

DR. ED. ISAACSON, THE HE-BREW DIVINE, GIVES HIS REASONS,

And Quotes the Scriptures in their Support.

Editor Deseret News:

I have been asked by many of my Jewish brethren to set forth my reasons for believing Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah of the Jews. Accordingly, I will here give a few of my reasons.

The passage of Scripture I have selected as the basis of my theme is recorded in the Book of Genesis iii., 15: "And enmity I will put between thee and between the woman, and between thy seed and between her seed. He shall bruise thee as to the head, and thou shalt bruise him as to the heel."

Hence Isaiah says, in the 7th chapter, 14th verse: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel—God with us—that is, God dwelling among us in our nature. Both the Jews and Christians are agreed that the text has a direct allusion to the Messiah: it is the first of that class of promises on record.

At this starting point then, the Jew and the Christian stand upon common ground.

- (1) That a Messiah should be born.
- (2) That the text is the first promise referring to him.
- (3) That he should be of the seed of the woman.
- (4) That he should bruise Satan's head, and,
- (5) That Satan should bruise his heel, or that the deliverance could only be effected in the death of the Messiah.

On these five points both the Jew and the Gentile are agreed. But here we separate, the Christians affirming that the Messiah and Savior of the world hath appeared in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Jews denying the affirmation.

Let me then calmly and impartially weigh the evidence on both sides; and with a sincere desire to ascertain the truth:

- (1) As to the person of the Messiah.
- (2) As to the lineage of the Messiah.
- (3) The time of the Messiah's appearing.
- (4) The offices of the Messiah, and
- (5) The confirmations of his Messiahship.

Josephus, the great historian, in that remarkable passage in his antiquities, after relating an unsuccessful sedition of the Jews against Pontius Pilatus, says, "Now there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. This was Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the Divine Prophets had foretold them; also ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him came to pass; and the tribe of Christians—so named from him are not extinct at this day."

From Josephus, an enemy to Christianity, this is, to say the least, a wonderful acknowledgment.

That he was to be of the seed of David, may be seen from Psalm ii., 7: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee;" but that the Messiah was to possess a higher nature than that of humanity is as clearly taught as that he was to be man. David, in Psalm xc., 1, thus testifies, "The Lord said unto my Lord, 'Sit thou upon my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.'"

(The original reads "Adonai," Jehovah. In reading the Hebrew, "Adonai" is always substituted for Jehovah.)

In this Psalm, David most distinctly calls Messiah his Jehovah. In conjunction with this there is an exalted being spoken of in Genesis as "Hame-lach Adonai"—the angel of Jehovah. Hagar worships as "Thou God seest me," or, as the original reads, "Hame-lach Adonai."

What, then, are we to understand by "The Angel of Jehovah?" He cannot be a mere angel, he is therefore none other than the Messiah, and the Messiah must be none other than Jehovah.

As the seed of the woman, he is man—as the author of the promise, he is God—as David's son, he is human—as David's Lord, he is divine—as Abraham's seed, he is man—as the bestower of Abraham's blessings, he is God—and Isaiah, looking through the vista of prophecy, to the advent of the Messiah, in his remarkable prophecy (ix., 6) mysteriously blending in him humanity and divinity, says: "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, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

As a child, he is human—as the Messiah, he is divine—as a son given, he is a man.

In the Book of Jeremiah, xlii., 5, 6, it is thus written: "Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, 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 those days Judah shall be saved, Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name, by which he shall be called 'Jehovah our Righteousness.'"

Thus do we perceive that Messiah is to descend from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Jesse and David. Upon these points the Jews are agreed. Let me now examine whether Christ, who was called by the people, the Messiah of God, is of the Abrahamic genealogy.

In Matthew's gospel, chapter i., there are seventeen verses exclusively devoted to tracing out Christ's lineage, from Abraham to Mary, the mother of his humanity, and to Joseph, his reputed father, making in all forty-two (42) generations.

Christ's genealogy has undergone the most rigid analysis, and not even the slightest taint of a suspicion of its genuineness can, by any conceivable possibility, be attached to it. It stands forth as an undying memento, that Christ is of the direct seed of Abraham, through which the Messiah was to be born.

Never were a people more careful in the preservation of their genealogies than the ancient Jews, so that through a period of not less than four thousand years, are to be directly traced the records of Christ's ancestry.

What, again, are the inferences to be drawn from their investigation?

- (1) That Messiah is of the house of David.
- (2) That Jesus Christ is of that house, and
- (3) That Christ's lineage, in connection with the other facts of his birth, demonstrates him to be the Messiah.

Let me now classify the following most important prophecies:

- (1) Messiah was to appear during the standing of the second temple.
- (2) That he was to appear, four hundred and ninety years after the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and during the existence of a Roman Empire, and
- (3) That a king was to reign over the Jews, and that he was to be the last monarch of the house of Judah.

At the time of Christ's appearing, the temple stood in all its glory—the wonder and admiration of the world. Not a stone of the mighty fabric was loosened, it bade fair to stand for ages, but in an almost incredible space of time, not a vestige remained of that noble structure.

At the advent of Christ, the Jews were subject to the authority of the Romans; hence, in the reign of Augustus they were enrolled, "they paid tribute to Caesar," and the power of life and death was taken from them.

But it may then be asked, "How can we reconcile the prophecy of Jacob that the scepter should not depart from Judah till Shiloh come?" Easily. Judah was still governed by a king, they had their own laws, their own councils, their own magistrates, only the paramount authority was invested in the Caesars.

The tribe of Judah was now the only one remaining; the others had become extinct, or were lost among the nations. The sceptre was still in Israel, but now Shiloh comes and the sceptre must depart, and it is worthy of remark that the very year in which Christ, who called himself Shiloh, appeared in public, the sceptre departed; King Archelaus was dethroned, a Roman procurator appointed, and the kingdom of Judah destroyed!

Here we have a prophecy delivered one thousand six hundred and eighty-nine years before its accomplishment; that Messiah of whom Moses and the prophets did write, has already come in the person of Jesus Christ, the only individual who has or ever can, on these very points, authenticate his mission.

Isaiah, liii chap., so clearly foretells us, the sufferings of Messiah, the object of his birth, teachings, mediation, atonement, death, resurrection, and all things so fully accomplished in Jesus Christ even to the smallest minute of detail.

That the Messiah was to be a king of a more exalted nature than any earthly potentate, is taught in the Old Testament, Psalm xxxix., 27: "I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth."

The Scriptures also designate the Messiah as a Savior, as a mediator and redeemer; all of which offices have been fully fulfilled, in the person and ministry of Christ.

Messiah was to confirm his mission by the working of miracles: Isaiah xxv., 5, 6: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped."

Fulfilled: Matthew, xi., 4, 5: "The blind receive their sight and the deaf hear."

Messiah was to be poor, despised and rejected by the people: Isaiah, liii., 3: "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

Fulfilled: Luke, 8, 58: "The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

Messiah was to be betrayed by his familiar friend. Psalm, xli., 9: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, hath lifted up his heel against me." Luke, xxii., 34.

Now observe a fulfillment even of the minute circumstances, in the death of the Messiah. Psalm, xli., 21: "They gave me also gall, for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

Fulfilled: John, xix., 29. "Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it unto his mouth."

The Old Testament affirms that Messiah should rise from the dead: See Psalm xvi., 9-10. Isaiah, liii., 10. Fulfilled: Luke, xxiv., 5-6. Mark, xvi., 19. Luke, xxiv., 51.

We see a prophecy multiplied upon prophecy, referring to the promised seed, all strangely, completely, satisfactorily, undeniably fulfilled in Jesus.

In Jesus we see an embodiment of the highest morality, the noblest self-denial, the most exalted virtue, the sublimest truth, and the most consummate holiness, fearlessly challenging unequal, either in sacred or profane history. In a word, we see in this wonderful Being, strangely, mysteriously, incomprehensibly, yet truthfully blended, the actions and attributes of Jehovah, and yet of man—David's son, and yet David's Jehovah!

How plainly Christ resembled Moses may be seen in the following similitudes:

Moses was the most favored prophet of the Old Testament dispensation; while other prophets had their revelations in dreams and visions, he talked with God face to face. Christ said: "We speak that which we do know, and testify that which we have seen;" and, "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him."

In his argument with the Jews, He declares Himself to be that prophet of whom Moses wrote.

Jesus was also a legislator like Moses, for He gave a law more perfect in its nature, more diffusive in its application, and more extensive in its rewards.

Did Moses teach "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah, thy God, in vain?" Christ said, "Let your communications be yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Did the Jewish law-giver teach "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself?" The Christian law-giver also taught, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Did Moses teach, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth?" Christ said, "Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also."

Did Moses inculcate obedience to the law? Christ said, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven." Moses enacted laws but for one nation, Messiah is to legislate for all nations.

Moses was raised up to deliver the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, and to bring them into the promised land, but failed in the accomplishment of the last part of his mission.

Christ delivers from a more fearful bondage of sin and Satan and introduces His believers into the "kingdom of God" the spiritual Canaan.

Thus might I continue to multiply analogy upon analogy in the histories of these remarkable personages. I would then ask, "Is this similitude and correspondence, in so many particulars, between Jesus Christ and the great prophet and legislator Moses, the effect of mere chance? Let us search all the records of universal history and see if we can find a man who was so like to Moses as Christ was, and so like to Christ as Moses was. If we cannot find such a one, then have we found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, to be Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God?"

Messiah was to offer himself a sacrifice for sin; Isaiah lii., "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

How completely was this fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, even to the smallest detail, as would almost lead one to think the prophet had flourished posterior to the events predicted and had actually copied them from the Gospels rather than that he prophesied seven hundred years anterior to the birth of Jesus.

Many of my Jewish brethren ask me: "If Jesus possessed such exalted power, why did he not compel obedience and force the scepter from the hand of Herod?" Simply because "His kingdom was not of this world."

Here my beloved brethren, was the great obstacle to the reception of Christ. The Jews expected, (upon what authority I know not) Messiah would come a mighty temporal prince, and not only break the yoke of Roman bondage, but elevate them in the scale of nations. Hence when he appeared in the meek and lowly Jesus of Nazareth, a universal disappointment ensued, which resulted in the general cry and rejection, "We will not have this man to reign over us." They did not think the bondage he came to destroy was that of sin, "to bruise the serpent's head," and to destroy the latter's usurped power and reign to the hearts of the people. "For," said he, "the kingdom of God is within you," not a kingdom of dazzling royalty, pomp, nobility and splendor; but of truth, justice, holiness, righteousness, joy, peace and believing.

And now, my dear brethren of the house of Israel, I have finished the investigation from our own Scriptures and from Jewish and Pagan histories into the claims of Jesus Christ as the Jewish Messiah. I have calmly, and I trust impartially, weighed the evidence for and against.

I have traced the person of Messiah to be very man and very God, the "seed of the woman," and yet the "Hame-lach Adonai" or Angel of Jehovah.

We have seen these natures mysteriously united in the person of Christ. We have traced the lineage of Messiah as far back as Seth the Son of

Adam and found Christ to be of that lineage. We have investigated into the time of the appearing of Messiah and have seen that Christ appeared, just at the very time predicted. We have traced the offices of Messiah and have found those offices fulfilled in Jesus.

Further, we have abundant other confirmations of the validity of His mission, in the miracles He wrought, His modes of instructing, altogether different from those of other Jewish scribes, the manner and circumstances connected with His death, fulfilled even to the very letter of prophecy; the predictions he uttered, in which the voice of history in every age, and especially the present state of Jerusalem and our people concur to demonstrate their truth, and consequently the very truth of the Gospel.

Finally, I would affectionately present the question to every unprejudiced Jew, "Are not the claims of Jesus of Nazareth, as the anointed of God, abundant and incontrovertible?"

If after all our examination into His mission, my Jewish brethren still persist in refusing to acknowledge Him as the Messiah of whom Moses, in the law and the prophets did write, then I ask, "Who is the Messiah to be?" and "If Jesus is not that Messiah, then, who was He?" Call him an impostor, you cannot, and still acknowledge with modern Judaism, that the author of Christianity was a virtuous man, a prophet and a reformer. You must acknowledge more, for the more you consider the astonishing facts, in his history, the more you gaze upon the wonderful display of divine power, wisdom and benevolence, that marked his character, the more you contemplate that amazing disinterested love that burned in his heart for sinful man, the more you investigate the plan of human redemption so triumphantly accomplished by him, the more you will be led to exclaim, "Thou art the Son of the living God!"

In conclusion, I would in brotherly love, most heartily beseech all of my brethren of the house of Israel, to give this subject serious and prayerful attention. If Jesus is the Messiah, which you cannot disprove, should you still persist in denying it and rejecting Him—you gain nothing, but you will have everything to lose. It is not an error which can be retraced, a false step, which may be retraced in time and your destiny throughout eternity, depends upon this issue.

In embracing Christianity, I do not embrace a new religion; it is the religion of which the immaculate Son of God, and a Jew according to the flesh—as I am—declared "one jot or tittle shall, in no wise, pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

The Evangelists were Jews, the disciples were Jews, the early Christians were all converts from Judaism, and in subsequent ages, tens of thousands of Jews have embraced Christianity. I am also of the "Stock of Abraham," educated as you were, having imbibed the same principles, the same prejudices, in common with yourselves, cherishing the same inspiring hope, the same burning wish, the same longing desire—that our downtrodden constraints may be emancipated from the thralldom of Gentile persecution and tyranny.

Jehovah is willing to return again, your captivity, as soon as you shall receive, "His anointed"; even now is He yearning over you and saying "by his prophet, 'Return unto me, O! house of Israel, for why will ye die?'"

Oh, be wise, now, in this day of your gracious visitation; life is frail, time is wasting, death is waiting, eternity hastening, judgment pending. Delay not, my brothers; tarry not, fly, oh, fly to the only hope set before you. Believe in the Lord, Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved! Amen,

DR. ED. ISAACSON.

222 First North St., Salt Lake City,

April 15th, 1888.

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One black MARE, supposed to be 5 years old, branded W F on right thigh, has a young colt.

One sorrel two-year-old MARE, with white strip in face, branded W F on right thigh.

One black yearling HORSE Colt, branded W F on right thigh.

One brown two-year-old HORSE Colt, branded W F on right thigh.

One gray MARE, 3 years old, white strip in face, branded W F on right thigh.

One bay HORSE Colt, 2 years old, branded W F on right thigh.

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Dated at Draper Precinct, Salt Lake County, Utah, this 16th day of April, 1888.

H. A. SMITH,

Poundkeeper of said Precinct.