

Inside this Issue: • The Collection for the Saints
• Some Reflections on the Jewish Apocalyptic

BREAKTHROUGH IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY



Benjamin Berger, one of the founders of Olive Tree Fellowship.

We are privileged to be bearers of good news of a significant breakthrough in the introductory conference of TJCII in Hungary, November 9-11, 2012. Our guest speaker was Benjamin Berger, one of the founders of the Jerusalem Olive Tree Fellowship, who is well-known and loved as a speaker all over Europe. Our other invited speaker, Fr. Peter Hocken was unable to come to Budapest for health reasons. However, he sent a written message for each evening, each of which perfectly matched Benjamin's messages.

As the opening of the conference, we remembered a Hungarian forerunner of the Messianic Jewish Movement, rabbi Yitzhak Lichtenstein. We presented a short video of the quiet, yet significant commemoration held on the 104th anniversary of his death. See the following link for the English version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFUVKxv93F4>

The location of the meetings, the tarnished building of "Radnóti" secondary grammar school was also prophetically meaningful. The poet Miklós Radnóti, after whom the school is named, was martyred in 1944 for being Jewish. A few years before his death, he had come to faith in Jesus through a poet friend, Sándor Sík, who was a catholic priest. Radnóti was baptized Catholic, but was taken to a forced labor unit and was marched to Serbia. Then on another forced march, he was shot dead not far from the Austrian border. His poetry is still considered amongst the finest in Hungary. His prophetic words about the Coming Kingdom were written from the pits of darkness and suffering:

"... until the Kingdom comes, that had been promised by the young Rabbi, the one who fulfilled the Law and fulfilled our words... behold the hour is near, it is coming, that Kingdom is approaching! 'And what is the purpose of the Lord - I asked. Behold: it is the Kingdom! Until then let us set off and gather the people..."



Also in the same building, a lieutenant of the Hungarian army organized a life-saving operation in 1944 and saved the lives of over 2000 Jews from the murderous actions of the Hungarian Arrow Cross.

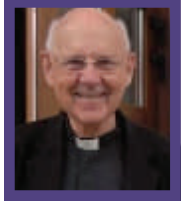
(continued on Page 4)

TJCII

THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS

BY PETER HOCKEN

(Fr. Peter Hocken, a member of the TJCII Executive Committee)



For the apostle Paul, the collection he was organizing for the saints in Jerusalem had a high priority. Yet few disciples of Jesus, whether Jewish or Gentile, seem to have grasped its centrality for Paul. He uses the word diakonia (service) to describe this commitment: “I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there” (Rom 15:25); “entirely on their own, they [the Macedonian churches] urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints” (2 Cor 8:3-4); “This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.” (2 Cor 9:12).

“For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.” (Rom 15:27)

Paul sees the collection among the churches of the Gentiles as an expression of the profound bonds uniting Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ. The theology of this mutuality is developed in Romans 15: “For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.” (Rom 15:27). The blessings enjoyed by the Gentile believers come to them from the Jews, and for Paul the collection expresses a recognition of this foundational truth.

At first Paul may not have planned to go to Jerusalem with the collection. “Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.” (1 Cor 16:3-4). From Corinth he goes to Macedonia (see 1 Cor 16:5). Then when the Macedonian churches beg to take part, Paul is intending to go himself with the collection: “he [a brother] was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering” (2 Cor 8:19). But Paul is not certain how this gift will be received by the church of Jerusalem: “Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there.” (Rom 15:31).

Another passage that throws light on Paul’s commitment to this service to the saints is Gal 2:7-10, where Paul describes how the “pillars” James, Peter and John, recognized “that I had been given the task of preaching to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been given the task of preaching the gospel to the Jews” (Gal 2:7). When the pillars in Jerusalem “agreed that we [Paul and Barnabas] should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews” (Gal 2:9), they ask only one thing of Paul and Barnabas: “that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.” (Gal 2:10). Here surely we find the deepest reason why this collection for the saints in Jerusalem is so important for Paul. The poor here evidently refers to the poor in Jerusalem and in Judea. It seems that these were the first believers to be referred to as “the saints.” They are the saints in a twofold sense: first, as the holy remnant of Israel; and secondly, as made holy by the Spirit of God in regeneration.

As an initiative for the reconciliation and right ordering of Jews and Gentiles within the one body of Christ, TJCII can be an example, not only of Jewish believers sharing their spiritual blessings, but also of Gentiles sharing their material blessings. Supporting Jewish believers, particularly in Jerusalem and the land of Israel, is a practical consequence of our theological convictions concerning the one new man.

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Some Reflections on the Jewish Apocalyptic of the Period 70-132 AD

By Maria Miduch

[This article is a brief summary of key ideas from the recently-completed doctoral dissertation of Maria Miduch, who teaches Old Testament in Krakow, Poland. Maria is also an intercessor for TJCII.]



Nothing will be more essential for the studies of the first Church – the first community of believers in Christ – than Bible study, particularly exegesis of the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. However, there are other writings which – though not included in the canon of the Bible – witness to the merging of the Jewish theological thought and the ideas of new followers of the Jewish Messiah. Especially valuable is the apocalyptic literature (apocalypsis in Greek means revelation, as with the Revelation of St. John the Apostle). The literature created between the year 70 A.D. (i.e. the year of the Temple destruction by Titus) and the year 132 A.D. (i.e. the year when the Bar Kokhba revolt broke out) deserves special attention. We know from the Bible that as long as the Temple existed, the Jews believing in Jesus took part in the Temple worship with their fellow Jews.

regarded as key moments in Jewish believers in Jesus from the Council of Yavne (around 90 A.D.), the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132 (the folio gnize the Messiah in Bar Kokhba called pseudepigrapha by Catholics witnesses to the the Chosen Nation who recognized the Anointed One in the Nazareth tradition of their fathers Jewish way.

The Chosen Nation stands in the center of end-time events, and the ultimate interference of God in the fate of the world takes place only in view of that Nation.

Two events have been re- the separation of the Jew- the synagogue: the Council and the outbreak of the Bar Kokhba. The literature of the followers of Jesus did not recognize the promised rene continued to live by and worship God in the

Within this period, four apocalypses were created by Jewish authors: the Fourth Book of Ezra, the Second Book of Baruch, the Apocalypse of Abraham, and the Fourth Sibylline Book. I focus here on the eschatology of the first three of these books. In all three, the eschatology is centered on the people of Israel (and in this sense is nationalistic in form). The Chosen Nation stands in the center of end-time events, and the ultimate interference of God in the fate of the world takes place only in view of that Nation. God is faithful to His covenant. Some students see certain elements present in the apocalypses as later Christian additions, because they clearly refer to the Christian vision of eschatological blessedness, arguing that this excludes a Jewish origin. Such students consider it unlikely that these passages came from the Jewish followers of Jesus into the pagano-Christian circles. This type of reasoning seems to be a serious mistake. Even if it were possible to confirm that some small fragments had a pagano-Christian origin, we still have to ask: Why were the main Christian communities (whose members were not Jews) not troubled by this Israel-centered eschatology? Does this not show that the replacement thinking that was later to dominate in the Church was alien to them?

Exploring the ideas included in these apocalypses makes more problematic the attempt to make a clear point of separation between the Jewish and the Christian. It is impossible to designate a dividing line clearly and distinctly. For those acquainted with Messianic Judaism and its theology this fact is obvious. However, in the world of scholarly research this fact still seems unnoticed, and attempts at designating such dividing lines are constantly being made. These scholars seem unaware of the harm their approach causes to the Church and the Jewish believers in Jesus.

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BREAKTHROUGH IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

(continued from Page 1)

Benjamin spoke with a prophetic power that shook the predominantly Catholic audience. For many of the listeners his statements were hard to take and he was asked the question: Why does the church need repentance? Benjamin's answers were passionate and direct regarding wrong teaching throughout the ages but he also confronted the listeners with the silence of the church, its priests and bishops in the face of the Holocaust and also her present silence in the face of spiraling anti-Semitism. On Saturday he gave a monumental summary of Biblical history of God's dealings with the Jewish people and the nations from Abraham to the Book of Revelation. On Sunday he lifted up the Jewishness (past, present and future) of Yeshua.

[MP3 recordings of his teachings are available at the following link: <http://messiasizsido.hu/index.php/kik-vagyunk/hanganyagok/103-tjcii-konferenciak/152-olajfa-napok-iii-tjcii-nemzetkoezi-konferencia-budapest.html>]

Below are some testimonies from the conference:

- ◆ "For me this conference started to re-arrange my picture of Christianity and the Jewish people. I sense that I put my feet on a new road that I do not yet see clearly, yet I know it is from the Lord." (Tamás Harkai, free church worship leader with Jewish family background).
- ◆ "It was a joy to see so many people who came from very different backgrounds. It is encouraging from the point of spreading the vision of TJCII in Hungary. My prayer is for us to meet together again soon, showing the unity of believers who stand with the chosen people of God." (Balázs Wintermantel member of the intercessory team).
- ◆ "If the church recognizes and expresses the Jewish identity of Jesus, the Jewish people, too, will have to re-think who Jesus is for them. How do THEY relate to Him and to one another. Perhaps, this is the best we can do to put all this into practice: to recognize and express the Jewishness of Yeshua."
- ◆ "We, sinful people had killed the Only begotten Son of God, yet, He made us sons. We, Gentiles killed the firstborn son: Israel and they are ready to accept us as brothers in Yeshua. We are not complete without them. Without them we cannot come back to the Father's house. Without them the Father's house is not complete."
- ◆ "It would be so important for Christians to understand that a Jew does not have to forget his Jewishness when he comes to the Lord."

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Published by TJCII, a non-profit initiative which began in 1995.
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The Aims of TJCII Include:

- Make known the restoration of the Jewish segments of the Body of Messiah
- Foster repentance for the historic suppression of the corporate Messianic Jewish witness of Yeshua (Jesus), the Messiah
- Further the calling and election of Israel and the Messianic Jewish Community through intercessory prayer, teachings and diplomacy
- Foster reconciliation and unity between Christians and Messianic Jews