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# Jerusalem Crucified, Jerusalem Risen: The Resurrected Messiah, the Jewish People, and the Land of Promise

DAVID B. WOODS

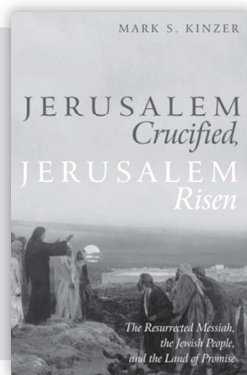
## JERUSALEM CRUCIFIED, JERUSALEM RISEN: THE RESURRECTED MESSIAH, THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND THE LAND OF PROMISE

Author: Mark S. Kinzer

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### Chapter Highlights

Kinzer's introduction begins with his objection to the dominant form of the gospel in Christian history, namely that the gospel is not "good news" for the Jewish people—its proponents celebrated the destruction of Jerusalem and the apparent termination of the Jewish people's priestly service while also opposing Jewish tradition. The author

**R**abbi Dr. Mark Kinzer is a prominent Messianic Jewish theologian and a master exegete of the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> His latest book, *Jerusalem Crucified, Jerusalem Risen*, is groundbreaking work aimed at providing an integrated, coherent interpretation of the biblical text on diverse yet inextricable and indispensable components of the *euangelion* (good news): the Jewish people; the land of Israel; the city of Jerusalem; the Temple; the Torah; the *ekklesia* (including Jewish and Gentile members); and the divine plan for humanity and the cosmos, especially in modern Jewish history. Ultimately these lead to an interpretation of the *euangelion* as a message that addresses all these matters with "integrative power." Moreover, the *euangelion* is not merely historical (pointing to the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus) but also *prophetic*, pointing to what is yet to come for all its components listed above—or all but the Temple, which is a special case.

then sketches the way ahead, explaining that Messiah's death *and resurrection* are "inseparable" from both the past and ultimate future of the Jewish people and, thereby, that of their holy land and city.

Kinzer strategically builds upon one of Western Christianity's most renowned scholars, N.T. Wright, which will help Christian readers feel more at home in his theological space while also leveraging on exegetical work already done. However, while Wright establishes Israel as the beneficiary of the prophesied good news, he stops short of fleshing out the implications for the Jewish people and their place on the earth. *Jerusalem Crucified* aims to take Wright's work further, first by relating the suffering and death of Jesus with the destruction of Jerusalem and "intensified exile" of the Jewish people that followed and, second, by relating the resurrection of Jesus to the anticipated glorification of Jerusalem through the LORD's return to Zion. This is truly good news for Israel, as opposed to a supersessionist gospel that despises the

value of the Jewish people, place, and tradition. The “prophetic *euangelion*” sees the suffering of Messiah as a *proleptic participation* in the suffering of the Jewish people from 70 CE (when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans) onward, thereby imparting redemptive value to it. If such unity in suffering is accepted, we ought also to explore Kinzer’s argument that there must be a corresponding unity in the resurrection of Messiah and the restoration of the Jewish people.

The logic is persuasive, but the author does not leave it as a mere proposal or opinion; he provides cogent argumentation for it using both biblical and historical evidence. Moreover, Kinzer makes explicit his premises, priorities, purposes, and, vitally, his method. These are not only essential for following his reasoning, they are also valuable to students and novice exegetes like myself who need to learn from a master in the field. The author explains his fourfold “theological reading” of Scripture, including *compositional*, *canonical*, *covenantal* (or *communal*), and “*world-historical*” lenses.

The *compositional* mode of reading Acts prioritizes the theology of its author, Luke,<sup>2</sup> even over the history he records. Kinzer notes that theologians in the past century have studied Luke’s *theology* (beyond his historical narrative) much more than they have allowed Luke to inform their own theology. This is striking for me because I have experienced opposition from those who don’t imbibe Lukan theology, and because such a statement implies their guilt (given that they claim to uphold the divine authority of Scripture). The downplay of the theology of Luke-Acts in the *ekklesia* is a concern that Kinzer hopes to “rectify” because it is essential for the *euangelion* to the Jewish people. I agree.

Chapter 1 reviews the history of Jerusalem in the era since the first century CE, from the inspiring account of James, the brother of Jesus,<sup>3</sup> to its capture by Persians, and later Arabs, in the seventh century. With this background

Kinzer examines the juxtaposition of the death of Jesus with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem found in Luke’s gospel. The argument extends, not by extrapolation but by careful observation of this gospel, to include a parallel between Jesus’ resurrection and Jerusalem’s redemption. Therefore, Kinzer argues, the eschatological destiny of Jerusalem is guaranteed;

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inasmuch as Messiah’s death was a proleptic participation in Jerusalem’s destruction, so his resurrection assures believers of its coming restoration. The author’s development of what I would call *geographic theology* in Luke-Acts to support the restoration argument is brilliant. It is not just a collection of interesting facts about biblical locations but rather the interpretation of a message embedded in the narrative’s geography and sequencing by the biblical author.

The second chapter, on “Jerusalem and the Temple,” is most challenging. The author presents the Temple as separate from the holy “land, city, and people.” Its history is “complex and unstable,” and its value is symbolic rather than intrinsic—it points to “realities beyond itself”: the Temple in heaven, the cosmos as a temple, the eschatological Temple,<sup>4</sup> and the human temple (the people of Israel). Impressively, Kinzer marshalls Jewish extra-biblical literature to support his understanding from

the Hebrew Bible that the Temple's importance was primarily symbolic, and then he provides a thorough review of references to the Temple in the New Testament.

## What does Luke-Acts tell us about the role of Torah from the Apostolic Period to the eschaton?

The focus then shifts from the Temple to *the people* in Acts: How does the author of Acts view the Jewish people outside the *ekklesia*? Are they “cut off” from the people of Israel? Chapter 3 explains the Jewish people’s future redemption in Luke-Acts as a consequence of Messiah’s (death and) resurrection. This connection is evident especially in the rhetoric and prophetic component of the speeches recorded in Acts. Kinzer discusses the “differentiated missiology of Acts”—the mission to the Jewish people as distinct from that to the Gentiles. In his discussion of Acts, he presents a familiar biblical paradigm from earlier times: God’s judgment and scattering of the Jewish people *prove* that the covenant is still in place, since these grave consequences are among the terms of the covenant for disobedience. This explains why Jewish opposition to the *euangelion* is highlighted in Acts—not to write off their covenantal status but to confirm it! Moreover, Acts speaks of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel *after* the nations have trampled Jerusalem until the end of their times and after Israel repents.<sup>5</sup>

Having studied the destiny of Jerusalem, the Temple, and the Jewish people, Kinzer then asks the obvious question: What does Luke-Acts tell us about the role of Torah from the Apostolic Period to the eschaton? Torah, he finds, is foundational to continuation of

Jewish national customs and vital to the eschatological hope of the Jewish people *in the land of promise*. The author draws on the infancy narrative in Luke and Acts, the teaching and practice of Jesus and of his disciples, and then tackles various common objections to Torah’s ongoing validity. These objections are founded on several New Testament texts that (supposedly) undermine the authority of Torah in the lives of the *ekklesia*: Jesus broke the Sabbath; Peter was instructed in a vision to eat unclean animals; the apostles presided over a council in Jerusalem and ruled that only four constraints were to be imposed upon the *ekklesia* rather than all the commandments of Torah. Though these objections have been thoroughly refuted in earlier literature, Kinzer further contributes weighty defense of Torah. Moreover, if the history and theology of Luke-Acts do not release the *ekklesia* from Torah, neither do they release the Jewish people. Of special interest is Kinzer’s exegesis on the Sabbath debate, which differs significantly from the line taken by the publisher of this journal (*First Fruits of Zion*)<sup>6</sup> yet reaches the same conclusion nonetheless.

*Jerusalem Crucified* presents two chapters on the divine *boule* (plan, counsel, or providence),<sup>7</sup> even though the *euangelion* was “fractured” when God’s people were “fractured” through the rejection of that *euangelion* by a substantial portion of the Jewish people. First, Kinzer discusses Luke-Acts as a testimony to God’s sovereignty over worldly affairs, by which even wicked human actions are repurposed for God’s ultimate deliverance. The archetype of this is the execution of Jesus, finalizing his bond with the Jewish people throughout their impending judgment and exile. But God raised Jesus from the dead, producing a sure hope for the “ultimate eschatological restoration of the Jewish people” at the end of their exile. Kinzer then proceeds with a more difficult hypothesis: the final redactor of Acts (and Luke) was responding, in part, to two developments following the

destruction of Jerusalem: first, Paul had been misread as being anti-Jewish and opposed to Judaism; such readers separated the *euangelion* concerning Jesus with that concerning the people and land of Israel. Second, the redactor recognized (by divine revelation) the ascendance of Pharisaic, “proto-rabbinic” tradition within Judaism as the means by which God was to preserve the Jewish people (according to his covenantal faithfulness).<sup>8</sup> Indeed, this was the divine *boule* (plan).

The next chapter (6) turns to the exciting subject of modern Jewish history in relation to God’s plan. If God is indeed sovereign over history, then we ought to seek his signal amid the noise of that history, and both Zionism and Messianic Judaism bear evidence of being part of his plan. Was Zionism anticipated in the *euangelion* of Luke-Acts? As much as political Zionism was a secular development, it was anchored to ancient Jewish tradition embedded in the *euangelion*; Jewish yearning to return to Zion is as old as the exile. The “triumphal” entry of Jesus to Jerusalem was a “prophetic typological sign” pointing to his *truly triumphal* return that awaits Jerusalem’s eager welcome of him.<sup>9</sup> Believers ought to recognize that the recreation of the Jewish state centered on Jerusalem is a divine initiative and a guarantee of a much better future still. I agree, and I appreciate that there must be a *theological meaning* to these historical events, including the Shoah. I am grateful for Kinzer’s response to Gary Burge’s attack on Christian Zionism by explaining that God’s gathering and restoration of the Jewish people in the land of promise are his initiative for the sake of his name and are *not* conditional upon their repentance.

Kinzer then seeks theological answers to five difficult questions faced by those who affirm God’s hand in the Zionist initiative and accept the *euangelion*. These relate to the Jewish state itself as the beginning of the redemption, the state’s sovereignty over the land and

over Jerusalem, the ownership of the Temple Mount and whether Israel should rebuild the Temple, and whether disciples of Jesus should always back the Israeli government’s policies and actions.

But how does Messianic Judaism square with Zionism and with the “prophetic *euangelion*”? In a seeming reversal of the downward spiral of the first century CE, the modern Messianic Jewish movement emerged around the time of “a Jewish national presence” in the land, while the *ekklesia* has sought to connect to that presence both theologically and practically. Thus, non-Jewish believers should, in Kinzer’s view, acknowledge the divine hand in arousing “Jewish life within the *ekklesia*.” The Jewish people and the *ekklesia* are mutually dependent witnesses of God’s cosmic salvation.

If the author’s arguments in the preceding chapters are sound, then they combine to present the apostolic proclamation as truly good news to the Jewish people and the land of Israel. It also relates to her own identity and the destiny of the *ekklesia*. Jerusalem is not only crucified with Messiah but also (will be) risen with him. This unity in suffering and glorification is at the core of the prophetic *euangelion* and thus key to integrating diverse ecclesial doctrines. Kinzer ends by testing his thesis on the *euangelion* for coherence *canonically, soteriologically, ethically* and *theo-politically* (together), and *missiologically*. The coherence he demonstrates means that the *ekklesia* ought to recognize Jerusalem’s “potential to unite the whole people of God,” with all nations making pilgrimage to worship at the Temple Mount.

## Reflections

Perhaps surprisingly for a Messianic Jewish theologian, Kinzer admits he is “agnostic” regarding the Millennium (or Messianic Era). This is problematic for me in several ways. First, although the author affirms a literal, bodily resurrection in the eschaton and acknowledges the premillennial beliefs (chiliasm) of the *ekklesia*


in the first two centuries CE, he merges the vision of the Millennium with that of the World to Come.

Second, Kinzer repeatedly affirms the ongoing priestly vocation of the people of Israel, now and in the eschaton, but it is not clear to me how they can accomplish their duties according to the Torah without a Temple. He acknowledges that Jesus' priesthood is strictly heavenly—Jesus is not permitted to serve in the earthly Temple—but what happens when the heavenly Jerusalem comes down to the earthly one? It seems that Jesus' heavenly priesthood and sacrifice can coexist with the earthly ones (when functioning) only until his return (p. 88). Although his argument against the need for an earthly Temple is cogent, it nevertheless seems inconsonant with the anticipation that the Temple Mount will be a “house of prayer for all peoples”<sup>10</sup> yet without a Temple. This apparent lack of congruence surely arises from the above-mentioned eschatological merger.

Third, though Kinzer writes much on the eschaton, he does not cite Revelation 20:5–6 (concerning the first and second resurrections). Finally, if an expert cannot be sure what Scripture says regarding the Millennium, what shall less qualified people believe? While his transparency is admirable, his uncertainty surely summons him to develop a decisive theological interpretation of the Bible on the Millennial Age.

*Jerusalem Crucified* is a book for theologians and biblical scholars, especially those interested in eschatology and in the Lukan writings. The author mostly uses language and literature familiar to Christian scholars, thus framing his work in a manner accessible to them. In keeping with his previous writings, Kinzer wants to provide an understanding of Scripture, history, and tradition that makes sense (i.e., that is integrated and non-contradictory). He is not particularly arguing for Messianic Judaism or Messianic Jewish theology, though his writing

does provide good support for both. Similarly, though the book is not written in support of Christian Zionism, that camp will also benefit from it. However, Kinzer is not defending Israeli settlements in the so-called “occupied territories,” nor is he dispensationalist. I was curious about his repeated reference to “the land of promise,” citing Hebrews 4:1–11 while avoiding entirely the more obvious and explicit reference to it in Hebrews 11:9 (also translated “the promised land”),<sup>11</sup> which strongly supports the Zionist cause.

The book is not for casual readers; it is for thought leaders in the *ekklēsia* and the Jewish world, and it is an absolute *must-have* for advanced students of Luke-Acts. I will surely draw heavily from it in the future as a reference work; I only wish someone would transpose it and the author's other publications into a “Kinzer Commentary” for my Bible software. 

## Endnotes

- 1 In this review I have sought to use Kinzer's terminology, though some compromises are made for economy of explanation.
- 2 Kinzer keeps with scholarly consensus in identifying Luke as the author of Acts, acknowledging also that the text may have been redacted by a later editor before its canonization.
- 3 Written by Hegesippus in the second century, whose work is lost except for that preserved by church historian Eusebius in the fourth century CE.
- 4 Particularly that of Ezekiel 40–48.
- 5 Acts 3:19–21; Luke 21:24.
- 6 D. Thomas Lancaster, *From Sabbath to Sabbath: Returning the Holy Sabbath to the Disciples of Jesus* (Marshfield, MO: First Fruits of Zion, 2016), 135–193.
- 7 Gamaliel spoke of the divine *boule* in Acts 5:38–39, and his faith-inspired prediction has proven true ever since.
- 8 One cannot help here but think of Paul's imagery of the divine preservation of the cultivated branches of the olive tree in Romans 11.
- 9 Luke 13:34–35.
- 10 See p. 292—the last page—quoting Isaiah 56:7 and Mark 11:17.
- 11 Also see Acts 7:5.