

## **This Day the Scripture is Fulfilled in Your Ears**

### **7.1 The Messianic Hope**

It was Jewish messianism which made the life of Jesus what it was and thus brought Christianity into being. It was also messianism, as accepted by Gentile believers which contributed towards making the deification of Jesus inevitable. Again, it was messianism which provided the spiritual impulse behind the Jewish revolt of AD 66 which destroyed most of the historical evidence. The fundamental Christian teaching is that Jesus the (anointed) Messiah (the Christ) had come. As Peter declared: "You are the Messiah" (Mark 8:29). It was he who had, quite deliberately given them such cause, obviously believing that it was calling and destiny to fulfil the messianic hope, and to do so in accordance with the predictions he accepted as authoritative. The coming of the Messiah was not fortuitous but connected with prophesied Last Times or End of Days, preceding the Kingdom of God, a time of testing and great tribulation for Israel - Biblical predictions which built on Babylonian and Persian ideas of the succession of the ages (Schonfield 20).

Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks (9:240) was later understood to mean seventy weeks of years or 490 years from the commandment of Cyrus to restore the Temple (539-8) - or about 46 BC. Thus the times of Herod the Great (37-4 BC) were times of expectation. Daniel is supposed to have lived around 500 BC, but the pseudonymous author dates from circa 164 BC, not long before. After 100 BC there was mounting interest in the Last Times. The advent of John the Baptist announcing 'the Kingdom of God is at hand' was thus timely and no less timely was Jesus' conviction that he was the Messiah announcing 'the Time is fulfilled' (Schonfield 23).

The Jews believed they were an elect priestly nation among the nations of the world sent to provide an illustration for World Theocracy - a 'kingdom of priests and a holy nation', witnessing to all nations. Such a vision required the attainment in Israel of a state of perfect atonement to the will of God. Eventually it began to be despaired that such a collective situation would arise and hopes were pinned on a remnant of faithful souls - the elite of the final World Order. The last stage of the evolution of the Messianic Hope involved the intervention of God by means of the Anointed Ones, ideal ones, a prophet like Moses, a perfect Priest, a righteous King of the line of David, coming in the End of Days to transform the whole world scene and usher in the Kingdom (Schonfield 24).

The consolidation of books outside the Pentateuch as authoritative made for the development of new oracles and hidden meanings. The persecution followed by the successful Maccabean revolt against the imposition of Hellenistic religion by the Seleucids caused a wave of Jewish religious fervour coinciding with the apocalyptic vision and resulting in new written works. This in turn gave rise to new sectarian movements seeking religious purity and to splits into the Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes, which in the more turgid atmosphere of following more despotic Jewish rulers resulted in internal dissension (Schonfield 27).

Jeremiah had predicted a New Covenant 31:31 "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah" in which the knowledge of God would come to every man.

The Sadducees emphasized a strict adherence to the Mosaic Law and cultivation of ethics, the Pharisees sanctified daily life with rules which covered all contingencies, and the Essenes aimed for a simple pure and holy life which overcame fleshy and

material temptations. The Sadduces looked to a Mosaic prophet, but the others to the perpetual covenants with Levi and David (Jer 33:15) looking to messiahs of the tribes of Levi and Judah. In the Testaments of the Patriarchs we have "Obey Levi and Judah and be not lifted up against these two tribes, for from them shall arise unto you the salvation of God. For the Lord shall raise up from Levi as it were a High Priest and from Judah as it were a king: he shall save all the race of Israel." For the Essenes the Priestly Messiah would be superior to the Royal Messiah, but for the Pharisees, the ideal king would be preceded by a priestly prophet like Elijah (Schonfield 28).

John Hyrcanus I was believed by many to have become the fulfillment. Josephus notes he was "esteemed by God worthy of three privileges, the government of his nation, the dignity of high priesthood, and prophecy, for God was with him, and enabled him to know futurities", but he was no paragon and his successors were despots (Schonfield 28).

From this point national affairs played an increasing role in Messianic Hope and intensified as affairs now went from bad to worse. Internecine rivalry brought in Roman control followed by the reign of the Idumean Herod the Great, who despite having strengths, exterminated the Hasmoneans who preceded him and many of his own children. His rule was detested as one of a police state. The pious saw this situation combined with seasons of drought as the Period of Wrath. The nation became like one in the grip of a delirium. Obsessed with conviction that the last times had come, terror and superstition overcame all reason among the people (Schonfield 29).

When Herod died, Josephus comments: "And thus did a great and wild fury spread itself over the nation, because they had no king to keep the masses in good order; and because those foreigners, who came to reduce the seditious to sobriety, did, on the contrary, set them more in a flame, because of the injuries they offered them, and the avaricious management of their affairs". At Jerusalem two thousand were crucified.

In the time of Jesus, many people thus believed the eleventh hour had come, the Last Times had begun, the Kingdom of God was at hand. The world was on the eve of wrath and judgement. The Messiah would appear.

Christianity declares that Jesus was this Messiah, whose advent fulfilled the prophecies, but fails to understand the implications of making him more congenial to Hellenic rather than Jewish concepts. It is alleged the Jews were expecting a Warrior Messiah, who would deliver Israel in a military victory. Although many did believe in the warrior messiah, this image does not come consistently through the prophetic images. Living under alien domination, oppressed and ill-used, the niceties of prophecy mattered little. Anyone would serve as Messiah, whether descended from David or not, if he was bold, courageous, a leader of men. However the violent option was denounced by the Pharisees (Schonfield 34).

The Psalms of Solomon 17:35-42 give us a first century BC image of this 'Messiah of Righteousness', a man of God: "And a righteous king and taught of God is he that reigneth over them: and there shall be no iniquity in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy and their king is the Lord Messiah. For he shall not put his trust in horse and rider and bow, nor shall lie multiply unto himself gold and silver for war, nor by ships shall he gather confidence for the day of battle ... For he shall smite the earth with the word of his mouth even for evermore ... He himself also is pure from sin, so that he may rule a mighty people, and rebuke princes and overthrow sinners by the might of his word. And he shall not faint all his days, because he leaneth upon his God: for God shall cause him to be mighty through the spirit of holiness, and wise

through the counsel of understanding, with might and righteousness."

He is a perfect Israelite 'Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows ... Then said I, Lo I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea thy law is within my heart." (Ps 45:7 50:7).

Such a view was expounded by the Pharisees, but the more diffuse sects such as the Essenes kept their knowledge to themselves. The goal was the universal rule of God acknowledged by all men, when war, strife and wickedness should cease. To reach that goal it was required that Israel should be 'a kingdom of priests and a bold nation.

In the Psalms of Solomon, we see "And he shall gather together a holy people, whom he shall lead in righteousness: and shall judge the tribes of the people that hath been sanctified by the Lord his God. And he shall not suffer iniquity to lodge in their midst; and none that knoweth wickedness shall dwell with him. For he shall take knowledge of them that they be all sons of their God, and shall divide them upon the earth according to their tribes ... He shall judge the nations and the peoples with the wisdom of his righteousness. Selah" (Schonfield 36).

## **7.2 Prophecy, Miracle and Midrash**

There is a great diversity of opinion concerning the extent and nature of Old Testament prophecies in the New Testament. While the four gospels purport to describe an historical account of Jesus life and sayings, they were constructed by a variety of authors at least thirty years after his death, based partly on existing oral traditions and older lists of sayings and miracles which have now been lost, not as historians, but with the purpose of affirming Jesus as the divine first-born son of God, the prophesied Messiah of history, who entered the world and died a death of suffering to redeem all men.

The authors of the gospels, with the possible exception of John, neither knew Jesus nor were they historians, but evangelists who sought to link Jesus in every way possible as the culmination and fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, partly in response to obvious criticisms, particularly from Jewish critics during the first century AD, and partly to give reality and detail to the messiah of an eschatological Kingdom which was becoming a little slow to arrive. Given this overlay and reworking of Jesus' life and teachings, there are some people who would reduce his life and message to that of an inspired Galilean teacher who was thoroughly Jewish, possibly had no pretensions to being the messiah, and was martyred unjustly by either the Jews or the Romans in the manner of a minor zealot and whose teachings were later changed beyond all recognition, firstly by Paul and then by other gospel writers, in perpetuating a new and somewhat alien message of the divine redeemer of all mankind, whose flesh and blood must be drunk for our salvation.

Many of the gospels are inconsistent with one another, or make fanciful embellishments, in ways which are significant enough to cause a discerning historian either to debunk them altogether as history, or to eliminate major sections of them. However, despite variations in their detail, and the fact that one of them, John, is different in its more gnostic outlook and source material from the three synoptics, Mark, Matthew and Luke, there is nevertheless a singular message and impression that emerges from these gospels, which is larger, and more challenging, more blasphemous and more innovative than the narrow vision of the simple Jewish teacher of the regional towns of Galilee would suggest.

Many of the later apocalyptic visions in the Old Testament have similarly been subject to the criticism that they have created a fraudulent sense of prophecy by combining older works such as the original Isaiah, Daniel and Zechariah with new inserted material, for example the so-called second Isaiah and Daniel, to create composites which appear to have prophetic impact only because later writers who already know what has subsequently happened have covertly imbued works authored by a much older writer with apparent prophetic significance. This criticism does not however apply to comparisons between the Old and New Testaments. Although the second pseudonymous authors wrote much later than their supposed authors in some cases as late as c 165 BC, they are all clearly written well before the time of Jesus. This applies also to the First Book of Enoch, with the exception of the Similtudes, which are approximately contemporary with Jesus' teachings.

A different type of criticism often levelled at New Testament use of Old Testament prophecy is that passages have been lifted out of context to retrospectively elaborate the life and passion of Christ in a way which the writer never intended and would probably be aghast at. Prophecies which originally applied to Israel and its kings and politics have been coopted into a new and alien world view of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It is however the poetic irony of all works in the prophetic tradition that, however dubious and composite their origin, they may later come to be adopted in the light of history as utterances foretelling future events which might well make their authors appalled. This in no way undermines their prophetic relevance, because if the stream of consciousness, like dreaming has a quality of foresight, which reverberates with unfolding history, it may well manifest in associations unconceived of and possibly even abhorrent to the original author.

One interesting way of looking at how gospels have been constructed has been suggested by John Spong (1992 8). This is the idea of midrash, the Jewish tradition of commentary on the religious passages of the Old Testament, which provides for ornamentation of the texts to develop correspondences between passages which unfold a hidden trend or religious theme. In Spong's view, a more rational and humane way of viewing the gospels is to look at the passages as midrash commentary, stitched together with a fine thread to make a vast and scintillating quilt of correspondence between the Old Testament and the new, fitting sayings of Jesus into a context which the evangelists, poring over the old texts realized long after the Crucifixion could be said to give added prophetic meaning to Jesus' mission. There are so many passages of varying episodes in the Old Testament that some are bound to reflect what happens later in an oracular way. But is this all there is to it? Isn't there a major theme in common to some of these prophecies which is a key motif in the whole apocalyptic drama?

In other cases, the gospel writers have added imaginative ornamentations designed to create an enthralling mythical story, in the Old Testament tradition, of a larger than life character of prophetic utterances and miraculous works. No doubt Jesus was one of the therapeutae and had a reputation for faith cures, but the extensive repertoire of nature miracles have a meaning which is designed to reflect and surpass those of other well-known human and divine wonder workers, from Appolonius of Tyana to Dionysus (p 346).

However, despite all these additions, there is an irreducible core of prophecy connecting the Old Testament to the New, which would suggest that Jesus did in a very real way set out to fulfill the destiny of the apocalyptic tradition that had long been building in Israel.

### 7.3 Joseph's Heritage

We do not know whether the righteous and holy king, the Davidic Messiah of Isaiah 9 and 11 as distinct from the Priestly Messiah of the sectarian documents had been associated with the Suffering Servant. of Isaiah 52-53. There was a belief that the Saints the Elect of Israel would perform an atoning work for sin by their faithfulness to the Law and by their sufferings at the hands of the wicked and at least in sectarian circles this was applied to the Just One, the Son of Man singular as opposed to the collective elect (Schonfield 215).

*Let us lie in wait for the righteous man,  
because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions;  
he reproaches us for our sins against the Law,  
and accuses us of sins against our training.  
He professes to have knowledge of God,  
and calls himself a child of the Lord ...  
Let us see if his words are true,  
and let us test what will happen at the end of his life;  
for if the righteous man is God's son, he will help him,  
and deliver him from the hand of his adversaries.  
Let us test him with insult and torture,  
that we may find out how gentle he is,  
and make trial of his forbearance.  
Let us condemn him to a shameful death,  
for, according to what he says, he will be protected.  
Wisdom of Solomon (2:12-20)*

The Teacher of Righteousness was of course a Suffering Just One (Schonfield 217)

*Violent men have sought after my life  
because I have clung to Thy Covenant.  
For they, an assembly of deceit, and a horde of Satan,  
know not that my stand is maintained by Thee,  
and that in Thy mercy Thou wilt save my soul  
since my steps proceed from Thee.  
From Thee it is that they assail my life,  
that Thou mayest be glorified by the judgement of the wicked,  
and manifest Thy might through me  
in the presence of the sons of men;  
for it is by Thy mercy that I stand.  
Hymn 2*

Daniel's Son of Man is inspired by Moses who received the covenant in the clouds. Daniel's image of the cloud-borne man is also in the religious symbolism of Assyria and Babylonia. It also reflects Moses communion in the clouds of Sinai as reflected in the Samaritan prophecies. We also have a reflection of this image in the John the Baptist stories of the Mandaean, where John is conveyed on a cloud to Jerusalem and set down there.

Messianic interest had attached itself to the person of the patriarch Joseph among certain sections of the Saints. The concept emerged in later Judaism of a Messiah ben Joseph, who would be killed. In Jewish teaching Joseph was the perfect righteous man, whose brethren persecuted him and attempted to get rid of him. But in the providence of God he who was humiliated was afterwards exalted and became the saviour of the sons of Jacob, from whom he had been separated. It was prophesied of him, 'From thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel (Gen 44:24) (Schonfield 217).

The stone was Jacob's pillow - the seed of his families - anointed at the spot the northern cult centre of Bethel (Gen 28:10), the stone laid in Zion for a foundation, 'a tried stone, a precious corner stone', (Isa 28:16) the stone which the builders rejected

and which would become the chief corner stone (Ps 118:22) and the stone of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which smote a great image representing the successive heathen empires and became a great mountain and filled the whole Earth (Schonfield 218).

In the Testaments of the Patriarchs, Joseph is revealed as the antetype of the Suffering just One. 'Do ye also, therefore, my children, love the Lord God of heaven and earth', and keep his commandments, following the example of the holy and just man Joseph. For until his death he was not willing to tell regarding himself; but Jacob, having learnt it from the Lord, told it to him. Nevertheless he kept denying it. And then with difficulty he was persuaded by the adjurations of Israel. For Joseph also besought our father that he would pray for his brethren, that the Lord would not impute to them as sin whatever evil they had done to him. And thus Jacob cried out: "My good child, thou hast prevailed over the bowels of thy father Jacob." And he embraced him, and kissed him for two hours, saying, "In thee shall be fulfilled the prophecy of heaven, which says that the blameless one shall be defiled for lawless men, and the sinless one shall die for godless men." (Schonfield 218).

The Book of Jubilees it is said that the annual Day of Atonement was instituted because of Joseph. 'And the sons of Jacob slaughtered a kid, and dipped the coat of Joseph in the blood, and sent it to Jacob their father on the tenth of the seventh month ... For this reason it is ordained for the children of Israel that they should afflict themselves on the tenth of the seventh month-on the day that the news which made him weep for Joseph came to Jacob his father.' It is by no means easy to get to the heart of this Joseph mystery; but we may venture to suggest that it has a northern background, for Joseph is synonymous with the northern Kingdom of Israel in several places in the Old Testament (Ps. 78:67, 80:1, Ezek 37:16,19, Amos 5:6,15) (Schonfield 219).

There is room for suspicion that as a result of strict monotheism there was transferred to the Joseph figure of a Suffering just One some of the characteristics of the old Syrian cult of Adonis-Tammuz or Adad, Tammuz:

*Whose annual wound in Lebanon allur'd  
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate.*

The death and resurrection of Adonis-Tammuz, a manifestation of Dumuzi (p 174), had to do with the Fertility cult, and in the ancient liturgies he is called Shepherd and Wild Ox, names used in the Joseph predictions (Gen 49:24, Deut 33:17). This association with Adonis occurs also in the Canticles. A traveller in Euboea, according to Lawson (Modern Greek Folklore), had observed the gloom of the people in Holy Week. Asking an old woman for an explanation, he was told, 'Of course I am anxious: for if Christ does not rise tomorrow we shall have no corn this year.' Thomas Meek regards the shepherd lover in Canticles as an original reference to the god Dad, who in Palestine was Adad, the counterpart of Tammuz. There is a connection between the god-name and that of David the shepherd king of Israel, and there is a strong probability that in Palestine the messianic expectation embodied elements of the local Fertility cult. Tammuz in the liturgies was 'shepherd, pure food, sweet milk', and of the Messiah it is said, 'And I will set up one shepherd over them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.' (Ezek 34:23, 37:24). There was a shrine of Adonis-Tammuz in David's city of Bethlehem (the place of Bread) (Schonfield 219).

In the Mandaean literature John the Baptist says of himself, 'A shepherd am I who loves his sheep; sheep and lambs I watch over.' Jesus was the good shepherd and the foolish one of Zechariah in his sacrificial role. The persecuted David, destined to be

king and shepherd of Israel, anticipates the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (Schonfield 220).

The Messianic Hope was sufficiently fluid to permit the interchangeability of the messianic personalities, and there is considerable evidence of such fusions. When Jesus is made to declare in the Fourth Gospel, 'I am the Good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep,' he is speaking with the voice of Adonis-Tammuz, as well as in accordance with messianic prophecies, and most appositely in his case, since he came from Galilee and by parentage was Son of Joseph and by descent Son of David (Schonfield 220).

The Son of Man belongs to the sphere of Jewish mystical teaching regarding the Archetypal or Primordial Man, and its messianic significance was developed among the Essenes, sourcing from Daniel (Schonfield 221). The Son of Man stands collectively for the Elect Ones of Israel, the people of the Saints of the Most High, who ultimately will possess the kingdom and institute the rule of righteousness. It was natural, however, that what was believed of the Elect Ones of Israel should be applied to the ideal Israelite. just as the suffering Holy Community was personified by the suffering Holy and just One, so the corporate Son of Man found its epitome in the messianic Elect One, the Prophet like Moses who was brought near to God in the clouds of heaven. Jesus is described as the True Prophet in the Clementine literature of the Ebionite Nazoreans (Schonfield 222).

There is some warrant for the opinion that the Qumran documents linked the expected Prophet with the Son of Man figure (the Man, *geber*) and with the Teacher of Righteousness. It appears the functions ascribed to the persons alluded to in the Community Rule (IV) as *geber*, "Man", correspond to those of the expected Prophet: *geber* was to "instruct the upright in the knowledge of the Most High" at the end of time, and "to teach the wisdom of the Sons of Heaven to the perfect of way". *Geber*, however, seems to have been identified with the Teacher of Righteousness. In the Commentary on Psalm 37, the verse, "The steps of *geber* are confirmed by the lord" is interpreted: "This concerns the Priest, the Teacher of Righteousness." ' The role of *Geber* (the Man) is messianic. Through his teaching the Elect Community regains the innocence of the First Man, for God has chosen them for an everlasting Covenant all the glory of Adam shall be theirs'. This leads naturally to the Pauline Christology of the Second Adam from heaven and the doctrine of the predestination of the Elect.

Revelation 12:1-6 twelve stars etc. round Mary corresponds to the Qumran hymn:

*For the children have come to the throes of Death,  
and she labours in her pains who bears the Man.  
For amid the throes of Death  
she shall bring forth a man-child,  
and amid the pains of Hell  
there shall spring from her child-bearing crucible  
a Marvellous Mighty Counsellor;  
and the Man shall be delivered from out of the throes.*

This is probably a Davidic Messiah since it refers to Isa 9:6 'counsellor.'

Power as a form of the divine name 'was a northern form of speech, certainly Samaritan and possibly Galilean." Mark 14:62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Hegesippus reports James saying "Why do ye ask me concerning the Son of Man. He sits at the right hand of the great Power, and will come in the clouds of heaven" "We have to do with a North Palestinian idiom, attested especially in accounts of sectarian

circles in this area. Here we have a very striking link between the 'Galilean' Gospel tradition and North Palestinian forms of religion" (Black 1961 81).

#### **7.4 The Similitudes of Enoch:**

Were the Similitudes of Enoch a Northern text? This would explain the absence of this section of Enoch from Qumran.

'And there I saw One who had a Head of Days [i.e. the Ancient of Days], and his head was white like wool, and with him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man whose face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of Man, who he was, and whence he was, and why he went with the Head of Days. And he answered and said unto me, This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who reveals all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, and his lot before the Lord of Spirits hath surpassed everything in uprightness for ever. And this Son of Man whom thou hast seen ... will put down the kings from their thrones and kingdoms because they do not extol and praise him [the Lord of Spirits] nor thankfully acknowledge whence the kingdom was bestowed upon them ... 'And at that hour that Son of Man was named in the presence of the Lord of Spirits and his name before the Head of Days. And before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of heaven were made, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits. He will be a staff to the righteous on which they will support themselves and not fall, and he will be the light of the Gentiles and the hope of those who are troubled in heart. All who dwell on earth will fall down and bow the knee before him, and bless and laud and celebrate with song the Lord of Spirits. And for this cause has he been chosen and hidden before him before the creation of the world and for evermore. And the wisdom of the Lord of Spirits hath revealed him to the holy and righteous, because they have hated and despised this world of unrighteousness ... And in those days the kings of the earth, and the strong who possess the earth will be of downcast countenance... And I will give them over into the hands of mine Elect Ones... before them they will fall and not rise again ... for they have denied the Lord of Spirits and his anointed. 'And the Lord of Spirits seated him [the Son of Man] on the throne of his glory, and the spirit of righteousness was poured out upon him, and the word of his mouth slew all the sinners ... And all the Elect will stand before him in that day ... And the righteous and elect will be saved on that day and will never again from thenceforth see the faces of the sinners and unrighteous. And the Lord of Spirits will abide with them for ever, and with that Son of Man will they eat and lie down and rise up for ever" (Black 1985 49).

The atmosphere of the Similitudes of Enoch is apocalyptic and predestinarian, and is reflected in the Revelation and the Pauline Epistles. Here the Son of Man concept unites with the Just One and the Messiah of Righteousness, the Branch of David. He is present in the mind of God and chosen before the creation, and from time to time revealed to the righteous for their consolation; but he is neither divine nor actually pre-existent. He is named and hidden from the beginning in the secret thoughts of God, finally to be revealed in the Last Times as the ideal Man who will justify God's creation of the world. In this sense he is the Second Adam, answering to the Light Adam of the Nazorean-Mandaeans, and the Nazorean-Ebionite 'manlike figure invisible to men in general'. From such teaching, probably while he was in the borders of Arabia, Paul acquired the inspiration from which he developed his concept of the Heavenly Messiah who had incarnated in the earthly Jesus.



At the end of the Similitudes, Enoch is told that in the Son of Man he has seen an image of his own righteous self; so that we are not required to go beyond the idea that when the Messiah would be manifested he would embody that perfect righteousness which God from the beginning designed for humanity, and which was present in the chief Saints of all the ages. By virtue of that perfection of holiness Man in the Messiah is exalted to the right hand of God, and is fitted to be God's representative in the reborn and redeemed world from which all sin has been banished. The Son of Man is so to speak the essential Messiah embodied in all the Messiahs, the eternal principle of Righteousness exemplified in all the just Ones.

The extent to which Jesus drew upon this heritage is evident. His language again and again echoes that of the Similitudes, as we can see by bringing together some of the Gospel references. 'Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me ... of him also will the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. (Mark 8:38) And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. (Mark 13:26) Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (Mark 14:62) The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire (Matt 13:41). For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works. (Matt 16:27) Ye which have followed me, in the Regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28). When the Son of Man shall come in his glory ... then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats (Matt 25:31). The Father hath given him authority to execute judgement also, because he is the Son of Man (John 5:27).

Thus we can appreciate how among the Saints belief in the Messiah could envisage both a Suffering Just One and a Glorious King. The two apparently distinct concepts could be united, the one preceding the other, as evidently they were in the mind of Jesus. It took a Nazorean of Galilee to apprehend from the Scriptures that death and resurrection was the bridge between the two phases. The very tradition of the land where Adonis yearly died and rose again seemed to call for it.

### **7.5 The Greater Moses**

It is significant that Jesus in his mission refers to Moses in several of his major episodes and teachings. His forty days is clearly a reflection of those of Moses, although also having intimations of Eden: Mark 1:13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

Then in his transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appear: Mark 9:3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

John has a series of passages which advance the claim that Jesus is the new and greater Moses:

John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

John 1:45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

This is echoed again in John 5:46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. It refers to Deut 18:15 The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. Of course we now know that Deuteronomy is the product of Hilkiah and not Moses. Jesus can be forgiven the sin of ignorance.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

John 6:32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. Mana was only to sustain the starving but the flesh of the Lord is for eternal life.

### 7.6 The Davidic Son

Mark 2:24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

Mark 10:47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Mark 11:9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

Mark 12:35 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

### 7.7 The Hard Saying

"There was a goodman who owned a vineyard. He leased it to tenant farmers so that they might work it and he might collect the produce from them. He sent his servant so that the tenants might give him the produce of the vineyard. They seized his servant and beat him, all but killing him. The servant went back and told his master. The master said, 'Perhaps he did not recognize them.' He sent another servant. The tenants beat this one as well. Then the owner sent his son and said, 'Perhaps they will show respect to my son' Because the tenants knew that it was he who was the heir to the vineyard, they seized him and killed him. Let him who has ears hear" (Gospel of Thomas 65). The servants are of course the *nabi'im* or prophets who have suffered and the son is the Suffering Servant messiah. Although the Nicene creed may be a blasphemous extension of Jesus' role as prophet-messiah to that of divinity, there is only one son in the saying, who is not a servant.

Matthew ornaments this in a sequel which, despite his suggested Pharisaic origin, leads to transfer of the path from the Jews to the Gentiles: 21:41 "They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons."

This parable illustrates how Jesus saw himself as the natural inheritor of the prophets

or *nabim*, the mouthpieces of God - the goodman of the vineyard, who had first sent his servants to the people "for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt 5:12), but now God was sending his son, who would be killed.

Some critics conjecture that Jesus never wanted to be the Messiah (Ranke-Heinemann 1992 79), or that he did not envisage his own crucifixion or possibly even foresee his death (Spong 1994). Certainly one could say that in the gospels, he waited until named by Peter before pronouncing his messiahship to the disciples. Luke 9:20 "He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am?" Peter answering said, 'The Christ of God.'" However he had already said as much to John's disciples previously. Luke 7:19 "And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, 'Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?'" And even earlier still, the act of exorcism is indicative: Luke 4:41 "And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, 'Thou art Christ the Son of God.' And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ." And right back at the Synagogue in Nazareth he said "Today the scripture is fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:17).

Moreover as soon as he is pronounced Messiah by Peter, he enunciates his own death: Luke 9:21 "And he straightly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing; Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."

Now when Peter rebukes him, Jesus says "Get behind me": Mark 8:32 "And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.'" Now this is a turn of phrase which is specifically used in Jesus' temptation in the desert: Luke 4:6 "And the devil said unto him, 'All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.' And Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'"

From this it would ironically appear that the principal temptation facing Jesus in the desert was the very temptation to be the divine Davidic ruler who lives out his days in worldly splendour, rather than the Suffering Servant, who, like Moses, dies for coming too close to God, in fulfilling the will of the Father.

John has a different perspective on the same phenomenon. Several times he has Jesus note his time is not yet come, firstly to his mother at Cana (2:4), then to his disbelieving brothers when they tell him "If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world" at Tabernacles in Jerusalem (7:5), and later twice when they who sought to take him in the temple (7:30, 8:20). Why his family is thus singled out is interesting, particularly since they became figures of the Nazorean church and did not hold the same view of Jesus as a deity, as the gospel writers but rather as priestly messiah.

Although John does not celebrate the eucharist at the Last Supper, he has an even more bloodthirsty quote from the synagogue at Capernaum which clearly alienates many of his followers. Moses mana becomes Jesus' blood: 6:55 "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. ... Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disci-

ples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? ... From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life ... And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ". To this Jesus responds "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" destining his betrayal from his very recognition. This indicates that Jesus is actively promoting the conflict of dark and light. It is not merely Judas in ritual opposition but it is necessary that Judas embody the dark for the conflict of dark and light to come to climax. Judas is in this sense demonized by Jesus.

We have here a simple choice. Either we style Jesus merely as a small-time Galilean prophet and insurrectionist, who preached a good, but not particularly original message (love your enemy is the key novelty): A man who did not envisage his own demise in ritual terms, who could not possibly have said "Take up your cross" because he didn't know he would be crucified, and did not know the scriptures as well as the gospels indicate: A figure who, through Paul's heresy, and the later purely allegorical mythologies of the gospels, became elevated to a mythical hero - the dying and resurrecting God. Alternatively we can envisage that Jesus read the scriptures, understood that the prophecies called for the death of the redeemer and, upon accepting the messiahship, for better or worse, retreated to the desert to come to terms with the tragic and glorious mission he had to accomplish, through the astute use of controversy to the knife edge. In which is it that 'I should bear witness unto the truth'?

### **7.8 Unravelling the Prophetic Heritage**

There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood leads on to fortune. This fortune may be boon or doom. There are many indications that the messiah of history was going to be a prophet who taken at the flood led on to a peculiar doom, a tragic irony whose anticipation had been brewing in the religious mind. It appears that Jesus, having read some key passages of the scriptures well, realized the nature of this doom, but regardless, took it at the flood tide, and by his sense of destiny, achieved as a prophet and shaman, something which has caused him to be portrayed for two millennia since, for better or worse, as a superhuman manifestation of God.

Regardless of later embellishments, there stands a core of material which anticipates in graphic detail the ritual passion the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, the Foolish Shepherd of Zeccariah and the Messiah and Son of Man of Daniel, evoking a clear heritage for the mission of the Christos. Could Jesus have been the Messiah and lived? Whose fault was the betrayal and crucifixion? The Jews? The Romans? Jesus himself? Satan? I will argue that, just as outlined in the Qur'an, and stated by Jesus in the Gospels, it was the prophesied sacred heritage of Yahweh himself at the core of the Passion. To fulfil this 'accursed share' required Jesus to enact with studied care and shamanic charisma sufficient of these Old Testament prophecies.

To unravel the paradox between scepticism and belief, it is necessary for us to look at both sides of this sacred lot of prophecy and to try to differentiate the fantastic and contrived from the peculiar forces of synchronicity in destiny, which, even in the scientific age, can shape human politics and many unforeseen aspects of our own lives.

The term Messiah (in Hebrew) or Christos (in Greek) simply means 'the anointed one'. Anointing with the oil of kingship was a central ritual in the coronation of both political and sacrificial kings. The earliest references to the Jewish messiah are to a Davidic monarch who was expected to lead Israel to an era of political ascendancy in

which Yahweh and his works would in turn become glorified. One story even links the visit of the Queen of Sheba to the notion that Solomon in his glory was the prophesied messiah of history. This is indirectly referred to by Jesus Luke 11:31 when he predicts the 'Queen of the South' will return because a 'greater than Solomon is here'. The idealistic vision of Israel becoming a world superpower naturally extended in the minds of the prophets to the extension of Yahweh's dominion to the gentiles. The Davidic monarch was also traditionally described as a son of God as Yahweh promised David at 2 Sam 7:14 "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee."

We can say, therefore, that at the time when Jesus lived not only was there a widespread expectation that the Messiah would shortly reveal himself, but also that in some of the current thinking about 'he that should come' there was nothing inconsistent with the way in which Jesus understood the functions of the Messiah, although the subsequent deification and Logos are pagan embellishments (Schonfield 40). Sonship of God meant something quite different to the Jewish mind than to the Gentile mind. Jewish kings were titled sons of god.

The convictions Jesus had, as we must appreciate, rested on the oracular treatment of the Old Testament. The Jewish circles in which he moved were accustomed to applying the text of the sacred books not only to the messianic figures, but to other individuals concerned in the Cosmic Drama, and in general to the circumstances of what they believed to be the Last Times (Schonfield 42).

We have evidence that some accounts of the activities of Jesus became coloured and elaborated by prophecies which it was deemed appropriate to identify with them. But the picture we have of the immediate and spontaneous association of prophecies with the experiences of Jesus argues strongly that his disciples were not initiating the process, but continuing one they had acquired from him. The Gospels insist that Jesus had some foreknowledge of his fate which he had derived from the scriptures. Significantly, he began to communicate this information only after he had elicited from Peter at Caesarea-Philippi the affirmation that he was the Messiah. 'From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day' (Matt 16:21). He declared this on the ground that these things were written concerning the Messiah. (Mark 9:12, John 5:46, Mark 14:21, Luke 24:44) (Schonfield 43).

If Jesus exhibited such foreknowledge, this would be nothing extraordinary if he had had access to some of the literature of 'the Saints', as seems to be indicated by his familiarity with the idea of a Suffering just One and with a Son of Man christology. ... Believing himself to be the Messiah, it would not be surprising if Jesus should have sought to learn from 'the Saints' as much as he could of what was required of him and what would befall him (Schonfield 43). It is needful to emphasise that, neither before nor since Jesus, has there been anyone whose experiences from first to last have been so pin-pointed as tallying with 'What were held to be prophetic intimations concerning the Messiah. The nearest comparison available to us is that of the Teacher of Righteousness of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Schonfield (44) states the concurrent opinions of two other authors on this matter:

'Jesus acted as He did act and said what He did say because He was consciously ful-

filling a necessity imposed upon Him by God through the demands of the Old Testament. He died in Jerusalem., not because the Jews hounded Him thither and did Him to death, but because He was persuaded that, as Messiah, He must journey to Jerusalem in order to be rejected and to die.'

'The Historian is dealing in the end with an historical figure fully conscious of a task which had to be done, and fully conscious also that the only future which mattered for men and women depended upon what he said and did, and finally upon his death. This conscious purpose gave a clear unity to his words and actions, so that the actions interpret the words and the words the actions.'

From first to last his actions are marked by the utmost purposefulness, and he speaks with an authority which made a profound impression on all who came in contact with him. He is revealed as a man who knows exactly what he is doing, and why. More than once in respect of his end he is reported to have said: 'My hour is not yet come' (John 2:4, 7:6, 12:27 Mark 14:41).

If Jesus believed that a series of experiences would happen to him in accordance with prophetic requirements, did he consciously proceed to speak and act in accordance with them? It rather looks as if the Christian scholars Hoskyns and Davey realised the implications of what they were saying, but shied away from them: 'Thus far it might be argued that the evidence points to a strange human act of will by which Jesus determined to obey the will of God as He had extracted the knowledge of it from a persistent study of the Old Testament Scriptures.... But this is not the truth. No New Testament writer could t link of Jesus as the Greeks thought of Prometheus. The Event of the Life and Death of Jesus was not thought of as a human act, but as an act of God wrought out in human flesh and blood, which is a very different matter' (Schonfield 45).

This suggests that, before his baptism by John, Jesus had a blueprint of the Messiah's mission with the prophetic requirements organised to show a progressive programma of events, having their climax at Jerusalem when he would suffer at the hands of the authorities. In his time and setting, with its strange obsessions, tremendous issues depended on the measure of this faithfulness to unalterable divine decrees (Schonfield 45).

## **7.9 The Branch of the Renewal**

Associated with a Davidic messiah are frequent references to a Branch, which is conceived as a genetic offshoot of Yahweh's seed line rather than a celestially begotten Son of the Father. However one prophecy of profound impact is that of Isaiah 11 (p 566). The Branch, a messiah of the line of Jesse, David's father, becomes a man of spiritual insight and justice with a tongue like a sharp sword, who not only institutes social harmony, and becomes an ensign whom the gentiles seek, but also transforms the natural order back to something like the age of innocence before the Fall. This is a profound prophecy - that a mere human could play such a superhuman role, and as early as 700 BC! It is not hard to understand why Christian writers might see in it a prophecy of the mission of Christ and neither is it difficult to imagine Jesus, knowing it well, adopting it as a key to his quest.

By contrast, another Branch in Jeremiah 23:5 leads in a less-fruitful direction. We are told "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is

his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." This at first sounds like a transcendental messiah named as the Lord, but later at 33:15 the passage is repeated with the following change concerning not the messiah, but Jerusalem: "... and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness". Does this mean that Jerusalem, admonished for its iniquity by Jesus is equally the Messiah of history? The passage also implies the saving of Israel and Judah, when the apocalyptic events which succeeded the Passion culminated in the sacking of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple, hardly consistent with history or Jesus' Essene end-of-days rhetoric.

In Psalm 2 we do see the Davidic king extolled as the Lord's begotten Son to be feared, and whose dominion shall extend to the ends of the earth. This idea of the Davidic messiah does however have clear intimations of spiritual divinity as well as temporal power.

*Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,  
against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying,  
Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.  
He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.  
Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.  
Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.  
I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me,  
Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.  
Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,  
and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.  
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;  
thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.  
Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.  
Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.  
Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way,  
when his wrath is kindled but a little.  
Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

Now this Psalm, which purports to be Davidic has been referred both to a messianic figure and to David or a later king of Judah (Weiser 109). But 2 Samuel 5:17 notes: "But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David" and afterwards David vanquishes them under the guidance of God, so one could say this is formally a coronation Psalm of David (Flanders et. al. 410). "Our Rabbis expound it as relating to king Messiah, but according to its plain meaninging it is proper to interpret it in connection with David." (Cohen A 3). It refers to a divine king who will rule with strength to the extent that he has the heathen for his inheritance to whom the kings and judges are subject. This would appear to be the way David would see it, but even the Rabbis concede it refers to the messiah.

However it has a bizarre twist. This is the sort of twist prophetic writings often have, one in which a new and quite different interpretation emerges. It is also regarded by Christians as an allegory of the crucifixion. It explains that the heathen (Rome) will rage and the people (of Jerusalem) will imagine a vain thing. The Kings and rulers (Herod, Pilate and the High Priests) take counsel together against the Lord's anointed (Jesus). But the Lord will laugh and vex them and set his holy King on the hill of Zion (in his death), the son whom 'this day I have begotten', who will have the heathen for his inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession, becoming a global religion.

Jesus was supposed to be the Prince of Peace, not a despot whom the leaders of the

world stood and kissed for fear. He stood very bravely and alone for the truth in front of Pilate in John. As in another passage Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

But in the second coming, the Son sits in judgement, 'be wise and kiss the Son lest he be angry' and they perish, blessing those who put their trust in him. At the end of Psalm 2 the Son suddenly looms as an eschatological deity.

So we have a recipe, if you like a secret manual for the Messiah which Northern Israel sects may have pored over, along with Psalms 22, 31, 41 and others. Jesus, to pronounce the Kingdom, must be installed on the hill of Zion by God in the face of conspiracy between the Romans and the Jewish rulers. He must thus initiate a plot in which they conspire together to kill him because he declares himself king. The potter's vessel of Judas will be smashed in the process of betrayal. And the Son of Man will then judge the wicked in glory, worshipped by all the nations. It is a strange twist of the ancient Psalms, but a potent one, running with inuendos.

The sense of the Davidic monarch of destiny evolved over time, affected both by the release from exile and from the development of apocalyptic visions of the climax of history in the Day of Resurrection sourcing ultimately from the Zoroastrian model of cosmic renovation at the hands of Ahura Mazda.

Although there were many kings of Israel and Judah from the time of David to the exile, who succeeded in having long reigns before 'sleeping with their fathers', once we enter the domain of sacred kingship, we return to the ancient theme of human sacrifice. Although Israel abhorred the practices of the nations, the cult of Yahweh preserved the ancient relationship between the sacred and sacrifice. The taboo of herem sanctifies to god, whether by being accursed or becoming 'too holy'. The passover itself is not just a symbol of the Exodus, but of Yahweh passing over the first-born human sacrifice only of those houses whose doorposts were painted with the blood of the lamb (Exodus 12:23). In Exodus 34:19, Yahweh claimed all first born out of the matrix as his. Human sacrifice, albeit in times of crisis, is recorded throughout the Old Testament, from the daughter of Jeptath to the seven sacrificed to the harvest for Saul's transgressions. Human sacrifice in times of crisis continued to be the supreme offering. The idea that one person should bear atonement for the sins of the people continued through to the time of Jesus, and was also an aspect of Essene practice - John 11:50 in the words attributed to Caphias "Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not". This passage does not just mean the animal sacrifice on the Day of Atonement, or on the Purim, it is a passage conceding the continuity of human sacrifice on occasion.

Thus while it might be expected that a Davidic Messiah could hope to become a victorious temporal monarch and live out his years unhindered, such is not the case for a sacred king of the apocalyptic renovation, any more than it was the case for his great predecessor, Moses who for not sanctifying the waters of Qadesh to Yahweh died a death of sacred atonement on Mount Nabo when he was still in full possession of his faculties, because regardless, no man can see the face of God and live. Although the Essene Teacher of Righteousness might have hoped to be the divine leader without suffering the penalty, he too because of his sharp tongue was made, not merely a political martyr, but a sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. If we examine the nature of several key Old Testament prophecies which have been applied to the mission of the



Jesus as Messiah, we see this dark side of Yahweh's nature running consistently through the major prophecies.

### 7.10 The Suffering Righteous One

In the second Isaiah chapter 49, the nature of the Suffering Servant is elaborated in these contrasts of light and darkness. We are first offered a foretaste of an immaculate conception combined with the glorified speaker of sharp truth:

*Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far;  
The Lord hath called me from the womb;  
from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.  
And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword;  
in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me,  
and made me a polished shaft;  
in his quiver hath he hid me;  
And said unto me,  
Thou art my servant, O Israel,  
in whom I will be glorified.*

But in the next section we find the dark side emerging in the spending of strength for nought and Israel not being gathered ... two themes both of which were realized in Jesus mission:

*Then I said, I have laboured in vain,  
I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain:  
yet surely my judgment is with the Lord,  
and my work with my God. ...  
Though Israel be not gathered,  
yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord,  
and my God shall be my strength."*

Many people quite correctly analyse such passages in terms of the shifting political history of Israel and Judah and the helplessness the Jewish prophets felt, despite their faith in Yahweh, in the face of both political domination and the unfaithfulness of the Jewish people.

We also find the arena extending grandiosely, far beyond the twelve tribes, to the 'ends of the earth' in the universal 'light of the gentiles':

*"And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."*

However the dark aspect now deepens further still in the form of the Redeemer whom 'man despiseth' and 'the nation abhorreth', but who will nevertheless (eventually) be worshipped by Kings and princes:

*"Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee."*

We finally hear of the epoch of the Redeemer and the mission of mercy to those who are in bondage and darkness:

*"Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee ... to establish the earth ... That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. ... They shall not hunger nor thirst; ... for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."*

This ends with the expanse of the new domain extending to the four directions and even back to the magical land of the Moon God of Moses "... and my highways shall

be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim."

Now while it may well be that the second Isaiah conceived of these images purely in terms of the glorification of the destiny of Israel, the language and passages clearly lead to a scenario where the Redeemer is despised by their own people, Israel is not gathered, yet the will of the Father is exalted to the ends of the earth in the very spending of the Servant's strength to nought. The Gospels consistently attribute an incisive knowledge of these scriptures to Jesus in a form which characterises his teaching as a series of challenges using scripture concisely to make pertinent points in a decisive way.

Luke 4:18 elaborates a brief description of Mark 6:2 to quote Jesus reading a comparable passage Isaiah 61:1,3 at his first and only sermon in Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." It is difficult to see Jesus quoting these words attributed to him without appreciating the bitter-sweet legacy this passage of Isaiah also implies 'beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness' in 'the planting of the Lord'. It is thus consistent with the description of Jesus mission that he understood full well not just that assuming the messianic role was fraught with danger, but that it carried with it a frank sacrificial nature which had already been documented in these and other prophecies. It thus became necessary for Jesus to carefully establish sufficient precedents from Old Testament prophecy during his journey to Jerusalem to weave an atmosphere of prophetic authenticity around his mission as the 'chosen one'.

This theme of the 'suffering redeemer' continues through many passages of Isaiah. In chapter 53 we find him a reviled vine:

*"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."*

Many of these passages run throughwith he imagery of the dying god of fertility. Although it is Yahweh being spoken of, the maetaphor is 'the planting of the Lord', 'a tender plant' and 'a root out of a dry ground' - precisely the imagery of Adonis and Tammuz.

We again see how the second Isaiah percieves Yahweh as a God who expresses his link with humanity in tragic irony. The traditional nomadic role of shepherd extends to the flock of humanity and the sacred lamb of atonement who complains not. This is the passage pointedly read to the eunuch in Acts 8:32. Likewise Mot was the lamb of god and Tammuz was the good shepherd.

*"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."*

We next see shadows of trial and execution at the hands of a scornful people

*"He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation?" and sacrificed for a sin offering "for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken."*

He is also numbered among the sinners and publicans despite preaching non-violence and truth:

*"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."*

We come again to the critical point, it is God himself who has wasted his redeemer as a sin offering of the son to glorify the father.

*"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."*

Finally the suffering servant becomes glorified through being cursed among the transgressors, just as Jesus rose again after being hung between two 'thieves'.

*"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."*

Nowhere does this spirit of heaviness of the garment of praise become more pronounced than in the very psalms in which the praise of God is sung and which form one of the central sources of Old Testament prophecy about Jesus. We again confront the paradox of prophetic implications. The psalm is clearly written for an event at the time of writing. It is headed: For the leader 'upon the hind of the morning' - Aijeleth ha-Shahar, which is identified in the Talmud with Esther (Cohen A 61). But this would refer it to the plot of Haman which was widely believed to be mythical. Nevertheless this purim interpretation is of great significance to the Christian prophecy.

### **7.11 God, God! Why Have You Forsaken Me?**

Of the many dimensions of joy and sorrow portrayed in the psalms, the doom expressed in Psalm 22, the final cry of Christ on the cross "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacht-hani?" - El, El Why have you forsaken me? - the same cry of Mot the god of the waning seven year season of famine to his father El when smitten by Anath to his demise in championing the storm God Ba'al, the waxing Lord of fertility of Canaan, gives perhaps the most vivid affirmation of the continuing theme of atonement sacrifice, common to all Near Eastern religion, in Israelite thought. This is where the dark aspect of Yahweh comes right home - for Psalm 22 is the very Passion of the Messiah. Weiser (219) concedes: "To Christian memories, this psalm is sacred, because Jesus used its opening words in his prayer on the cross. The song first leads us down into the utmost depths of despair and suffering ... it then soars to the heights in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving":

*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?  
why art thou so far from helping me,  
and from the words of my roaring?  
O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not;  
and in the night season, and am not silent.  
But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.  
Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.  
They cried unto thee, and were delivered:  
they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.  
But I am a worm, and no man;*

*a reproach of men, and despised of the people.  
 All they that see me laugh me to scorn:  
 they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,  
 He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him:  
 let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.  
 But thou art he that took me out of the womb:  
 thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.  
 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.  
 Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.  
 Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.  
 They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.  
 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint:  
 my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.  
 My strength is dried up like a potsherd;  
 and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;  
 and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.  
 For dogs have compassed me:  
 the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me:  
 they pierced my hands and my feet.  
 I may tell all my bones:  
 they look and stare upon me.  
 They part my garments among them,  
 and cast lots upon my vesture.  
 But be not thou far from me, O Lord:  
 O my strength, haste thee to help me.  
 Deliver my soul from the sword;  
 my darling from the power of the dog.*

Psalm 22 considers this mortal cry to have been heard, to succour the meek and signify eternal life, but only after the price of life has been forfeit:

*For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;  
 neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.  
 My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation:  
 I will pay my vows before them that fear him.  
 The meek shall eat and be satisfied:  
 they shall praise the Lord that seek him:  
 your heart shall live for ever.*

Finally the psalm heralds not only the universal worship of the Lord by all nations, but the declaration of his righteousness in this supreme act of sacrifice:

*All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord:  
 and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee ...  
 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness  
 unto a people that shall be born,  
 that he hath done this.*

This of course contains many passages quoted by the Gospel writers, including the piercing of hands and feet, the casting of lots on the vesture Matt 27:35, the scorn and seeing if Elias will deliver him Mark 15:35. Other aspects, including the bulls of Bashan recall much more ancient rites of sacrifice of the sacred kings of the waxing and waning year, which were performed in gruesome rituals from burning alive in a tree in Britain to the tearing apart of Dionysus, the goring of Adonis, the death by castration of Attis and the grinding of Tammuz in the millstone.

Ironically such sacrificial death, which was ritually performed by hanging the victim in a tree became a Deuteronomic curse: 21:22 "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death ... thou hang him on a tree ... for he that is hanged is accursed of God". Paradoxically, the crucifixion of the Messiah, the 'accursed redeemer', was thus cited by early Christians as abrogating the old law, as quoted in Galatians 3:13 "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us for it is

written 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree!'. This was the same fate that befell Haman in Esther 7:10 in a parallel sacrificial rite of the waning sacred king in the style of Esther-Ishtar for the glorification of Mordecai-Marduk "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai".



Fig 7.1: Last Supper altar scene San Croce (detail) Tadeo Gaddi

The exaltation of the accursed is mentioned again twice in Acts: 5:30, (10:39): "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

One of the reasons Jesus used the Psalms extensively in modelling his vision of the messiahship and its sacrificial conclusion is that they consist of ancient material, some of which filtered its way back to Jerusalem from the North after the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC (Flanders et. al. 407). There are instances of duplicate psalms, such as 14 and 53, one version using the Northern term Elohim for God. Weiser (82) notes the Tammuz theme in several other passages (Ps. 9:13, 18:5, 30:3, 40:2, 71:20, 103:4, 107:18, 116:3 and significantly for

Jesus, Jonah 2:2).

### 7.12 Behold the King Cometh Lowly on an Ass

The situation becomes ever more turgid with Zeccariah, which at 2:8 mentions Yeshua specifically as priest in passages of the vine and fig tree (final pastoral peace). If the consistent gospel accounts of this episode do reveal an original tradition, it appears that Jesus intentionally acted out the episode of the 'foolish shepherd' as the theme for his final end-of-days confrontation in Jerusalem walking intentionally to his doom as a shaman would walk straight into the eye of a gathering tornado that he himself had whipped up. Zechariah never dared to translate his vision into action, and it had therefore become a vision awaiting fulfillment, not so much a prophecy as a working manual for the tragic passion.

At Zech 3:8, we find yet another reference to the Branch:

*"for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch. ... upon one stone shall be seven eyes ... and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree."*

This sounds like a reflection of Christ's message of love, but it is the first Zechariah speaking in the context of Zerubbabel building the second temple after the exile.

At Zech 9:9 we find "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." a reference apparently to Salmah the sacrificial summer king whom some say is portrayed in the Song of Songs, which became a case of intentional 'scripture fulfillment' as rather than prophecy - in Jesus' orchestrated triumphal ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (p 370).

With chapter 11, begins the central episode of the Foolish Shepherd, one which needs to be understood in appreciating the dilemma of the climax of the Passion, for it is the one passage which captures the ascending darkness of the sacrificial event in its full totality and intimately in the first person of the narrator. It carries with it a personal feeling of desperation at the social circumstances leading to such an apocalyptic act. It conveys all the contrasts of darkness and light, but remains unambiguous about the fact that it is the Lord himself visiting on his people and his Foolish Shepherd this terrible event. The devil does not even qualify a mention, only the willfulness of human nature and the false gods, presumably the Greek Zeus and the Queen of Heaven, Tammuz, Adonis etc.

Obedying a prophetic call, the narrator vows himself to Yahweh, dons the rough pastoral garment of the prophets and carves himself two pastoral staffs, Grace and Concord and goes out to preach repentance to the flock, prophesying Yahweh's mercy and displeasure. From the earliest times the prophets had complemented the role of the priests by exhorting the people to moral virtue. But not even Zechariah's fellow-prophets had remained faithful. The populace had turned to foreign deities. Zechariah found himself alone and preaching to deaf ears. He grew exasperated, and cried out in the market-place: "I will not feed this flock! Thus says the Lord: 'Let the sick beasts die, and let those that are caught in the thicket perish and, for all I care, let the remainder devour one another.'" (Graves 1946 306).

He publicly snaps his staff of Grace and goes up to the Temple to vow himself as a temple slave, saying to the priests "I have come to devote myself to God. At what price do you value me?" They answered scornfully that because you are a worthless shepherd who has chattered as idly as a woman we will only give you 30 shekels (under Lev 27:6-8). They weigh him out thirty shekels, saying: 'Go now to the High Priest and register your vow.' Zechariah is enraged! At a goodly price you have valued me!" There in the Temple he sees a Gibeonite potter, who although from an unclean Canaanite guild were employed as temple craftsmen.

He throws the thirty shekels at the potter's feet for him to tread into the clay and runs out of the temple still a free man and still a prophet. This passage is echoed in Matt 27:3 concerning Judas and his accursed end: "So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter". But why is it Judas who is casting the shekels, rather than Jesus? Because they are twins in the sacred tragedy? On reaching the market place he summons the people and breaks his staff of Concord crying out: "For Judah and the rest of Israel I proclaim discord in the name of the Lord!" The very chaos messiahship of Jesus!

In Mark 11:15, Jesus makes an exactly similar ethical assault on the financial dealings at the Temple proclaiming just such discord in the name of the Lord:

*"And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him"*

In a vision Zechariah becomes the Foolish Shepherd 'for lo I will raise up a shepherd ... which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces'. This visits doom: 'Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye'. He sees

himself preaching falsely in the very Courts of the Temple, trying to stir the people to shame, until at last his own father and mother cry out: " You. have spoken lies in the name of Yahweh - you shall not live!" and thrust him through.

In Zechariah this act breaks the spell of evil. The people are suddenly moved to repentance and Yahweh proves merciful. The Lord then makes Jerusalem a 'burden-some stone' for its opponents and Judah a 'hearth of fire among the wood' to destroy Israel's opponents. But then we come to the very sad and glorified episode. The pierced one is at once the travail of Armageddon:

*"And I will pour upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon." After Jesus died, John says 19:34 "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. ... They shall look on him whom they pierced."*

The false " prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision ... neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husband-man; And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." Now these two passages appear in reverse, just as has Judas, because Jesus' sheep are the real disciples and they are scattered before the piercing, and it is the false prophets who disclaim the injuries to their hands, not Jesus from his Crucifixion. The cart of prophecy has become the horse of reality.

Thereupon the frightful Day of the Lord dawns. All the nations of the world march against Jerusalem. The city is taken, the houses rifled, the women ravished and half the population carried off into captivity. But the Son of God suddenly manifests himself; and his feet bestride the Mount of Olives, which splits in two. The faithful ones, preserved from slaughter, take refuge in his shadow. That day the sky turns dark, but at evening clears and living waters flow out from the City eastward to the Dead Sea and westward to the Mediterranean. Two-thirds of the nation have perished; but the remainder are refined, as gold and silver in the fire. Yahweh says: "It is my people" and they: "It is our God." Jerusalem is saved, the oppressors are consumed in a plague and the worship of Yahweh is restored. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one."

*And indeed this episode also comes straight out of Jesus' next sayings: Mark 13:3 "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple ... he said "And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows. But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. And the gospel must first be published among all nations."*

However, as we know, the kingdom didn't come, despite Paul and many Christians after him waiting vigilantly for the 'thief in the night'. It is true that within 30 years Jerusalem did fall, but by that time Mark and subsequently the other gospel writers began writing partly in response to the continuing delay in the Kingdom.

These passages in Zechariah raise further controversial issues about Christ's final hours and the culmination of his mission. In Luke 22:35 it is related that Jesus said "

'he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, 'And he was reckoned among the transgressors' for the things concerning me have an end". And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough." In the synoptic gospels it is related that one disciple 'smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear'. Jesus is then tried by the Romans for insurrection and held while the real Zealot with the ritual title Bar-Abba (son of the father) is freed and consequently Jesus is ironically crucified between two thieves.

Matthew 26:31 makes clear the link to Zechariah:

*"Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. ... behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. ... Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled."*

John 18:8 has Jesus state that no disciples were arrested: "I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none". By assuming responsibility, Jesus intentionally trades his own life as the instigator of the attack for his accomplices.

In Luke, Jesus asks for twelve swords and settles for two. Only one is used in all four gospels. In Zechariah the Foolish Shepherd dies by the sword. It is also the Foolish Shepherd who sells himself for thirty pieces of silver, not his chosen scapegoat to whom he has passed the sop. So who is the bad guy? If Zechariah is truly prophetic it was Jesus, not his 'twin' selling himself into betrayal and his death should have come swiftly and cleanly at the swords of his bretheren or disciples, not a Roman crucifixion, however appropriate the tree of the accursed might be to the atonement of the the Paschal lamb. Indeed it is possible that the lasting fame of Jesus' teachings and the heritage of Christianity itself may hinge on a most unusual twist of fate in these last hours, which Jesus may not himself have fully anticipated.

### **7.13 The Abomination of Desolation**

Matthew 24:15 quotes in the most alarming terms the end of Days signified by Daniel's abomination:

*"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, ... For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be ... For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be ... and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."*

Daniel completes the cycle of the major prophecies with its couplet of references linking the only Old Testament passage specifically addressed to the Messiah to the pivotal quotation concerning the future transcendent Son of Man.

Firstly at 2:44 the first Daniel invokes the eternal kingdom:

*"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."*

This is subsequently amplified by the 'second' Daniel at 7:13 in his night visions:

*"behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an*



*everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."*

Finally the Messiah is cut off after a cryptic time period: 9:24

*"Seventy weeks are determined ... to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy ... from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."*

While these passages specifically mention both the Messiah or anointed one being sacrificially cut off and the vision of the transcendent Son of Man meeting the Ancient of Days, a unique appearance in the likeness of old Canaanite El, in a way which forms natural source material for Jesus' apocalyptic vision of the Kingdom realized in the Son of Man coming with power in the resurrection, the Son of Man appears in Daniel before the Messiah is 'cut off', just as the sheep are scattered in Zechariah after the pierced shepherd is mourned. Both cases require reversal of the order to assume prophetic sequence.

#### **7.14 Sorcery, Blasphemy and Insurrection**

The charges brought against Jesus by the High Priests were ostensibly for blasphemy. In Mark 14:61 when the high priest asks "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus said, 'I am'." Although Matthew 26:64 amends this to "Thou hast said" and Luke 22:67 has Jesus parry "If I tell you, ye will not believe and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go." and then like Matthew defers "Ye say that I am," without exception in the three synoptics Jesus declares "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven". This is then enough to declare blasphemy: Mark 14:63 "Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, 'What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?' And they all condemned him to be guilty of death." Of all statements, laying claim to the resurrected Godhead of the future Son of Man is the greatest possible challenge conceivable to the high priests to enact the ancient rite and crucify him, not that it appears, for all that, to be a capital charge.

This charge of blasphemy should be considered in the light of the traditional nature of Yahweh as a transcendent God, beyond form or idol, and beyond human comprehension, whose very name was unspeakable from the time of the exilic redactions: 'I am that I am'. Yet John at 8:56 has Jesus stand in the temple and claim to be the ancient one in fleshy form: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad'. Then said the Jews unto him, 'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?' Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am'. Then took they up stones to cast at him." This goes far beyond any claim of a Davidic king to be the earthly son of God.

This point is driven home even more acutely in John 10:30: Jesus claims "I and my Father are one." Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?" The Jews answered him, saying, "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself

God." Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." Now Jesus is quoted here as commenting on Psalm 82, a very old psalm which still treats god as one of a congregation of polytheistic deities. It is really the subjugation Psalm:

*God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.  
How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.  
Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.  
Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.  
They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness:  
all the foundations of the earth are out of course.  
I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.  
But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.  
Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.*

In this psalm, God (Elohim) is subjugating the congregation of El the mighty, the 'children of the most high', the sons of El, and now they are going to die like men (Armstrong 1993 63). However here god (Elohim) is identified both with Yahweh and 'judges' in the manner of god's human agents (Exod 21:6, 22:7,8,27) following Deut 1:17 "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's" and paralleling Isaiah 3:14 and Psalm 58, in which it is the worldly judges who are on trial. Neither gods nor angels die like men in Hebraic thought (Cohen A 270). These interpretations thus remain controversial in Jewish thought.

Jesus takes a novel interpretation of this situation - serving a ball right on to the top edge of the net - saying 'they are gods unto whom the word of god came.' That is true of the judges, but applying it in particular, in extreme irony, to the Son of Man, who is God's 'only begotten' who will 'die like men' and fall like 'the princes'. However, by definition, it also applies to all people 'enlightened' by the Logos. The pagan kings of Tyre and Damascus were traditionally deified. Even Jewish kings were 'sons of God'. However to use 'ye are gods' to claim the messiahship is clearly a blasphemous rejoinder, using the very scriptures to cite something the Jews do not want to admit.

It is just such responsibility we should aspire to in taking Jesus down from the cross and assuming responsibility for 'the foundations of the Earth' being 'out of course' from our own human actions, since we are speaking here of true prophecy. It is also a pivotal issue today, when we urgently need to take responsibility for our actions here on Earth, rather than leave the consequences of our mistaken greed to divine will and ultimately divine judgement upon us. It is time to finally heed these words of Jesus "Ye are gods", and to make a judgement to preserve the Immortal Age.

Having turned the tables, Jesus is challenged by what authority he does these things. His response is adroit and politically very pertinent, because the sacrifice/martyrdom of John was still fresh in their minds: Mark 11:27 "The chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered and said

unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

The web of destiny was tightening. The Pharisees and Herodians conspire to catch him speaking against Rome but his answer is pure shaman: Mark 12:13 And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words. Who say "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" But he said "Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, "Caesar's". And Jesus said: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (Thomas 100 adds "and unto me which are mine" a hidden dimension of blasphemy) This is a prudent answer, but a peculiar one for a table-turner, because it is precisely to ensure Roman coins were not offered to Yahweh that the money changers were in the Temple. This would have been politically very pertinent if the Crucifixion was as late as 36. AD 34-5 was a census year, which only happened every 14 years, so the acrimonious tax would have been due. There were howls of protest when Jesus had stayed with Zacchaeus at Jericho.

Another of the charges levelled was that he said he would destroy and rebuild the Temple in three days. John 2:18 "Then answered the Jews and said unto him, 'What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?' Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Then said the Jews, 'Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?' But he spake of the temple of his body."

Jesus repeated this in Matthew 12:40 "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." But nevertheless Matthew 26:60 later claimed this was false witness: "At the last came two false witnesses, And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." Matthew later has this as part of the Crucifixion: 27:40 "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." But of course this is not what Jonah intended, more to the point was sealing the tomb: 27:63 "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." Three days are of course traditionally the three dark nights of no moon, during the Descent of Inanna (p 174). The fact that Passover was at full moon doesn't diminish from the ancient sacrificial significance of the period.

The gospel accounts of the trial before the high priests differ. Most commentators now disbelieve that there was a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin, just a synhedron (Gk) or council gathered quickly by the high priest. Mark's overnight meeting of the full Sanhedrin appears an unlikely exaggeration. Acts 5:27 does corroborate the presence of a formal Sanhedrin although its existence has been doubted in Herod's time because of direct Roman rule.

Luke's independant account of the judgement has been described by David Catchpole as 'more historically reliable' (Pagels 1995 94). It has been noted he may have received an account through Manaen (Acts 13:1). While Mark 14:62 makes bolder statements "And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." and his claim that there was a substantial gathering at night and 15:1 "the elders the scribes and the whole council" in the morning, in Luke 22:66, Jesus is more evasive about his role as Messiah "And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes

came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth."

John also has passages which are regarded as carrying specific historical credibility. John has an even more low key arrest and containment by the high priests, in which he is merely moved between the houses of Annas and his son-in-law Caiaphas the high priest. The earlier hearing at which the concern is raised that John 11:48 "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our holy place and our nation." is regarded by Fergus Millar and Pagels (1995 107) as being closer to the actual events.



Fig 7.3: Stone found in the temple warning of death for entering the inner court (Wilson I 153)

The charge conveyed to Pilate was by contrast one of insurrection, following Jesus' intentional act of overturning the tables in the 'cleansing of the Temple' according to the synoptics: Luke 23:2 "And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King."

John 18:33 states "Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, 'Art thou the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence'. Pilate therefore said unto him,

'Art thou a king then?' Jesus answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth'. Of course being a sacred king enacting a fertility rite is also, sadly, a king 'not of this world'.

When in John, Pilate says 18:31 "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews say "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death". Some authorities, dating from Augustine, declare this was the case because it was the Passover. They do not enter Pilate's residence for this reason. In a rabbinic treatise there were no Sanhedrin meetings on festival days, and no sentence was passed until conviction on the day after the trial (Fox R 289). There is continuing dispute as to whether the death penalty was still an option or not. Richard Husband claims that under first century law the Sanhedrin retained the right to capital punishment for religious crimes transgressing the law and adultery (Pagels 108). In 36 AD Stephen was stoned in the Temple (Acts 7:57), but was this more of a lynching than a formal trial. In 62 AD, Ananias II condemned James, but lost his position for not notifying the newly arriving procurator. Jesus bar Ananias later in 62 was arrested and beaten for lamenting

against Jerusalem and the sanctuary (Fox R 287) and brought before Albinus because they did not dare execute this Jesus as they had executed James (Josephus). Blasphemy was a capital offence only for worshipping idols or 'naming God's name' (Fox R 289).

To claim either to be the Messiah, who was a recognised human, or the son of God, as David was, is not blasphemy. "Use of the phrase 'Son of the Blessed' or 'Son of God' was no capital crime ... not in the Mishnah nor pre-Mishnah law; it is an expression found often in apocalyptic literature" (Goldstein). Sitting 'at the right hand of power' is as we have seen a Northern term similar in content to David's allusion to himself in Psalm 110:1. However when compounded with forgiving sins, being Lord of the Sabbath and the only route to Abba John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me", one can perceive a form of personal idolatry vehemently opposed by the Jews in Melkarth and other deified pagan heros.



Fig 7.4: Ecce Homo engraving after Reubens (Maccoby 143).

Pilate is described by Josephus and Philo as "greedy, inflexible and cruel and resorted to robbery and oppression" (Hoehner 173) and by Agrippa 'harsh, unbending and stubborn' (Fox R 289). Various historians (Pagels 1995, Maccoby, Rank-Heinmann 1992, Fox R 294) note that Pilate appears to have been let off very lightly by the gospels, and the Jews, in particular, have reaped the blame for Jesus' death. This is certainly the case in historical terms. However,

there is reason to think that the high priests put Pilate in a double bind.

The person figuratively entitled Barabbas 'son of the father' who is mentioned both in synoptics Mark (15:7, Luke 23:18) and gnostic John (18:40) was held for insurrection and murder, "during the uprising", possibly associated with the protest over Pilate charging Temple proceeds (Corban) for an aqueduct into the city at which many protesters were taken by surprise killed by his plain-clothes agents. This may be the "Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices" mentioned by Luke (31:1) during Jesus' final approach to Jerusalem, although this has also been suggested to have been a separate demonstration at the previous passover (Hoehner 176). The Corbanas was a special temple trust held for the Nazarites for their sacrifices, so it is very plausible that this did involve Galilaeans (Hoehner 174). It has been suggested that it occurred shortly before the crucifixion (Schoenfiled 266).

Pilate had committed several other excesses which had caused friction, not only with the Jewish people, but with the Herodian princes as well. He had put Roman stan-

dards into Jerusalem and only desisted when a passive demonstration for 5 days and 5 nights around his house at Caesarea was prepared to have their throats cut rather than give in when encircled by soldiers three deep (Wilson I 123) in a manner reminiscent of Jesus' "offer the wicked man no resistance" (Matt 5:38). This episode, along with the aqueduct are mentioned by Josephus immediately before his redacted Jesus entry suggesting it immediately preceded his crucifixion. Philo also mentions a second episode with shields in Herod the Great's palace which resulted in a deputation of Herodian princes and Tiberius having to instruct Pilate to remove them to the temple of Augustus at Caesarea. "Because of this Pilate was exasperated, for he did not want Tiberius to be informed, nor did he wish to appear penitent" (Hoehner 179). By 36 Pilate was removed from office by Vitellius prefect of Syria after protests from the Jews and Samaritans for killing the Samaritan claimant to the Taheb and his followers, who was ascending the sacred Mt. Gerizim claiming to reveal the ancient vessels supposed to have been buried by Moses. Caiaphas was at the same time removed from office, suggestive of a reaction against Jesus' crucifixion (Schonfield 262).

Pilate had come down from his home at Caesarea on the coast specifically to keep an eye on the Passover celebrations militarily equipped to deal with any disturbance. Certainly no one can doubt that the Romans were prepared to violently repress all such spiritual movements as potential insurrection. In the 40s Theudas another nabi promised to divide the Jordan. The Romans arrested and killed him (Fox R 287), along with his followers for this 'symbolic insurrection'.

Pilate's fear of impeachment times the 'shields episode' late, and the fact that the Jews could report directly to Tiberius suggests it was after the death of Sejanus prefect of the praetorian guard in Oct 31. The opposition between Antipas and Herod would time this after Sejanus' death as they were both friends of his (Hoehner 179).

Pilate and Herod were described by Luke as "at enmity between themselves". It would thus appear that, despite being a cruel and impetuous governor, Pilate in this instance, firstly sought to improve his relations with Herod by sending Jesus to him as in Luke 23:7, from which date Luke 23:12 notes "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together." One can see why because this also neatly solved Herod's potential problems of a repeat of having to endure having killed both John and Jesus to keep the peace in Galilee. In Luke's account, it is notable that Jesus is mocked and ritually 'set at nought' as a sacred king by Herod's men just as John did previously.

By demanding Barabbas, the Jews achieved the release of an apparent Zealot rather than the charismatic who preached against themselves, thus putting Pilate on a cleft stick. By transferring Jesus to Pilate, the high priests also thought they had dispatched Jesus while also scoring a moral victory concerning the Corban. However none of them quite realized that all these energies had actually been set in motion very carefully by the Shepherd of Belial, as far back as picking the ears of grain in the fields of Galilee.

It should be noted that many features of the gospel episode correspond with Roman practices and even in a prophecy-fulfilling way. Although Pilate's asking three times against Jesus' guilt is often cited as evidence of pro-Roman and anti-Jewish bias, this pattern is also found in questioning later Christians. Although dividing of lots over the clothes is regarded as prophecy-fulfilling polemic of Psalm 22, Hadrian mentions the claiming of immediate valuables of the accused by their attendants. The wearing

of a seamless garment, as recorded, would thus force lots to be drawn. Although as Jesus was only informally remitted to Herod in Luke as a gesture, Roman law mentions right to trial in one's domicile. Romans had both a terminal and a cautionary scourging each of which is mentioned separately in Mark and Luke (Fox R 292). The Paschal lamb must have no bone broken as echoed in Psalm 34:20 "God rescues him ... taking care of every bone ... God will not let one be broken." Jesus is mentioned in John as foregoing this, unlike his companions, because he was already dead. Breaking of the bones of crucified victims was a unique aspect of Jewish crucifixions because it was against Mosaic law that a man hanged accursed should remain after sundown (Wilson I 130).

Jesus' doom was to be the sacred king, whom the crowd ritually call to be crucified as the accursed who will pay atonement for their sins. A great deal of emphasis is placed on the idea that the crowd must have been a mob of the high priests, whose temple servants were said to have numbered 20,000 (Wilson I 126). Wilson suggested Jesus was "disowned by those who had welcomed him to Jerusalem - because he had failed to sanction the abortive uprising against the Romans that arguably they had launched in his name." However, reading the Wisdom of Solomon, it is quite obvious that the sentiment of heralding the king in triumph will turn in the next phase of the pageant to the dark one of testing the "just man" to the death to see if he is really who he claims. As Caiaphas said "What need we any further witness?"

Although, as the synoptics note, Jesus was "delivered to the sinners" or gentiles (John even mentions a band or 'cohort' at the arrest suggesting Roman participation), and died a Roman punishment, crucified at the hands of the Romans, the blame is passed to the Jews, secured from Pilate at John 19:12 by shouting "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." When he is crucified John 19:19 has Pilate personally write his title "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS", despite the high priests protestation "Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews". Although the gospels attitude has been portrayed as anti-Jewish, it is equally a real-politic portrayal of the intrigue between Herod, Pilate and the High Priests, each trying to protect their own order. As Pagels (1995 105) concedes "Let us assume first that it is historically likely that certain Jewish leaders may have collaborated with the Roman authorities in Jesus' arrest and execution".

However it should be understood that Jesus' charge of blasphemy for claiming to be the Messiah was accompanied by other significant claims to becoming the accursed. When asked to raise Lazarus from the dead at John 11:33 Jesus groaned. When he subsequently raises Lazarus, Caphias then makes his speech about one man dying for the people. Jesus death is thus in a sense in exchange for the life of Lazarus. Again when Jesus ordains the twelve disciples at Mark 3:14 to cast out devils and is thronged by the multitude "his friends went out to lay hold on him: for they said, 'He is beside himself' and the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, 'He hath Beelzebub [Ba'al Zebul], and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils'. And he said unto them 'How can Satan cast out Satan?'"

It is thus clear that the very miracles (p 380) by which Jesus is identified by many Christians as more than human, the very manifest Son of God, were to others at the time evidence of sorcery, a charge which is every bit as grievous as abrogating the law as 'Lord of the Sabbath'. This is confirmed by the Mishnah passage "On the Eve of the Passover they hanged Yeshu[a] ben Pantera - because he practised sorcery and enticed and led Israel astray" and by the Lexicon Talmudicum references to Jeshu-ha-

Notzri by mention of the wicked kingdom of Edom, since that was his nation ... he was hanged on a Passover Eve.

When we ask who it is that is responsible for the sacrifice of the chosen one, Christian writers have polemical and inappropriate answers. Each of the gospels Mark, Matthew and Luke, with increasing emphasis, cite Satan and through him the Jews for this predicament, which is perceived as the cosmic struggle between God and the Devil for supremacy, in which God achieves the ascendancy of the loving Kingdom for the faithful only through the tragedy of the Passion, the darkness of Satan exacting the death of the Redeemer in the very act of his deification. The Jews collectively in their harsh and cynical rejection of Jesus' divinity, with increasing vehemence, figure as the instruments of Satan's will and thus inherit an undeserved opprobrium in Christian thought.

John's gospel likewise, while not portraying Satan as a morphous creature who perches on the spires of the Temple, gives a similar portrayal in terms of the struggle between the agents of darkness and the light of Christ, associating Satan with Judas, certain leaders and then the Jews collectively. John 9:4 "the night is coming as long as I am in the world I am the light of the world." 12:31 Now is the krisis of this world, now the ruler of the world shall be cast out." A debate continues between those who see this as a non-ethnic theological symbol of darkness and those who frankly see it as singling out the Jews for demonization (Pagels 1995 106).

However there is no hint of the Devil in Psalm 22. It reads as a simple old fashioned sacrificial piece in which the chosen one, who is sacred to God, is in the ritual style chosen for scorn and death in the very revelation of the glory of god. Its is this very scorn and pain which draws out that same devotion to God which is the final reward of the 'righteousness ... that he hath done this'. The Qur'an correctly lays the responsibility with Allah and not Iblis or the Jews 3.55 "And when Allah said: O Isa, I am going to terminate the period of your stay (on earth) and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you of those who disbelieve and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the day of resurrection."

Comments attributed to Jesus in the Gospels confirm as much, for it is Jesus who, as his mission begins to unfold in the synoptics, teaches his disciples that he must be killed and rise again on the third day even as Jonah did to fulfill the scriptures:

*"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matt 12:40 )*

The inevitability of the Passion is systematically unfolded in advance by Jesus in Mark. As early in his mission as 2:20 Jesus is described as noting the parable of the bridegroom:

*"But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."*

At 9:9 after his transfiguration:

*"And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead" despite their confusion at what rising from the dead should mean.*

At 9:31 he teaches his disciples

*"The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day."*

Finally again at 10:32 as they were going up to Jerusalem



*"he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again."*

In John 20:8, the disciples including Peter were still not clear even at the tomb:

*"Then went in [Peter and] also the other disciple, who came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead."*

Even when betrayed by Judas and taken in the garden, Jesus notes that, despite the power of darkness, what is being done is fulfilling what must be done:

*"And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled'." (Mark 14:48)*

Although later Luke 22:53 changes this emphasis to "but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.", John the master of darkness and the light quotes simply in 18:11 "the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?".

Lord Adonai, it is no comfort in the living world that in Psalm 34:19 we hear:

*Many are the afflictions of the righteous:  
but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.  
He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.  
Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.  
The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants:  
and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*

Why must we take the consolation to be 'redeemed' from untimely death as a 'soul' when the only part of our bodies left undestroyed in your 'deliverance' are our 'bones' - these prophetically unbroken bones of Jesus? (John 19:36) Adonai, for the love of Eve, deliver my body from the sword and my darling from that power of the dog!

How can anyone seriously blame the Jews, even if they said "his blood be on us and on our children" or beat their chests when they returned from the cross. This is the ancient ritual fulfilled. To pass the buck from God to the "devil in the Jew" is a complete abnegation of responsibility.

One has to 'marvel' at the way the ancient sacrificial principle, which first blessed the seasons with the blood of men, has become so integrally incorporated into the persona of the jealous god Yahweh, who in one person now demands the sacrifice of his 'own son' in the ancient manner of kings who sacrificed their sons in their own stead either as ritual surrogates, or more frankly as Herod the Great did, to eliminate precipitate claimants to the throne. How is it that, despite now being a supreme God of Creation, who is subject neither to the sun, nor moon, nor the seasons, that Yahweh transformed as Abba, Jesus' Father, the unchanging eternal God of all, indulges in such unnecessary pain and slaughter of the chosen one that the 'acceptable year' of the redeemer may arrive? Did Ahura Mazda sacrifice his own son that the light could prevail? Is this autocratic and vengeful 'king of the universe' a fit deity for a living world, or a demiurge of the patriarchy as the gnostics have declared?

One can take this theme much further and outline how the mission of Jesus, through all its episodes leading to Jerusalem, overturning the tables and the Passion is actively pursued and provoked by Jesus himself to bring the very Passion about, in confirmation of the line of Isaiah which directly precedes that of his sermon at Nazareth: 60:22 'I the Lord will hasten it in his time'. But of course this is the existential dilemma posed by the prophecies which predict that Israel will 'not be gathered' and

that 'strength will be spent for nought'. To fulfill such a prophecy it is necessary to provoke the very degree of controversy that will lead to one's own undoing, realizing the liberally quoted single line of Psalm 118:22 "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner."



Fig 7.7: Betrayal of Christ - Giotto

### 7.15 Mine Own Familiar Friend

While we are thinking of the tribulations of Jesus, it would be meet to pay our respects to Judas, who like Jesus died a sacrificial death, but unlike him has not enjoyed the blessing of the Almighty, but eternal damnation for fulfilling the very will of God, despite his later redemption in the gnostic Gospel of Judas, where he is seen as a companion fulfilling an essential role in the apocalyptic drama, scapegoat to sacrificial lamb, of the manner of a twin, in a similar way to Thomas in his Gospel.

*Jesus said to Judas: "But you will exceed all of them.  
For you will sacrifice the man that clothes me."*

*"Look, you have been told everything. Lift up your eyes and look at the cloud and the light within it and the stars surrounding it. The star that leads the way is your star."  
Judas lifted up his eyes and saw the luminous cloud, and he entered it.*

Let us therefore not cast out Judas, but welcome him warmly into the fold as a long forgotten friend, yea a twin, with whom we have taken the bread of Tammuz, for Judas, as surely as Jesus, is the bread of God.

Judashas become a figure of scorn and disrepute who has been used by orthodox Christians as an archetypal image of the Jew as traitor, which has echoed painfully down all history in the Jews who were compelled to be smitten in Christian Easter celebrations. For this reason, despite his central symbolic in the four gospels and the Acts, some modern authors have sought to portray him as an historical fiction invented to blame the Jews for the Crucifixion (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 106), or to make the disciples seem less shocking (Spong 1994 242). Why so diminish Jesus that we attribute all such passages to midrash when all it takes is a Galilean who has Essene contacts who have studied the scriptures and Psalms?

Lord Adonai, why, why, why, when it says in Psalm 41 "The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies" do we actually find:

*Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?  
And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity:  
his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it.*

*All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.  
 An evil thing, say they, cleaveth fast unto him:  
 and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.  
 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted,  
 which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.  
 But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.  
 By this I know that thou favourest me,  
 because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.  
 And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity,  
 and settest me before thy face for ever.*

Yet again this psalm, which has been identified with Ahitophel conspiring with Absalom against David (2 Sam 15:3) has a potential royal tradition going back to David's time (Cohen A 127). The 'whispering together' carries the implication of evil charms. The 'evil' clinging to him is identified with Belial (used by the Essenes) which is also used in the Old Testament as 'worthlessness' - lawless violence (Psalm 18:5). John 13:18 identifies 'mine own familiar friend' as Judas.



Fig 7.5: The Taking of Christ - Valentin (Klassen)

Lord Adonai, I want to live this life in peace and leave the living world a better, growing changing, evolving place, I do not want to 'betrayed by my very own friend' and 'set upon thy face forever' from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen. If thou art everlasting, give me at least the life into which I was born. It would be better to be a bastard and be whole in the sight of life than to be the scourged whom he receiveth: Heb 12:5 "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you

as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are part-takers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

Psalm 41 clearly sets up a context for the accursed redeemer to become so reviled "Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die ... ?" that he is betrayed merely by his friend's 'vanity' "And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity" so that "when he goeth abroad, he telleth it ...mine own familiar friend, ... which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me". In Psalm 41 betrayal is the dark element:

*Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?  
 And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity:  
 his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it.  
 All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.  
 An evil thing, say they, cleaveth fast unto him:  
 and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.  
 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted,  
 which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.  
 But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.*

Psalm 31 again elaborates this accursed affliction of evil charm. The second line is quoted as Jesus' last words in Luke 23:46.

*Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me; for thou art my strength.  
 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.  
 I have hated them that regard lying vanities; but I trust in the Lord.*

*I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy:  
 for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities; ...  
 Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble:  
 mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly. ...  
 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.  
 For I have heard the slander of many; fear was on every side:  
 while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.*

This is said to be a composition about David's own persecution by Saul in the wilderness of Maon (1 Sam 23:25), preceding the time when he later became king.

Now it is clear that there is a ritual atmosphere surrounding the betrayal, despite the increasingly antagonistic portrayal of Judas as inspired by Satan (Pagels 1995 105), and as a symbol of scorn of the Jews (Maccoby 121). John notes from the beginning 6:70 "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" All four gospels (Mark 14:9, Matt 26:14, Luke 22:1, John 12:4) attribute Judas's motive to greed, or 'vanity' as Psalm 41 declares, arising specifically from the 'waste' in the indulgent anointing (Mark, Matt, John). Kazantzakis (1961) more accurately portrayed him as a Zealot who became predictably offended at Jesus' Edomite excesses. Graves (1946) as the disciple who tried to save Jesus and failed by a twist of fate. The Dionysian Last Supper, following hard on the 'heels' of the ritual anointing seems to have been the 'last straw' for a disciple, who in all probability, like Simon Zealotes and James and John the 'sons of thunder' was a dedicated nationalist who saw in Jesus a potential victorious kingly Messiah. There are diverse interpretations of the name Iscariot. It has been associated with Sicarii, the Zealot dagger-assassins, with sakar 'to deliver up' (I)skariot(h) which is a repeated motif (Rom 8:32), and with a place name (Klassen 32).



Fig 7.6: The Last Supper - Leonardo da Vinci  
 Some speculate the figure to the left is a woman (Magdalen = John)

So is this Judas just another fiction of midrash? A fantasy of the evangelical gospels? Klassen thinks not. He notes that he is consistently described by both Jews and Christians as a historical character. The Aramaic church at first described Judas as one of the circle of twelve who received as much recognition as the others, and was honoured by Jesus for accepting the mission. Jewish writings describe him as one who recognised Jesus' secret name and as the only one of the disciples from Judea who was competent and loyal, handling the funds, but critical when Jesus didn't always heal people, purveyed contradictory teachings and didn't fulfill the expectations of the kingly messiah in a nationalistic way (Klassen 203-5).

All the gospels narrate that Jesus intentionally provoked the betrayal in a ritual manner at the Last Supper in the 'dipping of the bread' with Psalm 41: Mark 14:18 "One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? ... And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish."

John 13:25 specifically says that Jesus gave Judas the task, and that he told him to go and carry the act out quickly:

*"He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him."*

Effectively Jesus is casting Judas as the scapegoat in a sacred drama of opposition. The later gnostic gospel of Judas is correct in portraying Judas as a heroic partner to Jesus in the sacred tragedy, rather than the villain symbolic of betrayal by Belial. It has to be emphasized that the sop 'lot' reflects traditional assignment of a sacred role, just as the successor to Judas was chosen by lot.

In John Judas, has not yet approached the chief priests, although he disliked the waste of the anointing because "he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein," donated in Luke 8:3 by the women. Judas was thus the treasurer who kept the whole body sustained and found this a wasteful use of resources. In John 11:57 the notice is already out against Jesus, so it is only necessary for Judas to mention his whereabouts and the arrest will be made "Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him."

Luke speaks similarly, setting out the ritual role of the betrayer as the accursed, each of them wondering who 'should do this thing' 22:21 "But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing."

Matthew follows on this ritual dialogue 26:24 "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said." It is thus clear to both Jesus and Judas what the situation is. Jesus still has the power of choice to escape or walk into the snare he has set for himself.

There has been debate about whether Jesus intended his arrest or was taken by surprise. Morton Smith has suggested that Jesus was interrupted during a baptismal initiation (Mark 14:52), but Luke's 22:44 story of sweat falling like blood emphasizes the extreme emotional trauma of impending pain and death.

Judas in Luke 22:47 betrays Jesus by his very affection: "And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" The proverbial kiss of death is the ultimate contact point of dark and light - loving your enemies in action.

In Matthew 27:3, Judas, when he saw that he was condemned, repented, and brought the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to

that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called "the field of blood" unto this day" - a particularly Mot-like reference.

This passage relates both to Zechariah, as we have seen, and also to Jeremiah 32:9 And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver.

Acts tells a different story, more like Psalm 55:23 "But thou O God shall bring them down into the pit of destruction; bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days" 1:18 "Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; as that field is called The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take." Well let's take a look at this reference of Acts:

### Psalm 69

*Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.  
I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing;  
I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.  
I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried:  
mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.*

*They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head:  
they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: ...  
Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake  
O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee...  
Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.  
I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.  
For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up ...  
They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.  
But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time:  
O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation. ...  
Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.  
Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up,  
and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. ...*

*Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.  
Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour:  
mine adversaries are all before thee.*

*Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness:  
and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none;  
and for comforters, but I found none.*

*They gave me also gall for my meat;  
and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.  
Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not;  
and make their loins continually to shake.*

*Pour out thine indignation upon them,  
and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.*

*Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.*

*For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten;  
and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.*

*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*

*But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.*

*I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.*

Yahweh, why do they 'persecute him'? Why hast thou 'smitten'? Why do they 'talk to the grief'? Why hast thou 'wounded'? Anath was a bitch of hell who walked up to her waist in blood, but you, Oh Abba were supposed to be the unchanging God of eter-

nity! Why then fatherly-motherly God, do you sacrifice those who love you, who seek only to truly know you? Why is your face only the face whom none can see and live? Why do you have us sing of death? ... of reproach? Sing as the smitten, ... as the desolate? Even as the reviled and hated? If you are the God of creation, why this torture, why this endless darkness and heaviness? Are you the demi-urge - the jealous Lord of darkness? Tell me O Jehovah!!

One suggested reason is that this is a later exilic hymn, which is strongly associated with the authorship or life of Jeremiah (Cohen A 216). We can see a host of themes running through this psalm. Yahweh Sabaoth, Lord of Hosts is like the feudal king of the deities, served by helpers, with the Female ever-yawning as the pit below.

In terms of Christian prophecy 'The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up' is clearly the Pharisees and priests. 'They that sit at the gate' are the Jerusalem feast crowds, the 'song of drunkards' is Dionysus, the 'gall and vinegar' is present. Just as Jesus first preached the 'acceptable year of the Lord' so here 'my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time'. Just as in Jesus' says to the crowd 'Behold my mother and my brethren!' we have 'I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children'.

So, if you you are mindful to wash Judas out as later midrash with the sacrificial gall and vinegar think again! You are going to have to throw away Jesus' gnostic schism with his family, preaching in the acceptable year of the Lord, confronting the priests and Pharisees, the truth of there having been 'none to take pity' at the trial and pass up 'drawing nigh unto my soul, and redeeming it' - the *raison d'être* of the whole event.

A far more economical hypothesis is that Jesus read a few of these Psalms and the critical passages of deuterо-Isaiah, Zechariah and Daniel during those thirty years or more he was not heard of and was possibly taking Essene training, which matured at the age of thirty. The Essenes were obsessed with the messianic vision and spent nearly all their time reading the scriptures. Their Teacher of Righteousness had already net such a death on the Day of Atonement. Some people have even thought that deuterо-Isaiah was written after him. Their scriptures were already focussed precisely in the direction of apocalyptic prophecy.

### 7.16 The Fatted Pork of Midrash

It has been commented that the entire ordering of the books of the Christian Old Testament has been chosen to emphasize the supposed prophetic links between specific prophets and Christ's advent. We have seen the pivotal role played by the second to last book, Zechariah. In Malachi 3:1, the last book, there are two well-known prophecies linking Christ's mission with that of John the Baptist - the 'cleansing refiner':

*"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple ... But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap ... and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."*

We are now entering rich midrash territory, because, taken as they stand, these two passages simply refer to a 'prophet' and a 'messenger' both of whom prepare the way for the Lord. They could refer to Jochanaan and Yeshua but they could equally refer to traditional prophets of a traditional Yahweh who will enter his temple as a revered God, not in fleshy form as his only-begotten son. Although Jesus did attempt to purge the priesthood he did not purify the Levites, nor did they as a result make an offering in righteousness.

Until now, we have been examining how major Old Testament passages might provide a prophetic framework for Christ's mission. A quite different situation emerges when we examine how individual gospel writers attempted to connect statements and events in their gospel descriptions with specific New Testament passages in the spirit of prophecy.

Matthew, using Mark's work and the possibly the cryptic Q, for 'quelle' synoptic sayings source, common to himself and Luke's later gospel, elaborated existing oral and written traditions in a way which emphasizes in what Spong (1994) suggests are midrash developing apparent links with the prophets and the psalms. Although Matthew's is neither the earliest writing, nor the most direct reporting, it provides the most clearly articulated set of such 'prophecies'. To quote Elaine Pagels (1995 76) : "Matthew saw the Pharisees as the chief rivals to his own teachings about Jesus and decided to present Jesus and his message in terms comprehensible to the Pharisees and their large following - not only as God's Messiah, but also as one whose teaching embodies and fulfills the true righteousness previously taught in 'the law and prophets'."

"In writing his gospel, Matthew was concerned to refute damaging rumours about Jesus - for example, that his birth was illegitimate, which would disgrace and disqualify him as a suitable candidate for Israel's Messiah 1:19 "Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily." ... in opposition to the rumour that Jesus was born illegitimate, Matthew and his predecessors found vindication for their faith in Isaiah 7:14" (Pagels Sat 77)

Matt 1:22 - Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." "In the original Hebrew, the passage had read 'young woman' (almah), apparently describing an ordinary birth. But the translation of almah into the greek parthenos ('virgin'), as many of Jesus' followers read the passage, confirmed their conviction that Jesus' birth, which unbelievers derided as sordid, actually was a miraculous 'sign'." (Pagels 1995 77)

It is difficult to disentangle the cause and effect from the mutual antipathy between the early gospel writers and their Jewish counterparts. Jesus' teachings promoted controversy and 'neglected or even violated observance of Sabbath and kosher laws'. With increasing vehemence Mark's and then Matthew's writing ascribes to the scribes, Pharisees and high priests a villainous role as self-serving, if unwitting, agents of Satan. In turn Pharisaic writers responded to what they perceived to be blasphemous and deviant teachings with satirical derision.

We thus find two counter-currents in the literature. Matthew antedates Mark's spirit descending on Jesus at his baptism to the very moment of his conception in the virgin birth. 1:18 "When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Contrasting this current are a series of writings from Celsus and the Talmud (Graves Naz 98, Wilson I 62) which suggest that Jesus was Yeshua ben Pantera the illegitimate son of Mary M'gadd'la (the braider or hairdresser) by a Roman called Pantera (Panther) an animal emblematic of Dionysus. This name remained somewhat mysterious until a Roman gravestone was found bearing this name in Europe (Wilson I 63).

This controversy is echoed in John 8:37-41 "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have



seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father ... Then said they to him, 'We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.'" Matthew's gospel reads almost as a perfect response to this very debate to make Jesus the Son of God have 'one Father even in God' in a virgin birth at the end of a genealogy linking Abraham to Joseph but only to Jesus through divine intervention in a manner quite alien to the Jewish patriarchal tradition of Yahweh's immortal seed line and much more closely resembling the divine birth of Dionysus resurrected as son of the divine Father Zeus by a mortal mother Semele.

Luke has John the Baptist setting the seal on precisely this idea: 3:8 "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

The cycle from Mark to Matthew and Luke and finally John sees a rise and fall of the issue of the 'virgin birth', as if it is a painful area either to be exorcised or feverishly rationalized. In Mark, it is the baptism, not the birth, which signals Jesus' divinity, almost as if Jesus' earlier life was a void or a shadow. Mark makes little reference to his family, quoting a passage similar to Thomas saying 99: The disciples said to him, "Your brothers and your mother are standing outside." He said to them, "Those here who do the will of my father are my brothers and my mother. It is they who will enter the kingdom of my father." Luke and Matthew by contrast make ornate and varied attempts to emphasize Jesus' divine birth. But John reverts to the shadowy treatment of Mary and Jesus' kin adopted by Mark.

It is also of significance that the allegory of the woman taken in adultery by the Pharisees to whom Jesus says "He who is without sin cast the first stone" and I say allegory because Jesus' own trial indicates that at the time Jews did not have the right to sentence people to death on their own, has been inserted into John at a later date has been inserted to portray Jesus as the moral defender of an adulterous woman.

Spong (142) has commented that the story of the birth in Bethlehem, was motivated by the need to fulfill Micah's prophecy of the Davidic messiah: 5:2 "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Micah's passage leads on from a very suggestive previous chapter in which the Lord's mountain will establish universal peace: "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. ... And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it."

One can thus understand the desire of early Christians to express fulfillment of the prophecy linking their Messiah to the Davidic heritage as convincingly as possible, even if subsequent human history was to make poetic irony of Micah's prophecy, for despite the adoption of Christianity by the Roman empire, and its spread as a major world religion, far from turning swords into plowshares, the Christians would unleash religious wars, crusades and inquisitions both against others and their own people, with a fervour and bigotry which excelled Islamic jihad.

Matthew's genealogy 1:1-17 is inconsistent with that of Luke 3:23-38, suggesting that each author worked independently to create a respectable genealogy posthumously for Jesus to validate his claim to being the Davidic Messiah. Matthew misses out several generations of known Kings of Israel calling the historical exercise into serious question (Spong 69). Paradoxically the Talmud Babli Sanhedrin notes "they say that his mother was descended from princes and rulers, but consorted with carpenters" (Graves 1946) suggesting a maternal rather than paternal heritage, but this does not clarify whether such a connection might have been Davidic rather than for example an Idumaean one.

It is notable in Matthew's genealogy that four women famous for their influence on Jewish history specifically through abrogating the patriarchal sexual order precede Mary as the 'wife of Joseph': Tamar, who played the harlot to seduce her father-in-law, Rahab a prostitute who assisted in the fall of Jericho, Ruth of Moab who seduced Boaz, and Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah whom king David killed for her charms in a window piece of male sacrifice of the waning consort (Spong 69). This inclusion in addition to the whole exercise implies that the early gospel writers found themselves facing allegations concerning Jesus' irregular parentage.

Controversy was also raised concerning the fact that Jesus appeared to come from Nazareth rather than the prophesied Davidic birth place of Bethlehem. This controversy is again clearly stated in John 7:41,3 "Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him." This point has been earlier emphasized at 1:46 "And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

Matt 2:5 - Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Each of Matthew and Luke solve this problem in different ways, both of which relate directly to the divine birth. Luke at 2:1 claims "a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David." This does not tally in any way with history as noted by Fox (27-30) Since Romans did not follow Jewish custom, Joseph's city was clearly Nazareth, the town of his residence, not the hypothetical town of his Davidic ancestry.

Josephus does mention a local census taken by Quirinius (Cyrenius) but this was in AD 6, when Judea was brought under direct Roman control. Nazareth at this time was in Galilee and was not under direct Roman rule, so there was no call at all to go to Bethlehem. "Herod, the king of Judaea" of Luke 1:5 who can be none other than Herod the Great had died in 4 BC, and who would have had sole authority for a census before direct rule. We certainly cannot have both the census and Matthew's 'massacre of the innocents'.

Matthew tells an even more elaborate story which evades the inconsistency of the taxes, pivoting around the three wise men, the intimations to Herod of a royal birth and the flight to Egypt prompted by Herod's purported attempt to kill all the male children in Bethlehem. By returning from Egypt to Nazareth as a defensive manoeuvre

vere, Matthew provides the perfect excuse for Jesus' inauspicious origin in Galilee.

Of course Matthew's star had been a famous text for a new Messiah used by others in the 130s for political ends (Fox 35). Bar Cochbah another messiah was "the son of a star". Numbers 24:17 "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth."

The star, the flight out of Egypt and the wailing in Bethlehem are then attributed to two equally tangential quotes removed from their natural context:

- Matt 2:15 - Hosea 11:1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

- Matt 2:17 - Jer 31:15 Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. NOTE they were returned later (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 29).

Elaine Pagels (Sat 78) comments: "Since no historical record mentions a mass slaughter of infants among Herod's crimes, many New Testament scholars regard the story of the 'slaughter of the innocents' like the 'flight into Egypt', as reflecting Matthew's programmatic conviction that Jesus' life must recapitulate the whole history of Israel. According to these scholars, Matthew is less concerned to give biographical information than to show a connection between Jesus, Moses, and Israel's exodus from Egypt. Like Moses, who as a newborn [of similarly doubtful parentage] escaped the furious wrath of the Egyptian Pharaoh, who had ordered a mass slaughter of Hebrew male infants, so Jesus, Matthew says escaped the wrath of King Herod. And as God once delivered Israel from Egypt, so now Matthew claims, he has delivered Jesus. Matthew does here what he does throughout his gospel; he takes the words from prophetic writings ... generally understood to apply to Israel and applies them to Jesus of Nazareth, whom he sees as a culmination of Israel's history."

John Spong with equal perspicacity notes that Lukes quiet sojourn: 2:22 "And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; 2:23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) is quite inconsistent with Matthew's flight into Egypt.

With regard to the cave of the Nativity mentioned in the Protoevangelicum, St. Jerome ironically noted "Bethlehem used to be overshadowed by a grove of Adonis, and in the cave where Christ formerly wiled as an infant, they used to wail for the beloved of Venus." (Graves Naz 59) Bearing in mind Jesus' sacrificial mission to trample the garment of shame of womankind this might have more than coincidental significance.

Matters become even more turbid when we consider Matthew 2:23 "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene." The only pertinent reference in the Bible is Num 6:2 where there is the Nazirite vow of abstinence [Heb: *Nazar* - abstain or separate] Judges 13:5-7 describe the birth of a Nazirite but this is clearly Sampson in 24, and can in no way be interpreted to be a prophecy of Jesus, who consorted with winebibbers and founded the Eucharist. One can through the interpretation of Nazareth as 'branch' make a looser connection to the righteous 'branch of David' of Isaiah 11:1 and Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15 but this is very far from Matthew's statement.

Matthew 3:3 does refer specifically to Isaiah 40:3 "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God". Bearing in mind not only the Essene tradition but that of the prophets themselves, a voice crying in the wilderness was almost the essence of the prophetic tradition, not a unique event applying to John the Baptist. There is also nothing in the context of this statement to indicate a forerunner for a Messiah in human form. It does say "the glory of God shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together". This could suggest a global belief, but would traditionally simply be national support for Yahweh. True it says "Behold the Lord God will come with a strong hand and his arm shall rule for him." Traditionally the long arm of the law is not an individual but a collective - colloquially the 'police' - in this case the prophets and the priesthood.

At 4:14 Matthew asserts that Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernum that Isaiah 9:1 might be fulfilled "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined". This is one of several passages in which Jesus is ascribed to have intentionally fulfilled a prophecy. This abrogates the spontaneity of prophecy by performing an act of personal power but is nevertheless natural for a shaman who captures by an act of will, or daring, the heritage of the prophecy. True Jesus did preach in these areas anciently afflicted by political turmoil, but again they are places in his home region and a natural place for human gathering by the shores of Galilee. His reference at 8:17 to Isaiah "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." gives a general reference to the nature of the Suffering Servant, which however remains opaque as a quotation.

Having intentionally in the sight of the pharisees healed a man with a withered hand in the tabernacle, Jesus performs faith healing on a great multitude charging that they should not make him known: Mark at 12:17 immediately quotes Isaiah 42:1 "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry nor lift up nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law."

Sayings of Jesus asking 'not to be named' generally initiated the opposite effect however: Mark 1:45 "But he went out, and began to publish it much and to blaze abroad the matter, so Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter."

At 13:14 Mark quotes Jesus use of parable for the people while keeping the direct teachings for his disciples by criticizing the integrity of his audience quoting the following 'prophecy' of Esias: "By hearing ye shall hear and ... not understand, see and ... not perceive." This can hardly be called a prophecy, because it was the almost universal fate of the prophets to accuse their people of being rebellious to their firebrand talk. There is no specific prophecy to refer to, but a bable of lamentations from all the prophets at once. Isaiah says at 6:9 "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." and somewhat hopefully at 43:8 says "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes and the deaf people that have ears". Jeremiah 5:21 in more pessimistic tone laments "Hear now O foolish

people which have eyes and see not ... ears that hear not" Ezekiel 12:2 makes matters even plainer: "Son of man thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house which have eyes to see and see not ... ears to hear and hear not." True this was also the heritage of Jesus, but by no means a unique one, and one to be fully expected given the frankly controversial nature of his mission. To call it prophecy is a syllogism. In fact parable is a poetic way of ornamenting a point in an allegorical story to enthrall.

Since the disciples were still arguing at the Last Supper who was the greatest: Luke 22:24 "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.", one could equally question their veracity to receive the inner teachings and suggest perhaps that it was after all the women who at Galilee and later at the crucifixion and burial who were the real gnostic initiates:

Luke 8:1 "And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance."

The nature of parable as allegory is better captured in Matthew 13:35 where he quotes 'the prophet' in apocalyptic poetry: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." However, this is not a quote from the prophets, but from Psalm 78:2 "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known and our fathers have told us." The oral tradition of the fathers are here inflated into the archetypal secrets of existence.

At 21:4 Matthew quotes Zech 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass". As noted this is another intentional prophecy ascribed to Jesus originating first in Mark 11:1. Shortly afterwards at 26:56, he quotes Zechariah again: 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." Both the sword and the scattering are also mentioned in Mark 14:49-50.

At 27:9 Matthew relates the episode of the thirty pieces of silver, echoing Zechariah 11:12 "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." Many people contend that this episode, which is not paralleled elsewhere is simply a piece of polemic concerning the accursed nature of Judas, but it serves to emphasize the link held in the minds of the early Christians between Jesus and the Foolish Shepherd. In Zechariah it would be Jesus playing the role of Judas, suggesting the two are twin scapegoats of the passover.

Finally at 27:35 Matthew quotes Psalm 22:18 "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." an episode fulfilled fortuitously by a seamless garment worn by Jesus for the occasion.

The Gospel of John has a different set of assumed or frankly stated prophesies, from

no bones broken to the casting of lots.

John 19:32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

14:8 out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water John 7:38

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

John 12:37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

John 19:24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.