

“As you know, the Jews were in Israel for around 1000 years before Jesus appeared. They had a definite concept of what the Messiah would be like—*there was a status quo regarding the nature of the Messiah*. The Christians appeared and introduced an entirely different¹¹ picture of what the Messiah would be like (son of God, God incarnate, born of virgin, two comings, etc.). Thus, *the Christians changed the status quo concept of the Messiah, and so the full burden of proof rests upon them*.”² Samuel Levine, *You Take Jesus, I'll Take God*

“The ancient rabbinical views are nearly 180 degrees in opposition to those of modern rabbis. However, the vast majority of modern Jews have never been taught the ancient views. An examination of those ancient writings reveals that *the messianic ‘status quo’ spoken of by Samuel Levine never existed*...The messianic beliefs found in the Talmud and the Midrashim represent the majority opinions of the various rabbinical academies. As we examine these views we will see that the Christian beliefs regarding the birth, character, mission and destiny of the Messiah are in most cases identical to those of the ancient rabbinical ones. Therefore, the ancient rabbinical beliefs were not changed but embraced by the Christians. *The burden of proof, therefore, rests on modern rabbinical scholarship to explain their radically different view of the Messiah!*”³

Mark Eastman, M.D., *The Search for Messiah*

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters...Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”⁴

The New Testament, Paul's second letter to Timothy

5

WHICH PROPHECIES DID JESUS FULFILL?

In our review of prophecy concerning Messiah's First Advent to Earth, we ask, “Are the rabbis presently lying to their people by claiming that Jesus is not the Messiah?” We see them studying and learning, day in and day out, in their yeshivas,⁵ deciphering cabbalistic codes and obscure hypotheses on what the Scriptures may mean here or

¹The renowned Finnish scholar, Risto Santala, eloquently illustrates that Levine's accusation is untrue when he says: “...in connection with these ‘twin’ psalms [80, 110], we have had to speak about the Messiah as the Son of God, and even about the Zohar's ‘mystery of the number three’ which is associated with these psalms, it is worth pointing out that such ideas, usually associated with Christian theology, are also a natural part of **older Judaism**. They are **not**, in other words, **mere creations** of the Church.” Risto Santala, *The Messiah in the Old Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, p. 21. [] and bold mine.

²Samuel Levine, *You Take Jesus, I'll Take God*. Los Angeles: Hamoroh Press, © 1980, p. 12, used by permission. Italics and underline mine.

³Mark Eastman, M.D., *The Search for the Messiah*, pp. 2-3. Italics and underline mine.

⁴II Timothy 3:1-2, 7 KJV.

⁵A *yeshiva* is a Jewish religious study school. In Hebrew, the word literally means “you sit,” as a student does in class.

may teach there. However, it seems that concerning *the Messiah*, they are for the most part, ever “learning but not able to come to the knowledge of the truth” concerning the prophecies Jesus fulfilled, as we will discover in this chapter.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE? THAT IS THE *MESSIANIC* QUESTION

One of the most startling aspects of the Bible is that it predicts hundreds of events which **later** in history became facts, as they actually occurred before our very eyes. Many are forthcoming and will occur in our lifetime. These events are the most exciting and will be reviewed in the latter chapters of this book.

Here, in this section, we are going to read about some very interesting events which, against all odds, were predicted to take place in the life of the Messiah. These events, foretold hundred of years before the fact, took place 2000 years ago in the life of a man known throughout history as Jesus of Nazareth who, by no small coincidence, made the monumental claim of being the Jewish Messiah.

THE MESSIAH’S CONCEPTION WAS PREDICTED TO BE SUPERNATURAL DESPITE THE RABBIS’ MISUNDERSTANDINGS

The first prediction,⁶ of course, concerns His conception. Amazingly, it was foreseen by the prophet Isaiah nearly seven centuries beforehand. This Messianic personality was to be brought forth from the womb of a virgin, as foretold in the biblical writings. The prophet penned these words: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14 NASB).

Two chapters later, he elaborates: “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this” (Isa. 9:6-7 NASB).

⁶For predictions prior to the birth of Jesus, such as His genealogies or Satan’s attempts to destroy the Messianic line (the attempted corruption of pure human lineage by creating a half-demon race through the Nephilim in Genesis 6 at the time of Noah), see our *Vol. II*, chapter 24, “Satanic Messianic Abortion—Jesus’ Messianic Genealogy.” This chapter also documents the rabbis’ attacks on His genealogy to be frivolous, even illustrating a passage from the Talmud which authenticates His required royal Davidic lineage.

Though these prophecies seem clear enough in both Hebrew and English, Rabbi Pinchas Stolper, in the book *The Real Messiah*, has the nerve to say: “Nowhere does the Bible predict that the Messiah will be born to a virgin. In fact, virgins never give birth anywhere in the Bible. The idea is to be found only in pagan mythology. To the Jewish mind, the very idea that G-d would plant a seed in a woman is unnecessary and unnatural. After all,—what is accomplished by this claim? What positive purpose does it serve?”⁷

OUR RABBI FRIEND’S QUESTION, SATISFACTORILY ANSWERED

In reply to the rabbi’s question, which is a legitimate one, we have an answer. Remember, earlier we demonstrated that man was once in a state of innocence in the garden, in perfect harmony with God. At one point in time, he was tested and he failed. This failure marred the perfect image of God in which he was made (Gen. 1-3), because he exercised his free will, given by God, to rebel against God. This was his right within the realm of freedom of choice given by our creator. However, it resulted in our fall from His grace.

Once in the fallen state, he could only reproduce descendants who also inherited this newly acquired sin nature, which is imperfect and the seed of all violence and death on our planet. Human nature is guilty, and of course, in no way can a person redeem or pay for another’s guilt—only their own—and that penalty is death and eternal judgment, according to the Bible. Thus, if the Messiah was to come into the world to be innocent and a guilt offering for all, He would have to bypass this *original sin nature* which has been passed down from generation to generation to all men since Adam, while still being a man. Thus, Genesis 3:15 said that the Messiah would be the “seed of woman,” not man. So if God created the miracle of allowing His Spirit to genetically replicate an ovum within the womb of a virgin, Jesus bypasses inherited sin as required! There is your reason.

⁷Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, *et al*, *The Real Messiah*, p. 45. From the chapter by Rabbi Pinchas Stolper entitled “Was Jesus the Messiah? Let’s Examine the Facts.”

THE DEEPER MEANING LIES IN THE QUESTION, “CAN GOD ACCOMPLISH THIS TO SERVE HIS PURPOSE?”

Now we have a true sinless redeemer without inherited original sin, not an impostor. Many have questioned how God can do such a thing. “No woman can have a child without a man, that story is a pagan fairytale for kids.” Nope, sorry—God can do anything He wants. If He has told us in advance that He will, certainly we can expect He will follow through.

The same Jewish rabbinic challengers, with whom I have debated in the past, had no qualms about greater miracles. One example is the miraculous birth of Isaac. His mother was over ninety years old. Israel came from the miracle child Isaac, who was born of a mother the Bible said had already long lost the “manner of women” in relation to child-bearing (Gen. 18:11). As a matter of fact, the very name that God requested Sarah give the boy, Isaac, means “laughter” in Hebrew. Sarah laughed when she was told she was going to have a son. She did not believe God until her belly began to show and it became obvious!

The Orthodox Jews have no objection to God making Adam from dirt. The very Hebrew word *Adama* means “red mud.” Where did man come from? Adam came from *Adama*, molded and breathed into by God. If Eve was made from the rib God removed from **Adam**, isn’t that a little harder than creating a baby from a full-grown woman? Of course! So we remind those critics that the miracle of Jesus’ supernatural birth is not out of the question and had a very specific important Messianic redemptive purpose and meaning! Any more questions, rabbi? We didn’t think so!

THE ARGUMENT OF INTERPRETATION VERSUS MISINTERPRETATION

In Gerald Sigal’s book, *The Jew and The Christian Missionary*, he argues that “Christians misinterpret and mistranslate” the Hebrew word for virgin. He says: “...but the Jews never believed, nor did their Holy Scriptures teach, that the Messiah would be born of a virgin.... Seeking to substantiate the Christian-pagan concoction, the early Christians searched the Jewish Scriptures for justification of their claim of a virgin birth. They seized upon the word *almah*, which they mistranslated in an attempt to give credence to their spurious claim that the birth of Jesus was foretold by the Bible. This contention has made Judaism and Christianity forever incompatible....”⁸

⁸Gerald Sigal, *The Jew and the Christian Missionary: A Jewish Response to Missionary Christianity*. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., © 1981, p. 20, used by permission.

However, nothing could be further from the truth. Moishe Rosen, founder and president of *Jews for Jesus*, answers the classical rabbinical objection in his book, *Y'shua, the Jewish Way to Say Jesus*. He tells us: "Matthew ties the virgin birth of Jesus to Isaiah 7:14, a passage that says, 'Therefore the LORD Himself shall give you a sign: behold, the young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel [God is with us].' The discussion focuses around whether the Hebrew term *almah*, employed here, should be properly translated 'young woman' or 'virgin'. Notice that the sign was to be not only the virgin birth, but the fact that God would be with us. You will not have to be a linguistics expert to understand the following points.

Usually, it is said that if Isaiah meant a virgin, he could have chosen another word, *bethulah*. But *bethulah*⁹ could be used of a married woman who was not a virgin, as in Joel 1:8. *Almah*, however, can be shown to mean a virgin in its six other uses in the Hebrew Bible [Genesis 24:43; Exodus 2:8; Psalm 68:26; Proverbs 30:19; Song of Songs 1:3; 6:8.] and when Jewish scholars rendered the Scriptures into Greek during the third and second centuries B.C.E., they translated *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 by the Greek term *parthenos*, which could be understood only as meaning 'virgin.' That translation represented the best understanding of that day."¹⁰

**"THE VIRGIN BIRTH IS JEWISH,"
SAYS PROFESSOR DAVID FLUSSER, PH.D.**

In dealing with Isaiah's prophecy which predicted that the Messiah would be born of a virgin, many have said, as you have read, "This is a false Christian concept!" However, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the Hebraically predicted manner in which the Messiah would enter the world, preceding His thirty-three-year career, is genuinely Jewish.

Risto Santala documents a spectacular phenomenon found in the order of Hebrew letters in the original text of Isaiah 9:6 which relates to the Messiah. Let's investigate in Hebrew. The closed *mem* (*mem* is the Hebrew letter for "m") is always used in the Bible at the end of a word.

⁹Gerald Sigal, in an attempt to evade the true meaning of this Hebrew word, writes: "According to some missionaries, proof that *betulah* does not necessarily always mean 'virgin' can also be derived from the fact that Genesis 24:16 uses the qualifying words 'neither had any man known her' in its description of Rebekah: 'And the maiden was very fair to look upon, a virgin [*betulah*], neither had any man known her.' Those who hold this view should read Rashi's commentary on this verse. Quoting from Bereshit Rabbah, Rashi states: 'A virgin': [This refers to] the place of virginity. 'Neither had any man known her.' [This refers to] an unnatural sexual act...." Ibid, p. 23. It goes without saying that Sigal's quotation of Rashi's commentary, "an unnatural act," proves nothing but desperation. In this passage, the Bible clearly pointed to a natural virginity.

¹⁰Moishe Rosen, *Y'shua, The Jewish Way to Say Jesus*. Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, © 1982, pp. 16-17, used by permission.

The only exception, where it is placed in the middle of a word, is in a prophecy in Isaiah which indicates the increase of the Messiah's government. That word לְמַרְבֵּה (*lemarbe*) meaning "to increase" should read לְמַרְבֵּה with the double underlined second letter (reading from right to left) of the word open, not closed, as you see in the first example which appears in the Hebrew Bible.

In order to understand the spectacular meaning of the closed *mem*, Santala consults one of the ancient rabbinical commentaries, he points out that: "*The zohar*^[11] on the other hand decides that the closed 'm' refers to the fact that the Messiah will be born from a 'closed womb'." Perhaps such things were in Professor David Flusser's mind when, on a visit to Finland in the summer of 1984, he was asked for his views on the New Testament's most difficult questions. Of the resurrection of Jesus he stated categorically: 'It is a historical fact... I was not there at the tomb myself, of course, but the resurrected Jesus did manifest himself to his disciples'....And the Virgin Birth? 'Nor does that go against Jewish thinking.'"¹²

11Israeli professor Yehudah Liebes mentions this closed *mem* in connection with the ancient rabbinical literature and Christological combined speculation. Delving a good bit deeper than Santala, he writes: "...the idea of the Messiah who splits open the closed womb of the Shekhina signified by the closed letter *Mem* developed in later Kabbalistic thinking—an idea which had its beginnings in the Zohar, in which Midrashic, Kabbalistic and Christological speculations were combined....This connection could easily have been made by interpreting the word *bara* in Genesis 1:1 according to its Aramaic rendering—son—especially if they utilized the statement of the rabbis discussed previously: 'In the beginning' (i.e., the word *bereshith*) is also a statement (by which God created the world).' This interpretation would have carried even more weight had Christians added to it the Talmudic passage which designated the closed final *mem* as a 'closed statement' along with their own understanding of this letter as representing the womb of the virgin, as mentioned above....parallel to the Sifra *di-Tseniutha*'s 'half a statement'—born of a closed womb, albeit the Christological connection between the closed *mem* as the womb and closed statement....After a lengthy discourse on these ideas, Neckam substantiates them by interpreting the various combinations of the Hebrew letters found in the word *bereshith* (in the beginning): *Ab* (father), *bar* (son), *esh* (fire = Holy Spirit) and *yesh* (existence). He even interprets the final letter *Tav* as signifying the cross, among other things." Yehudah Liebes, "Jewish Thought and Spirituality, Christian Influences in the Zohar," *Immanuel*, Winter 1983/84, © 1983, pp. 55-57, used by permission.

12Risto Santala, *The Messiah in the Old Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, p. 194.

THE HEBREW SIGN, WHICH PROVES THE MESSIAH IS DIVINE, DAZZLES MOST RABBIS

Richard Wurmbrand, an eighty-five-year-old Jew I had the great pleasure of meeting at the 1994 Messiah Conference in Pennsylvania, is a Holocaust survivor who was persecuted for being both a Jew and a believer in Jesus. Wurmbrand explained the significance of the *mem* in his book, *Christ on the Jewish Road*: “I must add that, generally speaking, I have found many rabbis very ill-prepared to answer our arguments. I once talked to one of the Berlin rabbis, who had fled to Rumania. I showed him the text in the ninth chapter of Isaiah, which foretells the coming into the world of the Messiah, declaring: ‘For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, ‘The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end...’ (Isa. 9:6-7). This passage contains an orthographical curiosity. In Hebrew, the letter M is written at the beginning and in the middle of a word with the sign, מ, and only at the end of a word as a closed square. This orthography is rigidly adhered to throughout the Old Testament, except in one particular case. In this verse, in the word *lemarbe* (increase), a final M, מ, appears in the middle of the word. This orthographical mistake has never been corrected. A final M, מ, which should occur only at the end of the word is written in the middle of one.

“I asked the rabbi if he could explain this, but he could give me no answer. I then told him of the Kabbalistic tradition, that Isaiah put a מ in the middle of the word, in order to show the reader who was destined to understand it that the Divine Child of whom this prophecy speaks would be born of the closed womb of a virgin.”¹³

OUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE MESSIAH’S FINAL MEM AND A RABBI IN JERUSALEM

This closed *mem* has undoubtedly caused trouble for more than a few. Since this is the only place in the Bible where a closed *mem* appears in the middle of a word, ancient rabbis have seen it as a secret divine symbol concerning the Messiah being born of a woman with a closed womb (a virgin).

A *mem soft* or “final” *mem*, by Hebrew linguistic rule must always appear in words ending in “m.” Only an **open mem** is allowed to be used in the middle or beginning of words. Most modern rabbis are unaware of the existence and meaning of this with regard to the ancient Hebrew mystical belief in the prophecy of the Messiah, until it is pointed out to them.

¹³Richard Wurmbrand, *Christ on the Jewish Road*, pp. 105-106.

When I was visiting in Jerusalem in 1988, I attended one of Samuel Golding's¹⁴ so-called anti-missionary meetings in order to punch a few holes in his arguments against believers. I brought up the fact that the closed *mem* was considered of Messianic significance in connection with the supernatural conception of the Messiah within ancient rabbinical folklore. Golding laughingly denied this and even tried to say that this *mem*, the Hebrew letter in question, was a *samech* (one of the Hebrew letters for "s").

A *samech*, ס, resembles a *mem* in its closed form but, of course, is not exactly the same. As you can see, the corners are rounded. In trying to disprove me, he asked "his rabbi" in the back of the room, who, to the immense embarrassment of Golding, confirmed that it was a *mem*.

Golding has criticized Christians in his book, *A Guide to the Misled*, for not knowing or taking time to study Hebrew. However, in this case, it turns out that he should take time to study Hebrew, doesn't it?¹⁵



Johann Kepler explains his model of planetary orbit to Rudolf II, as we will see the Messiah's birth was not only foreshadowed in Hebrew letters but also within the science of astronomy.

¹⁴Samuel Golding's true name, before it was changed, was Frank Waddington. His life-long story of having been an evangelical preacher who found out he was a Jew in the 1960's, is false. He was converted in Turkey. In the 1980's, he had the title *Rabbi* Shmuel Golding on his books. He was forced to remove it when the authorities found out he never was, nor is he now, a rabbi. We have copies in our file of both editions of this book entitled, *A Guide to the Misled*.

¹⁵I have this conversation in Golding's classroom recorded on videotape. If anyone is interested, they may write this author. Abba Hillel Silver says: "Already in Talmudic times this word with its closed *Mem* was regarded as holding Messianic meaning." Abba Hillel Silver, D.D., *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel*. New York: The MacMillan Company, © 1927, p. 97. Talmudic times can be as early as 200 BC.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 740 BC

כִּי־יֵלֵד יֶלֶד־לָנוּ בֶן נֶתַן־לָנוּ וְהָיָה הַמְּשָׁרָה עַל־שִׁכְמוֹ וְיִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ פֶּלֶא יוֹעִין אֶל גִּבּוֹר
אֲבִיעֶד שְׂר־שָׁלוֹם: לְמַרְבֵּה הַמְּשָׁרָה וְלִשְׁלוֹם אֵין־קֵץ עַל־כִּפּוֹר דָּוִד וְעַל־מַמְלַכְתּוֹ
לְהַכִּין אֹתָהּ וְלִסְעָדָהּ בַּמִּשְׁפָּט וּבְצֶדֶק קָה מַעֲתָהּ וְעַד־עוֹלָם קִנְיָתָּהּ יִהְיֶה צְבָאוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה־זֹאת:
יִשְׁעִיהָ מִזֶּה־וּ

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”

Isaiah 9:6-7 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“The prophet said to the house of David, For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and he shall receive the law upon him to keep it, and his name is called from eternity, Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Continuing for ever, the Messiah; for peace shall be multiplied upon us in his days.”¹⁶

Targum to Isaiah 9:6

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 63 AND 37 AD

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.” Jesus himself also said: “ ‘Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel’ ‘For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.’ ”

Luke 1:31-33 NASB; Matthew 19:28; 23:39 KJV

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“Jesus was *never called these names*; i.e., Wonderful, Prince of Peace, etc., even in the New Testament, and yet the verse says explicitly that the person referred to will be *called* those names. Furthermore, in desperation, the Christians say that Isaiah 9:6 refers to Isaiah 7:14. The absurdity of 7:14 referring to Jesus has been discussed before....How can this refer to Jesus—his government never began, let alone had any peace! If someone tells you that it refers to the second coming—well, by now, I think that you should be able to seek the weakness of that. Thus, this verse refers to someone, but surely not to Jesus....” In footnote 18, regarding names, Levine says: “...many Jewish commentaries translate the verse like this: ‘And the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father will call him (the boy that is born) the Prince of Peace.’ Thus, the verse does not say that the Prince of Peace will be another name for God.”

***You Take Jesus, I'll Take God*, by Samuel Levine, p. 54; © 1980. [] mine**

¹⁶Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol. III, p. 35.

AUTHOR'S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

With all due respect to Mr. Levine, we believe that if he is going to criticize Isaiah's Messianic prophecy using the New Testament, he should take the time to fully inform himself. Though Jesus may not have been called all these Messianic titles in the First Coming in His day, He is projected to be just who Isaiah proclaims in our near future, as the angel Gabriel in the New Testament book of Luke affirms to His mother, Miriam.¹⁷ Revelation 22:6 assures us that the Messianic Kingdom of Jesus will soon take place. Apparently, Levine knows this prophecy in question is about the Second Coming; otherwise, why would he have mentioned it? I assure you there is no "weakness" in that. For details, see our chapters 26-30 on the Second Coming. Jesus points out that His Messianic Kingdom was postponed because He was rejected. It will only begin when He is accepted by the Jews. Lastly, Levine mentions that Jewish commentaries retranslate this passage. We have not seen them and he does not go to the trouble to name them, if they exist. Even if they do, that would prove our point that certain rabbis covered up the Messianic prophecies. The Jewish Targum to Isaiah of ages past quoted above clearly refers this passage to the Messiah whom Jesus claimed to be (Luke 24:42; John 4:26, 14:10).

Philip Moore

A STAR IS BORN, IN MESSIAH, TO HERALD THE COMING OF THE PROMISED ONE

The prophecy of Numbers 24:17, which speaks of a star in connection with the Messiah, has a two-fold meaning. Throughout the ages, the rabbinical sages have written about a star (tri-planetary conjunction) appearing in the sky in the zone of the Pisces constellation near the time of the Messiah's birth. Dr. Alfred Edersheim, a renowned nineteenth century Bible scholar,¹⁸ confirms this point when he refers to a famous rabbi, Abarbanel, and his commentary. In his book, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Edersheim comments: "In his Commentary on Daniel that Rabbi [Abarbanel] laid it down, that the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation Pisces betokened not only the most important events, but referred especially to Israel....He further argues that, as that conjunction had taken place three years before the birth of Moses, which heralded the first deliverance of Israel, so it would also precede the birth of the Messiah, and the final deliverance of Israel."¹⁹

¹⁷This is the original Hebrew name of Jesus' mother, whom we know as Mary in English.

¹⁸Dr. Alfred Edersheim was a brilliant Jew who realized that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah.

¹⁹Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p. 211. [] mine.

A PERSONAL TRANSLATION OF ABARBANEL'S INSIGHT, HERETOFORE UNTRANSLATED, JUST FOR YOU

While studying Isaac Newton's handwritten theological manuscripts at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, this author made the acquaintance of "Dr. X," a high-ranking Hebrew University official who translated the passage. He later became apprehensive when he discovered my intent to publish this text and requested that I not mention his name under any circumstances.

"Dr. X" was the only person able to properly translate this due to his unique knowledge of astronomy and the technical terms involved therein. His interesting English translation reads as follows: "...because since the beginning of Creation until now, there have been only two conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces.^[20] The first occurred in the year 2365 [A.M.]^[21] when Israel was in Egypt, 3 years before the birth of Moses, that is, 83 years before his prophecy and miracles, the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and the giving of the Torah...Since both of them are conjunctions of the same type, namely grand conjunctions in the sign of Pisces, the second one will be like the first—the one that accompanied the Exodus from Egypt—in every way. Therefore, since the first conjunction indicated Israel's Exodus^[22] from exile to freedom, from slavery to redemption, and from lowliness to greatness and kingdom, and also wonders and miracles, the birth of Moses, and revenge from enemies—so also the second Israelite conjunction indicates for Israel prophecy, relief, salvation, and redemption, and there can be no doubt, the time of the birth of the man of God, our

20"Jupiter, Saturn and the Sun are all lined up in the sign of Pisces." This footnote is "Dr. X's" explanation to the layperson of the astronomical conjunction of which Abarbanel is speaking.

21A.M. stands for *anno mundi*—"from creation" (Latin: "in the year of the world").

22We note that Franklyn M. Branley, in his 1990 book *The Christmas Sky*, has commented concerning Pisces, Moses, the Exodus, conjunctions and the Jewish scholars: "Records of the planets tell us that there were three planets in the evening skies of the fall...and that these planets moved closer together as the months went by. The three planets were Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Saturn, in the constellation of Pisces, the fish...The Magi knew about the planets. They were astrologers, the astronomers of that time and place. They studied the planets, and they knew of their positions and their motions. They also knew that these three planets were in a constellation where centuries earlier, according to Jewish scholars, planets had appeared around the time of the birth of Moses. Moses was the prophet who was to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to the eastern borders of the Promised Land. Pisces was therefore considered the constellation of the Jews. The appearance of the planets in Pisces may have been a sign to the Magi that an event of great importance was occurring in the land of the Jews. The Star of Bethlehem might have been these three planets that had moved close together. They may have been the guide that the Wise Men followed to find the manger where Jesus was born." Franklyn M. Branley and Stephen Foster, *The Christmas Sky*. New York: Harper Collins, © 1966, 1990, pp. 43-44.

righteous Messiah, exalted from Abraham and higher than Moses and all according to its ways requires the conjunction to renew....”²³

**RABBI LIEVA OF PRAGUE AND THE BOOK
OF REVELATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT
AGREE—THE MESSIAH IS ALSO THE STAR**

Other rabbis have said, not only would there be a star in the sky at the time of the Messiah’s Coming, but, in fact, the star *is* the Messiah. Rabbi Lieva of Prague has said: “A STAR shall proceed out of Jacob, and there shall come a SCEPTRE in Israel. The KING MESSIAH is here spoken of as a STAR.”²⁴

The Targum Onkelos, a recognized ancient rabbinical commentary, makes this claim: “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but he is not near; when a king shall arise out of Jacob and be anointed the Messiah out of Israel. He shall slay the princes of Moab and reign over all mankind.”²⁵

Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, says that Jesus is in fact the star. Jesus says: “I, Jesus...am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star” (Rev. 22:16 NASB).



Johann Kepler, founder of Exact Modern Science, established Jesus’ birth through astronomical calculation.

²³Quoted from “Dr. X’s” handwritten translation for this author during his 1989 study at the Hebrew University.

²⁴F. Kenton Beshore, D.D., LL.D., Ph.D., *“The Messiah” of the Targums, Talmuds, and Rabbinical Writers*. Los Angeles, CA: World Bible Society, © 1971, chart 4, used by permission. Available through World Bible Society, Box 1, Los Angeles, CA, USA 90053.

²⁵Samson H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation, The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum*. Jerusalem: Hebrew Union College/Jewish Institute of Religion, © 1974, p. 21, used by permission.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 1452 BC

אֶרְאֶהוּ וְלֹא עֲתִידָה אֲשׁוּרְנוּ וְלֹא קָרוֹב דֶּרֶךְ כּוֹלֵב מִעֲקֵב וְגַם שְׁבֵט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וּמִחֲזִין פֶּאֶתִי
מִזֶּאֱב וְקָרָךְ כָּל-בְּנֵי-שֵׁת: במדבר כד:יז

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, And a scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth."

Numbers 24:17 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

"...a star will shoot out from the East, and at his head will be a staff of fire like a spear, and the Gentiles will say, 'This star is ours.' But it will not be so, but rather of Israel, as it is said, A *star has stepped out from Jacob* (Num. 24:17)." ²⁶

The Week of the Messiah Prayer

"Our rabbis have a tradition that in the week in which Messiah will be born, there will be a bright star in the east, which is the star of the Messiah." ²⁷

Pesikta Sotarta, Fol. 58, col. 1

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 37 AD

"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him.' "

Matthew 2:1-2 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

"...a whole mythology—mythology—was created around the persona of Jesus...and what you read about in the New Testament...from the three wise men ^[28] and all that kind of stuff—all **bubbameis**—all mythology. Beautiful, powerful stuff that obviously affects a billion souls in this world, but it's mythology." ²⁹

Rabbi Shalom Lewis, 1994

AUTHOR'S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

Rabbi Lewis' statement is careless, inflammatory and without foundation. Marco Polo recorded an interview with the descendants of those who remembered the wise men setting forth from Saveh, Persia! Modern scientific fact documents that astronomy confirms the appearance of this star (constellation and tri-planetary conjunction) at the time of Jesus' birth, as the scientist Johanas Kepler discovered. Dr. Edersheim notes: "Kepler, who was led to the discovery

²⁶George Wesley Buchanan, *Revelation and Redemption*. Dillsboro, NC: Western North Carolina Press, © 1978, p. 409, used by permission. Buchanan's source was *The Prayer, Secrets, and Mysteries of Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai*.

²⁷Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol. II, p. 129.

²⁸The "wise men" are the magi mentioned in the book of Matthew. A *bubbameis* is known in Yiddish as a "grandmother's tale." Though Rabbi Lewis referred to the wise men/magi as mythology in 1994, in December 1968, *Sky & Telescope* magazine noted: "Marco Polo reported passing through a small Persian village called Saveh, whose people told him that it was the town from which the Magi set forth...." Roger W. Sinnott, "Thoughts on the Star of Bethlehem," *Sky & Telescope*, Dec. 1968, p. 386. The New Testament mentions magi but not three. In our opinion, the rabbi should check out the text before he criticizes it.

²⁹Quoted from a personal tape of the 1994 seminar entitled, "Jesus: The Jewish Perspective," conducted at the Atlanta Jewish Community Center by Rabbi Shalom Lewis.

by observing a similar conjunction in 1603-4, also noticed, that when the three planets came into conjunction, a new, extraordinary, brilliant, and peculiarly colored evanescent star was visible between Jupiter and Saturn, and he suggested that a similar star had appeared under the same circumstances in the conjunction preceding the Nativity [birth of Jesus].³⁰

Philip Moore

THE SCIENTIST, KEPLER, TRACKS MARS, JUPITER AND SATURN OVER BETHLEHEM AT THE MESSIANIC BIRTH DATE

Alfred Edersheim has collected some startling facts surrounding the birth of Jesus and the Star of Bethlehem (star in the original biblical language refers to constellations, planets and celestial phenomena),³¹ which we read about in the New Testament and ancient rabbinical writings. Dr. Edersheim asks, “Did such a Star, then, really appear in the East....” His answer was: “Astronomically speaking...there can be no doubt that the most remarkable conjunction of the planets—that of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces, which occurs only once in 800 years—*did* take place no less than three times in the year 747 A.U.C....(in May, October and December). This conjunction is admitted by all astronomers. It was not only extraordinary, but presented the most brilliant spectacle in the night-sky, such as could not but attract the attention of all who watched the sidereal heavens, but especially of those who busied themselves with astrology. In the year following, that is, in 748 A.U.C., another planet, Mars, joined this conjunction. The merit of first discovering these facts...belongs to the great *Kepler*, who, accordingly, placed the Nativity of Christ....Kepler, who was led to the discovery by observing a similar conjunction in 1603-4, also noticed, that when the three planets came into conjunction, a new, extraordinary, brilliant, and peculiarly colored evanescent star was visible between Jupiter and Saturn, and he suggested that a similar star had appeared under the same circumstances in the conjunction preceding the Nativity [birth of Messiah].”³²

THE ANCIENT CHINESE AND THE ASTRONOMER GOLDSCHMIDT AGREE

Edersheim also points out: “In the astronomical tables of the Chinese...the appearance of an evanescent star was noted.....Moreover, it has been astronomically ascertained [by the astronomer, Dr.

³⁰Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p. 213. [] mine.

³¹Dr. Edersheim documents: “*Schleusner* has abundantly proved that the word ἀστὴρ, though primarily meaning a *star*, is also used for constellations, meteors, and comets—in short, has the widest application: ‘omne designare, quod aliquem splendorem habet et emittit’ (Lex. in N.T., t. i. pp. 390, 391).” Ibid, p. 204, footnote 2.

³²Ibid, pp. 212-213. [] mine.

Goldschmidt....],^[33] that such a sidereal apparition would be visible to those who left Jerusalem, and that it would point—almost seem to go before—in the direction of, and stand over, Bethlehem.”⁷³⁴

THE INTEREST OF THE ZOROASTRIAN PERSIAN MAGI IN THE MESSIAH'S STAR WAS INSPIRED BY THEIR LEADER, A STUDENT OF DANIEL

Why would magi,³⁵ who were, without a doubt, astrologers (Dan. 5:15),³⁶ be interested in the King of the Jews and the appearance of God's prophetic constellation at the designated time? We all know that astrology is strictly forbidden by the Bible (Deut. 18:10-12; Isa. 47:13). Interestingly, Matthew neither condones nor condemns this activity, but merely records the astrologers' inquiries, questions and answers, just as the book of Job in the Old Testament records Satan's conversation with God (Job 1:6-9, 12; 2:1-7).

Matthew, in recording the historic visit of these men, reaffirms both the existence of the star (constellation and tri-planetary conjunction) and the notion that it was a rabbinical tradition that such a phenomenon would signify the Coming of the Messiah. The fact that the constellation existed at that time was subsequently confirmed by the famous sixteenth century astronomer Kepler. Dr. Edersheim sheds light

33Ibid, p. 213. Edersheim's footnote 1 inserted into text with [].

34Ibid.

35The dictionary defines magi as: “1. the three wise men who paid homage to the infant Jesus. Matt. 2:1-12. 2. the class of Zoroastrian priests in ancient Media and Persia, reputed to possess supernatural powers.” *The Random House College Dictionary*, 1975 Edition, p. 804.

36Joseph Good enlightens us regarding magi: “The Greek ‘magi’ is taken from the Babylonian word ‘mag,’ which has a number of meanings. It is true that the word does mean ‘astrologer;’ however, this is not its only usage. The same word is used for scientist, counselor, or scholar.” Joseph Good, *Rosh HaShanah and the Messianic Kingdom to Come, A Messianic Jewish Interpretation of the Feast of Trumpets*. Port Arthur, TX: Hatikva Ministries, © 1989, p. 168. Available through Hatikva Ministries, POB 3125, Port Arthur, TX, USA 77643-3125. Rabbi Good is available at: Tel. (409) 724-7601. *The New Scofield Reference Bible* footnotes Matthew 2:1: “...there came **wise men** from the east to Jerusalem” with the following note: “(2:1) ‘Wise men’ is from the Greek *magoi*, a Persian word for men expert in the study of the stars. There is no evidence that these magi were only three in number or that they were kings. Their interest aroused by the star that signalized Christ's birth, they journeyed to Judæa to seek the newborn King of the Jews. They arrived some months after His birth. When Herod sent them to Bethlehem, the star reappeared and led them to the Christ child.” *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 993. Daniel identified the meaning of “wise men” in the Bible as he recorded his audience with King Belté-shaz'zar: “Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, *Art* thou that Daniel, which *art* of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods *is* in thee, and *that* light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. And now the wise *men*, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof” (Dan. 5:13-15 KJV).

on why astrologers would have been interested in Jesus, when he states: "...from about 120 B.C. to the sixth century of our era, the kings of *Yemen* professed the Jewish faith. For if, on the one hand, it seems unlikely, that Eastern magi would spontaneously connect a celestial phenomenon with the birth of a Jewish king, evidence will, on the other hand, be presented to connect the meaning attached to the appearance of 'the star' at that particular time with Jewish expectancy of the Messiah."³⁷

Thus, we can see why the magi were concerned about Jesus! They were apparently "half-converted" to Judaism, enough to realize the expected Messiah's arrival but not enough to have foregone the forbidden practice of astrology. Reverend Dr. D. James Kennedy has noted: "Tradition tells us that Zoroaster, the Persian religious leader, was a student of Daniel when he was in Babylon. He learned from him that a star would appear in the constellation Coma when that **One** whom it foretold was to be born."³⁸

The wise men might have, in a sense, professed Judaism, but were not necessarily accepted as orthodox practitioners of the pure faith. We have apostates or phonies today, which the New Testament predicted (Matt. 24:11; Mark 13:22; I John 4:1). They say they believe in Jesus, while they deny both His deity and His ultimate power to save.³⁹ We know these are not wise men, don't we?

KEPLER AND SANTALA EMPHASIZE THAT GOD USED THE STARS TO TELL EVERYONE, EVEN THE BABYLONIANS, THAT THE MESSIAH HAD COME

Interestingly enough, the astronomer Kepler has commented on why the magi were intrigued with the Star of Bethlehem: "I do not doubt but that God would have condescended to cater to the credulity of the Chaldeans."⁴⁰

My friend, Risto Santala, a Finnish Bible scholar, has recently pointed out: "The astral phenomenon which took place at that time was, however, with great probability, interpreted Messianically....*The symbolic relevance of the portent was clear to the people of that time.* The constellations of the zodiac were generally identified with different nations, Pisces, for example, being considered the patron constellation of...Palestine, and the revealer of the End Times. Saturn was associated with Palestine in Babylonian astrology, whereas Jupiter was the royal

³⁷Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, pp. 203-204.

³⁸Dr. D. James Kennedy, "The Gospel in the Stars," p. 7. See our *Vol. II*, chapter 30, "The Gospel in the Stars," where we reproduce Dr. Kennedy's interesting sermon nearly in its entirety. Bold mine.

³⁹See our *Vol. II*, chapter 4, "Cults, the Occult and the New Age."

⁴⁰John Mosley, *The Christmas Star*. Los Angeles: Griffith Observatory, © 1987, p. 39, used by permission. Available through Griffith Observatory, 2800 East Observatory Road, Los Angeles, CA, USA 90027.

planet, foreshadowing a political Golden Age. Thus, when Jupiter conjoined with Saturn in Pisces it was obvious that the Ruler of the End Times had been born in Palestine....This *coniunctio magna* [Grand Conjunction] lasted for nine months. In the first phase, from the 12th of April to the beginning of June, the planets drew gradually nearer to each other. A new conjunction began in the middle of July, fusing into a great brilliant star for ten days in the first weeks of October, perhaps at its brightest on the 3rd, the Great Day of Atonement. The third phase, in which the two planets receded from each other, began in the middle of November and lasted until the beginning of December. After this, in the beginning of January, Mars, the enemy of the Jews, drew near to both. The devout mind may well have seen this too as a portent of the persecution of the baby Jesus."⁴¹

Again, we emphasize that we are not endorsing astrology in any way, we are simply illustrating ancient Jewish Messianic beliefs and expectations as related by Matthew's account of the Star of Bethlehem. Further information on the stars and the Gospel of Jesus is included in our *Vol. II*, chapter 30, "The Gospel in the Stars," a sermon from Reverend D. James Kennedy. In this sermon, Kennedy expounds upon the true reason for the position of the stars in the night sky of that era; as they reveal God's plan and the Coming of His Messiah to redeem us. Astrologers have grossly perverted the sky's signs and the symbols God gave us (Gen. 1:14-16).

SKY & TELESCOPE CORROBORATES BABYLONIAN/JEWISH INTERCHANGE OF IDEAS, THE CONJUNCTIONS, AND THE VERY TOWN MARCO POLO FOUND

Is there any evidence or mention of the wise men of Persia and their quest for the Messiah, outside of the New Testament and the Hebrew Scriptures? Do historians note a Babylonian search for the Jewish king using His star? We are glad you asked! The reputable *Sky & Telescope* magazine reveals: "Marco Polo reported passing through a small Persian village called Saveh, whose people told him that it was the town from which the Magi set forth....If the Magi sighted a 'star,' why would they conclude that it marked the birth of a new king of the Jews? Babylonian and Jewish populations had been intermingled for years, so some interchange of ideas was inevitable....Babylonians conversant with Old Testament prophecies might have been greatly impressed by planetary conjunctions....Observing the long-awaited sign, the Wise Men would, perhaps, know to go to Bethlehem by the prophecy in *Micah* 5:2 (referred to in *Matthew* 2:5)....These two

⁴¹Risto Santala, *The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, pp. 83-84. [] mine.

conjunctions of the brightest planets could thus fit the story of the Star of Bethlehem....a highly unusual astronomical event in its own right.”⁴²



This illustration represents the constellation Pisces and the planets Mars, Saturn and Jupiter. The famed Rabbi Abarbanel said this planetary conjunction, which occurred at the birth of Moses, “must renew” at the Coming of the Messiah. This astral phenomenon is the “Star of Bethlehem,” which occurred at the Nativity of Jesus, as confirmed by the astronomer Johann Kepler. Illustration by Cathy Taibbi.

⁴²Roger W. Sinnott, “Thoughts on the Star of Bethlehem,” *Sky & Telescope*, Dec. 1968, p. 386.



If you desire to see the fascinating beauty of this constellation/conjunction recorded in Matthew 2:16, it is now possible to do so. Thanks to modern science, you can go back in time, so to speak, by visiting the planetarium. Above is a photograph of an astral reproduction of the 2000-year-old constellation of Pisces with the three planets, Mars, Saturn and Jupiter. This photograph was taken at the Fernbank Science Center planetarium in Atlanta, Georgia.

THE ONE WHOSE BIRTH WAS SIGNALLED BY THE STAR WAS TO BE BORN THE *SON OF GOD*!

More than once, I have been told by the rabbis that the Christian idea of a son of God is neither Jewish nor orthodox. One Jewish man even told me that he felt Islam was a closer kin to Judaism than Christianity. This is hard to understand, as an Arab in Israel once told me, “There is no ‘son of God,’ ” with a look of intense hate on his face.

I showed another Jewish person and a rabbi the Jewish Midrash Tehelim which says: “When the time of the advent of Messiah will be near, then the blessed God will say to him: With him I will make a new covenant. And this is the time when he will acknowledge him as his son, saying ‘This day have I begotten thee.’ ”

One of them hung his head in embarrassment and shame and the other evaded the topic by pleading another appointment. Before I showed them the Midrash, I asked what they thought of Psalm 2:7, which says: “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘Thou art My Son....’ ” (NASB).

One said, “I’ll need to see the original Hebrew”; the other said, “I’ll check it out, but more likely, it’s a Christian interpretation of a mistranslation.” I then pulled out the ancient Jewish commentary Midrash Tehelim, which is highly respected among Orthodox Jews. From our encounter, it became quite clear to me that the rabbis are not happy about the Messiah being the Son of God, especially when they see it illustrated in their own commentaries.

THE MESSIAH IS THE SON OF GOD, MUCH TO THE RABBIS’ DISMAY

Grant Jeffrey has also written and commented on his personal experience with the rabbis over this explosive issue. He relates: “In my discussions with orthodox rabbis and rabbinical students in Jerusalem, the conversation would often focus on Old Testament prophecies....The problem is that they have rejected Jesus partly because of their belief that the Messiah is not the Son of God but rather an anointed Messiah-King. In their understanding of the monotheism of the Old Testament, they believe that God could not have a ‘son.’ Despite the many verses in the Old Testament that refer to the concept of the Trinity, they see this as a contradiction....However, when I asked what would happen to Israel and the world to come when their Messiah-King became an old man and died, their reaction was pure astonishment. I explained, if they believed that the Messiah will not be the Son of God as Christians believe, but only an anointed human like King David, then He must die after seventy or so years. None of them had ever considered the fact of the death of their coming Messiah-

King. The tremendous expectations placed upon the Messianic Age could never be realized in just one lifetime of a normal, human king in Israel. Both the biblical prophecies and the Jewish teaching about the coming Messiah demand that the Messiah be more than just a man and that he must live forever to complete the transformation of all things in the Age of Redemption....Their understanding of Messiah's role is closer to Christians' understanding than they know."⁴³



"The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple,"
as depicted by Rembrandt in 1631.

43Grant R. Jeffrey, *Heaven...The Last Frontier*. New York: Bantam Books, © 1990, pp. 93-94, used by permission.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 1000 BC

אֶפְתָּה אֶל חֶק יְהוָה אֶמַר אֵלַי בְּנִי אַתָּה אֵלַי הַיּוֹם יִלְדֶּתִיךָ:
תְּהִלָּים בּוֹ:

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee.' " **Psalms 2:7 NASB**

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

"When the time of the advent of Messiah will be near, then the blessed God will say to him: With him I will make a new covenant. And this is the time when he will acknowledge him as his son, saying 'This day have I begotten thee.'"⁴⁴

Midrash Tehelim, fol. 3, col. 4

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 63 AD

"And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.' And Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.' "

Luke 1:30-35 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

"In the Christian missionary search for biblical proof of the belief in Jesus as the Son of God, proof has often been found where none exists by violating the integrity of the plain meaning of many scriptural passages. Prominent among these is Psalm 2:7, wherein it is stated: 'The Lord said to me: 'You are My son, this day I have begotten you'....Christian missionaries may argue that the references to sonship are typologies pointing to the existence of an actual divine sonship embodied in Jesus. But this argument is obviously based on purely subjective reasoning, with no facts from the Hebrew Scriptures to give it support. Psalm 2:7 could not at all refer to Jesus."

The Jew and the Christian Missionary,

by Gerald Sigal, p. 87; © 1981

"...any talk of the Messiah as being the 'son of G-d' is totally unacceptable. In no place do the Prophets say that he will be anything more than a remarkable leader and teacher."

The Real Messiah,

by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, et al, p. 14; 1976

AUTHOR'S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

Obviously, Mr. Sigal, with the guidance of Rabbi Bronznick, is wrong in his claim about Christian subjective reasoning and his statement that "Psalms 2:7 could not refer to Jesus." The Jewish commentary called the Midrash on Psalms clearly refers to this passage as Messianic! We suggest that Mr. Sigal and his rabbi brush up on their Midrashim. With all due respect, I must comment that Psalms 2:7 does refer to Jesus and that the statement by Mr. Sigal—

⁴⁴Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol. II, p. 129.

representative of modern rabbinic indifference and reluctance to admit Jesus' Messiahship—that the Christian interpretation violates the integrity of the plain meaning of Psalms 2:7, is false. We know that this statement is false because, contrary to his claim, the ancient Hebrew tradition, as documented in the Midrash Tehelim, affirms that Psalms 2:7 was counted among the prophecies the Messiah was to fulfill in the Hebrew Scriptures. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan maintains (in his chapter, “Why Aren't We Christians?” from *The Real Messiah*) that the Messiah will not be God's son and that any talk of such things is out of the question and out of line with the Jewish prophets. However, as you have read, the prophet King David expressly wrote in the volume of Psalms (which is part of the Christian Old Testament) that He would be just that, *God's son*. While some may try to claim that this is a Christian interpretation, we refer them to the Jewish commentary on this verse, which says God will acknowledge Him as His son, while quoting, “This day I have begotten thee,” from Psalms itself.

Philip Moore

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY

Mark Eastman, M.D., and Reverend Chuck Smith, in their book, *The Search for Messiah*, comment on the newly released Dead Sea Scroll fragment 4Q246, and give indisputable proof that the idea of the Son of God is an authentic ancient Jewish belief! They tell us: “The discovery and translation of the Dead Sea Scrolls has been a tremendous boost to our understanding of the beliefs and culture of the Jewish people during the First Century C.E. In the Fall of 1991 the remaining unpublished portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls were released to libraries around the world. A number of new fragments have come forth which have provided remarkable new insights regarding the messianic beliefs of the Qumran Jews during that period. The people of the Qumran community, the apparent writers of the scrolls, have been described as ‘religious end time zealots’ by some scholars, and as mainstream Jews by others. One thing is certain, they wrote extensively about the Messiah. Therefore, if the Messiah was believed to be the Son of God by ancient Jews, then it should not be surprising to find that belief expressed in the writings of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In fact, that is exactly what we find....[In] A portion of the Dead Sea Scrolls, called the ‘Son of God’ fragment 4Q246, we see an astonishing reference to a supernatural Messiah who is called the Son of God: *‘he shall be called the Son of the God; they will call him the Son of the Most High...He will judge the earth in righteousness...and every nation will bow down to him...with (God's) help he will make war, and...[God] will give all the peoples into his power.’* [45] The passage is filled with undeniable messianic images. The writer of this text believed that the Messiah would ‘judge the earth in righteousness’ and that the nations ‘will bow down to him.’ The text speaks not of multiple Messiah figures but of a *single* individual. This Messiah figure is triumphant and exalted and specially referred to as the ‘Son of God...Son of the Most High!’ His strength, accomplishments and character clearly reveal that he is not an ordinary man, but he was believed by these people to be a supernatural being. To find a messianic figure being called ‘the Son of God’, the ‘Son of the Most High’, by the Jewish believers in Qumran, is astonishing and conclusive! To them, the Messiah would be the Son of God!”⁴⁶

MICAH'S PREDICTED BIRTHPLACE FOR

⁴⁵The italicized information is from an article by Michael Wise and James Tabor, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Nov/Dec 1992.

GOD'S SON, WHO WOULD BE THE MESSIAH

Concerning the birthplace of Jesus, there is a beautiful and specific prediction, perhaps one of the most precise prophecies in the Bible, pinpointing the birth as occurring in the little town of Bethlehem. The prophecy states: "Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Beth-lehem Ephra-tah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:1-2 KJV).

One thing we should remember is that the Bible foretells very little about the birth of Jesus in comparison to the amount of details it reveals about His death for us, which was the reason for His birth!

The Scriptures foretell His humble birth in this small town, and the New Testament, over seven hundred years later, records the Star and shepherds appearing there at, and shortly after, His birth.

We learn from history that all Roman citizens and others were required to return to the town of their birth for the newly enacted tax census. Jesus' parents, Joseph and Mary, were both born in Bethlehem, and therefore, returned for the census. During their time there, Jesus was born!

MISCONCEPTIONS IN LATER TRADITION CONTRASTED WITH BIBLICAL FACT ABOUT THE BIRTH DATE

Christmas is not mentioned anywhere in the Old or New Testament of the Bible. It originated several hundred years after the birth of Jesus and is, in reality, of pagan origin.⁴⁷

The date of December twenty-fifth was set in the fourth century⁴⁸ and, according to Sir Isaac Newton's calculations, is inaccurate for the time of Jesus' birth! The greatest scientist ever to

46Mark Eastman, M.D., and Chuck Smith, *The Search For Messiah*, pp. 67-68. First [] mine.

47The Reverend Hislop reminds us: "That Christmas was originally a Pagan festival, is beyond all doubt. The time of the year, and the ceremonies with which it is still celebrated, prove its origin. In Egypt, the son of Isis, the Egyptian title for the queen of heaven, was born at this very time, 'about the time of the winter solstice.' The very name by which Christmas is popularly known among ourselves—Yule day—proves at once its Pagan and Babylonian origin. 'Yule' is the Chaldee name for an 'infant' or 'little child,' and as the 25th of December was called by our Pagan Anglo-Saxon ancestors, 'Yule-day,' or the 'Child's day,' and the night that preceded it, 'Mother-Night,' long before they came in contact with Christianity, that sufficiently proves its real character." Rev. Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*. England: A&C Black, Ltd., © 1916, pp. 93-94, used by permission.

48*The World Book Encyclopedia* says: "In A.D. 354, Bishop Liberius of Rome ordered the people to celebrate on December 25. He probably chose this date because the people of Rome already observed it as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birthday of the sun." *The World Book Encyclopedia*, 1970 Edition, p. 416.

live, according to all the authorities we have studied,⁴⁹ reveals: "...Luke tells us that when in circumcising Christ & purifying the virgin, they had performed all things according to the law (which was within forty days), they returned into Galilee to their own city Nazareth...Matthew acquaints us that they went first into Egypt & upon the death of Herod went from Egypt into Galilee to the city Nazareth whence...the time between the birth of Christ & death of Herod was very short....The Magi came to worship Christ while his parents stayed at Bethlehem in an inn & by consequence soon after his birth & Herod slew the children as soon as he found himself mocked of the wise men....And since Luke saith that when Christ was twelve years old he disputed in the temple at the Passover and only that he was about 30 years old when he was baptised...the death of Herod & a year and three-quarters before the vulgar era, will answer perfectly well to the Scriptures & to Josephus. Then might shepherds be able to watch their flocks all night in the fields, & then might the Jews go conveniently out of all Judea to Jerusalem....if any man had rather suppose that Christ was born at Christmas preceding; I might reply that Christmas was instituted in the room of a heathen festival & so is of no authority for determining the time: but I had rather say that the difference of three months in time is a nicety not worth disputing about."⁵⁰

Frank Manuel, commenting on Newton's calculation, says that Newton wrote and calculated "through a meticulous historical reconstruction of the times,"⁵¹ that Christ was not born on Christmas Day, which was a "pagan festival."⁵² By the way, Newton would have had nothing to lose by accepting the idea of Christmas, if it were true, for Newton himself was born on December 25, 1642.

"CHRISTMAS" IS A NICE IDEA, BUT IS IT JEWISH OR BIBLICAL?

The Bible details the true Hebraic traditions and circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus, which further identify Him as the Messiah. Although we may enjoy the Christmas tree with which many of us were raised, the biblical prophet Jeremiah says: "For the customs of the people *are* vain: for *one* cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not" (Jer. 10:3-4 KJV).

We born-again seekers of truth, including Messianic Jewish believers, may enjoy these traditions but we should not get too attached

⁴⁹In regard to Sir Isaac Newton's unsurpassed scientific credentials and reputation, see our footnote 2 in chapter 3, "Two Messiahs?"

⁵⁰*Yahuda Manuscript 25:20-21.*

⁵¹Frank Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton*, p. 62.

⁵²*Ibid.*

to them. The important thing is not celebrating His birth, giving gifts⁵³ or hanging balls and lights on a dead tree, or celebrating the twenty-fifth day of a Roman Julian calendar,⁵⁴ but rather realizing that He was born for us, to give His life for us⁵⁵ and to one day return as King to give us His Kingdom, where we will live forever in happiness with each other.

Neither Jesus nor the Old Testament ever told us to celebrate His birth. Rather Jesus told Pilate: "... I am a King [i.e., the Messiah]. To this end was I **born**...." (John 18:37 KJV; [] mine).

Jesus Himself asks that we celebrate the Last Supper or Passover in the form of communion (Luke 22:19-20) to signify His death until He returns, in remembrance of Him as our Passover lamb. Remember the New Testament words of Jesus: "...this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19 KJV). Paul wrote: "...Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let **us keep** the feast...." (I Cor. 5:7-8 KJV).

THE TRUE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS SURROUNDING THE BIRTH OF JESUS ACCORDING TO JEWISH TRADITION, THE NEW TESTAMENT, JOSEPHUS AND AN ECLIPSE!

Jesus was born during a shortage of hotel rooms in Jerusalem (Luke 2:7). He was taken to Egypt for protection during the time when King Herod was murdering male children (Matt. 2:13-15). He was brought back to Jerusalem after Herod died but in time to be dedicated in the Temple. According to Jewish law, this time of dedication had to be within forty days of birth (Lev. 12:2-4). In the New Testament, Luke speaks specifically of this: "And when eight days were completed before His circumcision, His name was *then* called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is **written** in the **Law of the Lord**, 'EVERY *first-born*

⁵³The wise men gave gifts to Jesus, not to each other.

⁵⁴Jesus celebrated Hanukkah, "the feast of the dedication" (John 10:22 KJV), also known as the Festival of Lights, at about this time of year. Could this day also have a Messianic meaning, since Jesus is the "light of the world" as John recorded? Isaiah wrote: "The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them....I will also make You a light of the nations...." (Isa. 9:2; 49:6 NASB). As you will see in our next paragraph, December twenty-fifth is an absolute impossibility for the birth of the Messiah according to the historian, Josephus, and critical date computations found in the New Testament.

⁵⁵"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45 KJV).

MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD'), and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord...." (Luke 2:21-24 NASB). Thus, if we can establish the time of Herod's death (alive at Jesus' birth [Matthew 2] and dead before His dedication), we will discover the season of the birth of the Messiah. The Jewish historian, Josephus, based on an eclipse, which occurred on March 13, 4 B.C. calculates Herod's death and places it in late October.⁵⁶ Thus, Jesus had to have been born before mid-October in order to be taken to Egypt and brought back in time to be dedicated at the Temple. This would place the birth of Jesus during the Jewish feasts of Yom Kippur and Sukkot, which occur within five days of each other.

During these holy days, Jerusalem would overflow, creating a situation in which there would not be enough room for Mary and Joseph in the inn (Luke 2). What an appropriate time for His birth; Yom Kippur in Hebrew means "the day of atonement," which He said He was born to be (Mark 10:45).

The very word manger, in which He was born, in Hebrew means "booth" or *Sukkah* (Genesis 33:17; Luke 2:7). The feast of Sukkot ("booths") symbolizes that we leave our comfortable places and dwell in humble abodes. Today, when the Jews celebrate Sukkot in Israel, untold numbers of booths are constructed in their yards. Many Orthodox Israeli Jews not only eat in them but also sleep in them all week.

Jesus left Heaven to **tabernacle** among men (Hebrews 9:11; Revelation 21:3). According to the prophet Zechariah (14:16-21), all nations will observe this feast during the millenium. This pre-mid-October date confirms Kepler's calculation of three planets coming together in a grand conjunction over Bethlehem to form the Star of Bethlehem.

In our opinion, if the world wants to celebrate "Christmas," which is not mentioned anywhere in the New Testament, they should celebrate these feasts with Israel and remember that the Jewish Messiah Jesus was born in Bethlehem during these feasts.⁵⁷ In Hebrew, *bait-lehem* means "house of bread." Jesus once said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:48 NASB).

The Reverend Alexander Hislop notes: "Gill, in his *Commentary* on Luke ii. 8, has the following....'.....From whence it appears that

Christ must be born before the middle of October, since the first rain was not yet come'.....there is no doubt that it could not be later than

⁵⁶Joseph Good, *Rosh HaShanah and the Messianic Kingdom to Come, A Messianic Jewish Interpretation of the Feast of Trumpets*, pp. 172-173.

⁵⁷For a fuller, more in-depth study of the true time of the birth of Jesus, using the Jewish priestly courses in force during first century Judaism as documented in the New Testament, see Luke 1:5, 8. Also see appendix 1, *Ibid*.

there stated, according to the testimony of Maimonides, whose acquaintance with all that concerns Jewish customs is well known.’ ”⁵⁸



The view from a tower in the town of Bethlehem where the most famous king in history was born. Upon Jesus’ return, we will experience an ultimate kingdom over all the nations ruled from Israel by the only one who loves us all (Micah 5:2). In the Bible, Zechariah and David teach us of this time: “And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion *shall be* from sea *even* to sea, and from the river *even* to the ends of the earth” (Zechariah 9:10 KJV). And: “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts....His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and *men* shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed” (King David/Psalm 72:8-10, 17 KJV).

STARTLING REVELATIONS ABOUT CHRISTMAS AND THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Ralph Woodrow sheds light on facts everyone should know about the birth of Jesus and its relation to Christmas. “The early Christians commemorated the *death* of Christ (1 Cor. 11:26), not his birth. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says, ‘Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church. Irenaeus and Tertullian omit it from their lists of feasts.’ Later, when churches at various places did begin celebrating the birthday of Christ, there was much difference of opinion as to the correct date. It was not until the latter part of the fourth

⁵⁸Rev. Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, pp. 91-92.

century before the Roman church began observing December 25th. Yet, by the fifth century, it was ordering that the birth of Christ be forever observed on this date, even though this was the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol, one of the names of the sun-god!

Says Frazer, ‘The largest pagan religious cult which fostered the celebration of December 25 as a holiday throughout the Roman and Greek worlds was the pagan sun worship—Mithraism...This winter festival was called ‘the Nativity’—the ‘Nativity of the SUN’.’ Was this pagan festival responsible for the December 25 day being chosen by the Roman Church? We will let *The Catholic Encyclopedia* answer. ‘The well-known *solar* feast of *Natalis Invicti*’—the Nativity of the Unconquered Sun—‘celebrated on 25 December, *has a strong claim on the responsibility for our December date*’⁵⁹

The Bible tells us not to add to God’s commandments, which, of course, include holy days and celebrations: “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it” (Deut. 12:32 KJV).

JESUS WAS BORN *BEFORE* CHRISTMAS, BECAUSE THE SHEPHERDS BRING IN THEIR SHEEP BEFORE DECEMBER

Apparently, early American Christians realized the gravity of this statement in the fifth book of the Bible, because they enacted laws forbidding the observance of Christmas. “In Massachusetts, the following became law in 1659. *Whosoever shall be found observing Christmas, either by forbearing of labor, feasting, or any other way, every such person shall pay as a fine five shillings to the county.*”⁶⁰

Regarding the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the New Testament reads: “...there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field...” (Luke 2:8 KJV).

Shepherds, who still pasture their sheep in Bethlehem (as I have personally observed, having lived in Israel during eight Christmas seasons), have never been seen herding sheep in December, the middle of winter. A somewhat popular Christian commentator, Adam Clark, has written: “...our Lord was not born on the 25th of December, when no flocks were out in the fields...On this very ground the nativity in December should be given up.”⁶¹

⁵⁹Ralph Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion*. Riverside, CA: Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association, Inc., © 1966, p. 151, used by permission.

⁶⁰John Mosley, *The Christmas Star*, p. 69.

⁶¹Ralph Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion*, p. 149. Woodrow’s source was *Clark’s Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 370, “Luke.”

The only part of *The Real Messiah*, an anti-missionary book we have quoted, that we do not differ with, are the lines by Pinchas Stolper which point out: “What reason can Christians give for not celebrating Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur which are clearly spelled out in the Torah?...Christmas and Easter are not mentioned in either the Jewish Bible or the Christian ‘New Testament,’—these festivals are pagan in origin, adapted for Christian use. But Pesach, Sukkos and Shavuot are clearly spoken of in the Bible. On top of which, Jesus nowhere requests that the Biblical festivals no longer be observed.”⁶²

Finally, Stolper got something right. As the apostle Paul noted earlier: “...let us keep the Feast....” (I Cor. 5:8 KJV). What feast? The Jewish feasts, emphasizing their Messianic fulfillments and meanings. It is my prayer that believers who read these lines will get Zola Levitt’s books on the feasts and start keeping them in their churches. What a testimony to our Jewish friends this would be. No doubt, many would find the Lord through this! And that’s what it’s all **about**, isn’t it?

BETHLEHEM WAS THE PLACE WHERE THE HEBREW PROPHET, MICAH, PREDICTED DEITY WOULD TAKE UP HUMAN RESIDENCE

Back to the future Bethlehem of Micah’s prophecy. One of the interesting points about this prophecy of Bethlehem, which is often overlooked, is the fact that it points to the pre-existence of the Messiah: “...whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from **everlasting**” (Micah 5:2 KJV; bold mine).

Since only God is everlasting, this prophecy indirectly affirms the deity of Jesus. Thus, the Messiah is foretold as being God—something no modern day rabbi wants to admit!

In connection with this prophecy made by Micah some seven hundred years prior to the birth of Jesus and its fulfillment in the New Testament, we find in the Gospel of Matthew, the first of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament (covenant), the prophet Micah quoted verbatim! The quote is made in reference to Herod’s inquisition of the Hebrew scribes concerning the birthplace of the promised Jewish Messiah. The scribes’ answer, as quoted by the apostle Matthew, was recorded as follows: “And they [the scribes] said unto him [Herod], In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel” (Matt. 2:5-6 KJV; [] mine).

⁶²Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, *et al*, *The Real Messiah*, pp. 47-48. Quoted from Rabbi Pinchas Stolper’s chapter entitled “Was Jesus the Messiah? Let’s Examine the Facts.” *Pesach*, *Sukkos* and *Shavuot* are Hebraic English renderings of Passover and the other Jewish feasts.

HEROD'S PREDICTED HOLOCAUST AND JESUS' ESCAPE— VERIFIED BY ANCIENT EGYPTIAN RECORDS

As a result of their answer, King Herod murdered all male children—two years old and younger—to prevent the arrival of the Jewish king and preclude a challenge to his own rule (Matt. 2:16; predicted in Jer. 31:15).⁶³

It was only after God warned Joseph in a dream that he took his stepson to Egypt, thus avoiding Jesus' death in the massacre. Egyptian

⁶³Gerald Sigal, in his anti-missionary treatise, *The Jew and the Christian Missionary*, comments on Matthew's quotation of Jeremiah's words. We believe the words of Jeremiah had both a prophetic and historic meaning. Sigal states: "Eager to show fulfillment of prophecy in the life of Jesus, Matthew refers to Jeremiah 31:15 as a proof-text that Rachel wept for the allegedly slain children of Bethlehem....However, an examination of this quotation within its biblical context plainly shows us that it does not refer to slain, but rather to captive children....This is the substance of which New Testament fulfillment of prophecy is made. Let the believer beware." Gerald Sigal, *The Jew and the Christian Missionary*, pp. 189-190. However, Norman Golb, an unsurpassed scholar holding the Rosenberger Chair in Jewish History and Civilization at the University of Chicago, demonstrates the ignorance of statements like Sigal's in his book published fourteen years after Sigal's. This method of relating past events to present events was not unique to the writers of the New Testament. It was a literary communication device used by Jews who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls *before* the New Testament was penned. Golb points out: "While nothing like the scriptural commentaries, i.e., the *pesharim*, appears in the New Testament, the same general understanding of the nature of the Jewish scriptures and use of its prophecies is found both there and in the scrolls. The way that New Testament texts—especially the Gospels—use those scriptures had for a long time been a puzzle to scholars....A famous example is Matthew 2.18, where, in connection with the birth of Jesus and the flight to Egypt, Herod's 'slaughter of the innocents' is said to fulfill Jeremiah 31.15, 'A voice was heard in Ramah...Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.' In the context of Jeremiah, the prophecy refers uniquely to the Babylonian Exile. This practice has led more than one reader of the Gospels to accuse the evangelists of misappropriation or even deliberate deception. In the scrolls, however, we find that the same procedure was followed by the biblical interpreters who authored the *pesharim*. The authors of these texts drew passages from the prophets out of their contexts and applied them to events in the immediate past or future—events that they believed had eschatological significance. Thus, the New Testament authors were using a method of argumentation and interpretation that would have been quite familiar to at least a portion of their Jewish audience. The early midrashists of rabbinic Judaism would themselves build upon this method, which must have been popular not only among members of the *Yahad* movement but also among many Jewish authors in intertestamental times...." Norman Golb, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls? The Search for the Secret of Qumran*. New York: reprinted with the permission of Scribner, a Division of Simon & Schuster, © 1995, pp. 374-375.

records,⁶⁴ even today, reveal “the holy family of Jesus” spent a short time there during the Bethlehem peril.



My friend Rachel (left) weeps at Rachel’s tomb in Bethlehem. The New Testament quotes Rachel’s lament for her children, as a foresight to Herod’s holocaust.

⁶⁴During my 1987 tour of Israel, Petra and Sinai, Egypt, the Egyptian tour guide on the bus quoted several historical Egyptian records and writings which referred to what she called “the holy family of Jesus” being in Egypt at this designated period. I was rather impressed that she volunteered such detailed information with such empathy, since she was a Moslem. However, someone told me that in keeping with historical accuracy, a tour guide is more or less bound by professional honor to tell the truth concerning documented historical events.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 710 BC

וְאַתָּה בֵּית־לְחֶם אֶפְרַתָּה צָעִיר לְהַיּוֹת בְּאַלְפֵי יְהוּדָה מִמֶּךָ לִי יֵצֵא לְהַיּוֹת מוֹשֵׁל בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
וּמִצְאָתָיו מִקֶּדֶם מִימֵי עוֹלָם: מִיכָה הָא:

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.”

Micah 5:2 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“And you, O Bethlehem Ephrath, you who were too small to be numbered among the thousands of the house of Judah, from you shall come forth before Me the Messiah, to exercise dominion over Israel, he whose name was mentioned from before, from the days of creation.”⁶⁵

Targum Jonathan

“ ‘Son of Judah, Judean! Tie your ox and tie your plow, for the King Messiah has been born!’He asked him: ‘From where is he?’ He answered: ‘From the royal fort of Bethlehem in Judah.’ ”⁶⁶

The Jerusalem Talmud, Berachoth, fol. 5a

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 63 AD

“Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Luke 2:1-7 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“...there is one more verse on the divinity of the Messiah which serves double duty by demonstrating his birth in Bethlehem as well. (Micah 5:1 = 5:2 in some translations). The Christological translation of the last phrase (*miqedem mimei 'olam*) is ‘of old, from everlasting,’ which demonstrates that this ruler is eternal and hence divine. But aside from the almost immediate reference to ‘the Lord his God,’ we are once again dealing with a mistranslation...according to the most probable reading of this verse, it not only fails to say that the Messiah is everlasting, it doesn’t even say that he will be born in Bethlehem.”

Jews and “Jewish Christianity,” by David Berger and

Michael Wyschograd, pp. 44-45; © 1978

⁶⁵Samson H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation, The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum*, p. 93.

⁶⁶Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, p. 123.

AUTHOR'S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

With all due respect, this verse certainly does indicate that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and be eternal. Many times this author has shown the Hebrew of Micah 5 to Jews in Israel. They would smile and say, "What an interesting verse. It is so specific about His birthplace, and yet, it shows that He is from forever, as you say." Also, the Jerusalem Talmud and Targum Jonathan, two major Jewish commentaries, say this verse refers to Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah. Hoping not to offend, we suggest David Berger, and the other authors and rabbis of the anti-missionary writings we have quoted in this book, brush up on their Hebrew and ancient rabbinical commentary.

Philip Moore

THE VAIN ATTEMPT OF THE RABBIS TO REINTERPRET MICAH'S MESSIANIC PROPHECY

Today, there are numerous rabbis who deny that their prophet Micah was writing about the birth of the Messiah. Many others believe they deny this in order to counter the Christian/Messianic claim that Jesus fulfilled this specific prophecy. Mr. Berger wrote: "...there is one more verse on the divinity of the Messiah which serves double duty by demonstrating his birth in Bethlehem as well....(Micah 5:1 = 5:2 in some translations). The christological translation of the last phrase (*miqedem mimei 'olam*) is 'of old, from everlasting,' which demonstrates that this ruler is eternal and hence divine. But aside from the almost immediate reference to 'the Lord his God,' we are once again dealing with a mistranslation....according to the most probable reading of this verse, it not only fails to say that the Messiah is everlasting, it doesn't even say that he will be born in Bethlehem."⁶⁷

There is another problem regarding the honesty and accuracy of this claim, apart from its lack of common sense; for anyone reading the prophecy in English or Hebrew understands that it refers to the Messiah. Moreover, the rabbis who wrote the ancient commentaries about the Old Testament would have been thoroughly embarrassed by their modern colleagues who emphatically deny its Messianic meaning. The Targum Jonathan says: "And you, O Bethlehem Ephrath, you who were too small to be numbered among the thousands of the house of Judah, from you shall come forth before Me the Messiah, to exercise dominion over Israel, he whose name was mentioned from before, from the days of creation."⁶⁸

The Jerusalem Talmud tells us: "'Son of Judah, Judaeon! Tie your ox and tie your plow, for the King Messiah has been born!'He

⁶⁷David Berger and Michael Wyschograd, *Jews and "Jewish Christianity,"* pp. 44-45.

⁶⁸Samson H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation, The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum,* p. 93.

asked him: ‘From where is he?’ He answered: ‘From the royal fort of Bethlehem in Judah.’”⁶⁹

These commentaries quite clearly show that, once again, the modern rabbis have been caught trying to deny the Messiah His prophecies.

THE TRUE MESSAGE OF JESUS’ PROMISED NEW COVENANT—AS THE BIBLE (OLD T.) TRULY TAUGHT

The Messiah brought in the new covenant promised in Jeremiah 31:31. This *new covenant* is characterized by God’s grace. Grace means “undeserved love.” God loves us even when we break His perfect law because of what His Messiah has done for us, by giving His life for our shortcomings.

This law was given to the ancient Hebrews in the first five books of the Bible, commonly referred to as the “Books of Moses” or simply “Torah.” Throughout the many centuries between the giving of the law and the Coming of the Messiah many sincere people began to build tradition around the law in order to make it easier to keep, so that they would not have to feel as if they were breaking it constantly. When someone did break the law, they offered a sacrifice⁷⁰ in the Temple and the Jewish priest made intercession for them before God. In this practice we see the reason God gave the law to the nation of Israel. It showed that an innocent substitute—Temple sacrifice—had to die for whatever sin was committed against God’s perfect standard, a standard that is impossible to keep. By the way, the Bible says that if you stumble in one point it is the same as breaking the entire law (James 2:10).

Now we are getting somewhere. We see that the law was given to show man’s true nature of sin, a basic rebellion instilled in our innermost being by the fall of Adam.

⁶⁹Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, p. 123. Patai’s source was the Jerusalem Talmud, Berachoth, fol. 5a.

⁷⁰Oesterley and Box inform us of the ancient Jewish sacrifice, which pointed to Jesus: “It is said several times in *Bemidbar rabbah* that no man in Jerusalem was burdened, or passed the night with a consciousness of sin; for the morning sacrifice atoned for the sins of the night, and the evening sacrifice for the sins of the day.” W.O.E. Oesterley, D.D., *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, p. 270.

SOME TEACH WHAT THE BIBLE DOES NOT, TO THE DETRIMENT OF US ALL

Many “Christian teachers” urge people to keep the Sermon on the Mount,⁷¹ even though Jesus pointed out that breaking the law in your thoughts is just as bad as breaking it in deed (Matt. 5:8).

It is because these teachers take this wrong approach to God, that we realize they are certainly not Christian in any New Testament sense of the word. The true Christian or Messianic doctrine is revealed by Paul, the former Rabbi Saul, in Romans 3:20-25.

Accordingly, Jesus was trying to explain the difference between heart and behavior to the religious Jews of His day, the Pharisees, who, incidentally, believed they were keeping God’s law. He showed them that God not only looked upon the outside performance but the heart as well; when their heart and motives were wrong, it was just as bad as when their actions were wrong. This, of course, stung these self-righteous Jewish religious leaders who attempted to please God through their actions and deeds.

The heart of Jesus’ teaching and message was that it does not matter how many sins you commit: “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven” (Matt. 18:21-22 KJV).

⁷¹We would like to comment at this point that contrary to the claims of some, Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount teachings are authentically Jewish, and were so well liked that rabbis one hundred years *after* Him have been caught borrowing them. Risto Santala tells us: “...in the Talmud. Rabbi Terphon, who received his instruction from contemporaries of Jesus, the elder Gamaliel and Johanan Ben Zakkai, says that ‘If someone urges you to remove the speck from your eye, he must be given the answer, ‘Take the plank out of your own!’’ [Arachin 16b] One hundred years later, a certain Johanan commenting on the first verse of Ruth—‘In the days when the judges judged...’—says that, ‘this generation judges its judges; but if someone should say to you, ‘Remove the speck from your eye,’ say to him, ‘Remove the plank from your own eye.’ ” Risto Santala, *The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, p. 185. This passage from the Talmud is from the section Baba Bathra 15b. Though it does not credit Jesus (Matt. 7:3-5), for obvious reasons, we are not going to sue for plagiarism. We wouldn’t even if we could! We are actually very flattered. On the back cover of Risto Santala’s companion book it is stated: “This book about the Messianic Old Testament prophecies in the Light of Rabbinical Writings has already seen five Hebrew editions in Israel....The item is somewhat delicate. The writer is stepping into the lion’s den of the Rabbis and into the fiery furnace of the liberal theologians. But he hopes that others will follow him and promote a similar dialogue in the spirit of tolerance....” Risto Santala, *The Messiah in the Old Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, p. back cover. Thus, you can see that the precious truths he brings to light, which may be embarrassing to some rabbis, may indeed provoke interest among the open-minded as well as anger among the stubborn! No matter what, we are determined to get the word out!

The Bible teaches that you really cannot help⁷² your action of sin. The Scripture tells us to be honest with ourselves and God each and every time and remember that we are paid for by the death of an innocent substitute, justified by faith.

Take a look in Genesis; God said that He counted Abraham's faith to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6).⁷³ Before the law was even given, God made a covenant⁷⁴ with Abraham. King David, whom God called "a man after his own heart," expressed God's truth when he said that none could hope to be sinless under the law: "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me" (Ps. 51:3 KJV).

The Jewish King Solomon, known throughout history as the wisest man on Earth, states God's inspired biblical words: "For *there* is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecc. 7:20 KJV).

These words are true and honest. They illustrate God's love and mercy toward all of us. However, the Pharisees of Jesus' day, 2000 years removed from Abraham, had built such a wall of hypocrisy and legalism around the law that few felt they could come to God for their needs. This was the real sin of that day!

**SOME MINISTERS SAY YOU CAN KEEP *THE LAW* WHEN
JESUS SAID YOU CANNOT—IF YOU COULD,
HIS DEATH WOULD HAVE BEEN MEANINGLESS**

The Pharisaic law estranged the common people from God and kept the Pharisees in power. This is why Jesus later said: "...The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat....For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers....But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. 23:2, 4, 13 KJV).

This is what is happening today in many so-called churches: Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, various legalistic Protestant denominations, etc. The teachers within these institutions insist on *keeping* the very things Jesus said you *cannot* keep. They teach these things to the masses, and the people who feel themselves to be

⁷²Apart from drawing on the power of the Holy Spirit's strength, which can empower us to resist and live a Christian life of victory as we maintain our fellowship with the Father as we trust Jesus, something some Christians do not always do.

⁷³"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (KJV).

⁷⁴"In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates...." (Gen. 15:18 KJV).

Christians take this as an example of how Christian life should be lived when, in reality, the sermon was God's condemnation to men indicating that they, in *their own power*, cannot please Him.

The divine interpretation of what Jesus expounds historically in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:8), is found later on in the New Testament in Romans 3:20-4:25 and Galatians, chapters 3-4. There, the true New Testament teachings are made clear beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Free and eternal salvation⁷⁵ is not based on what you do for God but rather what God has done for you through the death of His innocent son, the Messiah. All we are required to do is accept it and believe it. The Messiah gets all the credit for it.

Any Jew who looks at the Sermon on the Mount as a way of keeping the law, can reach one of two conclusions. Either it is impossible to keep the law and thus, the Messianic or Christian faith is a hypocrisy, or he realizes that the Messiah, in His sermon, was pointing out that the true requirement is to seek God honestly and unselfishly, in an attempt to keep the law.

This is clearly stated in Galatians 3-4 and Romans 3:20-4:25. If you read these two portions of the New Testament now, you will sleep better tonight and for the rest of your life. I might add that the churches which I mentioned generally do not teach these passages of Scripture, and those people who are in their ecumenical grip usually live very uncomfortable lives because of the way they are taught. It is one thing to be instructed about another's interpretation of the New Testament; it is clearly another to truly read it for yourself! Read Romans 3 and 4—you will never be the same!

WHEN DID THE NEW TESTAMENT BEGIN? HOW TO GET IN AND TELL A FRIEND

In reality, the new covenant did not begin until the sacrifice and resurrection of the Messiah. That event, and the whole body of Paul's epistles,⁷⁶ are in actuality, the new covenant as predicted by Jeremiah.

⁷⁵See our *Vol. II*, chapter 11, "Eternal Security for True Believers."

⁷⁶Epistle is a fancy word for letter. Paul wrote half of the New Testament and that half is made up of various letters he wrote to Christian congregations. He wrote Romans to the Church at Rome, which resembled more of a Baptist Church than a Roman Catholic Church. He wrote Corinthians, Thessalonians, Colossians and Ephesians to the Greek congregations in Corinth, Thessalonica, Colosse and Ephesus, Greece. Of course, you can see from these letters which doctrine these churches followed. They, too, were very similar to contemporary evangelical born-again churches rather than the Greek Orthodox Church, which was part of the Roman Catholic that developed after the era of Constantine only to later break off into Eastern Orthodoxy because of council disagreements, etc. When I was in Greece, I sat in on Greek Orthodox services out of curiosity. Though my Greek is not perfect, I never once heard Paul's epistles taught. At the most, a verse from Matthew's Sermon on the Mount was quoted and, of course, as

It is written on our hearts with love and we enjoy sharing our faith with others, bringing them into an eternal kingdom which one day will be physically realized when the Messiah returns. It is not written on our hands as a legalism to be followed under the whip⁷⁷ of a master, but on our hearts as joy.

We see our loved ones' admiration of our example as they ask, "What do you have that I don't?" Then we share with them, and if they accept, they are going to live with us and God throughout all eternity in God's forever love kingdom. This is the motivation and message of the New Testament. Accept Messiah; He in turn eternally saves you on the basis of His personal sacrifice. Thus, you become so grateful that you desire to tell all your friends so that you may spend eternity with them.

This was the teaching of the early believers for the first two hundred years, before Constantine took over the church and turned it into a politically subjective institution, which he used in an attempted rescue of the Roman Empire. At this time, the true believers in Messiah, Jew and Gentile alike, were persecuted. They retreated underground and became a secret community until after the Reformation in the late 1500's, when biblical truth began to be recovered.

IN PAST AGES, READING THE NEW TESTAMENT COST MANY THEIR LIVES—WHAT WAS SO VALUABLE THAT IT WAS WORTH DYING FOR? ETERNAL LIFE!

The Catholic Church of the medieval age would not allow the reading of the Bible. They burned those who attempted to translate it because any reading of this document would disprove the doctrines, traditions and dogmas which the church began to attach to the Scriptures in much the same way as the Pharisees.

The religious hypocrisy of the Catholic leaders would have been exposed if this book of God found its way into the hands of the common people. The few underground believers who knew the Scriptures, were tortured and executed for their beliefs, along with Orthodox Jews.

During the years in which this Roman institution held sway over the politics of the world, the Jews, along with the Jewish and Gentile

we have mentioned, until Jesus went to the cross and rose from the dead long after that teaching was given, the Old Testament was still in force. It was the resurrection of Jesus which marked the start of the new covenant which God has revealed to us in Paul's letters. Try them, you'll like them!

⁷⁷Jesus taught, "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light" (Matt. 11:30 NASB).

true Christians, when discovered, were put to the rack, burned at the stake, and enclosed in iron maidens.⁷⁸

Don't forget, if you were a true believer and read the Bible, you might have realized that the sale of indulgences (paid forgiveness for sin) was unbiblical. If you told too many people about this, the "church" (Catholicism) would run short of money. Thus, you were a risk they could not afford.

If you are interested in finding out historical details of actual cases describing the treatment biblical Christians endured at the hands of this institution, we suggest you read the bestsellers *Foxes, Book of Martyrs* and *Halley's Bible Handbook*.



"St. Serapion," a persecuted Christian,
as illustrated by Francisco de Zurbarán in 1628.

⁷⁸An iron maiden, as you will see pictured later, was a hollowed-out iron casement which on the outside looked like a woman, but on the inside was lined with iron spikes or knives. The "heretic" who did not believe the way the Roman Catholic authorities wanted him or her to believe, was placed in this structure, which was slowly closed, murdering them.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT 997 BC

לְדָוִד מְזֻמָּוֹר נָאֻם יְהוָה וְלֹאֲדָוִי שֶׁב לְיָמֶינִי עַד־אֲשֶׁת אֲבִיךָ חָרָם לְרִגְלֶיךָ:
תְּהָלִים קי:א

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.’” **Psalms 110:1 NASB**

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“In the future God will seat the King Messiah at his right, for it is said: ‘The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,’ ”⁷⁹

Midrash on Psalm XVIII, 35 (36 in Hebrew)

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 63 AD

“And He [Jesus] said to them, ‘How *is it that* they [religious leaders] say the Christ is David’s son? For David himself says in the book of Psalms, ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, ‘SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET.’ ’ David therefore calls Him ‘Lord,’ and how is He his son?’ ”

Luke 20:41-44 NASB. [] mine

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“The Christians believe that this passage proves that Jesus sits at God’s right side, that Jesus should be called Lord, and that he is...God (“*The Lord said unto my Lord*”). Once again, this interpretation rests on a mistranslation....the Psalm refers to the anxious time before Abraham had to fight the four kings, in Genesis 14. God is telling Abraham not to worry, sit, so to speak, at my side, until I take care of your enemies....”

***You Take Jesus, I’ll Take God*, by Samuel Levine, pp. 37-38; © 1980**

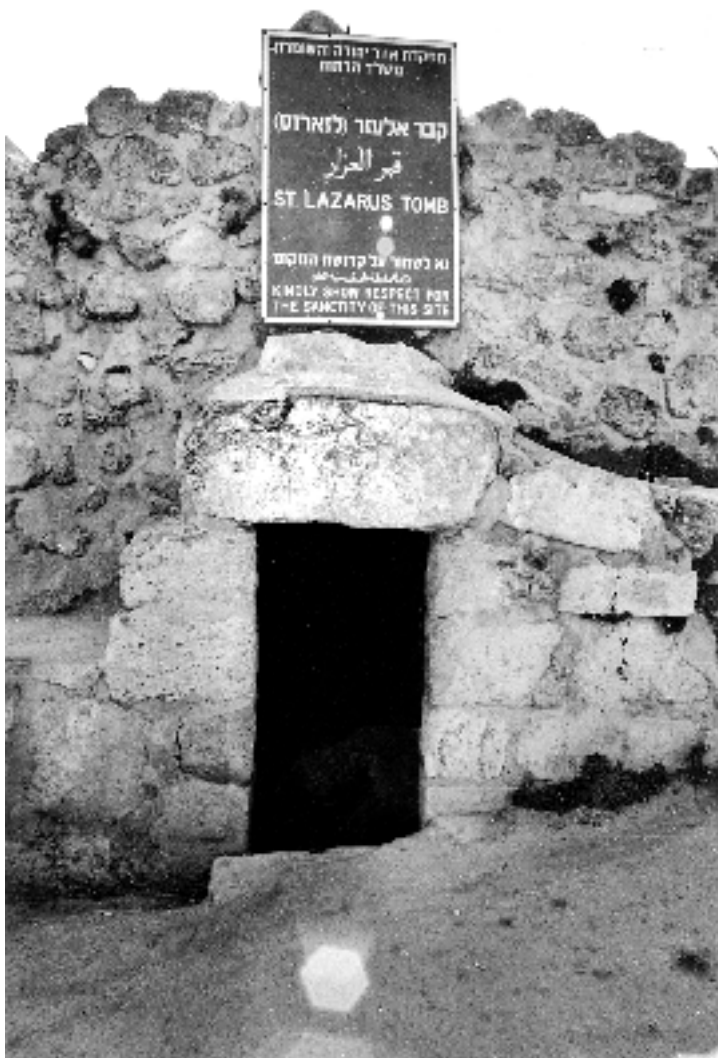
AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

Now I know that by bringing the original ancient understanding of this prophecy to light, I may help to burst the bubbles of both liberal, so-called “Christians” and modern rabbis, who deny the deity and Messiahship of Jesus. However, I am obligated by the Bible to illuminate these truths to all who sincerely want to understand and accept this Scripture in its authenticity. It is not my purpose to offend, only to proclaim the absolute truth, even though it may cause discomfort to some. In proving our point beyond doubt, I would like to quote the learned Henry Frowde of Oxford University, who notes in his article, “The Christian Messiah in the Light of Judaism” that: “The New Testament in its citations from the Old Testament Scriptures preserves much of the old exegesis of the ancient synagogue, **which has often been refined away or modified by the later Rabbis** and teachers. An interesting example of this meets us in the case of Ps. cx (*The Lord said unto my Lord*). In the New Testament (St. Matt. xxii 44 and parallels) it is implied that the Messianic interpretation of this Psalm was the one generally accepted and current at the time among the Jews. Later, however, this view was largely displaced in favour of others, more especially of one which referred the words *my lord* to Abraham (so Rashi). But the older view is sometimes attested. Thus it reappears in the Midrash to Ps. xviii 36 in a comment on the words: ‘Thy right hand hath upholden me.’ ‘R. Judan in the

⁷⁹Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol. II, p. 137.

name of R. Chama says, ‘that in the time to come the Holy One—blessed be He—will make King Messiah sit at His right hand, as it is said (Ps. cx 1): *The Lord said unto my lord, Sit thou on my right hand*’....”⁸⁰ Frowde’s scholarship certainly exposes Levine’s error.

Philip Moore



The tomb of Lazarus (in Hebrew, *Eleazer*, אלעזר). After four days in this tomb, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11).

⁸⁰Henry Frowde, M.A., “The Christian Messiah in Light of Judaism,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. XIII. London: Oxford University Press, 1912, pp. 327-328. Bold mine.

“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”

Psalms 110:1 KJV, penned 997 BC

“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, ‘What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?’ They say unto him, *The son* of David. He saith unto them, ‘How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?’ And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*.”

Matthew 22:41-46 KJV, spoken 33 AD

JESUS WILL SIT ON THE RIGHT UNTIL HIS ENEMIES CHALLENGE HIS MIGHT

The main reason we quoted Psalms 110:1, its ancient commentary and its New Testament references, was to illustrate that the Jewish Messiah, contrary to modern rabbinical thought and teaching, was almost always understood by ancient rabbis to be one and the same with God: “The *LORD* said unto my *Lord*.”⁸¹

In other words, God would one day become incarnate within a prepared human body of flesh; something I will document later in this work by using many other references and rabbinical commentaries.⁸²

⁸¹Italics mine.

⁸²Hal Lindsey, in his book, *The Promise*, makes a very good case for deity in reference to Psalm 40 and its rabbinical commentary and the Targum. We share his intriguing words with you: “In this chapter you’re going to have to put on your thinking-cap because the arguments and logic these Old and New Testament scholars use to present Messiah as a *divine* person who clothed himself with a human body at a point in history, is so close and so intriguing that you won’t want to miss a single nuance of their meaning. To many devout worshippers of Jehovah God, it’s the quintessence of blasphemy to say that there was a time when He took on a human body and lived on earth in that manner for any length of time. And yet, there are specific predictions in the Old Testament which indicate that very thing would happen when Messiah came to earth. Psalm 40 is one of the prophetic passages which alludes to this....The Psalmist predicted that there would come a time when God would no longer require sacrifice. It would be at a time when God prepared a body for the Promised One who was going to come and do God’s will on earth....A very ancient Jewish interpretation in the Midrash concerning Messiah’s genealogy makes reference to Psalm 40 and says that this is definitely Messiah speaking through the Psalmist. The New Testament writer of the epistle to the Hebrews quotes Psalm 40:6-8 from the Greek Septuagint version and uses it as the basis for his climactic argument to convince the Hebrew followers of Jesus that his sacrificial death *fulfilled* and thus *annulled* the Mosaic animal sacrifice system....As might be expected, there’s quite a present day dispute about the phrase in Psalm 40 ‘...a body you prepared for me.’ In the official Hebrew Massoretic text it reads instead, ‘My ears you have opened.’ However, the Septuagint version of the Old Testament (250 B.C.E.) translates this phrase as ‘but a body you prepared for me’....The best explanation is that the Septuagint translators of the Hebrew Old Testament, writing sometime before 200 B.C.E. paraphrased the meaning of this portion of Psalm 40. This paraphrasing is known as *targumming* and it was a standard practice in the translating of the Biblical writings. Paraphrasing didn’t deny the meaning of the original words, it usually put it into an idiom or concept which was more familiar to the people of their day. This is the

However, in this episode of Jesus' teachings to the Pharisees (Jewish religious leaders of His day), He mentions this particular predictive Messianic Psalm of David: "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet" (Ps. 110:1 NASB).

This phrase contains interesting and specific prophetic events which have to do with our near future. The first segment of this phrase, "Sit at My right hand," is recorded in the New Testament as occurring when Jesus left the earth from the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (see Acts I). After He was crucified, rejected and resurrected, He told His people, the Jews who received Him as Messiah, that the promised Messianic Kingdom of the Old Testament, a fervent hope of Judaism, would only be set up when He was accepted by all Israel, including their leaders. "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:39 KJV).

We know from other sections of the New Testament, chiefly Revelation, chapters 16-19, that this will not occur until the battle of Armageddon (see our chapter 26, "We Win Armageddon—Our Final Battle"). Until then, He will sit at God's right hand until the "restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21 KJV).

The New Testament book of Hebrews clarifies: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Heb. 10:12-13 KJV).

case with the phrase 'to open or pierce a person's ears.' It was related to completely and voluntarily submitting one's self to another. The idea is beautifully expressed in Exodus 21:2-6 where the case of a slave who loves his master and volunteers to be a lifetime slave to him is discussed. Moses instructs the master to pierce the slave's ear with an awl and that will be a sign that he's volunteered to serve him for his lifetime.... This idea was interpreted and paraphrased in the Septuagint by the Hebrew scholars as 'a body you have prepared for me,' because this was a corresponding Greek idea of total submission which the Greek speaking readers of the Septuagint translation would be more familiar with. If the Messiah was to come and dwell in a special body which God had prepared for him, what would be the purpose of it? There are many facets to the answer of that question, but primarily it was so that, as a sinless man, God could place on him the sins of all mankind and then the body of this special man, which God counted as a fulfillment of the sacrificial lamb, could suffer sin's penalty which is death and God could accept this death as substitutionary for every man who would ever place faith in its efficacy for him." Hal Lindsey, *The Promise*. New York: Bantam Books, Inc., © 1984, pp. 152-155, used by permission.

BUT WHO ARE THE ENEMIES SPECIFICALLY AND PROPHETICALLY MENTIONED? GOG AND MAGOG!

Armageddon is known and described in the Old Testament as Gog and Magog (Ezek. 38-39). Jesus will be called upon, according to the prophet Hosea⁸³ (Zech. 12:10), to save Israel from this future war. We should remember that the parchment of Zechariah 12:10 is part of the *Old Testament*, and was written five hundred years before the birth of Jesus in anticipation of the Messiah's Second Coming.

Considering this fact, the passage is one of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible because it speaks of the Messiah appearing to us for the second time, with pierced hands, five hundred years before His first appearance in Bethlehem. He is seen in the sky and mourned by Jewish on-lookers who are shocked by the fact that He is their Messiah, and has been all along for the past 2000 years, and He is saving them from the biblically predicted invasion (Gog and Magog) which we will prove to be Russia in our chapter 19, "Russia is Crushed in Gog."

Russia has been proven, through ancient rabbinical documents, including reliable geographical, historical, and even genealogical records, to be Israel's last great enemy. Also, it is important to note that Israel did not exist when the prophecy regarding Russia coming against Israel was written, 2600 years ago. Jews were captive in Babylon.

Today, as predicted, Israel is back in her land after 2000 years in exile. She has been reconstructed as a nation in our era. Ezekiel 36-39 speaks of this and, in the New Testament, the students of Jesus anticipated the rebirth of Israel (Acts 1:6). More will be said about this event in our chapter 18, "Israel—Is Real."

THE END TIME ENEMY, THOUGH THEY PRESENTLY LIE LOW, AWAIT THEIR FATAL ROLE, A FACT UNKNOWN TO MANY!

The reason we mentioned this is that in order for there to be an invasion of Israel, there obviously must be a State of Israel. During the past 2000 years, there was not a state; that is, until 1948. Thus, we know that we are in the general time-frame of this invasion. In an age of nuclear weapons, false peace treaties and terror, we are a heartbeat away! Though time will tell, we know that the Bible already has.

⁸³Hosea 5:15.

While Russia is seemingly benevolent in 1996, do not count on it to last. This will change in the next twenty to thirty years, if not sooner. The Bible demands it!

IS THERE A MIDRASHIC HINT AS TO THE IDENTITY OF THE ENEMY IN PSALM 110?

The last segment of this Psalm, “until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet,” is extremely interesting! What enemies are we talking about? Many have come to the superficial conclusion that it must be anyone who does not believe in the Messiah. We are not saying they are wrong, but there may be a deeper meaning to this prophecy. Could it be that they are the Gog and Magog (future Russian/Arab armies) of the Armageddon prophecy? Is there any evidence from the ancient rabbis that this passage might have been, in fact, referring to this future Russian invasion of Israel called Gog and Magog?

As we pored over the volumes of rabbinical literature written over a millennia ago concerning the Messiah and this anciently predicted invasion, which according to New Testament claims will herald the return of Jesus to save His people (Rom. 11:26; Rev. 19:11-18), we retrieved a Midrashic treasure! We found a rather breathtaking rabbinical commentary on this Psalm, which confirmed our suspicion that Gog and Magog will yet become the enemies which Jesus, in Matthew 22:44, claimed as His very own.

Why does He proclaim them His enemies? I suppose because they attempt to wipe out His people, the Jews. This rabbinical commentary was written many hundreds of years ago and is now accepted as a part of the rabbinical literature, even by the liberal rabbis, though it may not be studied or believed by all of the Orthodox. It reads: “[God says:] ‘Ephraim, My firstborn, you sit on My right until I subdue the army of the hosts of Gog and Magog, your enemies, under your footstool....’ ” (Mid. Alpha Betot, 2:438-42).⁸⁴

This commentary continues and explains the aftermath of the destruction of Gog and Magog accompanied by the Messiah’s Coming. “The Messiah will arise over Israel, will gather the exiles of Israel in Jerusalem, and will rebuild Jerusalem....And all the kings of the nations of the world will come to the door of the Messiah and will serve before him and bring him presents....”⁸⁵

84Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, p. 153.

85Ibid.

“The one like a man who sits upon the throne of God’s glory [Luke 22:69, cf. Ps. 110; Dan. 7:13], the sublime eschatological judge, is the highest conception of the Redeemer ever developed by ancient Judaism. Only one artist has captured it. Jan Van Eyck. He depicted the Son of man, above the altar at Ghent, as a human being who is divine. Could Jesus of Nazareth have understood himself thus? Let us not forget that he felt he was God’s chosen one, his servant, the only Son to whom the secrets of the heavenly Father were open. This very sense of sublime dignity could have led him in the end publicly to dare to identify himself with the Son of man; and in Judaism the Son of man was frequently understood as the Messiah.”⁸⁶

Israeli Professor David Flusser, Ph.D., world-renowned Jewish biblical scholar over the age of 70, residing in Jerusalem



The Son of Man over the altar at Ghent, as envisioned by the famous artist Jan Van Eyck in the fifteenth century.

⁸⁶Donald Hagner, *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus*, p. 266. Hagner’s source was David Flusser, Ph.D., *Jesus*, pp. 103-104.

WE REST EASIER BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT GOD WILL SURELY DEFEAT ISRAEL'S LAST ENEMY!

It is comforting to know that Israel, who has known very little peace, will finally have peace forever when she recognizes the Messiah. We know that this peace will be permanent from a prophecy found in the book of Amos: "...I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land...." (Amos 9:15 KJV).

All past calamities which have come against the Jews were successful only because they failed to call upon the Messiah Jesus. This time they will call on Him and they will never know destruction or devastation again!

DEITY AND RELIGIOUS MISCONCEPTIONS

Some rabbis have attempted to undermine the Christian/Messianic Jewish belief that Messiah is God. They use arguments that sound very plausible on the surface and concepts very much in line with Judaism to promote their arguments. However, they amputate entire portions of prophecy concerning the Messiah and completely disregard the once-respected ancient rabbinical commentaries on those Old Testament biblical texts which show that, though the Messiah is a man, He is also, most importantly, God in the flesh—God Incarnate.

There are some religions that attempt to deify the flesh of Christ in wafers and who venerate Mary as the "Mother of God." The Catholic religion presents these claims almost as if they were biblical. These ideas fostered by the Catholic, and to some extent by the Eastern Orthodox Church, are diametrically opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures. Fundamental Christians and Messianic Jews are repulsed and offended by these heretical claims. Beliefs such as these are not Scriptural but are the result of traditions which have been taking shape for nearly 1600 years, beginning with the philosophy of Constantine in 312 AD.

True believers in Messiah, born-again Messianic Jews and Gentiles alike, believe in the Messiah's pre-existence and His incarnate deity. They base these beliefs on many claims in the Bible, starting with Genesis and running through the other sixty-five books, culminating in Revelation. They also treasure a number of ancient rabbinical writings that verify these beliefs.

HOW CAN GOD BE BOTH DEITY AND HUMAN AT THE SAME TIME IF HE IS ONE BEING?

Many rabbis have disclaimed the deity of the Messiah, inferring that this concept is pagan, not Jewish, and that the Trinitarian claim of the New Testament is somehow foreign to the Jewish Bible. We take exception to this because the ancient rabbinical writing known to us as the Zohar clearly affirms God in three persons. The Zohar tells us: “Come and see the mystery of the word YHVH: there are three steps, each existing by itself: nevertheless they are One, and so united that one cannot be separated from the other. The Ancient Holy One is revealed with three heads, which are united into one, and that head is three exalted. The Ancient One is described as being three: because the other lights emanating from him are included in the three. But how can three names be one? Are they really one because we call them one? How three can be one can only be known through the revelation of the Holy Spirit.”⁸⁷



A painting of a contemplating scholar, 1633, Louvre, Paris.

⁸⁷Arnold Fruchtenbaum, “Jewishness and the Trinity.” San Francisco, CA: Jews for Jesus, © 1987, p. 3, used by permission. Fruchtenbaum’s source was *The Babylonian Talmud*, Zohar, Vol. III, p. 288; Vol. II, p. 43, Hebrew edition (see also The Soncino Press edition, Vol. III, p. 134). This pamphlet is available through *Jews for Jesus*, 60 Haight Street, San Francisco, CA, USA 94102-5895. Tel. (415) 864-2600.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 999 BC

כִּסְאֶךָ אֱלֹהִים עוֹלָם וְעַד שֶׁבֶט מִיֶּשֶׁר שֶׁבֶט מַלְכוּתְךָ: אֶתְהַבֶּה צֶדֶק וְהִשָּׁאֵף רָשָׁע עַל־כֵּן |
 מִשְׁחָךְ אֶל־הַיּוֹד שֶׁמֶן שִׁשּׁוֹן מִחֶבְרֹה:
 תְּהָלִים מִדָּ: ז-ט

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Thy Kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness; Therefore God, Thy God, has anointed Thee With the oil of joy above Thy fellows.”

Psalms 45:6-7 NASB**ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY**

“ ‘Thy Throne from God in heaven,...is for ever and ever’ (for ‘world without end,’ עֲלָמִי עַלְמִין) ‘a rule of righteousness is the rule of Thy kingdom, O Thou King Messiah!’ ”⁸⁸ **Rabbi Levy in his Targum. Wörterb. vol. i. p. 390a**

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 64 AD

“But of the Son *He says*, ‘THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM. THOU HAST LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS; THEREFORE GOD, THY GOD, HATH ANOINTED THEE WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE THY COMPANIONS.’ ”

Hebrews 1:8-9 NASB**MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION**

“The errors of the author of this epistle [Hebrews] are as many as the quotations with which he strives to confirm his views....The words, ‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,’ are wrongly quoted from Psalm xlv. 6. We read there *Kis-au-hau Elohim*, which means, ‘Thy throne (is) *of* God,’ and not ‘Thy throne, *O* God.’ Thus we find, in 1 Chron. xxix. 23, ‘And Solomon sat on the *throne of the Lord*.’ ”

***Faith Strengthened*, by Isaac Troki, pp. 291; 1850.⁸⁹ [| mine**

AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

The author (apulus) of this New Testament epistle (letter) of Hebrews, agrees with the ancient rabbinical commentary from Rabbi Levy’s Targum. He is not “mistaken.” Secondly, any Hebrew scholar can verify without question that Troki’s comment that the Hebrew is “wrongly quoted,” is in itself an error. Thirdly, I Chronicles xxix has no connection with Psalms 45:6-7, which was confirmed by ancient Jewish sources as being Messianic. Fourthly, the author of *Faith Strengthened* goes on to say that, based on the text, Jesus cannot be God, which we did not bother to quote here. In reading his book, you will see that he attempts to reinterpret almost all of the Messianic prophecies, distancing them from their natural and ancient meanings, in an attempt to scare Jews away from Jesus in today’s world, through purposely perpetrated deception. In our opinion, this is not only wrong, but malicious!

Philip Moore

⁸⁸Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p. 151, footnote 1.

⁸⁹Isaac Troki, *Faith Strengthened*. New York: Hermon Press, 1850, p. 155.

PAGAN NOTIONS VERSUS SCRIPTURAL PREDICTIONS —WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE IN BELIEF? A LOT!

It may be true that Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics engage in practices we believe to be nothing more than a type of candy-coated paganism. We, as true believers in Messiah, hold ourselves to be equal with the first believers in Jesus, whom others venerate. We believe Mary, whose true Hebrew name is Miriam (a common Hebrew name, even today), is not the “Mother of God” but rather a well-favored⁹⁰ woman, a virgin of God’s choosing, selected to be the agency through which the Redeemer would be brought into the world. This was foretold in Isaiah 7:14, Jeremiah 23:5-6 and Isaiah 9:6.

We believe that God, being all-powerful, incarnated Himself in human form over 1900 years ago, just as He appeared to Jacob when He changed his name from Jacob to Israel. Listen to the nearly 4000-year-old words spoken by Jacob (Yacov) in the thirty-second chapter of the book of Genesis, the first book in the Bible: “Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. And when he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob’s thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him. Then he said, ‘Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.’ But he said, ‘I will not let you go unless you bless me.’ So he said to him, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Jacob.’ And he said, ‘Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.’ Then Jacob asked him and said, ‘Please tell me your name.’ But he said, ‘Why is it that you ask my name?’ And he blessed him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel, for *he said*, ‘I have **seen God** face to face, yet my life has been preserved.’ Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Peniel,^[91] and he was limping on his thigh. Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is on the socket of the thigh, because he touched the socket of Jacob’s thigh in the sinew of the hip” (Gen. 32:24-32 NASB).

Obviously, this man was no ordinary man because Jacob said after his encounter with him, “I have seen **God**, face to face.” This man was the hidden divine Messiah Jesus who changed Jacob’s name from Jacob to Israel, which means a “Prince who has striven with God.”

⁹⁰The New Testament clearly tells us: “And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God...you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus’ ” (Luke 1:30-31 NASB).

⁹¹In Hebrew, the word *pen* refers to “face,” plural *penim*, and *el* of course, is “God.”

THE QUESTION OF THE DEITY OF MESSIAH

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 599 BC

בְּיָמָיו תִּשְׁעַת יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן לְבָטָח וְזֶה שְׁמוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא יְהוָה וְצִדְקָתוֹ
יִרְמִיָּה כג:

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, ‘The LORD our righteousness.’ ”

Jeremiah 23:6 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“What is the name of the King Messiah? Rabbi Abba, son of Kahana, said: Jehovah; for it is written, ‘This is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness.’ ”⁹² **Midrash on Lamentations I, 16**

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 64 AD

“But of the Son *He says*, ‘THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.’ ”

Hebrews 1:8 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“If the king is called ‘The Lord our righteousness,’ it would seem that he must be divine. The trouble is that this is a mistranslation.”

***Jews and “Jewish Christianity,” by David Berger
and Michael Wyschogrod, p. 42; © 1978***

AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

This claim of mistranslation is a dishonest one. For anybody who knows Hebrew, this is evident.

Philip Moore

ABRAHAM ALSO MEETS GOD FACE-TO-FACE, AS IF HE WERE A MAN

In Genesis 18, Abraham met God at his tent door. However, this time God appeared in the form of three men. In verse 3, Abraham clearly calls all three men, “My Lord.” The passage reads: “And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My **Lord**, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant....” (Gen. 18:1-3 KJV).

⁹²Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol. III, p. 176.

WHAT IS THE TRUE BUT CRYPTIC MEANING OF THE ANCIENT NAME OF DAVID FROM WHICH WE GET THE STAR OF DAVID

The Star of David is an illustration of God and man interwoven into one. In Israel, it is called the Shield of David for a very specific reason.

In Hebrew, *Magen* means “shield.” In English we substitute star, because the Shield of David forms a star of six points. Actually, the six-pointed star is composed of two ancient *daleds* (a *daled* is a “d” in the Hebrew alphabet). One points up and one points down and they are interlaced and woven through each other.

The middle letter of David’s name, *vav*, is not included in the modern Star of David. However, if it were, you would have a Jewish Star of David with a cross in the middle.

There is evidence that the ancient shape of the *vav* was similar to a Roman cross. All of the religious scholars in Israel know that the ancient shape for the Hebrew letter, *daled* (ד) was 6. So David’s name is spelled in Hebrew with two *daleds* and a *vav*. Its modern spelling would look like דוד. Its ancient spelling (the way David would have written it 3000 years ago before Hebrew was altered in the first dispersion), would look like this—ΔΤΔ.

DAVID’S CONSOLIDATION OF HIS ANCIENT NAME CONTAINED MESSIANIC DEITY IN ITS MEANING!

As a famous king of Israel, David would have consolidated these letters to spell his name in a logo style, a trademark, so to speak, to separate him from all other Davids in Israel. The signature of the king would have been written in this way: one ancient *daled* inverted over the other, with the middle letter of his name, *vav*, inscribed in the middle of the symbol.

The modern Messianic Jews may not even be aware that when they wear this Jewish star with the cross inside of it, they are wearing the personal signature of David, called the Shield of David.

If you think about it, who was David’s shield? Of course, it was the Messiah, who is God and man, and died on an ancient wooden *vav*. The triangle pointing skyward represents man created in the image of God, with three integral parts interlaced into one—mind, body and spirit;⁹³ while the triangle facing downward represents God’s image of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When they are woven into one another, as

⁹³“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” (I John 5:7 KJV). “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thes. 5:23 NASB).

is the true Star of David, they represent the God Incarnate Messiah, who showed Himself to us in the body of a Jewish man, Jesus, whose name means “salvation” in Hebrew. Remember, God said let us make *man* in *our* image (Gen. 1:26).

**YOUR PERCEPTION CHANGED FOREVER FOR THE
BETTER—THE STAR OF DAVID, THE SYMBOL ON THE
ISRAELI NATIONAL FLAG, PROCLAIMS JESUS’ DEITY**

You will never be able to view another Star of David or Israeli flag without knowing who it truly represents, Jesus, commonly called in the New Testament the Son of David (Matt. 1:1, 20; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42; Mark 2:25; 10:47-48; 12:35; Luke 3:31; 18:38-39).

DECKED BY MELCHIZEDEK

While I was in Jerusalem, I debated for two hours with a Hasidic rabbi about whether the Messiah was God. He said, “I see,” in complete surprise, as we both read the passages about Melchizedek. As is well known, Melchizedek was the highest of high priests—even higher than the priesthood of Aaron—through whom Abraham paid his tithes to God.

The rabbi told me, “It all makes more sense to me. What you are saying is Jewish and very wise. Though at this moment I do not fully understand it, I’ll take your New Testament and read it from cover-to-cover. Only, please do not tell anyone we have spoken about such things, for my life, family and reputation are at stake. It will be between myself and God....”

The passages we read were from Genesis, Psalms and the New Testament book of Hebrews. I explained to him, “Rabbi, in the Jewish Bible, we read of a unique person, a priest Melchizedek, whose priesthood reaches far above that of the Jewish high priests in the Temple. This individual, to whom Abraham paid his tithes (ten percent of his earnings), met Abraham when he was returning from Salem: ‘...Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth....’ ” (Gen. 14:18-19 NASB).

Over 1000 years later, King David penned the verses regarding the promised Messiah to come: “The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, ‘Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.’ The Lord is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath” (Ps. 110:4-5 NASB).

OUR NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS THAT JESUS FULFILLED THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHIZEDEK

One thousand years after God predicted these words through David, Jesus came along. The writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews enlightens us regarding this high priest: “...no one takes the honor to himself, but *receives it* when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, ‘THOU ART MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE’; just as He says also in another *passage*, ‘THOU ART A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK’....being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek....For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, ‘I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU, AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU.’ And thus, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise....This hope we have as an anchor^[94] of the soul, a *hope* both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,^[95] where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all *the spoils*, was first of all, by the translation of *his name*, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually. Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils. And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest’s office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. But the one whose genealogy is

94The symbol of an anchor was carved into the rock on the face of Jesus’ tomb in Jerusalem by the early Christians, and is still visible today (see photo in our Garden Tomb section coming up). The anchor, a first-century Christian symbol for eternal security, was also found carved on Jewish Christian tombstones in the Golan of Israel in 1994. We document this in our chapter 8, “The Messiah Conspiracy Continues in the New Old Testament,” and our *Vol. II*, chapter 11, “Eternal Security for True Believers.”

95For a fuller explanation of this veil, see our *Vol. II*, chapter 31, “The Mystery of the Temple Doors,” from a lecture by Jonathan Cahn.

not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham, and blessed the one who had the promises. But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. And in this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need *was there* for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also....For it is witnessed *of Him*, ‘THOU ART A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.’ For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. And inasmuch as *it was* not without an oath (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, ‘THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, ‘THOU ART A PRIEST FOREVER’ ‘); so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. And the *former* priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing, but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, *appoints* a Son, made perfect forever” (Heb. 5:4-7:28 NASB).

A RABBI'S ASTONISHMENT

After reading this, the rabbi was astonished. He said (I am paraphrasing), “I must be blind. Melchizedek was in our Bible all along and in the yeshiva [rabbinical study school], though I have a vague recollection of him in Genesis, I never once heard him mentioned in relation to this passage in Psalms. And of course, the New Testament passages I never read because I was always told the New Testament was a forbidden book for us. However, now that I have dared to read it with you, I see, at least concerning this passage on Melchizedek, it is quite an amazing book—one I must read from cover

to cover. However, I have just one question. If all this is true about Melchizedek, why have our rabbis not expounded upon him in their writings?"

I answered, "In past times, they did, though they do not today. Of course, the Melchizedek passage from Psalms 110 was considered a dangerous passage to those who rejected Jesus because it made His claim to the Melchizedek priesthood even more solid. Though this passage was acceptable, being interpreted as Messianic even before Jesus' day, thereafter its Messianic interpretation was banned by many a rabbi as blasphemy."

The scholar, F. F. Bruce, sheds light on this when he says: "There was a good deal of contact between orthodox Jews and Jewish Christians in Palestine in the first and second centuries, and there are frequent echoes in the rabbinical literature of controversies between the two parties, on the interpretation of messianic prophecy, for example. In a number of instances interpretations which had formerly been regarded as quite proper and respectable by orthodox Jews were ruled out as inadmissible when Christians began to use them to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. There is one notable occasion recorded when the great Rabbi Akiba got into trouble because he favoured such an unacceptable interpretation. He and his colleagues were discussing the vision of the judgment day in Daniel 7.9-14, where 'one like a son of man' appears before the Ancient of Days to receive universal and eternal sovereignty from him. 'As I looked,' says Daniel (verse 9), 'thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days took his seat.' The question was raised: Why thrones in the plural? Akiba gave the traditional answer: 'One for God and one for David' (i.e. for Messiah, the son of David). But Rabbi Jose expostulated with him: 'Akiba, how long will you profane the Shekhinah? It is one for justice and one for righteousness' [Bruce, in his footnote to righteousness, tells us that: "Akiba may have had in mind the divine invitation to the Messiah in Psalm 110. 1: 'Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool"—but the fact that Jesus in his reply to the high priest at his trial had conjoined this text with Daniel 7. 13 meant that its former messianic interpretation also was no longer favoured."]. Ever since Jesus had claimed, at his trial before the Sanhedrin, to be that Son of Man whom Daniel saw 'coming with the clouds of heaven' the messianic interpretation of the passage had become taboo for many Jewish teachers. The rabbis of this period, then, were not unacquainted with the story of Jesus and the activity of his followers, vigorously as they voiced their dissent from all that he and they stood for."⁹⁶

This exposition greatly impressed my friend! While Psalm 110:1 is a passage avoided even today by the rabbis (because it shows two persons in the Godhead), Psalm 110:4, three verses down, is feared

⁹⁶F.F. Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*, pp. 64-65.

even more because it indicates that the Messiah of Psalm 110:1 will indeed be *the* Messiah-priest Melchizedek, whom the redeemer of Israel would have to be! Jesus verifies all of this!

MESSIANIC MIRACLES OF HEALING

The Messiah, in the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah in the Jewish Bible, is understood to perform healings of the magnitude of miracles. Jesus also fulfilled this area of prediction when He opened the eyes of the blind (Matthew 15:31), raised the dead (Luke 8:54), opened the ears of the deaf and enabled the mute to speak, (Matthew 11:5) and healed the lame (Luke 7:22). However, when He was rejected and His earthly ministry came to an end, the full extent of His universal worldwide healing of all disease for all people was relegated to the future. When the Messiah returns, the Bible tells us that Jesus will heal everyone for all time in the millennial and eternal kingdom to come (Ezekiel 47:12; Revelation 21:4; 22:1-5).

The interesting Messianic rabbinical commentary in the Yalkut on Joshua reflects these dual times of the Messiah's healings, as it speculates " 'then' may refer to the past and to the future."⁹⁷

Concerning the past, it seems that if Jesus would have continued, nearly all of Israel would have been drawn to Him. As you may recall, the high priests were nervously worrying: "... 'What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him *go on* like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation' " (John 11:47-48 NASB).

Interestingly enough, the first century Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, though he mentions little of Jesus, speaks of His miracles as "wonderful works." In his *Antiquities* he wrote: "Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man [if it be lawful to call him a man], for he was a doer of **wonderful works**, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. [He was the Messiah.] And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him [for he appeared to them alive again at the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him]. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."⁹⁸

⁹⁷Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol. I, p. 266.

⁹⁸Moishe Rosen, *Y'shua: The Jewish Way to Say Jesus*, p. 102. Bold mine. Rosen's source was F.F. Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*, p. 37. The segment of Josephus is from *Antiquities* xviii 33, from the early second century. Dr. David Flusser, an unsurpassed expert in the field of Jewish and New Testament study, defends Josephus' *Jesus passage* with new and rock-solid evidence against the liberal critics, who have been crying "forgery" at the top of their lungs for as long as we can remember. Flusser notes: "Josephus (*Antiquities*, XVIII, 63-64)...tells us that Jesus was



“The Raising of the Cross,” a Peter Paul Rubens masterpiece painted in 1609-1610.

more than merely human...there are those who believe that the whole passage is a forgery interpolated into the text of Josephus. The late Professor Victor A. Tcherikover, an expert on Second Temple history, pointed to the end of that passage, which reads: ‘And unto this day there are still people who are called Christians.’ It is unlikely, he argued, that such a sentence would be a forgery, and it appears that these are the words of Josephus himself. The question remained undecided until Professor Shlomo Pines found a different version of Josephus’ testimony in an Arabic version of the tenth century: ‘At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon their loyalty to him. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive. Accordingly they believed that he was the Messiah, concerning whom the Prophets have recounted wonders.’” David Flusser, Ph.D., *Jewish Sources in Early Christianity*, p. 14.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 713 BC

אָמרוּ לַגִּמְהָרִי־לֵב חֲזָקוּ אֶל־תִּירְאוּ הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם נִקְּם יְיָ אֱמֹל אֱלֹהִים הוּא בּוֹא
וְיִשְׁעֵכֶם: אֲנִי תִפְקְחוּנָה עֵינֵי עִוְרִים וְאָזְנִי תִרְשָׁיִם תִּפְתָּחוּנָה: אֲנִי יִדְלַע כְּאַיִל פֶּסֶחַ וְתָרֵן לִשְׁוֹן
אֵלֶם כִּי־נִבְקְעוּ בַמִּדְבָּר מַיִם וְנַחֲלִים בְּעֶרְבָה:
יִשְׁעִיהָ לָהּ: ד-ז

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“Say to those with anxious heart, ‘Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you.’ Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah.”

Isaiah 35:4-6 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“Come and see; all that the Holy One has wounded in this world he will heal in the future. The blind shall be healed; for it is said, ‘The eyes of the blind shall be opened.’ The lame shall be healed; for it is said, ‘Then shall the lame man leap as an hart.’ The dumb shall be healed; as it is said, ‘And the tongue of the dumb sing’....The word ‘then’ (אֲנִי) may refer to the past and to the future. To the latter refers ‘then thou shalt see and flow together’ (Isa. LX.5); ‘then shall thy light break forth as the morning’ (*ibid* LVIII. 8); ‘then the eyes of the blind,’ etc.; ‘then shall the lame man leap,’ etc.”⁹⁹

**Midrash on Genesis XLVI.28, section 85; Yalkut on
I Samuel XXVIII.24 and Yalkut on Joshua X.12**

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 63 AD

“...as He [Jesus] approached the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’ And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, ‘Young man, I say to you, arise!’ And the dead man sat up, and began to speak. And *Jesus* gave him back to his mother. And fear gripped them all, and they *began* glorifying God, saying, ‘A great prophet has arisen among us!’ and, ‘God has visited His people!’ And this report concerning Him went out all over Judea, and in all the surrounding district. And the disciples of John reported to him about all these things. And summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, ‘Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?’ And when the men had come to Him, they said, ‘John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, ‘Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?’ ’ At that very time He cured many *people* of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He granted sight to many *who were* blind. And He answered and said to them, ‘Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: *the* BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed, and *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised up, *the* POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.’ ”

Luke 7:12-23 NASB. [] mine

⁹⁹Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol. I, p. 266.

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“The true Messiah is to reign as King of the Jews. Jesus’ career as described in the New Testament lasted all of three years, at the end of which he was crucified by the Romans as a common criminal. He never functioned as anything but a wandering preacher and ‘faith healer’....Only the gullible and superstitious are taken in by miracles....”

The Real Messiah, by Aryeh Kaplan, et al, pp. 46, 55; 1976

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY

“...the scrolls do speak of the coming Jewish Messiah....Two of the fragments made newly available in the *Review*’s^[100] photo books are especially striking....the most important phrases are clear. Apparently referring to the coming Messiah, the text declares that he will ‘heal the wounded, resurrect the dead [and] preach glad tidings to the poor.’ The passage closely resembles the words of Jesus in the Nazareth synagogue (*Luke 4*)....”¹⁰¹

“Is Jesus In The Dead Sea Scrolls?”, by Richard Ostling,
Time, September 21, 1992

AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

Judging from the rabbinical commentary and especially the newly released Dead Sea Scroll¹⁰² manuscripts on what the Jewish Messiah was supposed to

¹⁰⁰*Biblical Archaeological Review*.

¹⁰¹Richard N. Ostling, contributor, “Is Jesus In The Dead Sea Scrolls?”, *Time*, Sept. 21, 1992. Quebecor Printing Book Group, © 1992, Time, Inc., reprinted by permission. This article commented on the Dead Sea Scroll Text 4Q521. In Luke 4, Jesus reads Isaiah 61:1-2 to the congregation in His synagogue: “ ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord’ ” (Luke 4:18-19 KJV). He then tells the people: “ ‘...‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing’ ” (Luke 4:21 NASB). Thus, He was telling them, “I am the Messiah,” because only the Messiah was to fulfill these prophecies (Isa. 35:5-6). Notice Jesus stopped short of completing the Isaiah passage which went on to read: “...and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn....” (Isa. 61:2 KJV). This was because He knew that this portion of the prophecy was not to be fulfilled until His Second Coming, when He will rescue Israel in victory from the war of Armageddon (II Thes. 1:7-8; Rev. 16:16; Ezek. 38-39)! The passage from Thessalonians in the New Testament reads: “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God....” (KJV).

¹⁰²Although the rabbis were quoted from a 1976 publication and the newly released Dead Sea Scroll evidence shown here is from a 1992 secular news magazine, there is no indication that Stolper or present rabbis representing this train of thought have changed their minds. Based on our new evidence, if you are ever involved in a conversation on this issue, it might prove interesting to bring up this topic! You can try it, but I don’t think you’ll like it. The 1992 article notes that Britain’s *Journal of Jewish Studies* is already attempting to dispute at least one supporting text. The *Journal of Jewish Studies* featured an article titled, “Qumran Corner—the Oxford Forum for Qumran Research Seminar on the Rule of War from Cave 4 (4Q825),” written by Geza Vermes from the Oxford Center for Post-Graduate Studies. Vermes admits in his criticizing footnote: “Of course the same consonants can be vocalized *wehemitû*, ‘and they will kill the Prince of the Congregation’, proposed by Eisenman and Wise....” Geza Vermes, “Qumran Corner: The Oxford Forum for Qumran Research Seminar on the Rule of War from Cave 4

accomplish according to ancient Jewish expectation, it seems quite shocking and uncalled for that Rabbis Kaplan and Stolper would mock this credential of Jesus' Messiahship, doesn't it? *Time* magazine's major article, "Is Jesus in the Dead Sea Scrolls?" commented on the similarity between the Jewish Dead Sea Scrolls and Luke's New Testament report. These similarities regarding the activities of Jesus in the area of healing are a landmark of evidence for Evangelical Christians' faith in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah! This is illustrated in another part of the article, where Michael Wise of the University of Chicago mentions that these similarities are important in "underscoring the Jewishness of Jesus."

Philip Moore

THE DONKEY PROPHECY

For centuries, the rabbis have rejoiced in their tradition that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem on a donkey! One such rabbinic writing reads as follows: "...(*Zech. 9:9*) describes the Messiah, for when they laughed at him while he sat in prison, he submitted for the sake of Israel to the judgment imposed on him, and is therefore properly called submissive. Why is he spoken of as *yet he promises salvation*? Because after submitting to the judgment for their sake, he said: All of you deserve extermination; nevertheless, you will be saved, every one of you, by the mercy of the Holy One, blessed be He.

"*Afflicted, and he is riding upon an ass...* describes the Messiah. And why is he called *afflicted*? Because he was afflicted during all his years in prison while transgressors in Israel laughed at him.

"Why does Scripture say *riding upon an ass*? The ass represents the wicked who have no merit of their own and can manage to get

along only by resorting to the merit of their fathers. But through the merit of the Messiah, the Holy One, blessed be He, shields them <and guides them> in a straight way, and redeems them, as is said *They shall*

(4Q285)," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 1. Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies: Oxford, England, © 1992, p. 88. At the same time, Vermes harshly and falsely criticizes the world news media for emphasizing: "...their [Eisenman and Wise] claims without arguments to support them...." Ibid, p. 86. A bit schizophrenic, wouldn't you say? Mr. Vermes bases part of his argument against the pre-New Testament suffering Messiah of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the fact that, elsewhere in the scrolls, mention is made of the warring victorious Messiah who destroys the evil one, etc. We (Christians) believe this, too. This is going to be Jesus' Messianic Second Coming (see our chapter 23, "The False Messiah Armilus Equals Antichrist," and chapter 27, "Speculating on Messiah's Second Coming—Whether They Know It or Not"). Jesus will indeed end the war of Gog and Magog/Armageddon, destroying the evil Antichrist by the breath of his mouth (II Thes. 2:8; Isa. 11:4), carrying out judgment (Matt. 25) and finally bringing in peace (Rev. 21). It would benefit liberal Jewish scholars to study, realize and investigate the fact that the true evangelical dispensational Christian faith teaches two Comings of the Messiah. One in the past—suffering—as well as a victorious kingly role yet to occur, we believe before the mid-twenty-first century. Mr. Vermes may live to greet his returning Messiah Jesus. Let's hope he is ready! We invite our readers to send him a copy of this book. Maybe after he has received enough of them, he will read one.

come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them; I will cause them to walk by rivers of waters, in a straight way wherein they shall not stumble; for I am become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My first-born (Jer. 31:9).’’¹⁰³

ORIGINAL BIBLICAL WORD CONSTRUCTIONS IDENTIFY TWO COMINGS—ONE ON A DONKEY AND ONE ON THE CLOUDS

The Talmud Sanhedrin points out that there would be two Comings as prophesized in Zechariah 9:9 and Daniel 7:13.¹⁰⁴ What seems to reinforce this Talmudic interpretation is the interesting fact about the construction of the two Hebrew words which describe the Comings. The key word “humble” in Zechariah 9 denotes the First Coming, while the word “clouds” in Daniel 7 denotes the Second Coming.¹⁰⁵

It should be pointed out that in the original Hebrew version, the term for humble or poor is *ani*, and clouds, in Aramaic,¹⁰⁶ is *anani*. In Zechariah the text says: עָנִי וְרָכַב עַל-חֲמֹר (“**humble**, and mounted on a **donkey**”) and in Daniel: וְאָרְוָה עִם-עָנָנִי שָׁמַיָּא (“and behold, with the **clouds** of **heaven**”).

These two words are almost identical except that the first has one *noon* (which is the Hebrew “n”), while the second has two *noons*. This illustrates God’s inspired use of the biblical language, which can itself symbolize the two Comings, the First by one *noon*¹⁰⁷ and

103 William G. Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati* Piska 34, from *Pesikta Rabbati: Discourses for Feasts, Fasts, and Special Sabbaths*. New Haven, CT: Judaica Research at Yale University, © 1968, pp. 667-668, used by permission.

104 Sanhedrin fol. 98, col 1: “R. Alexandri said: ‘R. Y’hoshu’a ben Levi explained:....’ If they will be righteous, [the Messiah will come] *on the clouds of heaven* (Daniel 7:13); if they will not be righteous, [he will come] *as a poor man riding upon an ass* (Zech. 9:9).”

” Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, p. 83. Patai’s source was the *Babylonian Talmud*.

105 Santala also tells us: “It is possible to determine in any case that the Messiah should have come during the time of the Second Temple when it was still possible to determine His lineage according to the genealogical tables.” Risto Santala, *The Messiah in the Old Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings* (Hebrew edition), p. 66.

106 In the Hebrew Bible, this portion of Daniel was written in Aramaic because Daniel was in Babylon at the time. Aramaic uses Hebrew letters.

107 The letter *noon* has a very special Messianic significance in Hebrew culture. Rabbi Michael Munk writes in the book *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet*: “No turmoil (bent ן) will last forever, because in the end it leads to the erect ן. This is demonstrated in the very term ןן denoting perpetuation; in ןן (fish) it represents propagation; in ןן, descendant, it stands for the future of our people; and in ןן, Mashiach, it names the final Redeemer.” Rabbi Michael L. Munk, *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet*. Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, ©1983, p. 158. The last Hebrew word Rabbi Monk mentions is a mystical name for the Messiah found in Psalm 72, יִנּוֹן (*yinnon*). *Yinnon* has two *noons* as does the Hebrew word *noon*, ןן (a final *noon* is longer than the normal letter). Risto Santala comments on the name *Yinnon*: “Again it is worth recognizing that when looking at, for example, psalm 118 we saw that RASHI identifies this ruler with the

the Second by two.¹⁰⁸

JESUS' DONKEY

Our New Testament records the event of Jesus riding the donkey into Jerusalem: “And after He had said these things, He was going on ahead, ascending to Jerusalem. And it came about that when He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples, saying, ‘Go into the village opposite *you*, in which as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it, and bring it *here*. And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ thus shall you speak, ‘The Lord has need of it.’ And those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, ‘Why are you untying the colt?’ And they said, ‘The Lord has need of it.’ And they brought it to Jesus, and they threw their garments on the colt, and put Jesus *on it*. And as He was going, they were spreading their garments in the road. And as He was now approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, saying, ‘BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’ And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to Him, ‘Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.’ And He answered and said, ‘I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!’ ” (Luke 19:28-40 NASB).

THE DAY THE STONES ALMOST CRIED

As you have just read, the response of the people was that of Messianic expectation. Notice Jesus’ reply when the religious leaders denounced His followers for saying: “...‘Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!’ ” (Matt. 21:9 NASB).

Once Jesus had received this Messianic declaration offered by the few who really knew *and believed* the Scriptures, some of the Pharisees condemned this, saying, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.” Clearly, they were angry at Jesus for receiving Messianic honors in the

‘cornerstone’ which will be rejected, and with the *Yinnon* or ‘flourish’ idea in psalm 72:17. The *Yinnon* Messiah was before the sun, moon and course of the stars. This special name also describes how he will ‘*awake the children of the dust from the dead*’. It is quite impossible to understand what the New Testament has to say without some familiarity with these roots of our faith which arise from the Jewish literature.” Risto Santala, *The Messiah in the Old Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, p. 163.

108I would like to take time here to credit Itzhak Klugler for pointing this out to me in 1984. Itzhak is an Israeli Messianic Jew who immigrated to Israel in the early 1980’s. This is the first time the interesting aspect of the two *noons* in relation to the Messiah’s two Comings has ever been published!

fulfillment of this “donkey prophecy.” Jesus’ answer to them was monumental. “I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!” (Luke 19:40 NASB).

By claiming “the stones will cry out” Jesus was alluding to the date of the Messiah’s Coming. It had been said by the prophet Daniel, nearly six hundred years earlier, that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem four hundred and eighty-three years after the rebuilding of the second Temple (which was built out of *stone*, by the way). It was not a coincidence that the entrance of Jesus on the donkey occurred to the day of Daniel’s predicted date!



Israeli children prepare for a donkey ride.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 487 AD

גִּילִי מְאֹד בְּתִצִּיּוֹן הָרִיעִי בֶּת יְרוּשָׁלַם הִנֵּה מֶלֶכְךָ יָבוֹא לָךְ צָדִיק וְנָשֵׁט הוּא עָלֵי דֹרְכְךָ
עַל-חֲמֹר וְעַל-עֵיז בְּרִאֲחֻנּוֹת: זְכַרְיָה ט:ט

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

Zechariah 9:9 NASB**ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY**

“Rabbi Berachya said in the name of Rabbi Isaac: The last Redeemer will be like the first (Moses), as the first put his wife and his sons upon an ass (Exod. iv.20), the last one will also ride upon an ass; as the first fed his people with manna (Exod. xvi. 4), so will the last one also bring manna down from heaven (Ps. lxxii. 16); as the first made rise the well, so will the last one also bring forth water (Joel iii.18). Thus, here is something of which it is said, Behold this is something new; but it has already been.”¹⁰⁹ **Midrash on Ecclesiastes or Coheleth in loco**

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 90 AD

“On the next day the great multitude who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees, and went out to meet Him, and *began* to cry out, ‘Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel.’ And Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it...”

John 12:12-14 NASB**MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION**

“Zechariah 9:9—This is the verse dealing with the Messiah coming on a donkey...keep in mind that in the time of Jesus, riding on a donkey was not unusual at all. It is totally absurd to say that since Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, that proves conclusively that he is the Messiah, considering the fact that there were probably thousands of other Jews on donkeys going to Jerusalem at the same time. It makes more sense to say that the verse refers to the 20th^[110] Century—while everyone else will fly to Jerusalem on a 747 jet, or drive a car, or ride in a bus or train, the Messiah will instead choose a donkey, which would be quite unusual.”

You Take Jesus, I'll Take God, by Samuel Levine, p. 53; © 1980

AUTHOR'S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

Our point is that Jesus came on a specific day, on a donkey, which lined up with Daniel's prophecy of the Messiah, which could only be fulfilled on that day, excluding all days past and future. He was the only one being hailed as the Messiah as He came in on His donkey. Most importantly, the Messiah was predicted to come twice, once on a donkey (humbly), and again in glory on the predicted clouds of Heaven (Dan. 7:13). The author of *You Take Jesus, I'll Take God* should realize that Jesus' donkey and the time He appeared on it is one of the most unique correlations in history and that the Messiah's return cannot be

109Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol. III, p. 30.

110We know that He will not be coming in the twentieth century, but rather in the twenty-first century. Isaac Newton has also testified to this. If you are reading this book in the year 2000, you will see old Newton was right! Now, if you give yourself between twenty to forty years, you will see things really start to happen!

on an animal—only on the clouds, as many rabbis admit! If Samuel Levine studies up, I'll bet he will hush up! **Philip Moore**

WHY THE MESSIAH CANNOT COME ON A DONKEY TODAY AS SOME HAVE ALLEGED—TIMING!

Because of a specifically predicted timetable given us by another Hebrew prophet, Daniel, there is in fact a certain absurdity to Levine's statement about "a twentieth century donkey" and his attempt to convince us that it would be more timely for the Messiah to come on a donkey in **our** generation. It is important to realize that He will come, and His Coming will be soon, but it will not be on a donkey! Not this time.

In our present generation, the prophecies of Daniel 7 and accompanying ancient rabbinical commentaries prove otherwise. For example, Daniel tells us: "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom...." (Dan. 7:13-14 NASB).

When this prophesied event occurs (commonly known as the Second Coming), Jewish people throughout the world will realize that their leaders (who have rejected the Messiahship of Jesus) were wrong. The Jews who see Jesus coming, will at that time be "**all righteous.**" As the prophet Isaiah wrote regarding that period: "...and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also *shall be all righteous*: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified" (Isa. 60:20-21 KJV).

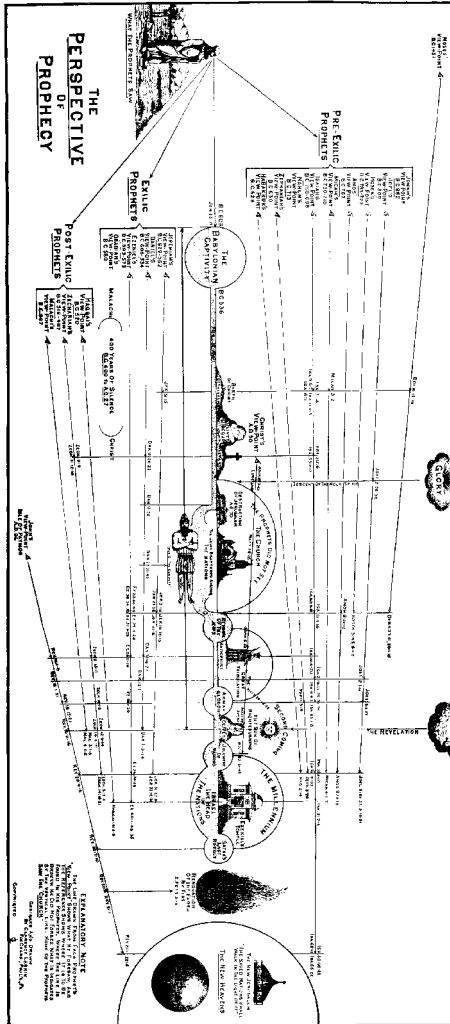
When they see the Messiah Jesus they will believe in Him, and that alone, **believing** in Him, will make them completely righteous. The New Testament says: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45 NASB). "BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen" (Rev. 1:7 NASB).

Isaiah also said: "As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it* and be satisfied; By His **knowledge** the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:11 NASB).

EVEN IN THE TALMUD, THE RABBIS CORROBORATE TWO COMINGS AND THE MANNER OF THE SECOND IS ON THE CLOUDS

In a discussion in the Talmud, the ancient rabbis clearly saw the two Comings of the Messiah. Once on a donkey, if Israel was unworthy, and again to a worthy Israel on the clouds of Heaven. In fact, these ancient rabbis cite the same two Scriptures in Zechariah and

Daniel that we have: "Rabbi Joshua ben Levi asked: In one place it is written, 'Behold, one like the Son of Man,' etc., and in another, 'Lowly and riding upon an ass' (Zech. ix. 9)! (He answered), If they be worthy, He (the Messiah) will come with the clouds of heaven; if not, He will come lowly and riding upon an ass.—*Talmud Sanhedrin*, fol. 98, col. 1."¹¹¹ For details of the Messiah's return on "*the clouds of Heaven*", see our chapters 27-30 which deal with His Second Coming.



Courtesy of Clarence Larkin Estate.

¹¹¹Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol. III, p. 179.

ORIGINAL ARAMAIC TEXT WRITTEN 555 BC

הָנָה הָיִיתָ בְּחֻזִּי לִילְיָא וְאַרְזָא עֲסֻנִי שְׂמִינָא כְּכַר, אֲנִשׁ אֲתָהּ הָנָה וְעַד־עֵתִיק יִמְנָא
 מִשְׁהָ וּקְרִימוֹהִי הָקֵרְבוּהִי: וְלָהּ יִתִּיב שְׁלִטָן וִיגְר וּמְלִכּוֹ וְכָל עַמְמִינָא אֲמִינָא וְלִשְׁנֵינָא
 לָהּ וּפְלִחוֹן שְׁלִטָּהּ שְׁלִטָן עָלֵם דִּילְיָא וְעֵדָה וּמְלִכּוֹתָהּ דִּילְיָא תִּתְחַבֵּל:
 דְּנִיאל זִיג־יֵד

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed."

Daniel 7:13-14 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

"Rabbi Joshua ben Levi asked: In one place it is written, 'Behold, one like the Son of Man,' etc., and in another, 'Lowly and riding upon an ass!' (Zech. ix. 9). (He answered), If they be worthy, He (the Messiah) will come with the clouds of heaven; if not, He will come lowly and riding upon an ass."¹¹²

Talmud Sanhedrin, fol. 98, col. 1

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 57 AD

"...Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, 'Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed *One*?' And Jesus said, 'I am; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, AND COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.' And tearing his clothes, the high priest said, 'What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy....'"

Mark 14:61-64 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

"Daniel vii.13, 'I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.' The Christian expositors of Scripture ascribe the object of this prophecy to the advent of their Messiah, who, according to their view of this prophecy, was to be a superhuman being; otherwise how could he come with the clouds of heaven? Refutation.—The prophet speaks here of a dream....The clouds of heaven mentioned in the quotation at the head of this chapter, bring to mind the heavenly rule which ordains changes on high, in the region which lies beyond the reach and influence of man....The last-mentioned prediction is most decidedly not realised in the person of Jesus...."

***Faith Strengthened*, by Isaac Troki, pp. 195-197; 1850**

AUTHOR'S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

It is quite obvious that Isaac Troki, in his "refutation," is grasping at straws. He not only rebuts the claim of the Christian New Testament, but also the Talmud, as you have read above, though he may be doing so unwittingly. The Talmud in this instance correctly reflects the true Christian realization that the Bible teaches the Messiah will come twice. Once "lowly" (Zech. 9:9) and once (yet to come) "kingly" (Dan. 7:13-14), just as Jesus promised in the New Testament Gospel of Mark.

Philip Moore

¹¹²Ibid, p. 179.

DANIEL NINE—THE TIME

Daniel 9:24-26, outlines specific details as to how the Messiah would come the first time at an exact time.¹¹³ Hal Lindsey, in his book, *The Promise*, beautifully illustrates the evidence: "...Daniel.... was himself in dispersion in Babylon with the rest of his nation when he wrote his remarkable prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27....this amazing prediction of the future events of Israel's career sets forth a divinely ordained time period of 'seventy weeks' of years (490 years) in which God would, in specific ways, *deal with the sin of the nation, bring in everlasting righteousness, and send the Messiah to the world.* This allotted time period was like a great divine 'time-clock' with 490 years of time marked off on it.

A specific event was to mark the beginning of this 490 years of God's unique dealing with his people. Daniel said that when the permission was officially given for the Jews to leave their Babylonian captivity and return to their land and restore and rebuild Jerusalem, that would mark the start of this 490 year period. Like a great stop-watch, God's finger pushed down on the button and the 490 year allotted countdown began clicking off April, 444 B.C.E. Archaeologists have confirmed to us that this was the year that Artaxerxes Longimanus, the Persian King, gave the Jews permission to leave their exile in Babylon.

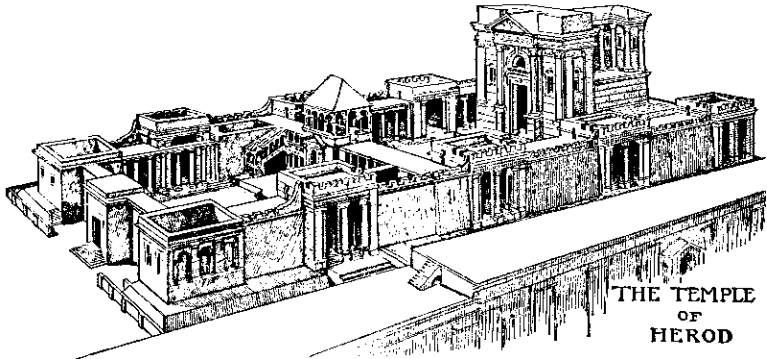
Then Daniel predicted a strange thing. He said that after sixty-nine weeks of years (483 years) had clicked off on this allotment of time, the Messiah of Israel would be revealed to the Jews and then *killed*, and the city of Jerusalem and their Temple would be destroyed and their 490 year special time allotment would be temporarily cut short by 7 years.

There's no possible way that it could be coincidence that on the *very day* that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and presented himself to Israel as their Messiah, exactly 483 years had transpired since the proclamation given by Artaxerxes. Daniel said that the city

¹¹³Although some contemporary rabbis attempt every mental gymnastic feat imaginable in order to get around this exact and powerful prophecy, this documentation is an infallible proof which has convinced many sincere rabbis of the Messiahship of Jesus. See the book *Rabbi's Edition* (Available through Good News Society, POB 7848, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2000) Tel. 1-610-449-1396, for testimonies of over twenty rabbis who have received Jesus as the Messiah. The prophecy is speaking of an exact time period of four hundred and eighty-three years counting from the command which allowed the rebuilding of the Temple, as we have quoted from Hal Lindsey's brilliant exposition. Rashi dishonestly attempts to apply this prophecy to Agrippa, liberal theologians attempt to link it to the murder of a former high priest, and all of the anti-Messianic Jewish polemical books we have quoted, such as: *You Take Jesus, I'll Take God*; *The Jew and The Christian Missionary*; *Faith Strengthened*; and *The Real Messiah*; deny this prophecy's Messianic application to Jesus, without foundation.

and Temple would be destroyed following the death of their Messiah, and within forty years the Roman Holocaust had taken place.

There's one critical fact that must be pointed out in this prophecy. *Whoever* the Messiah was to be, he had to have come to Israel *before* the city and Temple were destroyed in 70 C.E. Only one candidate fits that role—Jesus of Nazareth!¹¹⁴



The Temple of Herod was burned to the ground in 70 AD, as Jesus foretold (Luke 12:5-6).



A fifty-to-one model of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, located at The Holyland Hotel.

¹¹⁴Hal Lindsey, *The Promise*, pp. 187-189.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 538 AND 785 BC

וְהָיָה וְהָשָׁלַל מִן־מִצְרָאֵי דָבָר לְהָשִׁיב וְלִבְנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם עַד־מָשִׁיחַ נִגִיד שְׁבַעִים שָׁבָעָה
 וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁשִׁים וּשְׁנָיִם הָשׁוּב וְנִבְנְתָה רְחוֹב וְחֲרוֹץ וּבִצּוֹק הַעֲתִים: וְאַחֲרֵי הָשָׁבָעִים
 שָׁשִׁים וּשְׁנָיִם: קָרַת מָשִׁיחַ וְאִין לֹו וְהָעִיר וְהַקֹּדֶשׁ יִשְׁחָתוּ עִם נִגִיד הַבָּא וְקָצוּ
 בְּשִׁטָּף וְעַד קֵץ מַלְחָמָה נִחְרָצָת שִׁמְמוֹת:

דְּנִיאל ט: כה-כו

כִּי יָמִים רַבִּים יִשְׁבֹּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין מֶלֶךְ וְאֵין שָׁר וְאֵין נָבִיחַ וְאֵין מִצְבֵּה וְאֵין אֶפֹּד
 וְהַתְּרָפִים: הוֹשֵׁעַ ג:

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it [The Temple] will be built again....the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince [General Titus of Rome] who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”

Daniel 9:25-26 NASB. [] mine

“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and *without* teraphim....”

Hosea 3:4 KJV

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 63 AD

“And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said, ‘*As for* these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.’ ”

Luke 21:5-6 NASB

HISTORICAL EYEWITNESS

“These Romans put the Jews to flight...and proceeded as far as the holy house itself. At which time one of the soldiers, without staying for any orders, and without any concern or dread upon him at so great an undertaking, and being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatched somewhat out of the materials that were on fire, and being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to a golden window, through which there was a passage to the rooms that were round about the holy house [second Temple]...on the north side of it.”¹¹⁵ **Josephus**

AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

As you can see from Jesus’s prediction in Luke’s New Testament gospel, and the eyewitness account of Josephus, the Romans tore the Temple down stone by stone. When it was accidentally burned, the gold melted and ran down between the stones. Thus, the Romans had to remove the stones of the Temple one by one until the ground level was reached to retrieve the gold, thereby fulfilling the six hundred-year-old prophecy of Daniel 9, which Jesus said would occur in His generation.

Philip Moore

¹¹⁵Thomas S. McCall and Zola Levitt, *Satan in the Sanctuary*. Dallas, TX: Zola Levitt, © 1983, p. 120, used by permission. [] mine.

THE TALMUD TELLS ON ITSELF, HUSHING UP THE MESSIAH'S DATE

The Talmud unwittingly refers to events that verify many New Testament claims. The Talmud records the secrecy of the specific date for the Coming of the Messiah as predicted in Daniel 9, where it tells us: "...a *Bath Kol* came forth and exclaimed, Who is this that has revealed My secrets to mankind? Jonathan b. Uzziel thereupon arose and said, It is I who have revealed Thy secrets to mankind. It is fully known to Thee that I have not done this for my own honour or for the honour of my father's house, but for Thy honour I have done it, that dissension may not increase in Israel. He further sought to reveal [by] a *targum* [the inner meaning] of the Hagiographa, but a *Bath Kol* went forth and said, Enough! What was the reason?—Because the **date** of the **Messiah** is **foretold** in it."¹¹⁶ The Soncino English Talmud's footnote to the words, "the Messiah is foretold in it," reads: "The reference is probably to the Book of Daniel."¹¹⁷

THE ISRAELI BIBLE—ARMY STYLE—RESOLVES THE TIME CALCULATION CRISIS

The Israeli Army Bible, in its commentary footnotes on this segment of Daniel, identifies this time-period as weeks of years. Many liberals and even Christian allegorists argue that the weeks *of years* mentioned here is a modern Christian/Dispensational interpretation.

Since there are few Evangelical Christians in Israel, and thus no need to play down the Messiah, the Israeli Bible is honest and truthful about the time calculations! We would love to get these rabbis and "Christians" all together on an El-Al¹¹⁸ flight to Israel, then upon arrival at Ben-Gurion Airport, take them over to one of the soldiers at passport control and have him pull out his Bible and translate the footnote to Daniel 9 where it says *weeks of years*! If such rabbis and liberals would be open-minded on this issue, then they might become Messianic and evangelical.

¹¹⁶*The Babylonian Talmud*, Megillah 3a, pp. 9-10. Bold mine.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸El-Al is Israel's national airline. In Hebrew, *El* means "God" and *Al* means "flies." In support of Israel, we never fail to use it on our trips to the Holy Land.

**ATTORNEY WALTER CHANDLER SAYS JONATHAN'S
OMISSION COULD NOT BE COINCIDENCE—IT WAS
BECAUSE OF THE TIME FACTOR!**

Walter M. Chandler, the famous New York lawyer, in his book, *The Trial of Jesus: From a Lawyer's Standpoint*, sheds light on what seems to be an early rabbinic conspiracy centered around the time factor in Daniel's prophecy. Chandler wrote: "JONATHAN ben UZIEL, author of a very remarkable paraphrase of the Pentateuch and the Prophets....has purposely omitted Daniel, which omission the Talmud explains as due to the special intervention of an angel who informed him that the manner in which the prophet speaks of the death of the Messiah coincided too exactly with that of Jesus of Nazareth. Now, since Jonathan has intentionally left out the prophecies of Daniel on account of their coincidence with the death of Christ, it proves that....The Talmudists, in order to reward this person for having, through his hatred of Christ, erased the name of Daniel from the roll of the prophets, eulogize him in the most absurd manner. They relate that while engaged in the study of the law of God, the atmosphere which surrounded him, and came in contact with the light of his understanding, so caught fire from his fervor that the birds, silly enough to be attracted toward it, were consumed immediately."¹¹⁹

**SIR ROBERT ANDERSON OF SCOTLAND YARD
PUTS THE LAST NAIL IN THE COFFINS OF
THOSE WHO DISPUTE DANIEL**

Sir Robert Anderson, Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department of Scotland Yard and author of seven textbooks, spent his life investigating this prophecy. He even wrote a book, *The Coming Prince*, to illustrate the historical reliability which he uncovered during his investigation of Daniel 9:24-26. Anderson said: "Now it is an undisputed fact that Jerusalem was rebuilt by Nehemiah, under an edict issued by Artaxerxes (Longimanus), in the twentieth year of his reign. Therefore, notwithstanding the doubts which controversy throws upon everything, the conclusion is obvious and irresistible that this was the epoch of the prophetic period. But the month date was Nisan, and the sacred year of the Jews began with the phasis of the Paschal moon. I appealed, therefore, to the Astronomer Royal, the late Sir George Airy, to calculate for me the moon's place for March in the year in question, and I thus ascertained the date required—March 14th, B.C. 445....Its

¹¹⁹Walter M. Chandler, *The Trial of Jesus: From a Lawyer's Standpoint*, illustrated edition, p. 148. Chandler's sources were: The Talmud, "Succa" or "The Festival of Tabernacles," fol. 28, verso; David Ganz, "Chronol," 4728; Gesenius, "Comm. on Isaiah," Part I, p. 65; Zunz, "Culte divin des Juifs," Berlin, 1832, p. 61; Derembourg, work quoted above, p. 276; Hanneburg, "Revelat Bibliq.," ii, 163, 432.

terminus ad quem can thus with certainty be ascertained. Now 483 years (69×7) of 360 days contain 173,880 days. And a period of 173,880 days, beginning March 14th, B.C. 445, ended upon that Sunday in the week of the crucifixion, when, for the first and only time in His ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ, in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, made a public entry into Jerusalem, and caused His Messiahship to be openly proclaimed by 'the whole multitude of the disciples'....Now the great characteristic of the Jewish sacred year has remained unchanged ever since the memorable night when the equinoctial moon beamed down upon the huts of Israel in Egypt, bloodstained by the Paschal sacrifice; and there is neither doubt nor difficulty in fixing within narrow limits the Julian date of the 1st of Nisan in any year whatever. In B.C. 445 the new moon by which the Passover was regulated was the 13th of March at 7h. 9m. A.M. And accordingly the 1st Nisan may be assigned to the 14th March....the language of the prophecy is clear: 'From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto *Messiah the Prince* shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks.' An era therefore of sixty-nine 'weeks,' or 483 prophetic years reckoned from the 14th March, B.C. 445, should close with some event to satisfy the words, 'unto the *Messiah the Prince*'....What then was the length of the period intervening between the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the public advent of 'Messiah the Prince,'—between the 14th March, B.C. 445, and the 6th April...THE INTERVAL CONTAINED EXACTLY AND TO THE VERY DAY 173,880 DAYS, OR SEVEN TIMES SIXTY-NINE PROPHETIC YEARS OF 360 DAYS, the first sixty-nine weeks of Gabriel's prophecy....

But $476 \times 365 =$	173,740 days
Add (14 March to 6th April, <i>both</i> inclusive)	24 "
Add for leap years	116 "
	<hr/> 173,880 "

And 69 weeks of prophetic years of 360 days (or $69 \times 7 \times 360$) = 173,880 days.

It may be well to offer here two explanatory remarks. First: in reckoning years from B.C. to A.D., *one* year must always be omitted; for it is obvious, *ex. gr.*, that from B.C. I to A.D. I was not *two* years, but one year. B.C. I ought to be described as B.C. O, and it is so reckoned by astronomers, who would describe the historical date B.C. 445, as 444 (see note, p. 124, *ante*). And secondly, the Julian year is 11m. 10'46s., or about the 129th part of a day, longer than the mean solar year.¹²⁰

120Sir Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, © 1984, pp. xlv-xlvi, xlvii, 123-124, 127-128, used by permission.

This is why biblical three hundred and sixty-day lunar years differ in length from our three hundred and sixty-five and one-quarter-day solar year. Anderson's calculations are indisputable.

MARK EASTMAN AND REVEREND CHUCK SMITH CORROBORATE ANDERSON

In their book, *The Search for Messiah*, authors Eastman and Smith clarify: "Is there any other way to check the accuracy of this date? Yes....The 1990 Encyclopedia Britannica states that the reign of Caesar Tiberius started on August 19th in the year 14 C.E.....scholars believe Jesus was baptized in the Fall season. Consequently, according to Luke chapter Three, the ministry of Jesus started with his baptism in the Fall of the 15th year of the reign of Caesar Tiberius and...lasted four Passovers or 3 1/2 years. The first Passover of Jesus' ministry would have been in the Spring of 29 C.E.....The Passover in that year fell on April 10th. Remarkably, according to Robert Anderson and the British Royal Observatory, the Sunday before that Passover was April 6th!!!

That day, April 6th, 32 C.E., was exactly 173,880 days after Artaxerxes gave the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem on March 14, 445 B.C.E! That day was the first day that Jesus of Nazareth allowed his disciples to proclaim him as Messiah!

This prophecy is one of the many proofs that God transcends time and is able to see the beginning of time from the end with incredible precision....Furthermore, it is well established that the Jews of the Qumran community (the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls) believed that Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy pinpointed the time of the coming of the Messiah. In fact, many in the Qumran community based their messianic hope on similar chronological calculations.^[121] They believed that they were living in the generation to which this prophecy pointed!....However, according to the popular view (not the

¹²¹Mark Eastman has strong ground for revealing this newly discovered Messianic evidence concerning this prophecy, its commentary on the Messiah, its date, the Coming of Jesus and the Essenes at Qumran, because James Tabor, in the *Biblical Archaeological Review*, reported: "...the question is: Given their triumphant view of the Davidic messiah figure, is it likely that the Qumran group conceived of such a one being crushed? Such a connection is implied in the fascinating text 11QMelch[izedek], which deals with the end of days. There Daniel 9:25 is quoted, which mentions the coming of a messiah who is subsequently (in Daniel 9:26) *cut off*. This verse is followed immediately in 11QMelch[izedek] by a quotation from Isaiah 61:2-3, a messianic text of hope and comfort (see 4Q521, which interprets Isaiah 61 as the messiah's triumph). We know the Qumran group was intensely interested in this 'Seventy Weeks' prophecy of Daniel. They tried to place themselves within this chronological scheme as they calculated the eschaton." James Tabor, "A Pierced or Piercing Messiah?—The Verdict is Still Out," *Biblical Archaeological Review*, Nov.-Dec. 1992, p. 58.

Biblical one) he was not what they expected or wanted in a Messiah. The truth had been hidden from their eyes.”¹²²

ANDERSON’S INSPIRATION

Anderson was, in part, inspired by a rabbi who denied and challenged our interpretation of Daniel’s prophecy. “Very many years ago my attention was directed to a volume of sermons by a devout Jewish rabbi of the London Synagogue, in which he sought to discredit the Christian interpretation of certain Messianic prophecies. And in dealing with Daniel ix., he accused Christian expositors of tampering, not only with chronology, but with Scripture, in their efforts to apply the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks to the Nazarene. My indignation at such a charge gave place to distress....I decided to take up the study of the subject with a fixed determination to accept without reserve not only the language of Scripture, but the standard dates of history as settled by our best modern chronologists.”¹²³

WHAT EVENTS DID DANIEL PREDICT EXACTLY?

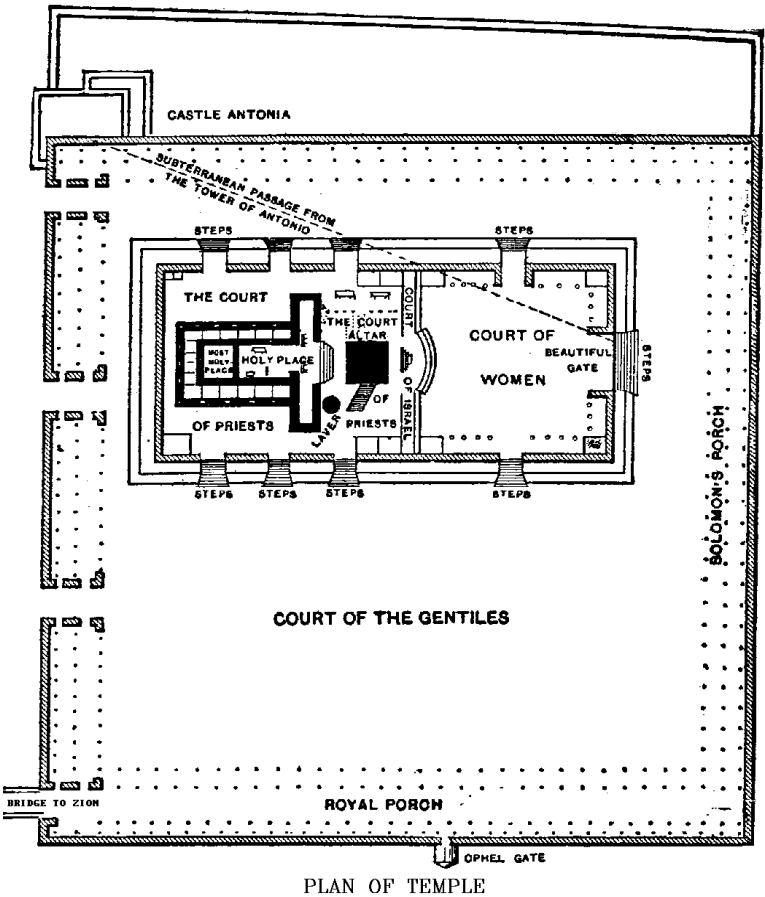
Daniel’s prophecy reads as follows: “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined” (Dan. 9:24-26 KJV).

Daniel clearly outlines that the Messiah would come four hundred and eighty-three years (sixty-nine weeks of years) after the command given for the Jews’ release from Babylon, so that they could return to Israel and begin rebuilding the Temple. The date of this command, given by the Persian King Artaxerxes, was discovered in Persian archives during archaeological excavations.

¹²²Mark Eastman, M.D., and Chuck Smith, *The Search for Messiah*, pp. 81-83.

¹²³Sir Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, p. ix.

The Old Testament prophet Nehemiah also verifies this in the second chapter of his biblical book.¹²⁴ Daniel predicted that once the Messiah came, He would be “cut off” (a Hebrew idiom for being killed, verse 26), then he says that the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary (of the Temple) would be destroyed.



¹²⁴Nehemiah 2:1-10.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 538 BC

שבעים שבועים נתחד עַל־עַמְּךָ וְעַל־עִיר קִדְשְׁךָ לַכֹּלֵא הַפֶּשַׁע וְלַחַטָּאִים חַטָּאוֹת וּלְכַפֵּר
 עָוֹן וּלְהַבְיֵא צֶדֶק עַל־מִים וְלַחַטָּאִים חַנוּן וְנִבְיָא וּלְמַשַּׁח קֹדֶשׁ קִדְשִׁים: וְתִלַּע וְתַשְׁכֵּל
 מִן־מִצָּא דָבָר לְהַשִּׁיב וּלְבָנֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם עַד־מִשְׁיַח נִגִּיד שְׁבַעִים שְׁבַעַה וְשְׁבַעִים שָׁנִים
 וְשָׁנִים תָּשׁוּב וְנִבְנֶה־הָרְחוֹב וְהָרִיץ וּבָצֹק הַעֲתִים: וְאַחֲרֵי הַשְׁבַּעִים שָׁנִים וְשָׁנִים יִכְרַת
 מִשְׁיַח וְאֵין לוֹ וְהָעִיר וְהַקֹּדֶשׁ יִשְׁחִית עִם נִגִּיד הַבָּא וְקָצוּ בִשְׁטָף וְעַד קֵץ מַלְחָמָה נִחְרָצָה
 שְׁמֹנוֹת: דְּנִיאל ט: כד-כו

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy *place*. So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks....Messiah will be cut off [killed] and have nothing, and the people of the prince [Titus of Rome] who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”

Daniel 9:24-26 NASB. [] mine¹²⁵

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“I have examined and searched all the Holy Scriptures, and have not found the time for the coming of MESSIAH, clearly fixed, except in the words of Gabriel to the prophet Daniel, which are written in the ninth chapter of the prophecy of Daniel.”¹²⁶

Rabbi Moses Abraham Levi

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 63 AD

“And when He approached, He saw the city and **wept** over it, saying, ‘If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the **time** of your **visitation**.’ ” **Luke 19:41-44 NASB**

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“...It is most reasonable and probable to affirm that the anointed one that he referred to in Daniel 9:25 is Cyrus, and not Jesus. The reason why a Christian would have difficulty understanding this is because the compiler of the King James Bible was a shrewd person. In the original Hebrew, both Daniel 9:25 and Isaiah 45:1 use the exact same word—‘moshiach.’ However, in the Christian version of the Old Testament, the word, ‘moshiach,’ is translated in Isaiah 45:1 as ‘anointed’ whereas in Daniel 9:25, the same Hebrew word is translated as ‘the Messiah.’ (‘Messiah’ is the Anglicized version of ‘Moshiach’; the pure translation of ‘Moshiach’ is ‘an anointed one.’) This deceptive translating makes it virtually impossible for the innocent reader who does not know Hebrew to discern the truth.” ***You Take Jesus, I’ll Take God*, by Samuel Levine, p. 31-32: © 1980.**

¹²⁵ See Chapter 22, “Rome Resurrected,” regarding details on Daniel’s end-time prophecies as they relate to Rome’s revival in our present-day Europe.

¹²⁶F. Kenton Beshore, D.D., LL.D., Ph.D., “*The Messiah*” of the Targums, Talmuds and Rabbinical Writers, pp. chart 13.

AUTHOR'S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

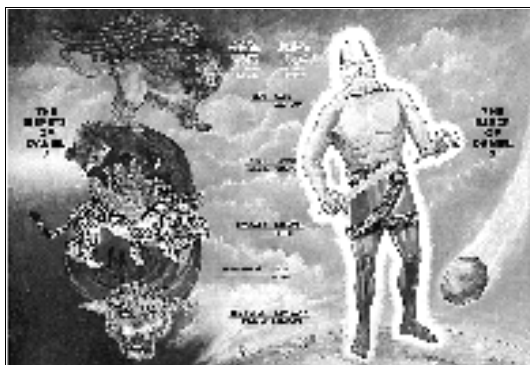
Being a Christian who happens to know Hebrew, I can reassure my readers that contrary to what Levine claims, מֶשִׁיַּח נָגִיד (Meshiakh Nagid) translates “Messiah cut off.” Those “dumb Christians who only read King James and don’t know Hebrew” need not worry. Jesus cried because He saw His people were rejecting Him (not knowing the time of their Messianic visitation). He knew the consequences of this act for Israel from the ancient prophecies written in the law (Deut. 28:57). This prophecy of Moses indicated cannibalism. Luke 23:27-31 added details to this. The Jewish historian of the first century, Josephus, records that these events actually occurred just as Moses and Jesus predicted. These events happened thirty-seven years after Jesus said they would. Josephus verified: “This famine also will destroy us, even before that slavery comes upon us; yet are these seditious rogues more terrible than both the other. Come on; be thou my food, and be thou a fury to these seditious varlets and a bye-word to the world, which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of us Jews.’ As soon as she had said this, she slew her son; and then roasted him and ate the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed.”¹²⁷

Philip Moore

WHAT DANIEL PREDICTED OF JERUSALEM, THE TEMPLE AND JESUS, HAS OCCURRED TO THE LETTER

Did it happen? Jesus rode into Jerusalem exactly to the day of the end of the four hundred and eighty-three years.¹²⁸ Soon thereafter, Jesus was crucified and within a generation the Temple and its sanctuary were destroyed. Who could dare to make such an accurate prophecy? Only God through his prophet Daniel.

Verse 27 of Daniel’s ninth chapter deals with the time of the Antichrist and his false prophet. They will appear in the mid-21st century as the ruler of a newly formed revived Roman Empire and as Israel’s Messiah. Much more will be said about this in our chapters 22, “Rome Resurrected,” and 23, “The False Messiah Armilus Equals Antichrist.”



A review of world history, and future, illustrated from biblical symbols.

¹²⁷*Wars of the Jews*, published in the compilation *Josephus: Complete Works*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, © 1981, book 4, chapter 3, verse 3, used by permission.

¹²⁸According to the three hundred and sixty-day biblical years, as foretold by Daniel.

**THE MAIN POINT OF DANIEL'S PREDICTION,
FULFILLED IN PAST AGES BUT STILL IN OUR
FUTURE, POINTS TO JESUS REGARDLESS**

Our point regarding these monumental prophecies of Daniel is that there is no way anyone can study them, including modern rabbinical “scholars,” and being intellectually honest about them, infer that Jesus was not the Messiah or that the Messiah will come on a donkey in the twentieth century. He will come, but with pierced hands (Zech. 12:10) “on the clouds of heaven” (Dan. 7:13) to a weeping Jewish Jerusalem, which He saves from invading Russian-Arab armies known to Israel as Gog and Magog. Read the 2600-year-old writings of the Hebrew prophet Ezekiel, chapters 38-39 in your family Bible and you will see what we are talking about! This subject is covered in our chapter 19, “Russia is Crushed in Gog,” and chapter 20, “Mohammed is Mad,” where we show how these future political predicaments will result in biblically predicted fulfillments.

**IN THE END, JESUS WILL BRING IN PEACE,
AS PREDICTED BY ZECHARIAH AND DAVID**

After the third world war (Rev. 16:16)¹²⁹ Jesus will fulfill the remainder of Zechariah's prophecy by inaugurating the long awaited Messianic Kingdom of peace. Jesus promised to fulfill this prophecy when Israel and the world's Jewry would receive Him (Matt. 23:39), when He would return “in the clouds of heaven” (Mark 16:42) from God's right hand, as predicted by King David (Ps. 110:1).

As you remember, Zechariah 9:9 dealt with the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem on a donkey. The remainder of Zechariah's prophecy says: “And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion *shall be* from sea *even* to sea, and from the river *even* to the ends of the earth” (Zech. 9:10 KJV).

It will be at this time (probably no more than one-half century away) that many great and unbelievable events will take place. Jesus will resurrect the dead (you and me, that is, if we have a chance to die before He returns). If you have partaken of Jesus' free gift of salvation you will live forever in a refurbished, regenerated New Earth.

These promises tingle my toes with vitality. Just think, happy-go-lucky, never to feel pain or suffering or to die, but to righteously enjoy, as God has always intended for us (see our chapters 29 and 30, which deal with new world Messianic conditions)!

¹²⁹John the apostle calls this war Armageddon in the sixteenth chapter of his Apocalypse.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 712 BC

קִן עַבְדִּי אֶתְמַדְבּוֹ בְּחַיִּי רָצִיתָה נַפְשִׁי נָתַתִּי רוּחִי עָלָיו מִשְׁפָּט לְגוֹיִם יוֹצֵא:
יִשְׁעִיה מִבָּא

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one *in whom* My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.”¹³⁰

Isaiah 42:1 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“Behold, My Servant, the Messiah, whom I bring near, My chosen one, in whom My Memra takes delight; I will place My holy spirit upon him, and he shall reveal My law to the nations.”¹³¹

Targum Jonathan

NEW TESTAMENT PREDICTION 96 AD

“...He [Jesus] who sat upon it *is* called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *upon Him* which no one knows except Himself. And *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the winepress of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.’ ” **Revelation 19:11-16 NASB.**
[] mine

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

All anti-Christian rabbis believe that the Messiah will fulfill the above prophecies and bring peace, but that it is not Jesus coming back to do it. We could not find an anti-Christian refutation of Jesus in our selection of books. They finally missed one, didn't they?

Philip Moore

AUTHOR'S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

Psalms 2:8-9 says that through God's spirit the Messiah will bring justice to the nations. All true believers look to Jesus to carry out these promises when He returns, as the last book of the New Testament, Revelation, asserts.

Philip Moore

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE TEMPLE, JESUS THROWS A FIT! WHY?

At that time, Judaism was still geared to accept any Gentile who wanted to be saved by accepting the Hebrew God of Israel. This is why there was a Court of the Gentiles at the Temple.

¹³⁰ *The New Scofield Reference Bible* documents: “There is a twofold account of the Coming Servant: He is represented 1. as weak, despised, rejected, slain; and also 2. as a mighty conqueror, taking vengeance on the nations and restoring Israel (e.g. 40:10; 63:1-4. The former class of passages relate to the first advent, and are fulfilled; the latter to the second advent, and are unfulfilled.” *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 748.

¹³¹ Samson H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation, The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum*, p. 59.

The Gentiles were placed in the outermost court, which was built at the instruction of God, so that any of the world's heathens who were interested might have the opportunity to see and accept the true faith of Israel before the Messiah came.

Even though the Bible and Temple opened the door for Gentiles to enter into the biblical faith, the religious leaders at the time of Messiah Jesus had grown intolerant of these allotments which God had commanded. This is why, in John 2:15, we read that Jesus whipped the moneychangers in the Temple: "...He made a scourge of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables..." (NASB).

You see, they were changing the money of heathen governments to shekels, the only acceptable currency for the purchase of sacrificial animals. They were charging exorbitant rates of exchange but the real and terrible thing which upset Jesus was the fact that these animals, sold for sacrifice, were taking up the entire Court of the Gentiles! In other words, if Gentiles were interested and wanted to observe Jewish rites and consider accepting the biblical faith and the God of Israel, they could not make their way into the Temple area which God had instructed the nation of Israel to allow for them. These corrupt priests and leaders were using their space to store sacrificial animals. Thus, after He drives the moneychangers from the Temple (house) area, Jesus says: "...‘Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves’" (Mark 11:17 KJV).

STRANGE PHRASES OF JESUS BECOME ALL TOO FAMILIAR WHEN WE LOOK BACK INTO THE OLD TESTAMENT

These two phrases: "a house of prayer for all nations," and; "a den of thieves" (indicating the Court of the Gentiles¹³² and astronomical rates of exchange), were prophecies foretold hundreds of years earlier in the Bible of Israel! These were to be fulfilled in Jesus' day.

Jesus was quoting from Isaiah and Jeremiah, who explicitly predicted and instructed: "...the sons of the [foreigner] that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar [including non-Jews (nations/Gentiles) who accepted the God of Israel]...." (Isa. 56:6-7 KJV; [] mine).¹³³

¹³²Gentile means "nation" or "non-Jew," from a nation other than Israel.

¹³³*The New Scofield Reference Bible.*

Jeremiah's 2600-year-old prophecy included the words: "**Is this house**, which is called by my name, **become a den of robbers** in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen *it*, saith the LORD" (Jer. 7:11 KJV; bold mine).

THE PROPHECY OF PRICE WAS THIRTY SHEKELS!

It has been said that everyone has their price. Judas' price was thirty Israeli shekels of silver and his motives were complex.

The Messianic expectations among the Jews of that day were geared toward a mighty warrior king rather than a suffering servant. Judas thought that he could push Jesus into a situation where He would have to use military might or fall helplessly to Rome. Judas felt he would force Jesus to legitimize Himself and make some easy money at the same time. However, Jesus played right along with what was really prophesied to happen; that is the appearance of the suffering Messiah. He willingly allowed Himself to be arrested, tried and put to death.

When Judas witnessed the first two parts of this triple design, he felt guilty. He had been paid the money which Zechariah had foretold to the penny five hundred years beforehand (Matt. 26:14-15).

Once he saw that Jesus was going to allow Himself to be executed, he felt tremendous remorse, so he tried to give the money back to the priests. They would not take it, saying: "What is that to us? See to *that* yourself...It is not lawful^[134] to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood" (Matt. 27:6 NASB).

¹³⁴Alfred Edersheim, a Jewish believer in Jesus and scholar of the last century, enlightens us: "...in the Temple the priests knew not what to do with these thirty pieces of money. Their unscrupulous scrupulosity came again upon them. It was not lawful to take into the Temple-treasury, for the purchase of sacred things, money that had been unlawfully gained. In such cases the Jewish Law provided that the money was to be restored to the donor, and, if he insisted on giving it, that he should be induced to spend it for something for the public weal. This explains the apparent discrepancy between the accounts in the Book of Acts and by St. Matthew. By a fiction of law the money was still considered to be Judas', and to have been applied by him in the purchase of the well-known 'potter's field,' for the charitable purpose of burying in it strangers. But from henceforth the old name of 'potter's field,' became popularly changed into that of 'field of blood' (Haqal Dema). And yet it was the act of Israel through its leaders: 'they took the thirty pieces of silver—the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's field!' It was all theirs, though they would have fain made it all Judas': the valuing, the selling, and the purchasing. And 'the potter's field'—the very spot on which Jeremiah had been Divinely directed to prophesy against Jerusalem and against Israel: how was it now all fulfilled in the light of the completed sin and apostasy of the people, as prophetically described by Zechariah! This Tophet of Jeremiah, now that they had valued and sold at thirty shekel Israel's Messiah-Shepherd—truly a Tophet, and become a field of blood! Surely, not an accidental coincidence this, that it should be the place of Jeremy's announcement of judgment: not accidental, but veritably a fulfillment of his prophecy! And so St. Matthew, targuming this prophecy...in true Jewish manner stringing to it the prophetic description furnished by Zechariah, sets the event before us as the fulfillment of Jeremy's prophecy." Dr. Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, pp. 575-576.

Judas threw the silver into the Temple in a fit of rage and disillusionment (by the way, Zechariah's "house of the Lord," in which the prophecy indicates the payment was to be cast down, was the Temple!). Finally, once he had flung those infamous shekels onto the *hekel*¹³⁵ floor, the priest picked up the coins and decided, with mock concern, to use them to buy the "potter's field," where poor people would be buried. As we read in the New Testament: "...they counseled together and with the money bought the Potter's Field as a burial place for strangers. For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day" (Matthew 27:7-8 NASB).

Since the money had been taken from the Temple treasury it had to be used for the public good (and actually, it was, since Jesus truly was the sacrifice and the Temple treasury was used to purchase sacrificial offerings). So Zechariah gets three predictions in a row right about the Messiah's betrayal.

Zechariah predicted: "So it was broken on that day, and thus the afflicted of the flock who were watching me realized that it was the word of the LORD. And I said to them, 'If it is good in your sight, give *me* my wages; but if not, never mind!' So they weighed out thirty *shekels* of silver as my wages. Then the LORD said to me, 'Throw it to the potter, *that* magnificent price at which I was valued by them.' So I took the thirty *shekels* of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD" (Zechariah 11:11-13 NASB).



The Potter's Field in Israel where Judas committed suicide.

¹³⁵Another word for Temple.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 487 BC

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר־בְּעֵינֵיכֶם הָבּוּ שֶׁכֶרִי וְאִסְלֵא יְהוָה וְיִשְׁקְלֶנִי אֶת־שֶׁכֶרִי שְׁלֹשִׁים
 קֶסֶף: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי הַשְׁלִיכֵהוּ אֶל־הַיָּצֵר אֲדָר הַיָּקָר אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָתִי מִשְׁלָתִים וְנִאֲקָתָהּ
 שְׁלֹשִׁים הֶקֶסֶף וְאִשְׁלִיךְ אֹתוֹ בֵּית יְהוָה אֶל־הַיָּצֵר:
 זְכַרְיָה יֵא:יב-יג

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“And I said to them, ‘If it is good in your sight, give *me* my wages; but if not, never mind!’ So they weighed out thirty *shekels* of silver as my wages. Then the LORD said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter, *that* magnificent price at which I was valued by them.’ So I took the thirty *shekels* of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD.” **Zechariah 11:12-13 NASB**

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“R. Hanin said, ‘Israel will not require the teaching of the royal Messiah in the future, for it says, *‘Unto him shall the nations seek’* (Isa. 11:10), but not Israel. If so, for what purpose will the royal Messiah come, and what will he do? He will come to...give...thirty precepts, as it says, *‘And I said unto them: If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver.’* (Zech. 11:12)” **Genesis Rabbah 98.9**

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 37 AD

“Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, and said, ‘What are you willing to give me to deliver Him up to you?’ And they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver. And from then on he *began* looking for a good opportunity to betray Him....And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a great multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, ‘Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him.’ And immediately he went to Jesus and said, ‘Hail Rabbi!’ and kissed Him....At that time Jesus said to the multitudes, ‘Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me’....Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ But they said, ‘What is that to us? See *to that* yourself!’ And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood.’ And they counseled together and with the money bought the Potter’s Field¹³⁶ as a burial place for strangers.”

Matthew 26:14-16, 47-49, 55; 27:3-7 NASB

136Matthew 27:9 mentions fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prediction. Jeremiah 32:6-9 mentions a field. However, the fuller meaning is found in Zechariah 11:12-13, which is Matthew’s exact quotation. *The New Scofield Reference Bible* quite accurately explains: “There may be an allusion to Jer. 18:1-4 and 19:1-3, but the reference is distinctly to Zech. 11:12-13. A Talmudic tradition states that the prophetic writings were placed in the canon in this order: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, etc. Many Hebrew manuscripts follow this order. Thus Matthew cited the passage as from the roll of the prophets and by the name of the first book.” *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1041.

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“Here, again, we meet with the usual misapplication of Scriptural passages. The quotation, taken from Zechariah xi. 12, 13, runs as follows: ‘So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter,’ etc....The thirty pieces of silver are a figurative representation of the righteous men of the time, who were cast to their potter....”

Faith Strengthened, by Isaac Troki, pp. 246-247; 1850

AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

I realize that the rabbinical commentary concerning the number thirty does not indicate the sale of Messiah for thirty shekels. Such a commentary is yet to be found, if in fact it exists. However, my point in using the quote from the Midrash is to illustrate to you, in the twentieth century, that the ancient rabbis saw Zechariah 11:12-13 as applying in some way to the Messiah; something modern Jewish scholars and rabbis categorically deny.

Philip Moore



Some of these olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane in Israel are actually the same trees which were alive when Jesus was arrested after praying in this garden over 1960 years ago. It is a botanical fact that their life span averages well over 2000 years.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE?

The Garden of Gethsemane is a beautiful garden in Jerusalem, located at the foot of the Mount of Olives. This was the place where Jesus and His disciples were praying the night Judas led the Roman chiliarch¹³⁷ (a chiliarch was a commander of 1000 men, equal in rank to a modern general¹³⁸) and his men, accompanied by the high priests and their henchmen, to Jesus. That same night, He was arrested by the Roman government for His claim of Messiahship.



As I stood in this beautiful garden I could feel the spirit of love and self-sacrifice. Even today, it seems to linger, to those who are sensitive to the things of God!

137This word is correctly translated by J.N. Darby in his study Bible in the passage John 18:12: "The band therefore, and the *chiliarch*, and the officers of the Jews, took Jesus and bound him...." J.N. Darby, *The 'Holy Scriptures,' A New Translation from the Original Languages*. Addison, IL: Bible Truth Publishers, 1976, p. 1295. Italics mine. Available through Bible Truth Publishers, POB 649, 59 Industrial Road, Addison, IL, USA 60101.

138Hal Lindsey, *A Prophetic Walk Through the Holy Land*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, © 1983, p. 108.

ON YOUR BACK LOOKING UP AT GOD

Let's take a closer look at the events surrounding the visit of the Romans and Pharisees to the Garden. The New Testament text reads: "...He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden....Judas then, having received the *Roman* cohort, and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore...went forth, and said to them, 'Whom do you seek?' They answered Him, 'Jesus the Nazarene.' He said to them, 'I am *He*'....When therefore He said to them, 'I am *He*,' they drew back, and fell to the ground.... '...if therefore you seek Me, let these go their way'...." (John 18:1, 3-6, 8 NASB).

JESUS CLAIMED HIS MEMORIAL NAME OF ALL GENERATIONS—"I AM," OR YAHWEH, FROM THE BOOK OF EXODUS, BEFORE THE PRIESTS, ROMAN SOLDIERS AND CHILIARCH

The "He" in verse 6 is not contained in the original language. If you have a New American Standard translation of the New Testament before you, notice that *He* is in italics, indicating that the word is not in the original language but was inserted afterward to make the English read more smoothly.

Jesus is claiming His ancient title of deity **I AM**, or in Hebrew, **YAHWEH**. This incredible Hebrew title comes from the Old Testament book of Exodus, the second book of the Jewish Bible. The conversation runs as follows: "Then Moses said to God, 'Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?' And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'; and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' ' And God, furthermore, said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations' " (Exo. 3:13-15 NASB).

God told Moses to address Him as such before the Pharaoh of Egypt. Of course, Pharaoh at that time had not become acquainted with the God of Israel, the one true God!

**JESUS' MESSIANIC CLAIM OF DEITY REFERRED
TO HIS ETERNAL PRE-EXISTENT SELF BEFORE
ABRAHAM WAS BORN—"I AM"**

Jesus was claiming this title not of His flesh, which was born at Bethlehem some thirty-three years before, of which God is the literal father, but rather His claim is based on His eternal pre-existence before His birth. This is beautifully illustrated in His conversation with some religious leaders in the Gospel of John. John records this revealing encounter as the authorities asked Jesus: “ ‘...whom do You make Yourself out *to be*?’ Jesus answered....‘Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.’ The Jews [religious minority leaders] therefore said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, **I am**’ ” (John 8:53-54, 56-58 NASB; [] and bold mine).

It is incredible that a century before, the Jewish leaders in charge would have fallen on their faces and worshipped Him for who He was (Messianic deity), but by the time Jesus arrived on the scene the religious leadership of Israel had been corrupted by Rome, as we have documented.

**JESUS KNOCKED THE ROMANS AND PRIESTS
(TOGETHER, OVER 1000 OF THEM) DOWN FLAT WITH THE
UTTERANCE OF HIS ANCIENT NAME, "I AM"!**

To get back to the subject, which is the event we were observing in the Garden of Gethsemane, verse 6 of John 18 says: “When therefore He said to them, ‘I am *He*,’ they drew back, and fell to the ground” (NASB).

Most do not realize the significance of the words, “they drew back.” This phrase indicates that they were knocked flat on their backs, suddenly, as God’s name released this power with the utterance of His true identity.



I have never seen this miracle of vast might, which was released when Jesus uttered His true divine name, ever portrayed in any of the movies about Him! Have you? In essence, Jesus told this group of Roman soldiers, including their leader, the chiliarch (John 18:12 Darby), that they could not arrest God on their own conditions. They had no choice but to let the disciples go, who otherwise would also have been arrested. After these events occurred, Jesus allowed the Romans and “religious leaders” to arrest Him so He could fulfill the Bible’s predicted role for Him as a willing Passover lamb, sacrificed for you and me, so anyone believing in Him could receive atonement for all evils. What a relief!

IS ISAIAH 53 MESSIANIC OR NOT? OUR GREATEST SUFFERER

Isaiah eloquently predicted: “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him” (Isaiah 52:13-53:2 KJV).

The Jewish prophet Isaiah, seven hundred years before Christ, claimed that this one, God’s servant, the Messiah, would be beaten beyond recognition and suffer so as to gain the interest of heathen kings and nations the world over. In essence, he said that the non-Jew would be given the grace of the God of Israel through the horrible sufferings and tortures of this man who would go almost unrecognized by the whole¹³⁹ of His own people, the Jews, to whom He was sent! Did this come true? Jesus, in His rejection by His fellow countrymen, was truly likened to “a tender plant,” and “a root out of dry ground,” due to the spiritual callousness and misunderstanding of the religious leaders of Israel!

History as well as the New Testament testifies to His brutal beatings (John 19:1-3)¹⁴⁰ and crucifixion by Roman soldiers, which

¹³⁹Although there were nearly one million Jews who did accept Jesus in the first and second centuries, many other millions were convinced falsely by the rabbinical authorities of their day that He was not the Messiah. For a full understanding of this, see our chapters 7-9 on the Messiah Conspiracy.

¹⁴⁰The apostle John records this mistreatment: “Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged *him*. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put *it* on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands” (KJV). Hal Lindsey, in his book, *The Promise*, beautifully elaborates: “It’s predicted that this Servant of the Lord would be treated in such a manner that he would be disfigured to the point that he would hardly look human (Isaiah 52:14). As unthinkable as it is, the Servant would be struck on both the back and face. He would be humiliated by being spit upon the face (Isaiah 50:4-11). It’s well known that this is the kind of treatment that Jesus received during the six illegal trials he was subjected to. The officers of Herod’s temple guard spat in Jesus’ face after the Sanhedrin had condemned him. Then they blindfolded him and struck him in the face. A jagged crown of thorns was jammed down on his head and he was cruelly whipped with a Roman scourge. It was a sadistic whip made of many strips of leather to which pieces of bone or jagged metal were attached to make the effect more painful. None of this abuse of Jesus was either legal or warranted. There had been no criminal charges proven against him. Yet all of this happened to the Servant of the Lord just as Isaiah had prophesied that it would

rendered Him so **marred**, He was unrecognizable. This is one of the reasons people from all nations and walks of life consider Him, saying, “Did He endure all of this terrible suffering so I could be set free? For me?” We can easily imagine that even a mighty king with unlimited political power and wealth would find this question intriguing.



“The Apostle Paul in Prison,” as envisioned by Rembrandt in 1627.

(Isaiah 52:13-53:12).” Hal Lindsey, *The Promise*, pp. 120-121.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 712 BC

הִנֵּה יִשְׁכִּיל עַבְדִּי יִרְוֶה וְנִשְׂא וְנִקְבָּה מְאֹד:

יִשְׁעִיה נִבֵּי:

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted.”
Isaiah 52:13 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“Behold, my servant, the Messiah, shall prosper; he shall be exalted, etc. ‘Behold, my servant shall deal prudently.’ This is the King Messiah. ‘He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.’ He shall be exalted more than Abraham; for of Him it is written, ‘I have exalted my hand to the Lord’ (Gen. xiv.22). He shall be extolled more than Moses....(Num. xi.12).”¹⁴¹

Targum**NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 90 AD**

“...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life....” When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.”

John 3:14-15; 8:28 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“...the Christians assert, that the prophecy of Isaiah constitutes a prediction of Jesus, the Nazarene, concerning whom Isaiah has said, ‘He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high,’ because to him alone it is asserted these words can be attributed....The word יִשְׁכִּיל ‘he shall prosper,’ is found again in the 1st Samuel xviii. 14, ‘And David *was prosperous* in all ways.’ ‘My servant shall prosper,’ relates to that period when Israel shall leave the countries of its captivity, and be elevated to the highest degree of happiness.”

***Faith Strengthened*, by Isaac Troki, pp. 108-118; 1850**

AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

Isaac Troki’s refutation of the Messianic interpretation and application of Isaiah 52:13 clearly flies in the face of the ancient rabbinical understanding. As you see, the Jewish Targum of many centuries past definitely explains this biblical passage to be about the Messiah. On the other hand, our Christian polemic friend would have us believe that it is about Israel’s happiness. That’s a new one on us. When Mr. Troki said, “The Christians assert,” he was apparently ignorant of the fact that the Targum also “asserted”—Messiah! Right? Yes!

Philip Moore

¹⁴¹Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol. I, p. 268.

**RABBIS SAY SUFFERING AND REJECTION
INDICATES HE IS NOT MESSIAH, HOWEVER, THE
TREATMENT INFLICTED BY THEIR PREDECESSORS
AUTHENTICATES JESUS' MESSIANIC CREDENTIALS**

Isaiah went on to predict: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:3-6 KJV).

Here, we see that the prophet Isaiah speaks of the Messiah's rejection by Jewish religious leaders and rabbis. He says that the peoples' leaders would cause the rejection of the exact one they were seeking! Was and is this true? Many contemporary, perhaps well-meaning rabbis have said, "Jesus could not possibly have been the Messiah, for if He was He would have been accepted by the Jewish leaders of the time." However, when we read the Jewish prophecies of Isaiah we find that one of the qualifications for Messiahship is in fact the Messiah's rejection by His own people! Does this settle the question in the rabbis' minds? Hardly.

When this quote regarding rejection is firmly stated to rabbis, they inevitably respond with the words, "Isaiah is not speaking about the Messiah in this particular passage, but rather Israel."

This line of thought has been contrived by modern "scholarship" to attack and counter the Messianic/Christian claims that Jesus is the suffering Messiah. However, if you quote the ancient rabbinical commentaries, the Talmud, Targums and Midrashim, in their references to these specific passages of Isaiah, you might find yourself on hostile ground in the rabbis office.

The older commentaries claim that this passage in Isaiah is indeed referring to the Messiah; something for which the rabbi has no answer in this case, if he is honest about his misunderstood interpretation that Isaiah 53 is referring to Israel.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 712 BC

נִבְּהוּ וְחָדָל אִישׁ מִכְאֲבוֹת וַיִּדְוַע חָלִי וּכְמִסְתָּר פָּנִים מִמֶּנּוּ נִבְּהוּ וְלֹא חֲשַׁבְהוּ:
שְׁעִיה נָנִי

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”

Isaiah 53:3 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“...the Holy One will reveal to them Messiah, the son of David, whom Israel will desire to stone, saying, Thou speakest falsely; already is the Messiah slain, and there is none other Messiah to stand up (after him): and so they will despise him, as it is written, ‘Despised and forlorn of men;’ but he will turn and hide himself from them, according to the words, ‘Like one hiding his face from us.’”¹⁴²

Mysteries of Rabbi Shim'on Ben Yohai

Jellinek, Beth ham-Midrash (1855), part iii, p. 80

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 90 AD

“...and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.’ The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, ‘I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?’ The Jews answered Him, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out *to be God*.’”

John 10:28-33 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“*He was despised, and rejected of men* [אִשִּׁים: ‘men of high status’], a man of pains, and acquainted with disease, and as one from whom men hide their face: he was despised, and we esteemed him not. This verse, continuing the theme of the previous one, speaks of the servant as being generally despised. He is described as suffering from pains and diseases with which he is well acquainted. Terms having to do with wounds, sickness, pain, and disease are often used in the Scriptures to describe the humiliations and adversities suffered by the nation of Israel (Isaiah 1:5-6; Jeremiah 10:19, 30:12). The prophet quotes the Gentiles as saying that the suffering servant of the Lord ‘was despised and rejected’ by their leaders, the ‘men of high status.’”

***The Jew and the Christian Missionary*, by Gerald Sigal, p. 39; © 1981**

AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

Mr. Sigal and Rabbi Bronznick just do not understand the ancient rabbinical commentaries about the servant of Isaiah 53 being the Messiah who is despised and expected to die for Israel. They employ an argument which began in the Middle Ages with Rashi, which was a fatalistic attempt to transfer the sufferings of the Messiah to Israel. Thus, their claim was and is that this passage refers to non-Jews against Jews. This is ironic because clearly Isaiah speaks of an individual dying for the sins of Israel and everyone else. When Isaiah said *we*, he was referring to himself as well as the rest of Israel. The rabbinical

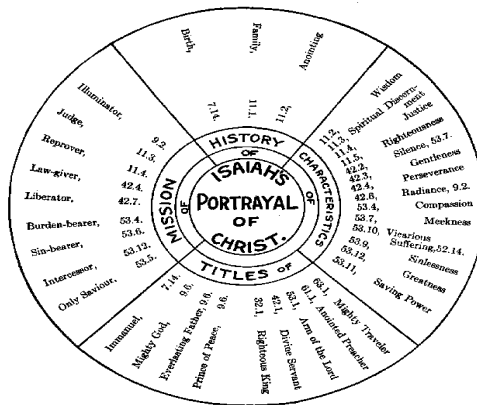
¹⁴²*The Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah, According to the Jewish Interpreters*, published in the compilation by The Library of Biblical Studies. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., © 1969, p. 32, used by permission.

commentaries of ancient Israel said this person was the Messiah. Mr. Sigal and his advocates should get their facts right before they write! Wouldn't you say?

Philip Moore



A young Israeli shears a sheep on a kibbutz. This reminds us of Isaiah's prophecy that the Messiah was "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isa. 53:7 KJV).



Isaiah, the Hebrew prophet, looking down through the centuries, predicted nearly every aspect of the Messiah's first coming to suffer.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 712 B.C.

לִזְנוֹן אֶחָדֵךְ לְזֶדִים וְאֶת־עֲצוּמוֹתֶיךָ יִחַלֵּק שְׂלֵל־תַּחַת אִשֶּׁר הִעָרָה לַמָּוֶת נַפְשׁוֹ.
וְאֶת־פְּשָׁעִים נִמְנָה וְהוּא חָטָא־רַבִּים נָשָׂא וְלַפְשָׁעִים יִפְגֹּעַ:
יִשְׁעִיה נִנְיָב

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.”

Isaiah 53:12 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“And when Israel is sinful, the MESSIAH seeks for mercy upon them, as it is written, ‘By His Stripes we were healed, and HE carried the sins of many; and MADE INTERCESSION FOR THE TRANSGRESSORS.’”¹⁴³

B’reshith Rabban, pp. 430, 671

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 57 AND 63 AD

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many....For I tell you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, ‘AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS’; for that which refers to Me has *its* fulfillment.”

Mark 10:45; Luke 22:37 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“Isaiah 53:1-8 finds the prophet quoting the astonished exclamations of the Gentile spokesmen....In the latter part of verse 10 through verse 12, the prophet records the blessings with which God will reward His faithful servant for all the abuse and injury he endured for the sanctification of the Name of God....the servant, Israel, formerly despised by the nations, will now attain a place of honor and recognition among ‘the great,’ the sovereign nations of the world....”

***The Jew and the Christian Missionary*, by Gerald Sigal, pp. 37, 64; 1981**

AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

Where Gerald Sigal, under the direction of Rabbi Bronznick, gets the idea that Isaiah 53 concerns a “Gentile spokesman,” eludes us. It would also have eluded the most brilliant ancient Jewish rabbinical commentators. This Messianic passage in Isaiah begins with: “Who hath believed **our** [Hebrew prophetic Jewish] report? and to **whom** is the arm of the LORD revealed?” (Isa. 53:1 KJV; [] mine). We all, even most rabbis and nominal “Christians,” agree that it was the Jews who wrote the Old Testament in the midst of a pagan world as God’s revelation to man. Further, Isaiah, who said *He bore our sorrows*, is Jewish! We believe Gerald Sigal and Rabbi Bronznick should read the ancient Jewish commentaries we have quoted, in their original Hebrew, if they know enough Hebrew. This passage cannot refer to Israel as implied by our friendly Jewish *Christian polemicist*. Though Israel will be sovereign when Jesus returns and establishes the millennium, this passage, as indicated by the ancient rabbinical commentary, refers to the Messiah, one who would be punished and beaten while praying for His enemies. This was never true of Israel but was true of Jesus! Furthermore, the Jewish Targum Jonathan to Isaiah 43:10-12, emphatically states that this servant is the *Messiah*. It says: “ ‘You are witnesses before Me,’ says the Lord, ‘and My servant is the Messiah, whom I have chosen; that you may

143F. Kenton Beshore, D.D., LL.D., Ph.D., “*The Messiah*” of the Targums, Talmuds and Rabbinical Writers, pp. chart 26.

know and believe Me, and that you may understand that I am He who was from the beginning, and also that all eternities belong to Me, and besides Me there is no God.’”¹⁴⁴ **Philip Moore**

THE ZOHAR’S ANSWER TO ATONEMENT AFTER THE TEMPLE FALLS IS THE SUFFERING OF THE MESSIAH

A clear example of a rabbinical cover-up of the true Messianic interpretation of Isaiah 53 can be seen in an obscure deletion in the Zohar. The Zohar is an ancient Jewish commentarial work which uses quotations from the Bible and other sources to answer many legitimate Jewish questions.

In response to questions regarding the atonement, the Bible and the Messiah, the Zohar says: “The souls which are in the Garden of Eden of Below roam about on every New Moon and Sabbath, and go to that place which is called Walls of Jerusalem, where there are my officers and detachments which watch over those walls....And they go to that place, but do not enter it until they are purified. And there they prostrate themselves, and enjoy the radiance, and then return to the Garden. [And again] they go forth from there and roam about in the world, and they see the bodies of the sinful suffering their punishment....And then they [continue to] roam and view those afflicted with sufferings and disease, and those who suffer for the Oneness of their Master, and then they return and tell [all this] to the Messiah.

“In the hour in which they tell the Messiah about the sufferings of Israel in exile, and [about] the sinful among them who seek not the knowledge of their Master, the Messiah lifts up his voice and weeps over those sinful among them. This is what is written: ***He was wounded because of our transgressions, he was crushed because of our iniquities (Isa. 53:5)***. Those souls then return to their places. In the Garden of Eden there is a hall which is called the Hall of the Sons of Illness. The **Messiah** enters that hall and summons all the diseases and all the pains and all the sufferings of Israel that they should come upon him, and all of them come upon him. And would he not thus bring ease to Israel and take their sufferings upon himself, no man could endure the sufferings Israel has to undergo because they neglected the Tora....As long as Israel dwelt in the Holy Land, the rituals and the sacrifices they performed [in the temple] removed all those diseases from the world; now the **Messiah removes** them from the children of the world...”¹⁴⁵

144Samson H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation, The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum*, p. 62.

145Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, pp. 115-116. Bold mine. These portions of the Zohar are quoted for you free of censorship. In modern versions of the Zohar this section has been censored because of its ancient endorsement of Isaiah 53’s Messianic

**THE MODERN SONCINO ZOHAR
HAS BEEN EDITED, APPARENTLY FOR
MESSIANIC COVER-UP BECAUSE OF JESUS**

We have just clarified that from time immemorial, rabbinical literature has admitted that the Messiah was to take up the slack when the Temple, the sacrifices, and the priests were no more. Incidentally, these were the claims made by Jesus in the New Testament.

This beautiful passage, which fits hand-in-hand with our New Testament Christian doctrinal happenings, is no doubt remarkable. However, there is a modern cover-up of this! What you just read was the original ancient version quoted from *The Messiah Texts*, by Raphael Patai. This version reaches back many, many hundreds of years.¹⁴⁶ However, in the modern English version of the same passage published by The Soncino Press, those precious words concerning the suffering Messiah are omitted, with a footnote explaining: “The first four and a half pages of this section (211b-216a) are declared by all the commentators to be an interpolation, containing much erroneous doctrine.”¹⁴⁷ Obviously, the commentator who wrote these pages did not believe they were erroneous! Did he?



In Israel, an Orthodox Jew attempts the blood atonement by swinging a chicken over his head as part of the sacrificial ritual on Yom Kippur.

significance.

¹⁴⁶Some believe it reaches back to the time of Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai, nearly 2000 years ago.

¹⁴⁷*The Zohar*, Vol. II. New York: The Soncino Press, © 1984, p. 301, footnote 1.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 712 BC

וְהוּא מְחַלֵּל מִפְשָׁעֵינוּ מִדָּבָר מִשְׁמֹתֵינוּ מוֹסֵר שְׁלוֹמֵנוּ עָלָיו וְבִחְבֶּרְתּוֹ נִרְפָּא לָנוּ:
שְׁעִיָּה נִנֵּה

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.”
Isaiah 53:5 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“The Patriarchs will one day rise again in the month of Nisan and will say to the Messiah: ‘Ephraim, our righteous Messiah, although we are your ancestors, you are nevertheless greater than we, for you have borne the sins of our children, as it is written: ‘Surely he has borne our diseases and carried our sorrows; yet we regarded him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our sins, bruised for our iniquities, upon him was the chastisement that makes us well, and through his wounds we are healed’ (Isaiah 53:4-5). Heavy oppressions have been imposed upon you, as it is written: ‘As a result of oppression and judgment he was taken away; but in his day, who considered that he was torn from the land of the living because of the transgressions of my people?’ (Isaiah 53:8).”¹⁴⁸

Pesiqta Rabbati, Friedmann’s edition, chapter 37

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 60 AD

“...He Himself [Jesus] bore our sins in His body on the cross...for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

I Peter 2:24-25 NASB. [] mine

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“In verse 4 [of Isa. 53], the Gentile spokesmen depict the servant as bearing the ‘diseases’ and carrying the ‘pains’ which they themselves should have suffered. At the time of the servant’s suffering, the Gentiles believed that the servant was undergoing divine retribution for *his* sins....we must conclude that this statement, made by the enemies of the suffering servant of the Lord, does not refer to Jesus, who, it is alleged, suffered as an atonement for mankind’s sins. There is no indication in this verse that the servant of God suffered to atone for the sins of others....This is the confession of the Gentile spokesmen, who now realize that it was they and their people who deserved to suffer the humiliations inflicted on the servant of the Lord, as they stated in verses 4-6.”

***The Jew and the Christian Missionary,*
by Gerald Sigal, pp. 42-43, 52; © 1981. [] mine**

AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

See our comments on previous Isaiah 53 comparison on page 184.

Philip Moore

¹⁴⁸Arthur W. Kac, *The Messianic Hope*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, © 1975, p. 80, used by permission.

**CENSORING ISAIAH 53 FROM THE
SYNAGOGUE LECTIONARY WAS DELIBERATE
BECAUSE OF JESUS, AS THE SCHOLARS AFFIRM**

Hal Lindsey, in his well-known book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, comments on this passage in Isaiah: “Rabbis since the birth and death of Jesus of Nazareth have reinterpreted this passage....[because] the passage speaks of this person as bearing the consequences of the transgressions of Israel.”¹⁴⁹

Frederick Bruce, author of the scholarly book, *The Spreading Flame*, notes: “It is a distinguished orthodox Jewish scholar who tells us that the reason why the prophecy of the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 52:13-53:12) is not included in the synagogue lectionary, although the passages immediately preceding and following it are found there, is the Christian application of that prophecy to Jesus.”¹⁵⁰

This orthodox scholar mentioned by Professor Bruce is none other than the famous Herbert Martin James Loewe of Cambridge, who wrote the over eight hundred-page *Rabbinic Anthology* with C.G. Montefiore. His exact words are: “Quotations from the famous 53rd chapter of Isaiah are rare in the Rabbinic literature. [Because of the christological interpretation given to the chapter by Christians, it is omitted from the series of prophetic lessons (*Haftarot*) for the Deuteronomy Sabbaths....the omission is deliberate and striking. (H.L.)]

¹⁵¹

**THE REINTERPRETATION OF ISAIAH’S
MESSIANIC PROPHECY ORIGINATED AT YAVNE
AND STILL DECEIVES TODAY**

The groundwork for these new reinterpretations¹⁵² was laid at Yavne a generation after Jesus, and they reached their zenith in Rashi’s writings in the eleventh century. It would seem that the last couple of generations have seen these interpretations become standardized within

¹⁴⁹Hal Lindsey with C.C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 37. [] mine.

¹⁵⁰F.F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*, p. 267.

¹⁵¹C.G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology*, p. 544.

¹⁵²Popular Christian author, Hal Lindsey, exposes the real veil over Israel’s Messianic misunderstanding as clearly originating in this forsaken remnant of a town, when he mentions: “ORTHODOX JUDAISM....primarily the heir of the first century Pharisees. Until modern times this was the predominant form of Judaism practiced by Jews in the dispersion. Their doctrines were first formulated by the Pharisee scribes and priests who survived the A.D. 70 holocaust. They fled to a place called Yavneh (which is just southeast of modern Tel Aviv), where they reinterpreted Judaism so that it could be practiced without a Temple and animal sacrifices. In theory, this group fanatically holds to the Torah. But in reality they hold the rabbinical interpretations of the Torah as more authoritative. In my opinion, this tradition is the veil over the Israelite’s heart that blinds him to the truth. At Yavneh, every prophecy concerning the Suffering Messiah was explained away.” Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust*, pp. 133-134.

mainstream Judaism. Not so long ago, many rabbis still agreed that Isaiah 53 was Messianic.

Isaiah 53 also predicted that the person in question would not be given justice¹⁵³ according to Jewish law. This came true during the trials of Jesus. All were amazed that Jesus did not defend Himself. “And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly” (Matt. 27:12-14 KJV).

Isaiah’s words, seven hundred years before, were: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” (Isa. 53:7 KJV).

THE MESSIAH WAS SLATED FOR JUDGMENT AND PRISON IN PROPHECY—WAS JESUS PUT IN JAIL JUST AS PROPHESED?

Another unmistakable prediction says that the Messiah would die for Isaiah’s people (Israel). This, of course, includes anybody who puts their trust in the God of Israel, even if they are not Jewish.¹⁵⁴ Isaiah miraculously predicts: “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken” (Isa. 53:8 KJV).

Seven hundred years *later*, we observe the obvious fulfillment of this prophecy in the New Testament’s record, which reports: “Then the band and the captain and officers...took Jesus....and bound him, And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year....Now Annus had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest [here He spent time in the prophecied cell]....Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment....” (John 18:12-14, 24, 28 KJV; [] mine).¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³Walter M. Chandler, in his book, *The Trial of Jesus, From a Lawyer’s Standpoint*, details the many Jewish laws that were broken during the illegal trials of Jesus.

¹⁵⁴“And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb *to be* his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, *and* his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation [Israel] abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, *and* the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee” (Isa. 49:5-7 KJV), [] mine.

¹⁵⁵The prison cell in Caiaphas’ basement where Jesus was held exists in Jerusalem to this day. I have seen it for myself! Israeli tour guides often lead tours there and explain the events in detail. I will never forget Helen Bar Yacov’s lecture there during my May

Between Jesus' many trials and His crucifixion, He was held in the pit¹⁵⁶ of a dungeon prison cell. The hole in the top of this jail (pictured on page 192) was the means by which prisoners were lowered into an *inescapable, hopeless stone dungeon*. To this day, Psalm 88 is on display in this room where Jesus was held. Many believe this Psalm, written 3000 years ago, to be the prophetic utterings of the Messiah, twenty centuries past, as He awaited His fate.

THE ANCIENT JEWISH SANHEDRIN'S TRIAL OF JESUS WAS SUCH A FARCE THAT EVEN A MODERN ISRAELI ATTORNEY IS ATTEMPTING TO GET IT THROWN OUT!

In his October 1993 sermon, "Christ in the Hands of the Police," Reverend D. James Kennedy noted that forty-eight different Roman and Jewish laws were violated during the trials of Jesus (these are carefully expounded upon in the book *The Trial of Jesus, From a Lawyer's Standpoint*, by the New York attorney Walter M. Chandler).

Kennedy interestingly pointed out that one Israeli attorney, Itzhak David, recently brought up the question of Jesus' guilt before the Supreme Court in Israel. He requested that the Court exonerate Jesus of the charges made by the Sanhedrin. In his sermon, Kennedy said: "I think as an aside, it is interesting that the UPI reported that an Israeli lawyer by the name of **Itzhak David, an Orthodox Jew, appealed** to the high court of Israel **to have Jesus Christ exonerated** and all charges against Him dropped and have it declared that this was, indeed, a mistrial and filled with violations of its own law. The Supreme Court heard this request for a *writ of certiorari* and they denied it. But David says he will try again. The court before which Christ was brought was, indeed, a farce and not really a trial."¹⁵⁷ Reverend Kennedy anticipated Jesus' Jewish exoneration at a future date, as do we!¹⁵⁸

1980 TBN tour to Israel.

156This brings to mind our beloved Joseph, who was also placed in a pit and put in Pharaoh's prison before he rose to prominence, saving all of Egypt from famine.

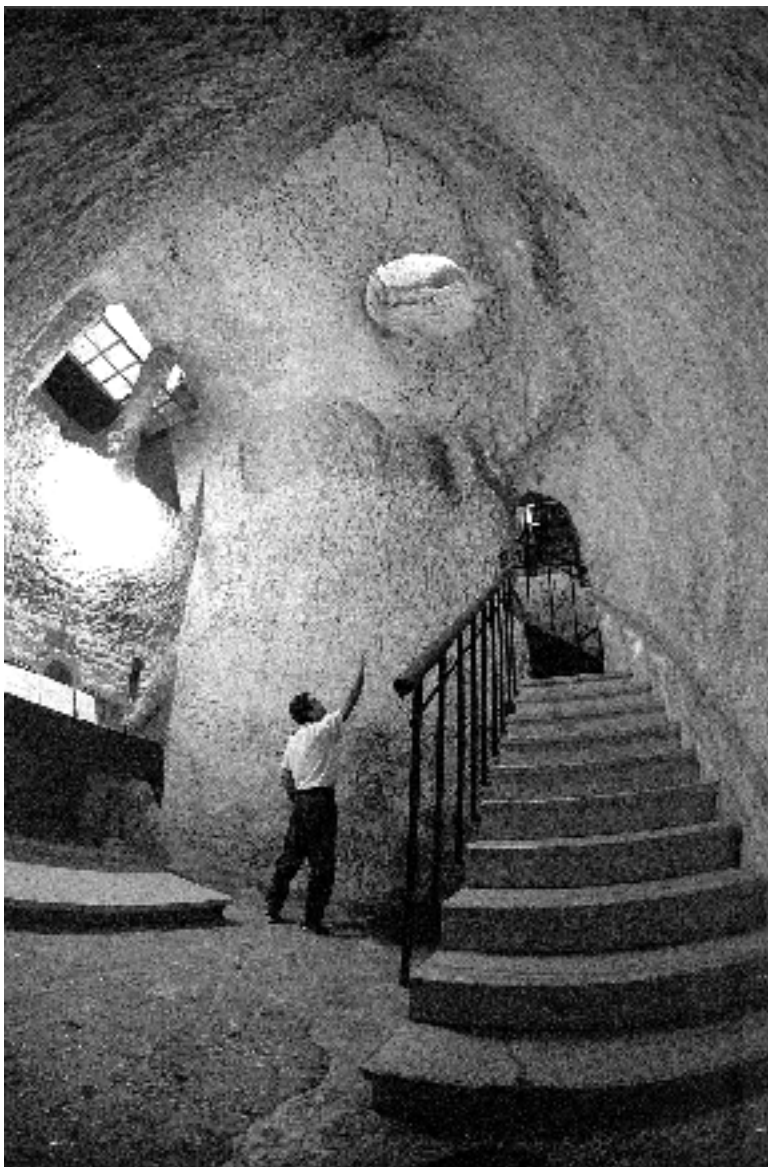
157Rev. D. James Kennedy, "Christ in the Hands of the Police," pp. 9-10. Bold mine. Reverend Kennedy's sermon is available in pamphlet form from Coral Ridge Ministries, POB 40, Fort Lauderdale, FL, USA 33302.

158We ask you to write the court and send them a copy of this book at their address in Israel. Write to Chief Justice Aaron Barak and Head Secretary (*Maskera Rashi*) Smayaho Cohen at Rehov Sharie Mishpat Kiayat Ben Gurion, Jerusalem, Israel 91950. For if Israel were to do this, some Israelis who have been taught that the New Testament is a forbidden book because Jesus broke the law would then realize He did not, and that He was innocent before His accusers. This might open the way to their investigation of Jesus and His claims of being Messiah, free of prejudice.

THE PSALMIST'S POETRY OF SORROW WAS JESUS' MESSIANIC REALITY OF SUFFERING FOR OUR INIQUITY

Were the words of the eighty-eighth Psalm the same words spoken by Jesus 1000 years later in a prayer to His Father? Many believe so. The Psalm reads: "O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day *and* night before thee: Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry; for my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man *that hath* no strength: Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. Thou hast laid me in the lowest **pit, in darkness**, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. Selah. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: **I am shut up**, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise *and* praise thee? Selah. **Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave?**^[159] *or* thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee. LORD, why castest thou off my soul? *why* hidest thou thy face from me? I *am* afflicted and ready to die from *my* youth up: *while* I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, *and* mine acquaintance into darkness" (Psalm 88 KJV).

159Bold emphasis illustrates what Jesus experienced and why. He was "shut up" in a dark, lifeless, stone dungeon and thereafter, crucified and died for us because of God's loving kindness, to provide a way to spare us!



This stone holding chamber where Jesus was imprisoned is located in Jerusalem, under the house of the high priest Caiaphas (Matthew 26:57). In Jesus' day, the left window and right stairwell had not yet been constructed; there was only the hole in the ceiling through which Jesus was lowered! Today, it is a tourist site visited by millions of pilgrims every year.



A little girl reads Psalm 88 on display in the corner of Jesus' jail cell.

THE ONE THEY INTENDED TO BURY UNDER THE CROSS WAS LAID TO REST MOST LUXURIOUSLY

Isaiah further details that this man would be buried in a pauper's grave as were the wicked. However, he emphatically states that when He finally dies He would receive burial with the *rich*. Isaiah predicted: "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth" (Isa. 53:9 KJV).

We all should know that the Romans intended to bury Jesus as they buried all crucifixion victims, at the foot of the cross in a cheap grave befitting the wicked who were executed in this cruel Phoenician manner. However, because Jesus was the Messiah and had no deceit in His mouth and had done no wickedness, Isaiah's words, "with the rich in his death" literally came true, because of a Sanhedrin member who loved Jesus.

Rabbi Joseph of Arimathæa requested and obtained permission from the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, to give Jesus a proper burial in his personal tomb. Joseph was a rich Pharisee whose elaborate stone-cut tomb can be visited in Jerusalem¹⁶⁰ to this day.

DESPITE THE NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE, THERE ARE STILL SOME WHO IGNORANTLY MAINTAIN A DESPICABLE BURIAL

Bishop John Spong, a critic of Jesus' predicted proper burial and resurrection, arrogantly writes in his book, *Resurrection, Myth or Reality?*: "The tomb of Jesus was unknown because, in all probability, there was no tomb. There was no tomb because he was buried as a common criminal in a common grave...."¹⁶¹

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. The tomb of Jesus is now known to us. I get an unfathomable spiritual high every time I visit it in Jerusalem. The description given of the tomb in the New Testament matches exactly this nineteenth and twentieth century excavation known as the Garden Tomb or, in Hebrew, *Gan Ha kever*, presently run by the British in Jerusalem.

¹⁶⁰This tomb is known as the Garden Tomb and is located in Jerusalem, on Nablus Road, a few steps away from the main Arab bus station. Evangelical tours provide safe visits to the tomb yearly for hundreds of thousands of pilgrims. Lectures are given free of charge—expositions, in our opinion—which biblically authenticate this tomb as the true tomb of Jesus. The Garden Tomb is not to be confused with the Tomb of the Holy Sepulchre, which is held by Catholics, Coptics and Greek Orthodox to be His tomb, and is located a half-mile away within the city walls.

¹⁶¹John Shelby Spong, *Resurrection, Myth or Reality?* San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, © 1994, p. 228, used by permission.

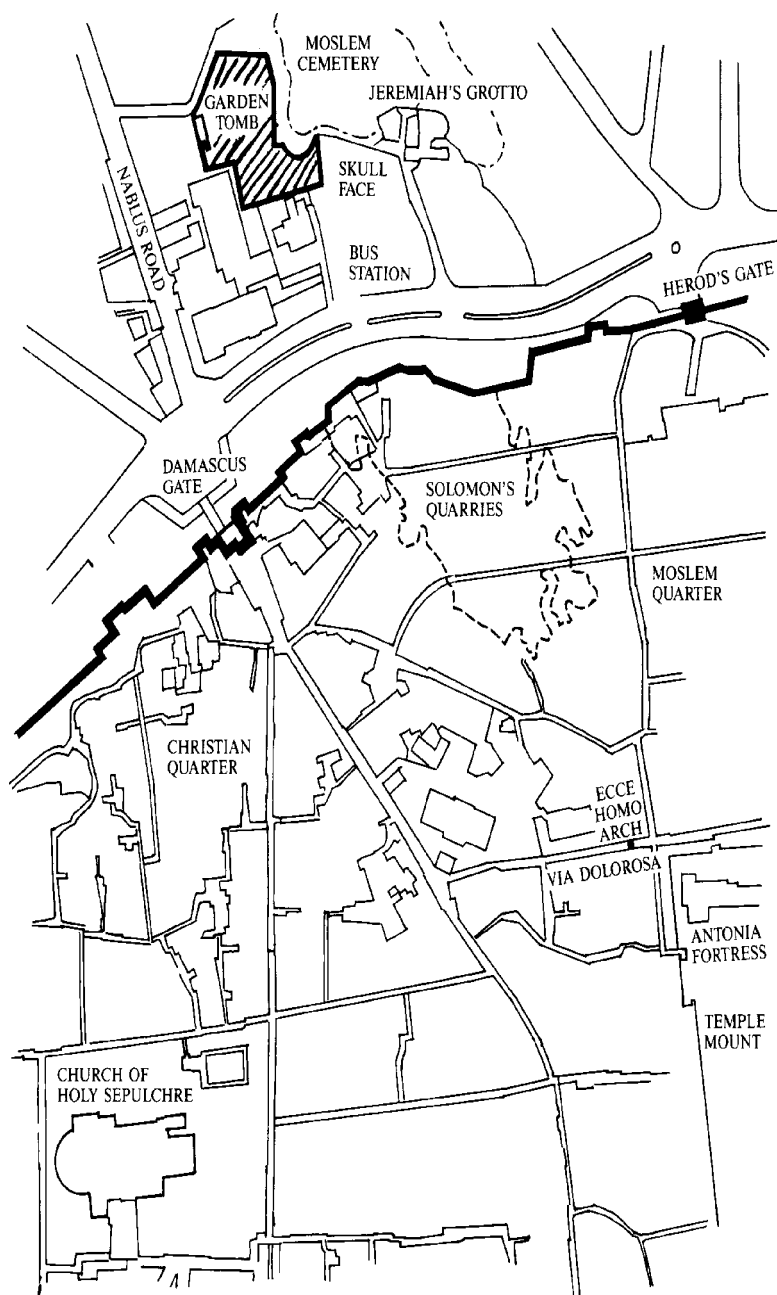
Spong also claims that the burial and Nicodemus' portion of the Gospel's accounts of Jesus are legends which have evolved over time: "By the time the fourth Gospel was written, a brand-new element had entered the burial legend. There the Joseph of Arimathea story is joined by the tradition involving Nicodemus. John introduced this story by reminding his readers of Nicodemus's earlier visit to Jesus 'by night' (John 3:1-15). Then John said that Nicodemus 'came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes....' "¹⁶² However, Nicodemus is not part of a New Testament legend, story or tradition. He was a real person written about in the Jewish Talmud under his Jewish name, Nakdimon ben Gurion.¹⁶³ Spong shows his ignorance again, doesn't he?



The Garden Tomb.

¹⁶²Ibid, p. 223.

¹⁶³See our footnote on this unique and precious biblical individual on page 250-251.



If you are in Jerusalem, show your taxi driver this map and you should be sure to arrive at the right place.

ISAIAH PREDICTED THAT BY BELIEF IN THIS ONE'S DEATH WE CAN ALL LIVE FREE OF GUILT AND TERROR

Isaiah goes on to emphasize that by the knowledge of this righteous servant, many would be *justified*, as he predicted: “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities” (Isa. 53:10-11 KJV).

This, of course, is the paramount claim of the New Testament regarding Jesus. That is, as a believer in Him, we are forgiven: “...if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:9 KJV).

“Saved” from what, some have asked. Saved from God’s judgment now and for God’s future world, in which eternity, Heaven on Earth, will one day be a reality (see our chapter 29, “After the Messiah Arrives and Ends the War—Paradise!” on the New Jerusalem, and our *Vol. II*, chapter 25, “Saved, Saved from What?”).

To continue, Isaiah foretells: “...because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isa. 53:12 KJV).¹⁶⁴

The prophet predicted that because this man would be willing to die while being numbered with “transgressors” (thieves), the sins of many (all who would believe) would be borne (paid for) by Him. It is a well-known fact that Jesus claimed His death on the cross would be for all the sin of those who would accept it as just payment (Mark 10:45). It is also common knowledge that Jesus was numbered with two thieves, one crucified on each side of Him (Luke 23:39-43). One believed in Him and was promised Paradise, the other did not and was promised nothing.¹⁶⁵



Interior of the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem.

¹⁶⁴*The New Scofield Reference Bible.*

¹⁶⁵This brings to mind the butler and the baker who were in jail with Joseph in Egypt. In the same way that Jesus told one of the thieves He would be in Paradise with Him, Joseph told the baker that he would be killed in three days, while the other was, of course, freed.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 712 BC

וַיִּהְיֶה חֶפְצִי בְּכֹאֵל הַחֲלִי אֲדֹתָשִׁים אֲשֶׁם נִפְשׁוּ יִרְאֶה נֹרַע וְאַרְיֵךְ יָמִים וְחֶפְצִי יִהְיֶה נֶחֱפֵץ
יִהְיֶה בְּיָדוֹ וְצִלָּהּ: יִשְׁעֶיהָ נָנִי:

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting *Him* to grief; If He would render Himself *as* a guilt offering, He will see *His* offspring, He will prolong *His* days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.”

Isaiah 53:10 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“...my servant, the Messiah, in whom I am well pleased.”¹⁶⁶

Targum to Isaiah XLIII:10

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 37 AND 60 AD

“...Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, *and* coming upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased’.... while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

Matthew 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:23-25 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“In this verse [Isaiah 53:10], the prophet reiterates, in bold terms, a basic biblical concept. In suffering there is purification. Thus, there are times that God presents crushing personal challenges to His most loyal followers in order to strengthen their spirit....No person is born pious or righteous....The words of Isaiah, ‘If he would offer himself as a guilt-offering,’ do not mean that the servant offers himself vicariously as a guilt-offering for others....Thus, Isaiah 53:10 cannot and should not be applied to Jesus.” *The Jew and the Christian Missionary*, by Gerald Sigal, pp. 59, 63; © 1981. [] mine

AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

In Gerald Sigal’s modern interpretative comment, he argues without foundation that no one is born pious and that the suffering which Isaiah mentions is not a vicarious guilt-offering for others. However, the ancient rabbis did believe the Messiah would be pious from the womb (see Isa. 9:6-7 [5-6 in Jewish editions], and our quotes of rabbinical comments on this). The rabbinical Targums of ages past even insert the word, Messiah, into their interpretive translations in Aramaic because the Messiah was so clearly understood to be this sufferer at that early date, as we have demonstrated. Mr. Sigal and his rabbi are so anxious to say that it cannot be Jesus who claimed it as a Messianic prophecy referring to Himself (Luke 24:44), that we believe they have again either forgotten or neglected to do their homework.

Philip Moore

166Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol I, p. 267.

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY BY THOSE WHO SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER

Jesus also made intercession for the transgressors who were crucifying Him. He said: "...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34 KJV).

This was because they thought they were crucifying an impostor or false Messiah. Remember Isaiah's prediction: "...we did esteem him...smitten of God..." (Isa. 53:4 KJV). However, in truth, the Passover lamb of God was offering Himself before God for all of their and our shortcomings. That many of them did not know who He was or what they were saying is clear from the priest's statement: "...If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him...." (Matt. 27:42-43 KJV).

This occurrence, which was also predicted by King David over 3000 years ago, reads: "He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him" (Ps. 22:8 KJV).

We can see that all of this was not by accident but was foretold. Only Jewish priests could offer sacrifice. However, these Jewish leaders¹⁶⁷ did not know they were offering the most important sacrifice of all time for all of us. They felt they were aiding Rome in ridding themselves of political friction.



Rembrandt, 1653.

¹⁶⁷Caiaphas and Annas held the office of high priest, perhaps falsely, as we documented earlier. However, the fact that they were filling the shoes of the Aaronic line and there was no one else to do this, made them responsible to God in issues concerning the high priesthood.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 712 BC

אָבן קלִינֵה הוּא נָשָׂא וּמַכָּאֲבֵינוּ סְבָלִים וְאַתְּחֵנוּ חֲשָׁבָנוּהוּ נִגְשֵׁ מִכָּה אֱלֹהִים וּמַעֲנָה:
יְשׁוּעָה נִגְדָּה

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.”

Isaiah 53:4 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“The rabbis say, His name is the leper of the house of Rabbi, as it is said, ‘Surely he hath borne our sickness, and endured the burden of our pains, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted’ (Isa. LIII., 4).”¹⁶⁸

Sanhedrin, fol. 98, col 2

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 60 AD

“...He Himself [Jesus] bore our sins in His body on the cross...for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

I Peter 2:24 NASB. [] mine

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“In verse 4 [of Isa. 53], the Gentile spokesmen depict the servant as bearing the ‘diseases’ and carrying the ‘pains’ which they themselves should have suffered. At the time of the servant’s suffering, the Gentiles believed that the servant was undergoing divine retribution for *his* sins....we must conclude that this statement, made by the enemies of the suffering servant of the Lord, does not refer to Jesus, who, it is alleged, suffered as an atonement for mankind’s sins. There is no indication in this verse that the servant of God suffered to atone for the sins of others....This is the confession of the Gentile spokesmen, who now realize that it was they and their people who deserved to suffer the humiliations inflicted on the servant of the Lord, as they stated in verses 4-6.”

The Jew and the Christian Missionary,

by Gerald Sigal, pp. 42-43, 52; © 1981. [] mine

AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

See our comments on previous Isaiah 53 comparison on page 184.

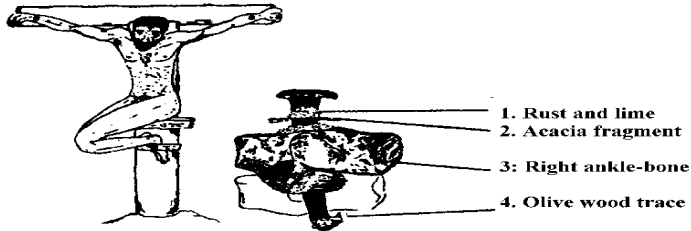
Philip Moore

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF THE DETAILS OF CRUCIFIXION FOUND IN ISRAEL!

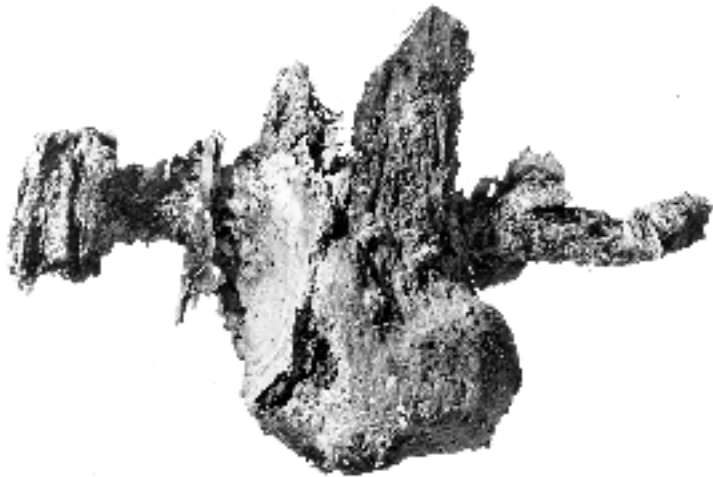
In his recent book, *The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, my Finnish friend, Risto Santala, has archaeologically illustrated what happened to Jesus as He fulfilled David’s prophecy. Risto reminds us: “In 1968 on the Givat Ha-mivtar hill on the outskirts of Jerusalem, Israeli archaeologists found the remains of ancient ankle bones in which there was the remnant of a

168Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol. II, p. 27.

well-preserved nail. The cross in question had been made of olivewood and the bar to hold the feet of acacia.



...It [Roman crucifixion] was referred to as the ‘*death of slaves*’. Cicero speaks of it as ‘*the most terrifying*’ manner of death. The Roman philosopher Seneca writes that, ‘The life of the accused drained from him drop by drop.’ The oldest extant illustrations of the cross depict it as a T (*crux commissa*), without the upper protrusion.”¹⁶⁹



“Crucified Man,” the only crucified remnant ever discovered.
Courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority.

¹⁶⁹Risto Santala, *The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, pp. 226-227. [] mine.

While we can be sure that this crucified heel is not that of Jesus¹⁷⁰ (He was resurrected), we are archaeologically assured that these are the remains of a wooden cross and the nail and heelbone of a man who was crucified in the same way the Scriptures confirm of Jesus.

The New Testament report of Jesus' sufferings takes on a uniquely intense, realistic light as we gaze at this photo, doesn't it? A cold but factual reminder of what He allowed Himself to go through for us. In His God Incarnate, sinless perfection, He did not permit pain to stand in the way of paying our penalty; He took *our* place and died in this cruelly and inhumanely devised manner—what mercy!

HOW DID ISAIAH KNOW ALL OF THIS? WAS HE IN THE CROWD AT THE CROSS? OBVIOUSLY NOT!

While reading these prophecies inspired by God (no man can foresee the future), you might have thought Isaiah himself, God's Jewish prophet in the Bible, was there among the crowd at the cross. The fact is that he lived and wrote all of these things seven hundred years before Jesus lived. What more supernatural proof could we ask for to confirm Jesus' Messiahship according to Jewish standards?¹⁷¹

THE PROPHECY OF CRUCIFIXION

Was Jesus' death on the Roman cross a random accident in antiquity or was His sacrifice for us a carefully predicted plan by God, foreseen in the biblical Psalms of King David 1000 years prior to the

¹⁷⁰We can be sure that this does not belong to Jesus because the ossuary bone box (ancient casket) bears the inscription of Yehohanan as documented in an article by Joseph Zias and Eliezer Sekele. The article also mentioned: "The nail in the right remains because the bend at the pointed end (which was probably caused by the nail's hitting a knot in the wood as it was driven in) likely resulted in its not being removed in order to avoid doing further injury to the body. When the feet were nailed to the cross, an olive wood plaque was put between the head of each nail and the foot, probably to prevent the condemned from pulling free of the nail. Evidence for this consists of wood fragments found below the head of the nail, which were identified as olive wood by the Department of Botany of the Hebrew University after analysis with a scanning electron microscope. Fragments of wood near the point of the nail could not be identified; thus, the type of wood the upright of the cross was made from could not be identified." Joseph Zias and Eliezer Sekele, "The Crucified Man from Giv'at ha-Mivtar—A Reappraisal," *Biblical Archaeologist*, Sept. 1985, © used by permission. Our thanks to Joe Zias who told me how to order this picture from the Israel Museum. We also thank Sophie Durocher and Areah Rochman Haperin of the Israel Antiquities Authority for sending this photo and giving us permission to use it.

¹⁷¹If you find all of this too hard to believe, as many do, go over to your bookshelf, pick up your Bible, blow the dust off of it and open those unread pages to the prophet Isaiah. In chapter 53 (a 2700-year-old piece of Hebrew literature) you will read the exact events of Jesus' life, which did not take place until 2000 years ago!

event? We will positively prove the latter in this section, though it may astonish many.

THE ENTIRE EARTH ENVELOPED IN TOTAL DARKNESS

During the time of Jesus' crucifixion, the New Testament says darkness fell while Jesus was on the cross. Records show that an orator as far away as Athens, Greece, was awed as he witnessed the same darkness, which was of a global¹⁷² nature. As God poured out all judgment for sin which was due us, He darkened the Earth so that no one could see what was going on between Him and His Son. God judged an innocent Jesus in our place so He could justify us and one day set us free. The orator, commenting on the blackness, said it must be "the death of a god."¹⁷³

The prophet Amos, over seven hundred years prior to the event, predicted this darkness when he said: " '...it will come about in that day,' declares the Lord GOD, 'That I shall make the sun go down at noon And make the earth dark in broad daylight' " (Amos 8:9 NASB).

Matthew documented this when he said: "Now from the sixth hour^[174] **darkness fell upon all the land** until the ninth hour" (Matt. 27:45 NASB; bold mine).

THOSE OPPOSING JESUS MISUSE HEBREW WORDS—THEIR IGNORANCE IS EXPOSED IN OUR PROPHETIC INSIGHT (DAN. 12:10)

Jesus uttered seven cries from the cross, one of them noted in the English Bible is a transliteration of the Hebrew, " 'Eli, Eli, LAMA sabachthani' " (Matt. 27:46 KJV), which in English means "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"

This phrase has often been exploited by liberal "Christian" theologians and some rabbis, who attempt to dupe the public into believing that Jesus had given up and was admitting He was not the Messiah. For example, Gerald Sigal, under the "guiding light" of Rabbi Bronznick, has written: "We must conclude that in those last agonizing minutes he truly felt personally abandoned, his mission coming to grief....Jesus could not be the Messiah that Christian

¹⁷²There was also a local eclipse, not to be confused with the global darkness. The eclipse, interestingly enough, adds to our evidence in that it gives us the exact date of the crucifixion, which we will later document.

¹⁷³Hal Lindsey, "The Resurrection In the Old Testament," Tape 089. Available through Hal Lindsey Ministries, POB 4000, Palos Verdes, CA, USA 90274.

¹⁷⁴Josh McDowell notes: "Because the Jews reckoned twelve hours from sunrise to sunset, it would make the sixth hour near noon and the ninth hour about three o'clock." Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ International, © 1972, p. 174.

missionaries believe him to be.”¹⁷⁵ However, the words, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani,” are the exact opening words of Psalm 22 of the Old Testament.

This Psalm, written by King David, was an admitted prophecy of the Messiah’s sufferings (even in ancient rabbinical commentary)¹⁷⁶ foretold over 1000 years before the birth of Jesus. Jesus was, in essence, sending a secret message to all who knew this Scripture, to turn back to this Psalm in the Old Testament and read a very detailed account of Messianic suffering through crucifixion. Interestingly enough, at the time when David wrote “they pierced my hands and my feet” (Psalm 22:16 KJV), crucifixion had not yet been invented!

It is important to note that Jesus cried out, “My God” twice, speaking to the Father and to the Spirit,¹⁷⁷ which shows that the first and the third member of the Godhead were there, in darkness, judging the sin of all which was placed on the second member,¹⁷⁸ Jesus, to pay for us as our substitute. Having been made guilty and then judged, Jesus would allow all who believed that He took and paid for our guilt to be free through the law of double jeopardy. God will not punish us for sin for which Jesus already paid!¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵Gerald Sigal, *The Jew and The Christian Missionary*, p. 97.

¹⁷⁶*Midrash Pesiqta Rabbati*, chapters 36-37.

¹⁷⁷Modern Judaism denies the legitimacy of the Trinity, claiming that it was pagan, only later to be adopted by the Christians. Apparently, the rabbis have not done their homework; for the Jewish commentary, Zohar, is in agreement with God’s tri-unity when it says: “Come and see the mystery of the word YHWH: there are three steps, each existing by itself: nevertheless they are One, and so united that one cannot be separated from the other. The Ancient Holy One is revealed with three heads, which are united into one, and that head is three exalted. The Ancient One is described as being three: because the other lights emanating from him are included in the three. But how can three names be one? Are they really one because we call them one? How three can be one can only be known through the revelation of the Holy Spirit.” *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 288; Vol. II, p. 43, Hebrew editions. See also Soncino Press edition, Vol. III, p. 134.

¹⁷⁸See our *Vol. II*, chapter 16, “Jesus’ Cry from the Cross to His Father Indicates Trinity,” which also verifies the darkness over Jerusalem caused by an eclipse during the crucifixion, as related by Dr. Edersheim.

¹⁷⁹There is a true story told of a court case. Once, after a judge had heard a particular case, the defendant, proven guilty, was to be sentenced to either pay a fine or serve time in jail. The merciful judge said, “I love you and want to set you free but, being just, if law is to abide, I cannot. This crime must be paid for.” Having no money but wishing to pay his fine, the defendant hung his head as he began to walk toward his cell. Just then, the judge’s son who was in the courtroom jumped up and said, “Dad, I will pay his fine, if he will accept my money for it!” Everyone smiled as the guilty man accepted the money and gave it to the judge. “Paid for in full,” said the Judge, “You are free to go. My son paid for you! And you accepted it.” The biblical analogy here is easy to see. God, the Father = Judge; Jesus = Son; Hell = jail; blood atonement = money; sacrificial substitutionary death = acceptance/payment.

WHY WAS THERE DARKNESS? FOR JESUS’ PRIVACY DURING A SUFFERING SO AWFUL WE WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND

Jesus took God’s judgment on Himself at its worst, in darkness, as recorded in Matthew 27:45. This was because God did not want to disgrace this part of His tri-unity Godhead before humanity. What was taking place was a very personal suffering between Jesus and His Father, God.

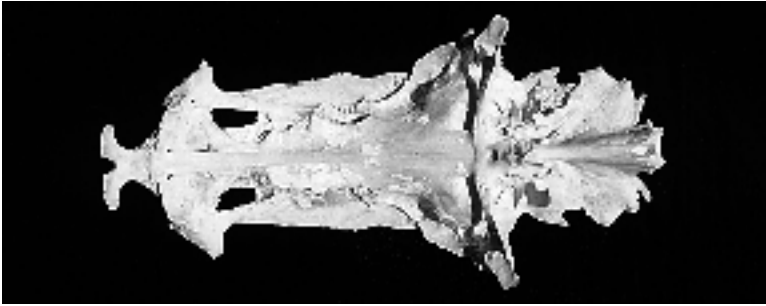
Psalms 22 tells of this darkness when it says: “O my God, I cry by day, but Thou dost not answer; And by **night**, but I have no rest. Yet Thou art holy, O Thou who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel. In Thee our fathers trusted...” (Ps. 22:2-4 NASB).

In Hebrew, the phrase “and by night” means a night season; “but there is not rest,” indicates a special darkness. Thus, the reason Jesus asked why He was *forsaken* was because though His Divine nature understood, His human nature did not realize the enormity of being abandoned and forsaken.¹⁸⁰ God (the Father and Spirit) must separate fellowship entirely from God (the Son) before judging Him for us. As a result, for the first and last time in all eternity, all the sins of the world were poured upon Jesus and He and God were separated. Jesus was forsaken by God for us. This is why Jesus cried out.

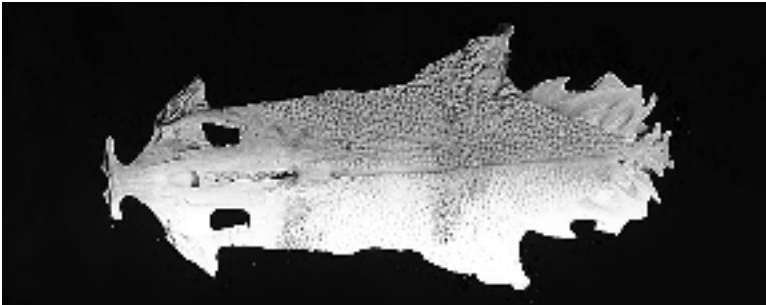
Through David, the pre-incarnate Messiah said, “Thou art holy.” Jesus knew His Father would have to separate Himself from Him, once He was made sin for all of us, because God cannot have any direct fellowship with sin. Thus, if He is truly holy, the God of Israel would have to cease fellowship at the time the Messiah was made sin and judged guilty for it! Jesus had thus done exactly what He had promised in the Gospel of Mark: “For even the Son of man came...to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45 KJV).

This was accomplished in full when He said, “It is finished” (John 19:30 KJV), which in the original language of the Gospel means “paid in full.” If we accept Jesus’ death payment, all of our sins from birth to death are paid for in full. We are redeemed as a result of Jesus’ horrendous suffering for us, having accepted this wonderful though horribly obtained gift.

¹⁸⁰This reflects Jesus’ dual nature. His human nature is subject to the Father because God the Father is greater than His humanity (John 14:28). His Divine nature is of one essence with God because they are equal (John 10:30).



A portion of the Arius catfish skeleton, commonly known as the "crucifix fish," has an outline design resembling a man being crucified.



The reverse side of the skeleton resembles a Roman shield from Jesus' day. Some feel there are divine hints about Jesus in nature. Another example is the dogwood tree, which blossoms during the season in which Jesus was crucified. Each of the four white flower petals has a red tinge on the outer edge, resembling bloodstains. The flowers' center resembles a crown of thorns.



ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 1000 BC

אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי לָמָּה עָזַבְתָּנִי רְחוֹק מִשְׁעוּעֵי דַבָּרִי שְׁאֵמְתִי: אֱלֹהֵי אֶקְרָא וְלֹא תִשָּׁעַנָּה וְלֹא תִלְוֶה
וְלֹא תִדְוֹמֶנָּה לִי: בְּרַבִּי קִשְׁלוֹ מִצֹּמֹם וּבִשְׂרֵי קִחַשׁ מִשָּׁמֶן: וְאֲנִי וְהִיטֵי חֲרָפָה לָהֶם
רְאִינִי וְיִנְעֹנָן רָאשָׁם: תְּהִלִּים כִּבְ-בִּגִּי; קֵשׁ-כֹּד-כֹּה

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. O my God, I cry by day, but Thou dost not answer; And by night, but I have no rest....My knees are weak from fasting; And my flesh has grown lean, without fatness. I also have become a reproach to them; When they see me, they wag their head.”

Psalms 22:1-2; 109:24-25 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“In the week when the Son of David comes, they will bring beams of iron and put them like a yoke on his neck until His stature is bent down. He cries and weeps, and his voice ascends to heaven, and in God’s presence He will say: ‘Sovereign of the world, how long will my strength last, how long my breath, my soul, and my limbs? Am I not flesh and blood?’....Then the Holy One—blessed be He!—says to Him: ‘Ephraim, my righteous Messiah, you took all this upon yourself from the six days of creation....’”¹⁸¹

Pesiqta Rabbati, Friedmann’s edition, chapter 36

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 90 AD

“...Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar.’ So he then delivered Him to them to be crucified. They took Jesus therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between. And Pilate wrote an inscription also, and put it on the cross. And it was written, ‘JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS.’ Therefore this inscription many of the Jews read, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew....” **John 19:15-20 NASB**

“Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ that is, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?’”

Matthew 27:45-46 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“ ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ is the opening sentence of Psalm 22. But why should Jesus have expressed this sentiment? Why should he have thought of himself as separated from God at the very moment when, according to Christian missionary theology, he was fulfilling God’s plan?...Furthermore, it makes little sense to see in Psalm 22, prophecies depicting the agony felt by Jesus at his crucifixion....what sense does it make for Jesus to complain: ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ ”

***The Jew and the Christian Missionary*, by Gerald Sigal, pp. 96-97; © 1981**

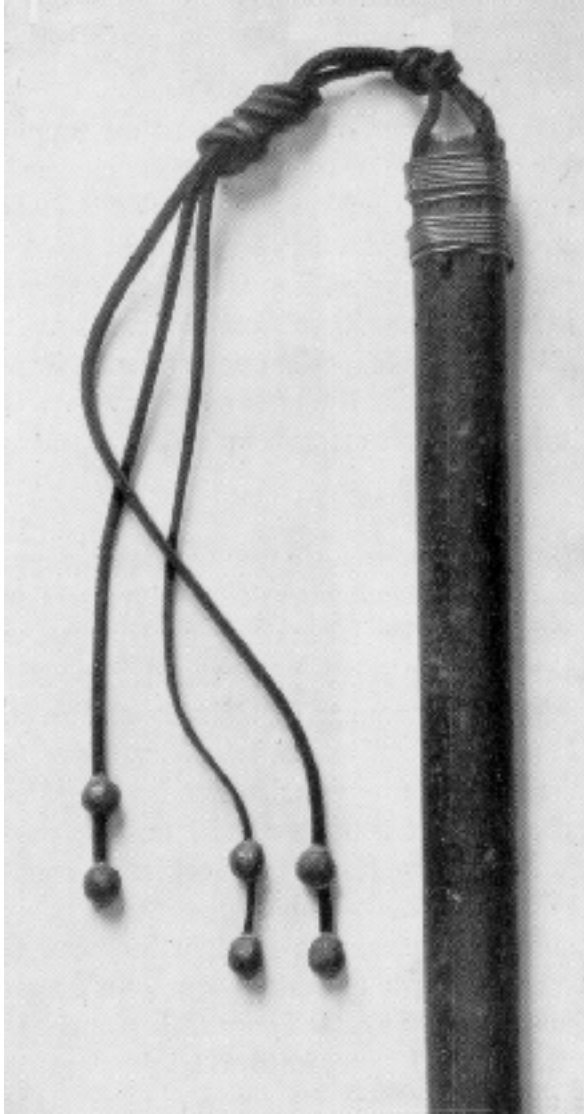
AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

It makes every bit of sense that the agony of the Messiah, which had befallen Jesus, is detailed in Psalm 22 because the rabbis of old clearly interpreted this passage from Pesiqta Rabbati, quoted above, as referring to the Messiah!

¹⁸¹Arthur W. Kac, *The Messianic Hope*, p. 80.

Secondly, it was precisely God's plan to separate Himself (the Father and the Spirit) from God the Son, so that He might judge Him for the sin of all, thus legitimizing Him as redeemer for not only the Jew, but all mankind, as the Jewish Bible had always taught (Isa. 49:5-7). It seems a pity that Mr. Sigal and his rabbi apparently have not studied their Pesiqa Rabbati.

Philip Moore



Jesus was whipped by Roman soldiers with an ancient weapon similar to this one. Notice the lead bits at the ends of the leather strips.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 1000 BC

וְאָכִי תוֹלַעַת וְלֹא אִישׁ חֲרַפַּת אָדָם וּבֹוֹי עָם: כָּל־רָאִי יִלְעָנִי לִי וַפְסִירוּ בְשָׁפָה יָנִיעוּ
 רֹאשׁ: גַּל אֶל־יְהוָה וַפְלִטָהוּ יִצְלִיָּהוּ כִי חָפֵץ בּוֹ: בְּמָנִים נִשְׁפָּכְתִּי וְהִתְפָּרְדּוּ קִלְעֻצְמוֹתַי
 הִנֵּה לִבִּי בְדוֹנָג לָמָס בְּתוֹךְ מַעֲי: יָבֵשׁ בְּחֶרֶשׁ וְלִשׁוֹנִי מִדְּבַק מִלְקוֹתַי וְלִפְרִמּוֹת
 תִּשְׁפָּתַי: כִּי סָבִיבוּנִי כְלָבִים עֶדְת מְרַעִים הַקִּיפוּנִי קֶאֱדִי יְדֵי וְרַגְלֵי: אֲסַפֵּר קִלְעֻצְמוֹתַי
 הַקָּה לְבִישׁוֹ יִרְאוּבִי: יִחַלְקוּ בְּגָדֵי לֶחֶם וְעַל־לְבוּשִׁי יִפִּילוּ גוֹרָל:
 תַּהֲלִים כִּב־ז-ט; טו-יט

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“But I am a worm, and not a man, A reproach of men, and despised by the people. All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head, *saying*, ‘Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him’....I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And Thou dost lay me in the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.”

Psalms 22:6-8, 14-18 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“The Patriarchs will one day rise again in the month of Nisan and will say to the Messiah....You have been a laughing-stock and a derision among the peoples of the world, and because of you they jeered at Israel, as it is written (Psalm 22:6). You have dwelt in darkness and in gloominess, and your eyes have not seen light, your skin was cleaving to your bones, and your body withered like wood. Your eyes became hollow from fasting, and your strength was dried up like a potsherd, as it is written (Psalm 22:15; 22:16 Heb.). All this happened because of the sins of our children, as it is written: ‘And Jehovah laid on him the iniquity of us all’ (Isaiah 53:6).”¹⁸²

Pesiqta Rabbati, Friedmann’s edition, chapter 37

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 90 AD

“The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and *also* the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. They said therefore to one another, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, *to decide* whose it shall be’....”

John 19:23-24 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“Missionaries claim that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy that the Messiah would be killed by crucifixion...there is absolutely no evidence that this Psalm is speaking of the Messiah. From the opening verse, it would seem that King David, the author of this Psalm [22], was actually speaking of himself.”

***The Real Messiah*, by Aryeh Kaplan, et al, p. 55; 1976. [] mine**

“This Psalm [22] voices the concerns of the Jewish people.”¹⁸³
***Their Hollow Inheritance*, by Rabbi Michael Drazin, p. 143; © 1990. [] mine.**

¹⁸²Ibid, pp. 80-81.

¹⁸³Michael Drazin, *Their Hollow Inheritance, A Comprehensive Refutation of Christian Missionaries*. Safed, Israel: G.M. Publications, © 1990, p. 143. The foreword to Drazin’s book was written by Rabbi Gabriel Marzel.

There is every evidence that this Psalm is indeed speaking of the Messiah since the rabbinical commentaries interpret it so. Even the thought that King David wrote of himself is preposterous, since the sufferer of Psalm 22 dies in immense agony before his enemies, while David was victorious and died a death quite different than the one predicted in the Messianic Psalm. Rabbi Kaplan would have done well to have studied the commentary on Psalm 22 before commenting so arrogantly.

Philip Moore

**FOUR INTRICATE, DELICATELY BALANCED
DETAILS OF THE PROPHECY OF CRUCIFIXION**

We are dealing with three issues here: 1. The heavy wooden cross Jesus was forced to carry part of the way to the site of His crucifixion, which we believe the ancient rabbinical commentary described, in the ancient idiom, as “iron beams”; 2. Why did Jesus sound His fourth of seven cries, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” and; 3. Most importantly, the significance of His sixth cry, “It is finished,” or *tetelestai*, more correctly translated as “paid for in full.”

**LINDSEY’S EXPOSITION OF JESUS’ FULFILLMENT
OF THE CRUCIFIXION PROPHECY DESTROYS
SIGAL’S POTENTIAL TO INFLICT DOUBT**

In answer to the author of *The Jew and the Christian Missionary*, we quote the popular and learned Christian writer, Hal Lindsey, who remarks: “Perhaps no other statement that Jesus made has provoked more curiosity and controversy than his cry from the cross, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Matthew 27:46)

I don’t believe Jesus asked the question because he didn’t know the answer. It’s that he wanted us to find out what it was and sending us back to David’s prophetic Psalm from where it is quoted was a good place to begin.

The Psalms make many predictions concerning the Messiah but the clearest and most graphic of these is Psalm 22. King David wrote this around 1000 B.C.E. yet the circumstances described in this Psalm do not fit anything that ever happened in the life of David himself as so many of his other Psalms do. David ruled the most powerful kingdom of his day and yet never fell into his enemies’ hands even during his darkest times, as this Psalm describes of its central figure. David died a peaceful death in old age too, while this personage in Psalm 22 dies in great suffering and humiliation....What we have before us in Psalm 22 is a very personal prophecy of how Messiah *felt* in his sufferings and how he viewed the things going on around Him. David, in the

power of the Spirit, speaks as if he were the Messiah, feeling his emotions and discouragement as if they were his own.

In one of the most amazing usages of prophecy anywhere in literature, David describes in unbelievably realistic terms the plight of one going through the tortures of crucifixion. Yet, crucifixion was a Phoenecian and Roman custom, unknown to the Jews until approximately 400 years *after* David wrote this Psalm.

It's fairly common knowledge that Jesus was executed on a Roman cross because he claimed to be the Son of God and Israel's Messiah.¹⁸⁴

THIS WE BELIEVE AND THIS WE DO NOT BECAUSE ONE KNOWS HIS "STUFF" BETTER THAN THE OTHER

Question: Why should we hold what the author of *The Jew and the Christian Missionary* has said to be essentially a lie, while agreeing with the comments of Hal Lindsey? Answer: Hal Lindsey agrees with the ancient rabbinical writings, whereas Sigal and the rabbi advising him are either ignoring, shunning, or even worse, are oblivious to the ancient writings of their own forefathers such as the Pesiqa Rabbati and the Yalkut, which clearly show the Davidic literature in question to be Messianic.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO JESUS? DID PSALM 22 IN JEWISH SCRIPTURE TRULY FORETELL SUCH DETAILS?

The Psalm foretells, "I am poured out like water..." (verse 14 KJV). This was true of Jesus as He sweat profusely after being lifted up on the cross into the Middle Eastern sun of Israel. The Psalm goes on: "...all my bones are out of joint..." (verse 14). Once a person was affixed to a cross, it was hoisted by a rope and knocked into a prepared hole in the ground. It was common knowledge that the sudden jerk would literally throw every bone in the body out of joint. Later, the ligaments would stretch, dislocating the bones even more.

Jesus experienced this horrifying agony of crucifixion predicted by David in verse 17:¹⁸⁵ "I may tell all my bones..." (KJV). Psalm 22 continues: "...my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels" (verse 14 KJV). John 19:34 records that Jesus' heart was pierced by a Roman spear. This would cause the poetic quote, "like wax it is melted in the midst of my bowels," to literally come true.

David's prophecy continues: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death" (verse 15 KJV). This verse clearly describes the weakened condition of Jesus as He hung upon the cross. The

¹⁸⁴Hal Lindsey, *The Promise*, pp. 134-136.

¹⁸⁵Verse 18 in the Hebrew edition.

mention, “dried up like a potsherd” (a potsherd is a broken piece of dried-up pottery which once contained water when whole), graphically illustrates what Jesus meant when He said, “I thirst” (John 19:28 KJV), after hanging so many hours in the merciless Mediterranean sun.

IS THE INTERPRETATION OF THIS PSALM CHRISTIAN INNUENDO OR WAS IT JEWISHLY CONSIDERED OF THE MESSIAH?

Chapter 36 of the ancient rabbinical commentary Pesiqta Rabbati speaks of these Davidic passages and clearly illustrates that these sufferings were to come upon Israel’s Messiah: “The Fathers of the World [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob] will in the future rise up in the month of Nissan and speak to him: ‘Ephraim, our True Messiah! Even though we are your fathers, you are greater than we, for you suffered because of the sins of our children, and cruel punishments have come upon you the like of which have not come upon the early and the later generations, and you were put to ridicule and held in contempt by the nations of the world because of Israel, and you sat in darkness and blackness and your eyes saw no light, and your skin cleft to your bones, and your body dried out and was like wood, and your eyes grew dim from fasting, and your strength became like a **potsherd**. All this because of the sins of our children. Do you want that our children should enjoy the happiness that the Holy One, blessed be He, allotted to Israel, or perhaps, because of the great sufferings that have come upon you on their account, and because they imprisoned you in the jailhouse, your mind is not reconciled with them?’”¹⁸⁶

Additional portions of this incredible Jewish rabbinical writing from the Pesiqta Rabbati read as follows: “During the seven-year period preceding the coming of the son of David, iron beams will be brought and loaded upon his neck until the Messiah’s body is bent low. Then he will cry and weep, and his voice will rise up to the very height of heaven, and he will say to God: Master of the universe, how much can my strength endure? How much can my spirit endure? How much my breath before it ceases? How much can my limbs suffer? Am I not flesh-and-blood?....He will be told: Ephraim, our true Messiah, be thou judge of these and do with them what thy soul desires, for the nations would long since have destroyed thee in an instant had not God’s mercies been exceedingly mighty in thy behalf, as is said *Ephraim is a darling son unto Me....They will growl over him like lions who lust to swallow him, as is said All our enemies have opened their mouth wide against us. Terror and the pit are come upon us, desolation and destruction* (Lam. 3:46-47).”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, p. 113. Bold and [] mine. Decide for yourself if Psalm 22 is a Christian interpretation or a Jewish one!

WHEN KING DAVID RECORDED GOD'S PROPHECY OF CRUCIFIXION BY PIERCING, HE MEANT IT, ALONG WITH THE GORY DETAILS

David's Psalm continues: "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look *and* stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" (verses 16-18 KJV).

When the Psalm says "**dogs** have compassed [surrounded] me,"¹⁸⁸ and "the **assembly** of the wicked have inclosed me," two groups are indicated. Dog was common slang for Gentiles or non-Jews,¹⁸⁹ thus the many Roman soldiers are foreseen. Secondly, this wicked assembly refers to the priests and some unbelieving Sanhedrin members,¹⁹⁰ who said: "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God" (Matt. 27:42-43 KJV).

These phrases uttered by this *assembly of the wicked* almost match those foretelling this event in verse 8 of Psalm 22: "He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him" (KJV).

Perhaps the greatest and most disputed line of the entire Old Testament portion of the Bible is "they pierced^[191] my hands and my

¹⁸⁷*Pesikta Rabbati*, Yale Judaica Series, Vol. XVIII. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, © 1968, pp. 680, 686-687, used by permission.

¹⁸⁸[] mine.

¹⁸⁹Hal Lindsey with C.C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 40.

¹⁹⁰See Matthew 27:41.

¹⁹¹What did they do, *Kaari* or *Kaaru*? That is the question. Moishe Rosen mentions: "Yalkut Shimoni (687):....'Kaari' my hands and my feet—Rabbi Nehemiah says, 'They pierced my hands and my feet in the presence of Ahasuerus.' [This shows that the reading 'pierced' was accepted by certain rabbis.]" Moishe Rosen, *Y'shua*, p. 74. Rosen has quoted from Rachmiel Frydland's unpublished manuscript, *Messianic Prophecy*, to show that the quoted passage illustrates that the ancient rabbis interpreted Psalm 22 as *Kaaru* כָּאָרוּ for "pierced," which here means *Kaari* "like a lion," which by no coincidence also pierces with its claws. The only differences between the two Hebrew words "like a lion" and "pierced," כָּאָרִי (*Kaari*) and כָּאָרוּ (*Kaaru*), is that one contains a *ude* ך (pronounced yude) and the other a *vav* ם. A long *ude* is often mistaken for a short *vav* and a short *vav* mistaken for a long *ude*. There seems to be a disagreement between our ancient and modern rabbinical friends. History, for no mysterious reason, has seen the letter ם *vav* become a *ude*! Albert Barnes comments: "Gesenius candidly observes that 'all the ancient interpreters have taken כָּאָרִי as a verb; and this is certainly possible if we regard כָּאָרוּ as the participle in Kal formed in the Chaldee manner, and in the plural number for כָּאָרִים.' And he refers to two MSS. to prove that 'it was commonly held to be a verb.' And in confirmation of this Vatablus declares that the ancient reading was twofold כָּאָרִי and כָּרוּ; while according to the testimony of Genebrard, the Jews continued to write כָּאָרִי in the margin and כָּאָרוּ in the text until the six hundredth year of the Christian era, and then began to insert the marginal reading into the text

feet,” because it clearly indicates crucifixion, which is universally known to have been perpetrated upon Jesus.

The phrase, “I may count all my bones,” describes a crucified man’s efforts to pull himself up to breathe. The Romans bent the legs slightly before nailing the spikes into the feet. They placed a small seat in the middle of the cross in order to cause a person, while hanging, to push up off the seat to gasp for air. While doing this, every bone in the body could be felt along with a lot of other things. That is why, if a person lasted too long on a cross, the Romans would break his legs so he would soon suffocate. If a victim lost consciousness at any time, he would expire within moments!

The Romans were about to break Jesus’ legs (John 19:33) because the priests wanted all of this finished before the Sabbath (John 19:31).

After they broke the legs of the two thieves on both sides, they noticed that Jesus looked dead. Since they were not sure, a soldier thrust a spear into Jesus’ side and blood and water were released separately. This showed that His corpuscles had separated from the blood serum and indicated that He had been dead an hour or more. Thus, they forewent this “leg breaking,” fulfilling Psalm 34:20, written 1000 years before: “He keeps all his bones; Not one of them is broken” (NASB). It is also interesting that God told the Israelis never

itself; and finally to omit כָּאֵרִי altogether.” Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament*, Psalms Vol. I. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, p. 395. Hebrew is a precise language and, we believe inspired by God. That is why, in all the efforts to foil this Messianic prophecy, all that could be changed was the act of “piercing,” to an animal which has four claws that also pierce! Hal Lindsey has elegantly commented on the motive for the rabbis’ alteration of Psalm 22:16 (22:17 in Hebrew): “...the identity of the one whose sufferings are described in Psalm 22 is of utmost importance. Because of the remarkable features...because it does seem so specifically to allude to Jesus, later Rabbis and liberal Christian theologians have either avoided comment on it or sought to ascribe the central personage as someone other than Messiah. However, in the ancient Rabbinic collection of traditions called the Yalkut...the Rabbis said that God makes an agreement with the Messiah to the effect that the Messiah would suffer for the sins of all Jews who have lived before or after him, and to illustrate these sufferings, they quote from Psalm 22...here is the Messiah [in Ps. 22], saying through David’s pen, that one day his hands and feet would be pierced. Obviously, the meaning of this phrase is vigorously contested by the Rabbis since to admit that it means exactly what it says is tantamount to admitting that Jesus...was their Messiah. The main objection to this phrase revolves around one word, ‘to pierce.’ In the Hebrew Massoretic text, the Hebrew word is ‘caari’ which translates into ‘like a lion.’ thus the Jewish Bible reads, ‘Like a lion they are at my hands and my feet.’ However, the 3rd century B.C.E. translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek (the Septuagint), designated this disputed word as ‘caaru’ which means ‘to pierce.’ Thus, 250 years before Jesus’ crucifixion would have made anyone prejudiced about this reading, the Rabbis were translating the word as ‘pierced.’ The only minute difference in these two words is the length of the stem of the last letter of the Hebrew word, and it could easily have been altered by one tiny slip on one stroke of a scribe’s pen.” Hal Lindsey, *The Promise*, pp. 134-135, 138. [] mine.

to break a bone of the Passover lamb (Exo. 12). Jesus, as our Passover sacrifice, again fits the bill!

DAVID'S PREDICTION THAT THE MESSIAH WOULD BE STRIPPED, HIS GARMENTS TORN AND VESTURE (COAT) GAMBLED FOR, REALLY CAME TRUE

Did the Psalmist's prediction: "...they look *and* stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" (Ps. 22:17-18) also come true? Before Jesus was nailed to the cross, He was stripped of both His garments and vesture, thus, He was without clothing.¹⁹² This is what is meant by looking and staring.

Once Jesus was lifted up, the Romans at the foot of the cross divided His garments and gambled for His expensive seamless coat. This was a common practice for obtaining the clothes of victims. The eyewitness John, who wrote the book of Revelation of things yet to come, tells us in his Gospel: "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also *his* coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said, therefore, among themselves, Let us not [tear] it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be...." (John 19:23-24 KJV).¹⁹³

WAS THIS MESSIANIC SUFFERING PROPHESED AND ACCOMPLISHED FOR NOTHING? NO! IT WAS FOR *TETELESTAI*

When Jesus said, *tetelestai* or "paid in full," He was proclaiming His task completed. The human race was now spiritually redeemed from all guilt. Jesus was placed back into harmony with His Father and He gave up His life in acquiescence to His Father. This was also foreseen by David when he mentioned in the last two verses of Psalm 22: "...It will be told of the Lord to the *coming* generation. They will come and will declare his righteousness To a people who will be born, that He has performed *it*" (Psalm 22:30-31 NASB).

Performed it, in Hebrew, means the same as *tetelestai* in Greek. Since the death of Jesus, all true believers in Him have approached the world of unbelievers with the good news concerning redemption with the words, "he hath done this,"¹⁹⁴ or *הַיָּהוָה עָשָׂה* .

Jesus fulfilled all of the intricate details prophesied in King David's book of Psalms 1000 years after they were written, which is in itself amazing. However, when we talk about redemption, what do we

¹⁹²The Romans crucified their victims naked. Hal Lindsey with C.C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 40.

¹⁹³*The New Scofield Reference Bible*.

¹⁹⁴Psalms 22:31 KJV.

really indicate when we say, “He, Jesus, performed it.” What did Jesus finish when He said, “It is finished,” or rather, *tetelestai*? What does this word really mean and what did Jesus precisely do when He redeemed the human race?

THE CRY OF JESUS PAYS THE DEBT OF SIN

Here again, we feel that Hal Lindsey has so beautifully illustrated the point of Jesus’ sixth cry, that we quote him extensively. In his book, *The Liberation of Planet Earth*, Hal wrote: “To understand the nature of this DEBT OF SIN, we have to reach back into the practices of the criminal courts of the Roman Empire.

“In the days of the great dominion of Rome, it was assumed by Caesar that every Roman citizen owed him perfect allegiance and obedience to his laws. Justice was swift to enforce this assumption, and if any citizen broke any law of the land, he soon found himself standing before the courts or Caesar himself.

NAILED TO THE PRISON DOOR

“If the man were found guilty of breaking the law and sentenced to prison, an itemized list was made of each infraction and its corresponding penalty. This list was, in essence, a record of how the man had failed to live up to the laws of Caesar. It was called a ‘Certificate of Debt.’

“When the man was taken to his prison cell, this Certificate of Debt was nailed to his cell door so that anyone passing by could tell that the man had been justly condemned and could also see the limitations of his punishment....When the man had served his time and was released, he would be handed the yellowed, tattered Certificate of Debt with the words ‘Paid in Full’ written across it. He could never again be imprisoned for those crimes as long as he could produce his canceled Certificate of Debt.

But until the sentence was paid, that Certificate of Debt stood between him and freedom. It continued to witness to the fact that the imprisoned man had failed to live according to the laws of Rome and was, in essence, an offense to Caesar....man owes God perfect obedience to His holy laws as summarized in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. By his failure to live up to this standard of perfection, man has become an offense to the very character of God, and the eternal court of justice has pronounced the death sentence upon man.

A Certificate of Debt was prepared against every person who would ever live, listing his failure to live in thought, word, and deed in accordance with the law of God. This death sentence has become a

DEBT OF SIN which has to be paid, either by man or, if possible, someone qualified to take his place (Colossians 2:14)....All we have to do is look inside ourselves and we'll see all kinds of emotions, lusts, drives, and temptations that overpower us from time to time and cause us to do things we know are wrong.

Those actions are what God calls 'sins,' and they *aren't* caused by our environment. They are caused by our 'reaction' to our environment, and that's an *internal* problem which man has.

Listen to how Jesus described man and his sinning: 'That which comes *out* of the man is what defiles him. For from *inside*, out of the heart of men comes the evil thoughts and fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting, and wickedness, as well as deceit, lust, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from *within*...'....Misbehavior is not primarily the result of our environment; it's a problem of the heart....In using the word 'heart,' Jesus is talking about that inner part of man's being which has in it the 'sin nature,' or a disposition toward rebellion against God.

Have you ever done something which was totally stupid and senseless and you said to yourself afterwards, 'What on earth made me do that?' Your better judgment *knew* it was wrong, but you went ahead anyway. Well, it was your 'sin nature' which prompted you to do it.

The Bible uses the terms 'flesh' and 'sin' (in the singular) to describe that force within us that is in total rebellion against God. This 'nature' was not in man when God created him. It entered Adam and Eve the moment they disobeyed God and He withdrew His spiritual life from them....The Bible teaches that when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, they didn't just lose their sense of fellowship with God and become unlike Him in their character; they actually had something *added* to them—a sin nature. And that made them sinners. Since that awful day of infamy, all men have been born with that same sinful nature, and that is the source of our sins....the day Jesus died....At noonday God drew a veil of darkness over the whole earth. It was pitch black. I believe God did this so that no one would be able to witness visually the horror of what was happening to Jesus as He hung there—because in that moment, the entire wrath of God was engulfing Him as He allowed the sins of all mankind to be put on Him. Until then Jesus hadn't uttered even a whimper.

But then, all of a sudden, the silence was broken and Jesus cried out in His humanity, '*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*,' which means, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'

In that instant God had taken the Certificates of Debt of every human being from the beginning of mankind until the close of history, and nailed them to the cross, making Jesus responsible and guilty for each one!

And God had to turn His back on His own Son in His greatest hour of need, because Christ had voluntarily allowed Himself to be made a sinner on our behalf and God could have no fellowship with sinners of *any* kind until redemption was completed.

When I get to heaven I want to ask Jesus, ‘Lord, what really happened in that awful hour of blackness?’

Even after He explains it to me, I know I won’t be able to comprehend what it must have been like for the poured-out fury of a holy God to fall like an atomic blast on Jesus.

His scream was out of deep agony of soul because, for the first and last time for all eternity, the Second Person of the Godhead, Jesus, was separated from the other two members of the Godhead, the Father and the Spirit.

No one will ever be as alone as Jesus was there on the cross. He was separated from every person He’d ever loved and trusted. Forsaken by His closest friends, forsaken by God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, forsaken by all, He hung there in an aloneness that nobody will ever be able to fathom.

Do you know why He did it?

So that you and I would never have to be alone again. So He could tell those who believed in Him, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you’ (Hebrews 13:5)....But that’s not the end of the story.

Just before Jesus gave up His earthly life and commended His Spirit to the Father, He shouted a word which is the Magna Carta of all true believers.

That victorious cry was ‘*Tetelestai!*’

Let that word burn like a firebrand into your mind, because that’s the *exact same word* that a Roman judge would write across a released criminal’s Certificate of Debt to show that all his penalty had been paid and he was free at last. The word used in this way means ‘paid in full’ and is translated in many Bibles as ‘It is finished.’ In the mind of God, ‘Paid in Full’ has been written across the Certificate of Debt of every man who will ever live because His debt to God has been fully paid by Jesus [provided the person accepts this!]^[195]....

195[] mine.

JESUS DIED TWICE

When Jesus was hanging on the cross as our substitute, the writer of Hebrews tell us, it was that ‘He might taste death for every one’ (Hebrews 2:9). Since man’s penalty for being a sinner is both spiritual and physical death, Jesus had to taste both kinds of death.

When He shouted out, ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?’ at that moment, there on the cross, He was actually made sin for us, and in His human spirit He died spiritually. The apostle Paul referred to this when he said, ‘He made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin *to be sin on our behalf*, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him’ (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This doesn’t mean Jesus was actually sinful in Himself. It means He was treated by the Father as if He were actually sinful. Since Jesus was bearing our sins, God had to judge Him just as He would have had to judge us because of our sins.

In dying spiritually and physically as our substitute, God looked at Jesus’ death and credited it to the account of fallen humanity. His spiritual death means God can give spiritual life to all men who will receive it; and His physical death, and defeat of it in the resurrection, means God can ultimately raise our physical bodies and give them immortality.

GOD’S ULTIMATE LAMB

There’s little more that can be said to amplify this vivid picture of Jesus’ substitutionary death on our behalf. The only thing to add is that in becoming a Lamb for the world’s sins, Jesus *fulfilled the need* for one lamb for a man, one lamb for a family, and one lamb for a nation.

It was no mere coincidence that His crucifixion took place on the day of Passover. He was destined by God to be the world’s Passover Lamb whose blood, when applied to the doorposts of our hearts, would cause God to ‘pass over’ us in judgment.

He was also the fulfillment of the lamb on the Day of Atonement upon whom the sins of the people were laid and who was slain in their behalf.

WHY?

The only question that might come to mind is, ‘Why did He do it?’ Jesus gave us the answer to that question when He told His disciples, ‘Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends’ (John 15:13).

Jesus died for us because He loved us!¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶Hal Lindsey, *The Liberation of Planet Earth*, pp. 45-49, 100-102, 118-119.

PIERCING DECEPTIONS BETWEEN TRANSLATIONS

The writers of *The Real Messiah*, an anti-missionary publication which is distributed by the National Conference of Synagogue Youth, vainly attempt to explain away the Messianic prophecy of Psalm 22. In this joke of scholarship, it is commented that: "Missionaries claim that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy that the Messiah would be killed by crucifixion. They quote a Biblical verse, which, correctly translated, reads (Psalm 22:17), 'For dogs have encompassed me, a company of evil-doers have enclosed me, *like a lion*, they are at my hands and feet.' 'Like a lion' in Hebrew is *KeAri*. The fundamentalist Christian interpreters actually changed the spelling of the word from *KeAri* to *Kari*."

"If one then totally ignores Hebrew grammar, one can twist this to mean 'He gouged me.' Then, as in the King James' Version, they make this verse read 'they pierced my hands and feet.' However, this bears no relation to the original meaning of the verse. Even with the change in spelling, it is a forced translation. This is but one more example of the lengths missionaries go to to prove that they are right."¹⁹⁷

We emphasize that there is no alteration of the Hebrew word *KeAri* כְּאֵרִי (also transliterated and pronounced *Kaari*) in verse 17 of Psalm 22 in Hebrew. *Kaari* means *KeAri*.¹⁹⁸ Rather, this word *Kaari* ("like a lion," a Hebrew idiom for being pierced) was originally *Kaaru* כָּאֲרִי, which can *only* mean "to pierce." Even in its present altered form, *Kaari* (changed from *Kaaru*) is not exclusively translated as "pierced" in the King James Version as *The Real Messiah* infers! In fact, it was translated as "pierced" in an English *Jewish* version from the 1930's, which reads: "...they pierced my hands and my feet."¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷Aryeh Kaplan, *et al*, *The Real Messiah*, p. 55.

¹⁹⁸This explanation using the words *KeAri* and *Kari* is puzzling to us. *Kaari* in Hebrew means "like a lion." *Kaaru* means "to pierce"! We asked Tal Moran, a friend from Israel who grew up speaking Hebrew, where the authors of *The Real Messiah* might have come up with the idea that there were two versions of *KeAri*, one meaning "they gouged me." Tal did not have the slightest idea. We believe the author of *The Real Messiah* apparently invented the word "*Kari*"; along with his "explanation" of translation, it is neither a word nor an issue.

¹⁹⁹*The Holy Scriptures*. New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, © 1930, p. 898.



On Mount Gerizim in Israel, Samaritans place the Passover sacrifice on a wooden roasting rod with a crossbar, forming the shape of a cross, in order to prepare the sacrifice to be cooked over an open fire. This is in line with their understanding of Moses' instructions in Exodus 12 concerning the command to perform the original Passover. Moses wrote: "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike *it* on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast *with* fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire" (Exodus 12:5-10 KJV).

Samaritans are also mentioned in the New Testament (Matt. 10:5; Luke 9:52; John 4:9, 39-40; Acts 8:25). Jesus once made reference to a Samaritan who performed a good deed by saving the life of a man who had been robbed, beaten and left to die. Thus, we have the parable of the “Good Samaritan,” which you have probably heard.

THE MODERN SAMARITANS PRESERVED THE ANCIENT EXODUS PASSOVER LAMB SACRIFICE

Here, we are dealing with modern Samaritans living in Israel (there are only about five hundred left on Earth), and the relationship between their ancient Passover custom and the manner in which the Messiah died on the cross.

The custom of sacrificing a lamb on Passover began during the bondage of the Jews in Egypt and continued as a symbol of their liberation. The Samaritans mistakenly thought Mount Gerizim was the place to offer sacrifice instead of the Temple; however, the Jews knew the Temple was Moses’ designated area.

The Samaritans have continued, until this day, to offer a Passover lamb in the same fashion and tradition as did the Jews while their Temple stood. The Temple was torn down nearly 2000 years ago but Mount Gerizim still exists. We can get an idea of how the Jews sacrificed and ate the Passover lamb in their anticipation of Messianic redemption by observing the ancient feast of the Samaritans, which is still celebrated today.

JESUS’ SUFFERING MESSIANIC CREDENTIAL IS VISIBLE STILL IN THE SAMARITANS’ *PREPARATION* OF THE LAMB

We see the strong connection between the crossbar on which the Passover lamb was placed and the cross on which the Romans hung Jesus. They, of course, did not know that He was designated to be the sacrifice for all mankind. God knew, and we can see that this crossbar was also God’s prophetic symbol pointing to the future Messiah’s First Coming and atonement for us.

LEARNED JEWS ARE STARTLED BY A JEWISH COMMENTARY THAT MENTIONS A “CROSS ON HIS SHOULDERS” IN ISAAC’S ANCIENT ORDEAL

It is related in Genesis 22:6, concerning Isaac’s near-sacrifice by Abraham, that: “...Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid *it* upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together” (Gen. 22:6 KJV).

Though many rabbis deny this verse foreshadows Jesus and His cross, we have surprised them when we pointed out the Midrash Shimoni's commentary on this verse; for we have read in Hebrew on page 58 of the Saloniki edition: "...and Abraham took the wood and he put it on his son as a person who carries a cross on his shoulders."

של אסתר
רבנן אמרי
זם שלישי
ית המקום
שאמר לי
מה שאני
ז א"ל לאו

גדול וגו' השתחוה לה'. בית המקדש לא נבנה אלא בזכות השתחויה
שנא' ידמוסו ה' אלהיו השתחוה. אף המתים אינן חיים אלא בזכות
השתחויה שנא' יבואו נשתחוה ונברכה:
קא ויקח אברהם את עצי העולה וישם על יצחק בנו כזה שחא
סותן צלבו ככתפו. ויקח בידו את ראש ואת המאכלת
למה נקרא שמה מאכלת מפני שחא מכסרת איכלים ורבנן אמרי
למה נקרא שמה מאכלת שישאל אוכלים בעולם הזה בזכות אותה

Photocopy reproduction of Hebrew quote in *Midrash Shimoni*.

This verse of the Yalkut startles many learned Jewish scholars because it shows that the cross (*Tzlav* in Hebrew) is mentioned in Hebrew literature, even outside of the Old Testament (Psalm 22) in connection to sacrifice for God. Remember, God asked Abraham to give his only son but then allowed a ram to be sacrificed in his place!

THE PROPHECY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHICH JESUS MADE POSSIBLE IN HIS DEATH

As Jesus gave the cup of Passover wine to His disciples,²⁰⁰ He said: "...This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20 KJV).

Today, many preachers seem to make salvation more difficult than the religious leaders of Jesus' day. Jesus rebuked these Pharisees. In Matthew, He said: "...they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments....But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees,

²⁰⁰Israeli Professor David Flusser interestingly points out that some early Jewish customs which were not given to us by other Jewish (Talmudic) literature, *are* revealed to us in the New Testament. The devout and orthodox Flusser enlightens us: "Early Christian literature thus reflects the world of the Sages at an earlier stage than its reflection in the Jewish sources. It reflects Jewish life in the Hellenistic diaspora, details of which we otherwise know chiefly from the writings of Philo of Alexandria. We can also learn from it about other Jewish diasporas and about Jewish customs which have not been recorded in early Jewish sources. Take an example: the Jewish custom of giving a boy his name during his circumcision ceremony is not known in our Talmudic literature, but in one of the Gospels (Luke 1:59-64) we are told that John the Baptist's father gave him his name during this ceremony. Or another example: the custom of passing around the glass of wine during the Kiddush (the blessing on the wine ushering in Sabbath and Holy Day meals) is unknown in the Talmudic sources, but the New Testament tells us that during the Last Supper Jesus asked that his cup should be passed among his Apostles (Luke 22:17 and parallel passages)." David Flusser, Ph.D., *Jewish Sources in Early Christianity*, p. 10.

hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matt. 23:4-5, 13-15 KJV).

The truth of the matter is, all that is needed for salvation is the acceptance of Jesus' atonement for all of our sins—past, present and future. To accept this, all we need to do is invite Him to come into our hearts and give us His free gift of salvation.²⁰¹

If you find this hard to believe, just take a moment to read the New Testament passages of Revelation 3:20, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 3:20-41, and Galatians chapters 3-4.

It is important for us to remember that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-8) was a lecture which condemned the people for attempting to gain favor and salvation from God by works, deeds and appeasement. This address was designed to show the religious people in the crowd that, by God's standards, they were sinners and that if they really wanted to be forgiven and partake in God's abundant plan for their salvation, they would have to accept the then future atonement of the Messiah by faith (faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God [the Bible] Rom. 10:17). Mark 10:45 teaches that this is the meaning of the new covenant, of which Jesus reminded His disciples at the last Passover supper in Luke 22.

THE PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

This new covenant, predicted six hundred years before Christ by the Jewish prophet Jeremiah, has two aspects to it: a spiritual and a physical. The spiritual occurred when Jesus offered Himself as the lamb of God at that fateful Passover in Jerusalem. As I Corinthians teaches, "Christ our Passover sacrificed for us." The physical aspect of this promise made by the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, will occur at the Second Coming of Jesus when Israel sees and believes in Him as a nation. At that time, the words "new covenant with the **House of Israel**" will have been completely fulfilled.

Today, the new covenant is with a select but growing number of Jews for Jesus (born-again Messianic Jews) and born-again Gentiles (known commonly as Evangelical or Fundamentalist Christians), who accept the Jewish Messiah. By "accept the Jewish Messiah," we mean accepting that Jesus died for us as was Jewishly predicted in Isaiah 53:4.

201 See Philip Moore, *Eternal Security for True Believers*.

THERE WERE SEVEN COVENANTS BEFORE THE NEW COVENANT

God had dealt with man using seven other covenants before the new covenant was instituted by the Messiah. *The New Scofield Reference Bible* lists these, with an abbreviated explanation and verse for each, as follows: “...(1) The Edenic Covenant (Gen. 2:16, *note*) conditions the life of man in innocence. (2) The Adamic Covenant (Gen. 3:15, *note*) conditions the life of fallen man and gives promise of a Redeemer. (3) The Noahic Covenant (Gen. 9:16, *note*) establishes the principle of human government. (4) The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:2, *note*) founds the nation of Israel and confirms, with specific additions, the Adamic promise of redemption. (5) The Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 19:5, *note*) condemns all men, ‘for all have sinned’ (Rom. 3:23; 5:12). (6) The Palestinian Covenant (Dt. 30:3, *note*) secures the final restoration and conversion of Israel. (7) The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:16, *note*) establishes the perpetuity of the Davidic family (fulfilled in Christ, Mt. 1:1; Lk. 1:31-33; Rom. 1:3), and of the Davidic kingdom over Israel and over the whole earth, to be fulfilled in and by Christ (2 Sam. 7:8-17; Zech. 12:8; Lk. 1:31-33; Acts 15:14-17; I Cor. 15:24). And (8) the New Covenant (Heb. 8:8, *note* 1) rests upon the sacrifice of Christ and secures the eternal blessedness, under the Abrahamic Covenant (Gal. 3:13-29), of all who believe. It is absolutely unconditional and, since no responsibility is by it committed to man, it is final and irreversible.”²⁰²

IN THE SEVEN COVENANTS BEFORE MESSIAH’S FIRST COMING, THERE WERE SOME FAITHFUL, WHO JESUS SAYS WILL BE IN THE KINGDOM

With the exception of the new covenant in the New Testament, these covenants or testaments are all known as “the old covenant” or rather “Old Testament.” They are meshed together in a simplified form today because they are all found in the old covenant section of the Bible, comprised of thirty-nine books from Genesis through Malachi.

The new covenant begins with the sacrifice of Jesus at the end of Matthew and ends with the epistles of Paul, formerly known as Rabbi Saul, who was a famous student of the well-known Rabbi Gamaliel.

The beginning of Matthew consists of Jesus’ lectures under the last segment of the seven segments of the old covenant law. He makes known that the eighth segment of God’s covenant will be brought in by His own sacrifice (predicted 700 BC in the old covenant by Isaiah,

²⁰²*The New Scofield Reference Bible*, pp. 1317-1318.

chapters 53 and 49:5-7). He also teaches that the prior covenant was designed to look forward to the time when Messiah would come and pay for all past and future peoples' shortcomings, so that they may have a joyous, eternal relationship with God. This would be fully realized after the Second Coming, when all are resurrected to everlasting life in the kingdom of God in and around Jerusalem (Isa. 60:21; Rev. 21:11-21).

Concerning past individuals, Jesus spoke of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who lived 4000 years ago, as being alive (meaning through their spirits; Matt. 8:11). Jesus declared that one day they would be resurrected and live in His kingdom with all who accept this covenant in their time (Luke 13:28-30). This covers all individuals who accept the God of the Hebrews under all eight covenants through all sixty-six books of the complete Bible—Genesis through Revelation—from the time of Adam until sometime in the near future.

What is most important for us is now. If you have read this, you now have sufficient proof that we are living under a new covenant and you owe it to yourself to check it out! If you are interested, send me a fax and I will send you a free New Testament.²⁰³

GOD HAD PLANS TO REACH THE NON-JEWS (GENTILES) EVEN IF HIS NEW COVENANT WAS REJECTED BY HIS JEWISH PEOPLE

Portions of the New Testament point out that God would, in addition to reaching out to the Jewish people, one day call those Gentiles who wanted to know Him. He knew that many Jews would not at first be receptive to His new covenant. Paul, in the New Testament, comments on these issues: "But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I [Deut. 32:21]^[204] will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are no people*, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I [Isa. 65:1]^[205] was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them [Isa. 65:1, 19-20; Isa. 42:6-7]^[206] that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith,

²⁰³Fax (404) 816-9994.

²⁰⁴"They have moved me to jealousy with *that which* is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with *those which are not a people*; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation" (KJV).

²⁰⁵"I am sought of *them that* asked not *for me*; I am found of *them that* sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation *that* was not called by my name" (KJV).

²⁰⁶"I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (KJV).

All [Isa. 65:2]^[207] day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people” (Rom. 10:19-21 KJV; [] mine).

“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things” (Acts 15:14-17 KJV).

In a parable, Jesus alludes to temporarily²⁰⁸ handing over the duties of God’s word to the Gentiles, as He was addressing the belligerence and arrogance of the Pharisees. He said: “...A certain landowner planted a vineyard with a hedge around it, and built a platform for the watchman, then leased the vineyard to some farmers on a sharecrop basis, and went away to live in another country. At the time of the grape harvest he sent his agents to the farmers to collect his share. But the farmers attacked his men, beat one, killed one and stoned another. Then he sent a larger group of his men to collect for him, but the results were the same. Finally the owner sent his son, thinking they would surely respect him. But when these farmers saw the son coming they said among themselves, ‘Here comes the heir to this estate; come on, let’s kill him and get it for ourselves!’ So they dragged him out of the vineyard and killed him. When the owner returns, what do you think he will do to those farmers? The Jewish leaders replied, ‘He will put the wicked men to a horrible death, and lease the vineyard to others who will pay him promptly.’ Then Jesus asked them, ‘Didn’t you ever read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone rejected by the builders has been made the honored cornerstone; how remarkable! what an amazing thing the Lord has done’? What I mean is that the Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation that will give God his share of the crop. All who stumble on

²⁰⁷“I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way *that was* not good, after their own thoughts; A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick...” (KJV).

²⁰⁸We say “temporary” because after the Rapture and during the seven-year Tribulation, *until* the end of Daniel’s seventieth week, God will again use the Jews to evangelize the world. Presently, this task has been carried out by the Fundamental Evangelical Church. Their members are of a majority Gentile, but once the Church (all who presently believe in Jesus, in a personal sense) is removed in the Rapture (see our chapter 25, “The Rapture Factor”), then God will again use the Jews as a whole people to tell the world about His work of atonement. Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, says that there will be 144,000 Jews sealed for this!

this rock of truth shall be broken, but those it falls on will be scattered as dust” (Matt. 21:33-43 *The Living Bible*).

Risto Santala notes an amazing parallel between Jesus’ warning and an interesting point made by an ancient rabbi. “There is a discussion in the Talmud concerning Jeremiah 13:17, where the prophet ‘weeps in secret’ because of the pride which will not ‘give glory to the LORD’, and so ‘the LORD’s flock will be taken captive’. R. Shmuel Bar Yitshak says that, ‘this is the result of Israel’s sinfulness, and is the reason why the Torah will be taken from them and given to the Gentile nations’.^[209] The Talmud itself understands this in the sense that God himself will allow the Temple to be destroyed and that even the ‘angels of peace’ will weep for it. There was something of the same sorrow in Jesus’^[210] lament.”²¹¹ Here, we see that at least one rabbi shared the same sentiment as Jesus.



209Haggiga 5b.

210The lament is found in Luke 19:41-44. It dealt with Him crying over the city of Jerusalem because He realized the disasters that would follow in the Jewish expulsion by the Romans as a result of their rejection of His Messiahship.

211Risto Santala, *The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, p. 43.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 606 BC

הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאמְרֵי יְהוָה וְכָרָאִי אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־בֵּית יְהוּדָה בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה:
יִרְמְיָה לֵאמֹר:

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“ ‘Behold, days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah....’ ”

Jeremiah 31:31 NASB

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“When the time of the advent of Messiah will be near, then the blessed God will say to him: With him I will make a new covenant. And this is the time when he will acknowledge him as his son, saying ‘This day have I begotten thee.’ ”²¹²

Midrash Tehelim, fol. 3, col. 4

“...He will sit and expound the new Tora which He will give through the Messiah.”²¹³

Midrash Talpiot, 58a

NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 37 AND 64 AD

“...for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”

Matthew 26:28-29 NASB

“For finding fault with them, He says, ‘BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH....’ ”

Hebrews 8:8 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

“The Christians assert that the prophet Jeremiah here foretold the giving of a new law for the people of Israel—viz., the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth....Scripture does not allude here to the substitution of a new law for the old one....”

***Faith Strengthened*, by Isaac Troki, p. 155; 1850**

AUTHOR’S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

In spite of what Mr. Troki said, the Midrash Tehelim, which represents much of ancient rabbinical belief, specifically quotes the Scripture of Jeremiah and relates that when the Messiah’s Coming nears, a new covenant will begin. Midrash Talpiot says that the Messiah Himself would give this new Torah, and, needless to say, it would have benefited Troki to have reviewed these Midrashim before writing such untruth! There is no denying the New Testament within Judaism in light of the ancient writings of the rabbis! So much for Troki’s argument!

Philip Moore

²¹²Rev. B. Pick, Ph.D., *Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied by the Ancient Synagogue*, published in the compilation *Hebraica, A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study*, Vol. II, p. 129.

²¹³Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, p. 256.

THE PROPHECY AND EVENT OF THE MESSIANIC RESURRECTION OF JESUS

No other faith in history can lay claim to a risen redeemer by demonstrating a body of proof such as that which Jesus left for us. The Jewish Bible predicted that the Messiah would die, and shortly thereafter, miraculously return to life to seal our own future resurrections and assure us that He was the true Messiah amongst many imposters (Matt. 24:5).

The greatest prophecy Jesus fulfilled from the Old Testament, recorded in the New, was His resurrection from death unto life: "...I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live...." (John 11:25 KJV). Truly, if we believe in His salvation and resurrection we will one day at the end of time, be raised from death to life as He promised!

SOME HAVE SET OUT TO DISPROVE THE RESURRECTION ONLY TO END UP CONVERTING TO IT

Frank Morrison, a brilliant lawyer, believed that the resurrection was a "cruel hoax," and avowed to destroy the Christian faith by proving that Jesus never resurrected from the dead. Mr. Morrison used the best historical, legal and theological libraries of our day to gather research to be used to write a book which he would name, *Disproving the Resurrection of Jesus*. However, once all the research was in, he fell on his knees and asked forgiveness in the *name* of Jesus, the risen Lord. He did write a book, but not the one he had intended.

His book, entitled *Who Moved the Stone*, is filled with evidence *legally proving* the resurrection. The evidence he discovered turned a bitter enemy of Jesus into a believer in Him as the Messiah. Mr. Morrison's legal training forced him to be objective in his examination of the evidence he found!

Lew Wallace, author of the famous novel *Ben Hur*, planned to write a book disproving Jesus' deity and resurrection. However, if you have seen the movie or read his book, his theme is based on evidence which *defends* the resurrection.

A LAW PROFESSOR CONCLUDES THE EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION INDISPUTABLE

Simon Greenleaf, professor of law at Harvard University (1833-48), "has been called the greatest authority on legal evidences in the history of the world."²¹⁴ Greenleaf wrote *A Treatise on the Law of*

²¹⁴D. James Kennedy, *Why I Believe*. Waco, TX: Word Books, © 1980, p. 106, used by permission. New York attorney Walter M. Chandler notes of Greenleaf: "The author can conceive of no more satisfactory way of establishing the principle of the admissibility of the Gospels in evidence under modern law than by quoting at length

Evidence. This classic law work used in courtrooms throughout the world to determine good evidence from bad “is still considered the greatest single authority on evidence in the entire literature of legal procedure”²¹⁵

Greenleaf was challenged by his students to take his laws of evidence and apply them to the resurrection of Jesus. Once he had done this, Greenleaf wrote *An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence Administered in the Courts of Justice*,²¹⁶ in which he concluded that the resurrection of Jesus was the most established fact in history. He clearly proved that there was more conclusive verifiable evidence of every type to substantiate the resurrection than any other event which has occurred in the history of the world!

We find it interesting that there have been booklets and treatises written over the centuries mocking the resurrection, and yet, there is clearly more evidence supporting the resurrection than there is testimony to the fact that Julius Caesar ever lived! Do you know anyone who has ever questioned Caesar’s existence? Neither do we!

TWO OF THE MOST COMMON MOCKERIES USED TO DISPUTE THE RESURRECTION, RESOLVED

The two “contradictions” most often raised by liberal critics of Jesus’ resurrection are: “How could He have eaten on the Passover and died on it, also?” and; “How could He have remained in the tomb three days and nights if He was buried on the Sabbath?” The answers to these two questions, still used to mock Christians today, would be simple if those posing them would take the time to investigate the culture of Jesus and His land, along with the intricate meanings of Hebrew words.

The answer to the first question is that Jesus ate His last supper on the ancient Essene calendar Passover. The Essene holy day fell one day earlier in that year than the Pharisaic Passover observed by most of Israel. Risto Santala noted in his book, *The Messiah in the New*

from the celebrated treatise on the ‘Testimony of Evangelists,’ by Mr. Simon Greenleaf, the greatest of all writers on the Law of Evidence. The opinion of Greenleaf on a subject of this kind is somewhat in the nature of a decision of a court of last resort, and his authority in matters of this import is unquestioned in every land where English law is practiced. *London Law Magazine*, a few years ago, paid him the following splendid tribute: ‘It is no mean honor to America that her schools of jurisprudence have produced two of the first writers and best esteemed legal authorities of this century—the great and good man, Judge Story, and his worthy and eminent associate, Professor Greenleaf. Upon the existing Law of Evidence (by Greenleaf) more light has shone from the New World than from all the lawyers who adorn the courts of Europe.’ ” Walter M. Chandler, *The Trial of Jesus, From a Lawyer’s Standpoint*, illustrated edition, p. 4.

215Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Historical Evidences for the Christian Faith*, p. 199.

216In 1965, Baker Book House reprinted this book from its 1847 edition.

Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings, that Bargil Pixner, using Josephus and Philo as sources, deduced that there were about 6000 Pharisees and 4000 Essenes at that period in history. He also mentioned that some believed: "...that Jesus partook of the Paschal meal with his disciples in an Essene guest room and following their festive calendar, which would place the event...on Tuesday."²¹⁷

Santala also mentioned that Jesus told Peter and John they would see a man carrying a pitcher of water, which was "a rare sight,"²¹⁸ who would show them the location of His Passover.

I will never forget my friend Meron Ten-Brink, an Israeli tour guide who asked me about Jesus eating and dying on Passover. He mentioned the water in connection with the Essene custom and the difference of a day in calendar dates. Jesus ate a Tuesday night Essene Passover and was crucified on a Wednesday Pharisaic Passover. We know this from the key sign given to us in the Gospel of Mark: "And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, 'Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a **man** bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will shew you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us'" (Mark 14:13-15 KJV; bold mine).

In the Essene tradition, a man would carry the water, not a woman, and since there were few Essenes in comparison to the Pharisees and a larger portion of the rest of Diaspora Jewry who would come to celebrate the Passover in Israel, this was indeed a *rare* sight.

In a 1994 facsimile from Israel, Tsvi Sadan explained to me why, in the Essene culture, only a man would carry the water for Passover. He noted: "The man thus is a celibate (Essene practice) who is forced to carry the water by himself."

Sadan also mentioned that Josephus wrote about an "Essene gate," which some believe indicated the existence of "a whole Essene quarter in Jerusalem."²¹⁹ A person educated in the times and traditions of Jesus would know this.

It goes without saying that if you knew you were scheduled to die on Passover, you would observe it the day before, if you could, while at the same time honoring the other predominantly religious Jews (Essenes) along with the Pharisees. Jesus was fair, wasn't He?

Second, the word Sabbath means "rest" as well as "Saturday." It is still used in Israel to designate a major Jewish holy day or season.

²¹⁷Risto Santala, *The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, p. 205.

²¹⁸Ibid, p. 204.

²¹⁹The facsimile was sent from the Messianic congregation named *Nativyah* ("the path of God" in Hebrew), headed by Joe Shulam in Jerusalem.

Any Israeli will admit it is *Shabbat* (“Sabbath”) during the entire seven days of any given Passover celebration.

A Jewish day runs from one sundown to another, thus, Jesus was buried Wednesday night (of the Sabbath Passover week) and resurrected sometime Saturday night. This allows for three days and nights, as He predicted, using Jonah’s example (Matt. 12:40). The tomb was found empty the next morning, on Sunday, by His disciples. Any questions?

DESPITE THE EVIDENCE FOR RESURRECTION HUXLEY LECTURED AGAINST IT

Thomas Huxley, Charles Darwin’s strongest supporter, known as “his bulldog,” made no secret of at least one of the primary goals²²⁰ of “the theory of evolution,” which he hoped his friend Darwin was justifying and legitimizing. One of the attractions in Huxley’s speech-making tours was “lecturing against the resurrection of Christ.”²²¹ In his writings, he proclaimed that “the promise of the Second Coming” was “allegorical.”²²² The word “allegorical” is a fancy word which means that it will never literally happen.

These are the two most important truths of our Bible. They secure: 1. our resurrection, and; 2. our hope in the coming redemption. If Satan can destroy or discredit these two promises of God through a

²²⁰See our *Vol. II*, chapter 5, “Darwinian Evolution: Fact, Fraud or Fiction?”, where we reveal the evidence behind the real political motives of evolution. We show that Huxley, in reality, did not believe in evolution. This section documents Darwin’s ulterior motive, the theft of theories from others and taking false credit for himself. We show that in his own autobiography, he admitted to his lifelong desire to “take a place by the other famous scientific men.”

²²¹Henry M. Morris, Ph.D., *The Troubled Waters of Evolution*. San Diego, CA: Creation-Life Publishers, © 1974, p. 58, used by permission. We also note that on the same page, Dr. Morris documents that Huxley “invented” the term “agnostic” and applied it to “himself.” Agnostic means, “I do not know about God because I cannot see him, but if I find evidence, I will accept that. First show me this concrete evidence.” ~~This term was much~~ more palatable to the public than atheist, which means “I do not believe God exists.” Huxley was a master propagandist and activist.

²²²Thomas Henry Huxley, *Agnosticism and Christianity and Other Essays*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1992, p. 203.

godless false philosopher, he has won. Huxley²²³ was a tool, a weapon against Christians, and he should be exposed!

A RABBI TRIES TO QUASH THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS IN THE PSALMS

Rabbi Sh'lomo ben Yitzhak, the famous interpreter commonly referred to by his Hebrew acronym Rashi, does not live up to the high esteem which he has enjoyed in the Jewish community since his death in 1105. When you take the time to carefully study exactly what he taught, as I did, you discover his use of double standards to cover up what he knew to be prophetic references pertaining to the Messiah. These examples are Isaiah 53, Zechariah 12:10 and the case of the Messiah's resurrection, Psalm 21.

The Jewish scholar, David Baron, has documented this in his book, *Rays of Messiah's Glory*. Baron, catching the rabbi red-handed, notes: "Rashi....in his comments on Psalm xxi...says, 'Our Rabbis have expounded it of the King Messiah, but it is better to expound it further of David himself in order to answer heretics' [Jewish Christians]."²²⁴

Here the dishonesty of the double standard, used in order to escape any possible reference to the resurrection of Jesus, is clearly identified and exposed to all of us.

²²³H.G. Wells, the famous novelist known for his work, *The Time Machine*, was a student of Huxley. No doubt, his false evolutionary ideas connected with the Morlocks were influenced by this false teacher. *Benets Readers Encyclopedia*, third edition, tells us that Wells died in despair in 1946, worrying about how man's inventions were progressing faster than his intellectual and social development, while also mentioning that he was an advocate of Fabian socialism, feminism, evolutionarianism, naturalism, and studied under Thomas Huxley at the University of London. We believe Dr. A.E. Wilder-Smith was right when he said the " 'dead hand of Darwinism' has 'weighed heavily on [scientific] progress for over one hundred years.' " John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *The Facts on Creation vs. Evolution*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, © 1993, p. 25, used by permission. Ankerberg and Weldon's source was A.E. Wilder-Smith, *The Creation of Life: A Cybernetic Approach to Evolution*, pp. 244-245. Though we may enjoy the adventure of *The Time Machine* in the book and movie, we should always bring ourselves back to the reality that the "Morlocks" at its end are as fictitious as evolution, not allowing ourselves to be subconsciously influenced toward the philosophy of Darwinism by Wells' casual expression.

²²⁴These "heretics" are Christian Jews. David Baron, *Rays of Messiah's Glory, Christ in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, p. 240. [] mine.

CONTEMPORARY ATTEMPTS TO CRUSH THE RESURRECTION EXPOSE FEAR WITHIN THE OPPOSITION

Jews for Judaism is an organization that distributes literature²²⁵ which attempts to deny the resurrection. As we read a copy which was given to us, we were amused at their claim that since different Gospel writers list different resurrection events, this is somehow contradictory.

In reality, this method of investigation complements and corroborates the story. Say, for instance, that you and three of your friends are interrogated regarding a murder you all witnessed and you tell four different stories. However, in the end, all the stories come together beautifully. This is a firmer evidence of authenticity. When the story is fully reconstructed, there is actually no contradiction because each of you saw different aspects at different times, depending on when and where you were during this episode.

Yes, the women went to the tomb to embalm Jesus, only because they were not aware of the fact that Joseph and Nicodemus had already done so. The word “unaware” is not spelled out in the New Testament; it is something we see for ourselves. It does not take a detective as skilled as Colombo or Sherlock Holmes to discover the obvious, does it?

The New Testament states that Nicodemus embalmed Jesus, and, in another passage, says the women sought Him out to perform this ritual only to find that the body of Jesus was not there. *Jews for Judaism*²²⁶ claim that this somehow presents a contradiction. In reality, this is merely a testimony to the fact that the women were not aware it had already been performed. How ignorant of this organization to say otherwise.

TWO JEWISH CONTEMPORARIES TAKE POT SHOTS AT THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Gerald Sigal, in *The Jew and the Christian Missionary*, says: “Belief in the resurrection of Jesus, so crucial to the theology of missionary Christianity, is based on unsubstantiated evidence. The Gospel accounts of the resurrection are not the result of objective observations by trustworthy eyewitnesses. As a result, the veracity of the resurrection accounts is highly questionable.”²²⁷

Sam Levine, in his book, *You Take Jesus, I’ll Take God*, arrogantly wrote: “The resurrection story is a fabricated hoax; it never happened. However, those early followers just could not believe that their savior simply died and was no more....They therefore made up a

²²⁵The piece was entitled *The Resurrection: What Is the Evidence?*, by Rabbi Tovia Singer. NJ: Jews for Judaism.

²²⁶This view is also held by liberal “Christian” theologians.

²²⁷Gerald Sigal, *The Jew and the Christian Missionary*, p. 238.

story (perhaps it was a hallucination which they thought was true) and the story that they made up was one that could not be disproven.”²²⁸

As you read on, these statements will be conclusively disproven! Don’t worry, be happy...about the resurrection of Jesus and the evidence we will present, which proves it.

DR. KENNEDY EXPOSES THE “SWOON SURVIVAL THEORY” AS A NON-EXCLUSIVE AND RELATIVELY MODERN WORKING IMPOSSIBILITY

Dr. D. James Kennedy notes: “Only a handful of theories have been propounded by skeptics, atheists, and unbelievers who have turned their greatest guns upon the resurrection....there is the ‘swoon’ theory. ^[229] This has been set forth by Venturini; it is found in the writings of Mary Baker Eddy; it is found in the writings of Hugh Schonfield in *The Passover Plot*. It is interesting, however, that for over eighteen hundred years there was never a whisper from the friends or the most implacable enemies of Christianity that Jesus Christ had not died. Some of these recent writers have now conceived the idea that Jesus had simply swooned....Medical authorities state that if Jesus had swooned, open air was needed, not a closed tomb. Certainly what was not needed were grave clothes wrapped around his head and spices covering nose and mouth. Furthermore, to place a person in such a swoon in a cold grave would bring about a syncope or cessation of his heartbeat, if he had been alive.”²³⁰

SCHONFIELD ATTEMPTS TO DEBAUCH THE RESURRECTION—A PERSONAL ENCOUNTER

Hugh Schonfield,²³¹ a Jewish writer, tried to discredit the resurrection in his 1965 book, *The Passover Plot*. Schonfield claimed that Jesus had a Messiah complex, and faked His death on the cross by having Himself drugged. “Jesus lapsed quickly into complete

228Samuel Levine, *You Take Jesus, I’ll Take God*, p. 71.

229The Jewish believer in Jesus, Dr. Arthur Kac, M.D., quotes the scholar Strauss, on this ridiculous swoon theory. He says: “Hear what Strauss has to say about this theory: - ‘It is impossible that a being who had been stolen half dead out of a sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening, and indulgence, and who still at last yielded to His sufferings, could have given to His disciples the impression that He was a Conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life, an impression which lay at the bottom of their future ministry.’ ” Arthur W. Kac, *The Messiahship of Jesus*, p. 232. We suggest you read *The Proof of the Resurrection*, by our friend, Elliot Klayman, a precious Jewish believer in Jesus, available through The Messianic Literature Outreach, POB 37062, Cincinnati, OH, USA 45222.

230D. James Kennedy, Ph.D., *Why I Believe*, pp. 109, 114-115.

231In 1983, before he died, I received two letters from Schonfield. I had attempted to share the Gospel with the very hurt and hardened man. He had once professed faith in Jesus in his earlier years, and had been a member of the Hebrew Christian Alliance.

unconsciousness. His body sagged. His head lolled on his breast, and to all intents and purposes he was a dead man.

Directly it was seen that the drug had worked the man hastened to Joseph who was anxiously waiting for the news....It is the moment before sundown in Jerusalem. On the hill of Golgotha three bodies are suspended on crosses. Two—the thieves—are dead. The third appears so. This is the drugged body of Jesus of Nazareth, the man who planned his own crucifixion, who contrived to be given a soporific potion to put him into a deathlike trance. Now Joseph of Arimathea, bearing clean linen and spices, approaches and recovers the still form of Jesus. All seems to be proceeding according to plan....As arranged, Jesus was conveyed carefully to the nearby tomb. The women of his following, who had been observing everything at a distance, saw where he was taken....Jesus lay in the tomb over the Sabbath. He would not regain consciousness for many hours, and in the meantime the spices and linen bandages provided the best dressing for his injuries....Jesus was taken from the tomb at the first possible opportunity for the entirely legitimate purpose of reviving him....a plan was being followed which was worked out in advance by Jesus himself and which he had not divulged to his close disciples. What seems probable is that in the darkness of Saturday night when Jesus was brought out of the tomb by those concerned in the plan he regained consciousness....²³²

SCHONFIELD'S LIE DISPROVED BY CRUCIFIXION PHYSICS

In order for Schonfield's theory to be true, a number of highly improbable things would have had to occur, including the total incompetence of the superbly trained Roman soldiers. Most important, the "drugged" Jesus would have suffocated within minutes,²³³ once His body sagged, as was already discussed in our section dealing with the physics of crucifixion. He would have been long since dead.

This gaping hole in Schonfield's "theory" is an obvious one, but to our knowledge, has never been addressed. This same theme of survival after crucifixion was portrayed in a mini-series, *The Word*, starring David Jensen, airing on American television in the 1970's.

232Hugh J. Schonfield, *The Passover Plot: New Light on the History of Jesus*. New York: Bantam Books, © 1971, pp. 160, preface, 161, 163, 165, used by permission of Element Books, Inc., POB 830/21 Broadway, Rockport, MA, USA 01966.

233The period of time between the moment His body sagged until permission was secured to take Him down would have been considerable—more than only a few minutes.

ATTEMPTS TO MAKE FICTION OUT OF THE RESURRECTION—NON-JEWS ARE GUILTY, TOO

Bishop Spong attempted to discredit the literal and bodily resurrection of Jesus in his 1994 book, *Resurrection, Myth or Reality?* He claimed: “The story of Jesus’ burial and the account of the empty tomb are in fact late-developing^[234] Christian legends....the tomb itself with its massive stone^[235] and its female visitors, to say nothing of the entire burial tradition, must all be dismissed as not factual....manifestations of the dead body that somehow was enabled to be revived and to walk out of a tomb are also legends and myths that cannot be literalized. The risen Jesus did not literally eat fish....Resurrection may

234Despite Spong’s erroneous assertions, former professor of Semitic languages at Yale, Charles Cutler Torrey, reminds us in chapter 3 of his book: “Evidence was also given to show that these scriptures of the Nazarene sect were put forth at an early date; as soon as such works could well be prepared, and in the time when they were especially needed. The current guesses at the dates of Mark and Matthew, published in the standard textbooks and treatises, are based primarily on the mistaken belief that the Gospels were composed in Greek....” At the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, in New York City in December, 1934, I challenged my New Testament colleagues to designate even *one* passage from any of the Four Gospels giving clear evidence of a date later than 50 A.D., or of origin outside Palestine. The challenge was not met, nor will it be, for there is no such passage’....The datings generally proposed at present, for all four Gospels, are quite indefensible in the face of facts which are coming to light....Every feature of these Gospels indicates that they were composed while the Nazarenes were regarded as loyal Jews, even if mistaken. There is in them no indication, of any sort, clearly pointing to a later date....Unexpected confirmation of both conclusions, as to language and date, appears to be given by the Jewish tradition preserved in the Talmud....the Jews of Palestine in the first century had in their hands certain Semitic writings which they called ‘the gospels’ (plural number) and regarded as the authoritative Christian scriptures....There are in the Talmud numerous allusions to the Gospels, always brief and sometimes sharply polemical. These heretical scriptures are either called ‘the *Gilyonim*’ or else are spoken of as ‘the books (or, writings) of the *Minim*’....The conclusion reached and stated by Professor Moore, in the course of the investigation which he published in 1911, that the allusion to the Christian Gospels in Tosephta Yadaim II, 13 comes from Johanan ben Zakkai, is certainly correct, and is extremely important....writings which had been put forth with the claim to prophetic inspiration, Messianic scriptures designed to show a new era of divine revelation and to supplement the older sacred books of Israel....There was a brief period of at least partial toleration under Johanan before he gave his mild but momentous ruling, that the Nazarene scriptures were of merely human origin....The tone of the decision, as has been shown, plainly implies an early date, before the time of the bitter hostility induced by the mission to the Gentiles and the disaster of the year 70. ‘The Gospels’ of the Nazarenes...addressed to the Jews, were already in circulation in or very soon after the middle of the first century, and cannot possibly have made their appearance as late as the war under Titus.” Professor Charles Cutler Torrey, *Documents of the Primitive Church*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, © 1941, pp. 91-93, 111, used by permission.

235See our photo, “Mike’s Site,” of a first-century Jewish tomb in Israel, including its *massive stone*, an archaeological find of preeminence—believe me, it is factual. I not only photographed it, but touched it with my very own hands! The large stone, which the New Testament claims was over Jesus’ tomb, was a traditional first-century Jewish burial custom among the wealthy; a group to which Joseph of Arimathea and Nikodemos ben Gorion (Nicodemus) definitely belonged.

mean many things, but these details are not literally a part of that reality.²²³⁶ Bishop Spong has also made several ignorant and unfounded accusations, one of which is: "...we had to experience our literal understanding of the Bible as no longer trustworthy. In the reverberations of the knowledge explosion that began with Copernicus and continued through Galileo, Newton...and Einstein, among others, the literal Bible disintegrated."²²³⁷

There is no doubt, from this statement, that Mr. Spong knows little about Galileo, Newton and Einstein, who not only believed in the Bible but held to quite literal fundamental positions (for Newton and Einstein's views, see our chapters 11 and 15, "Newton's Forbidden Works Rescued," and "Messianic Jewish Faith in Jesus").

Apparently, Bishop Spong imagines that these great scientists did not believe or helped to provide knowledge which has discouraged evidence to prove the literal prophetic claims of the Bible. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As you will see in this work, in our opinion, Spong arrogantly attempts to dress the neo-orthodoxy of the reformed nineteenth century German higher criticism of the Bible in new clothes. As is well known, the school of higher criticism says, in essence, that the Bible is not true or literal—a theory that has been disproved by modern archaeological discoveries, including the Dead Sea Scrolls. Spong claims his findings are derived from *a new understanding from the ancient Jewish traditions and Midrash*.²²³⁹ How absurd!

2236John Shelby Spong, *Resurrection, Myth or Reality?*, pp. back cover, 235-236.

2237Ibid, p.11. Crossan and Ludemann also impotently attacked the resurrection in 1995-6.

2238In our observation, Spong knows very little of Jewish culture and tradition. One example lies in his comment: "Jesus is quoted as saying to some of the scribes and Pharisees: 'For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth' (12:40). If these words are to be taken literally, then the resurrection of Jesus would have to be located at sundown on Monday." Spong thinks that Sabbath means Saturday so he mistakenly calculates to Monday, but in actuality, the entire seven-day Passover feast is considered Sabbath. Spong continues: "Even then, the stated order would have to be reversed so that it would read three nights and three days....[and] the sun went down *ending* that day near the moment of Jesus' death." We note that Jewish days run from sundown to sunup as the Jews recognize correctly the phrase "the evening and the morning were the first day," as Zola Levitt reminds us: "In Hebrew reckoning, the day begins at sundown, or moonrise. This seemed to be God's intention at the very beginning ('And the evening and the morning were the first day,' Gen 1:5)." Zola Levitt, *The Seven Feasts of Israel*. Dallas, TX: Zola Levitt, © 1979, p. 3, used by permission. Spong's ignorance of Jewish customs is particularly glaring in the two statements he uses in an attempt to discredit the three day and three night time sequence for the resurrection in the New Testament, as stated by Jesus. On pp. 210-213 of his ridiculous book, *Resurrection, Myth or Reality?*, he attempts to create a contradiction between "After three days" and "on the third day." It would appear that his math training is also insufficient because it is possible to rise after three days at the end of the third day, still on the third day, moments before the fourth starts, isn't it? Yes! [] mine.

2239John Shelby Spong, *Resurrection, Myth or Reality?*, pp. 8-12.

In our work, we have published numerous Midrashim supporting overall our fundamental position of biblical truth from creation, the birth and resurrection of Jesus, to the Apocalypse and the New Heavens and Earth promised us. How dare someone use the words *Jewish tradition* and *Midrash* to slander the resurrection of Jesus and fundamental truth, especially when archaeology has already disproved their view!

CAN SPONG ESCAPE MESSIANIC JUDGMENT? PERHAPS, *IF* HE TURNS TO JESUS

Bishop Spong and others who believe as he does should perhaps be reminded of Judgment Day, when they will cry out: "...Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Only to be answered: "...I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22-23 KJV).²⁴⁰

Regarding his chapter entitled, "Life After Death—This I do Believe," we ask why, if he really believes it, does he not do what the apostle Paul claims that all must do in order to get in on the Heaven side of life after death? Paul instructs in the New Testament: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath **raised** him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9 KJV).

If Spong is truly a Christian, as he claims on page 107 of his spurious book,²⁴¹ *Resurrection, Myth or Reality?*, he should retract his books, which mock fundamental Christian truths, and open his heart truly and faithfully to Jesus. We definitely believe that if he dared to do such a thing he would hear these words in the future, when the believers are judged: "...Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:23 KJV).

If Spong is a Christian, as he claims, how could he forget the words of Jesus to the Pharisees? "...if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24 KJV).

Obviously, he is not a Christian in the New Testament sense of the word, is he? He makes claims such as: "I will not make any further attempt to convert the Buddhist, the Jew, the Hindu or the Moslem. I am content to learn from them and to walk with them side by side

²⁴⁰This verse strictly applies to those who do not believe in Jesus and His exclusive saving power and resurrection. See our *Vol. II*, chapter 11, "Eternal Security for True Believers."

²⁴¹As far as his assertion that there has never been a literal and physical resurrection of Jesus.

toward the God who lives, I believe, beyond the images that bind and blind us.²⁴²

From this, we know that he is not. We know this because Jesus instructed us to tell all nations of His Messiahship (Acts 1:8). Jesus has also said: "...‘I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me’ ” (John 14:6 KJV). How can Spong be a follower of Jesus and be content to take lessons from the Moslems?

Pray that Bishop Spong may possibly change his heart and mind, and truly believe in Jesus’ blood atonement and resurrection to life eternal. This will assure Spong a place with the Lord and us, instead of eternal separation from Him after the Judgment Day of the Messiah.



The Garden Tomb of Jesus in Jerusalem, Israel.

²⁴²Dave Hunt, *Global Peace and the Rise of Antichrist*. Grand Rapids, MI: Harvest House Publishers, © 1990, p. 130, used by permission. Hunt’s source was *The Voice*, Diocese of Newark, Jan. 1989.

ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT WRITTEN 1000 BC

לִבִּי וְגִלִּי כְבוֹדִי אֶף־בְּשָׁרִי יִשְׁכֵּן לְבָטָח: כִּי לֹא־תָשׁוּב נַפְשִׁי לִשְׂאוֹל לֹא־תִתֵּן
 לְחַסְדְּךָ לְרֵאוֹת שָׁחַת: תִּדְרִיעֵנִי אֶרְחַח וְחַיִּים שְׂבַע שְׁמֹחוֹת אֲדַפְּנֶיךָ נַעֲמֹת בִּימִינֶךָ נָצַח:
 כִּי־תִקְדָּמֶנּוּ בְּרָכוֹת טוֹב תִּשִּׂית לְרֵאשׁוֹ עֲטֹרַת כְּוֹ: חַיִּים וְשָׁלֵם מִמֶּךָ נִתְּנָה לּוֹ אֶרֶךְ
 יָמִים עוֹלָם נָעַד: גְּדוֹל כְּבוֹדוֹ בִּישׁוּעַתְךָ הוֹד וְהִדָּר תִּשְׁנֶה עָלָיו: כִּי־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה בְּרָכוֹת
 לְעַד תִּתְּנֶהוּ בְּשִׁמְחָה אֲדַפְּנֶיךָ: תִּהְיֶה לָּם יוֹם־יָא; כֹּא: ד-ו

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

“Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever....Thou dost set a crown of fine gold on his head. He asked life of Thee, Thou didst give it to him, Length of days forever and ever. His glory is great through Thy salvation, Splendor and majesty Thou dost place upon him. For Thou dost make him most blessed forever; Thou dost make him joyful with gladness in Thy presence.” **Psalms 16:9-11; 21:3-6 NASB**

ANCIENT RABBINICAL COMMENTARY

“Our Rabbis taught, The Holy One, blessed be He, will say to the Messiah, the son of David (May he reveal himself speedily in our days!), ‘Ask of me anything, and I will give it to thee’, as it is said, *I will tell of the decree etc. this day have I begotten thee, ask of me and I will give the nations for thy inheritance.* (Ps. II, 7 and 8). But when he will see that the Messiah the son of Joseph is slain, he will say to Him, ‘Lord of the Universe, I ask of Thee only the gift of life’. ‘As to life’, He would answer him, ‘Your father David has already prophesied this concerning you’, as it is said, *He asked life of thee, thou gavest it him [even length of days for ever and ever]*. (Ps. XXI, 5.)”²⁴³

Talmud Sukkah 52a**NEW TESTAMENT RECORDED 65 AND 96 AD**

“And when they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead; and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people. And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘THOU ART MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE.’ *And as for the fact* that He raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: ‘I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY *and* SURE blessings OF DAVID. Therefore He also says in another Psalm, ‘THOU WILT NOT ALLOW THY HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.’ For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay; but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses. Take heed therefore, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon you: ‘BEHOLD, YOU SCOFFERS, AND MARVEL, AND PERISH; FOR I AM ACCOMPLISHING A WORK IN

²⁴³The Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a, p. 247. Last two () are The Babylonian Talmud’s Scriptural documentary footnotes 5 and 6.

YOUR DAYS, A WORK WHICH YOU WILL NEVER BELIEVE, THOUGH SOMEONE SHOULD DESCRIBE IT TO YOU.' [i.e., Hab. 1:5] And as Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. Now when *the meeting of the synagogue* had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God. And the next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of God."

Acts 13:29-44 NASB. [] mine

"And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, 'Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.'"

Revelation 1:17-18 NASB

MODERN RABBINIC COMMENT/REFUTATION

"The author of Acts claims that this is a foreshadowing of the resurrection of Jesus....Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow Your loyal one to see corruption.' For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and did see corruption; but he whom God raised did not see corruption. (Acts 13:34-37) The application of David's words to explain the disappearance of Jesus' body is without foundation. These verses were seized upon as proof-texts by desperate men attempting to explain the disappearance of Jesus' body to his followers....Nothing definite can be said concerning its final disposition at the time of the alleged resurrection. All the information concerning this alleged event is derived from the New Testament. The New Testament, while not a contemporary document, is the earliest and only source of information on the subject of the resurrection of Jesus. However, it lacks the necessary factual information to allow one to learn about the final disposition of the physical remains of Jesus."

***The Jew and the Christian Missionary*, by Gerald Sigal, pp. 90-91; © 1981**

AUTHOR'S COMMENT—EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN POSITION

The author of *The Jew and the Christian Missionary* and his colleagues would be wiser in their "scholarship" if they would heed the words of the prophet Habakkuk quoted in the forty-first verse of Acts 13. Furthermore, Mr. Sigal's "exposé" that the New Testament is the only source of information on the resurrection of Jesus is entirely inaccurate. The first-century Jewish historian, Josephus, speaks to us as an eyewitness concerning Christians who were still alive at Jesus' resurrection, in his book, *Jewish Antiquities* (93 C.E.). He has written to us: "Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man [if it be lawful to call him a man], for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. [He was the Messiah.] And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him [**for he appeared to them alive again at the third day**; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him]. And the tribe of Christians, so

named from him, are not extinct at this day.”²⁴⁴ What evidence!
Philip Moore

LET’S LOOK AT SOME OF THE CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE REGARDING THE *EMPTY TOMB*

The chief priests approached Pilate after Jesus’ death due to their fear that a resurrection would further confirm Jesus’ Messiahship. They knew, based on similar incidents in the past, that the Romans were likely to react severely to such Messiah-like figures, and thus tried to pre-empt any punitive measures which would have threatened both the national interest and their position. A clear motive is revealed here!

The eyewitness account of Jesus’ student, Matthew,²⁴⁵ bears testimony to this: “Now on the next day, which is *the one* after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, and said, ‘Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver [Jesus] said, ‘After three days, I *am to* rise again.’^[246] Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, lest the disciples come and steal Him away and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last deception will be worse than the first.’ Pilate said to them, ‘You have^[247] a guard; go, make it *as* secure as you know how.’ And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone” (Matt. 27:62-66 NASB).

Very clearly, these priests did not want Jesus to come to fulfill **the prophecy of the Messianic resurrection**, thereby sealing His identity as Messiah, did they?

²⁴⁴F.F. Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*, p. 37. This passage was proclaimed a forgery by some until the recent discovery of a much older Arabic edition containing the Jesus passage. We thank Professor Shlomo Pines for this recent discovery and for his validation of Joseph’s authenticity! Professor David Flusser made mention of Dr. Pine’s find in his recent book, *Jewish Sources in Early Christianity*.

²⁴⁵Critics who try to discredit the facts surrounding the resurrection of Jesus have often argued that the event did not happen, but rather that a legend or myth grew up around it over the centuries. Dr. D. James Kennedy answers this accusation for us: “Some have said that the resurrection was a legend that just gradually grew up. This was a popular theory in the last century when the higher critics said that the Gospels were written a hundred or two hundred years after the events, but the advance of archaeology has silenced this criticism. Now we know that the Gospels go right back to the authors whose names they bear, and that the testimony of the resurrection goes back to the very decade in which it took place. Therefore, there was no possible time for legend to develop.” D. James Kennedy, *Why I Believe*, p. 113.

²⁴⁶Luke 18:33; Matthew 16:1-4.

²⁴⁷This phrase means “to take a guard” in the original language.

**THE CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF THE
OPPOSITION AGAINST THE RESURRECTION,
AS REVEALED BY DR. GREENLEAF**

According to Professor Greenleaf, this conversation is very important evidence! It is what is called “the witness of the opposition.” The witness of the opposition is considered among the most important evidence in any courtroom. If Jesus had not existed, or had not been raised from the dead, as some claim, this conversation would not have occurred, nor would there be derogatory references to Him in the Talmud.²⁴⁸ More importantly, Jesus risked all of His teachings on the claim that they would only be true if He came out of His tomb! This risk was unnecessary, since He was already considered by many to be the Messiah or at least a teacher unlike all others “come from God.”²⁴⁹

Jesus put all at stake concerning His bodily resurrection. He knew with certainty that His resurrection would occur. He affirmed to the Pharisees: “Destroy this temple [body], and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19 NASB).²⁵⁰

**THE ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE OF THE ROMAN
MAXIMUM SECURITY OF THE TOMB OF JESUS**

There were many precautionary steps taken by Rome, at the urging of the chief priests, that were designed to prevent any rumors of a resurrection which they feared would be faked. They feared that a fake resurrection would make Jesus all the more popular. These steps included: 1. Making sure that Jesus was in the tomb; 2. Closing the tomb with a seven-ton stone; 3. Sealing the tomb with the seal of Caesar, and; 4. Stationing sixteen Roman legionnaires outside the tomb, who were checked by a centurion at every watch! These soldiers knew that to fail or to fall asleep on duty meant capital punishment—*execution*—by Rome.

The New Testament reports the pathetic plot hatched by the religious leaders in an attempt to discredit the resurrection: “Now while they were on their way, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and said, ‘You are to say, ‘His

248See our *Vol. II*, chapter 8, “Distasteful References to Jesus in the Talmud as Documented by R.T. Herford.”

249See John 3, where Nakdimon ben Gorion, known to us as Nicodemus, one of the wealthiest and most powerful rabbis of Jesus’ time, spoke of Jesus as “a teacher come from God.”

250John 2:2 mentions that Jesus “spoke of the temple of his body.”

disciples came by night and stole^[251] Him away while we were asleep.’^[252] And if this should come to the governor’s ears, we will win him over^[253] and keep you out of trouble.’ And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, *and is to this day*” (Matt. 28:11-15 NASB).

It is also recorded, *outside the New Testament*, in the dialogue between Justin Martyr and the Jew, Trypho, that the rabbis and sages of the elitist rabbinical establishment of that day propagated the lie that Jesus was: “...a Galilean deceiver, whom we crucified, but his disciples stole him by night from the tomb where he was laid when unfastened from the cross, and now deceive men by asserting that he has risen from the dead and ascended to heaven.”²⁵⁴

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE—THE MAXIMUM SECURITY OF THE SEAL OF CAESAR IS APPLIED TO JESUS’ TOMB

The seal of Caesar (Matt. 27:66) consisted of a piece of wax placed on both the *tomb closing stone* and the *wall* of the tomb. A leather thong was then pressed into both pieces of wax, and both were stamped with the insignia of Tiberius Caesar. Anyone breaking the band of leather out of either piece of wax would be guilty of breaking the **seal of Caesar**, which carried a mandatory **death sentence**.

In reference to this Roman seal and the “sleeping-on-duty” hoax, the lawyer Albert Roper, author of *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?*, points out: “...upon the request of the high priests, the tomb in which the body of Jesus was laid was sealed by order of Pontius Pilate,

251This accusation that the body was stolen is not isolated to the New Testament, as some liberals would have us believe. An unbelieving but inquiring Jew of the first century, Trypho, also asserts this in a dialogue with Justin Martyr. Dr. D. James Kennedy documents: “Trypho, one of the earliest and greatest Jewish apologists, in a dialogue with Justin Martyr speaks of ‘one Jesus, a Galilean deceiver, whom we crucified; but his disciples stole him by night from the tomb, where he was laid when unfastened from the cross, and now deceive men by asserting that he has arisen from the dead and ascended into heaven.’ ” D. James Kennedy, *Why I Believe*, p. 117.

252Kennedy further points out: “In the entire history of jurisprudence there has never under any circumstances been a witness who has been allowed to testify to what transpired while he was asleep. ‘While we were asleep, the apostles came.’ For a Roman soldier to fall asleep on guard duty meant inevitably the death penalty. And this was rigorously applied.” Ibid, p. 111.

253It should be emphasized that it was quite easy for the priests to convince the soldiers to lie. Since under Roman law the soldiers would have been executed for “loosing the body,” the priests assured the soldiers that, if they would admit to sleeping on duty, they would use their connections with Pontius Pilate to get them off the hook. Of course, this fabrication served the priests well because they could claim that the body was stolen and the resurrection was a hoax.

254James Parkes, *The Foundations of Judaism and Christianity*. London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., Ltd., © 1960, p. 226, used by permission. Parkes’ source was *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, p. 235. Cf. Ch. 17.

the Roman governor, and a guard of Roman soldiers stationed about it (Matthew 27:65). Commanding the guard was a centurion designated by Pilate, presumably one in whom he had full confidence, whose name according to tradition was Petronius....The Roman seal affixed to the stone before Joseph's tomb was far more sacred to them than all the philosophy of Israel or the sanctity of her ancient creed. Soldiers cold-blooded enough to gamble over a dying victim's cloak are not the kind of men to be hoodwinked by timid Galileans or to jeopardize their Roman necks by sleeping on their post."²⁵⁵

THE “DISCIPLE CONSPIRACY THEORY” DISCREDITED AS A RABBINIC TRICK THAT *DID NOT* WORK

In response to the rabbinic allegations that Jesus was “a Galilean deceiver” who was stolen from the tomb, we ask you to consider these questions: Do you think it even remotely probable that the disciples, who had just witnessed the execution of their beloved leader and already terrified, could even have considered sneaking past sixteen Roman soldiers? Or that these same soldiers would all forget that it meant the death penalty to sleep on duty; or even more improbable, would not wake up when the seven-ton stone was moved during the theft of Jesus' body?

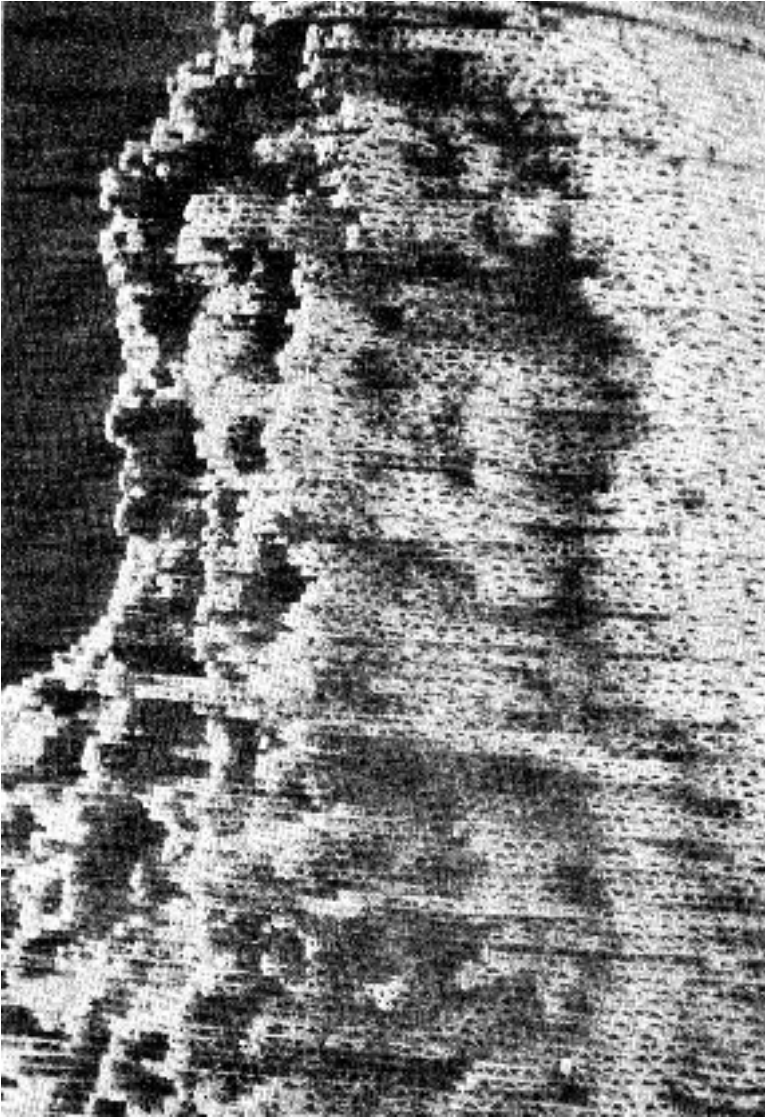
Rather, it is documented that when the stone was moved to show He was not there, the guards “became like dead men” (Matthew 28:4). Why? Because they knew they were going to be executed for their failure. Caesar was not going to buy the resurrection or any other explanation.

The maximum security precautions of the Romans are documented in *The Institutes of the Roman Legions*, by Vegetius (second-century Roman general). This book is in the U.S. Military Classic Library.



“The Resurrection of Christ,” Rembrandt, 1637.

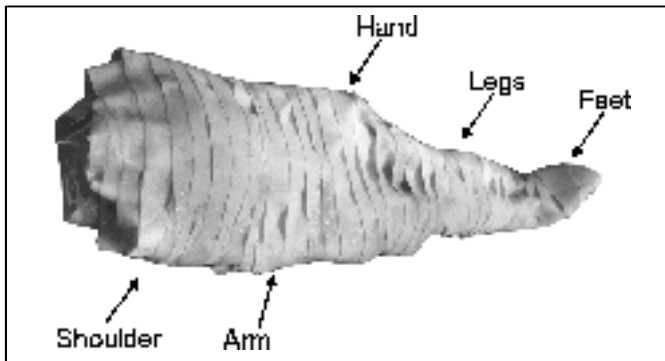
²⁵⁵Albert Roper, *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, Inc., © 1965, pp. 32-33, used by permission.



This three-dimensional computer-cut model of the image of a man from the Shroud of Turin may possibly be the image of Jesus, provided the carbon dating is in error, as it sometimes is. If this is the case, it is not entirely incomprehensible that this cloth may have been used to carry Jesus from the cross to the place of preparation where He was ceremoniously wrapped in linen, myrrh and aloes before being removed from the cloth and placed in the tomb. Photo used by permission of photographer Vernon D. Miller.



A Roman soldier and a priest are astonished at the sight of the empty graveclothes of Jesus, realizing His resurrection.



A model of the headless empty linen graveclothes, as they would have appeared after the resurrection of Jesus' body.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE UNDISTURBED GRAVECLOTHES

The Scriptures tell us that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea bought one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. The myrrh was a shellac-like tree sap, while the aloes were a powdered sachet. During the preparation of Jesus' body for burial, the myrrh and aloes were mixed and then coated onto one-foot strips of the finest linen, which were wrapped around the dead body of Jesus until the entire corpse resembled a mummy! Only the head was left unwrapped. A death mask of linen, which was easily removable, was placed on the victim's head. This was the ancient burial custom of the Jews, which they brought out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus.

At Yavne, a few decades after Jesus' time, a decision was made

to forego this expensive burial custom²⁵⁶ to help Judaism better survive outside of Israel. The New Testament Scriptures vividly attest to the ancient Jewish burial of Jesus: "And after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret *one*, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore, and took away His body. And Nicodemus²⁵⁷ came also, who had first come to Him by

256Archdeacon Dowling tells us: "This Rabbi (Rabban Gamaliel) was the son of Simon and grandson of Gamaliel I, leader of the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, referred to in Acts v, 34. He is called Gamaliel II, or Gamaliel, Prince of Jamnia, from his position as Patriarch of the first Rabbinic School re-opened in that city. He ranks as one of the seven great Rabbins of the Talmudists....It was an ancient custom among the Jews to bury their dead with great pomp. The heavy expenses which this entailed upon the poor sadly crippled their resources. Gamaliel forbade this extravagance, and ordered his family to bury him in simple white linen, and so did away with the extreme expensiveness of Jewish funerals." Archdeacon Dowling, "Jamnia During the Presidency of Gamaliel II, C. A.D. 80-117," *Palestine Exploration Fund*. London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1914. p. 85. Rabbins is another word for rabbis.

257Nicodemus was a rabbinic master of Israel (John 3:10). A rabbi of rabbis, highly respected and spoken of in the Talmud as Nakdimon ben Gorion. He put his entire reputation on the line when he stepped out and identified himself as a believer by helping Joseph to bury Jesus. The Talmud says of Nicodemus, who bought the very expensive burial preparations for Jesus: "There were in it [Jerusalem] three men of great wealth, Nakdimon b. Gorion, Ben Kalba Shabua and Ben Zizith Hakeseth. Nakdimon b. Gorion was so called because the sun continued shining for his sake...." Gittin 56a, *Talmud*. The Talmud continues: "It has been taught: His name was not Nakdimon but Boni and he was called Nakdimon because the sun had broken through [*nikdera*] on his behalf. The Rabbis have taught: For the sake of three the sun broke through, Moses, Joshua and Nakdimon b. Gurion." Taanith 20a, *Talmud*. [] mine. It is not hard to authenticate his New Testament title of Master of Israel when the Talmud records such honors in his prayer life as: "Nakdimon entered the Temple depressed. He wrapped himself in his cloak and stood up to pray. He said, 'Master of the Universe! It is revealed and known before Thee that I have not done this for my honour nor for the honour of my father's house, but for Thine honour have I done this in order that water be available for the

night; bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds *weight*. And so they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is **the burial custom of the Jews**.^[258] Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. Therefore on account of the Jewish day of preparation, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there” (John 19:38-42 NASB; bold mine).

Thus, we know that once all but Jesus’ head was securely wrapped, the myrrh would have hardened within twenty-four hours, creating a cocoon-like structure from which it would be impossible to escape without it being torn.

WHEN THE DISCIPLES SAW AN UNDISTURBED AND UNBROKEN COCOON OF WRAPPINGS, THEY REALIZED THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION PROPHECY IN THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES

The New Testament reports the surprised reaction of two of the disciples when they saw these graveclothes: “...and stooping and looking in, he [John] saw the linen wrappings lying *there*; but he did not go in. Simon Peter therefore also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he beheld the wrappings lying *there*, and the face-cloth, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb entered then also, and he saw and believed. For as yet they

Pilgrims’. Immediately the sky became covered with clouds and rain fell until the twelve wells were filled with water and there was much over.” Taanith 19b-20a, *Babylonian Talmud*. The same Talmud’s footnote 6 to Kethuboth 65a (another book within the Talmud) confirms that Nakdimon ben Gorion was Nicodemus. This note reads: “...‘Nicodemus’, one of the three wealthiest men in Jerusalem in the days of the siege by Vespasian and Titus v. Git. 58a, *Talmud*.” Ibid. Jesus said to Nicodemus: “...Except a man be born-again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” He visited Jesus by night and said: “...we know that thou art a teacher come from God” (John 3:2-3 KJV). Thus we know that this man was not a man of fiction, but, according to a famous rabbinical source, was in fact a very real and godly individual. Imagine, the one the Talmud praises alongside Moses and Joshua was fascinated with Jesus! Interesting, to say the least.

²⁵⁸Merrill C. Tenney, dean of the graduate school of Wheaton College, tells us: “In preparing a body for burial according to Jewish custom, it was usually washed and straightened, and then bandaged tightly from the armpits to the ankles in strips of linen about a foot wide. Aromatic spices, often of a gummy consistency, were placed between the wrappings or folds. They served partially as a preservative and partially as a cement to glue the cloth wrappings into a solid covering. When the body was thus encased, a square piece of cloth was wrapped around the head and tied under the chin to keep the lower jaw from sagging.” Merrill C. Tenney, *The Reality of the Resurrection*. New York: Harper & Row, © 1963, p. 117, used by permission.

did not understand the Scripture,^[259] that He must rise again from the dead” (John 20:5-9 NASB).

In Greek, the word for “saw”²⁶⁰ means “to see and understand.” What occurred when Peter saw, but was unable to understand, was that Jesus’ body had risen through the graveclothes. This was *important* evidence, because you could look in the place where the head had been and perceive a hollow, unbroken cocoon. Jesus’ new physical resurrected body passed through these clothes, just as it passed through the wall of a room later (see John 20:26). One day, we will have this kind of body in our resurrection when He returns (I John 3:2; Phil. 3:21).²⁶¹

The molecular structure of such resurrection bodies enables them to pass through solid substance. This cocoon-like mummy and Jesus’ physical appearance later, alive, was the reason hundreds of thousands of Jews came to believe within the early Jewish Christian/Messianic movement, as recorded in the New Testament, historical²⁶² and even rabbinical sources!²⁶³

²⁵⁹This Scripture refers to the Old Testament prophecy of the resurrection, which was relatively obscure, primarily because it mentioned the idea of the Messiah’s death, which was unpopular. Thus, the necessity of His resurrection was unthinkable among many of the greatest sages who instead, placed their emphasis on the Messianic predictions relating to a mighty reigning *King* Messiah!

²⁶⁰In John 20:5-9, there are three words used for “saw.” The first, *blepei*, meant that John physically bent down, looked in, and physically saw the grave clothes; nothing more. The second word, *orei*, is used when Peter arrives after John and enters the tomb. This word means a very careful observation, a puzzlement with the purpose of apprehending the **importance** or the truth of what really happened. Finally, the third key word is *eidon*, and means “seeing with perception,” which is connected with solving the puzzle. Once John entered he saw the clothes in the exact shape of Jesus’ body and then realized that the Scriptures, in question by many, had indeed predicted the resurrection. Merrill C. Tenney notes: “The account says that ‘he saw and believed’ (20:8). The word ‘saw’ (Gr. *eidon*) implies mental perception or realization as well as physical sight. In modern language, he ‘clicked.’ The answer to the enigma was that Jesus had risen, passing through the graveclothes, which He left undisturbed as a silent proof that death could not hold Him, nor material bonds restrain Him.” Merrill C. Tenney, *The Reality of the Resurrection*, p. 119.

²⁶¹These New Testament verses promise: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2 KJV). “...Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Phil. 3:21 KJV).

²⁶²Such as Josephus, a secular Jewish historian.

²⁶³The Talmud of the rabbis, for one, continually speaks of the *minim* and how they must be combated. G. Alon notes in his unsurpassed work: “It is possible that the memory of a connection between *Birkat ha-Minim* and the Nazarenes lasted into Gaonic times....The editor notes that his ms. contains a marginal note: ‘*Birkat ha-Minim* was introduced after Yeshua ben Pandera, when heretics became **numerous**.’ ” G. Alon, *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age*, p. 290. Bold mine. *Yeshua ben Pandera* refers to Jesus, and of course *heretics*, coming from Rashi and the Jewish mind-set of a thousand years ago, to Jesus’ followers (Christians). These Jewish Christians were the only sect of that era which became numerous after Jesus was presented as the Messiah!



Katie Mason is captivated as she views an authentic Egyptian mummy at the Michael C. Carlos Museum in Atlanta, Georgia.

JESUS' GRAVE CLOTHES—WHAT DID THEY LOOK LIKE?

The Jewish outer wrapping for burial was borrowed from the time when Joseph the Patriarch received such a wrapping in Egypt (Gen. 50:26). Because the first-century Jewish practice of anointment and embalming was so similar (with the exception of removal of the body parts, soaking and drying of the skin and covering the head), this Egyptian mummy, which I photographed at the Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, gives you some idea of what the New Testament meant by “graveclothes.”

You can see that for these to be **undisturbed** (John 20:5-9),²⁶⁴ Jesus' escape from them had to be supernatural and miraculous. His resurrected body would have had to pass directly through them, as there was no other way to escape the tightly wrapped linen cocoon.

Unlike the mummies, who were wrapped completely from head to toe, Jesus' head and body were wrapped in separate pieces of cloth.

²⁶⁴See our footnote 255 where we quoted Merrill C. Tenney on this fascinating subject.

THE EVIDENCE OF EYEWITNESSES

We have all probably heard the old saying, “doubting Thomas.” Thomas, a disciple of Jesus, said: “Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe” (John 20:25 NASB). Jesus replied, “Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side....” (John 20:27 NASB). Thomas, after touching Jesus, replied, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28 NASB).

After the resurrection, some of Jesus’ first words to those who knew Him were: “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” (Luke 24:25-26 NASB).

Jesus then, point-by-point, expounded upon all of the Messianic prophecies of the Jewish Bible, from Moses to the prophets (Luke 24:27). After this they became concerned that He might only be a spirit, as so many cults presently teach. Because they doubted His bodily resurrection, He replied: “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have....These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled....Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:38-39, 44, 46-48 NASB).

THE EVIDENCE OF CHANGED BEHAVIOR

The apostles, who were afraid and in hiding during Jesus’ crucifixion,²⁶⁵ became bold and daring after His resurrection. Most died martyrs’ deaths while proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus rather than live and recant their testimony. Quite a change, wouldn’t you say?

Peter, who denied Jesus three times while He was being beaten in the courtyard, was so transformed by the resurrection that when he was martyred he refused to recant his testimony and asked to be crucified upside down, proclaiming himself not worthy to die the death of his Master! The secular **Jewish historian, Josephus Flavius, attests** to the resurrection of Jesus: “Now, there was about this time

²⁶⁵John was the only one at the site of the crucifixion. Peter was one of the most fearful, denying Jesus three times before the cock crowed, in a courtyard, as Jesus was nearly beaten to death by Roman soldiers (Luke 22:34).

Jesus, a wise man [if it be lawful to call him a man], for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. [He was the Messiah.] And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, *those that loved him at the first did not forsake him* [for he appeared to them **alive again** at the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him]. And the.... tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”²⁶⁶

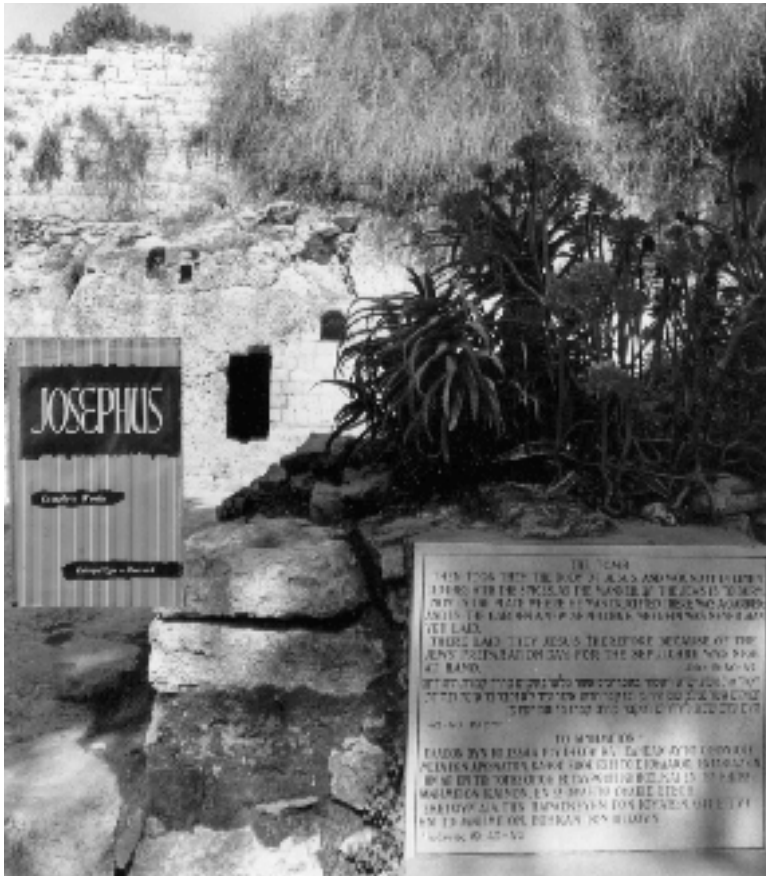
We know we have quoted Josephus before, but here we wanted to emphasize his words, “those [Christians] that loved him [Jesus] at the first did not forsake him.”²⁶⁷ They did not **recant**, their behavior *changed* because “he appeared to them *alive again*”! This is **strong** evidence coming from a secular historian!



The entrance to the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, Israel.

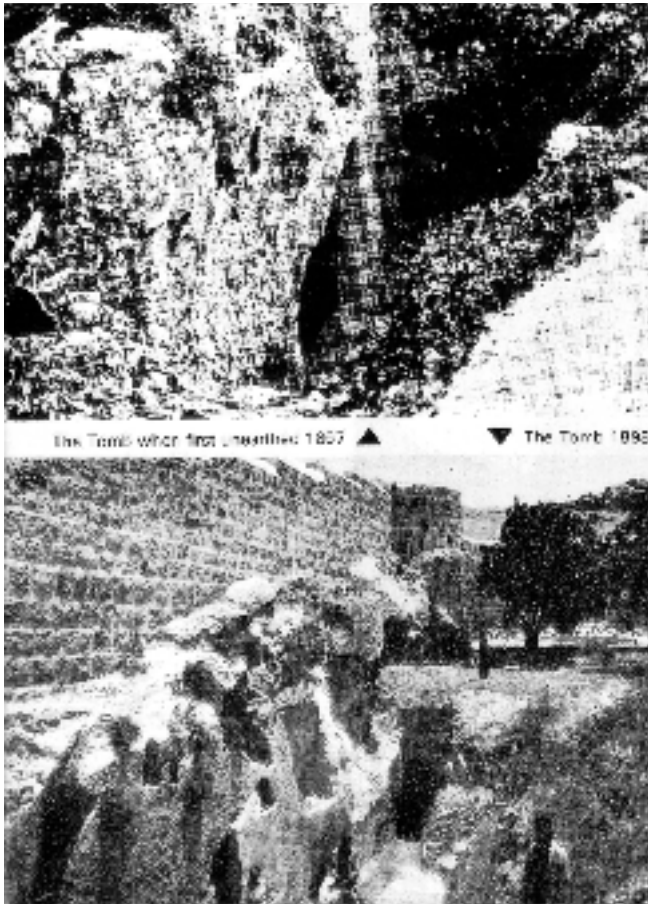
²⁶⁶Moishe Rosen, *Y'shua: The Jewish Way to Say Jesus*, p. 102. Bold mine. Rosen's source was F.F. Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*, p. 37. The segment of Josephus is from *Antiquities* xviii 33, from the early second century.

²⁶⁷Ibid. [] mine.



The tomb of Jesus in Jerusalem, Israel. This tomb, unlike those of other rabbis which you will see in this book, is empty, and has been for nearly 2000 years! Why? This rabbi was the Messiah. As we read earlier, the central biblical condition which the Messiah must meet, as confirmed by the ancient rabbinical literature, was that of resurrection! Both our New Testament and the first century Jewish historian Josephus, confirm that Rabbi Jesus²⁶⁸ fulfilled this prediction, as prophesied in the book of Psalms (16:10; 21:5), written nearly 3000 years ago.

²⁶⁸Jesus was called rabbi in the New Testament (John 1:38; 6:25). Nathanael said to Him: "...'Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel' " (John 1:49 NASB). Nicodemus said to Him: "...'Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him' " (John 3:2 NASB). Rabbi was originally a Hebrew term meaning a teacher associated with Scripture and guidance. In our day, different Jewish groups ordain rabbis after they have met their required study.



Jesus promised to overcome death, as Luke tells us: "...He [Jesus] took the twelve aside and said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again' " (Luke 18:31-33 NASB). Because Jesus kept this promise, something no other teacher of religion or philosophy has done to date, we can trust Him in His promise to resurrect all of us who believe in Him when He returns to establish the Messianic Kingdom for eternity. Jesus pledged in the New Testament: "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:39-40 NASB).



MIKE'S SITE

Since the circular rolling stone of Jesus' tomb is missing (it was chipped up and collected as relics by early believers), we display a picture of a similar first-century tomb with its stone intact, so that you may better understand what the Gospel meant in its description of a *great stone*! I call this Mike's Site because Mike Bentley, a missionary of twenty years in Israel, made a special trip to the spot to allow me to photograph this almost unknown attraction, which lies hidden in the Israeli wilderness. The location of this tomb is described in Deuteronomy 1:7 as "hill-country." J. N. Darby, in his study Bible of exceptional translation, describes the area correctly as Shephelah in his footnote to the verse. It is just south of the valley of Elah, not far from Moresheth-Gath, mentioned in Micah 1:14-15, the birthplace of the prophet Micah, between the mountains of Judah and the Philistine plain.



A closer look at this first century tomb reveals its interior and the massive size of its rolling stone.

To illustrate the prophetic fulfillment of Messiah Jesus and the resurrection, the New Testament quotes the Resurrection Psalm uttered by King David nearly 3000 years ago. “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever” (Palm 16:9-11 NASB).



Traditional site, believed by many to be King David’s tomb, near the Western Wall in Jerusalem, open to tourists today.

RESURRECTION—KING DAVID’S PREDICTION

Simon Peter, a student of Jesus, gave a detailed exposition of the predicted words of David, recorded in Luke’s New Testament book of Acts. “For David says of Him, ‘I WAS ALWAYS BEHOLDING THE LORD IN MY PRESENCE; FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, THAT I MAY NOT BE SHAKEN. THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL ABIDE IN HOPE; BECAUSE THOU WILT NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR ALLOW THY HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY. THOU HAST MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; THOU WILT MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH THY PRESENCE.’ Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT *one* OF HIS DECENDANTS UPON HIS THRONE, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, ‘SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET’” (Acts 2:25-35 NASB).

THE JERUSALEM TIMES/JEWISH PRESS ALLOWS CRITIQUE OF A JEWISH SCHOLAR WHO ACCEPTS THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

In recent years, Jewish scholars have begun to examine this type of evidence. One such scholar, Pinchas Lapidé, highly respected in the Jewish religious community, wrote a book supporting the resurrection of Jesus. Although he does not accept Jesus as Messiah and does not follow other Christian claims, he does validate this aspect of the New Testament. In his book, *The Resurrection of Jesus, A Jewish Perspective*, he states: “...according to my opinion, the resurrection belongs to the category of the truly real and effective occurrences...a fact of history....”²⁶⁹

Quite an amazing statement from a traditional scholarly Jewish point of view, isn’t it? Although Lapidé is held in high esteem by the Jewish community in spite of his study and honesty regarding the resurrection issue, some Jewish opinions have been negative in regard to his findings.

The radical orthodox Jewish paper, *The Jerusalem Times/Jewish Press*, printed the following comment by Steve Jacobs:

²⁶⁹Pinchas Lapidé, *The Resurrection of Jesus, A Jewish Perspective*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, © 1983, p. 92.

“I read with interest the article (P-O, April 25) which is headlined a ‘Jewish Scholar (named Pinchas Lapide) Says Resurrection (of Jesus) was an Historical Event.’ Nothing could be farther from the truth because his conclusion is based on the erroneous assumption the biographical stories about Jesus are historically reliable.”²⁷⁰

This paper periodically runs anti-missionary comments, quotes and articles. We believe they printed Steve Jacobs’ comments against the validity of Lapide’s statement because they fear any evidence that might lend credibility to Jesus’ Messianic movement from a Jewish point of view. Since Lapide is respected and is likely to be listened to by the Jewish community, he is given a bit of special attention in *The Jerusalem Times/Jewish Press*. We must remember, when considering his statement, that Lapide risked his professional reputation by publicizing his findings.

Earlier in a May 7, 1979 *Time* article entitled, “Resurrection? A Jew Looks at Jesus,” it was reported that West German Jews considered Lapide’s view outrageous and Rabbi Peter Levinson felt he had “overstepped the bounds of Jewish theology.” Lapide countered that Jews were raised from the dead in the Old Testament (I Kings 17:22; II Kings 4:35; 13:21), noting that resurrection is “a Jewish affair” (in this case since it was witnessed in Israel by Jews), to be judged by Jewish standards! He maintained the evidence that if the disciples were so upset by the *real* crucifixion that it would take a real resurrection to transform them into such a zealous and “self-confident missionary society.”

ORTHODOX JEWISH LUBAVITCHERS INDIRECTLY VERIFY THE JEWISH BELIEF OF A RESURRECTED MESSIAH

The fact that Orthodox Lubavitcher Jews have been sitting around the grave of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, who died in 1994, claiming they expect his resurrection, has some Orthodox Jews worried. It is quite obvious to us that Menachem Schneerson will not rise from the dead as the Messiah, but these Jews rightly realize the Messianic implications of the Jewish belief in a resurrected Messiah. If it once again became popular among modern Jewry, it would validate Jesus’ resurrection as a Messianic expectation within Hebrew beliefs, as was customary in ancient Judaism! As a result, David Berger, in a July 1, 1994 letter to the editor of *The Jerusalem Times/Jewish Press*, calls on the leadership of Chabad to “denounce this position in the strongest possible terms.”

²⁷⁰*The Jerusalem Times/Jewish Press*, Vol. xxxv, No. 52, Week of Dec. 27, 1985 to Jan. 2, 1986, p. 12.

Berger, the author of the book, *Jews and Jewish Christianity*, written at the request of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, has fought Messianic beliefs before, especially as they are embraced by Jews, purportedly “instigated” by missionaries. The deeper meaning of David Berger’s worries can be understood in this context. It seems to us that Berger is so worried that the resurrection of the Messiah belief will give some credence to Jesus that he closes his letter with the frantic words: “If it is allowed to survive within Chabad even as a minority view, the movement will destroy its legitimacy as a form of Orthodox Judaism....The belief in a dead Messiah cannot be allowed a shred of legitimacy within Judaism. It must be extirpated in its infancy.”²⁷¹

As you may remember, Rashi worried about the Messianic interpretation of Psalm 21 nearly 1000 years ago, and was aware of the reference to the resurrection meaning in the Psalm and the implication of it regarding the acceptance of Jesus. As we have previously documented in our paragraph, “A Rabbi Tries to Quash the Resurrection of Jesus in the Psalms,” he warned that the Psalm should be expounded upon differently; in other words, reinterpreted when dealing with “heretics” (Jewish Christians).

THE LUBAVITCHER JEWS BRIEFLY RETURNED TO THE ANCIENT MESSIANIC INTERPRETATION OF ISAIAH 53 IN 1994

The possibility of a Messianic interpretation of the circumstances surrounding the death of the Lubavitcher rabbi can be found in the *Lederer Messianic Ministries Newsletter*. Barry Rubin, the executive director of *Lederer*, interestingly notes of the Lubavitchers...

²⁷¹ *The Jerusalem Times/Jewish Press*, Fri., July 1, 1994, p. editor’s page, © used by permission. David Berger is professor of history at Brooklyn College and Graduate School.