

Resurrection and Jesus' Jewish Identity

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David Rudolph, Ph.D.
Messianic Jewish Theological Institute
david.rudolph@gmail.com

There once was a Jewish man who moved into a Catholic neighborhood. Every Friday his Catholic neighbors went crazy because, while they ate fish, he enjoyed barbecued steak, and the smell of this delicious steak filled the air. So the neighbors banded together and made a plan to convert the Jew. After several months of pressuring and arm-twisting, they succeeded. They took the Jewish man to the priest who sprinkled holy water on him and intoned, “Born a Jew... raised a Jew... now a Catholic.” The neighbors were ecstatic—no more delicious, maddening smells every Friday evening. But the next Friday the smell of the man’s barbecued steak once again filled the air. The neighbors all rushed to the Jewish man’s house to remind him of his new diet. When they arrived, they saw him standing over his barbecue grill, sprinkling water on the steak and intoning, “Born a cow... raised a cow... now a fish.”

This joke always gets a laugh but there is a serious side to it. The pressure to convert alludes to the long history of Jews who were forced to become Christians and renounce their Jewishness. The point of the joke is this: In the same way that a cow cannot become a fish through sprinkling, so too a Jew cannot become a non-Jew through baptism. Jews are by nature Jews.¹ I would like to suggest that this principle holds true

¹ Cf. Paul’s words to Peter in Gal 2:15— “We are Jews by nature” (Ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι). He also uses φύσις in 1 Cor 11:14.

for Jesus—“the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt 1:1)—as much as it does for his fellow Jews, and no amount of Christian sprinkling (liturgical, theological or iconographical) can change this fact. In the last six verses of the New Testament, the resurrected Jesus says, “I am the Root and the Offspring of David” (Rev 22:16). He remains today a Jew, the resurrected Jew, the son of David, the king of Israel.

But what does the New Testament canon have to say about Jesus’ post-resurrection Jewish identity? How does this theologoumenon impact the church’s worship? And what are the pastoral implications of seeing Jesus as a resurrected Jew? The aim of this essay is to try to answer these questions. I will begin by surveying the biblical basis for viewing the post-resurrection Jesus as a Jew. In part two I will explore how my own ecclesial setting, the Messianic Jewish community, recognizes Jesus’ continuing Jewish identity in its prayers and worship, limiting the discussion for our purposes to representative samples culled mainly from Messianic Jewish *siddurim* (prayer books). I will focus on two fall festivals (*Yom Teruah* and *Sukkot*) and two spring festivals (*Pesach* and *Bikkurim*). The final section will discuss the pastoral implications of maintaining this perspective.

THE RISEN JEW IN THE APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

Messianic Jews view Yeshua (Jesus) as a resurrected Jew because the Apostolic Writings describe him this way. Yeshua is referred to as the “son of David” nine times in the first gospel (Matt 1:1, 20; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15). Matthew views Yeshua as fulfilling the prophet Micah’s words, “And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to

shepherd my people Israel” (Matt 2:6; Mic 5:2). In Matthew 2, Yeshua is described as “king of the Jews” (Matt 2:2), the quintessential Jew, the one who comes out of Judah to rule on David’s throne as a shepherd-king. The *already but not yet* dimension of this eschatological kingship is brought out in Matthew 21:1-10, where crowds of Jewish people on the Mount of Olives process with Yeshua toward Jerusalem, the city of the great King,² crying out “Hoshannah [Please! Deliver us!] to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of ADONAI!’” (Matt 21:9). Messianic Jews view this as a prolepsis of the age to come, even as Yeshua said in Matthew 23, “Yerushalayim! Yerushalayim! You kill the prophets! You stone those who are sent to you! How often I wanted to gather your children, just as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you refused! Look!... you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of ADONAI!’” (Matt 23:37-39 CJB).

Luke’s gospel, chapter one, takes up the same theme of eschatological kingship but is more explicit. When the angel Gavriel appears to Miryam [Mary], he declares, “Look! You will become pregnant, you will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Yeshua. He will be great, he will be called Son of *Ha’elyon* [the Most High]. *ADONAI*, God, will give him the throne of his forefather David; and he will rule the House of Ya’akov [Jacob] forever — there will be no end to his Kingdom” (Luke 1:31-33 CJB). Here a heavenly *malach* [a messenger of God] refers to the identity of this child in Jewish eschatological terms. He will be the Jewish Messiah, the son of David, forever (“there will be no end to his [Davidic] Kingdom”). In the second volume of Luke’s diptych, the book of Acts, and probably not by coincidence in the first chapter, Yeshua’s disciples are

² See Matt 5:35.

depicted by Luke as looking forward to Yeshua's ruling on David's throne over Israel. We are told, "So when they [the disciples] had come together, they asked him [the resurrected Yeshua], 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?'" (Acts 1:6). They viewed Yeshua as a resurrected Jewish Messiah who was about to reestablish Israel's Davidic kingdom.³

In Acts 2, Luke again focuses on the theme of Yeshua, the resurrected Jew, by quoting the *shaliach* (apostle) Peter. Peter says to the crowd of diaspora Jews assembled in Jerusalem on the day of *Shavuot*:

But God has raised him [Messiah] up and freed him from the suffering of death; it was impossible that death could keep its hold on him. For David says this about him:

I saw ADONAI always before me,
for he is at my right hand,
so that I will not be shaken.
For this reason, my heart was glad;
and my tongue rejoiced;
and now my body too will live on in the certain hope
that you will not abandon me to Sh'ol
or let your Holy One see decay.
you have made known to me the ways of life;
you will fill me with joy by your presence.

Brothers, I know I can say to you frankly that the patriarch David died and was buried — his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, *since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn an oath to him that one of his descendants would sit on his throne, he was speaking in advance about the resurrection of the Messiah*, that it was he who was not abandoned in Sh'ol and whose flesh did not see decay. God raised up this Yeshua! And we are all witnesses of it! (Acts 2:24-32 CJB).

³ John Stott, *The Message of Acts*, pp. 40-41 writes concerning this question, "The mistake they [the apostles] made was to misunderstand both the nature of the kingdom and the relation between the kingdom and the Spirit. Their question must have filled Jesus with dismay. Were they still so lacking in perception? As Calvin commented, 'there are as many errors in this question as words'. The verb, the noun and the adverb of their sentence all betray doctrinal confusion about the kingdom. For the verb *restore* shows that they were expecting a political and territorial kingdom; the noun *Israel* that they were expecting a national kingdom; and the adverbial clause *at this time* that they were expecting its immediate establishment." But is there evidence of Yeshua's dismay in this passage as Stott suggests? Stott arrives at this conclusion because he reads Acts 1:6 through the lens of a supersessionist interpretive framework. The expectation of a national restoration is fully consistent with what the angel Gavriel told Miryam about her son's destiny (Luke 1:31-33; see Acts 1:12-14).

On the basis of Psalm 16:8-11, Peter contends that Yeshua, the resurrected Messiah, is the greater son of David and will “sit on his [David’s] throne.”⁴

Consistent with Matthew and Luke, Paul views Yeshua as the “son of David” and regards this aspect of Yeshua’s identity as central to his gospel message. Paul writes to Timothy, “Remember Yeshua the Messiah, raised from the dead, descended from David (ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυίδ). This is my gospel” (2 Tim 2:8). Note the order—“raised from the dead, descended from David.” Paul seems to imply here that the resurrected Yeshua remains a descendant of David. In describing his gospel to the congregation in Rome, Paul similarly emphasizes that Messiah is “descended from David according to the flesh” (Rom 1:3). He reminds the Gentile believers in Rome that the Messiah is an Israelite “according to the flesh” (κατὰ σάρκα) (Rom 9:5) and that the “Messiah has become [and continues to be] a servant of/to the circumcised” (Rom 15:8).⁵ Quoting from LXX Isaiah 11:10, he asserts that Yeshua will fulfill the words of the prophet, “The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles” (Rom 15:12; Isa 11:10).⁶

For Messianic Jews, Isaiah 60-66 attests to the perpetuation of Jewish ethnic identity in the resurrection. In this text we see that Israel and the nations continue to exist

⁴ Cf. Acts 13:32-37.

⁵ “Paul’s use of the perfect tense γεγενῆσθαι in verse 8, over against the simple aorist γενέσθαι, indicates Christ’s continuing to be a servant to the circumcision” (Hafemann, “Eschatology and Ethics,” pp. 170, 181-84. Cf. Wagner, “The Christ, Servant of Jew and Gentile,” pp. 483-84; Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, pp. 41-55; Turner, “The Interim, Earthly Messianic Kingdom in Paul,” pp. 323-42; Kreitzer, *Jesus and God in Paul’s Eschatology*, pp. 131-70; Buchanan, *New Testament Eschatology*, pp. 90-120.

⁶ Hafemann, “Eschatology and Ethics,” pp. 190-91 cautions against reading Rom 15 in a way that would displace the national context of Messiah’s reign, “...our passage gives no grounds for seeing Israel’s identity and eschatological hopes reconfigured into Christ and/or the church, having been transformed for him into exclusively present realities. Redemptive history does not become abstracted into the ‘Christ-event’ or personalised into an eschatological ‘community,’ but continues on after Christ’s coming and establishment of the Church just as concretely and historically as it did before. The ‘not yet’ of his eschatology includes Israel too. The ‘climax of the covenant’ remains Israel’s future restoration for the sake of the nations.” Cf. Horbury, “Jerusalem in Pre-Pauline and Pauline Hope,” pp. 218, 223; Horbury, “Land, sanctuary and worship,” pp. 221-22.

in the new heavens and new earth (Isa 60:1-3; 65:17; 66:12, 18-23). Drawing from this eschatological Jewish framework, John describes royal representatives of the “nations” (or “Gentiles”) bringing their glory or tribute into the New Jerusalem:⁷

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. *And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God...* I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. *The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.* Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. *People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations”* (Rev 21:1-2, 22-26).⁸

John also refers to Yeshua as “*the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David*” (Rev 5:5). And in the very last lines of the New Testament canon, John quotes Yeshua as saying *in the present tense*, “I, Yeshua, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. *I am the Root and the Offspring of David*” (Rev 22:16).

THE RISEN JEW IN MESSIANIC JEWISH WORSHIP

I have been part of the Messianic Jewish community for over thirty years and have always viewed Yeshua as a resurrected Jew. One way I have given voice to this

⁷ See Mathewson, “The Destiny of the Nations in Revelation 21:1 – 22:5,” pp. 121-42.

⁸ Poul Guttesen, “Leaning into the Future,” chapter 7 notes, “...since 21:1–22:5 expects not only the transformation of the earth but also the fulfilment of God’s covenantal life with his people in history, and since this vision seems to have an unambiguously positive place for the nations (21:24–26), might this final vision not provide a better motivation for historical praxis than a possible *interregnum* in Rev 20?... although the vision John receives is steeped in Jewish tradition, for most of its history it has been received in non-Jewish and often anti-Jewish contexts. This is a particular acute question for the argument I have developed, since I have consistently assumed that John transforms and expands ‘Israel’ to identify the people of the kingdom as the international crowd gathered around the Lamb. However, this raises the question whether there is any place for Jews as Jews within the people of God? Although this ‘expansionist’ view of the imagery does suggest that there is only one people of God, this does not necessarily mean an obliteration of national and ethnic distinctives within this one people. Further research in this area would pay particular attention to the pluriform way in which John describes the one people, that they come from every tribe, language, people and nation (5:9; 7:9; cf. 10:11; 14:6). That Israel, as the first covenant people of God, plays a distinct role within this community of nations, is perhaps suggested by the names of the twelve tribes on the gates of the New Jerusalem (21:12). Perhaps it is only when Israel’s particular role in the economy of God (which, in the perspective I have developed, cannot be separated from faith in Jesus as the Messiah for Jews) is fulfilled that the other nations can enter the one eternal city.”

perspective is through my prayers and worship. The fall and spring festivals in particular overflow with language and imagery that portrays Yeshua as the exalted Jewish high priest and king of Israel.

Yom Teruah

Jews around the world begin the festival cycle on Tishri 1 (usually the new moon of September). This day is traditionally referred to as *Rosh HaShanah* (literally: the head of the year); the Torah refers to it as *Yom Teruah* (the Day of Blowing [the *shofar*]).⁹ While the sounding of the *shofar* on *Yom Teruah* has many meanings in the Jewish world, the Messianic Jewish community emphasizes its eschatological significance. On this day, we remember the resurrected king of Israel who will return at the sounding of the *shofar*. Consider the *Amidah* (standing) prayer that some Messianic synagogues use during *Yom Teruah*. I grew up saying this prayer every year:

1. Blessed are You, LORD our God and God of our Fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, the God and Father of our LORD Yeshua the Messiah. You are the Creator of all things and are faithful to sustain Your people, the Seed of Abraham, both the physical and the spiritual seed. Blessed are You LORD our God, Creator and Sustainer.
2. *You are faithful to those whose bodies sleep in the dust. You have raised Yeshua the Messiah from the dead. He is the first fruits of those who sleep and will yet raise all who sleep in the Messiah, at the sound of the last Shofar. Blessed are you, O LORD, who raises the dead.* Blessed are you O LORD, who has inscribed us in the book of life.
3. You sustain the living with steadfast love, You heal the sick, and You provide good things to all people, but especially to those who are faithful to You and walk in the obedience of the promises given to us through the New Covenant.
4. You have given us this day of Yom Teruah as a time to examine ourselves and to look toward the day of the Messiah's return. *On this day, we remember him as our great high priest who brought His own precious blood, the blood of atonement, into your*

⁹ Num 29:1. Cf. Lev 23:24.

most holy place. He is our Kippur. Through his blood, we have our conscience purified from guilt and condemnation to serve you in love and confidence. *Truly we have found in Him the fountain that cleanses from sin and which in that future day will be a fountain of cleansing for all people. Before that great day, the Shofar will sound for the resurrection of the dead* and to herald your judgment and salvation to the ends of the earth. Blessed are You O LORD our Father, and Blessed are You LORD Yeshua, who has provided atonement through Your own precious blood.

5. You gather the outcasts of Israel and prepare that great day of Exodus from all nations that will be greater than the first Exodus. You have preserved and will fulfill Your promise that all Israel will be saved. Blessed are You, O LORD, who regathers and saves Your people Israel.
6. You O LORD restore those from among the nations who have followed Yeshua the Messiah. You pour out your Spirit upon them; you give them a new heart toward Israel; and you prepare them to show Your love, power, and mercy to Israel. Blessed are You O LORD, who restores the spiritual Seed of Abraham and shows mercy to the physical seed of Abraham.
7. You bring this age to a close and with the *Shofar* herald the Age to Come. Then shall the nations learn war no more, Israel will be fully delivered, and Your name shall be one over all the earth. You will restore the services of Your new temple in that age, and all nations will come to Your light; They all shall attend the Feast of *Sukkot* in Jerusalem. Blessed are You, O LORD our God, who saves Israel and establishes the age to come (Italics mine).¹⁰

In paragraph 2 of this prayer, Yeshua's resurrection is described as leading to our resurrection ("You are faithful to those whose bodies sleep in the dust. You have raised Yeshua the Messiah from the dead... and will yet raise all who sleep in the Messiah, at the sound of the last *Shofar*"). On Yom Teruah, Messianic Jews see Yeshua as "the first fruits of those who sleep" (1 Cor 15:20).

In paragraph 4, Yeshua is pictured as Israel's *kohen hagadol* (high priest). He is not a generic high priest, or a high priest from among the nations, but a Jewish high priest who enters the heavenly *mishkan* (tabernacle). On Yom Teruah, Messianic Jews view the resurrected Jew as dressed in priestly garments and entering the heavenly holy of holies

¹⁰ Juster, *A Messianic Jewish Worship Book*, pp. K5-6.

(“our great high priest who brought His own precious blood, the blood of atonement, into your most holy place”) – language from Hebrews 9:11-12, written to Messianic Jews.

Paragraph 4 also refers to the resurrected high priest of Israel revealing himself to his Jewish family and cleansing Israel’s sin. The words, “Truly we have found in Him the fountain that cleanses from sin,” are an allusion to Zechariah 12:10 and 13:1:

And I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that, *when they look on the one whom they have pierced* [i.e. when they see the crucified and resurrected Jewish Messiah], they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn... On that day a *fountain* shall be opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, *to cleanse them from sin* and impurity.

In another Messianic Jewish prayer, recited before the blowing of the *shofar*, significance is placed on being transformed into the likeness of the resurrected, Jewish Messiah:

Our God and God of our Fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, the God and Father of our LORD Yeshua the Messiah, You are God and Your word is true forever.

We are about to sound the *Shofar* on this day of remembrance.

We remember that the *Shofar* was blown to gather our ancestors together for battle or solemn assembly.

Even so, we read of the *Shofar* that will sound in the last days.

At the sound of the seventh *Shofar*, as the Holy Spirit spoke through John, Your bowls of wrath and judgment will be poured out upon all who resist Your kingship.

At the last Shofar, the dead in the Messiah shall be raised. Then those who are alive will be transformed, in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up with Yeshua in the clouds. We shall meet Him in the air and see Him as He is. We shall be like Him.

Then the LORD shall come with all His saints and defeat the enemies of God.

The sound of the *Shofar* leads to the day of Yom Kippur in which atonement through the blood of Yeshua will be applied to Israel and the nations.

Then will come the feast of *Sukkot* in which all nations will gather together and acknowledge you as King.

Will this be the day or year upon which your *Shofar* will sound and not only our prophetic blowing of our *Shofar*?

Will this be the year that the cry of *Maranata*, come Lord Yeshua, will be fulfilled?

Will this be the time in which Israel shouts to Yeshua the Messiah, “Blessed is He that comes in the name of the LORD”?

In that day all Israel will mourn and repent and receive the Messiah. All of the nations will also mourn and turn to the Lord.

The saints will be gathered from the four corners of the earth, and those left of unresurrected Israel will be gathered from the nations back to their Land.

The LORD will be King over all the earth and so we sound the *Shofar* (Italics mine).¹¹

The line beginning “At the last *Shofar*, the dead in Messiah shall be raised” alludes to two Pauline texts: 1 Corinthians 15:52 (“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed”) and 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (“Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever”). This *Yom Teruah* prayer emphasizes meeting the resurrected Jewish Messiah face-to-face and being transformed into his likeness. It echoes the words of John, “We shall...see him as He is. We shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2). The idea here is that our resurrection will resemble the resurrection of the Messiah. As Tom Wright notes, “The risen Jesus is both the *model* for the Christian’s future body and the *means* by which it comes about.”¹² From the Messianic Jewish perspective, however, there is no sense of erasure of Jewish identity when this happens. Messianic Jews remain Jews in the resurrection, even as Yeshua the Messiah remains a Jew in the resurrection.

¹¹ Juster, *A Messianic Jewish Worship Book*, pp. K7-8.

¹² Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, p. 149.

Sukkot

Chag HaSukkot (the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles) is the autumn harvest festival in Israel that begins on the full moon 15 days after *Yom Teruah*. During this eight-day festival, the Messianic Jewish community focuses on Yeshua, the *Mashiach* (the Messianic king) of Israel. The following festival *Amidah* is recited in some Messianic synagogues:

1. Blessed are You, O LORD our God, and God of our fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, the God and Father of our LORD Yeshua the Messiah. You are the Creator of all, and greatly to be praised and revered. Blessed are You O LORD, the God of our fathers and of our Messiah.
2. On this *Sukkot*, we are reminded of that ancient command to dwell in tents. We remember, by this, that You provided for our ancestors in the Wilderness; they were given supernatural food, their clothes did not wear out, and You led them through the wilderness. So on this festival, we are to remember that you are Adonai Yira, the LORD who provides. We are called to put our trust in You, not in our possessions; neither in houses, lands, or stored up treasure. Blessed are You, O LORD, who provides for your believing people.
3. On this *Sukkot*, we recall that the Messiah Yeshua tabernacled in our midst. He used the ceremonies of *Sukkot* to teach concerning Himself. When the lamps were lit in the court of the women, He proclaimed, "I am the light of the world." We who walk in Him, do not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. When the waters of libation were poured out, signifying pouring ourselves out before God, Yeshua said, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." Indeed, out of our inner being are to flow rivers of living water; that is the overflow of the Holy Spirit who dwells within. Blessed are You, O LORD, who gave the Messiah to dwell among us; we praise You LORD Yeshua.
4. *Sukkot* is the time of the final fall harvest in Your ancient land. All good gifts come from Your almighty hand. So during this harvest season, You commanded us to rejoice for eight days! Blessed are You, O LORD, who provides the harvest in our ancient land.
5. In ancient times, our priests offered sacrifices not only for Israel, but for all of the nations of the world. These 70 sacrifices represented the seventy nations of the world. They were as prayers of priestly intercession that the world might come to Your light and that the Messiah might be a light to the whole world. In the worldwide fellowship of Jew and Gentile, we already see the reality of that Day to Come. Blessed are You, O LORD, who led Your ancient people to offer sacrifices for the nations.

6. As *Sukkot* is the greatest harvest in Israel in the natural realm, so *Sukkot* points to the great harvest of people through the Messiah Yeshua. At the end of the age there shall be a great harvest of peoples from every nation and tongue. In the Age to Come, all nations will acknowledge Your kingship. We in faith proclaim the good news of Your kingdom to all, with the expectation of this great harvest. Has it not even begun even in our day? Blessed are You O LORD who brings forth a great harvest of salvation through Your people in the name of Yeshua.

7. On the first *Sukkot* of the Age to Come, the enemies of God will have been defeated. *The rule of the Messiah Yeshua will be established on the earth. Then shall be fulfilled the promise given through Zechariah, "On that day the LORD shall be one and His name one over all the earth." In that day the Messiah shall rule with all his resurrected saints. All nations shall come to Jerusalem and celebrate the feast of Sukkot. If they do not come they shall not have rain. You provide the rain which provides the harvest. You will be acknowledged as the provider over all the earth. The rain is also a symbol of Your Spirit which shall be poured out over the whole earth. Great shall be the celebration of Sukkot, the worldwide celebration of the kingdom of God. The knowledge of the LORD shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas. Blessed are You O LORD our God, King of the whole universe who establishes Your worldwide kingdom under the rule of Yeshua and has given us Sukkot that we might in faith look forward to that Day (Italics mine).*¹³

In this *Sukkot* prayer, Yeshua is depicted as the resurrected king of Israel reigning over a worldwide kingdom from Jerusalem – “In that day the Messiah shall rule with his resurrected saints...All nations shall come to Jerusalem and celebrate the feast of *Sukkot*.” The imagery is drawn from Zechariah 14, which begins with the prophet’s description of the LORD standing on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (v. 4 “his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives”).¹⁴ The Lord then vindicates Israel in the sight of the nations and calls the nations to celebrate the feast of *Sukkot* in Jerusalem as a sign of their allegiance.

Messianic Jews view Zechariah 14 as a description of the Messiah’s second coming. We read the statement, “his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives,” as a

¹³ Juster, *A Messianic Jewish Worship Book*, pp. M3-4.

¹⁴ Should Zech 14:4 be read allegorically? If so, then perhaps Yeshua’s ascension and return described in Acts 1:9-11 should also be read allegorically. Paul writes that Jesus will “descend from heaven” (1 Thes 4:16), but where to if not Jerusalem? Among the early church fathers, it was “widely believed that the Lord’s second coming would take place at Jerusalem” (Chadwick, *The Circle and the Ellipse*, p. 8).

reference to the resurrected Yeshua. That this is an ancient way of reading the text would seem to be confirmed by Acts 1, where two men in white robes tell the disciples that Yeshua will return to the Mount of Olives in the same way that he left:

While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Yeshua, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven” (Acts 1:10-11).

Why does Yeshua return to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem? From a Messianic Jewish perspective, he returns to the Mount of Olives because he is the resurrected king of Israel. He returns to Jerusalem to reign on the throne of David as the son of David.

Pesach

The feast of *Pesach* (Passover) occurs on the 14th day of Nissan, a full moon usually in March or April. Messianic Jews, like the wider Jewish community, hold *sedarim* on the first and second nights of the eight-day feast of *Matzot* (Unleavened Bread). During the fourth section of the seder—*Yachatz*, which means “Dividing” or “Breaking,” the larger half of the middle *matzah* (the *Afikoman*) is broken in two, wrapped in a cloth and hidden. This piece of *matzah* does not reappear until the twelfth section of the seder—*Tzafun* (which means “Hidden”)—when the *Afikoman* is found and eaten by all. The origin of this custom is debated. However, a number of scholars have argued that the *Afikoman* tradition may have originated among Jewish believers in Yeshua who viewed the *Afikoman* as a symbol of their crucified and resurrected Messiah. According to David Daube,

The word is Greek: *aphikomenos*, “the coming one,” in Hebrew *habba*’, clearly referring to the Messiah...Today in many parts of the world the children playfully hide the fragment lying aside, so that the person conducting the celebration, when he needs it at the end of the supper, at first cannot find it; alternatively, the leader himself may hide it and the children search for it. At its inception the game may have been of a more serious character, an allusion to the Messiah who, though existing, is in concealment, guarded by God until the appropriate hour. After all, at the latest from the Middle Ages, the *Afikoman* is described as *tzafun*, which may denote both “that which is preserved” and “that which is hidden:” a suitable designation for the Messiah waiting in the wings to be summoned to his task.¹⁵

In the contemporary Messianic Jewish community, the *Afikomen* is commonly regarded as a symbol of Israel’s resurrected Messiah.

Some Messianic synagogues hold a final seder on the eighth day of Passover in keeping with Chassidic tradition.¹⁶ This concluding meal of *Pesach* is called *Seudat Mashiach* (Messiah’s Feast). In the Los Angeles area, we use a *haggadah* (order of service) for this celebration called *Haggadah Shel Seudat Mashiach* that exalts Yeshua the resurrected Jewish Messiah. The introduction to the *haggadah* emphasizes that Yeshua will return to reign as King of Israel:

We who know that Messiah has come know that this night holds extra meaning since we know that Yeshua, our Righteous Messiah, has come once to atone for sin and *we now await His glorious return to reign as King of Israel and Ruler of the Nations*. We will tell the story tonight of the prophetic anticipation of Messiah, the Suffering Servant. *We will also look to the coronation of King Messiah when He returns*. This will be a night of honoring and glorifying King Messiah, using symbols, dialogue, songs, and poetry.¹⁷

¹⁵ Daube, “The Significance of the Afikomen,” pp. 425-26. “One should not ignore the phenomenological similarity between the various stages of the *afikoman* ceremony and the Crucifixion of Jesus, his being enwrapped in a shroud, his being placed in a closed cave, until at the climax, on Easter Sunday, he is risen from the dead” (Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, p. 244).

¹⁶ The Lubavitcher rebbe wrote, “The last day of *Pesach* is the conclusion of that which began on the first night of *Pesach*. The first night of *Pesach* is our festival commemorating our redemption from Egypt by the Holy One, Blessed be He. It was the first redemption, carried out through Moshe Rabbeinu, who was the first redeemer; it was the beginning. The last day of *Pesach* is our festival commemorating the final redemption, when the Holy One, Blessed be He, will redeem us from the last exile through our righteous Moshiach, who is the final redeemer. The first day of *Pesach* is Moshe Rabbeinu's festival; the last day of *Pesach* is Moshiach's festival” (*Likkutei Sichos* 22:34).

¹⁷ Emslie, *Haggadah Shel Seudat Mashiach*, p. 5.

Bikkurim

The feast of *Bikkurim* (Firstfruits), described in Leviticus 23:9-14, occurs on the day after the *Shabbat* (Sabbath) in the middle of *Pesach* week. Messianic Jews do not attach significance to the specific day of the week that Yeshua was resurrected (Sunday) but to the festival day on which he was resurrected—*Bikkurim*. In the same way that Yeshua died for our sins on a Jewish festival (*Pesach*), and gave us the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) on a Jewish festival (*Shavuot*), so too we see Yeshua as having been resurrected on a Jewish festival (*Bikkurim*). Paul, a first century Jew who celebrated these festivals, appears to have made the same correlation between Yeshua’s resurrection and the festival of *Bikkurim*. In his first letter to the Corinthians, he writes:

But the fact is that the Messiah *has* been raised from the dead, *the firstfruits [bikkurim] of those who have died*. For since death came through a man, also the resurrection of the dead has come through a man. For just as in connection with Adam all die, so in connection with the Messiah all will be made alive. But each in his own order: *the Messiah is the firstfruits [bikkurim]*; then those who belong to the Messiah, at the time of his coming (1 Cor 15:20-23 CJB; italics mine).¹⁸

During Passover and *Bikkurim*, some Messianic Jews recite the following *Amidah* prayer:

1. Blessed are You O LORD our God, and God of our Fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. You are the great and faithful God, fulfilling all your promises to Your people. Blessed are You, O LORD, faithful to all Your promises.
2. In this season of Passover we recall Your deliverance of our ancestors from Egypt. When the Passover lambs blood was placed on the doorposts and the lintels, the angel of death passed by the homes of our people, but slew the firstborn of Egypt. Through

¹⁸ Paul refers to “Pentecost” (i.e. *Shavuot* [Weeks]) in 1 Cor 16:8, a festival that occurs 50 days after *Bikkurim*. Because the Torah requires Israel to count from *Bikkurim* to determine the date of Pentecost/Weeks (Lev 23:15-16), the reference to Pentecost in 1 Cor 16:8 strengthens the argument that Paul associated Yeshua’s resurrection with the festival of *Bikkurim* in 1 Cor 15:20-23.

mighty plagues and fearful manifestations of power, You did show Yourself to be LORD of all in that day. Blessed are You O LORD who provided deliverance in that day and protection from the angel of death through the blood of the Passover lamb.

3. You delivered Israel from Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. You parted the sea and led us through on dry land. We were immersed through the sea with the presence of Your cloud and pillar. It was not because of our righteousness that we were delivered, as the Torah teaches, but because of your great love and mercy. So we sang unto You, “I will sing unto the LORD for He has triumphed gloriously, the horse and rider thrown into the sea.” You delivered us from the bondage of slavery and brought us into our own land. Blessed are You O LORD who delivered us from Egypt.
4. You commanded Israel to eat unleavened bread as a memorial. Our ancestors left Egypt in such haste that the bread did not have time to rise. Leaven is a symbol of evil, for leavened bread is corruptible. So we eat unleavened bread to remind us to be holy and pure. As we have been told in the Scriptures, “Purge out the old leaven of malice and bitterness and replace it with the unleavened bread of purity, sincerity, and truth.” Blessed are You O LORD who has commanded us to eat unleavened bread.
5. You sent the Messiah Yeshua to die for our sins as our Passover Lamb. Before He died He took the Matzoh and the red wine and used them as symbols of His broken body and His shed blood. Indeed through his death we have forgiveness of sins, for He gave His life blood to wash away our sins. He lived his perfect life and suffered and died that we might have life. Blessed are You, O LORD, who gave the Messiah Yeshua as our Passover sacrifice and provide the fellowship meal of the Messiah’s supper.
6. *You commanded that on the first day of the week after Passover, our people were to wave the sheaf of the first fruits of the produce of the land. So on this day, Yeshua was raised from the dead by the working of your mighty Holy Spirit. He is therefore the first fruits of those who sleep in Him. They too shall be raised in Him and we who are alive shall be changed. In His resurrection life, we have life, both now and in the Age to come. For if the Spirit of Him who raised Yeshua from the dead dwells in us, He shall give life to our mortal bodies by this same Spirit. Blessed are you O LORD who raised Yeshua from the dead.*
7. You have promised that a day is coming of great worldwide salvation for Israel and the nations after the judgments of the last days. The nations will come to Your light. So we thank You for your promise of a new exodus in which it will no longer be said, “The LORD lives who brought us out of the land of Egypt, but the LORD lives who brought us out of ...all the nations to which He has scattered us, from the North, South, East, and West.” Blessed are You, O LORD, who brings a greater Exodus.¹⁹

¹⁹ Juster, *A Messianic Jewish Worship Book*, pp. O1-2.

Paragraph 6 reflects how Messianic Jews view Yeshua the resurrected Jew in the light of *Bikkurim*. The Messiah embodies and fills full the meaning of the festival – “the Messiah is the firstfruits” (1 Cor 15:20). Another *Amidah* prayer for *Bikkurim* declares:

You have demonstrated your awesome might, O Most High, raising Yeshua our Messiah from the grave, taking him up through the clouds and seating him above every being and power in the universe. By this you showed the world that *he is both Messiah of Israel and Sovereign of the Universe*. Deserving of praise are you, O Lord, who raised our Messiah from the dead.²⁰

In reciting this *Amidah*, Messianic Jews affirm the humanity and divinity of Yeshua. From the Messianic Jewish perspective, Yeshua is not a generic human but a human with a particular ancestry and ethnic identity. He is a Jew and he represents his people as the “Messiah of Israel.” Many prayers in Messianic Jewish *siddurim* (prayer books) refer to Yeshua in the present tense as “Messiah, son of David.”²¹ Similarly, dozens of Messianic Jewish worship songs refer to Yeshua as the “root of Jesse” or “David’s son.”²²

THE RISEN JEW—PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS

Jewish believers in Yeshua are profoundly impacted by the revelation that Yeshua is a risen Jew. Below are a few of the pastoral implications.

Affirmation of Messianic Jewish Identity

²⁰ Fischer, *Messianic Services for the Festivals & Holy Days*, p. 217.

²¹ Fischer, *Messianic Services for the Festivals & Holy Days*, p. 23.

²² E.g., the song *How I Praise You*, by Israel’s Hope, includes the line, “Messiah of Yisrael is He, Restorer of our nation. The Hope of David now we see, bringing us salvation. Root of Jesse, Lion of Judah, Judge of Yisrael...”

Messianic Jews experience pressure to assimilate into Gentile Christian culture. However, when we look to Yeshua, the resurrected Jew, we are emboldened to remain Jews as he remains a Jew. He is a model of Messianic Jewish identity. As Bruce Marshall notes, the resurrected Jew upholds the continuing validity of a Jew/Gentile distinction:

...in the person of the Logos God makes his own the flesh of the particular, Jesus of Nazareth. God's ownership of this Jewish flesh is permanent...So in willing his own incarnation, it seems that God wills the permanence, indeed the eschatological permanence, of the distinction between Jews and Gentiles.²³

National Connection to Yeshua

Messianic Jews feel a national *kesher* (connection) to Yeshua the resurrected Jew. He is Yeshua *Achinu* (our brother),²⁴ a member of the tribe and the royal representative of our nation. He is the king of Israel. This sense of national connection does not diminish in any way our view of Yeshua as the one in whom “the fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col 2:9). For Messianic Jews, Yeshua is:

the incarnation of the Divine WORD through Whom the world was made, and of the Divine GLORY through Whom GOD revealed Himself to Israel and acted in their midst. He is the living Torah, expressing perfectly in His example and teaching the Divine purpose for human life. Yeshua is completely human and completely divine. As the risen Messiah and the heavenly *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest), Yeshua continues to mediate GOD's relationship to His people Israel, to those of the nations who have joined the greater commonwealth of Israel in Him, and to all creation. GOD's plan of salvation and blessing for Israel, the nations, and the entire cosmos is fulfilled only in and through Yeshua, by virtue of His atoning death and bodily resurrection, and GOD's gift of life to both Jews and Gentiles, in this world and in the world to come, is bestowed and appropriated only in and through Him.²⁵

²³ Marshall, “Christ and the cultures,” p. 178.

²⁴ See Kjaer-Hansen, *Joseph Rabinowitz and the Messianic Movement*, pp. 117-26. Cf. Heb 2:11, 17.

²⁵ “Statement on the Identity of Yeshua,” Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC), November 12, 2003. This was followed by the UMJC's 2004 “Statement on the Work of Yeshua”—“Yeshua is the Messiah promised to Israel in the Torah and prophets. Through His death, burial, and resurrection, He provided the atoning sacrifice that gives assurance of eternal life to those who genuinely trust in Him. Jewish people, along with all people, need the spiritual redemption that is only available in Messiah Yeshua, and need to put their trust in Him and His sacrificial work. Our role as a union of congregations is

Sharing the Besorah

Many Jewish people today think of Jesus as a blonde haired, blue-eyed Gentile God. For Messianic Jews to say that the Messiah was a first century Jew, and remains a Jew, communicates his continuing relevance to (and for) our people. Messianic Jews view Yeshua as *Mashiach ben Yosef*, the Messiah son of Joseph, who will one day reveal himself to his brothers. As Zechariah prophesied, we will see the one whom we have pierced and mourn for him as one mourns for an only son (Zech 12:10). We will embrace him as the Jewish Messiah.

Jewish and Gentile Identity in Messiah

Viewing Yeshua as a risen Jew has implications for our understanding of Jewish and Gentile identity in Messiah. The monophysite debate in the 5th-7th centuries required a vocabulary rich in nuances to explain how the Messiah's humanity coexisted with his divinity without diminishment of either nature.²⁶ This vocabulary can also be utilized to explain how new creation identity and Jewish identity²⁷ (or Gentile identity) coexist in union, without one diminishing the other.

Pseudo-Cyril described the relationship between the Messiah's divinity and humanity as two natures "enveloping one another" and "penetrating each other" in asymmetrical fashion "without forming a hybrid" or *tertium quid*. It is a "co-mingling"

to embody the message of life and redemption through Messiah in the context of the larger Jewish community."

²⁶ Torrance, *Christology After Chalcedon*, pp. 14-74; Chesnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies*, pp. 9-20, 57-85, 132-36.

²⁷ Or "nature" (Gal 2:15).

and “co-inherence” without loss of distinction. There is no sense of dissolution of the humanity in the divinity—“the two natures are not lost into one.”²⁸ This asymmetrical “mutual containment” of the two natures in each other does not level down the Messiah’s humanity (Eutychianism) but rather has the effect of drawing out its fullness. John Damascus referred to this relationship as *perichoresis* (*De Fide* 3.17) and describes it as the glowing of iron penetrated by fire. This asymmetrical relationship is reflected in the fact that “iron becomes fiery, yet fire does not become iron” (John of Damascus, *Contra Jacobitas* 52.41-43).

When we view the risen Jewish Messiah in this way an analogy may be drawn with respect to Messianic Jewish and Messianic Gentile identity: As Messiah’s divine nature brings out the fullness of his human/Jewish/son of David nature, so too the new creation nature (in Messiah) naturally brings out the fullness of our Jewish nature as Messianic Jews.²⁹ Rather than an erasure or dissolution of Jewishness through our being “in Messiah,” there is co-mingling, co-inherence, co-enveloping, co-penetration and asymmetrical mutual containment between Messiah in us and our Jewish nature. As Judith Gundry-Volf puts it,

Paul can speak of being a “new creation” (καὶνὴ κτίσις) without implying the erasure of differences, only their revalorization... “put on Christ” (in baptism) connotes a kind of eschatological transformation that takes up rather than leaves out the differences in the body...Though believers “put on” the *one* Christ, he “puts on” their *differentiated*

²⁸ David Höhne, “What Can We Say About Perichoresis?” pp. 64, 68-69, 71 comments, “This asymmetrical interpenetration involves an equally asymmetrical mutual containment in that while the divine nature may completely contain the human, the reverse is not the case...In Jesus Christ, God and man are one; in Him, therefore, God becomes accessible not by superseding or eliminating the *humanum*, but by realizing and manifesting humanity in its purest and most authentic form...This conformity of the *humanum* with the *divinum* in Christ is, therefore, not a diminution of humanity, but its restoration...in the case of Jesus Christ, the chrism of divinity permeated His humanity.”

²⁹ Cf. Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:26-27.

“flesh”—to reappropriate Paul’s metaphor—and “lives in me” [Gal 2:20], that is, in each individually differentiated “me.”³⁰

The result is a “Messianic Jewish” identity. Borrowing John of Damascus’ illustration, we can think of the new creation nature as a fire that causes our Jewishness (in the case of Jews) and our Gentileness (in the case of Gentiles) to glow all the brighter.

Below are some additional pastoral implications of Gentile Christians viewing Jesus as a risen Jew.

Affirmation of the Jewish People

For Gentile Christians, seeing Jesus as a resurrected Jew, the son of David, the king of Israel, directly impacts the way they view Jewish people. Jewish people become Jesus’ people. Love for Jesus the Jew leads to love for Jewish people. How can Gentile Christians express their love for Jewish people? There are many ways but I will mention two that are often overlooked:

- (1) Gentile Christians can uphold carnal Israel’s election—“for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom 11:29)—and repudiate all forms of supersessionism (punitive, economic and structural).³¹

³⁰ Gundry-Volf, “Beyond Difference?” pp. 27-30. *Pace* Gundry-Volf (p. 29), I would not describe the process of revalorization as the “adiaphorization of differences” but as the *unfolding of important distinctions that reflect the diversity of creation*. As Harink, “Paul and Israel,” p. 12 points out, “Israel as the called, chosen and beloved people of God is numbered among *the creatures which God has brought into being by his own act – Israel herself is nothing less than a creation by the word of God.*” See also Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals*, pp. 160-68; Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, pp. 109-40.

³¹ “In sum, I distinguish three kinds of supersessionism in the standard canonical narrative: economic, punitive, and structural. The first two designate explicit doctrinal perspectives, i.e., that carnal Israel’s history is providentially ordered from the outset to be taken up into the spiritual church (economic supersessionism), and that God has rejected carnal Israel on account of its failure to join the church (punitive supersessionism). Structural supersessionism, in contrast, refers not to an explicit doctrinal perspective but rather to a formal feature of the standard canonical narrative as a whole. Structural

- (2) Gentile Christians can embrace Paul's "rule in all the churches" that the circumcised should remain circumcised and not become uncircumcised (1 Cor 7:17-24). This leads to affirming the importance of Messianic synagogues and helping Jews in predominantly Gentile churches to remain Jews and not assimilate.³²

Connection to the Jewish People

Seeing Jesus as a risen Jew can lead Gentile Christians to feel a sense of connection to Jewish people. Through Jesus the Jew, Gentile believers are "grafted, contrary to nature" (Rom 11:24) into the Jewish olive tree, becoming part of the "commonwealth of Israel" (Eph 2:12 RSV).³³ However, sometimes this trajectory of thought leads to the wrong conclusion that Christians are spiritual Jews and should therefore keep the Torah as a matter of covenant responsibility, as Jesus did. There is a pastoral need to help Gentile Christians who gain a revelation of the risen Jewish Messiah to understand that the Romans 11 olive tree is differentiated with natural and grafted-in branches. Jew/Gentile callings remain part of the kingdom of God and these callings reflect different responsibilities, as indicated by the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council decision and Paul's rule in all the churches (1 Cor 7:17-24).³⁴

The Otherness of Yeshua

supersessionism refers to the narrative logic of the standard model whereby it renders the Hebrew Scriptures largely indecisive for shaping Christian convictions about how God's works as Consummator and Redeemer engage humankind in universal and enduring ways" (Soulén, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, p. 181 n. 6).

³² Rudolph, "Paul's 'Rule in All the Churches' and Torah-Defined Ecclesiological Variegation," pp. 1-36; Rudolph, "Messianic Jews and Christian Theology," pp. 58-84.

³³ Lindbeck, "The Church as Israel," pp. 78-94.

³⁴ Rudolph, "Paul's 'Rule in All the Churches' and Torah-Defined Ecclesiological Variegation," pp. 1-36.

Sometimes the Gentile Christian response to seeing Jesus the Jew is not positive but negative. A non-Jew may feel threatened by the otherness of Jesus and respond by rejecting or downplaying Jesus' Jewishness. From a pastoral perspective, it may seem like the right course to avoid causing such people to stumble by describing Jesus in a way that does not emphasize his present national/ethnic identity. However, I would like to suggest that this is not helpful to the worshiper in the end. The historical Jesus was a Jew and remains a Jew. To love Jesus is to love him in the fullness of his divinity and humanity, and being a Jew is fundamental to his humanity. As Paul said, "Remember Yeshua the Messiah, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel" (2 Tim 2:8). Do we avoid referring to Jesus as male (in the present tense) if most of the people in our church or synagogue are female? No, we recognize that Jesus was a man and that the New Testament speaks of him in masculine terms, even in the present tense. In the same way, we should speak of Yeshua as the resurrected Jew and help Gentile Christians to embrace his otherness.

The Post-Human Jesus

There is a tendency in today's church for Gentile Christians to think of the Son of God as having left behind his humanity. Typically, Gentile Christians do not have difficulty worshiping Jesus or praying to Jesus but many experience difficulty thinking of Jesus as fully human, having a national/ethnic identity and returning in bodily form to establish his kingdom on earth. The Jesus worshiped today is often a Christ of the Spirit who has transcended earthly existence. Wright notes:

The idea of the human Jesus now being in heaven, in his thoroughly embodied risen state, comes as a shock to many people, including many Christians. Sometimes this is because many people think that Jesus, having been divine, stopped being divine and became human, and then, having been human for a while, stopped being human and went back to being divine (at least that's what many people think Christians are supposed to believe).³⁵

When Gentile Christians see Jesus as the resurrected, Messianic king of Israel (i.e. Jesus the son of David [= Christ]), post-human conceptions of him fade away. This is because Jesus' past, present and future as the "son of David," the particularity of his humanity, becomes vividly clear. As I have shown, Matthew, Luke, Paul and John all viewed the resurrected Yeshua as the "son of David," and Paul regarded this aspect of his humanity as central to his gospel (2 Tim 2:8).³⁶ By contrast, not a single early church creed or council refers to Jesus by this title, nor is there any other appellation that emphasizes his Jewishness.³⁷ In their attempt to deJudaize Jesus, the early church fathers unwittingly dehumanized him as well.

CONCLUSION

"Born a Jew... raised a Jew... still a Jew"—this is what the Messianic Jewish community declares about the resurrected Yeshua, the root of Jesse, the king of Israel. It is also what Yeshua declares about himself, about his own identity, at the end of the New Testament

³⁵ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, p. 111.

³⁶ Bockmuehl, "God's Life as a Jew," pp. 77-78 concurs, "For the first Christians, in other words, it was 'seeing the Word' in the resurrection that crucially corroborated the identity of Jesus the Jew as Messiah and Lord God of Israel. In the witness of the apostles — including the apostle to the Gentiles — the New Testament's implied readers firmly appropriated this truth... 'Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David' (2 Tim 2:8)." Also Bockmuehl, "Seeing the Son of David," p. 228.

³⁷ "One of the most obvious effects of supersessionism in traditional Christology is the effacement of the Jewishness of Jesus from Christian confession. It is remarkable that the great creeds and confessions of the faith are silent on this point, being satisfied simply with the affirmation of Christ's humanity. However, in Scripture, not only the Jewishness of Jesus, but his Davidic lineage are central features of the Gospel" (Blaising, "The Future of Israel as a Theological Question," p. 18).

canon: “I am the Root and the Offspring of David” (Rev 22:16). Yeshua’s identity as the “son of David” is central to the gospel message. This is Paul’s credo (2 Tim 2:8). For centuries Christian leaders have avoided facing this fact, perhaps out of fear that supersessionist foundations would give way. However, times are changing, the Messianic Jewish community has been resurrected, and many Christians are discovering the risen son of David. In the late twentieth century, New Testament scholars emphasized that Jesus *was* a Jew. I predict that in the first half of the twenty-first century, church theologians will begin emphasizing that Jesus, both in his earthly life and in his resurrection, *is* a Jew.

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