

“A man shall have no dealings with the heretics, nor be cured by them, even for the sake of an hour of life. There was the case of Ben Dama nephew of R. Ishmael, whom a serpent bit. There came Jacob [The apostle James of the New Testament] the heretic of the village of Sechanya to cure him (in the name of *Jeshu*¹ ben Pandera *var. leg.*); [Jesus] but R. [Rabbi] Ishmael would not allow him. Ben Dama said to him, R. Ishmael, my brother, do allow him, that I may be cured, and I will produce a text from the Law to prove that this is permitted. But hardly had he finished his discourse when his soul departed, and he died.”

The Talmud, Abodah Zarah 27b. [] mine

“The grandson of R. Joshua ben Levi had something stuck in his throat. There came a man and whispered to him in the name of Jesus, and he recovered. When the healer came out, R. Joshua said to him, What was it you whispered to him? He said to him, A certain word. He said to him, It had been better for him that he had died rather than that.”

The Talmud, Shabbath 14b

“R. Akiba said, He who reads in external books, and he who whispers over a wound, and says, ‘None of the diseases which I sent on Egypt will I lay on thee, I am the Lord thy healer’ (*Exodus*. xv, 26), has any share in the world to come.”

The Talmud, Sanhedrin x,1

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THE MESSIAH CONSPIRACY CONCLUDES IN PREVENTING HEALINGS

Healings! Were there secret healings performed in the name of Jesus? Obviously, as you have just read in the quotes by the ancients of rabbinical literature, the answer is yes! Hugh Schonfield, though we do not agree with all of his ideas, rightly admits: “These quotations confirm the evidence that we have from other sources that the Jewish Christians practised healing in the name of Jesus...it is interesting to note in...Mark’s Gospel that ‘these signs shall follow them that believe; *in my name*...they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.’ Epiphanius informs us that he was told by the

¹As you previously read, the name *Yeshu*, here anglicized to *Jeshu*, is the true name of Jesus. *Yeshua*, which means “salvation,” was reduced to a curse by earlier rabbis through the removal of the last letter. The remaining three letters meant “may his name and memory be blotted out.” This reproduction is just that, a reproduction, thus providing additional evidence of the antagonistic spirit of the rabbis against Jesus!

It shows their stubborn resolve and arrogance in rejecting Him as the Messiah of salvation. We wish to appeal to rabbis to change the word *Yeshu* in the present Talmud, which is extremely offensive to knowledgeable Gentile Christians and Messianic Jews, back to Jesus’ true Hebrew name, *Yeshua*; if not change it to *Yeshua*, at least change it to Jesus or “Jeshua” in English Talmuds. We make this appeal to return His true name to future editions, for the sake of good will, good relations and as an apology. We further

Jewish Christian Joseph that before his conversion, when lying dangerously ill, one of the elders, a student of the Law, whispered in his ear, ‘Believe that Jesus the son of God was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and that he will come again to judge the living and the dead.’ This kind of thing was of frequent occurrence, writes the Bishop of Constantia, and mentions another Jew, who told him that once when on the point of death he heard a whisper in his ear from one of those who stood by, that ‘Jesus Christ who was crucified, the son of God, will hereafter judge thee.’ By means of their healing art, the Jewish Christians were thus able openly or secretly to reach and influence their brethren. McNeile has well explained R. Akiba’s condemnation of those who whisper *Exodus* xv, 26, over wounds. The last words ‘I am the Lord that healeth thee,’ have the numerical value of the name Jesus, and would be used by crypto-Christians as a substitute, when they dared not pronounce the name of Jesus openly.”²

THE EQUATION OF THE AGES

In order to understand the “healing connection,” we have to present the “equation of the ages.” The letters of the Hebrew alphabet all have a corresponding numerical value. The numerical value of the letters in *Yehoshua* יהושע is equal to the numerical value of the phrase “the Lord that healeth thee,” אֲנִי יְהוָה רֹפֵאֲךָ in Hebrew. *Yehoshua* is an alternative and popular spelling of *Yeshua* (Jesus in Hebrew); it means “Savior,” as Joshua (*Yehoshua*) of the Old Testament was called. For a good example of interchangeability, see Nehemiah 3:19 in the Hebrew Bible, which uses the name *Yeshua* (ישוע). *Yehoshua*

² appeal to rabbis to make their peace with the present Jewish believers and evangelicals for the terrible mistreatment of the early Jewish-Christians by the rabbis of the early centuries of the Christian era. As Douglas Hare commented in his quotation of the Talmud: “The most extreme treatment that the Rabbis will countenance is that the lives of Minim may be endangered and not saved, Tos. B. Mezia 2:53: ‘The Minim and the apostates and the betrayers are cast in [to a pit] and not helped out’....” Douglas Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 39. We ask for a public confession of wrongdoing for calling believers “apostates and betrayers.” We ask for an apology and help in clearing up the question of Messianic prophecies fulfilled by Jesus in a worldwide rabbinic forum of public inquiry and confession. If you are a rabbi, and if you are interested in righting the wrongs of the past in order to improve relations between the rabbinical and Jewish-Christian communities, we invite you to contact Philip Moore, c/o RamsHead Press, POB 12-227, Atlanta, GA, USA 30355. Fax (404) 816-9994. Letters received will be published in a book and distributed. All three Talmud captions cited from Hugh J. Schonfield, *The History of Jewish Christianity, From the First to the Twentieth Century*. London: Duckworth, © 1936, pp. 78-80. The fact that Jacob is James is documented by Dr. David Flusser, *Jewish Sources in Early Christianity*, p. 13.

Hugh J. Schonfield, *The History of Jewish Christianity, From the First to the Twentieth Century*, p. 80.

adds as follows: $\aleph 10 + \eta 5 + \iota 6 + \vartheta 300 + \epsilon 70 = 391$. The Hebrew words for “the Lord that healeth thee” from Exodus 15:26, add as follows: $\aleph 1 + \beth 50 + \daleth 10 + \aleph 10 + \eta 5 + \iota 6 + \eta 5 + \gamma 200 + \beth 80 + \aleph 1 + \gamma 20 = 388$. Since there are three Hebrew words, when you add three to the equation—voilà—you get the same 391.

If you have any doubt about what I have just simplified, you don’t have to take my word for it. The scholar Louis Ginzberg relates his opinion in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*: “I fully agree with the view which finds in the Mishna Sanhedrin a statement by R. Akiba directed against Christians. The severe condemnation by Rabbi Akiba of the use of Exodus 15 in connection with medication is certainly directed against certain Christian healers, as has been felt by many scholars, though they were unable to explain why just this biblical verse was so opprobrious to the Rabbis. The answer to this question is very simple. The last three words of this verse אֲנִי יְהוָה רַפְאֵךְ have the same numerical value (three hundred eighty-eight plus three for the three words = three hundred ninety one) as the name of Jesus (יהושע = three hundred ninety one). It is not unlikely that some crypto-Christians who were afraid to openly perform cures ‘in the name of Jesus’ would use this verse in which they found his name indicated....The very strong condemnation of the use of Exodus 15 cannot, however, be explained otherwise than on account of the favour this verse enjoyed among the Christian healers.”³

HEALING IN THE NAME OF JESUS, HEBRAIC STYLE—A PROBLEM?

Did the rabbis in early times have difficulty preventing the witness of Jesus’ Messiahship through the healings which were performed by believers in His name?⁴ Could it have been that the healings were so real and persuasive in support of Jesus as Messiah that the rabbis really had something to worry about? Hugh Schonfield, a Jewish scholar who claimed in his early life to have believed in Jesus and later recanted, tells us in his book, *Saints Against Caesar*: “Another aspect of Nazarene activities which gave the rabbinists concern was their medical ministrations....they did employ the single name of Jesus. And when, as so often, their cures were successful, a conviction was created of the effective power of this name, thus inspiring the faith of the delighted household in the person of the Nazarene Messiah. At the end of *Mark’s Gospel* it is said: ‘These

³Louis Ginzberg, “Some Observations on the Attitude of the Synagogue Towards the Apocalyptic-Eschatological Writings,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. XLI, 1922. New Haven: Yale University Press, © 1992, pp. 123-124, used by permission.

⁴The numerical equivalent of Jesus’ name in the Hebrew Scripture.

signs shall follow them that believe; in my name...they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.’

The rabbinites found the influence of the Nazarene physicians the hardest of all to stop, because those in need could not easily be prevented from privately sending for one of the heretical community. To the list of those declared by Rabbinical Judaism to have no share in the world to come, Rabbi Akiba, inveterate enemy of the Nazarenes early in the second century, added: ‘Also he that reads the heretical books, or that utters charms over a wound, and says, ‘I will put none of the diseases upon thee which I have put upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee’...‘I am the Lord that healeth thee’ (*Exod.* xv. 26) have the numerical value of the name Jesus in Hebrew....’⁵

THE WITNESS OF THE OPPOSITION

It goes without saying that if there were no real healings performed in Jesus’ Hebrew name, influencing further belief in Jesus as the Messiah, then of course, the Talmud would be silent on this issue. The very fact that the Talmud reveals several incidents of healing in connection with Jesus’ name is evidence that it was occurring. The rabbis, however, opposed its use for their own relatives despite evidence of its effectiveness, as we saw in the second quote on the opening page of this chapter. This is clear evidence, the best evidence, the evidence of the opposition. This was established by the Harvard law professor Simon Greenleaf, in his book, *The Testimony of the Evangelists*.⁶

THE NAME OF JESUS IS MYSTERIOUSLY ENCODED IN ISAIAH’S PROPHECY ABOUT THE MESSIAH

In the latter portions of Isaiah 52 and all of chapter 53, we are introduced to the suffering servant of the Lord. Many rabbis of ancient times, along with the New Testament, rightly interpreted this prophecy to refer to the Messiah, as you previously read.

When we take the fascinating phenomenon of the original Hebrew and count out every eighth word starting at the first *ude* in verse 13 of Isaiah 52, we discover that the Hebrew letters spell Jesus’ name! In the Bible, the number eight symbolizes new beginnings. Jesus brought us the New Covenant/New Testament (new beginnings) predicted by Jeremiah. Interesting, wouldn’t you say? Below, we

⁵Hugh Schonfield, *Saints Against Caesar, The Rise and Reactions of the First Christian Community*, pp. 78-79.

⁶We noted this in detail in our section on the Resurrection in chapter 5, “Which Prophecies Did Jesus Fulfill?”

enlarge the letters which spell the name of Jesus (Hebrew is read from right to left).

כי לא בחפזוֹן תִּצְאוּ וּבמְנוּסָה לֹא תֵלְכוּן כִּי־הֲלַךְ לִפְנֵיכֶם יְהוָה וּמִאֲסָפְכֶם אֶלְתִּי וְשָׂאֵל:
מִלְכִים פִּיהֶם הִנֵּחַ יִשְׁכִּיל עֲבָדֵי יְרוּם וְנִשְׂאָ וְנִבְהָ מֵאֵד: כֹּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ עֲלֵיךְ רַבִּים כְּדֹמְשִׁתָּת
מֵאִישׁ מִרְאֵהוּ וְתִאֲרֹו מִבְּנֵי אָדָם: כֵּן יִזְהַו גּוֹיִם רַבִּים עֲלֵיו וְקִפְצוּ
כִּי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־סִפֵּר לָהֶם רְאוּ וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ הִתְבּוֹנְנוּ:

Isaiah 52: 12-15

יְשׁוּעַ = Jesus

The above words with their first letter in bold type are translated as: יִשְׁכִּיל “he will deal wisely”; שָׁמְעוּ “they shall be astonished”; וְתִאֲרֹו “and his appearance”; עֲלֵיו “concerning him.” Here you have the key meaning, of salvation, and the Jews’ response to Jesus’ wisdom in giving Himself for their atonement. Today, as we tell Jews about Jesus and show them these prophecies, they are indeed astonished.

THE NAME OF GOD IS ENCODED IN HIS ACCOUNT OF CREATION IN GENESIS

Likewise, *Yahweh* (Yehovah) is spelled out in Hebrew at twenty-two letter intervals⁷ (there are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet). This is the ancient and most holy name of God, encoded in the beginning verses of His account of creation.

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֵהוֹו וְבָהוּ וַחֲשָׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי
תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי־אוֹר: וַיִּבְרָא
אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאוֹר כִּי־טוֹב נִבְרָא אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין־הַחֹשֶׁךְ: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים
לְאוֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד:

Genesis 1:1-5

יְהוָה = Yahweh/God

⁷There are exactly twenty-two letters between the letters in bold type.

DECODING THE MESSIANIC MYSTERY OF THE FIRST TEN NAMES IN HEBREW HISTORY

We would like to point out that the very meanings of the Jewish names of our original ancestors reveal God’s plan to send His suffering Messiah, as a mortal, who would die for us.

Missler points out that: “In Hebrew: *Adam* (אָדָם) means ‘man’; *Seth* (שֵׁת) means ‘appointed’; *Enosh* (אֱנוֹשׁ) means ‘mortal’; *Kenan* (קֵינָן) means ‘sorrow’; *Mahalalel* (מַחְלָלֵל) means ‘the blessed God’; *Jared* (יָרֵד) means ‘shall come down’; *Enoch* (חֵנוֹךְ) means ‘teaching’; *Methuselah* (מֶתוּשֶׁלַח) means ‘his death shall bring’; *Lamech* (לָמֶךְ) means ‘the despairing’; and *Noah* (נֹחַ) means ‘rest’ or ‘comfort.’”⁸

Reading this genealogy of names as a sentence, translating them from Hebrew to English, we get: “Man is appointed mortal sorrow. The blessed God shall come down, teaching that his death shall bring the despairing comfort.” This, indirectly but clearly, shows that the God Incarnate Messiah would give His life for us, as Jesus did.

SOME RABBIS RECANT

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, one of the most famous and honored rabbis in Jewish history since the first century, held beliefs few Orthodox Jews may realize. As a matter of fact, he may have believed in Jesus, or at least had a profound interest and respect for the Jewish Messianic community, as revealed by a story in the rabbinic literature. This story runs as follows: Rabbi Eliezer was suspected of being a believer of “heretical” things and arrested. The Roman judge released him because he misunderstood Rabbi Eliezer’s reply, “The judge is right.” Later, in a conversation with Rabbi Akiva about this, Eliezer admits his conversation with and admiration for “Jacob of Kephars,” who has been proven to be James⁹ of the New Testament.

For a more complete understanding of this summary, I will quote the actual ancient conversation between Akiva and Eliezer as recorded in the rabbinical text. This is from the book, *Israelis, Jews, and Jesus*, by the Jewish scholar, Pinchas Lapide. He tells us: “The oldest

⁸Chuck Missler, “Mystery of the Messiah.” Coeur d’Alene, ID: Koinonia House, © 1994, used by permission. () mine. Audio tape available through Koinonia House, POB D, Coeur d’Alene, ID, USA 83816-0347. The following translation, *ibid*.

⁹In the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament and all foreign language translations from them, excepting English, the word *Yakov* for the apostle James is translated Jacob, which is the same name used in the first book of the Bible when it speaks of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Remember, the apostles were Jews and this is a Jewish name. The name James came to be in the English Bible because King James of England wanted his name in the Bible. When the honored and respected King James Version of the Bible was written, James asked that his name be used in place of Jacob. This is a documented fact for scholars of English literature. Don’t get me wrong, I love and swear by the KJV—it is my favorite English translation.

rabbinical passage which speaks of Jesus deals with one of the bright lights of the early tannaitic period, Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, also named Eliezer the Great, whose magisterial opinions are quoted more than 320 times in the Mishnah. In two tannaitic texts [9. Tos. Hullin II, 24, and Aboda Sara 16b]...Rabbi Eliezer praises a decision on religious law which was passed on to him in the name of Jesus.

‘When Rabbi Eliezer was arrested for heresy, they led him to the place of judgment to pass sentence on him. The Roman judge said to him, ‘How can an old man like you bother with such trifling things?’ Eliezer answered, ‘The judge is right.’ The Roman judge thought that Eliezer was talking about him, whereas Eliezer was actually speaking of his Father in heaven. Then the Roman judge said, ‘Since you agree with me, you shall be set free.’ When Eliezer got back home, his disciples came to him, to console him. But he refused all consolation. Then Rabbi Akiba said to him, ‘Rabbi, ...perhaps you once heard something heretical, and it pleased you. Perhaps you were arrested on account of that.’ Eliezer answered, ‘Akiba, you have just reminded me! Once I was going about the upper marketplace of Sepphoris, and there I met a disciple of Jesus the Nazarene named Jacob, from the village of Shechania. He said to me, ‘It is written in your Torah, ‘You shall not bring the hire of a harlot into the house of the LORD’ [Deut 23:18]. But may one use the harlot’s wages to build a toilet for the high priest?’ ‘You have spoken well,’ I said, since at the time I could not remember the Halakah. As soon as he saw that I agreed, he added, ‘Jesus of Nazareth taught me that. Jesus was speaking in reference to the prophet Micah, where it says, ‘For from the hire of a harlot she gathered them, and to the hire of a harlot they shall return’ [Mic 1:7]. Jesus added, ‘It came from filth, and it shall once again become filth.’ This pleased me, and that is why I was arrested for heresy [or Christian sympathies]....’ ”¹⁰ Rabbi Eliezer, “a believer in Jesus”? Decide for yourself.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

The scholar, R. T. Herford, has interestingly noted: “...it is curious to observe the embarrassment of R. Eliezer when on his trial. One would have thought that he could have saved himself by declaring that he was not a Christian, whereas he only made a skillful evasion, and owed his escape to the vanity of his judge.”¹¹

Herford further comments on another scholar’s opinion concerning the famous rabbi’s activities. He notes: “Grätz...associates

¹⁰Pinchas Lapide, *Israelis, Jews, and Jesus*, pp. 78-79. Lapide’s sources inserted with [] for clarity.

¹¹R. Travers Herford, *Christianity in Talmud & Midrash*, p. 142.

the incident much more closely with the subsequent arrest and trial. He says that by reason of his intercourse with Christians R. Eliezer was looked upon as a member of the Christian community, and therefore accused as a heretic.”¹²

AHER IN THE QUAGMIRE

Our professor friend Jakob Jocz tells us: “R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus is by no means an isolated case. An even more interesting person is the much discussed Elisha ben Abuyah, often referred to as *Aher* (‘the other’). Elisha, who flourished at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century, was a famous *Tanna* and the teacher of R. Meir. The references concerning him are obscure....we do know that he was suspected of hiding in his clothes *sifre minim*^[13] while he was still functioning as a teacher in the schoolhouse....”¹⁴

Professor Jocz’ footnote documents this evidence from the Talmud: “202. *Hagigah*, 15b: ‘It is told of Aher that when he used to rise (to go) from the schoolhouse, many *sifre minim* used to fall from his lap’. May there not be some significance in the fact that R. Meir, R. Akiba’s greatest pupil and ‘Aher’s’ devoted disciple, is credited with the pun on *εὐαγγέλιον* [evangelos/good news] = ‘און גליין’ which Johanan further developed into ‘עון גליין’? (See Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*, II, p. 36, note.)”¹⁵

Remember that these are those evil rabbinical puns for the New Testament, *awen-gillayon* and *awon-gillayon*, meaning “scroll of sin,” which we read about earlier. We ask, “Could it have been that Rabbi Meir was angry that his famed teacher became a believer in the New Testament?” Sounds like it, doesn’t it?

COMPOSER FORGETS HIS COMPOSITION?

Jakob Jocz, author of *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*, exposes evidence from rabbinical writings which might well indicate that the rabbi who formulated the Birkat ha-Minim curse against believers may have become a believer himself. He obviously used “forgetfulness” as a front to avoid suspicion due to his apparent refusal to use his own formulation. Jocz says: “Samuel the Small, the composer of the *Birkat ha-minim*, a year after he had composed the

¹²Ibid, p. 144.

¹³*Sifre* means “book” and *minim* means “sect” outside the mainstream—referring to Christian Gospels, no doubt. Aher kept losing the New Testament books and Gospels he was hiding and secretly reading as his students worked. He was absentminded, as many professors are, and when he would get up out of his chair they would fall before he realized what had happened.

¹⁴Jakob Jocz, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*, pp. 181-182.

¹⁵Ibid, p. 376. [] mine.

prayer, was leading the service at the synagogue. When he came to recite the *Birkat ha-minim*, he could not remember it. He tried to recall the prayer ‘*shetayim we-shalosh sha’ot*’, but he was not dismissed. The question is asked, why did they not dismiss him? The rule laid down by Rab Jehudah (died 299) on the authority of Rab (i.e. Abba Arika, 167-247) was that if the precentor errs in any of the benedictions they do not dismiss him, but if he errs in the *Birkat ha-minim*, they dismiss him, because there is the possibility of his being a heretic. But in the case of Samuel the Small it is different, because he himself composed it. But could not he have changed his mind? To this, Abaje (died 338/9) replied that there is a traditional saying: A good person does not become bad.”¹⁶

In our personal copy of the Talmud, which is the Soncino English version, we ran across a slightly different and more informative account of what happened to Samuel: “These eighteen are really nineteen?—R. Levi said: The benediction relating to the *Minim* was instituted in Jabneh...Our Rabbis taught: Simeon ha-Pakuli arranged the eighteen benedictions in order before Rabban Gamaliel in Jabneh. Said Rabban Gamaliel to the Sages: Can any one among you frame a benediction relating to the *Minim*? Samuel the Lesser arose and composed it. The next year he forgot it [29a] and he tried for two or three hours to recall it, and they did not remove him. Why did they not remove him seeing that Rab Judah has said in the name of Rab: If a reader made a mistake in any of the other benedictions, they do not remove him, but if in the benediction of the *Minim*, he is removed, because we suspect him of being a *Min*?—Samuel the Lesser is different, because he composed it. But is there not a fear that he may have recanted?”¹⁷

¹⁶Ibid, p. 55.

¹⁷*The Babylonian Talmud*, Berakoth 28b-29a, p. 175.