



The Shepherd of Israel



הַעֲדָה הַמְּשֻׁרָאֵל

The Southeast Corner of Jerusalem's old city wall. It is also known as the Pinnacle of The Temple for it stands on the southeast corner of the Temple compound. It is the highest point from the ground remaining, 716 feet above. It overlooks the Kidron Valley also known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat.



WHEN WILL THE MESSIAH COME?

by Dorothy Stern

When I was a child during World War II, suffering because of the persecution of my people in Europe, the only ray of hope that gave me courage was a message given by a rabbi in a Conservative Synagogue in New England that some day the Messiah would come and he would heal and save the people. Many years later I was to learn that the Messiah had come, and that he was Jesus Christ. "He is ours, after all," I thought. During those hard years and in centuries of the diaspora, the Jews held to the hope that some day the Messiah would come to help them. Then Israel would not be the persecuted and least of all nations, but she would be the head of the nations.

This hope of the Messiah came directly from the Holy Scriptures. It was God who promised the Messiah to the people and He unfolded prophecies concerning Him throughout the books of the Old Testament. In this way, when false pretenders to the title came, they would be found out as imposters. And when the true Messiah came, He would be recognized and accepted by those who knew the Word of God and truly believed in it.

The Bible clearly gives vital information concerning the person of the Messiah, such as where he will be born, when he would be born, what kind of special birth, his rejection, his crucifixion, and his final acceptance by Israel as her own. We who believe in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, base our faith on the teachings of the Old Testament and the New Testament. We allow the Bible to interpret itself, not in the allegorical sense which would allow many divergent interpretations, but in a literal way. This means that in order to understand a passage, we should consider the original language, grammar, history, customs, context, unity of Scripture and other guidelines. Poetic expressions, of course, are recognized as such. We know that our concept of the Messiah stems from the Bible and that prophecies about the Messiah appear all through the Scriptures.

Recently we noticed an increased interest in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Jewish people are asking more questions and are digging deeper into the Biblical passages. What do they really mean? A few years ago, a Jewish lady, when confronted with the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6, said that if the word *alam* really means everlasting, then she knows that Jesus is the Messiah. I told her to consult a rabbi about the meaning of the word, and when she confirmed it, she became a believer in Christ.

A Hebrew Christian couple who attend our meetings have been talking to a Jewish lady and her husband about the virgin birth as presented in Isaiah 7:14. While this Jewish couple maintains that *alma* does not mean virgin and that *os* does not mean miracle, a complete study of these words which they are now undertaking will indeed show that *alma* does mean virgin and that the birth of Jesus Christ was a miracle.

These are some of the questions that are most often asked by Jewish people about the Messiah:

When Will The Messiah Come?

Daniel 9:25 clearly pinpoints the exact time of the coming of the Messiah. It is significant that this passage contains the only actual use of the word *Messiah*, and therefore the verse cannot refer to any other person. A timetable of years beginning with the edict of Cyrus to rebuild the Temple until what is termed Daniel's Seventieth Week is presented in verses 25-27, as follows:

Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing: 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

even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined. And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate.

History shows that the edict of Cyrus was made in 445 B.C. The seven weeks plus the threescore and two weeks mentioned in verse 25 adds up to 69 weeks. These are not literally weeks, but according to the Hebrew word *shavua*, a unit of seven which could be 7 days, 7 weeks, 7 years. The term for 7 weeks in this passage is literally seven sevens, or 49 years. The threescore is 60 sevens, or 420, and the two weeks is 2 sevens, or 14 years. This brings the total time to 483 years.

Proof of this usage of weeks for years is found in the Bible. Every seventh year the land must rest and this seventh year is called *shavua* (Leviticus 25:1-4). Further, when Jacob worked another 7 years in order to marry Rachel, the 7 years were called another week, *shavua*. (Genesis 29:27).

The great Jewish commentator Rashi, and other commentators as well, writing in the 12th Century, agree that the passage referring to the Messiah being cut off (v.26) referred to Agrippa, the Jewish king who was killed during the days of Jesus Christ. They figured out the time in Daniel 9:25 correctly, but because of spiritual blindness and ignorance, they identified the wrong man!

Another prophecy concerning the time of His coming, is to be found in Genesis 49:10:

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh come: And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.

Shiloh is acknowledged to be the Messiah not only by Christian scholars, but by some of the Jewish

commentators as well, notably Rashi and Onkeles. Onkeles, acknowledged as the greatest Jewish translator from the Hebrew to Aramaic, translated this prophecy as "until Shiloh come," meaning the Messiah. Disagreeing is the Harkavy Edition of the Old Testament, which interprets this verse to mean that some one will come to the city of Shiloh. But by no means can this verse be translated that way literally, because the Hebrew grammar clearly says, until Shiloh come, and not come to Shiloh. This Harkavy Edition does admit in its preface that it is not strictly a literal translation. Obvious liberties have been taken to conceal the true meaning of the Scriptures.

The historical condition that the sceptre would depart from Judah when the Messiah came, was actually fulfilled when Jesus came. The sceptre is the emblem of royal rule. Jerusalem was under Jewish rule under the Roman government, but the Temple was destroyed and the Jews fled the city. The sceptre had departed. Shiloh, the Messiah, had come!

What About The Trinity?

Since the Jewish people say that they believe in monotheism, one God, how can we reconcile this with a triune God? In Deuteronomy 6:4-5 we read:

Hear O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

The word for one in this verse is not the single integer, *yachid*, but the word *echod* which can have the meaning of two or more united as one, or a group as one. This same word *echod* is used for the word one in Genesis 2:24 when God made Adam and Eve one flesh:

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Yet, when Maimonides listed the Thirteen Principles of Faith that every Jew must believe, he did not use the word *echod* that appeared in the Bible in Deuteronomy 6:4, but he substituted the word *yachid*. *Yachid* is the word used in Genesis 22:2 when God told Abraham to

take his only son Isaac to the altar, and it is translated as sole or only:

And he (God) said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

A composite unity, three as one, is not a concept which is foreign to Judaism. For example, when an Orthodox Jew goes before the religious court he appears before a tribunal of three acting as one judge. This tribunal is called a *Bes din* (house of justice). It is significant that on Yom Kippur Eve, a group of three acting as one, symbolically pardons the sins of individual Jews. Further, the Jewish mystical book, the *Zohar*, which is part of the Cabala, mentions the family in heaven many times and this family in heaven has been referred to by Jewish theologians. A triune God is a Jewish concept.

The Bible shows us, and some Jewish theologians agree, that the Godhead is a special kind of unity by which God has revealed Himself to mankind in three personalities—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the first verse of the Bible, the word *Elohim* is used to apply to God:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
(Genesis 1:1)

This word *Elohim* has a plural ending, which shows that God has chosen to reveal Himself as a composite unity. This thought is further continued in verse 26 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: . . ." The *Zohar* itself states that there are three steps to the Godhead by which we can comprehend the profound mystery of the word *Elohim*.

What Does Isaiah 53 Mean?

This passage begins at Chapter 52:13 in the Jewish Bible and as far as context is concerned. Verse 13 mentions a servant that shall be exalted and extolled, and is said to refer to the Messiah in ancient Jewish writings, such as *Targum*. Isaiah 53:10, as well, is recognized as Messianic, and refers to the passing of the kingdom to the Messiah. In reference to the suffering, verse 5, the Midrash says that the Messiah will bear one-third of the sufferings.

Those who oppose the Messianic interpretation of this passage say that the whole chapter refers to the nation of Israel who is seen as suffering for the sins of the Gentiles. Two pronouns are used here, *he* and *we*. If he is Israel, who is we? And if we is Israel, who is he? It is common knowledge that the nation of Israel is always referred to as she, as nations all are of the feminine gender. Therefore, our conclusion is that the one mentioned is a person, the suffering Messiah. The content of the passage, interpreted literally, reveals the rejection, death and resurrection of the Messiah. Verse 12 clearly states that he bore the sins of many:

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors:

While it is true that Israel suffered at the hands of the nations, nowhere in the Holy Scriptures do the prophets state that Israel will bare the sins of the nations. On the contrary, according to Isaiah chapters 13 to 23 the nations will be judged by God specifically for their sins against Israel. Israel will also be judged for her own sins.

Although the Bible is clear about the Messiah, when he would come, why he would come, etc., because of spiritual blindness and ignorance, some Jewish people do not see the light of a Holy God because they do not acknowledge their own sins. They continue to say as in the days of Jeremiah, "Because I am innocent surely his anger shall turn from me . . . I have not sinned" (Jer. 2:35). Yet since the days when Jesus came, some Jewish people have accepted him. Someday all Israel will believe in him: " . . . and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced. . ." (Zechariah 12:10). Then there will no longer be the question, "When will the Messiah come?" For every eye shall see him when he comes again—Revelation 1:7:

Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen.

(Reprinted with permission from *The Way*, Spring 1975)

A STRANGE SYNAGOGUE PRAYER

The folklore of a people is a mirror of its inner life. Sagas, traditions, runes, these are not merely the product of idle fancy; back of them lies history, the fortunes and misfortunes of tribal or group life.

It is but natural that Jewish history should have passed through stages similar to those of other peoples. The infiltration process to which practically every nation is subject has not left us unaffected. The names of our Hebrew months came from Babylon, and J. L. Peretz, an authority on matters Jewish, reminds us that "we have learned and adapted something from every nation, for we have lived among them all."

Doubtless it is little known how *Oz M'linai B'reshis*, one of the prayers for Yom Kippur, came to be incorporated into the Jewish Prayer Book. Students of our liturgy are of the opinion that the prayer is a Judeo-Christian infiltration into the poetry of the Synagogal liturgy, else what explanation is there for this strange petition from *Musaf l'Yom Kippur*:

"Our righteous Messiah has departed from us. We are horror-stricken and have none to justify us. Upon his shoulders he carried our sins, and through his wounds we find forgiveness. O, Eternal One, create him anew. From Seir Lebanon let him proclaim redemption a second time through thy servant, Yinnon."

Would the poet have voiced the above had he not felt that the prophecy of Isaiah 53, mirroring the great sufferer of the human race who brings redemption through his vicarious atonement, had been fulfilled in Jesus?

Why then is this fact kept from us? And why, it may be asked, is the prophecy of Isaiah 53 ignored in the *Haftorah* readings in connection with the Pentateuchal lessons? Yet there it stands, the choicest gem, the truest portrait of our Messiah in the whole prophetic volume!

(reprinted with permission from: *Raisins and Almonds*, Dr. Henry Einspruch, Ed. pp. 48-49.)



WHAT IS BETH SAR SHALOM?

The Beth Sar Shalom Fellowship is, as its name implies, a Jewish Fellowship, but not in the sense the term is normally used today. This particular fellowship is part of the Hebrew Christian movement, which is composed of Jewish people who, through the study of Scripture, have become convinced that Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish Messiah, and have become believers in Him.

On various occasions, therefore, these Jewish believers come together and are joined by Gentile believers for Bible study and discussion. A standing invitation is always extended to all Jewish people who would like to visit with us and study the claims of Jesus in the Jewish context.

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