

TANAKH INTRODUCTION

Before we begin studying the Bible together, let us remember the

danger that lies in only reading about the Bible. If you read

the notes we've given you and do not read what the notes are

derived from, i.e. the entire text of Scripture (in this case the

entire book of Genesis), then you are like the person born

without a tongue who did not eat the ice cream but only had the

experience described to him in a book. G-d wants to speak to you

directly through "every word that proceeds from the mouth of

G-d." His words are inerrant and will stand forever in the

theatre of mankind. All that our fallible little notes can do is

help to set the stage for you and to possibly raise the curtain.

If you don't have an on-going schedule to keep you actually

reading the Bible itself cover to cover, you may possibly "miss

the show" and these pages will be useless in the end, like

program notes given to you by an usher for a play you never saw.

So sit down now and read the book of Genesis, all fifty chapters.

Put the food of the Word of G-d directly into your mouth. Then we

can talk about it. We will proceed only on the assumption that

you have done that and will continue to do that as we go along

from book to book.

BERESHIS (GENESIS)

....B'ray-SHEET ("in the beginning") is the Hebrew name for

Genesis. Many of the books of the Hebrew Bible are named from

their first words. This Hebrew word begins the first fifth of

the so-called "book of the Law of Moses" SEFER TORAT-MOSHE

II Kgs. 14:6). In view of the watchword Sola Scriptura (the

Bible alone is authoritative for faith), we must allow inerrantly

inspired authors of Scripture to give us our normative

interpretation of Scripture. For example, when we look at Genesis

1:1, we should remember Rav Sha'ul's teaching of the doctrine of

creation ex nihilo (Latin, "from nothing") that G-d "calls into being that which does not exist" (Romans 4:17). With Rav Sha'ul's inerrant teaching to guide us, we will not be tempted to interpret Genesis 1:1 in any way that would have G-d creating the cosmos from pre-existing materials. The book of Romans would have us see the book of Genesis in terms of the sovereignty of G-d, that G-d created the cosmos out of nothing and the chosen nation of Israel out of nothing, since Abraham and Sarah were old and "as good as dead" (Romans 4:19). So Genesis chps 1-11 are about the creation of the inhabited world. And the book begins with Adam, who is told to govern the world as the son of G-d, being a type of "the one who is to come" (Romans 5:14; Genesis

3:15; 49:10 NIV), as expectation begins to build about a promised

eschatological Redeemer-Ruler, a Savior from sin and death, a

Great "Descendant" or "Seed" ZERAH. In Genesis we see the

"fall," that is, "creation being subjected to futility" (Romans

8:20) and the whole human race being brought under the bondage of

the law of sin and death (Romans 6:23) and all this occurred long

before the death-dealing Law of Moses was given at Mt. Sinai.

Romans 5:12 tells us how to exegete (interpret) Genesis 3. Adam

is an epochal figure whose failure and fall determines the

character of all encompassed in his epoch; that is, all of

God-alienated humanity in need of the epoch of the second Adam,

the New Man, the Moshiach, and especially in need of the new life
that flows from the Kingdom of G-d and G-d's great King Moshiach
and the Messianic Adamic fountain head. When we look at the
first man lying on the ground dead (Gen. 5:5), the Bible is
showing us the first sinner of a sinning/dying epoch which only
the Moshiach's death brings to an end (II Cor. 5:14). The six
days of creation may also stand for creationary epochs because
the Seventh Day or Shabbos may also point toward the millennial
epoch at the end of this age, if the book of Revelation (Rev.
20:4) and its creation theology is allowed to exert any force as
an interpretive key to the meaning of Gen. chp. 1-3. YOM can be a
period of in definite length in the Hebrew Bible. The age-day

interpretation fits well with the geological record. Moreover, if the sun had not yet been created on Day One, you could hardly have a 24-hour solar day on that "day" of no sun! If the sun were not visible until day #4 (as in a long period where thick clouds constituted the primordial atmosphere) such a description as Genesis gives us could be reconciled with science. However, we need to remember in all of this that Moses is not conducting an amoral science lecture but rather is preaching a life-or-death sermon (Deut. 30:15) to get his Jewish people to stop violating the law and get delivered from the wrath of G-d.

In a sense it would be better to read the book of Genesis last

instead of first. The reason is that Genesis answers all kinds of questions that only get raised for the reader later in the Bible.

So it is only when you read Obadiah and Malachi that you really start asking, "Who are the Edomites and when do we first hear of their patriarch Esau?" Similarly, when Gog and Magog are mentioned in Ezekiel, when Javan (Greece) is mentioned in Zechariah, when Babylon (Shinar--Gen. 14:1) is mentioned in Isaiah, when the Canaanites and the Moabites and the Amorites (Noah's son Ham is the father of the Amorites) are discussed in the rest of the Scriptures, Genesis is the place to turn to get the Bible's theological introduction and overview of their significance and determinative character. Genesis introduces us

theologically to all the major questions of life. What is

mankind? What is marriage? What is work and rest from work in

relation to G-d? In Proverbs it says that wine is a mocker

(20:1). How does the Bible first introduce us to that fact?

(Hint: see Gen. 9. Read also Lev. 10:8-11; Num. 6 :1-4; Luke

1-15; Rom. 14:21.) How did the evil of polygamy begin? (Note

Gen. 4:19 and Lamech's overweening desire for both women and

violence--see Gen. 2:24 on monogamy.) What is sin? What is guilt?

Does man have to sin? (See Gen. 4:7). How in the human heart

did wickedness begin and proliferate over the earth? How did it

happen that the life-blood was set apart as holy in the

beginning, when G-d began to institute blood sacrifice as a necessary aspect of the faith of Abraham? Where did Moses and Joseph and the children of Israel come from? How did bondage, especially bondage in Egypt come about? How can it be circumcised and rolled away from the human heart so that we might know G-d personally and become his true sons? Adam, Abel, Seth, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Arphachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah and Abraham show us sons of G-d, whereas the sons of the Serpent become a brood of "Lamech's" swallowed in a flood of wrath. The coming "Descendant" is "the seed of the woman" and "the son of Man" and is also part of the promise given to Abraham.

Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach Yehoshua/Yeshua tells us this when he

says, "Abraham your father rejoiced at the thought of seeing the

day of my coming" (Yochanan 8:56) See correct spelling of the

Moshiach's name in the Hebrew Bible Neh. 7:39; see prophecy

regarding this name as Moshiach's name Zech. 6:12; Ezra 3:8. Now

this is important: Galatians 3:16 interprets in this Messianic

sense Genesis 12:7;13:15; 17:7; 22:18 and 24:7. G-d promised

many descendents but the fact that the word ZERA or SPERMA is

singular Shliach Sha'ul takes as a Messianic reference, not

merely a reference to the nation. Shliach Sha'ul sees the notion

of promise, including a promised eschatological covenant (Genesis

17:2), as central to the book of Genesis, because the Exodus from

Egypt, the conquering of the land of Israel, the coming of the

King Moshiach, and his inheritance of the nations are all an

unfolding of the promise that has its beginning in Genesis (the

word "Genesis" is from a Greek word meaning "origin"). Since a

gracious promise from a sovereign G-d who creates out of nothing

negates any notion of salvation through meritorious

works-righteousness, Shliach Sha'ul has Moses and Habakkuk to say

"amen" when Shliach Sha'ul teaches that righteousness was

credited to Abraham's faith when Abraham became the father of all

(Jewish people and Gentiles alike) who believe (see Genesis 15:6;

Deuteronomy 7:7-8; 9:4-6; Habakkuk 2:4). This is the teaching of

Yehoshua in Yochanan 6:28-29. Although the book of Genesis tells us the origin of everything from marriage to polygamy and from the Edomites to the Sodomites, Shliach Sha'ul shows us the most important doctrine that originates from Genesis, the doctrine of justification by faith alone (Romans 3:28).

Important prophecies in Genesis are these: one descendent of Abraham will bless the nations (see Genesis 12:1-4; Isaiah 49:5-6); Abraham's descendants will be slaves 400 years in a land not their own (Genesis 15:13); Abraham's descendants will be delivered in the fourth generation (Genesis 15:14-16); the land of Canaan would be given to Abraham's descendants as an

inheritance (Genesis 15:16-21) and the promise would be given graciously and miraculously through Isaac (17:21; 21:12). If the book of Revelation reads Genesis 3 with an apocalyptic symbolic interpretation (see Revelation 12:9 and 20:2) then we should not read it with an empty literalism as though it were just a story about the origin of lethal snake bites (some famous rabbis have made this mistake). On the other hand, we would make a big error if we read Genesis 3 as a fictitious myth, as though it weren't dealing with facts and with the sober historical reality of the human condition. Just because something is told in picture language fraught with symbolism rather than with scientific mathematical formulas does not mean that it is any less true or

that it did not in fact occur. The story in Genesis 3 is not a mere parable. However, like a parable, the story points beyond

itself to its practical lesson, that the fruit of going our own

way (Isa. 53:6) against G-d's Word is death, and there is a way

that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death

(Prov. 16:25). For Man must live by every word that proceeds from

the mouth of G-d (Deut. 8:3). Satan is not literally a snake.

If he were, we wouldn't need the new birth, just medicine to

neutralize the venom. But Moses talks about the need for

hitkadeshut when he uses the metaphor of the "circumcision of the

heart" in Deut. 10:16; 30:6 and when he talks about the spiritual

change or new birth indicated when Abram and Jacob received their new names as Abraham (father of many") and Israel ("he strives with God"). On this, see Gen. 17:5;32:28.

Man is morally responsible before G-d and is commanded to yield his heart in obedience. On the other hand, G-d is free to choose and to judge. G-d is free to judge the attitude of Cain or to sovereignly choose the younger rather than the elder son as the heir of the promise. Judging from what we are saying here, would you say that Shliach Sha'ul is dealing with the issue of the new birth versus a works-righteousness religiosity when he refers to Genesis and to the "children of the promise" in Romans 9:8? Is Shliach Sha'ul seeing in Genesis the idea that only a sovereign

Creator can effect the new creation, and that self-righteousness

and self-efforts can never be our savior?

The world offers various g-dless cosmogonies (theories of the

origin and development of the universe) such as evolution. But

the Bible declares that without regeneration from G-d, Man is not

evolving upward from the beast but downward toward the Beast, and

the number of his name is 666, the number of unregenerated

Mankind at his most bestial. Without regeneration, man tends

away from the likeness of G-d and toward the likeness of the

unreasoning beast (Jude 10). If you come to the Bible looking for

information to support the latest scientific theory instead of

approaching the Bible to look for Yehoshua (Yochanan 5:39) and to gather fruit from the Aitz HaChayim (the tree of life), you are reading the Bible the wrong way, like a woman trying to find a recipe in a telephone directory. The Bible was not written to form us into gods who know exactly how old the universe is or how scientists might someday create a human being from the mud of matter. The Bible was written to give assurance of salvation and to equip the man of G-d for every good work (Yochanan 20:31; I Yochanan 5:13; II Tim. 3:16-11). Any fool might believe that such a complex organ as the human eye could by evolution spontaneously generate itself to see and rationally comprehend the world, but a miracle is needed before a depraved heart can

believe that it has a need for G-d's Moshi'a (Deliverer), the
Moshiach. The Bible was written to tell us what is man,
something paleoanthropologists only pretend to know. They try to
divine that what differentiates humanity from the animal kingdom
is human speech or rational thought or the ability to use complex
tools or to walk in an upright manner on two feet. They can't
agree, however, and tend to put clever extinct species of apes
and "near-men" and "cave men" and modern man all in the same
genus, Homo (man). However according to the Bible, the genus of
Man is not alone defined by his rationality (which serves a
depraved will) but by the fact that Man is something that animals

are not: man is a sinner needing the covering of G-d's saving

hand, that is, a sinner needing the Moshiach. If we ask

ourselves, where does the notion of a suffering yet innocent

redeemer of the world originate, the answer again is Genesis.

Starting in chp 37, Joseph, like Yehoshua son of Joseph, is an

incognito prophet and savior, unrecognized by his own people,

envied and rejected as not from G-d, buried as dead, but raised

up by G-d to the right hand of supreme power to feed the bread of

new life to the whole world, including at last his own people who

do not recognize him until the end. (Rav Sha'ul may have had

this Joseph cycle in mind when he wrote Romans 11.)

This Anointed King, this Deliverer, will come from the line of

Seth (Genesis 4:25), from the offspring of Shem (Genesis 9:26),

from the family of Abraham (Genesis 12:3), from the seed of Isaac

(Genesis 26:3) and from the sons of Jacob (Genesis 46:3) and from

the tribe of Judah (49:10). Are you staying with me? Got a

dictionary? The word ZERA means what? _____

What does ex nihilo mean? _____

Read Gen. chps 6-10. Archaeologists are not ignorant of flood

strata in the geological record of ancient Mesopotamia. There

definitely was some kind of horrific flood in antiquity. Flood

stories are part of the memory of the human race and are almost

universally known. The death that swallows Adam and the

generations after him nearly swallows the whole human race in the

wrath of G-d unleashed in the great deluge. But once again there

is a Moshi'a savior figure, a kind of second Adam, and those who

find salvation in his ark survive, while all those outside him

are destroyed. See II Shimon Kefa 3:6. Possibly around 2166

B.C.E. Abraham was born in what is today modern Iraq. His home

was in the city of Ur of the Chaldees (part of today's Iraq and

Kuwait) and his people were Arameans, a Semitic group spreading

out from the Euphrates in Iraq. His family migrated to Haran (an

area near the Turkey-Syrian border 20 miles southeast of Urfa in

modern Turkey), where his father died, where his brother Nahor

settled, and where this Gentile named Abraham received his call

to make aliyah [he was the first foreign emissary of Moshiach's shlichut (mission) to the Holy Land.] G-d chose to save Abraham and to make him the founder of a nation (Israel) and the father of many peoples (the Arab people come through his son Ishmael, born when Abraham was 86). G-d chose to make him a prophet and to give to him and to his "seed" both a covenant and a land and various promises, including the promise of a Moshiach and universal salvation, including the inheritance of the Gentile nations. These covenant promises were renewed to Abraham's son Isaac and Abraham's grandson Jacob. Jacob's name was changed to Israel. The area of Haran is important because it was from this

region that Nahor's granddaughter Rebecca came, and she was

destined to become the wife of Isaac and the mother of Jacob.

Also, Leah and Rachel, the wives of Jacob, came from this region,

because the father of these girls was Laban, Rebecca's brother

and Jacob's uncle/father-in-law.

When we study Genesis, we see this 75 year old Abraham leaving

Haran and being guided by G-d to the land of Canaan with stops at

Shechem, the vicinity of Bethel, the Negev desert to the south of

Israel, Egypt, Bethel again, and then Hebron, where Abraham spent

most of his life. He is a prophet, proclaiming G-d to the heathen

Canaanites by "calling on the name of the L-rd." He acts not only

like a prophet (notice his prophetic intercessory ministry in

20:17 and in 18:23-32) but also like a kohen, building altars and

making sacrifices. But then appears a greater kohen, a

mysterious royal figure ruling almost messianically over the city

that became known later as Jerusalem. This kohen, a type of the

Moshiach, takes Abraham's tithe and blesses him (Gen. 14). Four

eastern kings then attack Sodom and, because Abraham's nephew Lot

lives there, Abraham rescues him. But the same G-d who leads Lot

to escape that homosexual stronghold Sodom, leads Abraham to

miraculously father a son (Isaac) in his old age and then to send

his servant (possibly the Eliezer of Gen. 15:2) to Laban to get

Isaac a bride (see Gen. 24). With the birth of Isaac (a promise

25 years in coming), the promise of the rise of the nation, the possession of the nation's land (Israel), the coming of the Moshiach, and the inheritance of all the nations of the world--this great unfolding promise and its fulfillment--is assured. This is why the visit of the Angel of the L-rd in Gen. 18 is so important (18:2,17,22,33; 19:1 seems to make the inference that the Angel of the L-rd is G-d himself). Under the guidance of G-d we see Abraham moving around to different places, Hebron, the Philistine territory in Gerar, Beersheba, and Mount Moriah (later the site of the Beis Hamikdash mount--II Chron. 3:1). This is where his faith endured its most difficult test, prefiguring the vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice in the coming

Beis Hamikdash, prefiguring the sacrifice of the Moshiach, and prefiguring the sacrifice of every true believer who must put all on the altar to follow the L-rd. But G-d's guidance, made real to Abraham by the intervention of an angel (Gen. 22:11), came to his rescue even in the midst of severe testing. Abraham was put in the right before G-d by faith (15:6), as are all his Messianic heirs and spiritual children according to the promise (Gal. 3:7-9,29).

Isaac's movements are also under the guidance of G-d from the time he narrowly escapes death as a child until his dying day:

Mount Moriah, Gerar (Philistine territory), Beersheba. When his

servants dig a well, the L-rd invariably leads them to water and

the eyes of the heathen see "plainly that the L-rd has been with

you" (26:28). Even as a blind old man, Isaac's hands were guided

by the L-rd (see Gen. 27).

The Edomites, a people south and southeast of the Dead Sea, in

the country called Edom or Seir, raided Judah at the time of the

Babylonian invasion (Obad.11) in the 6th century B.C. and

possessed lands in the Negev desert (Ezek.35). But any claim they

might have made on the territory of Israel was forfeited by the

founder of their nation, Jacob's brother, Esau, who despised his

birthright and was supplanted by his twin brother Jacob. We see

the hand of G-d protecting Jacob, sending him away from Esau to

Haran, prospering him in spite of all Laban's deceptive

practices. As G-d was with Abraham and Isaac, so G-d guided

Jacob. Just as both Sarah and her maid-servant, Hagar, gave

Abraham offspring, so from Leah was born Reuben, Simeon, Levi,

Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. From Rachel was born Joseph and

Benjamin. From Rachel's maid-servant Bilhah was born Dan and

Naphtali. From Leah's maid-servant Zilpah was born Gad and Asher.

When Jacob's caravan left Haran, G-d was with him as he headed

for Gilead, protecting him from Laban. "The L-rd watch(ed)"

(31:48) and angels met him at the place he named Mahanaim and he

strove with G-d and prevailed until he received the blessing as

"Israel." G-d guided Jacob to Shechem and met him at Bethel,
leading him to Hebron. Through his son Joseph, G-d led Jacob even
to Pharaoh's court in Egypt. And the same G-d that led his son
Joseph to become a prophet in Egypt led Jacob's body to be
returned for burial in the promised land, where his tomb (Gen.
50) would become a sign pointing to the Moshiach's tomb and the
Exodus from sin and death. The tribes of Israel that Moses led
out of Egypt in the Exodus were given much assurance by these
stories from G-d's prophetic Word: G-d was likewise leading and
guiding and providing for them as he had for their fathers.

Joseph's movements under the guidance of G-d can be seen in three
days: the day his brothers rejected him as a prophet and as their

savior, refusing to do obeisance, selling him as a slave, and

burying him as dead; the day he was falsely accused and

imprisoned in Egypt; and the third day, the day he was raised to

the right hand of supreme power as a vindicated prophet and the

Moshi'a Savior of the world, ruler of all (Gen. 45:8). (See

I Cor. 15:4 "the third day")

The inference of Gen. 49:10 is that Judah's sovereignty

(shepherd's staff) will remain with that tribe until the coming

of David and the Son of David the Moshiach. See Ezek. 21:27 and

its near quote of Gen. 49:10, "until he comes to whom it

rightfully belongs." Gen. 49:10 says "the obedience of the

peoples" is his, that is the Moshiach's. In the Babylonian

Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b says that this is indeed a Messianic

prophecy.

GENESIS 3:15

And I will put enmity between thee (the Serpent) and the woman,

and between thy seed (the children of the evil one--Yochanan

8:44) and her seed; it (the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy

head (the Serpent), and thou shalt strike his heel. ["The Son of

the promise" is an important Messianic theme. The "seed of the

Woman" who is promised in Genesis 3:15 is to crush the Serpent.

This idea of the "Son of the Promise" underscored in Genesis

18:14 points toward the Deliverer foreshadowed also by others,

like Samson and Samuel, whose supernaturally orchestrated births

were a sign of divine rescue on the way. Moses tells us in

Genesis 49:10 that the Deliverer will come through Judah. But

here, even before Judah or Jacob, G-d miraculously brings into

being Isaac, just as G-d miraculously brings into being his true

people of the new birth. The supernatural birth of both people

(from the exile of sin) and the Moshiach (Immanuel) is a key

theme related to the doctrine of salvation in Isaiah.]

GENESIS 49:10

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a ruler's staff from

between his feet until Shiloh (or if Shelo "until he whose it

is") come and the obedience of the nations (peoples) is his.

SHEMOT (EXODUS)

G-d's blessing on the people of Abraham (Gen. 12:3; 15:5) is such

that, according to Ex. 1:12, "the more they were oppressed, the

more they multiplied and spread." We see this in our own day in

the way the Nazi Holocaust of 1933-1945 led to the thriving

nation of Israel in 1948, growing with a vast exodus of diaspora

Jews from the Soviet Union, Ethiopia, and other lands. G-d keeps

his promises as we see in Gen. 15:13 and Ex. 12:40. There are

modern liberal scholars (not too many of them) who believe that

the Exodus from Egypt did not take place historically. Abraham

is declared to be a fictional character and his prophecy in Gen.

15:13-16 about the Egyptian Exodus is declared to be a post

events literary creation. But we know that it is an historical

fact that the Exodus from the Babylonian Exile began around 538

B.C.E. (see Ezra 1:1-4) and that Jeremiah was a real historical

character and his prophecy about the coming Babylonian Exodus in

Jer.16:14-15 can be dated before 586 B.C.E. when Jerusalem's

destruction made the Exile in Babylon complete. Now if G-d can

prove to us that the latter Exodus is historical, why should we

be skeptical that the former Exodus is historical? The doubters

living in the last decade of the 20th century are without excuse

for their unbelief, since they are themselves eye-witnesses of a

full scale Russian Exodus that promises to double Israel's

population in just a few years.

This book tells of the enslavement and deliverance of a people

and the birth and preparation of their deliverer. We hear of a

contest between the G-d of the people of the coming Moshiach and

the people of Pharaoh and his fals g-ds We learn of a

miraclous deliverance out of Egypt and the journey to Mt. Sinai

(Mt. Horeb). It is on this mountain that G-d reveals Himself

first to Moses and then to the people, requiring by means of a

covenant or contract that they be exclusively devoted to Him as a

holy nation, with His holy presence accompanying them on the

march by means of the mishkan and the kehunnah (priesthood)

carrying the law of Moses. As men had to enter the ark of

Noah's salvation to be saved from death, so we must enter the ark

of the true Messianic deliverance to be saved. And another

deliverer, the baby Moses, [MOSHE has the idea of "drawing out

(of the water)], was also in a tiny ark (the same word is used in

both stories: TEVAH meaning "vessel" is probably from an Egyptian

loan word meaning "chest" or "coffin"). In the case of both Noah

and Moses, the people would have to be submerged in a tevilah

into covenantal fellowship with their deliverer to be saved (see

I Corinthians 10:2; I Shliach Kefa 3:20f; II Shliach Kefa 2:5).

And just as the Noah cycle in Genesis shows a glimmer of Messianic typology (see Matthew 24:38; Luke 17:27), so the book of Exodus is also Messianic and eschatological. Both stories point toward a new world coming which only a remnant preserved through judgment will inherit. Moses is depicted not merely as a prophet but as a mediator and judge/ruler who does a kohen's work as well. When he says "a prophet like me" in Deut. 18:15, this would include all these facets and by necessity would refer to the Moshiach. This is confirmed by Isaiah, who declares that the Prophet Moshiach will be a new Moses (Isa. 49:9-10). Look at chapter 24:2, where Moses is a type (a perfect model pointing to something higher) of Messiah because he symbolizes G-d's

mediator. Like the expected Moshiach-Prophet, Moses is also a

Mediator and law-giver (see Isaiah 42:4; Deuteronomy 18:18-19;

Isaiah 49:8-9), liberator, the inaugurator of the Kingdom of G-d,

the bringer of the covenant, the one delivered in order to be

G-d's deliverer, the one who rules and judges G-d's people and

raises up the divine dwelling of G-d in their midst, the

tabernacle, the MISHKAN OHEL MO'ED (the sanctuary of the tent of

meeting). Actually, Moses and Aaron together give us a picture

of the ruler-kohen Moshiach of Zechariah 6:13

(Yehoshua-Zerubbabel) and Psalm 110.

There is a recapitulation of the life of Moses in the life of

Moshiach Yehoshua. Both are saved from a slaughter of innocents,

both are called out of Egypt; Herod is a latter-day Pharaoh.

Twelve disciples to match the twelve tribes; there are forty days

in the wilderness to match the forty years of wandering, etc.

However, Moses is not a mere political leader bringing in a

this-worldly national liberation or revolution (this is only the

"Moses" of the "liberation theology" of Roman Catholic liberalism

in South America). He is a mediator pointing toward an

other-worldly G-d (G-d's angel goes before the Israelites--see

23:23; 33:2 and they see God--24:10). This G-d descends from

heaven and pitches His tent with His people, Himself dwelling

over the Aron HaEdut (ark of the testimony) where He sits

enthroned between the cherubim and over the Word He inscribed on

stone tablets. Moses sprinkles the elect nation (Exodus 24:8)

just as the Moshiach will sprinkle the elect nations (Isaiah

52:15). In both cases the elect are redeemed as a

blood-covenanted possession. Furthermore, in the book of Exodus,

Egypt's "new king who knew nothing of Joseph" (Exodus 1:8) is a

prefiguration of the Anti-Moshiach of the book of Revelation,

where the Exodus-like plagues of G-d's wrath (angry judgment)

fall on the Anti-Moshiach Beast's end-time Sodom civilization.

So Pharaoh's fall gives us a foreglimpse of the fall of the Beast

and his last-days "Babylon" civilization we see pictured so

vividly in Revelation 16 (see also Rev. 11:8). The Besuras

Hageulah of Yochanan is also organized much like Exodus, with

"signs" in both books convincing the people of the credibility of

each saving Mediator. While there are seven signs in Yochanan

there are ten signs building up to the Exodus of Moses. These

ten are Dahm (blood 7:14-24); Z'fard'im (frogs 8:1-15); Kinim

(gnats 8:16-19); Arov (flies 8:20-32); Dever (pestilence on

livestock 9:1-7); Sh'chin (boils 9:8-12); Barad (hail 9:13-35);

Arbeh (locusts 10:4-20); Chosech (darkness 10:21-29) Makat

B'chorot (slaying of firstborn 12:29-32). These are recited every

year in the Passover Seder, which is eaten with matzah and

M'rorim bitter herbs (see 12:8). Read carefully 12:1-27. Notice

the mixed crowd or rabble Erev Rav (large motley group) in 12:38

and remember the parable of the tares and wheat in Matt. 13:25.

Not all were prepared for holy battle (13:18).

Normally, passages like 12:37-39 are used in the Seder to explain

the matzah or unleavened bread. Ex. 12:42 explains why some

Jewish people stay up all night for the Chag festival. Read the

breath-taking description of the parting of what is traditionally

called the "Red Sea" (Yam Soof in Hebrew) in Ex. 14. and the

"Mi-chamochah Ba'Alim Adonai song in Ex. 15:11 found in the

synagogue liturgy. Notice a key theme of the entire Torah in

Ex. 15:13, "You guided them by Your strength to Your Holy Abode."

A Messianic theme in Exodus is the refrain we heard in Genesis

37:8, where Joseph's brothers taunt Joseph with the question: "Do

you think that you will indeed be king over us and rule us?" In

Exodus 2:14 Moses, even though he has been raised in a palace as

a prince, is likewise taunted, "Who set you as an official and

judge over us?" This is a continuation of the theme we will see

again in King David's life and in Isaiah 53 where, once again,

the spiritually anointed Leader is sent by G-d but rejected by

the people. In the case of both the Mediator of the Sinai

Covenant and also the Mediator of the (Jer. 31:31-34) Messianic

Brit Chadasha, the Savior-figure who "sprinkles" ["NAZAH"], with

the blood of the Covenant (Ex. 24:8; Isaiah 52:13) is called the

Eved (Servant) of the L-rd (Ex. 14:31; Isa. 52:13). Prince

Moses will be a type of the Moshiach, just as Joseph "prince

among his brothers" (Gen. 49:26) was. Genesis 49:10 tells us

that the obedience of the nations will come to the Moshiach

descended from the tribe of Judah, but Scripture gives us various

pictures of him. For example, the Jewish people (some of them,

that is) meant to do Yehoshua Son of Joseph harm, but G-d meant

to bring good out of it by saving many people (Genesis 50:20).

Also, Genesis offers the promise of land and life but ends with

everyone being sucked into a tomb (see Genesis 49:29-33), and the

body of Joseph going back to that tomb in a 400 year long trek

(Genesis 50:24-26; Exodus 13:19). But a victory over the defeat

of that tomb will occur when "the 70" (Exodus 1:5) burst forth
from the tomb of Egypt in a great exodus of "600,000" (Exodus
12:3?). This was possible because of midwives who didn't believe
in abortion (1:17), who did believe instead in the G-d of
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the G-d of the living. This awesome
G-d commissions Moses (1:23-2:15) while he is a shepherd in
Midian on Mt. Sinai (Horeb) to deliver His people with Match
Ha'Elohim (the rod of God) performing signs and wonders (this
word wonder" mofet in Ex.7:3 we will see again in a key
Messianic passage in Zechariah 3:8). The G-d of Israel reveals
to Moses his personal covenant Name which contains his character,

that he is the G-d who always is (Ex. 3:14), the eternally self-existent true G-d. This one true L-rd is the author of salvation (Ex. 6:1-8), and he explains that he is going to remember his covenant with the Patriarchs (Ex. 2:24) and then he will plunder the Egyptians (3:21-22; 11:2-3 12:35-36) and harden Pharaoh's heart before he brings out Israel from Egypt with a mighty hand. G-d has many marvelous reasons for this (see 6:1; 7:3; 9:16; 10:1-2; 11:9; 14:4; 18:11). The plagues of the Exodus were acts of judgment. The plagues were also deliberate denigrations of the destructive deities and idol religion of the Egyptians (12:12), the kind of Holy War that Moses and Joshua will be continuing as preparations are made to invade the Holy

Land. Ex. 6:6 says "I am the L-rd, and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. I will redeem (I will be the Go'el) Redeemer, literally buying you back from slavery by putting a blood sacrifice ransom on every door). I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment." But in doing these acts of judgment, in pouring out the plagues, G-d promises to "make a distinction between my people and your (Pharaoh's) people" (Ex. 8:23; Gen. 3:15). This is the key to what Yochanan means in Rev. 3:10, "Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to

test the inhabitants of the earth." Believers have been taken out of judgment and they will not be "destroyed with those who destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18); just the opposite, they will be raptured first (Rev. 11:12). G-d will "take" them like he took Enoch and Elijah. However, not all the tribulation plagues of Exodus necessitate evacuation for G-d's people to escape them (see 8:22; 9:20-21,26,34; 10:23; 11:6-7). This should prompt us to anticipate an imminent rapture but not to presume that rapture is the only way G-d can protect his kedoshim while He pours out bowls of wrath and plagues of judgment on the worldly people all around his chosen ones. Like a typical reprobate who continually refuses to humble himself before G-d (10:3), the proud

unregenerate Pharaoh does not believe even though all the

terrible plagues of judgment and wrath fall on him. But these

plagues the L-rd uses to distinguish between Egypt and Israel

(11:7), for He is redeeming a people of slaves set apart to

worship Him (10:26) and to become a free nation of kohanim to

G-d. The L-rd will make his covenant with his redeemed people,

and they will remember the covenant in a solemn covenant meal,

the Pesach Seder (chapter 12 Pesach). Chapter 13 hearkens back to

Genesis 22 and shows that only the first-born of the redeemed

will be included in the Pidyon HaBen redemption of the son--see

22:29b-30). When the first-born of Pharaoh and Egypt were struck

down while the first-born of Israel was preserved alive even before the Red Sea parted, these events showed the Israelites that they were being delivered from destruction by One who is omnipotent and can alone assure their future (their future lay with the ruling heir, the firstborn). The early Messianic Jews had the same realization when they saw G-d likewise save and raise his own firstborn Son from the dead and effect their and His "exodus"--see Luke 9:30 and I Cor. 5:7. Matthew also presents Moshiach Yehoshua as the New Moses, just as Isaiah looks forward to a new exodus of salvation and the Moshiach to lead it (see Isaiah 49:9-10). The Pesach lamb was a vicarious sacrifice for the first-born heir, who represented the whole community and

its future. The Pesach Lamb purchased the redemption of those who were saved and its blood on their houses literally bought them so that they became the people whom G-d bought or acquired ["KANAH"]

Ex. 15:16; 12:23-27). Atonement money (30:11-16) was meant to

remind the Israelites of the ransom given in the blood sacrifice

of the Pesach lamb and in the tent of meeting, that is "the kofer

(ransom) given for your lives" (30:12). Trace the word for lamb

in Hebrew Seh from Genesis 22:7 to Exodus 12:3 to Isaiah 53:7.

Moshiach is the coming Passover Lamb, the redemptive-savior of

Abraham's progeny. He is the one that Isaac asks for (unwittingly

not only for his own redemption but also for the purchased

redemption of all Abraham's children by faith).

Sometimes, as in the case of the detour the Israelites took

through the desert rather than the more direct route to Israel,

G-d has a reason for making us take longer to reach our

objectives. The disheveled ex-slaves needed time to get

disciplined and organized. We talmidim also sometimes need more

time and therefore should not get discouraged when our long-range

goals are not reached over-night. See 13:17-18. The important

point is that we must wait on the L-rd who will remember his

people (2:24). The L-rd works very quickly when he wills to do

so. It took only three months for the L-rd to bring his

Lamb-redeemed (13:13-14) and Red Sea-mikvehed people to Mount

Sinai (Horeb) where he met with their mediator Moses for one year

and where Israel became a blood-covenanted nation! These latter

two events look forward to the mediator Moshiach on the Mount of

Transfiguration and the remnant Shluchim of Israel at the

Moshiach's Last Passover Seder, when we too became a

blood-covenanted people.

One of the twelve sons of Jacob was Levi. He had a son named

Kohath who had a son named Amram whose children were Aaron and

Miriam and Moses. Aaron had a son named Eleazar who had a son

named Phinehas (read about Eleazar's death in the last verse of

Joshua). In the book of Exodus Moses is depicted as a Levite who

in chapter 32 leads a vanguard of zealous Levites in setting the standard of kedushah for the Israelites in the wilderness. Many Hebrews are still slaves in Egypt, spiritually speaking, worshipping the Egyptian bull G-d Apis (the golden calf) with orgiastic worship (the Hebrew word L'Tsachek in 32:6 has, according to the medieval rabbinic commentator Rashi, sexual connotations). The point is that the called out kahal of the Exodus is in need of a second Exodus, a new creation Exodus from the "Egyptian" idolatry and bondage within and the hard-hearted "Pharaoh" of their own proud and unspiritual nature. Moses has been to the mountaintop and has seen the pattern of G-d's coming salvation (25:9,10; 26:30), but the people, lacking his vision,

murmur against G-d's leader, break the covenant, and perish

("without a vision the people perish" [Prov. 29:18]--not

realizing that there is a spiritual march and a discipleship

discipline necessary to reach salvation's goal.) The people

develop increasing carnality, rebelliousness, faithlessness,

ingratitude, unteachability, anger and cowardice until G-d

condemns them and replaces them with a new-born people that

emerges at the end of the forty year wilderness wanderings. Only

the new-born "inherit the earth" of the land of Israel in the

end! But G-d is the Prime Mover of the Exodus; it doesn't depend

on Moses' eloquence (or lack of it--4:10; 6:30) or even on

Israel's competence. He will say, "Israel, come forth!" and she who was dying in chains in an unclean land of idols will come forth living and free, destined for kedushah and hitkhadeshut.

Notice the power encounter is between the "New Age" Anti-Moshiach pseudo-miracles and occult arts of magicians in Pharaoh's court and the power of the Ruach Hakodesh (7:11; see II Thes. 2:9-10; Rev. 13:11-18). We see that Anti-Moshiach oppression is of a political and religious kind, and that it is diabolically designed to hinder worship of the true G-d and His Moshiach (See 13:13).

In many ways Moses prefigures the Moshiach. Moses himself is no messianic hero, however, but a limited man who needs Aaron as his

press secretary and spokesman, and Miriam as his music and choreography worship leader. Through Jethro's advice, Moses wisely admits his need for a vast division of labor as far as leadership is concerned (18:18, 21), because the job of Shofet (Judge) was getting too large for him. So we see Moses as a model of the true spiritual leader, one who spends time on the mountaintop alone in intercessory prayer and devekut with G-d as well as in meditation on the Word, and then allows a host of others to help him carry the load of work, which would be too heavy for him to bear alone. He does this by supervising their work which is compartmentalized and graded in complexity under

properly fitted leadership so that as problems go up the hierarchy, most get solved before they reach him. Exodus 29:4 shows the kohen's total abulation looking forward to Moshaiach's tevilah. This kohen's washing is the source of the consecration ritual for service to G-d (19:14) and the proselyte initiation ritual which is Brit Chadashah tevilah. See the word (mikveh) in Exodus 7:19 and Genesis 1:10. There is typology for this in the parting of the Red Sea and in the washings of the kohanim as they are installed in their ministry. Deliverance and redemption, however, are not ritually received (rituals are commanded but as "wilderness tests" of obedience and faith, not for their supposed magical properties). Deliverance and redemption come through

emunah in the ransom of the Passover Lamb (later fulfilled in the

Moshiach) that heals us from the plagues of sin and death (Ex.

15:26; 23:25; Isa. 53:5,7).

The promised life G-d offers (later fulfilled in the mavet,

kevurah and techiyas hamesim of the Moshiach) is symbolized in

time (Shabbos and Festivals of Sacred Calendar) and in space

(Holy Camp, Mishkan and Promised Land).

In front of the OHEL MO'ED was the KIYYOR for washing and the

MITZBE'ACH of the burnt-offering. In the Holy Place was found the

golden SHULCHAN with the LECHEM PANIM and beside it, the

MENORAH.

In front of the PAROKHET on the KODESH HAKODESHIM was a

MITZBE'ACH HAKETORET. In the KODESH HAKODESHIM was the

ark of the

covenant with the ASERET HADIBROT on the LUCHOT AVANIM

inside and

the KAPPORET functioning as its lid, with the two cherubim facing

each other on top of the KAPPORET. Typology of Moshiach is seen

in the MISHKAN's construction, since he is the perfect pattern of

G-d's saving presence with men; he is the bread of life, the

Lechem Panim, bread of the Presence and he is the Shulchan upon

which all our sustenance rests; he is the menorah, the Lampstand,

the light of the world; he is the Mizbe'ach Haketoret (the altar

of incense), He is the sweet fragrance of salvation's incense; He

is the Mizbe'ach Ha'Olah, (the altar of burnt-offering); he is

the great Kohen Gadol, the acceptable sacrifice, the one MELITZ,

the kiyor (basin) who washes us with the Ruach Hakodesh, the

law-giver, the door, the KAPPORET, the blood, the victim, and the

Word as well as the Presence who tabernacled with us in the

flesh. Isaiah says He is even the covenant (Isa. 42:6).

Exodus 30:30 is the origin of the word Moshiach. Kohanim were

anointed with a special oil, and among laymen only the Davidic

King (Himself a kohen after the order of Malki-tzedek) was

anointed. When David's dynasty became acknowledged as the

Messianic line, "G-d's anointed" (Moshiach) became a portentous

way of referring to David's Moshiach-bringing dynasty. (See the

Hebrew word in Psalm 2:2 and Daniel 9:26).

In the theology of Exodus, Egypt is not just exited; it is judged

and condemned, just as is the old humanity in the momentous

sacrifice of the Lamb of G-d. The true people of G-d is a

remnant within the "rabble." Not all Israel is Israel. The royal

idol of Pharaoh was a serpent g-d, a cobra, and the most

important of all Egyptian devils was Apophis represented by a

serpent. Genesis 3 has this in its background since Moses is the

author. The Serpent g-d of this world is being rejected.

Ironically, Moses finds he has a more gruelling challenge in

dealing with the people of G-d than he did with the people of

Pharaoh. Nearly stoning him, they crave the sensual delights of their former life of slavery, not realizing that these will bring upon themselves the evil diseases of Egypt (see Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 7). The murmurers are always yearning to get out of the ministry and have a "normal life." Doubting that G-d can furnish a table in the wilderness" (Psalm 78:19), many fail to endure to the end and be saved.

As we see in the Servant Songs of Isaiah, both Israel and Moshiach are G-d's first-born Son (see Exodus 4:23; Psalm 89:27).

They are both the "seed" of Abraham, but Isaiah 53 says that Moshiach makes atonement for the people. "For the transgression of my people was he stricken" (Isa. 53:8). We see much typology

of Moshiach in Exodus: the Pesach lamb chavurah meal (with blood

protection for covenant-keepers), the manna "test of obedience"

meals (teaching not to "gather" faithlessly in the flesh but to

wait on the L-rd and trust in the L-rd's providence and his

provision), and the legislation about strangers and outsiders

needing to be consecrated in the covenant initiation of

circumcision to partake of Pesach, as well as the sections on the

Zekenim eating and drinking with G-d.

Exodus 36:2 speaks of the artists G-d used to make His worship

beautiful and acceptable to Him (see also Ex. 35:10-19;

35:30-36:7). If the worshipers sacrificing and meeting G-d at

the MISHKAN are a prophetic foreshadow or type of the people of

G-d, then each KEHILLAH should have its artisans and artists

today to coordinate and embellish the gifts and talents that each

worshiper is prompted by his own heart to bring to G-d's

service. In Exodus we see the leaders coordinating the arts and

the artistic contributions of the people for the esthetic

enhancement of worship. It's important to remember that

Solomon's Beis Hamikdash and other artistic achievements of great

beauty (such as the Bible itself as a literary achievement) are

used by G-d to attract the heathen to come and taste and see that

the L-rd is good. No Brit Chadasha kehillah should underestimate

the power of the arts in attracting outsiders.

Exodus chps. 35-40 tells about the building of the mishkan (a type of portable royal pavilion-palace for G-d to dwell in as His people travelled with Him toward the Promised Land of new life).

The fire and cloud (Ex. 40:34-38) associated with it from the time of its completion are a sign that G-d indeed dwells there.

At the end of Deuteronomy we find Moses, old and ready to die and yet not entering the promised land. G-d had almost killed him once before (possibly in a deadly illness) over the mitzvah of

Bris Milah (circumcision) [Ex. 4:26]. In the book of Exodus we learn about many Jewish matters of importance: the L-rd calls

Himself the Elohei Ha'Ivrim (G-d of the Hebrews) (7:16); the L-rd

gives the prohibition on travel and fire-building on Shabbos

(16:29-30; 35:3); the testing of Moses occurs (compare Ex. 17 and

Num. 20); we see the Amalek (17:14) people over whom King Saul

got in trouble for not killing their king (I Sam. 15:8), There

are other important themes. The people of G-d are called to be a

malchut of kohanim and a holy nation (19:6). The reverential

glory attached to the ministry is seen in the striking ceremonies

and clothing of the kohanim (28:40-43). We see the trumpet or

shofar and catch its esohatological significance (see 19:13,16

and I Thes. 4:16).

The Aseret haDibrot which form the basis of all other laws in the

Bible are introduced (20:1-17). A depiction of G-d's nature is

given to us (34:6-7). The fear of the L-rd is seen as a

preventative against sin (20:20). The redemption price of a slave

is thirty shekels of silver (see Zech. 11:12 and Matt. 26:15;

27:3,9). The typology of Moses the Judge points to Moshiach the

Judge, since, to come before such a Judge means to come before

G-d (see 22:9); the Angel (Messenger) of the L-rd will have the

Name or Presence of G-d in Him and will be virtually the

equivalent of the L-rd Himself and therefore a picture of Mal.

3:1--see Ex. 23:20-21.

The reason for the Holy War In the Holy Land concerns the seven

indigenous peoples there who were made Charem (devoted under the

ban of destruction--Ex.23:32-33).

Much of this book is taken up with the detailed plans for

building the Mishkan as an acceptable place for G-d to dwell and

be met by His people. In fact it is called Ohel Mo'ed the tent of

meeting." Notice the fulfillment that comes with serving the L-rd

there. "The Israelites had done all of the work just as the L-rd

had commanded Moses. When Moses saw that they had done all the

work just as the L-rd had commanded, he blessed them" (Ex.

39:42-43).

On Moses' authorship, see 24:4,7 which says "Moses wrote down all

the words of the L-rd"..and read from "the Sefer HaBrit (Book of

the Covenant)." On the other "book," the Sefer HaChayyim,

referred to elsewhere in Scripture, see Ex. 32:33.

The Moshiach is Immanuel ("G-d-with-us"), the Word of G-d (G-d's

Wisdom, His Son) who descended from heaven to Mount Sinai to

dwell "with us" in the Devir (Kodesh HaKodeshim) of the

Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting, where G-d pitches His Royal

Pavilion among His people and can only be approached with

Biblically specified blood sacrifice acceptably mediated.

The temporary Tent of Meeting that Moses set up before the

tabernacle was erected is mentioned in Ex. 33:11.

EXODUS 3:13

And Moses said unto G-d, Behold, when I come unto the children of

Israel, and shall say unto them, The G-d of your fathers hath

sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name?

what shall I say unto them?

EXODUS 3:14

And G-d said unto Moses, I AM WHO I AM: and he said, Thus shalt

thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

EXODUS 25:40

And see that thou make them after their pattern, which was shown

thee on the mountain.

VAYIKRA (LEVITICUS)

A whole book of the Bible is devoted to underscoring the fact

that Biblical (as opposed to Talmudic) Judaism is a faith

requiring shefikhat dahm (shedding of blood) for the SELICHAT

AVON. On Mt. Sinai the L-rd made it clear that He could not be

truly honored as G-d without blood (7:37-38). We were bought at

great price, and all the blood of bulls and goats pointed to the

blood of the Lamb of G-d who takes away the sin of the world.

When we meditate on this book we see at what great price of blood

the world was redeemed. For, as in the institution of the Brit

Chadasha (Matt. 26:28), so the Sinai Covenant was instituted by blood sacrifice (Ex. 24:3-8). In Leviticus we see that this is emphasized with no less than eight types of offerings: the sin offering [CHATTAT] (Lev. 4:1-35; 6:24-30) to atone for specific unwitting sin; different animals or offerings were required, depending on the rank of the offender--ruler, kohen, or common person, poor person, very poor person; the offerer laid his hand on the victim and identified with it (as we must identify with Moshiach); this blood alone was put on the horns of the incense altar (4:16-18) in the Holy Place; on the Yom Kippur, this blood was taken into the Kodesh HaKodeshim and manipulated as for a

leprous unclean people (Lev. 14:7; 16:14). The kohen performed

ritual eating with part of the meat in the Beis Hamikdash area;

the Moshiach's Seder looks back to this since we are Brit

Chadasha kohanim (Yochanan 6:49-58).

Next, the guilt or trespass offering [ASHAM] (the same word is

predicted about the Moshiach in Isaiah 53:10) to atone for

unwitting sin requiring restitution (this was also eaten; read

Lev. 5:14-6:7; 7:1-7; whenever G-d or someone else was defrauded

or cheated of what was rightly his, this sacrifice was necessary.

Like the leper who, because of his uncleanness, defrauds G-d of

acceptable service and needs the cleansing blood applied to his

ears, hands, and feet (see 14:12-14), so we, who have defrauded

G-d of much service because of our uncleannesses, need the blood of the Moshiach applied to our whole being.

Next, the holocaust [OLAH or burnt offering] to atone for unwitting sins in general; the kohen had to keep the fire burning continuously (Lev. 6:8-13) because the victim had to be burned completely and there were sacrifices morning and evening. In the

L-rd's work the minister has to keep the fire of spiritual awakening burning continuously by not neglecting the Word and prayer and other ministry duties (see Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:25).

Next, the cereal offering [MINCHAH] to secure or retain good will (not a blood sacrifice but fine flour, olive oil, and

frankincense offered along with such); unless the offering was

for his own sin, the kohen could eat part of it (6:16; 1:9), and

this was one of his "mitzbe'ach rights," just as we have certain

mitzbe'ach rights at the Table of the L-rd that unbelievers have

no right to share (Heb. 13:10).

Next, the peace offering [SHLOMIM] or fellowship offering to

render thanks to G-d; the kohen took the sacrificial meat and the

cakes or wafers and gave them back to the repentant choteh to eat

wherever he chose. This is a picture of the privileges and

benefits that accompany the ministry of the laity and also points

to the Moshiach's Tish.

Next, the drink offering [NESECH] was denied the kohen and

completely poured out, just as our lives must be wholly expended

for the L-rd (see II Tim. 4:6) and we must not get involved in

civilian pursuits (II Tim. 2:4); (in addition there was the thank

offering [TODAH] for a blessing received,

Next, the vow offering [NEDER] upon completion of a vow, and the

freewill offering [N'DAVAH]"from a glad heart" (a voluntary

offering, such as was given at the three major feasts: Pesach,

Shavuos and Sukkot).

In some of these sacrifices, hands are laid on the victim, which

must be without flaw, and the victim then, with this physical

contact, becomes (through the gracious gift of saving emunah) a

substitute, and a vicarious kapporah is thereby appropriated for

the choteh (see Leviticus 1:4). With the touch of the hand and

the emunah of the believer, the sin transfers to the victim whose

bloody death expiates (removes) the chet from the choteh and

propitiates (appeases) the wrath or anger of G-d against sin.

Thus the sin is covered or atoned for. In Leviticus 4:1-3 we see

that sin doesn't get off scot-free...somebody has to pay. We see

the bull come forward to pay, just as later we see the perfect

victim, the filial Word of G-d the man Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach

Yehoshua, come forward to pay (as foretold in Isaiah 53). In

Leviticus 4:15 we see the zekenim of the community lay their

hands upon the head, just as later they unwittingly laid their

hands upon the head of the eternal Word Himself, the Moshiach

Kohen-Lamb. In this respect the Moshiach's death was not only an

Asham it was also a Chattat that is, a sin offering for the whole

community. In fact all of the sacrifices find their fulfillment

in the death of the Moshiach. On Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol

lays both of his hands on the head of the victim, confesses over

it all the perverse sins and transgressions of the people,

transferring them to the head of the doomed victim, who will bear

[NASAH] them away outside the makhaneh (camp) to the wilderness

where it will die (notice Lev. 16:22 and Isaiah 53:12 "He bore

the sin of many"). The covenant of salt referred to in Lev. 2:13

symbolizes permanence, which is an aspect of both salt's

preservative quality and G-d's covenant love for his people.

G-d spoke to Moses about such critically important matters from

the Ohel Moed (Tent of Meeting) (Lev. 1:1). And the chesed

Hashem is emphasized in the fact that Aaron, although he had made

a golden calf for the people and was completely unworthy to be a

minister (like Shliach Kefa and Rav Sha'ul), and although he in

no way earned by zechus the personal relationship to the King of

Kings that the Covenant offered, nevertheless, the grace of G-d

was such that G-d revealed to Moses how He wanted to be

worshipped in the Mishkan. Then G-d had Moses ordain Aaron and

instruct him to perform the holy duties of a kohen as are written

out in this book, the book of Leviticus. Nevertheless, not many should become teachers and engage in the kohen's service of teaching, since those who teach will be judged with greater strictness (Ya'akov 3:1), and Leviticus warns us several times about what will happen to kohanim who are careless in their duties. In Leviticus 4:31 it says, "Thus the kohen shall make atonement for him and he shall be forgiven." The perfect Word of G-d, who came to Moses with this oracle, Himself came later as our eternal kohen (Psalm 110:4) and made expiation for us with his own flawless life poured out in a bloody death so that we could be forgiven. This is "the ram of the guilt offering" (Lev.

5:16) that G-d promised to provide for Abraham (Genesis 22:11-14;

Isa. 53:10). Leviticus 9 promises the glorious Presence of the

L-rd will appear to you if the enjoined sacrifice is accepted

(9:1,5-7, 23); Yehoshua is the Word of G-d's Presence appearing

among us as Immanuel (God-with-us). Notice I Cor. 15:5f says "he

appeared.

In chapter 10 we see that two kohanim went beyond what is written

and the L-rd permanently retired them from their S'MICHA

(ordination), just as many great spiritual leaders, involved in

the "illicit fire" of wine, women and financial corruption, have

likewise been ingloriously defrocked and wiped out of the

ministry by the L-rd. If we know the Moshiach and we are kohanim

who have entered the Tent of Meeting, then why do we break the

law and drunkenly crave wine (Lev. 10:9)? If you are in the

L-rd's ministry, you cannot go anywhere you want or do anything

you want; you must not go outside the entrance of the Tent of

Meeting lest you die" (10:7). We must not touch anything

unclean, lest we grieve the Ruach Hakodesh and break our Rev.

3:20 communion with the L-rd, to which Lev. 10:17 points. If

anyone thinks that he is so gifted and invaluable to the L-rd

that he can get away with secret sin, he should remember that G-d

had for kohanim only Aaron's four sons and G-d put half of them

to death! No man is indispensable with G-d; all of us can be

eliminated and replaced (G-d replaced the whole people of Israel

in the wilderness); so we should meditate on this book and fear

G-d. G-d seems to be saying in Lev. 10:2-3, "Offer right

sacrifices, O ministers, or you will be sacrificed." The

eye-witnessed detail in Lev. 10:5 reminds us of Acts 5:1-11 where

two other ministers committed high-handed sin. Aaron's sons

deliberately shunned the fire from G-d (Lev. 9:24) and offered

unholy fire (10:1) of their own choosing.

In chapter 13, we see that G-d's minister must examine the flock

and sometimes infected members must be quarantined and dealt with

apart from the others. Suppose you as a spiritual leader

interviewed a lonely bachelor with a history of fornication and

suppose he was seeking admission to your ministry because he was

"lonely" for lady companionship. Would you see this as "leprosy"

and quarantine him? Or would you play the Jewish matchmaker and

rush to "meet his needs?" We need to make sure that all of us

keep our "itch" (Lev. 13:30) under the examination of the Lord's

body through faithful submission to the House of G-d where we've

been called. Lev. 16:2 tells us about the Parokhet (or curtain

veiling the Kodesh HaKodashim) and about the Aron Kodesh (the

Holy Ark) and regarding the atonement cover or Kaporet where G-d

Himself appears. In Rom. 3:25 the word (ilastE/rion is the word

for Moshiach's sacrifice of atonement, and it is a direct

reference to this Greek word which is also found here in the Septuagint translation of Lev. 16:2. So Yehoshua is where G-d appears in holy sacrifice. Yehoshua sprinkles the nations in a cosmic Yom Kippur sacrifice, according to Isaiah 52:15, since he is the cosmic and eternal kohen of Psalm 110:4. Aza'zel is generally translated "scapegoat" in Lev. 16:10. It cannot mean demon (see Lev. 17:7).

In chapter 18 polygamy (18:18) and homosexuality (18:22) are condemned and sexual sins are made one of the grounds for exile which is threatened (compare 18:25 to 18:28; also 26:34). Since the illicit and incestuous unions in Leviticus 18 seem to be referred to in Acts 15:20 and Matthew 19:9, a case can be made

that Moshiach Yehoshua allowed no other grounds for divorce and remarriage (other than porneia). Porneia would have been the grounds for the annulment of Yosef's marriage to Miryam had she been guilty of this kind of sexual deception during the engagement period (see Matthew 1:19), and in that case had he remarried he would be considered married only once (I Timothy 3:2). Other than these types of exceptions, Yehoshua considered the marriage vow indissoluble. If one intends to be a leader in G-d's work and if one knows that his calling entails it, one should seek ordination, not necessarily a prestigious academic degree. The Bible says nothing about prestigious degrees (except

that Moshiach Yehoshua condemns the idolatrous and caste-creating

use of titles in the L-rd's House -- Matthew 23:5-12), but it

says plenty (even in Leviticus) about ordination! Do you think

someone should not have to possess a medical license (that can be

revoked if they engage in malpractice) if they want to be a

doctor or a medical healer of bodies? If this is true, why do

you think you should be able to lead in the L-rd's work without a

similar recognized appointment holding you accountable for your

moral and doctrinal integrity? Just as Exodus gives minute

details for the building of the Mishkan, so Leviticus gives

minute details for how the kohanim are to be ordained so they can

be overseers who inspect the worshippers according to the exact

laws and regulations protecting the holiness of G-d's people.

G-d wants quality control and quality control inspectors to

insure holiness in his worshippers. This is why Shliach Sha'ul

lays down qualifying principles for the standards ministers must

keep (see 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1). Anti-clericalism is the

renunciation of the ordained ministry and is a reaction against

clericalism, wherein the clergy is turned into a caste system

that abuses ministerial privileges and lords it over the laity.

But anti-clericalism is itself a sin against G-d's Word because

G-d does want mesharetim (ministers, servants) and G-d does want

them authorized and accountable to those who appointed them.

In Lev. 8:22-32 we see the ordination ceremony. Moses officiates. (See also Ex. 29:19-34 and its description.) Notice that a man cannot ordain himself. Aaron and his sons are dependent on the G-d who called them to dress them in the holy garments of a kohen using his "dresser" Moses. The minister's hands, ears, and feet are made holy and sanctified and consecrated for avodas kodesh by the purifying blood. From now on, everything the minister touches, or listens to, and every place he frequents must be part of his holy business as a kohen because it is all under the blood (see Lev. 8:23,30). The minister's hands have been filled with holy work and he must be about G-d's holy business (see 8:26-28). G-d will uniquely

sustain the minister in all this (Ex. 29:33), but the minister must eat the offering G-d provides in the place where G-d assigns him (8:31-36) and not journey out in his own stubborn will to minister wherever he pleases. To do so might mean the death of his ministry (see Lev. 8:35). These are some of the many deep spiritual truths in Lev. 8, and there is a sense in which these truths apply to both lay and ordained ministers, though the specific teachings regarding ordination are emphasized.

In Leviticus 26:39-45, G-d promises he will expel and return the Jewish people to the land of Israel as part of his moral dealings with the world. Therefore, how can anyone write a treatise on

ethics and leave such matters out entirely? Shliach Sha'ul

didn't in his treatise on ethics called the Letter to the Romans

(Romans 9-11).

G-d is a land leaser and a leaser of harvests, according to

Leviticus 25:13-24. The Holy Land belongs to Him, and even the

Jewish people are aliens there resident with G-d. He will throw

unclean tenants out of his Holy Mishkan (dwelling, tabernacle)

and off of His Holy Land (Admat Hakodesh). Therefore, we must

repent of all our uncleanesses and tremble at His Word.

Against the rationalizing reductionism of the Midrash (Leviticus

Rabbah vii), Leviticus does not say the study of the Torah will

fulfill the imperatives of its commands. Leviticus 17:11 demands

divinely acceptable sacrificial blood, not mere Torah study.

Those who say that Leviticus gives no warrant for a Messianic

re-interpretation of its text should remember one important fact.

If a later canonical prophet of the Holy Tanakh points to the

Torah and gives it a typological Messianic meaning (as Isaiah

does by apocalyptically applying the word (asham) from Leviticus

to the Davidic Servant of the L-rd in Isaiah 53:10 and the word

NAZAH "sprinkle" from Leviticus to Isaiah 52:15), then a

Messianic re-interpretation of Leviticus is in fact implicit in

the Tanakh, and is not merely read in gratuitously by Messianic

believers. In the Torah, and especially in Leviticus, blood was

always associated with G-d's saving covenant and Holy Word, and

the Sovereign L-rd enthroned above the atonement cover over the

ark of testimony cannot be approached without biblically

prescribed blood acceptably mediated (note the Kohen Gadol on Yom

Kippur -- Lev. 16).

Since G-d is holy, there is no shadow or unclean thing in Him.

He is living; the unclean are dead. He must cover or remove or

atone for sin to stay in contact with unclean sinners seeking His

fellowship. We cannot experience His presence in congregational

worship unless we approach Him with acceptable sacrifice removing

our uncleanness. We bring the sacrifice he requires to his House

but not merely to the minister; we bring this sacrifice to the

L-rd Himself as the worshippers do in the book of

Leviticus. Meditating on Leviticus can help any believer

maintain a sacrifice of holiness: a clean mind, a clean body, a

clean house, clean clothes, and clean contacts (see Leviticus 15)

because we have been made clean and then holy or set apart for

exclusive service in Yehoshua, and every aspect of our lives must

reflect this. However, the dirty, the poor, the helpless are not

excluded from G-d's concern and neither should they be from ours

(19:14,32; 25:17,36,39-43).

Jewish feasts are Pesach and Chag HaMatzot, Shavuos (variously

called First Fruits or Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Harvest,

Rosh Hashanah (Trumpets) or the Jewish New Year, Day of Atonement

(Yom Kippur), Tabernacles or the Festival of Booths (Sukkot) (see

the reference to this festival's esrog and the lulav or palm

branch in Lev. 23:40), with its concluding day, technically a

holiday in itself, Shemini Atzaret, the Eighth Day of Assembly

referred to in Yochanan 7:37 and Lev. 23:39. (Purim is in Esther

and Channukah is predicted in Daniel 8:11 and mentioned in

Yochanan 10:22). The Jewish people rest on Shabbat (pronounced

Shabbos by Ashkenazic [European-origin] or Yeshiva-trained Jews).

Seven weeks after Pesach is Shavuos, the rest period for

harvesters, and this period is supposed to be literally counted

day by day from the waving of the sheaf (Hebrew Omer -- Lev.

23:10) by the kohen when the coming harvest is dedicated to the

L-rd until Shavu'os? when the harvest arrives. (In the Brit

Chadasha the Lamb of G-d was offered at Pesach and the Harvest

arrived seven weeks later at Shavu'os?). The nation itself rests

on the seventh month at Rosh Hashanah. Every seventh year is a

sabbatical when the land is to rest, and every seventh seven of

years everything is to rest, slaves are to be released, etc--this

is the year of Jubilee (see the 70 weeks of sevens in Daniel 9

when the Messianic Age brings in the final rest.) [On Shemittah

see Deut. 15:1f]

The Ner Tamid, or perpetual light above the synagogue ark and its

Torah scroll derives from Lev. 24:2.

Notice this key verse.

"You shall be holy because I am holy" (Lev. 19:2). The word

"holy" is a key word in Leviticus, appearing there more than any

other word. But Leviticus 19:15 is the "kingly law" of Yehoshua:

"You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Also see Deut.10:19.)

To love our neighbor there are times when we must with gentleness

and love, respecting his dignity as a creature in the divine

image, nevertheless rebuke him. G-d warns that we will incur

guilt ourselves if we don't rebuke him (Lev. 19:17). Sins of a

deliberate, willful, "high-handed" nature (remember Korah? --

Nu.16) could not be atoned for (Num. 15:30-31) and the book of

Hebrews uses this fact to warn the apostate against any

deliberate, willful renunciation of the L-rd. Deliberate

idolaters, Shabbos-breakers, blasphemers, murderers, adulterers,

false-witnesses and the like who disobeyed the Aseret HaDebrot

(the Ten Commandments) with a high hand were put to death in the

Sinai Covenant dispensation, and their sins were not atoned for

(see also Heb. 5:2; 6:4-6; 10:26-31; Deu. 17:12; Ps. 19:13).

This is why Shliach Sha'ul is quick to point out that his violent

crimes against the Messianic Jews were done in ignorance (I Tim.

1:13). The way some of the Pharisees are speaking against the

Ruach Hakodesh prompts Moshiach Yehoshua to warn them about

sinning beyond the reach of atonement and forgiveness.

Moses completed the building of the Mishkan (a type of portable

royal pavilion-palace for G-d to dwell in as His people traveled

with Him toward the Promised Land of new life) just as G-d showed

him on the holy mountain of Sinai, exactly one year after the

Exodus (Ex. 40:17). But, just as G-d sometimes gives us

something first and only then shows us what to do with it, Moses

did not receive all these detailed instructions in Leviticus

until the month following the completion of the building of the

tabernacle. Lev. 27:34 tells us that these are the mitzvot? that

G-d gave Moses during the year that the people of Israel were at

Mount Sinai. These were given to insure the purity of the kohen

and the nation of kohanim, and to insure that G-d's House would

be kept clean enough for such a holy G-d to dwell there. The

decontamination process we see in Lev. 14:34 for houses infested

with dry-rot or fungus is necessary for these houses to be

inhabitable by a clean and holy people; similarly the Day of

Atonement provides a function to make it possible for G-d to

continue to dwell in His House in the midst of His people.

G-d made sure the book of Leviticus was included in the Bible so

that the people might be "no more dull of understanding" when it

comes to His Holy Covenant faith, His Holy presence, His

holiness, and His acceptable sacrifice.

I Yochanan 1:7 sees the death of the Moshiach as a sin offering.

Yochanan 1:29 sees it as a vicarious burnt offering, and Hebrews

sees it "outside the camp (Lev. 4:12; Heb. 13:13). The author of

Hebrews proves that Yehoshua was a kohen, for only kohanim could

offer the blood. As Ps. 110:4 and Isaiah 53 was fulfilled in our

Moshiach Kohen so this verse in Lev. 1:20 was fulfilled in Him:

V'Chiper Aleichem HaKohen V'Nislach Lahem. The kohen shall make

atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven. The Kohen Gadol

was anointed with oil (Lev. 8:10-12) just as the coming Moshiach

("Anointed One") Kohen would be the king anointed by the Ruach

Hakodesh (Isa. 42:1; Ps. 110:4).

Everything starts when you are confronted by sin (Lev. 4:28).

Then there is the vicarious part (you must touch Moshiach

Yehoshua -- Lev. 4:29) and the mediatorial part (the kohen makes

the kill and offers the blood, which is what He did).

When the kohen changes clothes, this typifies our regeneration as

kohanim of the Brit Chadasha (Lev. 6:10; Rev. 1:6).

Notice Lev. 9:1-6 gives us the order of G-d's salvation in that

first there is sacrifice and suffering, then there is theophany

and glory. This is one of the passages Shliach Sha'ul is

referring to in I Cor. 15 when he says the Moshiach died, was

buried and appeared, according to the Scriptures. Which

Scriptures? Scriptures like these in Lev. 9:1-6. Lev. 14:34 says

that Israel has been given to the Jewish people as a homeland but

Lev. 26:32-39 makes the point that by no means will they have

unconditional security in Israel if they sin in their unbelief in

the Scriptures (see 18:24-25,29; 20:22-26). The land will cry

out as it did against Cain and vomit them out.

This is a summary of some of the Mitzvot or commandments and

other points of interest to us in the book of Leviticus.

The Mikveh is variously prescribed in Lev. 15.

The key purpose of much of Leviticus is given in Lev. 15:31,

"Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separated from their

uncleanness, so that they do not die in their uncleanness by

defiling my mishkan that is in their midst. The law of kashrut?

(fit, proper foods) comes from Lev. 17:13 and 11:1-47.

Why many ultra-orthodox Jews wear the Pa'ot is given in Lev.

19:27.

Hebrews 10:25 was written with Lev. 19:30 in mind.

Astrology, New Age practitioners and every kind of occult lure is

rejected by Lev. 19:31; 20:6,27.

Sacrificing children (as in abortion) to the G-d Molech is

forbidden in Lev. 20:2-5.

Homosexuality is forbidden in 18:22 and 20:13.

Modern day Israeli jurisprudence needs to study Lev. 24:22 and

19:34 and look more kindly on Gentile believers? who want to live

in the Holy Land. Also see Ex. 12:49.

Lev. 27:30 mentions the tithe called Ma'aser meaning one-tenth.

LEVITICUS 16:14-17

14. And he (Aaron the Kohen Gadol) shall take of the blood of

the bull, and sprinkle (see Isa. 52:15, same word) it with his

finger on the front of the atonement cover; and before the

atonement cover shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger

seven times.

15. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for

the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that

blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it upon

the atonement cover and before the atonement cover.

16. And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because
of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of
their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for
the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in
the midst of their uncleanness.

17. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the
congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy
place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself,
and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

BAMIDBAR (NUMBERS)

Numbers tells the story of a remnant going forward while most

people backslide or lose their way in rebellion and self-will.

Israel is on her way from Mount Sinai to the plains of Moab on

the border of Canaan, where, through the temptations of the

Moabites and Midianites, many will succumb to "Balaam's error" of

idolatry and immorality (see Numbers 25; 31:16 and II Shliach

Kefa 2:15 and Jude II) and rebel against the L-rd and His leaders

and die in the wilderness. "Balaam's error" surely turned the

L-rd against Israel then and it will turn the L-rd against the

Brit Chadasha kehillah today, though many who are lukewarm in the

Brit Chadasha kehillah think such sins are not so serious. But

Phinehas was the zealous minister (he was a kohen and, as the

grandson of Aaron, he serves as a "military chaplain" in Num.

31:6) who put to death Cozbi the immoral Midianite woman and her

Israelite lover (25:1-15), because of this same kind of sin,

which precipitated the holy war against the Midianites. Num.

10-21 tells of the 38 years, almost 40 years (1447-1407 BCE) of

wandering that the rebellious Israelites were divinely

sentenced to, wandering not only in the Transjordan but

particularly in the five different wildernesses of the Sinai

Peninsula: the Wildernesses of Zin, Shur, Etham, Paran, and Sin.

In eleven days they traveled from Mt. Sinai (Horeb) to the hill

country of the Amorites, Kadesh-barnea, which is about 40 miles

south of Beersheba. G-d had given the Amorites over to them, but

this became the fateful turning point of unbelief, and it was not

till near the end of Moses' life, some thirty-eight years later,

that these Amorites (both Sihon and Og were Amorite kings--see

Deut. 3:8; 4:47) were defeated. The people of Israel were so

close and yet so far from the Promised Land, but it was at this

time that they rebelled and were defeated by the Amalekites (Num.

11:39-45). It says these latter defeated them because they

"presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, even

though the ark of the covenant of the L-rd, and Moses, had not

left the camp." If we run ahead of the leadership the L-rd has

assigned over us, we run the risk of spiritual defeat as

believers.

From the book of Numbers we can learn much about the function of

administration (Greek diakonia), meaning the spiritual authority

to rule or administer a ministry--see Romans 12:7). Those who say

they lack this gift (and can therefore excuse themselves) are

wrong, because the Parable of the Talents emphasizes that we all

will have to give an accounting for our stewardship of our

talents (Matt. 25:14-30; Rom. 14:10; II Cor 5:10) and this would

include the way we administer the ministries G-d entrusts with

us. The message of Numbers is that we must humbly learn to

administer our assigned duties, because unclean rebellion will

bring chaos and death in the wilderness.

Num. 1:2 says, "Take a census of the whole Israelite community."

A first principle of Brit Chadasha kehillah growth strategy is to

count what you've got, and then to count what you've had, and

then to see if you are growing, and if so, at what rate. Here it

is ominous statistics gathering indeed, because we know from

14:29 this is in reality a body count of those rebels who would

be put to death in the wilderness for failing to carry their

burden of obedience in order to see the Promised Land (see

26:63-65). Compare the army muster in chapter 1 with the army

muster in chapter 26. In the L-rd's march to victory, the rebels

fell out of step with their G-d and were "numbered" for death and

were not called out to be part of the victorious assembly (kahal or ecclesia from the root meaning "called out," that is, a congregation called out from a world alienated from G-d, the Brit Chadasha kehillah, the community of the elect, the chosen people). G-d "had their number." Moses makes the first count with Aaron and then, a generation later, shortly before his own death, makes the last count with Aaron's surviving son Eleazar (Aaron's generation having died off) serving as kohen gadol.

When you look at the white hair of the aging Moses and when you look at Joshua and Caleb, you see that only non-rebels live to see the promise fulfilled. The rebels lose the vision and perish

in the wilderness (Prov. 29:18). This is an important theological idea in the book. The Levites are numbered in chapters 3 and 4, and they are literal stand-ins for the Firstborn of Israel who were in turn given to the L-rd in exchange for the Firstborn of Egypt (see 3:11-13). Chapter 2 shows the "decent and in order" way the tribal camp was masterfully arranged and administered by their true Leader, the L-rd of Glory.

Num. 1:16 speaks the chieftains elected by their tribes, so the election of zekenim (elders) and leaders by ministers and congregations is not the injection of unbiblical politics into Brit Chadasha kehillah polity or government. Therefore, we are to be members of a congregation, having been "enrolled" or "counted"

or "numbered" [PAKAD] for war (1:3). The idea here is of a group of troops divinely summoned into assembly to be counted and enlisted by means of a military roll call and we are not to sniff at or run from congregational business meetings and elections as beneath us, though the danger of overweening bureaucratic control and politicking in the L-rd's body is real.

Num. 1:47-53 shows there has to be a set-apart leadership to protect the purity of the faith from the distortions of the ignorant and the unqualified. The ministers literally camp around the Word (the Aseres Ha-Dibros or Ten Commandments are in the Ark of the Covenant) to protect sound doctrine. Therefore, semicha or

ordination is G-d's will for those accountable for sound doctrine

and the care of souls. Aaron and his sons (the kohanim descended

from Levi through Kohath and Aaron--see Ex. 6:16-20; Num.

4:5,15,19; 18:1-20) are distinguished from the Levites, who do not

touch the holy things or enter the sacred areas, on pain of

death, but assist the kohanim (see 1:47-53; 3:5-37; 18:2-7),

which non-Levites are not permitted to do. This is important to

keep in mind to understand the sin of Korah because as a Levite

he tried to usurp the kohen's authority. This was also the sin of

Antiochus Epiphanes who allowed the kehunnah to be usurped. "He

has allowed you to approach him, and all your brother Levites

with you; yet you seek the kehunnah as well" (16:10). Every

minister-baiting rebellious layman, every false teacher and false

prophet commits the sin of Korah (see Jude 11).

Chapter 2 highlights the wisdom of G-d as an administrator with

each tribe given its own position, each person his own clan,

family, and tribal grouping, each tribe its own order of breaking

camp, its own assigned leadership hierarchy, its own identifying

banner, its own order of march, its own position relative to the

mobile central sanctuary, with the Levites in the middle

protecting the Mishkan (Tabernacle) and with the tribe of Judah

(the tribe of G-d's anointed leader, the Moshiach) leading out as

the vanguard and with the tribe of Dan coming last as the

rearguard. Here is a place where the Word of G-d and the Moshiach

are connected in the Tanakh, as in the Logos-Moshiach in Yochanan

chapter 1. Judah is the tribe of the Moshiach (Genesis 49:10)

and is therefore the first to break camp (Numbers 2:3,9) and

makes the first offering (7:12) and sets out first in the march

from Sinai (10:14). See Proverbs 8:23 where G-d's Wisdom, His

Word, is "first" as well as Judges 20:18, where the Moshiach's

tribe is likewise called "first."

Notice in 3:5-10 there is full delegation of the work of the

ministry throughout the tribe of Levi, just as there should be

today in the Body of the L-rd. 4:16 says, "Responsibility shall

rest with Eleazar son of Aaron the kohen for the lighting oil."

Each believer has a responsibility in the ministry that should be

delegated to him. Shliach Sha'ul says, "See to it that you

fulfill (the responsibilities) of your ministry (Col. 4: 17)."

In 3:11-13 we see the Levites as a type of the elect, those

called to be G-d's own possession, those who are not their own,

but have been bought with a price (3:44-51). However, since they

have no land and receive the MA'ASER (tithe) in compensation

(18:21-24), there is a definite corollary between them and the

L-rd's ministers.

In chapter 5 we witness a trial by ordeal for an allegedly

unfaithful wife that points forward to a better kind of probe,

the word of knowledge, a spiritual gift that has replaced this

Sinai Covenant lie detector test and, moreover, has made it as

applicable to men as to women. (See I Cor. 12:8)

In chapter 6 we see an example of a vow of commitment that the

laity, men or women, could take, the ascetic NAZIR (Nazarite)

vow, where they set themselves apart for temporary withdrawal

from the world unto G-d and this included avoiding intoxicating

beverages, contact with the dead, and cutting the hair.

Chapter 7 emphasizes that when one initiates any type of new

ministry one should first dedicate it formally to the L-rd.

Moreover, every Sabbatical year (seventh year) the unfarmed land

rested (Lev. 25:1-7 on Shemittah, see also Deut. 15:1f) and the

children of Israel rededicated themselves by gathering on Sukkoth
(the Feast of Tabernacles) and publically reciting the covenant
provisions of the Torah to which Israel under Moses had committed
itself (see Deut. 31:10; 15:9-18.). Also at the end of seven
Shabbaths of years of seven times seven years, the so-called Year
of Jubilee [Yovel] the Hebrew slaves went free, debt was
forgiven, and land was returned to the original tribal occupants
(Lev. 25:8-54). The poor were liberated from the debts and the
enslavement to the rich into which they had fallen, and the rich,
who had accumulated vast land acquisitions, were divested of some
of their filthy lucre. All this happened on Yom Kippur every 49

years (Lev. 25:8-9) and such is the essential background for understanding Isa. 61 as Moshiach Yehoshua quotes it in Luke 4:18. This was theoretically how the law worked, if it were actually enforced, which would keep too much wealth from falling into the hands of a few. Unfortunately evil rulers do not always enforce just and merciful laws, and the period of the 70 years of Exile was actually a punishment for violating this part of the Torah, as G-d said in effect, "I am not mocked: if you will not give me my Sabbaths and let the land rest every seven years, I will take my Sabbaths anyway and you will sit in Exile waiting for the land to rest until its appointed Sabbaths are completed" (see Lev. 26:34-35; II Chron. 36:20-21).

Chapter 8:6,15,21,22 show that your ministry begins with your

water initiation, and therefore we need to create pre-tevilah

instructional materials and classes so that we give Moshiach's

tevilah only to serious people willing to become serious talmidim

and lay ministers, not double-minded people intent on

backsliding. This means we must have pre-tevilah as well as

post-tevilah classes.

Chapter 8:19 shows where Shliach Sha'ul gets his ecclesiology.

He sees ordained ministers as MATANOT (gifts) to the Brit

Chadasha kehillah in Ephes. 4:11.

Chapter 9:15-23 shows that we must stay deep in prayer in order

to discern when the L-rd is moving us out in a new venture and
when he is encamping us. Many prayerless grumblers, their
feelings or their pride hurt by some imagined slight, stay with a
congregation only until their patience runs out or they get bored
and then they drift to something else, which instead of another
congregation may be the world, because these malcontents often
backslide completely. They moved without looking for the cloud
ascending from the Mishkan, without watching for the place where
it settled down (9:15-23). Their ears were not attuned to the
sound of the two silver trumpets, one blowing to assemble the
leaders (which departing backslider cares if he is a leader?) and
both trumpets blowing to assemble the whole congregation to move

out together (10:1-10). See I Thes. 4:13-18 on how our ears are

to be tuned to the rapture's trumpet. Read Ps. 90 to see the

wrath of G-d being revealed from Shomayim (Rom. 1:18) against

Israel in the wilderness.

Chapter 10:8 says that the Israelites didn't make war without

music. This shows how important the ministers of music are in

the L-rd's body. From 10:11 to 14:45 we march with the

Israelites from Sinai to Kadesh-barnea, which takes us no more

than 2 months. The complaining started here in the wilderness of

Paran and the Israelites provoked G-d to anger (11:1-3,4-35; Psa.

78:26-31; 106:13-15). But, when Moses is rebelled against, we are

told that Moses is greater than a prophet and in this sense a unique mediator of revelation (12:6-8); it surely is in this sense that the Moshiach will be "like me" (Deut. 18:15), but he too will have his Shliach Kefa's and his Judas's rebel against him.

Chapter 11:25b says of those set apart for ministry with the 15th century BCE lawgiver Moses, "And when the Spirit that was on him (Moses) rested upon them, they prophesied but did not continue."

Is this unfortunate situation also true of you? Yehuda 1:20 says that we should continue to daven in the Spirit (meaning leshonot) as we build ourselves up in the most holy faith, studying and meditating on the Scriptures.

In chapter 12 Miriam the prophetess has to be physically healed

to cure her of a rebellious mouth. Her offense was that she

slandered G-d's leader. 13:32 says that 10 of the 12 spies

slandered the vision of G-d's prophet and so turned the people

away from it, refusing to urge the people to conquest. For that

crime a whole generation wandered in the wilderness under divine

wrath and a death sentence (14:21-23, 34-35). Let us not give an

evil report by saying, "It can't be done here, the giants are too

big!" Such an unbelieving leader will be doomed to become a mere

caretaker of wandering dead men walking in their own blind flesh.

Numbers is a book that shows the folly of wandering in the lusts

of one's flesh. Num. 15:1-21:20 tell the story of this wilderness wandering. And, lest the backslider harden his heart and go all the way and apostatize, Num. 15:22-31 warns (along with Heb. 10:26) that there is no kapparah for deliberate, defiant sin. The wilderness period was remembered by some of the prophets as the time of Israel's apostasy (Amos 5:25-26), when she did not keep covenant faithfulness with her L-rd (see Josh. 5:2-9 and compare Acts 21:21). The TSITSIT (Num. 15:38) were to be worn to remind the Israelites not to forget the word and follow their own lusts. But the final refutation to the folly of the old-timers who focus on the "giants" and say "it can't be done" is that it in fact was done, with 1,820 fewer people the second time around, when the

Israelites finally went in and possessed the Promised Land

(compare the census in 26:51 and 1:46).

Chapter 18:21-32 says that not just anyone is to receive the

MA'ASER [tithe] but only G-d's ordained leadership. Some love the

tithes but not the years of ministerial training and the

accountability of ordination that goes with them.

Chapter 19:1-10 shows that because of our uncleanness we must

have faith in the kaparah of Moshiach and have a tevilah into

him, for he is the antitype of the red cow who died outside the

camp and became the tevilah that cleanses us from our sins

forever.

Chapter 20:12 gives the ominous warning that even Moses would die

outside the Promised Land like Miriam (20:1) and Aaron (20:22)

because, although he was beset by rebellion from his own

family and others, Moses did not trust G-d enough to keep his

head in all situations (II Tim. 4:5) and did not obediently honor

the L-rd who delivers us from all our critics and slanderers.

Moses did not honor G-d as holy before the people and so he too

lost a blessing (27:14) Moses should have known that no weapon

formed against us will prosper. Then he would have honored G-d

as holy before the people no matter how they taxed their leader's

patience. The disobedience of the people does not excuse the

disobedience of the leader.

Notice that bitterness against G-d's leaders is just a step

removed from bitterness toward G-d himself (21:5).

Chapter 21:8 points toward the One who, though He was the Ben

HaElohim and without sin, yet he took the form of the likeness of

sinful flesh (Romans 8:3), the flesh of the corrupt children of

the Serpent (Gen. 3:15; Yochanan 8:44), and was lifted up, so

that men might look on him and live. See Yochanan 3:14-15. The

snake Moses lifted up on a standard at the end of the wilderness

wanderings, before the the conquest of the Transjordan began,

points to the Ben HaAdam Moshiach being lifted up and drawing all

men unto himself (Yochanan 12:32).

Balaam's donkey speaks because "the L-rd opened its mouth"

(22:28). The Syrian prophet Balaam with his talking donkey

points toward Saul the persecutor, who, on his horse on the way

to Damascus, wanted to curse the people of G-d, the Messianic

Jews, but could only bless them (24:9). Like the talking snake in

Gen. 3, this talking donkey is placed at a cross-roads as far as

human destiny is concerned. Those who make the decision of faith

will be blessed (24:9; Gen. 12:3). Balak (bah-LAHk) is king of

Moab (his G-d is Chemosh--Num. 21:29). And he looks down from a

mountain and sees Israel camping tribe by tribe on his territory

as they are passing through on their way to the Promised Land.

He in league with the Midianites, whom Moses will defeat in Num.

31 and whom Gideon will have to fight later in the time of the Judges. King Balak knew he needed divine help to oppose Israel, so he looked for the type of professional preacher who is always harshly denouncing everybody, so he could unleash such a maggid on Moses and the Israelites and defeat them with curses. So Balak begins by trying to tell Balaam what to preach and what to prophesy and attempts to persuade this Gentile prophet Balaam (beel-AHM) to curse the chosen people. Of course, we know that Balaam will be killed later (31:8) and G-d knows that even his donkey knows the fear of the L-rd better than Balaam, but for the moment money does not corrupt his ministry (22:18). Later, even

illicit sex will become a source of corruption to the true faith

as well (25:1). The most important prophecy Balaam utters is

24:17 which is the KOKHAV (star) that shall come out of Jacob and

shall become the star of David, the Moshiach.

Notice how Korah starts a rebellion against Moses in chapter 16

even though Moses has taken nothing for himself (16:15). It is

important to note that the only thing that keeps the people from

going down to Sheol is that they do not rebel against G-d and his

leadership (16:26-34). Our muttering can be the death of us

(17:25). The battle cry of Brit Chadasha kehillah-splitting

rebels is Numbers 12:2-3.

Chapter 27 (also 36) speaks of the equal inheritance promised to

women, so the laws of inheritance included provisions for

daughters. This should be seen within the larger context of the

book as a whole, since Israel was herself nearly disinherited as

a nation on at least two occasions (see chapters 11 and 14).

Moses had married a non-Israelite (12:1) woman, a fact that might

have set a bad example for the people about the sanctity of their

inheritance, but this was actually just a pretext Aaron and

Miriam used to challenge the authority of Moses for the sake of

their own personal ambitions. We see that G-d grants us our

inheritance as a gift, but we still have to fight the good fight

and seek first the kingdom in order to enjoy it (note the tribes

of Gad, Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph

received the Transjordan land as a gift but they still had to

fight with the other tribes first before, they could enjoy their

inheritance--see Num. 32).

Chapter 27:15-23 teaches that leaders should have assistants they

are equipping to take over their ministries (as Moses equipped

Joshua). The ministry can continue in a manner that is decent

and in order only when these transitions are anticipated and

prepared for.

See chapters 25 and 31:15-16 on the consequences of sexual sin.

Notice the Levites were given 48 towns but no land allotments.

Would it be a bad application of exegesis to say that the

Levitical towns and pastures (chapter 35) might be warrant for a

congregation providing its spiritual leader with a place to live

in?

In 35:13 we see there were six cities of refuge. Even today,

people who have disagreements in one congregation seek refuge in

another. But where there has been a case of unrepented sin and a

person flees one congregation to join another as a kind of "city

of refuge," spiritual leaders should co-operate in matters of

intra-congregational discipline.

Notice that the kohanim and Levites are responsible to Aaron

(18:3). A congregational board and its shammashim should be

responsible to the congregational leader. A "board-run"

congregation is not Scriptural, because they can make the

congregational leader a mere errand boy to do their bidding, and

he loses his prophetic voice in the body. However, leadership

must be shared, as Jethro emphasized to Moses.

Yehoshua (Joshua) (called Yeshua in Nehemiah 8:17) is called the

Servant of the L-rd in Numbers 27:18, "the man in whom is (the)

Spirit," making him a prophetic sign of the One who is to come,

the Servant of the L-rd filled with "My Spirit" (see Isaiah

42:1). See also Zechariah 3:8; 6:12 where another later

Yehoshua is similarly pointed to as a portent or ominous sign of

the Moshiach.

The Bible of the Jewish Diaspora from the third century B.C.E.

until the Messianic era of Moshiach Yehoshua was the Greek, the

Septuagint. In Greek the name of Joshua/Yeshua/Yehoshua in

Nehemiah 8:17 and in the Torah is IEsous or Moshiach Yehoshua.

G-d always has his two witnesses because Deuteronomy 19:15 says

that everything has to be supported by two witnesses. So at

crucial junctures, like at the transition from the wilderness

into the Promised Land or at the return from the Exile, G-d had

as his two witnesses one man from the tribe of the Moshiach and

one man bearing the personal name of the Moshiach: that is, Caleb

from the tribe of Judah and "Yehoshua" (Joshua) entering the

Promised Land; and Zerubbabel from the tribe of Judah with

"Yehoshua" (the Kohen Gadol Joshua) returning from the Exile (see

the book of Zechariah). One set of two witnesses were raised up

from the "tomb" of Egypt and the wilderness, and the other set

were raised up from the "tomb" of the Babylonian Exile. Wherever

at least two witnesses meet, there is the L-rd with his true Brit

Chadasha kehillah in their midst.

Notice the elaborate dedication of the altar HAMITZBE'ACH in

Numbers 7.

The Israelites leave Mt. Sinai and eventually arrive in Moab

(Num. 22-36), with major stops at Hazeroth (10:11-12:15), Paran

(12:16-19:22), and Kadesh (20:1-21:4). There are some 18

encampments from Kadesh-barnea to the wilderness and back to

Kadesh-barnea (33:18-36). It is in the wilderness of Zin, at the

end of the wanderings, that Moses and Aaron anger G-d and are

also sentenced to die in the wilderness. Moab is the last stop,

where Moses' last will and testament, the book of Deuteronomy,

will be delivered. G-d commanded Moses to keep this travel diary

(Luke kept one undoubtedly in writing the book of Acts), and you

may wish some day that you had kept a spiritual diary. How could

Wesley have benefited the Brit Chadasha kehillah as he did with

his writing gift if he had not kept his journals?

Notice the L-rd speaks from the Mishkan in Numbers 1:1 and not

from Mt. Sinai, so the Word emanates from the tabernacle where

the glory of G-d resides. The Word of G-d will likewise

"tabernacle" in the Moshiach (Yochanan 1:14) and emanate from

Him. The Heavenly L-rd is travelling from Egypt to Israel

embodied in the tabernacle. The people, by murmuring against

Him, are opting out of being His heavenly fellow travellers. So

this paradigm will speak its object lesson for all time to Ideal

Israel.

Kadesh-barnea, (kah-DESH bar-NAY-ah) an oasis at the southern

edge of Israel, is the area the Israelites used as a staging

arena for their conquest of Canaan (Numbers 13:26), encamping

there while their spies scouted the land (13-14; Deut. 1). It was from there that Moses tries to have a successful "kehillah" business meeting to vote to take the land, a vote that took 38 years to attain, because the rebels were wandering in the wilderness until they returned to the same place nearly forty years later (33:36-37). Aaron died there. It was also at this place that the Israelites complained about the hardship of their wanderings, so angering Moses that he struck the rock (Num. 20:1-13; Exod. 17:1-7) and forfeited his own marching privileges with those who went in and possessed the land.

We can conclude our services with the Aaronic benediction

(6:24-26) remembering, if a woman lights the Shabbos candles,

that the Aaronic kohenim lit the seven-lamped menorah (8:1-4).

We need to approach the study of this book with "fear and

trembling" and with Rom. 15:4 and I Cor. 10:11-12 in mind.

Notice the death of the Kohen Gadol provides release for the

guilty (35:25) just as the death of the Moshiach-Kohen (Psalm

110; Isaiah 53) provides release for us.

"There was an order of march for the Israelites, company by

company, when they set out," (10:28) and so there is for us.

Know your leaders and loyally hang tough with them.

Important verses to meditate on: Num. 32:23. Are you qualified

for work relating to the OHEL MOED tent of meeting (see 4:35)?

You have been charged with a literal responsibility to carry

(4:47); do you know what it is, and are you doing it? The

Israelites all had people over them in the L-rd (7:2); do you

(Heb. 13:17)? They brought to the Lord's House talents and

valuable things that could be used in the service of the L-rd

(7:4-5); what are you bringing to the L-rd? Look at 10:10. Some

live in New York City, the largest Jewish city in the world, and

feel no obligation whatsoever to remember them with a messianic

congregation or a messianic calendar. Hobab a relative of Moses

by marriage, is offered a blessing for continuing in Jewish

ministry (10:32): that blessing is offered to you. 10:33-34

speaks of seeking a resting place, and how G-d does this for

us--compare this theme in Heb. chps. 3 and 4. Compare Moses'

question in 11:13 to Moshiach Yehoshua's question to Philip in

Yochanan 6:5. Some get out of step with G-d because of a good

thing; but if we put a good thing before G-d, He may give us too

much of a good thing, until it becomes loathsome to us, even a

plague--11:20,33.

It says the Spirit rested upon them and they prophesied--11:25.

Compare Acts 19:6 and the tevilah in the Ruach Hakodesh. Meditate

on Num. 14. So often we have heard, "They will never be able to

start a messianic congregation. They are Gentiles. Jews will

never go for this. It's going to fall apart. There are two many
giants against them!" See 16:13-14. Men blame leaders instead of
their own sins--16:14. Men make false accusations--16:15. Avoid
the waters of Meribah ("Quarreling")--20:13. We need a different
spirit, the spirit of Caleb -- 14:24. The rabbis say that the
Gentiles can be righteous by following the laws of Noah, but
15:15 says the same sacrifice is necessary for both Gentiles and
Jews.

See 18:16 where you see the words PIDYON HABEN (the redemption of
the son) a ceremony on the 31st day of the firstborn Jewish boy's
life when five shekels (or silver dollars) are given to a Jewish
person, a Kohen, who buys the boy back or redeems him from the

L-rd, since all firstborn males of Israel belong to the L-rd.

This ceremony is not performed on a Shabbos and/or to the

firstborn of parents who are Kohens.

DEVARIM (DEUTERONOMY)

Scientists search for natural laws and governments enact civil

laws, but the greatest body of divine law ever given to man is

summed up by Moses in this book. Moses underlines the seriousness

and importance of Deuteronomy several times. He says that all

the words in it are "no trifling matter for you, but rather your

very life" (32:47; 4:1,3-4; 4:40). Indeed, with this book Moses

confronts all with life and death, exhorting all to choose life

(30:15,19-20). The life-span of individual Jewish people and

their protection from deportation and exile, their physical

health, prosperity, the well-being of their children, the esteem

of their nation in the eyes of the world (4:6-8), and their good

fortune in every aspect of life, even longevity of life (11:21),

even life itself, all hinged on their attention and obedience to

the words of this book. But what is true of them is also true for

everyone else, even for us who read the Bible and look to the G-d
of Israel for our salvation.

Moses and the people are poised just outside the territorial
borders of Israel, encamped at Moab (29:1), an ancient kingdom
east of the Dead Sea in what is today the modern country of
Jordan. Visualize their position. Look at a map. They are across
from Jericho, on the opposite side of the Jordan River. Moses is
now near death, one hundred and twenty years old (34:7), writing
and teaching the people his last hymn, depositing with the
kohanim and zekenim his last writings (31:9), laying hands on his
successor to leadership, Joshua (3:28; 31:7-8; 34:9), preaching

his last sermon, expounding and reinterpreting the Law that G-d gave at Mt. Sinai (Horeb) in the context of a renewal of the contractual agreement (covenant) between Israel and G-d as a new generation prepares to obey the Law in holiness and actually go in and take the Holy Land. Deut. 4:14-49 sets the scene for the whole book which Moses delivered as a sermon in Moab. When Moses led the people of Israel to the threshold of the Promised Land, he encountered, near the point where the Jordan runs into the Dead Sea, Sihon king of the Amorites. This is in territory that today belongs to the country of Jordan. Also, to the north, in the area of Bashan, which includes the famous (formerly, before the 1967 Six Day War, Syrian) Golan Heights, the army of

Moses encountered another famous Amorite king, the king of Bashan, the giant Og (see 3:11). G-d authorized Moses to conduct a holy war against these wicked peoples and put them under CHEREM ("destruction" 7:26, that is, devoting them to G-d). This means that their destruction was necessary at that particular time because they stood in the way of G-d's plan to save the world by means of a holy land and a holy nation of kohanim. For if at this early period the Hebrew nation was corrupted by the heathen peoples occupying the Holy Land, there would be no hope of reaching the other nations through the Jewish people. This process of a necessary and just war had been waiting since Abraham's time (Gen. 15:16) and G-d had Moses

actually begin the process to give Joshua and the others "on the

job training" in how to continue it (see 3:21-22; 7:1-6,17-26;

12:2-5, 29-31; 20:1-20). Og and Sihon and what G-d does to them

are a preview of how the L-rd will fight for Joshua and the rest

of Israel's G-d-ordained leaders in the years ahead--3:21-22.

The same G-d who fights against Pharaoh and Og and Sihon will

fight against the heathen occupiers of the Holy Land--7:18. (At

the Second Coming, Moshiach Adoneinu will fight against the

heathen occupiers of the whole world.)

Destroying idols (a task Moses knows they won't carry out

completely--31:27) in the Holy Land is on the top of the list of

statutes and ordinances that they must diligently observe in the land. In Deut. 12 we have the laws that will become Israel's own eviction notice when they don't obey them and have to go into the Exile.

Almost the whole book is a sermon, and the fact that, 38 years before, the previous generation had been commanded to go in and take the Holy Land by force and had nevertheless rebelliously (9:23) and faithlessly disobeyed G-d is the chilling reality giving such a dramatic setting to Moses' sermon. All of these rebellious parents are now dead, having eventually perished in the wilderness wanderings, inspite of Moses' intercessions (9:18-29; 10:10-11). The question for decision (30:19) is

whether their children, this new generation of adults alive at the time of the end of Moses' ministry, will repeat the mistakes of their parents and die, or whether they will obey the Torah and in holiness take the Holy Land and live to worship the L-rd there in His Holy Dwelling (12:11-26; 14:23-25; 15:20; 16:2-16; 17:8-10; 18:6; 26:2; 31:11).

"You shall not act as we are acting here today, all of us according to our own desires, for you have not yet come into the rest and the possession that the L-rd your G-d is giving you" (12:8-9). Each generation has an opportunity to obey G-d and go in and destroy idols and possess what G-d has prepared for it.

This is true of all omanim l'ma'an Yisroel (artists for Israel),

but we should also be warned that the only time the word

artisan/craftsman [CHARASH] is used in Deuteronomy, it is used of

one who prostituted his talent to make an idol for himself

(27:15). Maggidim, as they use the arts in ministry, should

remember that the Word is preeminent and that the prophet is one,

set apart from the people who remains before the L-rd to get His

Word for the L-rd's flock (5:27-28).

It is important to know who the Hittites were (see Gen. 23:3).

They were a people whose kings had written contracts and treaties

with the nations (like Syria) who became their vassals (dependent

states). We know from scholars like M.G. Kline that a vassal

state was granted certain rights in return for loyalty and obedience to the Hittite king, just as the land-use rights to the Holy Land were granted to the chosen people by their Holy King, the L-rd G-d. The covenant that G-d gave Moses at Mt. Sinai is similar in literary form to the sort of covenant or treaty that a Hittite king made with his Syrian vassal, including: a preamble in which the Sovereign identifies Himself (Deut. 1:1-5); a historical prologue in which the Sovereign rehearses all His past benefits (Deut. 1:6-4:49); a "stipulations" section listing the covenant requirements imposed on the vassal (Deut. 5:1-26:19); a "covenant ratification" section including a provision for treaty

renewal and specifically listing the covenant sanctions in terms

of the kinds of curses and blessings that will encourage

compliance (27:1-28:63); and, finally, succession arrangements

for continuance of the covenant (see 31:1-34:1 where

Joshua/Yehoshua is designated as Moses' successor and also see

18:15-19 where the Moshiach and the prophetic tradition leading

to Moshiach's coming point together to Moses' ultimate successor,

the New Yehoshua, the Moshiach--Isaiah 49:8). But it is

important to remember that the above, often alluded to by

scholars, is not the whole story. More than merely copying the

form of an existing treaty, G-d, as a free act of grace, set

Israel "in His love," and then He laid out certain commandments

by which Israel was warned to "keep yourselves in the love of God"

(Jude 21) and "continue in my covenant" (Heb. 8:9; Acts 2:42).

The specific divine directive was to go into the land and rid it

of all idols (Deut. 7:5-6) just as the Great Commission of the

Brit Chadasha was to go into all the world and preach the Besuras

Hageulah (Matt. 28:19-20).

Around the 13th or 14th centuries (during roughly the same

timespan as the life of Moses) these Hittite kings gave their

Syrian vassals written covenants similar to the kinds of treaties

we see in Exodus and Deuteronomy (notice the Aseret ha-Dibrot

[the Ten Commandments] 5:6-21). This is a powerful argument that

Moses is the primary author responsible for the writing of these books of the Bible. Those who deny Mosaic authorship discount the facticity of 5:3, which is like depriving I Cor. 15 of the eye-witness testimony of Shliach Sha'ul and the other Shluchim that undergirds the truth credentials of the Besuras Hageulah (see 11:7).

The Babylonian Exile and the Exile of 70 C.E. and every "holocaust" that Israel has endured can be understood only in terms of the Deuteronomy sanctions. The repeated pattern of national sin and rebellion against the prophetic preaching of the Torah of Moses followed by the invasion of foreign armies, siege, exile, deportation, repentance in the diaspora, divine favor, and

return to the Holy Land can only be understood in terms of the

covenant blessings and curses such as are listed in Deuteronomy.

(Against those who read Anti-Semitism into 28:37, Zechariah 1:15

is an important tempering Scripture here, for there is no

one-for-one relationship between Israel's sin and her punishment

at the hands of the nations.) However, like a tenant being

evicted from his apartment because he broke the rental contract

or covenant with the landlord, so Israel has definitely been

evicted more than once to show the nations that the G-d of Israel

is the true G-d and means business when He commands Israel and

all nations to repent and believe in Him. Also, as far as

believers are concerned, when Shliach Sha'ul read Deuteronomy, he

made spiritualized applications along these lines to the covenant

communities he set in order (see I Cor. 9:9 and Deut. 25:4;

1 Cor. 11:27-32 and Deut. 28:15f) and warned the members that

sinning might get them evicted by means of sickness and death

from the Moshiach's Tish. We need to understand the covenant

aspect of our faith so that our disobedience and faithlessness

does not get us evicted from the place of blessing G-d intends

for our lives.

Israel is described in this covenant as a divinely set apart

people intended to enjoy a privileged relationship to their L-rd

(see 1:31; 32:6,9), one that is permitted by G-d as fulfillment

of His promises to the patriarchs (7:8; 29:12-13; 4:21), but requires obedience to all the covenant stipulations (from the heart, not merely legalistically), including transmitting the teaching to each generation's children. This trans-generational holy requirement is accomplished by constant teaching, example, and pedagogical aids designed to indelibly etch on the memory and the heart of young and old alike, and, not only this but also consciously quarantining the nation, the family, and impressionable minds from the heathen world (6:4-7:6). But the most important stipulation of the covenant is also a gift: hitkhadeshut [regeneration] (10:16; 30:6; see also Lev. 26:40-41;

Jer. 4:4; 9:25; Rom. 2:29). (The Moshiach is surprised that Nicodemus could be a ruler in Israel and not understand this--see Yochanan 3:3-10--and that the Pharisees could turn the law into a bewildering maze of legalisms and thereby lose love and justice and compassion). Salvation and right standing before G-d, according to the authoritative message of Moses, does not come through herculean feats of legalistic observance (30:11-13) nor through merit based on humanly-derived righteousness (7:7; 8:14; 9:4-7) but through loving, loyal, obedient faith in the word of G-d (30:14,20; 6:4-5,13,16; 8:3; 10:12; 11:1,13,22; 30:20) which, according to Moses, necessitated love of the neighbor as well (10:19). As far as human merit before G-d is concerned, even

Moses fell short and needed G-d's unmerited favor and mercy

(32:48-52). Nevertheless, G-d's mitzvot must be obeyed

(28:1,58-59), and the antinomian who lawlessly ignores G-d's

commandments does not love G-d (19:9; 30:16). Moreover, how one

responds to false doctrine is a test of one's true love of G-d

(13:3). Yet ultimately, loving G-d is impossible without

hitkadeshut [regeneration] (30:6).

Deut. 1:39 says "your children who do not yet know good from

bad." Luke chapter 2 shows Yehoshua as a boy who was ready to

reach the age of moral accountability called in Hebrew Bar

Mitzvah. If you think children's ministry is not especially

important, underline the word children everytime it occurs in

chapter 6.

Chapter 1:16 can be applied to the modern community of believers

in this way: don't have cronies or cliques or favorites or you

will destroy justice and equity in the house of the L-rd's

people.

Chapter 1:29-33 is the Besuras Hageulah according to Moses that

was rejected at Kadesh-barnea (that fateful turning point of

unbelief) when the 10 spies gave the evil report. Every

generation has an opportunity to obey the L-rd and to follow Him

and to gain new ground for the Kingdom of G-d, or else to

hesitate, shrink back, and be lost. Every generation is put to a

test and a trial--either to march ahead in faith and take some

ground, for G-d or to rebel and "grumble in your tents" (1:27)

and die with a faithless hardened heart in the wilderness. If

even Moses, great though he was, fell short of the L-rd's holy

expectations and was punitively replaced, how much more should we

be careful to obey G-d's Word (3:25-28).

We don't take away from G-d's Word (4:2). Scripture interprets

Scripture. We worship G-d only at the divinely acceptable

mitzbe'ach and before the appointed kohen that He promises to

show us (by His canonical prophets--see 12:4-7) and we know from

all the prophetic puzzle finally filled in that the ultimate

altar and kohen is Yehoshua on the aitz haGeulah. Beware of

syncretism caused by adding to the canon (1:2; 12:29-32; 13:1;

Prov. 30:6) syncretistic pseudo-Jewish religion, adding to and

subtracting from the Torah (Moshiach Yehoshua is subtracted and

an autonomous-from-Moshiach Yehoshua-the-tree-of-life

pseudo-wisdom is added and pursued as in Gen. 3:6).

Why we study through the Word every year is clear from 4:9; 5:1.

Not to do so is to adversely affect our children (5:29).

Example: a couple takes their children to religious services, but

do not personally study the Word with them and disciple them; the

children grow up and marry nominal believers and suffer the

tragedy of divorce. Note: the next generation of children are

consequently the victims of broken homes. Do you see from this

example how the sins of the grandparents affect their

grandchildren? Could this not have been avoided if each

generation had been taught the Torah in the power of the Ruach

Hakodesh? Live in the Word! Don't let the thoughts of the L-rd

out of your mind or out of your heart? (6:7)

The unregenerate man can only obey the Bible legalistically since

he lacks the Ruach Hakodesh's power to rise to the law's higher

moral challenges and since he does not have the prophet's insight

into higher obedience in holy love. However, those who do not

grapple with the Law (thoughtlessly setting up a too sharp

antithesis between Law and Grace), are those who may choose an easy and cheap, lawless "grace" that is more antinomian ignorance than holy reverence for G-d's Biblically defined will. We are not under the Law's penalty but we are not free from the Law's moral severity. "Under (the dispensation of) Grace" means under an even more severe morality, not an amoral lawlessness (see Rom. 6:1-14). Moreover, as Jewish people put their faith in Mashiach Yehoshua, G-d does not intend for them to turn traitor to the Sinai Covenant and its mitzvot. That would be cheap grace indeed!

In 7:12f concrete physical blessings including healing are promised to the obedient. G-d also promises He is going to get

His victory among the heathen (7:24). That is the basis on which

we can attempt great things for G-d.

One reason G-d doesn't always answer our prayers quickly is given

in 8:2-3.

Deut. 12:28 warns against following other gods who have not

proved themselves to you. How did the true G-d prove himself? By

two Exoduses, one from the first death with Moses as the leader

(see the magnificent description in Exodus 14:15-31); the other

from the second death with Yehoshua as the leader. Also, the

true G-d has proved Himself by power encounters such as in

Numbers 17 and I Kings 19. This is why the gifts of the Ruach

Hakodesh must not be neglected today: power encounter is still

needed to defeat the idols of the heathen and show that Yehoshua

alone is Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach Adoneinu.

What implications can you draw from 16:19-20 about Bible

believers going into politics and about social justice being part

of the Besuras Hageulah? (See also 24:19-22).

Look at Navi in 18:15. This section foretells the prophet like

Moses that G-d will raise up in the Promised Land. Isaiah

49:9-10 speaks apocalyptically of the Moshiach as a New Moses.

The immediate (not final) fulfillment of this Deut. 18:15

prophecy is Joshua (whose Aramaic/English name is Yeshua/Yehoshua

-- see Nehemiah 8:17 in the Hebrew Bible). Joshua is a type of

Moshiach because he is an agent of chesed to the Gentile Rahab

but of chereem damnation to the seven wicked nations trodding down

the Holy Land, the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites,

Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. The rabbis likened David to

Moses, and since David's house will bring Moshiach the Lawgiver

(Isaiah 42:4), we should not be surprised that Moses says another

prophet is coming "like me," and the first prophet to come after

Moses has the name of Moshiach Yehoshua or Yehoshua/Joshua the

son of Nun. (See also the notes on the book of Joshua.)

Look at 19:15. The people of G-d, the local kahal assembly

called out for eschatological salvation, is at least two

witnesses according to Matt. 18:20. Note Moses and Aaron going

before Pharaoh, Joshua and Caleb entering the Promised Land, the

Kohen Gadol Yehoshua/Joshua and Zerubbabel returning from the

Exile to build the Second Beis Hamikdash, Yochanan and Shliach

Kefa rushing into the empty tomb at the end of the Besuras

Hageulah of Yochanan, and the Brit Chadasha kehillah being

raptured before the final destruction of the world's destroyers

(see Rev. 11, especially 11:18). Yehoshua sent the 70 out in

two's, which meant that he sent out 35 tiny Brit Chadasha

kehillot, and Shliach Sha'ul and Barnabus were themselves a Brit

Chadasha kehillah as they together planted many house Brit

Chadasha kehillot in the first emissary journey of Moshiach's

shlichut. More Brit Chadasha kehillot could be planted if this

fact were appreciated and people did not "despise the day of

small things" (Zech. 4:10) as they planted new works for the

L-rd.

Deut. 22:5 tells why we have to have a dress code.

Read 22:15. Modern parents are often promiscuously irresponsible

in the matter of protecting their children's sexual purity. See

7:3-6.

Grace brings a marvelous "exception to the rule" in Deut. 23:3

for Ruth the Moabitess.

Deut. 27:26 emphasizes that the Law does not justify or clear of

guilt but brings everyone condemned to Moshiach needing salvation

(Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:19), for indeed Moses testifies that everyone whose actions "do not elevate the words of this law" is pursued by the law's curses. So from this verse (27:26) we see the universal need for salvation from the curse of the law (Gen. 6:5; I Kings 8:46; Eccles. 7:20; Prov.20:9; Ps. 53:3; 14:3; 130:3; Isa. 53:6; 64:6; Mic. 7:2; Rom. 3:23; Gal. 3:22; I Yochanan 1:8; 5:19). Further, we see that the whole reason the Moshiach was accounted cursed and struck down by G-d (Isa. 53:4; Deut. 21:23) was in order to make kapporah for us and redeem us from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13). For the legal demands of the Law entail curses (Deut. 27:1-26; 28:15-68) and these stand

against us and pursue us as part of the burning wrath of an
offended Holy G-d until the record is erased, the sin is expiated
(removed), and the penalty is set aside in the kapporah (Col.
2:14). And ultimately the curse on mankind is universal, not
limited to those who receive the Torah, but pursuing all the race
of Adam (see the curse section in Gen. 3:14-19) who forfeit
Chayyei Olam (Eternal Life) (Gen. 3:22-24) without regeneration
(Deut. 10:16; 30:6).

DEUTERONOMY

10:16

Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more

stiffnecked (stubborn).

30:6

And the L-rd thy G-d will circumcise thine heart, and the heart

of thy seed (descendants), to love the L-rd thy G-d with all

thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

DEUTERONOMY 18:15-19

18:15

The L-rd thy G-d will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst

of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall listen;

18:16

According to all that thou desiredst of the L-rd thy G-d in Horeb

(Sinai) in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again

the voice of the L-rd my G-d, neither let me see this great fire

any more, that I die not.

18:17

And the L-rd said unto me, They have well spoken that which they

have spoken.

18:18

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like

unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak

unto them all that I shall command him.

18:19

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not listen unto my

words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

YEHOSHUA (JOSHUA)

YEHOSHUA (JOSHUA, "the L-rd saves") was formerly named Hoshea

("salvation") until Moses changed his name (Num. 13:8,16). He

was from the tribe of Ephraim, meaning he was a descendent of

Yosef. The Greek Septuagint translates his name IEsous or

Yehoshua. He was Yehoshua the "son" of Joseph. Isa. 49:8 says

the Moshiach will be a new Joshua, "Thus says the L-rd; in a time

of favor I have answered you, on a day of yeshuah (Yehoshua =

"salvation" = also the name of Yeshua/Joshua--see Neh. 8:17 in

Hebrew Bible) I have helped you; I have kept you and given you as

a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the

desolate heritages." Zech. 6:12 says that Joshua/Yehoshua's name

(Ezra 3:8) is Tsemach (or "Branch" of David, that is, the

Moshiach). With all this in mind, we shouldn't be surprised if

we see Messianic typology in this book. Isaiah certainly did

when he read it (Isa. 49:8).

The book begins with Moses commissioning Joshua and telling him

over and over again to be courageous and strong in the Word. The

responsibility for a fierce military conquest is on his shoulders

and he must hear and heed the bold military plans of G-d and then

execute them with precision and fearlessness.

The Transjordan tribes (Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of

Manasseh) are told to seek first the kingdom of G-d and go over

to fight for the land of their brother tribes and then, they are

assured, G-d will grant them the enjoyment of their own

inheritance.

After the appearance to Joshua of the angelic commander of the

L-rd's army (5:13-15), Jericho is soon conquered. But sin in the

camp brings defeat when Ai is attacked, and only when the sinner

is dealt with does victory once again come to Joshua's forces.

Fulfilling Moses's command (Deut. 27:4-5), Joshua builds a

mitzbe'ach on Mt. Ebal and the people observe a covenant ceremony

there (Josh. 8:30-35). This is in central Canaan at the pass

between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. At the end of the book,

when hostilities have died down, Joshua assembles all Israel

again and charges them with a farewell address, and then gathers

them at Shechem for a ceremony of covenant renewal (24:1-28).

Loyalty to G-d is a theme of these sections and of the whole book, and something Achan's sin showed that he lacked. When Joshua copies the law (8:32) he is doing what the royal head of Israel will one day be obligated to do (Deut. 17:18), adding to the Messianic typology the Scriptures invest in him.

The first 11 chapters of the book of Joshua deal with the invasion of Canaan under Joshua, the salvation of Rahab, and the prayerless mistake with the deceiving Hivites of Gibeon. We see that Joshua's base camp is at Gilgal, where G-d "rolled away" the disgrace of Egypt when the Israelite men were circumcised (compare GALOTI "I rolled away and GILGAL in 5:9). From this

place of spiritual cleanness and responsiveness to G-d (which is what the BRIS MILAH symbolizes), G-d gives Joshua the bold plans he needs to brilliantly take the whole land.

A good general knows that the point of initial attack has strategic implications for every part of the total battle plan of the war. Like a brilliant war strategist, G-d has Joshua take Jericho and Ai first, then swoop south in a second campaign against the cities there, and finally turn to the northern campaign to secure the whole area in just three elegant moves.

We need to ask G-d to give us bold plans to take the whole area where we're called for G-d. We need to become convicted by a verse like 18:3, "How long will you be slack about going in and

taking possession of the land that the L-rd, the G-d of your
ancestors, has given you?" We need to pray for the strength of
Caleb (14:10-11) to do battle for the L-rd. Then we need to go
through the whole land and make a written description of what is
actually out there as we spy out the challenge of the field of
ministry G-d has given us (18:4). Then we need to ask G-d where
our "Shiloh" is, because that is where the tent of meeting is set
up, and that's where the people meet G-d (18:1) for edification,
prayer, and divine guidance (18:10) as G-d shows us our various
tasks and the ground he has already won for us. (Shiloh was where
the Mishkan was erected following Joshua's conquest of Canaan.)

As we execute the bold campaign plans that G-d gives us we can rest assured that the victory is His and is on the way. Read the major summary 11:18-20. Look at 13:6-7. We need to see the "land" of our sphere of ministry as a target for spiritual warfare to be claimed for the L-rd and to be apportioned out to be conquered in revival. What is your apportionment? Where do you live? Who are you ministering with? Does G-d want to move you? (See 23:3-16.) Remember that your ministry is a sacred trust given to you by the L-rd. Do not lightly leave one fellowship and drift to another. G-d put you where you are and only G-d should move you.

Chapter 12 lists the Israelite conquests. The occupation of the

land is described in chapters 13-31 with special emphasis on Caleb of the tribe of Judah. The Transjordanian question of the altar is settled in chapter 22. Deuteronomy forbade the disloyal act of offering sacrifice anywhere except in the one central sanctuary (Deut. 12:13-14). Those who believe that Jericho's walls fell (Josh. 6) only in the imagination of this book's author should read archeologist Dr. Bryant O. Wood's article in the March-April 1990 issue of Biblical Archeology Review. A study of ceramic remnants, carbon-14 dating, seismic activity in the region and even some tumbled walls give impressive evidence that the city was burned around 1400 B.C.E. Because Jericho is

in a rift valley, it is prone to earthquakes, geophysicists say,
that could cause the blockage of the Jordan River as well as the
destruction of the walls of the city. Earlier archeologists had
been digging in the wrong places and erroneously asserting that
there was no evidence that the city had been destroyed during the
period when the Bible indicates Joshua's conquest took place.

Review the notes in Deuteronomy and Numbers on the Messianic
typology in the book of Joshua. This is not a book on how to
have success in general but in particular, in particular
regarding the work of the great commission, which is to take the
whole world for G-d, Israel first and then the nations. This
whole book is prophecy in type, with Joshua the type of the

Warrior Word Yehoshua, and the book of Joshua a picture of the whole body of Moshiach breaking out in the great commission march to take the world for him.

The book is also a great teaching on the indispensable quality that the L-rd's leader must have--strength! See 1:7-8 and

17:14-18. The strength comes from prayer and the Word. A

believer can go through the worst this world has to offer and be

as strong as a lion, if he meditates on every verse of the book

of Joshua. G-d has given us many promises from His Word to draw

strength from. Do you see from 17:14-18 why a leader has to be

strong? The people are only as strong corporately as their

leader. Leaders must be qualified and called, duly accountable
and under authority, and strong in the Word and in vision (29:18)
to serve the L-rd in purity and holiness with compassion for his
sheep.

Faith is a matter of heart knowledge given as a gift, even to
unworthy prostitutes like Rahab in Jericho (2:9,12). However,
faith is also a matter of the will, a matter of heart loyalty to
G-d which can affect a whole family if that family has one
loyal-to-G-d witness. Notice the recapitulation of the Passover
theme--Rahab's household will be passed over when G-d's holy
wrath rages and burns through Jericho, consuming the wicked. The
destroyer will see the red sign of covenant protection and pass

over all who are under its covering. With the Gentile Rahab's "passover" she becomes a type of all the world's Nations coming under the red sign of covenant protection in the Brit Chadasha Pesach of the Moshiach's Tish. Rahab and Ruth lead the Gentiles of the world into the Israel of G-d. Josh. 2:12 proves that G-d blesses those who bless his people (Gen. 13:3), and Rahab, an ancestor of David and Moshiach Yehoshua (Mt. 1:5), shows by her life that it was always G-d's intention that "all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:3).

Note that Moshiach's tevilah (3:5) is to prepare for the battle of serving G-d. It is also a symbol of covenant purification

(5:2-3) as is circumcision (5:1-9; see Col. 2:11-13).

The ark of the covenant of the L-rd was where G-d's presence in

his Word dwelt. Josh. 4:7 says, "The waters of the Jordan were

cut off in front of the ark of the covenant of the L-rd." In the

Brit Chadasha, the same eternal, saving Word who parted the seas

of chaos at creation and at the Sea of the Exodus and at the

water of the Jordan has triumphed over the sea of death itself,

bringing the order of the Olam HaBah into eschatological victory

over this world's present chaos.

The L-rd gives his mesharet a certain authority as a leader

(4:14) if he has a genuine place of recognized leadership in the

Brit Chadasha Kehillah. It is not necessary to get pushy to

establish this authority--it's there by the Ruach HaKodesh (Prv.

18:16).

The purpose of Biblical miracles and any true miracle that

happens today is to bring people to a point where they have a

saving fear of the L-rd and His inerrant Word (see Rahab's speech

in 2:9-13).

Then as now music and shouts of praise are important in breaking

the yoke of spiritual oppression in worship (See 6:5).

Josh. 6:18 is why we avoid worldly enticements and all the wicked

things the heathen covet. Whoever loves the world is an enemy of

G-d, and whoever covets what has been devoted to destruction may

become himself a thing devoted to destruction (7:12). This is the crucial lesson that Achan can teach us, and it is the very reason modern men need to get rid of their yoga and New Age books and occult lore and extra-terrestrial beliefs and any other spiritual fixation that cannot be sanctified by the word of G-d.

Whoever defies G-d's ban on things like pornography and other worldly things set apart for destruction and tries to hide such things under his tent will find that G-d's anger has been aroused and the blessing of G-d has been removed. Such sin can contaminate others and destroy a whole ministry (see 7:2-5).

Chapter 6:21-24 is a picture of what actually happens when we

experience Yeshuat Eloheinu: people all around us go to Gehinnom

but we are spared, a fact that should bring fear rather than

conceit or arrogance (Romans 11:19-22).

Look at chapter 9. Can you discern when false brethren slip in

secretly among you? See Jude 4. You can't discern them if you

don't watch the people in your life in prayer (9:14-15). Are all

the people in your life really G-d's choice for you?

Chapter 14:6-15 is a case study to prove (through Caleb of Judah)

that the central theme of the Torah is true (1:8)--that loyalty

to the Word of G-d brings blessing. Look at the typological

preaching possibility in 15:16-17. Because He overcame the

world, the Elohim Avinu has given His Word the Bride of Moshiach.

To the extent that you don't dispossess HaSatan in your life, to that same extent his children will clutter your life and "dwell" with you "to this day." (See Josh. 15:63).

Chapter 18:1-6a gives us the kind of survey with bold plans that congregation planters do before they plant a congregation.

Chapter 21:41-43 is a major summary. Read it. Chapter 22:1-6 says to seek first the kingdom of G-d and all these other things shall be added to you as well.

Isaiah infers in Isaiah 49:8 that the Moshiach will be a new

Joshua. It is important to note that the immediate (not final)

fulfillment of the Deuteronomy 18:15-19 Messianic prophecy is

Joshua. Joshua is indeed both a prophet and like Moses because it was to Joshua and not to Moses that G-d gave the revelation of the exact boundaries of the tribal portions of Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel). Several times in the book Joshua proves he is a prophet. "Thus says the L-rd," Joshua begins in 24:2, using the formula of a prophet. Like Moses, Joshua has a burning bush experience (compare Ex. 3:5 to Josh. 5:15). The Jordan river parts like the Red Sea, and when Joshua stretches out his sword, G-d gives him victory as when Moses stretched out his rod in the book of Exodus. G-d says to him, "I will be with you as I was with Moses" (Josh. 3:7). G-d hardens the hearts of the

indigenous Canaanite population just as G-d hardened Pharaoh's heart (Josh. 11:20) and then G-d shows Joshua the brilliant strategy he should use to defeat them. G-d says, "I will be with you as I was with Moses" (3:7; 4:14). Moses died in the wilderness because he angered G-d, but Joshua led the people victoriously to the promised life in the Holy Land. Thus, Joshua is a prophetic sign of the King Moshiach, the ruler from among his brethren who, like Moses and Joseph the Moshi'a in Egypt, would lead the true remnant Israel from the rebellious unbelief, resulting in death, to the faith resulting in eternal salvation and Messianic deliverance and inheritance foreshadowed in the book of Joshua.

In the Torah there is the Aitz haChayim (the tree of Eternal Life--Genesis 3:22) and the Aitz haKilelat Hashem (Tree of the Curse of G-d--Devarim 21:23). The body of a man, even a King, hanging executed in the open air was considered accursed by G-d (that is, put under His judgment--see Joshua 8:29; 10:26).

Isaiah 53:4 says of the Moshiach, "We considered him stricken by G-d." Isaiah 52:13-53:12 teaches that "My Servant," the Branch of David, the Moshiach, had to become accursed as sin for us, taking the punishment we deserve (Isaiah 53:5). All our sins and rebellion had to be put on His head as the Yom Kippur scapegoat (Lev. 16:21) and sin offering (Lev. 16:15) sprinkled on the

nations (Lev. 16:15; Isaiah 52:15).

The book of Hebrews (Heb. 4:3,8,11) speaks of Joshua and the

promise of rest. The land of Israel was to be a place of rest

(Josh 1:13) from Israel's enemies (Josh. 21:43-45; 23:1). But

the reason for the Exile which came to Jerusalem roughly 800

years later is given in Josh. 24:20. However, Joshua says

clearly, "As for me and my household, we will serve the L-rd"

(24:15).

See Acts 7:45 in the Brit Chadasha which has)IEsou for Joshua,

but this is the same Greek word for our Messiah's name, this

means that his Hebrew name is Yehoshua or Joshua. Since the

Hebrew name of Moshiach Yehoshua was Joshua, we are reminded of

Moshiach Yehoshua when we read in Josh. 4:4 "Joshua summoned the twelve men from the Israelites" (see Mark 3:14). Get out a map of Israel. Notice that Moshiach Yehoshua had his headquarters for his spiritual conquest of Israel in Capernaum. Joshua used Shiloh (18:1-10) as headquarters for a time, but the covenant renewal meetings of all the tribes were at Shechem (see Josh. 24). Shechem was especially revered because it was Abraham's first campsite when he entered the Promised Land, and it was the place where G-d appeared to him and where he built an altar after the L-rd promised to give him the land (Gen. 12:6-7). For more on this book, see HOW TO POINT TO MOSHIACH IN YOUR RABBI'S

BIBLE.

JOSHUA 24:29

And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of

Nun, the servant of the L-rd (Eved Hashem), died, being a hundred

and ten years old.

SHOFETIM (JUDGES)

II Thessalonians speaks of the Apostasy or religious rebellion of

the people of G-d in the last days, an event that ushers in the

revelation of the Anti-Moshiach, whom only the Second Coming of

Moshiach Nagid HaShofet (Moshiach Prince the Judge) can destroy.

But here in Judges we see the Apostasy of Israel. And we notice

that haMa'al (the treachery, defection, apostasy, revolt), each

time it occurs, receives a divine answer as G-d raises up another

Judge to effect Israel's deliverance from the bondage of idols

and foreigners with their foreign gods.

The period of the judges begins roughly around 1370 B.C.E. and

lasts about 300 years until the reign of King Saul. The judges

listed in this book are Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah/Barak,

Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson (we

will hear about two more judges when we read I Samuel--namely Eli

and Samuel). There is no monarchy during this period. One of

the sons of Gideon, Abimelech, makes an abortive attempt to set

up a dynastic kingship after the death of his father Gideon, but

this evil despot fails ingloriously and shares Sisera's shameful fate (4:21) of being put to death by a woman (9:53). One of the crimes of Abimelech was killing all his rivals, that is, the seventy sons of Gideon. However, one escaped (Jotham) and on Mount Gerizim delivered a withering diatribe satirizing the monarchy (see 9:7-21), his curse (9:20) being fulfilled in 9:49.

All of this warns about evil kings ahead and also points to the need for a "shepherd" king after G-d's own heart which was idealized in David and in the Moshiach.

Judg. 21:25 states a theme of the book as well as a warning against independent-minded religion: "in those days there was no

king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

Judg. 18:30 shows how syncretistic heretical religion not grounded in the inerrant Bible led to idolatry which would in turn later lead to eventual exile and destruction. There are those who trust their feelings in religion and don't care about the rational-historical underpinnings of our faith. These are the ones who waste no time on careful interpretation of the Bible and do not discipline their feelings in careful submission to the Scriptures. On this, see Judg. 18:20 where a religious man experiences joy in the deadly doctrines he carelessly believes, proving that feelings are an unreliable index of the truth. This theme is noticeable in chp 17 as well: a rootless Levite, who is

completely independent from the larger religious body of Israel,
wanders around and eventually gets mixed up in heresy. In this
way a center of false religion was set up in the newly settled
city of Dan that rivaled the tabernacle at Shiloh. From this we
learn to beware of spiritual isolation: it says they "had no
relationship with anyone else" (18:7b). Many people today are
isolated in an independent congregation and loyal to a flock only
as long as it takes to get their needs met; then they break
fellowship and depart. Similarly, in this book we see that
Israel was willing to submit to its judges only long enough to
eliminate Israel's oppressors. Such wayward and temporary

submission amounted to no true accountability to G-d. Israel

during this period was constantly returning to her apostate

submission to the Canaanite g-ds, Baal and Astarte.

The people of Gibeah, which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin,

committed an unspeakable crime similar to those committed by

Sodom and Gomorrah. The Benjaminites refused to allow their city

to be punished, causing a civil war in which their population was

so depleted that the survival of the Benjaminite tribe was

threatened. Judg. chps 19-21 tells this story and how a new

source of marriage partners was provided for the tribe of

Benjamin.

Notice that one must inquire at the ark of the Word of G-d

(20:26-28). This means that everyone, even the finest maggid needs to be sitting under preaching and needs to be submitted to leadership (Heb. 13:17). The L-rd's kehillah in Judg. 20:2 is presented as an eschatological war muster, and 21:9 shows that G-d keeps attendance. Some are willing like Gideon to "put out a fleece" before they make decisions, but are otherwise uncovered and unaccountable in the major decisions of their lives. Pray for the Spirit of G-d to come upon you when you minister (see 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14).

Look at the picture of second generation nominalism in 2:10. The young people in the congregation pose this threat and this

challenge, and give the congregation the opportunity to know

spiritual warfare (3:2).

In 6:29-32 we see that the fertility, sex-cult g-d Baal is

impotent and can no more protect his own altar here than he can

when challenged by Elijah in I Kings 18. This point explains how

Gideon got his name "Jerubbaal" ("Let Baal contend with him").

Samson was from the tribe of Dan. In 14:12 we see Samson the sage

or wise man. This aspect of him typifies Moshiach the Hakham

(Sage) as does also Solomon and the book of Kohelet

(Ecclesiastes) and all the Wisdom Literature in the Bible

(Proverbs, Job, etc).

Samson and Samuel and Yochanan of the Tevilah of Teshuva were

under a vow for their whole lives, as is anyone called to the ministry. In the case of Samson and Hosea, it was G-d's permissive will for G-d's prophet to marry an unbeliever, but don't you try it (14:4). Intermarriage with the heathen led to idolatry and apostasy, which in turn triggered G-d's anger and resulted in G-d allowing an invasion of enemies and plunderers (Aramaeans, Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Canaanites, and Philistines), and these were punishments for Israel's faithless disobedience to G-d's command to go in and subdue the land and cleanse the land of idolators and idolatry (see Ex. 23:33; 34:12-16; Num. 33:55; Deut. 7:2,5,16; Josh. 23:7,12). See the

notes on Jude 5-7 in the Greek section, and notice in Genesis the

"sons of G-d" (Adam, Abel, Seth, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, Shem,

Arphaxad, Shelah, Eber, etc) and you will see the weight of the

exhortation that Samson's parents are giving him in Judg. 14:2-4.

The secret of Samson's strength was in his uncompromised

commitment to G-d and His Word, symbolized by a secret vow. When

he lost that, the strength of G-d left him and he became an

ordinary man again, as every backslider knows. The tears from

the Ruach Hakodesh (Psalm 126:6) and the zeal for the Word of G-d

are all we as believers have. If we lose these, we are weak as

ordinary men and will be "ruled by the Philistines" (15:11).

Samson's weakness was impetuosity and lack of self-control in regard to his flesh. The book of Proverbs was written to keep others from making his mistakes.

Delilah betrays Samson for money. Moshiach Yehoshua was a judge, the World Judge, who was also sold and betrayed for money by his friend. Throughout this book we are told about each judge, that he died, but Moshiach Yehoshua lives! Samson, like Moshiach Yehoshua, is led off to judgment as weak as any man. There is a Messianic paradox in the way this Judge's life ends: Samson is mocked like Moshiach Yehoshua on the day of his death, a time when he is ironically victorious in G-d (16:25). However, for Samson as for Moshiach Yehoshua, there is weakness before

strength and humiliation before exaltation (16:21-22). Messianic

Psalm 110:3 says "from the womb of the dawn you will receive the

dew of your youth" (see also Isaiah 53:10-12).

In contrast to Delilah, Devorah is a role model for women in

spiritual leadership, an Em b'Yisroel (mother in Israel--5:7).

Look at Judg. 13:22. Notice that the Malach Hashem (the Angel of

the L-rd) was more than an angel. He was a theophany of G-d

himself (see Gen. 16:7,13), as the Word took on visible presence.

This was the Word of G-d before He came on the scene as Yehoshua

the man. His name is a mystery, an open secret that must be

disclosed in the knowledge of salvation by the Ruach Hakodesh to

the heart. "Yehoshua" (meaning "the L-rd is salvation" or "the

L-rd G-d of salvation") is revealed throughout the Bible. See

13:18 and the notes on Joshua and also Zechariah. Read the whole

Samson story starting at chapter 13. See Judg. 13:13, where the

Angel of the L-rd has the same name in Hebrew as the Moshiach

Himself in Isaiah 9:5-6, which is PAY SEGOL LAMMED SEGOL ALEF

("wonderful").

Notice Jephthah in chapter 11, even though he subdues the

Ammonites, makes a rash vow that is not grounded in the Word of

G-d and in G-d's will and it costs him dearly. This teaches us

to watch and pray in all our decisions.

In the book of Judges, whenever there is a crisis and the people

need to be rescued, G-d raises up a Moshi'a (Deliverer, Savior)

(from the verb YUD SHIN AYIN). However, the people seem to be

their own worst enemies. They fail to separate themselves from

the g-ds of the people of the land, which were a snare to them

(see 2:1-2). Since G-d himself is the Moshi'a (Deliverer) (He is

also the Judge--see 11:27), He allows the odds to be stacked

against those who are his servants, so that G-d himself will be

more obvious as the deliverer in the situation, that it is He

alone (Yachid) (11:34) who is the true Moshi'a. See the story of

Gideon starting in chapter 6.

Judg. 19:22. As in ancient Greece and in many modern cities,

homosexuality was common in Canaan.

Notice: Judah, because she is the tribe of the Moshiach of the nations (Genesis 49:10) must go first (Judg. 20:18) and have preeminence.

JUDGES 20:18

And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of

G-d, and asked counsel of G-d, and said, Which of us shall go up

first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the

L-rd said, Judah shall go up first.

RUTH

Neither Edgar Allan Poe nor any other modern writer formulated

the short story as we know it. It was invented by G-d long

before. Ruth is a short story, though of course, its material is

history and not fiction.

Judges and Ruth are so different in tone that it is amazing that

they take place during the same time period. In contrast to the

murder and lust of Judges, there is the wonder of how much Ruth

endeared herself to people who should have been strangers. A

miracle quietly transpires in this story, and people who might

have considered Ruth an enemy because of her Moabite ancestry,

were instead drawn to her by the cords of G-d's love. Love is a

wonderful thing. The story of Ruth is saying, look how G-d's

love binds people together, with a bond that even death cannot

sever, for G-d is the G-d of the living, and even the dead are

not beyond his protective, loving hand.

Look at Ruth's story. Ruth's husband Mahlon is dead, he left her

no son, Naomi he left no grandchildren. Mahlon's property is

languishing untilled in Bethlehem, and all seems hopelessly lost.

Who can help her? Who can reclaim the land and bring a harvest

of prosperity again? Who can redeem the dead? No one, it seems.

The land has seen famine, the dead are gone.

But is anything too hard for G-d? Read the story and watch G-d

go into action! Watch him redeem the lost property and put the

deed of ownership back into the name of the deceased. All right,

you say, G-d can redeem the land perhaps. But can G-d redeem the

dead? Can the dead live again? Can a corpse have a child?

Again we ask, is anything too hard for the L-rd? Look at this

true story, recorded in the annals of the history of King David!

In this true story, the dead man's widow even conceives the dead

man's child, giving us a foreglimpse of Isaiah's virgin in Isaiah

7:14! And what a child! The child that is on the way in this

story is the Davidic King of Judah, even the Moshiach! Now, the

story is saying, after all that, you, reader, should believe that

G-d is the G-d of the living, who can redeem the world and the

land and who can make alive even the dead.

Ruth had neither a Jewish mother nor a Jewish father! But she has entered Ideal Israel (Y'shuron Yisroel, meaning "upright one or "law-upholding one", a poetic name for the true Israel of G-d --see Isaiah 44:2; Deut. 32:15; 33:26; 33:5) by faith alone (Gal. 2:15-21), by an individual choice to turn away from the former heathenish direction she was going and by making a personal decision to turn back and join the people of G-d and to take their G-d as her God in true teshuva (1:16-17). (Moab symbolizes for Naomi a heathenish neglect of G-d's people and G-d's House, because Bethlehem means "House of Bread," and she has felt the covenant curses of famine, death, and childlessness as a result of her moving in a heathenish direction that neglects G-d's

House--Deut. 28:18, 21, 24). But Ruth has become a "supernatural Jew" through the new birth and has entered "Upright" Israel by what alone made her upright, that is, emunah (Hab. 2:4; Gen. 15:6; Psalm 106:31; Gal. 2:16), and Ruth has entered Upright Israel ahead of those who say they are Jews but are still spiritually uncircumcised, still heathen at heart, as Naomi seems to be until she comes back to Bethlehem and begins to see G-d bless one of the Gentiles, her daughter-in-law Ruth (contrast Ruth 1:15 and Ruth 2:20). Ruth's regenerated, circumcised heart made her part of the true circumcision, the true Israel of G-d, and we who are regenerated in the Brit Chadasha kehillah have

also entered Israel with Ruth the Moabitess and with Rahab.

The point that the story is leading to is how great G-d's

blessing is on this Gentile woman--more than she could ever see

in her lifetime. (G-d has also similarly blessed us more than we

can see in our lifetime.) She became a direct ancestor of King

David and, through him, Ruth became a direct ancestor of the

promised Moshiach Himself! The irony of G-d's hand on Ruth's

life is a theme of the story. His providential care for her, the

way her footsteps are literally ordered by the L-rd (Psalm

37:23), the gracious way her faith is answered by his provision

--these are all highlighted by the fact that she is an outsider,

alone, a widow, a non-Jew, a foreigner, a member of the excluded,

(cursed by the Law--Deut. 23:3) Moabite people, a pagan who had

known only death and a false religion and was now poor and

helpless in a strange land.

G-d's special providential care toward those on their way to

salvation is a theme of Ruth. Everywhere this Gentile widow

turns, she is blessed, because she has been given a heart to

bless G-d's people (Gen. 12:2). Just as she does not forget her

mother-in-law, G-d does not abandon his chesed (covenant-keeping

loving kindness) with Ruth and with the living and the dead (Ruth

2:20). G-d makes everything work together for good for Ruth,

even a famine, even the death of her husband (Romans 8:28). G-d

uses the famine in Israel to get Ruth's future mother-in-law

Naomi to move from Bethlehem to where Ruth could meet her in

Moab. G-d uses the death of her husband to free Ruth to begin a

wonderful, spiritual pilgrimage. G-d, who withdraws the rain,

now brings the early rain and the later rain to end the famine

and bless the land with the harvest, which is a reward for

covenant-obedience (Deut 28:4). But, here is where the wonder

really begins. G-d leads the widows back to Bethlehem for a

harvest greater than they could ever imagine, a world harvest led

by the Moshiach Himself, the world Harvester "to whom the nations

belong (Gen.49:10)." (Notice carefully the Goel redeemer son of

Judah at the threshing floor in Ruth 3:2). The World Harvester,

the Moshiach will be born there in Bethlehem a thousand years

later (see Micah 5:2).

G-d gives Ruth a strange and marvelous love. G-d gives Ruth a

love for her mother-in-law and for the people of G-d. G-d gives

her the courage to say good-bye to her heathen sister and to go

to Israel with her mother-in-law. Then G-d brings her to a very

special man, a man of substance, a man of destiny, the most

wonderful husband she could ever have dreamed of, in fact a

husband far beyond her imagination, an absolutely unique man of

royal blood, the only man in the world who was Ruth's

contemporary and was at the same time destined to become a direct

ancestor of King David and of the Moshiach Yehoshua. And the

wonder is that G-d led this Gentile woman Ruth to find favor in

his sight and become related to him in holy covenant love. For

this man (Boaz) from the Messianic tribe of Judah become Ruth's

kinsman Go'el (redeemer), protecting the family, the dead as well

as the living. This man from the tribe of the Moshiach married

Ruth and redeemed (bought back) the land of Ruth's dead husband

and raised up an heir to carry the dead man's name. So the dead

man's inheritance was not wiped out. G-d is the G-d who saves

the living and the dead through a Redeemer from the tribe of

Judah. Here it is important to remember that APOLUTROSEOS or

HAPEDUT (redemption) as in Romans 3:24 means release on payment

of ransom. Had Moshiach Yehoshua not paid the ransom of his blood as our Go'el (redeemer) we could never have been bought back from sin and death and judgment. Our plight would have been more hopeless than Ruth and Naomi, these two tragic ALMANOT (widows).

In the Bible, G-d is also the protector of ALMANOT. In Bible times, a woman without the covering of a husband was in danger of exploitation or of sexual molestation or even being carried off.

Because of our sin nature and our sin practices, we were carried off and on the slave market auction block of sin. We needed a redeemer to buy us back. Moshiach Yehoshua is rich and can do

that because Moshiach Yehoshua is not in debt to HaSatan.

Moshiach Yehoshua has no sin nature and no sin practices. If we

humble ourselves like a poor widow and turn to him to redeem us,

he will put the wings of his garment over us and protect us from

all hurt and loss. Moshiach Yehoshua will be to us what Boaz was

to Ruth and Naomi. This book of the Bible is extremely important

because it shows the tribe of Judah and a coming redeemer of the

Jews and Gentiles, the Moshiach, who will fulfill Gen. 49:10.

The secret of Ruth's blessing was her faithfulness. She remained

where G-d placed her. She refused to leave her mother-in-law,

she remained with her in life and refused to leave her in death

(1:16-18). Ruth remained faithfully where G-d placed her. She

remained in Boaz's field. Boaz said, "Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain" (2:21) and she obeyed him.

Ruth didn't go to the field of someone else where she might have

been harmed (2:22). The passage says "she stayed close to the

servant girls of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat

harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law"

Naomi (2:23). Ruth remained with the people of G-d, and she kept

her heart loyal to her L-rd and His people. She is a chayil

isha "noble woman" (see Ruth 3:11; compare same exact words in

Prov. 31:10).

Notice how G-d leads Ruth out of her heathen past into a future

place of blessing with G-d's people. G-d leads her to just the
right field, one that G-d can eternally redeem with new life and
an abundant harvest, a field that will become Ruth's own,
allotted for her before time ever was, her portion, signifying
eternal life (see Romans 9:6-11).

In the Bible, your land signifies your eternal inheritance in
G-d, your allotted portion forever. There are two kinds of
people in the world! Those who despise their birthright of
Chayyei Olam (Eternal Life) and neglect the House of G-d, and
those who love the people of G-d and the courts of G-d's Beis
Hamikdash. There's no redemption, no redeemer, no hope for the
land or the dead in "Moab."

Notice, on this field of the Redeemer of Judah, G-d gives Ruth true Menucha (security--1:9; 3:1). He sustains Ruth with food and a home and a husband and even makes her the great grandmother of the great King (see Ruth 4:21-22). Judges 21:17 says that marriage was given to get an heir to avoid extinction, to avoid being wiped out. But the ultimate heir that Ruth will be given is the Moshiach, the One that will burst out of the grave and wipe out death itself.

Those with heathen hearts are still back in Moab. Ruth has come to the Promised Land and she has had her heathen heart cleansed and reborn in G-d's love, and she has come to hope in the G-d who

raises the dead. Her hope has cleansed her, too, as it says,

"every man who hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as

He is pure (I Yochanan 3:3)."

Then Ruth, who was humble enough to do any chore, any task, no

matter how menial--so great was her love for G-d's people--then

Ruth faithfully abides in G-d's love, and G-d makes Ruth's name

great. And in the story, all this providential blessing is

introduced so subtly that the reader barely see it as he reads.

Yet at the end of the story, G-d's grace becomes overwhelmingly

wonderful, just as when the believer reflects on the providential

care of the L-rd on his own life. Like Ruth, we find that G-d

was subtly blessing us all along, even before we knew him.

When going to the Jewish people, it is essential to identify with

them as Ruth did. When a Jewish person asks you about your

faith, if your deeds and your lips say, "My faith is Jewish.

These are my people," your sincere love and seriousness will get

a definite reaction from the Jewish people, as it did for Ruth.

The Go'el is introduced in the book of Ruth. Look at 3:9. The

Go'el is the kinsman-redeemer who shows kindness to the living

and to the dead, and redeems the inheritance of those who have

died. This is what the Moshiach does, and Boaz, the son of Judah

(Gen. 49:10) who takes the Gentile bride, is a picture of the

Go'el Moshiach Yehoshua, who rose from the dead to redeem the

Brit Chadasha kehillah.

Naomi had to be made empty in order that G-d could lead her back

to Him and fill her with blessing. There is a kind of chiasmus

in the fact that the land of Israel is empty when Naomi goes out

of it full, and the land is full when she comes back to it empty.

She had to leave a place called Beit-Lechem ("House of Bread")

and return marah ("bitter") to it. The name Naomi means

"pleasant", but life's blows make her bitter until G-d starts to

open her eyes as she sees a Gentile "daughter" blessing her and

being blessed by G-d with Israel's blessings, a Rom. 10:19;

11:13-14 fact which provokes Naomi to jealousy to come back to

G-d in her own heart. Only when things get as bad as they could

be in a heathen land, and all of her loved ones were dying, only

then did Naomi, bitter Naomi, turn around and repent of the

heathen direction of her life, and start heading back to G-d's

House and G-d's people. Then G-d blesses her through her return

to G-d's people. It's important to remember that the child in

the story, Obed, is called "Naomi's son." (See Ruth 4:17.)

Naomi's unredeemed property has to be purchased and it belongs to

her husband and her son Mahlon (both deceased) and the son Obed

also belongs to them and to Naomi. The child would be known as

Obed son of Mahlon son of Elimelech. The son would be Naomi's

protector and the heir of the land, insuring that it would stay

in the family. So G-d is making it evident to Naomi that He is
redeeming her life because she has returned to him. This is a
solemn warning to the backslider, but it has a loving expression
in this beautiful little book.

Ruth 3:12

Though it is true that I am a kinsman-redeemer, there is a
kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. [i.e. Moshiach]

SHMUEL ALEF (I SAMUEL)

This two-part work begins with the pollution of the religious
worship by Eli's apostate sons who were kohanim during the time

when the great prophet Shmuel (born ca. 1105 B.C.E.) was a child.

The two-part work ends with a foreshadowing of the purified Beis

Hamikdash worship which was the vision of Moshiach of King Dovid

(died ca. 970 B.C.E.). A subtle indication of this is the linen

ephod (ephod) worn both by little Shmuel (I Sm. 2:18) and many

years later by King Dovid (II Sm. 6:14). The ephod of the Kohen

Gadol was an apron-like garment with an ornamented vest

containing the Urim and Thummim used to determine the will of G-d

(sacred lots that were cast to determine whether to go to war,

etc).

The kehunah (priesthood) we see being purified as the story of

I-II Shmuel unfolds looks forward to the perfect Moshiach-Kohen

who is coming (Ps. 110:4). A man of G-d comes to Eli and

prophesies to him about the kehunah (priesthood) of his ancestor

Aaron (see I Sm. 2:27f). Eli is told that he and his sons will

be replaced by another Aaronic family, which turns out to be the

family of Zadok. Eli's branch of the kehunah will be broken off

and "I will raise up for myself an "ne'eman (faithful) kohen"

(2:35), says the L-rd. Zadok and his sons will replace Eli and

his sons, just as Dovid the king after G-d's own heart will

replace Saul the unfaithful monarch and will take his crown (I

Sm. 28:17; Rev. 3:11). Yehoshua/Moshiach Yehoshua finally and

completely fulfills 2:35 through Psalm 110:4 and Zechariah 3:8

and Isaiah 53:10 (although Zadok was the immediate fulfillment).

One of the reasons King Saul angered G-d is because he usurped

the role of kohen (I Sm. 13:8-15), thus showing his lack of

respect for G-d's holy kehunah and for the king's covenant

obligation to keep the Law (see Deut. 17:11-20). When he

attacked and caused the death of the kohanim at Nob, that was the

last straw, though he had already been condemned for rebelliously

disobeying G-d in regard to the Amalakites (15:1-35; see Ex.

17:8-16; Deut. 25:17-19). The only kohen to survive the massacre

at Nob was Ahimelech's son Abiathar, who, because he later

supported David's son Adonijab instead of Solomon as David's heir

to the throne, was finally banished, leaving the Aaronic

kehunah to Zadok and his sons. Since Ahimelech and Abiathar are

descendants of Eli, we read the story of I-II Shmuel knowing

there is a curse on them and that their branch of the Aaronic

family tree will eventually lose the kehunah.

Eli should have feared G-d enough not to eat and drink judgment

on himself, especially in view of his unholy sons who were

kohanim (see Lev. 10:1,2,16-20). The backdrop of Eli's decadent

kehunah is the ominous military threat of the Philistines, who

are on the brink of subjugating the whole land and are already in

some sense holding sway (13:19-22), in spite of Shmuel's best

efforts (7:2-17). The sinful people discover that the ark will

not work as a good-luck charm or a magical weapon. Without

repentance and obedient holiness, Israel will be defeated, as

Samson found out in his own experience with the Philistines. But

the Philistine g-d Dagon cannot stand in the presence of the ark;

rather, it falls in broken obeisance. This means that if the

people of G-d through their sin lose the power of G-d, that does

not mean that G-d has lost his power. G-d is the true king of

Israel, and the people need to beware of the tyrannical

exploitation they may be asking for when they act like other

nations and demand a king. It turns out that King Saul, lacking

covenant loyalty to the Word of G-d, falls short of the

theocratic ideal, and his life becomes a foil against which to

view the description of the Moshiach in II Sm. 7:12-17, "But I will not take my steadfast love from him (Dovid's Son, the Moshiach), as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you (Dovid)."

In I Sm. 17 we see the killing by the youth Dovid of the Philistine champion Goliath (10 feet tall and weighing in with a 150 lb. coat and a 19 lb. spear head) and thereafter the beginning of Saul's jealousy and eventual unraveling (18:7-8).

Later Saul tries to kill David, but G-d puts a wonderful brotherly love for Dovid in the heart of Saul's son Jonathan, who rescues Dovid from Saul's murderous wrath and seems to know quite

unselfishly that Dovid and not he will inherit the throne

(20:13-15). David's wife Michal, Saul's younger daughter, also

helps Dovid escape (19:11-17). In the Philistine city of Gath

Dovid has to use his wits to save himself, pretending to be mad.

The Philistine king Achish later makes Dovid his mercenary and

gives him the village of Ziklag (though as his mercenary Dovid

outwits him and destroys non-Israelite villages in a holy war

rather than his own Jewish people). In any event, Achish is

convinced enough by Dovid's acting to let him do whatever he

wants (see 21:10-15) except fight side by side with the

Philistine (29:3-11), something Dovid doesn't want to do anyway,

especially against his own people. Up to this point Dovid with

his own private army seems to act like a sort of Jewish Robin Hood, even hiring himself out as a private police force. When a wealthy sheep owner Nabal (naval = "fool") rejects Dovid's help and thereby proves himself a true "fool," his death opens the door for his widow to become Dovid's wife. This woman, Abigail, is carried off from Ziklag by Amalekites (30:2) along with "the women and all who were in it" (it = Ziklag). In a foreshadow of the coming rejected Moshiach, Dovid is almost stoned by his own people, very much like Moses (Ex. 17:4; I Sm. 30:6), both of them being the rejected "servant of the Lord" (Deut. 34:5; I Sm. 25:39; Isa. 53:11). Chapter 8:8 shows that G-d is a rejected G-d;

therefore, we should not be surprised that the Moshiach is a
rejected Moshiach (Isaiah 53). But notice that when Dovid the
King is rejected by the Jewish people, he is accepted by the
Gentiles, the Philistines (see Acts 28:28)! Then, after that,
the Jewish people accept him and crown him king, as we shall see
in II Shmuel. At the end of I Shmuel, signalling that the people
of Israel once again have no king and need Dovid their King to be
their deliverer, a horrible picture comes into view: Saul and
Jonathan and all Saul's sons are killed in battle by the
Philistines at Mount Gilboa.

The second chapter contains ominous warnings against those who
are dabbling in religion and have not had the new creation

experience of the new birth. What happens to the judge and kohen

Eli's materialistic and hedonistic minister sons happens to

Goliath and to Saul: G-d becomes their enemy! What a fearful

thing! Look at how the Eli kohen's household was replaced,

indeed how the Shiloh mishkan itself was replaced (Jeremiah 7:12,

14). Shiloh was destroyed by the Philistines and replaced as a

religious center by Gilgal in the Jordan Valley near Jericho.

The Jerusalem Beis Hamikdash itself became the replacement during

Shlomo's reign.

But the most poignant part of the early section in I Shmuel is

the story of Hannah and Shmuel. How important a mother is! Look

at the dividends received from making sure a child has good training in the faith. Shmuel was the greatest man of his time, but it was only because he had a great mother! If you can read this section without tears in your eyes, there is something wrong with your reading. Samuel was the last of the judges and a great prophet, a Levite (I Chr. 6:26) who lived in Ramah in the territory of Ephraim. Chapter 9:17 shows us a word of knowledge in operation along with Samuel's prophetic gifts (I Cor. 12:8; I Sm. 3:11-14; 9:16; 10:1-7). Notice that Ramah was his headquarters but he had an annual preaching mission (I Sm. 7:16) to various cities. He was rejected by the elders who wanted a king (I Sm. 8:7). But no set-back ever stopped him from pushing

ahead for the L-rd. He was a man of prayer (I Sm. 12:23). He set

many things in order (I Chr. 9:17-26) in the House of the L-rd.

He left a valuable heritage in his writings (see I Chr. 29:29;

I Sm. 10:25). He organized an unforgettable Pesach (II Chr.

35:18). When he kisses (nashak) the anointed King (I Sm. 10:1),

he is acting out a Messianic prophecy (see Ps. 2:12). Notice

that the ruler Nagid (I Sm. 10:1), the coming Moshiach, is called

G-d's King, G-d's Anointed one Moshiach (see I Sm. 2:10; 10:1;

12:3,5; 16:6; 24:6; 26:9). See the doctrine of the resurrection

in I Sm. 2:6. The institution of the king came into being to

protect the people from their enemies. Since the greatest enemy

of man is death, this is the connection between the King Moshiach

and the resurrection of the dead (see I Sm. 10:1). Notice in

Hag. 2:5 it says, "the desired (Chemdat) of all nations will

come. This is a Messianic reference to I Sm. 9:20, "on whom is

all Israel's desire chemdat fixed, if not on you?" Micah 5:2, a

Messianic prophecy, may have come to Micah as he was meditating

on I Sm. 16:1, where G-d says to Samuel, "I will send you to

Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king

among his sons.

Notice chapter 3:7 shows that the living Word of G-d, the

Moshiach, must reveal himself to us and give us a new heart and a

new spirit or we have no knowledge of G-d. We must have "the

Word of G-d revealed" to us through a "spirit of wisdom and illumination" (Eph. 1:17) or we may remain as ignorant of the

Bible as Eli's sons.

See I Sm. 6:4,14, where the Word of the Covenant (in the Ark)

with the guilt (asham) offerings (Isaiah 53:10) returns to the

field of Moshiach Yehoshua. See Lev. 5:14-6:7; 7:1-6; 16:14-17;

Isaiah 52:15; Yochanan 6:53 on blood sacrifices and the Word.

Chapter 8:3 has Samuel repeating Eli's sin as nepotism

degenerates into second generation nominalism.

A minister must stay small in his own eyes (15:17) unless he

wants to be replaced. There is always a Dovid waiting to replace

you if you become a proud Saul.

When you go into the ministry, don't imitate anyone else. Find

what you do best and do that for the L-rd (17:39).

Look at 23:2-3. Israel's military strength is still a testimony

to the strength of G-d, even today.

But 20:31 shows the folly of building your own kingdom.

Chapter 21:4 points to the Dovidic kohenhood of the King

Moshiach, for only kohanim could eat this bread (see Psalm 110

and Zechariah 3:8). Only the nation of priests mamlechet kohanim

(Ex. 19:6; Rev. 1:6) of the Brit Chadasha can eat the bread that

Moshiach Yehoshua offers (Yochanan 6:53; Heb. 13:10).

Look at chapter 23:2 again. Do you inquire in the Word of the

L-rd every day about the day's proceedings and decisions? If you do, your victories will increase.

Strongholds of En Gedi" (23:29) means in accessible places. Do you have them? Have you learned to hide in the L-rd from Saul and HaSatan? We need periods of quiet and rest every day in our quiet time and daily devotions.

Look at chapter 24:6. Unlike Saul, Dovid would not allow himself to become jealous of another minister or to attack (in envy) a fellow minister. David feared the L-rd too much for that. Do you?

Chapter 28 has an important lesson: after you expel sinners from

your place of authority or kingdom, make sure you don't get

carnal and go back and consult with them (see also Psalm 1).

Chapter 30:6 says to find your strength in the L-rd, not in how

well you are doing in relation to others or from the standpoint

of their expectations.

I Shmuel is an amazing character study of the tragedy of King

Saul. A slow breakdown in his character is carefully presented

to us as a warning. We too could become like him, jealous,

cracking under pressure, not obeying G-d with fearful care and

attention to detail, taking our eyes off G-d, laying down carnal

and arbitrary policies, getting out of step with the Spirit. If

we don't hate sin as much as G-d commands us to, He may lose

patience with us and replace us, if we abuse our privileges, G-d

doesn't want to be obeyed our way; He wants to be obeyed His way.

See chapter 15 and what happens if we rebel against this

teaching. Saul's personal Meribah/Massah experience took place

at Gilgal where his rebellion cost him his ministry (review I Sm.

13:8-14; Ex. 17:1-7; Num. 20:1-13; Ps. 106:32; 95:8; Deut. 33:8;

Heb. 3:8), repeating in his kingly person the experience of the

children of Israel in the wilderness. Also he repeated the sins

Israel committed when she entered the Promised Land: Saul almost

caused the death of Jonathan (compare Jephthah's daughter Judg.

11:39 and I Sm. 14:28-30) and Saul committed the sin of Achan

(compare Josh. 7 and I Sm. 15:13-23).

Notice the importance of spiritual song in 16:14-23. Very often

in a service there is not enough liberty in the Spirit to preach

until, through singing, the demonic oppression in the room is

lifted (see I Sm. 18:10-12). I Sm. 16:17 says that the L-rd's

musician must be an artist who can play well.

The man of G-d is necessarily a refugee in a wicked and

G-d-hating world, but G-d gives Dovid favor and guides his steps

to safety. See chapter 19. In chapter 22 we see the wickedness

of Saul, who has no respect for G-d's ministers. This is called

anticlericalism. Increasingly the world is filling up with Sauls

and preparing for the Great Tribulation when the Brit Chadasha

kehillah will be under a final massive assault of

anticlericalism. See 23:14.

Notice the connection of the Spirit of G-d with the new birth--

I Sm. 10:6. Notice that when Dovid seemingly lost everything at

Ziklag, he "strengthened himself in the L-rd his G-d" (30:6).

I SHMUEL 3:7

Now Shmuel did not yet know the L-rd: The Word of the L-rd had

not yet been revealed to him.

I SHMUEL 10:6

And the Spirit of the L-rd will come upon thee, and thou shalt

prophesy with them, and shalt be changed into a different person.

SHMUEL BAIS (II SAMUEL)

The first few chapters chronicle the power struggle between the house of Saul and the house of Dovid, including the murder of Abner, the commander of Saul's army, by Joab, Dovid's commander.

It's important to understand that both Abner and Absalom's acts of sleeping with royal concubines were efforts to prove each had acquired royal status (see II Sm. 3:7; 16:22). During this time,

Dovid has to consolidate the military behind his regime and persuade Israel and those backing the dynasty of Saul to receive him as their king. The restoration of Michal as his wife reinforces Dovid's status as Saul's son-in-law and therefore the

legitimacy of his claim to Saul's throne. In the course of the book, all of the potential claimants to the throne from the house of Saul are eliminated, with the exception of Jonathan's lame son Mephibosheth whom David spares to sit at his table. Jerusalem is taken from the Jebusites and established as the capital of the united kingdom. But David reminds us of Moses. Just as David arrives at his zenith, having been anointed king of Judah and then seven and a half years later having been anointed king of all Israel (both times at Hebron), he sins. Calamity arises against him out of (his) own household" (II Sm 12:11). David's sons struggle for his throne, Absalom eliminating the firstborn

heir and preeminent claimant Amnon and attempting to seize the

throne, then Shlomo purging the oldest surviving son Adonijah,

but this is part of the story of I Kings.

In chapter II Sm. 6 Dovid dances in a white linen kohen's garment

before the L-rd and bitter Michal the daughter of Saul is

destined to die childless as she hardens her heart against G-d

and His people. When Dovid brings the ark of G-d to Jerusalem

and purchases the property for the Beis Hamikdash's construction

(II Sm. 6:15-16; 24:21-25), he is making it possible for the Son

of Dovid to build the House of G-d, an act that will become one

of the most important prophecies of Moshiach. Notice the Angel

of the L-rd, so important in relation to the promise of an heir

for Abraham (Gen. 18) and so decisive in the Exodus (Ex. 14:19),

is now in evidence once again at the site selection of the

Jerusalem Beis Hamikdash (II Sm. 21:16), pointing to Isaac's lamb

(Gen. 22:7-8) that will be provided, the Lamb of G-d, the

Moshiach.

See the Messianic title in II Sm. 6:21 Nagid Al-Yiroel "prince

over Israel." (Compare Moshiach Nagid Dan. 9:25.) Notice David

"distributed food among all the people" (II Sm. 6:19) as his

greater Son does in the miraculous feeding of the 3,000 and the

5,000 in the Brit Chadasha Scriptures.

Notice very carefully the prophecy that Moshiach would come from

Dovid in II Sm. 7. See the obvious Messianic interpretation

given to this prophesy as it is rendered in I Chr. 17:13. The

fulfillment of the all-important promise in II Sm. 7:16 ("your

house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne

will be established forever") necessitated the resurrection from

the dead of Dovid's "seed" (zera) King Moshiach Yehoshua which

was done to fulfill the Word of G-d (II Sm. 7:21). Notice in the

Bible "the servant of the Lord" is another appellation for Dovid

(II Sm. 3:18; 7:5,20,25-29) and "my servant Dovid" another

appellation for the Moshiach (Ezek. 34:23), making "the servant

of the Lord" a Messianic title Avdi Davod as it is in Isa. 52:13;

53:11.

II Sam. 11 shows that Dovid was safer when he was poor and fighting giants than when he was rich away from G-d's Messianic battlefield. Run from your Bathshebas and find divine safety with your Goliaths?

Rav Sha'ul uses the metaphor of a battlefield and the command to "endure hardship" like a good soldier when Shliach Sha'ul deals with the subject of the ministry and of doing the work of a kiruv outreach worker for Moshiach (II Timothy 4:5). Study Uriah in chapter 11 and you will see an illustration Rav Sha'ul could have used.

Note the cronyism between Joab and David and avoid it. G-d hates

overweening bureaucratic control and religious politicking in His

House. Here it leads to Uriah's murder, adultery, and the host

of evils described in the remainder of II Shmuel.

In chapter 12 a perfect crime is ruined by a prophet with a word

of knowledge.

Notice that the L-rd is not mocked. "With the crooked G-d shows

himself shrewd" (II Sm. 22:27). Whatsoever you sow even as a

believer, you may indeed reap even in this life. II Sm. 12:11-12

show all the reprisals that follow the Bathsheba sin (see

fulfilment 16:21-22). There is punishment even in this life for

sin.

II Sm. 12:20 indicates that, nevertheless, Dovid allowed no root

of bitterness to crop up between himself and the L-rd.

II Sm. 13:15 shows us the difference between real love and lust.

One reason we need to watch in prayer: to have divine wisdom

against the wicked counselors HaSatan will use to infiltrate our

ministry, but whose wisdom G-d can turn into foolishness as He

did with Bathsheba's grandfather Ahithophel (see II Sm. 15:31;

17:14,23; Rom. 1:22; I Cor. 1:20).

Dovid's anguished love for his rebellious son who usurped his

father's throne at Hebron, Absalom, (II Sm. 13:39; 18:33) is a

picture of "G-d so loved the world" (Yochanan 3:16) and also it

pictures the anguished love for apostate Israel felt by the heart

of G-d in verses like Luke 13:34 and Rom. 9:1-3. Ittai, the

faithful foreigner, a warrior among Dovid's mighty men, is a

picture of faithful Gentiles being grafted in while the

unfaithful natural branches are cut off (see II Sm. 15:21; 18:2).

Remember vain, ambitious Absalom's long hair and how it got him

caught in the end? Avoid carnal ambition in the ministry or,

like Absalom, you'll be caught and ensnared by your own vanity.

(See chapter 15:3-4 for the modus operandi of this expert Brit

Chadasha kehillah-splitter).

In chapter 15, Hushai, Dovid's adviser, hangs back to be his spy

in league with the descendents of Aaron, that is, Zadok and

Abiathar and their messenger sons.

II Sm. 17:23 shows Ahithophel as a type of Judas, the man who thought he could outwit the Son of Dovid and ended up hanging

himself. This type of betrayal is referred to in places like

Psalm 41:9 and 55:12-14. Even Dovid's own son Absalom betrayed

him, and betrayal is part of the sufferings of Moshiach we must

all endure. Shliach Sha'ul says, "Demas in love with this

passing world has deserted me" (II Tim. 4:10). Family members

(Micah 7:6; Matt. 10:36) and ministry partners sometimes do this

to us, and we must not grow bitter when it happens.

In II Sm. 19:17 Joab is replaced by David as head of the army but

this changes in chapter 20. Along with Abonijah and Abiathar,

Joab will be purged by Shlomo in I Kings as a fulfillment of

Dovid's curse (II Sm. 3:26-29,39) upon him for his

insubordination.

II Sam. 22:31 ("the word of the L-rd is flawless") is an argument

for the inerrancy of the Bible.

Look at "Let your hand fall upon me and my family" in 24:17. Here

we have the vicarious suffering of the Davidic Moshiach, toward

which Ezekiel 4 is also pointing (as well as Zch. 13:7). The

Beis Hamikdash with its vicarious sacrifices by the kohanim (Lv.

10:17-18) are also in view in this II Sm. 24:17 context. Moshiach

Yehoshua is the new Beis Hamikdash and the sins of Israel fall on

David's family when they fall on Moshiach Yehoshua. II Shmuel

shows the fall of Dovid from his throne and his ascension to it again after suffering. This foreshadows what will happen to the Moshiach who has "nothing" (Dan. 9:26) and loses his throne when He is "cut off" (Isa. 53:8,12b) but regains it when he is resurrected from this death and ascends to the right hand of supreme power (Psa. 110:1; Isa. 52:13-15; 53:12a). We assume Moshiach Yehoshua deliberately chose the Mount of Olives for his Gethsemane weeping because of II Sm. 15:30; at least the divine choice was deliberate. Notice that Moshiach Yehoshua has Shliach Kefa, Ya'akov and Yochanan just as Dovid has "the Three" (II Sm. 23:19). When Isaiah says that the Dovidic Moshiach will be"

oppressed and afflicted" but he will "not open his mouth" (Isa.

53:7), Isaiah may be thinking of II Sm. 16:9-13. Also in Isa.

42:1; 61:1 he may be thinking of II Sm. 23:2. Notice the

Messianic Dovidic covenant (Brit Olam) is "an everlasting

covenant" (II Sm. 23:5), language used of the Brit Chadasha (Jer.

31:31-34; 32:40; Ezek. 37:24-26). Gen. 19:10 is in view in

II Sm. 22:44-46.

It is important to correlate one's study of the Psalms with the

study of I-II Shmuel (see Psalms).

The area of Edom, which was spared during the conquest of the

land, was later conquered by Dovid (II Sm. 8:13-14) just as

Balaam prophesied (Num. 24:18). Dovid also defeated Moab (II Sm.

8:2,13-14) just as Balaam had prophesied (Num. 24:17). Dovid

eliminated the threat of the Philistines (II Sm. 5:17-25; 8:1)

and the Arameans (modern Syria)--see II Sm. 8:3-8; 10:6-19--as

well as the Ammonites (II Sm. 12:19-31) and Amalekites (I Sm.

30:11). Finishing the work of Joshua, Dovid extended Israel's

borders from Egypt to the Euphrates, fulfilling prophecy (Gen.

15:18; Josh. 1:4). It is therefore not surprising that Isaiah saw

Israel's ultimate deliverer as not only a new Joshua (Isa. 49:8)

but also a new Dovid, or a "Branch" (Tzemach) descended from

Dovid's line (Isa. 9:6-7; 4:2; 11:1-10; 53:2; 7:14).

The word for the "Besuras Hageulah" or "good news" is found in

II Sm. 18:27.

II SHMUEL 7:16

And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever

before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

MELACHIM ALEF (I KINGS)

With Jerusalem in ruins and the Dovidic throne seemingly

destroyed forever, the prophetic author of I-II Kings sets out to

vindicate the Word of G-d to the faithful. There's a reason why

this has happened. Prophecy has been fulfilled. Curses have

overtaken the covenant-breakers. And G-d's word is still true,

and the Son of Dovid, the King Moshiach, will yet come. Dovid's

throne will rise again. This is the message of faith from the

midst of the Exile.

Two key passages are II Kings 25:27-30 and I Kings 9:6-9. The

Messianic hope is still alive in the Exile in Babylon. A

descendent of David (Jehoiachin) is alive and being favored by

the King of Babylon as the book reaches its hopeful conclusion at

the end of II Kings 25. This means the Messianic promise is

still realizable and is in fact in the process of being worked

out, that is, in the fullness of time. The reason for the

destruction of all the other thrones, other than that of the

Moshiach, is given in I Kings 9:6-9, where Shlomo is given this

solemn divine warning (which the book shows by exhaustive

historical documentation was no idle threat): if you turn aside
from following me, you or your sons, and do not keep my
commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go
and serve other g-ds and worship them, then I will cut Israel off
from the land that I have given them; and the house that I have
consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight; and Israel
will become a proverb and a taunt among all peoples. This house
will become a heap of ruins; everyone passing by it will be
astonished, and will hiss; and they will say, 'Why has the L-rd
done such a thing to this land and to this house?' They will
say, 'Because they have forsaken the L-rd their G-d who brought

their ancestors out of the land of Egypt and embraced other g-ds

worshipping them and serving them; therefore the L-rd ham brought

this disaster on them."

In chapter II of I Kings we see Shlomo himself turn aside from

following G-d, and his backsliding is described in 11:4, "For

when Shlomo was old, his (foreign) wives turned away his heart

after other g-ds; and his heart was not true to the L-rd his G-d

as was the heart of his father Dovid." This turning point in

Shlomo's life (begun in 3:1) presaged the downfall of all the

kings and kingdom in I-II Kings. Doomed is the usurper's throne

of the Northern tribes of Israel, an apostate throne that both

detracts from the Messianic hope of Dovid's throne in Judah and

also divides G-d's kingdom. In 733 B.C.E. we will see the demise

of this kingdom of the Northern tribes in the Assyrian dispersion

(II Kings 17:5-23). The ten tribes of Israel were destroyed

because they raised up rival g-ds and sacrificed to them on rival

altars in rival sanctuaries (preferring Dan and Bethel to

Jerusalem--see 12:28-29) with a rival kohenhood (12:31) and their

kings sat on rival thrones at Shechem, Penuel, Tirzah, and

Samaria. Generally speaking, the kings of the Northern tribes

continue the sins of apostasy of their first king Jeroboem (931-

910 B.C.E.), and even Jehu (841-814 B.C.E.), who ruled in Samaria

for 28 years and fathered a 100 year-old dynasty, was no

exception, even though G-d used him as a bloody nemesis against

evil tyrannical rulers in the Holy Land. With the exceptions of

Asa (22:33), Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, the kings of

Sudah also generally amount to a sorry lot.

At the beginning of I Kings we find the throne of Dovid, with his

choice of successor Shlomo, threatened by certain enemies. These

receive G-d's vengeance: Adonijah (who plotted to seize the

throne), Joab (who supported Adonijah's treachery), and Shimei

(who cursed Dovid and disobeyed his son Shlomo), as well as

Abiathar the kohen (of the accursed house of Eli--see I Sm.

2:27-36). Like Moses speaking to Joshua, so Dovid, from his

deathbed, speaks to Shlomo (2:1-9) and gives him his solemn

charge. The Beis Hamikdash must be built; so must the king's palace and throne room and the walls around the royal city of Jerusalem. By this time Zadok is wearing the high kohen's vestment, confirming the prophesy against Eli calling for a new line in the kehunah (see I Kings 2:35). At Gibeon, we see a divine wisdom that rules and reign in life which all believers should pray for. King Solomon goes to Gibeon to sacrifice and to beseech such wisdom from G-d. The L-rd gives it to him "to execute justice" (3:28). Like the Son of David we see in the Brit Chadasha, Shlomo also wisely appoints 12 officials over all Israel (4:7,27) and with great wisdom administers the kingdom. I Kings 4:20-21 summarizes this period in the life of Solomon.

And just as the Beis Hamikdash became one of the wonders of world-wide pilgrimage, so people came from all the nations to hear the wisdom of Solomon" (4:34), divine wisdom which is still wondered at in the wisdom literature of the Bible like Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. In this, although she was initially a "doubting Thomas" (10:7), even the Queen of Sheba becomes a believer and Messianic Gentile pilgrim (10:6) symbolic of the Brit Chadasha kehillah.

The Beis Hamikdash of Solomon (which took seven years to build and stood less than 400 years) was extensively decorated and overlaid with gold, that "the whole house might be perfect"

(6:22). Of course we know that the perfect Beis Hamikdash of the Spirit was yet to come in the Moshiach's body (see Yochanan 2:19-21; 20:22), and that the Beis Hamikdash of this Son of David (Solomon), having begun in 960 B.C.E., would be torn down in 586 B.C.E. Nevertheless, its dimensions and furnishings preach through architecture, sculpture, painting, and other arts of the perfection that was to come in the Moshiach. For example, its Holy of Holies was designed as a perfect cube, approximately 30 feet by 30 feet by 30 feet. It was divided into (Oolahm) portico, main (Haychal) hall, inner (duh veer) sanctuary. In the portico were the ornate cast bronze pillars supporting the entrance; in the main hall were the golden tables for (Lechem

HaPanim) the bread of the Presence, the gold lampstands, and the altar of incense; in the inner sanctuary was the Aron Brit (ark of the covenant). The hayom mutzak (molten sea [a huge bowl or tank for the ablutions of the kohanim]) and the altar of the burnt offering were in front of the steps leading up to the portico. The Beis Hamikdash was adjacent to the palace of the Son of David (see the great judgment throne of ivory 10:18), and the total symbolism of the complex of the house of the Lord/house of His Anointed King of Kings (10:23) says that G-d, the sovereign master of the universe and the head of Israel, can only be approached through a kapparah blood sacrifice acceptably

interposed for G-d's covenant people by Moshiach's kehunah and its mediation.

In the synagogue today, the Ner Tamid (eternal lamp) suspended above the ark is a symbol of the Moshiach, for I Kings 11:36 says "Yet to his son I will give one tribe, so that my servant David may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem," the lamp being a symbol of the permanence of the Davidic dynasty through the coming Moshiach.

In I Kings 5, unfortunately, Solomon becomes like Pharaoh to his own people, resorting to forced labor to build the house of the L-rd, his own house, the Millo (fortification), and the walls of Jerusalem. He did not enslave the Jews (see I Kgs. 9:22) but

there was apparently enough oppression that the Northern Tribes

could say to Shlomo's son, Rehoboam, "Your father made our yoke

heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and

his heavy yoke that he placed on us, and we will serve you"

(12:4). This became one of the causes of the division of the

kingdom into the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel after

Solomon's death. As Solomon succumbs to the idolatry of the

foreign g-ds of his foreign wives and as he abuses his G-d-given

wisdom to entangle himself with ties with Egypt (note the

accumulation of horses and women--see the warning of Deut. 17:16

-17), we see that he is no perfect king. Only the Moshiach will

bring the perfect king with the perfect house and the perfect

kingdom. But we are co-laborers with G-d and we, like Solomon's

Beis Hamikdash builders, must work reverently (see I Kings 6:7).

Notice that the Son of David needed an artist for Israel (I Kings

7:13-14) and He still does today.

Notice that Solomon dedicated the Beis Hamikdash during the

(Succot) Feast of Tabernacles (8:2). Look at 8:10-11 where we see

the first Azuza Street experience among the (K'hal Yisroel)

assembly of Israel. Notice the Beis Hamikdash was the place

where G-d's Spirit and Presence and Name might dwell and the

place where the Word of G-d in the ark of the covenant was to

"incarnate" itself, in a sense, for I Kings 8:21 says, "There I

have provided a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the L-rd that he made with our ancestors, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt." As such, the Beis Hamikdash points toward "your son who shall be born to you (Dovid)." He will "build the house for my name." (see I Kings 8:19.). The Moshiach would be the eternal successor of Dovid (see I Kings 8:25; 9:5).

The "Lord's Servant" is the Davidic king (I Kings 8:59; Isa. 52:13-53:12), for it says that the L-rd "maintains the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel." Dovid's throne chair, ironically, becomes a cruel Aitz, however, because the monarchy itself is destroyed by the Exile. Indeed, Pilate sits

where the Son of David should reign, but does so only in the Millennium. After Rehoboam loses the kingdom about 926 B.C.E., never again does a descendant of David (other than Moshiach Yehoshua the Moshiach) rule over Israel.

When Solomon backslides (mainly in his old age), G-d raises up adversaries against him (see ch. 11). The conquered peoples rebel and the Northern tribes rebel also. Hadad the Edomite, Rezon of Syria (Aram), and Seraboam are all instruments of Solomon's punishment. Ahijah of Shiloh prophesies the division of the kingdom and the ascendancy of Jeroboam to the throne of the Northern tribes (see 11:35). This comes to a climax when (R'chev'am) Rehoboam (930-913 B.C.E.) tries to be a tougher

"Pharaoh" than Solomon.

Note carefully the prophecy concerning the coming righteous king

(Yo'shiyahu) Josiah (610-609 B.C.E.) in 13:3, who is named by

name (as Moshiach Yehoshua is in Zech. 6:11-12 and as Cyrus is in

Isa. 44:28f) and who will destroy this pagan altar later during

the time of Jeremiah's revival preaching. In chapter 13 we hear

about "the man of G-d who disobeyed the word of the Lord"

(13:26), a major theme of the whole of the book of Kings. Ahijah

of Shiloh is an important prophet. He prophesies the Assyrian

dispersion of the Northern tribes (14:15-16) and the kind of

dynastic destruction that will characterize the kings of the

Northern tribes. In what transpires we see that Ba'sha (Baasha)

(908-886 B.C.E.) kills off (fulfilling the prophecy of 15:27-30)

the dynasty of Yerovaam (Jeroboam) (930-909 B.C.E.), Zimri

(885-874 B.C.E.) the house of Zimri, and (Yehu) Jehu (841-814

B.C.E.) the house of Omri, each a nemesis of G-d, and each

pointing to the assassinations and coups and countercoups that

lead to the demise of this apostate throne of Israel in 722

B.C.E.

The apostate people of the Northern tribes are worshipping the

fertility gods Baal and his consort Asherah because Omri, after

he establishes Samaria as his capital, marries his son Ahab to a

foreign Phoenician wife named Jezebel (princess of Sidon), who

had converted Ahab to this pagan faith of Baal worship and then initiated a persecution of the true prophets of G-d on a vast scale. G-d confronts the people by bringing an a tribulation drought and forcing Ahab to search for terms with Elijah, who, after being miraculously sustained in the wilderness and through a widow in Zarephath, demands a contest on Mount Carmel in which the true G-d and the true prophet alone will live, the others, losing the contest, will forfeit their lives along with their worthless altar. When the prophets of Bael are slaughtered because their G-d cannot light his own sacrificial fire, the divinely imposed three and half year drought concludes in a

mighty torrent of rain (proving the L-rd, not Baal sends the blessing of rain, fertility and life), Elijah runs ahead of Ahab to his second place of residence (not Samaria but Jezreel near Mount Gilboa). There the wrath of Jezebel drives Elijah back into the wilderness to hide once again and to come like Moses redivivus to Mount Sinai (Horeb) where G-d commands that a purge of idolatry be set in motion as Elijah anoints Hazed of Syria, Jehu of Israel and Elisha as prophetic successor to Elijah (19:15-16), all called to be the divine nemesis of idolatry and apostasy. See the prophecy (21:20-24) that Jehu will fulfill.

After Naboth's ancestral property is seized and his life is taken, Elijah announces the L-rd's word against both Ahab and

Jezebel (21:17-24). As the book concludes, Ahab and Jehoshaphat are going to war against Syria, and the godly king Jehoshaphat wants a prophecy from a prophet of G-d. Micaiah foresees (22:17) the coming devastation and defeat and, as prophesied (21:19), Ahab is killed in spite of all his precautions in the ensuing battle.

Notice that those who try to use their holy office to commercialize and profiteer off of G-d's holy things will not find true prosperity (22:48).

The kohen Azariah in I Kings 4:1 is the son of Zadok.

The miracle that happened for Elijah at Mt. Carmel points back to

Lev. 9:23-24.

I and II Kings tell how an entrepreneur (any of the "dreamers who do") named Shlomo built a Beis Hamikdash, which unfortunately, as we see at the end of this two-part book, is destroyed by sin, as the author of I-II Kings writing in the Exile to Jewish people in the Exile, explains to them the reason for the Exile and its devastation. The Beis Hamikdash of the body of Moshiach Yehoshua was also destroyed by sin, but His Beis Hamikdash was destroyed for sin. But sin led to the destruction of Solomon's Beis Hamikdash and the Exile. Nevertheless, we see how Solomon was given divine wisdom (see 1:5:13...the Bible is not anti-scientific) and also prosperity in order to accomplish his

assigned task.

We should notice that King Shlomo was given many artists and

co-laborers. Indeed, even the kingship itself belonged to G-d

but was entrusted provisionally to Shlomo (II Sm. 7:14) and was

not the prerogative of self-promoting men (1:1:37; 2:15). He

prayed for and received from G-d the wisdom (1:3:9) most of the

other kings in this story lack. Shlomo is a type of the Chochma

Elohim (Wisdom of G-d), who became the Moshiach (1:10:24). G-d

surrounded Shlomo with people of quality to help him carry a

heavy burden with expertise. He with the twelve mentioned in

1:4:7 is a type of the peaceful Mashiakh Ben Dovid who will reign

in peace on earth during the Millennium, just as his warrior/king

father Dovid is a type of the Warrior Word (Revelation 19:13)

who will come to destroy the wicked at the end of history. In

1:7:7 we see Shlomo as the anointed King/Judge typological

Moshiach figure (1:10:18), along with Hiram as the artist for

Israel (1:7:14), and in this pairing we see something similar to

what Moses and Bezalel (Exodus 31:3) had been in the Torah.

The Beis Hamikdash is that meeting place between G-d and where

the Ruach Hakodesh comes down when the Word of G-d tabernacles

with G-d's people (1:8:10) and G-d's people can approach his

presence. Without a vision for this communion of G-d and man,

the people perish. But G-d is faithful, even if men are not

(1:9:4-9), and we see in 1:7:51-8:16 the milestone the whole

first quarter of the Bible has been driving toward: the

completion of the Beis Hamikdash with the glory of G-d filling

it. What was lost in Gen. 3:19-24 (the hope of the glory of G-d

which is Chayyei Olam (Eternal Life)) is now beginning to be

regained--do a concordance study of the word "glory" in the book

of Romans to get a fix on the Besuras Hageulah as the Besuras

Hageulah of Glory) is starting to be regained. The Beis

Hamikdash being filled with glory is a picture of the coming

Incarnation and outpouring of the Ruach Hakodesh on the people of

G-d. Of course the promise in 1:8:25 remained unfulfilled until

the line of Dovid is raised to reign forever in resurrection

glory on Passover 30 C.E. Whenever a foreigner looks toward His

torn down but gloriously raised up Beis Hamikdash (I:8:4lf--see

also Amos 9:11) the Brit Chadasha blessing goes forth to that

foreigner. This is why we have been set apart (I:8:53) as a

tabernacle on the Great Commission march and we offer our

sufferings and levitical sacrifices as the House of our Suffering

L-rd to carry the Good News to the ends of the earth. The

itinerate prophetic bands of Elijah and Elisha and Shliach Sha'ul

and modern kiruv outreach workers for Moshiach and emissaries of

Moshiach's shlichut are just as much "the Brit Chadasha kehillah"

as stationary congregational preaching points. The true Brit

Chadasha kehillah is wherever the elect are rightly disciplined

by the proper hearing and sharing of the Word.

Dovid's great son had wisdom. G-d's greater Son was Wisdom, as

Proverbs 30:4 makes clear. It will not do to try to bring Israel

into Proverbs 30:4 as the Son, since the context reflects back to

Proverbs 8 and especially 8:30. Israel is scarcely mentioned in

Proverbs. The figure of a son toiling by the side of his father

was a familiar one, and is an arresting metaphor for G-d's

primordial Wisdom toiling creatively in the beginning with G-d.

Likewise, Psalm 2:7, Psalm 89:27-28, and Isaiah 9:5-6 are

passages where the Moshiach is pictured as G-d's Son, G-d's

B'chor (firstborn) in the sense of his, heir coming in divine

glory as in Daniel 7:13-14, that is, on the clouds with G-d to

"divide the spoil with the strong (Isaiah 53:12) and to govern,

eternally (Isaiah 9:6-7).

In chapter 11:4 we see that Shlomo's G-d-given wisdom was

foolishly seduced by a muddle-headed ecumenicalism just as the

prostitute religious community apostatizes in II Thes. 2:3; Heb.

10:26; II Tim 4:4; I Tim 4:1. If we join this apostasy we can be

sure G-d will always raise up a way to judge us (1:11:15-17).

This is a dominant theme in Kings--that "You only have I known:

therefore, I will punish you for all your sins..." since

"judgment begins at the household of G-d." G-d is a just G-d and

he will remove the guilt of His House from the blood of the

innocent by punishing the culpable, for G-d is a great King

(1:2:31). Solomon, Elisha, Jehu, Joash, Josiah, Nebuchadnezzar

all represent G-d's prophesied holy nemesis against sinners.

Rehoboam is a warning against an authoritarian style that tries

to L-rd it over the sheep and splits the Brit Chadasha kehillah.

You should be able to insert the prophets and their approximate

dates into the dates of the rulers of Israel and Judah so as to

get a fix on who is preaching to whom.

The life-or-death struggle with Rabbinic Judaism's Baalism

(Kabbalah occultism, Talmudic gnosticism, Rabbinic clericalism, etc.) that Elijah fought is still going on.

In the Elijah cycle G-d gives his guerrilla warrior-prophet a free room (I Kings 17) and his office was in Zarephath so that he could have a one-man show to pull down the strongholds of Satanic lies destroying the house of Israel. This was near the Jordan where Elijah had once hid to begin his Mount Carmel fight for the true Jewish faith which Yochanan of the tevilah of teshuva would continue.

Ya'akov 5:17 tells us that this time of tribulation in I Kings 17-19 lasted 3 and a half years. It was then that Jezebel and her husband King Ahab tried to shut the door of revival on the

prophet Elijah. But what happened? G-d rained down tribulation

on Queen Jezebel and King Ahab. G-d rained down a life-quenching

drought on their evil, G-d-rejecting world, a real tribulation

that went on for three and a half years. But did Elijah get

raptured before the trouble started? No. Did Elijah escape

being persecuted by the spirit of Anti-Moshiach in Ahab and

Jezebel? No. Was rapturing Elijah before this time of trouble

the only way G-d had of keeping the prophet from that hour of

trial G-d was bringing on the world (Revelation 3:10)? No.

Not at all. How we like to limit G-d with our neat little

prophecy charts! G-d didn't rapture Elijah before that three and

a half year tribulation! G-d hid Elijah in the desert for

"times, time and half a time"--three and a half years! (See also

Rev. 12:6.) And the earth helped Elijah (See also Rev. 12:16.)

The brook quenched his thirst and he ate meals catered by

ravens!) Then when the tribulation had served its purpose and

the false prophets had come to their Anti-Moshiach destruction,

then G-d raptured Elijah! The true Brit Chadasha kehillah was

hidden "underground" during the time of trouble. The true Brit

Chadasha kehillah of "7000 who had not bowed their knee to Baal"

gave their witness and risked martyrdom for G-d during Elijah's

three and a half year tribulation. The true Brit Chadasha

kehillah was a guerrilla group of refugees pursued by an evil

world yet bravely serving the L-rd at all costs, whether that

involved a sacrificial life-style or martyrdom.

I Kings 3:28

And all Israel heard of the judgment which the King had judged;

and they feared the King: for they saw that the wisdom of G-d was

in him to do judgment.

I KINGS 8:43

Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all

that the foreigner asks of thee: that all people of the earth may

know thy name and fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that

they may know that this house, which I (Solomon) have built, is

called by thy name.

I KINGS 17:3

Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the

Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan.

MELACHIM BAIS (II KINGS)

To the good kings of Judah (there are no good kings of Israel)

listed in I Kings (Sc.) a case could be made for possibly adding

Y'ho'ash (Joash) (835-796 B.C.E.), Amatz'yahu (Amaziah) (796-767

B.C.E.), Azarya (Azariah) (Uzziah) (792-740 B.C.E.) and Jotham

(750-735 B.C.E.). However it must be said of Joash that he

foresook the L-rd and served idols after the death of the kohen

Jehoiada (II Chron. 24:15-18); it must be said of Amaziah that he

backslid into the worship of Edomite idols (II Chr. 25:14-16); of

Azariah (during whose reign Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos began their

preaching ministries), that he tried to usurp the kohenhood and

was punished with leprosy (II Chr. 27:20); of Jotham, during

whose reign Micah was preaching, that he failed to cleanse the

Beis Hamikdash of its pagan influence which caused many to

continue their evil ways (II Chr. 27;2,6).

Fire comes down from heaven as at Mount Carmel to protect Elijah

in II Kings 1, and finally Ahaziah of Israel is told that he will

die and G-d's word is fulfilled (1:17). This means we are at the

year 852 and we will go all the way to 586 B.C.E. in this book.

The battle of Qarqar (853 B.C.E.) is not recorded in the Bible.

If it were, this might be the place for it. It was fought in

Syria and it held back the Assyrian advance into the territories

of Syria, Israel, and Judah for a time.

The expression "company of prophets" (bnei hanevi'im) found

starting in 2:3 means "members of the prophetic order." These

were a confraternity of maggidim gifted with miraculous powers

and with the gift enabling them to prophecy. We hear of them in

Bethel and in Jericho.

That Elijah is Moses or even Joshua redivivus is shown by his

parting the Jordan River (II Kings 2). His rapture is also

described (II Kings 2) and Mal. 4:5-6 looks for just such a

prophet of repentance at the time of the Moshiach or the end of

days. Notice the Hebrew verse at the end of this section,

II Kings 2:10. Notice that Elijah's rapture, when it occurs, is

secret as far as the world is concerned, and, from Elijah's point

of view, according to II Kings 2:10, it is questionable as to

whether Elisha himself will see it. Also, see Heb. 11:5 which

says (quoting the Septuagint). As far as the people were

concerned it was a secret rapture like Enoch's because "he was

not found." Only Elisha saw him go up.

Elisha, having received a "double share of the Elijah's spirit,"

also parts the Jordan, purifies a poisonous spring of water

(2:22), curses small boys who jeer at maggidim with an attack by

mauling she-bears (2:23-25), prophesies the defeat of Moab and
calls forth water for a thirsty army which looked like blood to
their Moabite enemies (3:1-27), does multiplication miracles with
a jar of oil belonging to a destitute prophet's wife (4:1-7) and
twenty loaves of bread (4:42), cures infertility (4:8-17) and
raises the dead (4:18-37), neutralizes poison in some food
(4:38-41), cures leprosy (5:1-19), renders a judgment miracle
against Gehazi (5:19-27), retrieves a floating axe head from the
Jordan River (6:1-7), hears "in the Spirit" the military plans of
the king of Syria but is protected by horses and chariots of fire
(6:8-17), blinds these enemy soldiers of Syria (6:18-19), feeds

his enemies (6:20-23), foretells famine relief (6:24-7:20),

directs the Shunammite woman on how to survive a seven-year

famine in absentia (8:1-6), and prophecies the overthrow of the

Syrian king Ben-hadad by Hazael (8:7-15). In

9:4 we read about a "young prophet" who, at the command of

Elisha, anoints Jehu king of Israel and prophesies that he will

be the nemesis of G-d against Ahab and Jezebel, after which Jehu

kills Jezebel's son Joram (852-841 B.C.E.) king of Israel and

Ahaziah (841) king of Judah. Then Jehu killed Jezebel (9:30-37)

in Jezreel. (The wicked daughter of Ahab usurps the throne of

David and tries to slaughter her way to power as the queen of

Judah after this--her name, Athaliah queen of Judah, and she

rules Judah from 841-835 B.C.E. until little seven year old

Jehoash is restored to the throne by the godly kohen Jehoiada.)

The slaughter of wicked Ahab's dynastic heirs along with

adherents of Baal worship continues in ch. 10.

Jehoash of Judah repairs the Beis Hamikdash in II Kings 12, a

task that every Brit Chadasha kehillah has to do from time to

time. King Joash of Israel visited Elisha on his deathbed

(13:14) and received prophecies about coming wars with Syria.

When Elisha dies, a corpse resurrects after touching the bones in

Elisha's grave.

II Kings 15 gives us the gruesome story of how the various kings

of Israel kill each other off as the throne of Jeroboam moves

toward self-destruction.

Notice the duplicated material (II Kings 18:13-20:19 = Isa.

36:1-39:8) not only in Isaiah but also in Jeremiah (II Kings

24:18-25:21 = Jer. 52:1-27).

In 734 B.C.E. the Assyrian threat has reemerged, Syria and Israel

are threatening King Ahaz (735-715 B.C.E.) of Judah for not

joining their alliance against Assyria. Ahaz trusts ruthless

King Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria more than either G-d or the

prophet Isaiah and calls in Assyria's aid against these two

Northern enemies of Judah. The Assyrians attack (Shalmaneser V

and Sargon II begin and end this campaign) and Israel is defeated

and destroyed in 722 B.C.E. as Amos (760-750 B.C.E.) predicted

(Amos 5:2). But trouble is in store for Judah, as Isaiah warned.

In 701 B.C.E. Sennacherib's Assyrian army surrounds Jerusalem and

a great tragedy would have ensued had not G-d intervened (see

II Kings 18:13-19:37). Then, the king of Judah reigning during

this time, Hezekiah (715-686 B.C.E.) son of Ahaz became ill,

almost died, was healed and received 15 years additional life

with the "sign" of Ahaz's "sundial" having its shadow reversed as

G-d "backs up the clock," as it were (20:1-11). However, at that

time Hezekiah imprudently showed his royal treasures to a

visiting Babylonian delegation, opens the door for the Babylonian

Exile a little over a hundred years later. Hezekiah's worst

legacy was his wicked son Manasseh, the worst king Judah ever

knew: a single-handed cause of the punishment of the Exile

(21:1-18).

In II Kings 22:1-23:30, Josiah (640-609 B.C.E.) king of Judah

becomes acquainted with a lost book of the law of Moses and such

fear falls on him that he removes a foreign and idolatrous cult

from the Beis Hamikdash (622 B.C.E.) during a unique time in the

history of the Jewish people, when Jeremiah, Nahum, and Zephaniah

were preaching in Jerusalem. Its important to study all these

last five chapters of II Kings to get the historical background

necessary to read the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

Notice that when the Word of G-d is rediscovered, revival follows

(II Kings 22).

But the Kingdom of Judah was doomed. In 605 B.C.E.

Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon carried off into Exile many including

Daniel; in 597 B.C.E. Ezekiel was among the deportees, and in 586

the final destruction of Judah's kingdom was complete. Except

for the brief 100 year (167-63 B.C.E.) Maccabean period there was

never again a kingdom of Judah. The Northern tribes and the

tribe of Judah both broke faith with G-d and consequently both

their kingdoms perished (see II Kings 17:7-18 and II Kings

17:19-20;24:1-4). This is a major theme of II Kings. A few

kings to think about. Omri established Samaria as his new

capital and the site of his palace. He also promoted cultural relations with Phoenicia, sealed by the marriage of his son Ahab (Ach'av) to Jezebel. Jezebel was responsible for corrupting the Northern Kingdom and his daughter Athaliah greatly hurt the Kingdom of Judah. Ahab's son Jehoram and Jezebel were killed by Jehu (Yehu) (ending the dynasty of Omri). Jehoshaphat (Y'hosphafat) king of Judah reigned during this time. He was the son of a G-d-fearing king of Judah, the energetic and religious Asa. It was Jehashaphat who sent the princes, Levites, and kohanim out to the people to teach the Law of Moses. The unfortunate marriage of his son Jehoram (Yehoram) (both

Jehoshaphat and Ahab had sons by the same name) to Ahab's

daughter Athaliah was a result of the peace-making efforts

between his kingdom and Ahab's, but much grief came of it,

including a futile commercial navy venture with Ahab's Ahaziah.

Jehoram (848-841 B.C.E.) son of Jehoshaphat paid for his

murderous apostasy (he killed several of his brothers) in the way

Judah's enemies were strengthened in the time of his reign

(especially the Edomites, Philistines, and Arabs). He died of a

horrible disease of the bowels. About a hundred and ten years

later the Northern Kingdom is in its death throes ready to be

destroyed by the Assyrian Empire (722 B.C.E.) and Ahaz is king of

Judah (732-715 B.C.E.). He is the father of Hezekiah and the son

of Jotham; he is also the grandson of the leprous king of Judah

Azariah (Uzziah) and the great-grandson of King Amaziah (796-767

B.C.E.). Ahaz descended from Ahaziah (853-852 B.C.E.) through

Joash. Ahaziah was killed at Jezreel by Jehu (see Hosea 1).

Unlike these more godly individuals, Ahaz sold out to the

Assyrians in order to buy assistance from the military threat of

the evil Pekah king of Israel and Rezin of Damascus. This cost

Ahaz his military and religious independence, obliging him to

import from the Assyrians their pagan religious practices

(worship of stars and sun, child sacrifice, occult consultation

with wizards and necromancers, etc.) His son Hezekiah tried to

counter all this by a reform movement that included repair of the

Beis Hamikdash, destruction of idols, a Pesach celebration

involving people from the Northern Kingdom, organizing the

kohanim and Levites for regular religious services, reinstating

the tithe, preparing for Assyrian siege by building a water

tunnel and many other godly acts. 701 B.C.E. was the year

Sennecherib held Hezekiah captive behind his Jerusalem walls

"like a bird in a cage." This also may have been the year

Hezekiah almost died but was given a healing and a

life-extension. You should know something about each king so you

could identify them by name if given information about them on a

test. For example, which king lived an extra 15 years and gave

the Babylonians a tour that Judah would live to regret?

Notice the foreglimpse of the Incarnation in I Kings 3:28, where

it says that the Wisdom of G-d was inside the King of Israel. We

should not be that surprised that the ultimate Beis Hamikdash and

the Moshiach are one and the same, since they are both called by

"My Name" (see I Kings 8:43 and Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:5-6).

II KINGS 2:10

He (Elijah) answered, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you

see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if

not, it will not."

DIVREY HAYAMIM ALEF (I CHRONICLES)

DIVREY HAYAMIM BAIS (II CHRONICLES)

Since II Chr. 36:22-23 is virtually identical with Ezra 1:1-3a,

a case can be made for common authorship. If so, the author, if

he wrote I-II Chronicles as well as Ezra-Nehemiah (incorporating

the memoirs written by Nehemiah), could not have written this

work before 445 B.C.E. when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem. It

is certainly possible that Ezra is the author as the Talmud

attests. A later hand may have added a few touches, but the bulk

of the material may be the result of Ezra's ministry. If Ezra

were a young man in 458 B.C.E. when he embarked for Jerusalem, he

might still have been alive toward the year 400 B.C.E. which is

the approximate time when this corpus of literature reached its

final stage of editing.

Much of the Hebrew Bible was available to the Chronicler and many

other (now lost) writings as well. These he used to preach to

the post-exilic Jerusalem community his long sermon known to us

as I-II Chronicles.

Whereas the author of I-II Kings is writing from the Babylonian

Exile, the author of I-II Chronicles is a post-exilic Jerusalem

writer and one with a heightened Messianic expectation, who wants

to tell the whole story of G-d's electing love and providential

care, from Adam to Dovid's coming Son (this is the story the

genealogies are telling), viewing all of history from the point

of view of the Messianic covenant G-d made with Dovid (II Sm. 7).

In I Chronicles, chs. 1-10 lead to an idealized Dovid (in many

ways a typological portrait of the coming Mosiach); chs. 11-29

detail the events of Dovid's rule that have primarily Messianic

or eschatological significance. In II Chronicles, chs. 1-9 is

about Dovid's preeminent son Shlomo (also idealized into a

Messianic type--I Chr. 22:10--with a golden reign) and most of

this section is about the building of the Beis Hamikdash for the

G-d of Israel who is coming to dwell with His people forever;

chs. 10-36 are about Dovid's later sons, the kings of Judah, all

seen in a certain sense as foreshadows of the final "Dovid" who

would sit on "the throne of the L-rd." As Moses receives the

plans for the Tabernacle from G-d and hands on his ministry to

Joshua, so David receives instructions about the Beis Hamikdash

and hands on this divine legacy to Solomon (see I Chr. 22:13),

whose "peace" (shalom) points the people to Joshua's "rest"

(M'nucha) (see I Chr. 22:9). Everything divine emblem connected

with the planning of the Beis Hamikdash--the Levites, the

singers, the musicians, the gatekeepers, the orders of the holy

kohenhood, the Beis Hamikdash worship in the divinely chosen city

of Jerusalem--all these help the Babylonian returnees liberated

by the Persian Empire to see themselves not as merely in

Jerusalem worshipping at the Beis Hamikdash but as the

Exile-chastened remnant of Messianic salvation preparing the ground for the coming of the long-awaited Messianic kingdom, as it says in I Chr. 17:14, "I will set Him (the King Moshiach) over My house and My kingdom forever, His throne will be established forever."

I Chronicles tells us much about leaders. The author of this book was preaching at the beginning of a religious revival, and he used the leaders of the distant past as models for those he was exhorting to lead the spiritual awakening of his day.

According to I Chronicles, a leader is someone who offers goals and honors those who reach them. "Whoever attacks the Jebusites first will be the chief officer," David said (I Chr. 11:6).

A good leader is someone who gives something to every person who follows him (I Chr. 16:3).

A leader is someone who has praise in his heart, more praise in fact than those whom he leads, because one of his duties as a leader is to exhort the people to praise (I Chr. 16:7).

A leader also fears G-d (I Chr. 16:30) more than those who follow him, or else his followers have nothing to learn from him, for what is wisdom but the fear of the L-rd? (Prov. 1:7)

A leader is a shepherd who counts the sheep and he knows when one is missing. He is a keeper of the flock of G-d who knows that G-d does not dwell in expensive religious edifices (I Chr. 17:5).

Therefore, a good leader would rather start a few home meetings and have a dozen sheep counted in each one than wait (while people perish) for the purchase of an expensive building to seat the same amount.

A good leader has followers who know and do their duties (I Chr. 23:27-30). This means that every area of the ministry has someone over it and accountable for it (I Chr. 27:25-34). A leader is someone called by G-d to do something for G-d, and a good leader is someone strong enough in the L-rd to do what G-d has called him to do (I Chr. 28:10).

A good leader is someone who can uncover the skills of those he serves, and can help them experience the honor of serving G-d

(I Chr. 28:21).

A leader can set a good example in giving and can the credibly

challenge others to give (I Chr. 29:5).

A leader in the Biblical context is a person "with a God-given

capacity and with a G-d-given responsibility to influence a

specific group of G-d's people toward G-d's purposes for the

group." Notice in this excellent definition these 4 ingredients

in a good leader: 1)giftedness, 2)a sense of accountability to

G-d for those being influenced, 3)the group is limited and

definable and so defines the leader, 4)there is in the giftedness

the recurring ability to determine G-d's direction for the group

(this is why congregational leaders often resign--they sense they

have lost this ability for a particular Brit Chadasha kehillah).

Leaders love to rank themselves based on their supposed sphere of

influence: small group, community, intercommunity, regional,

inter-regional, national, international. A congregational leader

will tend to rank congregational leaders at the apex of his

leadership hierarchy. A researcher/strategist/theologian will

disagree and assert that researchers/strategists/theologians are

at the apex. The truth is that all are just little shepherds

tending to tiny (but important) aspects of G-d's vast master

plan.

Do you know your gift-mix? Is it expendable? Can you match your

leadership roles to your strengths?

What is your present role in the L-rd's body?

What are your personal goals?

What is your commitment to minions?

A good leader doesn't back away from challenges. Hebrew and

Greek may take a little work. But if J.W.'s are willing to do

the work to get out every day in a disciplined way and attempt to

use Hebrew and Greek to convince people that Moshiach Yehoshua

isn't divine, then how can a good leader do less than work as

hard?

I Chr. 10:13 tells why Saul died. This is a warning to us.

I Chr. 15:16 shows that the Word is to be brought forth in the midst of joyful singing and wonderful music. If you have a great pulpit ministry but neglect the ministry of music, the Word will not be brought forth as it should be. There should be ministers in charge of the music--see 15:27 and the worship service depicted in II Chr. 29:20-30.

Study in Hebrew the clear Messianic prophecy at 17:10-14.

Study I Chr. 21:17. A rabbi might say, "We have no teaching about

King Dovid's Son, the Moshiach, which condones any Messianic

human sacrifice for sin." Oh, no? Look at I Chr. 21:17-where

Dovid makes a reference that would have to include the Moshiach

and the Moshiach's Beis Hamikdash when Dovid says, "O L-rd my

G-d, let your hand fall upon me and my family, but do not let

this plague remain on your people." Meditate on the Messianic

"Son of Abraham" shown us in Isaac (Gen. 22) and Joseph and Jonah

(to say nothing of Isaiah 53) and you will see the Messianic

prophecy regarding human sacrifice and the Moshiach's person,

that is, His death and resurrection.

In chapter 28, notice how Dovid is a new Moses (the post-exilic

Chronicler is saying that the Moshiach who is coming now that we

are back from the Exile will be a new Dovid like Moses). Isaiah

says this explicitly in Isa. 42:4 and 49:9.

Do you make a sacrifice of thanksgiving every morning and every

evening (I Chr. 23:30)? If not, now you know why depression

sometimes attacks you.

Why the Song Service is important: When King Jehoshapat had to

fight a battle where he was horribly outnumbered, he appointed

"men to sing to the L-rd and to praise him for the splendor of

his holiness as they went out at the head of the army...(and)..

as they began to sing and praise, the L-rd set ambushes against

(their enemies)." (II Chr. 20:21-22)

Some will have itinerant teaching ministries (like that described

in II Chr. 17:8-9 though more will hopefully be teaching home

Bible studies and building them up until a congregation planting

can evolve).

Some of our students will become emissaries of Moshiach's shlichut. What are the keys to becoming a kiruv outreach worker for Moshiach? (Hint: they both have to do with spiritual renewal and revival because without these, such ministers are only entertainers performing an empty religious charade.) One key is discovering and falling in love with--almost as though for the first time--the Word of G-d. The great revival under Josiah began when Hilkiah the kohen said, "I have found the Book of the Law in the Beis Hamikdash of the L-rd" (II Chr. 34:15). A propheticess told Josiah the other key in II Chr. 34:27--he humbled himself and was genuinely sorry for his sins and wept.

One of the themes of II Chronicles has to do with what makes a good leader. The author makes the point that what leaders need is not necessarily "success" but revival. "Success" will destroy some leaders: it says that after King Uzziah "became powerful, his pride led to his down fall" (II Chr. 26:16). Again, it says that "in those days (King) Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to the L-rd, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign. But Hezekiah's heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him; therefore the L-rd's wrath was on him and on Judah and Jerusalem" (II Chr. 32:24-25).

Leaders tend to fluctuate between fear and discouragement on the

one hand and pride and arrogance on the other, because they

forget how unimportant they are in themselves, since, as G-d said

to King Jehoshaphat, "the battle is not yours, but the Lord's"

(II Chr. 20:15).

King Jehoshaphat "had some good in him," but he was always

getting himself in deep trouble by political alliances and

business partnerships with unbelievers (see II Chr. 19:2;

20:35-37). Do you have people entangled in your life who are not

God-fearing and regenerated? Ephesians 2:2 says that the spirit

of HaSatan is at work in them. How can light and darkness yoked

together expect to prosper and be blessed by the L-rd? We must

learn to keep the world at arm's length and show our unsaved

friends "mercy mixed with fear, hating even the clothing spotted
by corrupt flesh" (Jude 23).

If a nation yokes itself with a HaSatan-influenced (Ephesians

2:2) president, that nation will pay the consequences. Look at

II Chr. 28:19: "The L-rd had humbled Judah because of Ahaz king

of Israel, for he had promoted wickedness in Judah and had been

most unfaithful to the L-rd." Should believers care if an

unregenerate becomes president? Of course! One U.S. President's

favorite verse in the Bible was: "If my people, who are called by

my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and

turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and

will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (II Chr. 7:14).

But what does revival look like? One picture of it is given in

II Chr. 5:14 where it says of the kohanim in Shlomo's newly

constructed Beis Hamikdash in Jerusalem, that they "could not

perform their service because of the cloud (of the L-rd's

presence) for the glory of the L-rd filled the Beis Hamikdash of

G-d." What does it mean to say that a person is "walking in

revival"? And how important is this? King Shlomo answers that

question when he says that G-d steadfastly maintains the Covenant

with his servants who "walk before him with all their hearts"

(II Chr. 6:14). Even many believers desperately need revival.

Some have neglected being faithful to a body of believers where

the L-rd wants them to be protected, like He protected little

seven year old King Joash. HaSatan was trying so hard to destroy

little King Joash that HaSatan even had his grandmother Athaliah

(daughter of Ahab, who usurped the Dovidic throne 841-835 B.C.E.)

trying to murder him. But the L-rd had him surrounded with

ministers and little Joash was hidden in the house of the L-rd

where HaSatan couldn't touch him. Do you have a Brit Chadasha

kehillah home where you are submitted under congregational leader

care? If not, you are like little Joash would have been had he

been wandering around on the streets with his demon-possessed

enemies looking for him.

It's so easy to neglect personal study of the Word and prayer and let one's congregational leader do all that so we can be free to give our heart to our careers and friends and relationships and other things and just drop in for a few services or watch a few religious television shows to convince ourselves that we are not backsliding away from revival. But what does the Word say in II Chronicles: "The Lord is with you when you are with him. If you seek him he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you" (15:2). Don't you realize you will dry up in unfruitfulness unless you seek the Lord in personal prayer and Bible study and fellowship? People cannot be won to the Lord by

you unless you are close to the L-rd. It says this in II Chr.

15:9 about King Asa's personal revival, that "large numbers had

come over to him from Israel when they saw that the L-rd his G-d

was with him."

How does personal revival begin? It begins with the fear of the

L-rd, when you and I realize that we represent G-d to people and

therefore that we must fear the L-rd because He will hold us

accountable for how we live as his representatives. II Chr. 19:6

says it well. Here King Jehoshaphat is charging judges with

their responsibilities. However, he might as well be speaking to

us since believers will judge the world with Moshiach Yehoshua

and even angels (I Cor. 6:2-3). King Jehoshaphat says, "Consider

carefully what you do (in other words, how you live and speak),

because you are not judging for man but for G-d...Now let the

fear of the L-rd be upon you" (II Chr. 19:6-7). That's the

warning. Now here's the promise: King "Jotham grew powerful

because he walked steadfastly before the L-rd his G-d" (II Chr.

27:6).

Unfortunately, many of the wicked kings we study in this book and

in I and II Kings were willing to change their religious

commitments as light-heartedly as Catholics become Jews or

Protestants become Muslims today. Note what wicked King Ahaz

said when he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, "The g-ds of

the kings of Aram (Syria) help them; I shall sacrifice to them

and they will help me'; but they were his ruin and that of all

Israel" (II Chr. 28:23). We do not ask anyone to change their

religion in order to prosper. We ask people to have the courage

to believe the truth. Then we identify with them and work with

them so that their religious expression of their commitment to

the truth avoids as much cultural dislocation as possible.

That's why we want to see established messianic synagogues in

Jewish neighborhoods and messianic mosques in Arab neighborhoods.

That's why we are focussing on cross-cultural outreach and

congregation planting. (See the author's two books, Everything

You Need To Grow a Messianic Synagogue and The New Creation Book

for Muslims.)

Many Israelis and Jews do not believe in hell. The Holocaust has

led many Jewish people even to disbelieve in G-d. However,

various kinds of holocausts are predicted in II Chr. 7:19-22,

since judgment begins at the household of G-d. This should make

Gentiles and nominal backslidden believers fear as well, because

if G-d did not spare the Jews, "neither will he spare you

Gentiles." (Romans 11:21). Look at the warning of II Chr. 7:19:

"But if you turn away and forsake the decrees and commands I have

given you and go off to serve other g-ds (like the humanistic and

non-Biblical g-ds of Talmudic Judaism and Secular Humanism) and

worship them, then I will uproot Israel from my land

(holocaust!), which I have given them, and will reject this Beis

Hamikdash I have consecrated for my Name. I will make it a

byword and an object of ridicule (anti-Semitism!) among all

peoples." This is the negative message, a severe warning not to

neglect receiving the Ruach Hakodesh and the circumcision of new

birth (Deut. 30:6) so that one desires to study the Word of G-d

and so that one can be taught by the Holy Spirit to interpret it

correctly and not with a carnal and unspiritual mind. However,

on the positive side, we can point to the fact that G-d blesses

those who honor G-d's Word, showing how that anti-Semitic "Haman"

Saddam Hussein was militarily defeated on Purim, 1991, and how

America was miraculously blessed with less than 100 casualties in

the Persian Gulf War because she protected G-d's people and

obeyed Gen. 12:3.

But there is a greater positive message to be seen in

II Chronicles. Since Yeshua (Moshiach Yehoshua) is risen with

those he has already spiritually resurrected unto Chayyei Olam

(Eternal Life), his Body (the whole house of true believers) is

the everlasting Beis Hamikdash that G-d has made for his Word and

his Spirit to inhabit. If we are filled with his Spirit, the

gifts of the Spirit can operate in our life. G-d says in II Chr.

7:16 "I have chosen and consecrated this Beis Hamikdash so that

my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always

be there." G-d's Name is his personal self-disclosure. The

personal Word of G-d, the Moshiach of Israel, is that

self-disclosure of the Father. When we are filled with the Ruach

Hakodesh various gifts can flow through us: preaching, inspired

utterance, ministry, teaching, encouraging, contributing,

leading, comfort, supernatural wisdom, supernatural knowledge,

miracles, supernatural faith, healing, discerning evil or other

spirits (see II Chr. 18:21 when a false prophet like Rev. Moon is

unmasked because God's prophet can discern that he has a lying

spirit), tongues and their interpretation, planting a

congregation, leading someone or many people to commit their

lives to Moshiach Yehoshua, caring for G-d's people, helping and

more. Through the gifts of the Spirit we can be the eyes and

heart of Moshiach, for his eyes and his heart always dwell in his

Beis Hamikdash which is the people of G-d.

II Chr. 16:12 says "In the thirty-ninth year of his reign (King)

Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease

was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the

L-rd, but only from the physicians." The Bible does not teach

that when you are sick you should not see a doctor. However,

even if you do see a doctor, you should look to the L-rd to give

the doctor wisdom and to be the ultimate healer in the situation.

G-d promises not only to heal our land but to touch us

individually if we have a change of heart and repent and confess

that we have done wrong and have acted wickedly and if we turn

from our old ways completely and turn back to G-d (6:37-38).

Will you make a commitment right now to start putting personal

prayer, personal Bible study, and personal ministry first in your

life and to make ministry preparation a priority so that G-d can

use you? Ask G-d to give you the wisdom of Shlomo and the

discernment you need to yield to G-d for a total healing.

The glory cloud that appears at the dedication of both the

wilderness Tabernacle and the Beis Hamikdash of the son of Dovid

(Shlomo) is a type of the incarnation. See II Chr. 5:7-14 and

also Ex. 40:34-35; II Chr. 7:1-3. Notice what happens in II Chr.

5 when the Word in the ark enters the Beis Hamikdash: "then the

Beis Hamikdash of the L-rd was filled with a cloud." See II Chr.

6:32-33: both the Servant of the L-rd and the Beis Hamikdash are

to be lights to the Gentiles (a related theme is found in

Isaiah). Both the Moshiach and the Beis Hamikdash bear the Name

of G-d (Jer. 23:5-6; Isaiah 9:6). Note also II Chr. 7:4 where

the L-rd's Word entered His House in order to trigger divinely

acceptable blood sacrifice--all this is a type of the

Incarnation. Note II Chr. 7:19-22. The sins of Israel's kings

brought the Exile of Israel and the destruction of the Beis

Hamikdash (events which are themselves a prophetic picture of the

death of the Incarnate Word).

The hope of Scripture (including II Chronicles and Ezekiel) is

that Dovid's great Son the King Moshiach would raise up a Beis

Hamikdash worthy of the new holy age. His resurrection body is

that Beis Hamikdash. Like Joshua, who brings the people of G-d

toward their promised rest, so Shlomo the son of Dovid raises up

the Beis Hamikdash and brings the people of G-d toward Messianic

rest (II Chr. 22:8-9; Josh. 11:23; 21:44).

Look in the Hebrew Bible at the mention of HaSatan in I Chr.

21:1.

One can see why the Persian King Cyrus is called "Moshiach" in

Isa. 45:1, since he undertakes to cause the Beis Hamikdash to be

rebuilt. He is also mentioned climactically at the end of

II Chronicles, showing G-d's sovereign hand in the affairs of the

people He is saving.

I CHRONICLES 17:13

I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me...

I CHRONICLES 21:17-18

17. And Dovid said unto G-d, Is it not I that commanded the

people to benumbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil

indeed: but as for these sheep, what have they done? let thine

hand, I pray thee, O L-rd my G-d, be on me, and on my father's

house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.

18. Then the angel of the L-rd commended Gad to say to David,

that Dovid should go up, and set up an altar unto the L-rd in the
threshing floor of Oman the Jebusite.

II CHRONICLES 6:10

Now the L-rd has fulfilled his word that he promised; for I have
succeeded my father Dovid, and sit on the throne of Israel, as
the L-rd promised, and have built the house for the name of the
L-rd, the G-d of Israel.

EZRA NECHEMYAH (NEHEMIAH)

Look at Ezra 3:8. Like Ezra the kohen, the Kohen Gadol Yehoshua
(Aramaic; Hebrew: Joshua) son of Jehozadak (alternately Jozadak)
and his son Joiakim were descendents of the Aaron-Zadok family

line. This man is the one in Zech. 6:11-12 whose personal name is the Moshiach, giving us an extremely important and impressive prophecy that pinpoints exactly what the coming Moshiach would be named, Rebbe Melech Moshiach Yehoshua.

CHRONOLOGY: 722 B.C.E. Samaria falls as the northern kingdom of

Israel begins the Assyrian deportation and dispersion. ca. 712

B.C.E. Isaiah predicts Cyrus will be the name of the one who will

rebuild the Beis Hamikdash (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1, 13). 605 B.C.E.

Jeremiah predicts there will be 70 years of Exile (Jeremiah

25:11; 29:10). 586 B.C.E. Beis Hamikdash destroyed. From

586-516 (70 years) there is no Beis Hamikdash until it was

finally completed ca. 516/515 B.C.E. after many delays, when

King Cyrus of Persia conquers Babylon in 539 B.C.E. and sends the

Jewish Persian governor Zerubbabel and the Kohen Gadol Yehoshua

back to Jerusalem in 538 B.C.E. (Esther's story took place around

483 B.C.E. and Malachi may have prophesied around 433 B.C.E.,

after Nehemiah returned to Persia. Haggai and Zechariah

prophesied in Jerusalem around 520 B.C.E.) Ezra returns to

Jerusalem in 458 B.C.E. and Nehemiah returns in 445 B.C.E.

This corpus called Ezra-Nehemiah tells the story of how G-d's

people struggled and were divinely aided in finally rebuilding

the Beis Hamikdash and refortifying Jerusalem so that its walls

could protect its people, the restored remnant of Zareel. When

we read the book of Nehemiah we will see that the restored Jewish

commonwealth (with a Jewish Persian governor, Nehemiah) faced

many problems. Nehemiah tells us about unfair interest (Neh.

12), Tobiah the Ammonite camped out in Beis Hamikdash quarters

(Neh. 13), Shabbos-breakers, stolen tithes (see also Mal.

3:8-12), and heathenish infiltration into the people of G-d by

such means as intermarriage of the holy people with foreign

idol-worshippers. But Ezra had to bring the people back to the

Word of G-d and make their purified worship of G-d a first

priority. So the altar and the sanctuary were first, and this

was primarily Zerubbabel and Yehoshua's work from 538-515 B.C.E.

finally completed after Darius I (522-486 B.C.E.) gave his official permission, though the foundation of the Beis Hamikdash was laid as early as 536 B.C.E. Then came the reforming work of Ezra in 458 B.C.E. during the reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.E.). Finally came the rebuilding of the walls when Nehemiah arrived in 445 B.C.E.

Ezra 2:62 speaks of certain people who could not prove they were children of Abraham and were therefore disqualified for the ordained ministry. Today if you lack the witness of the Holy Spirit within you that G-d is your Abba father (Roman 8:15-16) you lack the new birth relationship to Abraham and his Son the Moshiach necessary for salvation and for a call to the ministry.

In Ezra 2 and Nehemiah we see that ecumenical unity with unregenerate religious leaders is impossible and forbidden by

Scripture. It is in fact just this that creates the apostate

Prostitute riding on the Beast in Revelation 17. The "Samaritans"

in Ezra-Nehemiah were Assyrian imports from Babylon and

elsewhere, who claimed to worship the G-d of Israel but had

grossly compromised the faith. What fellowship does darkness

have with light?

Furthermore, marriage with unregenerate spouses is absolutely

forbidden, since they have no part in the congregation of Israel.

Today we see that many religious Jews are endogamous (marry only

within their own people) and this they understand to be one of

the mitzvot (commandments) according to Nehemiah 10:30. It would

not be socially realistic for ministers to simply ignore this.

Those called to minister to these Jewish people may need to

enculture ethnically to a great extent and, like Ruth,

incorporate themselves fully, remembering the endogamous Jewish

social structure reflected in Ezra-Nehemiah. Unless there are

hundreds of messianic synagogues, messianic yeshivas, messianic

Jewish singles ministries and youth ministries, etc. (creating a

socially realistic messianic Jewish marriage market for messianic

Jews) the Jewish religious community may see the messianic

movement as a sacreligious attempt to ethnically destroy their

endogamous tribal identity as Jews. Instead our "Ruths" (even if like her they lack Jewish parentage) may become just as Jewish as Ruth became, identifying Biblically with the Moabitess, and thinking of themselves as "grafted in," humble members of Ideal Israel, the kingdom of G-d. Our "Ruths" should put the Bible first, and at the same time like her they are free to eat as Jews, worship as Jews, marry as Jews, bury as Jews, and give their children to marry as Jews. To marry a woman whose ethnic orientation remains "outside the tribe" may hurt a minister's credibility in Jewish ministry (see Neh. 7:63-64). These people, who are called to do this, however, must always humbly submit to

the Bible and never to mere rabbinic "human precept" (Matt.

15:8-9) when it comes to such ultimate concerns as the definition

of who is a member of the true congregation of Abraham.

Arrogant, Biblically illiterate "Ruths" who idolize all things

Jewish and have a patronizing condescension toward anything

non-Jewish are not what the Bible is calling for. And all

believers should have a love that reaches out to all the people

groups of the whole world, not merely the Jewish people. The

Good News is to the Jews first but also the Greek! The "Ruth"

who only wants to learn to read her Hebrew Tanakh so she can

witness in the Jewish Deli but doesn't care to learn to read her

Greek Brit Chadasha so she can witness in the Greek Diner is not

a Biblical believer in the truest sense of Rom. 1:16. The rabbis

may love her but the Moshiach may one day rebuke her. Becoming a

child of Abraham requires faith that works itself out in love

(Gal. 3:26-29; 5:6).

Our unscriptural timidity in making this Ruth-like ethnic

incorporation of joining the tribe and identifying with the tribe

in order to win the tribe is one of the unscriptural hesitations

in the body of Moshiach that is holding back the end-time revival

among the Jews. Matthew 28:18-20 commands us to make messianic

learners of whole peoples and tribes, not to destroy their social

structure and threaten their tribal existence by socially naive

congregation-planting strategies. Question: If you feel you must be married, does your prospective mate share your vision and feel called to minister to the same cultural people group where G-d has placed you?

Leadership pointers in Ezra/Nehemiah: when in fear, worship (Ezra 3:3). This reminds you of the most important thing to remember: that the hand of the L-rd is on you (Ezra 7:28).

Fast and pray for direction before you embark (Ezra 8:21).

When unbelievers are sanctified by G-d to offer you anything, never compromise your testimony to them in your relations with them (Ezra 8:22). Remember, ministry is not a mere business proposition but every project must be a testimony to the L-rd who

drives money changers out of his Beis Hamikdash. Never take down
your guard (Neh. 4:23). As Shliach Sha'ul told Timothy, "Always
keep your head." This means never "provide them a scandal" with
which to reproach you. (Neh. 6:13)(Never let yourself be found in
an embarrassing position that compromises your testimony, since
your whole ministry can be hurt for years with hundreds of people
by one indiscretion.) Don't confide in the people you minister
to, and be very very careful in whom you confide or what you
divulge to anyone (Neh. 6:19). Never bring crass commercialism
into the Lord's household, for we are all, rich and poor,
brothers (Neh. 5:7). As a kiruv outreach worker for Moshiach,

never give unbelievers an excuse to reproach us for materialism

or commercialism (Neh. 5:9). Always keep promises (Neh. 5:13).

Notice the financial accountability in Ezra 8:33 where the

kohanim had to reweigh the Lord's treasure to insure no

misappropriation of funds. Do you understand petty cash receipts,

purchase orders, the receipt/disbursement ledger of accounting,

two signatures on checks, annual trustee board meetings to review

books of the ministry organization, filing a 990 form with the

IRS, etc.? Notice that the title is for the ministry and should

be handled by duly ordered, accredited, and accountable

ministers. Much money is wasted today buying mansions and Swiss

villas for charlatans because gullible believers don't follow the

Word (see Neh. 10:39). (Note: a not-for-profit religious organization can engage in any activity as long as the proceeds do not contribute to the profit of its officers and boards of directors and as long as the activity is in line with its religious statement of purpose. See Neh. 13:8 for a violation of this).

When planting a congregation or starting a new ministry of any kind, let your first step be to ask G-d to show you who your "Levites" are (deacons, board members, staff) and begin sharing the vision and the responsibility of the ministry with others.

(See 3:8 and 3:24.) Choose as leaders (see Ezra 8:18) people who

are more trustworthy and G-d-fearing (Neh. 7:2) as well as people

who have a natural leadership charisma or acknowledged spiritual

position in the community (Neh. 7:70) and/or enculturative

flexibility that accompanies the gift of Shlich, because if

these "catalyst" people can be won to your cause, those families

interlocked in their group are more apt to follow their leader.

Nehemiah 4:18 says "The trumpeter stood beside me." This means

that if you are the leader you should have staff meetings and

inform your people of policy so that they understand that the

"trumpeter" stands beside you. Then they will be less likely to

press the panic button (or blow the trumpet) or make any big

decisions without clearing it in conjunction with your

G-d-ordained leadership. You should have brief well-organized staff meetings to deal with problems as they arise (Neh. 4:20); you should work hard (Neh. 4:21), and you should stay under the covering of the community where G-d has placed you (Neh. 4:23).

Don't neglect the prayer life of that community for this is where the saints watch.

When you as a builder lay the foundation of a new ministry (Ezra 3:10) by starting that Bible study or fellowship or traveling group, remember that you must first begin co-laboring with G-d to woo and assemble the core people, prayerfully setting goals and dates, visiting people, beginning mail (learn computers) and

telephone ministry, getting co-workers (see Ezra 6:18 for an example of collaborative duty roster making) involved in direct kiruv outreach for Moshiach, preparing Bible lessons, song sheets, music, refreshments, etc. When you assemble your core people, point out the need to them (Neh. 2:17) and share the feasibility of your vision based on the planning and research you have done (see Neh. 2:13, 17) and then share your testimony (Neh. 2:18) and build their faith until they are ready to make the commitment. Avoid the prima donna: (Neh. 3:5) and those whose spirits are not right (Neh. 2:20). When all is ready, have an official kick-off night (Neh. 3:1) to dedicate the enterprise to the L-rd. Help your co-workers develop a sense of ownership in

the enterprise, where they see they have a stake in its success

(Neh. 3:29). You may need to have a newsletter which lets all

the principal participants know what each other is doing (see

Neh. 3) and "render honor to whom honor is due" (Romans 13:7).

Ask the L-rd to give you the wisdom so that it can finally be

said, "the people's heart was in the work." (Neh. 4:6)

As a maggid, you seek the inspiration of the Ruach Hakodesh to

preach with this purpose: get the people to throw their weight

into the task of rebuilding the Household of G-d (Ezra 5:1-2).

Get the people to think about the legacy that they will leave to

posterity for the L-rd. By the beginning of Ezra 6, Cyrus had

long been dead but his legacy was not lost. What will your

legacy be? Zechariah and Haggai's preaching should be studied in

this context.

The people had the strength to make progress in building the

Kingdom of G-d through their ministry labors because they were

urged on by the expository preaching of the Word of G-d (see Ezra

6:14). Look at 7:6. As a scribe (Sofer), Ezra was not just a

calligrapher/copier; he was a trained teacher and interpreter and

prophetic expositor with a profound knowledge of G-d's laws and

commandments. All his studying finally paid off; someday so will

yours as a maggid through the arts who knows the Word and how to

rightly interpret it artistically and with spiritual power. When
are we going to make the "Ezra" commitment? It says, "For Ezra
had set his heart to study the teaching of the L-rd and to do it,
and to teach the laws and rules to Israel." (EZRA 7:10) Many have
had an opportunity to study, but because of their spiritual or
cultural myopia or immaturity have passed it by for various
superficial reasons and rationalizations. Now they don't have
the Ezra "study goods" and have only themselves to blame for
imminent ministry opportunities they are not ready to seize.

This is not a matter of the prestige of our teaching institution;
it is a matter having to do with the discipline of the learner.

Our goal is to get you to be expository maggidim through the

arts, to have a good theological library and to know how to use

it (see Neh. 8:8 for a definition Of expository preaching). This

is so you may go and establish new ministries throughout the

world and see many come to salvation.

A mesharet (minister) defined: someone who is "commissioned"...to

inquire or regulate Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of

your G-d, which is in your care (Ezra 7:14). Like an emissary of

Moshiach's shlichut speaking to his sending agency, Nehemiah

said, "Send me" (Neh. 2:5) and the Bible says the question came

back, "How long will you be gone and when will you return?" And

Nehemiah "gave him a date." So we see that Nehemiah did not go

drifting abroad indefinitely like many drifters I met in Israel

in 1981, but he had a project goal (to build a wall of

protection, spiritually and physically, in a particular place,

fortifying Jerusalem) and he had a time goal to finish his job

for the L-rd in a certain time frame. Furthermore, he did what

an emissary of Moshiach's shlichut must do with the spiritual

leaders and kiruv outreach workers for Moshiach that he is

training: he set a sacrificial example (Neh. 5:15).

An undisciplined person isn't fit to be a deacon, much less an

elder (I Tim. 3:8). Nehemiah trusted the L-rd and did not

succumb to intimidation and threats. He would not run or allow

himself to show fear in front of those he was leading (Neh.

6:11). However, the servant of the L-rd must not quarrel; he must be kind to everyone, hoping that G-d will give his enemies the grace to turn and to acknowledge the truth (II Tim. 2:24-26).

As an emissary of Moshiach's shlichut to Israel, Ezra had to raise support, exempt ministry from taxes, and appoint leaders! (Ezra 7:14-25). When your theological education has you readied and you are found trustworthy by the L-rd and duly approved and accredited, some of you will undoubtedly form not-for-profit ministries, each with its own tax-exempt status, tax deductible receipting legal capability, statement of purpose, constitution and by-laws, name, board of directors or trustees

and officers. Then you will be doing the work of Ezra. This is what your studies are meant to prepare you for. At the time of Ezra, scribes were qualified to teach and preach. Unfortunately very few Bible schools or seminaries today prepare real scribes when they attempt to prepare people for the ministry. Knowing Hebrew and Greek is not even a requirement in many schools.

Notice: when you do something for G-d, or even when it looks like you might, many people under HaSatan's thumb are going to get angry (see Nehemiah 3:10; 3:3f etc.). Therefore, don't tell the wrong people or even the wrong believers what you intend to do (Neh. 2:12), lest by casting your pearls before swine, they turn and hurt you. Then later when things get off to their wobbly

start, don't let any tactless pessimist despise the day of small

things (Zeohariah 4:10). Do a secret and intensive survey of the

problem before you start grandly announcing to everybody that you

have found the solution (see Neh. 2:13--"I went by night"). If

you are going to start a congregation or new ministry, what kind,

with whom, where? Where is it needed? What is G-d's plan?

Where are G-d's co-workers?

To build a congregation, our objective is to win unbelievers to

the L-rd, leading them to confess him in prayer, before the

congregation, in the water, in the L-rd's Supper, and in

community commitment as members of the local body. Do you see

the sanctifying theme in the Pesach Seder and its discipling

tension in Ezra 6:21? We should keep records and lists each

month and totals each year of the exact number of people who

confessed the L-rd in the sinner's prayer, the number who

confessed him before the congregation, the number who confessed

him in the water, and in the L-rd's Supper, and in membership.

(Register your members--Neh. 7:5). We need the computer to help

us keep this hard data. (See member's pledge 9:38; 10:29;

10:39). Numbers are very important, and if we are not growing

something is desperately wrong and we need to keep changing our

methods until we find what touches hearts and wins countable

disciples. Half of our time needs to be spent "watching" in

prayer, not being ignorant of the Devil's devices, knowing that

HaSatan backs off when he knows you know what he's up to

(Nehemiah 4:9-10). We need to get new believers doing this so

that they are perfected and consolidated in their new faith by

learning to pray and then getting the leading of the L-rd in

where to go to witness for Yehoshua/Moshiach Yehoshua.

Notice that as an emissary of Moshiach's shlichut to Israel, Ezra

did more than organize a congregation; he also organized a school

or yeshiva--see Neh. 8:13 where he gathered the leaders to study

the Bible.

Questions: How could you use Ezra 1:2 in witnessing to Iranian

Muslims? How could you use Ezra 1:3-6 to raise your support as

an emissary of Moshiach's shlichut to Israel today? Could you

use Ezra 2:63 to make a case for the teaching that duly certified

mesharetim should be present when the ordinance of the L-rd's

Supper is served? When the tithe is collected (Neh. 10:38)?

What book of the Bible do you have to read to get more details on

Ezra 4:6? (Hint: see Esther 1:1.) How does G-d effect a

reversal in chapter 6 of Ezra? What might you ask the people to

do when you read the Word before you preach (hint: see Neh. 8:5)?

Ezra 1:8. Sheshbazzar may have been either the uncle of

Zerubbabel or his other name.

Ezra 4 begins telling how in 536 B.C.E. the work on the Beis

Hamikdash began but was delayed and interfered with. The author

then goes into a long digression after 4:4 in which he tells of

similar later opposition to rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

Finally, 4:24 resumes the story from where 4:4 left off. To

follow the digression, note the dates of Xerxes (486-465 B.C.E.)

and Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.E.). The narrative regarding the

Beis Hamikdash begins again at 4:24 with the year 520/519 B.C.E.

under Darius I (521-486 B.C.E.), who is the father of Queen

Esther's husband, Xerxes (also called Ahasuerus. It is during

this crucial year that the resumption of the Beis Hamikdash

building begins (see Hag. 1:15).

Enemies to the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and the Beis

Hamikdash used intimidation, lawyer harassment, attempted

infiltration, lying, accusations, spies and informers to the

Persian monarchy. But, from the standpoint of Daniel chapter 9,

these "delays" were actually measured by G-d, who had already

predicted the exact year in which the Moshiach would begin his

ministry, calculated from the year that the decree would go forth

to rebuild Jerusalem. Also, the Beis Hamikdash was calculated by

G-d not to be completed until Jeremiah's seventy years were up,

so G-d was letting Israel's enemies slow things down until 516

B.C.E., when the 70 years would be up. See notes on Daniel.

See Ezra 6:14. Under the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah,

Zerubbabel and Yehoshua resume work on the Beis Hamikdash in 519.

Darius I makes a march in the archives for their authorization to

do this given to them earlier by King Cyrus. When this

authorization is found, Darius I gives his decree. Delay is now

over, the Lord's work proceeds. The Beis Hamikdash is completed

March 12, 516 B.C.E. 70 years after its destruction. The Beis

Hamikdash is dedicated by sacrifice and the Pesach is

celebrated--see chapter 6. Notice how this points to Moshiach

Yehoshua, who on the night of his arrest, had a Pesach and the

next day made the sacrifice. Then on the third day, G-d raised

up the Beis Hamikdash of everlasting life.

See Ezra 7:11. 458 B.C.E. is possibly the count-down date of

Daniel's first 69 "sevens" (Daniel 9:24-27). It works out if a

solar calendar is used. The commission of Nehemiah (Neh.1:1, 11;

2:1-8) in 445 B.C.E. is another possible count-down date of

Daniel's 69 "sevens" if a lunar calendar is used.

Look at 8:15. The Levites were the deacons of the Old Testament,

in charge of gates, supply rooms, implements (but not making

incense).

EZRA 3:8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house

of G-d at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the

son of Shealtiel, and Yehoshua (Moshiach Yehoshua) the son of

Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the kohanim and the

Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto

Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and

upward, to set forward the work of the house of the L-rd.

EZRA 7:12-16

12. Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the kohen, a scribe of

the Torah of the G-d of heaven, greetings:

13. Now I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel,

and of his kohanim and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of

their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee. 14.

Foresmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven

counselors, to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according

to the Torah of thy G-d which is in thine hand;

15. And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his

counselors have freely offered unto the G-d of Israel, whose

habitation is in Jerusalem.

16. And all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the

province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people,

and of the kohanim, offering willingly for the Beis Hamikdash of

their G-d which is in Jerusalem:

(Some scholars use a lunar calender and compute from the time

(445) that Nehemiah received a commission from the same king.

However, in either case, Daniel's 69 "sevens" puts us in the time

frame of the ministry of Moshiach Yehoshua.)

NEHEMIAH 7:3

The kohanim: the descendants of Jedaiah (through the house

[family] of Jeshua)...

ESTHER

Five books of the Hebrew Bible are known as the Five Scrolls

(Chamaish Miglot). Song of Songs is read on the Shabbos of

Passover week (Sepherdim read it on Seder night and Friday

afternoons). Ruth is read on Shavuos (Pentecost). Ecclesiastes

is read on the Shabbos of the week of Tabernacles (Succot).

Lamentations is read of the Ninth of Av, a fast commemorating the

destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. And, finally, the book we are

studying, the Scroll of Esther, is read on Purim.

Both Esther and Job could be produced as plays or musicals with a

high professional production level. In Aaron Frankel's Writing

the Broadway musical, he shows how to lay out the scenario for a

story by identifying the points in the play, visualized as a

series of scenes, where the conflicts in each scene rise to a

crescendo requiring song and/or choreography. Here are a few

ideas on how to organize the telling of Esther's story in this

way. A few possible lyric lines for songs have been put in

quotation marks. Why not think of how you could write an original play or musical to be presented every Purim in your ministry, and to be usable in Jewish outreach? (Try your own creative hand--you can polish the ideas below or come up with better ones): Scene: Persian city of Susa (modern Iran). Time: 483 B.C.E.

Possible ideas for a scenario with a few song lyric ideas: King

Ahasuerus and company (tipsy): "Queen Vashti, you're not acting

very pretty." Queen Vashti could sing a song to her maidens to

go tell the King she is now a "liberated" woman. The chorus made

up of King Ahasuerus's counsellors ("wise men (chachamim)"--

Esther 1:13) could lament the rebellious female population of the country and how Queen Vashti will start an insurrection in every home. A national domestic revolt is imminent, right in homes of the nation! These wise men could sing, "It's a scandal! Things are getting out of hand! Queen Vashti refuses to come at the king's command! (see Esther 1:12)." On a serious note, Esther 1:22 can be taken as an allusion to the fall of mankind in Gen.

3.

Esther singing in front of the harem: "So if I'm Jewish, why don't I come out of the closet?" (Make sure the diction fits the character and is in good taste and in agreement with Scripture.

Does this work?)(Look at Esther 2:10-11.) A certain dramatic

license is acceptable sometimes. Esther could sing or recite some of the great Messianic prophecies in her Hebrew Bible, and she could dream of the Moshiach being a great King just as she, by the providence of G-d, might become a great Queen. However, rather than try to keep her life and her throne, in a later scene she is urged by her uncle Mordecai and her conscience to decide to lose her life and her throne for the sake of her people's salvation. The play's ending tells us, however, that whoever loses his life can get it back through faith (Luke 9:24; see Esther 4:14). But the drama could hinge on Esther as she reaches this crisis decision to lose everything and so matures through

suffering, finally saying (or singing), "If I perish, I perish

(Esther 4:16), I must proclaim the truth." (Rav Sha'ul said, "I

am ready to die in Jerusalem"--Acts 21:13). Her attention could

be drawn to the example of the suffering Messianic figure of

Joseph, who said, "G-d sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a

remnant (sh'airit) on earth and to save your lives by a great

deliverance (Gen. 45:7)."

Mordecai (after he overhears the assassination plot of Bigtha and

Teresh against King Ahasuerus): "I keep my ears open so I never

lose my head--but why does everyone want someone's head? Why

does everybody hate the Jews? Let my life be given me--that is

my petition" (see also Esther 7:3). These are possible working

song titles. He can refer to his ancestor Saul's battle against
that race of anti-Semites called the Amalekites and their king,
Agag (see 3:1). Unfortunately, like Joseph, Mordecai is
forgotten. Instead, Esther 3:1 tells us that King Ahasuerus
promotes Haman. But those who are exalted will be humbled, and
pride goes before the fall. Mordecai is even in more danger when
word leaks out that he is a Jew (Esther 3:4). A yellow star
could be pinned on Mordecai, and a tattoo could be slapped on his
arm to dramatize 3:3-5. The pogrom plot begins ironically in the
month of Pesach in Esther 3:6-7 (the people are "sold" as in
Egypt--see Esther 7:4) and the pogrom countdown will be 11 months

long, finally to be executed on the 13th day of the 12th month.

Haman and Ahasuerus possible duet (after Haman gives him the

money for the king's treasury to pay for the pogrom): "I'd like

to propose a toast (to the death of the people of the L-rd of

Hosts.)" Notice that the shameful and death-dealing results of

racial hatred are so terrible that great bewilderment at the

horror of it all seizes the population (see Esther 3:15). Notice

also that any demonic pleasure anti-Semites enjoy is short-lived,

for what follows is like a terrible hang-over from an extended

drinking bout. But, meanwhile, while the wicked drink and get

drunk, the g-dly fast and pray for deliverance (4:1-3). And

those who are truly sober and ready to stand in the battle will

not run from their Jewish uniform of sackcloth in order to hide in "civilian" clothes (Esther 4:4). It should be clear in this drama that "prayer changes things," (see also 4:26) but prayer requires courage and fearless confession of the truth in order to make its effect, since faith without works is dead.

Mordecai and Esther duet based on Esther 4:14: "For such a time as this." Chapter 4 is where the crisis of decision takes place.

Everyone is in a position of some kind of influence and can plead for the salvation of the Jewish people. Therefore, everyone should be able to identify with Esther's crisis. All believers come to the royal dignity for such a time as this (Rev. 1:6;

I Kefa 2:5,9), and have a Rom. 15:27 obligation regarding the physical well-being of the Jewish people. And if we fail at our obligation, G-d will raise up someone else to do kiruv outreach work for Moshiach among the Jewish people (Esther 4:14). But since G-d has called us to the kingdom for such a time as this, we should look for his divine favor (Esther 5:2,8; 2:15,17; 7:3; 8:5) and enablement and open doors (5:3). Notice that in Esther ch. 6 Mordecai gets the favor Esther already has received, and finally that favor spills out on the entire people of G-d throughout the land. On the other hand there is an omen of disfavor over taking the accursed Human in Esther 6:13. If we ask the L-rd and trust him, he will give us something

supernatural that will be attractive and will win favor for the
cause of the Lord's people and their Scriptures.

Haman (after the scene at the end of chapter 5): "I'm happy and
light-hearted without G-d, (and I'll be even happier without the
people of G-d.

Ahasuerus: "What honor has been given to this man of G-d
(Mordecai)?" Great villain's aside: "Whom would the king wish to
honor more than me?--Esther 6:6)

Haman: "In all modesty, who would the King desire to honor more
than Haman the Magnificent? Haman the Incomparable? Haman the
Sublime? Haman the Glorious etc.?"

Possible trio: Esther and Ahasuerus and Haman: "Who but a devil

would dare to try to destroy the Jews?" (Haman could pretend

innocence as he sings along in the trio.)

Esther solo on 8:17: "How does one become a Jew?" (The fear of

G-d comes on you and your heart is cut by the circumcision of the

Ruach Hakodesh unto conviction and faith in the Moshiach of the

Hebrew Scriptures. Esther could recall stories she had heard of

the coming of the Moshiach who would be like Dovid and Joseph and

suffer for his people as a victim like one of Human's victims.)

What are some of the themes of this story?

1. Getting drunk gets Ahasuerus into trouble twice, once with a

divorce and the other time by flirting with anti-Semitism and

genocide when he plots a pogrom with Haman.

2. Women's rights (Queen Vashti refusing to bow to this

woman-crazy husband of hers) and resisting idolatry (Mordecai the

Benjaminite refusing to bow to Haman the Agagite--see I Sm. 15;

Ex. 17:14-16; Deut. 25:17-19).

3. Ahasuerus and his gradual deliverance from anti-Semitism as he

meets one beautiful Jew and has his mind, that Haman and HaSatan

nearly poison, delivered. This gets us into the roots of

anti-Semitism: see Esther 3:8, hatred of a people who are

different belies hatred of a G-d who is different. Why do people

hate the Bible and pass laws that contradict it? Because people

are lawless by nature and need a new heart.

4. Ahasuerus is delivered from anti-Semitism by, of all people, a woman. (G-d can use a woman to do anything, and this is another theme: the most unlikely and the weakest vessels can be used by G-d for great purposes). And G-d can use unlikely people in Jewish ministry, too, to effect a "great deliverance" (Gen. 45:7)!

5. Another theme: drunken lust to exploit people for the sake of fleeting worldly power versus true Biblical sacrificial service to G-d's people.

6. Notes on Esther's character: the closet religious witness, who is ashamed of her faith. A big dramatic question to which the

play should provide a suspenseful answer is: will she or will she

not come out of the closet and, whatever the possible loss, tell

people what she believes?

7. Another theme: luck versus providence, and how G-d controls

both ("What a divine coincidence!" could be a refrain in the

score). G-d uses all things to arrive at his own final goal of

protecting his people and keeping them alive until the King of

the Jews returns: feminism, beauty contests, insomnia,

8. The enemies of the true people of G-d will always fall into

the pit that they have dug-Proverbs 26:27.

9. The origin of the festival of Purim and the coming

eschatological event it points to, where all the enemies of

Israel, all the Hamans lacking G-d's heart, will be separated out

and destroyed. Daniel 12:2; 7:13-14.

COMIC POSSIBILITIES: the King's don't-call-us-we'll-call-you

extermination of drop-in visitors, which builds suspense when

Esther drops in unannounced, etc. Also, look at the chance for

Haman to make a great extended double take (a la Oliver Hardy)

at the end of 6:10.

IMPORTANT STAGE BUSINESS: dealing with the King's ring and the

reversal when Mordecai gets it from Haman in 8:2. Seriously, the

Moshiach (see "My Servant" = the Moshiach Zech. 3:8, Isa. 42:1;

Hag. 2:23) is called G-d's signet ring in Hag. 2:23. See Esther

8:10 and the reversal from Esther 8:2. Why do the nations rage

against the L-rd and his anointed, his signet ring, the Moshiach?

On other reversals, see Mordecai's reversal, Esther 6:3-6;

Human's reversal, Esther 7:10; 8:5; 9:24; the Jewish people's

reversal 9:1; etc.

Haman is a type of the Anti-Moshiach in the Bible (along with

Pharaoh, the king of Babylon, Antiochus Ephiaphanes, Caligula,

Nero, Hitler, Saddam Hussein, and all anti-Semites. This book

makes the astounding statement that G-d is at war with all

anti-Semites, and G-d will curse those who curse the Jewish

people (Gen. 12:3). The Moshiach himself will return at the

final battle at the end of days (Armageddon), which will be the

last battle of G-d against anti-Semites. Esther 9:5 is a picture of the Day of the L-rd in the Hebrew Bible (Amos 5:9-14; Zeph. 1:14-18). See also Esther 9:2,16.

The whole show could be done in modern dress with Haman in a fascist uniform. We need to create spectacles that will draw outsiders to G-d's House, just as G-d did with the splendor of the Beis Hamikdash and the annual pilgrimage festivals.

Typological exegesis of Esther. The Moshiach's bride will not be ashamed of him, that he is from the tribe of Judah. The bride that does not come to him (Vashti = apostate religion) forfeits any privileged position and is replaced by the bride that "boldly

approaches the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and

find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16; Esther 5:2).

Notice, as in I Cor. 15:4, the turning-point day of deliverance

is "the third day" (Esther 5:1).

See 9:10. When we taste the dainties of the anti-Semites and

enjoy their fleeting pleasures, we lose our kingship and royal

power, as Mordecai might have (he didn't). However, Mordecai's

ancestor learned this lesson the hard way when he seized the

plunder of Amalek (I Sm. 15:17-19), unlike Abraham who abstained

from the plunder (Gen. 14:22-24).

Notice Purim is to be a time of joy (simcha) and feasting and

gladness and a time to send gifts of food to one another and

presents to the poor (Esther 9:22). If this festival were
celebrated each year in the Brit Chadasha kehillah, less
anti-Semitism would be found there. A Purim play could help laugh
the HaSatan out of the sanctuary. Since, according to Romans
chs. 9-11 the Brit Chadasha kehillah "joins" Israel, Esther 9:27
applies to the Brit Chadasha kehillah, because the text says, "the
Jews accepted as a custom for themselves...and all who joined
them, that without fail they should continue to observe these two
days every year.

Mordecai's work in the last verse ("he sought the good of his
people and interceded for the welfare of all his (zar'o)

seed"--Esther 10:3) sounds like the Moshiach in Isaiah 53:12,10

("he made intercession for the transgressors...and he shall see

(zera) seed").

Important note: Saddam Hussein's army was destroyed on the very

day of Purim, 1991, proving any Haman who threatens to destroy

Israel can still be brought down by the G-d of Israel.

ESTHER 8:17

In every province and in every city, wherever the edict of the

king went, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with

feasting and celebrating. And many people of other nationalities

became Jews because fear of the Jews had fallen on them.

IYOV (JOB)

The question for the sages of Israel that the book of Job (a

Gentile sage from Edom--see Job 1:1; Lam. 1:21) grapples with is:

in the face of the riddle of life's sufferings, what answer can

chachma (wisdom) bring to vindicate both G-d and suffering Man as

nevertheless righteous and worthy?

The divine answer comes in the form of a drama whose diction is a

long dialogue poem sandwiching its dialogical wisdom between a

prose prologue and a prose epilogue. It could be staged with Job

himself as the narrator who goes in and out of the story like the

protagonist in Arthur Miller's *After The Fall* or Tennessee

Williams' *Glass Menagerie*. Or it could have a Sherwood Anderson's

Our Town narrator, possibly using the Devil himself as the

narrator. Must reading for the art of writing a play is Sam

Smiley's playwriting: *The Structure of Action* (Prentice-Hall

Publishers.) Perhaps you could adapt this Bible drama for the

stage and use it as a community outreach project. If you got it

published, it could be used on stages throughout the world.

At the beginning of *Job*, a demonic wager puts both G-d (G-d's

worth in Himself) and Man (the worth of Man's love for G-d) to

the test. See 1:8-11; 2:3-5. Is G-d really worth anything (do

His people really believe so?), or is religion merely an opiate

of the people, as in Karl Marx's demonic challenge? Remember,

Job is a type of Moshiach, as we will show. Since Job's life is

exposed to Satanic attack as we see in these passages, this very

attack also points forward to the attacks of Satan against

Moshiach Yehoshua, both in the beginning of his ministry, at the

turning point after he shares with his Shluchim his coming death

on the Aitz, and at the L-rd's Supper (see Mark 1:13; 8:27-33;

Yochanan 13:2)

Chapter 1:21 offers the instinct of faith to answer life's

biggest riddle: why do we suffer? In fact, how can G-d be good

if He allows us to suffer? The answer of 1:21 must be probed in

depth as the protagonist (hero) is tested in depth, and this

probe necessitates a dramatic dialogical interrogation of both

G-d and Man, utilizing wise men or sages.

Chapter 3:1-31:40 offers the solution to the riddle given by

Job's three friends: you are suffering for sin; therefore, repent

and your sufferings will vanish!

In chapter 32:1-37:24, Elihu presents his solution to Job's

riddle: you are undergoing a divine discipline of love to deter

you from further sin; therefore, stop claiming innocence like the

wicked do before G-d, and stop calling G-d's justice into

question.

G-d's solution finally appears in chapter 38:-41:34. In brief,

G-d replies that to encounter G-d, whether in abasement or

abundance, is enough and is worth everything. Then, in the

epilogue G-d "restores what has been taken" (Yoel (Joel) 2:25;

Job 42:10f) and "all things work together (co-operate) for good

for those who love G-d and are called according to his purpose"

(Romans 8:28).

Have you ever had a Job experience? Our Moshiach did. Shliach

Sha'ul did. Shliach Sha'ul seems to be talking about all true

witnessing kaddoshim in II Corinthians chapter 4. Can you cast

your testimony in the form of a before-and-after Job experience

so that G-d gets the glory and is worth it all in the end? We

will overcome the devil by the word of our martiurias (Revelation

12:11).

There was once a minister who had a "Job" experience. He was

called on the carpet by his overseers, who accused him of heresy.

Then his family deserted him and he lost his home. Then his

friends came around and lectured him on not being a good family

man. Then all the religious people avoided him. He even lost

his ministry appointment and was left all alone. In all this he

had done nothing wrong, but he held on to his righteousness and

cried out to G-d for vindication.

This minister waited for G-d to vindicate his innocence and to stop the mouths of his detractors. Satan was behind the whole plot, because it was the ministry of the man of G-d that was being unjustly discredited. After a long period of being put to the test, the L-rd restored everything that He had allowed to be taken from the man of G-d. In fact, the man of G-d received back from the L-rd his ministry appointment, home, etc. Not only that, the biggest publishing houses, colleges, Brit Chadasha kehillot (even the President's Brit Chadasha kehillah) opened to the man of G-d. Then he learned by experience what he had believed already by faith: that G-d is worth everything and is worth losing everything for. Do you see how Job could be done in

"modern dress?" Could you write a novel, a screenplay, a drama on Job?

Have you had a Job experience of dying to self for our Moshiach and coming back to life with "all these things added unto you as well"? Could you write your personal testimony as a tract and give it out in kiruv outreach for the Moshiach, using the theme of Job in the way you tell your story of how G-d saved you and proved Himself real to you at the end of your struggle of faith?

What is a theodicy? See chapter 36:2. What is the two-tier structure of reality presented in Job? How is it like the structure of reality presented in Revelation and the rest of

Scripture? What is a theophany? See 38:1-42:6.

Do you see how mesasretim who make outlandish salaries bring

HaSatan's accusation against them (1:9)?

Look at chapter 5. Eliphaz infers that Job is a fool (5:2) whom

G-d is correcting (5:17). He tries to comfort Job but wounds him

with false accusations. Job is pictured more and more as a

kicked-down sage, who is a type of Moshiach, and Job's wisdom is

that which comes from suffering in the flesh (I Shliach Kefa

4:1). Like our Moshiach, Job prays for his enemies in 42:8.

Look at 6:14. Shliach Sha'ul says, "All men forsook me."

Job's question in 9:2 is answered in Habakkuk 2:4.

Look at 9:33 and 16:18-21. Is not our Moshiach our defender,

paracletes meaning a friend of the accused person called to speak

in his favor) against Satan's accusations? See Job 31:35,

I Yochanan 2:1 (KJV). Job 33:23-26.

Job 14:14 is answered by Job 19:25-26. Remember the Go'el from

the book of Ruth? This word is found in Job 19:25.

Job 34:33 is a good point for Besuras Hageulah rejecters.

Chapter 38:33 is a good point for proud scientists who accept the

g-dless cosmogony of evolution instead of the book of Genesis

properly interpreted in the light of other Scripture. The whole

section starting from chapter 38 reveals the weakness, ignorance,

unworthiness and stupidity of puny man so prone to arrogance.

To sum up, in the book of Job the hero is presented by the unknown author as the ideal man of wisdom literature, a sage, prosperous, blessed of G-d and honored of men, one who is upright in character and on no account can be tempted to curse G-d, so great is his wise fear of the Almighty. A crisis occurs in Job's life that leads him to seek G-d in a deeper way. So extreme is Job's situation that nothing less than a personal encounter with G-d will suffice. Job's despair brings him to the point of discovering that philosophy and religion are amal m'nachamim, "miserable comforters" (16:2). He needs to know G-d personally, nothing less will satisfy the gnawing yearning within his soul.

He has many questions, many "whys" that only G-d Himself can answer. Mere human wisdom and conventional piety, which the other actors in this drama personify, are amazed and confounded by Job's questions.

Only occasionally, and almost as an afterthought, do they ask penetrating questions. For example, without appreciating the profundity of the question, Bildad asks Job, "How can a man be yitz'dak righteous before G-d?"

This is really the question of the whole book. If man serves G-d and is blessed, how can it be proven that his service was not mere unrighteous self-serving opportunism. On the other hand, if man serves G-d and is not blessed but cursed, how can it be

proved that a) the righteous fare any better than the wicked

either in this life or in the next? b) that there is a

resurrection in any case? c) that there is a mediator in heaven

without whom no man can stand vindicated and redeemed as

righteous before a righteous G-d? Like Job, we must prove that

our suffering is not deserved but for the glory of G-d (I Kefa

1:12-17; Yochanan 9:3).

While Job stands rejected and forsaken with mockers around him

(17:2), he reminds the reader of the picture we have of the

suffering Servant of the L-rd in Isaiah 53 or the mocked Dovidic

King in Psalm 22 (compare Job 27:4 to Isa. 53:9). In the midst

of the false accusations Job "holds fast to his righteousness"

(27:6) and waits on the L-rd to confirm the innocence of his

cause (Job 42:7-8). So the mocked sage who becomes a fool that

the world curses and makes sport of is depicted here. We have

seen this picture before in that other sage, the judge of Israel,

Samson, being made sport of by the Philistines (Judg. 16:25) or

in the King of Israel, Dovid the sage, pretending to be mad

before a similar scoffing Philistine audience (I Sm. 21:13-15).

When sages like Moshe or Dovid are nearly stoned by the people

(Ex. 17:4; I Sm. 30:6) we see this reemerging picture of the

rejected, righteous Sage of Israel. Significantly, the Son of

Dovid is depicted as the sage par excellence in the life of

Shlomo in I Kings. Then II Chronicles intensifies this portrait and gives Messianic prophetic significance to Dovid's Son as the Moshiach Sage of Israel. Finally, Isaiah combines the two portraits of the sage found in Job and Shlomo and depicts the Dovidic Servant of the L-rd as the mocked and rejected sage filled "with the spirit of wisdom" (Isaiah 11:2) who seems to labor "in vain" but trusts his cause to the L-rd (Isa. 49:4) and, after mockery and rejection (Isa. 53:2-4), is finally vindicated by G-d as righteous (see Isa. 53:11-12). So the book of Job gives us one of our most important glimpses of the coming Moshiach.

This book does not merely pose the most pressing questions of life. It also gives us some profound answers. We discover that true faith has to be tested. The whole book is a test of Job's faith, the integrity of which HaSatan throws into question in the prologue. Job comments on this test by saying with the affirmation of faith, "He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come out like gold." We also discover in this book that faith is knowing G-d and being known by G-d, and mere religious or philosophical assent is not faith nor can such intellectualism substitute for a personal relationship where the true G-d is personally known. "How can a man be yitz'dak righteous before G-d?" The book of Job tells us that G-d

vindicates man's faith. Abraham the sage had faith in G-d and

G-d vindicated him as righteous (Gen. 15:6). The righteous shall

live before G-d by faith (Hab. 2:4).

But what difference does all this make if there is no

resurrection for the righteous? Is there a resurrection in any

case?

To get the answer of the book of Job we need Job 19:25-27, where

we also find the answer to the other question the book asks,

namely, is there a mediator in heaven without whom no man can

stand vindicated and redeemed as righteous before a righteous

G-d? The Job 19 passage should be studied with Job 16:18-21. In

these passages Job's faith affirm: the bodily resurrection of the

dead. He also affirms by faith the existence of a heavenly

mediator between G-d and man whom he called Edi (my witness) and

Sahadi (my advocate) (16:19) and mokhi'ach "my arbitrator" (9:33)

and go'eli "my redeemer" (19:25). And just as Job himself has to

make intercessor for his friends at the end of the book,

literally mediating between them and G-d (Job 12:7-8), so this

heavenly figure vouches for Job from on high (16:19) and at last

stands upon the earth when Job is bodily resurrected (19:25).

Like that other heavenly Messianic figure, the angel of the L-rd,

in Job 33:23 we see this heavenly Mal'ach (angel/messenger), this

Mailitz (Mediator) coming to Job's defense. However, he does

more. He provides a Kofer (ransom), redeems Job's soul from going down into the Pit (Job 33:28), and makes it possible for Job "to see the light of life" (compare the Messianic text of Isa. 53:11 in the Dead Sea Scrolls to Job 33:28). But Isa. 59:20 says that the Go'el (Redeemer) coming to Zion is no mere angel but the Moshiach. Therefore the word in Job 33:23 should more properly be translated "messenger" than "angel" because the Mal'ach (angel/messenger) of the Lord" is no mere angel in Judg. 6:14 (where he is called "the L-rd"), just as the Moshiach is no mere Mal'ach (angel/messenger) of the Covenant" In Mal. 3:1 (where he is also called "the L-rd"). Therefore, seen from the

fuller perspective of the entire Hebrew Bible, Job is indeed

looking for the one the Jewish people called the Moshiach. Like

Job, Daniel also sees the coming resurrection and the resurrected

saints being given the kingdom at the end of days by a heavenly

Messianic figure (see Dan. 12:2; 7:13-14).

JOB 19:25

For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at

the latter day upon the earth.

TEHILLIM (PSALMS)

No one has an excuse for not having a deep prayer life and

devotional walk with the L-rd! The software has already been

written for it! The L-rd has provided the most vigorous prayer

life you can imagine, and all you have to do is let the Ruach

Hakodesh put it into your mental computer. I'm referring to the

Psalms.

If the Moshiach, G-d's Word who is "the light that lightens every

man, is your "operating system" then you are not a religious

spectator but a Kingdom warrior like David and you are the target

of demons and hellish opposers of G-d. The Psalms have a

militant and embattled pressure, which, if they are the thoughts

of your prayer-life, will keep you in the race of the ministry.

They will also keep you on guard in the onslaught of demonic

battle as a victorious and rejoicing soul-winner.

Like the protagonist in Kafka's *The Trial*, the servant of G-d is

often hedged in on every side. Then he must fight his way out in

prayer as Dovid does in Psalm 35. Read Psalm 35:11-19. These

are the times when we are too weak to pray as we should (Romans

8:26). Then we can pray and sing in our heavenly prayer language

and in spiritual song, and we can also pray the Psalms, letting

G-d's Word to us become our word to G-d. There have been times

in my life when I was so weakened by HaSatan's plots that my

enfeebled prayerlife had to go on the "automatic pilot" of the

Psalms and all I could do was read the Psalms and sing them

antiphonally out loud to the L-rd days on end till I could

literally no longer speak. See Psalm 69:3. But thank G-d for

his Word which is a prayer warrior sword with which we can cut

our way free of every depressing confusion.

In short, the Psalms have been provided for us through Dovid and

other lyricists (these were originally lyrics used in worship

with musical accompaniment). Some of you may create melodies and

choruses to be used in worship utilizing the words of the Psalms

as your lyrics. A very important arts project to the body of

Moshiach right now would be to visit a Sufi meeting and do

research on how to develop messianic Muslim use of music with the

Psalms. Another research project could be to visit various synagogues and do the same thing with a messianic Jewish use of the Psalms.

Your familiarity with I and II Shmuel will help you not to ignore the possible historical context of these Psalms, particularly the ones ascribed to Dovid. For Example, Psalm 51 may refer to II Shmuel 12, when Nathan exposed Dovid's sin with Bathsheba.

The 23rd Psalm may reflect the "valley of the shadow of death" where Dovid fought Goliath or similar dangers he experienced.

For a full attempt at this kind of reconstruction of the Psalms into their original historical setting, see the Reese Chronological Bible, Bethany House Publishers.

Psalm 11 may be referring to Dovid's flight from Saul, when HaSatan was trying to kill Dovid and Dovid was an innocent refugee from HaSatan, who had in effect seized the throne by possessing King Saul. (Look at Psalm 11:1-2.) All true believers are refugees from the G-d who rules the kingdom of this world, and take care when worldly spokesmen speak well of you, for if they called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household! (Matthew 10:25) And if they hanged on the Aitz the head of the house, do you think HaSatan's government will always let the members of the house reign already like kings? (The Corinthians made this mistake--I Corinthians 4:8).

The Brit Chadasha makes clear that human government will eventually become the Beast and the Brit Chadasha kehillah will be persecuted by it. You must recognize that your existential situation is the same as Dovid's. He was seated in heavenly places with Moshiach Yehoshua just as we are (we are kohanim end kings), but he was constantly embattled by the spirit of anti-Moshiach in Saul and Absalom as a refugee king hiding in the L-rd and always very weak in order to be strong in G-d. If this is not true in your experience, it may be because you are sitting around like Dovid's brothers when Saul's army was being challenged by HaSatan's spokesman, Goliath. If all you have is a comfortable Sunday morning religion, start witnessing and begin

some messianic ministry and watch your situation be instantly transformed just as Dovid's was when he took Goliath's challenge and got HaSatan's attention (see Psalm 69:9). Yet, like Dovid, you will prevail in time because the battle is the L-rd's, and He is the "savior of fugitives" (Psalm 17:7).

Psalm 110 proves that the Moshiach is HaAdon L-rd and will be a kohen. When you put Ps. 110:1-4 together with Mal. 3:1; Zech. 4:14; 3:8; and Ezra 3:8 you get Yehoshua's sacrifice of Isa. 52:13-53:12.

Note Ps. 1:4 in the Jerusalem Bible: "It is nothing like this with the wicked, nothing like this!" (lyric poetry expresses

passion).

Ps. 2:7-8 Today I have become your father-relationship, not

sexual concept. Moshiach Yehoshua is the only one, the unique

one of G-d, not the sexually (and therefore in the beginning

non-existent) begotten one of G-d. This is the heresy of Arius,

the first "J.W." Monogenes in Yochanan 1:14,18; 3:16 means

"unique one." Explain to Muslims that Moshiach Yehoshua is the

Son of G-d only in the sense that "like begets like," and the

Word is like the Father in his divine presence--not Son in the

sense that G-d got married and had a child who did not exist

until he was sexually procreated. The Word of G-d is his

personal Word uniquely of his own substance and perfectly

reflecting Him in fellowship, as a son does his father, but the analogy breaks down on the human level since fathers pre-exist their sons and the Father did not pre-exist his Word.

Another note on Psalm 2. Another reason it "has been given to you not only to believe on him but also to suffer for him" (Phil. 1:29) is because there is a war going on and war always brings suffering. Ps. 2 depicts the war going on between the Seed of the Woman and His seed and the Seed of the Serpent and His anti-Moshiach seed.

Psalms 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are individual prayers of entreaty.

5:3 Do you have a devotional life like this? Do you watch for

G-d in everything?

Read Psalm 8. The Word of G-d is called the Son of Man in

Yochanan 1:1,51 because He is the image of the invisible G-d

(Col. 1:15), and he is the light that enlightens every human

being created in the image of G-d (Yochanan 1:9). He is the

eternal Son of the Father who was destined to be incarnated as

the Son of Man and the "ruling heir" (Col. 1:15) into whom hands

all authority is given (Matthew 28:18).

Psalm 8:1-2 alludes to natural revelation, that G-d has made his

glory, majesty and power known to mankind in the stars and in

nature (Romans 1:19f), and even children are not ignorant of this

natural revelation, so men are without excuse. Dr. Allan R.

Sandage of the Carnegie Institution's observatories in Pasadena,

California, is a cosmologist and astronomer. Speaking of the

stars he says, "I find it quite improbable that such order came

out of chaos. There has to be some organizing principle. G-d to

me is a mystery, but is the explanation for the miracle of

existence why there is something instead of nothing."

Look at Psalm 13. Our entreaty is always in the context of

praise, for a double-minded man bitter in his lack of faith

should not think that he will get anything from the L-rd. In

Psalm 14 we see that no one is righteous before G-d, as Shliach

Sha'ul makes clear in Romans 3. Without faith it is impossible

to please G-d (Heb. 11:6), since no one but G-d is good (Mark 10:18). When David speaks of David's righteousness in Ps. 143:2; 18:20-24; 17:3; 7:8, he is speaking of the righteousness of faith and faithfulness to G-d's covenant; he is not contradicting Ps. 14:3. On the necessity of faith in regard to righteousness, see Ps. 62:8; 78:21-22,37; 81:12; 116:8-10.

The type of guest the L-rd welcomes is seen in Psalm 15: one who never uncharitably slanders someone else (15:3) and one who stands by his commitments at any cost (15:4). Some of the students who drop in at our school are so willing to drop out, because they think G-d is as uncommitted to ministry preparation as they are. "Demas in love with this passing world has forsaken

me and has departed," Shliach Sha'ul said, of one of his seminary students.

Psalms 16:10-11 contains the hope of the resurrection of the King of Israel. Shliach Kefa bases his first sermon on this in Acts 2.

Have you experienced not only the knowledge of salvation, but its ground (what's behind it)--G-d's love for you? See Psalm 18:19:

"He rescued me, since he loved me. G-d loves even me! He saved

me because he loved me. Say it often to yourself. Use it often

in witnessing. Augustine used Psalm 18:25-26 to teach a rather

simplistic theory of double-predestination that Calvinists love

to espouse. However, to say that G-d has a "secret counsel"

whereby he has, irrespective of human response, condemned

arbitrarily to hell whomever He pleases is not Scriptural. To

claim one's election in this light can also lead to pharisaic

presumption, just as seeing reprobation in this light can lead to

Islamic fatalism and kiruv outreach and social irresponsibility.

Shliach Sha'ul warns about this pharisaic presumption in Romans

11 where, having assured us that all the people of G-d seen as a

corporate entity are once saved, always saved." But then Shliach

Sha'ul goes on and warns the believers in Rome that they should

not get presumptuous individually but rather fear that they could

be individually cut off. Moshiach Yehoshua also warned Messianic

maggidim in the strongest terms that they could be cut off

(Matthew 7:21-23). However, there is a doctrine of individual

assurance (II Shliach Kefa 1:10, see Psalm 37:23-24), just as

there is a doctrine of a universal call and unlimited kapporah

(I Tim. 2:4-6). The so-called "secret counsel" is not secret at

all, but the electing counsel of HaAv in His electing Word

publically reveal in the man Yehoshua the Moshiach (Matthew

11:27; Ephesians 1:3-7). However, this is not to say that

someone can, by sheer unaided human will, save himself. This is

the heresy of Pelagius, who rejected original sin (despite Psalm

51:5) and believed that man could choose salvation without any

help from G-d in circumcising the heart, which Pelagius said was

not desperately wicked. But Moshiach Yehoshua said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you," meaning that G-d gives us a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26), because with our own fallen heart of stone we could never find G-d without G-d's help. However, if we will to seek G-d (Yochanan 7:17), if we make ourselves a new heart (Ezekiel 18:31), G-d will draw near to us (Ya'akov 1:8). So human responsibility to respond to the Besuras Hageulah cannot be minimized in the human responsibility for sin which is taught in the so-called doctrine of total depravity. Having said all this, it is nevertheless true, that our own choices, whether to accept G-d's mercy in the Moshiach or reject it, even though these

choices are real and are our own, cannot overreach or dominate

G-d's choices, which are prior and decisive.

Psalm 19:7-10 and Ps. 119 deal with the inerrancy of the Bible,

which is the Book whose every word is authored by the Spirit of

the Word from the Father (see I Shliach Kefa 1:11, 3). This is

the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration of the original

autographs. These last two paragraphs will be covered in more

detail in the section on Historical Theology in this book. A

good setting for Psalm 22 is in II Shmuel 15:30 where Dovid

experienced something of the messianic rejection as the Moshiach

did on the Aitz.

See Psalm 27:1. If G-d is your strength, how strong are you?

Are you witnessing every day? See Psalm 10:10. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Above all, guard your heart from growing slightly cold and your testimony from growing slightly muted (Psalm 73:25-28).

See Psalm 49:7-9. Look at the Stephen-Saul debate in The Rabbi

From Tarsus monodrama for the significance of this verse. Only

a G-d-Man can save us. Therefore, any kind of Arianism that

loses the deity of the Word and any kind of gnosticism that loses

the fully human incarnation of the Divine Word leads to heresy

and to another "Yehoshua/Yeshua" and another (damnable) Besuras

Hageulah (Psalm 107:20; II Cor. 11:4; Gal. 1:9). We are not

worshipping a human idol (Psalm 56:4).

Don't get idolatrous and become "star-struck" on religious

leaders (Psalm 62:9), but neither be arrogantly disrespectful so

as to presumptuously disregard the office of those who are

serving in the body of the L-rd.

Read Psalm 63 and ask yourself if you love G-d like Dovid loved

G-d, with a reckless abandonment. Dovid loved even his enemies

(Saul and Absalom) with a mad king's crazy kind of love (see the

picture of Dovid feigning madness with the King of the

Philistines Achish in I Shmuel 21:13.) This was why Dovid was a

man after G-d's own heart. Another "mad king" went to the Aitz

with this type of love, and Shliach Sha'ul said, "If we are out

of our minds, it is for the sake of G-d" (II Cor. 5:13). The

spirit of anti-Moshiach in Saul when he slaughtered the Kohen

Gadol Ahimelech (I Shmuel 21) was desperately trying to destroy

Dovid, but Dovid had faith to go right into the HaSatan's cave

with love so radical he would even let his rebellious son almost

destroy him, even as G-d so loved the rebelling world (Yochanan

3:16). David is a type of the Warrior Word who will return to

set up his victory over his enemies in the millenium.

Ps. 129:5 says of every Haman, every Hussein who hates Zion, "May

all who hate Zion be put to shame and turned backward."

However, soldiers who go into battle fighting for the L-rd's

people (if indeed it is the L-rd's people that they are

protecting) can look to a promise in Ps. 91:7, "A thousand may
fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it
(destruction) will not come near you. You will only look with
your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked." In 1948 when
Israel had to fight for her independence as a nation, in the 1956
Sinai campaign, in the Six-Day War in 1967 when Jerusalem was
reunited, and in the 1973 Yom Kippur war, we believers had grown
used to hearing about battlefield miracles being reported about
Israelis; but in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when Saddam Hussein's
anti-Israel troops were defeated on Purim, this time the miracles
we were hearing about were concerning American troops and, among

other things, the low number of casualties was truly

"miraculous," as top U.S. military officials readily admit. The

Bible says, "In Judah G-d is known" (Ps. 76:1; 147:19-20). It

also says that G-d will "rise up and have compassion on Zion

(Jerusalem), for it is time to favor it, the appointed time has

come (Ps. 102:13). Gen. 12:3 says that G-d will bless anyone who

blesses Israel. America defended Israel (remember the Patriot

missiles shooting down the Scud missiles fired at Israel?) and,

miraculously, had only 89 casualties in the Persian Gulf War and

the American economy is now starting to revive. So there is a

blessing for America now, and the same blessing that was on the

soldiers will be on you when you preach the Good News "to the Jew

first and also the Greek." "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you'" (Ps. 122:6). And when you go on the street and begin street preaching you shall not be put to shame.

You shall have an answer for every objector (Ps. 119:42,46).

I was praying the Psalms to the L-rd today, and He showed me the secret of how to be happy. "Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked (see Ps. 1:1; 26:4-5)." Happy are those whose delight is in the torah (law) of the L-rd, and on his law they meditate day and night (Ps. 1:2). Why are they happy?

Because "the law of their G-d is in their hearts; their steps do not slip" (Ps. 37:31). "Happy is everyone who fears the L-rd, who

walks in his ways. You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your

hands; you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you" (Ps.

128:1-2). Happy are all those who choose the Derech HaChayyim

(the way of life)--Jer. 21:8. Such a person has found what

Ponce De Leon looked for in vain--the fountain of youth, because

Psalm 1:3 says he will be like a tree whose leaves do not wither!

That's us! And we yield our fruit in its season. The Bible says,

"The righteous flourish like the palm tree...they are planted in

the house of the L-rd. ..in old age they still produce fruit;

they are always green and full of sap" (Ps. 92:12-14).

What keeps us happy? Keeping G-d's precepts (Ps. 119:56). This

is just as true for the young as for the old. "How can young

people keep their way pure? By guarding it according to your Word" (Ps. 119:9). Taking our eyes off selfish gain and empty vanities and instead treasuring G-d's word and delighting in its counsel--this is how we avoid sinning (Ps. 119:11,24,36-37). And in every misery of life the L-rd's Word is our great consolation, a delight that makes us wiser, more understanding with every step we take in its light. "Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble" (Ps. 119:165)

The wicked are not so. They have no true taste for the Word of G-d. The Bible is one book they don't pour over! They have no knowledge, their hearts always go astray, and they do not regard

G-d's ways (Ps. 95:10). They do not call upon the L-rd (Ps.

14:4). The wicked refuse to take refuge in G-d but seek refuge in

money (Ps. 52:7). Trusting in their own works, they do not regard

the works of the L-rd (Ps. 28:5). Their G-d is not the true G-d

but a worthless idol, and "those who make them (idols) are like

them" (Ps. 115:8). Ps. 36 says there is no fear of G-d before

their eyes, and they do not really reject evil either, though, as

far as G-d is concerned, they flatter themselves in their own

eyes that their own iniquity cannot be found out or despised by

the L-rd. The wicked say in their heart, "G-d, you will not call

us to account" (Ps. 10:13). The drunkard may go to Brit Chadasha

kehillah, the bigot may go to synagogue, but G-d is not fooled.

True faith repents. Yet their heart is not steadfast towards

Him. They are not true to His covenant (Ps. 78:37). G-d is not

in all their thoughts. "They did not keep in mind His power, or

the day when He redeemed them" (Ps. 78:42). So G-d gave them

over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own proud counsels

(Ps. 81:12), and the L-rd who sees and is close to the lowly

"perceives the haughty from far away (Ps. 138:6).

To the ungrateful wicked G-d says, "What right have you to recite

my statutes, or take my covenant on your lips? For you hate

discipline, and you cast my words behind you." (Ps. 50:16) "Not

another Bible!" he says, as you offer it to him. But the L-rd

replies, "Mark this, then, you who forget G-d, or I will tear you apart, and there will be no one to deliver. Those who bring thanksgiving as their sacrifice honor me; to those who go the right way I will show the salvation of G-d" (Ps. 50:22-23).

On the other hand, the L-rd "Is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth." Those who fear the L-rd will find their desires fulfilled (Ps. 145:18-19). But as far as the wicked is concerned, suddenly you will look for him but you will not find him, the wicked will die, and on that very day their plans will perish.

Not so the righteous. "For the righteous will never be shaken;

they will be remembered forever. They are not afraid of evil

tidings (bad news); their hearts are firm, secure in the L-rd.

Their hearts are steady, they will not be afraid; in the end they

will look in triumph on their foes. They have distributed freely,

they have given to the poor; their righteousness endures forever;

their horn is exalted in honor. The wicked see it and are angry;

they gnash their teeth and melt away; the desire of the wicked

comes to nothing" (Ps. 112:6-10).

What I have been giving you is some of the "wisdom" Psalms. These

have the wisdom theme that you get in the other wisdom literature

in the Hebrew Bible. The prophet has his contribution to G-d's

Word. The priest has his. The King of Israel has his. But this

kind of literature comes from the sage or wise man. You find

wisdom literature in the book of Job, in Proverbs, in Ecclesiastes

and other places. What I'm talking about also relates to the

Messianic prophecies in the Psalms.

For example, while Job stands rejected and forsaken with mockers

around him (Job 17:2), he reminds the reader of the picture we

have of the suffering Servant of the L-rd in Isaiah 53 or the

mocked Davidic King in Psalm 22 (compare Job 27:4 to Isa. 53:9).

In the midst of the false accusations Job "holds fast to his

righteousness" (Job 27:6) and waits on the L-rd to confirm the

innocence of his cause (Job 42:7-8). So the mocked sage who

becomes a fool that the world curses and makes sport of is depicted here. We have seen this picture before in that other sage, the judge of Israel, Samson, being made sport of by the Philistines (Judg. 16:25) or in the King of Israel, Dovid the sage, pretending to be mad before a similar scoffing Philistine audience (I Sm. 21:13-15). When sages like Moshe or Dovid are nearly stoned by the people (Ex. 17:4; I Sm. 30:6) we see this reemerging picture of the rejected-yet-vindicated-as-righteous Sage of Israel. Significantly, the Son of Dovid is depicted as the sage par excellence in the life of Shlomo in I Kings. Then II Chronicles intensifies this portrait and gives Messianic prophetic significance to Dovid's Son as the Moshiach Sage of

Israel. Finally, Isaiah combines the two portraits of the sage found in Job and Shlomo and depicts the Dovidic Servant of the L-rd as the mocked and rejected sage filled "with the spirit of wisdom" (Isa. 11:2) who seems to labor "in vain" but trusts his cause to the L-rd (Isa. 49:4) and, after mockery and rejection (Isa. 53:2-4), is finally vindicated by G-d as righteous (see Isa. 53:11-12). So the book of Job gives us one of our most important glimpses of the coming Moshiach.

Also notice particularly the following Messianic prophecies in the Psalms. Ps. 2:2 and 20:6 which speaks about the L-rd and his (Anointed, Moshiach), always with reference not merely to Dovid

but to Dovid and the Moshiach arising from his genealogy as it

says "to Dovid and his zera (his seed) forever" (Ps. 18:50;

II Sm. 7:12). I Chr. 17:11 explicitly states this as a prophecy

of the coming Moshiach, "I will raise up your zera (offspring)

after you (Dovid), one of your own sons, and I will establish His

kingdom. He will build a house for me, and I will establish His

throne forever. I will be his Father and He will be My Son (see

also Ps. 2:7; 89:26-27 the Son is called the B'chor) "the

Firstborn," the King of Kings). I will not take my steadfast

love from Him, as I took it from him who was before you (i.e.

King Saul). I will confirm Him in My House and in My kingdom

forever, and His throne shall be established forever." The

nations of the whole world will be His heritage and possession

belonging to Him (Ps. 2:8; Gen. 49:10; Ps. 144:2). Therefore

every king had better reverently "kiss the Son" (Ps. 2:12;

I Kings 19:18) and reverently bow to the coming Moshiach Ben

Dovid (see Ps. 18:43-45).

Dovid is prophesying about the eternal Moshiach-Kohen, the

eternal (cohen, kohen) that is coming (Ps. 110:4). Now by

definition a cohen must make a sacrifice. However, Dovid keeps

prophesying about violence being directed at his own person,

including himself and not only Dovid but also, more importantly,

the Moshiach arising from his genealogy. He says, Karu yadai

V'raglai "they have pierced/have bored/have dug holes in my hands

and feet" (Ps. 22:17; Zech. 12:10). However death is not the end.

"G-d will ransom my soul/life from the power of Sheol/the abode

of the dead, for He will receive me" (Ps. 49:15). "Prolong the

life of the King; may His years endure to all generations! May He

be enthroned forever before G-d" (Ps. 61:6-7). "He asked you for

life; you gave it to Him--length of days forever and ever" (Ps.

21:4; 110:3-4). Although the necessary sacrifice is emphasized

in Ps. 50:5 ("Gather to Me My Chasidai My g-dly ones, who made a

covenant with me by sacrifice!"), the grave itself is defeated,

for G-d will not let His Chasid "G-dly One" (a title of the

Moshiach in Ps. 89:19, Chasid'cha "your G-dly One") see the Pit

of corruption (Ps. 16:10). Like the Pesach Lamb of G-d, he

"keeps all his bones" (Ex. 12:46; Ps. 34:20).

For further Messianic prophecies in the Psalms see Ps. 41:9;

55:12-15,20-21; 45:6-7; 69:7-10,19-21; 89:3-4,34-51; 118:22-23;

132:11,17-18; 145:13.

David was an ominous sign, a mofet (portent Ps. 71:7) of the

coming Moshiach just as the 520 B.C.E. Kohen Gadol

Yehoshua/Yeshua (Ezra 3:8) was a portent (Zech. 3:8) to many and

his name is the Moshiach's name (Zech. 6:11-12).

Notice both G-d and the Dovidic Moshiach are called Ro'eh Yisroel

"the Shepherd of Israel" (Ps. 78:71; 80:1) and the Moshiach is

addressed as G-d in Ps. 45:6 (see also Zech. 12:8 and Isa. 9:6).

The first objective of the Moshiach Ben Dovid was to provide a

dwelling place for G-d (Ps. 132:5). This was done only in one

Son of Dovid, Yehoshua, in whom came the Incarnation. Only here

did G-d raise up an eternal Tent for Himself, where His Spirit

and His Word could dwell with Him forever. Any other Beis

Hamikdash is fleeting (Ps. 39:4,12) and sinful (Ps. 51:5; 14:36;

53:2-3), fallen and dying. Only Moshiach Yehoshua was the

sinless kohen who rose from the dead and reigns forever as a

Tabernacle in which we may dwell with G-d with a clean heart and

a new and right spirit (Ps. 51:10). Notice Avdi "My Servant" is

a Messianic title in Ps. 89:20 as it is in Isa. 52:13-53:12.

Read the Psalms through this month and sing to the L-rd a new

song (Ps. 149:1). Sing 27:1; 34:1-4; 68:19-30; 119:105; 125:2;

133:1; 134:1-2.

As you pray for your own and other ministries, be sure and read

the following: Ps. 20:1,4; 25:3-5,16-18; 27:13-14; 30:5;

31:19-20; 32:8-9; 33:18-19; 34:18-19; 37:4-9,34; 51:1-19;

55:18,23; 56:11; 68:6; 73:25-26; 84:11; 86:16; 102:28; 103:8-18;

107:40-43; 112:6-10; 118:5-9; 121:1-8; 126:5-6; 127:1-2; 130:1-8;

138:3-6; 139:13-18; 141:3-4; 147:10-11.

"I cry to G-d Most High, to G-d who fulfills his purpose for me"

(Ps. 57:2). "Let me hear what G-d the L-rd will speak"(Ps.

85:8-9).

PSALM 16:9-11

9. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh

(body) also shall rest in hope.

10. For thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol; neither wilt thou

suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

11. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is

fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for

evermore.

15(16) My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue

sticks to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of

death.

16(17) For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked

have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

17(18) I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

18(19) They part my garments among them, and cast lots (gamble)

for my clothing.

27(28) All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the

L-rd: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before

thee.

28.(29) For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor

among the nations.

29.(30) All they that be rich upon earth shall eat and worship:

all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none

can keep alive his own soul.

30.(31) Posterity shall serve him; future generations shall be

told about the L-rd.

31.(32) They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto

a people that shall he horn, that he bath done this.

PSALM 27:10

When my father and my mother forsake me, then the L-rd will take

me up.

PSALM 33:6

By the Word of the L-rd were the heavens made: and all the host

of them by the breath of his mouth.

PSALM 49:7(8)-9(10)

No man can by any means redeem the life of another, nor give to

G-d a ransom for him:

8(9) For the ransom of a life is precious (costly)--no payment is

ever sufficient:

9(10) That he should live on for ever, and not see corruption.

MISHLE (PROVERBS)

The fear of the L-rd is the beginning of Wisdom (1:7,29; 9:10;

15:33) and "life indeed" (19:23). Moreover, whether to fear the

L-rd is a choice (1:29) with ethical implications (14:2; 16:6)

that are a matter of life and death (21:16). The aim of

acquiring wisdom is acquiring more trust in the Lord (22:19) as we seek Him (28:5). The waywardly complacent fool makes the wrong choice (14:16,33; 15:17, 17:16), and the Book of Proverbs strongly exhorts the pursuit of Biblical wisdom as something of incomparable value (16:16; 23:23), asserting that whoever does not tremble at the wise words of Scripture is a doomed fool (19:16), even if he is outwardly religious (15:8; 21:27; 28:9) and generally presumed righteous (20:9; 21:2; 30:12).

The Book of Proverbs deals with practical wisdom, with matters like marrying well and finding a good spouse (see 18:22;

31:10-31). Also wisdom itself is something that is found. Wisdom

(chochma) is presented metaphorically as a lady street preacher

(1:20-33; 8:1-9:12) and is contrasted with the lethal allure of

Dame Folly (Aishet K'siloot "a woman of folly"), presented in

contrast as an adulterous street walker (2:16-19; 6:24-7:27;

9:13-18; 23:27-28; 30:20). Both women make strong appeals to the

passersby in front of their respective houses. The house of one

is blessed and the other is cursed (see also 14:1), and all who

enter the house of one or the other will share in either the

house's blessing or its curse. This poetic teaching against

sexual immorality falls within the larger theme of "bad company

destroys good morals" (I Cor. 15:33) which includes 1:10-19;

2:12-22; 3:31-35; 4:14-19; 14:7; 22:5,14,24-25; 28:7; 29:3; 31:3

and passages which deal with ethical qualities like envy, greed,

covetousness, violence, mercy, generosity, and kindness

(11:24-26; 15:27; 21:13,31,26; 22:9,16,22-23; 23:4-6,17; 24:1;

27:4; 28:20,22,25; 28:27; 29:7; 30:14-15).

Seen in a feminine image, Wisdom is the most desirable of women

and the tree of life (3:13-18; 4:22; 8:35-36--see also 11:30).

Seen in a masculine image, he is the Father's Son (Prov. 30:4),

working as a master worker, a carpenter's assistant used

instrumentally to create the world (3:19; 8:22-34).

PROVERBS 8:30 "Then I was by him (at his side), as an artisan

(craftsman). I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing

always before him."

(When the Word became flesh, he became the craftsman at Joseph's

side...Joseph the carpenter from Nazareth, Joseph the son of

Dovid; likewise, the Word in the beginning was the craftsman at

the side of G-d. The feminine metaphor with which this chapter

began has changed to a masculine one. Amon is a masculine noun

meaning artisan or craftsman. Another possible meaning is

foster-child. In any case, as Keil and Delitzsch have shown, at

this point in the chapter the feminine determination disappears.

See how the word is used in Jeremiah 52:15. To be filled with

the Spirit of G-d like Bezalel meant to be filled with wisdom to

build creatively as a craftsman--see Exodus 31:3. Thus Wisdom is

pictured as a craftsman with G-d, even as Yochanan 1:1 says, "In

the beginning was the Word and the Word was with G-d." In

Proverbs 30:4 more light is thrown on this passage: Wisdom is

like a Son, a Son working creatively at his Father's side.

However, Hosea 11:1-4 shows that the divine fatherhood is moral

and spiritual, in contrast to the sexual or physical ideas of the

Baal cults, or in contrast to the ignorant scoffers at the

Biblical doctrine of G-d the Father of His Word Yehoshua. These

critics show the same ignorant tendency to create a non-biblical

strawman "trinity" and then burn it down with ill-informed

polemics, like the ignorant railings of certain Muslims against

the Qur'anic version of the "trinity.")

PROVERBS 30:4 "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?

Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the

waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the

earth? What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou

canst tell?"

(It will not do to try to bring Israel in here as the Son, since

the context reflects back to Proverbs 8 and especially 8:30.

Israel is scarcely mentioned or thought of in Proverbs. The

figure of a son toiling by the side of his father was a familiar

one, and is an arresting metaphor for G-d's primordial Wisdom

toiling creatively in the beginning with G-d. Likewise, Psalm 2:7, Psalm 89:27-28, and Isaiah 9:(5)6 are passages where the Moshiach is pictured as G-d's Son, his firstborn in the sense of his heir coming in divine glory (see Daniel 7:13-14 on the Son who comes in the clouds with G-d) to "divide the spoil with the strong" (Isaiah 53:12) and to govern eternally--Isaiah 9:7(6).)

The folly of the Fall (Gen. 3:1-24) itself is alluded to in Prov. 3:5-7,-Trust in the L-rd with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the L-rd, and turn away from evil" (see also 11:2; 12:9; 14:12;

15:25,33; 16:5,18-19; 18:12; 19:3; 21:4,24; 25:6-7,27; 26:12;

27:1-2; 28:26; 29:23, which also touch on the sin of pride and

presumption).

The book advocates honoring G-d with the tithe (3:9-10) and

remaining docile before Him to hear and obey His Scriptural

commands (3:11-12; 10:8,17; 12:1,15; 13:1,13; 15:5,10,12,31-32;

19:20,25; 20:18,30; 21:11; 24:6; 25:12; 27:5-6,17; 28:23; 29:1)

lest one backslide (26:11; 28:4). Obeying G-d requires hard

work, diligence, and shrewd planning for future needs (6:6-11;

10:4-5, 26; 12:11,24,27, 13:4; 14:4,23; 15:19; 16:26; 18:9;

19:15,24; 20:4,13; 21:5,17,25; 22:7,13; 24:27,30-34; 26:13-16;

27:18,25-27; 28:19), as well as self-control (16:32; 19:19; 20:1;

23:19-21, 29-35; 25:28; 29:11,22; 31:4-5), straightforwardness

and honesty of speech (4:24; 6:12; 10:10-11; 12:17,19,22;

14:5,25; 19:9,28; 21:6,28; 26:23-28; 30:8) and forswearing all

treachery, dishonesty, and injustice (3:29; 10:2; 11:1,9,20;

13:5; 16:11; 17:23; 18:5; 20:17,23; 22:28; 24:10-12,24-25;

38:13), remembering that G-d hates the slanderer (10:18), the

gossip (11:13; 16:28; 18:8; 20:19; 26:20,22), the sower of

discord (6:12-19; 13:10; 26:21), and the one who gloats (24:17)

or belittles people (11:12) or is bitterly vengeful (24:29;

25:21-22) or is a mocker (30:17).

Part of the task of teaching shrewdness to the simple (1:4) is

warning him not to offer property as collateral for his

neighbor's debts or to similarly go into debt himself (6:1-5;

11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26-27; 27:13). Also he must be taught to

be sensitive to the reactions of others and how they are

perceiving him (25:17; 27:14,23).

"Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses" (10:12),

"whoever walks with the wise becomes wise" (13:20), meaning that

we should stay in fellowship with fellow believers and maintain a

loving relationship with them (see 17:9). But "the one who lives

alone is self-indulgent" (18:1a). "What is desirable in a person

is loyalty" (19:22a; 20:6; 25:19; 27:10).

Notice that the sage no less than the prophet preaches the Torah

and warns about its curses (see 2:22; 10:30; Deut. 28:63-67)

This book was written "for the wise" (1:5) but it also written

for young people (1:8,10; 19:27; 22:6), who will perish without

discipline (13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15,17). This book

reminds and we always need reminding, that "a good name is to be

chosen rather than great riches" (22:1).

This is a book concerning self-control and common sense in

matters of work, diligence, speech, honesty, and sex.

Prov. 1:22. The fool does not study the Word, does not tremble

at the Word, does not acknowledge it by his life though he may

always be "learning" it (II Tim. 3:6-7). He has not been "made

into a learner with a teacher" according to Matthew 28:19-20. A

disciple is a "learner with a teacher."

Prov. 1:33 Fearing no mischance means not fearing what Sartre

feared, the radical contingency of life, that "anything can

happen." (See 29:25; 28:1 and do a concordance study on "fear" in

the book of Proverbs.

Prov. 2:1-5 We study to know G-d, to please Him in all things,

and to enjoy him forever.

Prov. 3:11-12 Can you take correction from ministers?

Prov. 3:31 One year the New York Post headlines on April 16

"MARVELOUS!" and the picture was a prize fighter bleeding and

knocked senseless. Do you have any idea how angry this kind of

stupidity makes G-d?

Prov. 4:13 This matter of spiritual study is a life-or-death

matter.

Prov. 4:22 Have you learned to use your Bible as a therapy system

to bring inner healing (and consequent bodily healing) to

yourself?

Prov.4:23 Be very careful upon what you set your affections.

Prov.5:8 Flee from the lusts of youth and avoid even the

appearance of evil. Learn to run from disgrace and hide from

temptation in the L-rd.

Prov. 5:17 Polygamy is out, monogamy is in.

Prov. 6:6-11 Get a job, and don't be dumber than an ant.

Prov. 7:11 Don't let any spirit drive you, whether it be the

demon of gluttony, autoeroticism, gluttony, gambling, or

workaholicism.

Prov. 8:22 Creation's wisdom is created, but the rationality of

G-d in creation is uncreated, and it was this power in G-d that

came on the scene as the man Moshiach Yehoshua. Humanity has

wisdom the animals lack because, unlike animals, we are create in

the image of G-d. But G-d always imaged Himself by his

rationality in the Logos, the logic of G-d. The Moshiach is the

Chochmah Elohim (the Wisdom of G-d) who gave Moses the pattern

for the Tabernacle on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 25:40).

Prov. 9:13 We should strive to act on the prompting of the Ruach

Hakodesh rather than on impulse.

Prov. 10:8 Be aware of the worthless speech in your life.

Prov. 10:9 Secret sins will disgrace you.

Prov. 10:17 Stay under Brit Chadasha kehillah discipline. Become

a disciple.

Prov. 10:28 If you are moving into maturity in the Spirit there

should be deep joy in your life.

Prov. 11:2 is a key theme.

Prov. 11:7 Put this together with Ps. 1 to define who the wicked

are and use it to lead people to Biblical discipleship.

Prov. 12:2-3 This typical proverb shows that deism is wrong. G-d

actively and morally intervenes in his world, though his hand is

veiled to the unwise.

Prov. 12:11 Be an entrepreneur for G-d, one of the dreamers who

do.

Prov. 12:15 Do you know the difference between servile

"submission" and Biblical accountability?

Prov. 13:2 The whole world is filled with political treachery and

military violence. Work only with sifted people you have tested

first.

Prov. 13:13 and 30:5-6 are reasons why we believe in the

inerrancy of the Bible.

Prov. 13:20 Can you avoid a sterile quarantine from your unsaved

friends and still witness to them without losing your testimony

with them?

Prov. 14:22 What is your arts project? Do you have a vision to

reach the lost through the talents G-d has given you?

Prov. 14:31 Think about the poor we pass daily on the sidewalk

and how we insult G-d by the way we treat them.

Prov. 15:1 Learn to be soft and humble and gentle in speech as a

minister.

Prov. 15:19 Your nightly prayer should be, "Make me industrious

tomorrow, L-rd, and give me strength and wisdom to know what to

do to serve you.

Prov. 15:32 When someone rejects the Besuras Hageulah ask why

they hate themselves.

Prov. 17:19 This is a pitfall in the ministry: a bitter sarcastic

tone in the voice.

Prov. 17:22 Never let HaSatan have your sense of humor.

Prov. 18:13 is the first rule of counselling.

Prov. 22:6 is why you should consider children's ministry. My

Sunday School teacher was Rav Sha'uline and G-d knew all the

potential little Shliach Sha'uls she was investing in. With the

L-rd now, her works still follow her.

Prov. 22:15 Traces of original sin.

Prov. 23:20 Avoid gluttony.

Prov. 24:7 Have you ever noticed that the unsaved have little to

contribute to a spiritual discussion? By the fruit of their lips

you will know them.

Prov. 24:19-20 The problem of the prosperity of the wicked is

solved.

Prov. 25:21-22 Love your enemies.

Prov. 28:4 The unspiritually broadminded are carnally

muddle-minded.

Prov. 28:9 Backsliders can't pray.

Prov. 23:13 Why we need to confess the Lord before the

congregation.

Prov. 28:25 Envy is at the root of most quarrels, though it hides

under other pretexts.

Prov. 28:26 Get in touch with Moshiach Yehoshua and follow his

promptings.

Prov. 30:7-9 The two-way temptation of money.

Prov. 30:20 G-d, show us our moral blindness and wretchedness.

PROVERBS 3:19

The L-rd by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath

he established the heavens.

PROVERBS 8:23

I was appointed from everlasting, from the first (beginning), or

ever the earth was (begun).

PROVERBS 30:6

Add thou not unto his words, lest he rebuke thee, and thou be

found a liar.

KOHELET (ECCLESIASTES)

Shakespeare said, "We owe G-d a death...but death is a fearful

thing."

There is an unconscious terror of death in Man, who knows that

the significance of his life shrivels at the words "unto dust

shalt thou return." In the gruesome shadow of death, the whole

life of Man is made to seem as so much empty and lonely loitering

at the gates of an infinite abyss. There is a word for this

emptiness in Hebrew, the word havel which means empty,

unsubstantial, a passing elusive vapor. This is what life is

without a personal knowledge of G-d.

The author, who calls himself Kohelet "leader of the Assembly,"

Ben Dovid Melech Byrooshalam "son of Dovid, king in Jerusalem,"

finds that death has thrown a shroud of gloom and meaninglessness

over every kind of work that man does "under the sun." G-d's

work endures (3:14; 7:13), but man's does not. Death sees to

that. And therein is the riddle of life. What can dying, man

gain from all his work (1:3)? What can mortal man achieve from

all his labor, in view of his rapidly approaching demise (2:22)?

There is a time to die (3:2), but death is life's biggest riddle.

What possible gain can workers have from all their life-long toil

(3:9) since death causes them in the end to toil "for the wind

(5:16)?" A generation comes and goes to death and is forgotten

(1:4; 2:16). Death makes all toil "wearisome" and predictably

futile and, since everything dies, everything is *deja vu*

(disagreeably the same). People of long ago and people yet to

come will both alike be forgotten and all their labors will be

forgotten because of that great leveller called Death. Death is

what makes life at heart such an unhappy business, and there is

nothing man can do about this crooked state of dying affairs

(1:15). So this life in itself is found wanting, and death is the reason. Many who claim to be Jewish claim that life is wonderful as it is, but these people are not Biblical Jews, any more than that Jewish man Karl Marx was a Biblical Jew with all his philosophizing about the worker's existence "under the sun.

The French philosopher Pascal noticed how we habitually block out the thought of our own coming demise. We do this in order to maintain a fragile sense of mental happiness. Death is an end too incomprehensibly ominous to contemplate. Yet our thoughts keep returning to glower at its reality. And though we try to divert ourselves with continuous activity and company and "unhappy business," we know that each of us must ultimately die

and see everything we have done unravelled into nothingness.

Where can we then find pleasure in anything we do? What in the

world, what under the sun, are dying men to do with their

meaningless lives?

The author makes a test of various activities and pursuits:

wisdom, madness, folly, pleasure, laughter, wine, women, song,

great building projects, great "life works," great acquisitions,

possessions, treasure-collecting, and he finds only emptiness and

meaninglessness in all these. Whatever pleasures these things

brought him were fleeting indeed. The more wisdom he acquired,

the more sorrow he became aware of. The more money he acquired,

the more vexation came with it. Death robs all men, because

everyone goes to the grave naked and penniless. So what use is

money, in the face of death? And since the sage and the fool

must both go to the same all-consuming grave, what use is wisdom,

in the face of death?

The author acquired much wisdom and his wisdom remained with him

(2:9), although wisdom can be ephemeral even in this life, in

view of senility and the effects of aging, so grimly portrayed in

ch. 12. But since man cannot extend his life or control what

happens after his death, all that his wisdom attains for him may

fall into the hands of some foolish oblivion as soon as he dies,

so what good is wisdom, anyway, in the final analysis? The same

fate (death) befalls everyone. No man has an heir he can really trust, since even one's posterity is also subject to death and chance, which can, and eventually will, given sufficient time, play havoc with anyone's legacy. So death destroys life's meaning. Death makes one hate life (2:17). Death makes one hate one's work (2:18). Wise men, for all the work of their minds, are no better than mad men or fools because all alike die.

Indeed, man is no better than the beasts who are also subject to the same fate. And man is ignorant! Man doesn't know what G-d has done or will do (3:11). Man doesn't know what will take place after his death. Men doesn't know if his human spirit

awaits a fate different than animal extinction (3:20-22). Man needs G-d to give him some answers, because if death completely swallows and obliterates man, then Mankind that G-d created to work and till the ground and have dominion over the animals is himself no better than an animal.

This is the problem. Death. What is the answer? Is there anything that death cannot obliterate? Yes, the author of Ecclesiastes says. The work of G-d. It endures and death has no dominion over it (3:14). But what is the work of G-d? What does G-d do, in the final analysis? G-d judges everyone, and he has appointed a time to judge the world (3:17). G-d judges the sinner by bringing all things he does into judgment (11:9). The sinner's

life is dispensed with not as the sinner pleases but as G-d pleases, and the wages of sin that G-d pleases to dispense is a meaningless death (2:26). But death cannot obliterate this judgment that G-d metes out. Therein is where lies the hope of the resurrection from the death, which this book questions but does not negate. The author does not merely say, "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." In fact he says just the opposite. He says, "I've tried that, and I don't recommend it." G-d will bring everything into judgment (11:9); therefore, fear G-d (5:7). Do not live for this world because this world in itself is meaningless and empty and fallen and dying. Live for

G-d and enjoy everything that he gives you as a gift from him.

Otherwise, there is no pleasure in this life. Death is man's

lot. To be able to accept this as a fact of life is itself a

gift from G-d. G-d is a mystery and creation was created good

but it is now fallen (7:29). Man has limits to his wisdom. There

is no power in man that will save him from the day of death.

All he can say is that death cannot take away the good that the

G-d-fearer has. "It will be well with those who fear G-d,

because they stand in fear before him." The author seems to be

questioning and looking for something new under the sun (1:9-10),

which was what the Moshiach is when he comes walking out of the

tomb in his glorious resurrection body. Otherwise, "there is no

work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol (the abode of the dead), to which you are going" (9:10). The righteous and the wise and their deeds are "in the hand of G-d" who endures and whose judgment not even death can thwart. This is the assurance of wisdom that makes the resurrection of the dead the vibrant hope and the only answer to the riddle that death poses to the author of this book.

Philosophers like David Hume may say that they are not afraid to die, but put a pistol to their breasts, then threaten to kill them, and see (with Boswell and Yochananson) how the wisest philosopher will behave. The illusions of genteel philosophy

will not help us face the rude indignities of death when they

brutally rap at the door.

The problem of evil as it churns bitterly around in our minds

often tempts us to doubt the existence of G-d, especially a G-d

who is safely removed from both suffering and death and waits

austerely in heaven to judge us. If we think of death's

inescapableness and even of Moshiach Yehoshua as "a nice, dead

prophet," where do we have to go with the guilt of our moral

failures as our years quickly arraign us into the courts of the

inevitable graveyard?

Facing the evil of the human condition and the absurd,

meaningless, sniper fire of death picking off everyone around us,

we begin to feel a deep inner unhappiness and anxiety. We ask ourselves, what is lurking at the bottom of all our fears--is it not the fear of death? Many psychological researchers are now saying that the fear of death has a central place in human life, so much so that some believe a culture's very concept of reality, its model for "the good life," and its moral codes are all intended to protect people psychologically from the ubiquitous terror of death. Of course, Freud disagreed that every fear is ultimately the fear of death. Yet he dares admit that "the dread of death, which dominates us oftener than we know, is...usually the outcome of the sense of guilt."

We suspect that a certain amount of our present sufferings come from our own faithless treacheries haunting us from the past. And the dread of something worse possibly coming back to torment us after death prevents us from ever being fully at ease with our dwindling and frail mortality. In light of death's unknown hellish judgments, as Hamlet says, "the conscience does make cowards of us all." Death is truly an awesome "undiscovered country" from whose dreadful domain no traveller can return.

Yet the English philosopher Hobbes once wrote, "G-d, that could give life to a piece of clay, hath the same power to give life again to a dead man, and renew his inanimate and rotten carcass into a glorious, spiritual and immortal body." This very point

is what separates the religion of the Bible from that of Homer,
for the Greek g-ds could not revive the dead. They were not truly
omnipotent. But omnipotence is precisely the claim of the G-d of
the Bible whose Hebrew prophets even predicted the coming of the
Moshiach. Their promise was that through this coming King and
Redeemer, G-d would personally destroy death and bring
immortality and bodily resurrection to light at last.

However, the Torah teaches that the penalty of unintentional evil
that must be paid to redeem G-d's people from ultimate divine
judgment is the death of a sacrificial victim called an Asham,
"ah-sham" guilt offering, which had to be brought to the kohen

for slaughter (Leviticus 5:14-19). The prophets said that the coming Moshiach would be an eternal kohen and his death would be a momentous "ah-sham" guilt offering for sin (see Psalm 110:4; Isaiah 53:10). The merciful purpose of such a blood sacrifice is to purify humanity from its unpunished sin so that all who turn from evil and have faith can be justly forgiven. How significant it is, then, that hundreds of years before their words were fulfilled, the prophets of the Hebrew Bible predicted that "My Servant" the Moshiach would be named Yehoshua (or Moshiach Yehoshua--see Jeremiah 23:5-6; Zechariah 3:8; 6:11-12; Ezra 3:8). Further, these Hebrew prophets predicted that the Moshiach would offer himself as a blood sacrifice and then afterwards see the

light of resurrection life (see Isaiah 52:13-53:12 in the Dead Sea Scrolls). As it says in Hebrews 2:14-15, this was to release those who throughout their life have been subject to servitude and bondage through their fear of death (thanatophobia).

Would you like to be freed from that great fear behind all your other fears? Would you like to be delivered from the fear of death and the dread of punishment? Would you like to have true peace with G-d? Isaiah 53:5 says of the Moshiach, "the punishment that brought us peace was upon him." His blood and "his wounds can heal you" from the fear of death and the dread of punishment (Isaiah 53:5). But faith comes from exposure to

the Word of G-d as it is obediently taught and studied and

faithfully proclaimed. Why rely only on your own thoughts when

you can seek to know G-d's? Reach out to Moshiach Yehoshua by

faith. Trust him to forgive your sins and receive Him and obey

Him as L-rd as you worship among a body of believers where the

Bible is believed and faithfully taught.

People don't get saved unless they feel lost. Ecclesiastes

(Hebrew, Qohelet) depicts the utter emptiness and futility of

life that only the resurrection of the Moshiach can alter. Do

you remember those instant writing pads you played with as a

child? You raise the sheet and all your work vanishes...That's

what life is like. The only thing that gets preserved is what

G-d calls to judgment (12:14). All else in this life is chasing
after wind.

"There is nothing new under the sun," (1:9) yet what is old will
also be lost, and memory will not give it permanence, for it too
will be forgotten. Only the Word of the L-rd will stand forever
(I Shliach Kefa 1:25) and our labors for the L-rd (I Cor. 15:58).

All empty hedonism, worldly amusements, materialism, secular
education, secular art, workaholic personal kingdom-building
(with or without nepotism) will pass away. The world with all it
craves for is coming to an end (I Yochanan 2:17). G-d rewards
sage and fool alike--with death! (2:16). Therefore, worldly

wisdom is an empty mirage. G-d is the only one capable of

escaping or breaking the empty cycle of vanity described in

2:24-26. This G-d did in the new creation age that is already

dawning in the resurrection of His filial Word, our Savior and

L-rd, Moshiach Yehoshua the Moshiach.

Eccles. 3:21-22 shows that had the Moshiach not brought in the

dawn of the resurrection age, there would be nothing for us to do

but to be happy in the ministry of our vocational calling.

However, since the resurrection has occurred, we can be happy in

our "tent-making" means to effect the Great Commission ends of

the work the Moshiach has assigned us (II Thes. 3:7-12; I Thess.

4:11-12; Eph. 4:23). This means denuding ourselves of our own

cultural and "class consciousness" regarding educational and vocational status, and to take the Bible and Shliach Sha'ul as our model in using the gifts of vocation (and even possibly celibacy) to the Lord's advantage in doing cross-cultural outreach at home and abroad.

Society is wicked, oppressive, and evil and the life of this world--in itself--is not worth living, arising as it does from the futile envy and mutual jealousy and ambition of dying men

(4:4). A philosophical skepticism about yourself will also keep you from bringing worldly ambition into the L-rd's work, and will keep you from vain, restless, striving in the ministry. Cure:

take a walk in the out-of-doors and meditate on Ecclesiastes.

Dream dreams for G-d (without a vision you die), but strip off

the vainglory and pompous arrogance (5:6).

Ask G-d to give you the ability to enjoy life and to keep your

heart "occupied with joy" (5:19). If you are a congregational

leader you will have to marry and bury people. Use the Word! Use

Song of Songs to marry and Ecclesiastes 5:1a etc., to bury.

Worldly humor is as empty and sinister as the jestors in Nero's

Circus or at Hugh Heffner's Playboy Club (7:5), and every

philanderer knows that a woman's worldly laughter is a prelude to

the bedroom (Eph. 5:4-5). This kind of affair is far worse than

the deprivations of celibacy (Eccles. 7:26-27). 8:15 shows that

radical abstinence (health-breaking fasts, etc.) is unbiblical

because it impunes the goodness of G-d's creation. The preamble

to all kiruv outreach for Moshiach is 8:5-6: the hope of the

worldly dead is extinguished.

Learn to live in humble and careful fear of the L-rd, asking him

daily for a wise heart (10:1-2), since you can ruin your whole

life's good works and good name with a little folly.

"Slaves I see on horsebeck" (10:7) means that the celebrities and

stars and princes of this world are in reality mere garbage

supervisors since their world is actually a junk heap at the

mouth of hell and not Moshiach's Kingdom.

A warning for flakey students: "Fools find hard work irksome; he who does not know the way cannot go to town" (10:15). Our school is to show you the way to do cross-cultural ministry at home or abroad--a task more complex than pursuing a diploma at a diploma mill. You must do the ministry, plant a cross-cultural fellowship among Jews or Muslims, etc., write and perform a performing arts ministry vehicle before an audience. If you cannot do anything for G-d here as an outgrowth of our school, how can you hope to succeed overseas or anywhere else?

Be careful what you say: it will fly away and be heard afar

(10:20).

Become a good steward of your time (11:6). Also the time is now

to get your time-management act together.

Notice the Faulknerian As I Lay Dying poetic "death tableaux" in

the picture of old age in 12:3-5.

Eccles. 12:12 warns about too many books wearing you out. But

don't throw out books related to Hebrew, Tanakh (Old Testament),

Greek, Brit Chadasha Scriptures Survey, Messianic Yeshiva

studies, Messianic Prophecies and Rabbinic Literature,

Judaeo-Christian History and Philosophy, Historical Theology and

Doctrine, Cross-cultural communication and the Arts and ministry

formation. This is our curriculum at Artists For Israel Institute

and books related to these subjects you never have too many of in

the teaching and preaching ministry of the body of Moshiach.

ECCLESIASTES 7:29

G-d made Man upright, but they have devised many schemes.

SHIR HA-SHIRIM (SONG OF SONGS)

A book that is traditionally read at Pesach is Shir HaShirim "The

Song of Songs" (meaning "the best of all possible songs").

There are several reasons why Shliach Sha'ul is correct when he

interprets the book as making reference to the Moshiach and his

wedding banquet with his people. In Eph. 5:25-27, Shliach Sha'ul

says, "Husbands, love your wives." The Song of Songs contains

love poems and refers to the son of Dovid's Chatunah "wedding")

in 3:11. King Shlomo here, the son of Dovid, is not the ultimate

One who brings peace. One greater than Shlomo is here, the rose

of Sharon, the lily of the Valley (2:1), the fairest of ten

thousand (5:10). And He does have a bride who is faithful to his

covenant with her. She is the people of G-d. He is her king

(1:2-4,12) and her shepherd (1:7-8). Shliach Sha'ul says,

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Moshiach loved his people and

gave himself up for her in order to make her holy by cleansing

her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present her

to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of

the kind--yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish." On

the same theme, Song of Songs says (4:7), "you are altogether

beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you. And the son of

Dovid's covenant bride is called (tahm-mah-TEE) "my perfect one"

(5:2; 6:9). It says, Look! "Who is that coming up from the

wilderness...leaning upon her beloved" (8:5)? And the answer is,

the people of G-d, for they were married in the wilderness, they

became wedlock in covenant marriage with the L-rd at Mt. Sinai,

and the Pesach is the wedding banquet, celebrating the covenant.

I Cor. 10:4 says that the beloved Rock they leaned on in the

Exodus wilderness was Moshiach. For I Cor. 5:7 says, "Moshiach,

our Pesach Lamb, has been sacrificed."

But to keep the bridal garments clean, we need to clean out the

old yeast (I Cor. 5:7). We need to catch the proud little foxes

that spoil the vineyard of our love relationship with the

Moshiach (2:15). We need to seek him, while he may be found. Song

of Shl. 3:1 says, "Upon my bed at night I sought him whom my soul

loves." "With great delight" He wants you to sit in his shadow

(2:3) today. He wants you to be faint with love for Him (2:5)

today. Look, it says, who is this making His appearance like the

dawn, terrible as an army with banners (6:10)? Look, He is

coming, leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills

(2:8). Even tonight he is standing at the wall you have built to

shut him out. A garden locked is your soul (4:12). But tonight

He is gazing into the windows of your inner most being. I'm

talking about Ha'arye Y'huda the Lion of Judah, the One to whom

the nations belong, the harvester of the world. He is standing

even now on His threshing floor, and you are Ruth lying at his

feet. "Kiss the Son, (Nahsh-koo bar), lest He be angry and you

perish in the way. Happy are all who take refuge in Him (Ps.

2:12). He is the "desired of all nations" (Hag. 2:7). He is

altogether desirable (Song of Shl. 5:16). He is saying to you in

love tonight, "Arise and come. G-d wants to make a Spring visit

to your soul. "For now the winter is past, the rain is over and

gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has
come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The
fig tree puts forth its figs (are not the Jewish people beginning
to turn to Him?), and the vines are in blossom; they give forth
fragrance." The Moshiach is saying to your soul tonight, "Arise,
beloved, come." (See 2:10b-13.) By His death He paid the
bride-price and purchased us for Himself, for His very own
(8:12). Now He wants to set a seal on our hearts forever (3:6).
By His resurrection, He proved that his "love is as strong as
death" (8:6). Right now you are a wall. He wants you to become
a door he can enter. It's time to turn from self and yield to
Him. Holy Covenant love requires that. Any bride can tell you.

But a bride must be clean and dressed in white especially at

Pesach time. If we come to Him confessing our need to be cleansed

by Him, we will be able to say, 'I am my beloved's and he is

mine" (6:3). "He brought me to the banqueting table, and his

banner over me is love" (2:4).

The Ruach Hakodesh wants to awaken love in your heart for the

Moshiach of Israel tonight. You must open to him and let him

ravish your soul. Although editors have tried to format this

love song as a drama, their attempts have not been persuasive.

Therefore, ignore any dramatic personae supplied in your Bible.

These are not in the Hebrew. We must let the Bible interpret

itself. This is where G-d affirms erotic romantic love in marriage. Because marriage itself is a mystery, it echoes on a human level the relationship between the Moshiach and his people.

For just as the old humanity was made male and female, so the new humanity is made Moshiach and his bride.

Chapter 2:7 is a refrain. See 3:5 and 8:4. The significance of

this refrain seems to be that love must be allowed to grow

naturally, in its own time. It is not to be rushed or forced or

given an artificial stimulus. Promiscuous modern "dating" is

unscriptural and dangerous, like quick-chicken hormones, discos,

raunchy rhythm music and low cut necklines. Look at 3:4. Being

married is belonging to someone more indissolubly (Matthew 19:6;

Genesis 2:18) than one's own parents. This is a mystery, beyond

all comprehension, the way of a man with a virgin, that a man

leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife and

they become one body

The Brit

Chadasha Scriptures stands for the equality of women (Gal.

3:28;p I Cor. 7:4; 11:11-12), although this doctrine does not

obviate the hierarchy of function in the body of the L-rd and in

the family, where women and children do not L-rd it over men,

though women can hold offices and can speak for the L-rd as

prophetesses.

Look at 6:8-9. Like election, erotic romantic marital love is

selective, unique, personal and mysterious (why this girl and no other?) It is likely that this poetry was used in the context of weddings. Look at 7:1-7. The poetic imagery is oriental and culture-bound. Just as one man can't see what another man sees in his wife, so it is with cultural divergences in language, ways of perceiving, customs, etc. That's why the gift of Shliach is important. Those who have the cross-cultural gift to go to a particular people-group can see beauty and worth in that culture, whereas those without this gift cannot see the same beauty and worth in that particular culture.

Look at 8:1. Loved ones long to be together--they are one flesh

and erotic love is the glue to hold them together in holy

matrimony for the sake of the children. See Malachi 2:15. Song

of Shl. 8:10-11 is a polemic against polygamy and its barter

mentality where the shared spouse becomes an object for loan. See

8:6. G-d is a furious cuckold with tender reconciling heavenly

love in the one hand and furious betrayed love in the other. (See

notes on Hosea).

See Isaiah 7:14 notes on Song of Sol. 6:8.

SONG OF SONGS 6:8

There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without

number.

YESHAYAH (ISAIAH)

The first six chapters of Isaiah summarize much of the rest of the book. In his prophecy, Isaiah preaches against ethical relativism (5:20), loitering drunks who disregard the Lord and his works (5:11,22), cut-throat land-grabbing nobility (5:8), unjust murderers (1:15,21; 5:7), fortunetellers and fraternizers with pagan mockers (2:6), idol worshippers (2:8), humanism (2:22), blind guides leading the people into disaster (3:12), the haughty rich who exploit the penniless (3:15-16), justice-subverting bribe-takers (5:23) and all those who reject the Word of God (5:24). Invasion by foreign armies (5:26-30),

fiery destruction, and exile (5:13,29) will cause a reversal of

fortune for these people, and the Day of the L-rd will cause the

haughty rich to be brought low (2:17) and the poor in spirit to

become purged in the fire and holy (1:25; 4:3).

Along with the survivors will come in the aftermath the Moshiach,

the Tzemach (Branch) of the L-rd (4:2) who is identified (in the

book of Isaiah itself, not merely in Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15 or Zech.

3:8) with the Tzemach T'zadik (Righteous Branch) of the L-rd and

of Dovid, the Tzadik Avdi the Righteous Servant of the L-rd

(53:11) and Dovid (37:35). This Moshiach-Servant is associated

with the L-rd in many ways: He too is "raised high and lifted up"

(compare 52:13; 6:1); He too is glorious, Jesse's glorious root

(compare 4:2 and 11:10 with 6:3, noticing also the word Shoresh

[root], linking 11:10 and 53:2); He too is the rallying

focal-point of the nations (compare 11:10 to 2:2-4 and see the

one "to whom the obedience of the nations belongs"--Genesis

49:10; see Ezekiel 21:27 [21:32 in the Hebrew Bible; Psalm 18:43;

Isaiah 42:1,4; 49:6); He too bears a divine name and governing

function (9:5-6); He too is Immanuel, (G-d-with-us), the

rightful owner of Israel's land (compare 8:8 and 7:14 to 5:5); He

too, this anointed Moshiach-Servant (11:2; 42:1), is righteous

(see 11:4-5 and 42:21; 51:5). The Moshiach-Servant, through the

Dovidic covenant, witnesses as a light to the Gentiles (9:6) to

those outside the covenant (Isaiah 55:3).

Job standing rejected and forsaken with mockers around him (Job

17:2) reminds the reader of the picture we have of the suffering

Servant of the L-rd in Isaiah 53 or the mocked Davidic King in

Psalm 22 (compare Job 27:4 to Isa. 53:9). In the midst of the

false accusations Job "holds fast to his righteousness" (Job

27:6) and waits on the L-rd to confirm the innocence of his cause

(Job 42:7-8). So the mocked sage who becomes a fool that the

world curses and makes sport of is depicted in Isaiah 53. We have

seen this picture before in that other image, the judge of

Israel, Samson, being made sport of by the Philistines (Judg.

16:25) or in the King of Israel, Dovid the sage, pretending to be

mad before a similar scoffing Philistine audience (I Sm.

21:13-15). When sages like Moshe or Dovid are nearly stoned by

the people (Ex. 17:4; I Sm. 30:6) we see this reemerging picture

of the rejected-yet-vindicated-as-righteous Sage of Israel.

Significantly, the Son of Dovid is depicted as the sage par

excellence in the life of Shlomo in I Kings. Then II Chronicles

intensifies this portrait and gives Messianic prophetic

significance to Dovid's Son as the Moshiach Sage of Israel.

Finally, Isaiah combines the two portraits of the sage found in

Job and Shlomo and depicts the Dovidic Servant of the L-rd as the

mocked and rejected sage-counsellor (9:5-6) filled "with the

spirit of wisdom" (Isa. 11:2) who seems to labor "in vain" but trusts his cause to the L-rd (Isa. 49:4) and, after mockery and rejection (Isa. 53:2-4), is finally vindicated by G-d as righteous (see Isa. 53:11-12).

The Moshiach is the eternal Kohen who sprinkles the nations with a Cosmic Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) sacrifice. (Ps. 110:4; Zechariah 6:11-13; Isaiah 52:15; Lev. 16:14-17).

The Moshiach is the Seh Elohim (the Lamb of G-d) provided from heaven as the sacrifice in order that G-d's people might be passed over and redeemed from divine judgment, as Isaac was and as the nation of Israel was. G-d sent His Word and healed His

people from the plagues of judgment He poured out on the heathen.

G-d saved His people in order that they might make an exodus to

new abundant life in accordance with His gracious covenant

promise in the Moshiach (Gen. 32:8; Ps. 107:30; Isa. 53:5-6,10;

Deut. 7:15; Isaiah 42:1,6-7; 40:3; 42:16; 43:19; 49:5-26).

The words "son" and "child" are very important to Isaiah's

message. His own two sons are given portentous names (7:3;

8:1-3) and the conception of the second son in the womb of his

prophetess-wife is divinely timed. In chs. 7-9, Isaiah refers to

his own son and to Dovid's son, a son he calls "G-d with us" and

"Mighty G-d." Isaiah shows us a Deliverer who can rule the world

(9:5-6), and yet he marvels at this personage being born as a

humble child, just as a little child leads the rest of creation

in the future kingdom--Isaiah 11:6. The future kingdom is

described in passages which include 2:1-4; 4:2-6; 11:6-9; 25:6-8;

35:1-10; 60:1-22. The future king of this glorious kingdom is

described in passages which include 7:1-12:6; 32:1-20;

49:1-57:21; 61:1-11. The Moshiach is the Descendent of the Woman

who will battle that Ancient Serpent, Satan (Gen. 3:15), called

"Leviathan the twisting serpent" in Isa. 27:1.

The secondary, if not primary meaning of the word Ha'Almah in

Isaiah 7:14 is virgin because the same Hebrew word means virgins

in Song of Shlomo 6:8, since the king's female companions were

queens and either concubines or virgins (see Esther 2:13-14,17),

not mere unmarried maidens who may have previously cohabited with

another man--a capital offense in Israel and a disqualification

for the king's harem in the book of Esther. In Esther 2:13-14,17

there are two harems, one for the virgins, and one for the

concubines. Queen Vashti occupied another area, as did Esther

when she became queen. Many older Jewish Bibles admitted this by

translating its plural form as Almot "virgins" in Song of Shl.

6:8. In Isaiah 7:14, the prophet is referring to a "sign" for

the dynasty of Dovid, and the ultimate fulfillment of that

prophecy involves no one other than Yehoshua, G-d's Immanuel,

whose virgin mother was betrothed to a descendent of Ahaz's

Messianic Davidic dynasty--see Hebrews 7:14; Romans 1:3; Matthew

1:1,16; Luke 3:23,31. The legal right to the throne came through

the father--see Babylonian Talmud Baba Bathra 130a on Deut.

21:16. Also, see Ignatius' Epistle to the Ephesians, "Miryam of

the seed of David."

The Branch of the L-rd and of Dovid is called "the L-rd" in Mal.

3:1 and Ps. 110:1, since Adon refers to Hashem in Zechariah 4:14

and 6:5. Therefore, we shouldn't be surprised if the name of G-d is

given to the Moshiach in Isa. 9:5-6. The Hebrew words Moshi'a

and Go'el found in the books of Judges and Ruth point to this

Savior/Redeemer figure, the Moshiach. See Isaiah 49:26. Three

kings serve as foils in Isaiah's depiction of the Moshiach: Ahaz

son of David, Hezekiah son of David (compare 7:4-17 and

27:1-7,21-35), and the Persian King Cyrus, called Moshiach

(45:1), because he saves the Jewish people from the Babylonian

Exile and sends them home to rebuild their land and Beis

Hamikdash. About 734 B.C.E. Rezin King of Damascus (Syria) and

Pekah King of Israel organized a coalition to rebel against

Assyria. When Ahaz refused to join them and they invaded Judah

(7:1), Ahaz appealed directly to Assyria for help, beginning the

process of foreign invading armies and exile that would swallow

his throne in 586 B.C.E. Assyria captured Damascus (732 B.C.E.),

Samaria (722 B.C.E.) and Babylon (defeating Assyria) captured

Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. Isaiah warned Ahaz's son and successor,

Hezekiah about the coming Babylonian captivity (see 39:5-7 and

6:11-12). Isaiah also prophesied about the release from Exile

and the return to the land (48:20f).

For prophecies by Isaiah against the nations, see 13:1-14:23;

21:1-10; 43:14-15; chp. 46-47 (Babylon); 14:28-32 (Philistia see

ch. 20 on Ashdod); ch.15-16 (Moab); 17:1-11 (Damascus); chp.

19-20 (Egypt); 21:11-12 (Edom); 21:13-17 (Arabia); ch. 23 (Tyre);

23:4,12 (Sidon); 10:5-19; 14:24-27; 37:33-35 (Assyria); 18:1-7

(Cush, Nubia south of Egypt);

Isaiah was well aware of Deuteronomy 4:26-27 which says that sin

will cause the people to be "utterly destroyed...and...only a small number of you will remain." Isaiah was also aware of the covenant reprisals in Deuteronomy 28:32-33,36-37,41,45-62.

Therefore, when he begins to prophesy, he sees only a few survivors left after G-d's scourge of judgment is finished (see 1:9; 10:22). Isaiah foresees that Assyria will be G-d's rod of judgment (10:5) against Israel, though later G-d would destroy the Assyrian hordes as He did the oppressive Midianites in Judges 7:22-25 (see Isaiah 9:4; 10:24-27). The fulfillment of these very prophecies, as well as 30:31 and 31:8, about the destruction of Assyria came in 701 B.C.E. (see 37:36-38) when the Assyrian army was supernaturally defeated. Later, the capital of Assyria,

Nineveh, would be destroyed in 612 B.C.E., as Isaiah (31:8-9),

Nahum, and Jonah had predicted.

Isaiah also predicts the Babylonian captivity. (See Isaiah

39:5-7; 14:3-4) It is important to keep the historical facts in

mind: Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon brought down the

Assyrian Empire in 605 B.C.E. at the battle of Carchemish (see

Isaiah 10:9) in the Upper Euphrates in South Turkey, and Cyrus the

king of Persia brought down the Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C.E.,

when Cyrus took the city of Babylon and released the Jewish

people to return to Israel (see Ezra 1:1).

So Isaiah saw both the Assyrians and the Babylonians coming as

G-d's instruments of judgment on the unrepentant Israelites, and

he also foretold the great latter day exodus that would occur

when G-d would bring His people back from Exile and they would

stream into Zion with Messianic and Millennial fulfillment. In

fact, Isaiah foretold an end-time exodus which would eclipse the

Exodus from Egypt. It would be so great he says (Isaiah 43:18)

there will be "no need to think about what was done before." This

"streaming to Zion" theme is a recurring motif in Isaiah,

including the notion that G-d will make a supernatural causeway

(like the highway He made through the Red Sea) for the remnant of

repentant and humbled survivors to return to Him through the

wilderness. (See Isaiah 2:2; 4:5-6; 14:1-2; 27:12-13. See

especially 11:15-16, also ch. 35; 10:25-27; 40:3-11; 43:16-21;

46:3-4; 48:21; 51:10; 52:12; 56:6-8; 60:11-14; 63:9-13).

But Isaiah saw that the remnant would be pathetically few (1:9).

As we shall see in the second half of Isaiah, a remnant of one,

the Suffering Servant of the L-rd, will be sacrificially stricken

to death for the transgressions of the people as a whole (Isaiah

53:8,10). Over and over the recurring theme in Isaiah is that

the cataclysmic fires of judgment continually bring the ultimate

Day of the L-rd near, the Assyrian and Babylonian armies

functioning as divine proxies as the fires of their armies serve

to refine the wicked dross from the remnant (see Isaiah 1:25).

For all the rulers of the world are under the control of the G-d of Israel. The theme of Proverbs 21:1 is seen in Isaiah 37:29 and in the passages about Cyrus. The "nations are but drops in a bucket," but "the King's heart is in the hand of the Lord" and, if invaders are allowed to punish G-d's wayward people, it is G-d's method of refining out that faithless segment of the people who refuse to fear G-d and repent. So, G-d, the refiner, has this smelting process to remove waste products (dross) as he tests the metal of His people's faith by means of foreign military threats (see Isaiah 48:10).

Following each cycle of warning and judgment, there is a hopeful promise of blessing, restoration, and the promise of the coming

of the Moshiach. Notice this judgment-restoration pattern in

relation to all the Messianic prophecies in Isaiah, esp. 1:2;

7:14; 9:6-7 (5-6, Hebrew); 11:1-5,10,12; 16:5; 22:22; 32:1;

33:17; 37:35; 42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12; 55:3; 61:1-2;

63:1-6.

It is important to note that G-d uses military defeat and exile

to show His people that they are estranged from Him. He is "the

Holy One" and their sins have made Him hostile to them and have

placed them under His covenant ours. (Isa. 59:2). But the Good

News of Isaiah is the announcement of release from the exile of

sin (61:1-4) and from hellish divine estrangement through the

coming of the Moshiach, G-d's instrument of reconciliation (see

Isaiah 52:7-53:12). Through Him, those who repent will find

that, though their sins "are scarlet, they may yet be white as

snow (Isaiah 1:18).

See also Isaiah's teaching that hell is eternal torment in Isaiah

66:24; 14:11; 48:22; 50:11; 57:21; 1:31. Cf. also Dan. 12:2;

Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:48; Rev.20: 10.

The nation of Israel as servant (Isa. 41:8; 42:19; 44:1) is

restored from divine estrangement and exile (Isa. 42:1; 49:1;

52:13-53:12) by an individual, the Moshiach, the beautiful

"Branch of the L-rd," "David My Servant" (Isaiah 4:2; 33:17;

37:35; 52:13; 53:11) who restores the nation to a right

relationship to G-d (Isa. 49:5-6; 53:11).

Skeptics think Isaiah could not have foreseen the Exile (but see

5:13,29; 6:12; 27:8) and beyond so clearly (i.e. predicting Cyrus

King of Persia by name (Isaiah 45:3) and therefore postulate 2 or

3 or more other later unnamed prophets who supposedly padded out

the more supernatural parts (i.e. 41:2,25; 44:28-45:5,13; 46:11),

cloaking themselves under Isaiah's name, as they wrote at various

times over 100 years after Isaiah's death. Some liberal scholars

believe "Second Isaiah" wrote chs. 40-55 from Babylon and "Third

Isaiah" wrote chs. 56-66 later still, from Israel after the end

of the Exile some 180 years after the death of Isaiah. Some

liberal scholars think they see the hand of even later "Isaiahs"

in chs. 56-66. But all this speculation does not build faith or

edify, nor is there any more exegetical warrant for these

theories than for the single author assertion, which the Brit

Chadasha Scriptures and Moshiach Yehoshua Himself affirms (see

Mark 7:6). We must remember that the writing prophets of the

Hebrew Bible were not ghost writers. It does not seem credible

that the Jewish people would know the names of the authors of

such tiny books as Obadiah and Yoel (Joel) but not have a clue as

to the identity of the author of Isaiah chapters 40-66, probably

the most magnificent section of prophecy in the entire Bible.

Furthermore, virtually every theme in chapters 40-66 of Isaiah

can be found, at least embryonically, in chapters 1-39, a fact

that makes multiple authorship an improbable hypothesis.

Also the many verbal parallels between chs. 1-39 and chs. 40-66

discredit this liberal theory. King Josiah is predicted by name

in I Kings 13:2 and Moshiach Yehoshua is predicted by name in

Zechariah 6:12 (cf. Ezra 3:8) nearly 300 years and 500 years

respectively before three sons of David were born. Since the last

of these predictions can be proven beyond all doubt, there seems

no excuse to doubt the other predictions or, for that matter,

Isaiah's authorship of the entire book bearing his name.

Isaiah's message is that, even though the nations will stream to

Jerusalem in the end (2:2-3), in the meantime in pride and rebellion both Israel and the nations have exalted themselves against the L-rd, and he will judge them in an awesome display of power which will leave only a few survivors (1:9). Therefore, the inference is, if G-d can "part the sea" for the Exile and the Return, why can he not also use His right arm of power to raise up eternally alive and victorious both the Moshiach and the dead for the Millennium (2:4; 11:6-10; 24:23; 33:24) and the new heavens and the new earth (65:17)?

ISAIAH 7:14

Therefore the L-rd himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name

Immanuel. [This word Ha'almah is translated "virgin" not only in the rabbinically translated Septuagint but in older modern Jewish translations of the same word in Song of Songs 6:8, so there is no good reason not to translate the verse as above.]

YIRMEYAH (JEREMIAH)

The godly king Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign (640 B.C.E.) and forty years old when he was killed (609 B.C.E.).

Around Josiah's 21st year of life, the young prophet Jeremiah began preaching. He was to have many years of preaching ministry, during the following: the reign of the Josiah's 23 year-old son

Jehoahaz (609 B.C.E.) who ruled only three months in Judah and, after being deposed and exiled by Pharaoh Neco, died in Egyptian captivity (Jer. 22:11-12; II Kings 23:30-34); the reign of

Jehoiakim (609 B.C.E.), who was installed as king over Judah at the age of 25 and ruled 11 years; the reign of Jehoiachin (598

B.C.E.), who was installed at age 18 and ruled little more than 3 months before he was taken prisoner to Babylon by King

Nebuchadnezzar; the reign of Zedekiah (597 B.C.E.) who was 21 years old when he began to reign and was blinded by

Nebuchadnezzar shortly before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E.

The evil reigns of these miserable sons of Josiah were prophesied

by Isaiah who said, "I will make boys their princes, and babes

shall rule over them" (Isa. 3:4). Jer. ch. 36 shows Jehoiakim

burning the Bible.

Jeremiah objected to G-d at his call that he was too young to

preach, but G-d silenced him (1:2). G-d appointed him to be a

preacher who would "pluck up and pull down, destroy and

overthrow, build and plant" (1:10; 12:14-17). Jeremiah's

preaching would cause stumbling blocks (6:21), testing and

refining the people (6:27). Fire would come out of his mouth and

destroy kingdoms (see 5:14; 23:29). Just as Elijah said there

would be neither rain nor dew except at Elijah's word (I Kings

17:1), so Judah would be uprooted and taken into Exile and then

(70 years later-- 25:11) Judah would be planted back in Israel

(31:28), but these cataclysmic events would happen only at

Jeremiah's word.

Immediately in Jeremiah's ministry G-d shows him the coming

crisis, represented by a "boiling pot, tilted away from the

north" (1:13). This pot was going to boil over and pour its hot

lava of destruction as foreign soldiers came down on Jerusalem

from the north. This threat from the north (1:14; 4:6; 6:1,22;

10:22; 13:20; 16:15; 25:9,26; 31:8) became concrete in the

persons of King Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian soldiers. G-d is

telling Jeremiah to preach that there is no escape from these

soldiers. The people have broken G-d's Law and now G-d is sending

His divine marshalls to put the people under arrest and take them

off to Babylon to serve a 70 year prison sentence in Exile. Go

peaceably Jeremiah preaches, and you will live. If the nation

humbles itself and waits on the L-rd, the nation will return. But

whoever attempts to resist the divine arrest will be put to

death. They will be like bad figs (24:8), and because of their

disobedience G-d will not give them a heart to know Him (24:7).

This was Jeremiah's hard message, which cost him dearly, and

brought great persecution down on his head. But, ironically,

weak, isolated Jeremiah, the maggid with the dangerous and

wrath-provoking message, is in much safer hands than the

sonorous-voiced false prophets and power wielding political leaders, who stir up violence against Jeremiah as a traitor. For the L-rd promises to protect Jeremiah but to put to death these enemies of his, both Jews and Gentiles, with judgment beginning at the household of G-d (see 1:18-19; 25:8-9,29) and climaxing in the Day of the L-rd (25:33; 46:10). "Flight shall fail the shepherds" (25:35), a prophecy that proved true for fleeing King Zedekiah, the last king of Judah (52:1-11). All the wicked must drink the lethal cup of judgment that is coming (25:28), even ultimately that anti-Moshiach the king of Babylon (Jer. 25:26).

The reason for the coming Babylonian Exile is given in 5:18-19,

the land of Israel was full of elilim (idols). See also 9:12-16;

10:5,18,21; 16:11-13. The sin of Manasseh (15:4; II Kings 21:6),

especially child sacrifice (Jer. 7:30-34) brought great national

disaster of Judah, just as the abortion holocaust will bring

great grief on America. Consequently, G-d's wrath burns against

her, and G-d is going to turn Jerusalem into an abortion and it

will be no place to marry or to bear children (16:3-4).

Jerusalem will be like a rejected prostitute (3:2-3; 4:29-31)

because she has stubbornly rejected the L-rd, her true husband,

and has given herself in spiritual adultery to false g-ds, the

Seals and all the worthless foreign idols that have taken over

her land. Nothing short of the Babylonian exile would cure her of this sin of changing her g-ds (2:11). What is amazing is that the kingdom of Judah does not learn her lesson by seeing the idolatrous northern kingdom of Israel go off (722 B.C.E.) into captivity because of this very sin (3:6-10); Judah has to undergo a similar punishment herself to get cured of idolatry. But, to put it simply, the main fault that brought all this punishment on G-d's people was refusal to listen to the prophetic Word of the Scriptures (25:4-7; 32:33-35; 35:15-17).

Jeremiah did not have a popular message to preach (look at it-- 13:19; also 15:10), and many people opposed him. Who wanted to hear someone prophesy massacre and national desolation (see, for

example 9:22)? But all Jeremiah was preaching was Deuteronomy 28 and its covenant curses (see Jer. 11:2-4; 34:18). Nevertheless, some men from Jeremiah's home town (Anathoth near Jerusalem) were so embarrassed and infuriated by his preaching that they started a conspiracy to kill him (11:8-23). The political leaders were stupid, because they did not inquire of the L-rd (10:21); also the wise, because they had rejected the Word of G-d (8:9). And the rest of the people either scoffed at all preaching (5:12-13) or championed the false prophets who contradicted Jeremiah's message predicting war and judgment. Jer. 14:16 says that people who listen to false prophets will be destroyed with them (so take

heed, you in the cults, or you who love your rabbi or your priest). The false prophets were incompetent to warn against coming disaster because G-d had not sent them (14:14) and they had no knowledge (14:18). These spiritually stupid false shepherds assured the people of peace even while the flames of war were ready to ignite (6:14; 8:11; 23:30-40; 27:9-22; 29:8-19). The human heart is devious above all else and perverse beyond understanding (17:9). Other lying false prophets in Jeremiah are Pashhur the false kohen? (20:1), Hananich the false prophet (28:1-17), Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah (see 29:21-23 which says that a sexually immoral preacher is by definition a false prophet). And look what

happened to Shemaiah of Nehelam who wrote a scathing letter from

the Exile against Jeremiah (29:24-32). False teachers (scribes,

rabbis) nullified the Word of the L-rd by their lying pen with

which they banded down their own traditions (see Jer. 8:8). A

true scribe (like Baruch) does not seek great things for himself

in a

tribulation world that is on the brink of destruction (45:5).

Because of these false political and religious shepherds (23:1-2,

11-22), the situation in the land was beyond remedy. The people

refused to know G-d (9:6). The time of repentance and revival in

Israel had past (8:20); doom and judgment were inevitable on

king, kohen, prophet, and inhabitant of Jerusalem (13:13). But

Jeremiah saw beyond the Exile and the Return and he had in view the Brit Chadasha (31:31-34; 11:10; 22:9) and the coming of the Moshiach (23:5-6; 33:14-18) and the shepherds that G-d would raise up at that time: "I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding (3:15; see also 23:3-4)."

With the ominous look of a weeping undertaker (9:1) called to preside over the funeral and burial (in Exile) of the whole nation, Jeremiah comes on the scene and makes his doleful appearance (see 15:17). Jerusalem and its neighboring towns are under a death sentence (33:5; 34:2,22). Read 16:1-9. Commanded

to celibacy (since what is going to happen to Judah now will make

it no place to raise children), Jeremiah is also instructed by

G-d that his devastatingly sad message will close down wedding

chapels (7:34). He is to shake the dust or the mourner off his

feet (16:5), since deaths en masse will now be divine punishment.

Mourning is futile when death is judgment and is coming like an

epidemic on the entire population. However there will be a

she'erit Yisroel (remnant of Israel), because G-d will not make a

full end of His people (see 4:27; 5:18; 6:9). A wonderful

restoration is prophesied (32:37-41; 33:6-33; 46:27-28). A great

end-time Exodus from the north is predicted in Jer. 16:14-15;

31:8, which is a prophecy that is not exhausted by the Return

from Babylon but must surely also include Soviet Jews returning

from the Soviet Union (due north of Israel) in the greatest

Exodus ever, one that will shortly double the population of

Israel in our own time. The prodigal nation will come home

(31:13--"I will turn their mourning into joy") and will be

ultimately reconciled to G-d and to His Moshiach (33:14-18; cf.

Zech. 6:12; Ezra 3:8 his name is Yehoshua), through individual

moral accountability (31:10-11, 18-20; 29-30) and "one way"

(32:39), the way of the new birth circumcision of the Brit

Chadasha (31:31-34; 4:4; 9:25-26; 32:40; Deut. 30:6).

Because of the pressure that was on him, Jeremiah was tempted to

wallow in self-pity and to speak bitterly. But G-d promises that if he will "utter worthy words" G-d will protect him and make him a "fortified wall of bronze" (15:19-20). But the true prophet must speak G-d's word faithfully (23:28).

We see Jeremiah as a type of the Moshiach (compare Jer. 11:19 to Isa. 53:7). Like that other Messianic type Boaz in Ruth 2:20, Jeremiah is a kinsman-redeemer (32:7), showing that G-d will ultimately redeem his exiled land, showing hope in the midst of bitter tragedy (32:24-25). He prophesied Es-Tzarah (the "time of Jacob's trouble"--30:7) and the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash (7:14; 22:5; 26:4-6) and the Exile and the coming of the Moshiach

who will be "raised up" out of this tribulation (30:9), just as

Yehoshua prophesied the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash and the

Roman Exile and the Second Coming (see Mark 13:1-27). We see

Jeremiah buried in mud but then raised to the right hand of power

(given favor with both King Zedekiah and King Nebuchadnezzar) in

Jer. ch.38. See also 39:11.

Jer. 42:18 shows the folly of relying on the deceptive "help" of

Egypt. Here we see that we must not look at events or people but

listen to the word of the L-rd and rely on Him. When it comes to

Egypt, even after the Exile, some people never learn (44:7-10).

See 44:17-19,25; 7:18 on "the queen of heaven" a Canaanitish

g-ddess of fertility, Ashtoreth (Judges 2:13), a heathenish title

shamefully imposed on Miryam by the Roman Catholic Brit Chadasha

kehillah.

39:8 shows Nehemiah's job now awaits him. See also 52:14.

One disciple of Jeremiah's came over 600 years later. Read Jer.

16 and Romans 11.

Today Jewish people have been restored to their land (30:18) and

are honored in every field of endeavor (30:19).

Saddam Hussein of "Babylon" (modern Iraq) should have believed

30:16: "all who prey on you I will make a prey." Also see 50:24;

51:14,41,44,49,58.

On Jeremiah's preaching against the nations, see the following

chapters: Babylon (chs. 50-51); Philistia (ch. 47); Moab

(ch. 48); Egypt (ch. 46); Edom (49:7-22); Tyre and Sidon (47:4);

Ammon (49:1-6); Kedar and Hazor (49:28-33); Elam (49:34-39).

Historical facts and dates: 640 B.C. King Josiah, an

eight-year-old child, begins his reign. He will only live to be

40 years old and will be killed in battle by the Egyptians, but

during his reign there will be a breath of both revival and

reform.

627 Jeremiah is called of G-d to be a prophet. Ashurbanipal, last

of the great Assyrian rulers, dies. Judah is under tribute to

Assyria whom power was beginning to wane.

626 Nabopolassar begins neo-Babylonian Empire, revolting against

Assyria and beginning his 21-year reign. His son Nebuohadrezzar

would destroy the Jerusalem Beis Hamikdash in 586 B.C. 621

Discovery of the book of the Law in the Beis Hamikdash (Jer.

15:16)

612 Ninevah, the capital of Assyria, is sacked by the Babylonians

and Medes as Nahum predicted.

609 King Josiah is killed at Megiddo by Neco of Egypt who was on

his way to fight to rescue Assyria from Babylon. This is believed

to be the famous site known as Armageddon, where Revelation says

the final battle will take place.

609 Jehoahaz (Shallum) ruled Judah for three months before being

deposed by Neco and taken to Egypt in chains as collateral to

assure high indemnity payments.

609-598 Jehoiakim reigns over Judah as Egyptian vassal enthroned

by Pharaoh Neco. He was an evil king (see Jer. 22:21). 605

is the year of the Battle of the Assyrian city of Carchemish

(the ruins of which are on the Euphrates in what is today Syria

and Turkey) which fell when the Assyrian Empire finally succumbed

in defeat. Nabopolassar sent his son Nebuchadnezzar to defeat the

Assyrian ally Pharaoh Necho and the Egyptians there (the

Egyptians had occupied the city but lost the war--see Jer. 46)

and then Babylonian soldiers entered Israel, taking Daniel etc

hostage (II Kg. 24:1). Jehoiakim abandoned Egyptian suzerainty and became a vassal of Babylon. Because the people of Judah had seen a few temporary victories of the Egyptians, they refused to believe Jeremiah's prophecies about Babylon destroying Judah and this brought persecution on Jeremiah. But Jeremiah trusted in no foreign alliances, especially with Egypt (44:26,27). Later the Pharaoh Hophra did prove useless in protecting Jerusalem from the angry hand of Nebuchadnezzar when he began his siege in January of 588.

604 King Jehoiakim burns the Word of G-d (36:22f) but Jeremiah is inspired to write it again, this time with a judgment upon Jehoiakim (36:24-31).

601 Because of a temporary victory of Egypt against Babylonia, the pro-Egyptian party in Jerusalem persuades Jehoiakim that Judah should side with Egypt again in spite of Jeremiah's warning (Jeremiah 22:13-19). This act of rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar spelled Jehoiakim's downfall, and he received the burial not of an honored king but of a donkey (23:19), for Judah's enemies were armed by Nebuchadnezzar to attack her (II Kings 24:2).

597 Jehoiakim dies. Eighteen-year-old Jehoiachin (Coniah), who only reigned three months, is captured. Nebuchadnezzar captures Jerusalem and deports King Jehoiachin to Babylon with many others, including Ezekiel. Nebuchadnezzar replaces Jehoiachin

with Zedekiah (II Kings 24:17). Zedekiah, a third son of Josiah

to come to the throne, soon after permits nationalistic minded

nobles to imprison Jeremiah.

539 Zedekiah's revolt begins.

586 Nebuchadnezzar again occupies Jerusalem because Zedekiah had

entered into negotiations with Egypt (II Kings 25:1-7).

586 Destruction of Jerusalem. Zedekiah tries to flee but is

captured and taken to Nebuchadnezzar's throne in Riblah (in

modern Syria) and Zedekiah's family is slain and he is blinded

and taken in chains to Babylon where he died (39:6-7). Jeremiah

is released from prison by the Babylonians and given to the care

of Gedaliah.

586 Gedaliah appointed governor of Judah and assassinated.

Jeremiah is taken to Egypt where he predicts the conquest of

Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar (43:8-13), fulfilled 568-567. 585

Jeremiah in Egypt.

Jeremiah was "a man of strife and dissension for all the land"

(15:10), a prophet nailed by the driving, fiery hammer of G-d's

Word, a lonely, weeping prophet of vision who stood out against

the shallow optimism and political expediency that would lull his

nation into the inevitable divine judgment of war and national

disaster. But like Mashiach Yehoshua, Jeremiah was without honor

in his own hometown (11:21), which was three miles northeast of

Jerusalem, a village called Anathoth. He belonged to the tribe of

Benjamin.

What does G-d require of you? To feed on his Book until you get

'My words into your mouth'--then preach them. We want the L-rd's

ministries to grow numerically and we want to do all we can to

see new people disciplined, but we need to remember that Jeremiah's

message was so strident (judgment, defeat, impending death and

disaster) that only a small number of people were friendly with

him. Ahikam hid Jeremiah when he would otherwise probably have

been killed after his third Beis Hamikdash sermon (Jer. 26:24)

Nahum and Zephaniah and Habakkuk were contemporary preachers.

Hilkiah was the g-dly kohen who discovered the book of the Law

during the early part of Jeremiah's ministry, and Huldah was the

prophetess who helped to spark Josiah's reforms because she

prophesied disaster would overtake his nation (II Kings 22:16; II

Chr 35:1-25). But most people seemed to shy away from Jeremiah.

After Josiah died, real persecution was in store for this lonely

prophet of G-d.

A key theme verse is 1:10. G-d has the nations in his hands like

a potter (18:5-10) molding clay pottery and when they displease

him, he can squeeze them into destruction like he did Nazi

Germany. In the same way G-d has uprooted and then replanted the

nation of Israel (31:27). Here is his promise: Stay in G-d's will

and under his discipline and he "will build you and not
overthrow, plant you and not uproot." (42:10) But here is his
warning: "I am going to overthrow what I have built, and uproot
what I have planted--this applies to the whole land. And do you
expect great things for yourself? Don't expect them. For I am
going to bring disaster upon all flesh--declares the Lord--but I
will at least grant you your life in all the places where you may
go (45:4-5). See 1:13-16; 2:19; 4:5f where Jeremiah also preaches
disaster.

The maggid (preacher) is not ignorant of what G-d is doing in the
world, and as a co-worker with G-d, the maggid's (preacher's)
words are actually G-d's hammers and planting forks.

Jeremiah foresees G-d's nemesis, Babylon, coming (just as

Yochanan in Revelation saw eschatological Babylon coming). And he

sees that since Babylon is G-d's marshall, the only thing for the

Jews to do is to put their hands up and submit to the arrest of

exile; otherwise, they will be fighting G-d and will be

destroyed. His message sounded like treason to unregenerate ears,

and most people would not listen to him though he preached for 23

years. (See 25:3-14 for a sample of his main message.) How would

you like to preach 21:8-10? The seventy year exile was an awesome

punishment, a virtual life imprisonment away from one's homeland.

Today, Jeremiah would also be rejected in this world and he would

probably also find himself in prison or assassinated. He would

probably shout "Howl, you shepherds, and yell...for the day of

your slaughter draws near...the peaceful meadows will be wiped

out by the fierce wrath of G-d (25:34,37)." Howl, King Fahd of

Saudia Arabia with your personal yacht the size of an oceanliner!

Howl Qadhdhafi of Libya with your women bodyguards and

international murder unlimited! Howl, Mayor of New York, you

Herod who would make it a crime not to hire perverts as

money-changers in the Beis Hamikdash! You will not go unpunished!

"For I am summoning the sword against all the inhabitants of the

earth" (Jeremiah 25:29). Jeremiah preached to the g-dless that

you have rejected the Word of the L-rd, so your wisdom amounts to

nothing! (8:9)

(But can you say all this with tears? See 8:19-23.)

Unregenerate men are repulsed by a Jeremiah. Unregenerate men are

not interested in what G-d is doing, only what man is doing

(humanism). See 1:16. What does the unregenerate do? See 2:13. If

the unregenerate loves a G-d, he loves a strange one. He says,

"It's no use" and joins the vast millions involved in the cults.

The Jews in Egypt told Jeremiah, "I can't give up my cult because

I'm so blessed by it." (chapter 44) The unregenerate follows the

willfulness of his own evil heart. The unregenerate person is

described in 4:22. Even if he is wealthy and cultured, he is

still a low-life rebel (5:4-5). He is persistent in rebellion,

clings to deceit, and refuses to repent (8:5).

Unregenerates, whether Jewish or Gentile, don't believe the Word

of G-d when it says that a holocaust is coming. They didn't

believe the Babylonians were coming, they didn't believe the

Nazis were coming, they didn't believe Moses (Dt. 18, 28) so how

could they believe Moshiach Yehoshua? (Jer. 5:12-14) And Gentile

Christians become proud and arrogant, forgetting that the root

supports them, not they the root.

A heart circumcision is needed, opening the heart and cutting

away the thickness. But the irony is that those who think they
are spiritual Jews are not and those who ARE spiritual Jews don't
know they are. Moshiach Yehoshua is the living Torah who cuts the
Brit Chadasha (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and only he can cut us with the
new creation circumcision. A hellish reprisal awaits all those
who refuse to submit to his circumcision and believe on Moshiach
Yehoshua Moshiach and him hanged on the Aitz (11:6-8). 34:18
shows us what the sacrifice of G-d (climaxing at Moshiach's Aitz)
means: repent or this will happen to you!

G-d threatens to withdraw the rain (as he is doing in Africa)
because the people are like fowlers lying in wait, setting up a
trap to catch people: the pimps, the hookers, the bar-hopping

nymphomaniacs, the porno store owners, the lottery ticket

sellers, the drunken mothers on welfare, the rock-crazed teeny

boppers (see 5:26). And the liberal rabbis, the liberal kohens

and liberal ministers, the cultists--they all preach an easy soft

set of lies and the people who hear them love it (5:31).

Then there is the problem of clericalism. A prosperous

professional clergy casts revels in its gnostic knowledge and

cult of adoration and won't do street preaching and be spit upon

by irate Jewish people. (9:22-23)

Do you realize that you are being raised up as G-d's watchmen?

(6:17) You are to watch and pray until you have a word from the

L-rd. You are to stand in the council of the L-rd, and see and

hear his Word, and then you are to proclaim it and obey it

(23:18,22) and turn his people back from their wicked ways. A

true maggid (preacher) has a true burden from the L-rd; it is the

application of a text to the discerned needs of the people he is

addressing. A maggid (preacher) can pray and get a word from the

L-rd for the people (42:4).

You are to tell people, "Don't trust your religion. Don't say,

"I'm Catholic! I'm Jewish!" (7:3) "I attended mass! I went to

High Holy Day Services! (7:8-10). And don't say a word about 'The

Queen of Heaven!' (7:18). In Jeremiah's third Beis Hamikdash

speech (Jer.26) he warned that G-d was going to make the Beis

Hamikdash like Shiloh. From the time of Joshua until the time of

Eli, Shiloh had been the place of Jewish worship. But remember

Eli and his wicked sons (I Sam. 2:12) who ministered there?

Consequently, the L-rd allowed the Philistines to destroy Shiloh

and Jeremiah is pointing to another army coming to do the same

thing to Jerusalem if the people do not repent.

Jeremiah is an example of a prophet who is a virtual refugee from

the existing authorities, both religious and political. We learn

a lot about the ministry from him. 22:15-16 speaks about the

sacrificial lifestyle of a man of G-d. He is faithful and

fearless for the sake of the flock. Hasn't G-d given you a little

flock? Do you let them stray and scatter? Get a partner and pray

about your little flock, pray about specific people and then go

together and minister to that person together. If you can be

trusted with one, G-d will add to your flock.

Who will shepherd the Israelis? (See 23:1-4)

Jeremiah did prophetic "street theatre" mimes, interpreted

dramatic actions and he was not afraid of the "flesh" of his

hearers (20:10-11; 1:18). Note the acted parable of the soiled

loincloth in chapter 13 and the interpreted mime with the yoke in

chapter 27. Also see 51:63-64. (This one was interrupted by a

mime meddler, a false prophet.) Jeremiah 26:2 says that G-d

commanded him to stand out-of-doors and preach in the open air.

He could do it because he knew he was sent (26:15). Has G-d sent you to New York?

Why can't we have a street dance company (with musicians)? See 30:19; 31:4; 31:13.

Jeremiah 30:7 calls the tribulation the "time of Jacob's trouble", but see 31:7-9. During Hitler's Holocaust the ships started arriving in Israel. G-d was providing a haven of refuge even during such tribulation.

The Israel of G-d is eternal (31:36); we have been grafted in and so also will the remnant of all peoples and the last days remnant of the Jewish people. The Brit Chadasha kehillah is a

miraculous Jewish-Gentile fellowship. However, the Jewish nation

is an eschatologically significant people group--see 46:28.

Notable verses: Jeremiah predicts who will defeat Babylon

51:11,28. The Mashiach will be called the L-rd (Jer. 23:5-6)

Notable themes: The reversal of the imprisoned prophet who is

obedient to G-d and freed while the disobedient people go off in

chains to exile is a key picture here. Thinking of Jeremiah in

the dungeon of King Zedekiah must have comforted Shliach Sha'ul

in the dungeon of Nero in Rome.

Zedekiah had to be physically blinded to realize he was

spiritually blind, as was also true of Saul.

We see what Nietzsche, Sartre, Lenin, etc., would like to do to

the Bible when King Jehoiakim cuts it up and burns it without
fear in chapter 36.

The Brit Chadasha kehillah needs kiruv outreach associations,
shlichut agencies, and other Brit Chadasha kehillah
organizations. An example of such an organization is found in
chapter 35. It is a "second decision" organization, requiring
commitment to a certain "mandate" and membership involves one in
committed activity beyond normal religious life. The prophet
Jeremiah and Baruch constitute a sodality as well. A sodality is
a grouping together based on common purpose or interest. Rav
Sha'ul's company in Acts 13:13 is another example.

The local Brit Chadasha kehillah sometimes does not see this structure in the Bible and tries to control and destroy the autonomy and legitimacy of these sodalities, which also sometimes abuse their autonomy and fall into disrepute because they do not realize that they are servants of the local Brit Chadasha kehillah and not beyond its correction.

Sodality members who have leaders with no ordination by a larger body are following a potential independent rebel who is unaccountable to anyone. This is how Jim Jones and all manner of cults and scandalous failures begin and is not Scriptural.

Get a prayer partner and start doing visitation outreach together with the people you pray for. Follow Jeremiah's model and prepare

to go on the street and do either a brief sermon or sketch or
song.

Notice the very important prophesy that the exile would last for

70 years (Jer. 25:11-12). Daniel refers to this prophecy in Dn.9

Jeremiah's real estate inheritance activities are his prophetic

verification that the word of G-d regarding the restoration of

Israel would come true (see 37:12; 29:10).

Jer. 21:8 says that there are two ways, the Derech HaChayim, the

way of life, the way of covenant blessing, and the Derech

Hamavet, the way of death, the way of the covenant curse. The

fool chooses the way of death. He knows about the rental covenant

he signed with the Landlord, but he says, "I don't have to read

it, or study the fine print, I can forget about the rent due

notices, I can lay around in filth and create a fire hazard, I

can have noisy parties all night long and walk the dog without

going outside (I once had a neighbor who did that--but he was

very clean, he always insisted on hosing down the floor once a

day, no matter what the tenant below him screamed as his

apartment was flooded)." He never worried about the rent

covenant. No covenant curses will ever cross my threshold! he

said, as he hosed down his dogs and his living room floor. But

G-d's Word shows us something different. The wrath of the Lamb,

the covenant reprisals of the Lamb, those curses that crossed the

threshold to destroy the Egyptians, will not pass over you unless
you come out from among them and stand under the blood mark of
the Lamb. (If you stand under your own opinion or your own whim
or the way that seems right to you, you will be destroyed.) And
there's no way to touch both the two doorposts and then the
lintel with blood, as it says in Ex. 12:7 without forming a
bloody tav: not a Ku Klux Klan cross: Not a Gentile anti-Semitic
cross: a Jewish cross commanded by the G-d of Israel through
Moses. A mezuzah full of good works and religion on the threshold
is Jewish but not Jewish enough. The bloody tav of Moses is
necessary. Those without it can expect none of the diseases of

Egypt to pass them by. All over the world the curse of lust and
uncleanness and AIDS is crawling across millions of thresholds.

Following close behind crawls the curse of racism and poverty and
drugs and homelessness and crime and murder and prostitution and
abortion and genocide and war and ecological disaster and,
ultimately, Armageddon and "the End" itself. Do not boast about
tomorrow. Do not say, "When the overwhelming scourge passes
through" it will not touch you (Is. 28:18).

When we celebrate Pesach, we need to also celebrate Jeremiah's
Brit Chadasha and our redemption from the plagues of Egypt by the
Moshiach-Lamb who took our plagues.

Notice that G-d gave Jeremiah a very important and shocking, even

enraging, message and then did not tell him to share it with

Baruch and a few kindly souls in a quiet, sympathetic, Brit

Chadasha kehillah audience. No, G-d commanded Jeremiah to go

into the "lion's den" and preach in the Beis Hamikdash area

itself where a riot was inevitable (read very, very carefully

Jer. 26:2). This is our model of what preaching is, not a Brit

Chadasha kehillah ritual performed tamely between the offering

and the benediction for the benefit of a few religious folk, but

a dangerous, life-or-death confrontation ordered by G-d at a

particular place where G-d's enemies are given one final warning

before G-d's judgment disastrously falls upon them. A street

preacher in front of a Roman Catholic cathedral to irate

Catholics as they come out of Mass is closer to what Jeremiah was

doing when he preached than what most American clerics

(especially those who are wealthy and liberal) do when they

preach, particularly those whose pulpits are privileged spaces

for pampered, smooth-talking Pharisees.

If we have any illusions that humanism is right when it says that

human nature is essentially good, Jer. 42:1-43:7 should convince

us otherwise. The heart of man is desperately wicked--who can

know it? (Jer. 17:9) If Man were good, surely these "good" people

would say, "Jeremiah, we know you are a true prophet. We've seen

all that you prophesied in the last nearly 40 years come true. As

you predicted, Judah is now in exile in Babylon. Therefore, we

will listen to G-d and respect and obey you as G-d's prophet."

Instead read Jer. 43:2 to find out what they did say. Here we

see that man needs a supernatural miracle in his heart to bring

him to the point where he can know G-d and stop rebelling against

G-d's word (Lam. 1:18).

JEREMIAH 23:5-6

5

Behold, the days come, saith the L-rd, that I will raise unto

Dovid a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper and

shall execute judgement and justice in the earth.

6

In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely:

and this is the name whereby he shall be called, The L-rd Our

Righteousness.

JEREMIAH 31:31-34

31

Behold (Look). the time is coming, saith the L-rd, that I will

make a Brit Chadasha with the house of Israel, and with the house

of Judah:

32

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in

the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the 2

land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was a

husband unto them, saith the L-rd:

33

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of

Israel; After those days (after that time), saith the L-rd, I

will put my torah within them (in their thoughts and emotions)

and write it in their hearts; and will be their G-d, and they

shall be my people.

34

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every

man his brother, saying. Know the L-rd: for they shall all know

me. from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the

L-rd: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember

their sin no more.

[Notice this passage is talking about an intimate, inward knowledge of G-d, of a sense of relationship, even fellowship with G-d, as well as the assurance of forgiveness of sins; in short, regeneration. Jeremiah foresaw Brit Chadasha Jews and he understood that the Word of G-d would somehow effect the miracle of the Brit Chadasha "in their hearts." Have you become a Brit Chadasha Jew? You can. Yehoshua the Word of G-d (sharper than any sword, able to circumcise and consecrate the most heathen heart) says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any one hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in to him, and dine in devekut with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20)]

EKHAH (LAMENTATIONS)

Lam. 1:21; 2:21f speak of two phases of the Day of the L-rd, the

first already past in the fall of Jerusalem and the dissolution

of the people of Judah, and a second in store for the gloating

enemies of G-d's people. Therefore those who speak of "Israel's

Final Holocaust" had better be reminded that it will also be a

holocaust for all the nations of the world. Jeremiah is the

traditional author of Lamentations in the closing days of Judah's

conflict with Babylon around 586, the date of Jerusalem's final

capitulation to Nebuchadnezzar.

The ninth of Ab (August) is the Jewish commemoration of this disaster, and on that day this scroll is read in the synagogue following the evening services. The other minor fast days associated in some way with this event are the Tenth of Tevet (marking the beginning of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem), the Seventeenth of Tammuz (which marks the first breach in the walls of Jerusalem during the Babylonian siege), and the Fast of Gedaliah (commemorating his assassination after he was appointed Governor of the Jewish people by Nebuchadnezzar).

In this book, Jerusalem is personified and she weeps bitterly

(1:2) because Judah has gone into the Galut (Exile)--see 1:3-5.

The prodigal city remembers the wonderful days of old when her

festivals brought rejoicing multitudes to her Beis Hamikdash

sanctuary. Now those days are gone, and she is mocked and

despised, and enemies have invaded her sanctuary (1:10). Like

the Moshiach, hanged on the aitz, the city is naked and

humiliated and left to be seen by passers-by. "Is it nothing to

you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow

like my sorrow which was brought upon me, which the L-rd

inflicted on the day of his fierce anger" (Lam. 1:12). See Lam.

2:22.

Jerusalem remembers her false prophets with their false and

misleading visions (2:14) and her prophets who obtain no vision
from the L-rd (2:9) and she remembers her own rebellion against
G-d's word (1:18), and sees that all this desolation of altar and
sanctuary, all this abolition of festival and Shabbos, is just
punishment from the L-rd Himself. The Gentile enemies gloat over
her when they see Jerusalem's destruction in the Babylonian
Exile, but she calls on G-d to bring on the Day of the L-rd when
all the Gentile nations of the world will become as Jerusalem is
(1:21). Judgment only begins at the household of G-d. See 3:64
and Zech.1:15; 2:8.

A terrible picture of gehinnom is seen in 3:7-8, for here we view
a people (pre-Exilic Jerusalem) who refused to know G-d and we

see them frozen in the gehinnom-like divine judgment. We are reminded again of the pierced Moshiach surrounded by mockers when we read 3:14. See also 3:30, 52-57.

The burden of proof today is still on Judah's religious leaders as to whether or not they rebel against G-d's word (1:18), since it was their sins which caused the destruction of Jerusalem (4:13-16). They were as unreliable as that ally Egypt, a nation that could not save" (4:17). Jewish religious leaders must prove that they rightly interpret the word of G-d, because desolate Jerusalem is still a rebuke and a challenge against them.

Note for street ministry: homelessness is mentioned in 3:19.

Jerusalem's survivors are homeless after G-d's judgment falls on them. But see the song of hope in 3:22-23. We see that to be thus humbled is good (3:27-29). There is hope in 3:31-32. If we don't grow bitter toward G-d but instead test and examine our ways and return to the L-rd, then there is indeed good in being humbled by the L-rd (3:39-40).

The hope of Israel's ultimate return to G-d is stated in 4:22 and 5:21. This is still the great hope of all Biblically defined believers.

LAMENTATIONS 5:12

Princes are strung up by their hands; elders are shown no respect.

YECHEZKEL (EZEKIEL)

Ezekiel was a poet and dramatist that G-d raised up to confront

the Jewish people with the ominous threat of His holy wrath in

the form of symbolic pantomimes (4; 5; 12:1-7; 24:1-14) acted in

accordance with intricate stage directions provided by the Divine

Director Himself. Ezekiel did his prophetic "turns" and his

eerie dumb show tableaux "before the eyes" of the Jewish people

with the feverish seriousness of an actor who had seen G-d

mounting the stage of history with imminent, awesome, desolating

judgment.

G-d was fed up with sinners who answered the truth of his prophets only with hostility and hate (Jeremiah 5:13; 6:10; 15:10; Amos 5:10) and who listened even to Ezekiel more out of esthetic appreciation for his artistry than from an attitude of spiritual conviction (Ezekiel 33:30-33). Therefore, at the snap of G-d's finger, out of nowhere, the Babylonian armies were suddenly poised at the gates of Jerusalem, just as the terrible divine (merkaVA, chariot) suddenly hovered over the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem (11:23), ready to strike and to "destroy the city" (43:3).

With perfect mobility, G-d's throne chariot (arrayed with wings,

feet, and wheels) showed G-d's judgment in its sovereign freedom and kaleidoscopic power ready to intervene quickly at any time or place. And this overwhelming vision of G-d (3:15) seized Ezekiel with such force that he was snatched up between heaven and earth (8:3) and was inspired and spiritually fortified to preach with audacious boldness to "a contrary and stubborn" house, the rebellious sons of Israel. For the Word of the L-rd was with Ezekiel and G-d's strong hand was upon him (his name means "G-d makes hard") to make him harder than his hardest and most fearful opponents. Ezekiel was lifted up and taken away by that divine indignation (3:14), that righteous anger against sin (see also Jeremiah 6:11; 15:17) that is so profound it will take great

public risks and endure every kind of suffering in order to

confront and provoke obstinate mankind with G-d's holy

ultimatums. His call was to be a reprover, an Ish Moshi'ach

(3:26) who must not be afraid to speak out to his own hurt and

warn both the wicked and the once-righteous backslider, both

those without and within, as a Tsofeh (a watchman, a sentinel) to

the house of Israel.

To play this role, Ezekiel would have to live out a painful

scenario of real-life suffering. Just as G-d cast Hosea as a

maggid (preacher) with a prostitute-wife in order that the

prophet could feel G-d's pain and communicate G-d's heart to the

Jewish people, so a scroll of mourning and lamentation was scripted for Ezekiel (2:9-10) so that he too might experience the sufferings of G-d. Part of being a watchman is to wind up being the victim of a divine misunderstanding, a holy fracas where one generally finishes by being disliked, where one may even be considered crazy (Meshuga--Hosea 9:7-8) and where one constantly provokes hostility (false prophets don't tend to make people angry--Luke 6:26).

And Ezekiel's preaching exacts a terrible price on the maggid (preacher), because his private experiences (like the death of his beloved spouse--chapter 24) carry an omen of warning for the spectator in the pew (24:19-27). For Ezekiel is an actor who must

not give a mere performance but must be made by personal

tragedies to actually know the pain in G-d's heart. And in these

things Ezekiel the maggid (preacher) seems to be saying to the

layman listening, "You'll never know what G-d has allowed me to

go through in order that I can preach His Word to you, sir; on

the other hand, you'd better know or else how will you know that

He also requires you to repent?"

As Shliach Sha'ul says, Ezekiel had to "fill up, in this frail

frame of mine, whatever may still be lacking in respect of

Moshiach's afflictions as yet to be endured for the sake of his

body" (Col. 1:24). G-d literally closed and opened Ezekiel's

mouth either to speak or to be silent by means of a strange kind

of vocal paralysis or aphasia, a kind of "thorn in the flesh"

with which G-d afflicted the prophet's speech (Ezekiel 3:26;

24:27; 33:22). And just as the kohen in the tabernacle had to

literally eat the sin offering and bear the iniquity (undergo

ritually the punishment) of the congregation (Lev. 10:17), so

Ezekiel had to "eat" a script calling for everything from

ingesting revolting stage props (see chapter 4) to enduring

protracted and spectacular marathons (see Ezekiel 4:5f) of

bearing Israel's iniquity (in a way that pointed toward the

Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53). So Ezekiel was an artist for

Israel.

Who is Gog Eretz Hamagog This is important to know, because if he

is the leader of Russia, then this means that, although the

Jewish people in Russia may have hopes for religious freedom and

social rights today, this will suddenly change and the Soviet

Jews will have to deal with a Soviet "Pharaoh" in the last days

who will persecute them and invade the land of Israel.

Also, if Gog is the last days Soviet "Pharaoh", then Russian is

the language of Gog and this means that Russian should be learned

by many Messianic believers in order to preach the Scriptures of

Ezekiel to Soviet Jews during this period of the final Exodus at

the end of history (see Jer. 16:14-15).

In Genesis 10:2 we read B'nei Yefet Gomer Oomagog "sons of YEH-feht (Japheth) (were) GOH-mer oo-mah-GOHG." Non-Biblical sources place Gomer north of the Black Sea in what was once the Soviet Union. Beth Togarmah is present day Armenia, which is also a region in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Turkey and NW Iran. Magog's land included the Caucasus mountains, located in the SW part of the former Soviet Union between the Black and the Caspian Seas. This is confirmed by the fact that both Jerome and Josephus identifies with the ancient Scythian barbarian tribes associated with the area North and East of the Black and Caspian Seas, the ancient land of Scythia, now part of what was once the former Soviet Union but is now Russia and other states.

The identity of (Meshech and Tubal)--see Ezek. 38:2--is generally identified with Phrygia and Cappadocia in what is today the modern nation bordering the Black Sea to the south, that is Turkey.

What Ezekiel is saying here in Ezek. 38 is that, from the prophet's point of view, from the uttermost parts of the earth there will come an attack on Israel. Put (Poot) is Libya and Cush (Coosh) is the classical Ethiopia of Africa (not modern Ethiopia but rather the region south of Egypt: Nubia or North Sudan.)

The Sudan is Africa's largest country. In 1990 it faced its third

famine in 6 years. Its Islamic fundamentalist government of that year, led by General al-Bashir, blockaded relief agencies from getting food to its own starving people because of political considerations, putting millions of people at risk of death by starvation. Al-Bashir supports the policies of Saddam Hussein of Iraq and Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi of Libya. Iraq, having signed a peace treaty with Iran in 1990, brings into focus the prophecy of Ezekiel 38:5 (4), which speaks about Libya (Put), Persia (Iran), and Sudan (Cush) as allies against Israel. Micah 5:5 shows that the Enemy of Israel is Iraq (Assyria/Babylonia). These countries in Ezekiel 38:5 will be the allies of Gog and Ezekiel tells us that this invasion will take place in the far distant future,

after Israel is back in the land. Israel will be prosperous when this happen. (see 38:8, 11, 12, 14). Gog will be mustered "after many days...in the future years" (38:8).

The destruction of hostile Gentile powers was predicted by earlier prophets like Zephaniah, who said, "I the L-rd have decided to gather nations and assemble kingdoms, in order to pour my wrath on them, all my burning anger; the whole earth will be consumed by the fire of my jealousy" (Zephaniah 3:8). Jeremiah sees disaster coming out of the north in Jer. 4:6 (though in that passage, he may be referring to the Scythians or the Babylonians or both). Isaiah saw the Assyrian threat coming from that

direction in Isaiah 10:5-32 and 31:8f but Isaiah also saw an end-time exodus which will eclipse the Exodus from Egypt. It will be so great he says (Isaiah 43:18) "no need to think about what was done before." Ezekiel 39:27 is a key verse: "When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies. I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations." Here Ezekiel seems to be saying very specifically that when the L-rd gathers the Russian Jews (and other Jewish people scattered throughout the Diaspora) from their enemies, he will deal with Enemy Number One, the Russian Pharaoh and G-d will show Himself holy by destroying him with the plagues of a latter day New Exodus (Ezekiel 38:22) when

he and his Iranian and Libyan and other allies invade Israel.

Look at what the Bible says about the New Exodus. Isaiah 40:3 and

other prophecies are important. Just as Yochanan Hamatbil

prepared a way in the wilderness for Yehoshua to lead out a New

Exodus from sin and death at Jerusalem in which the tribulation

divine judgment plagues of 70 C.E. Roman fire fell on the "Egypt"

Jerusalem (Rev. 11.8) of the Caiaphas/Herod "Pharoah" of His day,

so another desert highway will be raised up in the last days to

"let My people go" (Isaiah 40:3). This is the divinely created

Red Sea "highway" by which the L-rd will lead the Russian Jews

and other Jews of the Diaspora in a New Exodus where He will

"resurrect" them from the "tomb" of Exile and from the unclean "grave" of "Egypt" in the sight of the wondering eyes of the whole world. Isaiah recalls the wonders of Moses' Exodus (Isaiah 10:25-27) as an "earnest" of how G-d will protect His returning exiles in the last days and "carry" them to their "promised" new life (Exodus 19:4; Isaiah 46:3-4; 63:9). G-d has a breath-taking exodus in store for His people that will totally eclipse the exodus of Moses (Jer. 16:14-15). Certainly once poor, anti-Semitically persecuted, Russian Jews without social rights or religious freedom in Russia, should indeed feel something of G-d's "carrying" grace when they suddenly find themselves being outfitted with free apartments and free education and all kinds

of Jewish philanthropic help as they make their exodus from

Russia.

This exodus trek is described as a "desert" (Jer. 31:2) but a

desert which is a place of favor and divine care and miraculous

provision (Micah 7:14-15). The miracles G-d did in the first

Exodus become type and also guarantee of the miracles coming in

the final eschatological exodus (see Isaiah 11:15-16; 43:16-21;

51:10; 63:11-13; 48:21; 52:12). The people will return to

Jerusalem and G-d will make the city his holy Mishkan (dwelling,

tabernacle) of protection and refuge for persecuted and

world-weary exiles (Isaiah 4:5-6). Even the "desert" approaches

to the Promised Land will blossom with miraculous blessing
because there will be an end-time rebirth of the lost ideal of
the early Israel who followed her Divine Husband faithfully, the
time when she was a child in Egypt (Hosea 11:1-9), when she was a
virgin bride of the L-rd and had not yet "known" other foreign
g-ds awaiting her in Canaan, and the marriage covenant rites will
be removed (see this theme in Hosea 2:14-23; Jeremiah 2:2-3).

The culmination of all this is that Israel will be saved because
she follows the L-rd as she did at first, she "follows the Lamb
wherever he goes" (Rev. 14:4), even into the desert, even into
the wilderness (Rev. 12:6).

But Ezekiel 39:27 says, "When I have brought them back from the

nations and have gathered them from the countries of their

enemies..." This refers to the Dispersion as does Luke 21:24:

"They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to

all the nations." Amos said the same thing, Israel will go into

the (gah-LOOT), Exile, Amos 7:11). The Jews will go into the

galut (Jer. 13:19), because Exile is one of the curses of

disobedience to the Covenant (Deut. 28:36) and is one of the

covenant judgments or reprisals for idolatry and unbelief in the

prophesied Moshiach (Deut. 18:19; Genesis 49:10; I Kgs 14:15;

Jer. 7:25-34). (On the Dispersion see Lev. 26:33; Neh 1:8;

Esther 3:8; Psalm 44:11; Ezek. 6:8; 36:19; Yochanan 7:35; James

1:1.) Please pray about these Scriptures until you see the prophetic significance of the 100's of thousands of Soviet Jewish settlers in the Brighton Beach area of Brooklyn, New York City, and in Israel and understand the need to preach these Scriptures to them so that they will break the bonds of sin and death and the bondage of atheism and materialism and turn away from evil and believe in the Moshiach and come to new promised life in Him as they return to G-d.

Notice chapter 5:5 where G-d gives Ezekiel the prophetic explanation of the pantomime, "This is Jerusalem." Notice the horror of the holocaust that is coming, worse than the Nazi holocaust in one aspect at least, the cannibalism of 5:10, one of

the covenant reprisals of Lv. 26:29 and Dt. 28:54. Notice the

reason given: "because you have defiled my Mikdash (sanctuary)"

with idolatry.

So in chapters 5 and 6 we see "street theater" outreach using

impressive props and stage business (notice the sharp sword and

the hair cutting), using symbolic food, dramatic action (being

tied up) and extended performances. That is, Ezekiel goes on a

390 day marathon of performances and then a 40 day marathon, so

that the people will have time to ponder and repent, as in an

extended revival where the minister extends his services at the

congregation.

Notice that anti-Semitism is not just a terrible Gentile sin (for which Gentiles will be judged and punished); it is also a covenant reprisal for not heeding the Word of G-d (5:14-15).

Therefore, when Jewish people complain bitterly about anti-Semitism, we must pray and ask G-d for wisdom as to how we can lovingly and gently explain both of these aspects, the Gentile culpability and also the Jewish guilt (believe it or not, there are also Jewish anti-Semites! E.g., Karl Marx, etc.).

Notice that the Judaism of Ezekiel is apocalyptic and highly eschatological, not merely ritual oriented and legalistic. 7:2 speaks of the "end" kaitz (i.e. the end of time, especially from the aspect of unveiling the secret of the course of history). The

imminent coming of the Babylonian Exile is a sign of the imminent

end of the world. This is the key to Ezekiel's emphasis

regarding the coming of the Moshiach. I Cor. 7:30 picks up this

eschatological strain found in Ezekiel 7:12.

Notice there will be a "famine of hearing the word of the L-rd"

(Amos 8:11) and the people will turn in vain to the prophets,

priests and elders (Z'kanim Kohanim N'vi'im) to hear the word of

the L-rd. Notice how Ezekiel prophesies against the rabbis

(scribes) or spiritual leaders of his day in 8:11-12 and 34:10.

In chapter 8 there is an ecstatic levitation and rapture so that

Ezekiel sees the secret sin (not secret to G-d) of the spiritual

leaders that is the direct cause of the Exile holocaust

approaching where the land will be "filled with violence" (8:17).

It is the "idol of jealousy" (Samel Hakin'ah 8:5) that reminds us

of the later HaSkikoot M'shomaim (the abomination causing

desolation) of Daniel 11:31) of Antiochus Epiphanes and the

prophecies of Yehoshua. The former was probably a statue of

Asherah, the Canaanite goddess of fertility. The latter was a

statue of Zeus or Jupiter. Both caused the Temple's destruction

and the tribulation of Exile.

Chapter 9 shows G-d beginning to vacate the Temple, his glory

moving to the door, and the 7 guardian angels serving as

Ezekiel's guides who also interpret the situation. Only those

marked with a tav which in ancient times looked like a cross (x

or +) will be saved (see 9:4). This same mark was on the

doorposts at Pesach, because the top and the sides of the door

frame were dabbed with the blood of the Pesach Lamb. Those so

marked are marked for salvation. Notice the judgment begins

(9:6) with the household of G-d and with the leaders (I Peter

4:17; James 3:1).

Chapter 9:7 says "they went out and began killing throughout the

city," meaning that this is an apocalyptic vision that shows the

Babylonian killing coming is really a divine judgment of G-d

being carried out.

In chapter 10 the glory departs from the Temple, first to the

threshold of the Temple (10:4) and then to the East Gate (10:19).

This is to anticipate the destruction coming, since G-d will not

dwell with an unclean people and his protection He withdraws from

the wicked "rabble" who hypocritically attempt to dwell in His

Holy House, playing the charades of empty ceremonialism. We see

from what the angels are doing with the fire (10:2) that the

fires to be set by the Babylonian armies are really from G-d.

As in 5:11 where G-d withdraws His favor, chapter 11 shows that

G-d is the true Mikdash (sanctuary) of the elect (11:16) and now

his protective presence is travelling from the Jerusalem Temple

to the remnant in the Babylonian captivity. Yehoshua points to

his body as a sanctuary (Yochanan 2:19-21) because he alone is
the acceptable covenant, sacrifice and priest.

Chapter 11:19 begins Ezekiel's teaching on the need for personal
regeneration. See 36:26. This entails both a spiritual and a
moral transformation.

Chapter 12:3 begins again a series of symbolic pantomimes such as
we saw in chapters 4 and 5. This time the L-rd gives Ezekiel his
dramatic action in one word: "Pack!" G-d is going to make him an
ominous portent again (notice the word mofet in 12:6 and remember
what it means in Zechariah 3:8). Ezekiel is instructed by his
"Director" to perform this play "during the daytime, while they

watch," also "in the evening, while they are watching" (12:4).

We should gather from this that G-d wants prophetic street

theater during rush hour periods when many people are passing by.

We discover that Ezekiel is portraying Zedekiah's attempt to dig

through the wall of Jerusalem and escape Nebuchadnezzar, which

resulted in his being blinded (12:6,13; II Kings 25:4-7). Notice

how the L-rd serves as an acting coach in 12:18. In the second

half of this chapter we discover that our G-d is One who listens

and intends to answer back the false prophets and the false

optimism of the scoffers speaking among His people (see

12:22-28). On the words of the hecklers who challenge the Bible,

see Mic. 2:6; Amos 2:12, 7:12-13; Hos. 9:7; Isa. 30:10; Jer.

11:21; 20:7-10.

Chapter 13:2 is against preachers who preach "out of their

imagination" instead of under the leading of the Ruach Hakodesh,

who "follow their own spirit and have seen nothing" from G-d.

"The L-rd has not sent them" (13:6). They have not been shepherds

among the people. They have been mere predators, part of the

condemned general landscape, mere "jackals (wild dogs) among the

ruins (13:4)." A true prophet is supposed to preach repentance

and warn of judgment as a watchman who can see not only the

agents of G-d's wrath approaching, but also can sight the soft

places in a nation's wall of morality that sinners are creating

for the battering ram of G-d's judgment to pierce through

(22:30). G-d is looking for intercessors who will stand with

Moses in the breach between the people and G-d's wrath (Psalm

106:23). These intercessor/street preachers will wrestle with G-d

and buy time and get a message to go and turn sinners back from

certain destruction.

The names of the false prophets will not be found in the Sefer

HaCayim (Book of Life, Psalm 69:29), a point emphasized by saying

they will not "enter the land of Israel" which symbolizes

receiving Chayai Olam (eternal life: Daniel 12:2), according to

Ezekiel 13:9. What a terrible price to pay for not preaching the

true Good News B'sorah. Shalom V'ain Shalom ("Peace when there

is no peace.")

It is the temptation of the preacher not to rebuke sin or get

people angry or lose financial support. This is accomplished, so

the temptation goes, by saying "Peace" when there is no peace

between a G-d of righteous judgment and sinners (see Micah. 3:5).

But woe to us if we preach not the Besuras HaGeulah." A movement

with secret sin and religious apathy led by lukewarm (and indoor)

preachers is a flimsy structure with only a little whitewash to

hide that it is going to come down when all its rottenness will

be exposed (13:10-16). Will the false prophets who ensnar the

lives of my people preserve their own lives? (13:18) By

preaching for a few filthy shekels of money, they have profaned

G-d, polluted his work, dishonored Him, treated Him as common

(all these ideas are in the idea of Chillul Hashem--see 13:19).

The false preachers (the liberal clergymen and rabbis) "lie to my

people, who listen to lies." False prophets can be killers

(13:19). They have an evil "grasp" on the gullible who listen to

them, and G-d has to save people from these false shepherd

enemies (13:23).

The Besuras HaGeulah is to Israel first but also it is to the Ger

(foreigner, resident alien, Gentile). See Ezekiel 14:7.

Notice that the "Moonies" are as guilty as "Rev". Moon (14:10).

The implication of Ezekiel 15:7 is that the Holocaust proves that

there is a G-d, not the opposite. (Many modern Jewish philosophers use the Holocaust to make a case for atheism.) In chapter 16, Jerusalem is G-d's adulterous queen who has gone whoring after the nations and their idols. Therefore she will be raped by them in the approaching Exile. Ezekiel is expounding on the Hosea theme of the adulterous wife. Ezekiel alludes to the Assyrian deportation of the Northern tribes of Israel that climaxed with the destruction of the capital of the Northern Kingdom, Samaria, in 722 B.C.E. Ezekiel is saying that Jerusalem will have a similar fate befall her as befell Samaria, the capital of the last King of Israel, Hoshea, when the Assyrians

invaded Samaria as agents of divine judgment. But notice that

Ezekiel ends on a hopeful note, there there will be a New

Jerusalem with a Brit Olam (an eternal covenant 16:60). In

chapter 23, Ezekiel will continue prophesying this allegory

having Samaria, the prostitute raped by Assyria in 722 B.C.E. and

Jerusalem her prostitute sister raped by Babylonia 586 B.C.E. in

Ezekiel's day. In both cases G-d is a cuckold with an adulterous

wife (23:35).

Do not overlook the Messianic prophecy in 17:22 about Tzemach

Tzaddik (Righteous Branch), a code-word for Moshiach. In Isaiah

11:1; 53:2; Zechariah 3:8 and Jeremiah 23:5-6, we see this tender

shoot, this sprig that will shoot up from the stump of David, the

Messiah, to whom the nations belong" (Genesis 49:10), and in whom

all the nations ("birds of every kind" 17:23) nest and find

shelter. This Messianic Age will be the time when G-d

inaugurates the Great Reversal, and the exalted are humbled and

the humbled are exalted (17:24; 21:26).

In chapter 18, we find the doctrine of individual responsibility

for sin, that each man dies for his own sins, not those of his

father. G-d is a fair judge, and doesn't gloat (18:23) but

judges according to this righteous principle: the soul who sins

is the one who will die ("hanefesh hachotet hi tamut"--18:20).

Cheap grace and antinomian unconditional election are denounced

in 18:24. Notice that the wicked religious people will perish

because of apostasy or unfaithfulness (ma'al) [18:24; see also II

Thessalonians 2:3).

Notice how Ezekiel tells the Jewish people to repent and get

regenerated (18:30-31). Shoo-voo! Repent! Get a lev chadash

(new heart) and a ruach chadasha (new spirit, a regenerated

spirit, a spiritual new birth). Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach was

surprised that a man could be a leading rabbi in Israel and not

know about this doctrine (see Yochanan 3:3,10). In chapter 20

the ziknei Yisrael come to inquire of Hashem through Ezekiel the

navi, and he rehearses the whole history of G-d's dealings with

His people according to his Holy Brit (Covenant), how He searched out the most beautiful land on earth for them but purged out the rebels, forbidding them to enter, bringing them into the "bond of the covenant" masoret habit (20:37, bond of covenant reprisal). Then, after they have done their time in the Golus as punishment for their idolatry, G-d will bring them back, chastened and humbled, in a New Exodus (20:39-44).

In chapter 21 the Jewish people are shown that Babylon is actually G-d's sword of judgment and that G-d "will hand you over to brutal men, men skilled in destruction" (21:31).

Jerusalem will become a gigantic cooking pot when the king of Babylonia begins his siege in chapter 24 and the people will be

cooked. But the survivors in Babylon are not to mourn the death of their loved ones back in Jerusalem, because their destruction is G-d's righteous judgment. The survivors must act toward them as Ezekiel is instructed to act as the survivor of his wife's death. In his testimony, especially regarding his personal tragedy, Ezekiel will be a "sign" to the other survivors in this matter. Even his thorn in the flesh of vocal paralysis or aphasia will come and go according to the divine timing of momentous events in Jerusalem (24:2, 27 and 33:21-22).

In chapters 25-32 we see all the judgments G-d will also bring on the nations including Libya (Put, 30:5) and Lebanon (31:15

fulfilled in our own day).

G-d's promise to the Jewish people to possess the land is not

unconditional (33:23-29), because only the man who obeys G-d's

commandments (20:11) shall live by them (in the land) [ya'aseh

otam haAdam vachai bahem] and therefore Israel today, without

faith in the Moshiach and obedience to the Messianic prophecies,

can expect Great Tribulation. But see Amos 9:15.

On the 614th commandment by Moses (Dt. 10:16) necessary to live a

Torah observant life-style, see the Brit Milah regeneration of

the heart needed to love G-d (Dt. 30:6) and to escape the world

(Rom. 2:29; Rev. 2:9) in order that one not be an enemy of G-d

[Jer. 9:25-26).

Like Zechariah (see Zch. 3:8) and Isaiah (Isaiah 37:35), Ezekiel interprets the word Avdi ("My Servant") found in Isaiah 53 as a Messianic Title. In Ezekiel 34:25 "My Servant" the Messiah is promised along with a Brit Shalom (a covenant of peace"--Ezek. 34:25). Ezekiel is of course familiar with Jeremiah's prophecy about the Brit Chadasha found in Jer. 31:31-34 as well as the prophecy of Isaiah about the peace that "My Servant" the Moshiach will bring (Isaiah 53:5). In Ezekiel chapter 34 Ezekiel seems to be alluding to these previous prophecies.

The prophets' preached the Word of G-d in continuity with previous prophecies and also in continuity with the foundational

prophecies of Moses. When G-d tells Ezekiel that he must preach

"His Words" (Ezekiel 2:7), the primary reference is to the

Besuras HaGeulah according to Moshe Rabbeinu.

The Besuras HaGeulah according to Moses is found in Dt. 30:6 and

10:16, which commands that everyone be regenerated, using the

expression "circumcision (brit milah) of the lev (heart)."

Ezekiel preaches about this in Ezek 44:7,9; 11:19; 18:31; 36:26.

If one submits in repentant obedience by faith to this spiritual

brit milah, one is overtaken by all the blessings of Deuteronomy

28:1-14 (productivity, plenty, invincibility, providential care,

divine undergirding, fellowship with G-d, security from enemies,

vocaitonal success, posterity, prosperity, freedom from debt, and blessings from heaven, as though G-d's rain (promised to the faithful) were watering the tree of eternal life in the paradise described in Genesis 3, and a foretaste of heaven may be given even in this life to those who obey G-d's Word and get regenerated and heed the Bible through careful study and adherence to the faith. Such will be on top and not on the bottom because G-d will exalt them and His blessing will overtake them.

When one thinks of the Beis Hamikdash, it must be remembered that there was more than one Temple constructed on the same site, Mount Moriah, where Abraham brought his son Isaac to be

sacrificed (Genesis 22). It was also on this site that David saw

the Angel of the Lord and the vicarious "plague" coming on his

Messianic household (see Isaiah 53:8 "for the transgression of my

people the stroke of plague was on him." The Messianic Davidic

House must be struck down in order to save the people from plague

(I Chr. 21:17) David received this revelation in relation to an

altar he was divinely ordered to build on the threshing floor he

purchased from Araunah the Jebusite. As we read in I Chr.

21:1-22:1, it was here that the first Temple would be built,

Solomon's Temple, around 960 B.C.E. Solomon's Temple was

demolished by the Babylonian army of King Nebuchadnezzar and not

rebuilt until 516 B.C.E. when the Jewish people returned from the
Babylonian Exile. This "Second Temple" was profaned by Antiochus
Epiphanes in 168 B.C.E. but left unharmed by Pompey the Roman
general in 63 B.C. when he captured Jerusalem. However, King
Herod the Great totally refurbished and expanded this "Second
Temple" starting in 20 B.C.E. It was open 10 years later,
totally finished in 64 C.E. and burned by the Roman General Titus
in 70 C.E.

When we think of the Beis Hamikdash, we generally think of
Herod's Temple located in the Northeast corner of Jerusalem and
overlooking the Kedron Valley lying between the Temple and the
Mount of Olives. If you looked at Herod's Temple from an aerial

view you would see four long walls forming a rectangle which encloses a compound with a large open level space. You would get the impression of a lavish walled city, with, however, only one residence--G-d's--for the Temple itself is the only house within the walled "city." The Temple sits with its front door facing east surrounded by empty courtyard and compound walls. However, lest anyone believe that the Jewish G-d could rule through some King Messiah other than Herod, Herod's architectural plans provided his troops with the Fortress Antonia ominously overlooking the compound wall from the northwest corner. The southeast corner of the compound wall was known as the "pinnacle"

of the Temple because its 500 ft. tower dominated the Kidron Valley. This surrounding wall protected the sanctity of the Temple compound and was made up of beautiful column-lined walkways. 268 columns, thirty-five feet high, bordered part of the courtyard along the eastern compound wall. From that shady spot called Solomon's "Porch," the early believers had a magnificent view of the Temple as they met daily for open air services (Acts 2:46).

There are two words for Temple in Greek, nao's, meaning the sacred building itself, and (iero'n, the whole sacred precinct.

Only the kohanim could enter the nao's. In I Cor. 3:17, Rav

Sha'ul says that all believers in the Moshiach are the nao's of

Hashem and in II Thes. 2:4, Sha'ul says that the Anti-Moshiach

will usurp G-d's "seat" of authority and worship in the nao's of

G-d.

The sanctuary of the Beis Hamikdash itself was made up of three

chambers: the vestibule or ulam (oo-LAHM) at the entrance, the

main room or nave called hekhal (hey-KHAL) where the kohanim had

access, and the debir (duh-VEER) or inner sanctum called the Holy

of Holies, where only the Kohen Gadol had access and only on one

day of the Year, Yom Kippur. The nave contained the menorah, the

small golden altar of incense in front of the inaccessible third

room, and teh enigmatic bread of the presence (I Kings 7:48).

The inner sanctum contained the ark of the covenant. Outside the front door of the Temple was the altar of the burnt offering where the priests and the Levites attended to the sacrifices.

The Jewish men could approach the altar but could not proceed beyond the court of Israel. The Jewish women could not even approach this far; they had to stay back in the Court of Women.

And Gentiles could not approach even as far as Jewish women; in fact, a Gentile had to stay out in the vast surrounding courtyard called the Court of the Gentiles, and he or she would be put to death if any attempt was made to enter the gates of the walled inner court protecting the Temple, the altar, the Court of Israel and the Court of the Women.

Chapter 34 is primarily referring to political shepherds or leaders, but there is a definite application to spiritual leaders as well. This chapter teaches the principle that privilege entails responsibility. To whom much is given, much is required. Those who greedily pursue the rights and blessings associated with their leadership offices but neglect the responsibilities will hear this terrifying announcement from the L-rd: "I am against the shepherds and shall demand fromt hem an account of My flock" (34:10). This threat has the ominous ring of Deuteronomy 18:19, "I Myself shall call that person to account." This means that G-d will hold these shepherds responsible and bring them

under divine judgment. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry G-d, but that is what will happen to the rapacious, self-serving shepherds who forget that it is G-d's flock and He guards it jealously. Because these kings despise the congregational leader responsibilities for the people submitted under their royal office, G-d will have to replace them with the kingdom's true congregational leader/shepherd, the Moshiach (34:23-25). This same theme is touched on in Jeremiah 22:22 and 23:4. See also Acts 20:18-35 and Hebrews 13:17.

Many aspire to be spiritual leaders because they see glory in the limelight of the pulpit, or because they like the idea of being a preacher and not having to do secular employment (though many

preachers are employed with tent-making professions).

Nevertheless, having to earn one's living working in the

rancorous atmosphere of unregenerates is not easy, and many

aspire to be preachers because they naively assume that preachers

always escape secular employment. (Did Amos? Did Sha'ul?)

However, many who aspire to the privileges of preaching are not

willing to shoulder the preacher's congregational leader

responsibilities (things like visitation, follow-up, and

dangerous door-to-door work and street preaching) or make the

necessary sacrifices. Before a preacher can be entrusted with

the shepherding office, he must be trained and tested first and

then show himself approved.

Ezekiel 34:4 says, "You have not restored the weak." How can one

do this unless he knows how to teach and preach the great

doctrines of the Bible? General revelation versus special

revelation; the inspiration, authority, and inerrancy of

Scripture; the attributes, qualities and aspects of G-d; creation

vis-a-vis evolution; providence; election; predestination; the

nature of man, sin and the Savior, atonement; the person and work

of the Ruach Hakodesh, salvation; the nature, role, government,

ordinances, and unity of the people of G-d; and eschatology--

these are some of the great doctrines of the Word of G-d given to

strengthen the weak, who would otherwise be in danger of being

whirled into confusion by faddish gusts of teaching from ignorant but cunning religious merchandisers (Eph. 4:14). Not many should aspire to be morim (teachers), especially if there is an unwillingness to study and show oneself approved (Jam. 3:1; II Tim. 2:15) as a disciple with a firm hold on the true doctrine (Titus 1:9). The super-spiritual person who sniffs at ministerial preparation and attempts to launch into full-time ministry without adequate training wants the privileges without the responsibilities of the ministry. Like a doctor who skips medical school, such a person should not expect to have a long and successful professional practice. The preacher who knows little

about the great doctrines of the Bible will lack substance in his preaching and teaching with which to feed, always with a word in season, the flock, and to feed them with a healthy diet from the Word of G-d.

Ezekiel 34:4 says, "You have not tended the sick or bandaged the injured." A properly trained minister should have some proficiency in Biblically counseling and exhorting the troubled young person, the bereaved, the addicted, the engaged couple, the person with family or marriage problems, the person in need of healing from mental illness, the demonized person, the hospitalized individual, the sexually deviant, the homeless, the aged, the poor, the unemployed. Of course no one person can do

all of this service. This is why the gift of administration is given through a local body of believers, with the different members exercising their gifts and callings corporately to serve the needy for the glory of Hashem.

The impulsive, independent-minded person who dashes off to "serve G-d" in full-time ministry without learning practical

congregational leader theology is making a grave mistake. The

Shluchim were equipped with over three years of on-the-job

training and supervised experience with Moshiach Yehoshua before

their ministerial internship was completed, and even then the

L-rd did not send them out alone. Many isolated, lazy,

undisciplined mystics, puffed up with visions and stubborn with
conceit, wander off to serve G-d" without accountability or
ministerial recognition and wind up becoming counselees rather
than counselors, so great are their errors and so damaging is the
effect of their ministry on other people.

Ezekiel 34:4 says, "You have not recovered the straggler or
searched for the lost." Many assume that, because they have
prayed the sinner's prayer with a few people, they know all there
is to know about outreach. No need for them (they think!) to
study the history of "awakenings" and "revivals" or various
outreach movements in two thousand years of Brit Chadasha
kehillah History. No need to learn lessons from the lives of the

great pioneers, the Wesleys and Jonathan Edwards's of the past.

But how men and women of G-d have been seized by the Word is

important to know. The revelation they received from the

Scriptures and how the Word of G-d used them to affect their

generation is important to study. We need great tutors, not only

from our own day, but also from across the centuries and, as they

teach us through their books, we also will be able to pray and to

minister as they did, in the power of the Ruach Hakodesh. He

promises to give us a new heart and a new spirit and a new life

if we will read the Bible and follow the Word of G-d

(11:19-20). On regeneration, see 36:25f; 18:31; 47:5,12 also. See

Messianic prophecies 17:22; 21:27; 34:23-24; 37:24; 48:35 (since

the L-rd is the Beis Hamikdash and the bringer of the river of

life in chs 40-48 and the bringer of the final covenant in 16:60;

34:25f; 37:26).

At first, Ezek. 40-48 seems to be giving us straight-forward

architectural plans for the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash.

However, when we get to Ez. 47, the waters of life flowing out

from beneath G-d's throne (43:7) are no ordinary waters that one

could find in any stream (47:5 says that it is a "river that

could not be crossed!"), which leads us to suspect that this Beis

Hamikdash is no ordinary human structure that could be built by

human hands, but a picture of the Beis Hamikdash of coming

millennial glory in our Moshiach.

EZEKIEL 36:26-28

26

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put

within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your

flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

27

And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my

statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them.

28

And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and

ye shall be my people, and I will be your G-d.

(The One G-d of Israel has already told us he wants to put his

living Word in us. (Jeremiah 31:33); now he tells us he wants to
put his Ruach Hakodesh in us. If we harden our heart and refuse
him, we are left with a stony heart; if we receive the new heart
and the new spirit, if we receive by faith his living Word and
his Spirit, what is this but Chayyei Olam (Eternal Life)!

DANIEL

Daniel was a Jewish prophet in what is today southern Iraq in the
ancient city of Babylon. G-d gave him visions to interpret so
that he could see from the Exile to the end of time. He went into
exile almost 30 years before the main wave followed him later at

the time of the destruction of the Jerusalem Beis Hamikdash.

Along with three other youths, Daniel was trained as a court

aide. G-d rewarded Daniel for the way he dedicated himself to G-d

in what he ate and how he lived. G-d gave him wisdom to see the

Moshiach's coming kingdom. See Dn. 2:44, "The G-d of heaven will

set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its

sovereignty be left to another people." This is the Kingdom of

the coming Deliverer, the Moshiach, who is also glimpsed in the

fiery furnace.

A type of highly symbolic Jewish writing found in both the Old

and Brit Chadasha Scriptures is generally called apocalyptic

literature (Apokalepsis meaning "revelation"). The following sections of Scripture should be studied to perceive different aspects of the apocalyptic literary pattern: the book of Daniel; the entire book of Revelation; Mt.24; Mark 13; and Luke 21. This type of literature contains some or all of the these elements: enigmatic dreams needing divine interpretation or visions with angelic tour guide-interpreters, dualism where the world is divided into two camps, either G-d's or Satan's allies, a sense of history under divine sovereign control and moving toward an imminent catastrophic end ushering in the new holy age, extensive and complex symbolism including bizarre beasts, mysterious numbers, and ominous portents, all with the underlying view that

G-d's purposes are actually at work in world history and that

Moshiach's Kingdom is coming in ultimate victory.

The conservative interpretation of Daniel is that Daniel himself

authored this book in the second half of the sixth century B.C.

around 530 (when he would have been about ninety years old, if he

were born ca. 620 B.C.E.) There is no conclusive linguistic or

historical argument to prove otherwise, and the manuscripts found

at Qumran in the Dead Sea Scrolls indicate conclusively that no

canonical material from the Tanakh was authored later than the

Persian period (450-330 B.C.E.), undermining the older liberal

view that Daniel was written about 165 B.C.E. by an unknown

author. Moshiach Yehoshua attests that Daniel the prophet wrote

this book (Mt. 24:15).

Some scholars propose that "Darius" (the Mede) is a throne name

of Cyrus (the Persian king who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.E.)

and translate Dn. 6:28 "Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius,

even (that is) the reign of Cyrus the Persian." This translation

is possible. Compare I Chr. 5:26 Et' Ru'ach Pul Melech-V'et

Ru'ach Pilnesser Melech Ashoor with Dn. 6:28. But Gleason Archer

favors the hypothesis that Darius the Mede (Dn. 5:30-31) may well

have been the throne name of Gubaru, the known governor of

Babylon, whose reign would be understood as simultaneous with

that of Cyrus in Dn. 6:28 (history does not record how old Gubaru

was, so we cannot correlate his age with Dn. 5:31).

The whole of Biblical eschatology (the study of the last things)

is affected by one's interpretation of one verse in Daniel, that

is, Daniel 9:27. Of particular importance is how one construes

the ambiguous antecedent of the pronoun "he" in the clause, "he

will confirm a covenant with many for one week." Is the "he"

Moshiach or Anti-Moshiach? Some scholars argue on one side, and

some on the other, and many scholars make their case also germane

to the question of whether the rapture will come before or after

the Tribulation.

Tangentially, as far as this question is concerned, the rapture

debate is largely settled by the two witnesses in Rev. ch.11.

First of all, two witnesses are the "minyon" of the minimal

constituency of a local kehillah of Moshiach (Matthew 18:20) in

the Brit Chadasha. Moshiach Yehoshua sent his disciples out in

two's. At critical junctures, there were always two remnant

witnesses: Aaron and Moses at the beginning of the Exodus, Joshua

and Caleb entering the Promised Land from Egypt, Zerubbabel and

Joshua the Kohen returning to the Promised Land from the Exile,

Yochanan and Shliach Kefa at the empty tomb, Shliach Sha'ul and

Barnabus on the first journey of Moshiach's shlichut. As in a

court of law or in historiography (principles of

historical research), "let everything be established at the mouth

of two witnesses" (Deuteronomy 19:15; I Timothy 5:19; Mat.

18:16). If the two witnesses constitute an apocalyptic picture of

the universal Brit Chadasha kehillah being raptured in Revelation

ch. 11, then the rapture is public, not secret (see Rev. 11:12;

1:7) and, if one includes a nuclear holocaust in the Tribulation,

the rapture is in that limited sense pre-tribulational, for the

text plainly says that the rapture of the two witnesses takes

place before the destruction of those "who destroy the earth"

(Rev. 11:18; see also II Shimon Kefa 3:7; Zech. 14:12; Zeph. 1:2)

However, returning now to Daniel 9:27, it is not as clear as

some believe that, according to this verse, Anti-Moshiach must

conclude a seven-year covenant with the Jewish people. The text says, "He will confirm a covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall make sacrifice and offering cease; and on a wing (kenaf) will be a desolating abomination: even until the End, even one being decreed (by G-d), overwhelms the desolator (that is, the Anti-Moshiach)." Popular Dispensational scholars like John F. Walvoord use this text in an Armageddon countdown which they believe begins with the founding of Israel as a modern nation in 1948. The scenario goes something like this: a leader of a 10-nation confederacy of Mediterranean and European powers (the Anti-Moshiach) will impose a seven-year

peace treaty protecting Israel. For three and a half years, the Anti-Moshiach will consolidate world power. Meanwhile, the U.S.S.R. (which is Magog of Ezek. 38) will attack Israel but be supernaturally defeated. Then the new world dictator, claiming to be G-d, will break the treaty (Dn. 9:27) and unleash the Great Tribulation, a time of terrible persecution. Most Dispensationalists put the rapture before this point (some at the beginning of the seven-year period, others at the mid-point of the seven-year period) because they make a distinction between Israel and the Brit Chadasha kehillah that is so radical that these teachers have the two groups meeting Moshiach at different times, the Brit Chadasha kehillah in a secret rapture, Israel

publically at the end of the battle of Armageddon. At any rate,
after the plagues and earthquakes and epidemics and famines and
other terrors are poured out on the wicked world by the L-rd,
there is world (nuclear) war that climaxes near the Israeli town
of Megiddo with the result that three-quarters of the world's
population is destroyed. The return of the Moshiach occurs,
Israel is rescued, the wicked are punished, the Millennium reign
of Moshiach begins from Jerusalem and continues for a thousand
years, then the wicked are resurrected and thrown into hell, and
the new eternal state of existence begins with the new heavens
and the new earth.

But returning to Dn. 9:27, when the Bible is ambiguous, the translation should be ambiguous. Otherwise, to render an ambiguous passage by means of an unambiguous translation is to add to the Bible the opinions and traditions of men (Mark 7:9).

G-d warned Jeremiah that He Himself would make the sacrifices cease (Jer. 7:14). Moreover, Biblical theology tells us that G-d and His Moshiach are the first cause of everything, even the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash (the Scriptures reject a dualism where Satan or his Beast could be a prime-mover co-equal with G-d), even if Satan and his Beast may be secondary causes (notice Dn. 11:31). Also, the ministry of the Moshiach was 3 and 1/2 years in length, at which time he prepared the body of his

sinless Beis Hamikdash to replace the Beis Hamikdash of Herod,

the veil of which was torn making it obsolete at the moment of

Moshiach's death when the once-for-all divinely acceptable

sacrifice was offered in indestructible heikhal, the Moshiach's

body. This means that after his death on the Aitz, there is three

and a half years of the same still awaiting his body, the Brit

Chadasha kehillah, before the Second Coming. This period is

called the Great Tribulation. Tribulation, (Acts 14:22 I Thes.

3:3), not the wrath of G-d (I Thes. 5:9) is appointed for the

Brit Chadasha kehillah. This Tribulation period is called the "42

months" or the "1,260 days" in passages like Revelation 11:1-2

and 13:5. It is bad exegesis not to make a distinction between

the "wrath of G-d" and the "Tribulation" (the wrath of

Anti-Moshiach in Dn. 8:18 is not the wrath of G-d) just as it is

bad translation to remove the ambiguity in Dn. 9:27, where the

verse may contain an allusion to the Moshiach's "many" in Isaiah

53:11-12. There is one particular verse on the side of those who

say that the "he" in "he will confirm a covenant with many for

one 'seven' is not Moshiach (Dn. 9:25-26) but the

Anti-Moshiach (the ruler in "the troops/people of the ruler" of

Dn. 9:26). This verse is Dn. 8:11, "Even against the Prince of

the host (i.e. G-d) it acted arrogantly; it took the regular

burnt offering away from Him and overthrew the place of His

Sanctuary," a passage referring to Antiochus Epiphanes who

prefigures Anti-Moshiach. See also Dn. 11:31, a reference to the

pagan G-d Zeus Olympius, set up in 168 B.C.E. by Antiochus

Epiphanes and prefiguring the Anti-Moshiach's final sacrilege.

See also Dn. 12:11. If the covenant is confirmed by the "ruler"

in the "troops/people of the ruler" of Dn.9:26, then this

covenant is also referred to in I Maccabees 1:11.

In either view just described, the Bias HaMoshiach (the Parousia)

is imminent (i.e. it can happen anytime), because we do not know

where at any particular time we are in the three and a half year

period before the end. No man knows the day or the hour. Also, as

we well know in a push-button nuclear age, Armageddon and the apocalyptic End could happen at anytime. This is important because Dn. 12:7 says that the Great Tribulation (called the time of Jacob's trouble-- Jer. 30:7; see also Mt. 24:21) will be for three and a half years, and "when the power of G-d's holy people has been finally broken, all them things will be completed."

II Thes. 2:4 could also be apocalyptic picture language since the same word naos is used of the Brit Chadasha kehillah in I Cor.

3:16. That is, Hitler did not have to goose-step into a little

building in Jerusalem to qualify as the Anti-Moshiach for the

first half of the 20th century, and neither will the final

Anti-Moshiach (whose coming like the Moshiach's is also

imminent). So neither will the final "Hitler" need the Jerusalem

Beis Hamikdash rebuilt in order to usurp G-d's "seat" and so

fulfill II Thes. 2:4 as the final Anti-Moshiach.

Those who want to make a sharp distinction between the Moshiach's

coming for his saints (I Thes. 4:16-18) and with his saints (Jude

14-15, see notes in GREEK section) are hampered by the fact that

kedoshim can mean either earthly or heavenly "holy ones," i.e.

either saints (Dn. 8:24) or angels (see Ps. 89:5,7). All this

forces each of us to exercise humility in teaching eschatology.

It does seem that the Anitchrist will persecute the saints for

three and a half years (Dn. 7:21, 25 cf. 4:16).

If the decree mentioned in Dan. 9:25 took place in 457 B.C.E.

(Ezra 7:12-26) then the first 7 heptads (49 years) run from 457

to 408, within which time the rebuilding of the Jerusalem walls,

streets etc was completed. Then 62 heptads ($7 \times 62 = 434$ years)

later brings us to C.E. 26 because $434 - 408 = 26$ (actually C.E. 27

because we gained one year passing from 1 B.C.E. to C.E. 1, since

there is no year zero in between). This would take us to the time

of the coming of the Moshiach, and it would be after this time of

62 heptads, but while the second Beis Hamikdash was still

standing (a narrow corridor of time from C.E. 27 to C.E. 70) in

which the Moshiach must come and be killed in order to fulfill

this prophecy of Daniel 9:25-27. Moshiach Yehoshua did it, and

Zechariah predicted that the Moshiach's name would indeed be

Moshiach Yehoshua (Zch. 6:12; Ezra 3:8), just as Isaiah

predicted the Moshiach (called "David" or "the son of David" in

various Scriptures) would die and rise from the grave (II Kings

19:34; Isaiah 4:2; 11:1-4; 53:2,8-12). For more regarding Daniel,

the reader is referred to Gleason Archer's commentary on Daniel

in Frank E. Gaebel's The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Volume

7, Zondervan Publishers, 1985.

Daniel teaches how to remain steadfast during times of

oppression, in the face of pressure to apostatize or to

compromise one's faith, even if it means having to exercise civil

disobedience against some anti-Moshiach law (Dn. 3:28). The

Moshiach who is with us to the end of the age (Mt. 28:20) will be

with us in the fiery furnace or in the lion's den, if we will

remain faithful to G-d. The Son of Man may be served as G-d but

not idols. See Dn 3:18 and 7:13-14 where the same Aramaic verb is

used for serve (G-d)" or "pay reverence to deity" as in serving

G-d. The word is p'lach with Nebuchadnezzar's

boanthropy, Daniel prophesies that the pride of the Beast (Dn.

4:16) of Babylon will be brought low (Dn. 4:37), his seed will be

cut off (Dn. 5:30 --Belshazzar was the "son" of

Nebuchadnezzar in the sense of "successor in office"), and the

handwriting on the wall will be seen that G-d's judgment cannot

be escaped and that the days of any anti-Moshiach kingdom arm

numbered (Dn. 5:26). The purpose of humbling Nebuchadnezzar is to

teach him that until G-d's sovereignty is acknowledged, man is

bestially stupid (Dn. 4:34-35); on the other hand, when the

L-rd's sovereignty is acknowledged, men's reason returns to him

(Dn. 4:36). We know from historical sources such as I Maccabees

and the writings of Josephus a great deal about another madman

named Antiochus Epiphanes who learned Nebuchadnezzar's lesson the

hard way.

Daniel teaches that history is going somewhere, and that G-d has

history under control. Daniel shows the movements in history of

major kingdoms or empires. The Babylonian empire of Dn. 2:38 is

depicted as the gold portion of an idolatrous statue in ch.2 and

as a lion in ch. 7. The Medo-Persian empire of Dn. 8:20 is

depicted as the silver portion of a statue in ch.2 and as that of

a bear in ch. 7 and as a ram in ch. 8. The Greek empire (the

male goat of 8:21) is the Greco-Macedonian Empire of Alexander

the Great which is indicated by the bronze part of the statue in

Daniel ch. 2 and a leopard in ch. 7. The iron/clay portion of the

statue of Daniel 2 and the beast with iron teeth in ch. 7

symbolize the Roman empire. The Moshiach's Kingdom is seen in the

supernatural stone in Dn. chp. 2 and in the Son of Man in the

clouds at G-d's judgment court in heaven in ch.7. The fate of

Anti-Moshiach (important because of his anti-G-d kingdom) is

stated in Dn 7:11,26; 11:45.

Study the word "kingdom" which is a key word in the book,

occurring well over 50 times, and which contreats the kingdoms of

this world with the eternal Messianic Kingdom of G-d (2:44,

7:14).

This book should be studied especially at the time of Chanukah

each year (the first Chanukah--celebrated 25 Chislev 164--being

predicted in Dn. 8:8, where it says that "the sanctuary shall be

restored to its rightful place." The coming of the Syrian King of

the Seleucid dynasty, Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.E.), is

predicted by Daniel. This despot put pressure on the Jews to cash

in their Hebraic faith and their Kohen Gadol and Beis Hamikdash

sacrifices for Hellenistic (Greek-influenced) culture. A

rebellion began in 168 B.C.E. against Antiochus but his

desecration of the Beis Hamikdash became a symbol for the coming

of religious apostasy and of Anti-Moshiach in the last days. The

kohen line of Zadok was usurped when Antiochus Epiphanes sold the

kehunah to Menelaus (see II Maccabees 4:23-50), who lacked the

G-d-ordained Aaronic genealogical credentials.

The book of Daniel is about both the meaning of history, from

G-d's perspective and under his sovereign control, and about

end-time divine intervention in history, whether in a fiery

furnace or a lion's den or by the Son of Man, when history reaches its goal at the end of days or, as Daniel says, "at the time of the End." Daniel fasts and prays and watches as the L-rd's seer from where he has been placed in the royal court of the Babylonian and Persian empires. The first six chapters speak of various miraculous events and visions during the Babylonian reigns of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, and the Persian reign of Darius the Mede. The second half of the book speaks of the coming of Antiochus Epiphenes, the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Beis Hamikdash, the coming of the Moshiach and his being cut off, a subsequent second destruction of Jerusalem, the coming of the

Anti-Moshiach, the Moshiach's return as the glorious Son of Man

who receives the Kingdom from G-d, and the Techiyas HaMesim, some

to Chayyei Olam (Eternal Life) and some to the shame and

everlasting contempt of Gehinnom (Dn. 12:2).

Study Daniel's eating habits and fasting and prayer (Dn. 1:5-21)

which may have had something to do with Daniel's long life (605

B.C.E. = Dn.1:1; 539 B.C.E. = Dn.1:21). Also see 10:3. Study

Daniel's prayer (Dn. 9:4-19) and notice how prayer is struggling

against cosmic principalities or demons (Eph. 6:12; cf. Dn.

10:12-11:1).

Chapter 11 gives us predictions of the struggles between

Alexander the Great's successors, namely his four generals, the

most important of whom are Seleucus I taking his throne over

Syria and Ptolemy I over Egypt. But first, the three kings of Dn.

11:2 are Cambyses, Cyrus's elder son (529-523 B.C.E.), Gaumata or

Pseudo-Smerdis (522 B.C.E.) and Darius the First (522-486

B.C.E.). The "fourth" is Xerxes (486-465 B.C.E.), the husband of

Queen Esther. The coming of Alexander the Great is predicted,

starting in Dn. 11:3. After one of his drunken bouts, he died of

a fever in 323 B.C. in Babylon (see Dn. 11:4). His baby was

murdered. His seed was cut off, seemingly a divine punishment.

Dn. 11:5-20 describes the war between the Ptolemies and the

Seleucids, variously named king of the north or south. Dn.

11:21-35 (also Dn. 8:9-12, 23-26) have to do with the career of

Antiochus Epiphanes, whereas the eschatological Antichrist comes

on the scene starting at Dn. 11:36 and is referred to in 2:34;

7:8-26; 9:27 and 12:11.

Antiochus, the sinister little horn and despicable tyrant, as he

is called (Dn. 11:21), will suspend the worship of G-d in the

Beis Hamikdash, according to Daniel's prophecy. Not only did

Antiochus claim divine honors for himself on every major coin

that he had minted, but he had a second beast, Menelaus, who

bribed and murdered his way into the Kohen Gadol's office,

plotting the murder of the legitimate Kohen Gadol Onias III. Thus

Antiochus could lead the Jewish people in their apostasy of

"forsaking the holy covenant" (see Dn. 11:30; II Thes. 2:3; Rev.

13:11-17.) Together, Antiochus and Menelaus desecrated and

plundered the Beis Hamikdash. I Maccabees 1:21 says Antiochus

"arrogantly entered the sanctuary" (II Thes. 2:4). The ominous

period in which the Beis Hamikdash was desecrated and during

which time there was great persecution and death was about three

years. Antiochus, who became totally mad at the end of his life,

did not die in the Holy Land but in Persia (Iran), looting

another temple.

The armies of the Maccabees versus the Seleucid armies of

Antiochus Epiphanies give us a picture of the armies of the

Moshiach who will destroy the Anti-Moshiach at Armageddon. See

also Mic. 4:12-13; Zech 9:13; 10:8-9 and also the end of Heb.

11:33-35 for possible references in the Bible to the Maccabees.

See especially "the people who know their G-d will firmly resist

him" (Dn. 11:32).

Only Dn. 2:4b-7:28 is in Aramaic; the rest is written in Hebrew.

In volume I of the Expositor's Bible Commentary, on p. 217 R.K.

Harrison comments on the Nabonidus Chronicle, an Akkadian account

discovered at Haran that refers to "King of the Medes" in the

tenth year of Nabonidus (516 B.C.E.), proving that "Darius the

Mede" was a real person and not a confused tradition erroneously

put in the text by any Maccabean ghost writer. Also, on p. 318,

R.K. Harrison says "the manuscript evidence from Qumran

absolutely precludes a date of composition in the Maccabean

period, but does indicate one in the Neo-Babylonian era (626-539

B.C.E.)."

DANIEL 9:26b

...Moshiach will be cut off (violently killed) and to him there

will be nothing, and the troops of the prince who is to come will

destroy the city and the holy sanctuary (the Beis Hamikdash). Its

(his?) end will come with a flood and to the end there shall be

war. Desolations are decreed.

HOSHEA (HOSEA)

Read Hosea 14:9.

In Numbers 25:1-3 and Hosea 9:10 we see that the Israelites

turned in to the Baal prostitutes at Baal-Peor (Baal=L-rd; Peor=

the mountain on which he was worshipped) when they worshipped the

G-d of the Moabite women. Hosea 9:10 (RSV) says "they became

detestable like the thing they loved." We become good or bad

according to what we admire (see Phil. 4:8). Americans admire

violent, pornographic movies and are becoming increasingly

violent and pornography-tolerant.

Once a maggid (preacher) had to marry a prostitute in order to be

able to speak from the heart of G-d. Only a cuckold with a covenant-breaking loose-living wife (who forgets him and thinks only about her worthless boyfriends) can have any comprehension of how G-d feels toward his people when they forget him and let something else have first place in their hearts. Like a good and faithful husband, G-d supplies all our needs and in Him we live and move and have our being, yet we worship and serve our prideful fancies and give ourselves over to other lords as if we ourselves were religious prostitutes (worse than prostitutes because we receive no real and lasting payment from our idols, the "gigolos of the heart".)

A husband whose wife forgets him and is unfaithful has an

ambivalent reaction: on the one hand he has a tender broken heart
and an open hand seeking reconciliation (see 2:14-23); on the
other hand, he has a fist of hellish reprisal seeking justice and
punishment. He is like a sower with two kinds of seed in his
hands: seeds of mercy and seeds of vengeance. Contrast the name of
Hosea's son (Jezreel meaning "G-d sows") in 1:5 and the urn of
the word in 3:23. G-d will sow vengeance on the northern tribes
because they broke away from David, G-d's King. [Jehu threatened
the Lord's plan to raise up a Savior through the seed of David
not by killing the king of Israel, Joram (852-841 B.C.E.), but by
killing the king of Judah, Ahaziah, the grandson of Jehoshaphat

the descendent of David. Like Athaliah's sin of almost liquidating the Davidic dynasty, this sin of Jehu was more than bloodshed. It was an anti-Moshiach attack on the coming Davidic Moshiach Himself. In this respect Athaliah was as evil as Manasseh (697-642 B.C.E.), who has been called "the Ahab of Judah." But Jehu's sin began at Jezreel, so the sin of Jezreel was the rejection of David and David's coming Son the King Moshiach. Whoever rejects him commits the sin of Jezreel.]

Furthermore, the treacherous and rebellious kings of the northern kingdom wipe out each other's dynasties with violent abandon.

Therefore, in the same way that Hosea can't be sure that Jezreel is his legitimate son, G-d also has a backsliding people who have

begotten "alien children (5:7). However, Hosea sees that G-d will transform such tragic covenant-breaking and its results. What G-d has sown will in the end come up as a marvelous multitude: first Israel after the flesh, then spiritual Israel (Hosea 1:10-11; Romans 9:25f; I Shliach Kefa 2:10) the reborn, regenerated Israel of G-d--a Jewish-Gentile end-time miracle, the called out people of G-d, then natural Israel at last herself grafted in (see Rom. 11).

Hosea is a prophet to the nation, and his domestic upheavals help him see what others cannot see. He sees that his nation has broken its covenant with G-d, has turned from G-d-ordained

leaders and gone after worldly self-reliant ones who favor military strength (1:7) and a foreign policy that plays off (see 8:10; 12:1) one enemy (Egypt) against another (Assyria), while the common people applaud the g-ds of civic religion and celebrate them by idolatrous sensual pursuits rather than seeking the divine protection that a national revival might have brought.

To return to Egypt to appeal for help there (7:11) implied a cancellation of G-d's electing choice, for G-d called his people out of Egypt (11:1). Four of the kings of Israel were assassinated in palace intrigues during this period because each king trusted traitors (7:5).

Will America trust the P.L.O. or Iran (which are committed to the
destruction of Israel)? America plays off Red China against
Russia, relies on billions for the arms race, and yearns
nostalgically for the good ole days when liberal womanizing
sell-out-the-world-to-Stalin types like Franklin D. Roosevelt ran
the country. America's political covenants say that we are "one
nation under G-d" (which G-d, the G-d of deists like Thomas
Jefferson and Ben Franklin or the G-d of the Bible?) but we
covenant-breaking Americans give G-d little room to operate when
our laws give rights to sex perverts as though they were not sex
perverts but a victimized minority with their own gay crusaders,

"Brit Chadasha kehillot" end now even a Greenwich Village Gay

High School. (One of the school's aims is to help 15 and 16 year

olds to be comfortable with their homosexuality.) Do you see how

we need modern Hosea's to preach to America?

Remember the droughts that have come upon New York City? Look at

4:2-3 and 6:3 in Hosea. Hos. 4:2-3 shows that drought is a

penalty for rejecting G-d's Word, which the perverted

government of New York City has done: "Swearing, dishonesty, and

murder, and theft and adultery are rife; Crime follows upon

crime! For that, the earth is dried up: Everything that dwells on

it languishes-- beasts of the field and birds of the sky--even

the fish of the sea perish." Furthermore, just as drought is one of the ways G-d withdraws from us, so rain is one of the ways he comes to us: "Let us pursue obedience to the L-rd, and we shall become obedient. His appearance is as sure as daybreak, and He will come to us like rain, like latter rain that refreshes the earth." (6:3)

Why are New York City's leaders (not all of them but many of them) so corrupt? Their prosperity has corrupted them. Look at 13:6. "When they grazed, they were sated; when they were sated, they grew haughty; and so they forgot Me." The very prosperity G-d gave Israel in the land caused them to forget Him; yet they grumbled at the lean wilderness experience, and as soon as their

husband provided more than enough, they forgot him like an
unfaithful wife. Thus Samaria (the capital of the northern
tribes) "must bear her guilt, for she has defied her G-d" (Hosea
13:16). This was tragically fulfilled (II Kings 17:6) in 722 B.C.
when the Assyrians took the northern tribes into exile. Samaria
is the unfaithful wife of G-d that must be driven out of his
house (9:15) in order for G-d's prodigal wife Israel (the true
remnant) to fear and return to her true provider and covenant
L-rd (see 2:23).

Therefore, we see that those who teach that prosperity is G-d's
will for every person are teaching error. Money can absolutely

ruin the person who cannot handle its temptations; therefore, G-d

often gives money to those he is angry with as a punishment they

deserve. Such fools are sealed in their sin by their assumption

that riches are the final proof of divine approval. See 12:8.

"And Ephraim (the northern Kingdom) thinks, 'Ah, I have become

rich; I have gotten power! All my gains do not amount to an

offense which is real guilt (in other words) none of my crimes

are going to catch up with me!'" Like Israel, believers tend to

whitewash their own sins and overestimate their own spiritual

fortitude and ability to handle perfect financial and physical

security. Those "health and wealth" teachers have forgotten that

acquiring wealth can be the ruin of many. They have

simplistically reduced divine financial miracles performed at
G-d's wise discretion to a cause-and-effect "faith" formula which
ignores the wayward heart of man and the chastening, testing hand
of G-d.

In Hosea 11:9 we see the perseverance of G-d's mercy (unmerited
by us). In 11:8-11 we see the tension between his justice (his
righteous wrath against his covenant-breaking spouse) and his
love (his determination to justify or forgive his spouse). See

Romans 3:26. Hos. 11:1 and Matthew 2:15 show the solidarity of
Moshiach and people, just as the rejected son on the aitz and the
accepted son at the resurrection show the same two ideas of

justice for man and justification of man embodied in the man

Yehoshua. Deuteronomy 21:13-21 requires a father to deliver up a

rebellious son to the death penalty, but the Divine Father has

love that won't allow him to do it. A father might give his son

up to the death penalty, a husband might divorce his wife, but

G-d will never give up his chosen people (Isaiah 49:15; Hosea

11:9). Hosea ch. 3 shows G-d's love redeeming his people from her

sinful bondage just as Hosea in long-suffering love buys back his

wife from the slavery into which her adultery has sold her. But

Israel will not return to G-d just as Gomer will not return to

Hosea until the End (see 5:4; 7:10; 2:7; Rom. 11).

Traditional Islamic and heretical Christian misunderstandings of

the fatherhood of the G-d of the Bible stem from an ignorance of

Hosea. In 11:1-4 divine fatherhood is moral and spiritual, in

contrast to the physical ideas of the Baal cults and the Qur'anic

"Trinity".

One reason the body of Moshiach needs Shlichut Acts 13:13

modalities (a sodality is a brotherhood or association based on a

common purpose) is because of the nature of modalities (a

modality is a local Brit Chadasha kehillah the modal quality of

which is that it is a minimal decision group of people who may

agree to do no more than observe a day--usually Sunday--and honor

various liturgical forms and may grow in no more dramatic way than biologically). Modalities might sometimes tend to settle down to mediocre religious "business as usual" (note Hosea 6:6!), with spineless leaders who put up with wicked board members and big tithers because they love their salaries (note Hosea 4:8!) just as the kohanim of Hosea's time preferred to prosper from their share of sin offerings for willful sin rather than act to dissuade the people from evil. Therefore, the sodality ministry of the prophet and the outreach worker and the Shliach and the teacher are needed by the local spiritual leader and his flock, because "my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (4:6).

The modalities must not be able to too completely control the

sodalities, any more than a patient should be able to control his

physician or dictate his own prescription for recovery. Just

as Israel attributed to a fertility sex-g-d the praise due to G-d

for the G-d-given fruits of the earth (thus making G-d jealous),

and just as Gomer forgot her maggid (preacher)-husband Hosea, and

just as America has forgotten the G-d on her coinage and goes

after her g-ds of youth, money, sex, exotic religions, corporate

and status power, etc so the Brit Chadasha kehillah as both

sodality and modality has a tendency to forget G-d and to abandon

the love she had at first--Rev. 2:4. What G-d wants is "hesed",

loyalty to one's covenant obligations and devotion to one's

covenant partner; that is, steadfast love. If we skip around New

York as spiritual prostitutes without commitment or staying power

or systematic study stick-to-it-ness, G-d vows to take all the

pleasure out of our unfaithful pursuits (2:7, 11). If we want to

be saved we must come out from among this harlot's brood in

Manhattan, this foul-mouthed and violence-loving brood of a

former generation of backslidden Americans. We must become

faithful to the modality or sodality where G-d has placed us.

Otherwise, G-d threatens reprisal as he did with Israel--military

carnage, drought, spiritual exile and estrangement. Hoses

prophecied from 750 to 715 as a native of the northern part of

Israel in the period after Amos and contemporary with Isaiah and

Micah. Undoubtedly Shliach Sha'ul was heavily dependent on Hosea for Ephesians 5:32 and Romans 11:25-26, just as Yochanan was for Rev. 21:9f for his simile of marriage as a picture of G-d's relationship to His covenant spouse, the people He will restore to Himself in the end-times.

Looking at New York City's 42nd street we see prostitution, soft and hard porn movies, video stores, pornographic literature, massage parlors, transvestites, lesbians, homosexuals. Hosea taught that there's a link between promiscuity and forgetting/forsaking G-d. The spirit that led Gomer to forsake her husband also led her to forsake her G-d (4:12).

The Lord is saying in the book of Hosea that New York City is like Samaria. Samaria was the apostate capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. She was marked for judgment. She had helped turn the holy faith of Israel into Baal worship, a fertility cult which promised rains and harvests by means of a wicked religion where devotees indulged in an orgy of drunkenness and religious prostitution. Baal was a nature god or weather god associated with thunderstorms as in I Kings 17:1-18:46 (notice I Kings 18:45 where the thunderstorm comes from the God of Israel, not Baal, whose proponents have been defeated by Elijah). Baal was a fertility god or sex cult god whose worship involved erotic acts and public immorality. Baal worship was apparently based on

imitative magic: that is, magic that attempts to control the

universe by mimicking the desired event. If one wants Baal, the

prodigious lover and fertile bringer of rain and harvests, to

"ride the clouds" to his reigning wife-g-ddess Asherah (Jdg. 3:7)

so that one's barley harvest will be abundant, then one worships

Baal by visiting a cult prostitute, getting drunk, and engaging

in ritual fornication. This is the rationale of

imitative magic behind the demonic worship of Baal, and this is

also the background of the book of Hosea where a maggid

(preacher) is commanded to marry a cult prostitute of Baal named

Gomer.

G-d says, "Go, take for yourself a wife of whoredom and have

children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord" (Hos. 1:3). The land of America has certainly "played the whore" (2:5), forsaking the L-rd. She has forgotten her true Provider (2:13) and only G-d Himself can heal her disloyalty to Him (14:4). She has lost the honeymoon love she had for Him in the days of her youth, in her early wilderness period (2:14). America has turned to other g-ds, and the L-rd has an indictment against her. Her children are shameless. They have rejected the knowledge of G-d and brazenly devote themselves to immorality. Drugs have taken away the understanding, a stubborn spirit of whoredom has taken away contrition, and the vile deeds

that even children are engaged in do not permit them to return to their G-d. The glory of our youth is to know the true G-d and the free destiny to which He has called us, but "when their drinking is ended, they indulge in sexual orgies: they love lewdness more than their glory" (4:18).

So drunkards leer and refuse to work and welfare mothers proliferate illegitimate children and those who don't know G-d dearly love their wanton ways. And "they do not consider that I remember all their wickedness. Now their deeds surround them, they are before my face" (7:2). When G-d glances He sees a kaleidoscopic horror show of sexual depravity and decadence. Like an aging overweight prostitute or a filthy homeless transvestite,

America staggers in her sin. Her wealth she puts into pockets with holes in them and she does not know it. She turns "to that which does not profit" (7:16). Americans elect politicians "but not through Me" (8:4), and these unjust sycophants court the muscle beach "gay lobby." With great wickedness and guilt comes great hostility to the Word.

The L-rd has shown that He is soon going to send fire upon all the world's sleazy cities (8:14), for they have played the whore, departing from their G-d, deeply corrupting themselves. He will remember their iniquity, He will punish their sins, as He did in the time of Hosea. The homeless will grow like a vast herd, like

wanderers in a distant country. In them the heart of a wayward
people will be exposed, and a prodigal nation shall sift its
trash, eating the fruit of its lies. Because, merely talking
about G-d, this people is bent on turning away from Him. And, led
by cords of idolatry, this people trusts only in its power and in
the multitude of its police. Therefore, violence rages in their
cities, and G-d's hot anger hangs overhead like a vulture. Until
repentance is preached on the sidewalks, these who sleep there
will not know G-d, nor will He return them to their homes.

If you study the Book of Hosea, you will see that the true

Messianic religion of Moses had been bartered off at that time.

Jeroboam had split the kingdom and had led the people away from

the true expectation of the Moshiach through David (8:4; 3:4-5;

1:11; Amos 9:11; Mic. 5:2; Is. 11:1-5; Jer. 23:5-6; Ez. 37:24-38;

Zch. 12:7-8; II Sm. 7:12-13). The people build pagan sanctuaries

under "sacred" trees and the wicked kohanim lead them to get

drunk and to go into cult prostitutes under the alluring shade of

"oak and poplar" (4:13) and other kinds of trees. But G-d is a

jealous G-d. and He says, I am like an evergreen cypress" (14:8).

Yet the people refuse to live beneath His protecting shadow.

Therefore G-d threatens to make Israel a treeless desert (2:3),

sending the Assyrian exile (prophecy fulfilled 722 B.C.E.) whose

armies set fires that together with droughts turned Israel into a

"parched land." And today the Lord again is going to take His shadow away. The shade from the blazing sun over our country will be removed. Every time an American prostitute brings a "client" into her hotel room and turns on the air-conditioner, little does she know that the chlorofluorocarbons, the chemicals in it used to transfer the heat, are destroying the atmosphere's ozone layer. When she sprays on deodorant, little does she know that these same chemicals are removing the ozone shield and letting in ultraviolet light causing skin cancer on her exposed body, eye cataracts on her painted eyes, and a defective immune system in her ulcerated body. God is removing His ozone shade from the

sun's harmful ultraviolet rays at a rising level of depletion

that atmospheric scientists called "disastrous" and irreversible.

Rev. 16:8 says, "The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun,

and the sun was given power to scorch people with fire."

The world's daughters have turned to prostitution (4:13), selling

their virginity for a little wine, worshipping idols at

rock-concerts. But G-d is removing the pleasant shade.

Soon everyone on the streets will wear hats and umbrellas,

looking like orthodox Jews on a rainy day. Soon the light outside

will be starkly white, like the flashpoint light of a nuclear

explosion. Soon to venture outside will be a project for fools,

like going unshielded into an x-ray room or strolling around
naked inside a nuclear reactor. The Day of the L-rd is coming
(called also the parousia in the Brit Chadasha Scriptures), that
time when G-d will decisively break into history, save His
people, and settle the score once and for all with His enemies,
both militarily and politically. The Day of the L-rd is a Gadol
"great" day (Yoel 2:11), a day that is karov ("threateningly
near" or "imminent"--Yoel 1:15; 2:1), a HaGorah "dreadful,
terrifying" day. The Sun shall be turned to darkness, and the
moon to the color of blood (Yoel 2:31), and the stars shall
withdraw their shining (Yoel 3:15). See Hosea 5:9-10 which
speaks of the Day that G-d's wrath will be poured out "like

water" which Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom of Israel) saw in 722

B.C.E. which is the time when the ultimate Day of the Lord (still

future) drew near, overtaking evil Samaria, and Hosea's prophecy

was fulfilled. See 8:13; 3:4; 9:3,15-17; 11:5 for references to

the coming Exile.

If you are wondering whether the fig tree of Luke 21:29 is

Israel, see Hos. 9:10.

Since the word "sow" is a key word in Hosea, note also 8:7 and

10:12.

On the meaning of Hos. 4:15, see Amos 5:5.

HOSEA 6:2

After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise

us up, and we shall live in his sight.

[Just as the Moshiach was raised from the dead through the glory

of the Father, we too may live a new life (Romans 6:4). The Word

of G-d took on flesh and died for all; therefore, all have died

(II Corinthians 5:14). The old humanity has already been put to

death, and he who does not believe is condemned already (Yochanan

3:18). This is why everyone has not yet been raised bodily from

the death: because, those who hear and believe must first be

raised spiritually from death to life. If we reject the Brit

Chadasha Scriptures interpretation of Hosea 6:2 in favor of our

own interpretation, there is a way that seems right to a man, but that way leads to death (Prov. 14:12). The period when decomposition of the body sets in is three days (see Yochanan 11:39) but G-d raised the Messiah on the third Day so that he would not see corruption--Psalm 16:10; I Cor. 15:4. Hos. 6:2 says that, even though the Exile will come, the nation will be brought back to life and forgiven, and the Lord's "appearing" is as sure as the dawn--Hos. 6:3.]

YOEL (Joel)

Some scholars believe that Yoel (Joel)'s prophecy could be dated in the 9th century or even before 701, when Assyria threatened Jerusalem. The truth is, we don't know for sure when this great prophet lived. So Yoel (Joel)'s writing constrains the scholar's dogmatism with a measure of humility. One thing seems likely, however: if Yoel (Joel) was written in the 9th century, he is quoted or alluded to by many of the other writing prophets, and his little book has had a great impact on preachers down through the centuries, which is a true statement no matter when the book was written. If Amos (760-750 B.C.E.) is aware of Yoel (Joel)'s prophecy, this would help to explain the similarity of Amos 1:2=Yoel (Joel) 3:16 and Amos 5:20=Yoel (Joel) 2:2. If the

affinity between Yoel (Joel) 3:10 and Is. 2:4; Mic. 1:3 means

that Yoel (Joel) is aware of the preaching of Isaiah (710-681

B.C.E.) and Micah (750-686 B.C.E.), however, then Yoel (Joel)

must be later than Amos. For other possible connections like

these, see Amos 9:13=Yoel (Joel) 3:18; Obad. 15=Yoel (Joel) 1:15;

2:1; Obad. 17=Yoel (Joel) 2:32. It seems that, because of these

and many other cross-references in Yoel (Joel), perhaps either he

is aware of these other prophets or they are aware of him. But

this is not necessarily the case, even though very often the

words are exactly alike in the Hebrew, since the Ruach Hakodesh

is at liberty to duplicate his messages through different

prophets. For this reason we cannot completely rule out a later

date for Yoel (Joel), even if we prefer an earlier one. But his

message does not hinge on precise dating, so it is not fruitful

to endlessly examine this question of dates.

In the word of the L-rd that comes to Joel, the prophet witnesses

a locust plague, interpreting it as an act not of neutral

"Nature" but of the Creator who is active in nature to bless or

to judge His creation. Using imagery we also see in Revelation

ch. 9, Yoel (Joel) depicts this locust plague as an omen of the

Day of the L-rd (called also the Parousia in the Brit Chadasha

Scriptures), that time when G-d would decisively break into

history, save His people, and settle the score for once and for

all with His enemies, both militarily and politically. The Day of
the L-rd is a Gadol "great" day (Yoel (Joel) 2:11), a day that is
Karov ("threateningly near" or "imminent"--Yoel (Joel) 1:15;
2:1), a HaGorah "dreadful, terrifying" day. The sun shall be
turned to darkness, and the moon to the color of blood (2:31),
the stars shall withdraw their shining (3:15). Around Jerusalem
there will be a valley, the valley of (G-d's) HeCharootz
"verdict" because he will sit to judge the multitudes (3:14) on
that great and terrible "Day." Yoel (Joel) has a vision: he sees
hordes of marching locusts and they are terrifying harbingers of
not only the coming onslaught of an end-time invading foreign

army called "the northern one" HaTsfoni (see 2:20) but also a

heavenly army of the Lord's hosts on the Day of the L-rd (see

1:6; 2:4,11) when He will judge all nations in the environs of

Jerusalem (3:2, 12-21). With great alarm and urgency, Yoel (Joel)

calls upon the people to assemble for repentance and fasting and

prayer so that G-d might relent and not send His own end-time

army on a cosmic mopping up operation following the invasion of

the locust attackers.

Then in ch. 2:28-39 Yoel (Joel) uses the same word Shafach that

Isaiah uses when he talks about "pouring out" the wine on the

ground in a ritual called a drink offering (Is. 57:6). Yoel

(Joel) sees that just as G-d's wrath was poured out on the people

in a devastating outpouring of locusts, so G-d's mercy will be

"poured out" (2:38) on people in the Tevilah of the Ruach

Hakodesh. One of the effects of this merciful Spiritual effusion

or tevilah is that ordinary sons and daughters will become

prophetically gifted maggidim. According to Acts chs. 1-2, one

hundred and twenty male and female Jewish street maggidim turned

the world upside-down on Shavuot C.E. 30 (Pentecost) when the

initial evidence of their prophecies spoken in tongues unknown to

them proved that Yoel (Joel)'s prophecy of the tevilah of the

Ruach Hakodesh was beginning to be realized.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 and Isaiah 4:2; 11:1-4; 63:2; Zechariah 3:8;

6:12; Ezra 3:8 tell us that the Moshiach, the Branch of the L-rd

and of David will be called L-rd and Yehoshua (Moshiach

Yehoshua). (The Moshiach is also called L-rd in Malachi 3:1 and

Psalm 110:1, since Adon refers to Adonai in Zecharich 4:14 and

6:5.) Yoel (Joel) 2:32 tells us that "everyone who calls on the

name of the L-rd will be delivered" on the great and dreadful day

of G-d's judgment that is coming.

Yoel (Joel) 2:28a (HEBREW 3:1)

Then afterward I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons

and your daughters shall prophesy...

AMOS

Amos preached around 760 B.C. (before Micah's ministry began, though Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah are all prophets of the same general time period). From Dan (the farthest point north) to Beersheba (the farthest point south) there were pagan centers of worship. Bethel and Gilgal had also become perverted into places boasting of idol Beis Hamikdash sanctuaries, Bethel itself being the royal sanctuary of King Jeroboam II (782-753 B.C.) with Amaziah his official kohen (see 7:10-13; 4:4; 8:14). The northern kingdom was enjoying great military, political, and economic prosperity and success at this time, and the idol shrines were

well supported and maintained with pride. G-d raised up a country

prophet, a raiser of sheep and a cultivator of figs from Tekoa, a

small town six miles south of Jerusalem. G-d called him to leave

Judah and to become a short-term emissary of Moshiach's shlichut

to the foreign kingdom of Israel. The burden of his message from

G-d was that the Exile was coming and that the people must repent

of sin, injustice, immorality, drunkenness, and idolatry or

perish in the coming conflagration. The people of the northern

kingdom of Israel had created and were exploiting an underclass

and G-d was angry and was on His way to bring judgment. Amos'

preaching got him into conflict with the religious authorities

and caused him to be thrown out of the national cult shrine of

their false religion (see Amos chp. 7).

Moshiach's S'micha or ordination does not necessarily mean one

earns one's living from the ministry. In fact, there are times

when G-d appoints (and the people of G-d acknowledge His

appointment) of an individual, but at the same time G-d wants the

person to keep economically independent of the ordained clergy.

Such a person has a secular income-earning vocation but also a

prophetic mission. Such a person was Amos. Amos was secularly

employed, a shepherd who had to hold down two jobs while

idolatrous kohanim (as immoral as bribe-taking judges) preached

bland messages in order not to lose their backslidden tithers and

lucrative positions. It often happens that backslidden denominations and religious movements corrupt their dedicated elite and then attempt to silence their true prophets (2:11-12; 5:10), since the prophets represent the true G-d of the poor-in-spirit who are hungry for something more than empty formalism. In Amos' day the kohanim' toleration of the immorality of the population left everyone oblivious to the deteriorating moral condition of society, making it like a basket of fruit, ripe for G-d's destruction (8:1-3). And so it is today in those countries where abortion stockyards make people worse than cannibals (who it seems don't normally butcher their own flesh and blood), and where the poor, although loved by G-d, are

treated like scum by the immoral rich, who are preoccupied with materialistic and sensual goals. Fortunes are extracted from the life-blood and sweat of the poor who must try to keep their heads above water in a suffocating climate of greed and who barely get a chance to breathe before the greedy landlords and unjust merchants and employers and judges pull them under again (2:6-8; 4:1). The message of this book is that the indulgent life of the wicked privileged will come to an end, as surely as it did for Nazi Germany (see 3:15; 5:11; 6:4-6).

At the call of G-d Amos left his home in Judaea as a mere lay maggid (preacher) without any ecclesiastical authorization or

status as a recognized prophet. He refused to be intimidated by

the apostate religious leader, Amaziah. Amos predicted Amaziah's

wife would become a prostitute when foreign armies invaded

Amaziah's "parish" and this corrupt kohen would see all that he

possessed taken from him as he was dragged off to the unclean

lands of the heathen (7:10-17). Amos in effect says to him, Fear,

G-d, maggid (preacher)! When G-d defrocks you, Amaziah, you will

know it! It is worth noting in passing that, in the tradition of

Amos, and to protect himself from his critics (who were quick to

challenge his motives), as well as to give himself travel and

monetary independence, Shliach Sha'ul refused to take a salary

for preaching the Besuras Hageulah (though he did, on occasion,

accept free-will offering support, especially when he was in prison).

Amos broke from the tradition (I Sam. 9:7; Micah 3:11) that a prophet should be remunerated in some way before being consulted.

Amos refused to let himself be cast in the role of "organization man. Amos refused to be a spokesman for the evil political and religious establishment, the type of spokesmen that preach for pay or position and say only what their employers want to hear.

Rather, in the tradition of Micaiah ben Imlah (I Kg. 22:14), Amos could speak only the word that the L-rd gave him, and took no "professional remuneration" since G-d alone was his boss and

pay-master. This tent-making preacher model is especially useful when the paying religious institutions are wicked and Scripturally aberrant as they were in the northern kingdom with its calf-idol cult of the renegade non-Davidic King Jeroboam II and its Baal heresy. However, this is not the same as wet-behind-the-ears charismatic "prophets" who disguise their independent carnality and rebellious immaturity with an "I don't listen to men but to G-d" attitude in defiance of Hebrews 13:17 which says, "Obey your leaders."

Amos was called to be a short term emissary of Moshiach's shlichut (his ministry as it is recorded is only a single year's work). He had to leave his native land and go to another nation

(for Israel was divided into two kingdoms at this time). He had a

very hard message to proclaim: that the dynasty and the

unbiblical religious shrine and the entire population of the king

(Jeroboam II) would be uprooted and destroyed (7:9,11).

Naturally, this was a dangerous message sure to cause Amos

resistance from the "establishment" political and religious

leaders of the land. One of the reasons Amos was listened to is

because he spoke of an earthquake (8:8) two years before it

happened (1:1), just as he spoke of the exile of the northern

kingdom (760 B.C.) nearly 40 years before it happened (722-721

B.C.) at the hands of Assyria (which Amos does not name).

There are those who would reduce our faith to an observance of days (Sundays), rituals (hymns and pew calisthenics), and doctrines (dead orthodoxy), a purely religious Besuras Hageulah as opposed to a "social Besuras Hageulah. Amos opposes them, declaring that political and religious and social corruption must not go unchallenged by true believers. The poor must be aided and the legal corruption must be confronted, whether it be judges who take bribes or land grabbing money grubbers who turn farmers into serfs. Of course, liberal Brit Chadasha kehillah leaders have used Amos as a retreat from the fundamental Besuras Hageulah of salvation from hell through faith alone in the blood of Moshiach Yehoshua, and have preached Amos as their key text for a works

righteousness universalist "social Besuras Hageulah." But the

true Besuras Hageulah is not an either/or religious/social

Besuras Hageulah, but a both/and religious/social Besuras

Hageulah (Moshiach Yehoshua reached out but he also fed and

healed the poor).

It has been said (Robert Hymers) that most evangelicals in

America have never experienced a true Biblical turn-around as far

as the world is concerned. There are those who think that because

they are religious, G-d will accept any kind of behavior from

them. They love any religion that doesn't require the new life of

G-d from them! (Therefore, their religion teaches them to

transgress--4:4-5--and at its center is rebellion against the G-d
of regenerated humanity.) They profess to be regenerated and that
once saved, they are always saved; therefore, they can get away
with high-handed (presumptuous) sin. Although they are bored with
G-d (8:5)1, they believe that religious observance safeguards
them so that they can eat, drink, do with their bodies anything,
go with their friends anywhere, do anything, and get away with it
because they are religious. Then, just when these religious
hypocrites are settling down to their antinomian "cheap grace"
and empty religious formalism, Amos steps in and says "You fat
cows of Bashan...All the sinners of My people shall perish by the
sword, who boast, 'Never shall the evil overtake us or come near

us.' Yes, you alone have I singled out and known of all the peoples of the earth; therefore (instead of holding you unaccountable to live anyway you like), I will call you to account and punish you for all your sins!" (see 4:1; 9:10; 3:2).

The people of Amos's day had a popular theology that said nothing bad could happen to them because they were religious. They thought they would be the survivors, the remnant, no matter what happened. The people had an eschatology that the day of the L-rd would be "peaches and cream" for them and trouble for everyone else besides the remnant. Amos said, in effect, "Remnant? O yes, sweetie pie, there will be a remnant--what's left of a finger

after the L-rd slams the car door on it!" (See 3:12.) "Behold,
the L-rd G-d has His eye upon the sinful kingdom: I will wipe it
off the face of the earth!" (9:8). With uncompromising radicalism
he meets the superficial religiosity of his contemporaries who
have grown self-sufficient and comfortable in their smug
ritualism and worldliness. He did not let the stubborn resistance
of his audience stop him. He criticized the shallow doctrines of
assurance and the last days in vogue in his day ("you who put far
away the evil Day (of the L-rd) and bring near the status quo
rule of violence"--6:3) and inverted them to point to the coming
judgment. He preached that mere outward religious practice could
not off-set their sinful lives, and that the End (HaKetz) was

coming, the day of the L-rd (8:2).

Since faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word, and since

the people Amos preached to had no taste for the Word of G-d but

wanted only to get their religion over so they could go home to

pursue their cut-throat materialism (8:5), Amos promises that G-d

will bring a famine of hearing the Word of G-d (8:11). That

famine, a judgment of G-d, has already descended on many places

in the world. Wherever the people are not open to a revival in

the Word they experience a famine of the withdrawal of the Word.

The people at this time were living in a society where the rich

were very rich and the poor were very poor and exploited. The

greed of the wealthy knew no bounds, drinking and adultery were everywhere, and yet a hypocritical attempt was made to please G-d by empty religious profession. But G-d knows the difference between empty profession and a living faith at work in love to help the poor (whether it be people who are poor in money or poor in spirit).

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK: UTTERANCE AGAINST THE NATIONS,

ch. 1-2 Because of war crimes, G-d-angering deportations, fratricidal conflicts, inhumane "overkill" kinds of outrages against Israel, the nations living around Israel are ripe for imminent judgment. But so is Judah for spurning the Word, and Israel, for worshipping sex and money instead of G-d and for

social exploitation of the poor. ("For two transgressions and for

four" means "for an ample number of offenses.")

JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL, ch. 3-6

Hunger, drought, crop failure, contagious disease, natural

calamity are all part of the judgment of G-d on these wicked

people.

Prepare to meet your G-d, America! I sent you herpes, and you

would not turn back to me! I sent you drought, and you would not

turn back to me! I sent you AIDS and you would not turn back to

me! I sent you bankruptcy and Wall Street crashes and debt and

deficit and unemployment and recession and you would not turn

back to me! Prepare to meet your G-d O New York (see 4:6-12)!

Look at 5:3 where G-d uses a military scourge as a punishment on

a wicked nation (America had the yawning mouth of a Viet Nam hell

opened once to swallow her youth; something worse is coming if

America does not repent!) When will we learn to stop seeking the

evil sanctuaries (6:5) of bars and discos and violent sex movies?

Seek the L-rd and you will live (5:6)! G-d will not fight for us

to defeat our enemies if we Americans live like G-d's enemies!

The rapture would not be a day of joy for the worldly idolatrous

Brit Chadasha kehillah of this generation (5:18-20)!

PROMISE OF RESTORATION AND BLESSING, chp. 9:11-15 In

chapter 5 Amos speaks to a group very similar to the people in

many lands today (especially South America where liberal marxist

Liberation Theology is impacting the Roman Catholic Brit Chadasha

kehillah). I am referring to the group who are steadily driving

the landed peasantry away from their earlier land-owning

independence into the condition of serfs. The smaller farmer no

longer owns his own land (a sacred trust!); he is a tenant of the

urban class which is corrupting with bribes the serf's last court

of appeals protecting widows and orphans, the court at the

village gate. For Amos the court in the village gate is the

central institution in Israel (and constitutes Yehoshua's picture

of the millenium, with disciples on thrones as a court of the

Messianic millennial kingdom). What G-d wants is righteousness in

the courts and marketplaces, not mere rituals in the shrine holy

buildings! Landless serfs did not exist as an economic class

much before the 8th century because prior to that time there were

fewer Ahabs and Jezebels to seize the land of the Naboths of

Israel (see I Kgs. 21). Land was a holy trust belonging to G-d

and leased by the families to be used to serve the L-rd. Small

landholders were now swallowed up by the large estates of the

commercial class, who had secularized their concept of land and

left G-d out of the picture entirely. G-dless capitalism can be

as vicious as g-dless communism in this respect.

However, the people of his day lived in pride and thought themselves invulnerable. Chapter 6 shows they had confidence in their country because of momentary peace and prosperity due to a fleeting international situation where their national enemies were preoccupied (momentarily) elsewhere. Americans think they made it through the World Wars and Viet Nam and they can go on making it no matter how they live. Did Nazi Germany make it? Are we with our abortion clinics and porno industry that much better than they with their anti-Semitic literature and their ovens?

American homes where once the Bible was taught by G-d-fearing fathers are now overrun with TV pornography, and, now, who feels discomfort? "They drink straight from the wine bowls and anoint

themselves with the choicest oils--but they are not concerned

about the ruin of Joseph (6:6)."

Being defeated and drained in the Viet Nam war was not enough to

make us have a national revival and send thousands of emissaries

of Moshiach's shlichut to Viet Nam! Therefore G-d has another

Viet Nam awaiting us! Go ahead! Don't preach the Besuras Hageulah

and help the poor! Don't raise your sons to be g-dly emissaries

of Moshiach's shlichut to places like South America! Then you can

pay the price of your wickedness by watching them die in the

battlefields and swamps of these places! Preach like this and it

will be said, "The country cannot endure to hear these things..."

(7:10) Amos had to fearlessly preach the revelation of G-d's burning wrath against his people. Amos said, "I am not a prophet" (7:14). He meant, that is, by profession! He meant he was not a member of that economically sychophantic professional clergy caste who attached themselves to a shrine or a political leader and tamely prophesied disaster for national enemies and prosperity for all their religious followers. When Amos said, "I am not a prophet's son" (7:14), he meant he was not a trainee of their devious theological schools!

Amos declared that you can't love G-d and money, no matter what any maggid (preacher) tells you!

Amos today would preach on our streets. He would point at the

pimps and the drug dealers and the lurking muggers and criminals

and the brazen men who sexually assault women on the street with

their fiercely foul mouths. It is not Russia alone that is

pointing its nuclear missiles at this wicked city-- it is also

the G-d who hates wickedness!

The last four verses of Amos are quoted by James in Acts 15:16;

the book of Ya'akov is also highly indebted to Amos. But the

point James is making in Acts 15 is that wherever people turn to

Yehoshua ben David the fallen wilderness hut of David is being

resurrected again to prepare for the ultimate salvation of Israel

and the world.

In Amos 9:8 G-d promises to preserve a She'erit (remnant) through

the coming judgment and to "raise up" (Akim "I will raise to

stand up i.e. even from the dead") David's fallen Akim sukkah

(hut/booth/tent--9:11). This is a Messianic prophecy fulfilled

more literally and more gloriously than anyone ever expected.

AMOS 8:11

Behold, the days come, saith the L-rd G-d, that I will send a

famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for

water, but of hearing the words of the L-rd.

OVADYAH (OBADIAH)

A key to the dating of this book is found in Ezek. 25:12-14;

35:1-15, and Lam. 4:18-22--all documents of the early exilic

period when Jewish fury raged at the Edomites for the way they

swooped in like vultures to take advantage of the 588-586 B.C.

Babylonian victory over Judah. The Edomites moved into southern

Judah and took over Israelite territory near Hebron. Psalm 137:7

preserves a memory of this.

Probably written shortly after 586 B.C., Obadiah's book refers to

the Galut (the Exile) in Obadiah 20. 586 B.C. was the fatal year

when the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed and the city of Jerusalem

sacked. Obadiah sees in the fall of Jerusalem an outworking of

the wrath of the Day of the L-rd upon his people, but He has left

a remnant (holy consecrated survivors) who have a right to the

capital and the country, while the merited lot of the nations who

attacked Jerusalem is to perish. Edom is the particular nation

Obadiah prophesies about, saying they will justly suffer at the

hands of G-d. Edom's annexing of Israelite territory is to be

reversed, despite Edom's natural impregnability, human wisdom,

manpower, and weaponry (see also Jer. 9, 16). The moral of this

briefest book in the Tanakh is that if any nation thinks it is

impregnable to G-d, it had better think again. We live in a

world where human rights mean nothing and where people are

programmed for violence by constant movie/tv/reading. G-d

denounces the heartless violence of Edom in verse 10. This

heartless murderous hatred of the Jewish people is what that

cunning "Edomite" Hitler did not repent of that brought about his

destruction.

But over against the day of disaster endured by Jerusalem in 586

B.C. (see verse 11) stands another day, a day of disaster for all

the nations of the world, the Day of the L-rd (see verse 15-16).

See verses 17-18 where it says that a few survivors will escape

the calamity befalling G-d's people, but total destruction will

befall those who don't know G-d (16, 18). This would include no

doubt all who, like Jacob's twin Esau, sell their birthright and

foresake the Lord (Gen. 25:29-34). For God has not merely summoned a sword against Israel; He has summoned a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth (Jer. 25:29) and it is a lethal cup of judgment they must drink (Jer. 25:28), for Israel will not be the only nation to drink it. When the Babylonians set fire to the Beis Hamikdash in 586 B.C. judgment is merely beginning at the household of God. Therefore when the world looks at those flames or the flames of the 1933-1945 Jewish Holocaust the world should shudder, for such is only a preview and a foretaste of what horror is coming on the inhabitants of the world and, unlike the Jewish people, the heathen will have no survivors. All the nations around Jerusalem shall drink of judgment just as the

Jewish people drank (Obadiah 16). This is the world-sobering

Chazon vision that Obadiah saw (1:1).

OBADIAH 16

Just as you drank on my holy hill so all the nations will drink

continually; they will drink and drink and be as if they had

never been.

YONAH (JONAH)

The point of the story is that G-d loves more people than know

it, and those that know it don't know the half of it. But the

problem is that His prophets and preachers tend to be

narrow-minded, touchy, selfish, racially biased vindictive little
prima dons and therefore G-d has to work miracles as fast as a
magician (out of his hat G-d pulls a wind, a lottery draw, a
submarine fish, a revival, a quick-growing castor-oil plant and a
worm) to get any use out of his hard-to-manage ministers.

In 1:3 we see that Jonah didn't want to preach to his people's
traditional enemies because he wanted G-d to judge them and he
knew a forgiving G-d like his would not judge them if they
believed Jonah's message and repented. This is so typical today
of the religious feelings of many Christians against Jews, Jews
against Christians, and Muslims against both and vice versa.

Whereas Jonah was a Jew with these kinds of feelings toward non-Jews, today we are in a reverse situation: we know Jews are guilty of rejecting the Moshiach so we don't preach to them because we want prophecy to be fulfilled against them. We know Muslims are guilty of rejecting the prophetic finality of Moshiach Yehoshua's coming so we don't preach to them because we want prophesy to be fulfilled against them. What petty little religious Jonahs we all are! And no wonder this religious hatred has desolated Lebanon in our generation and threatens to ignite the Middle East into World War III. The book of Jonah shows that G-d wants reconciliation and peace between G-d and man and

between man and his fellow men, and this little book shows the

folly of disobeying G-d and backsliding away from G-d's Matthew

28:19-20 Great Commission. What madness that Jonah would trust

his own opinion and a fragile little boat in a precarious sea

more than the wisdom of a compassionate omniscient G-d who

commends him to preach salvation to even Israel's enemies.

Shliach Sha'ul must have been thinking of what happened to Jonah

when he said, "Woe to me if I preach not the Besuras Hageulah!"

(I Cor. 9:16).

Joppa, where this story really sets sail, is also the scene in

Acts 10 and 15:6-11 where another maggid (preacher) named Simon

Shliach Kefa son of Jonah had to learn Jonah's lesson...a maggid

(preacher) not like Jonah, the man caught by a fish, but like the other Shluchim, a fisher catching men. Shliach Kefa had to learn that in this world's Jewish/non-Jewish confrontation, G-d is not a respecter of persons but draws near to any who are willing to repent. The author of the book of Jonah ironically emphasizes the G-d-fearing quality of the pagan sailors and contrasts their fear of G-d (and that of the Ninevites) with the brazen presumptuousness of the disobedient and uncompassionate prophet Jonah. Like the voyage narrative at the conclusion of the book of Acts, the author is making the subtle point in chapter one of the book of Jonah that we of the human race are all in this little

boat of life together, and that unless we listen to G-d's
prophecy we will all alike perish. However, we see that very
often G-d has to send a wind of tribulation to get His prophet to
spit out the saving message (just as He had to cause the big fish
to spit out the prophet!), and, since we all tend to be Jonahs
most of the time, we can understand why Shliach Sha'ul warned all
believers that we must go through much tribulation to enter the
Kingdom of G-d (Acts 14:22).

Look at 1:7. Have you ever noticed how the unbelievers who are
in the same existential boat with you always find out you are a
believer--even when, like Jonah, you try to hide it?

There are many unbelievers, even many among college-educated Bible scholars. Unfortunately, Moshiach Yehoshua was not college-educated, so he thought this "big fish" story was historical, whereas our modern college-educated Bible scholars assure both us and G-d that this "big fish" story did not really happen. Like Jonah, our preachers trust their own notions more than G-d's miraculous Word. However, there have been incidents recorded of people surviving being swallowed by sperm whales, which could be large enough to swallow a living man "if he managed to negotiate the air-supply tract of the mammal and reach the great laryngeal pouch" (R.K. Harrison, Introduction, p.907).

The story of Jonah has the literary density of meaning to provide a parabolic moral lesson or an allegorical picture of a disobedient chosen prophet of a disobedient chosen people who must be chastened in death and resurrection in order to be a witness to the rest of the world's remnant (which G-d has also chosen to save). Thus the book provides a subtle rationale for why the Exile had to happen: to move Israel from idolatry to a more universal vision of their service to a world-embracing G-d.

Yet, there is no reason to eliminate the spiritual biography of

the historical Jonah, an anti-hero like Shliach Kefa in the

Besuras Hageulahs and Shliach Sha'ul in the early part of Acts.

Those who deny the story any veracity have an anti-supernatural

bias, that is not particularly modern or sophisticated.

On the contrary, what happened to Jonah is a key historical

"sign" of the central historical miracle of the Bible--the

sacrificial death and saving resurrection of the Messianic

prophet who is greater than Jonah (Moshiach Yehoshua), and the

men of Ninevah will stand up at the judgment and rebuke the

unbelievers of our generation as worse than them, for they

apparently repented when they believed Jonah's testimony of his

burial-tevilah and

resurrection from the sea, whereas "someone greater than Jonah

(Moshiach Yehoshua) is here" with a greater burial-tevilah and

resurrection (Matthew 12:38-41). The repentant Gentiles of
Ninevah will one day rebuke the Jewish rabbis of our day who say
that the Jewish Bible knows nothing of a buried and resurrected
prophet type of Moshiach; foregleamings of this type of prophet
are found not only in Psalms 16, 22, Isa. 53 and Gen. 37:24 but
also in Jer. 38:5-9, to say nothing of the motif of national
burial-exile and resurrection-return in the pre-exilic prophets
and in places like Ezekiel 37. The picture of death swallowing
and then vomiting up a prophet is the most graphic predictive
sign of the death and resurrection of the Moshiach that we could
expect in the Tanakh. The "three days and three nights" of Jon.

1:17 is the time period after which decomposition of the body begins (see Yochanan 11:39 and Hos. 6:1-3). The fundamentals of the Good News entail the fact that G-d raised the Moshiach on the third day (I Cor. 15:4), since the Moshiach was to die but his body was not to see corruption (Ps. 16:10). Notice that Jonah gets to this extreme point of desperation before he even prays about his condition of being stubbornly out of the will of G-d (Jon. 2:1; compare 1:5-6).

Since Jonah is an important character in the Qur'an (37:139-148; 68:48f; etc.), here is an important point for witness to Muslims as well. Actually Jonah, ministering ca. 800-750 B.C. did prophesy that Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.) would expand the

northern kingdom (II Kg. 14:25), but what happened to Jonah is as

important as anything he ever prophesied. This is also true of

Yehoshua. This is also true of each of us, and is why we should

never tire of giving our personal testimony of what happened to

us when Moshiach Yehoshua came into our lives.

But apparently Jonah was a small man (small enough to be

swallowed) and in 3:3 he apparently felt swallowed up by a vast

metropolis. He had a great testimony of a great personal

deliverance, but the city was so large how could he be equal to

the task? How many days would it take a street preacher to preach

across your city? How many days would it take a visitor to

minister to people house to house? Verse 4 says that "he started out" and apparently he took it one day at a time in some systematic fashion that G-d revealed to him, and G-d gave him an audience with people who gave him a bigger audience until even the king had heard and was his ally. Thus a great revival came to a city because one man finally (and unheroically) obeyed G-d.

Look at 2:7. G-d used an instrument of certain death--a great fish--to save both his prophet and the Ninevites out of the primal waters of chaos and death, just as later G-d used another instrument of certain death--the wood of Golgotha--to save us "Ninevites."

Look at 4:10. The "Gardener" of Ninevah, the Creator of all men,

rebukes the self-centered and ethnically prejudiced mourner of a

castor bean plant for his lack of compassion and love for G-d's

planting, Ninevah. Jonah is so blind (he is a type of that blind

Servant of the L-rd Israel seen so clearly in the second half of

Isaiah) that he cannot even see his own great personal investment

in G-d's "Garden" Ninevah and all the many trials and tests that

constitute Jonah's personal stake in G-d's harvest. What blind

laborers we are! We cannot even see and properly weigh our own

struggles! So it is that many ministers, after pouring out vast

energy for many years, sometimes backslide at the end of their

ministry, like a rich man stupidly discarding his hard-earned

bank deposit book. The point is that we who have been called by

G-d have been called not as an end in itself but as a means to call others. G-d wants us to know his heart for the lost and to share it so that His promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:3) would be fulfilled: that all the peoples of the earth would not be enemies but would bless themselves in one another as fellow heirs of Abraham's faith.

The Moshiach is the Prophet like Moses, the Prophet like Jonah, whom Death swallows and then vomits up: Moshiach the Firstborn from the dead, the King of Kings, who does not see death's corruption. Instead He sees the light of resurrection light and divides its booty with those He makes righteous by bearing away

the curse of their wicked depravity. See Deut. 18:15-18; Isa.

49:9-10; Hos. 11:1; Ps. 89:27; 16:10; 21:5; 61:7; 89:4; Isa.

53:5, 10-12; Gen. 22:4; Hos. 6:2; Amos 9:11.

Note well: Jon. 1:14. People are perishing because of disobedient

street preachers who don't go.

Jonah has to have reality splashed in his face to wake up. He has

to be reminded of G-d's having personally saved him (Jon. 2:6)

from the pit. He has to repent of stubborn disobedience and he

has to stop forsaking his true loyalty (Jon. 2:8). Read Jon.

chps. 2-3 again. Notice: the street preacher changes his mind,

the people hear and change their mind, and then G-d relents and

changes his mind, all as a result of forsaking stubbornness

regarding preaching on the street.

Notice: the street preacher is often angry, and G-d may put

righteous anger in his heart. However, he may be angry about the

wrong things. Jonah was (see Jon. 4:1-4). Does G-d not have a

right to be angry if his street preachers don't obey Him and

don't show His compassion for the work of his hands, his lost

sheep that he so urgently desires to be found? (See Jon.

4:10-11).

JONAH 1:17b (HEBREW 2:1b)

And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three

nights.

MICHOH (MICAH)

After the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam Hussein, the dictator of Iraq, found himself short of cash. He had been extorting vast sums from Kuwait by means of military intimidation, but when the Kuwaiti government did not give him all that he demanded, he invaded and annexed the country in 1990, an act that started the Persian Gulf war. Similarly, in the 8th century, the Assyrian Empire (modern Iraq) was extracting "tribute" from both Israel and Judah. In 724 B.C. Hoshea, the last king of the northern kingdom of Israel, withheld tribute from Assyria and triggered an invasion. But II

Kings 17:1-41 gives us G-d's perspective of these events, telling of the idolatry and stubborn godlessness of G-d's people and how these led to this terrible war. Micah was one of the prophets that G-d raised up to preach repentance to the people and to warn of the imminent divine judgment that would make itself felt in the Assyrian invasion. In fact, the 12 towns in southwest Judah named in Mic. 1:10-16 (with word plays on their names expressing their terrible fate) are in the path of the coming Assyrian invader. Micah's prophesy is especially relevant to our day. Just as in modern times, Assyria (modern Iraq) was Israel's primary enemy Micah's day.

Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos. The Lord

showed this 8th century prophet (he probably ministered sometime roughly between 740 and 701 B.C.) what was going to happen to Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, and Jerusalem, Judah's southern capital. The Lord warned Micah about the enemy army approaching as G-d's agent of judgment. Damascus was the capital of Aram (Syria). It fell to the Assyrians in 732 B.C. But G-d was already revealing to Micah that He "would make Samaria a pile of ruins in the open country" (1:6-7). The Assyrian invasion, which would threaten Jerusalem itself by 701 B.C., is seen in Mic.1:9 as an incurable wound spreading to "the very gate of the people, even to Jerusalem itself." Samaria was

destroyed by the Assyrians in 722-721 B.C. Gath, a city of the

Philistines, fell to the Assyrians in 711 B.C. Sennacherib's

march from Lachish to Jerusalem in 701 B.C. is Micah's prophecy

in 1:10-16.

While Nancy Reagan used astrology to decide her husband's

schedule, U.S. President Ronald Reagan spent some of his

astrologically determined time making sure Iraq had American

government approval to purchase huge quantities of weapons from

other countries as well as secret arms sales to Iraq from the

U.S. But during the Iran-Iraq war, nations that sold weapons to

Iraq soon thereafter often found those same weapons being

directed toward their own soldiers in the Persian Gulf War. These

pro-Iraqi nations made the mistake of King Ahar. When faced with

enemies and in need of militarily strong allies, Ahar king of

Judah (735-715 B.C.), inspite of Isaiah's warnings in Isa. chs

7-8, looked to Assyria's military might for protection instead of

almighty G-d and followed a pro-Assyrian policy in his defense

against Syria and the Northern Kingdom. However, ultimately,

this faithless and entangling policy of Ahaz led not only to the

fall of Syria's capital Damascus (732 B.C.), but also to the

captivity, exile, assimilation and national extinction of the

northern kingdom of Israel. Worse yet, Judah itself never fully

recovered from the political and religious "Pandora's Box" she

opened when she refused the divine protection that comes with a national revival and instead unlatched the door to her treacherous ally Assyria.

From 705 to 681 B.C. the Assyrian king was Sennacherib

(pronounced in English "sen-AK-uhr-ib". This king is referred to

in places like Isaiah 8:7-8; 36:1-37:38 and II Kings.) He is a

type of the Anti-Moshiach, the final Enemy of Israel (see Micah

5:5, which says "the Assyrian will invade our land"). Not much

has changed in 2700 years: the modern occupier of the land of

Assyria is Iraq, still an enemy of Israel. In fact, both Assyria

and Babylon lay within the borders of modern Iraq. The Assyrian

Empire included, along with her other territories, what is today

Iran, Iraq, and Syria (all Israel's enemies today). A Syrian (Antiochus Epiphanes) is seen as typical of the Anti-Moshiach in Dan. ch 8 and 11; and as Daniel prays against this beast, one of the demons wrestling against him is called the "prince of the Persian kingdom (Dan. 10:13)." Iran is often referred to as Persia in the Bible because the Assyrian Empire was defeated by the Babylonian Empire which was in turn defeated by the Persian Empire, and the Persian Empire was the former official name of Iran. It is worth noting that important enemies of Israel today are Shiite terrorists from Iran and Syrian-backed elements in Lebanon as well as the Iraqis; so little has changed since Micah

and other of G-d's preachers prophesied the existence of these coming adversaries. Also the Philistines (their principle cities were Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath (Mic. 1:10), and Gaza all located in the southern coastal area of Israel) are still the enemies of Israel in the persons who carry their name today, the Palestinians (Palaistinoi is a Greek name given to the descendants of the Philistines).

Micah preached during the reign of Jotham king of Judah (750-732) and Ahaz king of Judah (735-715) and during part of the reign of Hezekiah (715-686). As a street preacher, Micah shocked his audience by walking around barefoot in a loincloth "naked" as if he were a slave (see 1:8) being taken hostage in warfare (see,

similarly, also Isa. 20:2-6). Micah wanted to act out for his audience how their sins would soon cause them to be costumed. The dramatic way he was dressed as he preached made him act not only like a slave taken hostage but also like a mourner being dragged off as a prisoner. He was warning his generation that they were going to be bereaved of their children who would be going into exile as prisoners (1:16) and that they themselves would soon be defeated slaves and vassals and exiles. His lament is found in 1:8-16. Street preachers are needed now (with Micah's sorrow for the fate of sinners) who can pray for a revival--like Micah prays in 7:14-20. In the way they dress and act these modern day

"Micahs" can warn of exactly how the children of our generation are being dragged off into destruction and into an exile of sin leading to judgment. These street maggid (preacher)s can call for repentance as they depict the "deadly blow" G-d is preparing for our wicked nation (see 1:9 where Micah speaks of Samaria's unhealable wound). Micah describes a degraded nation: a land of muggers (2:8), villainous landlords (2:9), clever urban land-grabbers stealing the farmers' property by means of nefarious schemes (2:3-5), false prophets (they preach for money and have no word from the Lord--contrast 3:5-7 with 3:8), bribe-taking judges and hireling kohanim (3:5-12) and impoverished, exploited children (2:9). Look what Micah says

about dishonesty and cheating of any kind (6:11-16) In fact, any murderous nation guilty of millions of abortions yet unjustly and heartlessly refusing to "rescue those who are being taken away to death" (Prov. 24:11) is under the warning of Mic.2:3, where G-d says, "I am planning disaster for this nation...you won't be able to save yourselves." The wealthy wicked who, like feeble innocuous preachers, had better stop resisting Micah's preaching (2:1-11) or their wealth will be lost in the coming catastrophic end of the nation. Just as the land-grabbing greedy businessmen had evicted the widow and the poor children of Israel, so G-d will now evict them and they will leave their rich estates and go into destruction in the Exile (see Mic. 2:10). As for the

preachers who preach for money, the things that will safely keep them on the payroll of their corrupt constituencies will also lead to G-d not at all confirming their prophecies as true and their preaching as worthy (Mic. 3:5-7).

Look at Mic. 5:12. Certainly, the occult and new age religion will not save us from G-d's judgment on a thieving, violent nation of heathen idolators and liars. The astrologers and fortune tellers are a common sight today, even operating from sidewalk tables. Micah preaches against both sorcerers and soothsayers in 5:12, which will "be destroyed" on "that day" (5:10). A soothsayer was a person who used occult powers to

foretell events. This is also called divination. (See Deut.

18:10-14.) Sorcery or witchcraft is the attempt to use the power

of the devil to curse or cast a spell on a person or do magic.

Necromancy is calling up the dead, or the occult belief in such,

especially as a means of fortune telling. The witch at Endor in

I Samuel 28 told Saul's fortune by means of a "familiar

spirit"--that is, a demon that served her and worked with her on

an on-going "familiar" basis. For a sample of how the Bible

opposes all this, see: Isa. 8:19; 44:25; 47:12-15; Acts 8:9-24;

13:6-11; 19:13-20; Rev. 21:8; 22:15. Fortune tellers are like the

false prophets and lying religious leaders that Micah refers to

in 3:5,11, because they also prostitute and pervert religion for

money.

Samaria was the apostate capital of the Northern Kingdom of

Israel. She was marked for destruction. She had helped turn the

holy faith of Israel into Baal worship, a fertility cult which

promised rains and harvests by means of an orgy of religious

prostitution. The money from religious brothels had been melted

down to make idols, and Mic. 1:7 seems to say that invading

soldiers will demolish Samaria's syncretistic religion and carry

away her filthy idols. Hosea and Micah are preaching against Baal

worship's fertility cult prostitution (see also Judg. 8:22; Ezek.

16). Baal was a nature g-d or weather g-d associated with

thunderstorms as in I Kings 17:1-18:46 (notice I Kings 18:45
where the thunderstorm comes from the G-d of Israel, not Baal,
whose proponents have been defeated by Elijah). Baal was a
fertility g-d or sex cult g-d whose worship involved erotic acts
and public immorality (much like today's prostitution, soft and
hard porn movies, video stores, pornographic literature, massage
parlors, gay bars and sex clubs, etc). Baal worship was
apparently based on imitative magic: that is, magic that attempts
to control the universe by mimicking the desired event. If one
wants Baal, the prodigious lover and fertile bringer of rain and
harvests, to "ride the clouds" to his consort Asherah (Judg. 3:7)
so that one's barley harvest will be abundant, then one worships

Baal by visiting a cult prostitute and engaging in ritual

fornication. This is the rationale of imitative magic behind the

demonic worship of Baal, and this is also the background of Micah

1:7, where Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom and a

fountainhead of this pagan religious wickedness, is marked out

for destruction. The Asherah poles in 5:14 are Asherah Idols.

But notice Micah's message in Mic.1:2-7, "The L-rd is coming?"

Why? Because of the sins of the people, because of the idolatry

of Samaria (1:5-7), and this explains the coming desolation and

devastation. The parousia comes down in an anticipatory way with

the arrival of Assyrian enemy troops at the gates of Jerusalem in

701 B.C. (see Mic. 1:12). If any nation thinks that pornography will not be judged by the L-rd with violent judgment, that nation should look at Samaria and heed the warning of Mic. 1:2-9.

Micah shows evidence of containing material that was preached on many different occasions and over a number of years, but was compiled by Micah and arranged in an artistic poetic book to be preserved and published. Each of us should have a preaching Bible and a journal or notebook to preserve the study notes and insights that G-d gives us so that we can refine them and use them in ministry at the proper time.

Notice how unpopular Micah's preaching was (2:6,11) in contrast to the false prophets (3:11). Nevertheless, it is precisely

because of these lying preachers that Jerusalem will be destroyed

by the Babylonians (3:12; 4:10), and "you will go to Babylon.

But you will be saved from that place. The L-rd will go there and

take you back from your enemies" (4:10). Micah's words were

fulfilled in the first Babylonian deportation (605 B.C.), the

second Babylonian deportation (597 B.C.) and the Babylonian

destruction of Jerusalem (586 B.C.) and in the return of the Jews

from exile in 538 B.C. at the order of Cyrus King of Persia.

G-d's Spirit filled Micah with power to preach justice and an

uncompromised message (3:8), including the prophecy (5:2)

regarding the birth of the Moshiach, the ideal Moshel (ruler) of

Israel who will come forth "to Me," and whose "goings forth" are
from mikedem "olden time," even "from the days of eternity" mimei
olam (see Prov. 8:23 meOlam "from eternity;" Gen 3:22 l'Olam)
"and live forever;" Ps. 90:2 umeolame ad olam "from everlasting
to everlasting You are G-d;" therefore, since, according to Mal.
3:1, the Moshiach is the L-rd, we should hardly be surprised if
"His origin is from forever". Notice also that Mic. 5:1 says
that the Moshiach, like a helpless shopfet Judge, will be
insulted by a slap in the face (5:1). Although Assyria is said
to invade Israel (5:5-6), Israel will ultimately defeat this
enemy (see 5:6), just as the United States did on Purim, 1991,
for Israel's sake in a miraculous answer to prayer. This land of

Assyria/Babylon/Iraq is called the "land of Nimrod" because

Nimrod the warrior had his kingdom located in that area (Gen.

10:8-11). The remnant is scattered by G-d among the nations but

will overcome and prevail, though these survivors will in the

process be punished for their sins (5:8-15). Mic. 6:5 says to

remember the saving acts of the L-rd, in particular alluding to

Joshua 3:15 where the Jordan river parts like the Red Sea when it

is crossed as Joshua leads the children of Israel in to take the

promised land.

Memory verse: Micah 6:8 (see Deut. 10:12). Remember to be kind!

Study the great sermon found in 6:1-8.

Well over a century before his words were fulfilled in 586 B.C.,

Micah announced the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the

Jerusalem Beis Hamikdash (3:12). Notice that Jerusalem is to be

destroyed because of the sins of rulers, kohanim, and false

prophets (3:11-12). For this great prophecy Micah was still

remembered in the days of Jeremiah over a hundred years later

(see Jer.26:1-19). Then in Micah 4:1-4, we see the Good News go

forth and the nations destroy their war weapons and in faith

gloriously stream in as Zion (Jerusalem) is finally exalted in

triumph. Micah also predicted a time of tribulation is imminent

for this decadent world (7:1-6) in the coming days of judgment in

which a person's enemies will be members of his own family.

Israel will be severely chastened but will be saved in the end

(7:7-9) and her enemies will be destroyed (7:10).

A modern day miracle, the return of the Jewish people from the

dispersion is prophesied in 7:11-12. The message of hope in

2:12-15 is that a remnant will be restored. See also 4:1-5:15;

7:7-30. Everything that needs to be purged will be purged by the

L-rd (5:10-15).

The Moshiach will, according to Mic.5:3f, give up his people to

Exile until the time when Israel gives birth again and the

Moshiach's kindred return from Exile and sin to the people of

Israel. Then the Moshiach shall stand as a shepherd-king like

David, and shall feed His flock in the strength and majesty of

the Name of the L-rd, and a millennial security will abide with

Israel and the Moshiach shall be great to the ends of the earth

(Mic.5:4). The end-time Assyrian invader (the latter day Saddam

Hussein) shall find "seven shepherds and eight installed as

rulers" (meaning a more-than-sufficient deterrent) able to defeat

him and occupy his land and rescue Israel (Mic. 5:6), just as

America proved able to do during the Persian Gulf War. The rest

of chapter 5 seems to show the remnant of G-d ruling and reigning

with a rod of iron during the millennium.

MICAH 5:2 (1)

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are insignificant among

the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be

Ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from days of

eternity.

NACHUM (NAHUM)

Nahum probably wrote his prophecy shortly before 612 B.C.E., near

the time of the reforms of King Josiah of Judah (see II Kgs.

32:8-23:25). Over 100 years before, the Ninevites, those citizens

of Ninevah (the city made the capital of Assyria by King

Sennacherib) had apparently turned to G-d in a great revival

under the preaching of Jonah. Now, however, that generation had long been dead. Almost 100 years before Nahum prophesied, Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, had been destroyed (722 B.C.E.) by the spiritually untutored great grandsons of the people in Assyria who heard Jonah preach, and nearly 70 years before Nahum was written, Jerusalem itself had been threatened by these Assyrians (701 B.C.E.). Nah. 1:9 (NIV) proved true, however, because G-d did not give Ninevah a second victory over His people. In 663 B.C.E. the Assyrians even captured the Egyptian capital of Thebes (see Nah. 3:8). Now, near the time of King Josiah's revival in Jerusalem, G-d gives Nahum a dramatic you-are-there prophetic foreglimpse of the siege and

awesome destruction of Ninevah, Assyria's showplace capital.

Nahum's "vision" is written down a short time before the Medes

and the Chaldeans (from southern Babylon) and the Scythians

destroyed Ninevah in 612 B.C.E. and the Chaldeans or

neo-Babylonians triumphed over the Assyrian empire with the

destruction of this city. The Babylonian empire then lasted from

612 B.C.E. until 539 B.C.E., when Cyrus King of Persia conquered

the city of Babylon.

This prophecy is very important. It shows what G-d will do in the

end to every cruel militaristic nation--what He did to Assyria

and her capital Nineveh (see 1:8). Chapter 2 gives Nahum's vivid

description of the siege and sack of Ninevah. Nahum's little book also gives a word of encouragement (his name means "comfort" in Hebrew) to the oppressed remnant of G-d suffering under every oppressive military power, whether it be Assyria or some modern counterpart (1:12-13).

The key to the doctrine of justification is found in 1:3, which says, "G-d will by no means leave the guilty unpunished." Here we have the uncompromised character of G-d's justice, which must be understood in order to grasp the cruciality of the death of the Mashiach which satisfied that justice by providing an acceptable vicarious punishment for the guilty (Isaiah 53:5). When we grasp this doctrine, we realize the basis for our being acquitted of our

quilt before G-d. We are no longer guilty under G-d's avenging

wrath (we have peace with G-d--see Isaiah 53:5). We have been

taken out of condemnation and are no longer culpably left

unpunished because the vicarious punishment of Moshiach and his

resurrection is accredited to us as a free gift through faith

--Romans 4:23-25. We also see the key to our sanctification is

in offering our bodies as dead-to-sin living sacrifices no longer

under the power of the old guilty nature, which was sin-prone and

culpable as far as punishment is concerned (see Romans 12:1-2).

Indeed, we can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory

because that old life is dead and gone and the life we now enjoy

is a new creation life far above the death-dealing sinful life

that once doomed us (I Shimon Kefa 1:8; Gal. 2:20; II Cor. 5:17;

Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1-3; Ro. 7:21-25).

G-d will indeed punish those who oppose his holy purposes (1:11;

2:1) for his people (1:12-13) and the nations (3:1-7). 2:8 seems

to refer to Thebes in Upper Egypt, which was sacked by the

Assyrians in 663, and Nahum is saying that just as that great

power fell, so will Assyria fall. For Assyria, which had been

G-d's instrument of punishment on the unrepentant northern

kingdom of Israel, must now receive its own punishment for all

its wicked, cruel deeds (1:14; 2:13-14; 3:1,4,19; see also Is.

37:10-13). "Who can stand before His wrath?" (1:6) so today every

barbaric power that unleashes cruelty on the innocent can expect

the same destruction from the avenging G-d of Abraham.

Saddam Hussein's latter-day "Assyrian" army, threatening Israel

with SCUD missiles, met destruction on Purim, 1991, in a modern

fulfillment of this prophecy. Nah. 1:11 and also Nah. 3:18 may

refer to the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (669-627 B.C.E.). The

"you" in Nah. 1:12 refers to "Judah" (see Nah.1:15). The "you" in

Nah. 1:14 refers to Ninevah, whose end is imminent. Nah. 1:18

speaks of a proclaimer of Besorah (good news). When G-d defeats

his enemies (in this case the Ninevites/Assyrians), the people of

G-d publish "good news" (see also Is. 40:9; 52:7). Of course,

death is the greatest enemy of all, so in 1991, if there were really a revival in the U.S.A., Americans would not only be proclaiming the Good News of the defeat of the defiant modern Assyrian threat (the Iraqis) in the Persian Gulf War; they would also be proclaiming good news of the defeat of the greatest enemy of all--death itself--through the death and reurrection of Yehoshua the Moshiach.

NAHUM 1:3

The L-rd is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all leave the guilty unpunished: the L-rd hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.

[In the Torah, death is not merely the curse of sin--see Genesis

2:17; 3:17-19. Death is also the legal penalty of justice so

that G-d's honor is not impugned by allowing evil to go

unpunished--Nahum 1:3. Therefore, should we be surprised that

when the Word of G-d came in the Law of Moses he demanded death

for sin? Should we be surprised that when the Word of G-d came

in the Moshiach he satisfied his own demand by offering his own

death as justice and mercy for all transgressors? The Word that

promised life through Moses and the Prophets came to provide a

death that would allow no sins to go unpunished, a death that

would shield the redeemed from the curse of death and bring

divine justice and immortality to light. The Word of G-d became
our Moshiach, our Deliverer. By his death he turned aside his
Father's holy fury against all our ungodliness. He took the
penalty of death for us. When he said, "My G-d, why have you
abandoned me?" He was G-d's righteous and merciful Word taking
our curse of abandonment from G-d--the curse of hell--upon
himself to rescue us from the punishment we all deserve--see
Isaiah 53:5. He did this so that all who believe can be raised to
a new spiritual existence with him.]

CHABAKUK (HABAKKUK)

The greatest king that ruled the kingdom of Judah during this time was killed in battle in 609 B.C.E. His name was Josiah and it was under him that a spiritual revival occurred when part of the Torah was rediscovered in the Beis Hamikdash and studied. King Josiah tried to stop Pharaoh Neco of Egypt from assisting Assyria in its futile last stand against Babylon. Josiah was killed in that battle fought with Neco at Megiddo (near modern Haifa) just 4 years before the Babylonians defeated Neco at Carchemish (605 B.C.E.), which tipped the balance of power toward Nebuchadnezzar who was now free to subjugate Judah, starting in 605 B.C.E.

See 1:6. At around this time (in the decade 608-598 B.C.E.) in the history of Judah, Habakkuk (probably a contemporary of Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Obadiah, Nahum, Daniel and Ezekiel, roughly speaking) was given the prophetic vision to see and inquire why G-d was allowing the godless, ruthless Babylonians to pose a greater and greater threat to the more righteous kingdom of Judah (the northern kingdom having long ago gone into Assyrian deportation --722 B.C.E.).

The worthless king of Judah (whom Jeremiah predicted would have the burial of a donkey--Jeremiah 22:18) with the audacity to cut up and throw into the fire the Word of G-d (Jeremiah 36:23) was the murderous, idolatrous, oppressive Jehoickim (who was a vassal

of Egypt and took the Egyptian name Eliakim before he became a rebellious vassal of Babylon and was put to death on the way to captivity in 598 at the age of 36). Habakkuk seems to be asking in 1:2-4 why G-d, who is a G-d of justice and a protector of the righteous, is not acting to punish the evil establishment of this villainous king's Judaeen society?

The answer comes back in 1:5-11. G-d has a breath-taking answer so astounding that few will even believe it when they are told (see 1:5 and also Acts 13:41 to see how Shliach Sha'ul applied this verse to the Besuras Hageulah). G-d is raising up the Chaldeans (the Babylonians), who are an even more powerful and

more villainous army of cut-throats, and are more than adequate to

punish the righteous-persecuting rogues of Habakkuk's day. But

this answer from G-d gives rise to another question stated in

1:12-2:1. Habakkuk's "complaint" (2:1) is this: how can G-d

justify allowing a people (the Babylonians) more wicked than

another people (the Jews) to be His punitive agents and,

moreover, allow these g-dless "fishers of men" seemingly to have

"open season" (1:14-15) on the people of G-d? How can G-d be

silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they?

(1:13) This is the main question the book raises.

Surely it can be agreed that the Babylonians are unrighteous.

Their own might is their g-d (1:11) and the only "justice" they

acknowledge is what proceeds from themselves (1:7)

Habakkuk trusts the L-rd and patiently, confidently, waits for

the answer. The answer comes in 2:2-3:19. The dog-eat-dog manner

in which wicked nations weary themselves against each other will

not profit them (2:13), for "the earth will be filled with the

knowledge of the glory of the L-rd, as the waters cover the sea"

(2:14). In the midst of all this villainy, wicked men trust

themselves alone and die. Shliach Sha'ul says in Romans 1:24

that part of the penalty of sin is in the sin itself, for when

G-d gives a man over to his own ugly sin, he becomes an ugly

sinner. If a man or woman practices perversion, he or she

becomes a pervert. If one gives himself over to vanity, one becomes a narcissistic bore; to gluttony, an obese glutton; to liquor, a drunk; to violence, a heartless butcher. "The arrogant do not endure" (2:5), they have forfeited their life (2:10). And the enemies they are creating will eventually arise to settle the score, and destroyers like the Babylonians will themselves be destroyed (2:7-8). However, the righteous will live by personal faithfulness to G-d (2:4), even by their personal trust and faith in G-d, who is worthy (despite what Satan says in that other theodicy, Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5) of exalted praise even if barbarous invasion comes and everything in this brief life is taken away

and all hope outside of G-d Himself fails (3:16-19). The idols

of the barbarous invaders are not real, but the L-rd is in his

holy Beis Hamikdash; "let all the earth keep silence before Him"

(2:20).

Habakkuk's prayer is that, "In wrath may You remember mercy"

(3:2). Hab. 3:3-15 depicts the Lord's glorious coming from Sinai,

marching toward Edom as at the Exodus (Dt. 33:2), recalling the

history of Israel and His victorious march in the conquest of the

land for the salvation of his people. But G-d also came forth

triumphantly (3:13) to rescue his Mashiyach (Moshiach,

"Anointed").

Shliach Sha'ul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17 and Galatians

3:11. This verse sums up the key doctrine of the Bible, that regeneration and its attendant peace with G-d that passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7) does not come from ourselves or our religious and ethical strivings but is a gracious gift from G-d, the gift of saving faith in the infallible Word of G-d (Ephesians 2:8; Romans 10:13-14; II Tim. 3:16; Yochanan 10:35) who inscripturated Himself in the Bible and incarnated Himself as the Moshiach and now lives in those who are called by G-d to abundant new life in the Ruach Hakodesh.

Habakkuk was both a theologian and an artist. The musical notations in chapter 3 tell us that he may have been a Beis

Hamikdash prophet (a member of the Beis Hamikdash staff who declared the Word of G-d especially in relation to various assemblies and feast celebrations) who composed his oracle from G-d in an artistic musical setting for use in the Beis Hamikdash in Jerusalem.

HABAKKUK 2:4

Behold, as for the one that is lifted up, his soul is not right within him: but the righteous shall live by his faith.

ZEFANYAH (ZEPHANIAH)

Zephaniah (640-622) prophesied between the time of Isaiah and

Jeremiah, roughly 626 B.C.E. near the time of Jeremiah's call to

the office of prophet. Zephaniah's preaching helped (with

Jeremiah's) to spark King Josiah's revival (621 B.C.E.--see II

Kings ch 23) after the wicked reigns of Manassah and his son Amon

had left the people of Judah in need of a spiritual awakening.

Zephaniah may have been a great, great grandson of Hezekiah King

of Judah (1:1). We know he prophesied before Ninevah was

destroyed in 612 B.C.E. (see 2:13).

Mankind is in danger of being swept off the face of the earth

(1:2-3). Backsliders, if they don't repent, will be destroyed

(see 1:6). For the great, dark, terrifying Day of the L-rd is

karov (near--1:7,15-16) and hastening fast (1:14). The

superstitious (1:9) and those syncretists who try to mix the

faith with Canaanite, Ammonite, and Assyrian religion (1:4-5)

will be destroyed, as will the complacent, too indifferent to

trouble themselves making inquiry of the L-rd (see Zeph. 1:12 and

II Shimon Kefa 3:3-4). Money won't save anyone on that day, when

G-d will make a full and terrible end of sinners, and distress

will fall on all living (1:17-18).

In view of this Day of divine wrath so imminently approaching,

believers should repent of pride, humble themselves (2:3), seek

righteousness, seek the L-rd, through whom one may perhaps "be

hidden on the day of the L-rd's wrath" (2:3). A revival is shown

to be gathering together in one accord, in a spirit of humility,

to seek the L-rd (2:1-3). Notice that the L-rd will not be hidden

on the Day of the L-rd, but the believers may be hidden, hidden,

that is, from G-d's wrath. Elijah's rapture was almost hidden

from Elisha (II Kings 3:10). So G-d will in some way hide His

people when He reverses their fortune. (2:7) and puts their

oppressive enemies under their feet (2:9). The Nubians ("Cush")

mentioned in Ezekiel 38 will also be plundered (2:12).

The kohanim whose careless interpretation and teaching has "done

violence to the Law", the officials, the judges, the prophets --

all the leaders in Jerusalem are shamelessly unafraid of the Day
of the L-rd that is coming. Past destruction of evil cities like
Sodom and Gommorah (2:9) does not phase Jerusalem, who is all the
more eager to make all her deeds corrupt (3:1-7). Therefore, G-d
will gather all nations and the whole earth will be consumed in
fire (3:8). G-d is going to remove the proud and haughty and
leave a remnant of humble and lowly people (3:11-12).

Zephaniah was used to start a revival. What did he preach?

First, he attacked the false g-ds his people worshipped (1:4-5),
the sex-g-d (Baal) and the kohanim of their sex cult that the
people revered more than the L-rd's true servants. Zephaniah

also attacked the hypocrites who bowed publicly before the true

G-d but worshipped a false G-d in secret (1:5). 1:6 hits the

root evil--the unregenerate and desperately corrupt heart that

does not seek the true G-d and will not bother with Him (1:6).

Notice in 1:8-11 Zephaniah is not afraid to preach utter

destruction will befall the political and commercial

establishment of his day. This was a dangerous message for him.

The perils of complacency are depicted in 1:12-13. Zephaniah

rebuked a nation of indifferent nobodies who thought G-d

powerless to interfere with the ephemeral little lives they were

building for themselves through their brazenly sluggish

disinterest in the Word of G-d.

In 1:14-18 he graphically painted the horrors of the coming Day

of the L-rd. Then, having stirred their fear of the L-rd, he

called them to a spiritual change of heart in 2:1-3. Starting in

2:4, Zephaniah preached against the enemies of G-d in the west,

the Philistines (2:4-7); the east, Moab and Ammon (2:8-11); the

south, Nubia (2:12); the north, Assyria (2:13-15).

Then he turned on the leaders of Judah, her ruthlessly cunning

politicians, her bribe-hungry judges, her bragging preachers, her

theologians who "do violence to the Law." Zephaniah declared

that trouble is coming on the whole worthless brood (3:1-4)! G-d

laments that after all of His destruction of the g-dless pagans,

these religious people still haven't taken the hint and repented

(3:6-7). Therefore, judgment will have to begin with them(3:8).

The non-Jews will finally turn to the L-rd, according to 3:9-10,

and Shliach Sha'ul sees them joining the righteous Jewish remnant

in Romans 11. See 3:12. If G-d's judgment means destruction for

the wicked, it also means vindication of the righteous who,

refined by suffering, can render purer service (notice that a

small Jewish remnant would be restored to G-d after the

Babylonian captivity--see 2:7).

Here we see what G-d is preparing to do to Israel: that is, pour

out his wrath on the non-remnant while He hides His remnant or

elect and spares them from his angry, righteous judgment (see 2:3). Notice the promise of a great Gentile revival, and even of a "Pentecostal" transformation of a "deceitful tongue" of Judah (3:12) into "a pure speech" of the Gentiles (3:9). This heavenly "pure" speech was heard at Pentecost in Acts ch 2.

ZEPHANIAH 3:9

"Then I will purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the L-rd and serve Him shoulder to shoulder."

CHAGGAI (HAGGAI)

Zeal for the house of G-d consumed the Moshiach. He never spared

himself in making disciples and preaching and teaching and

throwing out of the Beis Hamikdash the money-changing profiteers.

However, in 520 B.C.E. the people who had returned from the

Babylonian Exile were allowing the Beis Hamikdash in Jerusalem to

lie in ruins (II Kings 25:8-17) while they spent all their time

building lovely houses for themselves (Hg. 1:4). Seventeen long

years had dragged by since the altar of the Beis Hamikdash had

been built by the Kohen Gadol Yehoshua (Ezra 3:1). The building

of the Beis Hamikdash itself had been delayed because of

unbelieving Samaritans in the land. These men caused political

interference with the Persian authorities who had initially

approved the return of the Jews.

However, Haggai got a word from G-d and started to preach with

the result that three weeks later the people had started work on

the Beis Hamikdash. This shows the power of anointed preaching

when G-d's Spirit is ready to move. Haggai's sermon encouraged

the people by showing them the way to G-d's favor, that up till

now they had missed getting the blessing because the Kingdom of

G-d was not put first in their lives. Poverty and drought and

crop failure and dissatisfaction (2:17) are curses from Dt.

28:15f on the people because they are not building G-d's house

(the Beis Hamikdash) and are instead building their own houses.

Then the L-rd stirred up the spirit of the Jewish-Persian

governor Zerubbabel (grandson of one of the last kings of Judah,

Jehoiachin) and the spirit of the Persian-born Jewish Kohen Gadol

Yehoshua/Joshua (Ezra 3:8) and the spirit of the people. And they

began to work on the Beis Hamikdash!

Then, a month after his first sermon, Haggai got another message

from the L-rd. The people are not to fear, nor are they to

compare this Beis Hamikdash to Shlomo's Beis Hamikdash (some of

the elderly had seen Shlomo's Beis Hamikdash and were making the

negative comparison). They are not to see what they are doing by

comparison as "nothing" (2:3). They are to go to work and to know that G-d is with them. Indeed, Haggai sees G-d's Spirit dwelling in their midst as at the Exodus (2:5; Ex. 13:21-22; 14:19-20).

With great Messianic portent, Haggai prophesies that G-d is going to shake the heavens and chemdat kol hagoyim "the Desired of all nations" (i.e. the Moshiach; will come. Mal. 3:1 calls Him, "the Messenger of the Covenant, whom you desire." When the Moshiach comes, G-d will fill the Beis Hamikdash with greater splendor and glory than Solomon did, because "one greater than Solomon" will be coming to this Beis Hamikdash. Haggai's prophecy about the silver and the gold (2:8) was also fulfilled because Herod did a lavish refurbishing of the Beis Hamikdash a few hundred years

later.

The man in charge of rebuilding this "Second Beis Hamikdash" that

Haggai is prophecying over is a man named Joshua or Yehoshua

(Ezra 3:8). The anglicized form of this name is "Moshiach

Yehoshua" and, because he is building the Beis Hamikdash, he is a

prophetic type of the son of Dovid who would, in the last days,

gather a new remnant for a new Exodus and build the Beis

Hamikdash of the Ruach Hakodesh on Pentecost (Shavuot) C.E. 30 as

"one greater than Shlomo." (See also the prophecies of Zechariah

3:8 and 6:11-13). Notice 2:20-23, where, by building the Beis

Hamikdash, Zerubbabel of the Davidic line is himself a partial

fulfillment of the II Sm. 7:12-16 promise to Dovid about the

Moshiach, so Zerubbabel's very presence on the Beis Hamikdash

site is evidence of the Messianic stirring now in progress

(compare "I am about to shake the heavens and the earth" in

2:6,7,21). When the Moshiach comes there will be a new Exodus

(2:5,22) and the throne of the world's kingdoms will be

overthrown (2:22). The "signet ring" in the last verse of Haggai

Is a symbol of Messianic authority over Dovid's house.

Two months later Haggai is preaching again and has another word

from the L-rd. He rebukes the kohanim (raising a question --

compare Hg. 2:12 to Lv. 6:27--that causes them to rule against

themselves and the people) by proving that the evil all are

responsible for is much more infectious and pervading than any

holy consecration to the L-rd that they could claim (2:11-14).

Then Haggai gives them an encouraging word from the L-rd. From

the day that they laid the first stone and finished laying the

foundation of the Beis Hamikdash, G-d has begun to reverse the

blight of poverty that was on their lives and from this day on I

will bless you (2:15-19).

Haggai was a prophet consumed with G-d's cause. What was G-d's

cause, His goal? His goal was that the worshipping community be

posthaste set in G-d's order and the holy House be rebuilt

without further negligence, despite the danger or the sacrifice

required.

His preaching was aimed at getting the people spiritually

dissatisfied with the status quo, so that they would put their

hands to the task and go to work. The farmers needed to see that

G-d would not bless their crops if they put their crops above His

House (1:6); the wage-earners needed to see that G-d would not

plug the holes in their purses if they put their purses above

G-d's House; the kohanim needed to see that their offerings were

not acceptable if they found G-d's ruined House acceptable

(2:10-14).

Then, having stirred up (by the power of the Ruach Hakodesh) a

restless desire in the hearts of the leaders and the people

(1:14), the prophet's next task was to comfort and

encourage the flock so that no set-back would stop their forward

progress. "To work! I am with you!" says the L-rd. I will

prosper you. "Mine is the silver, mine the gold!(2:4-8). What a

magnificent promise! What congregation wouldn't roll up their

sleeves to attempt anything from G-d with a congregational leader

to preach messages to them like that! Haggai told them not to

focus on the negative in front of them (2:3) but the positive of

G-d's promise for the future (2:9). And once they cast off their

lethargy and set their hands to the task, look at the wonderful

promises "From today onward I intend to bless you" (2:19).

Remember, Haggai says, when you weren't involved in ministry or zealously working as the L-rd showed you, nothing you touched was blessed. But once you went to work, the blessing started and the blight stopped. This is because you are laying the foundation of the house of the L-rd (2:18)! Don't let such an important task seem as "nothing" to you (2:3). Get to work! The Moshiach is coming!

As it turned out, the Beis Hamikdash housing the Spirit that Haggai promised (2:9) and that he saw in the Davidic loins of Zerubbabel (2:23) was even more wonderful in its fulfillment than Haggai could have ever dreamed possible. The Beis Hamikdash G-d

raised up from the ruins of death on the morning that Yehoshua

rose from the dead as G-d's eternal kohen in his indestructible

resurrection body is the greatest gift mankind could ever

receive. A Beis Hamikdash like that is prepared for all who

believe in Him and die to the defiling shanty of this passing

world. When the Exodus at Jerusalem began on Pentecost (Shavuos)

and the Moshiach gave his remnant people the tevilah with the

Ruach Hakodesh, a Beis Hamikdash of kohanim was raised up for all

eternity and no greater privilege is possible than to be called

to minister as a kohen to G-d at this Beis Hamikdash, for it is

the Beis Hamikdash of G-d's (salvation, Yehoshua).

When Shliach Sha'ul was planning the collection journey we will

study about in the Brit Chadasha Scriptures, Hg. 2:7 along with

Is. 40:14; 60:6; 61:6 must have been on his mind.

HAGGAI 2:9

The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former,

says the L-rd of Hosts; and in this place I will give shalom,

says the L-rd of hosts.

ZECHARYAH (ZECHARIAH)

The Beis Hamikdash is under construction. The date is October 27,

520 B.C.E. The place is Jerusalem. It will take until the spring

of 516/515 B.C.E. for the Beis Hamikdash to be oompleted, and two

prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, are the key preachers G-d uses to

spur on the people to build. Zechariah begins by exhorting his

countrymen to repent and return to the L-rd. He reminds them of

how G-d had angrily taken their fathers into captivity (Jerusalem

and the Beis Hamikdash were destroyed by the Babylonians in 586

B.C.E.) because they refused to listen to earlier prophets like

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Micah, Hosea and Zephaniah (1:2-4). "And

my words and my statutes, which I

commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your

ancestors?" (1:6)

On February 15, 519 B.C.E. Zechariah has a vision at night (1:7).

He sees an angelic horse patrol reconnoitering the world for the L-rd and reporting that the pagan world was secure (1:11). They are apparently riding four horses and standing among some evergreen shrubs in the Kidron valley outside Jerusalem. They inquire of the L-rd and inform Zechariah that G-d's 70 year period (586-516 B.C.E.--see Jer. 25:11; 29:10) of anger against Jerusalem is over and the city and Beis Hamikdash will be rebuilt (1:16).

A new vision begins at 1:18. The powerful pagan nations in general (referred to in 1:15 as being guilty of "overkill" in serving as G-d's chastening instruments against the Jews) is

symbolized by four animal "horns." These horns of strength are being thrown down by "blacksmiths," the L-rd's workmen of destruction. Nabatean Arabs also served as "blacksmiths" of the L-rd when they threw down the Edomites (see Obadiah) in military defeat (they drove the Edomites from their homeland in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C.E.). Other "blacksmiths" had been the Persian Empire armies who brought down the horn of strength of the Babylonian Empire.

Zech. ch 2 shows the righteous survivors of both the nations and the Jewish people flowing into the prophet's vision of end-time Jerusalem, when true believers will experience the covenant of

G-d and his protection (2:5,11). Zech. 2:11 is very important

because it says "many nations/Gentiles will join themselves to

the L-rd on that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in

your midst."

The Kohen Gadol Joshua mentioned in Zechariah has his Aramaic

name given in Ezra 3:8, which is Yehoshua or Moshiach Yehoshua.

In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible,

this "Joshua," the first Kohen Gadol after the return, is called

Jesus in Greek or Moshiach Yehoshua in English. Here we see the

Brit Chadasha Scriptures name of Moshiach Yehoshua prophetically

indicated in the Old Testament. The Kohen Gadol represented the

people before G-d, and together with the other kohanim, amounted

to a prophetic sign of "the Branch," the promised Moshiach (3:8),

whose name (over 500 years later) became Moshiach Yehoshua the

Moshiach, fulfilling Zech. 6:12. On the word "Branch" as a

euphemism of "King Moshiach" in the Hebrew Bible, see also Is.

4:2; 11:1; Jer. 33:15. According to Jeremiah 23:5-6, "the Branch"

(of David) was to be the King of the end-time and would be called

"The L-rd our Righteousness." The divine perfection of this

kohen-king "the Branch" (compare the Hebrew of Ps. 132:17 to Ps.

110:4) is symbolized by the perfect number, seven, in the

seven-eyed stone set before "Moshiach Yehoshua" the high kohen in

Zech. 3:9, where G-d vows to remove the iniquity of that land in

one day, a reference to the once-for-all work of the Moshiach,
who will in "one day" effect an eternal "Yom Kippur" for the
guilt of the land.

Alluding to Amos 4:11 in Zch. 3:3, this Kohen Gadol's filthy
clothes transformed in Zechariah's vision to clean turban and
apparel symbolizes the unclean people back from Exile in an
unclean land whom G-d is now going to purify in preparation for
the coming of the Branch, the Moshiach (3:3-8). Since the Davidic
monarchy was a casualty of the Exile, the Kohen Gadol will now
"rule my house" (3:7), but only to be a prophetic stand-in for
the coming Moshiach (3:8).

The Davidic prince who returned from the exile, Zerubbabel and

the Kohen Gadol of chapter 3 are together a prophetic sign of the

Davidic prince of the last days, the Moshiach, who will bring the

Ruach Hakodesh. This is symbolized by presenting these two

anointed men as olive trees supplying a seven-lamped

lampstand with oil through which the worshipping community could

light up the world. These two witnesses of chapter 4, Zerubbabel

and "Moshiach Yehoshua" or Joshua the kohen, symbolize not only

the Moshiach but also the worshipping community, which the two

witnesses of Revelation 11 apparently symbolize as well. The

point of the chapter is that everything that is done in building

a congregational "Beis Hamikdash" dwelling for the L-rd is done

by the power of the Ruach Hakodesh (4:6).

From Zch. 4:6, we see that the Ruach Hakodesh does everything and

this is why we only hurt the L-rd's work when we quench the Ruach

Hakodesh or forbid (tacitly or bluntly) speaking in tongues or

any spiritual gift. See I Thes. 5:19 and I Cor. 14:39. Sooner or

later, organizations that quench the Spirit will find

themselves at a loss for power. Numbers, money, or buildings

cannot replace the power, the raw power (that can make people

nervous or offended or sold-out) of the Ruach Hakodesh.

In this fourth chapter of Zechariah, we see the dual aspects of

Moshiach: prince and kohen. The prince lays the foundation and

also completes the building of the Beis Hamikdash (4:9) and the

kohen acquits the sinners and opens their access to the presence
of G-d. As the Son of Man of Daniel 7, Moshiach Yehoshua was the
world-judge with the power to acquit the guilty. Therefore we see
Him in the Besuras Hageulahs forgiving sins even before He made
His self-sacrifice. However, when the Son of Man stood up alive
from the dead, all was finished and, both His dual roles intact,
He could send the Ruach Hakodesh to erect a universal body that
would be a house of prayer for all peoples, the called-out people
of G-d of the Moshiach. Both the king and the high kohen were
anointed with oil. The Kohen Gadol is called Kohen Mashiyach (the
anointed kohen) in Lv. 4:3. See also Ps. 2:2 for the same word

used for the king. Since Zerubbabel has royal Davidic blood and is the Jewish Persian governor, he represents the Moshiach coming as does also Yehoshua the Kohen Gadol since Moshiach will himself be a kohen forever (Ps. 110:4). This is the proper Messianic interpretation of Zech. 4:14.

In chapter 5, the curse of the law and sin itself are personified in a gigantic flying scroll thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide and in a woman deported to Babylon (Shinar) in a six gallon capacity basket, apparently just as sin is removed by the death curse of the law.

Look at chapter 6. Nothing escapes the L-rd. Just as He had angelic horsemen in the initial vision, so now chariots are added

(with power to execute judgment) and Moshiach Yehoshua's namesake

(the kohen Joshua) is crowned as a type of the Moshiach to come

and execute judgment concerning the whole world. Zech. 6:11-13

should be read in light of Zech. 3:8. "Moshiach Yehoshua" is

crowned and called Moshiach in an acted prophecy that is one of

the most astounding scriptures in the whole Hebrew Bible.

Liberal scholars, without any textual warrant whatsoever,

speculate that this text was probably originally about

Zerubbabel. Instead of humbly admitting that they don't

understand a text, they accuse it of being falsified by a later

scribe. This sin, committed by many Protestant and Catholic

commentators, is as grievous as sins of misinterpretation

committed by rabbis and other false teachers.

In chapter 7 (December 7, 518 B.C.E.) a delegation arrives from

Babylon to inquire about the fasts which for many years have

commemorated the fall of Jerusalem, the death of the murdered

governor Gedaliah (II Kgs. 25:25), the beginning of

Nebuchadnezzar's siege of the city of Jerusalem, and the day when

the city wall was breached Should these fasts continue once the

Beis Hamikdash is rebuilt, they ask. The answer that comes back

is a question and an appraisal of both the motives and the fruits

of fasting. This answer continues through chapter 3 and concludes

with 3:19-23 where a reversal is anticipated and the fasts become

a universal feast including Non-Jews with Jews (at a ratio of 10

to 1!). Other important Biblical references on fasting are Isaiah

58:3-7; Ezra 8:21-23; Ps. 35:13; Mt. 17:21; Yoel (Joel) 1:14;

2:12-13; Mt. 6:16-18; Acts 14:23.

In chapter 8:22-23 the nations come to Jerusalem to seek G-d and

to be blessed as was promised to Abraham (Gn. 12:3). In chapter 9

a new section begins. Here Zechariah sees G-d claiming all the

land promised to His people and coming to bring back to Himself

those who were alienated to Him. The Palestinians, whom some say

are related to the ancient Philistines, should take note of 9:7

as a hopeful promise for them if they humble themselves and turn

to the Moshiach.

In 9:9-10 we see a picture of the Prince of Peace entering

Jerusalem not on a war horse but on a donkey, as Moshiach

Yehoshua did on Palm Sunday. See Yochanan 12:12-19 and the other

Besuras Hageulahs. In 9:11-17 the victories of the faithful Jews

during the intertestamental period (the Maccabees against the

Syrian Greeks) are predicted.

Chapter 10 deals with the Lord's redemption of his people and his

compassionate determination to bring them home (10:8-12), despite

their false leaders (see 10:2-3 and the messianic prophecy 10:4).

Chapter 11 contrasts the foolish shepherds with the best of shepherds whom the people reject (Is. 53) and sell for the ironically "lordly" price (11:13) at thirty shekels (the price of a slave--Ex. 21:32), a prophecy that the Moshiach would be seen as no more valuable than a slave (fulfilled by Judas--see Mt. 26: Is. 27:9). The Suffering Servant would become the Suffering Slave (the ancient Hebrew word can mean both servant and slave. The three shepherds in 11:8 who were cut off in one month could refer to the prophets, priests and civil rulers who lost all authority when they rejected the Moshiach (see Mic. 3:11-12 and Zech. 3:3-4).

Chapter 12 shows that the powder keg of the last days is

Jerusalem, as is clear in our time (12:2). "All the nations of the earth shall come together against it" (12:3). 12:10 shows that revival will finally come to the Jews when they look upon Him whom they have pierced. Those who would rather put the Jews to death by means of terrorism and war then tell them the saving good news about the One whom they pierced should read their own obituary notice in 12:9. Notice the Moshiach's "house" will be "like G-d" (12:8). Notice when the Moshiach is pierced, G-d ("Me") is pierced, so close is the identity between them (12:10). Malachi 3:1 calls the Moshiach "L-rd," meaning "L-rd G-d." In chapter 13:1,6-9 we have a confirmation of Isaiah 53 and

Daniel 9:26. "What are these wounds between your hands?..The

wounds I received in the house of my friends" (13:6). These

Moshiach Yehoshua must have meditated on, as it became

increasingly clear to him that he must suffer and die and be

abandoned and rejected in order to fulfill the prophecies

regarding the Messiah. After the death of the Shepherd-Moshiach,

a remnant of his flock shall be saved and refined in the ensuing

tribulation (13:7-9).

In chapter 14 we have a picture of the last battle and the new

holy age dawning in the Millennium (14:16) as the Moshiach

asserts his Lordship over the whole world from Jerusalem, even as

Moshiach Yehoshua did by driving the money-changers out of the

Beis Hamikdash (14:21). Some see nuclear war in the description

given us in 14:12-15.

ZECHARIAH 6:12-13

12

And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the L-rd of hosts,

saying, Behold the man whose name is The Branch; and he shall

branch out from his place, and he shall build the Beis Hamikdash

of the L-rd: 13 Even he shall build the Beis Hamikdash of the

L-rd; and he shall bear the glory, and sit and rule upon his

throne; and he shall be a kohen upon his throne: and the counsel

of peace shall be between the two (that is, between the kohenhood

and the monarchy as these two offices are brought together in the

Moshiach's Ps. 110:4 ministry of king-kohen).

MALACHI

A mah-SAH is an "oracle," a word from the L-rd. It is also a

"burden," something that must be carried and delivered. Malachi,

many scholars believe, is preaching against the same sins

described in Nehemiah ch. 13, which can be dated in the last

third of the 5th century B.C.E. This would presumably make

Malachi the last of the minor prophets.

A modern Malachi might be burdened to preach against these same

sins today. In order to translate Malachi's 5th century B.C.E.

situation into our modern situation, use your imagination.

Suppose your congregational leader's salary could not be paid

because the people were not paying their tithes. Suppose they

treated the offering plate with contempt and gave begrudgingly to

the L-rd as though He were a despicable, unworthy street beggar,

giving Him a dime, perhaps, or nothing at all. Suppose the people

showed up at the Lord's House late or not at all. Suppose the

women dressed like they were going to the gym and the men like

they were at a rodeo, lounging around disrespectfully in the hair

styles and tight-fitting costumes and jewelry of the pagan world.

Suppose that the congregants, even some of the clergy, were

divorcing their believing spouses in order to marry worldly

people with no respect or concern for raising up godly children

in the House of the Lord.

"What a nuisance all this is!" they say. "What a bother!" The

people can't wait to get out the door when the service is

concluded, and they jump at the smallest excuse to skip the

meetings, which they often do, sometimes weeks at a time. Any

opportunity to cheat or shirk their responsibilities is seized

greedily. Whereas once the congregants "turned many from

iniquity" by preaching on the street to large crowds every week,

now they have compromised the doctrine and allowed themselves to

come under the sway of unregenerated family members and friends,
who influence them to show partiality toward what is not in
accordance with Scripture. Suddenly, the blessings these
backsliders once knew in the House of G-d become curses, and the
joy of the L-rd eludes them.

If you were a modern Malachi and faced a congregation like this,
you would be agitated because, looking out over their faces, you
couldn't distinguish between those who really knew the L-rd and
those who did not (3:18). To correct this terrible situation, a
burden from the L-rd might come on you, and you would then feel
the obligation weighing on you to preach against this

faithlessness, this disrespect of G-d, this lack of interest in the things of the L-rd, this cold-heartedness that makes G-d furious. When congregants hear about spiritual things and sigh with boredom, they arouse G-d's jealous anger. He then feels like a husband whose worldly wife is bored with him and can't wait to escape his hum-drum presence in order to pursue secret romantic excitement elsewhere. Such a despised husband would want to take any hypocritical gestures of marital devotion, any little proffered gifts, and throw them into the face of such an unfaithful wife! And this is how G-d feels: "I will smear offal on your face, the offal of your festival (animal) morifim" (Malachi 2:3)! When your wicked heart grows tired of G-d and

falls under the spell of the world, whatever you bring to G-d in

worship is just a lie, a hypocrisy, just feigning devotion that

is not there, just looking at your watch and going through the

motions of worship as fast as you can to get it over with. This

makes G-d furious. G-d threatens to excommunicate and expel from

His House the wicked hypocrites that do this. See Malachi 2:12

"May the L-rd cut off the man who does this!" Also see Revelation

3:16 "Because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about

to spit you out of my mouth!"

Interestingly, a congregation can be super-spiritual,

hyper-charismatic, and hysterically emotional, and still be

lukewarm about G-d as far as obeying His commands is concerned.

But G-d is not fooled. He says, "And this you also do, you cover

the altar of the L-rd with tears, weeping and groaning."

Emotionalism or religious exhibitionism will not turn curses into

blessings, or cause prayers to be answered, if there is sloven,

dishonest, contemptuous religiosity such as Malachi saw in the

5th century post-exilic community of Judah. The people were

experiencing poverty, oppression, famine, discouragement,

disillusionment, treacherous interpersonal relationships,

drought, spiritual dryness and doubt. They were gripped by

terrible indifference and bitterness, because they had prayed for

relief and it wasn't coming. Malachi says that people like these

are dishonest sneaks in the world (3:5) and also cheats in the

House of G-d (3:8-10), and there is a curse overtaking these

faithless backsliders that will only be removed if they stop

blaming G-d, stop envying worldly people, and repent (2:2, 17;

3:6-12, 14). Malachi's exhortation to "guard yourself in your

spirit and do not be faithless" (2:16)! Only then will the

devouring curse be rebuked by the L-rd (3:11). G-d wants zealous

believers faithfully in fellowship and He is taking attendance

(3:16; cf. Hebrews 10:25)!

Malachi realizes that the people have lost hope in the coming of

the L-rd's Davidic "Branch," the Righteous Servant, the Moshiach,

in spite of the more recent feverish Messianic expectations of

Haggai and Zechariah. Therefore, Malachi sees the Mashiach

arising as "the sun of righteousness with healing in His wings."

He will come to burn away the dross and to put the wicked under

the feet of the refined remnant and to bring the joy of the

Messianic age (Malachi 4:2-3). A forerunner will precede the

Mashiach as an end-time Elijah redivivus figure, and if the

people don't turn back to Him in godly heart-felt repentance as

His true fathers and true sons, the Lord will come and strike the

land with a curse (though not the curse of Edom, however, because

Edom's national salvation is hopeless, whereas there is hope for

Israel, according to Malachi 1:2-5).

All this was fulfilled when Yochanan of the tevilah of teshuva

(Malachi 3:1a; 4:5) began preaching, and when Moshiach Yehoshua

"suddenly" (Malachi 3:1b) came to purge the Beis Hamikdash and

refine the remnant and pronounce the curse of Canaan (Joshua

6:17-19) on the fig tree of the heathen Jerusalem of that day and

her Beis Hamikdash, who rejected Him and consequently received

the fiery curse (Mal. 4:6) of the destruction of 70 C.E.

Malachi 3:1 is extremely important because here is one place in

the Hebrew Bible that clearly states that the Moshiach will be

called Adon (the L-rd). (See also Romans 10:9-10.) David Kimhi

(Radak) in his commentary published in the Mikraot Gedolot

Rabbinic Bible explains Malachi 3:1's "the lord" (spelled with a lower case "l") is King Moshiach, who will come suddenly--no one knows when. He says that Moshiach is the Messenger of the Covenant referred to in this verse. However, the lower case "l" for "lord" will not do because in Zechariah 4:14 and 6:5 Adon kol ha'Aretz ("the L-rd of all the earth) uses the same word for L-rd and clearly the L-rd G-d is intended. So it is tendentious Rabbinic exegesis to assert a lower case "l" in one place and a capital "L" in the other.

A final word is in order about Malachi's situation. When Malachi writes down his prophecy, probably around 433 B.C.E., it is

likely that Nehemiah, having arrived in Israel in 445 B.C.E., has completed his first term as Governor and has temporarily returned to Persia (modern Iran). Zechariah and Haggai are deceased.

Esther, the Jewish-Persian beauty queen, is now an old lady or dead, Ezra the Scribe is aging because he has now been in the

Promised Land some 25 years (since his arrival in 458 B.C.E.). It

has been a long time since the Beis Hamikdash has been

resurrected (516 B.C.E.) from its 586 B.C.E. Babylonian

demolition. With the building of the new Beis Hamikdash amidst

Messianic expectations, disappointingly, nothing earth-shaking

(as prophets like Zechariah and Haggai and Ezekiel had promised)

has happened yet. The people are getting bored with religion and doubtful of G-d's promises about the Moshiach's coming. To encourage and rebuke them, Malachi points to Esau, the father of the Edomites, and proves by the military defeats of the Edomites at the hands of the Nabatean Arabs (who drove the Edomites from their homeland in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C.E.) that G-d loves Israel and has elected her for ultimate salvation. On the other hand, nations, who are indifferent to G-d and despise Him, will lose everything and be utterly wiped off the land of their inheritance as had already happened to the Edomites (see Genesis 25:32-34). This was a very strong warning to the bored-with-G-d backsliders of Malachi's day.

Edom had migrated into the Negev by 312 B.C.E. because in that

year the Nabatean Arabs were in control of Petra, a former

stronghold of Edom conquered by the Romans in C.E. 106. The

Edomites remained in the Negev and were known as Idumeans. King

Herod came from them. This area should not be confused with

Pella, the Transjordan mountains where Messianic Jews fled

shortly before the Roman 70 C.E. seige (see Mt. 24:16).

Like Esau and the Edomites, the people of Malachi's day doubted

G-d's love and were becoming careless in their walk, just as the

ministers were becoming indifferent in both their example and

their doctrinal position (see 2:6-9). Yet these backsliders

looked around and saw many prosper who were even farther from

G-d, and this they hypocritically threw in G-d's face (2:17).

Therefore, G-d answers that the Moshiach, the Messenger of the

Covenant Malach HaBrit (who is the L-rd Himself--3:1) is coming,

and He will be the fiery nemesis who will bring divine justice

and burn up impurity. Yochanan of the tevilah of teshuva

meditated on these words in the desert and preached them when he

appeared to his people (Matthew 3:12). For the Day of the L-rd

would burn up the wicked (See also II Thes. 1:8) but those who

repent and believe will be healed in the rays of G-d's Rising

Sun. The Day of the L-rd came "near" in an anticipatory way in

586 B.C.E. and C.E. 70, though the ultimate burning Day is still

in the future.

One of the impurities that needed to be burned away was not just

the bored unenthusiasm of their worship but also their

ingratitude to G-d reflected in their thieving from His tithes

(Malachi 3:7-10). The tithes provided for the upkeep of the Beis

Hamikdash and the support of the ministers and was to be a part

of their worship--one tenth returned to G-d.

"The lips of a kohen should guard knowledge" (2:7). Therefore,

the Moshiach, the Messenger of the Brit Chadasha, will refine the

Brit Chadasha kohenhood, which we are (3:3; I Shliach Kefa 2:5).

Therefore, we must make sure that we guard the doctrine that has been entrusted to us, taking the time to learn Biblical languages and to study to show ourselves approved by G-d as workmen who rightly use the true teaching (II Tim. 2:15).

MALACHI 4:5(3:23)-6(3:24)

4:5(3:23).

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of

the great and dreadful day of the L-rd:

4:6(3:24)

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and

the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite

the earth with a curse.

