

THE EPHRAIM-SCEPTER HERESY, #6

BINGO! EUREKA!

On October 4, 1996, I went to Loudon, Tennessee, to the Piney Ruritan Community Center for the Feast Of Tabernacles. There was a speaker there by the name of Scott Vaught who was teaching that Yahshua-Christ was of the Tribe of Ephraim rather than the Tribe of Judah. Ever since that time, I have been trying to find the origin of that theory. I have recently discovered from where it emerged. Little did I imagine that its origin is to be found in the "Jewish" Talmud, and that the more famous "Jewish" Cabbalists throughout history have been, and are still, its greatest adherents.

As many of you already know, I have gone to great lengths to steer people away from Eugene (Buddy) Johnson's venom along this line, for Buddy picked up the ball from Scott Vaught and started running with it and is disseminating it all over the country. I'm not going to waste a lot of time, but give you the documentation I have on this ignominious, heretical prevarication which has its origin from of the very pits of hell!

A friend of mine sent me a small 4"x6", 32 page booklet entitled *The Jewish Tradition Of Two Messiahs* written by staff writer Kevin Williams of the "RBC Ministries." While the author uses the usual nominal churchianity rhetoric like "Jew" and "Gentile", nevertheless, his is a scholarly treatise with documentation to back up his subject. He demonstrates on page 16 how some Jews differentiate between a "suffering" Messiah and a "conquering" Messiah, which is typically a "Jewish" line-of-thought. Unable to reconcile both a "suffering" and a "conquering" Messiah in one being, some of them decided that there must be two.

To show you this, I will now quote from pages 16-17 of this booklet:

"One highly regarded rabbi during Europe's Medieval Period was a Babylonian rabbi, Sa'adiah Gaon (882-942), who attempted to narrow the scope of the debate with a two-Messiah position.

"According to Michael Brown: '[Rabbi Sa'adiah Gaon] explained that there would actually be *two* Messiahs, the Messiah son of Joseph (mentioned explicitly in the Talmud in b. Sukkah 52a), who was associated with a time of victory mixed with hardship and calamity, and the Messiah son of David, who would establish God's kingdom on the earth.'

"Apart from the singular Talmudic reference, Rabbi Gaon is the earliest known Jewish scholar to articulate this two-Messiah position, and one of the only people to develop it into the 'Messiah son of Joseph' theology. However, for Rabbi Gaon, the coming of the Messiah son of David was contingent entirely on the work of the suffering servant, Messiah son of Joseph."

I will now copy and paste the passage mentioned above (Mas. Sukkah 52a), from the Sancino Talmud on CD into this document:

"Our Rabbis taught, The Holy One, blessed be He, will say to the Messiah, the son of David (May he reveal himself speedily in our days!), 'Ask of me anything, and I will give it to thee', as it is said, I will tell of the decree etc. this day have I begotten thee, ask of me and I will give the nations for thy inheritance. But when he will see that the Messiah the son of Joseph is slain, he will say to Him, 'Lord of the Universe, I ask of Thee only the gift of life'. 'As to life', He would answer him, 'Your father David has already prophesied this concerning you', as it is said, He asked life of thee, thou gavest it him, [even length of days for ever and ever] ... And the Lord showed me four craftsmen. Who are these 'four craftsmen'? — R. Hana b. Bizna citing R.

Simeon Hasida replied: The Messiah the son of David, the Messiah the son of Joseph, Elijah and the Righteous Priest. R. Shesheth objected, If so, was it correct to write, These are the horns which scattered Judah, seeing that they came to turn [them] back? — The other answered him, Go to the end of the verse: These then are come to frighten them, to cast down the horns of the nations, which lifted up their horns against the Land of Judah, to scatter it etc. Why, said R. Shesheth to him, should I argue with Hana in Aggada?" [*underlining mine to emphasize the two proposed Messiahs*]

I would point out that Eugene (Buddy) Johnson, like the "Jews", also teaches "Messiah the son of Joseph." From a "Jewish" standpoint, in the two-Messiah approach, some texts point to Messiah son of David, yet other texts of Jewish tradition speak of another mighty warrior who more closely reflects the experience of Jacob's son Joseph. Raphael Patai, in *The Messiah Texts*, (which can be found at Detroit Wayne University Press 1998) writes as follows, who in turn quotes Rabbi Hai Gaon. In the book *The Jewish Tradition Of Two Messiahs* the following is given in segments, but I will quote it as one continuous quote, and remember that this is an indirect quote:

"He is the warrior-Messiah whose coming was predicted to his first ancestress, Rachel. When, after years of barrenness, Rachel finally gave birth to a son, she called his name Yosef, saying, 'May the Lord add [yosef] to me another son, (Gen. 30:24). A Midrash fragment explains: 'Hence [we know] that the Anointed of War will arise in the future from Joseph.'

"At that time a man will arise from among the Children of Joseph ... and he will be called Messiah of God. And many people will gather around him in Upper Galilee, and he will be their king ... But most of Israel will be in their exile, for it will not become clear to them that the end has come. And then Messiah ben Joseph, with the men who rally around him, will go up from the Galilee to Jerusalem.

"And when Messiah ben Joseph and all the people with him will dwell in Jerusalem, Armilus [*the devil in Jewish tradition*] will hear their tiding and will come and make magic and sorcery to lead many astray with them, and he will go up and wage war against Jerusalem, and will defeat Messiah ben Joseph and his people, and will kill many of them ... And he will slay Messiah ben Joseph and it will be a great calamity for Israel.

"Why will permission be granted to Armilus to slay Messiah ben Joseph? In order that the heart of those of Israel who have no faith should break, and so that they say: 'This is the man for whom we have hoped; now he came and was killed and no redemption is left for us.' And they will leave the covenant of Israel, and attach themselves to the nations, and the latter will kill them.

"When Messiah ben Joseph is killed, his body will remain cast out [in the streets] for forty days, but no unclean thing will touch him, until Messiah ben David comes and brings him back to life, as commanded by the Lord. And this will be the beginning of the signs which he will perform, and this is the resurrection of the dead which will come to pass."

It should be becoming clear that what Eugene (Buddy) Johnson is teaching, wittingly or unwittingly, is "Jewish tradition" rather than true Scripture! But we can be quite sure that Eugene (Buddy) Johnson got it from Scott Vaught, and from where Vaught got it is questionable, maybe the late Joseph Jeffers. Those of you who have been buying Eugene (Buddy) Johnson's venom should take this evidence to heart, for we surely don't want to be influenced by the "leaven of the Pharisees" for which our Redeemer warned us to avoid! Eugene (Buddy) Johnson has bought this "Jewish" mentality hook, line and sinker. But this is not all the documentation I have in my possession to substantiate the evidence presented here by the publication *The Jewish*

Tradition Of Two Messiahs. Buddy might argue that he doesn't teach two Messiahs, but Buddy teaches the wrong one, and he is parallel in belief with this "Jewish tradition."

For further documentation I will turn to the most thorough, seven volume *History Of The Jews* by Heinrich Graetz, vol. 4, page 622: "It is especially important in contracting a marriage to know whether the souls of man and wife harmonize with each other in respect of origin and degree. By means of this secret the visionary of Cairo expected to solve the other mystery, namely, how good spirits may be conjured down from heaven, and in a measure compelled to enter the bodies of living men, and thus made to divulge revelations of the world beyond. Hereby he believed that he held the key to the kingdom of the Messiah and the regeneration of the world. Lurya also believed that he possessed the soul of the Messiah of the branch of Joseph, and that he had a Messianic mission. He saw spirits everywhere, and heard their whispers in the rushing of the waters, the movements of the trees and grass, in the song or twittering of birds, even in the flickering of flames. He saw how at death the souls were set free from the body, how they hovered in the air, or rose out of their graves. He held intimate intercourse with the saints of the Bible, the Talmud, and with the rabbis, in particular with Simon bar Yochaï. In short, Lurya was a ghost-seer and raiser of the dead, a second Abraham Abulafia, or Solomon Molcho, arousing hopes of the coming of the Messiah by Kabbalistic jugglery, but with all this fanaticism he was sober and sophisticated. He introduced the casuistry of the Talmud into the Kabbala."

Ibid., vol. 4, page 624: "It was Vital who spread sensational reports concerning the extraordinary, almost divine gifts of his master, and of his power over departed and living souls; doing so, it appears, with an artful calculation of effect and publicity. Lurya, once so isolated, now found himself surrounded by crowds of visitors; Kabbalists, young and old, came to listen to the new revelation. Several disciples attached themselves to him, and he communicated to them his confused thoughts, assigned to each the original Adamite soul that dwelt in him, the transmigrations which it had undergone before its present corporeal existence, and its functions on earth. It never occurred to these people, already enmeshed in the Kabbalistic net, to doubt the truth of these communications. The disciples that gathered round him Lurya formed into two classes: the 'initiated' and the 'novices.'

"Mystical conversations and notes, the interviewing and summoning of spirits, formed the occupation of Lurya and his followers. In short, Lurya was on the eve of founding a new Jewish sect. On the Sabbath he dressed in white, and wore a fourfold garment to symbolize the four letters of the name of God. The underlying fact of all his revelations and exertions was that he was the Messiah of the race of Joseph, the forerunner of the Messiah of David's line. This, however, he only furtively hinted to his disciples. His delusion was that the Messianic period would commence at the beginning of the second half of the second period of a thousand years since the destruction of the Temple, i.e., in 1568."

Ibid., vol. 4, page 625: "After Lurya's death, Vital Calabrese came to the fore. He immediately usurped a kind of authority over his fellow-disciples, pretended that Lurya on his deathbed had appointed him his successor, and, in feigned obedience to a dying request of his master, took away from them the written notes given them by Lurya. Vital let it be understood that he was the Messiah of the race of Joseph. However, some disciples did not pay any attention to this, and forthwith taught in various countries what they had received from Lurya himself. This was especially done by Israel Saruk in Italy, whither he had traveled ... Through Lurya's influence there was formed, side by side with the Judaism of the Talmud and the rabbis, a Judaism of the Zohar and the Kabbala. For it was due to him that the spurious Zohar was placed upon a level with, indeed higher than, the Holy Scriptures and the Talmud."

Ibid., vol. 5, page 52: "The parasitic Kabbala choked the whole religious life of the Jews. Almost all rabbis and leaders of Jewish communities, whether in small Polish towns or in cultivated Amsterdam, the Chacham Isaac Aboab de Fonseca, as well as Isaiah Hurwitz, the emigrant to Palestine, were ensnared by the Kabbala. Gaining influence in the fourteenth century, contemporaneously with the ban against science, it had made such giant strides since Isaac Lurya's death, or rather committed such gigantic ravages, that nothing could keep it in check. Lurya's wild

notions of the origin, transmigration, and union of souls, of redemption, and wonder-working, after his death attracted more and more adherents into his magic circle, clouding their minds and narrowing their sympathies.

"Lurya's disciples, the lion's whelps, as they boastfully called themselves, made systematic efforts to effect conversions, circulated most absurd stories about Lurya's miracles, gave out that their master's spirit had come upon them, and shrouded themselves in mystery, in order to attract greater attention. Chayim Vital Calabrese had been most prominent, and with his juggleries deluded the credulous in Palestine and the neighboring countries (1572-1620) till his death. He claimed to be the Ephraimitic Messiah, ..."

Ibid., vol. 5, page 153: "When he arrived at Abydos at the beginning of September, he was immediately admitted to an audience which lasted several days. The Polish prophet and the Smyrna Messiah did not laugh in one another's faces, like two augurs, but carried on a grave discussion. The subject of their mystical conversation remained unknown, as may be imagined. It was said to concern the forerunner of the Messiah – the Messiah of Ephraim – whether or not he had appeared and perished, as had been predicted. Nehemiah was not convinced by the long argument, and did not conceal the fact. On this account, the fanatical Sabbatians are said to have secretly made signs to one another to do away with this dangerous Pole. He fortunately escaped from the castle, betook himself forthwith to Adrianople, to the Kaimakam Mustapha, became a Mahometan, and betrayed the fantastic and treasonable designs which Sabbatai Zevi cherished, and which, he said, had remained unknown to the government, only because the overseer of the castle of Dardanelles had an interest in the concourse of Jews."

Ibid., vol. 5, page 207: "After Sabbatai's death one of his followers, Daniel Israel Bonafoux, an ignorant officiating reader (Chazan) at Smyrna, kept up the faith in the dead Messiah by all sorts of jugglery. At one time he pretended to have seen a moving fire-ball; at another, to have heard a voice say that Sabbatai was still alive, and would reign forever. The community at Smyrna bribed the Kadi to banish him from the city, but Daniel Israel took up his residence in the neighborhood of Smyrna, and encouraged the sect to persevere in its belief. He was aided and abetted by Abraham Michael Cardoso of Tripoli, who reappeared on this stage, where he found a conventicle of Sabbatian associates, who flocked round him, because with his scientific education, his culture, and fluency of speech, he was far superior to them. Cardoso announced dreams and visions, declared himself Sabbatai Zevi's successor, the Ephraimite Messiah ..."

For our last piece of evidence we will go to *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, ninth edition, 1894 under the heading "Messiah", volume 16, page 61:

"... A word, however, is necessary as to the Rabbinical doctrine of the Messiah who suffers and dies for Israel, the Messiah son of Joseph or son of Ephraim, who in Jewish theology is distinguished from and subordinate to the victorious son of David. The developed form of this idea is almost certainly a product of the polemic with Christianity, in which the Rabbins were hard pressed by arguments from passages (especially Isa. liii.) which their own exegesis admitted to be Messianic, though it did not accept the Christian inferences as to the atoning death of the Messianic king. That the Jews in the time of Christ believed in a suffering and atoning Messiah is, to say the least, unproved and highly improbable ..." *[all underlining mine]*

Whether all this is true or not, the reader must decide. Either Johnson is wrong, or it is I. Johnson dubs himself "pastor Buddy", but maybe it should rather be "rabbi Buddy."

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