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Messianic Perspectives

God has not forgotten the Jewish people, and neither have we.

SEVEN THINGS
EVERY CHRISTIAN
SHOULD KNOW
ABOUT THE
MESSIAH

BY DR. GARY HEDRICK

Yeshua (Jesus) is the most famous Israeli who ever lived. No other figure in history has garnered followers from every corner of the world, from every age and epoch, and from virtually all nations, languages, and tribes like Yeshua of Nazareth has.

Little wonder. He is, after all, the promised Messiah-King of Israel and Redeemer of the world. At His first coming, He was born into a first-century Jewish family. Some “watchers” were waiting for Him.¹ His parents were instructed by an angel to name Him *Yeshua*, an abbreviated form of the Hebrew word for “salvation,”² because He was being sent by God to save His people Israel—and ultimately, the whole world.



Adoration of the three Kings
Gyula Benczúr

Even though He was exonerated by the Roman ruler in His day,³ His enemies nonetheless schemed to have Him executed as a common criminal. Three days later, however, He arose triumphantly from the dead; and someday, He will return to this sin-scarred and war-torn world as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16).

In the meantime, while we await His return, here are seven basic facts that every Christian should know about Him.

1. More than twenty Bible prophecies were fulfilled on the day He was born.

Yeshua’s Messianic pedigree was impeccable. His mother and father both traced their lineages back to King David. His birth took place when, where, and how the prophets had predicted it would. Some of the prophecies about His birth and early childhood include these:

- a. He would be born through the Shemite branch of post-Flood humanity (Gen. 9:26; Luke 3:36).⁴
- b. His lineage would be traceable to Abraham (Gen. 12:3; Matt. 1:1).
- c. It would further be traceable through Abraham’s son, Isaac (Gen. 17:21; Heb. 11:17-18).
- d. Finally, it would also be traceable through Isaac’s son, Jacob (Gen. 28:14; Luke 1:33), thus completing the triad (Abraham-Isaac-Jacob).
- e. With respect to tribal roots, He would come through the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:8; Matt. 2:6).
- f. With respect to family, He would come through the family of Jesse (Isa. 11:1; Matt. 1:6).
- g. With respect to kingship, He would come through the royal House of David (Jer. 23:5; Luke 1:27).
- h. He would be born near the beginning of what we know as the first century (Dan. 9:26; Matt. 2:1ff).⁵
- i. He would be Judah’s final, rightful King (Gen. 49:10; Rev. 5:5).⁶
- j. His birth would guarantee the continuity of the never-ending “throne” (i.e., seat of power and authority) occupied first by David and Solomon, and later by the Messiah (2 Sam. 7:12-13; Luke 1:32).
- k. He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1, 4-6).
- l. He would take upon Himself the physical form of humanity (Isa. 9:6; Phil. 2:6-8).
- m. A star in the heavenlies would signal His birth (Num. 24:17; Matt. 2:2, 7, 9).
- n. His mother would be a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:34).⁷
- o. As to our relationship with Him, He would be *Immanuel*—“God with us” (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23).
- p. He would be born to destroy the devil’s work (Gen. 3:15; 1 John 3:8).
- q. He would be born without sin (Ex. 12:5; Heb. 9:14).
- r. He would be born to die (Psalm 40:6-8; Heb. 10:5-10).
- s. Following His birth, He would be presented with royal gifts by foreign dignitaries (Psalm 72:10-11; Matt. 2:11).⁸
- t. Mothers would mourn the death of their baby boys in the wake of His birth (Jer. 31:15; Matt. 2:18).⁹
- u. Once He was born, He and His family would flee briefly to Egypt to escape the demented king’s wrath (Hosea 11:1; Matt. 2:13-15).

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Bart D. Ehrman
Dan Sears



Studying the Talmud in 1935
Zoltan Kluger



Rabbi Pinchas Lapide
Ron Kroon

2. He's a real, historical Person—and He's Jewish!

Isn't it self-evident that Yeshua is a real Person? After all, the totality of history is divided between BC ("before Christ") and AD (*Anno Domini*, "year of our Lord"). How could a made-up fairy tale impact the flow of history on such a massive scale? It doesn't take a genius to figure out that it's a virtual impossibility. Many of us worked this out even before we became believers. Seriously, folks, it's not rocket science.

Nonetheless, that's exactly what some old-time skeptics used to say about Jesus of Nazareth. They claimed that He was a figment of someone's imagination. To them, He never existed. But those days are long past. Even the infamous "Jesus Seminar," an academy of liberal scholars in the 1980s and 90s who scoffed at the historicity of Yeshua and His Resurrection, finally disbanded due to lack of interest (and the death of its founder). Many contemporary scholars—including even some well-known skeptics and non-Christians—now acknowledge that the preponderance of evidence favors the historicity of Yeshua, His life, and even His Resurrection.

Take Bart Ehrman, for example. A former evangelical, Ehrman graduated from Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton College but says he gave up his Christian faith during PhD studies at Princeton in the 1980s. Today he is professor of religious studies at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill). In spite of his radically liberal perspective, however, he is convinced that Yeshua of Nazareth was an actual, historical person. In 2012, he published a book summarizing the compelling evidence for Yeshua's historicity.¹⁰

Another case in point is the late, great Israeli scholar David Flusser (1917-2000). Flusser was professor of early Christianity and Second Temple Judaism at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Although he never professed to be a believer in Yeshua, Flusser nonetheless had many Messianic (Yeshua-believer) friends in Israel and wrote extensively

about the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. He actually spent little time arguing for the historicity of Yeshua because he considered it an a priori assumption. In the Preface to one of his books, he wrote, "What I have set out to do here is to illuminate and interpret, at least in part, Jesus' person and opinions within the framework of his time and people. My ambition is simply to serve as a mouthpiece for Jesus' message today."¹¹

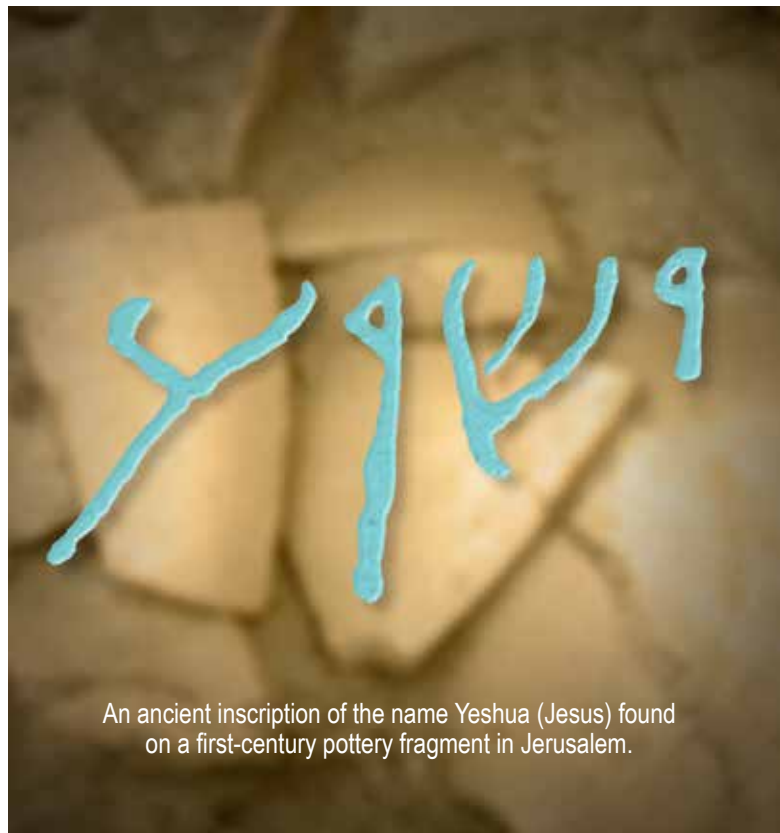
Still another example from the Jewish side is the late Rabbi Pinchas Lapide (1922-1997), an eminent Israeli diplomat, historian, and NT scholar. He wrote more than 35 books during his lifetime, many of them in German. One of his English works (published posthumously) was *The Resurrection of Jesus: a Jewish Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2002). In it, he says, "I accept the resurrection of Jesus not as an invention of the community of disciples, but as an historical event" (36). That's quite a courageous declaration for an Orthodox Jewish rabbi!

The Jewish Talmud (*Bavli*, the Babylonian version) acknowledges the Lord's existence, and even throws in a little bonus—that is, a tacit recognition of His ability to work miracles: "And a Master has said, 'Jesus the Nazarene practiced magic and led Israel astray'" (Sanhedrin 11:1, XIII.3.C).¹² It's easy to understand how someone looking through unbelieving eyes might misinterpret a miracle as "magic"!

Many people don't realize that *Yeshua was never known as a Christian*. One Israeli rabbi who came to faith in the 1980s and worked in our ministry for several years said that when he was younger, he actually thought Jesus was a Catholic! But He wasn't—not even close! He wasn't Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian, either. *He was a Jewish rabbi from Galilee*. He spoke Hebrew and Aramaic, like most Jewish people. He was raised in an observant Jewish home, so they traveled to Jerusalem to worship in the Temple on the pilgrim feast days. He never darkened the door of a church. He lived as a Jew and He died as a Jew.

For obvious reasons, people with anti-Semitic or anti-Judaic leanings don't like to hear these things. They do their best to portray the Lord in an un-Jewish light. But, this is nothing new. In medieval art, He was drawn to look more like a Roman than a Jew. Even today, many of us think of Him more as a modern Christian preacher or teacher than as a first-century Jewish rabbi. In reality, though, this kind of thinking is anachronistic.

Some people think He was known in the first century as "Jesus Christ," as though Jesus was His first name and Christ His surname. The general notion is that in ancient Nazareth, there was a house where Joseph and Mary Christ lived with their children, Jesus Christ, James Christ, and their other siblings.¹³ That's the basic idea—but, it's wrong.



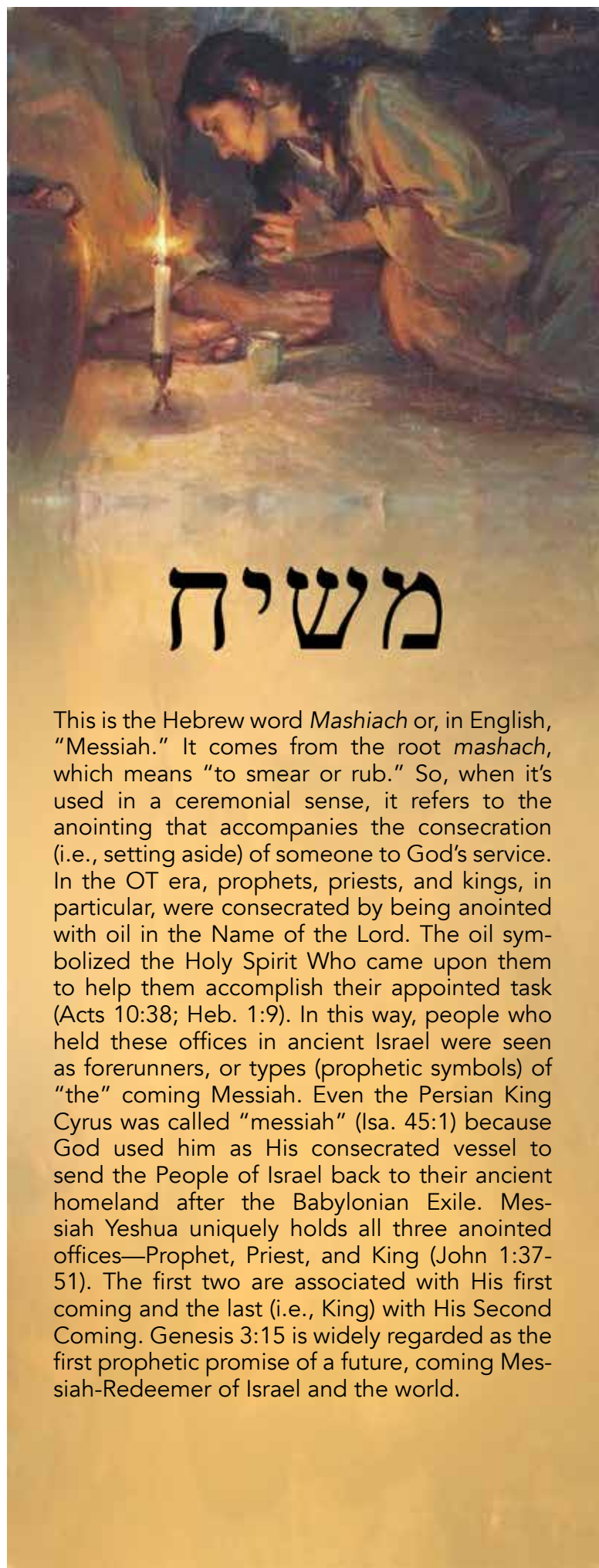
An ancient inscription of the name Yeshua (Jesus) found on a first-century pottery fragment in Jerusalem.

The Lord wasn't known as "Jesus" until around 400 years ago. In fact, the Tyndale Bible (1500s) used the name "Iesus" (from the Greek *Iesous*, pronounced *Yay-soos*) rather than "Jesus" (with a "j"). So, the English name "Jesus" is a relatively recent development. In the first century, His Hebrew/Aramaic name was Yeshua.¹⁴

Yeshua is His name and *HaMashiach* is His title (lit., "the Messiah"; or in keeping with the Greek, "the Christ"). In typical Jewish fashion, He would have been known in Nazareth simply as *Yeshua ben Yosef* ("Jesus [the] Son of Joseph").¹⁵

An anachronism is something that has been removed from its proper timeframe—like saying that George Washington was an avid basketball fan (when in reality basketball didn't exist in his day). So, like I said earlier, it's anachronistic to say that His original name was Jesus.

During His earthly ministry, Yeshua was recognized as a rabbi (i.e., "teacher"), the promised Messiah, and rightful King of Israel: *Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"* (John 1:49). This leads us to our next point.



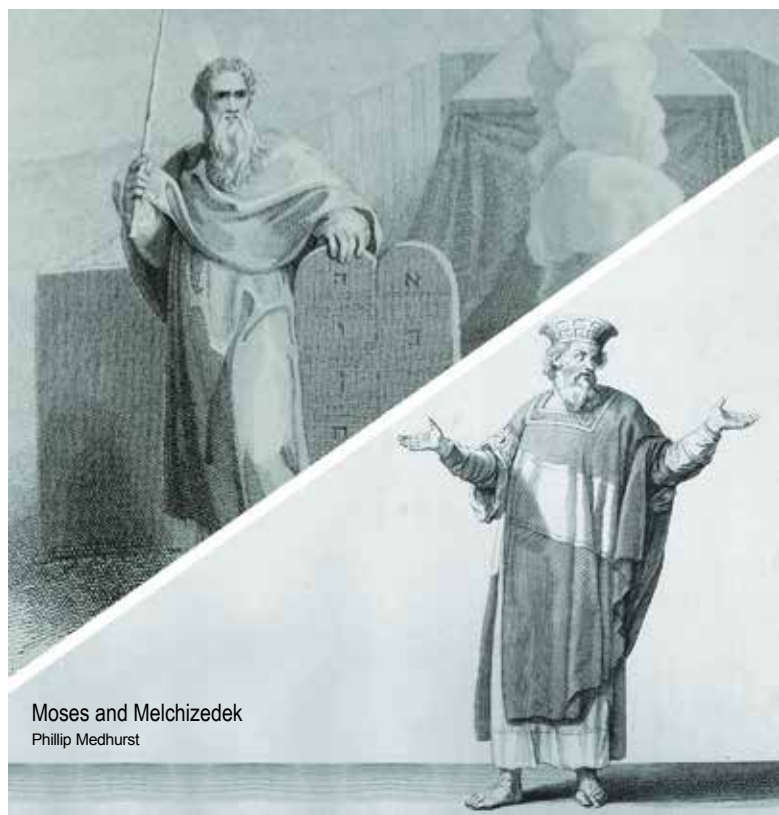
This is the Hebrew word *Mashiach* or, in English, "Messiah." It comes from the root *mashach*, which means "to smear or rub." So, when it's used in a ceremonial sense, it refers to the anointing that accompanies the consecration (i.e., setting aside) of someone to God's service. In the OT era, prophets, priests, and kings, in particular, were consecrated by being anointed with oil in the Name of the Lord. The oil symbolized the Holy Spirit Who came upon them to help them accomplish their appointed task (Acts 10:38; Heb. 1:9). In this way, people who held these offices in ancient Israel were seen as forerunners, or types (prophetic symbols) of "the" coming Messiah. Even the Persian King Cyrus was called "messiah" (Isa. 45:1) because God used him as His consecrated vessel to send the People of Israel back to their ancient homeland after the Babylonian Exile. Messiah Yeshua uniquely holds all three anointed offices—Prophet, Priest, and King (John 1:37-51). The first two are associated with His first coming and the last (i.e., King) with His Second Coming. Genesis 3:15 is widely regarded as the first prophetic promise of a future, coming Messiah-Redeemer of Israel and the world.

3. As Messiah, Yeshua holds the threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King.

First, in the past, He was Israel's Prophet; second, He is now their (and our) Great High Priest; and finally, in the future, He will be King of Israel and all the nations when He returns and sits on the throne of His ancestor David.

In the OT, ordination to each of these three offices involved a ceremonial anointing with oil, making each prophet, priest, or king a type (or, symbol) of the Messiah (lit., the ultimate "Anointed One"). The threefold office of Messiah Yeshua unfolds in chronological order: past→present→future.

- a. **PROPHET.** In the Bible, prophets were people who delivered messages. Sometimes (as in the case of Aaron, who spoke for Moses) they were spokesmen for people (Ex. 7:1); and in other cases, they were spokesmen for God.¹⁶ In either case, a prophet delivered the message he had received from the one who sent him. Contrary to what most people think, future-telling was only a small part of what a biblical prophet did. More often, his function was truth-telling rather than future-telling. Yeshua said many prophets had been killed by the recipients of their messages from God (Matt. 23:37). All too often, we do not want to hear the truth!



Moses and Melchizedek
Phillip Medhurst

In the OT, God promised, 'I will raise up for them [i.e., the people of Israel] a Prophet like you [Moses] from among their brethren, . . . and He shall speak to them all that I command Him' (Deut. 18:18). The NT fulfillment of this OT promise was Yeshua. He was the Prophet with a capital "p," the One like Moses. The NT states, *The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people* (Luke 24:19). In His office as Prophet, Messiah Yeshua was the ultimate truth-teller. When He told the truth to the Sanhedrin, they didn't like it one bit—so they conspired with the Romans to have Him killed (Matt. 26:59-68).

- b. **PRIEST.** The function of an OT priest was to bring people near to God (Heb. 7:19; 10:22). Yeshua, however, is no ordinary priest. He is, first of all, a priest from the order of Melchizedek (i.e., He is both priest and king; Psalm 110:1-4). And, second He is a High Priest (Heb., *Cohen haGadol*; Heb. 4:14).¹⁷ At any given point in time, there were hundreds of priests in Jerusalem who worked in rotating courses in the Temple. However, only one High Priest served at a time—and he was the only one who entered the Holy of Holies on *Yom Kippur* (i.e., the Day of Atonement) to sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat. What distinguished Yeshua from other high priests is that rather than offering the blood of animals as a sacrifice, He offered His own blood (Heb. 9:12). His shed blood cleared the way for us to draw near to God and enjoy His presence in our lives.



Ark of the Covenant
Ben Schumin

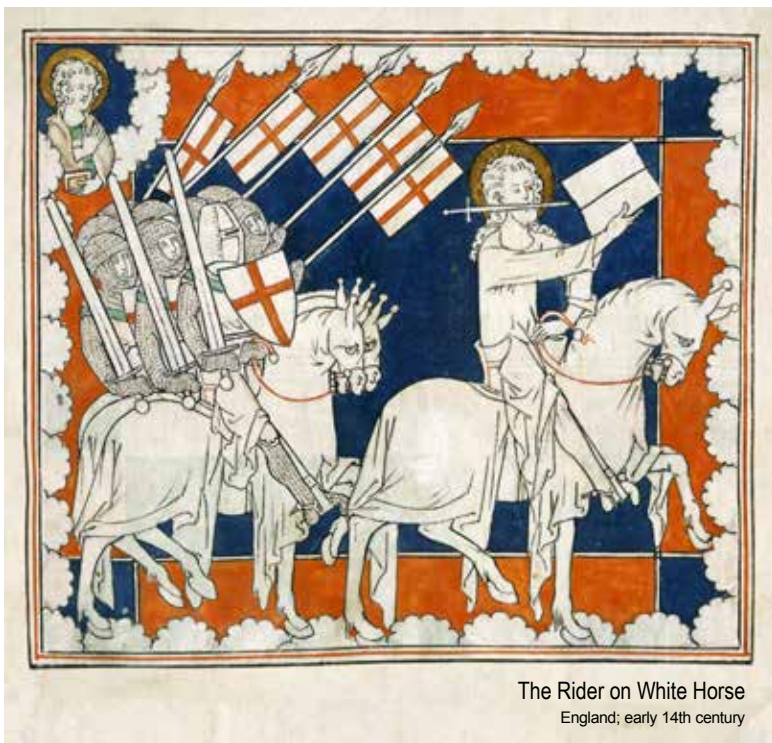
Our friend Alan Trimble¹⁸ reminded us not long ago that the configuration of the empty tomb on Resurrection Day bears a striking resemblance to the design of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. The Bible tells us: *But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain* (John 20:11-12).

The Ark of the Covenant was a gold-plated box covered with a matching lid called the "Mercy Seat." It was a national treasure. Inside the box were the original, stone tablets of the Law, a pot of manna from the wilderness wanderings, and Aaron's rod that budded (Heb. 9:4). The Mercy Seat was where the sacrificial blood was sprinkled each year on Yom Kippur to atone for the sins of the nation. According to the description in Exodus 25:10-22, it was overshadowed by the images of two cherubim (i.e., angelic beings). Now, with that mental image of the Mercy Seat in mind, imagine the scene on that Resurrection morning when Mary found Yeshua's tomb empty, except for two angels—one positioned at each end of the stone slab where the Lord's body had lain (John 20:12). We don't know if Mary recognized the similarity with the Ark; but, whether she did or not, that tomb was like a "holy of holies" and the slab became, in a sense, a "mercy seat" of grace and forgiveness because Yeshua had sacrificed Himself as our great High Priest!

c. **KING.** As far as the Romans were concerned, Yeshua's only "crime" was that of being a king whose kingdom was not of this world. They could find no other fault in Him (John 19:4-6). We know the Romans didn't seriously consider Yeshua a threat to Caesar because Pilate wanted to let Him go (Luke 23:20). However, for the corrupt Sanhedrin, who had been plotting to do away with Him for several years, sedition was as good a reason as any for which to condemn Him.

Yeshua came the first time as God's Suffering Servant (Isa. 53). He sacrificed Himself in His priestly role for the sins of the human race. When He comes the second time, however, it will be in His kingly role. The Bible says He will have "on *His* robe and on *His* thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:16).¹⁹ This time, no one will mock, deride, or spit on Him. He will appear in all His glorious splendor to destroy His enemies, establish His earthly Kingdom, and rule from the throne of His ancestor David forever (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Luke 1:30-33).

We'll have more to say about His kingly office when we get to Point 7 below.



4. He wasn't the founder of a strange, new religion.

This is a common notion in Jewish circles; however, neither Yeshua nor Paul was interested in establishing some weird, new Gentile religion. They both ministered and did their work within the culture and milieu of ancient Israel. It was their home. They were Jews who spoke Aramaic and Hebrew, along with Greek (the lingua franca of the time). They worshiped and preached in the Temple, and in synagogues. The New Covenant (Testament) was written by Jewish men. The first church was Jewish (and was located in Jerusalem). The early believers frequented the Temple and observed the Jewish holy days. Even after the Resurrection and Ascension of the Messiah, the Apostle Paul continued to offer sacrifices in the Temple and arranged his traveling schedule around the Temple calendar (e.g., Acts 18:19-21; see also 21:27-29; 24:17-18; 27:9).²⁰

If anyone was concocting a strange, new faith, it was the Sanhedrin and the unbelieving rabbis at Yavneh with their Messiah-less and bloodless revision of Judaism. Even controversial teachings like divine tri-unity and the divine nature of the Messiah aren't as far afield from traditional Jewish concepts as some people would have us believe.

On the other hand, could it be true that a strange, Gentile religion eventually developed in the midst of all the confusion during the first few centuries after AD 70? Arguably, yes. But, it had nothing to do with Yeshua or Paul. What emerged in the third and fourth centuries was an institutional counterfeit that was state-sponsored and incorporated the worship and veneration of icons and images—practices that Yeshua, the apostles, and the early Jewish believers would have found repulsive. As this religious counterfeit evolved in the East (Constantinople) and in the West (Rome), many of its early leaders and theologians were anti-Judaic and even anti-Semitic. They wanted nothing to do with anything Jewish.²¹



Biblical, historic Christianity is Jewish at its heart and stands in stark contrast to its dark, counterfeit, institutional twin. To sort it all out, all we have to do is keep our eyes on Yeshua the Jewish Messiah. In the Old dispensation, He was the *anticipation* of what God had promised; in the New dispensation, He is the *realization* of those promises. In a sense, then, the NT Messianic community represents the fullness and promise of ancient Judaism. There is continuity between the old and the new. Jewish believers today are the "remnant of Israel" Paul talked about in Romans 11:5. That's why no true Christian would ever knowingly embrace anti-Semitic beliefs. Our faith is Jewish at its very core.

So, institutional Judaism is the entity that jumped the tracks in the first century—not Yeshua or His apostles. Yeshua was in perfect alignment with what God was doing throughout the Old Testament era and into the first century. The Sanhedrin, however, was sadly and tragically out of step. No less authority than Yeshua himself had confirmed the Sanhedrin's culpability for the spiritual welfare of the nation.²² In that role, they formally rejected Yeshua as the Messiah on behalf of the nation (Matt. 26:57-68) because His résumé didn't fit their Messianic job description.²³ From that point on, their unbelief set the nation on a divergent path that would ultimately lead to its destruction.²⁴ Paul said that destruction would be so complete, that when the nation was reborn later, it would be like "life from the dead" (Rom. 11:15).

5. He didn't oppose the Law of Moses when it was properly applied.

Many Christians think Yeshua didn't like the Law of Moses (i.e., Torah), and that He recklessly disregarded and railed against it. However, that's not the case. The Lord respected the Law and often referred to "Moses" (i.e., the Law) favorably and approvingly in His teaching (e.g., Matt. 8:4; 19:8; Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:3; Luke 20:37; 24:27-44).

Think about it. Why would the Lord dismiss the Torah as irrelevant or passé when it pointed so powerfully and prophetically to Himself? Wouldn't that be like shooting Himself in the foot? The NT tells us, *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Yeshua of Nazareth, the son of Joseph"* (John 1:45).

Furthermore, when the two pilgrims met Him on the road to Emmaus, but failed to recognize Him, what text did He take first when He began teaching them about Himself? It says, *And BEGINNING AT MOSES and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself* (Luke 24:27, emphasis ours). So, where did He begin His teaching? He started with Moses and the Law!

He began His earthly life with biblical Torah observance.²⁵ His parents had Him circumcised on the eighth day, according to the Law of Moses (Luke 2:21). Forty days later, Yosef

(Joseph) and Miriam (Mary) presented their first-born Son in the Temple according to the Mosaic requirement (vv. 22-24; Ex. 13:2, 12; Num. 18:6; also, see 1 Sam. 1 and 2).

Later, when Paul sometimes referred to the Law negatively, it was in contexts where he knew it had been misappropriated by religious leaders as a means of achieving righteous standing before God through human works (i.e., legalism). But, apart from that, Paul had no objection to the Law. In Romans 7:12 he wrote, *Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.*²⁶

The Law is instructive and beneficial for purposes of *sanctification* (i.e., instruction and insights for holy living), but not for purposes of *justification* (establishing a personal relationship with God).²⁷ That's the important distinction—and that was the nature of Paul's concern.

The Old (Sinai) Covenant (i.e., Torah) was "broken" by Israel in the OT and is therefore no longer enforceable as a legal contract (Jer. 31:32; Heb. 8:13). However, it is still the inspired Word of God and even though it's not a legal contract, it is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, [and] for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).²⁸ So, any portion of the Sinai Covenant that's repeated in the NT is considered part of the New Covenant and is therefore incumbent on NT (New Covenant) believers, whether Jewish or Gentile.

Old and New Covenants: Contradictory or Complementary?

Some Yeshua-believers refer to the New Testament (or New Covenant) as a Messianic Torah. In fact, Paul may have been referring to the NT/NC when he talked about "the Torah of Messiah" (Gal. 6:2). After all, the Hebrew term *torah* simply means "instruction." Furthermore, some ancient Jewish sources say the Messiah will bring a new and updated Torah with Him when He comes (see "New Worlds and a New Tora," Chapter 26 in *The Messiah Texts: Jewish Legends of Three Thousand Years* by Professor Raphael Patai [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979], 247-57). And finally, note that *every one of the Ten Commandments is repeated in the New Covenant*—with nuances and elucidations that go even farther than the corresponding Mosaic edicts:

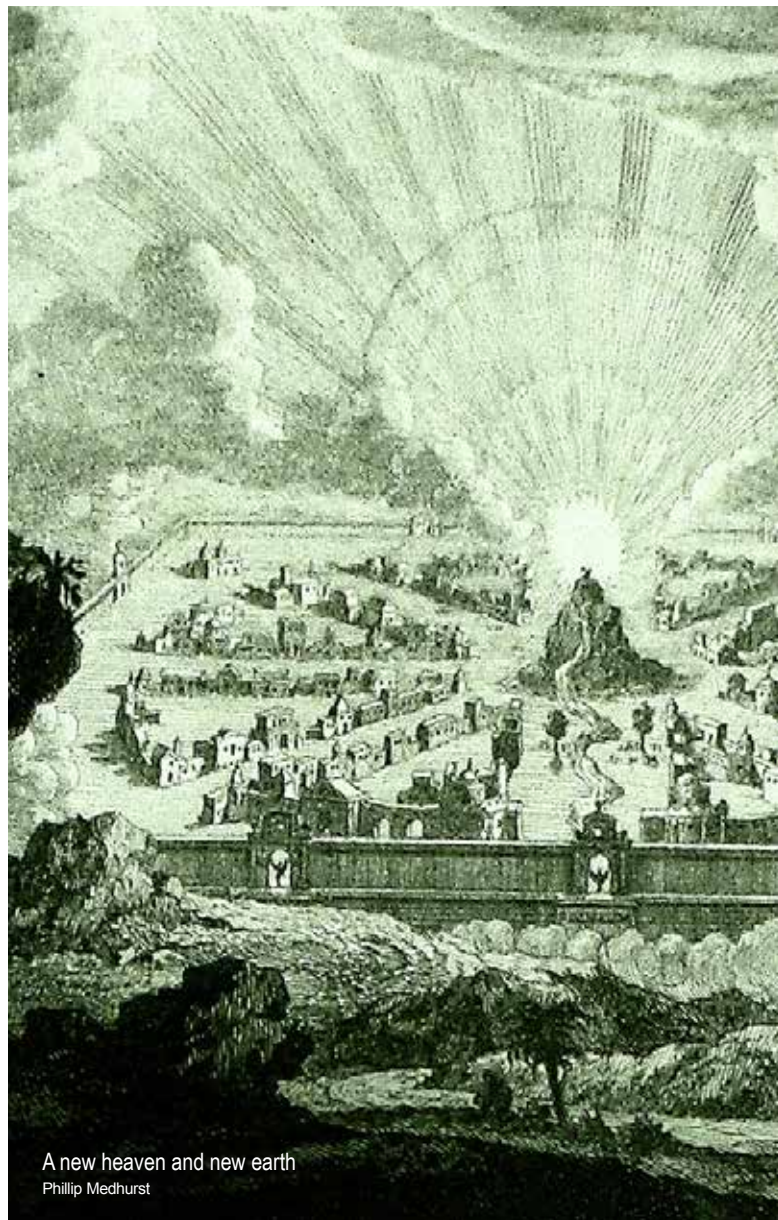
1. Do not have any other god before the LORD—Matt. 4:10; 6:24; 22:37-38; Luke 4:8; Rev. 14:7.
2. Do not make an idol for yourself—Acts 15:20; 17:16, 29; 1 Cor. 5:10-11; 6:9; 10:7, 14, 19; 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:16; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3, 5; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 1:9; 1 Peter 4:3; 1 John 5:21; Rev. 2:14; 9:20; 21:8; 22:14-15.
3. Do not take the Lord's name in vain—Matt. 5:33-34; James 2:7.
4. Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy—Matt. 12:8; Mark 1:21; 2:27-28; 6:2; Luke 4:16, 31; 6:5; 23:56; Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:1-2; 18:4; Heb. 4:4, 9-10.
5. Honor your mother and father—Matt. 15:4; 19:18-19; Mark 7:10; 10:19; Rom. 1:29-30; Eph. 6:1-2; Col. 3:20; 2 Tim. 3:2.
6. Do not murder—Matt. 5:21-22; 19:18; Mark 7:21; 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom. 1:29; 13:9; Gal. 5:21; 1 Tim. 1:9; James 2:11; 1 Peter 4:15; 1 John 3:15; Rev. 9:21; 21:8; 22:15.
7. Do not commit adultery—Matt. 5:27-28; 19:18; Mark 7:21; 10:11-12, 19; Luke 16:18; 18:20; Acts 21:25; Rom. 1:29; 2:22; 7:3; 13:9; 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:9, 18; 10:8; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:3; 1 Thess. 4:3; Heb. 13:4; James 2:11; 2 Peter 2:14; Jude 1:7; Rev. 2:14, 21-22; 9:21.
8. Do not steal—Matt. 19:18; Mark 7:22; 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom. 2:21; 13:9; 1 Cor. 5:10-11; 6:10; Eph. 4:28; 1 Peter 4:15; Rev. 9:21.
9. Do not bear false witness against your neighbor—Matt. 15:19; 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; John 8:44; Acts 5:3-4; Rom. 1:29; 13:9; Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:2; 2 Tim. 3:3; Rev. 21:8; 22:15.
10. Do not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor—Mark 7:22; Luke 12:15; Acts 20:33; Rom. 1:29; 7:7; 13:9; 1 Cor. 5:10-11; 6:10; Gal. 5:19-20; Eph. 5:3, 5; 1 Tim. 6:10; 2 Tim. 3:2; 2 Peter 2:14; Heb. 13:5.

What's notably missing from the NT/NC Torah are the OT Torah's more severe injunctions—like mandating the death penalty for infractions like deviant or promiscuous sexual activity, gathering sticks on the Sabbath, or disobeying one's parents—stern, "boot camp" penalties that were meant primarily as a deterrent in Israel's early history when she was up against almost unimaginable odds during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

6. He wants the world to hear His Good News.

God's message to the world is Good News. In fact, that's what the Greek word for "gospel" means—literally, "good news" or a "good message." It's Good News because it's a message of hope, healing, salvation, restoration, and freedom:

*"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound"
(Isa. 61:1).*



When this Good News of Redemption through the shed blood of Messiah Yeshua was first preached in Jerusalem, literally thousands of Jewish people responded (e.g., Acts 4:1-4).

So, the Gospel was first proclaimed in Jerusalem, and God's priority even today is that this Good News should continue to go "to the Jew first" (Rom. 1:16).²⁹ This is the plan for world evangelization that God will always bless. All we have to do is believe what He says and do it His way, even if we don't understand it!

7. He will return someday to rule over a literal, earthly Kingdom.

We said earlier that Yeshua's past office was that of a prophet; His present office is that of a priest who intercedes and advocates for us on high; and His future office will be that of King of kings and Lord of lords in His earthly Kingdom.

Someday, He will return to establish His Kingdom here on earth. Kingdom promises are splashed all over the pages of the Bible. The Kingdom is no more a metaphor or symbol than the Garden of Eden was. There was an actual Garden of pristine beauty and an ideal environment—a Paradise. Then Adam and Eve fell into sin and the world careened off course and went into a downward spiral. But someday, Yeshua will return as our Messianic King to restore the world to its original, Eden-like condition.

Some people insist that this has already happened. That is, Yeshua is already reigning as King over the earth. "The Kingdom is here now," they say. Yes, of course, there's a sense in which He is King in our hearts as believers; and that is as it should be. However, if our world is already in the Kingdom, we're in a lot of trouble, friends. When Messiah reigns from the throne of David in Jerusalem, there's not supposed to be any more international conflict (Isa. 2:4), no more injustice (Psalm 103:6), no more suffering (Rev. 21:4), no more poverty (Rev. 7:15-17), and no more pain or disease (Isa. 35:5-6). Nature will be transformed (Isa. 11:6). The evil one will be banished (Rev. 20:1-3).³⁰ Do we see any of this happening today? Obviously not. Instead of getting better, things are actually becoming worse.

Yeshua said that the Kingdom will be a time when God's will is extended all over the world: "*Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as [it is] in heaven*" (Matt. 6:10). That is most certainly not the case now; but someday, it will be:


⁷*How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*

⁸*Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, With their voices they shall sing together; For they shall see eye to eye When the LORD brings back Zion.*

⁹*Break forth into joy, sing together, You waste places of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.*

¹⁰*The LORD has made bare His holy arm In the eyes of all the nations; And all the ends of the earth shall see The salvation of our God (Isa. 52:7-10).*

The NT refers to this prospect as the believer's "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13). It's what we all hope and yearn for—and as far as many of us are concerned, the sooner, the better!

We look forward to the time when Israel's Messiah-King will return and "make all things new" (Rev. 21:5)! 



*Dr. Gary Hedrick
is president of
CJF Ministries.*

¹ Two first-century believers who were watching and waiting in the Temple for Messiah's arrival were Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:15-38).

² “*And she* [i.e., Miriam, or Mary] *will bring forth a Son, and you* [Joseph] *shall call His name JESUS [Yeshua], for He will save* [Heb., yoshiah] *His people from their sins*” (Matt. 1:21).

³ Pilate told the Jewish leaders that he found no fault in Yeshua and declared that He could be released (John 18:38-40).

⁴ In the post-Flood era, everyone on earth was descended from one of the three sons of Noah—Shem, Ham, or Japheth. The Semitic peoples were descended from Shem.

⁵ The consensus of scholarly opinion is that Yeshua was born around 4 BC, the year Josephus says King Herod died (Matt. 2:15). Daniel 9:26 says the Messiah would be “cut off” (or, killed) roughly 69 “weeks” (i.e., 69 heptads of seven years each, or 483 years) after the command to rebuild Jerusalem in 445 BC. When we factor in the 360-day prophetic calendar, the 69th “week” ends in AD 30, the year of Yeshua’s Crucifixion. (Some scholars calculate the date slightly differently, 2-3 years either before or after AD 30, but the point is that all the proposed dates are within just a few years of each other.) Since He had to be born before He could die, the Messiah would have been born prior to AD 30. So, Yeshua meets the criteria perfectly.

⁶ Since many family records (and all Temple records, as far as we know) were lost or destroyed in the chaos surrounding the catastrophe of AD 70, Yeshua is the last King of Israel who can independently verify His lineage back to King David. (His genealogy is preserved in the NT.) How far back could, say, Rabbi Schneersohn trace his genealogy? Or any other Messianic candidate today? Genealogical proof of ancestry was a prerequisite for the ancient priesthood and for kings. See “The Three Books Found in the Temple at Jerusalem” by Jacob Z. Lauterbach of Hebrew Union College in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (University of Pennsylvania Press, April 1918), 385-423.

⁷ The virgin birth shouldn’t be confused with the Catholic doctrine of the “immaculate conception.” The virgin birth refers to an act of parthenogenesis whereby Yeshua was conceived in Mary’s womb by the supernatural intervention of the Holy Spirit before she and Joseph had sexual relations. “Immaculate conception,” on the other hand, is the Catholic doctrine that Mary herself was conceived without original sin.

⁸ It’s doubtful that the Magi who came to visit the Holy Child were kings, irrespective of tradition and the lyrics of “We Three Kings.” However, the fact that they could undertake such a long journey to bring the King of Israel rare and expensive gifts suggests that they were men of extraordinary wisdom and influence who possessed considerable resources. They may well have held posts in the Persian government, as evidenced by the fact that they were granted an audience with King Herod upon their arrival.

⁹ In the immediate context of Jeremiah 31:15, “Rachel” (Jacob’s wife who had been buried at Bethlehem centuries earlier and who therefore represented all the mothers of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin) is weeping because her children “are no more.” Jeremiah is referring to the fact that when the Southern Kingdom was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC, members of wealthy and influential families—particularly the young people—were sent to Babylon via a port of debarkation at Ramah (40:1). Jewish mothers were left brokenhearted, mourning the loss of their children who were taken to Babylon. Centuries later, Matthew saw this ancient tragedy as a foreshadowing of the “slaughter of the infants” by Herod in Matthew 2:16-18, which also left many Jewish mothers weeping and wailing for their lost children. There are no confirmations of this slaughter in secular history; however, it fits well with what we know about the insecure and bloodthirsty King Herod, who murdered even many of his own family members during the latter years of his reign. Since Bethlehem was a small village in those days, the number of infants who were killed was probably much smaller than the many thousands reported by later tradition. Some estimates are as few as 20, on up to several hundred or more (which could account for the incident being overlooked by secular history). Irrespective of the exact number of deaths, however, it was an unspeakable calamity for the families who lost their infant sons.

¹⁰ *Did Jesus Exist? The Historical Argument for Jesus of Nazareth* by Bart D. Ehrman (New York: HarperCollins, 2012). While he defends the historicity of the Carpenter from Nazareth, Ehrman does not believe He claimed to be God. His theory is that only the Gospel of John (and not the other three gospels) upholds Yeshua’s claims to deity—and that it wasn’t even written by its namesake (John). The Gospel of John is a forgery from a later period, according to Ehrman. He brushes aside passages from the synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) that infer the Lord’s deity, like Mark 2:5-7, where He forgives a man’s sins (a prerogative reserved only for God) and bystanders accuse Him of blasphemy because they understand that He is claiming to be God (v. 7).

¹¹ *Jesus* by David Flusser (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1997), 16.

¹² *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary* by Jacob Neusner (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011), V 16, 578. While the text of the Talmud wasn’t codified in written form until the 5th century AD or so, it’s generally recognized that its corpus preserves strains of information from the oral tradition that are much more ancient than that.

¹³ Yes, Yeshua (Jesus) had brothers and sisters (Mark 6:3; Matt. 13:55-56). Yeshua would have been the oldest because Mary was a virgin when He was conceived (Luke 1:34). Catholic tradition says Joseph was much older and brought other children to the marriage who weren’t Mary’s. However, this view is problematic in numerous respects (e.g., why aren’t the older siblings mentioned in Luke 2:41-52?) and has no basis in Scripture.

¹⁴ Do an online search for the text “was Yeshua Jesus’ original name?” and you’ll find people who object strongly to calling Him “Yeshua.” To them, it’s heresy to call Him anything other than “Jesus.” We don’t object to calling Him Jesus, of course (or to calling Him by His name in any other language, for that matter); but to say it’s wrong to use the Jewish name the angels and His parents gave Him 2,000 years ago is just silly and may betray an unfortunate inclination toward anti-Semitism.

¹⁵ In Aramaic, His name and title would have been *Yeshua Msheekha*.

¹⁶ Biblical prophets were not always men. In the OT, Miriam (Ex. 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), and Huldah (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chron. 34:22), among others, delivered messages directly from God as *neviah* (the feminine form of the masculine *nevi*, the Hebrew word for “prophet”). In the NT, Anna, an elderly widow from the tribe of Asher, is called a “prophetess” (Luke 2:36-37). Events on the Day of Pentecost were seen as an initial fulfillment of the OT prophecy where Joel said “your sons and your daughters shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17). Also, Philip the evangelist had “four virgin daughters who prophesied” (21:9).

¹⁷ According to the author of Hebrews (possibly Luke), Yeshua isn’t merely a High Priest—He is a “great” High Priest (Heb. 4:14). It’s as though he’s establishing an even higher order of the priesthood to accommodate the credentials of the most holy and exalted of all the High Priests who ever lived.

¹⁸ Dr. Trimble is a retired physician (MD) and committed Bible student from the Dallas area who has visited Israel with our tours numerous times over the years.

¹⁹ Traditional Jewish sources recognize two Messianic figures: *Mashiach ben Yosef* (lit., “Messiah Son of Joseph,” the suffering Messiah) and *Mashiach ben David* (“Messiah Son of David,” the kingly Messiah). Some rabbis, then, recognize two Messiahs, each of whom comes once; however, the NT affirms one Messiah who comes twice.

²⁰ The fact that the apostles continued worshipping in the Temple, and even offering sacrifices prescribed by the Law, is significant because it contradicts the claims of some people that once the Lord was crucified and resurrected, His followers no longer viewed themselves as Jewish or submitted to the Law’s mandates. The truth is that many first-century Jewish believers continued living as observant Jews well into the second century and beyond, some of them living in their own Jewish-Christian communities.

²¹ One early so-called “Christian” leader in the east was John Chrysostom (347-407), Patriarch of Constantinople, who wrote: “The Jews do not worship God but devils, so that all their feasts are unclean. God hates them and indeed has always hated them. But since their murder of Jesus, He allows them no time for repentance. It was for this set purpose that He concentrated all their worship in Jerusalem that He might more easily destroy it. What is clear is that God hates them; it is the duty of Christians to hate them too” (John Chrysostom in *Against Judaizing Christians*, cited by Alex Jacob in *The Case for Enlargement Theology* [Saffron Walden, UK: Glory to Glory Publications, 2011], 35). This is only one of many anti-Semitic quotes from early “church” leaders.

²² In Matthew 23, Yeshua acknowledged that the scribes and Pharisees in His day sat “in Moses’ seat” (v. 2) and therefore His followers should respect their legal authority as the Jewish magisterium of that age. He added a caveat, however: “*Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do*” (v. 3).

²³ The Jewish religious establishment in Yeshua’s day had settled into a comfortable arrangement of mutual tolerance with the Roman authorities. Rome appointed a well-paid overseer in “Palestine” who had been raised Jewish (Herod the Great). As a gesture of good will, the Romans spent millions renovating and expanding the Jerusalem Temple into one of the most magnificent edifices in the ancient world. However, some Jewish sects were repulsed by the Sanhedrin’s cozy, symbiotic relationship with pagan Rome. There’s evidence, for example, that one reason the inhabitants of Qumran fled into the wilderness was that they were disgusted with the Jewish powers-that-be in Jerusalem. In any case, we know the Sanhedrin wasn’t interested in a humble Messiah whose main concern was dealing with the overarching problem of sin. Instead, they wanted a hard-driving political figure who could sort out the issues of Roman governance, bring together the competing sects of Judaism, and elevate Israel above its lowly status as just another Roman province.

²⁴ This continuity between OT Israel and the NT Messianic Community (the early Jewish Church) suggests that Yeshua’s disciples represented the believing remnant of Israel (Rom. 11:5). Once the Sanhedrin rejected Yeshua as Messiah and King of Israel, and traditional Judaism set out in another direction without her Messiah, the path was cleared for unbelieving Israel to be temporarily set aside while Gentile believers in Yeshua were grafted (by faith) into the “olive tree” of Abrahamic faith (11:17-24). This new, hybrid entity (consisting of believing Israel alongside believing Gentiles) is the Messianic Community (i.e., *Ekklesia* in Greek, or *Kehilla* in Hebrew, or what we know today as the Church or the Bride of Messiah). This Church (which is a spiritual rather than an institutional entity) was ordained at the Last Supper (Luke 22:20) and divinely infused by God with the breath of life a few days later (on the Day of Pentecost; Acts 2; compare Genesis 2:7). This new entity is what Paul called metaphorically “one new man” (Eph. 2:15) because it brings Jewish and Gentile believers organically together in Messiah. This true Church must be distinguished from the institutional church which by the fourth century had shed much of its Jewish character and began adopting pagan beliefs and practices. Does any of this mean that God is finished with unbelieving Israel and she’s all washed up? Not at all. Paul makes it clear in Romans 9, 10, and 11 that the current “blindness” of unbelieving Israel is only partial and temporary (11:25) and someday “all Israel” will be saved (v. 26). The present Messianic remnant of Israel (followers of *Yahadut Meshichit*, or “Messianic Judaism”) is a sort of “firstfruits” (James 1:18), pointing to what God will do for the rest of His people Israel when the final harvest comes in at the end of the age (Rom. 11:26).

²⁵ Many Messianic believers make a distinction between *traditional* (or cultural) Torah observance and *biblical* Torah observance. Biblical observance has a clear basis in the OT/OC and in some instances is sanctioned in the NT/NC. Traditional observance is based on the interpretations of rabbis and doesn’t have the same authority as Scripture. Many Messianic Jews, especially in Israel, observe traditions due to their identification with the culture; but, they know it has nothing to do with spirituality or their standing before God.

²⁶ Paul said that Yeshua is “the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Rom. 10:4). The word “end” in this verse is the Greek *telos* (τέλος), which means “termination, purpose, or goal.” The term as it’s used here is spatial, not temporal; so it has nothing to do with something (like the Law) coming to an end. Rather, it refers to something that has reached its final goal or terminal point—like an arrow that has hit the bullseye. The key phrase in this verse is “for righteousness.” The purpose of the Law is not to make us righteous (by Law-keeping), but rather to nudge us toward Yeshua (that’s the spatial aspect) so we can become righteous by trusting in Him (“to everyone who believes”). Yeshua has already hit the target, so all we have to do is trust in Him!

²⁷ A good way to remember the meaning of the term “justification” is to think about it like this: it’s “just-as-if” (just-IF-ication) I had never sinned. A relationship with God only comes when we exercise saving faith in the Messiah and His redemptive work on Calvary. When we do that, His righteousness is imputed to us, and in spite of our failures and shortcomings, our standing becomes that of someone who has never sinned. Paul said, *But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin”* (Rom. 4:5-8). This is what justification is all about.

²⁸ When Paul wrote these words, the NT was still being written and did not exist as a canon of Scripture; so the “all Scripture” to which he referred was the OT.

²⁹ This priority of “to the Jew first” was confirmed earlier by Yeshua himself when He told His disciples, “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*” (Acts 1:8). Notice: the entire enterprise of evangelism started in Jerusalem—so it was Jewish evangelism. In fact, the famous Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 was given to the disciples, who were Jewish and represented the believing remnant of Israel. So, He was commissioning believing Israel to take the Gospel to the rest of the world! That’s how it’s supposed to work! Today, Jewish believers should be our colleagues in world evangelization. We need them! That’s why we are supposed to evangelize the Jewish people first; then we all go out, together, to evangelize the rest of the world. The lack of a Jewish priority in evangelism is no doubt one reason the Church’s global evangelistic initiatives have been such a dismal failure up to now. Missiologists tell us that in the 21st century, people are being born *physically* at a much faster rate than they’re being born *spiritually*. So, when we get up tomorrow morning, there will be many more lost people in the world than there are today, as you’re reading this. We are losing ground rather than gaining it, even though churches and denominations are pouring record amounts of money into missions. That should tell us we’re doing something wrong!

³⁰ At the close of the Millennium, there will be one final, large-scale rebellion when the devil is released from his thousand-year confinement (Rev. 20:7-10). Rebels in the millennial population—and there will evidently be many of them—will be mortals who have been born during the Millennium but never truly submitted to Messiah. They will gravitate to the devil and his rebellion like iron shavings are drawn to a magnet. At the final Battle of Gog and Magog (v. 8), the satanic insurrection will come crashing down like a house of cards and be ended forever. The fate of the devil and his minions will be to land in the eternal Lake of Fire (v. 10). The problem of evil will at long last be resolved once and for all.

Bible Questions AND Answers

by DR. GARY HEDRICK

Have a Bible question?

Submit it to Dr. Hedrick at garyh@cjfm.org, or mail it to 611 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78215.

You may see your question addressed in a future issue of *Messianic Perspectives*.

QUESTION: *Doesn't Romans 11:19-20 confirm that God is done with the Jews? It says quite clearly that they've been cut off from God's promises because of their unbelief.*

ANSWER: Your choice of proof-texts is ironic. Let me show you why. Here's what it says:

¹⁹ You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in."

²⁰ Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.

All commentators agree that the unbelieving Jewish community constitutes the "natural branches" who were "broken off" from the Olive Tree of Abraham-like faith. They were broken off because of their unbelief.

Non-Jewish (Gentile) believers are grafted into that same Olive Tree of Abrahamic faith because of our faith in the Jewish Messiah, Yeshua of Nazareth (v. 17).

Then Paul warns Gentile believers about the pitfall of pride. We must not hold up ourselves as paragons of virtue because we think we were good enough and smart enough to receive Yeshua as Savior—and those wicked, stiff-necked Jews weren't. Paul brings that perverse line of reasoning to a screeching halt when he says, "Do not be haughty, but fear" (v. 20).

Wow, those are sobering words! What do we have to fear? Let's keep reading:

²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.

²² Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

Here, then, is the warning: if we apply a performance-based paradigm to the Jewish people, we should also apply it to ourselves. Yes, they have stumbled and fallen. And yes, they've been pruned from the Olive Tree while non-Jewish believers have been "grafted in" to that same Tree. But if we ever stumble and fall, we, too, will be "cut off" (v. 22). Since He lowered the boom on the natural branches (the Jewish people) for their unbelief, He could lower the boom on us, too. That's what he's saying here.

So, let me ask you: as a believer in Yeshua, do you ever fail God? Do you sin, whether it's a sin of commission or omission? Do you ever dwell on bad thoughts that you know don't please God? Has God ever prompted you to do something on faith, but you hesitated? Or maybe you didn't do it at all? If so, you, too, failed Him!

Paul reminds us in this passage that the very act of thinking that we're spiritually superior to the Jewish people reflects the serious sin of pride (or haughtiness; v. 20). May I remind us all that pride was the original sin? It caused the fall of Lucifer from his position in Heaven (Isa. 14:12-13)—and subsequently precipitated the Fall of the human race in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-6).

You might say, "I know I sin sometimes; but I'm a believer. I live by God's grace, ask for forgiveness, and rely on Him." Good answer! And someday the Jewish people *en masse* will appeal to that same grace, ask for God's forgiveness, and come to faith in Yeshua (Rom. 11:26)! Here's what Paul says:

²³ And they also [i.e., the People of Israel], if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

²⁴ For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

The Apostle points out how prideful it is for us to claim spiritual superiority over the Jewish people when, in fact, it's Israel's own Olive Tree into which we've been grafted! And Israel will be grafted in again! Here's what he said earlier in the chapter:

¹⁷ And if some of the branches [i.e., unbelieving people of Israel] were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree,

¹⁸ do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

The "root" is Abraham himself, the one with whom God made the grace-based covenant of faith (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-21).

So do you see what has happened here? We've shown that a passage some people say proves that God is finished with His People Israel actually proves just the opposite. It tells us that God has wonderful plans for Israel's future! He has not forgotten the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Finally, note Paul's powerful affirmation in Romans 11:

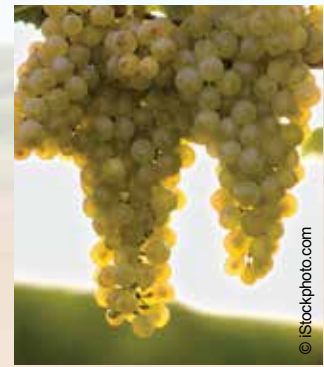
²⁸ Concerning the gospel *they* [i.e., unbelieving Israelites] are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* [note the present tense verb] beloved for the sake of the fathers [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob].

²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.



Fruit from the Harvest

by Violette Berger



Next Year in Jerusalem!

Richard Hill, CJFM representative (Las Vegas) and pastor of Beth Yeshua Messianic Congregation rejoices that 10 individuals prayed to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior at their annual Passover Seder, and that a number of unsaved Jewish individuals heard the Good News for the first time. Rich also led a Passover Seder at the Veteran's Home, and five veterans recommitted their lives to the Lord. Richard writes: "In addition, it was a privilege to share God's love through Jesus, the Lamb of God with 'Yacov,' a Jewish veteran who attended the Seder. He had just moved across country to the Veteran's Home for the healthcare, was lonely for his family, and had not attended a Passover Seder in years. Please pray for Yacov's salvation."

A chaplain friend of Rich's who had befriended "David," a 92-year-old Jewish Holocaust survivor, called Rich and asked if he would meet with David who lost his entire family in the Holocaust. Only he and one brother survived. When Rich met with David and shared the Gospel message with him, Rich said, "David didn't comment. He is blessed with good health but needs good spiritual health. I left him tracts to read, such as Charles Halff's *I Was Born a Jew and I'll Die a Jew*, and only then did David comment." He pointed to the tract and told Rich, "That's me!" Rich laments, "Unfortunately, the misconception in the Jewish world is that if you believe in Jesus, you are no longer Jewish! The rabbis perpetuate this satanic lie. Please pray for David's salvation."

Joy

Yosef Ovadia, CJFM representative and pastor of Kehilat Haderech Messianic Congregation (Israel) is overjoyed, thankful to God, and blessed with his congregation's new building. An important step in the design of the building was completed when verses carved out of wood were added to the wall behind the stage and in the lobby. It consists of the verse from John 14:6, upon which the name of the congregation is based (*HaDerech* means "the way.") "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' Each letter is made of smaller letters, which when viewed up close form many of the names of the Messiah in the Bible. Pastor Yossi asks for prayer for the completion of the new center for young adults, which will be named "The Well." He explains: "The well is a source of living water, and we pray that our 'well' will be a meeting place for the city's young people, where they can hear the Gospel, draw free living water, and enjoy good fellowship, lectures, lessons, and performances that will glorify the name of our Lord."

Apologetics on Campus

CJFM representative Eric Chabot (Columbus, OH) was pleased with his apologetics ministry at Ohio State University as they wrapped up the year for summer break. For the last meeting of the term, Dr. Rich Suplita was invited to speak about his journey from atheism to a relationship with Yeshua HaMachiach, Jesus the Messiah. Eric writes: "Dr. Suplita was a neuroscience professor at the University of Georgia where he served as the faculty advisor for the atheist group on campus. That year, a careful analysis of the atheistic worldview helped him realize that atheism is dead and philosophy has killed it." Following is a testimony from one of the students who attended the weekly apologetics meetings. "*Being a part of an apologetics ministry at Ohio State University has been one of the highlights of my college career. I've gotten to learn a tremendous amount from Eric and other guest speakers which have been such an encouragement and edification for defending and proclaiming my faith in Jesus Christ. God has been able to use this ministry on campus in my life to help advance my ministry amongst Muslims and other students at Ohio State in a great way, and I'm eager to help and get more involved with this ministry in my final semester at Ohio State.*"—Steven, Islamic Studies major

"Dancing Angel"

Diann Parkas, CJFM representative (New Jersey) is a Jewish believer and also leads a "Biblical Worship Dance" ministry. She recently had the privilege of organizing an event at an assisted living facility. Diann coordinated the dance presentations with Scripture from the facility's Bible study. A member of Diann's group also played *Amazing Grace* on the violin. Afterwards, Diann shared her testimony. She didn't find out until later that many of the 25 people who attended the program were Jewish. During a similar presentation at a senior housing complex, Diann gave an invitation at the end, and **five** of the 20 individuals who attended, prayed to receive the Lord. At another facility, the event coordinator told Diann that she told the residents that the "Dancing Angel" was coming, and an unusual large turnout of 35 people attended the presentation. Diann commented: "If an angel is a messenger, I guess that's what I am—a dancing woman with a biblical message." Diann asks that we pray for the salvation of the residents and staff who heard the message at these facilities and for the spiritual growth of the new believers.

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'" (Psalm 149:3).

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