

# MISHIKAN

A FORUM ON THE GOSPEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

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# MISHKAN

**A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People**

**"APOSTLE PAUL / RAV SHAU'L"**

ISSUE 20 / 1994

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**United Christian Council in Israel · Jerusalem**

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## **{1}The Apostle to the Gentiles (Editorial)**

In the area of evangelism among Jews, no individual stands out in the book of Acts more than "the apostle to the gentiles", Saul of Tarsus. Even his preaching among the gentiles invariably started with a visit to the local synagogue, and indeed he gives us to understand (Rom 11:13-14) that an underlying motive for his mission to gentiles was to move his fellow Jews to jealousy and cause them to inquire more seriously into the success of his preaching. Saul (Paul) seems to have based this hope on the popular idea that the Jews were appointed by God to be a "light to the gentiles".

It is commonly recognized today that first-century Judaism was a "missionary" religion, in the sense that wherever Jews went they openly and actively promoted Jewish monotheism. The frustrating thing was that, as active as it was, it was not all that successful; gentiles were coming up to the gate, as it were, but they were not going all the way to convert to Judaism. Jesus expressed it in this way: "You travel over land and sea [active] to make one convert [unsuccessful]" (Matt. 23:15). The main hurdle seems to have been the reticence to get circumcised.

Paul found many of these "proselytes of the gate" in the synagogues. When he proclaimed that they could have full participation in the God of Israel through faith in Jesus the Jewish Messiah and without being circumcised, their numbers quickly overwhelmed the Jewish respondents. Paul seems to have hoped that this success would be recognized by Jews as the realization of the Jewish mission to be a light to the gentiles; surely they would envy his success and would acknowledge the truth of his message.

But jealousy is a strange thing. The jealous person can try to emulate the competition or he can try to eliminate it. In Paul's case, his success led to persecutions (Acts 13:44-50; 17:1-5). Since that time, Paul has been the whipping boy of Jewish anti-Christian polemic. While Jesus was "that man", Paul was Balaam, Gehazi, the wicked Haman. In modern times, indeed, Jesus has largely been koshered; Paul, however, is accused of starting a new religion, one which Jesus the Jew would have rejected. In this new-look issue of MISHKAN two major articles and one book review treat a cross-section of current Jewish and Christian scholarship on Paul. This is followed by two informative historical {2} pieces, which continue filling in a multi-faceted picture of the history of modern missions to the Jews. There follow two articles dealing with the question of the sources of the synoptic gospels, and we have three further book reviews written by Israel residents. Among these I am particularly pleased to see David Rokeah's review of the Annotated Modern Hebrew New Testament.

Issue 17-18, which dealt with the work of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research (JSSR), has aroused more debate and reactions than we normally receive. We are glad that MISHKAN can serve as a forum for the exchange of (sometimes opposing) ideas. On occasion our editors, who are scholars in their own right, contribute to a discussion. When one does so, it is in his or her role as a scholar and not as a representative of MISHKAN. Unfortunately, in two of the articles on the subject of the Jerusalem School (one of which appeared in Issue 19), the authors' titles in MISHKAN's editorial framework were mentioned, possibly giving the misimpression that their opinions were those of the journal. We apologize to our readers and to JSSR for this oversight.

*Ray Pritz*

# {3}The Misunderstood Apostle

## Daniel G. Reid

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Over the past decade New Testament scholars have attempted to bring the picture of Paul and his religious and social world into new focus. Like the art restoration being carried out on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, many Pauline scholars believe they have caught a glimpse of the pristine hues of Paul and his message. In this case their work has focused not on the foreground of the Pauline text as if to recover some lost original wording or syntax but on its background. As the cultural, religious and social world of Paul's day comes to life, Paul's own message and ministry promise to stand out in bold relief.

## The Dawning of a New Perspective

The most significant area of recent Pauline scholarship has been the reinvestigation of Paul's theology of the law and the Jewish people. More than a decade ago a respected evangelical Pauline scholar could describe the Jewish background for Paul's statements about the law with the words: "For the Jews the law was the pre-eminent means of salvation." Nearly everyone would have agreed. More than ten years later many interpreters of Paul would call that statement a gross caricature of Paul's Jewish background and a misleading assumption for understanding Paul. Today if a seminary graduate of the late 1970s were to take a refresher course in Pauline theology, he or she would find new questions being posed and some unexpected solutions being offered.

In 1977 E.P. Sanders<sup>1</sup> presented formidable evidence from rabbinic and other Jewish literature that first-century Judaism was a "covenantal nomism" in which salvation was understood to be granted by grace, not according to a righteousness based on merit earning works. Law keeping as well as provisions for repentance and sacrifice for transgressions were understood by Jews to be the proper response to God's initiating grace. They were necessary for staying {4} within the bounds of the covenant: they are not covenant entrance requirements or a means of salvation. For this the Jews relied on God's electing grace by which he had made Israel his covenant people.

While Sanders was not the first to propose this perspective on first-century Judaism (G. F. Moore and Jewish scholars had done so before him), he presented it with new force. His extensive arguments and documentation, his frontal attack on a long-standing scholarly assumption and his proposal for understanding Paul against this background caught the attention of the scholarly world.<sup>2</sup>

Pauline scholars quickly recognized the importance of this fresh perspective on Judaism. True enough, some have suggested that Sanders has misread the literature, maintaining his conclusions are suspect because the rabbinic literature he cites does not give a true picture of

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<sup>1</sup> E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, Philadelphia 1977.

<sup>2</sup> E.P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, Philadelphia 1983.

that period. Nevertheless, no scholar has presented evidence compelling sufficiently to overturn the general contours of Sander's profile of Palestinian Judaism, and most scholars have come to accept the main lines of his conclusions regarding the Judaism of Paul's day.

## **Reassessing Paul**

If Sanders is correct about the nature of first-century Palestinian Judaism, then we need to reassess our understanding of Paul's criticism of law-keeping Jews. In the past, interpreters who have wanted to maintain the unity of Scripture's teaching on the law have frequently read Paul to be saying that Judaism, having misunderstood the gracious nature of God's covenant with Moses, perverted it into a system of attaining righteousness by works. Paul exposes the Jewish dilemma as either succeeding in keeping the law or failing to keep the law and being condemned for their transgressions. They were like a man attempting to walk a razor's edge: If he does not fall off, he will cut his feet. These interpreters of Paul have offered a general guideline for understanding Paul's statements about the law: negative statements regarding the law may not refer to the law as a revelation of God's will, but to Jewish misunderstanding and misuse of the law, i.e. halachah instead of Torah.

Still others have suggested that it was not Judaism that misunderstood the covenant, but Paul who misrepresented or misunderstood the faith of Judaism and wrongfully portrayed its spiritual dilemma.

Nearly 30 years ago Hans Joachim Schoeps<sup>3</sup> argued that Paul's perspective on the law was colored by the Hellenistic Judaism of the diaspora and the language of the Septuagint. This led him to a "fundamental misapprehension" of the law as "sum of prescriptions," which, when fully obeyed, would lead to life. On the contrary, argued Schoeps, Palestinian Judaism viewed the law as a delightful gift bestowed on Israel within the context of God's covenant with his people. God did not require absolute obedience to the law, but an intention to obey, which is man's affirmation of God's covenant. Reflecting on Paul's role as an interpreter of Judaism, Schoeps could write, "It must ever remain thought-provoking that the Christian church has received a completely distorted view of the Jewish law at the hand of a diaspora Jew who had become alienated from the faith-ideas of the fathers."<sup>4</sup> Paul's critique of Judaism may have had force against diaspora Judaism, but against true Judaism it was a hollow accusation.

## **Christ Is the Answer. What Is the Problem?**

Most scholars today however, recognize that the key to Paul's theological perspective lies in his Damascus-Road encounter with Christ, an event that brought a dramatic reorientation to his life and mission. To Sanders it appears that Paul's Damascus Road experience entailed a giant leap that left his theology in contradictory disarray. Against the backdrop of Jewish covenantal nomism, he sees Paul, the converted rabbi, wrestling with a dilemma posed by two central convictions: God gave the law and it is good, but Jews and gentiles are saved only by faith in Christ.

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<sup>3</sup> H.J. Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish History*, trans. H. Knight, Philadelphia 1961.

<sup>4</sup> Schoeps.261-62.

Indeed, Sanders argues, Paul's statements regarding the law were derived not from analyzing the human dilemma and then concluding that Christ is the solution, but the other way around. In his theologizing, Paul starts with the solution (Christ) and then proposes the problem. The result is a series of statements about the law that, taken as a whole, are unsystematic and at times inconsistent, though perhaps comprehensible to the persistent scholar. Paul, in the course of his ministry, produced an assortment of arguments to support his views and meet the needs of the hour. But these arguments were not the true reasons for his own commitment to Christ and his Christian understanding of the law.

Sanders roundly criticizes Luther and his Protestant successors who have interpreted the Judaism of Paul's day as if it were a first-century Semitic form of medieval Catholicism dressed up in a system of indulgences and meritorious works. He finds no instance of Paul objecting to Judaism on the grounds that it encourages men and women to earn merit before God. Paul does not reject the law because keeping it leads to boasting or because its requirements are unattainable. After all, in Philippians 3:6 and Galatians 1:14, he states that as a Jew he had no trouble keeping the law. He reckons the righteousness of the law worthless because he has found something far superior - Christ (2 Cor 3:4-18; {6} Phil 3:3-11). Paul's chief objection to Judaism is that it rejects Christ. Salvation is found in Christ alone. According to Sanders, a secondary line of thinking also guides Paul's critique of the law within Judaism: Christ the universal Lord has commissioned Paul as apostle to the gentiles, and Paul has come to understand that law-keeping stands as an obstacle to the salvation of the gentiles. The law, a peculiarly Jewish institution that relies on Israel's privileged election, has been done away in Christ. Now Paul preaches salvation to Jews and gentiles on equal terms faith in Christ.

Evangelical interpreters of Paul as well as others who hold the mind of the apostle in high regard, have been unwilling to accept this or any proposal that reduces Paul's theology of the law to a collection of ad hoc statements without logical consistency. Is it not possible that arguments, though they may not reflect a person's original reasons for arriving at a conclusion, might nevertheless be logical and coherent? Others have pointed out that one of the most puzzling aspects of Sanders' Paul is that he ends up disavowing a pattern of religion ("covenantal nomism") that is remarkably similar to what many have understood to be Paul's Christian understanding of grace and good works (salvation by grace and works as the evidence of that grace). Was Paul's rejection of Judaism arbitrary, or did he have a fundamental and consistently reasoned objection to Judaism other than simply its rejection of Christ?

### **Works of the Law: Individual Achievement or National Presumption?**

More recently, James Dunn has fine-tuned Sanders' basic insights and pursued a solution that exposes the cutting edge of Paul's critique of Judaism as it is now understood. At the same time he demonstrates a logic that may have integrated Paul's positive and negative statements about the law. In an important advance in the new perspective, Dunn has fleshed out his proposal in a new two-volume commentary, *Romans* (1988),<sup>5</sup> in the Word Biblical Commentary series and in his collection of essays, *Jesus, Paul and the Law* (1990).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans*, 2 vols, Waco 1988.

<sup>6</sup> J.D.G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox 1990.

Dunn claims to have discovered something that Sanders and other interpreters through the centuries have missed: The Pauline phrase "works of the law" does not refer to Jewish striving after works-righteousness. They are works performed in the service of the law by which members of the covenant people identify themselves as Jews and maintain their status within the covenant. Specifically, the "works of the Law" are practices such as circumcision and food laws - familiar Jewish practices in the ancient world which were widely recognized as marking off Jews from other people.

{7} Dunn sees Paul's criticism of Jewish religion as having a new edge. The issue at stake, particularly in Galatians, is not the basic inability of religious men and women to fulfill all that the law requires and so achieve righteousness before God. The issue is that Jews define the people of God as those who keep the works of the law; their confidence is that by doing the works of the law they do all that the law requires. This is a specifically Jewish shortcoming that identifies God's people by outward, physical and nationalistic factors. In this they neglect all that the law requires (Gal 3:10). That is, they neglect to live by the Spirit in faith and love. Because of this they fall under the curse of the law; a curse directed against those who exclude gentiles from the blessings of the covenant by insisting on nationalistic boundary markers.

This line of argument leads Dunn to a surprising but perhaps inevitable conclusion. When Paul writes "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Gal 3:13), he is saying that Christ redeemed Jews from the curse that had befallen them for their narrow and wrong understanding of the law. Christ's death opened the blessings of the covenant to both Jews and gentiles in the sense that Jews have been redeemed from the curse and gentiles from the alienating effects of that curse. The blessings of Abraham are now open to all in Christ.

Dunn finds this same critique of Jewish law-keeping at work in Romans. In Romans 2 Paul gradually narrows the focus of his diatribe against Jewish presumption, climaxing his argument with the issue of circumcision. In 2:25-29 Paul indicts Jewish religion for its superficial understanding of the law evident in its stress on the outward, physical and visible aspects of the law, particularly circumcision. A true Jew is not identified by these external measures, but by the hidden working of the Spirit in the heart - a work that disregards fleshly boundaries between Jews and gentiles.

When Paul writes "For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified before him" (Rom 3:20) he is saying something that would have been taken for granted by his audience in the ancient world but has largely been missed by the heirs of the Reformation.

Dunn would undoubtedly maintain that the NIV generalizes Paul's meaning and misses the point by translating this verse "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law." Paul does not have in mind religious {8} people in general who think that acts of piety and good works can earn merit before God. That, after all, was not the understanding of Jews who relied on God's grace, acknowledged the need for repentance and depended on the means of atonement provided by the law.

But on a wider and more general front, would Paul have opposed works righteousness? Dunn would probably answer affirmatively. However though Paul would define this grace specifically in terms of Christ, his emphasis on salvation by grace rather than works would not fundamentally distinguish him from Jewish theologians. Paul, according to Dunn, maintained a continuity between the old and new covenants. His criticism of Judaism was focused on its racially exclusive understanding of election and the covenant.



One may question whether this is a correct rendering of Paul? Has a more traditional rendering of Paul been needlessly sacrificed at the altar of the new perspective? Is it possible that Judaism was not guilty of legalism in any sense of the word? Does this not reduce Christ's bearing the curse of the law (as one of Dunn's critics has put it) to Christ's dying because of a bad attitude (racial exclusivism) on the part of the Jews?

## The Law Requires "Doing"

A dissonant voice in the debate is that of Stephen Westerholm, whose *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*<sup>7</sup> offers a helpful overview and penetrating assessment of the new perspective, and a new solution to the problem of Paul and the law.

Westerholm agrees with the new-perspective insight that Judaism did not conceive of salvation as being earned by human achievement. But he qualifies this by adding that Judaism on the whole had a more optimistic view of the value of works and human initiative than did the converted Paul. Contrary to the new perspective, Westerholm maintains that grace and works did not play an identical role in both Judaism and Paul. Paul's radical reassessment of the nature, function and power of the law called for *exclusive* reliance on God's grace and arose out of his encounter with the risen Christ. It was this exclusive reliance on grace that was foreign to Judaism.

Westerholm argues that "law" (*nomos*) in Paul's usage most frequently refers to the specific commandments given on Mt. Sinai, not to an alleged Jewish perversion of the law. Paul finds in the Sinaitic legislation divine requirements that demand "doing", but he concludes that life through the law has proven an unobtainable goal. Thus Paul's critique of law - keeping includes what he calls the "soft legalists" of Judaism, who believed God required them to obey the law {9} out of covenantal love. The principal sin of Jews was not self-righteousness or boasting though that too is excluded by faith in Christ. Paul's point was that human works of any kind cannot justify an individual before God. Since Christ has superseded the law, Paul has been forced to the conclusion that though the law promised life, it could not deliver it. But God's Word does not fail; he must have planned this from the beginning. Hence Paul goes to some length in explaining the role of the law in God's plan of redemption.

In the end, Westerholm argues, Paul proclaims a law-free gospel. Though Paul's ethic may overlap with the law at significant points, it does not depend on the law for its prescriptions. Christian fulfillment of the law is like that of a master musician, who fulfills the intention of the rules imposed on novice musicians without always observing them. The decisive difference for Christians is the indwelling Spirit who serves as their moral guide and enabler.

Westerholm's thesis is provocative and well-argued, teasing out a plausible broader theological perspective lying behind Paul's response to the issues of the moment. But in the end it is a return to the basic Lutheran distinction between law and gospel. The problem with life under Israel's law, viewed from "in Christ," was nomism, which is legalism, no matter how "soft" its outward form.

But does Paul have in mind the response of individuals viewed in light of such generalized religious terms? Might not the Jewish plight under the law be something corporate and historically specific, even peculiar to Jewish history? Might not Paul's analysis of the plight of being under the law find a

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<sup>7</sup> S. Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: "Paul and His Recent Interpreters"*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1988.



less contested point of contact with his former peers in Judaism and more clearly resonate with the Old Testament itself? Indeed, might not the law perform a role in redemptive history that is more integrally a part of the plan of God?

## The Climax of the Covenant

N.T. Wright, in *The Climax of the Covenant*,<sup>8</sup> has offered a sweeping revisioning of Paul and the law. Indeed, as Wright sees it, Paul was speaking to a persistent historical situation in which Israel found itself. The curse of exile had not been lifted from Israel, even though the nation had returned from Babylon to the land of promise. Life in the land had not been marked by the peace and prosperity foretold by the prophets but by foreign rule now epitomized by Roman occupation. Israel suffered the paradoxical judgment of being in exile in the land of promise. Yes, individuals could know the blessings of divine forgiveness and presence, but the people of God lived under the *national* reality of the Deuteronomic curse of the covenant, and they awaited the day of restoration and renewal. The divine {10} blessing of law which had been given to Israel, God's "new Adam" in the divine plan to bring about the world's redemption, had not been able to deliver the life that it promised (a point of agreement with Westerholm). Instead it had served to compound sin in national dimensions. But the problem resided not in the law, which was holy and good, but in sin. But in this manner the law performed as an agent of the divine purpose.

"God has deliberately given the Torah to be the means of concentrating the sin of humankind in one place, namely, in his people, Israel in order that it might then be concentrated yet further, drawn together on to Israel's representative, the Messiah in order that it might there be dealt with once and for all."<sup>9</sup>

This relationship between commandment and sin is starkly reminiscent of the primeval sin of Adam. The giving of the law through Moses, with the simultaneous sin of the golden calf; epitomized Israel's life under the law. To many first-century Jews the historical reality of the curse upon Israel was evident on every hand. They would have had no problem following this Pauline analysis of their dilemma, resonating as it did with aspects of certain accepted apocalyptic analyses of the plight of Israel (Dan. 9:1-18; Bar. 1:15-3:8).

It was this "curse," argues Wright, that Paul said Christ took upon himself on the cross (Gal 3:13). Christ, standing in as Israel's representative, drew down upon himself the curse and "death" of the exile and so exhausted it in his own death on a tree. With that event, the covenant reached its climax, and with the resurrection the blessings of Abraham were poured out on believing Israel and the gentiles. There is now one renewed covenant and one covenant people of God whose badge of membership is faith. Those of Israel who reject the new covenant offered in Messiah Jesus are destined for the national judgment of AD 70. The renewed people of God, made up of Jews and gentiles, are the new temple. Israel's destiny has been fulfilled.

This is a bold new appraisal of Paul, and at least as far as Wright's analysis of Paul's view of the plight of Israel under the law goes, his thesis has been supported by the research of others, such

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<sup>8</sup> N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* Minneapolis: Fortress/ Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark 1991.

<sup>9</sup> Wright. 196.

as F. Thielman<sup>10</sup> and J.M. Scott.<sup>11</sup> It {11} remains, however, for Wright to show convincingly that this plight of Israel is indeed what lies behind the Pauline passages that over the centuries the church has so studiously misconstrued. For example, he must argue that the "us" in "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us" (Gal 3:13) refers to Jews and does not include gentiles, for whom the curse of the law did not apply since it was never given to them. And he must show that Romans 3:20 ("by works of the law no flesh is justified") and the similar wording of Galatians 2:16 are not to be generalized as broad references to religious people, but are specific references to Israel's national failure to keep the law as a whole and to be his covenant people (i.e., "be justified"). Outside of Christ there is no membership in the covenant. Or again, Wright must show that Romans 7 is at bottom about the roles of Torah and sin in the story of Israel, not a rendition of Paul's psychological autobiography (The "I" of Romans 7 is for Wright fundamentally Israel, typified in an individual Jew, and seen from a Christian perspective).

Wright understands covenant, its climax in Christ, and a continuity of covenantal relationship with God in Christ to be central to Pauline theology. What role does Torah play in the ongoing life of the people of God? In Christ and in the Spirit the Torah has been "reaffirmed and relativized." It was reaffirmed in its paradoxical role in the divine plan and in its authority; relativized in that the features of Torah that marked off Israel ethnically and geographically from the nations (land, circumcision, food laws) are set aside. At this point Wright has not addressed in what ways Paul sees Torah as continuing to be relevant for believers. But a full treatment of Paul will be forthcoming in his major five-volume investigation, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, the first volume of which has already appeared.

## Paul and Halakha

It remains to mention P.J. Tomson's interesting study of Paul's use of Halakha, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles*.<sup>12</sup> Tomson argues that Paul's letters, like other ancient Jewish writings (even in Greek), contain or reflect Halakha in incidental or fragmentary ways. To illustrate this, Tomson concentrates on Paul's instructions regarding illicit sex, marriage {12} and divorce in 1 Corinthians 5-7, food offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 8-10 and table fellowship between Jews and gentiles in Galatians 2 and Romans 14-15. Tomson identifies himself with the new perspective on Paul and finds that Paul's "Law theology" maintains that both Jews and Greeks are saved with "equal rights" (Gal 3:28) in Christ; there is no prerequisite of keeping "works of the Law." The church, the people of God, is pluriform in its make-up, and access is gained on equal terms for both Jew and gentile.

However, behavior is a different matter: Here Tomson discerns that Paul's instruction regarding behavior in concrete life situations reveals a concern that both Jews and gentiles obey the "commandments of God" (1 Cor 7:19). How so? Paul's solution, argues Tomson, is

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<sup>10</sup> F. Thielman, *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul's View of the Law in Galatians and Romans*, NovTSup 61; Leiden: Brill, 1989; Thielman, "Law" in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, D.G. Reid, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity 1933.

<sup>11</sup> M. Scott, "Restoration of Israel," *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, D.G. Reid, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 1993; Scott, "'For as many as are of works of the law are under a curse' (Gal 3:10)," in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. C.A. Erans and J.A. Sanders, Sheffield: JSNT, forthcoming.

<sup>12</sup> P.J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles*, *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum* III. 1, Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum/Minneapolis: Fortress 1990.

that the Jews should keep the Jewish Law and gentiles should keep the Noachian commandments in the version to be explicated by Paul. Thus Paul was "egalitarian" regarding entrance into the covenant, but did not eradicate distinctions between gentiles and Jews in practical behavior. There were distinct codes of behavior for the two parties, though their implementation was not to erode the unity of Jews and gentiles in the body of Christ.

The problems, of course, arose in instances in which Jewish and gentile Christians were living and eating together. At Antioch, argues Tomson, the problem was the hyper-halakhic sensitivity of the "men from James," who probably objected not to infringement of purity laws (which, according to the sages, could not strictly be maintained outside the land of Israel in any case) nor to Jewish Christians doing away with dietary laws. Rather, he argues, the emissaries from James were of the mind that the gentile Christians could not be free from the sphere and influence of idolatry, and thus dining with them was forbidden. This halakhic viewpoint is represented among the Tannaim in the tradition of R Shimon ben Elazar (*t. Avoda Zara* 4:6). In this and other instances from Paul, Tomson handles the Jewish and Christian evidence with great skill and attention to detail. The emerging picture is a fascinating profile of Paul, the Jew and follower of Jesus Christ, a Paul who understands Christ to be the *telos* of the law and yet engages in halakha which he applies to both Jew and gentile.

Time and debate will clarify these attempts to reset the focus on Paul and the law. Like the optical illusion that appears at one moment to be the outline of a long-eared rabbit and the next a long-beaked bird, the new perspective yields alternative configurations of Paul's theology from the same data. Those who take Pauline studies seriously cannot avoid interacting with the new perspective, and responsible communicators of Paul's expression of the gospel will certainly want to refine their understanding of the context of Paul's mission. No matter what the conclusion, it will lead to a fresh understanding of Paul.

# {13} My Yiddishe Paul?

## Recent Writings on Paul's Jewishness and Their Significance for Jewish Missions

### Richard Robinson

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In recent years, a "Jewish reclamation of Jesus," to use Donald Hagner's phrase, has taken place. Jewish scholars have recognized and affirmed the Jewishness of Jesus, but at the price of his uniqueness.<sup>1</sup> Most Jewish writers, on the other hand, still consider Paul to be the one who began Christianity and turned Jesus into a god for the gentiles. Some have admired him for his religious genius, but the consensus has been that he separated himself from his own people.<sup>2</sup>

The aim of this article is to examine four of the most recent contributions that have to do with Paul and his Jewishness.<sup>3</sup> Two of the writers are Jewish and two are gentiles who take Paul's Jewish background seriously.<sup>4</sup>

Two vital questions concern us. The first question is the origin of Paul's doctrine and thought. Did Paul "invent" Christianity from an amalgam of pagan elements? More charitably, did it come to him solely by revelation on the Damascus Road? Or does his theology have substantial roots in the teaching of Jesus, the earlier apostles, and the Jewish background of his age? The relevance of this question to Paul's Jewishness and Jewish milieu is obvious.

{14} The second question is that of what has been called "Paul's main concern" or what some would call the "center of Pauline theology." Was it a polemic against the law? Was it justification by faith? Recently some writers have argued that Paul is concerned mainly with the relationship between Jews and gentiles in the Church.<sup>5</sup> At least two of these views directly echo concerns in the modern Messianic movement.

With this background, let us turn to the four recent writers.

### Four Recent Books on Paul

Four books have made their appearance in the past few years which every person who witnesses to Jews should know something about:

*The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity* by Hyam Maccoby (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986);

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<sup>1</sup> Hagner, D.A. *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

<sup>2</sup> A historical survey of Jewish scholarship on Paul cannot be done in the scope of this paper. Modern Jewish views of Paul are conveniently summarized by Hagner in "Paul in Modern Jewish Thought," in D.A. Hagner and M.J. Harris, eds., *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to Professor F.F. Bruce on His 70th Birthday*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980, pp. 143-65.

<sup>3</sup> For a survey of other recent scholarship, see also Tomson, pp. 1-19.

<sup>4</sup> There are reasons for including gentile scholars in this article. First, Jewish New Testament scholarship has frequently taken its cue from what non-Jewish scholars have said and done in the field. Second, in scholarly circles, there is cross-fertilization of ideas. Gentile scholars are influenced by their Jewish colleagues and vice-versa.

<sup>5</sup> For a survey of these trends, see Tomson, pp. 1-19.

*Paul the Convert: the Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* by Alan F. Segal (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990);<sup>6</sup>

*Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* by Peter J. Tomson (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum and Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990);<sup>7</sup> and

*Paul and the Torah* by Lloyd Gaston (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987).<sup>8</sup>

I will sketch the main outlines of the thesis of each author, offer a few general comments about the pros and cons, and then say something about the relevance of these writings to Jewish evangelism.

First then, a thumbnail sketch of the thesis of each author, followed by a brief critique of each.

## **Hyam Maccoby**

Maccoby thinks that the conventional view of Paul is all wrong.<sup>9</sup> The truth is that Paul was a gentile who converted to Pharisaism but didn't quite have what it took. Unable to become a rabbi and poking around for a job, he joined the Sadducean High Priest's police force until finally, in a state of terrible mental {15} anguish, he had a vision which reconciled all his conflicts and abject feelings of personal failure. Embarking on a missionary career, his ensuing teaching was a combination of his pagan background and what he had learned of Judaism. To further his conversionist aims, Paul resorted to deceit and trickery. First Corinthians 9:20-22 in particular ("to the Jew I became as a Jew...") shows Paul's deceitfulness.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, Paul had little in common with Jesus. Jesus and the Pharisees stood together on one side of the fence, having no conflicts with each other whatsoever. The Sadducees stood on the other side, and Jesus' conflict was with them alone (and by implication, with Paul, stoolie of the High Priest).

There is little good to say about this book. It is to Paul what The Passover Plot was to Jesus. It is no more than yellow journalism, not responsible scholarship. Maccoby uses an outdated 19th-century view that pits Jesus against Paul<sup>11</sup> and bases himself on speculation, unsubstantiated charges of historical inaccuracy, and discarding the evidence when it counts against him.<sup>12</sup> He barely addresses the primary sources. The volume is an extreme example of the approach, still very much with us, which maintains that Paul had little in common with Jesus or with Jewishness.

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<sup>6</sup> Segal is professor of religion at Barnard College.

<sup>7</sup> In the series *Compendia Rerum Judaicarum* and *Novum Testamentum* (section 3, *Jewish Traditions in Early Christian Literature*, v. 1). Tomson who studied theology and rabbinics in Amsterdam and Jerusalem, has ministered in the Dutch Reformed Church, and was the executive editor of two volumes in the *Compendia*.

<sup>8</sup> Gaston is professor of New Testament at the Vancouver School of Theology.

<sup>9</sup> Maccoby, pp. 15-17 passim and Part Two.

<sup>10</sup> For a sober explanation of this passage in the light of rabbinic educational methods, see David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, Salem, NH: Ayer Company, Publishers, Inc., 1992, p. 336-41.

<sup>11</sup> The view of F.C. Baur. Baur's exegesis was shaped by the philosophy of Hegelian dialectic, the same philosophy that lay at the roots of Marxism. In Hegel's system, there is a thesis, which is opposed by an antithesis, both resolved in a synthesis. For Baur, Petrine (that is, Peter's) Christianity was the thesis, Pauline Christianity was the antithesis, and Acts was the synthesis. With Baur's theory as the foundation, others constructed a superstructure in which they claimed that Paul borrowed his concepts from Gnosticism and the Greek mystery religions.

<sup>12</sup> Mark 3:6 relates, "Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus." Since Jesus also taught Pharisaic doctrine, says Maccoby, it certainly could not have been the Pharisees who were his opponents (he writes off the differences within Pharisaism as of no account, pp. 54-55). It must have been the Sadducees. With no objective basis for saying so, Maccoby therefore simply declares that "Pharisees" was substituted in the text for an original "Sadducees" (p. 34)!

## Alan F. Segal

For Segal, Paul's conversion is not primarily theological, but sociological. He defines conversion as "a decision to change commitments from one religious community to another,"<sup>13</sup> a matter of switching groups. What Paul switched from was participation in a Pharisaic Jewish community to participation in a largely gentile Christian community. This dovetails with the common understanding in the Jewish community of what present-day conversion means.

**{16}** It began when Paul had a mystical conversion. After this, Paul spent 14 years in a gentile Christian community learning his doctrine. During that time he became convinced there was no value to observing the ceremonial law. Paul saw his chief task as maintaining unity within the church which was composed of both Jews and gentiles. To accomplish this, Paul at first maintained a policy of observing the law as a courtesy (Rom 7:9; 1 Cor 9:20-22). But according to Paul's testimony in Romans 7, when he did so, he was attacked by pride and his very salvation was imperiled. Paul was a failed compromiser. Therefore, in contrast to the either-or position of Galatians, by the time of the book of Romans Paul had come to his final position: Do not keep the ceremonial law at all.

There is much in Segal's book that is positive. It represents a Jewish scholar's taking the Jewishness of Paul seriously, and in a way that breaks new ground. For instance, chapter two contains the argument that the Christian idea of the divinity of Christ was part of a larger Jewish tradition in which angels and even men are transformed into virtually divine status.<sup>14</sup> Although a man attaining divine status clearly falls short of the Christian understanding of the incarnation, it marks an important step in Jewish scholarship in showing that Paul's doctrines do not have to be divorced from a Jewish frame of reference.

Again, Segal describes Paul's conversion experience as a mystical visionary one similar to the experiences of the Jewish "merkabah mystics" of early rabbinic times.<sup>15</sup> That is certainly preferable to those who see Paul's experience as epilepsy or as brought on by psychological trauma!

Nevertheless, Segal must be criticized in the following areas: (1) Nowhere does he explain how a gentile community came into existence before Paul began his apostolic ministry or why a Pharisee like Saul would have allowed gentiles to become his teachers for 14 years. (2) He is guilty of sociological reductionism when he makes conversion to be nothing more than a switch of social groups. (3) Though he states that the Church was composed of both Jews and gentiles, he equates entering the community of the Church with leaving the Jewish community. (4) His sociology of conversion is too narrow; not all conversion groups erect "high boundaries" and display "hostility" to the outside world. (5) His exegesis is questionable at crucial points: his treatment of Romans 2 is idiosyncratic and weird;<sup>16</sup> his exegesis of Romans 7 rests on an alleged Pauline distinction between the physical and the spiritual that cannot be maintained; **{17}** and it equates keeping the ceremonial law with being "fleshly," radically misunderstanding Paul's remark about "knowing Jesus after the flesh." Romans 13:14, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no

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<sup>13</sup> Segal, p. 117.

<sup>14</sup> Segal, pp. 40-52.

<sup>15</sup> "Merkabah" means "chariot" and is the Hebrew words used to describe God's throne in Ezekiel 1. The "merkabah mystics" described their mystical experiences in terms of the images of that chapter. See Segal, ch. 2, esp. pp. 40 ff.

<sup>16</sup> He claims that Paul is not dealing with the Mosaic law but with human law courts. His conclusion is that Jewish courts are more corrupt than gentile ones since they should know better!

provision for the flesh," means not to observe Jewish practices, i.e., the ceremonial law.<sup>17</sup> (6) Although Segal breaks ground for a Jewish author in detailing some of Paul's Jewish background, the gentile scholar Schweitzer proves to be his theological father.<sup>18</sup>

## Peter J. Tomson

Tomson's book has a more narrow focus than the others because it focuses on the specific issue of Paul and the law. There has been a deluge of books on this subject but Tomson's is one of the most recent and relates the subject closely to the rabbinic Jewish background.

Tomson's thesis is this: In the past, scholars assumed that Paul's theology was centered on a polemic against the law.<sup>19</sup> Just as the assumption that Paul abrogated the Law was the starting-point for other writers, so the assumption that he kept the Law is Tomson's starting-point. He justifies this assumption in two ways: one, by the fact that there is much material in Paul's instructions to his churches that shows parallels, similarities, and points of contact with the rabbinic halakha of the day. Paul employed halakha himself, defined as "the tradition of formulated rules of conduct regulating life in Judaism"<sup>20</sup>; two, that exegeting Paul's letters on the basis of this assumption makes for the most coherent understanding of Paul. Even his theology of justification by faith does not entail the abrogation of the law as its corollary but exists side by side with elements of Jewish traditional law, as we see in rabbinic tradition and at Qumran, where justification by faith went hand in hand with obeying the law.<sup>21</sup>

The rest of the book is devoted to detailed and specific discussions of halakhic issues in Paul's letters, particularly in First Corinthians.<sup>22</sup> Along the way, Tomson makes a vitally important point: halakha is a "tradition of rules" handed down {18} from earlier sources. In Paul's case, these sources included: scripture; the teaching of Jesus and early apostolic tradition<sup>23</sup> and generally circulating Jewish halakha.<sup>24</sup> Tomson's definition includes newly formulated halakhot which then become part of a later tradition. So we find halakhot in Paul's own apostolic teaching.<sup>25</sup> The conclusion that emerges is much of Paul's teaching is not of his own invention, but is derived from Jesus and his apostles. This view is diametrically opposed to the conception that Paul invented a new religion that had little in common with the teaching of Jesus. Other writers had previously demonstrated this in less detail,<sup>26</sup> but Tomson closely integrates his demonstration into the Jewish background.

A criticism must be brought against Tomson's assuming that Paul observed and taught observance of the Law, even if meant as a lifestyle and not for salvation. It is admirable that he lays his cards on the

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<sup>17</sup> Segal, p. 252.

<sup>18</sup> Segal follows Schweitzer in (1) understanding Paul to be an apocalyptic-mystic; (2) seeing a pluriformity rather than a uniformity in law observance in the early church; (3) understanding that justification by faith is not central to Paul; and (4) understanding that the "flesh" is the arena of life in which the law applies.

<sup>19</sup> Tomson, pp. 1, 18-19. The center of Paul's thought has been more usually expressed as justification by faith.

<sup>20</sup> Tomson, p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Tomson, p. 67. Note that Tomson thinks "justification by faith" is a Jewish doctrine! - though other interpreters who detail the Jewish background of Paul seem convinced that the doctrine is quite foreign to his thought.

<sup>22</sup> For instance, 1 Cor 5 is related to the rabbinic halakhot of "arayot" or forbidden relations; 1 Cor 14:16 relates the halakha of worship concerning the proper conditions under which one may say "Amen."

<sup>23</sup> E.g., 1 Cor 9:14 on sustenance of the apostles; or 1 Cor 11:2-16 on the headcovering of women, ascribed to "the custom of the churches of God."

<sup>24</sup> E.g., Gal 5:3, he who is circumcised must keep the whole law.

<sup>25</sup> E.g., 1 Cor 10:25-27, regarding the allowability of gentiles eating "undesigned food" in a pagan environment. See the summary of Paul's sources on pp. 82-85.

<sup>26</sup> For example, F.F. Bruce, *Paul and Jesus*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974.



table, and the assumption certainly opens the door to understanding Paul's contacts with Pharisaic halakha. Nevertheless: (1) Tomson never looks at the verses in which Paul appears to describe the law as ended, or as temporary (Rom. 10:4; Gal. 3:24-25); (2) just because Paul laid down rules of behavior as the rabbis did, it does not follow that he thought the Law of Moses was still binding. In that context, Tomson does not deal with the questions of the authority of Jesus, Paul's own apostolic authority, or any possible rabbinic doctrines of the abrogation of the Law of Moses in the Messianic age.

## Lloyd Gaston

Together with two other non-Jewish writers, Krister Stendahl and John Gager, Gaston advocates a "two-covenant" Paul. He maintains that the apostle taught two ways of salvation: Torah for Jews, and faith in Christ for gentiles. Paul sees **{19}** Jesus not as a new Moses, not as the Messiah, and not as the climax of God's dealings with Israel. Rather, he fulfills God's promises to the gentiles.<sup>28</sup> Consider this statement:

(Paul) can be understood, at least implicitly, as affirming something like the two-covenant concept of F. Rosenzweig. That is, Paul affirms the new expression of the righteousness of God in Christ for the Gentiles and for himself as Apostle to the Gentiles without in any sense denying the righteousness of God expressed in Torah for Israel.<sup>29</sup>

It is ironic that neither Maccoby nor Segal, both Jewish scholars, accepts the notion that Paul taught a two-covenant way of salvation. Maccoby objects by saying that Pharisaic theology already allowed for gentiles to be saved either through conversion or through keeping the Noahide laws.<sup>30</sup> Yet because the strategy of Jewish dialogue leaders has been one of making Christians feel ashamed of supporting Jewish evangelism, Gaston can say:

"I believe that it is possible to interpret Paul in this [two-covenant] manner. That it is necessary to do so is the implication of the agonized concern of many in the post-Auschwitz situation, including Rosemary Ruether in her powerful *Faith and Fratricide*. "<sup>31</sup>

In other words, the exegesis of the Scriptures is now to be shaped by feelings of guilt and shame rather than by the truth!

## Practical Value

At first sight, these four books may seem to offer uneven or even dubious value. We have one idiosyncratic denial that Paul was even Jewish; one sociological approach that yanks Paul out of the Jewish community and deposits him in a gentile one, one volume that makes Paul an advocate of keeping the Law of Moses and raises plenty of questions in so doing, and finally, a politically correct two-covenant Paul.

Yet the value of these books for Jewish evangelism and Messianic theology is substantial, and sometimes consists less in the authors' conclusions than in what they present along the way.

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<sup>28</sup> Gaston, p. 33.

<sup>29</sup> Gaston, p. 79.

<sup>30</sup> Maccoby, p. 94.

<sup>31</sup> Gaston, p. 34.

## Apologetics

From three of these authors, there is an abundance of material from Jewish sources that can help us present the Jewish background of Paul. Alan Segal is {20} so certain that the New Testament represents first-century Jewish thinking that he advocates using the New Testament to comment on the Mishnah rather than the other way around!<sup>32</sup>

For instance, the doctrine of the Incarnation has been often held to be derived from paganism, but as we have seen, Segal argues that this doctrine was part of a larger Jewish tradition. Paul's conversion experience has been variously treated as an invention or a fit of epilepsy, but Segal seeks to fit it into the context of Jewish mysticism.

These contexts cannot fully explain either Paul's doctrine or his experience, but they show that this doctrine and experience were not alien to similar phenomena in Judaism. This is after all God's missionary principle: using the known to help us understand the unknown.<sup>33</sup> From that vantage point we can argue more scripturally for the divine nature of the Messiah. Some might think that an *ad hominem* argument undercuts our case for the God who became a man because it seems to prove the opposite, that a man became God. But we often need to establish plausibility before we establish certainty, to argue "in the subjunctive"; to show that the incarnation could be Jewish because somewhat similar ideas are also Jewish.

Again, consider the charge that Paul "invented" Christianity as something radically at variance with the teaching of Jesus. Here we can draw on Tomson's arguments that Paul's sources include Jesus himself.<sup>34</sup>

Even Hyam Maccoby reminds us of the kinds of anti-missionary arguments we still continue to hear.

## Missions

It is instructive that neither Jewish scholar reviewed here is willing to accept a two-covenant Paul, while a gentile scholar does. This is evidence that the two-covenant theory is designed for export to the Christian community rather than for internal consumption. Alan Segal is no friend to Jewish evangelism and interprets Romans 11:29 to suggest that no mission to Jews is needed; yet he cannot find a two-covenant theory in Paul. First, his statement on evangelism:

{21} Rather than merely abandon the unbelieving members of the Jewish community, Paul asserts that God's promises to them are still intact: "For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" (11:29). Of course, he hopes that the remaining Jews will come to Christ as he did, freely and without coercion. Though the mission to the Jews has

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<sup>32</sup> Segal, p. XV.

<sup>33</sup> Acts 2, the giving of the Spirit on Pentecost/Shavuot, recounts that Jews from every nation heard the apostles speaking in their own language. This reflects not the biblical data about Shavuot but very likely the rabbinic traditions of the 70 nations hearing the law in their own language at Mt. Sinai on Shavuot, and the gift of the law on the same date. Likewise, when Jesus cried aloud in John 7 about "living water," he was using the rabbinic tradition of water-drawing on Sukkot, and not the biblical data, in order to make his point.

<sup>34</sup> Of course, earlier writers also provide valuable material, such as F.F. Bruce, *Paul and Jesus* cited in n. 27.

been a failure, God will eventually reveal the reason. Therefore, there need not be a continuing Christian mission to the Jews.<sup>35</sup>

Yet he nevertheless makes this stunning admission:

As a believing Jew and a twentieth-century humanist, I could have hoped for a different outcome of Paul's interpretation of these passages. The theology outlined by Stendahl, Gaston, and Gager (that Paul teaches two ways of salvation) makes more sense for today than does Paul's actual conclusion. It would have been easier for today's Christianity had Paul embraced cultural pluralism more fully.<sup>36</sup>

The practical application is that a survey of these books teaches us how the dialogue movement can all too easily influence exegesis and Bible study. A corollary is that in any exegesis we need to beware of being unduly influenced by our desires to make the text say what we wish it to say.

## **Discipleship and Bible instruction**

One of the questions raised at the beginning concerned what is the center of Paul's theology. A strong case can be made for seeing Paul's relationship with Jews and gentiles in one body as at least one chief concern, most notably in the book of Romans.<sup>37</sup> Rather than just teaching doctrines like justification by faith from Paul's letters, we can also use them to teach new Jewish believers how to understand and relate to the gentile Christians in the church, and vice-versa. It is possible in the messianic movement to be so focused on Paul's Jewishness and his attitude to the law that his teaching on the relationship between Jews and gentiles is excluded or minimized.<sup>38</sup>

## **The Law of Moses**

Each of these four writers represents a different idea of Paul's relationship to the Law of Moses: Maccoby thinks that Paul abrogated the Law for everyone and that no one should observe it. Segal thinks that Paul abrogated the Law for everyone but that it was acceptable for Jewish believers to observe it. Tomson's view is that Paul did not consider the law abrogated but rather required as a {22} life-style (not for salvation) for Jewish believers, though not for gentiles. Finally, Gaston holds that the law was not abrogated for Jewish believers but was a life-style; he does not state it as strongly as "required."

There is an irony in that the Jewish writers claim Paul abrogated the law while the gentile writers maintain he did not. Is this an example of gentile writers being more objective on the subject while the Jewish authors still labor under the older Jewish view of Paul? Or is it an instance of rushing a little too headstrong into affirming a Jewish Paul? In Gaston's case the contemporary situation has shaped his view of a "two-covenant Paul." And Tomson, as we saw, accepted a law-observant Paul as a working assumption.

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<sup>35</sup> Segal, p. 280.

<sup>36</sup> Segal, p. 281.

<sup>37</sup> See n. 5 above.

<sup>38</sup> Rom 9-11 is an exception to this, in that it receives treatment in any discussion of the place of Israel. But there is much more on the inter-relationship of Jews and gentiles than that one passage.

How should Jewish believers think about the Law? A study of the arguments brought by these writers may help us to find the answer. Segal argued that even if Paul abrogated the Law, it was acceptable to observe it if one so wished, and this is the position of many Jewish believers today. It is interesting that this was also Augustine's view: Works of the law could be observed *sine ulla salutatis necessitate*, "without any necessity in view of salvation."<sup>39</sup> This question has to be addressed in the light of two other issues. The first issue is the teaching of other statements in Paul or in the rest of the New Testament. A problem with each of the four books is that no one of these authors examines all the relevant verses. Tomson, for example, does not consider Romans 7, which receives extensive treatment by Segal. Nor does he handle Galatians 3:24 ("the law was a tutor to lead us to Christ"). The second issue is the authority of Jesus and what in his ministry and teaching was new and different from what had come before.

## **Conclusion**

At least two possible scenarios emerge from this discussion. Some might vigorously pursue a "reclamation of Paul," recovering his Jewishness at the expense of a true understanding of what he taught. Two things might happen. First, as with the reclamation of Jesus, a number of diverse "Jewish Pauls" will emerge as the various writers support their views without regard to the full body of evidence. Second, just as the "blame" for Christianity was shifted from Jesus to Paul, so the blame may be shifted again to the Church Fathers and the Church Councils. Then they will be the ones charged with taking the Judaism of Jesus and Paul and inventing a new religion!

But another scenario is that God will use the newer scholarship on Paul to allow us to answer genuine questions about the gospel. That it why it is vital that those witnessing to Jewish people acquaint themselves firsthand with the writers discussed here and with others like them.

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<sup>39</sup> Cited in Tomson, p. 224.

# **{23} Anglican Mission to Israel – 1948-1980**

## **Kelvin Crombie**

Kelvin Crombie was born in Australia and came to Israel in 1979. He is presently serving as manager of the Christ Church guesthouse and as historical guide to the church.

The Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC) is well known among the Messianic/Christian fraternity in Israel. But when asked to describe the work of ITAC, uncertainty is apparent. Thus an explanation is necessary.

## **Origin of Name**

ITAC is a recent term, introduced in order to offset somewhat the anti-Israel stance of the Middle East Anglican Church and to decrease somewhat the overt missionary character of the original name, "The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews" (or LJS) and presently, the "Church's Ministry among the Jews" (CMJ). The LJS/CMJ was established in 1809 in England by evangelicals who saw the need to take the gospel to the Jewish people and to encourage their restoration to the land of Israel, prerequisites for the return of Messiah Jesus.

## **CMJ In Pre-1948 Israel**

The LJS consolidated its presence in Israel in 1833, when John Nicolayson became the first permanent Protestant resident in Jerusalem. During the following years, LJS established the first Protestant Church in Israel (Christ Church), the first hospital in Jerusalem, and the first industrial school, and was closely associated with the establishment of the first consulate in Jerusalem (that of Britain in 1838). The Consulate was located on the LJS property. LJS was also one of the main parties involved in establishing of the unique Anglo/Prussian Protestant Bishopric in 1841. Michael Solomon Alexander, the first Protestant Bishop was an LJS worker. Christ Church served for years as the spiritual home for Protestants of many nations, as well as for Jewish and Arab believers. CMS<sup>1</sup> built St. Paul's Church for Arab Protestants. Bishop Blyth (The fourth {24} Anglican bishop in Jerusalem.) was less evangelical than his three predecessors who were all members of the evangelical societies LJS and CMS. He desired to establish his authority over these two societies and attempted to take over Christ Church. LJS resisted, causing Blyth to set up his own society the Jerusalem and East Mission (J&EM). He built St. George's Cathedral for Anglicans of all persuasions, while the Germans built the Redeemer Church, thereby providing other options for the expanding Protestant community.

Until 1892 the Old City housed most of the institutions in or near the Christ Church compound. After 1892, a second area of activity developed on a large piece of property on the present Prophets Street, where a large Girls' Boarding School and a new Hospital (now the Anglican School) were opened.

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<sup>1</sup> Church Missionary Society, an evangelical Anglican society established in England in 1799, and which began operating in Eretz Israel in 1851.

The Society also owned property and carried out activities in Jaffa, including a bookshop and mission chapel. During the Mandate period, the former Park Hotel was purchased to serve as a Girls High School. The largest center outside Jerusalem until World War I was at Safed.<sup>2</sup>

The Society's institutions had a distinctively British character, although many of the missionaries and congregants were local Hebrew Christians. As the British Mandate period progressed, CMJ's British connection became a burden for the Hebrew Christians connected with her. Despite this, LJS personnel were actively involved in helping the Jewish community, especially during the riots of 1920, 1921, 1929 and 1936-1939.

### **CMJ in the Midst of the Battle 1945-48**

As anti-British sentiment arose, the British evacuated many non-essential British personnel and dependents in January, 1947. CMJ left the decision about evacuation to the individuals and many CMJ personnel remained - retaining continuity since 1840. The Hebrew Christians on staff remained but they too came progressively under pressure. Many Hebrew Christians, known to have social contact with British and Arab Christians, were singled out. Some were kidnapped, interrogated, beaten and threatened. Few dared to venture through Jaffa Gate after December, 1947, thereby severing the Jewish connection to Christ Church. In Jaffa, the situation for Hebrew Christians also became uncertain. Some were evacuated in May, 1948. This evacuation was criticized, but those involved testify to a well-founded concern for the welfare of Hebrew Christians.

In early 1948 the future of the CMJ Hospital was in doubt. The Arab domestic staff could no longer come to work, and fewer outpatients used the facilities. In February, 1948, the Magen David Adom (the Jewish ambulance service) buildings {25} offered part of the Hospital to Magen David Adom. By early 1948 the Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus had been cut off from the rest of Jewish Jerusalem, leaving the Jewish community without its largest hospital. Hugh Jones, the head of CMJ in Jerusalem, then offered most of the Hospital premises to the Vaad Leumi (Jewish National Council), the Jewish "Government." A. Katznelson, representing the Executive of the Vaad Leumi, wrote to Jones: "The Vaad Leumi is well aware of the fact that in taking this step your Society had at heart the medical requirements of the Jewish community, which were devotedly served in the past by your institution."<sup>3</sup>

No doubt Katznelson was unaware that some of the severest *cheremim* (curses) issued by the rabbis in the modern period, were issued against the CMJ when it first opened the Hospital in 1844 and the new one in 1897. Some of the first serious casualties brought into the newly-named "Hadassah A" Hospital resulted from the Ben Yehuda blast and the destruction of the Gush Etzion settlements.

Christ Church was strategically located between the Jaffa Gate and David's Citadel, controlled by the Arab forces, and the Jewish Quarter, at that time still in Jewish hands. Until the Jewish Quarter fell, groups of armed Arabs attempted to station themselves on the Compound but Hugh Jones removed them all. Many Christian Arabs and some Muslims found refuge on the compound when their homes on the Jewish side were in the midst of the fighting. The Girls School was forced to split. The Jewish girls were removed to the Mission Hospital Compound

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<sup>2</sup> See "A Real Son of Zion: Ben Zion Friedman And the Jewish Mission at Safed", *MISHKAN* 15 (1991).

<sup>3</sup> Dr. A. Katznelson to Hugh Jones, 2 April 1948, Bodleian Library dept CMJ, c 218.

under Ruth Clark, while the Arab and Armenian girls continued to attend school in the Barclay building.

## 1948-1958

When it became apparent that the Old City would be under Arab control, Hugh Jones, Ronald Adeney, Hannah Hurnard and Ruth Clark moved their residences to the Jewish side of Jerusalem. Jones received the rare honor of being able to cross over to Christ Church fortnightly in order to conduct services. Meanwhile a small Arabic Anglican service began at Christ Church under the supervision of Najib Cubain and Aql Aql. The battle over the future of Christ Church then began in earnest. Bishop Stewart had proposed the exchange of Anglican properties: St. Paul's on the Jewish side to CMJ, Christ Church on the Arab side to the Arab Anglican community.<sup>4</sup>

Jones was concerned lest CMJ lose control over Christ Church, and wrote to the CMJ Secretary, Mr. Gill:

I feel bound to say that I feel that the spirit that prevailed in the former St. Paul's {26} congregation would not augur well for Christ Church and all that CC stands for which has been built up by the prayers and labors of Christian well-wishers of Israel over the past hundred years.<sup>5</sup>

Over the coming years various proposals were made. Jones and Gill were prepared to allow use of some of the buildings, but these proposals were rejected because the Diocese demanded control over the entire Compound.<sup>6</sup> By 1952, the Arabic congregation had decided to move to St. George's.

Further attempts by Bishop Stewart were thwarted by Jones, who encouraged the property to be used by the RAF stationed in Egypt.

On the Israeli side of Jerusalem, the CMJ work initially existed side by side with a Hadassah Hospital department. The doctors' residence on the compound was used by CMJ as the office, chapel, accommodation and school. In 1953, CMJ began using St. Paul's Church after needed restoration due to war damage. The doctor's residence was now used for the school, under Ruth Clark's leadership. The Ministry of Religious Affairs was eager to minimize the influence of mission schools. Pressure was therefore brought to bear upon Jones to steer the school away from Jewish children.<sup>7</sup> There was need for such a school in Jerusalem for the growing number of diplomats and their families residing in the city.

When life returned to normal in the Jaffa-Tel Aviv region, Roger Allison began using the Lutheran Church in Jaffa for services. During the War, Germans living in Jaffa had been deported by the British and the property entrusted to the Scottish Mission. Allison agreed with the Scots that they would use the St. Peter's Church (Anglican), which was closer to their center in Jaffa, while CMJ used the German Church. The British had commandeered the CMJ property (today's Bet

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<sup>4</sup> "Bible Lands", Vol. 2, No. 2, April 1949, p. 213

<sup>5</sup> Jones to Gill, 5 May 1949, Bodleian Library Oxford, dept CMJ.

<sup>6</sup> Curtis to Jones, 19 June 1951, Bodleian Library, dept CMJ.

<sup>7</sup> Jones to Curtis, 15 March 1952, Bodleian Library, dept CMJ.



Immanuel) opposite the German Church. After the establishment of the State of Israel, the Israeli Army commandeered it.

The congregation in Jaffa grew and, in 1952, Jones submitted a request to the Lutheran World Federation to purchase the property they were using. When no positive answer was forthcoming, he increased his efforts to regain the CMJ Mission property from the Israeli Army. The property was returned to CMJ in 1954. After some restoration work, a boys' boarding school was set up there with help of the Scottish Mission. A number of CMJ workers also resided there. Allison envisaged that the property would one day be used as a "Christian Israelite community."<sup>8</sup>

Following 1948, the number of Arab Anglicans was greatly reduced and CMS {27} began selling off many of its properties in Israel. CMJ rented the former CMS Mission House in Lydda, which initially was filled with some 50 Arab refugees from Jaffa. By 1954, most of these refugees had moved out to housing, and the daunting task of renovation began. Female missionary workers then moved in, mostly involved in medical and clinical work. The small chapel was re-opened for services in 1954.

## **The Suez Crisis and Aftermath**

In 1956 a book by Muriel Corey on the life of the first bishop, Michael Solomon Alexander, was about to be published, entitled "From Rabbi to Bishop." Bishop Stewart was concerned over the book. He feared resentment would arise due to the emphasis given to the Jewish identity of the first bishop.<sup>9</sup> The timing was not good: The Arab Anglicans were now asking for their own Bishop. Najib Cubain wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, expressing his own convictions and those of the AEEC (Arab Evangelical Episcopal Community) that the Anglican Church should be indigenized and an Arab consecrated as Bishop.<sup>10</sup> Then the Suez Crisis erupted, heightening anti-Jewish and anti-British feelings in the Middle East.

Bishop Stewart resigned in 1957. His successor, Campbell MacInnes, brought with him a new title and a new position - Archbishop. The pressure brought to bear prior to the crisis now paid the Arab Anglicans dividends. The new Archbishop would preside over the Province of the Middle East, from St. George's. A new diocese - that of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon - was then created with its cathedral in Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup> The big question now was, "Where in Jerusalem?" The obvious choice was Christ Church. Thus began another attempt to detach Christ Church from CMJ.

MacInnes formally proposed the idea in June, 1957. It was discussed at the CMJ Committee.<sup>12</sup> Jones wished to ensure that the position and ownership of Christ Church would not be jeopardized. In his opinion, the time would come when the church would again be used for Jewish ministry. The Arab Anglicans were upset over their failure to gain full control over Christ Church. They decided to remain at St. George's. This prompted Jones to write: "I think that they had hoped that we would clear out of Christ Church lock, stock and barrel and hand it over completely to them and anything less than this is apparently {28} unacceptable."<sup>13</sup> Another offer was made in December, 1957, but was again rejected. CMJ's strong stance was not widely appreciated.

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<sup>8</sup> JMN, Vol XLI, number 26, July-August 1954, p. 407.

<sup>9</sup> Stewart to Curtis, 24 March 1956, Bodleian Library, dept CMJ.

<sup>10</sup> Cubain to Archbishop of Canterbury, 27 August 1956, Bodleian Library, dept CMJ.

<sup>11</sup> "Bible Lands", Vol XIV, number 1, July 1957, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> CMJ Minutes, L 1451, 21 June 1957.

<sup>13</sup> Jones to Curtis, 16 September 1957, Bodleian Library, dept CMJ

In January, 1958 the first bishop of the new Arab diocese, Najib Cubain, was enthroned. Repeated efforts to negotiate all or part of Christ Church into Arab Anglican hands failed.

The issue over the future of Christ Church was bound up with the overall situation in which CMJ found itself in the Middle East. CMJ was an Anglican society, and therefore linked to Anglicans in the country, most of whom were Arab. Many of the Arabs were antagonistic toward Israel. On the other hand, CMJ was committed to the welfare of the Jewish people in the land.<sup>14</sup>

Hugh Jones died prematurely in 1964. He was replaced by Roger Allison. MacInnes assumed responsibility for the services in Christ Church, while Allison supervised those at St. Paul's until a Hebrew Christian, Stephen Levison arrived.

Under Allison the work in Jaffa-Tel Aviv progressed. Services were held in the Lutheran (Immanuel) Church, attended by a number of Hebrew Christians and foreigners, while other activities were held in the CMJ Mission Hall (now Bet Immanuel). Isidore Ball manned the Bookshop. In 1966 a house group was begun in north Tel Aviv for those living in that area. The following year, Henry Knight, an ordained Anglican Hebrew Christian, joined Allison.

Jones noted in 1959 that the government had shown interest in property on Prophets Street Jerusalem, once Hadassah left for their new hospital at En Kerem. In March, 1962, the property on Prophets Street in Jerusalem, was handed back. The same year, Beryl Bradnack was appointed as the new headmistress. Bradnack was of the opinion that an international school in Jerusalem was essential.<sup>15</sup>

As Hadassah vacated, the buildings were taken over and used for classrooms. In 1964, a law was passed limiting the possibility of Jewish children attending mission schools. It became apparent that the future of the school was not among Israeli children. By 1967, the student body increased to 120, including many boys. CMJ UK sent a headmaster, Richard Thomas.

The property in Lydda was given up in 1965 and a property purchased in nearby Ramle, where a book shop was opened.

For some time CMJ had seen the need for a Christian fellowship center, preferably outside Jerusalem, where Jewish, Arab and expatriate believers could meet and seminars could be held. A former Arab hotel near the Druze village of Isfiya was purchased in 1961 and renamed "Stella Carmel." After a good deal of {29} renovations, the center was opened in February, 1962 with Ronald and Laura Adeney as wardens.

## **The Six Day War until 1980**

In spite of the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967, CMJ did not immediately receive its control of Christ Church. MacInnes was unwilling to make any decision about the property until the UN decided Jerusalem's future. Allison wrote: "I feel certain that the Archbishop must be feeling in doubt about Christ Church and its connection with CMJ. In some such connection he seems already to have said ... that CMJ is too sentimental about the place."<sup>16</sup>

MacInnes was determined to incorporate Christ Church under his responsibility. He wrote to Curtis: "I am very anxious that in the future there would be only one congregation in Jerusalem even if we

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<sup>14</sup> Jewish Missionary News, Sept/Oct 1964, p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> Bradnack, B., "The Anglican Church (International) School" in Jerusalem, ITAC Archives, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> Allison to Curtis, 11 July 1967, Bodleian Library, dept CMJ, Box 14.

use more than one Church. "<sup>17</sup> Morning services at St. Paul's were stopped and CMJ staff were expected to attend the morning service at St. George's. Only evening prayer and early morning communion could be held at Christ Church. A number of CMJ workers and committee members were suspicious of the Archbishop's encroachments upon CMJ's authority.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout this period, three major areas of conflict were evident between CMJ and St. George's: 1) The distinct types of Anglicanism represented by Christ Church (more evangelical) and St. George's (less evangelical, more liberal and high church). Curtis wrote of the Archbishop's fear that Christ Church would rival St. George's.<sup>19</sup> 2) The political situation. If MacInnes consented to CMJ being independent at Christ Church, this was tantamount to saying that the Old City was to remain in Israeli hands. Cubain and others would object to this. Allison wrote, "But any move partly depends on the delicate sensitivities of the Arab members of the Anglican church and we have to wait."<sup>20</sup> 3) The relationship between the authority of the Archbishop and a missionary society. CMJ was concerned lest its work would suffer under the authority of an entity which did not agree with its objectives.

Despite these tensions, Jewish ministry was soon restored in Christ Church following the appointment of a new Archbishop, George Appleton, in 1969. Shortly after taking up his post, Appleton restored Christ Church to CMJ, who in turn appointed Allison to minister there. Part of Allison's role was to restore {30} Jewish ministry.<sup>21</sup> Hebrew services initially began on the school compound in late 1969 because the surroundings were considered to be more neutral. At this point, Shlomo Hizak of the Mount of Olives Bible Centre and some of his followers joined Allison's group. In January, 1970, the mixed group moved to Christ Church, where Hebrew services were restored. The congregation continued to meet there until 1976.<sup>22</sup>

Allison's successor, Ronald Adeney, at first acted in the dual capacity of mission head and minister of Christ Church. In 1979, Fred Cooke arrived in order to take over responsibilities at Christ Church and to serve as chaplain at the Anglican School. Under Cooke, Sunday morning services were restored to Christ Church.

## Hospital/School

Following the Six Day War, Bradnack wrote (December, 1967) to inquire if Arabic classes for the Old City children could be commenced.<sup>23</sup> But, wrote Bradnack, "Is this what we ought to do, under the wing of CMJ as we are?" Her question was a pointer to the confusing road which lay ahead for the school. Was it to become an International school or remain an auxiliary of CMJ? Obviously, few Israeli children would be attracted to an international school, so consideration of its future was again necessary. Appleton envisaged closer cooperation with the Jerusalem and East Mission. Some CMJ Committee members, however, suspected that this would lead to a takeover.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> MacInnes to Curtis, 19 September 1967, Bodleian Library, dept CMJ, Box 14.

<sup>18</sup> Curtis to Allison, 21 August 1967 Bodleian Library, dept CMJ, Box 14.

<sup>19</sup> Curtis to Allison, 18 March 1968, Bodleian Library, dept CMJ, Box 14.

<sup>20</sup> Allison to Curtis, 5 March 1968, Bodleian Library, dept CMJ, Box 14.

<sup>21</sup> Curtis to Appleton, 25 April 1969, Bodleian Library, dept CMJ.

<sup>22</sup> Ronald Adeney to Barker, 5 July 1976, ITAC office.

<sup>23</sup> Bradnack to Curtis, 12 December 1967, Bodleian Library, dept CMJ, Box 17.

<sup>24</sup> Curtis to Allison. 7 April 1970, Bodleian Library, dept CMJ, Box 17.

The future was now being considered in relationship to future impending changes in the constitution of the Middle East Anglican Church. Certain CMJ supporters were fearful that "there may be strong pressure to vest the school and buildings in the diocese which would be predominately Arab."<sup>25</sup> In September 1970 a CMJ committee decided to maintain CMJ control over the school and to appoint a Board of Governors which would include representatives from the Jerusalem and East Mission and the Evangelical Episcopal Church in Israel. Allison voiced CMJ concerns: "We were all very much aware of the uncertainties of the future of the diocesan structure ... of the probability of the succession of an Arab bishop, and so anxious to emphasize the need for very adequate safeguards of the traditional orientation of the school towards the people of Israel, even {31} though the number of Jewish pupils might always be quite small."<sup>26</sup>

In 1971, Archbishop Appleton hired two British educators to make a survey of Anglican educational work in Israel. Their report concluded: "It does not seem right that the CMJ should be burdened any longer with a commitment which no longer reflects its objectives."<sup>27</sup> Appleton also approached an Israeli property development firm in order to assess the property for development. Two major options were possible: sale, or development of the school. Which of the two? Legal aspects then complicated matters. Following sale of the former Girls' Boarding School (Bet Hadege) in 1961, the Municipality received the option to purchase the Hospital property. Mayor Teddy Kollek and the Municipality were reluctant to forgo the option. When, in 1972, it was announced that the Americans might move their Embassy to Jerusalem, it became urgent to decide the property's future. If the move happened, CMJ would need to be ready either to improve the school or build a new one. Otherwise, the Americans and the UN might build their own. A suitable property on the outskirts of Jerusalem was then offered to CMJ by the Municipality. Kollek wrote to Appleton stating "We could not allow any buildings to be added to the existing school property."<sup>28</sup> He later wrote again, stating that the Municipality had plans "to use the building either as a community center or library, or for some other function that will benefit the public." He suggested that CMJ sell the property to the Municipality, in exchange for which the Municipality would build a school for CMJ on the outskirts of Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup>

The advantages in entering an agreement with the Municipality would be realized only if a new school were built. The disadvantage was that CMJ would lose its vital property in the middle of the city. Counter proposals were then made in 1974-75 to remain on the property and modify the buildings so as to meet the needs of a modern school. The Municipality continued to refuse the necessary building permits.

A new headmaster, Peter Cuthbertson, came in 1975. He strongly recommended continued use of property development to meet the needs. The CMJ Committee agreed. Municipal opposition was finally overcome and renovation work began in 1973, the same year that the school was named the "Anglican School."

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<sup>25</sup> Curtis to Malcolm McQueen, 25 August 1970, ITAC Office, Correspondence, 1970.

<sup>26</sup> Allison to Curtis, 24 September 1970, ITAC Office Foreign Correspondence, 1970.

<sup>27</sup> Report on Anglican Education, April 1971, pp. 24-25, Bodleian Library, Box 17.

<sup>28</sup> Kollek to Appleton, 27 February 1973, ITAC Archives.

<sup>29</sup> Kollek to Appleton, 31 August 1973, ITAC Office.

## Bet Immanuel

Henry Knight's appointment was vital for the development of Bet Immanuel.

{32} Following his institution as chaplain for the Anglican congregation meeting in the Immanuel Church in February, 1968, Knight, assisted by Janette Ross, endeavored to introduce more Hebrew into the Sunday evening services. A joint monthly Saturday morning Hebrew service with the Lutheran congregation began in 1969.

Knight, who, in 1970 became Israel Secretary of the Hebrew Christian Alliance, saw the need to devote his time to building up a more indigenous congregation. He outlined his ideas in July, 1970, suggesting a division of duties in Tel Aviv/Jaffa region which would separate expatriate ministry from his duties and from the CMJ mission hall. Soon afterwards the Hebrew-speaking congregation moved from the Lutheran Immanuel Church, to the more informal setting of the mission hall across the street, calling this center Bet Immanuel.<sup>30</sup>

In 1976, it was agreed that a reading room, a library and small youth hostel would be established. Renovation began in 1977. In 1975, two Mennonite ministers, Paul Swarr and Roy Kreider became involved in the work. Swarr assisted Knight in the pastoral duties. In 1977, Knight relinquished his position and Swarr took it up, while Knight concentrated upon teaching and writing.

A new worship room was completed in December, 1978 which could accommodate the growing Hebrew-speaking congregation. Work continued on the youth hostel and study center. By 1979, when Knight returned to the UK, the transformation of Bet Immanuel was becoming a reality.

## The Anglican Constitution

Dynamic changes affected three of the four ITAC Centers during this period. Only Stella Carmel, apart from some minor staffing and structural changes, seemed to go through the whole period with little change.

The Anglican Church in the Middle East as a whole was going through a phase of great change. Since 1970, the Arab Anglicans had been pressing for complete indigenization of the Arab Anglican Church of the Middle East, including an Arab Archbishop. A new Anglican Constitution was to be drawn up. CMJ faced the possibility of losing control over its properties (which would be vested under the control of the Diocese), losing the right to choose ministers for Christ Church and Bet Immanuel, losing support for its evangelistic efforts, and being associated with a church whose constitution would not even mention the name of Israel in the countries over which the constitution ruled.<sup>31</sup> It was an intense struggle. CMJ resisted and ultimately retained control over {33} its properties, the right to nominate its ministers, and support for the right to be involved in evangelism. But they lost over the issue of Israel. Such was the degree of

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<sup>30</sup> Allison to Barker, 9 May 1974, ITAC Office.

<sup>31</sup> For a more detailed analysis see Crombie, K., *For the Love of Zion*, London, 1991, pp. 237-255.

opposition to the existence of the sovereign State of Israel that it was not mentioned in the constitution.

When PLO Executive member, Elias Khoury, was elected to the position of assistant bishop in 1979, further complications developed. It could appear both to the Israeli authorities and the emerging Messianic Jewish movement that CMJ was endorsing this and similar developments in the Anglican Church. Some adjustments were necessary.

## **Epilogue**

Those adjustments took place through the next decade. CMJ Israel became an Israeli Registered Society (*amuta*) in 1983, the "Israel Trust of the Anglican Church" - a significant move considering the established Anglican position towards Israel. Other significant changes occurred at Bet Immanuel and Christ Church. At Bet Immanuel, the Anglican congregation had become a Hebrew-speaking Messianic congregation which, despite some difficulties, still worships there alongside several other groups. A Study Center thrived throughout the decade until its disruption in 1989. Bet Immanuel still functions as a Guest House and Youth Hostel.

The most significant changes occurred at Christ Church under the leadership of Alfred Sawyer, who came to the country in 1983. He wanted to see a Jewish ministry firmly established in the church. By the end of the decade, a non-denominational Hebrew-speaking congregation was meeting on Saturdays, while the Anglican evangelical services continued on Sunday. A study tour program named Shoresh was set up, as were a Coffee Shop, a Book Shop, and guiding ministry in the church. By 1992, the majority of the workers on the compound, especially in the Guest House, were Israeli believers, Jewish and Arab, mostly from the Hebrew congregation.

The School developed into a fine international school with some 300 pupils. Stella Carmel continues to be the quietest of the CMJ Centres offering peace and hospitality to thousands of visitors.

The story of ITAC, now also known as, "Messianic and Christian Ministries" is indeed a story of survival and resurrection. May God's eternal purposes be established in this ministry in the future in an even greater way than they have been in the past.

# {34} Arne Jonsen – A Pioneer in Israel, 1924-29

## Kurt Hjemdal

Kurt Hjemdal (Th. M., Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology) is chairman of the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel.

Some Jewish Christians in Palestine, who for a long time have been expecting the renewal of the Hebrew branch of the Apostolic church from the beginning of our Era, have a short time ago decided as a first step toward this goal to found anew The Jewish-Christian Assembly in Jerusalem. Our first service was held Sunday the 22nd of November 1925, when the Assembly was founded. We shall, God willing, proceed the first day in every week with celebrating Holy Communion. The service will take place in the English Cathedral through kind openness from the Bishop of Jerusalem.

That news spread to friends of the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel (NCMI) through the monthly magazine *Misjonsblad for Israel* (MFI) edited by this organization in vol. 23-24/1925. The man who had written this surprising article, was Norwegian pastor and missionary Arne Jonsen.

Today this man and his work are forgotten, but he must have been a remarkable person - in some ways "a man before his time." Certainly he was a pioneer. He must also have been quite stubborn. People at his time viewed his work as a fleeting <sup>1</sup> - but seen in the light of history his work seems prophetic. I shall try to give some glimpses of the man and his deeds.

## The Background

Jonsen was born March 23, 1885 in Trondheim, Norway. He grew up in a poor home as his father died when was nine. When he finished school at age 14 he started work as a shop-assistant, a job he held more than 10 years.

At this time the "Christian Endeavor" movement was coming to Norway. One of those introducing the movement, was pastor Hans B. Klæbø in Trondheim. Arne Jonsen was in contact with Klæbø and he participated in the movement's {35} meetings. There he received what he saw as a calling from God to bring the gospel to the Jewish people.<sup>2</sup>

After that he contacted the NCMI. This organization provided support and sent him to London to be trained as a missionary. In autumn, 1910 Jonsen was studying English, German and Jewish Evangelism in London. In contact with Hebrew Christian Testimony and its leaders, David Baron and C.A. Schoenberger, he got his first experiences in preaching the gospel to Jewish people. The next winter Jonsen was sent to the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum in Leipzig, Germany and studied Hebrew, Talmud and methods in missions to Jews.

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<sup>1</sup> Report from Mr. Hexeberg to the General Assembly of NCMI, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> This section is based on information from Arne Jonsen's daughter, Mrs. Sara Kalsås, who lives in Oslo. In addition I have had entry to letters from Mr. Jonsen. An important source has been: Chr. Ihlen, *Den Norske Israelmisjons Historie i hundre. År 1844 - 1944*, Oslo 1945.



The leadership in Norway wanted him to start as a missionary to the Jews living in Oslo (or Kristiania as it was named then). He bought a flat in the Jewish neighborhood and had meetings there for two years. (The flat is still a center of work among Jews in Oslo).

Jonsen's vision for mission among Jews was probably born in these years. His studies in London and Leipzig provided a background. While he was in London one of the most burning issues on the Jewish Christian agenda was whether a Jew had to leave his Jewishness to become a Christian. David Baron discussed this with Theodore Lucky, an old Jewish Rabbi who believed in Jesus. Lucky lived in Stanislau and stressed that Jews believing in Jesus as their Messiah should continue living as Jews, maintaining their Jewish identity.<sup>3</sup>

Coming to Leipzig, Jonsen would hear about Rabinowitsch and the movement he started in Kischinew in the 1880's, which also held that Jews who believed in Jesus would proceed as sons of Israel. One of those who strongly supported Rabinowitsch was Franz Delitzsch, the founder of Institutum Delitzschianum.<sup>4</sup>

Back in Oslo these ideas became part of Jonsen's view of mission among Jews. In 1914 he left the mission society to get a better education. In a short time he finished high school and started a theological education, but following advice from friends, he left theology and studied philosophy, thinking this would better prepare him for his goal: working among Jews in the Holy Land - if possible in Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup>

In this period he and some friends started what was called *Palestinaforeningen* (The Palestine Association) in Oslo. The aim of this association was to collect money to support a missionary going to Palestine - Arne Jonsen himself – to {36} try to build a congregation of believing Jews in the Holy Land. A quarterly magazine was edited by this association with Jonsen as editor. Here he shared his views and gave information of what was going on in Palestine.

In the second issue is an unsigned article, surely written by Jonsen, with the title: "What the Palestine Association is aiming at." Here we meet the program of the new association. The article asserts that it is time for a new association, and that it is time for the church to progress regarding methods in Jewish evangelism. To create a Hebrew Christian Alliance - which then existed - was only a short step in the right direction. The real goal was to be a Jewish-Christian congregation, and for Jonsen the right place for that was Palestine.

To achieve this goal he discussed the status quo: Jews came to a living faith in Jesus as their Messiah, left the synagogue and were assimilated into historic churches away from their real identity and their people. They often became strangers to their own people as well to the gentile Christians, belonging neither to one nor the other.

## **Vision Demands Support**

The NCMI leadership was following these plans with a great deal of scepticism; this was especially true of the chairman of the Board, Chr. Ihlen, a professor of theology at the University in Kristiania (Oslo). He hesitantly supported Jonsen, but he wanted him to go to Romania or some other place in Eastern Europe as a missionary. The board followed Ihlen. The members had little understanding of

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3 David Stern, *Messianic Jewish Manifesto*, Jerusalem 1988, p. 30.

4 Kai Kjær-Hansen: *Josef Rabinowitsch og den Messianske Bevægelse* Aarhus 1988.

5 Information from Sara Kalsås, from Arne Jonsen's letters and from *Palestinaforeningens Blad*.

Jonsen's thoughts of building congregations for Jewish believers. Children of their time, they thought that Jews who believed in Jesus as Saviour, had to leave Jewish society, practice and way of life. It was not possible to be a Christian and a Jew at the same time.<sup>6</sup> Jonsen replied: "Jews in Palestine - what is that other than a parallel to the Madagascans in Madagascar or the Chinese in China? The aim of the mission will in the time hereafter be to found a congregation of believing Jews on Palestinian ground."

He wanted to build a congregation which was not bound by the characteristics of the old historic churches of Europe. The New Testament would be its only foundation, not the historic confessions. In one of his articles he wrote that "it {37} Seems not to be God's will that the Jewish church shall be standing under the guardianship of its daughter, the gentile church."

Before he finished his doctoral studies in 1922 he married Sara Elisabeth (Lisa) Petri. She was the daughter of a Russian Jew, Philemon Petri, who as a young boy had become a believer and had to leave his home, going first to Sweden and later on to Denmark. In the next years Lisa bore three children: two girls and one boy.

Jonsen intended to go to Palestine, but he needed more support. In 1919 the NCMI Board had promised him the interests from a fund, but it wasn't much. Now he tried again, this time with greater success.

In 1920 a great change occurred in the NCMI. So far the missionary work had been coordinated and led by a sovereign board in Oslo. From 1920 a more democratic way of leadership was chosen. Local committees for mission to Israel were started around the country and these committees were bound together in a kind of district-organization. Representatives from both local and district-committees met together for the first time in 1920 in Trondheim. This General Assembly had the main authority in the organization. It would meet every third year and discuss and decide actual matters. It would also elect the Board members and the Chairman of the Board.

This development meant that Jonsen could have better chances of getting the financing he sought. Only a few years had passed since Jerusalem and Palestine were freed from the Turkish occupation under World War I. Many of the supporters of the NCMI were eagerly following the development in Palestine and were much more receptive to Jonsen's ideas than the Board members.

In 1922-23 Professor Ihlen had a study leave in Germany. In this period Jonsen asked the Board for more funding. While he did not succeed at once, he moved a step further. The Secretary of the Board, Bjarne Hexeberg, proposed to let Jonsen go to Palestine in autumn, 1922 to explore the possibilities for missionary work. Then he could present what his findings at the General Assembly in Bergen in autumn, 1923.

Jonsen did not leave until spring, 1923, but then he stayed in Palestine for several months. He was as enthusiastic as ever and did not doubt the possibilities for success in building Jewish congregations in the Holy Land.

{38} At the General Assembly Jonsen gave an enthusiastic speech. Professor Ihlen had arranged the presence of a school-leader, who had visited Palestine only a short time before and considered possibilities for mission work to be very poor. But both this man and Ihlen had

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<sup>6</sup> Personal letters from Professor Ihlen.

to give in to Jonsen's enthusiasm and the Assembly's vote. Jonsen received the support he had requested.<sup>7</sup>

In December, 1923 Jonsen was ordained as a Lutheran pastor in spite of his problems with the Lutheran view of baptism. Before the ordination he had to give a written declaration of his view on this matter.

## Starting up in Palestine

Jonsen left Oslo for Palestine 12 January 1924. His wife, their two daughters and his father-in-law accompanied him. They arrived in Jerusalem 30 January. His father-in-law died three days later, but not before he had walked on the Mount of Olives and in the old city. An old Jew came home.<sup>8</sup>

Jonsen rented a house in the Greek Colony and started his missionary work. He planned to do two things:

1. Rent an assembly hall, where he could have services.
2. Rent a piece of land to employ Jews.

Thus he planned to show solidarity with the Jews, who were trying to build a Jewish state in Palestine. As a Christian he wanted to express a testimony not only in words, but also in deeds. At the same time he saw that lots of Jews in Jerusalem were unemployed and he wished to avoid accusations of buying proselytes. Therefore he planned to offer some of them a job, so they could earn their daily living by their own work. He knew that Jews who received Jesus as their Messiah, would suffer strained relationships with their fellow countrymen; by employing them he could give them a chance to survive and learn sound holiness.

His strategy was to build a congregation and a colony. In the years to come he would be faithful to these two tracks even if he found out that the results were poor. The sod was hard and offered many disappointments. Jonsen acquired a piece of land on a hillside overlooking the village of Motza west of Jerusalem. He intentionally bought land with poor soil, "The good soil should be left for the Jews returning to their country." There he established a hen farm. The MFI pictured him in suit and tie tending his hens. "The Colony" did not succeed.

In an article in MFI January, 1925, a year after arriving in Jerusalem. Jonsen described how he, his family and the Jews who were coming to the {39} services, had celebrated Easter, Pentecost and Sukkot. The celebrations stressed the Jewish roots of the holidays and Jesus as their fulfillment.

In 1924-25 the United Jewish Missionary Council was founded in Jerusalem. Representatives from the different missions working in Palestine and Syria met together in this council, in which important issues for the missionary work were discussed. One of the subjects was: What to do with the Jew after his conversion? Jonsen comments on one of the lectures from the conference in an article to MFI and again emphasizes the need for a Jewish congregation on Jewish premises. He writes:

In such a congregation some matters will be different from our churches. Though the Christian Jews will honor the Sunday, first of all as the day of Holy Communion (Acts 20:7), they will as Jews feel

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<sup>7</sup> Report in MFI no. 17 and 18/1923.

<sup>8</sup> From MFI and letters from Mr. Jonsen.

it natural to respect the Sabbath. This and other differences will for people made spiritually alive, never have religious significance. The Christian Jews will in this way show their interdependence with the rest of Israel and they will through their national loyalty reach what they until now always looked for in vain: acknowledgment as real Jews, from their own people.

## **The Jewish-Christian Congregation**

Jonsen was the human force behind the founding of the Jewish-Christian Congregation, 22 November 1925. Joining him in his work were a Scottish missionary, Hyman Jacobs, who had been in Palestine for five years, and an internationally known friend of Israel, Mark John Levy, also very eager to create Jewish congregations.<sup>9</sup>

The first four months after the founding, the new congregation had its services in the library of St. George Cathedral. Bishop MacInnes thus supported the founding of the congregation. Later the congregation rented rooms for its services. In the initial period at St. Georges' the Jewish Christian Congregation had its service every Sunday morning, always concluding with Holy Communion. Jonsen described the order of the service:

It always opens with a song of praise, according to the custom of the English-speaking world. Then the texts of the day from the gospels and the epistles are read, followed by some comments and free prayer. We always read some of the Psalms of David in Hebrew, and often have a solo song accompanied by accordion, then a {40} sermon over a freely chosen text, followed by the communion, usually initiated by reading 1. Cor 11:23ff. We conclude with the aronitic blessing in Hebrew. The service usually lasts 1 1/4 hour. The sermon is usually given by brother Jacobs, the second pastor of the congregation. Brother Goldstein assists at the communion. The congregation which still is rather small, mainly consists of Jews, some of whom are baptized.

The Jewish Christians see our service with communion as something that belongs to them ... Here they are in their own home ... Christianity is also for Jews ... Or does anybody believe that only in Norway should we rejoice over the service in a national indigenous congregation?<sup>10</sup>

In spring, 1926 the new Congregation sent out an interesting declaration of its views, undoubtedly written by Jonsen:

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<sup>9</sup> Editor's note: Moshe Immanuel Ben-Meir, *Autobiographical Sketches*, to be published by Netivyah Ministries, Jerusalem, provides additional information: Ben-Meir himself and Chayim (Hyman) Jacobs, who had been a rabbi before he was ordained a Presbyterian minister, had taken the initiative to establish a Messianic Assembly independent of the existing missions, and Jonsen started to cooperate with them. Jonsen offered his plot of land "to the Assembly to start on it a Messianic settlement. A few of the young men went up to cultivate the land. They put up a hut and somehow obtained a donkey, a few goats and some chicken. So we had milk, eggs and vegetables for personal use and for sale. The donkey was used to carry burdens. We had great hopes."

<sup>10</sup> MFI 8/1926.

The Jewish-Christian congregation in Jerusalem greets all members of the body of Christ.

1. Jewish Christians have been denationalized both by synagogue and church since the early ages.
2. It is common opinion in Israel that to believe in Christ necessarily means defection from the Jewish nation.
3. When Jewish Christians have been assimilated among the gentiles, this has meant that almost all the light of the Gospel has been withheld from Israel.

We therefore declare:

- a. That the Jews, if they so wish, have the right to keep the customs of the people of Israel when they receive Jesus as their Saviour. Only, that nobody is compelled in such matters.
- b. We refute all rabbinical customs which are against the word of God, as also Jesus and the apostles did. The New Testament is the only guideline for our ministry.
- c. We believe that great numbers of Jews are open in their hearts for Christ, but do not want to break away from the people of Israel, and therefore under the present circumstances do not attain the joy and peace of being born again. Therefore:
- d. We believe that for the sake of the true Christian freedom it is the obligation of the church to preach a national freedom in the Gospel for the Jewish Christians.
- e. We believe that the greatest injustice in the denationalizing the Jews is done against the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is given the appearance of being the Jews' worst enemy instead of their best friend. This stain on his holy name should immediately be removed.
- f. We believe that all the servants of the Gospel in Israel soon will bless the day when they return to apostolic procedures in their efforts to bring Israel the Gospel.
- g. We commend all Christians to have fellowship with us in prayer and love. By that we the many, are one body in Christ.<sup>11</sup>

{41} Jonsen had to fight for his views. Ihlen was not convinced by Jonsen and in MFI he commented upon the founding of the Jewish-Christian congregation in Jerusalem: "You can have different opinions on whether the idea will show ability to survive. Reasons can be found both pro et contra. The test of life itself may answer this question."

From Budapest the Norwegian Missionary Gisle Johnson, a man of high esteem at this time,<sup>12</sup> sent an article to MFI in which he emphasized that Jewish Christianity belonged to the time

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<sup>11</sup> MFI 9-10/1926.

between the Ascension and the Apostle Meeting in Jerusalem 49 AD. Its mission was to bring the gospel to the gentiles. That accomplished, its role was finished. Today you can find Jewish believers, but never more Jewish Christianity.

Jonsen gave his reply in MFI, autumn 1926. The title of his essay is "Were Jesus and the apostles Jews?" He is quite sure that in the new Jewish state, to be a future reality, everything will in principle function as in the old Jewish state. And then it will be important that Jews believing in Jesus will be part of the state and behave as Jews.

At the General Assembly in Oslo in 1926 a committee reported on the Palestine-project. It was positive toward Jonsen's desire to build Jewish congregations and accepted his view that earlier missionary work created assimilation. But, for both ideological and economical reasons, it was sceptical as to Jonsen's plans of a colony.

As a result the General Assembly decided to support Jonsen for three more years, but the economic support was cut down to 12,000 Norwegian Kroner a year.

The pioneer work proceeded, but as time the early expectancy gave way to pessimism. Very few of those who participated in the life of the congregation stayed a long time. People were baptized - and then they left. When Jonsen refused to spend money on those who asked for it, some of them sent letters to Norway with bad rumors about his work. The limited financial support from NCMI made it impossible for Jonsen to buy the land he wished - and his co-pastor Hyman Jacobs was not trustworthy in financial matters.

In 1928 two well-known missionary leaders from Norway, Einar Amdahl and Johan Lunde, visited Jerusalem as participants of the International Mission Congress, which was held there that year. The NCMI Home Board asked them to visit Jonsen and report on his work. They acknowledged that they did not have much time, but they had talked with Jonsen and tried to investigate.

{42} The report concluded that the whole work seemed to be of a very low standard, that Jonsen was very impractical, unable to run the colony, and stubborn, following his own ideas only.<sup>13</sup>

Jonsen probably felt embarrassed about this visit and had an idea of what the consequences would be. But before he received reactions from Norway he experienced a severe crisis in his relationship with Hyman Jacobs. The above mentioned financial problems led to Jonsen's decision to leave the congregation. In a later report from Home Secretary Hexeberg it was reported that Jonsen promised to continue supporting the congregation, but having left, his dynamic power was missing. The congregation may have died only a short time later.

In autumn, 1928 the NCMI Home Board invited district leaders for a consultation on the support of Jonsen's missionary work in Palestine. The conclusion of this consultation was a suggestion to the General Assembly in 1929 that NCMI withdraw its support to Jonsen.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> On Gisle Johnson's lifelong ministry in Romania and Hungary, see Magne Solheim, *Im Schatten von Hakenkreuz, Hammer und Sichel. Judenmissionar in Rumanien 1937-1948*, Erlangen 1986, pp. 53-55, 188-202.

<sup>13</sup> Report from Einar Amdahl and Albert Lunde to Mr. Hexeberg, 6 April 1928.

<sup>14</sup> Editor's note: Ben-Meir comments: "When rumours of our doings and progress reached Chicago and Oslo, a mighty fear shook the respective societies who supported R. Jacobs and Dr. Jonsen respectively - fear for the old danger of "Judaizing" and from *free, self-supporting* Jewish 'converts'. Consequently Dr. Jonsen was called home, and R. Jacobs was suspended from his service."

After the consultation a letter was sent to Jonsen from the NCMI Home Board. Here it was written that the Home Board thought Jonsen's missionary work rests on a shaky basis and would come to nothing. Jonsen, on the other hand, demanded a budget of 30,000 NKR for realizing his colony plans - a strong provocation in this situation. The Home Board refused his demand, but invited Jonsen to further negotiations about his future.

Instead of responding Jonsen contacted the Swedish Israel Mission. From October, 1929 he was employed by this mission as a missionary among Jews in Vienna, Austria. That solved a problem for the NCMI leadership. They did not have to discuss further support to Jonsen. At the General Assembly in summer, 1929, Secretary Hexeberg reported what had happened since the General Assembly in 1926. His conclusion was: "Time and circumstances were surely not ripe for a missionary-work in Palestine after the lines of Dr. Jonsen. It has all been an {43} incident in the history of the NCMI."<sup>15</sup> The General Assembly approved the report and supported the decisions of the Home Board.

Later on Jonsen applied several times for support from the NCMI to start a new a missionary work in Palestine. But every time the answer was negative. Not until Magne Solheim arrived in Tel Aviv in December, 1949, would the NCMI be back in Israel with missionaries and missionary work. Jonsen stayed in Vienna six years, working among Jews and attaining high esteem for his work. But also here he got in trouble and when a new secretary general took over the Swedish Mission he was fired and returned with his family to Norway. During World War II he hid Jews in his flat in Oslo. Because of this he and his family had to flee to Sweden and stay there till after the war.

Always he dreamed of returning to Israel, but did so only once - in 1960 as a tourist. He died in 1969, at age 84.

## **Epilogue**

Arne Jonsen seemed to fail in his efforts to build a Jewish-Christian congregation in Jerusalem. But it is interesting to see that his dreams have come true. Today exists a living Messianic movement in Israel and a growing understanding in the churches of the Jewish right to build Jewish congregations in which the members preserve their Jewish roots and way of life.

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<sup>15</sup> Report from Mr. Hexeberg to the General Assembly, June 1929.



# {44} Luke's Special Tradition and the Question of a Hebrew Gospel Source

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## The Problem and the Thesis

Nearly one half of the material in Luke's Gospel has no direct parallels in the other Synoptics. Where this special tradition comes from is one of the most interesting questions of Gospel criticism. Only a radical minority of scholars believes that it was a creation by the evangelist himself.<sup>1</sup> But how does the special tradition then originate? One of the most recent commentaries on the Third Gospel ends with the sceptical judgment that we really don't know.<sup>2</sup> But we don't have to remain so sceptical. I would like to defend the thesis that Luke's special tradition ultimately goes back to conservative Jewish Christian circles in Judea. The influence of this layer of tradition can also be traced in many logia of the so-called Q-tradition, that is in saying parallels between Matthew and Luke, and in part of the Lucan pericopae parallel with Mark.

The thesis of an origin with Jewish-Christians in Judea is not completely new. It was outlined in the middle of the 19th century by Karl R Köstlin,<sup>3</sup> argued in detail at the end of the same century by Paul Feine,<sup>4</sup> and in modern times tentatively suggested by Eduard Schweizer.<sup>5</sup> In a special variant it is held today by the "Jerusalem School" of Synoptic Studies inspired by such eminent Jewish and Christian scholars as David Flusser and Robert L. Lindsey.<sup>6</sup>

{45} The case of a Hebrew tradition behind Luke's Gospel can be strengthened by several observations on the linguistic, theological, geographical and personal background of this tradition.<sup>7</sup>

## The Linguistic Background

Raymond Martin has developed a sophisticated methodology to discern Semitic sources in Greek documents.<sup>8</sup> According to the analysis of Martin no other part of the Synoptic Tradition shows as strong Semitic scholar as does Luke's special tradition.<sup>9</sup> There is not only a general Semitic flavor in this tradition, but at many points a Hebrew background is plausible and in some cases

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<sup>1</sup> See especially M.D. Goulder, *Luke. A New Paradigm I/ 11*, Sheffield 1989.

<sup>2</sup> F. Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas I*, Zürich - Neukirchen/Vluyn 1989, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Der Ursprung und die Komposition der synoptischen Evangelien*, Stuttgart 1853, p. 254.

<sup>4</sup> *Eine Vorkanonische Überlieferung des Lukas in Evangelium und Apostelgeschichte, Eine Untersuchung*, Gotha 1891.

<sup>5</sup> *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, Göttingen 1982, pp. 1-4.

<sup>6</sup> An introduction and discussion of the approach of the "Jerusalem School" one can find in *MISHKAN* 17/18 (192/1993) and in M. Lowe, "The New Testament and Christian Jewish Dialogue", *Studies in Honor of David Flusser*, Jerusalem 1990 *Immanuel* 24/25).

<sup>7</sup> The following is a summary of my article "Prägung und Herkunft der lukanischen Sonderüberlieferung", *Theologische Beiträge* 24 (1993), pp. 228-248. I am preparing a more comprehensive study on the question of Luke's special tradition. My gratitude goes to mag. theol. Tiina Schilling (Gomaringen) for her help in preparing the English form of this article

<sup>8</sup> *Syntactical Evidence of Semitic Sources in Greek Documents*, Missoula 1974.

<sup>9</sup> *Syntax Criticism of the Synoptic Gospels*, New York 1987, p. 128.

even probable. By collecting older observations Eduard Schoweizer argued a "Hebraizing source" behind parts of Luke's special tradition.<sup>10</sup> Especially a commentary on the Third Gospel by Adolf Schlatter is a mind of linguistic information among the older literature.<sup>11</sup> Many valuable observations of a Hebrew background of Luke can be found in the works of the "Jerusalem School". In some cases one may ask if Luke imitated the holy language of the Septuagint. But this cannot be a general answer to the problem. The Hebrew character of the text is far more prominent in the special tradition of Luke than elsewhere in his gospel. Why should the redactional work of the evangelist be so uneven?

Especially interesting are some close parallels to the language of the Dead Sea scrolls. It was one of the most astonishing findings that in the Qumran Hymn's Scroll (1QH 4:32f; 11:9) we have a clear parallel to the "men of (God's) favor" (Luke 2:14). So an old *crux interpretum* which is obvious in the textual variants (favor to men, men of good will) could be solved by the help of 2000 year-old Hebrew texts. The expression "Sons of Light" that was so dear to the Qumran Essenes is used in the Gospels only once in a parable of the Lucan special tradition (Luke 16:8). David Flusser is even convinced that Jesus had the Essenes in mind with the Parable of the Unjust Steward.<sup>12</sup> One can further {46} argue that a Hebrew substratum lies behind the Lucan form of the transfiguration (Luke 9:28-37)<sup>13</sup> or the Parable of the Wicked Tenants (Luke 20:9-18).<sup>14</sup>

There are not only linguistic but also structural parallels between parts of the Lucan special tradition and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The hymns in the Lucan birth narrative resemble in their poetic structure the Qumranic *hodayot*.<sup>15</sup> Edward M. Cook, a collaborator in the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon project of Hebrew Union College (Cincinnati), recently pointed out: "It can be shown that the style of the hymn (Luke 1:46-55) is like that of the *Thanksgiving Scroll* and uses the same poetic devices, and so could plausibly have been uttered by a first-century Palestinian Jew like Mary."<sup>16</sup> Cook refers his readers to the work of Randall Buth, a member of the "Jerusalem School".<sup>17</sup>

Even before the discovery of the Qumran Scrolls it was argued that part of the traditions behind Acts 1-12 belonged to the same stratum as the special tradition in Luke's Gospel. This can now be confirmed by comparable linguistic observations. The pericope of the election of Matthias replacing Jude as one of the Twelve (Acts 1:15-26) shows parallels to some Qumran texts even in details of quasi-technical language.<sup>18</sup> I will mention here only one other example. Normally the New Testament uses the verb *anastauroun* for "to crucify." Except in the Jewish-Christian First Letter of Peter (2:24) we find in the New Testament only two other times the expression *kreman epi xylou* "to hang on a tree," namely in the first chapters of Acts (5:30; 10:39). The same expression in Hebrew (*talah 'al ha-'ez*), which has its background in Deuteronomy 21:22-

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<sup>10</sup> Eine hebraisierende Sonderquelle des Lukas? *Theologische Zeitschrift* 6 (1950), pp. 161-185.

<sup>11</sup> *Das Evangelium des Lukas. Aus seinen Quellen erklärt*, Stuttgart 1931.

<sup>12</sup> "Jesus opinion about the Essenes," in *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, Jerusalem 1988, pp. 150-168.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. R. Mach, "Christus Mutans: Zur Bedeutung der 'Verklärung Jesu' im Wechsel von Jüdischer Messianität zur neutestamentlichen Christologie," in I. Gruenwals - S. Shaked - G.G. Stroumsa, *Messiah and Christos. Studies in the Jewish Origins of Christianity*, Tübingen 1992, pp. 177-198.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. B.H. Young, *Jesus and His Jewish Parables. Rediscovering the Roots of Jesus' Teaching*, New York 1989, pp.282-316.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. S.C. Farris, *The Hymns of Luke's Infancy Narratives. Their Origin, Meaning and Significance*, Sheffield 1985.

<sup>16</sup> *Solving the Mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls. New Light on the Bible*, Grand Rapids 1993, p. 156.

<sup>17</sup> "Hebrew Poetic Tenses and the Magnificat," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 21, 1984, pp. 67-83.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. A. Jaubert, "L'élection de Matthias et le tirage au sort," *Studia Evangelica IV*, Berlin/Ost 1973, pp. 274-280.

23, is used in the Qumran Temple Scroll in the more specific sense of crucifixion (11Q Temple 64:8).

## **{47} The Theological Outlook**

The special tradition in Luke's Gospel and also the first 12 chapters of Acts are characterized by these theological motifs.<sup>19</sup>

1. The special tradition begins and ends in the Temple (Luke 1:11; 24:53) and also the Jerusalem community of Acts holds fast to the old sanctuary.
2. From Matthew and Mark one could get the impression that Judaism in the time of Jesus was characterized by complete religious darkness. In the Lucan special tradition many Jews are dedicated as true to God and faithful in Jesus. One has only to remember all the pious characters of the birth narratives.
3. John the Baptist plays even a greater role here than in the other Synoptics. People ask if he could be the Messiah (Luke 3:15), one of many interesting parallels between the special tradition and the fourth Gospel (John 1:19t).
4. Women play a very positive role in the special tradition and many of them are mentioned by name (e.g. Luke 8:1-3).
5. There lies a certain stress on the promises for Israel's fathers but also on the Messianic promise for the House of David. In Luke 24:44 the (Davidic) Psalms stand pars pro toto for the third part of the Bible canon. There is an interesting parallel to that in the still unpublished halakhic letter from Cave N of Qumran (4QMMT C 10).
6. The special tradition is obviously concerned with the Samaritans as a difficult group between the Jews and pagans.
7. As far as pagans are concerned they are always mentioned in their connection with the chosen people of the old dispensation (e.g., Luke 2:32),
8. In the special tradition the activity of the Holy Spirit is an important theme not only in the ministry of Jesus but also in the prophesying of other people. The motif of divine wisdom is closely connected (e.g., Luke 11:49).
9. The special tradition has much to say on the subjects of praise and prayer towards God. Jesus is even depicted as charismatic and ecstatic (Luke 10:21). 10. The theme of the law remains much in the background. There are two Sabbath-conflicts but they are solved not by a word or deed of Messianic authority but by halakhic argumentation (Luke 13:15; 14:5).
11. Repentance and forgiveness are strongly emphasized. One has only to remember the entire chapter 15 of Luke's gospel.
12. Power and richness are very severely criticized.

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<sup>19</sup> For details and references see my article cited in note 7.

13. There are even some ascetic traits, for example in the depiction of John the Baptist as a nazir (Luke 1:15).

14. We find a certain stress on the action of angels (e.g., Luke 22:43) and a vivid picture of the heavenly world (Luke 16:9-31).

### **{48} The Geographic Background**

As a companion of Paul's during his last visit to Jerusalem, Luke knew the holy city and its surroundings.<sup>20</sup> But this is not a sufficient explanation for the fact that hardly any piece of the special tradition shows a Galilean bias. Instead many of the single pericopae are localized in a Judean surrounding and shaped by it. We are referred to the street between Jericho and Jerusalem (Luke 10:30), to the Tower of Siloah in Jerusalem (Luke 13:14) and the beginning of God's Kingdom is expected to be on the Mount of Olives (Luke 19:11 cf. Acts 1:6, 12). The weather-forecast in the Lucan form of an eschatological logion (Luke 12:54-56) is only possible in Judea, whereas Matthew (16:2-3) presupposes a Galilean situation.<sup>21</sup> The restriction of the Easter events to Jerusalem and its surroundings is famous. The Galilean communities are mentioned only once in the first chapters of Acts (9:31).

### **Personal Connections**

Mary is pointed out with tradition terminology as the ultimate source for the birth narrative (Luke 2:19, 51). Since the birth narrative is connected by many motives to the other parts of the Lucan special tradition, one has to ask the question if it could be a family tradition? There are interesting traits under the surface of the texts which do not point to the conclusion that such a family relationship was only a later construction. Richard J. Bauckham<sup>22</sup> observed that behind the symmetry of the Lucan genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23-38) is the same kind of Enochic periodization as has the Letter of Jude (v. 14). Since Bauckham is convinced of the authenticity of this letter, he also believes the genealogy goes back to family tradition. It is interesting to note that other parts of the special tradition show a certain nearness to the Enoch literature,<sup>23</sup> which was important to the Qumran Essenes as well.<sup>24</sup>

**{49}** From a linguistic point of view, the last part of the Lucan special tradition in Acts must be chapter 15.<sup>25</sup> Here the discussions of the so-called apostolic council are decided by a speech of James, the brother of the Lord (Acts 15:13-21). James cites the Davidic promise of Amos 9:11 in a form (Acts 16:16) which is closest neither to the Septuagint nor to the Masoretic text but to the citations in the Essenic Damascus Document (CD 7:16) and in the Messianic Florilegium (4QFlor 1:12) found at Qumran.<sup>26</sup> Acts 15 would be an appropriate ending of a source handed

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. M. Hengel, "Luke the Historian and the Geography of Palestine in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Between Jesus and Paul. Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity*, London 1983, pp. 97-128.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. M. Nun, *The Sea of Galilee and Its Jewish Fishermen in the New Testament*, Kibbutz En Gev 1989, p. 57.

<sup>22</sup> *The Epistle of James and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*, Edinburgh 1990, pp. 315-370.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. W.K.L. Clarke, "St Luke and the Pseudepigrapha: Two Parallels," *Journal of Theological Studies* 15 (1913) 597-599; S. Aalen, "St. Luke's Gospel and the Last Chapters of I Enoch," *New Testament Studies* 13 (1966/67) pp. 1-13.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. J.A. Fitzmyer, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, New York 1992, p. 191.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. R. Riesner, "James's Speech (Acts 15:13-21), Simeon's Hymn (Luke 2:29-32), and Luke's Sources," in J.B. Green & M. Turner, *Jesus of Nazareth Lord and Christ Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, Grand Rapids 1994, pp. 263-278.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. G.O. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4Q Florilegium and Its Jewish Context*, Sheffield 1985, pp. 210-211.

down in the Jewish Christian circles close to James, the brother of Jesus. It could be that John Chrysostom (In Acta Homilia 33:1) was right that James with the name of Symeon (Acts 15:14) referred to the Messianic prophecy of the old Jew in the temple of Jerusalem (Luke 2:29-32). Symeon is called *Haner eulabes* "a pious man" (Luke 2:25) which could readily be translated *hasid* in Hebrew or *hacon* in Aramaic. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered it was suggested very early that he and other characters of the birth narrative might have come from a broader Essenic, not necessarily Qumranic, background.<sup>27</sup>

## The Community behind the Special Tradition

We can assume that at least some of the special features in a tradition lead us back to the group that preserved and shaped it. The theological motifs of the Lucan special tradition we observed before are compatible with a "Sitz im Leben" in circles around James and other relatives of Jesus, and especially with the Jerusalem community as depicted in the first chapters of Acts. From the special tradition in the Gospel we can conclude: The transmitting community held fast to the holy city, the Old Testament promises and even the law. It hoped for the repentance of Israel, criticized richness and practiced poverty. Like other plausible theses the origin of Luke's special tradition in the primitive community of Jerusalem was already argued by other scholars before.<sup>28</sup>

One could ask if Luke's picture of the first community in Jerusalem is only an Idealization for his readers that were educated in Hellenistic philosophy. But {50} here also the Qumran texts and archaeology have a word to say. There are very significant Qumran parallels to the first chapters of Acts.<sup>29</sup> In particular the communal sharing practiced by a part of the Jerusalem community shows more parallels to Essenic customs than to the utopian visions of the Greek philosophers.<sup>30</sup> The first center of the Hebrew speaking primitive community was situated on the south-western hill of Jerusalem, today called Mount Zion.<sup>31</sup> Here the Benedictine archaeologist Bargil Pixner<sup>32</sup> discovered the "Gate of the Essenes," mentioned by the first century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (War V 145). The name of the gate can be plausibly explained only by an Essene Quarter next to it. So the Jerusalem Essenes and the early Christians were next door neighbors. It seems that already since Pentecost (Acts 2:5) a strong group of Essenes, including priests (Acts 6:7) converted to the new Messianic movement.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> E. g. G. Mollin, *Die Söhne des Lichtes. Zeit und Stellung der Handschriften vom Toten Meer*, Wien 1954, 222-224. According to the foreword the book was already finished in 1952!

<sup>28</sup> E. g. by J. Staudinger, *Die Bergpredigt*, Wien 1957, pp. 248-251; H. Klein, *Barmherzigkeit gegenüber den Elenden und Geächteten. Studien zur Botschaft des Lukkanischen Sonderguts*, Neukirchen/Vluyn 1987, pp. 133-136.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. C. Grappe, *D'un temple à l'autre. Pierre et l'Eglise primitive de Jérusalem*, Paris 1992, pp. 51-68.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. B.J. Capper, "The Interpretation of Acts 5:4", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 19 (1983) pp. 117-131; "In der Hand des Ananias ...". Erwägungen zu 1Q5 VI, 20 und der urchristlichen Gütergemeinschaft," *Revue de Qumran* 12 (1986) pp. 223-236, and also an article forthcoming in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II 26, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. B. Pixner, "Church of the Apostles on Mt. Zion," *MISHKAN* 13 (1990) pp. 27-42; *Wege des Messias und Stätten der Urkirche. Jesus und das Judentum im Licht neuer archäologischer Erkenntnisse*, Gießen 1994, pp. 287-326; R. Riesner, "Der christliche Zion: vor- oder nachkonstantinisch?," in F. Mans - E. Alliata, *Early Christianity in Context. Monuments and Documents*, Jerusalem 1993, pp. 85-90.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. B. Piexer, D. Chen and S. Margalit, "Mount Zion: The 'Gate of the Essenes' Reexcavated," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 105 (1989) pp. 85-95; R. Riesner, "Jesus, the Primitive Community, and the Essene Quarter of Jerusalem," in J.H. Charlesworth, *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, New York 1993, pp. 198-234.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. M. Delcor, "A propos de l'emplacement de la porte des Esséniens selon Joseph et de ses implications historiques, essenienne et chrétienne," in Z.J. Kapera, *Intertestamental Essays in honour of Jozef Tadeusz Milik I*, Karkow 1992, pp. 25-44; E. Ruchstuhl, *Zur Frage einer Essenergemeinde in Jerusalem und zum Fundort von 7Q5*, in B. Mayer, *Christen und Christliches in Qumran?*, Eichstätt 1992, pp. 131-137; O. Betz - R. Riesner, *Jesus, Qumran and the Vatican*, London 1994, pp. 141-156.

With their deep learning in Scripture (c1: IQs 6:6-8) and their sanctified life they influenced a segment of the Jerusalem community and also their Gospel tradition.

Luke's Special Tradition and the Synoptic Problem In my opinion the "Jerusalem School" has done much good work on the possible Hebrew background of a conservative Jewish-Christian tradition found especially behind the special tradition of Luke. But as it is right to abandon a Pan-Aramaic view, it would also be false to replace it by a Pan-Hebraic access to the synoptic tradition. We now have much more archaeological and documentary material on {51} the linguistic situation of the Holy Land in the time of Jesus.<sup>34</sup> The situation in the usage of languages was complex. In Galilee Jesus probably taught his big audiences in Aramaic. In scholarly discussions and also in some life-settings in Jerusalem and Judea he probably used Hebrew. But in Jerusalem lived a group of Jews, the "Hellenists," (Acts 6:1; 9:29) who spoke only or at least mainly Greek.<sup>35</sup> Since even some of Jesus' disciples had Greek names (e.g., Philippus), we can be sure that our Lord was able to teach in this international language too.

In a multi-cultural situation like that in first-century Palestine we should be very cautious to declare that the Jesus-tradition was only formed in one language and that there were grave distortions on the way from the Semitic to the Greek. The picture apparently was multi-faceted. There existed one tradition of the Twelve and one of the relatives of Jesus. We can assume one tradition of the sedentary sympathizers in Galilee and another of those in Judea. Some parts of the tradition were formulated in Aramaic, others in Hebrew. And with a certain probability, even a Greek tradition started in pre-Easter times. The Hebrew tradition behind Luke is an old tradition handed down by faithful Jews who believed in Jesus the Messiah. But this tradition is not the only genuine one by which we should censure all other strands of tradition. It seems better to be grateful for this multiplicity of traditions. As is it written in the Torah: "At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established" (Deut 19:15).

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<sup>34</sup> Cf J.A. Lund. "The Language of Jesus," MISKAN 17/18 (1992/93), pp. 139-155. The older discussion is summarized by R. Riesner, Jesus als Lehrer. Elm Untersuchung zum Ursprung der Evangelien-Uberlieferung, Tübingen 1988, pp. 382-391.

<sup>35</sup> Cf M. Hengel, The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ London 1989. PP. 7-18.

# **{53}The Issue of the Inspired Text: A Rejoinder to David Bivin**

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Dr. Brown's article, "Recovering the Inspired Text?", appeared in MISHKAN no. 17-18. This "Rejoinder" answers David Bivin's "Response" which accompanied the original article.

David Bivin's response (henceforth "Response") to my review article (henceforth "Recovering the Inspired Text?") assessing the work of the Jerusalem School in the light of *Understanding the difficult Words of Jesus* clearly underscores some of the fundamental problems inherent in the JSSR, and highlights what can best be called theological blind spots. Moreover, his failure to respond forthrightly to the wide range of criticisms leveled in "Recovering the Inspired Text?" is unfortunate. Most importantly, when Bivin, an active, professing evangelical Christian, chooses *not* to repudiate his earlier statements that the text of the Greek Synoptic Gospels is filled with errors and rife with mistranslations, it is fair to ask: Does Bivin believe that our canonical Greek Scriptures are actually the inspired, authoritative and hence, reliable and trustworthy Word of God?

Since these problems were addressed so clearly in "Recovering the Inspired Text?", it would be sufficient, for all practical purposes, to point interested readers back to the interaction between Bivin and myself in *MISHKAN 17-18*. Due, however, to the dangerously flawed methodology evidenced throughout *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*, and in light of some of the charges made by Bivin in his response, a rejoinder seemed appropriate.

## **Hitting a Sensitive Spot?**

A few initial comments are in order. Whenever I can learn and benefit from the JSSR, I am happy to do so. In fact, I believe that the JSSR can make many useful contributions to New Testament studies if some fundamental methodological and philosophical changes are made. Thus I still hold out hope that the major criticisms lodged in "Recovering the Inspired Text?" will be heeded.

**{54}** Nonetheless, at present it seems evident that my article hit a sensitive spot in Bivin and/or the JSSR. How else can one explain Bivin's charge that I "sidestepped the issue raised in *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*," even "artificially introducing a theological controversy" in "yet another attempt to avoid the real debate" ("Response" 108)? Such a claim can only appear ludicrous to unbiased readers. Moreover, his statement that I contested "the authors' interpretations just once" (110) is bizarre. I took issue or critically interacted with their interpretations of Matthew 5:10, 5:17-18, 5:20-21, 6:22-23, 11:12 (at some length), Luke 6:22, 9:29, 9:51, 12:49-50, 23:31, challenging also the editorial conjectures of Brad Young (to Matthew 21:43) and David Flusser (to Matthew 8:11-12). Only space prevented me from offering a fuller refutation.

## Why Review Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus?

Bivin finds it "inexplicable" that I "would choose to evaluate the School's research on the basis of an early attempt at popularization rather than on the basis of the technical writings of the School's members, especially of its senior members" ("Response" 113). Why then offer a full-scale review article at this late date? First, *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus* still serves as the single most systematic and widely distributed presentation of the JSSR for lay audiences, and, in fact, it does accurately represent the work of the school. The more technical articles found in the Jerusalem Perspective only perpetuate the errors begun in *Difficult Words*. Second, the fundamental, and, to reiterate, dangerous flaws of *Difficult Words* have not yet been recognized or renounced.

Accordingly, evangelical Christian readers must view the contributions of the JSSR with caution. To the extent that it remains representative of the JSSR, and is clearly associated with the School, it must be dealt with, and it must be discommended. In fact, the question is not, "Why should I assess the JSSR in light of *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*?" But rather, "Why should Bivin and the JSSR still defend *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*?"

## Nothing New Here

Bivin's discussion of Matthew 6:22-23 ("good/bad eye" = "generous/ stingy") is quite illuminating (see "Response" 108). In note 60 to "Recovering the Inspired Text?", I explained that the rendering suggested in *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus* was nothing new, and that it could be "readily adduced from Septuagintal usage ... or even from the Greek New Testament itself," providing evidence that supported this claim.

Bivin, however, cannot believe that the School's interpretation has been known for decades, or that it can be adduced without any recourse to rabbinic {55} literature. If that is true, he wonders, why isn't the "generous/ stingy" rendering reflected in modern English versions, being found, as it were, only in Moffatt's translation? Bivin's question itself is instructive: He cannot reckon with the possibility that scholars would be aware of the "generous/stingy" interpretation and not accept it! This too reveals a frequent assumption of the JSSR: Their scholars are somehow privy to an exclusive pool of information, and the primary reason other scholars have not proposed interpretations similar to those of the JSSR is because of their ignorance. Quite to the contrary, when competent scholars differ with the (also competent!) scholars of the Jerusalem School, they do so with good reason. In fact, in terms of the interpretation of the verses in question here, scholarly debate and discussion regarding the translation and interpretation of these verses - utilizing the same evidence put forth by the JSSR - can easily be traced back to 1913.

Let me take a moment to explain. David Bivin and Roy Blizzard, Jr. (among many others) argue that behind the Greek words *ophthalmos haplous* ("sound, healthy, good eye") and *ophthalmos poneros* ("unsound, unhealthy, evil eye") are the well known Hebrew (or equivalent Aramaic) expressions *ayin tov* and *ayin ra* (literally, "good eye/bad eye," but commonly used to mean "generous /stingy"). Thus, in "Response" 108, Bivin faults versions, such as the NN, which translate with "good eyes" and "bad eyes" instead of with "generous" and "stingy". But is there a valid reason for such a



rendering? In other words, is the translation of, e.g. the NN, the result of ignorance of the alleged Hebrew background?

Using the NN as an example, we can see that translators were fully aware of the Hebrew idiom, as evidenced by their renderings of Proverbs 22:9, where the Hebrew expressions mentioned above - viz, "good eye/bad eye" were rendered, respectively, with "a generous man" and "a stingy man". The Septuagint also understood these terms in similar fashion (See also the NN, Deut 15:9). Second, the Greek word *haplotēs*, closely related to the adjective *halous* found in Matthew 6:22, is rendered several times by the NN as "generous, generosity, generous" (e.g., 2 Cor 9:11), while another cognate form, *haplos*, is translated with "generously" at James 1:5. Only in Matthew 6:22 and Luke 11:34 did the related word, *haplous*, occur, and only there was it rendered with "good". There was obviously a reason for this! Third, the Greek idiom *ophthalmos ... poneros* ("evil eye") is rendered with "envious" at Matthew 20:15 and with "greed" at Mark 7:22.

Is the "generous /stingy" rendering of Matthew 6:22-23 plausible? Certainly! Is the rabbinic evidence - which, I emphasize again, has been known and utilized in the study of these verses for many decades - useful? Without question. But the issue is not so simple, as the study of any major recent commentary to Matthew or Luke (see Luke 11:33-36) would indicate. In fact, even Matthean {56} scholars such as W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison (see n. 60 for references) - who ultimately favor the meaning of "generous/stingy" at 6:22-23 - feel that there is a double meaning intended, since Jesus' audience would first think in purely bodily terms (i.e., "sound/unsound eye") before understanding the meaning of "generous /stingy." Moreover, the initial saying must also be interpreted (viz, "The eye is the lamp of the body"), and the meaning of the idioms in a wholly different context (viz, Luke 11:33-36) must be explained as well.

Thus, the matter is not cut and dried, and scholars who do not favor the view of the JSSR do so because they are not convinced by the evidence. In fact, I am not aware of one major, recent commentary on Matthew or Luke that even makes reference to a JSSR scholar when interpreting the relevant verses. But these same commentaries cite the relevant rabbinic and inter-testamental evidence! (See most recently Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* [Dallas: Word, 1993], 155-159, who in fact, renders with "generous/covetous"). In other words, the information adduced by the School in support of their interpretation has been well known and continues to be well known. 'bus it is correct to say that, in this particular case, there was nothing substantively new in the School's interpretation.

## **Belittling Sound Scholarship**

Bivin writes that: "in defending his own position, Brown relies on the opinions of others such as Neusner's view that rabbinic literature should be discounted, those of scholars who favor an Aramaic or Greek *Vorlage* as opposed to Hebrew, and of the advocates of Markan priority" (108). 'Bis claim is quite surprising.

In point of fact, I made reference to Jacob Neusner just once, and that in citing his *Journal of Biblical Literature* review of a book edited by JSSR member Shamael Safrai. But - and *this is* far more important - to say that Neusner believes that rabbinic literature should be discounted is extraordinary. Actually, Neusner is probably *this* century's most prolific scholar of early rabbinic literature (he has authored or edited more than 300 volumes), and certainly one of the most influential. He and/or his students have translated into English almost every major

rabbinic document. (In spite of imperfections in some of the work, the translations are definitely landmarks in Jewish studies).

How then can Bivin claim that Neusner and other scholars of his kind believe that "rabbinic literature should be discounted"? The answer is predictable: Neusner differs with the influential and respected Jewish scholars in the JSSR! While they tend to use rabbinic documents with extreme conservatism, Neusner calls for a thorough-going critical evaluation of the historicity and reliability of the sources. Thus, because his methodology differs from that of the JSSR, he is ) {57} totally dismissed in a few short words. Bivin has, to his own detriment, assumed a highly sensitive, overly defensive posture in responding to critics of the School. Thus, Bivin criticizes me for relying "on the opinions of ... scholars who favor an Aramaic or Greek *Vorlage* as opposed to Hebrew, and of the advocates of Markan priority" - in other words, for agreeing with the decided majority of the world's foremost New Testament, rabbinic and Semitic scholars. Bivin thereby underscores the exclusive mentality often evident in the School. Again, the careful reader should note that merely citing a viewpoint antithetical to that of the JSSR - so as to explain its basis and thus present it as another scholarly option - is maligned by Bivin.

### **Is Rabbinic Literature Useful?**

In a similar vein, Bivin also misses the point of my cautions regarding the usage of rabbinic literature in elucidating the New Testament, claiming that I endeavored to counter the assumption of the JSSR that "rabbinic literature provides important background to the Gospels". What I and many others caution against is the uncritical, and sometimes even cavalier use of rabbinic writings as sources for New Testament interpretation. Rabbinic literature can be extremely useful, but it must be utilized critically and carefully.

### **Persecuted for the Sake of Righteousness**

I have already noted Bivin's odd statement that the only interpretation of the authors that I contested was Matthew 5:10 (see above). His attempted defense of that interpretation needs to be discussed in some detail.

First, Bivin finds my statement that he and Blizzard "adduce from the Greek text that believers are to seek persecution" to be "completely inaccurate". Rather, he avers: "Nowhere did we suggest that believers are to seek persecution. We suggested the opposite" (110). Obviously, Bivin has missed my point here, since their whole argument was that *based on the traditional understanding of the Greek text of Matthew 5:10*, believers have at times erroneously sought out persecution because of the blessing to be received.

In *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*, in the chapter entitled "Theological Error Due to Mistranslation" (112-116) and under the heading "The Theology of Martyrdom", the authors write that, based on the standard rendering of Matthew 5:10, "one would quite naturally assume that there is some religious merit in being persecuted for the sake of the Kingdom of God" - a concept which led to "the martyrdom of millions" in the following centuries. In fact, the authors even find it necessary to ask: "Are we to seek persecution?"; answering with a resounding "No!" But, having created a false impression as to the traditional {58} meaning of the verse (viz, that it somehow implied that believers should seek persecution), Bivin and Blizzard seek to justify their new interpretation (not *translation* as they claim; see 114) of the verse.

When treating 5:11-12 (which, thankfully, cannot be "translated" away), they acknowledge that Jesus does, in fact, "speak to his disciples about persecution, and he does promise a reward to those who suffer merely because they are his disciples. Yet even here, Jesus was not urging his disciples to go looking for persecution or martyrdom to gain a heavenly reward" (116). Of course, the traditional (and completely correct) rendering of Matthew 5:10-12 never told anyone to seek persecution; rather, this alleged meaning was imported by Bivin and Blizzard. I sought to point out that both Hebrew *radap* and Greek *dioko* could mean "pursue" or "persecute" since this observation alone greatly undercuts their whole argument (see *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*, 112-116).

In point of fact, Bivin's interaction with the major Greek lexicons is completely unrelated to the discussion at hand. Rather, it serves as a smoke screen for the uncritical reader, actually turning attention *away* from the real issue: The writers of the New Testament - whether their audience consisted of Greek-speaking Jews or gentiles - primarily used the verb *dioko* in the sense of "persecute" (in Matthew 5:11, too) and they used the cognate noun *diogmos* - ten times out of ten!- to mean "persecution". Thus, there is absolutely no reason to dispute the meaning "persecuted" in Matthew 5:10.

Third, and lastly, Bivin claims that my assumption "that a Greek passive form should never be translated into an active Hebrew form" shows "Insufficient knowledge of Hebrew and Greek", arguing that it is "perfectly legitimate" for "the Greek word normally translated 'persecuted' here [to] be understood as active in meaning." Actually, I did not assume "that a Greek passive form should never be translated into an active Hebrew form." Rather, I noted that in this case, a passive form in Greek is retroverted into an active form in Hebrew ("persecuted for righteousness' sake" becomes "pursue righteousness") - in other words, contrary to the whole clause in the Greek (hoi *dediogmenoi* heneken *dikaisunes*) which is most definitely passive.

It is entirely irrelevant whether or not, as Bivin and Randall Buth argue, the Greek hoi *dediogmenoi* in Matthew 5:10 can be translated as "those pursuing/persecuting (for themselves)" as well as "those pursued/persecuted". The New Testament itself tells us the form is passive. That is to say, the following preposition *heneken*, *heneka* (which occurs 23 times in the New Testament and always in the sense of "on account of, for the sake of, because of") makes it perfectly clear that the overall sense must be "persecuted for the sake of, on account of, because of righteousness." And thus the Greek words which occur {59} here in every extant manuscript of Matthew's Gospel, *hoi dediogmenoi heneken dikaisunes*, must be translated with a passive form of the verb.

Trying to translate with "Blessed are those who pursue" can only lead to "Blessed are those who pursue on account of, for the sake of, because of righteousness" - clearly nonsense! The only way around this is to argue that the alleged original Hebrew (or, according to C.F. Burney, Aramaic; see Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, p. 80, n. 60) read something like *lisedaqah*, which in the supposed reconstruction could either mean "pursuing righteousness" or pursued /persecuted for the sake of righteousness." *But that is absolutely not what the Greek Gospel text says*, and thus the JSSR must argue that our present, biblical text grossly misunderstood the alleged Hebrew original, leaving us with something that Jesus actually never communicated.

To repeat: The biblical verse has been, and still should, be rendered: 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.' *The only way to get around this is to deny the authority of the Greek text of Matthew*. One can only wonder aloud: Why meddle with a verse that is totally

clear in context, makes perfect linguistic sense, and is harmonious with the rest of the New Testament - at the risk of undermining the authority of the Word of God?

### **Who Is Misleading Whom?**

Bivin's claim that "Brown sometimes misleads the reader by making statements which he then later contradicts" is completely inexcusable in a scholarly forum. In fact, I must say that it is actually dishonest.

Bivin backs up this serious charge with one example. He writes that "in one place" I state, "It is true that most New Testament scholars have not also been competent Semitists" while "in another place" I argue that New Testament scholars have "used rabbinic texts quite freely for well over a century" - statements which Bivin finds mutually contradictory. Thus, according to Bivin, I misled the reader by making statements which I later contradicted.

Actually, the "one place" where I pointed out that "most New Testament scholars have not also been competent Semitists" was the endnote to the very sentence in which I stated that New Testament scholars have "used rabbinic texts quite freely for well over a century"! (Remarkably, this was dubbed "in another place" by Bivin, and the sentence *preceding* this endnote was the place where, he claims, I "later [sic!] contradicted" myself). It was one and the same thought - a sentence with its endnote - and thus I concluded the note with the comment that, "the problem with regard to the rabbinic literature has not so much been its lack of use [as seen in the previous note, n. 57], but rather its *misuse*...." For the entire sentence, which is entirely clear, see "Recovering the Inspired Text?", p. 48, with notes 57-58.

### **{60}Which Chapter Was Deleted?**

Bivin notes that I was incorrect in twice stating that Chapter 8, "Theological Error Due to Mistranslation," was deleted from the Spanish translation of *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*. Of course, I stand corrected, and apologize for my error. I was repeating what I was told by a colleague of Bivin in 1988, and, in fact, I was negligent in failing to double-check before making a public statement. However, I was trying to be charitable. Since I had specially targeted that chapter for criticism, I wanted at least to point out that the authors had, upon further reflection, thought it better to exclude it from newer editions or versions. I am sorry that I was wrong, since the removal of that chapter would have been a step in the right direction.

### **Which Is Error-Filled?**

At the outset of this rejoinder, I made reference to the JSSR's apparent "theological blind spots". Of course, I was speaking in terms of the Christian members of the School, since no one can fault the Jewish scholars for not treating the New Testament text as the inspired Word of God. It is significant enough that they are devoting their time and effort to the study of Gospels in light of rabbinic literature. Rather, I was referring to an absolutely critical issue for evangelical Christians, an issue which Bivin somehow described as an artificial theological controversy which I introduced to avoid the real debate ("Response" 108). Actually, the issue of "the inspired text" began with Bivin and Blizzard. I was simply calling for much needed clarification from the authors.

In "Recovering the Inspired Text?" (50) I quoted Bivin and Blizzard's position that "no effort should be spared in correcting every mistranslation and in clarifying every mistranslation of the inspired text" ("Recovering the Inspired Text", p. 50, citing *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*, p. 117), asking forthrightly whether they were referring to the *Greek New Testament* as the inspired text. If so, I questioned, "how can it be rife with mistranslation and misinterpretations" (again, using their own words; see *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*, pp. 37 and 105)? I even urged the authors in an endnote to offer "some simple, clarifying, public statements" for the sake of their constituency ("Recovering the Inspired Text", n. 74). Sadly, this has not been done, and even more sadly, Bivin either completely misunderstood the crucial nature of this point or else purposely decided to avoid it. Other scholars have expressed to me their consternation and frustration with Bivin's evasive response to the issue of inspiration.

Lest anyone think that I am overstating the case, note that Bivin's whole reply deals with the issue of *canon* and *original sources*, without devoting a syllable to the issue of inspiration. Thus, he writes, "We Christian members of {61} the Jerusalem School certainly do believe the canon of Scripture is complete" ("Response" 109). But he fails to tell us if that canon of Scripture - the New Testament portion of which, he notes, was written in Greek and is extant only in Greek - is authoritative and not to be tampered with. Put in specific terms, if, e.g., the Greek text to Matthew 5:10 is Scripture, then it must be translated according to its obvious sense (as argued immediately above). If, as the JSSR believes, the Greek text mistranslated an original Hebrew saying of Jesus, then *the Greek text is* wrong and misleading, and hence is *not* the Word of God.

Bivin's whole discussion of original sources and canon is, quite frankly, absolutely unrelated to the issue at hand. Nonetheless, it still raises further, nagging questions: If, to quote Bivin, "The existence of an early Hebrew life of Jesus can at this time be nothing more than conjecture" ("Response," 109). If it can never "be fully and accurately reconstructed" (109); and if "the task of retranslating the Greek of the Gospels to Hebrew is not easy" (110) - then why fool with clear verses in the Greek New Testament for the sake of an alleged "original" Hebrew life of Jesus, one which is based purely on conjecture, which cannot be definitively reconstructed, and which, according to Bivin (109), even if discovered one day in a cave somewhere in Israel, would still not be added to the canon of Scripture?

It is one thing, to argue, e.g., as many do, that the terms "binding and loosing" in Matthew 16:19 should be understood against the rabbinic background of "(legally) forbidding and permitting" (see *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*, 143-149). It is quite another thing to state that, "The [Greek] Gospels are rife with mistranslations" (105). *If Bivin believes that the Greek New Testament can be freely emended and reconstructed, then he stands outside the pale of evangelical Christendom*

While someone might argue that modern English versions of the New Testament contain mistranslations or misinterpretations of the Greek because of their (alleged) failure to apprehend the Semitic nuances of the Greek text, it is another thing entirely to claim that *the Greek text* misinterprets or mistranslates the "original" Hebrew (or Aramaic) words. If the authors and/or editors of the Greek New Testament mixed up, or confused, or diluted, or mistranslated, or miscommunicated the words of Jesus, then these men were *not* inspired by God and their writings are *not* his Word to us.

Many liberal, New Testament scholars who deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus have no problem asserting that "the canon of Scripture is complete." But they do not for a moment believe in the *inspiration* of that Scripture in the historic, evangelical sense. For them, the Bible is not "the infallible rule of faith and life" and its text is not authoritative. Where does Bivin stand on these issues? Let the record be set straight once and for all.

## **{62} A Final Appeal**

This rejoinder has been forthright because the stakes are high, and many well-meaning Christians have bought into the arguments of the JSSR without realizing the implications of those arguments. On the other hand, as stated earlier, the Jewish and Christian scholars in the School have much to offer, and I do not doubt their sincerity. Thus, I offer a final appeal to David Bivin and other professing evangelicals in the JSSR.

1. Let them repudiate the dangerous flaws in *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*. If another edition is to be published, it should virtually be an entirely new book.

2. Let them offer a clear and unambiguous statement regarding the Greek New Testament in terms of its inspiration, reliability, and authority. They should explain forthrightly in what sense it is the Word of God. Future JSSR writings should then reflect that respect for the Greek text.

3. They should clearly identify completely conjectural emendations of the text as such. (Of course, such emendation of the New Testament text is, according to virtually all scholars, almost never called for. The problem is generally one of determining which Greek manuscript contains the best reading, then properly exegeting that text).

4. As has already been done to a degree by Bivin in his "Response", they should strongly downplay the importance of the School's major, wholesale literary reconstructions. No reconstructed "Hebrew Life of Jesus" is the Bible, nor is it superior to the Bible or in competition with the Bible.

To my knowledge, no fundamentalist, charismatic, evangelical, or Messianic Jewish scholar would have a problem with the basic thrust of these requests. However, by no means would I presume to tell Bivin or his colleagues what they should and should not believe. I only urge them to be forthcoming: If their scriptural stance is evangelical, then it must be reflected in their work; if it is not, then let that be acknowledged.

## **Putting all Rancor aside**

Obviously some sensitive topics have been treated in these recent issues of *MISHKAN*. I myself received what can only be called a rabid, virulent letter from an apparently well-educated, "Christian" follower of the School deeply angered at "Recovering the Inspired Text?" Nonetheless, these subjects needed to be dealt with for the good of the Body as well as for the sake of truth. Let us now move ahead to the business of interpreting and proclaiming the living Word of God!

In the event that JSSR devotes its primary efforts to: 1) the sober elucidation **{63}** of texts which New Testament scholarship recognizes as difficult and obscure; 2) providing Jewish background to the Scriptures; 3) and shedding light on Semitic nuances of biblical words and phrases, then all of us can glean from their work. Should the Jerusalem School continue to

devote itself primarily to the hypothetical work of retranslation and reconstruction, then their potential contribution to the ongoing ministry of the Word would be relegated to relative unimportance.

I have certainly learned from men like Bivin, Young, Lindsey and Buth. Can they learn from us too? May all of us involved in this discussion reflect the spirit of the wise man of Proverbs who readily receives constructive input, thereby becoming wiser still.

"Reprove a wise man, and he will love you; Instruct a wise man, and he will grow wise; Teach a righteous man, and he will gain in learning " (Proverbs 9:8b-9, New Jewish Version). A word to the wise is sufficient.

# {64}The New Testament in Hebrew Garb

**The New Testament In Contemporary Hebrew with Illustrations and References to Jewish and Other Sources. (The Bible Society in Israel, 1991)**

**Reviewed by David Rokeah**

Professor David Rokeah lectures at the Hebrew University on the history of Greece and Rome, the Jewish people in the Second Temple and the talmudic period, and the early church.

The Editorial Board of MISHKAN has asked me to review this edition (hereafter NTH), and I am delighted to do so. In NTH's rather short general introduction, details are supplied about the composition and contents of the New Testament. It states that the Gospels and Acts provide a biographical-theological picture of Jesus and the disciples, and describes the attitude of the Roman authorities and the Jewish leadership towards them. The adversaries of the new sect, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, are portrayed as seen by the Christians. At the same time we hear of the conflicts within the Christian community, conflicts between various apostles. These internal Christian controversies and conflicts were reflected especially in the letters of Paul to the Galatians, the Philippians and the Romans. These letters and the Gospel of John have two additional things in common which distinguish them from the synoptic Gospels: dualistic theological concepts; and an aspiration to separate from the main body of Judaism, creating a separate sect.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that the New Testament is a document that contributes much to our knowledge of the end of the Second Temple period, which both politically and religiously was stormy and fervent.

NTH is based on the translation completed in 1976, to which corrections have been added. Each gospel and epistle is preceded by a very short introduction, written in subjective style by the anonymous editors. This is the first study edition of the New Testament in Hebrew. It includes a commentary, references,

{65} and cross-references to the Tanach and the New Testament; as well as appendices on history, geography, religion, society, chronology, Jesus, and the administration of the Temple. Further on, there is a glossary; an index of names, places, and subjects; and, finally, maps and drawings. Let us consider various aspects of NTH, starting with its translation. Contemporary Hebrew has four main layers: Biblical, mishnaic, medieval, and modern. Biblical Hebrew serves today primarily in poetry, and medieval Hebrew in philosophy. Modern Hebrew is colloquial, informal, and used abundantly in the media. Earlier translators of the New Testament used biblical Hebrew, both its vocabulary and its syntax, most probably because of their desire to emphasize the links of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. As is well known, the New Testament is written in Greek of the so-called *koine* type, in simple, popular, spoken Greek. Its contemporary, mishnaic Hebrew, was also a spoken language, simultaneously beautiful, exact, and of literary quality. It would accordingly have been preferable to use it as much as possible in the translation and in the other parts of the book, rather

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<sup>1</sup> See D. Flusser, "The Dead Sea Sect and Pre-Pauline Christianity," *Scripta Hierosolymitana, Vol. IV* (1958), pp. 215-66. Now in D. Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem, 1988), pp. 23-74; F. Watson, Paul, *Judaism and the Gentiles - A Sociological Approach* (Cambridge, England, 1988), D. Rokeah, "A Note on the Philological Aspect of Paul's Theory of Faith," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 47 (1991), pp. 299-306.



than the colloquial "media" Hebrew that dominates this new edition. The many quotations from the Tanach (more than a thousand; see p. 2), given in biblical language, add a biblical flavor to this edition. The editors declare (pp. 2-3) that:

the aim of the translators was to reflect with maximal faithfulness the significance and intention of the original text and, at the same time, not to burden the contemporary reader with antiquated or foreign words, or with obscure expressions, but to present them, so far as possible, in a way that would be clear to the Hebrew reader of today. This aim is certainly commendable, although the use of a more mishnaic Hebrew would have been preferable. The editors present (p. 3) some examples to illustrate their methods. They were quite right in deciding to translate Matthew 27:45 as 'from twelve o'clock at noon ... until three o'clock' instead of the "from the sixth hour ... until the ninth" of the Greek text. But they erred in using the biblical term, *sar hameah* (a commander of a unit of a hundred soldiers)<sup>2</sup> to translate the Greek *hekatontarchos* (-arches), which in Matthew and Luke is used for the Latin term, *centurio*, meaning a commander of a *centuria*<sup>3</sup> It would have been preferable to transliterate the term, just as Mark (kenturion), the English translators, and the Sages did with other Roman military terms.

For example, *legio* was given as *Legion* and *tiro* as *tiron*. In the case of the *centuria* the Sages used the instrument that symbolized his authority, and named him *baal zemorah*, or carrier of the vine-rod. Similarly, the editors' translation of *archtereis* (usually translated into English as high priests) has no basis in either the Tanach or talmudic literature. The editors use *rashei cohanim*, chiefs or heads of priests; they should have used *cohanim gedolim great* (=high) priests.

{66} Another change introduced by the editors is more serious, because it may mislead the reader. They state that "the Greek term *ho iudaiol* (the Jews), which appears frequently, was translated each time according to its context; for example: in John 1:19 as 'chiefs of the Jews' but in John 6:52 as 'the audience'." Louis Feldman recently examined the use of the terms "Jews" and "Pharisees" in the New Testament.<sup>4</sup> He found that:

in Matthew, "Jews" appears 5 times, and "Pharisees" 31 times;

in Mark, "Jews" appears 6 times, and "Pharisees" 11 times;

in Luke, "Jews" appears 5 times, and "Pharisees" 26 times;

in John, "Jews" appears 71 times, and "Pharisees" 19 times;

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<sup>2</sup> Incidentally, the biblical word *sar* serves nowadays, as in biblical times, to identify a government minister.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, a unit of a hundred soldiers; there were actually only eighty men in a *centuria*.

<sup>4</sup> Louis Feldman, "Is the New Testament Antisemitic?" *Moment* (December, 1990), p. 50.

in Acts, "Jews" appears 79 times, and "Pharisees" 9 times.

The numbers speak for themselves. There is a special purpose in John, not necessarily an antisemitic one, in multiplying references to the Jews; clearly, this term should not be interchanged with any others. I think that the true explanation for this phenomenon in John is offered by Watson:<sup>5</sup>

These same two sociological phenomena - the transformation of a reform-movement into a sect and the creation of an ideology legitimating separation - are also in evidence in the Fourth Gospel ... This may be summed up in the same three headings used above.

(i) Denunciation ... The sectarian character of the Johannine community is thus seen in its undifferentiated hostility towards the community as a whole, and not just towards its leaders.<sup>6</sup> Leaders and people alike are denounced.

(ii) Antithesis... The Jews are 'from below,' "of this world" (John 8:23), "slaves" (8:32,[f.], in "darkness" (8:12). But Jesus is "from above," "not of this world" (8:23). and likewise his followers are "not of this world" (17:16); they are "free" (8:32ff.), they have "the light of life" (8:12, cf. 12:46). The function of such antithesis is to express and justify the sect's separation from the Jewish community.

(iii) Reinterpretation. Reinterpretation of religious traditions denies the legitimacy of the wider community's use of the traditions, and claims them exclusively for the sect .... The Johannine community thus claims to be the sole legitimate possessor of Jewish religious traditions.<sup>7</sup>

**{67}** This marks the change in his standing; now, he occupies the first place instead of Barnabas." One would expect the Hebrew translation to follow suit. However, Saul continues to be called Saul - not only in Acts, but also in the Letters, which in the Greek text open with the words: "I, Paul ...". (In a note to Galatians 3:24 and 6:17, however, he is called Pollos, whereas a few verses earlier, in a note to 6:11, he is called Saul.)<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Above n. 1, pp. 43-5; Watson's emphasis. And see my article mentioned in n. 1 above.

<sup>6</sup> In his n. 104 ad locum, Watson adds: "Thus, John frequently speaks collectively of 'the Jews', from whom his own community is sharply differentiated."

<sup>7</sup> Watson indicates (p. 122) that the same three headings and policy are also evident in Paul's Letters: "We see here [i.e. Rom 2] once again the sectarian claim to sole legitimate possession of the religious traditions of the community as a whole. Paul is trying to persuade the Roman Jewish Christians to abandon the remaining ties that bind them as a (failed) reform-movement to the Jewish community, and to join with his own followers in sectarian separation." Cf. Oskar Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy* (Leiden, 1987), p. 247 and n. 4, for his definition of Jewish Christians.

<sup>8</sup> In Acts 18:24 and 19:1 Apollos appears as Asaul, a name which does not exist in Hebrew. This I understand, resulted from a computer error, where Paul's name "Pollos" was replaced by "Saul" and Apollos was accidentally included. However, in a series of other references (e.g. 1 Cor 1:12; 3:4-6,22; 4:6; 6:12; and Tit 3:13) - including one on Acts 18:24 - the name Apollos appears as such in Hebrew letters.

The same is true of Peter. In John 1:42, Jesus says to Peter: "'You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Kephas' (which means rock)."<sup>9</sup> Apart from this verse, Simon Peter is called Kephas only four times in Galatians and four times in 1 Corinthians, whereas he is called Peter (Petros) more than 160 times in the original Greek. But the present editors have consistently changed Peter into Kepha in all of these references except for two instances: in the first verse of both 1 and 2 Peter (as well as in the titles of these Letters).

This Hebraizing of Greek names of Jews is superfluous, since many Jewish priests and Sages did in actuality bear Greek and Roman names, e.g. Ishmael ben Phabi or Phiabl=Fabius or Phoibe, Antigonos of Socho, Zecharia ben Avkules, Eliezer ben Hyrkanos, and Dosthal=Dositheos.

In their general introduction (p. 2), the editors note that:

The vast majority of the Tanach verses quoted in the New Testament have been taken from the Septuagint translation - the Jewish-Greek version of the Tanach which was available at that time. In places where there are no significant differences between the Septuagint translation and the Masoretic version the Tanach verses given in the present text are taken from the Masoretic version [and printed in distinctive type]. Important differences between the versions are explained in the notes.

Deuteronomy 21:22-3 says that one who committed a crime and was put to death should then be hanged on a tree; his body, however, should not be left overnight on the tree, but should be buried on the same day "for the hanged [person] is accursed by God." The meaning of the last phrase - *kilelat elohim* - is ambiguous in Hebrew. Daniel R. Schwartz<sup>10</sup> discusses various interpretations of this phrase, and asks: "is the construct state to be viewed as an objective genitive, meaning that he who is hung cursed or is cursing God? Or is it rather a subjective genitive, meaning that God cursed or is cursing him who is hung?" (p. 81).

{68} The author of the Temple Scroll, Schwartz shows, viewed the construct state as an objective genitive, whereas the Septuagint translated it as a subjective genitive: "For every one who is hanged on a tree is cursed by God." Paul (in Gal 3:13) adopted the position of the Septuagint (Schwartz, p. 82), "for he argues that by being crucified Jesus became cursed (and therefore could redeem others from the curse under which they labored)."<sup>11</sup>

May I suggest that, in view of the context in Deuteronomy (21:22-23), the Hebrew word *kelala* should be understood as meaning not a curse but a disgrace: it is an offence to God's dignity if a man - created in God's image - remains suspended from a tree for a long time. Such extended hanging is not needed to deter others from committing crimes.<sup>12</sup> Paul's version ("cursed be everyone who is hanged on a tree") includes the words "everyone" and "on the tree," which were added by the Septuagint; it omits

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<sup>9</sup> Or stone - *petros* Kephas is the Greek form of the Aramaic Kepha.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel R. Schwartz, "The Contemners of Judges and Men' (11Q Temple 64:12)," in his *Studies in the Jewish Background of Christianity* (Tubingen, 1992), pp. 81-8. Compare Skarsaune, p. 238 and n. 25.

<sup>11</sup> Schwartz's n. 4 ad locum indicates that he discusses the "scapegoat notion underlying Gal 3:10-14 and 4:4-5" in n. 57 on p. 25 of his *Studies*.

<sup>12</sup> The Tanach presents an antithesis between *cabed* and *kalel*, between honor and denigrate; see Exod 20:12: "Honor (*cpbed*) thy father and thy mother," and Exod 21:17 (and cf. Prov 20:20), where the verb *kalel* was mistakenly translated by curse. These meanings probably derived from caved-heavy, and kal=light. *Kalel* would then be to make light of someone. It should be noted that the usual Hebrew verb, to curse, is *arar* (as in Balak's request of Balaam (Num 22:6)), and that being accursed is *arur*.

the words "by God" (or "of God") which appear in both the Septuagint and Masoretic versions. The editors here quote the ambiguous Masoretic text (in distinctive type), and add the words "on the tree" (in lighter type) without explaining the implications of their omission ("by God") or their inclusion ("on a tree") of phrases and their use of varied type in this instance. Paul did not cite the Masoretic version, and he edited the word "God" out of the Septuagint version; the reader of this translation thus is misled here by the editors.<sup>13</sup>

In their commentary, the editors rightly adduce parallels derived mainly from the Tanach and from talmudic literature. For the latter they use extensively what appears to be the work of Strack and Billerbeck.<sup>14</sup> Like Montefiore, they should have acknowledged their debt to other scholars.<sup>15</sup> Geza Vermes concludes, when discussing "The Impact of the Scrolls on New Testament Study," that:

{69} if the Qumran Scrolls are invaluable in shedding new light on early Christianity, rabbinic literature skillfully handled, is still the richest source for the Interpretation of the original gospel message, and the most precious aid to the quest for the historical Jesus.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, the present editors acted wisely in using Rabbinic parallels in their commentary.

But Strack-Billerbeck must nonetheless be used carefully and critically: NTH tends to amass parallels that are occasionally irrelevant;<sup>17</sup> their interpretation is at times faulty; and they sometimes overlook the right parallel<sup>18</sup>. The present editors also should have paid attention to the chronological aspect of the cited parallels (as did Strack and Billerbeck), considering both the chronology of the Sages transmitting the traditions, and the collections in which the traditions appear.

In a few cases the editors bring parallels from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Concerning the message of John the Baptist (Matt 3:1 ff.), the Gospel quoted (3:2) a verse from Isaiah (40:3): "The voice of one crying in the wilderness ..." The editors compare this (in a note here and in a note to the parallel in Luke 3:4) to, the use made of this verse by the Qumran sect, in keeping with that sect's method of

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<sup>13</sup> Similarly, apropos the beginning of Gal 3:13: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law." The Greek text, followed by all the English translators, has no definite article; the present edition translates Christos here - and throughout - as "the Messiah," again misleading the reader.

<sup>14</sup> H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (6 vols., Munchen, 1926).

<sup>15</sup> See *The Synoptic Gospels*, edited with an introduction and commentary by C.G. Montefiore, 2 vols. (London, 1927); id., *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings* (London, 1930).

<sup>16</sup> Geza Vermes, *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (London, 1986), p. 125.

<sup>17</sup> In a note to 2 Tim (1:1-4), the editors quote the Mishnah in *Avot* (3:2) as a parallel: "Rabbi Hanina, adjutant high priest, says: 'pray for the welfare of the kingdom (Rome), for without [our] fear of it, we would have devoured each other alive.'" This parallel is absent from Strack-Billerbeck; it is also irrelevant.

<sup>18</sup>

See, e.g., David Rokeah, "Notes on the Gospels," *Tarbiz* 38 (1969), pp. 395-6 (Hebrew). Strack-Billerbeck (I:913) adduced rabbinic parallels in the Babylonian Talmud (*Ketubboth*, 111a; Bata. Mezi'a 85b), and in *Midrash Canticles Rabbah*, 11,7, for the statement in Mark (13:19-20) and Matt (24:21-2) describing the end of days, which declares that God will shorten this period of trouble because of the Elect.

I argue there that Strack and Billerbeck apparently overlooked an exact parallel in *Midrash Canticles Rabbah*, II,8. I also argue there that, although the Sages of this Midrash flourished after the compilation of the above noted Gospels, it is clear that the same rabbinic tradition served as a source of the evangelical narrative.

interpretation.<sup>19</sup> Further on the editors give parallels from the Dead Sea Scrolls to the first verses of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:3-5): "Blessed are the poor in spirit ..." <sup>20</sup> David Flusser compares the letters of Paul with the Scrolls, and concludes:

{70} The number and importance of the notions we have shown to be common to the Dead Sea Scrolls and Pre-Pauline Christianity mean that these points *of* contact cannot be explained away as incidental ... The terms dealt with in this paper were evidently coined in the Hebrew language and passed in a Hebrew literary medium into Christianity. They passed as true meaningful theological terms, not as empty or vague locutions.<sup>21</sup>

In note 164, Flusser lists some ten or so theological terms in the Scrolls and in Paul's Letters which are not only identical, but also help to explain each other. Flusser summarizes by saying (pp. 265-6): "The theological structure of the Sect was taken apart and the stones re-used by early Christian thinkers to build a new and different house." Nonetheless, the commentary on the letters of Paul in the present edition includes not even one comparison with the great treasure house of parallels to be found in the Scrolls. Perhaps the editors will remedy this in a future edition.

Let us round out our survey by considering two more subjects: the virgin birth and the attitude towards gentiles. Only Matthew (1:18-25) and Luke (1:26-35) present a tradition about the birth of Jesus from the Holy Ghost; Paul makes no mention of it.<sup>22</sup> The present editors do not find it necessary to inform the reader of this, nor do they refer to the Jewish and pagan polemic on this subject reflected in Talmudic sources and in the writings of the pagan, anti-Christian polemicist, Celsus. In an article published in 1969, I dealt with this subject;<sup>23</sup> Abel's article on this subject appeared in the same year.<sup>24</sup> I studied this subject mainly on the basis of Talmudic sources, while Abel focused on the New Testament. Both of us drew the same conclusion, phrased by Abel as follows (p. 395): "as far as the virgin birth motif is concerned, abuse from the Jews was a consequence of its formulation and not a cause." But as Georges Vajda, the editor of the REJ noted, I disagreed about the connection suggested by Abel between Panthera, the name of the Roman soldier alleged to have sired Jesus, and *parthenos* (virgin) (Isa 7:14), noted by Matthew with reference to Mary. The editors should have devoted at least a note to the theological problem that this unique tradition of the virgin birth posed - and still poses - to Christian theologians (as acknowledged in *MISHKAN* 16 (1/1992). p. 58).

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<sup>19</sup> See *The Rule Scroll*. The present editors refer, in square brackets, to p. 181, but do not indicate which edition is meant. The first editor of all the Scrolls was A.M. Habermann, but the reference here, apparently, is to the edition of J. Licht, published by the Bialik Institute (Jerusalem, 1965).

<sup>20</sup> CL D. Flusser, "Blessed are the poor in spirit ...," *Israel Exploration Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1960), pp. 1-13 (now reprinted in his *Judaism ...* [above n. 1]); this paper first pointed out the similarities between this text and the Midrash.

<sup>21</sup> D. Flusser, *Scripta...* (above, n. 1), pp. 263-4.

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed discussion of the information on the life and teaching of Jesus included in Paul see: R.J. Knowling, *The Testimony of St. Paul to Christ* (London, 1906).

<sup>23</sup> See D. Rokeah, "Ben Stara is Ben Pantera - Towards the Clarification of a Philological-Historical Problem," *Tarbiz* 39 (1969), pp. 9-18 (Hebrew).

<sup>24</sup> See E.L. Abel, "The Virgin Birth - Was it a Christian Apologetic?" *Revue des études juives*, 128 (1969), pp. 395-9.

There is a detailed entry for 'gentiles' in the theological glossary appended by the editors. However, no mention is made of the fact that the attitude of Jesus {71} towards the gentiles, as presented in the synoptic Gospels, is a very negative one. Just as the Sages did, Jesus refers to them as dogs; he even orders his disciples to go only "unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel".<sup>25</sup> It is true that, in Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15, Jesus tells the apostles to go and preach to the gentiles, but the text is of very doubtful authenticity.<sup>26</sup> Paul expresses, for understandable reasons, a different attitude, but he too was thinking of gentiles who had joined the Christian sect, as Watson indicates (above, n. 1, p. 121): "There is therefore no obstacle in the way of the view that the gentiles of Rom 2 are Christians. Paul affirms that these Gentiles do good and will receive eternal life, no less than Jewish Christians (w. 9f., cf. w. 6-8)."<sup>27</sup>

Christian scholars such as Emil Schurer studied Jewish history and literature as a background to the appearance of Jesus and to the understanding of Christianity.<sup>28</sup> There is another side to this coin, stressed by Vermes (above, n. 15, pp. 86-7):

Jesus and the movement that arose in his wake are recognized as belonging to first-century Jewish history. Furthermore, a good deal of the New Testament appears as reflecting a brief moment in the age-long religious development of Israel that starts with the Bible and continues via the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran, Philo, the New Testament, Josephus, Pseudo-Philo, the Mishnah, Tosefta, Targum, Midrash, Talmud - and so on and so forth .... In other words, instead of looking at the New Testament as an independent unit set against the background of Judaism, we have to see it as part of a larger environment of Jewish religious and cultural history.

The editors invested great effort in preparing the present edition, and the Bible Society in Israel should be congratulated upon its success in bringing such a difficult and important enterprise to fruition. This translation will enable Israelis to become acquainted with the New Testament and will, no doubt, be a considerable contribution to Israeli culture. My comments above are intended to lead to the improvement of the book and to foster truth, which I am sure was the aim of the editors. 'Faith' (emunah) in Hebrew is derived etymologically from {72} 'truth' (*emet*). Truth is considered to be an ideal as well as a divine characteristic in the Tanach, the New Testament, the Talmud, and the writings of the Church Fathers.<sup>29</sup> Seneca, the Roman philosopher and contemporary of Paul, asserted in the same spirit: "Whoever was cast outside the truth cannot be called happy."<sup>30</sup> May we all attain the truth and be happy!

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<sup>25</sup> See Matt 10:1 ff., 15:21 ff.; Mark 7:24 ff.; Midrash Tehillim (Psalms), 4:11 (ed. Buber, p. 24a); Midrash Tanhuma, Terumah, p. 107. For a discussion of this question in a broader context, see my "Early Christian-Jewish Polemics on Divine Election." in S. Almog and M. Heyd (eds.), *Chosen People, Elect Nation and Universal Mission* (Jerusalem, 1991), pp. 71-98 (Hebrew).

<sup>26</sup> See V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London, 1966), p. 610.

<sup>27</sup> A.F. Glasser, "Evangelical Objections to Jewish Evangelism," *MISHKAN* 16 (1/1992), pp. 36-49, has a completely different point of view.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. E.R. Goodenough's remark in his *Theology of Justin Martyr* (Amsterdam, 1968 [1923]), p. 36, n. 1: "Schurer is an outstanding instance of a great scholar who allowed the invectives of Jesus and Paul against the Pharisees and legalism completely to warp his understanding of Rabbinical Literature."

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., Zechariah 8:19: "Therefore love ye the truth and peace," and John 8:32: "The truth shall make you free"; G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, Vol. II* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962 [1927]), pp. 194-5; G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1972 [1961]), s.v. *aletheia=truth*, parag.B.

<sup>30</sup> De beata vita 5,2: "Beatus enim nemo dici potest extra veritatem proiectus."

# {73}Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee

Alan Segal

(New Haven and London: Yale University press, 1990)

## Reviewed by Michael Rydelnik

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Gentile Christian scholars have recognized the Jewishness of Paul for some time. Jewish historians have generally resisted seeing him as a representative of first-century Judaism. They have consigned to him the role of an antagonist and apostate who corrupted the teachings of Jesus in order to make gentile adherents to the new religion. Most Jewish scholars insist that Paul drew more heavily from the Greek mystery religions than from his own, more from pagan than from Jewish thought.

Against this background, Jewish historian Alan F. Segal has produced a new work that insists upon viewing Paul in light of his Jewishness. Segal, professor of religion at Barnard College, admits that "Paul is hardly ever read seriously by Jewish historians." Since he is "the only first century Jew to have left confessional reports of mystical experience (2 Cor 12:1-10), Paul should be treated as a major source in the study of first century Judaism" (p. xi).

Segal has not presented a linear argument but a collection of studies (some previously published) on Paul and his Jewishness. Segal's approach is sociological, drawing heavily from modern studies on the sociology and psychology of conversion. Thus, according to Segal. Paul's message is more sociological than theological: Paul considers the creation of a new body, consisting of Jews and gentiles, as more important than justification by faith (see especially pp. 174-83).

## Summary

The book is divided into three sections. The first, *Paul the Jew*, includes a chapter on *Paul and Luke*, which treats the relationship of the Pauline materials {73} with those by Luke found in Acts. The second chapter, *Paul's Ecstasy*, views Paul's mystical experience within the framework of Jewish apocalypticism. The third chapter deals with *Conversion in Paul's Society*. Section two, *Paul the Convert* contains the chapter. *The Consequences of Conversion*, described primarily as the end of the ceremonial law. Chapter five, *The New Conversion Community among Gentiles*, deals with the integration of Jews and gentiles into a new community of faith.

Section three, *Paul the Apostle*, includes a chapter on *Circumcision and the Noahide Laws*, which gives Paul's rationale for refusing circumcision to gentiles but allowing it for Jewish Christians. A seventh chapter, *Romans 7 and Jewish Dietary Laws*, proposes the creative view that the difficulty Paul expressed in Romans 7 was due to his attempt to keep dietary laws after becoming a Christian. The final chapter, *The Salvation of Israel*, deals with Paul's understanding of the spiritual destiny of the Jewish people. There is also an appendix, which provides a psychological study of Paul's conversion.

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The writing style is ponderous and hard to follow. Segal does not state his points crisply nor does he summarize well. Readers must be prepared to read sections repeatedly.

## **Evaluation**

This is a significant work because Segal recognizes the Jewishness of Paul and the important role Jewish thought must play in Interpreting Paul. Segal provides a significant advancement for both Pauline studies and Jewish history by stressing the importance of Paul as a source for first-century Jewish history.

Despite this important contribution, Segal's work suffers from various weaknesses.

He assumes that Luke's account in Acts is inaccurate. Segal is certain of Luke's facts concerning Paul only "when Paul's own letters confirm them" (p. 12). He makes no attempt to harmonize Paul's historical data with Luke's in Acts. While insisting that Luke's account of the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1-29) diverges from Paul's (Gal 2:1-10) (p. 188), Segal falls to consider the possibility that in Galatians Paul was referring to his famine visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11). This would have resolved an alleged contradiction without much difficulty.

And yet, when it serves his own conclusions, Segal assumes the historicity of Luke. See, for example his acceptance of Luke's account of Timothy's circumcision (pp. 215, 218-21) and of Paul's vow (pp. 238-40). 'Ibis inconsistent approach casts doubt on Segal's other assertions.

Another problematic element of Segal's book is his profoundly unbiblical view of conversion. As a result of his sociological perspective, Segal views conversion {75} as a change from one social group to another. He ignores the Biblical concept of conversion as an act whereby a sinner turns to God (p. 72).

Segal's exegesis is often farfetched. At times, his interpretations are completely sensible. Other times, however, his conclusions are questionable. For example, Segal alleges that Romans 7 expresses Paul's personal frustration, developed during his attempts to keep the dietary laws after his conversion: "Attempting to follow the ceremonial Torah as a Christian inevitably leads to sin, whether intentional or not" (p. 244). This view is creative but unconvincing.

Segal alleges that first-century Judaism applied the Noahide laws to gentiles although there is no evidence for such a view.

When it comes to the law Segal is inconsistent. On the one hand he maintains that the law has been abrogated in order to unite Jew and gentile into the new community. On the other he says that Paul permitted observance of the ceremonial law in order to accommodate other Jewish-Christians, even going so far as to circumcise Timothy and take a Nazarite vow himself. And yet, according to Segal, keeping the law was what led Paul to the frustrated and tragic autobiography of Romans 7. It would be truer to New Testament theology to say that the law of Moses has been rendered inoperative by the coming of the Messiah, but that Jewish believers may observe it for ethnic identification and evangelistic contextualization.

The most significant problem with Segal's work is his attempt to argue for the end of a Christian mission to the Jews. He does so in three steps. First, he admits that Paul views salvation to be found in Christ alone: "a double plan for salvation, however, does not seem to be the point here" (p. 279). Although Segal would prefer to join Stendahl, Gaston and Gager in their "cultural pluralism" (p, 281), Paul's exclusive language does not allow for such an



interpretation. In spite of his personal disagreement with Paul, Segal recognizes that Paul's view is "that only those who accept Christ will be saved" (p. 280).

The second element in this argument is that Paul fully expected all Israel to ultimately come to Christ. Thus, Segal says, Paul "surprisingly asserts the rabbinic notion that all Israel will be saved (Rom 11:26)" (p. 280).

Thirdly, Segal also argues that the mission to Israel has ended. He states that Paul "hopes that the remaining Jews will come to Christ as he did, freely and without coercion. Though the mission to the Jews has been a failure, God {76} will eventually reveal the reason. Therefore, there need not be a continuing mission to the Jews" (p. 280). It seems unlikely that Jewish people could fulfill their destiny without proclamation to them. Segal believes this conflict is a deliberate ambiguity in Paul, sourced in Paul's belief in the sovereignty of God (P 280-81).

Segal's understanding of Paul and the salvation of Israel does not go far enough. It is insufficient to assert that Paul recognized Israel's need to be saved, as well as the promise of the nation's future redemption, without recognizing the need for a continuing mission to reach them with the gospel. After all this is the same Paul who, in the very context Segal is discussing, asked, "How shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" (Rom 10:14-15) and whose story closes (Acts 28) with a mission to the Jews of Rome (although Segal would doubtless deny the historicity of Luke's account). Seemingly, Segal's conclusion is derived more from his own dislike of Jewish missions than from an accurate reading of Paul.

## **Conclusion**

Despite its weaknesses, Segal's work must be commended as ground breaking. It is exciting to see a Jewish scholar embrace Paul for the Jew he was. Segal's bold attempt can provoke and advance both the study of Jewish history and of the New Testament.

# **{77}Israel and Yeshua**

**Edited by Torleif Elgvin**

**Festschrift celebrating the Tenth Anniversary of Caspari Center (Caspari Center, Jerusalem, 1993; 167 pages)**

**Reviewed by Menahem Benhayim**

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A Festschrift, if my Judeo-German is a fair guide, suggests a feast of writing, with all the varieties of holiday fare: bitter and sweet, tangy and bland, and many intermediate nuances. In this collection the editor has gathered a fair variety of writing tastes and backgrounds to provide challenging and interesting - at times highly provocative - reading material.

I detected three main lines of study in the book: history, theology, outreach, with some overlap in each category. These were approached by Evangelical Christians from a non-Jewish perspective (European and Palestinian), a Messianic Jewish/Hebrew-Christian perspective, and from a Rabbinic Jewish approach (modern Orthodox and Conservative).

In his preface, Editor Torleif Elgvin offers a short hassidic anecdote as a gentle admonition for readers to consider the differences of pace at which travelers pursue their goals. In this collection, however, there are several travelers pursuing goals in opposite directions.

In the category of history there are informative and interesting articles by Kjaer-Hansen about the early Jewish Church; by Skarsaune about Lutheran pietism and the spiritual odyssey of the German-Jewish Christian Carl Paul Caspari, whose scholarly ministry was co-opted by the Norwegian church; Ray Pritz and Gershon Nerel focus, respectively, on Bible distribution and Jewish Evangelism in the Holy Land between 1844-1939, and Messianic Jews and the modern Zionist movement during approximately the same period, providing solid background material. In the area of theology, Ray Gannon presents what he calls Augustine's "more biblically balanced Israelology" than other Church Fathers. Augustine, Gannon claims, believed in the future salvation of Israel and in the need to show tolerance and respect for their cultural distinctives even within a {78} Christian framework; their dispersion could also benefit Christians because of their knowledge of the Hebrew Scripture. Nevertheless, quotations offered from his writings concerning deicide have understandably placed him in the eyes of Jewish commentators in the classical Christian anti-Jewish camp. Gannon, however, rejects as "unreliable" the assessment of the 19th century Jewish historian Graetz that Augustine abhorred the Jews.

Mitri Raheb, pastor of the Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, offers a personal theological testimony on biblical interpretation in the Israeli-Palestinian context. Making due allowance for the complexities and difficulties facing Arab-Palestinian Christians, I find Raheb's view quite one-sided. Expressing shock at the politicizing of Scripture on behalf of the Jews, Raheb is not reluctant to employ Scripture to support the Palestinian political cause. One may ask: Is the Israeli-Palestinian context to be interpreted biblically only in its modern phase? If there is a wider historical context to be considered, then it must include the possibility, biblically, of the return of the Jews to the ancient homeland. Or should Christians accept the

Arab military conquest of the Holy Land and the Middle East by militant medieval Islam as irrevocable?

When Raheb writes that "Islam too should be seen in this Judeo-Christian context, both theologically and historically," his ecumenism compromises the Bible's exclusive authority. In this respect, his presentation of the God who sides with the powerless seems strange in the context of Islam, which almost from its outset expressed its faith by force of arms.

He may be right in asking western Christians to make a distinction between "a Jewish concentration camp survivor who speaks of the promise of land, and when an Israeli settler from the U.S. speaks of the promise of land" (especially with fanatical Kahanists in mind). It is surely cruel, however, to suggest, as Raheb does, that Jewish powerlessness under the Third Reich is a kind of paradigm of Palestinian powerlessness under Israeli rule.

David Miller, a licensed Israeli guide and specialist in the agricultural images of the Bible, weaves relevant Scriptural texts into a Bible lesson from a challenging perspective: "The theological approach of the Bible is not the systematic approach so familiar to us today, but is expressed in terms of everyday life: 'A sower went out to sow'"

For me, and presumably for many readers of MISHKAN, the most relevant portions of the book deal with current burning issues involving Hebrew Christians and Messianic Jews, both in relations with one another as well as with mainstream Jewish and Christian communities.

In a bold challenge to mainstream churches, the Hebrew Catholic monk Daniel Oswald Rufeisen appeals, even demands that the diversity of Christian churches not be imposed on Israeli Hebrew Christians. In a survey of Christian history {79}from apostolic times, Rufeisen reflects on a Judeo-Christianity which maintained a plurality of approaches to faith, and through the Pauline mission, included a distinctive non-Jewish expression, leading to a truly catholic church.

As the gentile church grew stronger and finally was enticed into an alliance with the Roman Empire through Constantine, a monolithic model was imposed upon the entire church. Catholic no longer meant to be in union with Jerusalem, but to be like Rome, (which) dictated the conditions .... Christianity was no longer a way of life, but a doctrine which must be established, defined and centrally controlled." The mother church in Jerusalem was inevitably crushed between Jewish society and gentile Christianity.

Rufeisen sees no improvement in the situation for Hebrew Christians following the Great Schism between East and West, nor in the aftermath of the Reformation of the Western church, with its many divisions, wars, and hatred. In his view, contemporary missions to the Jews are engaged in the perpetuation of these divisions. Accordingly, he opposes efforts by Hebrew Catholics and their friends to form a Hebrew uniate rite within the Roman Catholic church, which would be "perhaps only another affirmation of the existing disarray."

One may acknowledge many of Rufeisen's criticisms and evaluations of the contemporary situation facing Jewish believers, but nevertheless ask whether the divine purpose for Israel and the Church can be frustrated even by the disarray of historic Christianity.

Baruch Maoz is a kind of Jewish Protestant antithesis of Brother Daniel. Fiercely devoted to the classical concept of "Jewish Christianity," he insists that the Hebrew term "yehudi meshihi" (lit. Jewish Messianist) is equivalent to "Jewish Evangelical Christian." There are a number of surprises in his article, appropriately entitled "Jewish Christianity: Whither and Why?"

For one, Maoz presents a rather idyllic nationalistic picture of the initial phase of the Bar Kochva revolt (AD 132). Yet it was surely no less futile than the earlier revolt and, nationally, had even more devastating results for the Jewish people and the Judeo-Christians. If indeed, as Maoz and others have suggested, it is historically accurate to say that Judeo-Christians answered the call to arms, it was a tragic error, and not the last time that Christians have been swept into futile wars out of misguided patriotism, paying dearly for it afterward.

In contrast to some persistent attitudes among classical Hebrew Christians, Maoz recognizes the value of serious "Christian scrutiny" of Rabbinic Judaism, and would encourage "some of our number to engage in penetrating study of the {80} Talmud, Mishnah and the tosafot" He accepts the fact that "Jewish traditions are part of our national heritage, (and) we should neither ignore nor despise them, (and) freely acknowledge the substantial good which they bring, but we may not overlook their faults."

One should welcome a critical attitude to all tradition, but Maoz may leave the impression that there is little to criticize in Christian traditions (even evangelical ones) which have developed among the nations. Furthermore, he states that "God has never left himself without a remnant (within Israel) according to the election of grace," and that there is nothing unique about the recent developments among Jewish believers in Yeshua.

Maoz' caution against making a particular eschatological plan central to Hebrew Christianity is worth heeding, but the uniqueness (not superiority), on biblical grounds, of Jewish existence inside and outside the universal body of Messiah remains a bone of contention inside and outside the church. He is right to remind us that there are similarities with other people groups in their struggles over the nature of national identity, yet it is doubtful whether they are as basic as the struggle of Jewish believers against the denial of our identity as Jews. It would be beneficial in our contemporary context, to heed the counsel of Adolph Saphir, the 19th century Hebrew Christian quoted by Maoz, "neither to Germanize nor Scotticise" our faith.

In a critical well-annotated article on the Messianic use of Rabbinic Literature, Avner Boskey provides historic overview of such use. Beginning with the Nazarene period, through the medieval debates involving Jewish converts to Roman Catholicism, and on to modern times, with the gradual shift from blatant antirabbinism to positive interest, Boskey sees rabbinic studies leading in some cases to an almost total embrace of rabbinic authority among certain schools of Messianic Jews and Evangelical Christians.

Boskey seeks an intermediate position, advocating "a more thoughtful and less phobic approach towards rabbinics," yet avoiding rash and unscholarly conclusions about the links between Messianic faith and rabbinism. He refers to "a missiological blunder of epic proportions," which he considers an excessive interest in acquiring rabbinic knowledge for evangelizing "approximately 15 percent of the Jewish people" who are Orthodox; yet Boskey overlooks the fact that large segments of "the overwhelming majority of approximately 85 percent" secularists are disappearing as Jews.

Boskey correctly notes that the Pharisees were once a small minority in Israel but eventually set the tone for Jewish life for centuries. By the same token, the significance of Messianic Jews or Orthodox Jews today cannot be in their numerical proportions to the majority.

{81} On the whole, Boskey has contributed a helpful and generally well-balanced presentation of the subject.

Editor Torleif Elgvin, in a separate article, also challenges certain forms of radical Messianic Judaism and its gentile friends on the issue of the "Torah of the Messiah and the Torah of the Rabbis." He sees them as mutually exclusive inasmuch as the latter now includes the doctrine of the divinely-given Oral Law. He argues from Jewish sources that this doctrine is much later than Yeshua's day and indeed is a reaction to Christianity. "The Messiah did not replace the Torah," he writes; "He was incarnating it and bringing it to completion." For the rabbis since the late fourth century, the Torah has "a metaphysical value which it did not have earlier," he argues. Elgvin appreciates Messianic Jewish attempts to express their faith in Jewish categories, and "would love to see Messianic Jewish congregations in Israel much more Jewish in expression and tradition," nevertheless, messianic theology should not be Torah-centered but Messiah-centered, he concludes.

Joseph Shulam of Jerusalem, in a brief punchy article on Messianic Jewish exposition of Scripture, while acknowledging the need for a critical approach to rabbinics, emphasizes the great debt the Church, and Messianic Jews especially, owe the rabbis for preserving and fixing the biblical text and providing guidelines for their interpretation, such as the four-fold "pardess" exegesis (which he relates to the literal, moral, allegorical and mystical). He offers New Testament parallels to this system.

Shulam lays out his plan for the development of a Messianic Jewish hermeneutic which recognizes the Bible as the word of God and incorporates a solid historical and philological approach to Scripture, combined with "a firm faith in the integrity and inerrancy of the text." He wants "the encrusted tradition of 2000 years of interpretation" removed, and offers suggestions for pluralistic and contextualized exposition and Messianic Jewish preaching. A large order! He concedes that the Messianic Jewish community is at present unable to fill it, "but we have no excuse for not starting."

## **Evangelism, Dialogue and Counter-Evangelism**

Ole Christian Kvarme and Walter Riggans - each having once lived in Israel and ministered to Messianic Jews from a mainline Evangelical Christian - relate to crucial aspects of the contemporary relationship between Israel and Yeshua.

{82} In "Evangelism and Affirmation," Kvarme upholds the basic thesis "that evangelism and Jewish identity are not contradictions." He warns against an unbalanced affirmation of Jewish election which tacitly or explicitly rules out a gospel witness to Jews. Out of his Israeli experience, he recognizes the wide "credibility gap between the Jewish New Testament and the identity of the historical churches Jews know." This presents a challenge to the entire believing community to improve its evangelizing as well as its communal life.

In a brief analysis of the warfare waged by mainstream Jewish leaders against Messianic Jews, Walter Riggans outlines six major types of activities, "all part and parcel of the traditional response of the Jewish community to Messianic Jews." These he classifies as "persecution" (conceding that "the balance of persecution has been experienced by the Jewish people at the hands of members of the church"), discriminatory rabbinic terminology ("meshumad," "mumar," "min"), polemical liturgy ("birkat ha-minim"), defamation of Yeshua (the "toldot yeshu"), various forms of social ostracism, and attempts to alienate churches from Messianic Jewish groups.

Riggans describes an existential situation which Messianic Jews must relate to; but I believe it cannot be detached from the reality of the struggle for Jewish national and spiritual survival, which for so long was threatened by distorted or insensitive Christian witness.

Two unusual and contrasting articles provide striking counterpoint, the first by Conservative Rabbi Chaim Pearl on "Some Thoughts on Jewish-Christian Dialogue," the other by Orthodox Rabbi David Rosen, former Chief Rabbi of Ireland, now active in interfaith relations in Israel, who writes about "The Relationship between Jews and Evangelicals in Israel."

Pearl prefaces his remarks with lavish praise for Caspari Center on its first decade of existence, and then proceeds to indulge in a rash of attacks on every aspect of its Christian faith. It is "not only non-rational. but anti-rational"; the concept of the new covenant must be rejected, salvation rests on deeds only, Christian evangelism created inquisitions and massacres; furthermore, the Messiah need not be a person and certainly not divine. In any event, since Jesus came 2000 years ago, "by no stretch of the imagination can any of the elements of a messianic age be recognized."

{83} Pearl cites the anti-Christian sometime *enfant terrible* philosopher-theologian Yeshayahu Leibowitz that the failure of Pope Pius XII to speak out against the mass murder of the Jews "put into practice what was implicit in Christianity from the days of its founder." Presumably, those good Christians he recognizes within the Holocaust period who did speak out and rescued Jews were implicitly unfaithful to their "founder."

The rabbi will nevertheless have it both ways: a Jewish "teaching of contempt" for everything Christian, in the style of Leibowitz, and a recognition of the Church as one path to God, as per Rosenzweig and Buber. It would require an essay to refute the unfair generalities and inconsistencies made by the rabbi, apparently in a time of pique over reports of renewed antisemitism in Europe, to which he refers.

Some of the rabbi's criticisms of certain Christian approaches to evangelism and salvation, such as the issue of eternal bliss or eternal doom as well as Christian and pseudo-Christian historical failures, are worthy of serious dialogue and discussion. They can hardly be dealt with from a condescending perspective that implies that the beliefs of the other side are anti-rational and perverse "from the days of its founder."

By contrast, Rabbi David Rosen, in an irenic and practical manner appeals to the common plight of all Western religious groupings: "We are all minorities in an overwhelmingly secular world." He does not ignore the peculiar problems of relations between Jewish and Christian, especially Evangelical, faith communities, but prefers to focus on those elements in Christian faith which even in the tragic past were viewed by discerning rabbis as positive. He has respect for his dialogue partner and can employ Paul's metaphor of the olive tree (Romans 11) to make a point.

Rabbi Rosen doesn't expect Evangelicals and Messianic Jews to "muzzle" themselves or "hide their beliefs," but he would advise them to "voluntarily suspend ... their perfectly legal right to solicit Jews with a view to persuading them to share their beliefs" during this period of crisis in Jewish history. If they cannot or will not suspend "proselytization activities," the very special relationship potential he advocates between Jews and Evangelicals "will remain and probably intensify as one of special conflict."

This perception is probably correct, but that cannot of course determine the decision to evangelize or not; it can only put it into sharper focus and sensitize it to contemporary reality.

# **{84} In the Lion's Den: The Life of Oswald Rufeisen**

**Nechama Tec**

**New York, Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1990, 279 pp. (\$21.95 Hard Cover)**

**Reviewed by Gershon Nerel**

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Oswald Rufeisen, born in 1922 in Poland, is well known in Israel and abroad as "Brother" or "Father" Daniel, the Jewish Catholic Carmelite monk from Stella-Maris in Haifa. His biography could not be better titled. The metaphor of "Lion's Den" indeed reflects best the exciting characteristics of Oswald's life experiences. Surviving the "Den of Lions" in which he found himself did not involve only physical threats, but ideological dangers and spiritual opponents as well. In different places and in changing times he found himself, like Daniel of the Bible, in the eye of the storm, his very existence at risk.

Nechama Tec, in her well-documented research, describes Rufeisen in various situations of real and quasi-"Lions Den" dangers. She presents Rufeisen as succeeding in his battle to survive when:

1. endangered by the German Nazis in occupied Poland during World War II;
2. mocked and accused as a German spy by Soviet Russian partisans in the forests;
3. becoming a "persona non grata" to the Communist authorities in Sovietized Poland;
4. criticizing idolatrous traditions within the Christian Church;
5. condemned by orthodox Jewry and even secular Jewish intelligentsia for his conversion and monastic life.

Although quiet and courteous, Rufeisen is also portrayed as full of revolutionary spirit. He was a strong individualist but never egocentric. On the contrary, while fighting against his enemies, he was at the same time active in support of any helpless person no matter what their background or ethnic origins. Thus, Rufeisen {85} consciously exposed himself to a death sentence by initiating the secret evacuation of Jews from the Mir ghetto in Poland, which was destined to be totally liquidated by the Nazis on August 13, 1942.

Alongside the physical dangers that Oswald confronted, the main theme of this biography is Oswald's integration of his basic identity. Living among Poles, Germans and Russians on the one hand, and among Catholic clergymen and Jewish traditionalists on the other hand, he proudly and consistently retained his sense of Jewish identity, manifested whether he dressed in the German S.S. uniform, or the Carmelite robe. Not only did he reject the idea of assimilation, he insisted on the unique personal expressions of his Jewishness.

Rufeisen remained an ardent Zionist "Halutz" (pioneer) "who chooses to live in Israel and identify with it." (p. 3). After becoming a disciple of Jesus, Rufeisen defined himself as a "Catholic Jew,"

unceasingly emphasizing the continuity between his Jewishness and Catholicism. Eretz-Israel became the natural field for his energetic activities following his immigration in 1959.

However, Rufeisen would never call himself a "Messianic Jew." Such a term would not be universalistic enough for him. Nevertheless, as an Israeli, Oswald says, "If you agree and accept the concept of Hebrew Christians, you must consider the return of the Jews to this country" (p. 243).

Rufeisen's vision is to recreate the original Hebrew Church of the early centuries, restoring a Jewish Christianity which would principally be based "... not on the revealed truths [dogmas, G.N.J, but (rooted) in the faith in God" (p. 242). Yet it is hard to grasp what would exactly be the full content of this Hebrew Church that Rufeisen envisions.

In fact, Oswald's diverse activities focus on proving to anyone who will listen, that "early Christianity was Jewish" (p. 241). His goal is directed at "repairing the relationship between Jews and Jesus" (p. 240). His strong sense of commitment in whatever he does, cannot be doubted and Nechama Tee reflects that dedication throughout the book.

Understandably. Tee's biography is full of admiration for Rufeisen's personality and adventurous life, but it is not merely a hymn of praise. In her investigative approach she often compares evidence from different sources. Diverse testimonies are used to corroborate the historical data, with oral and written sources effectively incorporated into the narration. At the same time, myth and reality are also {86} examined. For example, the "glorious reputation" of the partisans' activities stands against their "vagabond engagements" (pp. 192-194); or the "superlatives" of some of Rufeisen's deeds, are exposed as "wishful thinking" (p.189).

The author does not hesitate to disagree with some of the views expressed by Rufeisen. When dealing with the theological explanation given by Rufeisen to the Shoah (the Holocaust), Rufeisen told her about the analogy he makes between the Holocaust and the Crucifixion - "the *Shoah* being the Golgotha of the Jews." She responded she has difficulties with this kind of reasoning ... (p. 170). For Oswald, however, it is crystal-clear that the resurrection of Jesus prefigured the national restoration of the Jews in Palestine. "... Isn't it strange that three years after the Jews were almost totally annihilated, the Jewish nation came into being?" (ibid.); this question, asked by Rufeisen himself, would be just a rhetorical question for him.

Yet this biography is not only a history book, a look into the past, but also a serious contemporary account relating to issues disturbing us today. One may also ask: Is this "vita" of Rufeisen only a "one-person phenomenon," a totally unique and isolated event in recent Jewish-Christian history? The answer is an absolute "NO!" If we look only at the Israeli scene, we may find at least two other Jewish-Catholic Israeli monks, who also deserve a biographer: The Carmelite "White Friar" Elias (John) Friedman, and the Franciscan "Grey Friar" David-Maria Jaeger. To compare the diverse opinions and activities of these "Latin monastic personalities" in Israel with some other monks as well would be an instructive challenge.

I unhesitatingly recommend this book to anyone who is interested not only in documented history, but in a fascinating and sincere personal story. At the same time, the primary sources used in this book are an important mine of material for professional historians of the Holocaust, Zionism, "Synagoga and Ecclesia" relations and Hebrew Christianity.