

seeking. Others may be harder to persuade, but will nevertheless be offered reasons for thinking there is an issue to be addressed.

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Israel's Messiah and the People of God: A Vision for Messianic Jewish Covenant Fidelity, Mark S. Kinzer, Lutterworth, 2011 (ISBN 978-0-7188-9260-9), xxvii + 221 pp., pb £24

Based on the premise that the path of Messianic Judaism is never going to be easy, Mark Kinzer sets out to show that while many scholars think that Judaism and Christianity hold mutually exclusive theological claims, divided in the person of Yeshua, in actuality they each hold a component of redemption that is *only* revealed when the two are in fact united. In this way, Judaism remains no longer the so-called *bankrupt* religion that denies the significance of Yeshua, however, nor does Christianity threaten the very *life-blood* of Jewish existence! In this book, Kinzer offers an interpretation of *Salvation History* that brings together the people of Israel, the person of Yeshua and the Yeshua-believing community, and opens a different perspective for understanding God's redemptive work within the world. For Kinzer, Messianic Jews should not stand apart from the people of Israel, but should instead identify with her complex history and live in solidarity with a covenantal life that connects both Israel and Church. By living an observant Jewish life, embracing its religious tradition and recognizing their part in the Covenant and connection to the (spiritual) bloodline of the early patriarchs, the *ekklesia* naturally and ontologically, becomes an extension to Israel, rather than something that should seek to replace it. Yeshua therefore becomes the *fulfillment* of Israel's destiny as her perfect temple, priest and sacrifice and the intensification of God's presence.

Mark Kinzer begins with the premise that the *Jewish Christian* or rather, *Messianic Jew* cannot and should not ignore or forget the reality and importance of their Jewish cultural heritage or identity. He therefore points out that while theirs is a theology in which all Torah and Tradition is interpreted through the lens of Yeshua, this also invokes a clear connection/relationship with the faith of Judaism and therefore its way of life throughout (covenantal) history. Most Messianic Jews would therefore agree that Jewish identity should be rooted in Torah which serves in many ways as a basis for the Jewish way of life and any

appropriate (*halakhic* or *midrashic*) contingencies that might stem from its content and principles.

For Messianic Judaism, Yeshua is not only the promised Messiah, and therefore the redeeming nature of the Messianic age, but his presence also signifies the fullness of Torah as well as the human embodiment of God's eternal word. Entering into faith with Christ therefore involves not simply *coming into relationship* with the Messiah, but participation in a community that is united by the words of the *Shema*, to the original Covenant people (Israel); through whom Yeshua is the very epitome of fidelity. For Messianic Jews, the *Shema* is therefore more than simply a question of loving ones neighbor, it is also a reminder of the Covenantal promises which are completed and recognized in the person of Yeshua who, by his very identity, is the perfect expression and renewal of such promises. This is further emphasized by the true depth of continuity between the *proleptic* promises of the Covenant and the reality of the *Eschaton*. It is therefore important to recognize the importance and integral nature of the Jewish covenantal experience, which reinforces identity and context, and the eschatological nature of Yeshua's identity, which sanctifies the divine order by his sacrifice on behalf of the nations; raising to a new level the holiness of the divine order being offered to all humankind as a proleptic reality.

For Kinzer, themes of soteriology and eschatology are clearly tied up in the *Good News* offered by the apostles about the consummation of Covenant History. He therefore questions different beliefs and interpretations about what individuals therefore need to do in order to inherit life in the world that is to come. To do this, firstly, he considers the tradition of Peter and James, which appears to portray individual final destiny within the broader context of Israel's eschatologically renewed national life. In this case, Salvation is tied up with the need for *good works* by means of appropriate conduct within Israel's internal relationships (as emphasized by the *Shema*) and with Yeshua as the one that is the fulfillment of Torah. Salvation is therefore determined by the character of love shown by those who believe in Yeshua and follow him as the perfect example of Torah. Secondly, Kinzer looks at the Pauline Tradition which he similarly (he suggests) refers to *behavior* as a means of gaining Salvation. In this case Paul recognizes the wider scale of Salvation, in which the Messiah is revealed outside the boundaries of Israel although under the strict premise that the gentile believers, who have been *grafted* into Yeshua's covenant, do not behave arrogantly about their salvation or revert back to previous (/habitual) behavior on the basis that salvation will protect them! Here, Salvation must be lived out, by the Gentiles at least with love for one's neighbor; anticipated corporately and in union with the Messiah. Thirdly, Kinzer looks at the Johanne tradition which again presents faith and Salvation as a behavioral response to belief in Yeshua and commitment to him and his

message. For John however, the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God appears to be something that is a realized condition rather than in anticipation of a future blessing; eternal life being a current possession and present reality for those that believe in and follow the teaching of Yeshua.

Concluding with a chapter which considers the relationship between Messianic Jews and the Christian Church, Kinzer considers message of *Lumen Gentium*, a Vatican II document which sets out the evangelic role of the church as the *People of God* and its relationship with who those who are not *implicitly* members of this body; due to their *rejection* of the *kerygmatic* qualities of Yeshua. He points out that, while *Lumen Gentium* affirms that relationship with Christ certainly appears to initiate individuals into the people of God, the person of Yeshua also identifies the people of Israel as themselves members of an eschatologically renewed body, offering an identity that acknowledges their participation in the original Covenant; themselves each having a full measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

This is a fascinating set of essays which captures interest and inspires study. Kinzer is not afraid to consider controversial topics, which he covers respectfully and with diligence. I was certainly inspired to search Scripture to reinterpret for myself some previously held biases which, I am sure, are held by many scholars about the nature of Salvation. For many years, scholars have attempted to locate the place of Israel in relationship to the *ekklesia* that grew from teachings by ancient preachers such as Paul, James and Peter. The story for Messianic Jews (indeed for the whole Jewish Community) is most certainly not one of rejection, but rather one of continuity and fulfillment; indebted to its Jewish roots for its very existence as the covenantal people of God.

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Mystery Unveiled: The Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England, Paul Lim, Oxford University Press, 2012 (ISBN 978-0-19-533946-8), ix + 427 pp., hb \$74

Within the contours of modern theology, it is oft assumed as a maxim that the demise of Trinitarian orthodoxy in the post-Reformation period laid the foundation for Deism, Unitarianism, and other forms of rationalistic divinity, which the Enlightenment-cum-atheism built upon. In terms of contemporary historiography, Socinianism has proved to be a