

# *Resurrection Life of Jesus Church*

## BIBLICAL TRUTH CONCERNING THE STATE OF ISRAEL

RLJ-1178      JOHN S. TORELL      MARCH 22, 2009

PART 7B: THE MESSIAH ARRIVES

### IS THERE AN EARTHLY KINGDOM COMING?

That was the burning question of every Jew at the time of Jesus. They thought about it, talked about it, dreamed about it and hoped for it. If God could only send the Messiah, then the Romans would be driven out and the great Israel could once again be established.

In order for Gentiles to understand how Jewish people think, I am sharing with you what Jewish scholars like Professor Gershon Scholem (1897-1982) at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem have written:

*“...Judaism, in all of its forms and manifestations, has always maintained a concept of redemption as an event which takes place publicly, on the stage of history and within the community. It is an occurrence which takes place in the visible world and which cannot be conceived apart from such a visible appearance.*

*In contrast, Christianity conceives of redemption as an event in the spiritual and unseen realm, an event which is reflected in the soul, in the private world of each individual, and which effects an inner transformation which need not correspond to anything outside...”<sup>1</sup>*

What professor Scholem said was Judaism is a religion of works whereas Christianity is a faith movement without works. The apostle Paul affirmed that this is a correct view of Judaism vs. Christianity. **Romans 4:1-5; Ephesians 2:1-10**

Professor Scholem also says that within Judaism there are three forces vying for control:

*“...Within rabbinic Judaism as a social and religious phenomenon three kinds of forces are active precisely at those points where it is the most alive: conservative, restorative, and utopian.*

*The conservative forces are directed toward the preservation of that which exists and which, in the historical environment of Judaism, was always in danger. They are the most easily visible and immediately obvious forces that operate in this type of Judaism. They have established themselves most effectively in the world of Halakhah (Jewish Law), in the construction and continuing preservation and development of religious law. This law determined the nature of the Jew’s life in exile, the only frame in which a*

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<sup>1</sup> THE MESSIANIC IDEA IN JUDAISM, Gershon Scholem, 1971, p.1



*life in the light of Sinaitic revelation seemed possible, and it is not surprising that it drew to itself, above all, the conservative forces.*

*The restorative forces are directed to the return and recreation of a past condition which comes to be felt as ideal. More precisely, they are directed to a condition pictured by the historical fantasy and the memory of the nation as circumstances of an ideal past. Here hope is turned backwards to the re-establishment of an original state of things and to a ‘life with the ancestors.’ But there are, in addition forces which press forward and renew; they are nourished by a vision of the future and receive utopian inspiration.*

*They aim at a state of things which has never yet existed. The problem of Messianism in historical Judaism appears within the field of influence of these forces. To be sure, the conservative tendencies, great and even crucial as their role and their significance were for the existence of the religious community of Judaism, have no part in the development of Messianism within this community....*

*....The utopianism which presents the Jew of that epoch with the vision of an ideal as he would like to see it realized, itself falls naturally into two categories. It can take on the radical form of the vision of a new content which is to be realized in a future that will in fact be nothing other than the restoration of what is ancient, bringing back that which had been lost; the ideal content of the past at the same time delivers the basis for the vision of the future...”<sup>2</sup>*

When we look at this Jewish thinking, it is now easy to place the three political forces at the time of Jesus in their proper place.

## THE PHARISEES

The Pharisees belonged to the conservative force and constantly attacked Jesus for not maintaining the law as written in the Talmud. **Matthew 12:1-14, 24; 16:12**

## THE SADDUCEES

The Sadducees did not fit into any of these categories. They believed that there was no life after death; life was here and now that was all there was to it.  
**Acts 23:6-10**

They were pragmatic, worked well with the Roman occupation government and were able to make a decent living. Most likely a number of the publicans (tax collectors for the Roman government) were Sadducees. **Luke 19:1-9**

Collecting taxes was a thriving private enterprise in the Roman Empire and the state demanded a certain amount to be given to the state coffers, but the tax collector was free to charge much more, as long as he paid the amount set by

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid pp. 3-4

the state. This was a horrible time for the common people; there was a tax on all imports and exports, and a general sale tax. Then there was a tax to cross bridges, there were road taxes, road and harbor taxes and even town taxes. In addition to road taxes, wagons were taxed on number of wheels, axles, pedestrians were taxed for walking on public roads and in addition to these taxes businesses and craftsmen had to purchase licenses in order to carry out their trade.<sup>3</sup> The Jewish people were completely fed up with the taxes. Jesus had to address the question of taxes and His response did not sit well with the Pharisees. **Mark 12:12-17**

## THE ZEALOTS

This is the first time in this series that I am introducing this powerful political and military group of Jews. They wanted to restore Israel to its former glory. In order to present this group, I have chosen the following write-up from Encyclopedia Britannica:

*“Zealot, a member of a Jewish sect noted for its uncompromising opposition to pagan Rome and the polytheism it professed. The Zealots were an aggressive political party whose concern for the national and religious life of the Jewish people led them to despise even Jews who sought peace and conciliation with the Roman authorities. A census of Galilee ordered by Rome in AD 6 spurred the Zealots to rally the populace to noncompliance on the grounds that agreement was an implicit acknowledgment by Jews of the right of pagans to rule their nation.*

*Extremists among the Zealots turned to terrorism and assassination and became known as Sicarii (Greek sikarioi, “dagger men”). They frequented public places with hidden daggers to strike down persons friendly to Rome. In the first revolt against Rome (AD 66–70) the Zealots played a leading role, and at Masada in 73 they committed suicide rather than surrender the fortress, but they were still a force to be reckoned with in the first part of the following century. A few scholars see a possible relationship between the Zealots and the Jewish religious community mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls.”<sup>4</sup>*

It is interesting to note that Jesus selected an apostle from this militant group in Judea. **Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13**

In the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the Zealots believed that he was the Messiah and tried with force to have him proclaim himself as “King of the Jews” and drive out the Romans with His supernatural power. **Matthew 11:12; John 6:14-15**

Most Christians have read the story of the apostle Paul as presented in the Book of Acts and know about the 40 men who banded together to kill Paul. But did you know that these 40 men were Zealots? The response from Claudius Lysias, the

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<sup>3</sup> UNGER'S BIBLE DICTIONARY, 1957, pp. 899-900

<sup>4</sup> ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA 2008

chief captain of the Roman garrison in Jerusalem was swift, and if you look upon the force he assembled to protect Paul, you will understand just how much power these Zealots wielded. **Acts 23:10-35**

The Zionist World Federation founded by Theodore Herzl in the mid 1890's has its roots in the Zealots. The same murderous spirit that drove the Zealots have been driving the modern Zionists with the culmination of the political state of Israel in 1948.

## THE ESSENES

The Essenes were a fourth group that existed at the time of Jesus that belonged to the utopian force in Judaism. The New Testament doesn't tell us if any member from this community ever joined Jesus and His ministry. In order to give a brief explanation of what the Essenes stood for, I am again quoting from Encyclopedia Britannica:

*"Essene, a member of a religious sect or brotherhood that flourished in Palestine from about the 2nd century BC to the end of the 1st century AD. The New Testament does not mention them and accounts given by Josephus, Philo of Alexandria, and Pliny the Elder sometimes differ in significant details, perhaps indicating a diversity that existed among the Essenes themselves."*

*The Essenes clustered in monastic communities that, generally at least, excluded women. Property was held in common and all details of daily life were regulated by officials. The Essenes were never numerous; Pliny fixed their number at some 4,000 in his day.*

*Like the Pharisees, the Essenes meticulously observed the Law of Moses, the sabbath, and ritual purity. They also professed belief in immortality and divine punishment for sin. But, unlike the Pharisees, the Essenes denied the resurrection of the body and refused to immerse themselves in public life. With few exceptions, they shunned Temple worship and were content to live ascetic lives of manual labour in seclusion. The sabbath was reserved for day-long prayer and meditation on the Torah (first five books of the Bible). Oaths were frowned upon, but once taken they could not be rescinded.*

*After a year's probation, proselytes received their Essene emblems but could not participate in common meals for two more years. Those who qualified for membership were called upon to swear piety to God, justice toward men, hatred of falsehood, love of truth, and faithful observance of all other tenets of the Essene sect. Thereafter new converts were allowed to take their noon and evening meals in silence with the others.*

*Following the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (late 1940s and 1950s) in the vicinity of Khirbat Qumrān, most scholars have agreed that the Qumrān (q.v.) community was Essenian.”<sup>5</sup>*

## THE CABALA

The “Cabalistic Messiah” is a concept I want to introduce because few Christians have ever heard of it. Let us once again turn to Professor Scholem:

*“...This deep feeling of the impossibility of calculating the Messianic age has produced in the Messianic Aggadah<sup>6</sup> the idea of the occultation (hiding) of the Messiah, who is always already present somewhere and whom a profound legend, not without cause, allows to have been born on the day of the destruction of the Temple. Beginning at that moment of the deepest catastrophe there exists the chance for redemption. ‘Israel speaks to God: When will you redeem us? He answers: When you have sunk to the lowest level, at that time will I redeem you.’ Corresponding to this continually present possibility is the concept of the Messiah who continually waits in hiding...”*

*...The pages of the Talmud tractate (treatise) Sanhedrin which deal with the Messianic age are full of most extravagant formulations of this kind. The drive toward the point that the Messiah will come only in an age which is either totally pure or totally guilty and corrupt...”<sup>7</sup>*

## THE MESSIAH AND CATASTROPHIC EVENTS

The Jews who follow the teaching of the Cabala have a totally warped understanding of the Messiah.<sup>8</sup> In short, this is what the Cabala teaches concerning the Messiah:

During the time of creation, God became confused and a portion of Him fell into the bottomless pit where it took the form of a “holy serpent.” The holy serpent is the Messiah, who in himself is not a person, but an “essence.” It is the duty of all Cabalistic Jews to rescue this holy serpent and bring him up to the earth. But the serpent cannot escape the abyss until one of the following conditions is fulfilled:

1. The earth is full of goodness and there is no more sin.
2. All human beings on the earth have become totally evil and are wallowing in sin.

The Cabalistic leadership decided it would be easier to make people evil than good. Thus, it is the duty of all Cabalistic Jews to sin as much as possible in order to lead all people into a totally depraved lifestyle, which will destroy society

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> AGGADAH - Tales and lore in the Talmud and Midrash (Jewish commentaries)

<sup>7</sup> THE MESSIANIC IDEA IN JUDAISM, Gershom Scholem, 1971, pp.11-13

<sup>8</sup> THE DOVE WINTER 1995, John S. Torell, pp.4-37

and create chaos. Out of chaos they will bring in their type of order. Thus, the Cabalistic Jews can only succeed in their plan if there are catastrophic events in the world.

This damnable doctrine was developed by King Solomon toward the end of his life when he had totally fallen into sin and walked away from God.

#### **1 Kings 11:1-12**

Since the Christian church doesn't have knowledge of the Cabala, and it is never taught at any seminary, pastors do not have the slightest idea that it existed in the nation of Israel beginning with King Solomon. I attended the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, California for more than three years and received a Master of Divinity Degree and there wasn't one hour of teaching on this subject.

### **THE CABALA IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

Let's turn to the Old Testament and see how the prophets of old thundered against this damnable teaching.

King Hezekiah was moved by God to destroy the copper serpent which Moses had erected in the desert when the people were attacked by serpents. Over time this relic had become an object of worship, and according to the Cabalistic teachers, it represented the Holy Serpent in the abyss. **2 Kings 18:1-7**

The prophet Isaiah didn't hold back when he attacked the Cabalistic system.

#### **Isaiah 5:11-20**

He blasted the covenant with hell that the followers of the Cabala had entered.  
**Isaiah 28:14-18**

Jeremiah did not spare his words. **Jeremiah 7:1-11**

He told of a conspiracy. **Jeremiah 11:9-10**

Ezekiel repeated this warning. **Ezekiel 22:25-31**

John the Baptist exposed the Cabalistic leaders. **Matthew 3:7-10**

Jesus did not back down against them. **Matthew 12:34**

*Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!*

### **DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?**