MISHKAN

A FORUM ON THE GOSPEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE | *Issue 64/ 2010*

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Issue 64 / 2010

Editor: Jim R. Sibley

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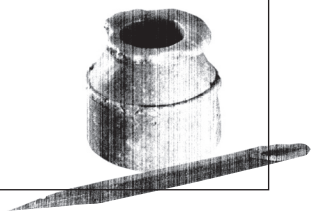
Mishkan's editorial policy is openly evangelical, committed to the New Testament proclamation that the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus (Yeshua) the Messiah is "to the Jew first."

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

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

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR



The Gospel and the Jewish People

By **Jim R. Sibley**

"The Gospel and the Jewish People" is the theme of this issue, and, indeed, it is the focus of *Mishkan*, in general. The gospel theme is richly illustrated in Scripture, as well as on our cover. It is the good seed that springs forth into life.

In Matthew 9 and 10, Yeshua spoke out of His "compassion" (Matt 9:36) for the Jewish people. He said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest" (Matt 9:37–38). Today, His disciples must also be motivated, not by triumphalism or pride, but by His compassion.

Yeshua had compassion for the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:6), but He also had encouragement for His disciples—"The harvest is plentiful." Certainly, as we witness the harvest among the people of Israel, we rejoice, even in the midst of opposition and difficulty.

But Yeshua also stressed the importance of praying for workers to be sent out into the harvest. Yeshua does not ask His disciples to pray for the harvest, but for the workers. The harvest is in His hands.

In this issue, we honor the life of a mighty man who spent his life in the harvest. Then, our former editor, Kai Kjær-Hansen, opens this issue with a call for the world missions community to give proper place to the Jewish people. To approach world missions without this emphasis is, indeed, to sin against the Great Commission.

We are pleased to present a trio of articles that bear directly on the messianic identity of Yeshua. May Samuel-Whittington raises the issue of "Circumcision and Jewish Identity" as seen in Scripture and in history. Finally, our reviewers introduce us to a variety of significant and stimulating books.

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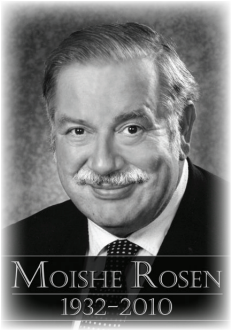

A Tribute to Moishe Rosen

By **Jim R. Sibley**

Charles Spurgeon reminds us that the occupation of the good soldier is war, and Moishe was a soldier—one who fought against anything that would keep his Jewish people from the knowledge of salvation. While love of country often motivates a soldier to give his last ounce of strength to the cause, for Moishe it was a dual love—a love for Yeshua, the Messiah, and a love for the Jewish people. As Tuvya Zaretsky says, "He pressed the battle to bring the Gospel to his own people and stood his ground for the cause of Christ. . . . Moishe insisted that any focus should be on the Messiah Jesus and not on his Jewishness."[1]

As editor of *Mishkan*, I must note that Moishe was an enthusiastic supporter of *Mishkan*, and personally contributed to these pages as early as 1989, writing on "Trends in Jewish Evangelism in North America: A Profile of Jewish Missions."[2] Since then, he has contributed two additional articles,[3] and his *festschrift* was reviewed in issue 62.[4] Several on the staff of Jews for Jesus have made, and continue to make, a major contribution to *Mishkan*.

As coordinator of the North American chapter of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE), I pay tribute to Moishe on behalf of his many friends and co-workers in this network of organizations, congregations, and individuals, all involved in Jewish evangelism. As a network, we would not be what we are today had we not had the support of Moishe Rosen. He was an encouragement from the beginning and a support for many others who labored beside him in other ministries. He always helped us keep our focus on evangelism as our first priority. He was greatly loved and will be greatly missed.

1 Tuvya Zaretsky, "First-Person: '[T]his Baptist is a Jew who loves Jesus,'" *Baptist Press*, May 20, 2010.

2 Moishe Rosen, "Trends in Jewish Evangelism in North America: A Profile of Jewish Missions," *Mishkan*, no. 10 (1989): 72–76.

3 Moishe Rosen, "Looking Back," *Mishkan*, no. 44 (2005): 76–79; "Following a Call and Counting the Costs," *Mishkan*, no. 52 (2007): 57–61.

4 Richard A. Robinson, review of Jim Congdon, ed., *Jews and the Gospel at the End of History: A Tribute to Moishe Rosen*, *Mishkan*, no. 62 (2010): 80–81.

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Having myself been involved in Jewish ministry for more than a quarter of a century, it has given me a great deal of satisfaction that Moishe always stood for biblical truth. He was not bashful about his theological convictions. He believed the Bible was God's Word and the authority for all of life. He took some courageous stands for sound doctrine, so, as a conservative evangelical, I speak for many when I say, "Thank you, Lord, that Your servant was not only focused on evangelism, but was also faithful to Your Word."

Finally, I want to conclude with a personal word. It was my privilege to know Moishe for almost three decades. I had already read his published materials, and within my first years in Israel, I met Moishe on a fact-finding mission he organized. Later, Tuvya "channeled" Moishe's teaching to me when I was at a very teachable point in my ministry. Later, of course I would hear his presentations at LCJE meetings and have personal conversations with him. Like so many others, I, too, have learned from him; I have been challenged by him; and I have been encouraged by him.

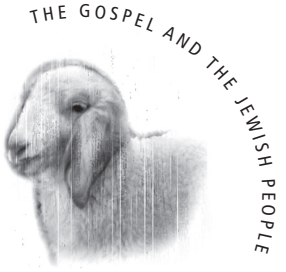
Douglas MacArthur famously said, "I still remember the refrain of one of the most popular barracks ballads . . . which proclaimed most proudly that old soldiers never die; they just fade away." And like the old soldier of MacArthur's barracks ballad, Moishe has now closed his time of service—but unlike that soldier, Moishe will not simply fade away. The first missionary to the Jewish people, the Apostle Peter, said this:

> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Pet 1:3–5)

Surely Moishe has already heard the Lord's, "Well *done,* good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matt 25:21). Nevertheless, a question Moishe posed still hangs in the air for future generations: "As far as the main challenges for the Messianic movement and for Jewish missions/evangelism today, I wonder if we will see leaders who possess the heroic qualities of those I've known in the past."[5] To their number another has been added.

5 Rosen, "Looking Back," 78.

Mishkan, no. 64 (2010): 6–17



Jewish Missions/ Evangelism and Edinburgh 1910 and the Centenary Celebrations 2010

by **Kai Kjær-Hansen**

The World Missionary Conference, which was held in Edinburgh in 1910, became enormously important for Christian missions in the twentieth century. From Edinburgh 1910, there went out a powerful call and inspiration to missions among all peoples—the Jewish people included.

A lot has changed since then. Here at the beginning of the twenty-first century, there is a global church that sees progress in the global East and South and decline in the West. Today the church is looking for new visions and perspectives on missions. How does Jewish missions enter into the reflections about this? When the centenary celebrations are over, will there still be room for Jewish missions in the church's missions thinking and strategy?

Celebration of Edinburgh 1910

The centenary has been celebrated in various ways; the celebrations are not yet concluded. The Lausanne Movement will be holding its third world conference in Cape Town, South Africa, October 17–24, 2010. The choice of the year 2010 is no coincidence. More than 4,000 delegates are expected to attend the conference.

Project "Edinburgh 2010" held its centenary conference in Edinburgh, June 2–6, with approximately 300 church leaders attending. The concluding service was attended by approximately 1,000 persons. In addition to this initial conference, Edinburgh 2010 has inspired the holding of conferences and study projects around the world.[1]

Edinburgh 2010 is also a multi-denominational and international project set up to commemorate the 1910 World Missionary Conference, and to provide new perspectives on missions for the twenty-first century. Theologically, missiologically, and confessionally, Edinburgh 2010 is broader than the Lausanne Movement. As it is officially said: "Whereas 1910 was confined to mainline Protestantism, the participants in 2010 will be drawn

1 See http://www.edinburgh2010.org.

from the whole range of Christian traditions and confessions, including Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Independent churches, and show a better gender and age balance."[2] Some may be surprised that the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) and World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) are among the stakeholders.

Halfway between Edinburgh 2010 and Cape Town 2010 it is, of course, too early to draw final conclusions about positions on Jewish missions/evangelism in the respective camps. This will have to wait. I doubt whether it will at all be possible to talk about two distinct "camps" with diametrically opposed stances on this question. *If* Edinburgh 2010 does not say a clear "yes" to Jewish missions, which I would deeply regret, it does not follow that all involved in Edinburgh 2010 are *against* Jewish missions. And if Cape Town 2010 issues a clear "yes" to Jewish missions, which I expect, it does not follow that all involved in Cape Town 2010 will work actively *for* Jewish missions/evangelism in the future—or vice versa. Things are rather more complicated.

Having said that, I am convinced that people who are involved in Jewish missions will expect the issues of missions and witness among the Jewish people to be treated *explicitly* in the documents and statements coming out from the two conferences. Anything else would be to bury one's head in the sand or to sweep the theological, missiological, and soteriological problems under the carpet. For no one can deny the fact that, historically speaking, the church's mission began as Jewish missions. And it should not be possible for anyone to avoid reflecting on the consequences for world missions of a "yes" or a "no" to Jewish missions today.

No one can deny the fact that, historically speaking, the church's mission began as Jewish missions. And it should not be possible for anyone to avoid reflecting on the consequences for world missions of a "yes" or a "no" to Jewish missions today.

In order to be able to assess, in due course, the question of continuity or discontinuity between Edinburgh 1910 and Edinburgh 2010/Cape Town 2010, we will consider what was said in 1910 about Jewish missions/evangelism. To clarify things, I will make use of some comprehensive quotations.

Edinburgh 1910 and Jewish Missions

In the series of books issued by study committees leading up to Edinburgh 1910, the question of Jewish missions is treated under "the non-Christian world." The chapter entitled "The Jews" is worth reading in its entirety.[3] The third section is quite unambiguous in its clear call to Jewish missions.

2 "About Edinburgh 2010," Edinburgh 2010, http://www.edinburgh2010.org/en/about-edinburgh-2010.html (accessed August 19, 2010).

3 The section "The Jews" is subdivided into three major paragraphs: I: The People to be Evangelized (1. Numbers and Distribution; 2. Language; and 3. Religious Condition); II: The Work Accomplished (1. The Character of the Work Done; 2.Classes Reached; and

Jewish missions are only in their infancy and we cannot conscientiously say that any part of the world field, except perhaps London, is adequately occupied. No effort is being made to reach the Reform Jews in Germany and the United States, and none whatever to reach the Orthodox Jews in Central Asia. Russia's Jewish millions are still languishing without the Gospel, and indeed in almost every part of the world the Jews are greatly neglected.

On account of the scattered condition of the Jews it is impossible to give an estimate of the number and classes of missionaries still needed. We feel, however, that Jewish missions are in such a peculiar condition to-day as to demand unusual measures to ensure, under God, their progress.

Followers of the Lord Jesus Christ—Himself after the flesh a Jew—should give to the presentation of Christ to the Jew its rightful place in the Great Commission. It is not a task to be left to a few enthusiastic believers, but the obligation and responsibility of the whole Christian Church. The Gospel must be preached to the Jew wherever he may be found.

For centuries the Church has paid little heed to the missionary message of the Apostle to the Gentiles, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek." Both are sinners, for both have come short of the glory God, and both need a Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet the Church has acted as though it believed otherwise. The attitude of the Christian to the Jew has not been merely one of neglect but of bitter hostility. Reparation is due for the contempt and injustice meted out by the Christian Church and its members to the race into which its Founder was born and out of which He drew His first disciples. Christianity was born in Judaism and owes a debt to bring the Jew home at last to the fold of Christ.

There is urgent need, therefore, that the Church should change its attitude toward an enterprise which is carrying out an essential part of our Lord's Great Commission. The spasmodic efforts to bring the Jew to Christ must be replaced by missions as strong, persistent, and sympathetic as those among other races of mankind. Many of the difficulties are of the Church's own creating; and will disappear with a deeper faith in the power of God through the Gospel and a wiser approach imbued with a truer sympathy. No other methods are needed than those which have been blessed in the past among both Jews and Gentiles. The issue remains unchanged. It is still Jesus whom the Jew must accept or reject. Reform Jewish Rabbis in the United States may

3. Results Achieved); and III: The Task Remaining. Cf. World Missionary Conference, 1910. *Report of Commission I: Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World,* vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910), 268–78. The reports are available at http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=genpub;idno=1936337.

speak of Him in flattering terms, and accept Him as one of the great prophets and teachers of mankind, but the gulf between them and Christianity remains practically as wide as that which must be crossed by the Orthodox Jew before he acknowledges the Lordship, Divinity, and Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth.

The time to reach the Jews with the Gospel is now, when they are rapidly drifting away from the faith of their fathers and are groping for something, they know not what. The Jews are becoming more and more an integral part of Christian cities, strongly influencing and often even dominating them by their enormous and increasing wealth and by their remarkable intellectual ability. However far they may have drifted, there still remains with them that inherent religious instinct, that capacity to appreciate great moral and spiritual truths which has characterised them throughout their history, and which, consecrated to the service of Christ, will enrich and revitalise Christianity itself. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall be the receiving of them, but life from the dead."[4]

Findings of the Commission in 1910

Under "Findings of the Commission," the following is said about the Jewish people and Jewish missions:

> 3. The Jewish people have a peculiar claim upon the missionary activities of the Christian Church. Christianity is theirs pre-eminently by right of inheritance. The Church is under special obligation to present Christ to the Jew. It is a debt to be repaid, a reparation to be fully and worthily made. The attempts to give the Gospel to this widely scattered yet still isolated people have been hitherto inadequate. The need is great for a change in the attitude of the Church towards this essential part of the Great Commission. The call is urgent in view of the enormous influence which the Jew is wielding in the world, especially throughout Christendom. The winning of this virile race with its genius for religion will be the strengthening of the Church of Christ and the enrichment of the world.[5]

For the aim we are pursuing there is no need to analyze these 100-year-old words in detail. Even though the language is somewhat antiquated—no one would, for example, speak of the Jewish "race" today, and even though much has changed over the past one hundred years—no one would speak about Jewish missions today without involving Messianic Jews—the main content is such that it could easily be used in the framework of, for example, the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE). People in this network would not have problems in repeating the words: "It is not a task to be left to a few enthusiastic believers, but the obligation and

4 Ibid., 276–78.
5 Ibid., 365.

responsibility of the whole Christian Church. The Gospel must be preached to the Jew wherever he may be found." However, that all was not sheer delight for those involved in Jewish missions a hundred years ago will be obvious now.

Jewish Missions' Criticism of Edinburgh 1910

The year after Edinburgh 1910, the Eighth International Jewish Missionary Conference[6] was held in Stockholm, Sweden, June 7–9, 1911.[7] On this occasion, a resolution was passed about the Edinburgh meeting's treatment of Jewish missions. There is commendation as well as criticism. This is the text of the resolution.

Resolution from Stockholm 1911

The following resolution (proposed and seconded by Louis Meyer and Hermann Strack respectively) was unanimously carried on Friday afternoon [June 9]:

> The Executive Committee of the International Jewish Missionary Conference, at its meeting in Berlin, Germany, on May, 30 [1911], protested earnestly and, we believe, rightly against the insufficient consideration of the great subject of the evangelization of the Jews by the Programme Committee of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference. While a meeting on behalf of evangelistic work among the Jews in Synod Hall was arranged for a late hour and has undoubtedly done much good, slight recognition was given to God's ancient people in the main-meetings in the Assembly Hall. The report of Commission I. dealt with the Jews, and we are thankful that the Commission gave one of our number, though not as a member of the Executive Committee of our Conference, but simply as an expert, an opportunity to present the greater cause of Jewish Missions to the readers of the report throughout the earth. When the report of Commission I. was presented to the World Missionary Conference, two representatives were privileged to speak on behalf of the Jews, each the allotted seven minutes. We are grateful for this and find in no wise fault because no more representatives of Jewish Missions were heard. But none of the remaining reports, eight in number, which were brought before the great gathering in Edinburgh and are now being widely scattered in printed form, makes any reference to the Jews and to the work of our Master among them, except that in the bibliography of Missions

6 On these conferences through 1906, see Hermann L. Strack, ed., *Jahrbuch der evangelischen Judenmission* [Yearbook of the Evangelical Missions among the Jews], vol. 1 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1906), 5–10.

7 On the conference in 1911 in Stockholm in other respects, see Kai Kjær-Hansen, "Controversy about Lucky: Reflections in Light of the Stockholm Conference in 1911," *Mishkan*, no. 60 (2009): 46–64.

a limited number of books referring to the subject has been mentioned. The Jew is simply left out from these reports.

The International Jewish Missionary Conference, assembled in its regular meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, hereby protest earnestly, but kindly against such oversight by men who have the interests of the kingdom of God at heart. The Jew is included in the Great Commission, and the work of evangelizing the Jew, being the link between that which men call Home and Foreign Missions, should have its regular place in the great missionary gatherings, home or foreign, of the day.

But we protest especially against the leaving out of Judaism, i.e. Modern Judaism, from the report of Commission IV., which deals with the Non-Christian Religions of the earth. Such omission of the religion of the modern Jew from the list of the religions of the mission-field, which is the world, must cause the readers of the report to think that modern Judaism is closely related to Christianity, and there is thus the danger of the impression being made that active missionary effort among the Jews is unnecessary.

Modern Judaism like Mohammedanism, to some extent, may acknowledge through some of its representative teachers that Jesus was a good and great man, a brilliant Jew, whose example should be followed by Jew and Gentile to a certain extent, but as a religion it does not know the Lord Jesus Christ and in its creed (or creeds) it stands directly opposed to the fundamental principles of true, Scriptural Christianity for which we as a Conference fully and boldly stand. Modern Judaism should be classed among non-Christian religions because it denies the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, even though it may agree with the first article of the Apostles' Creed. We therefore protest earnestly especially against the action of Commission IV. of the great World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh in leaving out Modern Judaism in its discussion of Non-Christian Religions.[8]

In other words, people who were involved in Jewish missions in 1911 protested against what they felt was an "insufficient consideration" of the evangelization of the Jews by the program committee for Edinburgh 1910. They were thankful for the support of Jewish missions that was expressed in Commission I and for the fact that they got a chance to present their cause and discuss it in minor forums. Their strongest objection was that the question of "Modern Judaism" and missions was not at all discussed in Commission IV, "and there is thus the danger of the impression being made that active missionary effort among the Jews is unnecessary." Let us now turn to 2010.

8 Cf. Hermann L. Strack, ed., *Jahrbuch der evangelischen Judenmission* [Yearbook of the Evangelical Missions among the Jews], vol. 2 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1913), 19–21.

Edinburgh 2010 and the "Common Call"

At the conclusion of the centenary celebration in Edinburgh in June, there was issued a "Common Call" with eight points. The introduction and the first two points are as follows:

> As we gather for the centenary of the World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh 1910, we believe the church, as a sign and symbol of the reign of God, is called to witness to Christ today by sharing in God's mission of love through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.
>
> 1. Trusting in the Triune God and with a renewed sense of urgency, we are called to incarnate and proclaim the good news of salvation, of forgiveness of sin, of life in abundance, and of liberation for all poor and oppressed. We are challenged to witness and evangelism in such a way that we are a living demonstration of the love, righteousness and justice that God intends for the whole world.
>
> 2. Remembering Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and his resurrection for the world's salvation, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are called to authentic dialogue, respectful engagement and humble witness among people of other faiths—and no faith—to the uniqueness of Christ. Our approach is marked with bold confidence in the gospel message; it builds friendship, seeks reconciliation and practises hospitality.[9]

One cannot be other than pleased with the clear call to witness and missions and the mention of "a renewed sense of urgency." Especially important is the mention of "the uniqueness of Christ" in point 2. This uniqueness is related to "witness among people of other faiths—and no faith." These words are only meaningful for me if witness to the Jewish people is included. It is time to see if this conclusion is too optimistic.

Edinburgh 2010 and Jewish Missions

As in Edinburgh 1910, so also in Edinburgh 2010 the themes related to Jewish missions are placed under "Christian Mission among Other Faiths." In six case studies, the following subjects are treated:

1. Mission among/with Muslims (three contributors)
2. Mission among/with Hindus (three contributors)
3. Mission among/with Buddhists (three contributors)
4. New Religious Movements (one contributor)
5. Judaism (two contributors)
6. Folk Religions (two contributors)

9 "Common Call," Edinburgh 2010, http://www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/files/edinburgh2010/files/conference_docs/Edinburgh%202010%20Common%20Call%20with%20explanation.pdf (accessed August 19, 2010).

Prior to these case studies are five "Position Papers on Various Ecclesial Traditions" and a further two "Thematic Papers." The main parts of these papers and case studies were submitted at a meeting in Hamburg, Germany, in August 2009, and have since been accessible on the Internet.[10] These papers have been used "as resource material and background for the report of the core group," i.e., for the committee assigned to draw up the report of "Christian Mission among Other Faiths."[11] According to plan, this report and all the papers will shortly be published by Regnum Books International.

It is well worth noting that the question of "Judaism" and the related Jewish missions is present in the case studies. Matt Friedman, of Asbury Theological Seminary, has submitted a case study entitled, "Back to the Future: Nineteenth Century Foundations of Messianic Judaism." It is difficult to imagine a more loyal presentation of Jewish missions and evangelism. Friedman believes that missions in a Jewish context has often been overlooked. First, he focuses on Joseph Samuel Frey, and then, on Joseph Rabinowitz; both are presented in a positive light. In the last part of his case study, Friedman writes:

> Now, in the early twenty-first century, and in the midst of the centenary celebration and renewal of the World Missionary Conference, let us look at how mission in the Jewish context is progressing on three levels: mission *to* the Jewish community, mission *within* the Jewish community, and finally, mission *from* the community of Jewish believers in Jesus to the nations beyond, participating in the worldwide *missio Dei*.[12]

Susan Perlman and Stuart Dauermann are among the sources Friedman mentions for these sections. LCJE and the Hashivenu forum are referred to unpolemically; so is the Borough Park Symposium (2007).[13] By way of conclusion, Friedman writes:

10 See "Hamburg Consultation of Theme 2," Edinburgh 2010, http://www.edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes/1-foundations-for-mission/hamburg-consultation.html (accessed August 19, 2010). At the beginning of September 2009, I was invited to submit a paper, which became "The Scandal of Jewish Evangelism: From Edinburgh 1910 to Edinburgh 2010" (Edinburgh 2010, http://www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/files/edinburgh2010/files/Study_Process/The%20Scandal%20of%20Jewish%20Evangelism.pdf; accessed August 19, 2010).

11 "Report on Study Theme 2 – Christian Mission among Other Faiths" has since mid-August 2010 been accessible on the Edinburgh 2010 Web site (http://www.edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes/main-study-themes/christian-mission-among-other-faiths.html). I want to make it clear that I am referring to this version without knowing if there will be any changes when the report is published in book form. The same is the case with the other papers that are being edited over the summer of 2010.

12 Matt Friedman, "Back to the Future: Nineteenth Century Foundations of Messianic Judaism," 9, Edinburgh 2010, http://www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/files/edinburgh2010/files/docs/Mission_in_the_Jewish_Context_-_Friedman_01.doc (accessed August 19, 2010).

13 Ibid., 9–11.

> Messianic Judaism is coming full circle, that even as a genuinely indigenous movement to and in the Messiah has continued to grow, even so, members of this movement are beginning to move out, bearing witness to Messiah's presence in their midst. They thus seek to be used of God in partnering with him in the initiation of indigenous movements to Christ among those who still have not heard.[14]

What more can people involved in Jewish missions wish for? One point in my own contribution is that a "no" to Jewish evangelism will, from a New Testament perspective, lead to theological and missiological absurdities. In other words, both case studies on Jewish missions included in the material from Edinburgh 2010 are positive towards evangelism and Messianic Judaism.

So really, there are no grounds for complaint for those who are involved in Jewish missions. Jewish missions/evangelism has not been ignored in the material from Edinburgh 2010. It has been given a voice. And yet, strange as it may seem, I, who am involved in Jewish evangelism, would have welcomed a case study under "Judaism" which argued *against* Jewish missions/evangelism, or which was skeptical of it. For without this voice, the dominant view of Jewish missions in the Jewish-Christian dialogue today is missing. This voice will most certainly also dominate the picture after Edinburgh 2010.

And most important in this context, when you consider the report "Christian Mission among Other Faiths," as it is in mid-August 2010, it is evident that the message in the two case studies on Jewish missions has *not* been included in the report—not with one word or one reference. The silence is remarkable.

I do not envy the committee that has been assigned to draw up the report, "Christian Mission among Other Faiths." The position papers, thematic papers, and case studies that have been used as resource material point in very different directions.

Hans Ucko,[15] just to mention one example, is embarrassed over the heritage of "carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World." He writes this in his position paper:

> We carry as Christians with us the heritage of "carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World" and the task articulated by John Mott as "the evangelization of the world in this generation". It is my experience that quite a few Christians feel embarrassed about this heritage. One could affirm the task of mission to provide community in an increasingly atomized world or to be a source of social assistance in economically challenging times. But Christian mission as having a mission

14 Ibid., 12.

15 Rev. Dr. Hans Ucko is consultant in interreligious relations, fellow in Interfaith Relations at Hartford Seminary, and president of Religions for Peace Europe. He used to serve as executive secretary for Christian-Jewish relations in the World Council of Churches' Office on Inter-religious Relations.

> among people of other faiths that went beyond diacony, advocacy or solidarity, that it had to do with Christianising the world or making converts among Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, would strike many as outlandish and passé. If at all to be considered, slogans or catch-words from Edinburgh 1910 would need to be understood in a very figurative sense to be relevant today.[16]

Ucko contends that another missiology than the traditional one is needed, a missiology which is more consistent with the world-view we have today. He writes:

> We need a reading of our Scriptures that allows another vision of the other. We need a reading and understanding that allows us to affirm with open and generous hearts that religious plurality is as God-given as any other plurality present in God's creation and that therefore Muslims and Buddhists are in their religious traditions as much striving towards the numinous as any Christian.[17]

Ucko's words about a "God-given" religious plurality is a far cry from Edinburgh 1910.

It is obvious the committee behind the "Christian Mission among Other Faiths" report has had to maneuver in theologically and missiologically dangerous waters. The triumphalistic and overly-optimistic tones of Edinburgh 1910 have been removed, of which I approve. The report gives an excellent insight into the contemporary missiological discussion, but it is also evident that missiologists often understand the same concepts quite differently.

About the question of Christian understanding of other faiths, it is said: "There will be many different answers to the question of Christian understanding of other faiths," and some examples are given.[18] As to the possibility of salvation beyond explicit Christian faith, it is said: "Down through history we find theologians who have spoken about God's work in the world and the possibility of salvation beyond explicit Christian faith."[19] Also, to illustrate this, a number of examples are given, and they are followed by this conclusion:

> In the same manner, as in the San Antonio statement of the WCC mission conference in 1989, we affirm the uniqueness of Christ: Anyone who ever has been, is now or ever will be saved is accepted by God on the grounds of the sacrifice of Christ and our identification or union with him. There is no other ground. To this should, however, be added

16 Hans Ucko, "Christian Mission among Other Faiths," 2–3, http://www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/files/edinburgh2010/files/docs/Hans_Ucko_Christian_Mission_among_other_faiths.doc (accessed August 19, 2010).

17 Ibid., 7.

18 "Report on Study Theme 2 – Christian Mission among Oother Faiths," 49.

19 Ibid., 50.

> that God gives to every human being a revelation sufficient to elicit saving faith; no one will be condemned because of lack of revelation. In conclusion, we can never solve the creative and dynamic tension between being both missionary and dialogical.[20]

Such a statement is also open to quite different interpretations, of which the report itself provides examples, and the conclusions different missiologists draw from it for the proclamation of the gospel among people of other faiths are quite different. One possibility is to interpret the words in a positive and "classical" way, in the light of the words of the "Common Call," where the call is to "a humble witness among people of other faiths—and no faith—to the uniqueness of Christ" (see above). No matter what *God*, at the end of time, might choose to do to people of other faiths, who have not had an opportunity to meet the gospel, it is important for me, first of all, to stress the church's obligation to share, here and now, the good news of God's love for the world, and in the light of a classical understanding of the "little Bible" to proclaim humbly and boldly: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Missions without this perspective misses the mark, which they knew in Edinburgh 1910.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Missions without this perspective misses the mark, which they knew in Edinburgh 1910.

As mentioned above, the "Christian Mission among Other Faiths" report from Edinburgh 2010 does not in its present form deal explicitly with Jewish missions. I consider this a deficiency and wonder what the reason may be. From the "Common Call," I conclude that missions and witness to the Jewish people are included in the call that has gone out from Edinburgh 2010. But as Jewish missions is under a great deal of pressure and renounced in many quarters of the Jewish-Christian dialogue today, an explicit "yes" to continued Jewish missions would have been very helpful. One or two sentences might have done it.

The Lausanne Movement and Jewish Evangelism in Cape Town 2010

I am anxiously waiting to see how the question of Jewish evangelism will be treated, and not least what will be written in the official statement from the Lausanne Movement's October 2010 conference in Cape Town.

According to the program,[21] Jewish evangelism will hardly be an issue that takes up much space in the plenary at the conference. So, there is a

20 Ibid., 51.

21 "Cape Town 2010 FAQs—Programme," Cape Town 2010, http://www.lausanne.org/cape-town-2010/faq-programme.html (accessed August 19, 2010).

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risk that after the conference, participating members of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE) will react as participants in Stockholm 1911 did to Edinburgh 1910 (cf. above).

It is, however, certain that LCJE will host four so-called "dialogue sessions," where other participants will be invited to dialogue about themes related to Jewish evangelism. At any rate, I expect from Cape Town a clear and unambiguous affirmation of Jewish evangelism. I cannot possibly imagine anything else. If nothing else, then a reiteration from "The Manila Manifesto" from Lausanne II, the Lausanne Movement's second world conference in the Philippines 1989:

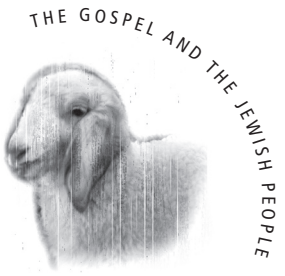
> It is sometimes held that in virtue of God's covenant with Abraham, Jewish people do not need to acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah. We affirm that they need him as much as anyone else, that it would be a form of anti-Semitism, as well as being disloyal to Christ, to depart from the New Testament pattern of taking the gospel to "the Jew first...". We therefore reject the thesis that Jews have their own covenant which renders faith in Jesus unnecessary.[22]

We will follow this matter up in a future issue of *Mishkan*.

Translated from Danish by Birger Petterson

22 "The Manila Manifesto," §3—The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ, the Lausanne Movement, http://www.lausanne.org/all-documents/manila-manifesto.html (accessed August 19, 2010).

Mishkan, no. 64 (2010): 18–34



In What Sense Was the First Coming of Jesus Messianic?

by **Colin Barnes**

This article is an examination of the messianic motifs in Micah 2:12–13 with reference to the New Testament (NT), rabbinic literature, and subsequent history.

Introduction

Messianic hopes were varied but high in first century Judaism. Whatever the details, however, the universal expectation was that the Messiah would "be good for the Jews." A moderate, pious, and inspired example of these hopes is found in Luke 1:74–75. The coming of their Messiah, however, did not usher in an age of peace and righteousness, but was followed by war, the destruction of the temple, and the dispersal of the people. How do we reconcile this reality with the words of Mary in Luke 1:54–55? While many Christians criticize the Jewish people for wanting the deliverance that the Old Testament (OT) promised, and Premillennialists generally confine such deliverance to the second coming, either way we are left with the question, "In what way *was* Jesus the Messiah for the Jewish people at His first advent?" That is, in what sense was Jesus messianic? This question is important both in its own right, and also because the first response of many Jewish people to the message of the gospel is, "The Messiah will bring in universal peace and godliness, and rescue Israel. Jesus did not do this; therefore, He is not the Messiah."

This essay will, therefore, seek to understand the consequences of the first coming of Jesus for the Jewish people. Its approach will be to examine a messianic prophecy in the OT in the light of the NT and rabbinic literature to see how it predicts/explains the first advent of our Lord and the subsequent history of Israel (i.e., to see in what sense it fulfilled messianic prophecy). The NT will be looked at to see if the prophecies are confirmed as messianic within it and to see how their concepts are developed. Rabbinic literature will also be consulted along the same lines. The prophecy, Micah 2:12–13, has been chosen for this study because it seems to contain ambiguities that bear directly on the question in focus.

Micah 2:12–13, "The Breaker"

Context

Most commentators[1] place the immediate application of this prophecy to the events surrounding the Assyrian invasion of Judah under Sennacherib. Verse 12 has the people being gathered to Jerusalem for safety, yet still frightened by the besieging Assyrian army. Sennacherib would later write how he had "shut up Hezekiah inside Jerusalem his royal city like a bird in a cage."[2] In verse 13, the threat is over (as per Isa 37:32), and their king breaks out of their enclosure, leading[3] the remnant into the wider land. God breaks "through the gate of the city of Jerusalem that had protected them but now confines them."[4] Brad Young describes the original simile as follows:

> After the sheep had been confined all night in the limited space of the makeshift sheepfold, the animals are anxious to break out. In the morning the shepherd will knock down a section from the piled-up stones. He will break open the barricade wall which penned up the sheep all night in a protective enclosure. Anxious to be released from the holding pen, the sheep will rush [note the LXX translation, "they shall rush forth from among men through the breach made before them"] out as quickly as possible, knocking down more stones from the makeshift fence in order to break outside.[5]

This irresistible force, this bursting through, is also seen in 2 Samuel 5:20.

Messianic Content

The pairing of the name of God with "their king" at the end of verse 13 agrees with similar expressions in Isaiah (48:20; 49:9; 52:11; etc.). More importantly for this study is the name הַפֹּרֵץ (*ha-poretz*), "the breaker." The root of this word is פרץ, and means "to burst through" or "make a breach in." It is the name given to Judah's first-born (Gen 38:29; Matt 1:3). Perez was an ancestor of David, and "Son of Perez" is a messianic title in rabbinic literature, and even to this day *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book* contains the phrase, "Through the offspring of Perez we also shall rejoice and be glad."[6] In both *Genesis Rabbah* (8:6) and *Leviticus Rabbah* (30), this is due

1 E.g., Ralph L. Smith, Leslie C. Allen, and Bruce K. Waltke.

2 Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, NICOT (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1976), 302.

3 Hans Walter Wolff (*Micah: A Commentary*, trans. Gary Stansell [Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1990], 85) finds the expression "the king will go up (יַעֲבֹר) before them" as ruling out Jerusalem as the setting, as one goes down from Jerusalem, but the term can also be used in military sense, e.g., Joshua 1:1; 1 Samuel 7:7.

4 Ralph L. Smith, *Micah—Malachi*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 32 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984), 29.

5 Brad H. Young, *Jesus the Jewish Theologian* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 53.

6 *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book*, trans. S. Singer (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962), 156.

to the "generations (תּוֹלְדוֹת) of Perez" (Ruth 4:18) being spelt "complete" with the initial *vav*.

> The word generations (תּוֹלְדוֹת) whenever it occurs in the Bible is spelt defectively [i.e., without the *vav*], and for a very significant reason. Thus the word is spelt fully [i.e., with a *vav*] in the case of "these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth," because when God created His world, there was no Angel of Death in the world, and on this account is it fully spelt; but as soon as Adam and Eve sinned, God made defective all the generations mentioned in the Bible. But when Perez arose, his generations were spelt fully again, because from him the Messiah would arise, and in his days God would cause death to be swallowed up, as it says, "He will swallow up death forever." (*Lev. Rab.* 30)

Genesis Rabbah 12:6 adds that the *vav* corresponds to the six things (the numeric value of *vav*) with which Adam was created, yet, through his sin, were lost or spoiled, i.e., his luster, his immortality, his height, the fruit of the earth, the fruit of trees, and the luminaries. Verses are quoted to show

1. that Adam originally had these in full,
2. that as a result of the fall he lost them, and
3. that the Messiah will restore them.

The root meaning of the name, to burst/break through or breach, always remains in focus, highlighting this dynamic aspect of the Messiah's mission. The rabbinic expository work *The Priestly Gift* says, "The last Saviour is the Messiah, the Son of David, who is descended from Judah's son Perez, . . . This is the Messiah, who will soon appear, because it is written of him that, 'One who breaks open the way will go up before them.'"[7] As will also be seen later, there is thus a strong resonance between "the Perez" of Micah 2:13 and the Messiah, the "Son of Perez." To what extent, and in what ways, is this messianic prophecy picked up in the NT?

■ Direct References

The most direct reference to this passage is one that has only recently been identified. It occurs in Matthew 11:12. Craig Blomberg notes (re Matthew), "Verse 12 forms an amazingly difficult interpretative crux."[8] A number of scholars have suggested the value of seeing the Matthew passage in terms of the rabbinic interpretation of Micah 2:13. David Kimchi (the Radak), for instance, wrote, "In the words of our teachers of blessed memory and in the Midrash, it is taught that 'the breaker' is Elijah and 'their king' is the

7 Risto Santala, *The Messiah in the Old Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, trans. William Kinnard (Jerusalem: Keren Ahavah Meshihit, 1992), 44.

8 Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 187.

branch, the son of David."[9] In his commentary on Micah 2:12–13, the Radak also wrote that it concerned "the prophet Elijah, who will come before the time of deliverance to extend the hearts of the Israelites to their heavenly father in order to be a herald of redemption to them . . . but their king is the Messiah king, and the Lord will go before them, because at that time he will send back his Holy Spirit to Zion."[10] In the early Jewish midrash Pesikta Rabbati, it is also written, "When the Holy One, blessed be He, redeems Israel. Three days before the Messiah comes, Elijah will come and stand upon the mountains of Israel. . . . In that hour . . . He will redeem Israel, and He will appear at the head of them, as it is said, he who opens the breach . . . will go up before them."[11]

In Matthew 11:12, John the Baptist is the Elijah of Malachi 3:1 and 4:5–6, who goes before the Lord to prepare His way, the last and greatest of the old order heralding in the new. As in the midrash, Jesus, the king, follows John. Note, however, that John does not make the breach, and the least in the kingdom is greater than him. It is Jesus, the Lord Himself, who, as in the original prophecy, both makes the breach and leads the sheep through the gate.

As the Matthew passage is dealing with the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist, and contains reference both to the kingdom bursting forth and of others bursting forth with it, the tie to Micah 2:12–13 seems both clear and helpful. It is the dynamism of the kingdom breaking in and the action of those following him that is in focus.[12] Young's rendering of the verse tries to capture this: "The kingdom of heaven is breaking forth, and everyone breaks forth with it."[13]

9 Young, 64.

10 Risto Santala, *The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, trans. William Kinnard (Jerusalem: Keren Ahavah Meshihit, 1992), 59.

11 Young, 63.

12 The big drawback to this is Matthew's use of the word βιαζεται ["appeared" or "breaks in with power"]. Arndt and Gingrich (Walter Bauer, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2nd ed., ed. William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979], s.v. "βιάζω"), while noting its usually passive sense, also give the option of "makes its way w[ith] triumphant force." Note also that פרץ itself, like the Greek term, is most often used in a passive sense. Of most concern, Gottlob Schrenk ("βιάζομαι," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishers, 1964], 1:609–14) opts for a passive meaning. However, he does state, "A first possibility . . . is to take βιαζεται in the sense of an intr. mid.: 'the rule of God breaks in with power, with force and impetus'" (1:610). Of the commentators, Blomberg (186) opts for a negative, passive meaning; W. D. Davies (Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew*, ICC, vol. 2 [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991]) gives a good summary of translations to date, follows Schrenk, and goes for the passive, as do Robert Gundry (*Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], 209), Donald Hagner (*Matthew 1-13*, Word Bible Commentary, vol. 33a [Dallas: Word Books, 1993], 303), and Leon Morris (*The Gospel according to Matthew* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 281). None of these relates it to the prophecy in Micah. Young (71) lists several occasions where βιαζεται is used in the LXX to translate פרץ. It is the generally negative usage of βιαζεται which sways the commentators.

13 Young, 71.

■ More General Usage

The concept of Jesus as "the breaker" is certainly present in the NT. In Mark 3:27, He compares Himself to a thief breaking in. He is God, breaking into our world. He has broken down the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:14), and He has burst the gates of death, leading out a host of captives. And finally, He will return, bursting in on our unsuspecting world (Luke 12:39).

Discussion

Rabbi Moses ben Nachman (The Ramban) described the birth of Perez as follows,

> "He was encircled by a hedge, and he was enclosed within it. That is why it was said 'So this is how you have broken through the hedge and come out from within it'." Perez was the first-born, "the first-born through the power of the Most High, as it is written, 'I will give to him a first-born son'. This was written about the holy person who is to come, David, the king of Israel—long may he live. Those who are wise will understand."[14]

With this profound statement, the Ramban describes the role of the Messiah in terms that directly challenge the central tenet of Rabbinic Judaism, as expressed in the dictum of the Mishnah: "Be patient in justice, rear many disciples and make a fence[15] round the Torah."[16] The Soncino footnote explains:

> The Torah is conceived as a garden and its precepts as precious plants. Such a garden is fenced round for the purpose of obviating wilful or even unintended damage. Likewise, the precepts of the Torah were to be "fenced" round with additional inhibitions that should have the effect of preserving the original commandments from trespass.

Thus, the man-made hedge was to protect the Torah and to help Israel not to break it.[17] In *Ruth Rabbah* 25, we likewise read: "These are the Sanhedrin who . . . make a hedge round the words of the Torah." That the Messiah would break through the hedge and come out from within it is a radical thought.

The Sages derived their concept of the fence from the Torah itself, where they found examples of fences. For example:

14 The Ramban, *Mikraoth Gedoloth*, as quoted by Santala, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 44–45.

15 The word *fence* here can refer either to a fence of rocks (e.g., *B. Bat.* 69a) or to one of shrubs, i.e., a hedge.

16 *Pirkei Avot* 1:1. See also, *Yoma* 73b.

17 For a NT example, see 2 Corinthians 11:24, in light of Deuteronomy 25:1–3.

> Hence it is written, HE SHALL ABSTAIN FROM WINE AND STRONG DRINK [And vinegar, too, is forbidden] on account of drunkenness. Why did the Torah forbid ANY INFUSION OF GRAPES, seeing that one does not get drunk thereby, and it likewise prohibited the eating of anything that proceeds from the vine, even such things as do not intoxicate? Why so? From this you can infer that it is a man's duty to keep away from unseemliness, from what resembles unseemliness and even from the semblance of a semblance. From this you can infer that the Torah has put a fence about its ordinances. . . . Thou shalt not approach. This indicates that you must not even approach a thing that leads to transgression. Keep away from unseemliness and from what resembles unseemliness! For thus have the Sages said: Keep away from a small sin lest it lead you to a grievous one; run to fulfil a small commandment, for it will lead you to an important one.[18]

> R. Judah b. Pazzi asked: Why was the section dealing with consanguineous relationships placed next to the section dealing with holiness? Only to teach you that in every case where you find [regulations serving as] a fence against immorality you also find sanctity; and this agrees with the opinion expressed by R. Judah b. Pazzi elsewhere, namely, that who so fences himself against [the temptation to] sexual immorality is called Holy.[19]

The concept of a fence developed to include rabbinic authority (*Eccl. Rab.* 10:9) and even the death penalty:

> Come and hear: R. Eleazar b. Jacob stated, "I heard that even without any Pentateuchal [authority for their rulings] beth din may administer flogging and [death] penalties; not, however, for the purpose of transgressing the words of the Torah, but in order to make a fence for the Torah."[20]

There is some indication that the Sages were uncomfortable with the breadth of license they had granted themselves, and tried to set limits to it. For example:

> NEITHER SHALL YE TOUCH IT, LEST YE DIE (III, 3). Thus it is written, Add not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar (Prov. XXX, 6). R. Hiyya taught: That means that you must not make the fence more than the principal thing, lest it fall and destroy the plants. Thus, the Holy One, blessed be He, had said, For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen. II,17); whereas she did not say thus, but, GOD HATH SAID: YE SHALL NOT EAT OF IT,

18 *Numbers Rabbah* 10:8.
19 *Leviticus Rabbah* 24:6.
20 *Yevamoth* 90b (see also *Sanh.* 46a).

> NEITHER SHALL YE TOUCH IT [the Rabbis believing that Adam had given her the additional prohibition, thereby adding a fence to it]; when he [the Serpent] saw her thus lying [for the fence was Adam's, not God's], he took and thrust her against it. "Have you then died?" he said to her; "just as you were not stricken through touching it, so will you not die when you eat it, but For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof," etc.[21]

It should be remembered that the Sages were living in postexilic Judea, that they had experienced the reality of God's wrath[22] for breaking His commandments, and that they desired to understand, keep, and protect them.

Clearly, however, Jesus was opposed to the fence the rabbis had set around the Torah (Matt 15:9; 5:38). The imagery of Micah is helpful here—of a city shut up. Concerning the Pharisees (Matt 23:13) and lawyers (Luke 11:52), Jesus does not even place them within the city, but rather with the enemy, who, as Sennacherib had boasted, had shut the city up so that no one could leave or enter. For another negative, sectarian view of the Pharisees along the same lines, see the Essene *Damascus Covenant* 4:19, "The builders of the wall . . . are caught in fornication."[23] In this the authors are possibly interacting with the Pharisaic word play between בָּנֵי (sons of) and בֹּנֵי (builders of) as in Isaiah 54:13 (see *Ber*. 64a).[24]

Thus the incredibly radical activity of the Messiah is thrown into sharp relief. Returning to John the Baptist, Jesus continued, "For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John" (Matt 11:13).[25] As seen, the law was given as a fence to Israel, to separate and protect them (Deut 7:6–11). The prophets likewise were those who repaired the fence, who stood in the breach.

> R. Nehemiah introduced his exposition with the verse, O Israel, thy prophets have been like foxes in ruins (Ezek. XIII, 4). Just as the fox looks about in the ruins to see where it can escape if it sees men coming, so were thy prophets in the ruins. Ye have not gone up in the breaches (ib.) like Moses. To whom can Moses be compared? To a faithful shepherd whose fence fell down in the twilight. He arose and repaired it from three sides, but a breach remained on the fourth

21 *Genesis Rabbah* 19:3.

22 Zechariah 8:14 can thus use the reality of God's punishment to show the reality of His promises; these people have experienced and know what it is to have God against them. After the exile, the people were cured of apostasy—knowing that they had been sent into captivity and lost their sovereignty because they broke the Sabbath, etc., they now wanted to understand fully what was required of them and to do it. That this led to legalism was tragic, but understandable.

23 Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles*, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum Ad Novum Testamentum (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 111.

24 R. Jacobs, "Hermeneutics," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 8:371.

25 All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New American Standard Bible.

> side, and having no time to erect the fence, he stood in the breach himself. A lion came, he boldly withstood it; a wolf came and still he stood against it. But ye! Ye did not stand in the breach as Moses did. Had ye stood in the breach like Moses, ye would have been able to stand in the battle in the day of God's anger.[26]
>
> Elijah then betook himself to Moses and said to him: "O thou faithful shepherd, how many times hast thou stood in the breach for Israel and quashed their doom so that they should not be destroyed, as it says, Had not Moses His chosen stood before Him in the breach, to turn back His wrath, lest He should destroy them (Ps. CVI, 23)." (*Ester Rab*. 7:13)
>
> And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge . . . but I found none (Ezek. XXII, 30)—save Noah, Daniel, and Job. (*Song Rab*. 11:44)[27]

But with the coming of the Messiah, everything is changed. He does not simply continue in the tradition of the prophets. Rather than repairing the fence around Israel, He breaks it down. The night is over, and the Shepherd breaks down the protecting wall, and the sheep rush out after Him. As in John 10:7–11, before Jesus, the protection was needed, but now, the sheep can go out to pasture, and as Micah 2:13 notes, they go out through the gate. This both affirms the fence as needful in the past, and states that, by His very coming, as the light of the world and the sun of righteousness, the Messiah has changed everything. Note Malachi 4:2, "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; *and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall*" (emphasis added).

How then is Jesus "the Breaker"—the one, as Ramban said, who breaks through the hedge? In Matthew 15:13, Jesus says, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted."[28] Paul, in Ephesians 2:14–15, shows how Jesus destroyed "the barrier of the dividing wall" by His death. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, for the law itself can also be seen as a fence. For example, we read in midrash that R. Eleazar said, "Even though the Torah was given as a fence at Sinai. . . ."[29] Surprisingly, this agrees with a minority opinion within rabbinic thought. The idea of the Messiah as lawgiver goes right back to Genesis 49:10, where "ruler's staff" (וּמְחֹקֵק) can also mean "lawgiver."[30]

26 *Ruth Rabbah*, Prologue V (see also Ezek 13:5).

27 See also the Soncino commentary on *Ruth Rabbah* 11:2: "Rash. quotes Ezek. XIII, 5, where the prophets are criticised for not fencing the house of Israel, whence we learn that 'fence' is metaphorical for the work of prophets."

28 As seen, John the Baptist is also associated with the breaker motif (c.f. Matt 3:10).

29 *Leviticus Rabbah* 1:10.

30 Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), s.v. "חָקַק." See also Isaiah 33:22.

This suggests that, while expressing eternal truths, the Torah in its present form was only given for a certain time, until the messianic age, when there would be messianic Torah.

The Talmud says, "The world is to exist six thousand years. In the first two thousand years there was desolation [no Torah]; two thousand years the Torah flourished; and the next two thousand years is the Messianic era."[31] Midrash adds, "The Torah which man learns in this world is but vanity compared with the teaching of the Messiah."[32] Burt Yellin comments:

> The thought of the Torah changing in the "Age to Come" is again made perfectly clear in the rendering of Deuteronomy 17:18, in Sifra. Here it is stated that the Lord wrote a copy of the Mishna-Torah for Himself, and that He would not be content with the Mishna-Torah of the fathers. The question is asked: "why does He say Mishna [from the root, *shana*, to repeat] -Torah?" Because it is destined to be changed.[33]

There are a number of hints as to how this will occur.

- Through Simplification

According to Talmud:

> Moses was given 613 precepts; of these there are 365 (thou shalt) in accordance with the number of days in the year, and 248 (thou shalt not) according to the number of bones in a man's body. . . . Came David and cut them down to eleven (Psalm 15). . . . Came Isaiah and cut them down to six (Isaiah 33:15-16). . . . Came Micah and cut them to three (Micah 6:8). . . . Isaiah came back and cut them down to two (Isaiah 61:1). . . . Came Habakkuk and cut them to one, as it is written (Habakkuk 2:4), "the righteous shall live by faith."[34]

This prophecy is fulfilled in the gospel of Jesus Christ: "For in [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed, from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith'" (Rom 1:17).

- Through the Giving of a New Law

Yalqut Isaiah [v. 26, *siman* 296] states, "The Holy One—may He be blessed—will sit and draw up a new Torah for Israel, which will be given to them by the Messiah."[35]

31 *Sanhedrin* 97a.
32 *Midrash Qohelet* 71:8.
33 Burt Yellin, *Messiah: A Rabbinic and Scriptural Viewpoint* (Denver, CO: Roer Israel, 1984), 130. "The Pesikhta Rabbati says that 'The Torah will revert to its original state'" (Santala, *Messiah in the Old Testament*, 71).
34 *Makkoth* 23–24.
35 The Targum of Isaiah 12:3 reads in part, "And you shall receive new instruction with joy from the Chosen of righteousness" (Yellin, 131).

This was fulfilled in John 13:34, "A new commandment I give to you that you love one another, even as I have loved you." No one but the Messiah could give a new commandment.

- Through the Closure of the Sacrificial System and Its Attendant Regulations

This is taught in the midrash on the inauguration of Aaron's priesthood: "In the Time to Come all sacrifices will be annulled, but that of thanksgiving will not be annulled, and all prayers will be annulled, but [that of] thanksgiving will not be annulled."[36]

This was fulfilled in the sacrifice of Jesus, "Who does not need daily, like those high priests to offer up sacrifices . . . because this He did, once for all when He offered up Himself" (Heb 7:27). Concerning the point of the continuation of the sacrifice of thanksgiving, see Hebrews 13:15.

- Through the Abolition of Dietary Laws

The midrash on Psalm 146:7 states that even the laws of *kashrut* (diet) will be abolished. "'The LORD sets the prisoners free' . . . What does this 'setting free of prisoners' mean? . . . in the future the Holy One will make all unclean animals fit for eating."[37] This was fulfilled in Mark 7:19, "Thus He declared all foods clean."[38]

- By Leading Us Out from the Realm of the Torah (Mic 2:13)

The rabbis taught that the jurisdiction of the Torah ended with death. "And thus R. Johanan said, 'What is meant by the verse, Among the dead [I am] free? Once a man dies, he becomes free of the Torah and good deeds'" (*Šabb*. 30a). This is also taught elsewhere:

> Our Rabbis taught: A garment in which [both linen and wool threads are woven may not be worn by the living] . . . but it may be made into a shroud for a corpse. R. Joseph observed: This implies that the commandments will be abolished in the Hereafter. Said Abaye (or as some say R. Dimi) to him: But did not R. Manni in the name of R. Jannai state, "This was learnt only in regard to the time of the lamentations but for burial this is forbidden"?—The other replied: But was it not stated in connection with it, "R. Johanan ruled: Even for burial"? And thereby R. Johanan followed his previously expressed view, for R. Johanan stated: "What is the purport of the Scriptural text, Free among the dead? As soon as a man dies he is free from the commandments." (*Mas. Nid.* 61b)

So, in resurrection life, we are not under the law.

36 *Leviticus Rabbah* 9:7.
37 As cited by Santala, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 72–73.
38 Note that this is in a pericope where Jesus has just stated His hedge-breaking credentials (Matt 15:13).

Thus the resurrected Jesus is no longer under the law, and as we follow Him (Mic 2:13), so we also are led out from it. This is the teaching in Romans 7:4, "Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God."

So we can see the Messiah as the one who breaks out of the confines of the law, and how we also rush out following Him. As Perez bursts out of the womb to new life, so we have left our schoolmaster behind. It is through His resurrection that Jesus made the breach, through "a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body" (Heb 10:20, NIV).

Consequences for the Breaker

- Divinity

Micah 2:13 (NIV) says, "Their king will pass before them, the LORD at their head." The commentators agree that "the breaker" of verse 12 is also the king, and that the king is the LORD.[39] It is also noted that the LORD as "breaker" ("Perez") is familiar to the OT (Exod 19:22; 2 Sam 5:20; 6:8). It is a cataclysmic bursting forth of the LORD, regardless of the wishes of man. The prophecy of Micah confirms that the Messiah has the divine name and does divine things.

- The Serpent's Bite

Ecclesiastes 10:8 (NIV) says, "Whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake." Having seen how the Sages perceived their task in terms of protecting the status quo by placing a fence around the Torah (itself perceived as a fence), it is not surprising that they should have employed this verse to guard both their work[40] and God's commands.[41]

39 "That [the LORD] is the 'breaker' is shown by the parallel terms in lines 7 and 8" (James E. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches about the Promised Messiah* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993], 68). "We also find an allusion to Deutero-Isaiah's message when v. 13 calls [the LORD] *king* (41:21; 43:15; 44:6; 52:7), as well as the twofold emphasis . . . that [the LORD] 'goes before them' (Isa. 52:12; cf. 45:1f.)" (Wolff, 86). This linking of King Messiah to the LORD is also found in rabbinic literature. "Lamentations Rabbah 1:51 asks the question: 'What is the name of King Messiah?' The answer given by Rabbi Abba b. Kahana is: 'His name is YHVH'; in the Midrash Tehillim on Psalm 21:3 [Rabbi Simeon] states that God would 'set His crown upon the head of King Messiah, and cloth Him with His honour and majesty.'. . . The Midrash continues with two designations of Messiah, stating that He is: 'YHVH a man of war' and: 'YHVH is our righteousness'" (Yellin, 23–24).

40 "For whoever breaks down a fence erected by the Sages will eventually suffer; as it is stated, 'Whoso breaketh through a fence, a serpent shall bite him' (Eccl. X, 8)" (*Eccl. Rab.* 1:25). See also *Genesis Rabbah* 79:6 for another example where breaking rabbinic authority leads to a serpent's bite.

41 "[You ask (the serpent),] 'Why do you lurk among the hedges?' 'Because I broke through a fence of the world.' R. Simeon b. Yohai taught: The serpent broke through a fence of the world [by violating God's law] and was therefore made the executioner of all who break through fences" (*Eccl. Rab.* 10:12). See also *Leviticus Rabbah* 26:2: "R. Samuel b. Nahman observed: The serpent was asked: 'Why are you generally to be found among fences?' He replied: 'Because I made a breach in the fence of the world.' R. Simeon b.

To what extent does this understanding apply to the Son of Perez—"the Breaker"? On the cosmic level, as the one breaking into the world, who will restore the Edenic, pre-fall stature of humanity (the second Adam), a run in with the snake, who opposes this purpose, conforms to the messianic prophecy from the fall: ". . . he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Gen 3:15, NIV). The serpent in this sense now guards the fallen world against the breaking in of its redeemer.[42] The strong man has been bound, however, and his goods liberated.[43] As the one who broke through, the Messiah suffered the consequences (Eccl 10:8), was struck by the serpent, and tasted death for every one. As to the Oral Torah, it was His criticism of the Oral Torah that led to the Sages desiring that He would suffer the punishment.[44]

- Ascension

Micah 2:13a says, "One who breaks open the way will go up before them . . . ." While, as seen, the "going up" can legitimately be viewed as a military term, the actual word is also used of eagles ascending (Isa 40:31), of going up to meet with God (Exod 19:3), and of offerings offered to God (2 Kgs 3:20). Even as a prophecy often fits the time given, but only finds its truest meaning in the Messiah,[45] this word of the King breaking through and then going up from Jerusalem also finds fulfillment in Acts 1:9.

Focusing on the person of the Messiah, this prophecy then speaks of His mission—to break out and liberate others, of His divinity, of the cost to Him, and of His exaltation on high.

Consequences for Israel

Isaiah 5:5 and 7 say, "So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. . . . For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel."[46]

The placing of a hedge around something was a form of protection (Job 1:10).[47] As the Breaker who creates a breach in the hedge, does the Mes-

Yohai learned: The serpent was the first to make a breach in the world's fence, and so he has become the executioner of all who make breaches in fences."

42 John 12:31; 14:30; and 16:11.

43 Colossians 2:15 and 1 John 3:8. As for those breaking out with the King, see Romans 16:20.

44 As seen in Matthew 15:12, where Jesus speaks against rabbinic law and about the hedge being broken.

45 "All the prophets prophesied only for the days of the Messiah" (*Ber.* 34b).

46 The use of the parallelism "hedge" and "wall" is of interest. The Oral Law was seen as providing an additional layer of protection, yet a city besieged would be surrounded both by its own walls and by the enemy siege mound (2 Kgs 25:1–4; Exod 4:2; Luke 19:43). The second wall would hem in the city, preventing supplies and reinforcements from reaching it, and those inside from leaving. Does this also describe the Oral Law? While meant to protect, its actual function has been to stop people at its hedge, and so prevent them from reaching the Torah. As seen, Luke 11:52 and Matthew 23:13 agree with this image. Concerning its initial setting, however, Isaiah 37:33 should be noted (see also Ezek 13:10–16; Isa 22:4–12).

47 "AND WHOSO BREAKETH THROUGH A FENCE, A SERPENT SHALL BITE HIM: i.e. Dinah.

siah thereby render Israel vulnerable? Paul tells us that Jesus broke down the wall between Jew and Gentile, and Jesus Himself prophesied that Jerusalem would be trodden down by the Gentiles. Is there a causal link here?

Before discussing this further, is there any evidence for a change in the spiritual conditions in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus? (Can history inform our discussion?)

> Our Rabbis taught: During the last forty years before the destruction of the Temple the lot ['For the Lord'] did not come up in the right hand; nor did the crimson-coloured strap become white[48]; nor did the westernmost light shine[49]; and the doors of the Temple [to the Holy of Holies] opened of their own accord. Then R. Johanan b. Zakkai rebuked them, saying: Temple, Temple, why wilt thou be the alarmed thyself [Predict thy own destruction]? I know about thee that thou wilt be destroyed, for Zechariah ben Ido has already prophesied concerning thee [I.e., concerning this significant omen of the destruction of the Temple]: Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that a fire may devour thy cedars. R. Isaac b. Tablai said: Why is its [The Sanctuary. A play on לְבָנוֹן, connected with לְבָנ] name called Lebanon? Because it makes white the sins of Israel. . . . (*Yoma* 39b)
>
> Forty years before the destruction of the Temple the Sanhedrin went into exile. (*Šabb*. 15a)[50]

"THE SCEPTRE SHALL NOT DEPART FROM JUDAH (Gen 49:10): this refers to the throne of kingship" (*Num. Rab.* 3:12). When this departed, the Sanhedrin went into exile and was no longer able to impose the death penalty. Rabbi Rahmon said:

While her father and brothers were sitting in the House of Study, She went out to see the daughters of the land (Gen. XXXIV, 1). She brought upon herself her violation by Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, who is called A SERPENT, [Hivite being connected to the Aramaic word for snake] and he bit her; as it is written, And Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, and he took her, etc. (ib. 2). 'He took her'—he spoke seductively to her, as the word is used in Take with you words (Hosea XIV, 3); And lay with her" (*Eccl. Rab.* 10:9). It was because she went out from her family's protection/fence that the Hivite was able to bite her.

48 "As it has been taught: 'Originally they used to fasten the thread of scarlet on the door of the [Temple] court on the outside. If it turned white the people used to rejoice, and if it did not turn white they were sad . . . and it has further been taught: 'For forty years before the destruction of the Temple the thread of scarlet never turned white but it remained red'" (*Roš Haš*. 31b).

49 "The westernmost light on the candlestick in the Temple, into which as much oil was put as into the others. Although all the other lights were extinguished, that light buried oil, in spite of the fact that it had been kindled first. This miracle was taken as a sign that the Shechinah rested over Israel V. Shab. 22b and Men. 86b" (Soncino Commentary, *Yoma* 39a). Rashi states that the above events were signs that the Shechinah, the Holy Spirit, was leaving the temple (Santala, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 106).

50 The "exile" was when they moved to the Chamber of Hewn Stones (after losing the power of life and death).

> When the members of the Sanhedrin discovered that the rights of life and death had been torn from their hands a general consternation seized hold of them. They covered their heads with ashes and their bodies with sackcloth, shouting, "Woe to us! The sceptre of Judah has been taken away and the Messiah has not yet come."[51]

Note that the Sanhedrin lost this power when the Romans took over after the death of Herod the Great. By the time the Roman governor arrived, the Messiah, however, had indeed come. Matthew 2:19–21 states, "But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, 'Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead.' So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel." The prophecy of Genesis 49 was not broken.

It was also at this time that the priests ceased to pronounce the divine name. It seems, therefore, that at the time of Jesus, the Shechinah[52] departed from the temple, the sacrifice for sin lost its efficacy, the scepter departed from Judah, and the name of the Lord was no longer used. As a result, it was understood both by Yochanan ben Zakkai, and the prophet Jesus ben Ananus[53] that the Second Temple was doomed.[54] It will also be noted that all of the above Talmudic references deal directly with the Day of Atonement, the scapegoat, and the red heifer.[55]

These phenomena are explained by the rejection by the nation of Jesus (cf. Matt 23:38). It was He who suffered outside the city ("their king will pass on before them" [Mic 2:13]), bearing the sin of the people (John 11:49). They now abide without their king, sacrifice, and priest (Hos 3:4). For Jesus is all of these, and without Him they lack the scepter, the sacrifice, and the high priest (Heb 3:1). In Him the name of the Lord dwelt, and on Him rested the Holy Spirit.

51 As cited by Santala, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 103–04.

52 The idea that the Spirit of prophecy had departed earlier is well addressed by John R. Levinson ("Did the Spirit Withdraw from Israel? An Evaluation of the Earliest Jewish Data," *New Testament Studies* 43, no. 1 [January 1997]: 35–57) and Benjamin D. Sommer ("Did Prophecy Cease? Re-evaluating a Reevaluation," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115, no. 1 [Spring 1996]: 31–47). In Ezekiel's description of the Spirit leaving the temple, the Spirit is seen by some as directly mirroring the departure of Jesus, and also the exact reverse of the Lord's final return with the Shechinah to the temple.

53 Josephus, *J.W.* 6.30–9.

54 Even as the people's defection led God to remove His Spirit from the first temple (which then allowed the Babylonians to destroy it), so their defection would have the same effect now.

55 "Seven days before the burning of the [red] heifer the priest who was to burn the heifer was removed from his house to the cell in the north-eastern corner before the Birah. It was called the cell of the stone chamber. And why was it called the cell of the stone chamber [or, the Chamber of Hewn Stones]? Because all its functions [in connection with the red heifer] had to be performed only in vessels made of either cobble-stones, stone or earthenware" (*Yoma* 2a). "Our Rabbis taught: Ten times did the high priest pronounce the [Ineffable] Name on that day: Three times at the first confession, thrice at the second confession, thrice in connection with the he-goat to be sent away, and once in connection with the lots" (*Yoma* 39b).

The Breaker both breaches the wall and goes out through it, leading His people with Him. The wall that separated (i.e., protected) the Jews from the Gentiles, He broke. *Exodus Rabbah* 11:5 describes Israel as a "fence for the world." But by then going out from the city, He did a number of things:

1. He separated godliness from Israel. This had already been telegraphed by the Breaker's herald (Matt 3:9). Had He broken the wall, yet stayed inside, the Gentiles would have flooded into Judaism, and this was a wine skin that the Breaker did not want to be burst (Luke 5:28).
2. It also meant that all who would follow Him must do what He did—go beyond the city walls and bear the shame and reproach.

The failure of the temple and the destruction of Jerusalem can thus be attributed to the breaking down of separateness of Israel and the going out of their King (i.e., as understood in terms of the messianic prophecy in Micah).[56]

Again, note the radical use of imagery in this prophecy; for a breaker to make a breach and go out is to speak of loss of unity: "There is no breach (פרץ): [that is], may our company not be like that of David from which issued Ahitophel. And no going forth: [that is] may our company not be like that of Saul from which issued Doeg the Edomite" (*Mas. Ber.* 17b). In this context, see also Isaiah 8:12–15; Luke 2:34; and Matthew 10:34–36. Note also that it was the breaking down of the walls which caused the breach (naturally), and the division within Israel (John 10:19), and His rejection (Luke 4:25-29; 12:51; Acts 22:21–22).

This section has concentrated on the consequences for Israel of the breaking of the hedge and the departure of their Messiah. This is legitimate (Luke 23:28–31), but the focus of the prophecy is rather on the Messiah and those following after Him, rushing and breaking out with Him. This is the joy of Acts, of Paul—not to escape from the Jewish people, but to burst free of the law and from the sting of death, into the broad pastures that their Shepherd was leading them.

Conclusion

This essay began by asking to what extent the first coming of Jesus could be seen as messianic. Jewish messianic expectations were seen as being somewhat ethnocentric, and as being more naturally fulfilled at what Christians term the second coming. It was, therefore, exciting to see the Messiah revealed as a universal Savior in these Jewish, messianic texts. As this dovetails with Christian understandings and claims, the warning of Levinson is pertinent: "When an early Jewish viewpoint, . . . provides what appears to be an exceptionally suitable foil for New Testament points of

56 The context in Micah was one of disobedience and rejection by the people and their leaders, and so it is here. This in no way lessens the tears of Jesus for them.

view, New Testament scholars ought to exercise particular suspicion about the manipulation of data."[57] I have therefore tried to exercise care that the patterns described are true to the rabbinic understanding, by means of both thematic studies and attention to each quotation's context. If the NT can then be shown to honestly participate in such patterns, it speaks more of a shared wisdom than of misappropriation and has profound consequences for both. That is, Jesus may be the Jewish Messiah, and Jewish exegesis may powerfully inform Christian theology. The essay has also tried to show how rabbinic literature can help to clarify an obscure passage in the NT. Clearly, the OT view of the Messiah is prophetic, the rabbinical view is theoretical, and the NT view is experiential. As both of the latter are based on the former, there is legitimate reason to expect some common ground.

Looking at the prophecy itself, what do we have? The first thing to note is the radical nature of the image. The Messiah as King, God, and Breaker does not merely stand in the breach but creates it, bursting through the protective walls and into the wider world. This is a very threatening image within rabbinic literature. This Messiah is no mere continuation of the old order, but violently ushers in the new. As the Breaker, He circumcises the law by cutting through the hedge of flesh with which the Pharisees had surrounded it. He also circumcises our hearts by cutting away the works of flesh with which we try to protect them (Jer 4:4; Col 2:11). Not only that, but He breaks down the walls between Jew and Gentile.

As to the consequences of this for Israel, by breaking down the wall that protected them from the Gentiles, He ushered in the time of the Gentiles, and with His rejection and departure, the Spirit left the temple, and Jerusalem was trodden down. Even the division this caused within Israel is itself a fulfillment of OT prophecy. Again, the events which followed the first coming of Jesus are seen to conform to the rabbinic understanding of this prophecy. In answer to the question posed by this essay, the first coming of Jesus was messianic, in part because it fulfilled Jewish understandings of a messianic prophecy, both as it related to the Jewish people and religion, and as it related to the person of the Messiah Himself. In His first coming, Jesus wrought messianic effects.

As seen, however, as the Son of Perez, He is also Davidic and a restorer (Hos 6:1). While rabbinic exegesis sees the ambivalence within the prophecy itself, the mood is one of triumph. He is the Son of Perez, who breaks the walls between God and man (Isa 59:2), bursts the gates of death, and restores the Edenic stature of man. He is thus a universal Messiah who breaks into this world, who is bitten by, and crushes, the serpent, and who ascends before them. He has the name of God, and all His generations are perfect (1 Cor 15:45-49; Isa 53:10). He did not break the wine skinsi0 and shall return suddenly to His sanctuary. The rabbinic linkage to the Son of Perez thus expands the scope of this prophecy—which describes the first coming of Jesus, not so much in terms of His substitutionary death,

57 Levinson, 57.

but how it impacts Jews, Gentiles, and the people of God—and looks to the completion of all things. Through this linkage, Perez remains a positive figure for the Jewish nation, and the triumph of the original prophecy is not misplaced. For a hurting people who wonder how Jesus was the Messiah for them, this prophecy is a powerful word from the Lord.

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In the end, what do we have? A Messiah who desires to meet with us, who bursts through our walls of separation and will not allow us to deal with Him from a distance, who will not interact with us via an intermediary such as the law, but who desires to see us face to face.

> A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a garden locked, a fountain sealed. . . . I come to my garden, my sister, my bride; I gather my myrrh with my spice. . . . Make haste my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountain of spices. (Song 4:12; 5:1; 8:14)

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Messiah As Wisdom: The Delight of God and Men

– A Theological Exposition of Proverbs 8:22–31

by **Seth Postell**

Introduction

Proverbs 8:22–31 has long been regarded as an important passage for the Christology of the church. For many, throughout church history, this passage referred to the pre-incarnate Son of God, Divine Wisdom, who is the Father's eternal delight, and through whom all things were created. In modern times, however, the majority of Christian commentators have rejected the christological interpretation. Bruce Waltke, in his recent commentary on Proverbs, states emphatically, "The notion that Wisdom is eternally being begotten is based on Christian dogma, not exegesis. . . . Augustine, Calvin, et al. erred, in that they wrongly interpreted Wisdom as a hypostasis of God that they equated with Jesus Christ and not as a personification of the sage's wisdom."[1]

The thesis of this exposition is that Proverbs 8:22–31 does, in fact, refer to God's eternal Son, through whom the universe was created. The goal of this exposition is to invite God's people to emulate the Father by joining Him in the delight of His Son. The first section of this paper will examine how Proverbs 8 was interpreted in early Jewish and Christian sources. The second section will look at the place of Proverbs within the Hebrew canon and also set the context of chapter 8 within the book itself. There, it will be argued that the messianic interpretation is substantiated by the inner-textual testimony of Proverbs 30:1–6. The third section will offer an exposition of the passage.

The Prominence of Proverbs 8:22–31 in the History of Interpretation

The prominence of Proverbs 8 in the effective history of interpretation, both Jewish and Christian, is amazing. Before looking at how this passage

1 Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1–15*, NICOT, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), n. 104, 409.

influenced the Targums and Rashi in their interpretation of Genesis 1:1, it is crucial to recognize that Proverbs 8 has not only *been* interpreted, it *is* an interpretation. There is an obvious correlation between this portion of Scripture and the early chapters of Genesis. Most striking of all is the appearance of ראשית ("beginning") in the opening colon of this poem. Here, the ראשית precedes the ראשית of Genesis 1:1. In other words, if Genesis 1:1 is understood temporally ("In the beginning"), then Proverbs 8:22 personifies the ראשית as One who was with God *before* the beginning.[2] The ראשית is with God before the works of old (8:22b), before the depths (8:24), before the heavens were fashioned (8:27–28), before creation. Proverbs 8:22–31 has many other words besides ראשית in common with the early chapters of Genesis.[3]

In other words, if Genesis 1:1 is understood temporally ("In the beginning"), then Proverbs 8:22 personifies the ראשית as One who was with God *before* the beginning.

These lexical similarities indicate that Proverbs 8:22–31 should be understood as a poetic (and theological) interpretation of Genesis 1:1. It is clear from the Aramaic Targums and Rashi that this interpretation was taken very seriously. In fact, Proverbs 8:22–31 proved to be an interpretation so powerful that subsequent interpreters did not read Genesis 1:1 apart from the interpretation offered in Proverbs 8.

The Fragmentary Targum (FT) likely preserves a pre-Christian interpretation of Genesis 1:1, and reflects an understanding of the creation account informed by Proverbs 8. Like Kenneth Wuest's expansive Greek commentary, the FT offers two translations for the word ראשית in Genesis 1:1, one temporal and the other nominal. The FT reads, "In the beginning [ראשית] with wisdom [חכמה (i.e. ראשית = חכמה)] God created the heavens and the earth."[4] This interpretation of the creation account has been noticeably influenced by the wisdom literature in the Old Testament.[5]

There are many clues within the opening and closing chapters of the Pentateuch to suggest that such a reading is also consistent with the final composition of the Pentateuch itself.[6] More remarkable than the FT is the famous Targum Neophyti (TN). This Targum, even more expansive than the

2 "Beginning" being understood as a reference to the undefined length of time in which God created the universe. See John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1999).

3 See ראשית ("beginning," v. 22; Gen 1:1); שמים ("heavens," v. 27; Gen 1:1); ארץ ("earth," vv. 23, 26, 29, 31); על פני תהום ("on the face of the deep," v. 27; Gen 1:2a); תהום ("deep," vv. 24, 27; Gen 1:2); מים ("water," vv. 24, 29; Gen 1:2); יום ("day," v. 30; Gen 1:5); עשה ("made," v. 26; Gen 1:7); ים ("sea," v. 29; Gen 1:10); אדם ("man," v. 31; Gen 1:26); טרם ("not yet," v. 25; Gen 2:5); עפר ("dust," v. 26; Gen 2:7; 3:14, 19); קדם ("east," v. 22; Gen 2:8); see also מעין ("spring," v. 24; Gen 7:11; 8:2); קנה ("brought forth," v. 22; Gen 4:1; 14:19, 22; Deut 32:6; Ps 139:13).

4 *Miqraoth Gedoloth*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Pardes, 1957).

5 See, for example, Psalm 33:6; Proverbs 3:19; and Job 28.

6 John Sailhamer cogently argues that the Pentateuch is a wisdom composition. See "A Wisdom Composition of the Pentateuch?" in *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, ed. J. I. Packer and Sven K. Soderlund (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 15–35.

FT, offers an additional interpretation of ראשית: "In the *beginning*, with *wisdom*, the *Son* of God[7] created the heavens and the earth."[8]

To many modern readers, this extraordinary pre-Christian interpretation appears fanciful. Several lines of evidence, however, suggest that this Targum offers an interpretation that is attentive to the details of Genesis 1:1, within the final composition of the Pentateuch, and also identical to the interpretation of the creation account provided by the book of Proverbs. There are at least four textual factors which support TN interpretation of Genesis 1:1: (1) the poetic and literary qualities of Genesis 1:1 lend themselves to a poetic interpretation;[9] (2) ראשונה ("first"), rather than ראשית ("beginning"), is the proper Hebrew word for initiating temporal sequence in Hebrew;[10] (3) the appearance of ראשית in the poetic-eschatological seams of the Pentateuch, most especially its final appearance (Gen 49:1; Num 24:20; and Deut 33:21) where ראשית is likely used as a reference to the coming Messiah; and finally, (4) the interpretation of Genesis 1:1 offered by the book of Proverbs. Rashi, following in the tradition of the Targums, refers to Proverbs 8:22 in his interpretation of Genesis 1:1. He writes, "For the sake of the Torah [by the Torah] God created the heavens and the earth."[11] Proverbs 8:22 left an indelible mark on the Jewish interpretation of the creation account.

Proverbs 8 also proved to be an important passage for the Christology of the early church fathers. Among the church fathers who understood Proverbs 8:22–31 as a reference to the Son of God are Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, Athanasius, Hilary of Poitiers, and Augustine.[12] Proverbs 8, however, was also wielded as a textual weapon by the Arian heretics, due in large part to the Septuagint's rendering of the Hebrew קנה ("possess," "create," or "beget") as κτιζω ("create"). The Arians used this verse to argue that the Son of God was created.[13]

Place of Proverbs in the Canon and Chapter 8 in the Book

The book of Proverbs appears in the final portion of the tripartite division of the Hebrew canon, the Writings. Proverbs follows Job and precedes the

7 Some have suggested that "the Son of God" was a Christian gloss, but a careful look at the actual manuscript of TN proves this to be untenable. The spacing in the verse reveals (1) the ד ("of") is original; and (2) the ו ("and") was obviously a gloss that was later erased because it was not original.

8 Alejandro Díez Macho, *Neophyti 1: Targum Palestinense MS de la Biblioteca Vaticana, Tomo I, Génesis* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientícas, 1968), 3 (emphasis provided).

9 On the literary qualities of Genesis 1:1 see Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC, vol. 1. (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 6; Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984), 203; and John Sailhamer, *Genesis*, EBC, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 35.

10 See Rashi's comments in *Miqraoth Gedoloth*.

11 *Miqraoth Gedoloth* (words in brackets provided).

12 See J. Robert Wright, ed., *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament, vol. 9 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005), 59–71.

13 Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, ABC, vol. 18a (Doubleday: New York, 2000), 279.

book of Ruth. Several textual factors suggest that the "Canonicler"[14] intentionally placed Proverbs between these two books, based on his interpretation of them. The book of Job introduces Job as a man who departs from evil (סור מרע; 1:1, 8; 2:3; 28:28), a phrase that appears near the center of the book of Proverbs, according to the Masoretic number of verses (16:17).[15] A key theme in the book of Job is mediation.[16] Job not only appears as a mediator in the opening and closing chapters of the book, Satan's accusation of Job is rich with courtroom imagery. Furthermore, in key places in the book he calls for a mediator who will stand between himself and God (Job 9:2–3, 15, 32–33; 16:19–21; 19:25). The infinite divide separating Job (and all mankind) from God is divine wisdom (see Job 28; 35:35; 38:36–37).

On the other side of Proverbs is the book of Ruth. Appended to the book of Proverbs is an acrostic dedicated to a virtuous woman (Prov 31:10–31). John Sailhamer calls attention to several key terms in this poem which have strategic import in the book of Ruth. Most noticeable is the "virtuous woman" (Prov 31:10; Ruth 3:11) who is praised at the gate (Prov 31:31; Ruth 3:11).[17] Ruth's virtue is tied, not only to her decision to leave her people and their gods (like the patriarch Abraham), but also to her personal participation in God's covenant purposes for, and through, David (Ruth 4:17–22; Gen 49:8–12).

The position of these three books in the Hebrew canon, though not inspired, does offer valuable insight for interpreting Proverbs. The book of Proverbs, throughout, praises wisdom and its importance in the horizontal and vertical directions (i.e., toward man and God). In the canon, Proverbs anchors Job's pursuit of a mediator into God's promises to the house of David. Furthermore, great place of prominence must be attributed to Proverbs 8:22–31 within the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. It offers the answer to Job's pursuit: God's firstborn Son, God's eternal wisdom, is the mediator between God and men.

The book of Proverbs displays certain compositional features essential for interpretation. Sailhamer divides the book into four major sections: the title (Prov 1:1); the prologue (Prov 1–9); the body of the book (Prov 10–24; 25–29); and the conclusion (Prov 30:1–33; 31:1–9; 31:10–31).[18] Brevard Childs calls attention to two important passages in the final composition of the book: Proverbs 8:22–31 and 30:5–6. Childs calls chapter 8 "the most striking development of the 'self-revelation' of wisdom (cf. Job 28; Sir. 24). . . . [I]ts hermeneutical effect for interpreting the whole book is worth

14 This term was coined by John Sailhamer to refer to the anonymous, but inspired individual who ordered the books of the Hebrew Bible and shaped the "seams" between its sections, so that its messianic message might be communicated more clearly.

15 The author is indebted to Robert Cole for this observation.

16 The importance of the mediator in Job was brought to the author's attention by Ryan Armstrong, a Th.M. student at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, N.C., whose paper on this topic is not yet published.

17 John Sailhamer, *The NIV Compact Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 355.

18 Ibid., 350.

exploring."[19] Childs further suggests that Proverbs 30:5–6, a passage rich with intertextual references, many of which directly relate to the coming Messiah,[20] serves to ground wisdom theology in Israel's sacred Scripture.[21]

If Childs has correctly identified Proverbs 8:22–31 and 30:5–6 as holding places of prominence in the book, then 30:4 is all the more striking, for this verse binds Proverbs 8:22–31 and 30:5–6 together. Here, the hypostasis of Wisdom (chap. 8) is firmly rooted within the framework of God's promises contained in the sacred Scripture. "Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His [S]on's name? Surely you know!"[22] This verse, according to Sailhamer, is an intentional allusion to Proverbs 8:27–30, for the purposes of "raising the question of the identity of the One who is with God and who brings wisdom from God to the human race."[23] The answer is provided by the author: it is God's Son, the promised Messiah.

An Exposition of Proverbs 8:22–31

Proverbs 8:22–31 may be divided into two stanzas. Verses 22–26 emphasize the supernatural origins of Wisdom, and verses 27–31 highlight the participation of Wisdom in the creation of the world.

The Supernatural Origins of Wisdom (Prov 8:22–26)

Several features of the Hebrew text suggest that ראשית should be translated, not temporally ("beginning"), but as a reference to the firstborn Son. First, several words are used in the Hebrew text, all of which suggest "birth" or "begetting" language.[24] For instance, though קנה is used synonymously with the verb "create" in certain places (see Gen 14:19, 22), it first occurs in Genesis 4:1. The abundance of lexical connections linking Proverbs 8:22–31 with the early chapters of Genesis[25] likely forms the backdrop for interpreting קנה in verse 22. Genesis 4:1 reads: "I have begotten [קנה] a man, the LORD." This verse appears to mirror Proverbs 8:22.[26] In addition to the use of קנה, several other "begetting" words are also used in this passage. In verses 24 and 25, the author uses the word חולל, "to bring forth, to travail" [e.g., in child birth] (see Deut 32:18; Job 39:1; and Isa

19 Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 554.

20 Several key messianic passages are quoted and/or alluded to in verses 1–6, including Deuteronomy 30:12–13; Numbers 24:3–9; 2 Samuel 23:1–7; and Psalm 18:50[51]. See Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 16–31*, NICOT, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 474.

21 Childs, 556–57.

22 NASB (capitalization provided).

23 Sailhamer, *NIV Compact Commentary*, 354.

24 See Richard J. Clifford, *Proverbs: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 96.

25 Cf. n. 3, above.

26 "I have begotten a man, the LORD" mirrors Proverbs 8:22: "The LORD has begotten me."

51:2). Another word that resonates with "child" imagery is שעשעים ("delights"; vv. 30, 31). This word is used seven times in the Hebrew Bible not counting the two references in Proverbs 8:30–31; five times for the Torah (see Ps 119:24, 77, 92, 143, 174), and twice for Israel as God's delight (Isa 5:7; Jer 31:20). Particularly helpful is the reference in Jeremiah 31:20: "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a delightful [שעשעים] child?"[27] This reference to a "delightful child" in Jeremiah may shed light on the enigmatic אמון in verse 30. Though translated as "master workman" or "craftsman" in the NASB, ESV, NIV, and NKJV, Harmut Gese convincingly argues for another translation: "a child sitting on the lap." He writes:

> The frequently discussed question of the meaning of *'mon* in v. 30 seems to me to be answered best with the basic signification of the root *'mn* (qal): "to hold on one's lap." God is imaged here as sitting on a throne in the act of creation while wisdom seated on his lap, as his child, shares the royal position (cf. wisdom as companion, Sap. 9:4), even the masculine form is explained in this explanation because it avoids an otherwise obscene idea.[28]

Gese's explanation is consistent with the other "begetting" words in the passage. For the reasons mentioned above, and considering the intertextual connection to Proverbs 30:4, a likely translation of Proverbs 8:22 is: "The Lord has begotten me, the firstborn [Son] of His ways." It is also worth noting that the word נסך in verse 23 is used in only one other place in the Hebrew Bible, Ps 2:6: "I have installed [נסך] my king upon Zion, my holy mountain." The JPS retains this royal imagery: "From the distant past I was enthroned."[29]

An important question any exposition of Proverbs 8 must tackle is whether or not Wisdom is created or eternal. To answer this question, it is important to keep in mind a few things: (1) the LXX wrongly rendered קנה as "create," rather than "beget," causing the church fathers a terrible, but unnecessary, headache; (2) this passage is a poetic interpretation of the creation account; poetic imagery must never be pressed too far; and (3) Wisdom exists, here, before creation. With respect to the third, Franz Delitzsch writes, "[S]ince to her (wisdom) the poet attributes an existence preceding the creation of the world, he thereby declares her to be eternal, for to be before the world is to be before time."[30] Finally, as Athanasius pointed out, it is inconceivable to think of a time when God was without

27 NASB; lit., "a child of delights."

28 Hartmut Gese, "Wisdom, Son of Man, and the Origins of Christology: The Consistent Development of Biblical Theology," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 3 (1981): 31.

29 *Complete Tanach with Rashi* software (Brooklyn: Judaica Press, Davka Corporation, 1999).

30 C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Pentateuch*, Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. 1 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 133. The phrase "before time" is considered by some to be philosophically problematic. Perhaps a better expression might be "before the existence of any created thing."

His *Logos* or Wisdom.[31] For these reasons, Proverbs 8:22–26 must not be understood as the creation of Wisdom at a point in time. Rather, because Wisdom precedes creation, it must be regarded as uncreated, and as a consequence, eternal.

The Participation of Wisdom in the Creation of the World (Prov 8:27–31)

The second stanza (vv. 27–31) emphasizes Wisdom's unique relationship with God. Although these verses do not clearly spell out Wisdom's active participation with God in creation, information provided in Proverbs 3:19, by implication, informs this conclusion. The primary point of this passage, however, is not Wisdom's instrumental role in creation. Rather the emphasis lies in the joyous exchange between Father and Son *in the process* of creation. In v. 30, Wisdom is portrayed as a child sitting in His Father's lap, laughing, playing, and bringing rapturous delight to His Father's heart throughout the creation event. One cannot but think of v. 18 in John's Prologue ("in the bosom of the Father") where, as Gese writes, "there appears the description of wisdom on God's lap, the *'mun*, known from Prov. 8:30."[32]

For these reasons, Proverbs 8:22–26 must not be understood as the creation of Wisdom at a point in time. Rather, because Wisdom precedes creation, it must be regarded as uncreated, and as a consequence, eternal.

The conclusion of this passage (v. 30) holds profound implications for those willing to heed Wisdom's invitation (Prov 8:1–4). Not only does Wisdom bring joy to the Father's heart, but for those who heed the call, Wisdom can bring divine delight to the sons of men (v. 31). The good news is staggering: by virtue of God's Wisdom, the sons of men may participate in the delight of God!

Conclusion

Proverbs 8 provides a glimpse of the Father and His Son behind the veil of man's finite experience. Praise God for this invitation to look at the Father and the Son prior to, and throughout, the creation jubilee. This passage has played a formative role in both Jewish and Christian theology. It was foundational to a reading of the creation narrative as something much more than a solo sung by a lonely, apathetic God. Rather, God sang the creation song in triune harmony, His Son laughing, dancing, and playing in His lap as each day unfolded. Although a christological reading of Proverbs 8:22–31 has fallen on hard times of late, Targum Neophyti and the church fathers correctly understood Proverbs 8 as a reference to the Son of God, the promised Messiah. This key passage points the way to participation in

31 Athanasius, "Four Discourses Against the Arians," Discourse 1.24, *Athanasius: Selected Works and Letters*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol. 4, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 320.

32 Gese, "Wisdom, Son of Man, and the Origins of Christology," 54.

the Father's delight for any genuine seeker of God. Anyone who desires to enter into this joy is invited, provided he can answer just one simple question: "What is the name of His Son? Surely you know!"[33]

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33 Proverbs 30:4.

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A Compositional Analysis of Zechariah 12:10

by **Jason Blazs**

Christians are often regarded by the Jewish community as attempting to make Jesus fit into the text of the Hebrew Scriptures. They argue that most of our claimed "messianic prophecies" were never really intended by the original authors of the Tanakh, but were rather given that meaning by the later New Testament (NT) writers. This accusation is not without basis, as it can often be unclear as to how a NT author saw a messianic meaning in a text being cited. There is, however, a method of exegesis of the Hebrew Bible that can give a helpful understanding of what exactly the NT authors were seeing. This method is called a "compositional analysis," and it examines the intentional way authors composed and arranged their texts in order to emphasize key theological concepts. When utilizing this method of exegesis, it can be seen that a messianic intent is not just limited to the wording of a verse, but rather it can also extend into the way the verse was arranged into the overall chapter, book, and Tanakh as a whole.

Hence, this paper will attempt to use the methodology of a compositional analysis and apply it to the very important messianic passage of Zechariah 12:10. What will hopefully emerge is that seeing Zechariah 12:10 as referring to a pierced Messiah is not only central to the book's compositional strategy as a whole, but is further supported by other texts from the Hebrew Scriptures. Further, it will be shown that many of the earlier rabbis understood this text in the same way.

Zechariah in the Compositional Strategy of the Twelve

This study begins by examining how the book of Zechariah fits into the texts that surround it. Zechariah was not randomly inserted into the Hebrew canon, but rather finds a unique place within the twelve "Minor Prophets." These twelve were also not randomly put together, and both Jewish tradition and modern scholarship agree that they have been regarded as an intentional compositional unity for at least 2,000 years.[1] Therefore, the

1 Michael Shepherd, "Compositional Analysis of the Twelve," *Zeitschrift fur die alttestamen-*

question becomes, what was the author's intent behind this arrangement? When looking at the seams at which the parts were pieced together, Michael Shepherd argues that "a compositional strategy can be followed, through which the reader is given an eschatological and Messianic message—a message suited for every subsequent generation of faith."[2]

Yet even within the macro-structure of the unified twelve, there are also micro-structures. After studying the history behind the times of these prophets, along with the literary seams that bind them together, scholars generally agree that the Haggai–Zechariah–Malachi (HZM) corpus should be understood as its own unit within the whole. Further, what begins to emerge when studying the HZM corpus is that Zechariah chapters 9–14 play a unique role within the book. In fact, it looks as if chapters 9–14 may have been arranged to serve as the pinnacle text within the twelve, giving a specific messianic and eschatological focus. Yet before that can be explained further, the links shared between Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, and Malachi must be examined, as this will serve to highlight the role that Zechariah 9–14 plays within them.

Haggai marks a significant transition in the book of the twelve, as it follows the section spanning the Judean kings from Uzziah to Josiah.[3] Also noteworthy is that Haggai and Zechariah would have been contemporaries, as they both have a strong focus on the need to rebuild the temple following the exile. Even beyond the historical background, there is significant textual linkage between Haggai and Zechariah 1–8. Haggai 1:1, 15; 2:1, 10; and Zechariah 1:1, 7; 7:1, all contain similar dating. Also, the image of Zerubbabel as an agent for the rebuilding of the temple is shared between the two, unique only to these sections in all the prophets (Hag 1:12, 14; 2:2, 4, 21, 23; Zech 4:6–10). His role also becomes paired with the image of Joshua the high priest in Zechariah 6:9–15.

Also worthy of note is that, from a textual standpoint, the Joshua and Zerubbabel accounts (3:1–10; 4:6–10) appear to be strategically placed in the midst of the night visions of Zechariah 1–6, potentially giving a commentary in the middle of those visions.[4] The unification of the offices of priest and ruler in Zechariah 6:9–15 is also puzzling and appears to have a theological motivation. Does the author desire to use Zerubbabel and Joshua as types to paint a forward looking messianic picture by this arrangement? Or, is the intention to show the limitations of those figures in their own era, contrasting them with the coming picture of the Messiah, in chapters 9–14? Most likely, there are elements of both in play, yet it is clear that, in their day, Zerubbabel and Joshua both failed to restore the sort of kingdom that would be possible only under the reign of the Messiah.

Moving on from Zechariah 1–6, it can be seen that chapters 7–8 play a key role in transitioning from chapters 1–6 to chapters 9–14 in several ways.

tliche Wissenschaft 120, no. 2 (2008): 184–93.

2 Ibid., 192.

3 Edgar Conrad, *Zechariah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 27.

4 Paul Redditt, "Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the Night Visions of Zechariah," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (1992): 250.

It is well established that, along with Zechariah 1:1–6, chapters 7–8 form an *inclusio* that envelops 1:7–6:15, to give closure to the book of visions.[5] Secondly, Zechariah 7–8 can be seen as their own distinct literary unit, as their structure shows the question of the fast (*tzom* 7:5), and the answer of the fast (*tzom* 8:19), forming a very clear chiastic pattern.[6] Finally, chapters 7–8 also serve to transition from the rebuilding of the temple in chapters 1–6 to the issue of the people's hearts, as the sincerity of their repentance is in question. Mark Boda comments that the absence of any reference to the completion of the temple in these chapters indicates that the author is "interested in the ethical renewal that is essential for true restoration."[7] As chapters 1–6 highlight the failure of Israel's leaders to bring true restoration, chapters 7–8 serve to prepare the reader for the eschatological and ethical renewal that comes through the Messiah, as pictured in 9–14.

Not only is Haggai tied to Zechariah 1–8, but they also both share strong thematic and textual connections with Malachi. Note the following lexical chart:[8]

HAGGAI	ZECHARIAH 1–8	MALACHI	TEXTUAL LINK
1:1, 14; 2:2, 21		1:8	*Pachat* (governor)
2:17	8:9, 13	1:9	*Yedechem* (your hands)
	8:17	1:2–5	*Ahav* (love), *Sone* (hate)
	8:9–15	2:2–3; 3:9–10	*Qalal, Arur* (curse), *Beracha* (bless)
	8:21–22	1:8–9	*Choleh* (sick)
	1:1–6; 8:14	3:6–7	*Shuva elai, v'ashuv eleichem* (Return to me and I will return to you), *Avoteichem* (Your fathers)
	1:12–15	1:4–5	*Asher za'am* (which are angry)

What is most intriguing about these links is that they are especially concentrated at the beginnings and ends of the three units. This is important because the biblical authors frequently like to place their textual links in the introductions and conclusions of books. The especially close linkage between Zechariah 8 and Malachi 1 further serves to contrast those units with Zechariah 9–14, which seems to be arranged between them to make

5 Joyce Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove: Inter-varsity Press, 1972), 59.

6 Mark Boda, "From Fasts to Feasts: The Literary Function of Zechariah 7–8," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (2003): 6–8 (see charts).

7 Ibid., 16.

8 See Paul Redditt, Aaron Schart, and E. Bosshard, and R. G. Kratz in Mark Boda and Michael Floyd, eds., *Bringing out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9–14* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 316–17, 337.

the messianic and eschatological focus of those chapters even more apparent.

Before continuing, it is important to address a common issue between Zechariah 9:1; 12:1; and Malachi 1:1, which is that of the identical *massa d^{e}var adonai* titles (burden of the word of the Lord). The crux of the matter is whether or not this shared introduction unites these three units as one. If they are to be seen as one, then it would possibly lessen the impact that 9–14 would have as standing out from the surrounding texts.

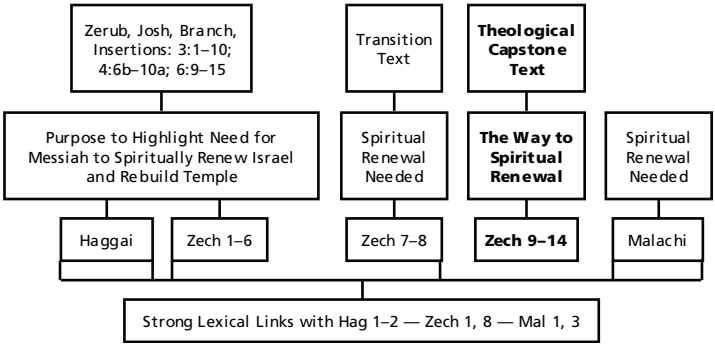
One argument for the unity shows that there is a thematic progression between the occurrences of *massa*. The first is directed toward foreign nations, the second is "concerning" Israel (*al-Israel*), and the third is directly "toward" Israel (*el-Israel*).[9] These introductions are also possibly united in that the term *massa* is regarded by many as a title, separate from what follows, and that *d^{e}var adonai* becomes a part of the message being given.[10] However, scholars cannot seem to agree on the reason for the unity. Does Zechariah mimic Malachi's use, or vice versa? Regarding the order of arrangement, Aaron Schart argues that Malachi's use proves it must have been written later than Zechariah 9–14, while Paul Redditt argues that the occurrences of *massa* in Zechariah are copying the earlier written introduction to Malachi to promote some transitional unity. As this issue is still debated, the conclusions remain unclear. What remains clear, however, is that there is strong lexical evidence binding Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, and Malachi together, with special prominence given to Zechariah 9–14.

This intentional placement of 9–14 is not superfluous, as these chapters carry a strong theological payload. Some argue that these chapters may even be the final section in the book of the twelve to serve as the "capstone" of the book, giving it its final, theological message.[11] Redditt comments that "those verses [i.e., Zech 9–14] reshape the future expectations of much of the Twelve, which anticipated a new, purified and united kingdom, ruled by a new David, and ministered to by a cleansed priesthood."[12] He claims that the eschatological shift in the text is in response to the fact that the efforts to rebuild the temple in those days did not prove sufficient in restoring a kingly and Davidic leadership, hence a new hope in 9–14, which looks forward to the Messiah to do this.[13] This also makes sense given the placement of Malachi, since it serves to refocus the people on the "*halacha*" of following the Lord. In doing so, it tempers the forward-looking nature of Zechariah 9–14, essentially reminding the readers not to

9 Ibid., 338.
10 Baldwin, 162.
11 Paul Redditt, "Zechariah 9–14: The Capstone of the Book of the Twelve," in *Bringing out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9–14*, ed. Mark Boda and Michael Floyd (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 305, 316.
12 Ibid., 321.
13 Ibid.

be too caught up in the messianic promises of the future, but to remember to serve the Lord faithfully in their own day.[14]

In light of the above observations, this chart may summarize some aspects of the authorial mind in the final HZM composition:



If the above chart represents a measure of reality in HZM, then Zechariah 9–14 truly does serve as a pinnacle within the composition. Note, again, the textual links between the beginnings and ends of Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, and Malachi. Further, if the compositional strategy of 1–8 shows the need for spiritual renewal, the rebuilding of the temple, and the restoration of a Davidic leader, then we would assume these issues would be resolved in chapters 9–14. As this is where Zechariah 12:10 lies, we will now examine the textuality and structure of 9–14 more deeply.

The Structure of Zechariah 9–14

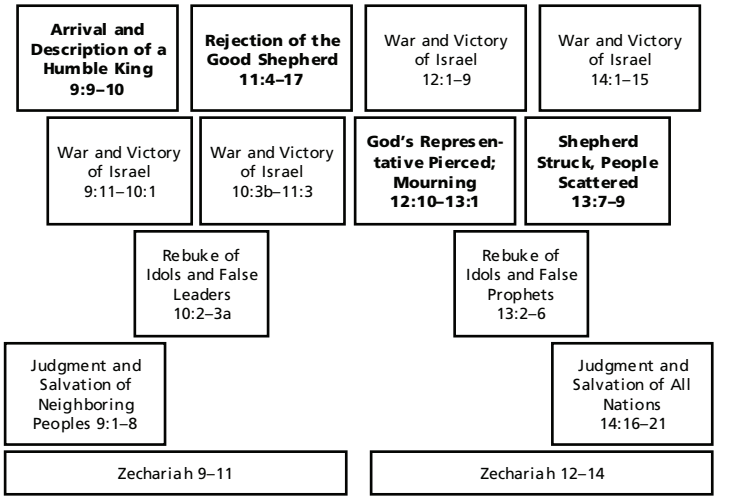
If scholars agree on anything concerning these chapters, it would be that it is much more difficult to find compositional strategy here than in chapters 1–8.[15] Yet there is some hope. Black, as quoted by David Mitchell, says, "While it is obvious that no reading of Zech 9–14 is capable of discovering a clear and well-ordered sequence of events beginning with chapter 9 and ending with chapter 14, it is not difficult to discover within Zech 9–14 an implied, though loosely organized sort of eschatological schema."[16] Though one could easily be lost in the sea of attempts by scholars to delineate that structure, some stability can be found in this analysis proposed by P. Lamarche:[17]

14 Aaron Schart, "Putting the Eschatological Visions of Zechariah in Their Place: Malachi As a Hermeneutical Guide for the Last Section of the Book of the Twelve," in *Bringing out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9–14*, ed. Mark Boda and Michael Floyd (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 342.

15 Baldwin, 74.

16 David Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 140.

17 This structure was reproduced in Baldwin (77). Note that though the verses and themes are the same from Lamarche, I have slightly changed the wording of the titles.



As can be seen from this outline, on thematic grounds, there are two similar chiastic structures, with four emerging units (highlighted in bold font) that have traditionally been understood as messianic: Zechariah 9:9–10; 11:4–17; 12:10–13:1; and 13:7–9. These units will be referred to as the quad.

Generally speaking, in order to have good evidence for a compositional strategy, there need to be both thematic and lexical links binding the passages together. Hence, in regards to the above chart, the question becomes whether the similar themes noted by Lamarche are enough to prove a compositional strategy. Mike Butterworth, whose approach to compositional study favored a lexical analysis, spent fourteen years, with the aid of computer programs, charting all the lexical links and structures within the book of Zechariah. In spite of his different method, he apparently did have regard for Lamarche's structure and decided to put it to the test with his computerized lexical analysis. Though his analysis did not yield as many lexical links within these structures as he would have liked to see, he summarized what he did find in this statement: "There does seem to be coherence to the whole section 9:1–13:9, brought out by the presence of significant ideas expressed in similar terms. It begins to look as if a connection between the humble king, the shepherds, and the pierced one was really intended by the persons responsible for the final form of Zechariah."[18]

In other words, this quad of messianic passages was clearly meant to be understood as a unit within chapters 9–14, serving to highlight a theological description of the Messiah. Yet, it does not stop there. Building on this analysis, we will further compare the lexical links and themes of the quad with other passages in the Tanakh to show that the author of Zechariah

18 Mike Butterworth, *Structure and the Book of Zechariah* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 284.

was not merely inventing these messianic ideas, but rather, following the precedent of other writers.

Zechariah 11:4–17 and Ezekiel 34, 37

The earlier text of Ezekiel has much bearing on the messianic motifs of our passage in question, and we will see that the author of Zechariah pulls from and interprets these motifs. First, let us note these motifs as they appear in Ezekiel with this chart: [19]

EZEKIEL 34	EZEKIEL 37	TEXTUAL LINK
v. 22	v. 23	*V'hoshati* (I [God] will save [My people])
23	24	*Avdi David melek aleihem v'roeh echad* (My servant David will be set over them as one Shepherd and King)
25	26	*V'carati l'hem brit shalom* (And I will make a covenant of peace with them)
24, 31	23	*Ehiyeh lahem l'elohim* (I will be their God)

Zechariah 11:4–17 then pulls upon these texts with the following links:

EZEKIEL 34 & 37	ZECHARIAH 11:4–17	TEXTUAL LINK
34:3, 4, 11, 16, 20, 23	11:16	*Qum* (raise up), *Roeh* (shepherd), *Shaber* (to break), *Rophe* (to heal), *Achal* (to eat), *B'ria* (fat)
34:23	11:6	*B'yad re'ehu, u'vyad malko* (in the hand of his neighbor and the hand of his king)
chap. 37	chap. 11	**Ezekiel**—fusing of staff; **Zechariah**—breaking of staff

In summary of these charts, a few key points emerge: 1) Ezekiel's messianic theology includes some key concepts describing who the Messiah would be; and 2) this earlier set of messianic concepts is then appropriated by Zechariah. This means that it was understood from Ezekiel that the Messiah would be a shepherd figure, a king like David, and the means through which God will save His people by renewing a covenant of peace with them.

19 Mark Boda, "Reading between the Lines: Zechariah 11:4–16 in Its Literary Contexts," in *Bringing out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9-14*, ed. Mark Boda and Michael Floyd (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 284–87. These charts are a compilation of the lexical links noted by Boda.

Zechariah 11:4–17 and 13:7–9

Many scholars regard these two shepherd accounts as originally being a unified text.[20] In fact, in Rex Mason's commentary on Zechariah, he changes the order of the books to place these two next to each other![21] He notes these similarities: 1) both utilize shepherd imagery; 2) in both a sword strikes the shepherd; 3) both draw upon covenant concepts; and 4) both share a similar metric structure.[22] Joyce Baldwin also notes that in both, war is declared on God's king and people.[23] Also, Mitchell observes that in both, God refers to the shepherd as "mine."[24]

What is intriguing, from the possibility that these texts were originally one, is that the above linkage with Ezekiel would then apply to both, implying that the two oracles speak of the same messianic shepherd. There are a few questions that naturally follow this observation: What is the significance of the Zechariah 12:10 unit being placed right between these two similar passages? Does this affect how the pierced one relates to the shepherd? Could these units actually be seen as a triad? Is the author trying to highlight Zechariah 12:10 as a capstone between the shepherd motifs?

Zechariah 12:10

David Mitchell has done a tremendous job examining the textual links between the Messiah of the Psalms and the Messiah of Zechariah 9–14, along with providing a thorough account of how the earlier rabbis understood these passages. To begin, he notes a textual connection between the three passages we have been examining; the two shepherd motifs enveloping Zechariah 12:10.[25]

11:4–17	Striking of Shepherd and Scattering of Flock
12:3	*Vne'esphu aleha kol goyei ha'aretz* (and all the nations of the earth will gather against it [Jerusalem])
12:10–14	**Look on Him who is Pierced**
13:7–9	Striking of Shepherd and Scattering of Flock
14:2	*Vasaphti et kol ha goyim el yerushalayim* (and I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem)

20 E.g., cf., Mitchell, 200.
21 See this section from Mason in Boda, *Bringing out the Treasure.*
22 James Nogalski quoting Mason in "Zechariah 13:7–9 As a Transitional Text: An Appreciation and Re–evaluation of the Work of Rex Mason," in *Bringing out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9-14*, ed. Mark Boda and Michael Floyd (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 294.
23 Baldwin, 79.
24 Mitchell, 201.
25 This chart is reproduced from Mitchell, yet the transliterations are my own.

He describes Zechariah 12:10–14 as serving as a sort of pinnacle between the shepherd motifs, and like the stricken shepherd, "this figure seems to be Yhwh's representative and intimately connected with him."[26] This intimate connection is illustrated by God identifying Himself as the pierced one, and that the piercing is similar to the shepherd dying by the sword.

Not only is God himself pierced, but the royal Davidic status of this pierced one is also confirmed in several ways. First, the context of 12:10 focuses heavily on the house of David. Second, the above triad cannot be separated from the figure in Zechariah 9:9, the lowly king riding on a donkey. Mitchell links this Zecharian, humble, king figure with the messianic concepts of Psalm 45.[27] There, he is described as coming to a daughter (*bat*), a king who is riding (*racav*), along with being described with the roots *anah* and *tsadik* (lowly and righteous).[28]

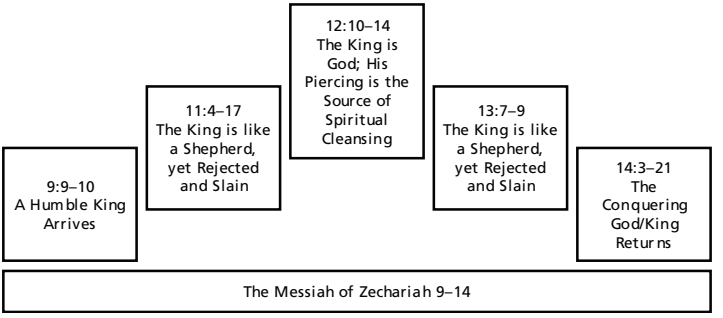
The placement of this Psalm is also important, because the ones preceding it show Israel crying out to the Lord for deliverance, and the ones that follow describe the ultimate triumph of God and the establishment of His kingdom. This contributes to the schema between Zechariah 9:9 and 14:3–21. The first shows the arrival of a humble king, the second shows the arrival of a conquering king. Clearly, the Zecharian author was familiar with these messianic concepts in the Psalms and incorporates them into his arrangement.

Psalm 89, which describes a king being cut off from the land, also has a very significant bearing on Zechariah 12:10. Mitchell notes that there is a hint in verse 40 that King Messiah would be pierced because of the term *chilalta* (defiled).[29] He argues that in this *piel* form this word can be translated as "pierced."[30] In addition to this, he also claims that there is evidence that the superscript of Psalm 88:1 may be frequently misunderstood. It reads: *al machalot l'anot*, and is frequently translated as it is spelled ("according to mahalath leannot"—NIV, ESV, with a footnote saying this is a musical term). Mitchell argues that instead of *machalot* having the root *chalah*, as typically understood, it could in fact be *chalal* (which can be "pierced," in the *piel* form). This, coupled with the *anah* root of *l'anot*, could render the superscript to designate the psalm to be "concerning the afflicted one," further coupling this with the theme of the following Psalm 89.[31] If this is all considered, then the usage of *chalal* and *anah* in Psalms 88 and 89 could easily be linked with their usage in Isaiah 53:3–5, 7, and 10, which also describe a lowly, afflicted, and pierced Messiah.[32] All of these textual backings, along with the Ezekiel links, show a messianic figure who is a pierced,

26 Ibid., 203.
27 Ibid., 249.
28 It is noteworthy that "shepherd" and "lowly" share the same lexical root (*anah*), though it is difficult to demonstrate what, if any, implications this has for interpretation.
29 Ibid., 254–58.
30 See *Brown Driver Briggs* lexicon for support.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.

lowly king. This demonstrates that Zechariah's idea of a pierced Messiah was not invented, but came from the Hebrew Scriptures themselves.

The final remaining issue to be addressed is the concept of a pierced God. Clearly, God identifies Himself as being the pierced one in 12:10, but how does this fit with the concept that the pierced one is also identified as a lowly, shepherd-like, kingly individual? Here we must recall Psalm 110, where the king and God are conflated into the same individual. Obviously, the idea of a man being God does not sit well with many, and this is the main reason why some tried to smooth over the translation of Zechariah 12:10 to make it someone other than God who is pierced.[33] However, building upon what we see in Psalm 110, it is not a foreign idea that the Davidic figure described in Zechariah 12 would also be equated with God Himself. Zechariah 14:4 further confirms this by showing us that it is God's feet that touch the Mount of Olives when He returns, with verse 9 designating Him as king. Mitchell notes that it is very strange to see God's feet touching the literal earth, as most of the anthropomorphical usages of that term are restricted to "supraterrestrial imagery."[34] The proximity and repeated nature of this conflation of the lowly king of Zechariah 9:9, the pierced king of Zechariah 12:10, and the returning conquering king of Zechariah 14:4 and 9 further supports the concept that this messianic, Davidic king was linked as being God Himself. In light of the inter-textual observations above, here is my proposed authorial structure of Zechariah 9–14:



Though the terminology of the king is not present in each section, the intertextuality shows that this individual was a humble shepherd-king, who was rejected and pierced, yet was God and the source of spiritual renewal,

33 The JPS and LXX both do this by rendering the "*elai et*" with a "because" (they will look to me, *because* they have pierced him). Yet they are inconsistent with this translation, as can be seen by examining how they deal with this same construct in Deuteronomy 5:27; 18:18; 1 Kings 10:2; and Jeremiah 1:17, where they translate those instances without the "because." Clearly in Zechariah 12:10, they break from their typical application of the grammatical rule in order to accommodate the difficulty surrounding the idea that God is pierced, instead of letting the text say what it says. Also, see Mitchell, 230; Mason in Boda, *Bringing out the Treasure*, 159–71; and Martinus Menken, "The Textual Form and The Meaning of the Quotation from Zechariah 12:10 in John 19:37," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (1993): 494–511.

34 Mitchell, 214. An example being "the earth is the Lord's footstool."

who was to return one day. If all these observations are merited, then to understand that the Messiah would fulfill all these functions is ingrained in the intended, authorial composition of Zechariah 9–14. Further, what emerges is not a quad, or a triad, but rather five texts that form a chiastic pattern, with both thematic and lexical linkage between each other and earlier messianic passages in Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Psalms. Clearly, this compositional strategy demonstrates that the author wanted the reader to see and understand a precise theology of the Messiah. Also, between the first, third, and fifth units, we see an eschatological timeline. That is, that the Messiah would first come humbly, would be rejected and pierced, and then would return again one day as a conquering king. Hence, the first and second comings of the same Messiah are not originally a NT concept.[35]

Given the patterns demonstrated above, there is another possible conclusion that can be made. If the compositional arrangement of the twelve serves to highlight Zechariah 9–14, and the arrangement of 9–14 serves to highlight Zechariah 12:10, then we must ask, what is the author trying to communicate? Since we know that the call for a spiritual and ethical renewal surrounding chapters 9–14 anticipates that the answer will be found within it, and the climax of these chapters is found in Zechariah 12:10, it appears as if the author is trying to say, "Look to Zechariah 12:10 to discover the way to be spiritually cleansed and renewed." In other words, *the call is to look to the Messiah's piercing to find the source of spiritual cleansing*. Ironically, this is also the call of the gospel message in the New Testament.

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Rabbinical Views

Finally, as mentioned in the beginning, a brief summary of the earlier, rabbinical understanding of these Zecharian passages is in order. The Talmud and Midrash Rabbah both cite passages in Zechariah 9–14 as messianic and eschatological (Zech 9:9—*Sanh*. 99a; Zech 11:12—*Gen. Rab.* 98.9; Zech 12:10–12—*Sukkah* 52a). Midrashim of the first century link Gog's attack from Ezekiel 37 with Zechariah 12 and 14, showing that they understood them as eschatological (*Aggadat Mashiah* 26–30; *Asereth Melakhim* 4:14–15; *Pirqe Mashiah* 5:58–67). Further, the midrashim describe the figures of the quad as being the same eschatological Davidic king, who is stricken by God (*Gen. Rab.* 98.9; *Lam. Rab.* 2.2.4; *Otot* 7.19).[36]

Concerning Zechariah 12:10, as noted above, in *Sukkah* 52a there is rabbinic attestation that they knew this to be referring to the piercing of the Messiah. Also, they understood this piercing to be referring to a physical

35 Mitchell comes to a similar conclusion by observing the timeline in the arrangement of the Psalter, comparing it with Zechariah 9–14.

36 Ibid., 140, 148, 202.

death, not just an offense to God's heart. This can be proven by *Targum Zechariah* (which is also cited in the Talmud at *b. Meg.* 3a; and *b. Mek.* 28b) as it uses this passage midrashically to describe the death of King Josiah, who was killed by piercing in a battle (2 Kgs 22:14–25:21).[37]

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Conclusion

In summary, this study has hopefully made some contribution to a better understanding of the Messiah as seen in the compositional strategy of Zechariah. When combining this analysis of 9–14 with its place in the broader arrangement of the twelve, the intentionality becomes even more compelling. It goes to show that the author was genuinely interested in informing the reader of the theology of the Messiah. Most ironically, this messianic theology is exactly the same as that of the NT authors. This proves that they did not read these meanings into the Hebrew text, but rather saw what the authors wanted them to see. It is on this basis that they could confidently apply these texts to Jesus as their literal fulfillment.

37 Ibid., 204–05.

Mishkan, no. 64 (2010): 55–61

Circumcision and Jewish Identity

by **May Samuel-Whittington**

The provenance and identity of the Jewish people have been subjects of much scholarly research over the centuries, and their relationship to their Gentile neighbors is a complex one. The present study is an attempt to look at an old, but vital, subject, not necessarily with new evidence but, I hope, with a fresh approach to all the available sources that shed light on the history of Jewish-Christian relations. Specifically, I wish to explore one particular aspect of Jewish identity—namely, circumcision—which along with Sabbath and the dietary laws has formed the obvious, external, distinguishing features of Judaism.

Circumcision was established by God's covenant with Abraham as a sign of his election and that of his descendants (Gen 17:5–27). Jewish prophets[1] elaborated on the spirit of circumcision and exhorted the people to circumcise their hearts (Jer 4:4). Circumcision was seen as a metaphor for repentance (Deut 10:16; 30:6), and failure to obey the spirit of the law, while being circumcised in the flesh, would result in punishment of both Israelites and Gentiles (Jer 9:25–26). Although both the Law and the Prophets consistently upheld the need for circumcision, apart from these passages, the Bible as a whole does not regard circumcision as the essential mark of Jewish identity or a requirement for membership in the community. Circumcision was largely neglected during Hellenistic times as it was considered an abhorrent practice, but attained its original status and significance in the Maccabean times.[2]

1 Isaiah foretold of a time when only circumcised people would be allowed to enter the new city of Zion (Isa 52:1–2). This may have included people who were physically circumcised as well as those who were circumcised in the heart, as this was part of his prophecy of redemption (Isa 52:3), when the Lord returns to Zion (v. 8) and reveals salvation throughout the world (v. 10). Ezekiel also prophesied that only people who were circumcised in both the flesh and the heart could worship properly (Ezek 44:9). See also Jeremiah 4:4.

2 Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 52–53.

Circumcision, A Boundary Marker

Although it was practiced in many communities in the Mediterranean region[3] as part of a boy's passage into manhood, by the close of the first century B.C.E. it was regarded as a distinctly (though not exclusively) Jewish practice by the Greeks and Romans.[4] The uniqueness lay in their imposing circumcision on infants. The response to this custom ranged from neutrality[5] to open repugnance.[6]

For the Jewish male, circumcision was the primary external sign of the covenant between God and the Hebrew people (Gen 17:13),[7] and served as a permanent reminder of one's descent and religion. To the Greeks who believed in a sound mind and a sound body, circumcision was a barbaric mutilation, a sign of extreme crudity that marred the beauty of the human form.[8]

Conversion to Judaism entailed following the Jewish laws—notably circumcision, exclusive devotion to the God of the Jews, and integration into the Jewish community. Although Hellenism and Jewishness could be adopted by changing one's values and culture, Jewishness was essentially a religious term.[9] The outward manifestations of religious conversion were circumcision and the observance of the ancestral laws of Judaism.

The period from the Maccabees to Bar Kokhba not only witnessed the growth of political and literary hostility toward the Jews, but was also a time of admiration and reverence of many Jewish rituals and ideas. It was an age of conversion to Judaism as well as hatred of Judaism. Although Jews sought to keep themselves separate and distinct, they were also eager to receive Gentile converts into their fold. In fact, some of the litera-

3 Circumcision was well known as an Egyptian custom and was observed by Arabs, Syrians, Phoenicians, Colchians, and Ethiopians. Cf. E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 430–31.

4 See Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 49–59.

5 This is the view held by Timagenes, the Greco-Alexandrian historian of the first century B.C.E. For him, circumcision was the decisive step to incorporate members of a Gentile nation into the Jewish nation. See Josephus, *Ant.* 8.319 = GLAJJ, vol. 1, no. 81 (trans. R. Marcus, LCL).

6 Josephus recounts of Apion, the Greco-Alexandrian author, that he "derides the practice of circumcision." See Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.137.

7 According to Genesis 17:23–27, Abraham circumcised himself, his son Ishmael, and his entire male household as a visible covenant sign for all generations. Speaking to Abraham, God says, "I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and make nations of you. . . . I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages. . . . I will assign the land you sojourn on to you and to your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan. . . . You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. And throughout the generations, every male among you shall be circumcised at the age of eight days. . . . Thus shall My covenant be marked in your flesh as an everlasting covenant" (Gen 17:5–12).

8 It was so repugnant to the Greeks that even those simply born with a short foreskin would sometimes undergo epispasm (Celsus, *Med.,* 7.25).

9 Armstrong describes Jewishness as an "ethno-religious" identity, where the ethnic definition is supplemented, and not replaced, by the religious identity. Cf. John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Capitol Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 201–03.

ture of this period was motivated by a desire to discourage conversion to Judaism precisely because of the powerful attraction that Judaism held for many Gentiles.[10] Whether the Jews actively sought to convert the Romans to Judaism, or merely tried to introduce their customs into Rome with the intention of practicing them publicly, is a moot question. I personally favor the second possibility, as the Jews on the whole were not in a position of power, and any attempt at proselytizing might have incurred the wrath of the Roman authorities. Therefore, circumcision remained the single verifiable ritual of conversion by which a Gentile convert could be identified.[11]

The Early Church and Circumcision

The earliest believers in Jesus followed a high standard of legal observance (Acts 21:20), and living according to the law was a natural and appropriate way of life for Jews and Jewish Christians, with no conflict between observing the law and being a Christian.[12] They did not see themselves as having departed from Judaism, and as such viewed Jesus as the long awaited Messiah and incarnation of God. As long as the majority of the Christ believers were Jewish, there was no tension between their identity as believers "in Christ" and their Jewish identity, as they were all part of the Abrahamic covenant. After all, with the new covenant having been established with Jesus, Jewish believers were no longer bound by the Mosaic covenant as the Epistle to the Hebrews (and Galatians) establishes.

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Following the defeat of the first Jewish revolt and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., the main sects within Judaism perished. This left the Pharisees to compete with Christians for the heritage of pre-70 Judaism. While Christianity evolved into a community whose adherents were predominantly Gentile, Rabbinic Judaism took shape as a response to the failure of the first revolt and the destruction of the temple; its foundations had been laid by the Pharisees.[13] Once the number of Gentile believers began to grow and their numbers exceeded those of the Jewish believers, particularly in churches outside Israel, questions regarding their core identity began to surface. Moreover, false witnesses (Acts 6:6–13) accused the disciples of blaspheming against Moses and God. Stephen's criticism of the Sanhedrin for having uncircumcised hearts (Acts 7:51) and his subsequent martyrdom

10 Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 49.

11 Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 218.

12 Stephen G. Wilson, *Luke and the Law*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 50 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 114–15, 102.

13 James D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2006), 302.

(Acts 7) provoked a persecution of other leaders and their expulsion from Jerusalem (Acts 8:13).

Paul's extraordinary experience with Jesus on the Damascus road caused him to re-evaluate his view of salvation. God's Messiah asks him, as a Jew, to bring God's message to the Gentiles (Gal 1:13–16). Whereas previously, righteousness was assumed to be attained through meticulous observance of the law,[14] now for Paul, the subservience of Torah to faith in Jesus meant an undermining of the authority of ceremonial law. Paul says, "We ourselves who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified" (Gal 2:15–16). Both Jew and Gentile are made righteous by faith in Christ: "For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (Gal 6:15).

We see mounting tension in Jewish-Christian relations erupting in riots and agitation among the Jews in cities that both Peter and Paul visited. Although Luke attributes this to "jealousy" (Acts 5:17; 13:45), it is possible that Paul was accepting into the community Gentiles without the requirements of circumcision or adherence to Jewish law. He was proclaiming that this was indeed the messianic community, yet the vast majority of them were Gentile, with only a small nucleus of Jews. Whereas norms such as Sabbath observance and circumcision were what had distinguished the Jew from the non-Jew, Paul abandoned these in favor of the "law of Christ." In following the law of Christ or the Spirit, the believer was fulfilling the old covenant and the demands of the law of God. The new law "is not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor 3:6).

At the Jerusalem Conference (Gal 2:1–10; Acts 15:6–29),[15] the Jerusalem church,[16] led by James, decided to admit Gentiles without circumcision. They were held to standards that were more lenient as long as they abstained from eating blood and strangled animals[17] and refrained from sexual immorality. While Paul's mission was primarily (though not exclusively) to the Gentiles (Rom 1:5; 15:15–16),[18] and Peter's mission was to Jews, circumcision and Torah observance were not actively promoted by either of them as a prerequisite for justification (Acts 15:9–11; 1 Cor 7:18). There was mutual recognition and support of these two different missions.[19] Like many Jew-

14 It has to be noted that the Torah itself points to faith and not adherence to the law as the path to righteousness. Abraham was justified by faith (Gen 15:6; Rom 4).

15 It is said by some to have occurred in 50 C.E.

16 The Jerusalem church held a uniquely important and authoritative place in early Christianity. Paul, whose letters constitute the New Testament's primary sources, acknowledges the primacy and legitimacy of the Jerusalem church (1 Cor 11:16; 14:34; Gal 2:10; Rom 15:27, etc.).

17 These were part of the dietary laws in the Torah (Lev 17:10–14; Gen 9:4).

18 Cf. also Acts 9:15; 22:15; 26:17–18. In all these accounts, nothing is said about the law.

19 Craig C. Hill, "The Jerusalem Church," in *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered*, ed. Matt Jackson-McCabe (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 65–70. The controversy over the

ish communities, they welcomed both Jews and non-Jewish God-fearers, even if they did not fully subscribe to the discipline of the group. Overall, they were well integrated into the diversity of Jewish communities of the mid-first century C.E. Although there was much animosity between Jewish and Christian leaders (Acts 4:5; 5:17ff), believers in Jesus were perceived as a sect within Judaism that looked to the soon return of Jesus in glory. They never lost sight of their Jewish heritage, nor were they conscious of being anything other than Jews.

Waiving circumcision for Gentile salvation was not a startling statement, for there was a variety of opinion within the Jewish community concerning ritual observances and Gentile salvation, and Jewish Christians must have had a similar spectrum of opinion. What was radical was Paul's vision of a single new community of Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus who interacted freely.[20] He envisaged a community where the ritual distinction between Jew and Gentile within the Christian sect would be dismantled. In other words, he hoped that Gentile converts to Christianity would not be required to become Jews (proselytes) first, since that was the only way for Jewish Christians to eat with them, to celebrate the Eucharist, or to intermarry with them.

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Paul did not, however, repudiate the law (Rom 3:31; cf. Gal 3:21) or deny that the Jews were heirs to the promises, and he continued to regard himself as a Jew although he acknowledged the utter impotency of the law to give life (Gal 3:21). In fact, Paul regarded Christianity as the fulfillment of Judaism.[21] And circumcision is of value only if one obeys the law (Gal 5:3). He reiterates the temporality of the Mosaic law, now rendered defunct by the establishment of the new covenant. Those Jews who did not believe in Christ were not "in Christ."

The circumcision of Timothy was purely for expediency (cf. 1 Cor 10:23). He was circumcised not in order to be saved, but because he had a Jewish mother, and also in order to remove any obstacle to his witness to the Jews.[22]

Antioch incident (Gal 2:11–14, 15–21) and the Jerusalem Conference (Gal 2:1–10) give us an insight into the issues with which the early church grappled. Galatians was written in the early 50s in Ephesus (Claudia J. Setzer, *Jewish Responses to Early Christians: History and Polemics, 30–150 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 9–25.

20 Alan F. Segal, *Paul, the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 201–03.

21 Donald A. Hagner, "Paul's Quarrel with Judaism," *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993); Samuel Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 336. Sandmel notes that Paul considered his "new convictions . . . to be the true and sure version of Judaism." See also James D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), 148–49.

22 Christopher Rowland, *Christian Origins: An Account of the Setting and Character of the Most Important Messianic Sect of Judaism*, 1st ed. (London: SPCK, 1985), 234.

Jewish Revolts and Jewish Identity

According to James Dunn, the period between the two Jewish revolts (66–70 and 132–135) was crucial for the parting of the ways, but after the second revolt, the schism between the main bodies of Christianity and Judaism widened.[23] The crucial issue was the recognition of Bar Kokhba as the messiah. For Jewish Christians who were still loyal to the ideal of a Jewish state, this was a difficult choice. To choose Jesus and deny Bar Kokhba as their leader would have raised questions about their national identity. Justin alludes to this dilemma when he says, "Bar Kokhba, the leader of the revolt of the Jews, gave orders that Christians alone should be led to cruel punishments, unless they would deny Jesus Christ and utter blasphemy."[24] Furthermore, the defeat of the revolt widened the rift, increasing the sense of betrayal and antipathy on the part of Jews and the feeling of vindication and supremacy by Christians.

While Judaism and Christianity both experienced hostility, the struggle for survival produced a spirit of rivalry between the two communities. The church became predominantly Gentile in its composition and increasingly separated from its Jewish heritage. The Roman authorities upheld the rights of the Jews to practice their own laws and customs. These rights were, however, denied converts to Judaism. Roman citizens, or Samaritans who followed Jewish practices such as circumcision, were put to death on the charge of mutilating themselves against the prevailing laws and practicing what was permitted to Jews alone.[25] Christians, in contrast, were accorded a more favorable treatment.

The views on circumcision within Judaism and the salvation of Gentiles were not uniform, so the conflict within the Christian community was only a reflection of an "internal Jewish debate."[26] Rabbinic Judaism extolled the merits of circumcision[27] and classified it as a central pillar of the faith.

The uprisings, which were provoked by the prohibition of circumcision by Hadrian in the second century, demonstrated a determination to resist, even at the cost of life, any interference with the right to observe the fundamental precepts of Judaism, namely, the right to observe the Sab-

23 Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways*, 2nd ed., 317–18.

24 Justin, *Apol.* 1.31.6.

25 Antoninus Pius equated circumcision of non-Jews with castration, which was a criminal offence (Justin, *Dial.* 17.1). Cf. also Septimus Severus (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.15.19) and Justin, *Dial.* 5.1.9).

26 Gentiles might demonstrate their affection for Jews and Judaism in a number of different ways, but, according to rabbinic tradition, if they wished to be accepted into full membership in a Jewish community, they had to be circumcised. Even without circumcision, Gentiles were sometimes regarded as Jews, if they exclusively worshipped the Jewish God, or if they followed the Jewish Laws, but it does not imply integration into the Jewish community; Tannaitic texts take circumcision for granted as the vehicle for conversion. See Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 140–74, 218–19.

27 "'Great is circumcision, which is as weighty as all the mitzvoth of the Torah' (*Nedarim* 32b). 'Whosoever is circumcised will not suffer gehinnon' (*Tanchuma* 20). 'The Jewish people was saved by God thanks to the merit of circumcision' (*Yalkut Mishle* 964)" (Abraham P. Bloch, *The Biblical and Historical Background of Jewish Customs and Ceremonies* [Jersey, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1980], 9).

bath and the rite of circumcision. Hadrian's successor, Emperor Antoninus Pius, permitted the Jews to circumcise their sons; it meant that the general prohibition remained in place but the Jews were granted exemption.[28] Thereafter, throughout the Roman Empire, at least for the next century, circumcision remained a fairly secure sign of Jewishness.

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The history of Jewish believers is an interesting one, but with the Hellenic contextualization of the Christian message, life for them was difficult as they tried to conform to the prevailing culture without compromising the biblical faith of their ancestors. The key to having a balanced view of "Jewish identity" is to interpret cultural mores and practices from a biblical perspective. In all of this, the authority and interpretation of Scripture have to be paramount.

28 Amnon Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987).

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by **J. Ronald Blue**

Adam Sparks. *One of a Kind: The Relationship between Old and New Covenants as the Hermeneutical Key for Christian Theology of Religions.* Eugene, OR: Pickwick Papers, 2010, 325 pp., $39.00, paper.

Written in academic style from a strong reformed theology position, *One of a Kind* outlines the error of those who hold to "inclusivistic" views toward other religions or a "pluralism" that accepts all religions as equally legitimate. Adam Sparks is thoroughly biblical, cogent, and convincing in proving that Christ is the only way and that true salvation is found only in Him.

Carefully documented, this extensive study refutes vain attempts of the "Israel analogy" and "fulfillment model" to argue for salvation for those who have never heard of Christ or those of non-Christian religions. In part 1, "Israel in a Christian Theology of Religions," Sparks carefully reviews leading theologians from Roman Catholic, Protestant, and evangelical persuasions who advocate a more inclusive approach. Sparks states that he was unable to find any Orthodox theologians who employ the Israel analogy. To include Clark Pinnock as a reputable voice for evangelicals on this issue would be disputed by many.

A refreshing presentation of the continuing importance of Israel and the ongoing relationship of Jewish people in a covenant relationship with God in part 2, "Israel and the Church," proves that all varieties of "supersessionism" and "replacement theologies" are inadequate, especially in light of the clear teaching of Romans 9–11.

Any final doubts about the "wideness of God's mercy" are dispelled in part 3, "Critique of the Israel Analogy and Fulfillment Model." Biblical unity and continuity in "salvation history" is unequivocally centered in Christ.

Sparks devotes one entire chapter to advocate Covenant Theology. He states, "Reformed theology maintains that the relationship [between the Old and New Testaments] is marked by a prevailing continuity, and Dispensationalist theology emphasizes the elements of discontinuity" (p. 120). This statement is unwarranted. Balanced dispensationalists stress the unfolding drama of redemption as strongly as Reformed theologians.

This valuable study merits the attention of every theologian, church or missions leader, and any caring Christian. The academic dissertation style in which it is written may limit its audience, but *One of a Kind* is a needed voice in a world of increasingly fuzzy thinking about the state of those who have not come to saving faith in Christ.

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Benjamin D. Sommer. *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, xv+334 pp., $85.00, hardback.

by **Richard A. Robinson**

Benjamin Sommer is professor in Bible and Ancient Semitic Languages at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. His exploration in *The Bodies of God* is described on the back cover as "innovative," "illuminating," "audacious," and "original." Translation: Sommer has a stimulating and controversial proposal to bring to the table. "What I propose to show in this book is that the startling or bizarre idea in the Hebrew Bible is . . . not that God has a body—that is the standard notion of ancient Israelite theology—but rather, that God has many bodies located in sundry places in the world that God created" (p. 1). The bulk of the book is devoted to unpacking this thesis, with the final chapter devoted to implications relating to Christianity and Kabbalah, among other things.

Readers not familiar with rabbinic thinking may be equally startled to note that the basic idea of God's corporeality is not new in Jewish thinking. Marc Shapiro elsewhere cited a recollection of Adin Steinsaltz, of *The Steinsaltz Talmud* fame. This story, if true (Shapiro wonders), would testify to a belief in God's corporeality (that is, His bodily form), even in the twentieth century. Steinsaltz relates:

> When I was a young man I met someone in Israel who was at the time a very important political personality. We were talking, and he asked me, "Where does God put his legs?" For a moment I didn't understand. I thought he was joking, but he was asking this question seriously. When I tried to tell him that, as far as I knew, God has no legs, he told me that I did not know what I was talking about as a religious person, because his father truly believed that God has legs! I tried to remonstrate. I opened the Siddur and showed him that not only do we not believe that, but we should not: it is forbidden. He ended the conversation by telling me that he was very friendly with the *rosh yeshivah* of Mir and that he would warn him that there was a person in Jerusalem who should be destroyed![1]

The reason for the modern reader's surprise is that the idea that God is *non*-corporeal began to reign supreme in Jewish thinking beginning with the medieval Jewish philosophers. Their objections to God's embodiment had more to do with a philosophical outlook than with the text of the Hebrew Bible. "For Maimonides and other medieval Jewish philosophers (starting with Saadia Gaon), the denial of God's corporeality was a crucial aspect of monotheism; a God with a body was a God who could be divided, and for these philosophers the belief in a divisible God constituted what one might call internal polytheism" (p. 8).

However, what Sommer is suggesting is something more: that God's embodiment

1 Marc B. Shapiro, *The Limits of Orthodox Theology: Maimonides' Thirteen Principles Reappraised* (Oxford: Littmann Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004), 67.

could be construed as *fluid* in the Hebrew Bible. What this means is gradually clarified, beginning in chapter 1 ("Fluidity of Divine Embodiment and Selfhood: Mesopotamia and Canaan") through an examination of Ancient Near Eastern documents. This chapter will be the most heavy-going for the general reader, laden as it is with references to Canaanite and Babylonian gods and texts. But it is the foundation for what follows. And, to let the cat out of the bag, if you want to figure out what is going on in Genesis 18 with Abraham's three visitors, you will want to start with Sommer's first chapter.

In that chapter, he discusses two types of "fluidity" of the "divine selfhood" of Mesopotamian and northwest Semitic gods. The first he calls "fragmentation," whereby "there are several divinities with a single name who somehow are and are not the same deity" (p. 13). In the second type, we have "overlap of identity between gods who are usually discrete selves" (p. 16).

Following the discussion of fluidity, we hear about the "multiplicity of divine embodiment" among the same deities, whereby "a deity's presence was not limited to a single body; it could emerge simultaneously in several objects" (p. 19).

Finally, still in the foundational chapter, Sommer shows that similar conceptions did *not* prevail in classical Greece, though it was as polytheistic as Mesopotamia and Canaan. It is the project of the rest of the book to show that concepts of divine fluidity are to be found in monotheism as well, specifically within the Hebrew Bible. In other words, the phenomena we see in such biblical passages as Genesis 18 are not a by-product of polytheism, but cut across poly- and monotheistic societies—nor are they found in all of them.

Having laid the foundation, chapter 2 addresses "The Fluidity Model in Ancient Israel," and chapter 3, "The Rejection of the Fluidity Model in Ancient Israel." Here Sommer talks about what some would variously call "divergent theologies," "different emphases," or "conflicting traditions" within the Hebrew Bible, depending on where one stands on the critical-conservative spectrum. For his part, Sommer draws on the documentary approach to the Bible whereby strands of the text originated from various quarters traditionally labeled J, E, P (priestly), and D (Deuteronomy/Deuteronomic writings) respectively. Sommer finds that J and E preserve the concepts of fluidity, as seen in such passages as the mysterious Genesis 18 story (hardly the only example, but one familiar to many readers of this review). However, P and D reject that model, and their conception became the prevailing one until later rabbinic times when the earlier model re-emerged.

Whether or not one accepts the documentary hypothesis in any of its many variations really does not impinge on Sommer's point, which is that one can find various approaches to the fluidity concepts in the pages of Hebrew Scripture, whether one wants to attribute that variety to particular emphases or to divergent authors. In any event, Sommer has drawn our attention to distinctions in the fluidity concept in various parts of the Hebrew Bible; it is for the exegete and biblical theologian to compile the data into a coherent whole. (Interestingly, Sommer's answer to the question as to *why* a final redactor would let contradictory traditions stand is not because the redactor was incompetent, but in order to spark a discussion on the subject!)

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on "God's Bodies and Sacred Space," and how the competing conceptions of God's divine embodiment—God's presence in particular locations—plays out in the tent, the ark, the temple, and beyond. It is fascinating material, but let me move on to chapter 6, which explores the implications of what Sommer calls the "persistence" of the fluidity conceptions. This persistence is found in rabbinic litera-

ture, exemplified here (1) by rabbinic ideas of the *shekhinah*, (2) in Kabbalah and its ten *sefirot*, and finally (3) in Christianity. Here is where Sommer shows the congruence of the ideas of the Trinity and incarnation with ancient biblical ideas. I want to quote one paragraph in full from Sommer, because here is yet another opportunity for the reader, by now already startled by the ideas of God's embodiment and fluidity, to register surprise yet once again (emphasis is mine):

> This study forces a reevaluation of a common Jewish attitude toward Christianity. Some Jews regard Christianity's claim to be a monotheistic religion with grave suspicion, both because of the doctrine of the trinity (how can three equal one?) and because of Christianity's core belief that God took bodily form. What I have attempted to point out here is that *biblical Israel knew very similar doctrines*, and these doctrines did not disappear from Judaism after the biblical period. To be sure, Jews must repudiate many beliefs central to most forms of Christianity; these include a commitment to a person whom Judaism regards as a false messiah; the repudiation of the Sinai covenant to which God committed Godself and Israel eternally; the veto on the binding force of Jewish law; those aspects of Christian ethics that subjugate justice to victimhood; and the rejection of God's baffling but sovereign choice of a particular family and that family's descendants. No Jew sensitive to Judaism's own classical sources, however, can fault the theological model Christianity employs when it avows belief in a God who has an earthly body as well as a Holy Spirit and a heavenly manifestation, for that model, we have seen, is a perfectly Jewish one. A religion whose scripture contains the fluidity traditions, whose teachings emphasize the multiplicity of the *shekhinah*, and whose thinkers speak of the *sephirot* does not differ in its theological essentials from a religion that adores the triune God. Note that the Christian beliefs that Judaism rejects are not specifically theological in nature. The only significant theological difference between Judaism and Christianity lies not in the trinity or in the incarnation but in Christianity's revival of the notion of a dying and rising God, a category ancient Israel clearly rejects. (pp. 135–36)

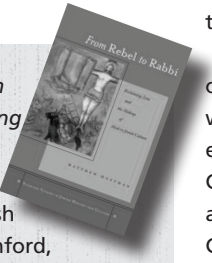
According to this view, the main differences between Judaism and Christianity, where the paths diverge, are *not* in the theological sphere of a triune God or a God who is incarnated, but in other areas, including the idea of a dying and rising god. It is, by the way, strange that Sommer makes this the dividing line, as the notion that Christianity borrowed from pagan dying-and-rising-gods is rather out of date; why does he not rather connect the conceptions of the Messiah's death and rising to Jewish ideas of atonement and resurrection? (Interestingly, Jewish author Michael Kogan in his recent book *Opening the Covenant* locates the dividing line between Judaism and Christianity somewhere else, namely, in the area of anthropology, that is, the doctrine of man, his innate goodness or lack of it, and ideas of original sin.)

This is a stimulating book. It is a heavily *textual* book, that is, it relies on a close reading of ancient Near Eastern and biblical texts to marshal its points. It draws, too, on general theories of religion such as those of Mircea Eliade. It is not specifically theological, and some questions remain unaddressed. For example, Sommer defines a "body" as "*something located in a particular place at a particular time, whatever its shape or substance*" (p. 2; italics his). How does this relate to a doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, whereby God presumably created space and time? Does God therefore "have"

a body? Or would it be more correct to say that He rather "reveals Himself" in bodily form(s)?

Also missing from the discussion, but very relevant, is the conception of the "one and the many" in Israel, as classically elaborated in H. Wheeler Robinson's *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel*. That doctrine, with the fluid back-and-forth between individuals and the group, would appear to have affinities at the level of human beings with the idea of the fluidity of God/gods—and has been an important element of some evangelical understandings of the Old Testament and of messianic prophecy, especially in the work of Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.

The Bodies of God is not bedtime reading, but neither is it "up in heaven, so that you have to ask, 'Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us?'" (Deut 30:12). It will greatly repay study.



Matthew Hoffman. *From Rebel to Rabbi: Reclaiming Jesus and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture*, Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007, x+292 pp., $60.00, cloth.

As I pen this review, a somewhat controversial exhibition is underway at the London Jewish Museum of Art's Ben Uri Gallery. The exhibition (running through September 19, 2010) is entitled "Cross Purposes: Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion" and includes works by both Jewish and non-Jewish painters. One critic, Benjamin Perl, complained that they should just call it a Christian museum. "From all the subjects from our heritage, why choose this?" he said in an interview. However, the *Jewish Chronicle* took on online poll, finding more supporters than naysayers. David Glasser, co-chair of the gallery, remarked that "what was considered as the most sacred and holy of images—the Crucifixion—has evolved into a universal and generic motif."

But why indeed? And why in a Jewish museum?

In his recent and timely book, Matthew Hoffman—assistant professor of Judaic Studies and History at Franklin & Marshall College—focuses specifically on the Jewish use of images of the crucified Jesus (the exhibition in London, on the other hand, includes works by non-Jews). Though the first chapter deals with the rather well-known story of the Jewish "reclamation" of Jesus as a Jew in Western Europe and America, the rest of the book covers territory less familiar to many. There, Hoffman focuses on modernist Yiddish literature of Eastern Europe, much of which is inaccessible to the non-Yiddish-reader, but some of which is translated in this volume. It is this part of the story that engaged me the most.

It indeed takes a book to describe the currents of Jewish life about which Hoffman writes. Especially in Eastern Europe, Jews embraced Jesus as a fellow-Jew, not in any Christian sense, but as a way to re-appropriate him from what Jews understood to be a Christian misinterpretation. Not a god, but a martyr. "Jesus," stated Chaim Zhitlovsky, founder of the early twentieth-century Yiddish socialist magazine *Dos naye leben* (The New Life), "was martyred as the first Jewish socialist revolutionary." On the other hand, embracing the Jewish Jesus was, at the same time, a way to share in the wider, non-Jewish world, for adding Jesus to the "canon" of Jewish personalities meant sharing in some aspect of European/Christian culture. Hoffman captures the dual nature of what was taking place: "Did establishing Jesus as a figure within the modernist Yiddish literary canon serve as a way for modern Jewish writers to *subvert* Christian cultural claims on the figure of Jesus? Or was it merely a way to *share* in these claims

as part of a broader cosmopolitan culture?" (p. 119; emphasis mine).

Either way, "for almost all modern Jewish writers Jesus' death is understood more within the Jewish tradition of martyrdom than the Christian tradition of vicarious atonement and sacrifice" (p. 125). He is "not . . . a redeemer, but . . . the archetypal victim of the world's cruelty" (p. 152). And particularly, I might add, of the world's cruelty toward the Jewish people.

In fact, in some poems it is the Jewish people, as a whole, who are forever crucified—forever a nation of "Christs."

> The blood that runs from the cross,
> Will run and run and cry in you,
> As it did a thousand years ago. (p. 151)
> — Moyshe Leyb Halpern,
> "A nakht"

Emma Lazarus, whose famous "New Colossus" poem emblazons the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, also wrote "The Crowing of the Red Cock," a vista of Jewish history read through Christ-like imagery:

> Where is the Hebrew fatherland?
> The folk of Christ is sore bestead;
> The Son of Man is bruised and banned,
> Nor finds whereon to lay his head.
> His cup is gall, his meat is tears,
> His Passion lasts a thousand years. (p. 177)

For yet other writers, there was another option for the "Jewish Jesus" besides being a martyr or an archetype of Jewish suffering and martyrdom:

> For writers like Kvitko, Grinberg, and Shneour (and they were by no means alone), when confronted with the calamities of Jewish history, the Jewish Jesus had two options: he could remain on the cross and let "skin-and-bone Jews" assume his mantle as supreme martyr, or he could come down from his cross to join his fellow Jews as a witness and partner in their pain and suffering. In both cases, these poets make clear that the passion of Jesus is an appropriate paradigm for understanding Jewish history. (p. 192)

This kind of "re-appropriation" of Jesus was, as Hoffman points out, often polemical: You Christians are the persecutors, and you use Jesus to justify your persecutions. But we Jews know Jesus was a Jew like us, and we know He was not Messiah or Son of God, but Martyr, Sufferer, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, suffering as we did. We take Him back as He really is, and subvert your Christianity! Yet in the midst of the polemics, there was the desire to connect with the larger European/Christian social world, a desire which could be realized by at once embracing the Christian symbols, and simultaneously de-baptizing them, as it were, back into the Jewish fold.

At once social commentary and "review of the arts," Hoffman's book opens a window onto a particular corner of Yiddish literature and painting. The output of these artists creates a figure in their own image (as is true of many other treatments of Jesus), but also conveys a muscular, in-your-face approach to the world, to suffering, to the meaning of Jewishness. It indeed raises the question, what then *is* a martyr? Someone who dies for a cause, the cause of their beliefs? Or perhaps someone who dies simply for being who they are, because the world cannot stand who they are? Messianic Jews, and the church at large, believe Jesus to be Messiah, Atoner, Suffering Servant, Son of Man, Son of God. "Martyr," on the other hand, is typically considered the mislabeling of those who see him (merely) as not outlasting his political moment.

But can we not step back and see if there is some truth to what these writers and painters had to say—even though they were quite often secular? Jesus was, of course, Jewish. He died for a cause, and His cause

was that of bringing atoning healing to the world. He died, too, because the world could not stand Him, just as for much of its history it could not stand the Jewish people. Moreover, Jesus is part and parcel of His people, the Jews. When people suffer, does not God suffer too? When Jewish people have suffered, has not the Jewish Jesus suffered too? Jesus *was* Martyr, but He was not Victim. The modernist Yiddish writers may have been, in some ways, closer to the truth than they knew. At any rate, the material Hoffman provides stands on its own as a portrait of a moment in Jewish cultural history.

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Shalom Goldman. *Zeal for Zion: Christians, Jews, and the Idea of the Promised Land*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 384 pp., $35.00, hardcover.

by **Jorge Quiñónez**

Zeal for Zion is the sort of book not encountered often, but which makes a significant impact on your understanding of history. Shalom Goldman, a professor of Hebrew and Middle Eastern Studies at Emory University, discusses American evangelical Protestants' early contribution to and involvement with Zionism. On the dust jacket is a quote from Stephen J. Whitfield of Brandeis University: "Who could have guessed that the Jewish people would attract such interesting friends? Some of the best were Christian champions of Zionism, and their lives and ideas are the subject of Shalom Goldman's absorbing, learned, elegant, and often surprising book."

Goldman chooses his primary sources carefully to weave a unified presentation of various important historical figures. In this review, I focus on two of these individuals who were most compelling to me, personally—Theodore Herzl and Hebert Danby.

It is sometimes difficult to understand how deeply-rooted anti-Semitism was in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The primary sources that Goldman calls upon, in order to flesh out the dealings Theodore Herzl had with the Christian "movers and shakers" of his time, are telling. Kaiser Wilhelm II is among the most notable that Goldman quotes extensively. Goldman says of his views:

> If [Jews] were to move to Palestine, the Tribe of Shem, instead of continuing to exploit Christians, "would be directed to worthier goals." Jews attracted to socialism, a threat to German imperial rule, will "move off to the east." The kaiser then moves to the theme of the Jews as killers of Jesus. Here he provides an interesting twist. God has punished the Jews for their alleged deicide; it is not the job of the German government to punish them. Despite this negative view of Jews, the kaiser sees anti-Semitism, a destabilizing social force, as a dangerous and "horrible" phenomenon. (p. 115)

Here is an example of what becomes a common theme in the book: Christians who have some very negative views of the Jewish people, and at the same time show some support, or even a positive opinion, of them. There is a term for this: *allosemitism*. This term was coined by Artur Sandauer, a Polish writer and literary critic of the twentieth century, and was later used by the Polish-Israeli sociologist Zygmunt Baumann.[1]

Allosemitism combines both positive (philo-Semitic) and negative (anti-Semitic) feelings, and provides a more realistic characterization of the attitudes of some toward Jews. Bauman noted it could encompass everything "from love and respect to outright condemnation and genocidal hatred."[2] The interplay between the Kaiser,

1 Alan Todd Levenson, "Missionary Protestants as Defenders and Detractors of Judaism: Franz Delitzsch and Hermann Strack," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 92:3–4 (2002): 383–420.

2 Ruth Ellen Gruber, "Allosemitism (noun)—Jews

Herzl, and other interested parties in the backroom deals and negotiations that were going on in the interest of the Zionist movement (on which Goldman focuses) never ceased to surprise me.

The other figure of tremendous interest is the English translator of the Mishnah, Herbert Danby, whose name may be familiar to many, but whose biography is not so well known. Danby, an Anglican clergyman and Hebraist, moved to British-occupied Palestine in 1919, at the age of thirty, to help the local Anglican bishop improve relations with the Jewish community. Danby would soon develop a relationship with Jewish scholars such as Joseph Klausner, a leading scholar and Hebrew literary figure.

Over the next two decades, Danby would translate the entire Mishnah and Klausner's controversial book on Jesus, *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times, and Teaching*,[3] into English. Over the course of time, Danby became an ardent Zionist and one of the leading non-Jewish Hebrew scholars in the world.

Like the translation of the Zohar by another Anglican priest, Paul Phillip Levertoff (who happened to be Jewish), which was also published in the same year (1933), Danby's translation of the Mishnah became the standard for more than a generation.[4] It is hard to imagine that Paul Levertoff, who is called a "leading twentieth-century Kabbalist" by Kenneth Rexroth in 1959, did not know Danby.[5]

Goldman also discusses Danby's Jewish missionary background, which only makes the story more interesting. While I found this one of the more fascinating chapters in the book, even the most jaded of Jewish history buffs will certainly find much of interest and significance in this volume.

as the perpetual 'other'," JewishJournal.com, http://www.jewishjournal.com/world/article/allosemitism_noun_jews_as_the_perpetual_other_20080807/ (accessed February 15, 2010).

3 Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times, and Teaching*, trans. Herbert Danby (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1929).

4 Jorge Quiñónez, "Paul Phillip Levertoff: Pioneering Hebrew Christian Scholar and Leader," *Mishkan*, no. 37 (2002): 21–34.

5 "The Hasidism of Martin Buber," Bureau of Public Secrets, http://www.bopsecrets.org/rexroth/buber.htm (accessed February 15, 2010).

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