related to Jewish Evangelism, Hebrew-Christian/Messianic-Jewish identity, and Jewish-Christian relations.

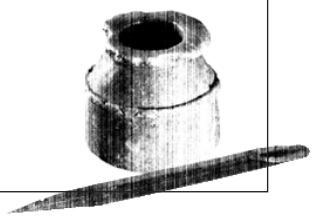
Mishkan is published by the Pasche Institute of Jewish Studies.

Mishkan's editorial policy is openly evangelical, committed to the New Testament proclamation that the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus (Yeshua) the Messiah is "to the Jew first."

Mishkan is a forum for discussion, and articles included do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors, Pasche Institute of Jewish Studies, or Criswell College.

Mishkan is the Hebrew word for *tabernacle* or *dwelling place* (John 1:14).

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR



Singing the Lord's Songs in Zion

By **Jim R. Sibley**

In Psalm 137, the psalmist recounts a bitter experience of captivity in Babylon. Seeing an Israelite with a harp, the captors call out, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." But the exile replies, "How can we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land?" Now, more than 2,500 years later, Israel is planted in the land, Messiah has come, and the full restoration of Israel, though future, is guaranteed by the unequivocal promises of God. Furthermore, the existence of a remnant of Jewish believers in Yeshua is the tangible evidence and pledge of God's faithfulness to His Word. Now Jewish believers can, and should, express themselves in music and the arts, praising the Lord and expressing their new life in Messiah.

Mishkan readers should be profoundly grateful for the efforts of Ann Hilsden as managing editor of this issue. Mrs. Hilsden has been, and continues to be, a very gracious and gifted leader in the renaissance of Messianic music and art in Israel. Nothing could be more appropriate than for her to begin this issue with a historical overview of this revival.

I know of no one who has given more serious attention to the apologetic significance of the arts than my colleague at Criswell College, Dr. Joe Wooddell. As both a musician and a scholar, he makes it clear that aesthetics are not just for our enjoyment, but for our employment. Avner Boskey has long been involved in music and the arts, both in the Diaspora and in Israel, and he challenges us to wrestle with the question of "the cultural integrity and sociological relevance" of modern Israeli Messianic music. This also has ramifications for music and the arts throughout the Diaspora. Joshua Waggener, who is completing doctoral work at the University of Durham (UK) related to the topic of his article—namely, "Music in the Bible"—provides the biblical perspective that is so essential in this

discussion. David Loden is well known and greatly loved as a pioneer and leader in producing phenomenal music and musical productions in Israel, while Irit Iffert represents the rising generation with fresh ideas and vision. Together, they help us understand how believers in Israel are expressing their faith through the arts—"singing the Lord's songs in Zion."

In addition, David Mishkin writes a fascinating article about "The Resurrection of Jesus in Contemporary Jewish Scholarship," followed by an interesting article about David Baron, by Igal Germann. Of course, there are judicious and helpful book reviews by Lyn Bond and Rich Robinson, our very gifted book review editor. Knut Høyland rounds out the issue with an update on the news in Israel. All in all, this issue of *Mishkan* should provide us with yet one more reason to "sing the Lord's song."

Mishkan, no. 68 (2011): 5–10

Shir Chadash

– The Rebirth of Hebrew Worship in the Land of Israel

by **Ann Hilsden**

With a steady pen in hand, a man, dressed in religious Jewish garb, sat in an inner room in Jerusalem, hunched like a scribe over his desk, poring over detail after detail of music scores—hymns and anthems, ancient and contemporary—translated into Hebrew. Every bar he checked for ties, dots, notations, and counts. Driven by a love for songs of the saints and a desire for more Hebrew songs of worship, Moshe Imanuel Ben-Meir (called, for short, "Ma'abam") compiled several years of work and championed the first Hebrew hymnal of the twentieth century. Describing a Hebrew meeting in the 1920s at Jerusalem's Christ Church on Motzei Shabbat, he remarked, "There was no singing, for lack of Hebrew Hymns."[1]

Ben-Meir was not only a scholar and lover of music, but born in Jerusalem in 1905, he was one of the earliest pioneers of the Messianic movement in Israel. His efforts to assemble a few Hebrew-speaking believers into one congregation date back as far as 1925. It is somewhat ironic that Ben-Meir would gravitate to hymns of the "church," while at the same time grappling with issues of Jewish identity for the small communities of local believers. Either this was an intentional tie to the church, which was viewing a Messianic Jewish expression with suspicion and disapproval, or there were few alternatives. Having been educated at Moody Bible Institute, he would have learned many hymns in that context.

Two hundred and twelve songs filled *Ha'Sefer ha'Kachol*, or "Blue Book," as it has been fondly referred to over the years. Officially it was *Shir Chadash* ("New Song"), and probably no more than a few hundred copies were ever printed. Ben-Meir preferred to use the Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament rather than the Modern Hebrew version. Besides the many hymns and anthems that he himself had translated, there were also many that he composed. In addition, some of the songs included in the hymnal (probably as a courtesy) were composed by local missionaries and expatriates whose

1 Moshe Imanuel Ben-Meir, *From Jerusalem to Jerusalem: Autobiographical Sketches* (Jerusalem: Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry, n.d.), 62.

knowledge of Hebrew was not at an adequate level for creating poetry with excellence, so many of those songs fell from use at an early stage.

I should qualify—fell from use by whom? In the l960s there were four, perhaps five, small congregations in Israel that worshiped and conducted their services in Hebrew. There was the Messianic Assembly in Jerusalem, under the leadership of Victor Smadja, who emigrated from Tunisia at the age of twenty-one. There were the Hayim Haimoff Bar-David congregation in Ramat Gan, the Beit Chesda congregation in Haifa, and perhaps a house group in Be'er Sheva, as well as a small Brethren group in Tel Aviv that used Hebrew. So the blue hymnal, *Shir Chadash*, was a rather monumental project in proportion to the small numbers that would initially use it.

In 1963, the Finnish pioneer Risto Santala approached one of the Bar-David sons, a teenager named Arieh, with a suggestion: "We need some updated music for our youth. Could you take some newer songs, and put them in a format for guitar accompaniment?"

So young Arieh went to work. Using a rubber stamp for each notation, tie, and marking, he painstakingly worked on approximately one hundred songs. The scores read from right to left, and some of the songs stretched out on A4 paper to over a meter in length. Notated were the melody, one voice of harmony, and the chord above each bar. Until then, the hymns were harmonized for piano or organ accompaniment in four parts. Arieh's project, called simply *Shiron Meshichi* ("Messianic Songbook"), was a labor of love for the youth movement that was small but growing in the embryonic body of believers in Israel in the 1960s.

In 1970, leaders in the land, especially Victor Smadja of the Messianic Assembly, decided it was time to produce a new hymnal; he chose 120 of the 212 songs from *Shir Chadash*, using Ben–Meir's translations, and added 120 more current hymns. Again, Arieh Bar-David was approached, along with Amikam Tavor, the main translator. Others joined the committee to produce a new and improved Hebrew hymnal for believers in Israel. Immediately, Arieh began his search for the most beautiful and appropriate hymns that would lend themselves to translation. He considered over two thousand hymns before making his final selection.

The songs, once chosen, would be given to Amikam for lyrical translation. This was a job for a linguist, poet, and musically astute person, and it was a tall order. In the end, Arieh would tweak and correct the lyric, making sure it had the right ring and the right rhythm. Then he would go to work with "Notaset," a very tedious method of rub-down transfer of music notation onto a score.

This was a six-year project for Arieh. Each week he would meet with the committee, ratifying song choices, going over translations, and proofing materials. He would spend hundreds of hours, year after year, working on the songs every spare moment. As a commander of an outpost near the Suez Canal during the Yom Kippur War, Arieh took his precious work with him, and during the evenings enclosed himself in an inner room of a tent to work on the music. The soldiers called it "University of Arieh" and knew not to disturb him during the evening hours. As explosions were heard

near and far, Arieh's prayer was that God would grant protection and none of his work would be lost.

In the end, this hymnal contained four hundred songs and choruses, and this time the selection included Negro spirituals (always popular among Israelis) and some folk music, including traditional Jewish songs. Also included were some original songs by the Catholic Sisters of Mary and some songs composed by others like Peter Van Woerden and M. Chavez. There were songs like number 268, which were completely re-written rather than translated. In this case, instead of translating "How My Heart Goes Out to Jesus," Arieh rather liked the melody but asked Amikam to write four stanzas telling the story of the death and resurrection of Yeshua, resulting in a very picturesque ballad, called "Again, Springtime in Jerusalem."

Hallel v'Zimrat Ya ("Praise and Song of God")—more commonly called "The Brown Book"—finally found its way to print at Victor Smadja's Yanetz Press in Jerusalem. As it was processed and typeset, one young lady, an employee at Yanetz, was impacted by the beauty of both the songs and the message. Batya Shaffner (now Segal) could not resist the compelling message she had read and typeset. She soon became a believer and, as we shall see, a writer of Hebrew worship music.

Many believers from that era remember well the joy of receiving the new hymnal. It was a work of excellence that would endure. In many ways, however, it signaled the close of an era in the body of Messiah. Soon a new paradigm would emerge to supplement the timeless hymns of "The Brown Book."

This same year (1976), an American couple immigrated to Israel, with talents and gifting that would take the Israeli body of believers to the next step in their worship. David and Lisa Loden arrived, took up their abode in Netanya, buried themselves in Hebrew studies, and embraced their newfound family of believers. A prolific songwriter and singer, David had been successful in music and theatre at high levels in the secular industry prior to coming to faith. Once in Israel, Hebrew music began to flow from his pen. A booklet called *Roni Bat Tzion* was published in 1977, featuring that famous song as well as other classics such as "Adon HaKavod," "Hine Yeshua," and "Adonai Machaseinu." During this period, only David, Peter Van Woerden (a nephew of Corrie Ten Boom), and Elisheva Shomron (known for her famous song "Kadosh") were writing original Hebrew worship songs.

A young volunteer at Beit Immanuel in Yafo, whose identity has been forgotten, suggested to David that there be a conference to encourage and teach song-writing in the Hebrew language for believers. As David and his new friend Arieh Bar-David organized the first of many music conferences, they little knew that there would be an important by-product of this initiative.

Prior to these days, the congregations in Israel—by now more than a dozen worshiping in Hebrew—simply had little fellowship with one another. Many had come to the Lord from difficult backgrounds and had become somewhat hard-nosed, dogmatic, and protective of their brand of "truth." But the music conferences bound the people together on a whole

new level, and there was joy in the fellowship. It was like the oil of anointing described in Psalm 133 (NKJV): "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron . . . For there the LORD commanded the blessing—Life forevermore!"

From 1979 through 1983, the music conferences were frequent and fruitful. Many came with little or no musical background, but were given the tools, taught the skills, and were inspired to write and sing their faith. One young man came to one of the earlier conferences with a borrowed guitar and presented a song that he had written. He received a tepid response, perhaps partly due to the lack of tuning of his guitar and his lack of knowledge about songwriting. But he eagerly learned and put into practice his knowledge, and at the next conference he presented "Bit'chu Ba'Adonai," delighting everyone. It is still used today, though it is very simple, both lyrically and musically. The next conference, he arrived with his song "Hine, Ke'einei Avadim." It is simply lovely, and it is a song that is still sung and still moves God's people into fervent worship.

In those early years, Batya Segal composed "Sos Asis," "Hodu L'Adonai," "Kumi Ori," "Hine El Yeshu'ati," and others. Elisheva Shomron wrote "Ahavato G'dolah," "L'Ma'an Tzion," "Hine Eloheinu," "Lev Tahor," and many others. Ruthie Azuz wrote "Bo'u Lefanav," David Stern wrote "Koli El Adonai," and Zippora Bennett gave us "Gol al Adonai" and "Yasisu." I mention only a few, for there were many who contributed delightful songs that were put into use and celebrated by the whole body! These songs and dozens of others came out in three new booklets: *Bo'u Lefanav*, *Kumi Ori*, and *Hallelu-hu*.

One cannot explain this kind of musical renaissance simply in human terms. Surely it was more than imparting musical and lyrical skills and encouraging with words. I see this as a divine "kiss" on a newly regathered body of believers, in their own land, and for their own expression.

One cannot explain this kind of musical renaissance simply in human terms. Surely it was more than imparting musical and lyrical skills and encouraging with words. I see this as a divine "kiss" on a newly regathered body of believers, in their own land, and for their own expression.

Someone asked David Loden, "So are we to throw away 'The Brown Book'?" The obvious answer was, "Certainly not!" For a season some of the younger congregations were using the newer songs exclusively, while the pioneer congregations, most of them conservative, continued to use "The Brown Book," though they, too, marveled at the new songs that God had given.

From here on I write in the first person, for the conference of 1983 impacted me profoundly, and I loved the uniqueness of the Hebrew music. It could not easily be categorized, yet it was melodic and beautiful, truly worshipful. In 1985, I took some singers and musicians from our own congregation into a small Jerusalem studio and recorded the first studio-recorded worship album in Israel, *Sos Asis*. It was somewhat raw, probably

with hints here and there of a foreign accent, but it was delightful and well received. Hearing it today, one pictures a kibbutz choir and a rustic group of musicians—but it was the sound of that day. The next year, along with Barry and Batya Segal, we decided to record another album, this time with the help of good folks from Yad HaShmona—mostly the Bar-David family. So we recorded *Gili Me'od*, upgrading to Hamon studios in Tel Aviv, and captured another dozen or so of the Hebrew songs of praise.

Coming from Christian television in Canada and being on the receiving end of every new Christian music album that came out, I thought I had heard it all. But this new music won my heart, and I wanted to be a part of it.

It was in 1986 that I entered the picture and worked with David Loden and Arieh Bar-David to continue the music conferences, which had lapsed for three years. At a weekend event in Yafo's Beit Immanuel, once again new songs were presented, workshops and seminars were given, and a new book emerged, called *B'libi Tzafanti*. The songs were rich, and once more the worship life of congregations was injected with freshness.

While more conferences took place after 1986, there failed to be follow-up with producing song books. Arieh had been instrumental in each of the song books, but it was a load far too heavy for him to bear.

In the early 1990s, Peniel congregation in Tiberias stepped up and filled the void by collecting all of the materials that had been published, and using computer technology, prepared each song in a new format, with interlinear translation as well as transliteration. Shira Nelson (who is now with the Lord) poured months and months of work into this gift to the body of Messiah. Newer songs were added to the collection, and the second printing of *Zimrat Ha'Aretz L'Yeshua*, better known as the "Peniel Book," was a testimony to the high demand for the material. Since then the book has been taken by a German publisher and translated into several languages.

In 1997, after the music conference at Yad HaShmona, David Loden and I decided to do what we had wanted to do for a long time—organize a concert featuring many of the songs from the conference, and record it live! We had some money saved up in the music committee account, so we brought in a company to record the concert. Compared to today's technology, this was unbelievably cumbersome. We had two microphones on each location, one for recording, the other for the room sound—two totally separate systems. It was quite a big production, with soloists, a choir, rhythm section, and small ensemble of brass, woodwinds, and strings. It was a glorious evening, but not a pristine performance as far as the recording went. Rhythms changed mid-song, cues were missed, and practically everything had to be re-recorded. We worked on it for months, spending every shekel in our account and more, but in the end *Zamru Lo*, our first national worship album, was released and enthusiastically received.

However, it was clear that we could not do this regularly—the costs were too high and the workload too heavy. In 2002, another attempt to produce a live concert album fell by the wayside because of the sheer weight of work it would have taken to re-record and salvage. By this time, the

Messianic Alliance of Israel (MAI) had taken on a "rescue mission" to bring back the conferences, the concerts, and the recordings, putting the system back on track. We kept holding music conferences at Yad HaShmona, and every two years close to a hundred new songs were presented. The next step was to find a feasible way to put on a concert and produce a CD of songs chosen from the conference.

Consequently, when the Jerusalem Pavilion was completed in 2004, I invited Hanan Lukatz, the director of MAI, to utilize our new facility to hold the concerts, record them, and even video the events. Thus began a series of worship events that took place every two years, featuring singers and musicians from all over the land, resulting in national Hebrew worship CDs called *Tehila L'Eloheinu* ("Praises to Our God"), three volumes of which have now been released.

Author info:
Ann Hilsden came to Israel with her husband, Wayne, in 1983. Together with other Canadians, they co-founded the King of Kings Community in Jerusalem, an English-speaking international congregation. Her main interest is in the growth and development of Hebrew praise and worship expression, and over the years she has produced over twenty recordings in Hebrew.

What is happening today? We are returning to our rich heritage. The young people are rediscovering some of the beautiful hymns of "The Brown Book," appreciating the lyrical and musical beauty, unwilling to relegate it to the dustbin of history. A recording of these hymns, produced by Alex Atlas and released by HaChotam Publishing, is called *El v'Adon*. Young voices and a mix of traditional and modern styles were used in this tribute to hymns translated by Amikam Tavor and by "Ma'abam."

Recently, a concert was presented at the Jerusalem Pavilion called Midor Lador ("From Generation to Generation"), featuring songs from the late seventies and early eighties—mostly by David Loden, Batya Segal, and others—sung only by young singers, played only by young musicians, with a tribute to the songwriters at the end. One of them later quipped, in private, "It was nice that they honored all of us old dogs."

We are also returning to the vision of the songwriters of the seventies and eighties—equipping and teaching, with songwriting conferences and courses, and adjusting our current apparatus so that we will go forward with excellence, and keep singing a *shir chadash*.

I envision that the hymn-writing, music composition, and worship expression in the land of Israel will continue to be robust and fruitful, and will live up to the prophecy that Jerusalem will be a praise in all the earth (Isa 62:7).

Mishkan, no. 68 (2011): 11–22

Aesthetic Messianic Apologetics

by **Joseph D. Wooddell**

I waited patiently for the Lord;
And He inclined to me and heard my cry.
He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay,
And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm.
He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God;
Many will see and fear
And will trust in the Lord.
- David, Psalm 40:1–3[1]

On a recent trip to Israel, I observed young people in Jerusalem in areas where the night life was prominent. Music was everywhere, on the streets and in the shops. Jews in Israel and around the world, just like every other ethnicity, love music, and the genres appealing to various Jewish generations and cultures are endless. Elsewhere, I have argued that beauty is a neglected tool in the Christian apologist's tool box.[2] Contrary to popular opinion, beauty is objective, *not* "in the eye of the beholder" (I defend this claim below). Nearly all people recognize, appreciate, and are attracted to true beauty, so apologists should devise ways via various art forms (including music), and especially through the beauty of individual and community lifestyle, of modeling, explaining, and defending the faith. This is no less true with Jewish evangelism and apologetics. I have no intention of merely repeating what I see as the three most commonly emphasized (and obviously necessary, though not necessarily sufficient) aspects of Jew-

1 All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible (1999) unless otherwise noted. Emphasis added.

2 Joseph D. Wooddell, *The Beauty of the Faith: Using Aesthetics for Christian Apologetics* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011); "Beauty: Objective or Subjective? A Foundation for Apologetics," presented at the national meeting of the International Society of Christian Apologetics, April 23–24, 2010; "Christian Artists and Art Critics: The Apologetic Value of Evangelical Involvement," presented at the national meeting of the Evangelical Philosophical Society, November 13–16, 2007; "Beauty in the Pulpit: The Aesthetic Apologetic Value of Preacher and Sermon," presented at the Southwest regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, March 23–24, 2007.

ish evangelism and apologetics: (1) understanding Jewish language, (2) sensitivity to Jewish history[3] and culture,[4] and (3) clear exposition of messianic prophecy,[5] although in the end I shall mention them as crucial. This essay goes in a new direction. It argues that beauty in general, and music in particular, can and should be used for apologetics and evangelism toward all men, including "the Jew first" (cf. Rom 1:16 and Acts 3:26).[6] To this end, I begin with the nature of beauty, then consider Scripture, and conclude with relevant examples from Jewish history and contemporary culture. My undergraduate degree and early ministry experience were in music, while my master's, doctorate, and subsequent experience have focused on philosophy, apologetics, and theology, all of which lend support to the following.

Beauty

Plato understood truth, goodness, and beauty to be synonymous,[7] and both Plato and Aristotle "considered beauty to be an objective property of artworks and other things."[8] But such a notion is not limited to the ancients. Augustine,[9] Anselm,[10] and Aquinas[11] would all agree, as would Jonathan Edwards,[12] as well as some more recent thinkers. Keats declared, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."[13] Physicist Paul Dirac,[14] philosophers Noah Lemos[15] and Doug Blount,[16] and arguably even atheist Bertrand Russell[17] all agree that beauty is objective.

Notwithstanding contemporary secular culture's nearly universal, supposed[18] acceptance and promotion of all sorts of relativism (aesthetic, mor-

3 One helpful source is Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987).
4 See Barry Rubin, *You Bring the Bagels I'll Bring the Gospel: Sharing the Messiah with Your Jewish Neighbor* (Baltimore: Messianic Jewish Publishers, 1997).
5 See Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?* (Nashville: B&H, 2010).
6 On this latter phrase and idea see Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser, eds., *To The Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008).
7 Douglas K. Blount, "Foreword," in Wooddell, *The Beauty of the Faith*, viii.
8 Kathleen M. Higgins, *Aesthetics in Perspective* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1996), 8.
9 Augustine, *Confessions*, 7.17.23.
10 See Wooddell, *The Beauty of the Faith*, 90, and Patrick Sherry, *Spirit and Beauty: An Introduction to Theological Aesthetics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 70.
11 Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2.1.27.1. Also see Wooddell, *The Beauty of the Faith*, 52–54.
12 Jonathan Edwards, *The Nature of True Virtue*, ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven: Yale, 1989).
13 John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn," in *The Complete Works of John Keats*, ed. Nathan Haskell Dole (London: Virtue, 1904), 116.
14 Frank E. Gaebelein, *The Christian, the Arts, and Truth: Regaining the Vision of Greatness* (Portland: Multnomah, 1985), 95.
15 Noah Marcelino Lemos, *Intrinsic Value: Concept and Warrant* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 97–99.
16 Blount in Wooddell, *The Beauty of the Faith*, vii-viii.
17 Morris Kline, *Mathematics in Western Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 5–6.
18 I say "supposed" because anyone who thinks about the matter only for a moment will

al, political, epistemological, and even metaphysical and logical), it should not be difficult for *believers* to embrace beauty's objectivity. Since believers believe in a God whose ultimate nature does not change, and since He is the source of *all* truth, it should not be surprising that truth claims about beauty, and beauty itself, are unchanging and objective, not subjective or relative to the observer. I have found via informal conversation, however, that many believers disagree. Surprisingly, such believers are aesthetic relativists. Typically, their argument simply runs as follows: beauty cannot be objective, because there are so many people whose opinions differ as to what is, in fact, beautiful. What one person finds beautiful another finds ugly. Thus runs the argument, but such is clearly insufficient. In what follows I explain why.

Most believers are, rightly, *moral* objectivists. They believe right and wrong, good and bad, do not change based on people's opinions. Murder is wrong, and it is just silly to say "it's wrong for me but not wrong for you." Torturing babies for fun will always be morally repugnant, and anyone who disagrees is just wrong, misguided, or in some way malfunctioning. Of course, secularists, materialists, atheists, naturalists, etc. might disagree with moral objectivism, but I am speaking here only of what *believers* ought to think. Believers rightly maintain that morality is unchanging, *regardless* of what people think. So why would the same believers think beauty does change *because* of what people think? Probably for one of three reasons: (1) they have been so indoctrinated by a relativistic culture that they have not really thought about it, and simply do not see their own inconsistency; (2) they want to be "tolerant" and inoffensive toward others, in spite of their own inconsistency (i.e., kindness trumps truth); or (3) unlike morality, they cannot think of any objective criteria or method for judging whether something is beautiful, so they wrongly assume beauty is relative. I shall address each reason in turn.

Regarding (1), I have discussed the matter with many believers, and they simply do not see the inconsistency, so I shall attempt to clarify it here.[19] It is really quite simple: If popular opinion does not affect morality, then why should popular opinion affect aesthetics? Opinion is irrelevant with respect to goodness, and opinion is likewise irrelevant with respect to beauty. One cannot consistently say ethics is objective *regardless* of what people

One cannot consistently say ethics is objective *regardless* of what people think, and that beauty is subjective *because* of what people think, unless one give some reason for the difference.

realize most of these contemporaries who call themselves relativists are anything but. They typically believe "hurting others" is wrong and "social justice" is good, that their senses are functioning properly, that their SUV is a different item from their iPhone, and that 2+2=4 (or at least that 2+2 cannot both equal 4 and not equal 4 at the same time in the same sense).

19 I suppose it is possible they see the inconsistency but simply are not compelled to change their view because of it. In this case they are what I would call "postmodern," and thus have jettisoned the need for logic.

think, and that beauty is subjective *because* of what people think, unless one gives some reason for the difference. One may believe in the subjectivity of beauty, but if that one is a moral *ob*jectivist he should find some other argument to support his being an aesthetic *sub*jectivist. Of course, I have never heard any compelling argument to this effect. This is not to say there is not one, but if there is I have not heard it. The fact that I have not heard a good argument for beauty's subjectivity, and the fact that until relatively recently most intellectuals in Western history have understood beauty not to be subjective but objective[20]—not to mention my belief about truth, goodness, and beauty being one and the same (especially since I see them all grounded in God)—lead me to conclude that beauty is objective, unchanging, absolute, regardless of what anyone thinks, believes, or practices. To illustrate crudely, if someone witnesses a child crossing the street, tripping over a pothole in the road, falling and inadvertently smearing his face into the week-old remains of a dead skunk, and says such a display is beautiful, I would conclude such an observer is simply wrong. To look out at Pike's Peak from the top of Palmer Park in Colorado Springs on a clear day and declare such a view ugly is to be objectively incorrect. The same could be said of many sculptures, paintings, pieces of music, and even physical forms and faces.

Regarding (2), I begin with a real-life example from ethics. A colleague once told how he asked a group of Christian students whether morality is objective or subjective, to which one student replied "subjective." "Let me rephrase the question," replied the professor, "is murder ever okay?" "Well, lots of people would say so," replied the student. In desperation my colleague resorted to the overused ethical example, "Is torturing babies for fun ever morally justified?" The student was clearly troubled, but still unwilling to make a firm pronouncement. My colleague was dumbfounded until he reflected on the facts that the student was raised in the U.S. public education system of the 1990s and early twenty-first century (what should we call that first decade?), and that the student's sister was homosexual. The student was more interested in being what he considered kind, tolerant, or loving than in clearly proclaiming objective truth or goodness. When the professor asked the student about beauty, the student responded similarly. Of course, believers *should* believe in the objectivity of morality (as grounded in God's nature, His commands, His Word, or some such thing), and many do, but those same believers often then declare beauty to be subjective, in spite of their inconsistency. Their goal, like that of the student in my example, is to be loving, tolerant, or kind at the expense of truth. Believers should keep in mind, however, that the two (truth on one hand and love or kindness on the other) are not mutually exclusive. Scripture admonishes us to speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15), and certainly Jesus

20 Kathleen Higgins says it is primarily "recent thinkers, beginning around the seventeenth century, [who] have stressed the subjective character of . . . the experience of beauty" (8). See also Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, *History of Aesthetics* (The Hague: 1980), 199–219. This is not to say there were not aesthetic subjectivists in every age; indeed there were. It is only to say that objectivism predominated until relatively recently in Western thought.

always did both. In fact, part of what it means to be loving is to be truthful. So believers should not, in the name of kindness, tolerance, or love, shy away from understanding goodness or beauty as objective. The kind and loving thing to do is to be truthful.

Finally, regarding (3), someone might say *morality* is objective since God so clearly and so often tells humanity what to do and not to do. According to our antagonist, however, while God gives clear moral directives, He does not give clear aesthetic directives. Without such instruction from God, the argument goes, and without some other criteria for judging beauty, we must assume beauty is relative, in the eye of the beholder. Such reasoning, however, is faulty on at least two counts. First, while *exact* criteria for determining beauty might not be given by God, God often mentions beauty in His Word. The "sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful" (Gen 6:2);[21] Rachel was beautiful (Gen 29:17); trees can be beautiful (Lev 23:40); the "Branch of the Lord" will one day be seen as beautiful (Isa 4:2); Daniel refers to the "Beautiful Land" (Dan 8:9 and 11:41); the feet of those who bring good news are "lovely" (Isa 52:7) or "beautiful" (Rom 10:15); there is even a sense in which "the Lord" is beautiful (Ps 27:4). Of course, *mere external beauty* is "vain" (Prov 31:30) and can cause pride (Isa 23:9), but it exists nonetheless. So Scripture often references beauty, and although it perhaps delineates no strict criteria for determining what is, in fact, beautiful, this does not necessarily mean such criteria are not forthcoming or that the Word of God itself does not understand beauty as objective. (Not giving criteria for determining the objectivity of beauty is clearly not the same as not believing in the objectivity of beauty!) We might choose to be "particularists" rather than "methodists" when it comes to determining beauty. Methodists begin with methods or criteria (which is where our antagonist wants to begin), while particularists begin with particular items or examples of beauty, determine what these examples have in common, and then come up with broad criteria. For example, what might the daughters of men, Sarai, Rachel, and the beautiful woman in Proverbs 31 all have in common? What attributes might the aforementioned trees and land share? What might the Branch of the Lord, the Lord Himself, and the feet of those who bring good news have in common? The answers might lead us to some criteria or determining factors. But even if they do not, the reasoning behind (3) still fails for a second reason. For even if no criteria are forthcoming, such a lack does not necessarily mean beauty is not objective, or that we do not know it when we see it. An example from ethics should suffice to illustrate: Doctors, ethicists, scientists, politicians, and family members all might have different views about when and whether to remove a feeding tube from a patient in a persistent vegetative state, but such diversity of opinion does not in the least suggest there is no right answer in a particular case. In fact, whether we care to ad-

21 Literally, the daughters of men were "good," but the context seems to warrant "beautiful," which might just support the aforementioned notion that goodness and beauty are one and the same, and if so then objective.

mit it or not, there is always *only* one right answer in each particular moral case. We might lack the criteria or other information necessary to make a fully informed decision, but such a lack does not mean there is no right decision to be made. Our lack of criteria is irrelevant as to whether there is, in fact, one correct answer. The same is true of beauty. Our lack of criteria for determining beauty in no way entails that beauty itself is subjective.

So, our antagonist might ask, what good is it? Why all this talk about beauty if we cannot know it when we see it? Answer: I never said we could not know it. In fact, in the above paragraph, I implied that we might (I think we often do), even without clear criteria for judging it. Space precludes a full discussion here of how one can know something like "the beautiful" without telling *how* he knows it (i.e., without criteria). The reader should consult Jonathan Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue* and my explanation of how that work applies to what I have been arguing.[22] Humanity (even lost humanity) is created in God's image, and we seem to have a moral sense; that is, we know certain moral truths innately or *a priori* (cf. Rom 1:19–20 and 2:14–15). Perhaps we have an aesthetic sense as well; we know true beauty when we see it. This is especially obvious if the ancients were correct about truth, goodness, and beauty being one and the same (and I think they were correct).

So beauty is objective,[23] and people often know it and are attracted to it when they experience it.[24] Beauty's objectivity and its being identical with truth and goodness are significant for evangelism, missions, and apologetics, because if truth, goodness, and beauty are objective and identical then in presenting beauty we are also presenting truth. This gives the evangelist, missionary, and/or apologist another far reaching tool for his craft, and it gives him confidence that he is sharing objective truth instead of just attempting to attract unbelievers with mere pragmatic or utilitarian appeals to their

Beauty's objectivity and its being identical with truth and goodness are significant for evangelism, missions, and apologetics, because if truth, goodness, and beauty are objective and identical then in presenting beauty we are also presenting truth.

22 Wooddell, *The Beauty of the Faith*, chapter 6, "Jonathan Edwards, Beauty, and Apologetics" (74–86).

23 If the reader thinks my arguments and examples have been too one-sided, it might be because every argument I have ever read or heard defending beauty's subjectivity boils down to one of these: "beauty is subjective because people have different ideas about what is beautiful," or "if beauty were objective, who would be fit to decide what is beautiful and what is not?" And I have already addressed both arguments (where the word argument is used loosely and generously).

24 Of course, someone could be so depraved and could have suppressed "the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom 1:18) to such a degree that he now calls "evil good and good evil" (Isa 5:20), and therefore be unable to recognize true beauty. But non-divine beings (like us humans) cannot know who those persons are. We are, moreover, commanded by God to preach the gospel to "all the nations," presumably attempting not to leave out a single person, even those who look, talk, and act like they are too far gone to accept the gospel. Even Paul wants those he has delivered over "to Satan" to learn and repent (cf. 1 Cor 5:5 and 1 Tim 1:20).

subjective taste.[25] Being created in God's image, we have a built-in sense of truth, goodness, and beauty, and we may confidently put such things on display with specifically evangelistic and apologetic ends in mind.

The third and final section of this essay will suggest specific applications of such an approach, but since Scripture is the believer's final authority it will first prove helpful to consider whether Scripture says anything about whether beauty may be displayed or lived out in a way (perhaps through music?) that is attractive and compelling to *un*believers, including Jewish unbelievers. Scripture seems to say that it can, and to this subject we now turn.

Scripture

In this section of the essay, I am not arguing that Scripture argues for the objectivity of beauty (although I do not doubt one could mount such a convincing argument, especially given the passages cited in the previous section of the essay). I have already argued *philosophically* for the objectivity of beauty, and shown that Scripture references beauty as if humans know it when they see it. This section on Scripture merely intends to show that Scripture endorses the use of beauty in general, and music in particular, for apologetics and evangelism.

The passage cited at the beginning of this essay (Ps 40:1–3) shows how David, inspired by God, confidently maintained that God's work in the believer, along with the resultant song of praise, would attract many to the faith. It is that simple. We trust, obey, and cry out to God, He works in our lives, we praise Him, and people believe. The text does not say whether the "many" are Jews or Gentiles. It does not matter. Nor does it say or matter whether the song is sung in the *mishkan* (tent of meeting) or outside. Note in this context that the praise is apparently set to music in a "song." Psalm 22 is similar. Here David praises God "in the assembly" before his "brethren" and "those who fear Him" (vv. 22 and 25), presumably Jews. But he is also convinced that as a result of his and others' praise to God, "all the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will worship before" Him (v. 27); presumably, David is including the Gentiles.[26] Note that they will "turn to the Lord" and end up worshiping Him.[27]

25 However, even if beauty were not objective, it would still be worth using for such tasks. That it is objective and that all persons are created in God's image and likely have an "aesthetic sense" gives the worker much more confidence in what he is doing.

26 One wonders what exactly they will "remember." Perhaps they will remember the *protoeuangelion* (Gen 3:15) as passed down verbally from the beginning. Perhaps they will remember the mighty acts of God throughout history up to that point, to which no doubt all the nations were privy. The exact content is irrelevant. The point is that whatever it is they remember will aid in their turning to and worship of God.

27 Of course, this entire verse could be looking forward to the Gentiles' reception of the gospel through the apostles, or it could be eschatological/millennial. I do not see why it could not be referring to any or all of these possibilities.

Although not as explicit, one might infer similar evangelistic and apologetic insights from Psalm 51:10–13:

> Create in me a clean heart, O God, / And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
> Do not cast me away from Your presence / And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.
> Restore to me the joy of Your salvation / And sustain me with a willing spirit.
> Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, / And sinners will be converted to You.

Why, according to this passage, will sinners "be converted" to God? Presumably it is because God will restore David to a place of usability. But *how* will God use him? David asks God to give him joy and a willing spirit. Perhaps David has in mind that as this joy overflows not only in everyday life but also in worship and song, people will look on and find such joy and restoration compelling, and will themselves repent as he did and "be converted" to God. The possibility of such an interpretation and application should not be ruled out. So the Psalms, not surprisingly, show how God might specifically use music, worship, and song, or the beauty and attractiveness of a life well lived, in order to communicate truth and draw unbelievers to Himself, including Jewish unbelievers. And why not?! Why not use music or a compelling life or anything else, especially considering Paul the pragmatist, who attempted to "become all things to all men, so that I may *by all means* save some" (1 Cor 9:22, emphasis added)? He desired more than anything that his Jewish countrymen embrace Jesus the Messiah (cf. Rom 9:3 and 10:1), and he would use any means or method at his disposal. Of course he would (as we should) run all methods through an objective moral filter, but there is no reason such a filter would preclude using beauty in general, or music in particular, for the apologetic task.

I stated in the essay's introductory paragraph that not only music but also beauty in general may be used for Messianic apologetics, especially the beauty of a life well lived. New Testament passages are not far to seek in this regard. A portion of 1 Peter 3:15 is arguably the most famous passage in defense of a robust Christian apologetic program: "always being ready to make a defense [*apologian*] to everyone who asks you to give an account [*logon*] for the hope that is in you. . . ." But this phrase is bookended by phrases which involve the lifestyle of the believer: "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts . . . [and make your defense] with gentleness and reverence." Presumably while the "defense" and "account" are necessary, they are not sufficient. How we package the product is equally important. William Lane Craig maintains, "More often than not, it is what you *are* rather than what you *say* that will bring an unbeliever to Christ. This, then, is the ultimate

apologetic. For the ultimate apologetic is: your life."[28] Inspired by God, Peter says to do this for "everyone," which includes both Jew and Gentile. Peter earlier emphasized the beauty of a life well lived when focusing on his readers' witness to the Gentiles: "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet 2:12), probably echoing Jesus: "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt 5:16). Of course, one may also focus on godly living with Jews in mind. Paul seemed to do this in Athens as he reasoned "in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present" (Acts 17:17). This was not a onetime event, it happened "every day" with anyone present, including "the Jews." Paul's life *and* verbal teachings were part of his apologetic. Much more could be said on this,[29] but it is time now for some specific applications and examples.

Given these first two sections—that beauty is objective, recognizable, and attractive, and that Scripture both mentions beauty and supports it as an apologetic tool—we may conclude that music, other art forms, and beauty in general (especially the beauty of a life well lived) are applicable to *all* evangelism and apologetics, including toward the Jews. But it is incumbent upon those called to Jewish evangelism and apologetics specifically (Galatians 2:7, for example, says Peter "had been entrusted with the gospel . . . to the circumcised") to devise new and specific ways of using music, the arts, and beauty in general as tools for their task in every generation.

Examples and Applications

This section is the briefest for two reasons. First, this essay aims mostly toward theory, arguing that beauty and music are legitimate apologetic tools, and that Scripture is not silent on the subject. Second, the possibilities for application and historical examples are endless, so I note only a few here. I leave it to the reader, and especially to musicians, artists, apologists, missiologists, etc., to think creatively about how to apply the first two sections. That said, I shall nonetheless offer some suggestions I think are sound.

Messianic Jewish and Jewish culture and history are replete with examples of influential musicians and artists. The Jewish ones might be Hasidic, Orthodox, Reform, or even atheist, and the Messianic ones adhere to various emphases and styles. Examples range from arguably the most

28 William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994), 302. Emphasis in original.

29 Other NT teachings on the beautiful life of the believer or Christian community as helpful for reaching *all* sorts of people include the following: Jude, who tells us to "contend" or "fight" for the faith (v. 3), and when giving directives as to how to accomplish this includes both verbal *and* lifestyle components; 3 John 11, which indicates that our life demonstrates whose we are. Other NT examples abound. See Wooddell, *The Beauty of the Faith*, chapter 5, "The New Testament and Aesthetic Christian Apologetics" (60–73).

famous and influential (presumably secular) contemporary American Jewish "artist" Steven Spielberg,[30] to virtuoso violinist Itzak Perlman,[31] whose religious views I know nothing about, and Hasidic Reggae beat-box rapper and singer Matisyahu,[32] to nineteenth century Messianic Jewish composer Felix Mendelssohn,[33] Orthodox Jewish hip-hop artist Jewda Maccabi,[34] and Messianic Jewish singer, songwriter, and worship leader Greg Silverman.[35] Those called to Jewish missions should acquaint themselves with these and other creative personages in the Messianic and Jewish communities. By doing so they will improve their chances of discovering more relevant methods and material for sharing with God's chosen people.

As mentioned in my introductory paragraph, I recently experienced young adult Jewish culture and music on the streets of Jerusalem, which reminded me that people are people wherever they are. People love the arts and creativity, both old and new, and their stylistic tastes are nearly as diverse as the number of people themselves. While beauty is objective and unchanging, aesthetics may be applied nearly as diversely as tastes differ.[36] In other words, regarding music we may assume that rap, hip-hop, and reggae are just as valid stylistically as classical. Some styles (and pieces or composers) may prove more "timeless" than others, but that fact alone does not necessarily make them more valid (or objectively beautiful) means of communication. If I am right about all this, then there is no reason why Christians gifted or talented in these and other styles should not use such media to reach Jewish people with the gospel. Hasidic rapper and singer Matisyahu testified about how he began his musical journey:

If I am right about all this, then there is no reason why Christians gifted or talented in these and other styles should not use such media to reach Jewish people with the gospel.

> When I was 17, I left home in order to find my path and lived on the road for several months. One day in a park in Vermont I heard this kid singing Rastaman chant, a central song of devotion. The words were

30 "Stephen Spielberg," Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_Spielberg (accessed February 1, 2011).

31 Itzhak Perlman, http://www.itzhakperlman.com (accessed February 1, 2011).

32 Matisyahu, http://matisyahuworld.com (accessed February 1, 2011).

33 Felix Mendelssohn, http://www.felixmendelssohn.com/index.html (accessed February 1, 2011). See also Jacob Gartenhaus, *Famous Hebrew Christians* (Hixson, TN: International Board of Jewish Missions, Inc., 1998), 129–34.

34 There is no official Web site or entry on Wikipedia, so see posts on YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=jew+da+maccabi&aq=0s.

35 Greg Silverman, http://www.gregsilverman.com/gregsite1.html (accessed February 1, 2011).

36 Did I just contradict myself with this statement? Absolutely not. A particular rap, symphony, contemporary praise song, or chant might or might not be objectively beautiful. One's "taste" for, say, rap or reggae is itself simply that, a "taste" or preference. The general style itself is *not* the thing to be judged as beautiful or not. Rather, the content of the particular piece, either musically, lyrically, or whatever, is what is to be understood as beautiful or not.

> familiar to me (from the Hebrew Psalms of King David) and something hit me. I felt I knew I could sing this song and really mean it. . . . In the moment as my destiny was revealing itself, reggae music, Judaism, and my quest to find my path all came together and I knew why I was given life—to unify these worlds.[37]

What if, instead of a "kid singing Rastaman chant," Matisyahu had heard a Messianic Jewish artist talented in that style and gifted in apologetics singing a song not only "from the Hebrew Psalms of King David," but specifically from, say, a messianic psalm or prophetic passage? Would that there were such an artist! Perhaps there is. Would that there were more. Certainly God has gifted and called *someone* to such a task. If so, perhaps Matisyahu would by now be a follower of Jesus the Messiah. No guarantees, but it is possible. And even if he never comes to faith in Jesus (I pray that he does), doubtless there are many others with similar tastes who would benefit spiritually from such an evangelistic and apologetic method: i.e., setting OT messianic passages to *all* styles of music so as to reach *some* from each cultural milieu.

The possibilities are endless for applying music to apologetics and evangelism with Jewish people in mind. Of course, it will look one way in Jerusalem, another in New York, quite another in an Eastern or Western European city. One also must keep the recipient's age or generation in mind. I said early in the essay I would not merely repeat what so many works on Jewish evangelism and apologetics tend to emphasize: language, history, culture, and messianic prophecy, but I also said that by the end of the essay I would mention them as crucial. The genre of the medium is also essential. In music this means things like jazz, classical, pop, rap, reggae, hip-hop, hymns, choruses, and an abundance of specifically Jewish styles of which I know nothing. A skilled composer, songwriter, or musician who also knows Jewish language, history, culture, and messianic prophecy should get to know his specific audience and craft his art accordingly. "Songs Without Words" need not be limited to the pieces comprising that title written by Messianic Jew Felix Mendelssohn. Antonio Vivaldi did the same with his famous "Four Seasons." The point is that not even lyrics are required to convey a message. Believers who happen to be classical composers could create such pieces with Messianic apologetics in mind. I, for one, would be elated to see how a country and western artist might craft songs sensitive to Jewish culture and containing a message of Messianic hope. I would love to see popular Christian rappers like LaCrae or Tadashi devise and invent music with a Messianic apologetic message. Contemporary Christian music godfather Michael W. Smith seems mostly to write and perform American Christian pop or praise and worship, but he is an ingenious talent scout and producer. There is no reason people like him should not collaborate with Messianic leaders in Israel and elsewhere in order to find people

37 "Matisyahu, 'Live at Stubb's Vol. II (Part III),'" http://matisyahuworld.com/news/detail/matisyahu_live_at_stubbs_vol._ii_part_iii_--_video_exclusive (accessed February 1, 2011).

gifted and talented in Jewish musical styles who are also believers, and produce Messianic apologetic music that would appeal to a Jewish audience stylistically. A believer skilled at composing choral and orchestral works in the style of, say, the music of "Schindler's List," could create an entire symphony, replete with lyrics, depicting how some Jews in the Holocaust were Messianic Jews, and it was their hope in Jesus the Messiah which sustained them either in life or in death. The possibilities are myriad. I mention these only in hopes of kindling the fires of our apologetic and evangelistic imaginations.

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Conclusion

Beauty is objective, and most people know it and are attracted to it when they see it, even if they cannot tell *how* they know it. One thing I have not mentioned is that our adversary Satan knows this very well, and has used it to his own advantage and to our detriment, whether through pornography, movies, television, covetous materialism, or even music. Scripture takes it for granted that people know beauty when they see it. Scripture also exemplifies and admonishes us to use music in particular, and beauty in general, to reach unbelievers. History and contemporary culture are full of Messianic and Jewish examples of artistic talent and influence. Believers should prayerfully and energetically capitalize on this influence and talent in order to reach Paul's "kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom 9:3). If Paul was willing to suffer hell for their salvation, we should be willing to spend at least some time and effort devising creative ways to share "the Messianic hope."[38]

38 This phrase comprises the title of Rydelnik's new book (cited earlier): *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?*

Mishkan, no. 68 (2011): 23–28

What Is Jewish Music?

by **Avner Boskey**

The State of Israel from time to time is convulsed by shock waves. Some of these are due to military threats from across its borders or even from hostile forces within. Yet, the question "Who is a Jew?" still has the power to cause solid government coalitions to tremble or to lead to street riots in ultra-Orthodox sections of town.

Messianic Jewish artists and theologians also struggle with related questions as they carve out creatively sound and theologically astute expressions of faith in Israel today. One question that regularly keeps raising its head concerns both the cultural integrity and sociological relevance of modern Israeli Messianic music.

Denying the Problem

I remember many decades ago attempting to tactfully communicate to a dear sister in the faith that, while the children's music she had written may have been theologically sound, it had no cultural markers that would identify it as belonging to the Jewish people. "There is no such thing as Jewish music!" was her response.

Since a significant amount of Messianic music in the last quarter of the twentieth century was written by non-Jews (some of whom showed little awareness of or interaction with the rich history of Jewish music), and since those works have continued in some form to shape present musical creations, it should not be overstated that solid answers to my friend's dogmatic comment are as important today as they were in times past.

Is there something called "Jewish music" today? Is it multifaceted and, if so, will one of these facets win the day? Is music created in the Diaspora a more or less authentic expression of Jewish music? How can songwriters and worship leaders deepen their awareness of Jewish music as they sculpt living notes in this creative process?

Jewish Music and Uncle Joe

There is no better initial starting point than the thoughts of Uncle Joe, better known as Comrade Joseph Stalin. In 1913, he was asked to write a short (by Russian standards) propaganda leaflet which was called *Marxism and the National Question*. His succinct definition (which clearly had the Jewish people in mind as well), said: "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological makeup manifested in a common culture."[1] Stalin's perspective vis-à-vis the Jews was that they were not truly a people, since in his mind they possessed no common language, no national territory, no stability, and no common culture. That being a given for Stalin, he toiled with steely resolve to forbid Jewish people from reforging a common Hebrew language, returning to their ancient national territory in Israel, achieving communal stability, and developing the buds of a common culture!

Stalin's negative assessment here was influenced by one stark historical reality—the Exile. From the perspective of biblical history and sociology, when the Jewish people were exiled from their patrimony by Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar over 2,500 years ago, the common ropes which bound the Jewish people to their land, language, and culture were slowly sawed through. The prophetic lament of Deuteronomy 28:15–68 became a reality for the Jewish people, and the shock waves of the Exile created cultural tsunamis with which the children of Jacob are struggling even to this day.

Seeking Their Good

The long years in Assyria and Babylon took their cultural toll. Jewish music, which had been the mainstay in Solomon's temple, now had become a sideshow—a small part of the imperial, cultural potpourri in the Mesopotamian court. This Hebraic music was indeed a droll source of entertainment for the Chaldean conquerors—strange songs in a strange land (Ps 137:4). The anguished cry of YHVH's musicians rose up in torment, asking if it were even possible to sing holy melodies in front of such profane people.

Within eight hundred years of the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles, the majority of the Jewish people no longer used Hebrew in daily parlance. Instead, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin became their *lingua franca*. Israel became a foreign country and the destination for potential pilgrimage, while Hebrew accents metamorphosed into Babylonian (and later Iraqi Arabic) vernacular.

The prophet Jeremiah was initially authorized by the God of Jacob to proclaim the following *modus vivendi* (29:4–14): The Jewish people were to settle down in the land of exile and seek the welfare of that land, inter-

1 J. V. Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question," Marxist Internet Archive, http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1913/03a.htm#s1 (accessed April 28, 2011).

ceding for its good and the good of its people. After seventy years, YHVH would restore His people from exile to the promised land. Those were His plans "for welfare and not for calamity,"[2] to give Israel a future and a hope.

Forgetting Our Faces

Sadly, the majority of the Jewish people got entrenched in Babylon, Assyria, and Persia. Only a visionary remnant risked all to return to the gates and tombs of their forefathers (Neh 2:3). God had prophesied a short-term exile, yet the unwillingness of most Jewish people to return to the promised land had much to do with them having a much longer sojourn among the nations. Seventy years quickly turned into nearly forty times seventy, before even a third of the exiled sons of Jacob would return *en masse* to Zion.

As linguistic, geographic, and cultural links began to dissolve between the people and the land of Israel, the Jewish face began to lose some of its original Mediterranean sharpness. Though other cultural expressions (from *Mimouna* to *Purimshpeils*) and languages (from Ladino to Yiddish) ably preserved the soul and cultural treasures of the Jewish people in exile, something had been lost as well.

To paraphrase C. S. Lewis's discussion about his book *Till We Have Faces*, a human being cannot clearly engage in honest communication with the divine unless he himself is real again: "It must be speaking with its own voice (not one of its borrowed voices), expressing its actual desires (not what it imagines that it desires), being for good or ill itself, not any mask. . . ."[3]

The Joys of the Diaspora

In 1968, Leo Rosten came out with a book called *The Joys of Yiddish*. His light-hearted approach to the riches of the Yiddish language warmed many an Ashkenazi Jewish heart. As one who was involved with Yiddish literature, theater, and even a Yiddish mandolin orchestra at an early age, I can personally testify to many of the riches in the Jewish Diaspora's multifaceted heritage. Indeed, the primary beneficiaries of these rich streams of heritage are those Jewish people who make their home in Israel. Only there can the "ingathering of the exiles" be experienced on a daily, "magic carpet ride" basis.

Jewish sociological patterns are not so different from those of other nations. People tend to gravitate to that which they know. In Israel today, American Jewish *olim* congregate at folk festivals or to hear rock greats from San Francisco's heyday. European *vatikim* (long-timers) attend Yid-

2 All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible (1999) unless otherwise noted.

3 Rose Macaulay, *Letters to a Sister from Rose Macaulay*, ed. Constance Babington Smith (London: Collins, 1964), 261.

dish theater productions, while emigrants from Morocco gather to hear *piyyutim* and large Andalusian orchestras. As Yeshua said, "And no one, after drinking old wine, wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good enough'" (Luke 5:39).

Prophetic Promises

According to the Mesopotamian sorcerer Balaam (who once prophesied under the unction of the Holy Spirit), Israel is a people who dwells alone and is not to be reckoned as sharing the same destiny as other nations (Num 23:9). One of the irrevocable promises given to the Jewish people (Rom 11:29) concerns the restoration of the exiles of Israel back to their own land. Though Replacement Theology and Arab nationalism tend to take great exception to this prophetic vision, the God of Israel has run roughshod over such misplaced convictions.

The restoration of the Jewish people—exiled for nearly three millennia from its own country—presents a unique set of challenges on a number of levels. The God of Israel had this scenario in mind when He prophesied through Isaiah, "Then you will say in your heart, 'Who has begotten these for me, since I have been bereaved of my children and am barren, an exile and a wanderer? And who has reared these? Behold, I was left alone; from where did these come?'" (Isa 49:21).

God's sovereign restoration of the children of Israel to the land of Israel involves the re-establishment of their physical control of the land. It entails the restoration of spiritual life, authority, and divine priority. It even extends to a holy restoration of their tongue and speech (Zeph 3:9). A restored Jewish people in a restored Jewish land will also actualize the essence of Stalin's declaration: Israel will be the center of a restored and flowering Jewish culture—and that will also entail a revived musical culture.

Prophetic Process

The restoration of the Jewish people to the land of Israel has taken some surprising twists and turns. Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Avraham Itzhak Kook was at first puzzled as to how the Holy One, blessed be He, could use secular, socialist, and atheistic Jews to catalyze the return to Zion. He drew strength from Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, which places the spiritual revival of Jacob *after* the final return to the land (Ezek 37:9–13).

The restoration of Jewish music, like the restoration of the entire Jewish people, is not a "one off," fast-food process leading to a monolithic musical expression. The *kibbutz galuyot* (ingathering of the exiles), of which David Ben-Gurion often spoke, is naturally followed by *mizug galuyot* (the blending of the exiles). That process takes time and effort, and based on God's intentions in Ezekiel 37, we can also assume that the process will have YHVH's sovereign anointing and watch care.

It would make sense that, as the various streams of Jewish music (which were originally developed in the Diaspora) meet and blend on the soil of

the land of Israel, in time a *tertium quid* will arise—a blend of the best of these streams intertwining around a core "DNA calling" involving the creative arts. This is part of the prophesied fruit to come (Isa 27:6), when fresh-running Jewish sap begins to powerfully flow again through the Jewish olive tree (Rom 11:17, 24).

It would make sense that, as the various streams of Jewish music (which were originally developed in the Diaspora) meet and blend on the soil of the land of Israel, in time a *tertium quid* will arise—a blend of the best of these streams intertwining around a core "DNA calling" involving the creative arts.

Current Trends

How is that process coming along in Israel today? For starters, there is not just one universally accepted form of Jewish music—there are many widely diverging streams. It is true that religious music still holds its own among the Orthodox community. Indeed, some Orthodox describe their music as the only real "Jewish music," which is a bit of a misnomer. Modern neo-Chassidic music actually owes much of its origins to Gypsy, Magyar, and Ukrainian folk music, often filtered through a lens of American Big Band and jazz. In Israel, since most musicians are Jewish in any case, the neo-Chassidic "patenting" of the term "Jewish music" raises a faint smile on many musical lips.

The vast majority of the Israeli listening public shows a greater affection for less rigorously defined and more culturally diverse songs. Greek, Spanish, and Ethiopian influences brought back or reinterpreted by returning exiles have each contributed to the spiciness of the bubbling bouillabaisse known as modern Israeli music.

The blending of *Mizrahi* music (that of Jews from the Arab world) with rock music has fashioned a synthesis which is finding much favor with middle aged and younger listeners.

Last but not least, Israel finds itself at the center of the creative swirl known as trance music, with some DJs and bands blending religious themes and poetry along with electronic and dance music. The worldwide influence of American rock, pop, and rhythm and blues has left its mark on the MTV generation, and these dynamic elements (which also owe much of their own heritage to African, Irish, and church hymn roots) are an inseparable part of the world's (and Israel's) musical equation.

Which Jewish Music Is Authentically More Jewish?

In the same way that Rabbinic Judaism does not grant its *imprimatur* to Reform or Conservative (let alone Messianic!) streams of Judaism, there is a dynamic whereby some Messianic musicians term "Fiddler on the Roof style" music more Jewish than the songs of Jo Amar. But it is very much within the realm of possibility to appreciate one's own community's musical stream and heritage without having to belittle or denigrate other communities' streams.

Diaspora Jewish music is here to stay for the immediate future, though its flowerings seem to be more a thing of the past than of the future. Without cavil it must be said that at the present time Israeli creative efforts are leading the way for the Jewish people as a whole—in line with Ahad Ha'am's prophetic vision. Messianic musicians and songwriters in the Diaspora (and in Israel as well) have much to learn in this exciting regard.

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How Should We Then Sing?

Messianic Jewish music coming out of Israel at the turn of the last century often owed more to Joni Mitchell and the Fisherfolk than it did to Daklon and Ehud Manor. One of the great challenges facing Israeli Messianic minstrels in our day is learning how to drink deeply from our own cultural wells, to become more cognizant of our musical riches both in the past and in the present, and to boldly go where no man (or woman) has gone before—to press onward and upward to the higher calling of creating the new Jewish music that God has yet to break forth over His people Israel—a people He has fashioned for Himself, that we might give Him praise (Isa 43:21)!

Mishkan, no. 68 (2011): 29–38

Music in the Bible

– From Human Sounds to Heaven's "New Song"

by **Joshua Waggener**

In the Bible, music is presented not as a subject to be listened to, appreciated, or studied, but as an object of human culture, something "made" by humans and used in a wide variety of human activities. Beginning as early as Moses' "Song of the Sea" in Exodus 15:1–18, it finds a significant role in Hebrew worship and is formalized as an activity for corporate worship in the time of King David, resulting in the poetic and musical compositions of the Book of Psalms, many of which foreshadow the Messiah.

Music-making is also evident in non-Jewish cultures encountered in the Bible and assumes a position in early Christian worship, as evidenced in the New Testament (1 Cor 14:26; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16). The Revelation of John even depicts musical activity in heaven, giving trumpets, harps, and sung praise a prominent place in eschatological events.

Thus, music depicted in the Bible is a temporal, human activity of cultural significance with messianic implications; it is an acoustical phenomenon which serves as a sonorous vehicle on which personal laudations and laments ride and declarations and doctrines soar. Biblical music emanates throughout the earthly spheres of human culture and transcends into the spiritual sphere of eternal divine worship, all the while calling humans to engage with their Creator.

Music As a Temporal, Human Activity

The first explicit mention of music in the Bible occurs in Genesis 4:21 in the description of Jubal as "the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe."[1] In the seventh generation after Adam (Gen 4:17–21), Jubal is a son of Lamach, along with his brother Jabal ("the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock" [Gen 4:20])[2] and half-brother Tubal-cain ("the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron" [Gen 4:22]).

1 All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

2 Donald Hustad comments, "Here the two components of Hebrew worship—animals for a burnt sacrifice and instruments for the accompanying 'sacrifice of praise'—originate

As the verse emphasizes that Jubal was "the father of all those who *play*" musical instruments (emphasis added), music's status as a temporal activity was established early on in the biblical account.[3] The word translated "play" is the Hebrew verb *taphas*, which can mean to "lay hold of" or "wield."[4] This verb is used throughout the OT in descriptions of aggressive action (e.g. 1 Kgs 18:40, "*Seize* the prophets of Baal"), including military conquest (e.g. Josh 8:8, "as soon as you *have taken* the city . . ."). Thus, *playing* music was not a passive experience, but an activity that one engaged in heartily.

In the Psalter, which is replete with musical references, various verbs are used to describe musical activity in the context of Hebrew worship. For example, Psalms 71:22 and 150:3 speak of "praising" (*yadah*) Yahweh with various instruments, Psalm 81:2 of "sounding" (*nathan*—literally, "to give") the tambourine, and Psalm 98:5 of "singing praise" (*zamar*) with the lyre. Thus, music in the Psalter is music-making.

"[W]hen Scripture alludes to music, it is to *music in action*. The music of ancient Israel and of the New Testament church, as part of the music of the ancient world, was not about works or scores; it was somethng made and heard."

Jeremy Begbie writes, "[W]hen Scripture alludes to music, it is to *music in action*. The music of ancient Israel and of the New Testament church, as part of the music of the ancient world, was not about works or scores; it was something made and heard."[5] Music mentioned in the biblical account was, therefore, part of the "happenings" and history of biblical people.

The Cultural Significance of Music

This emphasis on the practice of music-making identifies music as an aspect of culture. Ebbie Smith concisely explains, "Culture is the shared and integrated patterns of behavior exhibited by a particular group."[6] These patterns consist of activities and their related ideas that are transmitted via institutions within a part of human society. As the Bible depicts primarily

in the same family! Scripture does not give instructions in animal husbandry or in music performance, but, when offered in worship, both were expected to be the best possible, to the glory of God!" (*Jubilate II: Church Music in Worship and Renewal* [Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 1993], 131).

3 For a study of the implications of music's temporal nature, see Jeremy Begbie, *Theology, Music, and Time* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), which seeks to "show how the experience of music can serve to open up features of a distinctly *theological* account of created temporality, redeemed by God in Jesus Christ, and what it means to live in and with time as redeemed creatures" (6–7).

4 Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (1906; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 1074.

5 Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 60 (italics original).

6 Ebbie Smith, "Culture: The Milieu of Missions," in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 261.

the culture of the ancient Israelites in the OT, musical references preserved in the biblical account are primarily from that culture. These OT references (especially in the Psalms) contain the majority of biblical information we have about music. Therefore, the following discussion will focus on the significance of music for the ancient Israelites.

The Israelites incorporated music, especially singing, into a wide variety of cultural activities. Begbie states:

> Ancient Israel was a singing culture, and the variety of songs seems to be as wide as the variety of human activity. So, for example, we read of work songs (Isa 16:10), military songs (Judg 5:1–31; 1 Sam 21:11; 2 Chr 20:21), songs of instruction, prophecy and mutual edification (1 Kgs 4:32; 1 Chr 25:1–3), love songs (Isa 5:1; 23:15–16), songs of entertainment (Job 21:12; Isa 24:9; Lam 5:14; Amos 6:5), songs with dance (Exod 15:20; 1 Sam 18:6–7), songs of derision (Job 30:9; Ps 69:12; Lam 3:14, 63) and songs of mourning and lamentation (2 Chr 35:25).[7]

Further human activities are listed by Andrew Hill in his compilation of OT references to music, including "family gatherings and celebrations," "the court life of the kings . . . and enthronement celebrations," and "feasting and merrymaking."[8]

These last two relate to regular occurrences in the culture of Israel during the First Temple period, as Davidic kings were enthroned and temple worship established in Jerusalem, including the observance of Levitical feasts. Upon their pilgrimage to Jerusalem to take part in these feasts, Israelites sang particular Psalms en route (Pss 120–134). Once at the feasts, other prescribed songs were part of the liturgy, such as the Egyptian Hallel Psalms (Pss 113–118) used at Passover.

The Psalms and Their Messianic Implications

The collection of Hebrew poetry passed down and eventually compiled under the inspiration of God became the OT Psalter, often referred to as Israel's "hymnbook." This collection is a diverse display of poetic and liturgical forms, as well as historical and theological content. It begins with the description of a "blessed man" who meditates on and follows "the way" of the Torah (Ps 1), and then proceeds with five books of Hebrew poetry. Among this poetry are admonitions to "the wise," descriptions of the king, instructions for faithful worshipers, and laments of an oppressed people, among other topics.[9] These psalms formed the language for Hebrew musi-

7 Begbie, *Resounding Truth*, 61.

8 See Andrew E. Hill, "Music in the Old Testament," in *Baker's Handbook of Bible Lists* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 221–26.

9 In modern psalm scholarship, individual psalms are often assigned to specific categories or psalm genres (*Gattung*). Although scholars disagree on terminology and which psalms should be included in each category, many base their methodology on Hermann Gunkel's *An Introduction to the Psalms*, trans. James N. Nogalski (Macon, GA: Mercer University

cal worship as practiced during the First and Second Temple periods and beyond.

However, the Psalms are not a static relic of ancient cultural practices in Israel. Instead, many of them point ahead to a fulfillment in later history through the Jewish Messiah, or "anointed one." The root term for "Messiah" occurs in Psalms 45 and 89. Psalm 45:7 speaks of God anointing (*mashach)* a blessed king, who will reign forever, with the "oil of gladness." The root is used again in Psalm 89:20; but in this instance Yahweh is anointing David to "establish" and "strengthen" him with "steadfast love" (vv. 21–33). Yahweh promises that David's offspring and throne will be established forever (vv. 34–37). Strangely, however, in the next verse (v. 38) the psalmist states that he is "full of wrath against [his] anointed" (*mashiyach*), and concludes the psalm with unanswered questions and pleas for Yahweh to "remember" how His anointed is mocked (vv. 45–51).[10] A number of other psalms also include references to the "anointed" (*mashiyach*), including Psalms 2, 84, and 132.

In the New Testament, psalms understood as messianic become arguments for Jesus' identity as the long-awaited Messiah. Psalm 132 finds fulfillment in the angel's proclamation to Mary in Luke 1:32–33: "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." In Acts 4:24–30, Christians in Jerusalem quote Psalm 2:1–2 in a prayer regarding the abuse of God's "holy servant Jesus," whom they declare God "anointed" (v. 27).

Other psalms, such as Psalms 22 and 110, do not use the term "anointed," but contain references to the Messiah's suffering at the hands of the Romans (Ps 22:15–18) and His role as king and priest (Ps 110:1–4). This latter psalm is quoted or referenced in the NT more than any other, especially in Hebrews.[11] As Waltke and Houston state, "David's sufferings and glory typify Jesus Christ, but sometimes his language transcends his own experience and finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. . . ."[12] Thus the psalms, the

Press, 1998). More recently, other scholars have sought to both emphasize the individuality of the psalms and interpret their meaning within the "canon" of the Psalter. For a survey of modern trends in psalm interpretation, see David M. Howard, Jr., "The Psalms and Current Study," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2005), 23–40.

10 Note that these unanswered questions about Yahweh's faithfulness to His anointed conclude Book III of the Psalter. Some scholars point to Books IV and V of the Psalter (Pss 90–106 and 107–150, respectively) as an answer to these questions (Gerard Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* [Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985], 209–28).

11 Willem A. VanGemeren lists the following NT uses or references to Psalm 110: Matt 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62; 16:19; Luke 20:42–44; 22:69; Acts 2:34–35; Rom 8:34; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3, 13; 5:6; 7:17, 21; 8:1; 10:12–13; 12:2. See "Psalm 110: The Kingdom of the Lord" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 696. See also Bruce Waltke and James Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 484.

12 Waltke and Houston, 112. Waltke and Houston affirm three different types of messianic psalms: 1) indirect and typical, including any reference to David or the Davidic king; 2) typico-prophetic, which are more clear prophecies concerning Messiah (e.g. Pss 2 and

poetic hymns of ancient Israel, are significant musical artifacts for ancient Israelites as well as prophetic statements pointing to Jesus the Messiah. The musical and religious significance of the Psalms will be further explored in the next section as we consider music in the Bible as an acoustical phenomenon and "vehicle" for praise.

The Acoustical Diversity of Biblical Instruments

From the first instance of musical activity mentioned in the Bible, music is clearly an acoustical phenomenon consisting of diverse sounds produced by a variety of musical instruments. Again, Jubal "was the father of all those who play the lyre (*kinnor)* and pipe (*'ugab*)" (Gen 4:21), representing two major categories of instruments: strings and wind instruments.[13] Although Amos has stern warnings for those in Judah who "sing idle songs" and "invent for themselves instruments of music" (6:4–6), the Psalter makes it clear that the full variety of musical sounds are to be used in worship, both personal and plural.

First, superscriptions above various psalms indicate they are to be sung using various instruments, including the flute (Ps 5) and string instruments (Pss 4, 6, 12, 54, 55, 61, 67, 76). Second, verses within particular psalms instruct worshipers to sing along with various instruments, including string instruments (Pss 33:2; 43:4; 71:22; 92:3; 98:5; 144:9; 147:7); tambourines used in a procession of "singers" and "musicians" (Ps 68:25); and various combinations of instruments used together (Pss 81:2–3 [tambourine, lyre, harp, and trumpet], 149:3 [timbrel and lyre], 150:3–5 [trumpet, lute, harp, tambourine, strings, pipe, and cymbals]).[14] This multiplicity of instrumental references describes the richness of musical practice during temple worship in Jerusalem.

Laudations, Laments, Declarations, and Doctrine in Hebrew Song

Still, the majority of musical references in the Bible refer to singing, and it is the treasury of Hebrew songs that first serves as a musical mode of offering in the religious community. It is upon the vehicle of these songs (especially the Psalms) that both personal and corporate worship expres-

110); and 3) enthronement, which includes Psalms 93–99 and other psalms depicting royal ceremonies.

13 A full catalog of musical instruments mentioned in the Bible is beyond the scope of this article. Readers are referred to Andrew Hill's list of twenty-four terms for music instruments in the Old Testament in *Enter His Courts with Praise: Old Testament Worship for the New Testament Church* ([Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993], 290), as well as the helpful explanation and chart in the *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed. ([Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1982], 800–04).

14 For a more comprehensive list of instruments mentioned in psalm superscriptions and texts, see Brian L. Hedrick, *The Biblical Foundations of the Instrumental Music in Worship: Four Pillars*. (Colorado: Outskirts Press, Inc, 2009), Appendix 2, 67–70. Also, see the discussion in Paul S. Jones' chapter "A Biblical Case for Instruments in Worship," in *Singing and Making Music: Issues in Church Music Today* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2001), 23–31.

sions ride, including praise and petition, declarations and doctrine. Psalm verses such as the following express an individual's praise and thanks to Yahweh in song:

> I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me. (13:6)
>
> I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. (69:30)
>
> I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. (146:2)

Yet other psalms express personal laments, with exclamations such as:

> How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? (13:1)
>
> Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry. . . ! (39:12)[15]

Such personal exclamations of worship are common in the Psalter, and demonstrate the link between song and prayer, music and offering.[16]

Other psalms serve as declarations through which ancient Israel proclaimed attributes of Yahweh through song, including His holiness, goodness, righteousness, grace, mercy, and loving-kindness:

> Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. (30:4)
>
> They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. (145:7–9)

Likewise, Psalm 139 declares Yahweh's omnipotence (vv. 1–6), omnipresence (vv. 7–12), and omniscience (vv. 17–18).[17]

15 Note that the superscriptions of both Psalms 13 and 39 include a dedication "To the choirmaster," indicating that these personal laments were to be used in corporate song!

16 Likewise, Hebrews 2:12 emphasizes the significance of the "sacrifice of praise" for Christians, pointing to Messiah's example of sung praise in Psalm 22:22. For a thorough exploration of this verse and its implications see Ron Man, *Proclamation and Praise: Hebrews 2:12 and the Christology of Worship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007). Also, note Hustad's comment that, in our musical worship, "We should bring God *our best* sacrifice—the best performance of the best words and music which *our* church can produce and understand—because that is good stewardship of the talents God has given us, as well as our faithful response in devotion and dedication" (Hustad, 54–55).

17 For a thorough survey of the attributes of God in the Psalms, listed psalm-by-psalm from 1 to 150, see Michael Travers' appendix in *Encountering God in the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003), 296–309.

More comprehensive doctrines are also proclaimed through song in the Psalter, including the biblical meta-narrative of Creation-Fall-Redemption. Yahweh's role as Creator and Sustainer is declared in Psalm 8 (which Waltke and Houston describe as "Genesis 1:26–28 set to music"),[18] in part one of Psalm 19 (vv. 1–6), as well as in Psalms 95, 100, 104, and 149. Man's status as a fallen, sinful creature is clear in David's confession "my sin is ever before me" and commitment to "teach transgressors your ways" in Psalm 51 (vv. 3, 13).[19] Thankfully, Psalm 103:12 declares that our sins are removed "as far as the east is from the west," and Psalm 130:8 clearly describes Yahweh as one who "will redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

Biblical Music beyond Israelite Culture

Thus far, our discussion of music in the Bible has focused primarily on the musical practice in ancient Israel, as described in OT passages and especially the Psalter. However, the entirety of the biblical account also includes references to music in other cultures, including musical instruments used in Babylon and music's use in the early Christian church.

Daniel chapter three includes references to various instruments used to call the "peoples, nations, and languages" to "fall down and worship" the golden image set up by King Nebuchadnezzar (vv. 1–7). These instruments included a type of animal horn, a reed pipe, a lyre, various harps, and "every kind of music" (Dan 3:5, 7, 10, 15). Although the musical terminology used in these references is debated, the instruments at King Nebuchadnezzar's court likely represented those at courts throughout Mesopotamia and Egypt in the sixth century B.C.[20]

New Testament references to musical practice of the first century include mention of singing and various instruments. The Gospels contain comments on the role of the flute and singing in both mourning and dancing (Matt 9:23; 11:17; Luke 7:32). Paul's first letter to the Corinthians includes musical analogies for both loveless speech ("a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" [13:1]) and for speaking in tongues (the "distinct notes" or "indistinct sounds" of "lifeless" instruments such as the "harp," "flute," and "bugle" [14:7–8]). Also, various passages acknowledge the use of the trumpet to call attention to both hypocritical prayers and the end of the age (Matt 6:2; 24:31; 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16).

18 Waltke and Houston, 272.

19 Note also the seven "Penitential Psalms" (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143) recognized by the early Christian church.

20 Ancient Near Eastern music is much attested to in archaeological artifacts and records, but the Bible does not explicitly describe the musical practices of Mesopotamian and Egyptian cultures. See D. A. Foxvog and A. D. Kilmer, "Music," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 436–49. The instruments listed here are based on Foxvog and Kilmer's summary (445–46). For a more complete linguistic discussion of the terms for musical instruments used in Daniel 3, see T. C. Mitchell and R. Joyce, "The Musical Instruments in Nebuchadnezzar's Orchestra," in *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, ed. D. J. Wiseman (London: The Tyndale Press, 1965), 19–27.

The use of music in NT worship is less clear. As Allen Ross states, "The New Testament does not go into a detailed description of praise and music and musical instruments for the early church."[21] However, many assert that an essential continuity was retained between Jewish and early Christian practices, despite lack of clarity in exactly how musical practices were transmitted. For example, Begbie summarizes the connection between pre-Christian Jewish music and the early church as follows:

> Since the first Christians were Jews, much of what applies to pre-Christian Jewish music applies to the music of the New Testament period. Again, music was intertwined with everyday life, and singing seems to have been integral to the emerging Christian community, with little sign of any negative attitude toward music as such. Jesus sings with his disciples before going to the Mount of Olives (Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26), and Paul and Silas sing in prison (Acts 16:25). Paul writes of singing praise with the spirit and with the mind (1 Cor 14:15) and singing a hymn to build up the church (1 Cor 14:26), and he urges the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16).[22]

Likewise, Calvin Stapert recognizes that "early Christians belonged to a tradition, Judaism. . . ," and, therefore, understood singing to be closely related to expressions of both joy and sorrow.[23] Primarily, according to Stapert, "the song the church sings . . . is a joyful response to the works of God, stimulated by the Word and the Spirit. It is sung by humans to God and to each other, with the saints and angels and all creation."[24] As Ross asserts, the NT did not need to explain the use of music in worship because of the retention of existing Jewish practices in the

"The song the church sings . . . is a joyful response to the works of God, stimulated by the Word and the Spirit. It is sung by humans to God and to each other, with the saints and angels and all creation."

21 Allen Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006), 261.

22 Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 67–68. Begbie further comments on the possibility that Jewish temple and synagogue worship had relatively little influence on the musical practices of early church, compared to Jewish family worship and oral tradition (73). For a now classic exploration of the musical and liturgical connections between Jewish synagogue practice and the early Christian church, see Eric Werner, *The Sacred Bridge: The Interdependence of Liturgy and Music in Synagogue and Church during the First Millennium*, vol. 1 (London: D. Dobson, 1959), vol. 2 (New York: KTAV Publishing, 1984).

23 Calvin Stapert, *A New Song for an Old World: Musical Thought in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 15–16.

24 Ibid., 28. Stapert's comment regarding the angel's part in singing may be overstated. Although the carol by Charles Wesley (adapted by George Whitfield) declares "Hark! The herald angels sing. . . ," the scriptural accounts do not clearly depict angels singing. Instead, they serve as God's messengers, heralding glorious news (as in Luke 1:11–20; 1:26–37; and 2:9–14) or severe warnings (Gen 19:1–13). Of course, they do sound trumpets (as in Rev 8, 9, and 11), and some angels may be identified with the "living creatures" described in Ezekiel 10 as "cherubim" and depicted singing around the throne in Revelation 14.

early church: "The writers simply assume that such praise should continue and will continue in glory."[25]

Biblical Music in the Heavenly Realm

According to John's vision recorded in Revelation, music making does continue in "glory," the eternal heavenly state. It is here that we see music transcend temporal earthly culture and join the eternal spiritual realm.[26] Both the use of instruments and sung praise are described in Revelation, including trumpets declaring judgment throughout Revelation 8 and numerous references to harps accompanying praise (5:8; 14:2; 15:2). As Hedrick observes, "[In Revelation], we see two distinct functions of the use of instrumental music in praise and worship of God. . . : heralding God's revelation and accompaniment of voices."[27]

In particular, the voices described in Revelation 5 and 14 are singing "a new song" in praise of "the Lamb" (5:9; 14:3). John's description of such a sublime sound led the Puritan preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards to write a sermon entitled "Praise: One of the Chief Employments of Heaven." In his application, Edwards gives the following "reproof" to "those who neglect the *singing* of God's praises" (italics original):

> It is an appointment of God, that we should not only praise in our prayers, but that we should *sing* his praises. It was a part of divine worship, not only under the Old Testament, but the New. Thus we read that Christ and his disciples sung praises together, Matt 26:30. So it is commanded, Eph 5:18, 19, "Be ye filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." And Col 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." 1 Cor 14:15, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." So also the saints in heaven are represented as singing God's praises. And is that their happy and glorious employment; and yet shall it be so neglected by us, who hope for heaven?[28]

25 Ross, 261.

26 Beyond the realms of this biblical survey, but of potential interest to the reader is the Pythagorean doctrine of "the music of the spheres," which postulated a "harmonious universe" and was developed by various theorists up to the Renaissance and beyond. For a short summary, see James Haar, "Music of the Spheres," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 17, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Grove, 2001), 487–88. For a more thorough exploration, see Josceyln Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth: The Spiritual Dimensions of Music from Antiquity to the Avant-Garde* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1987).

27 Hedrick, 48. See also Thomas Allen Seel, *A Theology of Music for Worship Derived from the Book of Revelation* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1995).

28 Jonathan Edwards, "Praise, One of the Chief Employments of Heaven," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 913–17.

According to Edwards then, in order to follow the example of Messiah, the commands of Paul, and the practice of the saints in heaven, Christians should be "employed" in the practice of singing praises.

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The "New Song" for All Peoples

In fact, the Bible commands all nations and people to praise their Creator in song. As Psalm 67:4 declares, "Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth." Paul, in his theological treatise addressed to Roman Christians, even quotes similar passages in his explanation of Jesus' ministry "to the Jews first" (Rom 1:16) which extended salvation to the Gentiles (Rom 11:11). Paul states in Romans 15:8–11:

> For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name." And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him."[29]

Therefore, one result of evangelism should be the singing of praises, as all those who hear the message of the gospel, both Jew and Gentile, are called to sing a "new song" to their Creator. In David Peterson's words, they are to engage with "the living and true God . . . on the terms that he proposes and in the way that he alone makes possible,"[30] which includes the musical act of singing. May those who profess Jesus as Messiah fulfill "the ministry of the gospel of Christ" (Rom 15:19) through the making of music that calls all peoples to true worship of Yahweh.

29 Paul is quoting OT Scriptures from 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43; and Psalm 117:1, respectively.

30 David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1992), 20.

Mishkan, no. 68 (2011): 39–44

Settings of Silver

by **David Loden**

"Apples of gold in settings of silver is the Word
fitly presented." (Prov 25:11)

I am an artist. I have been one from early youth. I was writing music at age eight, directing a choir at fifteen, and singing professionally at eighteen. My field is music and theatre, and it is from that perspective that I write. I am seventy-five years old and, although I have spent the last thirty-five years in congregational leadership, I have now passed that responsibility on to others. In response to what I understand to be direction from the Lord, I have returned the mantle of pastoral work back to Him and am moving in a new-old direction—"new-old" in that it is a new chapter in my life, but a return to old, familiar dwellings . . . the world of the arts. My desire is to look holistically at the Messianic community from the perspective of artistic production and then to center in on the field of production of musical events. First, I want us to consider what we are presenting as artists and how we are presenting it. Then I want to challenge us to do it better! As believers we have been graciously endowed with biblical truth, and the presentation of these "golden apples" needs silver settings—a worthy frame. This then is the work of the Messianic artist.

I will approach this subject first with an explanation of my understanding of art and its importance in the presentation of the biblical faith, and then continue with a practical program to present this faith to Israeli audiences in musical performances. Although the bulk of the population of Israel has yet to be reached for the Lord, I firmly believe that they are prepared and ready to receive and respond to the promise and grace of God when expressed with beauty and excellence.

Art and Its Importance in the Transmission of Values

Art is the visible face of a culture. A culture is the communally understood values of a society. Art is the window of that culture through which we communicate our worldview: (1) to ourselves, to understand it better; and

(2) to other cultures and societies. Every group of people bound together by blood, language, geography, faith, or any combination of these can be thought of as a society. Every society grows into the knowledge of its own unique identity. At that point it can be said to have a culture of its own. The cultural face then begins to be manifest in artistic expressions.

The questions following from that are three: (1) Are we, the believers, a recognizable society? (2) Are we mature enough as a society to have developed our own culture? (3) Are we, as artists, effectively participating in making the face of our own culture and worldview visible to ourselves and to others? This is our challenge.

Artists in general, and particularly Messianic artists, should have very little need to hear how important art is. For most of us, it is our life and the burning concern of our hearts. I will, therefore, content myself with a few basic observations to emphasize the significance of the artistic endeavor. Art is not a luxury; it is found at all times, among all peoples, in all places. In a word, art is universal in the experience of man. Art in contemporary culture is all pervasive and has the ability to reflect the character of an age in an understandable way. Art can be defined as the unique impulse of the human spirit to explore possibilities of meaning and truth apart from the empirical scientific approach to truth. Art is man's endeavor to encounter transcendence. The German theologian Paul Tillich said, "The truth of science is correctness; the truth of art is power of expression."[1] In Tillich's view, there was much more to art than form and content. In his opinion, it is the task of the artist to disclose the import, or inner meaning, of reality.

In our day, there has been a tendency to split the aesthetic experience of art from knowledge. Reason has been seen as the sole path to truth. According to this argument, any truth which is artistically apprehended or expressed is considered to be subjective and un-provable; whereas truth apprehended or expressed by reason is objective and verifiable. For this reason, in modern times art in the service of the Messiah has been relegated to the realm of decoration and illustration and generally considered to be at best nonessential, if not actually suspect by its very nature. The Christian artist has been made to feel, by and large, peripheral.

Our Hebrew heritage has much to contribute in this arena. This split of art from knowledge is a result of dualistic Greek thinking and would have been totally foreign to our Hebrew ancestors in the faith, as well as to Yeshua himself. The biblical view of man is that he is a unified being. Marvin Wilson writes: "To the Hebrew mind a human being was a dynamic, body-soul unity, called to serve God his Creator passionately, with his whole being, within the physical world."[2] Knowledge in the biblical sense is far more than intellectual understanding; it is an intimate involvement of the whole human personality. In Jewish thinking, man is called to celebrate and enjoy

1 Paul Tillich, *The System of the Sciences according to Objects and Methods* (East Brunswick, NJ: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1981), 179.

2 Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), 168.

the physical realm in all its aspects. There is a Talmudic story which relates that at the Day of Judgment, man will be required to give account of all the opportunities for enjoyment that he missed. There is no room for a remote asceticism.

For our Hebrew fathers, art was integrated into every aspect of life, and the distinctions which we know today as high art, low art, and folk art did not exist. Whether music, dance, drama, or storytelling, these things were woven into the daily fabric of life and the worship of God. For example, the songs and stories in Scripture are a fascinating subject for study. Dance in the Bible was interwoven with both religious celebration and everyday activity. There were dances of celebration and victory after war, there were processional dancing before the ark and courtship dancing in the vineyard. Dance was not divorced from life and merely observed as an art form. Again we see the active interaction between life and art.

There is a hidden song deep in the soul of the Hebrew people. Out of the mouths of contemporary Jews we hear these words: "Man cannot live without a song." And in the words of Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, "A Jew is he—or she—whose song cannot be muted, nor can his or her joy be killed by the enemy . . . ever!"[3] Music is first mentioned at the creation of the world when, as the book of Job describes it, "the sons of God shouted for joy and the stars sang together" (Job 38:7). For those who have read C. S. Lewis' The Chronicles of Narnia, one cannot help but be reminded of the picture of Aslan, the Christ-figure, singing the created world into existence. The biblical narrative places musical activity as one of the earliest pursuits of mankind, together with animal husbandry and tool making. Our Jewish heritage not only validates but also elevates the status of those who are artists, integrating art into daily experience.

I like to think of our work as "exposing the hidden truth." I have been involved for the last two years in producing George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* in Hebrew. It is deeply satisfying to see those who have loved this music in Israel suddenly hear it in a language they can fully understand. The reactions have been stunning! People sat, mouths open and amazed, even weeping as truth that had been obscured came to light and the hidden became visible by translation. This is a single, small example of "exposing the hidden truth."

Truth can be either beautiful or ugly, and it is many times hidden. The face of God is beautiful but generally veiled from the eyes of society. The evil in our world is ugly, but also unseen by most people because we do not want to see it. Exposition of truth can mean exposing the beauty of life or exposing the underbelly of daily existence. Exposition of truth can be overt and designed, or contained as an underlying layer beneath a placid exterior.

So we have "nice art," portraying God and His attributes, and we have "ugly art," in which evil and corruption are revealed. Do we, as Messianic artists, have to make a choice? If we do, is the choice we make based on

3 Ibid., 308.

what our constituency will think of us? These are unpleasant questions, but they must be asked and answered.

I remember two years ago being in Stuttgart, singing the role of Saul in the oratorio of that name by Handel. My daughter (who sang the role of Michal) and I went to a small museum in the city and saw an exhibition by the twentieth-century German artist Otto Dix (1891–1969). The collection (named by the artist himself) was *Triumph des Todes* [the triumph of death]! If you find this work and view it, I must warn you that the subject matter is not lovely, and his approach is quite raw. If you wish to turn the other direction, OK . . . but Otto Dix, not a believer, a loyal German citizen and a decorated veteran of the First World War, did not turn the other direction! He saw the excesses and hedonism of society in the Weimar Republic at a time when Germany was beginning to recover from that first war, and at the same time, beginning to prepare for the second one. He saw underneath the revelry and did not turn his face away! He painted his exposure of hedonism and the early rise of Nazism. He saw it coming. He painted the truth under the pretty façade and changed the hearts of many German people at the time . . . eventually paying a heavy price personally for his exposure of truth.

Do we busy ourselves with the pleasant things and leave the ugly ones for non-believing artists? (They do it very well.) As believers, do we have something to say about our society which may be unpopular? Where is the play written, the picture painted, or the music composed by Israeli Messianic artists which reveals institutionalized evil in our country? Dare we comment on the evil of abortion or blatant injustice to new immigrants or Arabs? Are we bold enough to expose truth and pay the possible consequences? I am not suggesting that as believing artists, we start to portray only "ugly" subjects or become unnecessarily provocative. I do expect that we should provoke our people to see and examine. I do expect that as the "Society of Yeshua" we will unabashedly comment on our world, the beautiful and the evil, from the perspective of the redeemed and in the spirit and love of the Messiah!

"Apples of Gold in Settings of Silver": A Practical Program

Israelis love the arts, and music in particular. Every time there are concerts of classical and baroque music written on New Testament themes, or works of faith by those who wrote for the glory of God, the houses are full and enthusiastic. Art can be appreciated by audiences simply because it is art and can be approached eclectically, or art can challenge us by communication. The example of Handel's *Messiah* is a good case in point. As long as the average Israeli can hear the work in a language that is not his own, he can maintain

As long as the average Israeli can hear the work in a language that is not his own, he can maintain "artistic distance" and file it in the drawer labeled "Art." When he hears it in his own tongue, however, it suddenly becomes clear communication!

"artistic distance" and file it in the drawer labeled "Art." When he hears it in his own tongue, however, it suddenly becomes clear communication! Yet much of the life's work of the older composers was unequivocally written with an agenda of communication of truth in mind. Translation of their works in order to make them understandable would not have been a problem for them. The values of "Christian" societies were then, as now, based upon the truth of the Scriptures. (This is not to say that Christian societies ever consisted solely of those with a true salvation experience.) My point is to emphasize that the artists of those societies were expressing the core values that underpinned those societies. They presented biblical truth and commented on the social lie. This was their brief, and it should be ours as well. What, then, can be done?

During the last ten years, a number of Messianic artists in Israel have taken a higher profile in the art world, and their work is being evaluated in the secular arena. The musical artists have been improving their skill sets, and more of the believing youth are breaking out of the mediocrity of the past and getting a hearing in the public arena. There have been a number of new musical productions presented in the land, and they are standing up to the test of critical evaluation in the public forum. One good example is "The Covenant," a musical production written by Robert and Elizabeth Muren and translated into Hebrew by the late Ehud Manor. Starting with the first Hebrew performances in 2006, it has become a popular event in the Israeli theatre calendar. Tens of thousands of Israelis have seen this work and have been profoundly moved. Chris Mitchell, in a piece written for CBN News, says, "For the past 3 years, tens of thousands of Israelis have filled theaters to see an original musical called 'The Covenant.'"

I am personally gratified to see this happening, at last. I will present another complementary vision, which is now in the process of being put into place. I wish to see "settings of silver" for the gold of biblical truth.

It has been my dream to see a production organization established for the presentation of concerts on a regular basis in the public sector; concerts with either overt biblical themes or written by composers whose artistic purpose is the glory of God. With the establishment of the non-profit organization Kamti, the concert choir Liturgi-Kal, and in cooperation with Pavilion Productions in Jerusalem, this dream is coming to fruition. The name of this concert series echoes one of the rallying cries of biblical faith, equally apt for Jews, Christians, and Messianic believers: "*Soli Deo Gloria*," or "Glory Be to God Alone!"

There are two criteria for choosing music for the concerts. The first criterion is that the piece is written from the ground of faith (i.e., orchestral works by composers whose life work gives glory to God, or in the case of vocal/choral works, the texts are biblical themes, biblical texts, liturgical proclamation, or prayer). The second criterion is that, in the case of compositions with texts, the content is able to be translated and sung in Hebrew whenever possible. Two criteria also pertain to the performance of the concerts: first, participating artists should be Messianic Jews, believing Christians, or those of a spirit which can cooperate with our goals and

vision. Second, the works are to be presented with the highest standards of quality attainable, given the available resources.

The initial production of this series was Handel's *Messiah*. Ground breaking work by Amikam Tavor and Arieh Bar-David in the translation of this incredible text, and the pioneering performance which Arieh directed in 2008, gave rise to the vision which would become the concert series "*Soli Deo Gloria*." *Messiah* was performed in Hebrew again in 2010 by Kamti and Pavilion Productions, in May and in December. In this manner, the dream of one dear sister in the Lord, Irene Levy, was fulfilled in glorious manner. Irene carried this burden for thirty years, talking to everyone she could, and praying endlessly. May her joy be complete, and may the glory be to God! This year will see a two-part concert series initiated. In May, we produced two performances of "Evening of Glory," a program consisting of the Overture to the first orchestral suite of Johann Sebastian Bach, the *Gloria* of Antonio Vivaldi (in Hebrew), and the *Gloria* of John Rutter, a contemporary British composer, in the original Latin. The second part of the 2011 series will be in late December, when, with the help of God, we will again present two performances of *Messiah* in Hebrew.

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David Loden has vast experience in opera (having sung 29 standard roles professionally) and has performed on and off Broadway, as well as managed a ballet company. Since coming to faith in the 1970s, he has been a prolific writer, and since immigrating to Israel in 1974, he has been a pioneer in congregational planting and writing worship music, as well as training others to do the same.

It is our desire that the concert series grows from two events a year to four or five. There are many possibilities for outstanding, quality musical experiences. A rich repertoire is available in both historic and contemporary works. The pool of performing artists in the Messianic community in Israel is constantly growing. Although this vision may seem to the casual observer to be simply another concert series, my desire is for our eyes to be opened again to what was once an obvious fact: That truth, when presented through the gate of beauty, finds easy entrance to the hungry soul.

Communication of truth is not only ink on paper or bytes on the Internet. The effective use of artistic gifts enables truth to conquer, reside in, and change the hearts of men. This is the wisdom of Solomon in Proverbs 25:11.

"Apples of gold in settings of silver is the Word fitly presented."

Mishkan, no. 68 (2011): 45–49

Royal Work for the King in Jerusalem

by **Irit Iffert** (translated by Ann Hilsden)

For as long as I can remember, I have been a singer. By the age of nine, I produced my first notebook of my own songs, and after that, they multiplied. At the same time, I began to study the flute after two years of playing recorder in the neighborhood community center. It was a principle in our home that my sister and I would study a musical instrument.

Within a short time my sister and I had learned to play our instruments well enough in a context of praise and worship, so we joined the worship team of our congregation. When I started high school, I dropped flute lessons altogether (much to my present regret) and only played on weekends for the congregation.

In twelfth grade, for the first time, I was asked to come to a recording studio and sing. Since then, there have been many times I have been asked to sing on recording projects, but I still have the sense that I have not "gone the distance" in attaining a more professional level. Often I think of how much better my progress would have been, if only I had been in a fertile setting where music was flowing and growing in a Messianic environment. If I had been able to learn theory, sing in a choir, or play in an ensemble where people of faith were encouraging me, how wonderful that would have been. I thank God that in the past few years I have had the opportunity to learn music and to make up for this sense of loss.

A Dream and a Vision

Learning in a Messianic arts school sounds like a dream. But it has become a reality at the Yuval Messianic School of Music and the Arts in Jerusalem.

For years, people in the body of Messiah have been hoping and praying for a Messianic school of the arts where children, youth, and adults can develop their gifts for God's glory. It turns out that this dream has been ripening in the hearts of many people for some time. In the summer of 2010, the time was right to begin working toward the reality, asking the Father in heaven for direction.

With great anticipation, Alex Atlas and I met with a number of pastors and presented this vision. To our surprise they, too, had been praying and working toward such a vision. In the summer months, we were busy putting together a teaching staff, a management staff, and a possible schedule that involves all the different classes and lessons. At the same time we started organizing an open house to present Yuval—its goals and visions, and what one can expect to see in the coming year—to see if there was any interest and willingness to be involved.

At Yuval there are three principal supporting bodies: King of Kings Community Jerusalem, Beit Geula (Jerusalem Assembly), and HaChotam Publishing. They are the founders and creators of the school, and it is good to see the cooperation and commitment these separate ministries have for this shared vision. In the early stages of our meetings, the committee decided that Yuval should use the Pavilion facilities in the center of Jerusalem, and we are so thankful to God for this open door. What a blessing it is to assist the students to develop their gifts and worship our God together in the very center of the city which He chose! In September, we were surprised to see the Pavilion full of interested people at the open house, and we were overjoyed to see that the timing was right to establish this school in Israel. The response was overwhelming!

After the opening celebration, one woman turned to me, so thrilled and encouraged, because she and a number of others had been praying for over twenty years that such a school would be established, and actually to be present at the fulfillment of their vision and to see with their eyes the answer to their prayer was almost too much for her. It was a great encouragement to us, as a leadership team, to see the power of prayer at work!

And so we went forward, walking on water, with our eyes fixed on the Lord, who was the true initiator of this project. We began the process of building a curriculum and finding financial support. In October 2010, Yuval Messianic School of Music and the Arts was established in Jerusalem, to the glory of God!

We soon realized that we needed to be registered with the government as an *amuta*, or non-profit organization, to make sure all of our operations were legal and orderly. After weeks of meetings with the lawyers, the bank, and the accountant, we finally received our status under the name of "Yuval Arts." We received from the accountant a very favorable financial arrangement, and he is also located near our school.

Shortly after we obtained our official non-profit registration, we celebrated with a mid-term recital. On a winter's evening in January, the Pavilion was filled with family and friends of Yuval, and it was so exciting to see what had been accomplished in a short time. We heard instrumental solos and ensembles, vocal solos, duets, and different choirs. An exhibition of art adorned the foyer, and we enjoyed dance, drama, and a very fun video animation. What a pleasant surprise that there are so many gifts in our small body of believers in Israel.

Throughout this first term, Yuval also offered special seminars and events. We held a photography seminar, a drawing seminar, and a concert in coop-

eration with an orchestra from the United States. A Yuval Purim event in March was another opportunity to have the students perform and exhibit. After the end-of-term recital in June, Yuval had a two-day seminar/retreat for songwriters and composers that was well received.

Why "Yuval"?

Yuval is the first musician mentioned in the Bible (Gen 4:21). Also, in Jeremiah 17:8, it is written: "He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream [Heb., *yuval*]."[1] Our prayer is that Yuval will be a place where all can come, spread out their roots, grow, and bear fruit for the glory of Yeshua.

We see Yuval as a center where anyone can come for a variety of studies, including music, visual arts, media, dance, and drama. The lessons take place in the afternoon, so that both children and adults can come after school or work. The lessons are weekly, and some of our students have come from Rishon Letzion, the Tel Aviv area, and Beersheva. We also have a variety of cultures and backgrounds among the students and teachers—Arab, Russian, Ethiopian, French, Mexican, American, German, Finnish, British, Canadian—Jews and Gentiles—all one in Messiah!

The purposes of Yuval are:

1. To qualify a generation of Messianic believers to use their God-given gifts to build the kingdom of God and the body of Messiah in the country.
2. To be a quality Messianic institution that leads, paves, and directs the way for its students to be true disciples of Yeshua, involved in and influencing society.
3. To be a light to and serve non-believers, drawing people to Yeshua.

In its activity, the school focuses on cultivating the gifts of the students and teaching them to use and invest these gifts within the body of Messiah and in the non-believing community.

Who Teaches at Yuval?

There is a wealth of gifted teachers in the field of music who teach such instruments as drums, piano, guitar, and recorder, and who teach voice and direct choirs. Also in the fields of visual arts and crafts, theater and drama, dance, and animation, we have highly qualified teachers. For them, as well as the students, this has been an answer to prayer and has opened a door of opportunity for them to bless others with their gifts in greater ways than before.

1 All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Yuval Today

As of April 2011, Yuval has served over 150 students, from the ages of 5 to 71! We have seventeen permanent teachers as well as a number of others who substitute teach or do one-time seminars or short courses. We do not see the Yuval School as a type of "factory" where the teacher comes, receives the student, teaches, dismisses the student, and the student in turn takes it as a duty and as an information session. We see the school as a living, spiritual center, where teachers are imparting knowledge, investing in the students, and listening to them, so that they can also be examples and mentors, encouraging them in their walk with Yeshua and in using their gifts for His glory.

For example, a young girl came to Yuval to start her first piano lesson, but first shared about her situation at her neighborhood school—her classmates were mocking her for her faith. The teacher prayed with her that God would strengthen her hand and give her the power not to be ashamed of her faith. In that moment, this girl learned that Yuval was a safe place to share her problems, where she could receive strength and encouragement from other believers, learn from their experiences, and depend upon their prayers.

In that moment, this girl learned that Yuval was a safe place to share her problems, where she could receive strength and encouragement from other believers, learn from their experiences, and depend upon their prayers.

Hebrews 13:21 says, "He will equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." He does, indeed, equip us and enable us to serve Him. We are instruments in His hands. It is for us to give back the gifts that He gave us for His glory—He is the center, to Him be the glory. The difference between Messianic art and secular art is the goal behind it. We do all for the glory of God and the good of His kingdom, for our gifts are from Him. "Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us competent" (2 Cor 3:5–6a).

In Even-Shoshan's Hebrew dictionary, an artist is defined as "one who is a master of his field, skilled with expertise."[2] "Art" is a "creative work made by one gifted with perfect taste."[3] Let us stop and ask ourselves just how much we are "experts" or "skilled." Do we aspire to a high level of skill and professionalism? How much time do we invest in making the most of our God-given abilities? Psalm 33:3 says, "Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts." God wants us to open our gifts, to use and develop them for the working out of His will on earth.

Yuval is a place where many can bring their melodies, dance, artwork, and drama, and offer their gifts in an environment where God is glori-

2 *Even Shoshan Hebrew-Hebrew Dictionary*, s.v. "אמן."
3 Ibid., s.v. "אמנות."

fied. At Yuval we can dig our roots deep, and our children, youth, and adults together can be witnesses to the work of God among us as His kingdom is built. Pray for the Yuval school, still in its beginnings, and for the three organizations that are sponsoring it, and pray that we can become a strong school that has a foundation that will enable it to continue to serve and strengthen the body of Messiah in the land of Israel.

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Irit Iffert, a young Israeli Messianic Jew, serves as a teacher, singer, and worship leader. She has recorded two albums and is involved in different worship projects and concerts around the country and abroad. Irit also serves as the coordinator of Yuval Messianic School of Music and the Arts.

"... and every craftsman in whose mind the LORD had put skill [shall work], everyone whose heart stirred him to up come to do the work" (Exod 36:2).

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Mishkan, no. 68 (2011): 50–63

The Resurrection of Jesus in Contemporary Jewish Scholarship

by **David Mishkin**

Jewish interest in the study of Yeshua (Jesus) started almost two hundred years ago and has been well documented from a variety of perspectives.[1] It began cautiously among a few daring scholars. Today, the study continues at an ever increasing pace. Books and articles abound about the teachings of Yeshua and His exact place within Second Temple Judaism, and about how much of the "historical Jesus" can be known. But there is one area of study that has received relatively little attention from Jewish scholars. Ironically, it is the very thing the New Testament describes as the most important event in His life: His resurrection from the dead. It is an event of utmost importance. In fact, without it there would be no good news. The apostle Paul could not have been clearer: "and if [Messiah] has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor 15:17, NASB).

Because of this, there is a large body of (Gentile) literature on the resurrection of Yeshua. There are numerous books from an apologetic point of view,[2] and there have also been massive studies focusing on the theology and historicity of the resurrection.[3] There is a case to be made that it is an actual, historical event. Critical scholars passionately disagree and this has made for a lively, ongoing debate.[4] Jewish scholars have for the most part stayed away from this discussion, although a few memorable theories have

1 Jakob Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979); Donald Hagner, *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984); Walter Jacobs, *Christianity through Jewish Eyes* (New York: KTAV, 1974); Matt Hoffman, *From Rebel to Rabbi: Reclaiming Jesus and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2007).

2 Gary Habermas and Michael R. Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004); William Lane Craig, *The Son Rises* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000).

3 N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2003); Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010).

4 Paul Copan and Ronald Tacelli, *Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Figment?: A Debate between William Lane Craig and Gerd Ludemann* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000); Norm Geisler, *The Battle for the Resurrection* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992).

appeared. Most notably, Pinchas Lapide argued that Yeshua not only died on the cross and was buried, but that He did, in fact, rise from the dead.[5] His conclusion, however, was that the event was beneficial for Gentiles only. Hugh Schonfield, in his famous book *The Passover Plot*, also made some interesting comments.

More recently, a number of other writers have contributed to the discussion. This article will examine the works of Jewish scholars who have interacted with the resurrection of Yeshua. It will focus on the contemporary period—the first decade of the twenty-first century (with one exception, which appeared just a few years earlier). The following questions will be addressed: (1) What are Jewish scholars saying about the historicity of the resurrection of Yeshua? (2) Which events surrounding the resurrection are acknowledged as historical? (3) What, if any, alternative theories have been presented? (4) How well do these alternative theories hold up?

Dan Cohn-Sherbok

Just a few years before the new century dawned, British theologian Gavin D'Costa brought together scholars from a variety of backgrounds to discuss the resurrection of Yeshua. The resulting book was called *Resurrection Reconsidered*. Reform rabbi and university professor Dan Cohn-Sherbok examined the question from a Jewish point of view.

Cohn-Sherbok begins his article by explaining a conversation he had with his wife about the Apostles' Creed. He was able to agree with about half of it. The parts he rejected were the "central beliefs of the Christian tradition."

> At the heart of my rejection of these Christian beliefs is my inability to accept the claim that Jesus rose from the dead. Traditionally, this has been the linchpin of the entire Christian theological edifice.[6]

After this introduction, he surveys the belief in resurrection in both the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud, concluding that resurrection is a "central feature" in traditional Jewish theology. Before dealing with the question of the resurrection of Jesus, Cohn-Sherbok surveys the reasons traditional Jews have not accepted Jesus as the Messiah. "Could such a man have been resurrected?" He concludes, "The Jewish answer has universally been, 'No.'"[7]

Cohn-Sherbok knows that there are exceptions to this rule, and he admits, "There is no logical inconsistency in believing that Jesus could have been revived from the dead."[8] The real question is: Did it happen? If an

5 Pinchas Lapide, *The Resurrection of Jesus*: *A Jewish Perspective* (1979; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002).

6 Dan Cohn-Sherbok, "The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish View," in *Resurrection Reconsidered*, ed. Gavin D'Costa (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1996), 185.

7 Ibid., 194.

8 Ibid., 195.

all-powerful God exists, many have argued, then a resurrection is theoretically possible. Cohn-Sherbok affirms this logic, but he does not say, one way or the other, if he himself believes in an all-powerful God. From here, he moves on to the specific questions regarding the resurrection of Jesus.

There are two main reasons why he denies the resurrection of Jesus. First, he mentions the "conflicting records of the gospel writers."[9] He does not give examples, but depends on the testimony of other critical scholars for confirmation. Scholars have long been debating the historicity of the New Testament, and the last century has seen an "outpouring of scholarly attempts to capture the true words of Jesus."[10] For Cohn-Sherbok, the disagreement among scholars is reason enough to doubt the resurrection.

> It is well known that there is no universality of agreement, and if scholars cannot concur about such historical matters what credence can we give to the gospel accounts of the miraculous reappearance of Jesus to his disciples?[11]

Is he saying that scholars need to agree in order for something to be considered true? This line of thinking would be the end of scholarship! The whole point of scholarly writing is to sift through the evidence, come to a conclusion, and present the findings. Cohn-Sherbok remains removed from the subject at hand, retreating from the investigation, because of "conflicting records of the gospel writers" and the opinions of other scholars. He does not actually interact with the New Testament itself.

When he speaks of "conflicting records" of the gospel writers, he continues by saying, "and as other essays in this book have demonstrated the picture presented there is riddled with difficulties."[12] True, other writers in this book point out "difficulties." That was the purpose of this book—to present various critical views. But why didn't Cohn-Sherbok also mention Wolfgang Pannenberg's article in this book called "History and the Reality of the Resurrection," which refuted some of these critical assumptions? Indeed, discrepancies (whether they are called conflicts or difficulties) are not necessarily insurmountable, and they should not be a reason to abandon the search. Even Cohn-Sherbok acknowledges that some things in the Gospels can be considered historical. Specifically, he believes that Yeshua "was crucified, died and was buried."[13]

The second reason Cohn-Sherbok denies the resurrection concerns the experiences the disciples had of Yeshua after His death. The disciples believed that He rose from the dead. Many critical scholars acknowledge that something must have happened to make them believe He had risen from the dead. What is usually questioned is their reason for believing—did they really experience the risen Jesus or did something else happen? At

9 Ibid., 197.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., 185.

this point, alternative explanations are often presented. Cohn-Sherbok is not convinced that these experiences are historical. But if something did happen, he says it is "possible, indeed likely, that those who encountered Jesus after his crucifixion had nothing more than a subjective psychological experience."[14] This line of reasoning goes beyond historical inquiry and enters the realm of psychoanalysis.

This theory is pure speculation, especially as put forth by Cohn-Sherbok. Others who have promoted this theory acknowledge as historical at least some of the events surrounding the resurrection. Based on these historical events, a case can then be made to explain why a "psychological experience" might fit. Cohn-Sherbok does not explain which of these events (if any) he considers historical, and, therefore, his diagnosis is made without any data.

Cohn-Sherbok's article offers a "Jewish view" of the resurrection of Yeshua. His conclusion is that he does not believe it. He is not against believing it, he just wishes there were more evidence.

> As a Jew and a rabbi, I could be convinced of Jesus' resurrection, but I would set very high standards of what is required. It would not be enough to have a subjective experience of Jesus. If I had voices or had a visionary experience of Jesus, this would not be enough.[15]

He then gives some details describing what he would need in order to believe. They include a "host of angels trailing clouds of glory and announcing his Messiahship for all to see." It would also have to be public, "televised on CNN and other forms of the world's media."[16] Actually, for the person who is committed to not believing, even this evidence would not suffice. Unfortunately, Cohn-Sherbok's "Jewish view" is a view from afar. His arguments for why he does not believe in the resurrection of Jesus do not hold up, but for him that seems to be beside the point.

Paula Fredriksen

Paula Fredriksen teaches religion and history at Boston University. In 1988, she wrote her first book about Jesus,[17] and twelve years later she wrote *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity*.[18] Her approach to the New Testament is that of an objective historian. There is no attempt to offer any type of "Jewish view" or add personal commentary to the events. Like most critical scholars, she believes that much of the New Testament is not to be treated as actual history.

14 Ibid., 197.
15 Ibid., 198.
16 Ibid.
17 Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).
18 Paula Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity* (New York: Vintage Press, 2000).

She believes that Paul's letters were written in the mid-first century and that the Gospels were written at the end of the century. She understands that this means the distance between the events and the recording of the events is relatively short by ancient standards. Biographies for Alexander the Great, for example, did not appear for several hundred years after he died, and they are generally considered trustworthy. Fredriksen acknowledges that "forty to seventy years," by comparison, is "not bad at all."[19] Some of us who believe in the historical reliability of the Gospels might have hoped for a more enthusiastic statement about this important point. But for now, "not bad" is . . . well, not bad.

There are only a few events recorded in the Gospels which she admits are completely historical and trustworthy. The most "solid fact," in her view, is Yeshua's death by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate.[20] Following that, "the disciples' conviction that they had seen the Risen Christ," is, to her, a non-negotiable. She calls it "historical bedrock."[21] Another important fact, for the purpose of this study, concerns the spread of the new Jesus movement. Some scholars have questioned the extent and origin of the young church. But Fredriksen accepts the general account recorded in the Book of Acts. She acknowledges that the movement went quickly beyond Jerusalem and established congregations in Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Bethany in Judea, Lydda, Joppa, Caesarea, Damascus, and Antioch. "Within just five years of Jesus' death," she writes, "evidence abounds of this new movement's wide and rapid dissemination."[22]

The first question that needs to be addressed is, "Why would the disciples believe that they saw Him alive after He had clearly died?" One answer is that He really did rise from the dead. That option should at least be considered before any others are offered, but Fredriksen does not deal with that possibility. On one hand, she is agnostic on the issue, believing that "what these disciples actually saw or experienced is now impossible to say."[23] At another point, she offers an explanation as to why the disciples believed they saw Jesus after He was crucified.

> And finally, the traditions about the resurrection appearances that grew in the wake of this black moment display the power of his closest followers' commitment to Jesus' message that the Kingdom really was at hand. That Passover in Jerusalem, they were expecting an eschatological event, the arrival of God's kingdom. What they got instead was the crucifixion. But then, an unexpected eschatological event occurred: God, they became convinced, had raised Jesus from the dead.[24]

19 Ibid., 19.
20 Ibid., 8.
21 Ibid., 264.
22 Ibid., 236.
23 Ibid., 261.
24 Ibid., 252.

This statement is highly nuanced and needs to be unpacked. Fredriksen is apparently saying the following: 1) the disciples were expecting an eschatological event; 2) this is based on Yeshua's teaching regarding the kingdom of God; 3) in place of the expected eschatological event, the disciples were faced (unexpectedly) with the crucifixion of Jesus; and 4) it was the disciples' *commitment* to Jesus' teaching (about the kingdom of God) that somehow caused them to believe He had been resurrected. In other words, it was not an encounter with the risen Messiah that caused the disciples to believe that He had been resurrected. It was His teaching about the Kingdom of God that inspired them to believe something that they clearly knew was not true. This, too, is speculative, and it is another version of the "psychological experience" theory.

But the disciples were not the only ones who came to believe. A short time later, Paul also had a radical experience that lead him to believe in the resurrection of Yeshua. Whereas the disciples were already committed to Yeshua's teaching, Paul was equally committed to stopping this new movement. And he was not some uneducated fisherman. But somehow he, too, came to believe. How would Fredriksen explain this? Was it another psychological experience? That would be a remarkable coincidence.

Fredriksen's book was not an attempt to provide an answer to the question of the resurrection of Yeshua. She was writing in a much larger context and had a different agenda. The resurrection was mentioned only casually, almost unnoticeably. But, in the process, she does make a definite statement about her belief regarding this event. Perhaps in a later work she will fill in the missing details to explain her theory.

Alan F. Segal

In 2005, N. T. Wright and John Dominic Crossan met for a night of dialogue to discuss the resurrection of Jesus. Other scholars were invited to participate and give papers. Alan F. Segal submitted a paper called "The Resurrection: Faith or History?" This was actually the second time he had given a paper at a gathering dedicated to the resurrection.[25] Segal is a professor at Columbia University and has written extensively on early Christianity, Jewish-Christian relations, and a number of other issues.

Segal believes that "bodily resurrection in the New Testament means different things to different writers in the New Testament."[26] He begins by looking at Paul's writings and says that Paul saw resurrection only in terms of a spiritual body, not a physical body. By contrast, the Gospels present Yeshua, after the resurrection, with physical scars (John 20:27) and eating fish (John 21). His working assumption is that Paul's writings and the Gospels

25 Alan F. Segal, "Life and Death: The Social Sources" in *The Resurrection, An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Resurrection of Jesus,* ed. Stephen Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

26 Alan F. Segal, "The Resurrection: Faith or History," in *The Resurrection of Jesus, John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*, ed. Robert B. Stewart (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 122.

> do not share a common vocabulary for describing early Christianity or the resurrection body. Paul and the Gospels take very different ways to describe the new revelation of God's plan. That does not assure us that Paul has a different view of the resurrection body than the Gospels do, but it hardly assures us of their unity.[27]

Segal admits that this issue is "frankly ambiguous, so it is hardly settled in the direction of univocability."[28] After comparing the different authors, he comes to the empty tomb. Paul's writings pre-date the Gospels and provide the earliest reference about the resurrection. "The empty tomb," he says, "cannot be traced in Paul's teaching."[29] The Gospels, therefore, must have invented the empty tomb story and so their historicity cannot be trusted. He concludes this section by saying, "We have no idea what happened to Jesus' body."[30]

Segal presents two challenges. First, according to Paul's language, Jesus was raised spiritually (not physically). Second, Paul makes no mention of the empty tomb. Therefore, "the earliest Christian traditions contain no description of the resurrection itself."[31] His argument comes from 1 Corinthians 15. Segal believes that "Paul explicitly denies that flesh and blood can be resurrected (1 Cor 15:44, 50, 53–54)."[32] Unfortunately, he does not exegete or explain these passages. He then goes into more detail about secondary passages from Paul's other writings, but his case ultimately stands or falls with these three verses from 1 Corinthians 15.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is writing to people who already believe that Yeshua was resurrected. His point is that since Yeshua was certainly resurrected, His followers will just as certainly be resurrected. At the end of the chapter, he addresses the question of what type of body will be raised. Segal believes that the language used here is that of a spiritual body and not a physical one. In the same way, he argues, Yeshua must have been raised merely spiritually.

Segal is right that Paul's description of resurrection uses different language than the Gospels. But, different language does not necessarily imply different meaning. In 15:44, Paul says the following about the type of body which is resurrected: "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Segal and others believe the word used for "spiritual" (*pneumatikos*) is proof that individuals are resurrected with a non-physical body. But, the entire context needs to be addressed.

The word *pneumatikos* is used twenty-six times in the New Testament, almost exclusively by Paul. The two exceptions both appear in 1 Peter 2:5. Elsewhere in 1 Corinthians, the word is used three times (2:15; 3:1; 14:37),

27 Ibid., 123.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 134.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 122.

and it always has the connotation of spiritual maturity or someone who belongs to God. The context of 1 Corinthians 15:44 is a comparison between the body of a person who belongs to God and the body of a person who does not. It is a "spiritual" body in the sense of godliness, not because it is immaterial.

The use of the word *pneumatikos* in extra-biblical literature is also helpful to this discussion. Michael R. Licona has done a detailed study of the word in "eleven centuries of the extant Greek literature."[33] He concluded,

> While it can refer to something "ethereal," other meanings appear frequently. We noticed six occurrences of "spiritual body" and noticed that with one possible exception, the term is never employed to mean an immaterial body.[34]

The next passage Segal cites is 1 Corinthians 15:50. Here, Paul writes that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor can the perishable inherit the imperishable." Licona also studied the phrase "flesh and blood" in the New Testament, the Septuagint, and rabbinic literature. He concludes that the primary meaning refers to "mortality rather than physicality."[35]

This leaves one final passage that Segal cited, 1 Corinthians 15:53–54. It contrasts the "perishable" with the "imperishable." This is the same word (perishable) that Paul used in verse 50 as a parallel with the phrase "flesh and blood." He is continuing the logic of the chapter. That which is earthly, frail, weak, and susceptible to decay (i.e. unspiritual) will not inherit the kingdom of God. That which is spiritual (i.e. belonging to God) *will* inherit the kingdom of God.

Segal's second point is that Paul makes no mention of an empty tomb. In 1 Corinthians 15:4, Paul writes that Yeshua "was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." No one denies that the word "buried" implies something happening to a physical body. Therefore, the word "raised" must also be taken this way until evidence can be given to the contrary. It is an argument from silence to say that Paul did not know of the empty tomb tradition.

Segal has failed to make his case. The verses he cites from 1 Corinthians 15 do not imply that Yeshua's resurrection was merely spiritual. The fact that he did not specifically mention an empty tomb does not prove that there was no such previous tradition. There is, therefore, no contradiction between Paul's understanding of the resurrection and that of the Gospels. This knocks down Segal's conclusion, stated above, that the Gospels cannot be trusted because they disagree with the earlier tradition about the resurrection.

33 Licona, 408.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid., 418.

Geza Vermes

Geza Vermes is one of the most important Jewish scholars of the last fifty years. An expert on the Dead Sea Scrolls, he taught Jewish studies at Oxford for several decades. He has written numerous books about Yeshua from a Jewish point of view, beginning with *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospel* in 1973.[36] Thirty years later, he focused his attention on the issue of Yeshua's resurrection from the dead. His book *The Resurrection: History and Myth*[37] acknowledges that the study of the resurrection of Yeshua is different from other aspects of the historical Jesus. "Unlike the crucifixion, it is an unparalleled phenomenon in history. Two types of extreme reaction are possible: faith or disbelief."[38]

His view of the New Testament is critical, finding many discrepancies that cause him to question a number of events. Yet he is committed to uncovering the real Jesus. After listing a series of discrepancies, he realizes the evidence can be taken in more than one way.

> To quote the two extremes, N. T. Wright, the learned, twenty-first century bishop of Durham, author of a disquisition of over 800 pages, concludes that the resurrection of Jesus is a historical event. By contrast, the more succinct David Friedrich Strauss, one of the creators of the historico-critical approach to the gospels in the nineteenth century, declares that "rarely has an incredible fact been worse attested, and never has a badly attested fact been intrinsically less credible."[39]

Looking at the events as they are recorded in the Gospels themselves, he sees two main pieces of "circumstantial evidence" for the historicity of the resurrection. The first is the women who found the empty tomb. They arrived and were told that Yeshua was resurrected. The second is the appearances of the risen Yeshua to different disciples. In each case, Vermes (along with most critical scholars) sees many inconsistencies between the accounts of the four different authors. On the other hand, he also recognizes that there is an element of authenticity in both the testimony of the women and the accounts of the appearances.

A woman's testimony at that time was considered worthless, and it was not even permissible in a Jewish court of law. It would also have been an embarrassment. Vermes knows that no first century writer would have fabricated such a story and understands that some part of it must be considered "early" (i.e. historical). Similarly, he defends the accounts of the appearances of Yeshua. If they were fabricated by the early church, "one would have expected a uniform and foolproof account attributed to patently reliable witnesses."[40] Despite acknowledging the arguments for an

36 Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (New York: MacMillan, 1973).
37 Geza Vermes, *The Resurrection: History and Myth* (London: Penguin Books, 2008).
38 Ibid., 2.
39 Ibid., 104–05.
40 Ibid., 142.

early date for these events, these pieces of evidence are not enough for him. He believes that "none of them satisfies the minimum requirements of a legal or scientific inquiry."[41] At this point, an alternative theory is needed to explain what really happened.

The section that immediately follows is called "Six Theories to Explain the Resurrection of Jesus." There were actually eight, he tells us, but he discarded the two extremes—"the blind faith of the fundamentalist believer" and the "out of hand rejection of the inveterate skeptic." The six theories, in his words, are as follows:

1. The body was removed by someone unconnected with Jesus.
2. The body was stolen by his disciples.
3. The empty tomb was not the tomb of Jesus.
4. Buried alive, Jesus later left the tomb.
5. The Migrant Jesus (similar to #4, but then Jesus goes to India).
6. Do the appearances suggest spiritual, not bodily, resurrection?[42]

After discussing each option, he concludes that "all in all, none of the six suggested theories stand up to stringent scrutiny."[43] So, the New Testament's account does not hold up, and neither do the alternative theories. Vermes presents one final bit of evidence at the close of the book.

After the resurrection, and specifically after Pentecost (fifty days later), the disciples became bold in their faith. There was a radical transformation in their lives as they "underwent a powerful mystical experience." These once fearful men became "ecstatic spiritual warriors."[44] Vermes credits the "tale" of the empty tomb and the appearances as part of the reason for their hope.[45] But he does not explain why the disciples believed this. Without an alternative theory, this is good evidence for the historicity of the resurrection.

What would cause such a dramatic turnaround, in such a short period of time, especially in an entire group of people? The reason for such a change, according to Vermes, was the disciples' conviction of "the spiritual presence of the living Jesus."[46] But what does this actually mean? If Yeshua was still dead, what type of "spiritual presence" could have been imparted to the disciples? And why did they go from despondency after the crucifixion to elation just days later? Vermes does not answer these questions, but he concludes the book with an alternative option. He advocates "resurrection in the hearts of men," which he believes is something available to all people, even today.

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 143–49.
43 Ibid., 149.
44 Ibid., 150.
45 Ibid., 151.
46 Ibid., 152.

> Whether or not they adhere to a formal creed, a good many men and women of the twenty-first century may be moved and inspired by the mesmerizing presence of the teaching and example of the real Jesus alive in their mind.[47]

Vermes is a rare Jewish scholar who allows for the possibility that all people (not just Gentiles) may benefit spiritually from Jesus. But on what basis is this possible? The New Testament credits the resurrection for bringing about changed lives. If the supernatural element—and specifically the resurrection—is removed, in what way can Yeshua be a "mesmerizing presence"? Also, if critical scholarship declares that most of the events of His life probably did not happen (or that we cannot know for certain), how can Yeshua be considered an example for us? What did He do that we should emulate?

Vermes is a rare Jewish scholar who allows for the possibility that all people (not just Gentiles) may benefit spiritually from Jesus.

Vermes' belief about Yeshua is complex. He dismisses much of the New Testament as myth, yet he strongly believes that some things can be known about Jesus. He acknowledges the following: 1) Yeshua died on the cross and was placed in a tomb owned by Joseph of Arimathea; 2) the tomb was later found empty (his responses to the six alternative theories confirms this); 3) the disciples' belief in the resurrection goes back to an early source (although discrepancies prevent us from knowing the exact details of what happened); 4) alternative attempts to explain away the resurrection are lacking in credibility; 5) the disciples became radically transformed people who boldly proclaimed "the gospel"; and 6) in some way, Yeshua's life and teaching can bring inspiration even today.

Vermes has presented the most complete study of the resurrection of Jesus by a Jewish scholar. The title of his book (*History and Myth*) refers to his understanding of the New Testament documents. He believes they are a mixture of facts and legendary material. Other scholars use this assumption to automatically discredit the authenticity of the New Testament, and, therefore, assume that the resurrection could not possibly be historical. But Vermes was attempting to look more closely. And although he remains officially unconvinced, he has written a remarkably positive case in favor of the resurrection!

Jon D. Levenson

Many scholars believe that the concept of resurrection can be found in the Tanakh only in later portions, perhaps not appearing until Daniel 12:1–2. One scholar who disagrees with this is Harvard professor of Jewish studies Jon D. Levenson. He finds the concept of resurrection earlier in the pages of the Hebrew Scriptures, and he has written two books on different aspects

47 Ibid.

of this subject.[48] After these books he co-authored *Resurrection, The Power of God for Christians and Jews*.[49] The preface declares it to be "a book by a Christian and a Jew."

Kevin J. Madigan and Levenson write with one voice, explaining the Jewish background and later traditions of both the resurrection of Yeshua and the eschatological resurrection of traditional Judaism. The book begins with a narrative about some of Yeshua's disciples finding an empty tomb. From here, the authors tell us the disciples came to believe that He rose from the dead. The famous words "He is risen" then become the cornerstone of a new movement. Few other historical details are given regarding the early days or even years of this new movement.

The authors do acknowledge that Paul, along with the first disciples, firmly believed in the importance of the resurrection as an actual, historical event. It was so important to Paul that "had Christ not risen from the dead, the promise of salvation expressed by the gospels would be worthless and void."[50] It is clear that this teaching was foundational. The resurrection happened (according to the disciples, Paul, and later Christian doctrine), and it is of supreme importance. The authors also state, contrary to Alan Segal and others, that Paul believed in the resurrection of a physical body.

> The body that is sown is a physical body, "it is raised," to be sure, "a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:44). Nonetheless it is a body. We are not dealing here with the immortality or transmigration of the soul or anything else of that sort.[51]

According to Madigan and Levenson, Christianity is based on the fact that the resurrection is a historical event. But what about non-Christian views of the resurrection of Yeshua? Can an event be true for one group of people and not true for another group? There may be various interpretations or explanations of an event, but the event itself cannot be both historical and non-historical at the same time. The authors do not actually deal with this question, but they do explain that Jews do not need to believe in the resurrection of Yeshua.

> Paul thought in terms of three groups: Jews, Pagans and the Church. For the Pagans of that world, the only hope was to cease to be Pagans and to become sons of Abraham. . . . For Christians, Paul thought that this adoption would be effected through baptism; for Jews, it had

48 Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995); *Resurrection and Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

49 Kevin J. Madigan and Jon D. Levenson, *The Resurrection: The Power of God for Christians and Jews* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

50 Ibid., 25.

51 Ibid., 41.

> been accomplished through circumcision, and so Israel and the sons of Abraham would be saved.[52]

These words are then followed by a quote from Romans 11:25–27, highlighting the words, "all Israel will be saved." The authors believe that Jews can and will enjoy the benefits of the final resurrection by simply being Jews (or, more specifically, by "studying Torah"). This is a form of the Two Covenant Theory, which says that Jews and Christians have different—but equally valid—paths to God (and therefore Jews do not need Jesus). It is a convenient theory, if one's objective is "tolerance" and mutual acceptance at any cost. But it is simply not supported by the New Testament itself.[53]

The authors make no direct statements regarding their own personal beliefs about the resurrection of Yeshua. That was not the purpose of this book. But considering the implications of the subject matter, this omission does seem odd. Perhaps this was part of their strategy in writing with one voice. However, some conclusions can be deduced. Madigan is a Christian, and, therefore (one would assume), he believes that the resurrection is a historical event. It would be hard to conclude otherwise, given what the authors have said about Paul's view of the event. Remember, Paul (according to Madigan and Levenson) said that Christian faith would be "in vain" and "worthless" if the resurrection never happened.

But what about Levenson? As a Jew, the authors believe he does not need Jesus, and, therefore, the issue is apparently moot. But the Two Covenant Theory falls short, not only in the Gospels, but equally so in the life of Paul. Unlike Madigan and Levenson, Paul emphatically believed that Jews need Jesus. He had great sorrow because of their unbelief (Rom 9:2), and it was his heart's desire that they might be saved (Rom 10:1). Paul was specifically called to be the apostle to the Gentiles, yet the Book of Acts records that, in every city, he always went to his own Jewish people first. And to Paul, the message of salvation was inextricably linked to the fact of the resurrection.

> And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the [Messiah] had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus who I am proclaiming to you is the [Messiah]." (Acts 17:2–3)

Conclusion

The above authors would all agree that Jesus lived, that He was Jewish, and that He died on a cross in Jerusalem in approximately the year 30 C.E., under the reign of Pontius Pilate. Beyond that, there is little agreement. In this,

52 Ibid., 32.
53 See John 14:6; Acts 4:12; etc.

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Jewish critical scholarship is exactly like Gentile critical scholarship![54] The question of the disciples' original belief in the resurrection highlights their differences. Cohn-Sherbok is not sure if the disciples actually believed it. But if they did, he says it is likely the result of a psychological experience. Paula Fredriksen says that the disciples absolutely believed they had seen Jesus after the resurrection and that it was their commitment to His teaching that created this belief. Alan F. Segal says the Gospels cannot tell us anything about the resurrection, since they differ from Paul's letters (written earlier), which teach a spiritual resurrection. Geza Vermes admits the story of the disciples' belief must go back to an early source, although the way it is presented would not meet legal standards. Jon D. Levenson writes about it as if it were a historical event (but it is possible that this is the view of his co-author alone).

This interest in the resurrection of Jesus is perhaps the beginning of a new phase in the Jewish study of Jesus. His Jewishness is certainly no longer an issue. Jewish scholars are increasingly going to the New Testament itself to consider and interact with what the texts are actually saying. And this is ultimately a good thing.

54 Gary Habermas, "Resurrection Research from 1975 to the Present," in *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 3.2 (2005): 135–53.

Mishkan, no. 68 (2011): 64–71

THE MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

"And a Time to Speak"

– A Study on David Baron's Encounter with Historical Criticism and the Quest for Messianism in the Book of Zechariah

by **Igal Germann**

The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah is an exegetical masterpiece written by David Baron (1855–1926), a prolific author and a premillennial theologian.[1] This book, originally published in 1918, has a prehistory as "Notes on Zechariah," originally collected in *The Scattered Nation*, the quarterly publication of the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel.[2] *The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah* is the only biblical commentary produced by David Baron, and thus it provides us with a unique opportunity to examine Baron's theological encounter with historical criticism applied to the discipline of Old Testament (OT) studies.

The present essay will explore Baron's theologico-messianic interpretation of the Book of Zechariah. It argues that *The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah* should be examined against the backdrop of historical criticism that blossomed in Europe. Prior to and during the lifetime of Baron, the orthodox belief in the prophetic authority of the Book of Zechariah was undermined by some biblical scholars. In Baron's view, this pressing state of affairs was adequately attributed to a lack of scholarly consensus on issues of literary-historical unity, as well as a diminished theological vision of Zechariah as the herald of Israel's Messiah. Baron, therefore, sought to face these ideological challenges head-on. In the following paper, I intend to cast light on Baron's theological career as a bold apologist and a consummate Hebrew-Christian interpreter of the Book of Zechariah.

1 David Baron, *The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah* (London: Morgan and Scott Ltd., 1918). For a thorough discussion of Baron's career from a missiological perspective, see Ronnie McCracken, *David Baron: A Prince in Israel* (Jerusalem: Keren Ahvah Meshihit, 1995). For a historical overview of the Hebrew-Christian movement, see Hugh J. Schonfield, *The History of Jewish Christianity: From the First to the Twentieth Century* (London: Duckworth, 1936). On the rise of Bible criticism, see Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1996), 270–370.

2 The book would be republished by various publishers in 1919, 1951, 1962, 1972, 2000, and 2002. It is also available from print-on-demand publishers.

The Book of Zechariah in Contemporary Biblical Scholarship

The Book of Zechariah, a Hebrew prophetic book, now dated to the postexilic era of Israelite history, has received much attention in OT scholarship. The first part of the book, chapters 1–8, consists mostly of night visions addressed to the remnant of Zion, residing in Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C.E., whereas the exact dating, audience, and setting of Zechariah 9–14 have been much debated in contemporary biblical scholarship (supplemented today with the quest for a canonical reading of Zechariah). Thus, having these critical issues in mind, biblical scholars began to question the literary-historical integrity of Zechariah 1–8 and 9–14, respectively. In particular, until the year 1880, the majority of OT scholars opted for the pre-exilic provenance of Zechariah 9–14.[3] In his detailed historical exposition of OT criticism in Germany and England of the nineteenth century, John Rogerson notices that "a late post-exilic dating for chapters 9–14 was not widely accepted until after 1881."[4]

In the preface to his commentary on Zechariah, Baron confesses what caused him to embark on the expository study of Zechariah:

> But having once made a start, the conviction deepened within me that it was a task entrusted to me of God, and that such a handling of this great prophecy, which stands in close organic connection with the whole prophetic Scripture, and the last chapters of which deal so vividly with the solemn events of the end of this present age, might, with His blessing, prove of some use to earnest-minded believers and Bible students at this present time.[5]

However, apart from the exegetical complexities involved in the study of Zechariah, Baron's heart was burdened with the widespread adoption of supersessionism, or Replacement Theology. According to Baron, acceptance of this theological concept leaves no room for the literal fulfillment of Zechariah's eschatological prophecies concerning the salvation of Israel,

Acceptance of [Replacement Theology] leaves no room for the literal fulfillment of Zechariah's eschatological prophecies concerning the salvation of Israel, the sanctification of the city of Jerusalem, and the vision of the "saved" neighoring peoples, such as Egypt or the Canaanites, in the *eschaton*.

3 Cf. Johann G. Eichhorn (1752–1827), a renowned German OT scholar, believed that though there are striking differences between Zechariah 1–8 and 9–14, the prophetic book as a whole exhibits phenomenal unity on a literary level. In 1823–24, Eichhorn argued for a post-exilic date for Zechariah 9–14. Robertson Smith (1846–94), a Scottish OT scholar, ascribed parts of Zechariah to more than one author. See John Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany* (London: SPCK, 1984), 24, 277; Christopher M. Tuckett, *The Book of Zechariah and Its Influence* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2003).

4 Rogerson, 23.

5 Baron, *Zechariah*, vii.

the sanctification of the city of Jerusalem, and the vision of the "saved" neighboring peoples, such as Egypt or the Canaanites, in the *eschaton* (see Zech 12–14).

For one thing, supersessionism led to anti-Judaic sentiments, for Jews were considered an abandoned people, landless and scattered in the Diaspora. Interestingly, in an essay entitled "Blindness in Part Has Happened unto Israel" (a messianic exposition of Romans 11:25–27),[6] Baron references Adolph Saphir (1831–91) as having said that "Christendom which boasts so much of having taken the place of Israel, instead of being able to exercise any influence for Christ and His Gospel on the Jewish people, has itself fallen into the two outstanding errors of modern Judaism."[7] These are, namely, the exaltation of human tradition to an equal authority as that of Scripture and justification by works. In these, he apparently has Roman Catholicism primarily in mind.

Concerning the state of critical biblical scholarship in his own time, Baron says that

> most of the modern writers, biased at the outset by their committal to what is known as the Higher Criticism, with its attitude of suspicion of the authenticity and genuineness of the sacred text, spend themselves, so to say, on theories of reconstruction, and for the most part uncalled for alternations and emendations, with the result that there is much of criticism in their works, but very little which is worthy of the name of exposition.[8]

Baron saw clearly that the questions regarding the provenance of Zechariah 9–14 bear directly on the interpretation of these chapters. He says, "In order rightly to understand or explain the prophetic element in these chapters, and to know whether these forecasts have already been fulfilled or not, much will depend on the question of the date of their origin."[9]

The state of scholarship on the study of Zechariah 9–14 begins with Joseph Mede (1586–1638), an English biblical scholar, who claimed that Zechariah is not the author of the book bearing his name.[10] This non-traditional approach to the study of the Book of Zechariah was endorsed by later scholars, including Richard Kidder (1633–1703) and William Newcome (1729–1800). Mede himself assigned a pre-exilic date to Zechariah 9–14.[11] It is no wonder that Baron dismissed Mede's view, as long as it stood contrary to the traditional reception of Zechariah in the history of biblical interpretation. Samuel Rolles Driver (1846–1914) claimed that the oracles in

6 Cf. *David Baron and the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel* (London: The Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, n.d.), 148–54.

7 Ibid., 148. Cf. also David Baron, *Selected Writings* (Jerusalem: Keren Ahvah Meshihit, 2005), 154.

8 Baron, *Zechariah*, ix.

9 Ibid., 262.

10 Ibid. Cf. also Jeffrey K. Jue, *Heaven upon Earth: Joseph Mede (1586–1638) and the Legacy of Millenarianism* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006).

11 Baron, *Zechariah*, 262–63.

Zechariah 9–14 were compiled "some time between 518 and 300 B.C."[12] According to Baron, Driver disregarded the eschatological interpretation of Zechariah 12:10–14, a passage he interpreted as a "deed of blood" that related to a previous event, rather than an explicit messianic prophecy predicting the vicarious death of Israel's Messiah in the *eschaton* (cf. John 19:37; Rev 1:7).[13] On the other hand, Baron commends the hermeneutics of Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800–82), an English churchman and Regius Professor of Hebrew at Christ Church, Oxford, who claimed that the quasi-historical "theories are as unsubstantial as their assumed base is baseless."[14] Both Pusey and Baron, therefore, held that the Book of Zechariah was an inspired post-exilic prophecy, that it predicted the suffering and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that it yet awaits its final consummation in the last days.

Another essential element of Baron's argument is the exegetical attempt to establish internal, literary connections between chapters 1–8 and 9–14 of Zechariah, respectively. For example, the prophetic promises to return the Judean exiles from Babylon is a recurring literary motif spread throughout Zechariah's oracles (Zech 2:6–13; 8:6–8; 9:11–12; 10:10–12). This literary marker exhibits the theological integrity of Zechariah's message of hope and comfort to post-exilic Israel.[15]

A Case Study: Zechariah 9:9–10

Now, having seen the hermeneutical challenges Baron faced in the wake of historical criticism, it is imperative to supplement our discussion with a consideration of Baron's messianic exegesis, which has been masterfully employed as an ideological tool to counter historical criticism. Choosing to respond differently from others can be challenging. To understand Baron's approach requires deliberate investigation into his concept of messianic prophecy, drawn primarily from Zechariah's texts.

It is, therefore, crucial to explore Baron's exposition of Zechariah's oracles, interpreted literally, as being fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. According to Baron, the failure to accept this canonical hermeneutic means that one will not grasp Zechariah's messianic theology of hope and restoration until the exegete of Scripture totally surrenders himself to God's *living* Word. The core of the exegetical task, in Baron's perspective, is unfolding the messianic secret concealed in the Hebrew prophecy.[16] In Baron's theological interpretation of Zechariah, much of the divine

12 Ibid., 266.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., 266–67. Cf. Timothy Larsen, "E. B. Pusey and the Holy Scripture," *Journal of Theological Studies* 60 (2009): 490–526: "On the prophet Zechariah, for example, Pusey argues that no issue of faith is at stake regarding its dating. Nevertheless, despite it being a matter of scholarly rather than devotional or theological interest, Pusey includes a table giving all the theories of its dating that have been offered" (523–24).

15 Baron, *Zechariah*, 280–81.

16 Cf., e.g., David Baron, *The Servant of Jehovah: The Sufferings of the Messiah and the Glory that Should Follow, An Exposition of Isaiah LIII* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing

revelation lies beneath the surface. The messianic fulfillment of the biblical prophecy will be revealed only to those readers of Scripture who are eager to discover the progressive truth about Israel's Messiah in the Hebrew writings of the Tanakh. In the preface to his commentary, Baron expresses this theological concept ideally:

> There are some reasons why this portion of Old Testament Scripture should especially be precious to Christians. I will mention only two. First—because of the clear and striking manner in which it testifies of our Lord Jesus. Luther calls Zechariah *Ausbund der Propheten*—the quintessence of Old Testament prophecy—and this is especially true in reference to Messianic prophecy. Indeed it seems to be the special aim and mission of Zechariah to condense and concentrate in small compass, and in his own peculiar terse style, almost all that has been revealed to the "former prophets" about the person and mission of Messiah—about His Divine and yet truly human character, and of His sufferings and of the glory that should follow.[17]

Our case study, Zechariah 9:9–10, an oracle of peace to Jerusalem, will illustrate how Baron has tackled the overall skepticism prevalent in the field of OT studies. It is important to notice that though Baron did not want to argue with scholars "who would give a non-Messianic, non-Christian interpretation" to Zechariah 9:9–10, he still sought to criticize those "rationalistic" scholars who applied this prophetic passage to a variety of Jewish post-exilic figures like Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, or Judas Maccabeus. In fact, Baron says that these unsuccessful attempts to conceal the messianic features of Zechariah 9:9–10 "have been sufficiently refuted by scholars of the same school."[18] Embarking on this critical note, Baron quotes the words of Alfred Edersheim (1825–89), who contemporizes the Pauline concept of the letter and spirit of Scripture: "When we brush aside all the trafficking and bargaining over words that constitutes so much of modern criticism, which in its care over the letter so often loses the spirit, there can, at least, be no question that this prophecy was intended to introduce . . . another Kingdom, of which the just King would be the Prince of Peace."[19] Now let us look at a case study of Zechariah 9:9–10 (NRSV):

> Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off

House, 1922). Cf. also his *Types, Psalms, and Prophecies: Being a Series of Old Testament Studies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1906); *Rays of Messiah's Glory; or, Christ in the Old Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughon, 1886); and *The Shepherd of Israel and His Scattered Flock: A Solution of the Enigma of Jewish History* [an exposition of Psalm 80] (London: Morgan and Scott, 1910).

17 Baron, *Zechariah*, 5.

18 Ibid., 303.

19 Ibid.

> the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle-bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

The following is a brief review of Zechariah 9. This chapter depicts God's personal intervention for Jerusalem and the final victorious conquest of Israel's traditional enemies (vv. 1–8), namely Syria, Phoenicia, and Philistia, which extends Israel's northern and western national borders to their ideal limits. While, by and large, the prophetic visions in Zechariah 1–8 are specifically dated, Zechariah 9 (along with the remainder of the book) is undated. Zechariah 9 is attached to the oracles immediately preceding and includes the Lord's conclusive victory leading to the ultimate blessing of Israel, the establishment of God's rule over the Gentile nations, and the final fulfillment of all the covenant promises (cf. the promises God made to Abraham in Genesis 15:18–21 and the series of promises in Zechariah 12–14).

How does Baron expound the eschatological program of Zechariah 9:9–10? While Baron acknowledges the classic Jewish interpretations of Zechariah 9:9–10, as suggested by medieval commentators like Rashi (1040–1105) and Saadiah Gaon (Rasag, 882–942), he opts for the Christological interpretation preserved in the New Testament. According to Baron, the gospel story of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday is the most appropriate messianic interpretation of Zechariah 9:9 (the oracle is cited in the records of two evangelists, Matthew 21:5 and John 12:15).[20] The picture of the "prince of peace" arriving at the gates of Jerusalem is remarkable in the Christological imagination of the gospel writers. This messianic king is humble and inaugurating a kingdom of peace, insofar as the arrival of that king at the gates of Jerusalem occurs on a donkey and not a war horse.

And yet the eschatological reference to the peaceful universal rule in verse 10 makes a case for a "split prophecy"—i.e., a biblical oracle having a two-stage fulfillment in the history of salvation. Baron unfolds this hermeneutical method in his preface to the commentary on Zechariah 9:9–10:

> And it is quite in keeping with the character of the Old Testament prophecy that there is no perspective observed, nor clear indications given of the pauses and intervals between the different stages and acts by which Messiah's work would be accomplished, and his Kingdom finally established.[21]

20 Ibid., 304 n. 1; cf. Adrian M. Leske, "Context and Meaning of Zechariah 9:9," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62 (2000): 663–78.

21 Baron, *Zechariah*, 302.

Thus, having observed this "split intention," Baron applies this exegetical concept to Zechariah 9:9–10, which awaits its consummation in the *eschaton*:

> It is to the first advent of Messiah, then, that attention is especially called by the word "Behold," in the 9th verse of the chapter we are now considering, although, as we shall see, this very prophecy looks on also to the second advent, and beyond the sufferings of Messiah, to the glory that should follow.[22]

The foregoing messianic interpretation of verse 9 pertains to the imminent coming of the Day of the Lord and the much anticipated appearance of the Davidic King, who will arrive again at the gates of Jerusalem to bring universal peace to the ends of the earth. Thus, in Baron's dispensational view, Zechariah 9:9–10 anticipates God's royal theophany.

Following the return from the Babylonian Exile, the remnant of Zion lacked a king installed by the Holy One of Israel. In order to fill this lacuna in the leadership of the post-exilic Judean community, the God of Israel will prepare the ground for the coming of the messianic King. By reading Zechariah 9:9–10 and 2:14 side by side (both oracles echoed in Isaiah 12:6 and Zephaniah 3:14), Baron concludes that the God of Israel will manifest Himself in the person of the forthcoming Savior (similar theophanic motifs are found in Isaiah 40:9–11; 41:27; 52:1–2, 7–9; and 62:11). Thus, following a thorough exposition of Zechariah 9:9–10, Baron sets the stage for the following conclusion:

But this is sure and certain, that however long the pause may last, God never loses the thread of the purpose which He has formed for this earth; and as surely as the prophecies of the sufferings of Christ have been literally fulfilled, so surely will those also be which relate to His glory and reign. . . .

> But this is sure and certain, that however long the pause may last, God never loses the thread of the purpose which He has formed for this earth; and as surely as the prophecies of the sufferings of Christ have been literally fulfilled, so surely will those also be which relate to His glory and reign; and although Israel and the nations have had to wait long for it, the angels' song at the birth of our Savior, "Peace on earth and goodwill toward men," will yet be realized, and Christ will not be owned by His own people as "the King of the Jews," but His rule will extend "from the sea to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth."[23]

22 Ibid., 305.
23 Ibid., 317.

Conclusion

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To sum up, David Baron's counter-critical hermeneutic has challenged some of the literary-historical models applied to the study of the Book of Zechariah (for example, the literary division of the book into "Proto-Zechariah" and "Second Zechariah," respectively). In Baron's perspective, historical criticism has seriously undermined and threatened the Judeo-Christian concept of divine inspiration of the Book of Zechariah. Baron's theological commentary is, therefore, characterized by his consistent rejection of historical criticism and consistent application of a literal hermeneutic and a dispensational interpretation of Zechariah.[24] It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that Baron's messianic, eschatological hermeneutic, with its concept of "split prophecy," has proven to be an effective tool to counter the results of critical biblical research. Though much lends itself to further research and debate, Baron's lively discourse with contemporary scholarship is a significant milestone in the history of biblical interpretation. The study of David Baron's encounter with historical criticism and the quest for the message of Messiah in the Book of Zechariah reminds us of the importance of recovering other forgotten voices that challenged the status quo in the field of OT studies.[25]

24 In this sense, David Baron stands in line with mainline, evangelical, biblical interpreters, such as Charles L. Feinberg, Eugene H. Merrill, and Merrill F. Unger. See the comprehensive essay of Al Wolters, "Zechariah 14: A Dialogue with the History of Interpretation," *Mid America Journal of Theology* 13 (2002): 39–56.

25 I want to clarify that contemporary biblical scholarship employs a wide range of research tools including archaeology, anthropology, folklore, linguistics, oral tradition studies, and religious studies, to name a few. A growing awareness of the confessional history of biblical interpretation is another positive development in biblical scholarship today. Ibid., 39–40.

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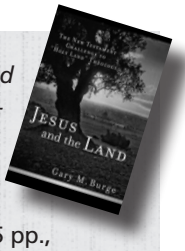
by **Richard A. Robinson**



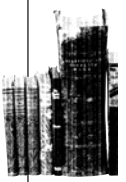
Gary M. Burge. *Jesus and the Land: The New Testament Challenge to "Holy Land" Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. xiv, 145 pp., $21.99, paper.

In his newest book, Gary Burge continues his explorations into land theology (most of the book) and its relationship to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (the last chapter). The two are not always connected, but Burge links them very directly. Given his long-standing interest in the Middle East conflict, it is not too much to say that he seems to have written this in order to give a theological undergirding to his views on that conflict.

In approaching the topic from the biblical/theological standpoint, Burge's approach is to demonstrate that geographic land is no longer a concern of the New Testament (NT) authors, especially land based on (as he several times phrases it) "religious privilege." Jesus has fulfilled all the institutions and promises of the Old Testament (OT), including the land promises, which have now been extended to encompass the entire earth, an "entire redefinition" (p. 24) of the land that was already taking place with Philo and Josephus. There is a good deal of insightful material here, especially on the theme of Diaspora Judaism's relationship to the land.

Burge then turns his attention to Jesus, who is "surprisingly silent with regard to . . . territorial aspirations" and "curiously receptive to contact with the occupiers"; Israel's "national ambitions tied to reclaiming the land live on the margin of Jesus' thinking" (p. 28). Particularly, in contrast to movements that tried to reclaim the land from Rome by force, Jesus claims that in a stunning reversal the poor, landless, and meek will inherit the land (pp. 40–41).

Next, John's gospel gets its own chapter. For John, what Burge calls "John's messianic replacement (or fulfillment) motif" (p. 46) is prominent, though Burge more often calls it by the former name. As one example, Jesus "becomes the new 'Siloam'" (p. 44). Again, when Jacob had his vision of angels on the ladder in Genesis 28, he called the place of God's presence "Bethel," or "God's House." Burge makes a point of stating that the content of the revelation to Jacob at that time was to reaffirm the land promises. According to him, John 1:51 shows that Jesus "subsumes" Bethel and the ladder—the gateway to God—into Himself. Curiously, though, Burge then says that Jesus replaces *Jacob* as well as replacing Bethel, and, therefore, receives the land promises given to Jacob. It would seem rather that *Nathaniel* replaces Jacob in John 1 while Jesus is now the ladder to heaven. The land promises are quite out of view in John 1, yet Burge can say that two central themes in John are Jesus as God's house and Jesus as recipient of the land. True, as Burge well puts it, ancient Israel was "a temple with a land



wrapped around it." That, however, is a different question from the exegesis of John 1.

John 15, which speaks of Jesus as the true vine and His followers as branches, is said by Burge to be a "careful critique of the territorial religion of Judaism" (p. 56). It is, however, not at all clear that the use of imagery applied to the people and the land in the OT must have that same value here. Jesus rather seems to be taking up the metaphor to speak of intimate relationships—any "critique" of land views is simply not in view here. To be sure, Jesus does turn expectations as to who will inherit the kingdom on their head in other passages, but those are quite clearly critiquing the status quo. John 15, it seems to me, is something else altogether.

Even as he argues that Jesus fulfills the land promises by becoming the new temple and "the way to God's Holy Space" (p. 55), he seems in danger of giving in to the sort of gnostic tendency that he rightly distances from the faith of the early church. His idea of fulfillment, often true as far as it goes, is therefore somewhat deficient. For one thing, he appears to equate "fulfillment" with "replacement" (see above on John's motif). Thus on page 56 regarding Jesus' fulfillment of the holiday of Sukkot: "Jesus similarly *empties* Tabernacles of its ritual significance and then leaves the ceremony behind, offering the light and water once offered there" (italics added). *Empties* is an odd way of describing fulfillment.

The problem with this kind of description of *how* Jesus fulfills the OT makes Jesus seem like a spiritual vacuum cleaner, as it were, sort of sucking up everything in the OT into Himself and leaving anything external to Him as devoid of significance. But these OT institutions, metaphors, etc., emerge again on the other side of the cross and resurrection—even though Jesus *does* fulfill them. Thus Jesus is the new temple, but so is the church and the individual believer. Jesus is the suffering servant, but we are also servants often called on to suffer, as Jesus did. Jesus is the final and ultimate priest, yet Christians are a priesthood too. I am not sure how I would fit the land into that sort of paradigm, but it seems to me that the concept of fulfillment needs more nuancing than Burge provides.

There is a further note of interest regarding "fulfillment." As I mentioned, Burge notes that at the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus claimed to be the light of the world and the giver of living water. Both light and water were prominent at the festival, and so Burge tells us that Jesus is claiming to fulfill the holiday. But the light and water motifs were not part of the OT presentation of Tabernacles. They were later additions to the holiday. We cannot properly speak of Jesus "fulfilling" post-OT traditions. Rather, what seems to be happening in John 7–8 is that Jesus is using contemporary customs as an occasion to teach, just as He did at Passover, when He sat with the disciples and spoke of the meaning of the "cup," a ritual which was not part of the OT Passover originally given by God. Jesus is, therefore, in our example of Tabernacles, neither emptying nor re-interpreting nor fulfilling something, but being a "missionary" by taking what people had their mind on and using it to point to Himself. We may certainly speak of Jesus fulfilling various OT promises of light, water, and so on, but that is different than saying that in this instance, He was "emptying" Tabernacles of its ritual significance. (The fulfillment of the *biblical* Tabernacles may be more readily found in such motifs as the provision of "My Father's house" as

a place of shelter, fulfilling the booths that God had Israel live in during their journey in the wilderness, just as the fulfillment of the *biblical* Passover lies in Jesus being the Lamb of God and our Redeemer from the slavery of sin, rather than in "fulfilling" the meaning of the cup.) So the question here becomes one of Jesus' relation to post-biblical customs and ceremonies. That too must be brought into a full picture of the nature of the fulfillment that Jesus brought.

Space does not allow me to describe Burge's chapters on Acts, on Paul (the latter receives rather extensive attention, in relation to the promises to Abraham), and on Hebrews. It is good to see that Burge provides room for "paradox" in Romans 9–11, in which Paul's eschatology "provides a place of Judaism without Christ" (p. 89) and which provides a bulwark against anti-Judaism and supersessionism (pp. 93–94).

In the end, the absence of the land-as-geography motif as a NT concern is largely one of silence. This could be either because it is no longer of interest (or has been transformed), or conversely because it is part of the understood background. The apostles' question in Acts 1:6 (p. 26) as to the restoration of the kingdom is not, after all, met with denial of the "what," but by a disclaimer of the need for them to know the "when." Jesus' statement that "Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24) would seem to indicate a future reality of the land in a Jewish context.

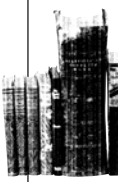
And a serious hermeneutic discussion needs to take place. Burge comes from the side of the fence that advocates interpreting the OT in light of the NT. Others want to take the fully opposite tack. In reality, the OT and NT are conversation partners even as they constitute the totality of God's Word, and their relationship is more mutual than either side in the debates often allows for in practice.

On the level of biblical land theology, the book therefore is the start of a discussion. Things are not necessarily as simple as Burge tries to make them, but I welcome the well-written and thought-provoking contribution that comprises chapters 1–7 of the volume.

This brings me to the second level on which the book needs to be addressed—that of the Middle East conflict. Burge has written more directly on this in the past. And while biblical land theology is worth discussing in its own right, one gets the feeling—based on Burge's past interest, not to mention the endorsement by Stephen Sizer—that the first seven chapters in this book are there as a prelude to the real point, namely, erroneous Christian views of the land. Burge calls it thinking "Christianly" about the land, which appears to mean that those who think otherwise are not (yet?) thinking Christianly. In particular, "thinking Christianly" for Burge means addressing Christian Zionism and dispensationalism as aberrant theologies. (For the record, by the way, I do not consider myself "dispensational" and I have never used the term "Christian Zionist" to characterize my views.)

An anecdote (p. 112) sets the stage as Burge recounts a meeting with evangelical pastors, who believed—we are given to understand, in a fashion typical of "Christian Zionists"—that since Palestinians were living on land given by God to Israel, "any means—even violent means—were appropriate to remove them" (p. 112).

This view, we are told, is "not uncommon." Burge then cites—of all those he could have cited—David Brickner ("executive director of the messianic Chris-



tian organization Jews for Jesus"—why not characterize Jews for Jesus as what it is known to be, an evangelical missions agency?). His source is a secondary online citation no longer available when I checked; had he consulted the original (at http://www.jewsforjesus.org/publications/newsletter/1998_04/jubilee) he would have seen that Brickner's comments were given a slant they were not intended to have.

I mention this at length not because I work with Jews for Jesus, but because it seems to be part of a tendentious method of presentation on the part of Burge. The section by Brickner which Burge quotes reads in part,

> Evangelicals who would understand the Middle East must pay close attention to the teaching of Scripture, and take note of the cosmic forces that now do battle in the heavens but will soon do battle on earth. They must choose carefully which side to uphold.

The full article, though, also includes this:

> So what are we to think about God's promises regarding Israel? There are two aspects to be held in tension. God's choosing of Israel is "without repentance." Yet God's blessings upon Israel (at least the full extent of those blessings, including salvation) are very much contingent on obedience through faith. . . .
>
> The solution to this conflict is neither unthinking loyalty to an Israel in unbelief, nor reckless disregard for the clear teaching of Scripture with regard to God's promises to the Jewish people. The future of the land and the people is secure only in and through faith and obedience to the One who sent the Lamb. Only His shed blood on the door posts of the hearts of modern day Israelites can secure the salvation that lasts for all eternity. Judgment is coming, "to the Jew first and also to the Gentile" (Romans 2:10).

To put Brickner with those who advocate violent removal of Palestinians from Israel is, to put it quite simply, irresponsible—if not defamatory. The quote seems to have been selected, out of context and from a secondary source, as a sound bite to bolster Burge's characterization of Christian supporters of Israel.

A number of reviewers of previous books by Burge have found his treatment of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be lacking in balance. Such a treatment is found in the present book:

> Simply put: the land was already occupied by thousands of Palestinians. Eventually the new Zionists set about photographing and mapping the land while assessing strategies for forcefully expelling the Arab population. (The government working group was "The Committee on Population Transfer.") After the birth of the fledgling state, the government began emptying and destroying over 400 Palestinian villages. (p. 113)

There is enough imbalance here to topple a whole Galilean village over on its side. To be sure, Burge gives a nod to those who saw the establishment of Israel as "a moral correction to what had happened to Jews in Europe." But to balance the above paragraph, there is nary a word about the fact that Israel was an international creation under the auspices of international bodies; not a sentence about how the Arab states tried to wipe out the new nation on the

eve of its birthday; not a peep about the continued hard-wired-in-documents position of some leading Palestinian groups to not accept the reality of Israel's existence. What about the Middle East prompts authors who write on this subject to avoid talking equally about North Korea, the 1990s Bosnian conflict, African genocide, or the fact that the United States now sits on land taken from others (and that of its own initiative, not as a result of international agreements)? I suspect the answer is that the wacky and dangerous Christian Zionists are not involved with those other trouble spots.

Those looking for a far more balanced approach would do well to read the writings of Paul Merkley, who has written several scholarly works on Christian Zionism (for the record, Merkley is a self-proclaimed Christian Zionist, with affiliations to the International Christian Embassy; he is also a respected scholar). Or one could look at the books of Yaakov Ariel, an Israeli-American scholar who has a penchant for addressing controversial issues with clarity and fairness. Then there is *Evangelicals and Israel: The Story of American Christian Zionism*, by Stephen Spector (Oxford University Press, 2009), who is Jewish and who wishes "to explore Christian Zionists' convictions with empathy and respect, though not necessarily with agreement" (from the Preface, p. vii; Spector teaches English at Stony Brook University on Long Island).

And that is a major failing of Burge's book: there is no empathy, meaning not that he agrees with Christian Zionism, but that he does not show any ability to see it from the inside, its strengths and weaknesses, its rationales. In any event, Burge is historically under-informed. As Merkley has pointed out, support for the existence of Israel has hardly been historically the province of dispensationalists alone. While Burge excoriates Christian Zionists for ignoring the ethical dimension of the OT prophets (p. 121), he equally ignores the ethical dimension of the birth of modern Israel, a birth that at the time was supported by mainstream Christian denominations who were anything but dispensational.

Furthermore, "most Christian Zionists" (p. 121) are, in Burge's opinion, eschatologically motivated: "A commitment to the restoration of Israel springs from a desire to accelerate an eschatological crisis that will deliver the world to Armageddon and bring Christ back" (pp. 121–22). Some surely are; but many others simply believe that Israel has a right to exist on humanitarian and historical grounds. Unless Burge wants to tautologically define *Christian Zionists* as those who hold to the views he claims characterize them, those who would fall under that umbrella are far more diverse than he allows. Spector's book, mentioned above, offers a good corrective, through Jewish eyes, to similar characterizations of Christian Zionism.

While this is a "must-read" in order to hear an increasingly common evangelical position on the Middle East, *Jesus and the Land* needs to be read alongside the other authors cited above.

Derek Leman. *Yeshua in Context: The Life and Times of Yeshua the Messiah*. Stone Mountain, GA: Mount Olive Press, 2010. 154 pp., $15.00, paper.

Leman's latest book focuses on the stories of the Gospels to paint a multifaceted portrait of Yeshua in His Jewish milieu. Drawing in part on the insights of scholars such as Adela Collins, Luke

Timothy Johnson, and Scot McKnight means that Leman has been in touch with current scholarship, and it gives the book a different flavor than many others of this genre. There are any number of thoughtful insights and no doubt also statements and emphases with which some will disagree. Especially in the earlier chapters, I found the writing to be somewhat distracting; a second edition would benefit from a thorough edit and even the addition of study questions. The opening bibliography is helpful. Those who are familiar with Mark Kinzer's controversial views will note his endorsement on the back cover. I hope that does not stop some who take issue with Kinzer from reading a helpful and insightful book.

Stu Schlackman with Deborah Pope. *From the Star to the Cross: Accepting the Promised Path from Judaism into Christianity.* The Colony, TX: Pocket-Pak, 2010. 185 pp., $15.00, paper.

Stu Schlackman, a Jewish believer, is the owner of Competitive Excellence and an elder at Central Christian Church in Richardson, Texas. This engagingly written testimony book will resonate most with the over-40 crowd for whom growing up Jewish meant immersion in Yiddish and European culture. Schlackman's journey includes discovering that the gospel does not promise a pain-free life—"I eventually realized it wasn't all about me" (p. 101). Many in today's Messianic Jewish community will not find the up-front title politically correct, but everyone must be allowed to tell his/her own story. I especially enjoyed the vignettes and conversations, real and imagined, with various family members. There is a Web site at www.fromthestartothecross.com.

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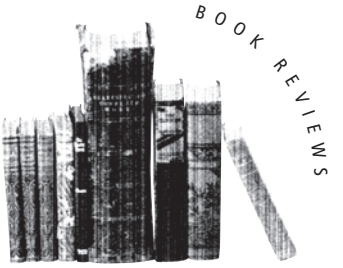


by **Lyn Bond**

Ruth Wardell and Jeffrey Gutterman. *Biography of Ruth with the Truth Wardell: "Missionary to the Jewish People."* San Antonio, Texas: Ariel Ministries, 2011. 194 pp., $25.00, paper.

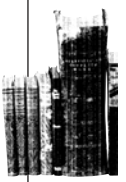
People who are interested in the history of Jewish missions in the United States will find the book *Ruth with the Truth Wardell* a helpful and readable volume. Ruth Wardell has had working relationships with many of the existing organizations that seek to bring the Good News of Yeshua's redemption to the Jewish people.

As biographies go, this one is not overly ponderous. There are 194 pages. Some parts are autobiographical, written in the first person; other portions contain first-person accounts of individuals who knew Ruth in one of her many capably-filled positions of ministry. The title page has these words: "Missionary to the Jewish People from 1946 until the Present" and "Spiritual 'Mom' of Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum." The book's seventeen chapters engagingly tell about each of the many facets of Ruth's ministry—a ministry that moved from several of the New York boroughs to Los Angeles and finally to Texas. (There were also ministerial moves within cities as Ruth worked with different age groups within a location.) A four-page appendix of poems her father and others wrote for her is included.

This biography is not merely the story of a missionary's life; it gives insight into what it was like to minister the Good News of Jesus' salvation to the Jewish people from the mid-twentieth into the present century. It is arranged in chronological order, from Ruth's very early years until it was published in 2011. The first three chapters answer the question of how the daughter of a non-Jewish pastor became a woman who desired to share the Messiah with the same people group from which Jesus was born. The final chapter is called "Ruth's Musings/Reflections," a collection of tributes from some of those whom Ruth knows, as well as a look at some of her most recent activities.

Every dramatic story has conflict, and Ruth's is no exception. Since she is by nature a peacemaker, one really has to read between the lines to see the drama that played out in her life. Ruth's parents wanted to minister in China but were unable to do so. It is unfortunate that they went to be with the Lord before she was able to minister to the very people her father had hoped to serve. Yes, a young woman called to minister to Jewish people also ended up ministering to Chinese people!

In addition to the narrative of Ruth's life, the book includes testimonies of various people to whom and with whom she ministered (often accompanied by photographs). These vignettes are part of what makes the book so



charming. However, sometimes the facts, as Ruth recalled them, do not correspond with the memories of those who were interviewed. Of course, often in life people do not see the same things in the same situations. One quality, though, that all who were interviewed agree on, is that Ruth was generous with her time and encouragement.

The pictures, though captioned with the names of those pictured, do not give the dates when the photos were taken. However, most of those who are pictured would agree that the photos capture them at a time when they were doing just what Ruth taught—having joy and doing the will of God.

The "secret to her success" is simply to do the will of God. Ruth is forthcoming with the often entertaining details that made her successful in ministry to youth, as well as to adults and seniors. For example, when a young girl wanted to be baptized, she was given a packet of papers to read and questions to answer.

Ruth rewarded those she cared about by pouring herself into their lives. Her "kids" grew up to be teachers, Bible school professors, missionaries, mothers, fathers—and include Arnold Fruchtenbaum, whose ministry published this memoir. In a word, they became people who helped shape the lives of others in the same way that Ruth was used by the Lord to shape their own lives.

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by **Knut Høyland**

In March 2011, Israel's Channel 1 aired a documentary describing the "informal" influence of Yad L'Achim—an Israeli "anti-missionary" organization—on decisions made by the Interior Ministry in the visa cases of Christian workers or citizenship cases of Messianic believers in the country. In a recent decision of the district court in Jerusalem, the issue of non-governmental third-party influence on the decisions of the Interior Ministry was again brought to the attention of the public.

The decision was covered by the large daily newspaper *Ma'ariv* on July 3, 2011, under the headline "Via Dolorosa." The article, which deals with the treatment of Christian tourists visiting Israel, relates to the court's landmark decision that information about alleged "missionary activity" received by the Interior Ministry from non-governmental bodies cannot be used as grounds for denying entry to Israel. In this case, Tim and Elizabeth Hanson were denied entry based on the following note in their file: "Entry forbidden due to missionary activity." This note was based on a report filed by "Mevaser Shalom," a private organization with which the couple had volunteered in the past.

The judge's ruling stated: "The Interior Ministry's 'news' was based on rumors, hearsay, and unfounded conclusions, the connection between the plaintiffs and any missionary activity being completely unproven. . . . The Interior Ministry did not even bother to check for itself what kind of 'missionary activity' was attributed to the plaintiffs or whether or not it was legal." The significant point here is that in his ruling, the judge clearly differentiates between legal missionary activity and that which is illegal. Since 1977, when the so-called "anti-mission" law was passed prohibiting the giving of material or other benefit as an incentive to conversion and the religious conversion of minors, no one has been indicted under this law. At the same time, local believers and Christian visitors and workers in the country have repeatedly been accused of "missionary activity." The judge emphasizes that the accusations in this case were neither proven nor investigated and, therefore, constitute "foreign consideration" in the evaluation of the Hansons' case. He further noted that such a consideration can only have relevance if investigated by the police according to the penal code.

Although the judge did not order the Interior Ministry to grant the Hansons entry to Israel, he ruled that the alleged "missionary activity" could not be used in the consideration of their case and that the Interior Ministry would need to provide a new decision in their case within forty-five days.

"Mission" is a bad word in the Hebrew language and holds a very different semantic meaning and connotation from the Christian understanding of the word. This landmark decision by the Jerusalem district court may help to make it more difficult to stigmatize

and discriminate against Messianic believers and Christians in Israel by throwing around accusations of "dangerous missionary activity."

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