

Is Yeshua The Prophesied Messiah of The Hebrew Bible?

Book Review

by Rabbi Yaakov benYosef

In his book Is Yeshua The Prophesied Messiah of The Hebrew Bible? the author Dan Kane builds his case. The objective of Mr. Kane's thesis is to "determine if the Jesus in the Christian Bible could be the Mashiach of the Hebrew Bible"(pp XV). In support of this objective Mr. Kane uses traditional Christian teachings as well as scriptural quotes.

Mr. Kane begins the book by establishing the historical situation that existed during the time of Jesus. The author divides the first chapter into sections, each dealing with a specific period in the life of Jesus. The first chapter begins with the birth of Jesus and progresses to the rejection of Jesus. In this chapter most of the support for the historical context is obtained through the scriptures and theological writings. While the use of theological documents often support historical understanding, these documents are not the best historical evidence. Thus the first chapter, written from a theological perspective, can not be considered accurate from an academic perspective. This makes the first chapter lacking in its ability to produce strong and compelling historical evidence of the political, social, and economic influences that shaped the life of Jesus.

The remainder of Is Yeshua The Prophesied Messiah of The Hebrew Bible? addresses the theological aspects of Jesus as the Messiah. To support his thesis from this perspective the author continues to use theological writings. However, because understanding Jesus as the Messiah is a theological perspective and not a historical perspective, the heavy use of theological documents is appropriate. The theological portion of the book can be broken down into six major categories which are destruction, abandonment, rebirth, prophecies and conclusion.

Chapter two is in the category of destruction. Chapter two is titled The Calm Before The Storm . The chapter addresses the problems that occurred for the religious establishment as a result of the destruction of the Temple. The author does an excellent job of supporting his thesis in this chapter. He explains how and why the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of Israel led to a new religion that is theologically considered to be G-d's replacement for Israel. As a result, of this new religion, the author says that it was not only prudent but mandatory for Jewish religious worship to remain free from the influence of the idols presented by the new religion.

Chapter three and chapter four fall in the category of abandonment. These two chapters primarily address the abandonment that Jesus experienced as a result of his convictions. Chapter three, titled Trials and Treachery, addresses the theological aspect of the actions of Judas and the religious trial that resulted. The author proposes that Judas was disenchanted because Jesus had not already established his earthly kingdom, leading to his traitorous actions. The remainder of this chapter follows scriptural order and explains the last supper, arrest and trial. In this chapter the author does an excellent job of using the prophetic scriptures relating to the rejection and trial of Jesus. Chapter four addresses the theological aspect of the crucifixion. In the first part of this chapter the author focuses on the theological concept that the Passover Lamb was a type and shadow of Jesus. In the second part of the chapter the author addresses the thief on the cross and the death of Jesus. In chapters three and four the author uses the New Testament as his main source material. However, where direct ties to the Old Testament exist, the author uses Old Testament verses to support his case.

Chapter five is in the category of rebirth. The chapter addresses the resurrection of Jesus and is written from the perspective of the New Testament writers. This chapter begins with the

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discovery by Mary Magdalene that the body of Jesus is missing and ends with the Acts of the apostles. In this chapter the author does well presenting his theological understanding of the resurrection. He explained an alternate understanding of the passage of John 20:17. This alternate understanding was a pleasant surprise and makes the reader consider possibilities that have not been traditionally taught.

Chapter six is in the category of prophecies. The chapter addresses Jewish understandings, concerning the belief in a Messiah. The first part of the chapter addresses Jewish interpretation of the scriptures and the concept of messiah. The second part of the chapter presents the prophecies that support the case for Jesus as the Messiah. In the first part of the chapter the author explains how modern understanding and Jewish culture have changed the traditional understanding of the scriptures. However, the author focuses primarily on modern Jewish understanding and does not address the divisions within Jewish culture concerning the Messiah. As a result, this chapter is written to present only one perspective. Therefore, the main topic of how the messianic prophecies are understood by modern Jewish culture leads us to the conclusion that all Jewish people understand the messianic prophecies from that one perspective.

The final section, is the conclusion. The conclusion begins, with Talmudic writings and progresses to five main predictions concerning the messiah. The author does an excellent job of closing his case concerning the validity of Jesus' claim as the Messiah. This is particularly seen in the author's decision to summarize points and predictions made earlier in the book into five biblical predictions.

The book Is Yeshua The Prophesied Messiah of The Hebrew Bible? is a good book for individuals to open an investigation into the Hebraic roots of Christianity. The book does a good job of addressing basic issues that arise when Christians first understand the prophecies concerning Jesus from a Jewish perspective. However, parts of the book are weak in arguing a historically Jewish and theologically Jewish presentation. As a result, the book lacks the needed evidence to convince Jewish individuals that the Jesus taught from a Christian's perspective is the same Messiah that first century Judaism was looking for.