FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON THE 'BEGOTTEN' MESSIAH

by

PHILLIP SIGAL

Grand Rapids, Michigan

The messianic question is one of the most complex theological enigmas besetting both Judaism and Christianity. Among the puzzling aspects of this obscure problem are such themes as how this end-time redeemer-figure will appear, what will be his function, and perhaps most importantly, his origin. It is axiomatic and need not here be documented that even the title *māšî'ah* 'annointed one,' in reference to the end-time redeemer has an obscure origin. It does not occur in Hebrew scripture. It makes its first appearance denoting the end-time redeemer in the apocryphal work, the Book of Enoch (48:10; 52:4)[1] This compilation in its complete form, however, was already known in the pre-Christian era. The use of *māšî'ah*, therefore, denoting the end-time redeemer as a synonym for, and perhaps conflation of Son of Man and Servant of Yhwh, found in the Gos-

1. Since I have here referred to the Book of Enoch as "apocryphal" the reader should be alerted to the fact that although the Book of Enoch is generally classified with the Pseudepigrapha in the standard distinction between Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, I find no compelling reason to adhere to this distinction. All of the pseudepigraphic works are assuredly apocryphal, and some of the apocryphal works not included in the traditional collection of Pseudepigrapha, such as Tobit, are pseudonymous. See Charles Cutler Torrey (1945, p. 11), and George Nickelsburg (1981, p. 6). Because I Enoch is germane to our theme a few words concerning its dating are in order. Enoch is a compilation of separate collections of traditions ranging over a considerable period of time, from before 200 B.C.E. to the early first century C.E. A recent view (Nickelsburg 1981, p. 48), suggests that I En. 1-36 was known before the death of Judah the Maccabee in 160 B.C.E.; 37-71 were composed around the turn of the era, but were definitely pre-Christian (ibid. pp. 221 ff.); 72-82 date to the third century B.C.E. (ibid. p. 47); 83-90 are taken to be part of the apocalyptic literature that emerged during the reign of Antiochus IV (ibid. pp. 73, 94); 92-105 are dated to late in the second or early in the first century, B.C.E., with an alternative suggestion of early in the second century B.C.E. (ibid. pp. 149f.); 91, 106-108 were appended later.

Additional pre-Christian sources for the use of *māšî'ah* to denote the end-time redeemer figure: Psalms of Solomon 17:36; 18:6, 8.

pels, was part of the pre-Christian vocabulary and already part of the enigmatic complex of ideas surrounding the eschatological expectation.

When one postures oneself in the first century and evaluates the then-circulating notions concerning the messianic figure it becomes clear that the Gospels do not present a new and original idea. What was new in the Gospels was not the complex of ideas but the application of these ideas to Joshua of Nazareth.[2] It is not necessary to agree with all the particulars of Joseph Klausner's presentation in his *Messianic Idea in Israel* to credit him with an important thesis on the source of the messianic idea. Klausner (1956, pp. 15ff.) saw Moses, the first redeemer (*Numbers Rabbah* 11:2), as the paradigm of the Messiah who was to be the end-time redeemer.

Understanding Moses as prototype of the Messiah compels us to examine the Moses elements found in the Gospels. In this paper I will explore only the birth narrative of the Gospels in tandem with the birth of Moses and divine birth stories in general. In approaching this question Gordis' view on the "begotten" Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls, alluded to in the Rule Annexe (1QSa 2:11–15) can be very helpful. This will emerge in due course.

Enoch 48:2–3,6; 62:7 inform us that not only the *name*, but also the person of the one to be the Son of Man was pre-creation. The view expressed at 48:3 in the line "Yea, before the sun and the signs were created" reflects the early rabbinic exegesis of a very difficult text at Ps. 72:17 as "[His name] existed before the sun." This is also manifestly an early proto-rabbinic[3] view, found in an anonymous *barayta* (Babylonian *Pesahim* 54a).[4] Enoch 48:6 indicates the Messiah was chosen and hidden before God before creation. This might simply mean his identity was kept secret, or that the person, and not only his name, was pre-existent. Should

2. On the continuity between Judaism and early Christianity during the first century see Phillip Sigal, (1980a, Part One, Chapter Seven).

3. On the term "proto-rabbinic" see Sigal (1980b, Part Two, Chapter One).

4. The pertinent Hebrew of Ps. 72:17b reads: *liqnê šemeš—šemô*. It would take us too far afield here to review and analyze the critical work relating to this verse. The obscure consonants of the word missing above as given in the masoretic text are *yod-nun-yod-nun*. The LXX translates 'may his name remain [endure] before the sun,' implying remaining as long as the sun does. What the Hebrew behind this might have been is a matter of guesswork. All modern translations follow the LXX lead. But Targum to Psalms reads: *ûqdam mehevê šimšā mizamān havá šmeh*, 'and even before the sun was, his name was designated.' The midrash at Genesis Rabbah 1:4, however, reads that the name of the Messiah was in the *mahšābāh*, 'in the mind,' differently from all other sources. Thus, although Genesis Rabbah 1:4 relied upon Ps. 72:17b it had a Hebrew text that varied somewhat from that of the targumic rendering, or modified the targumic exegesis for its own reason; or alternatively, both the targum and midrash reflect older variant interpretations of Ps. 72:17b which were in circulation and

the latter be the case, it becomes necessary for those who believe this to also have a belief in an incarnation of this pre-existent celestial messianic figure in an earthly being in order to fulfill his mission on earth. This belief, held in some quarters, suggests that a belief in the divine nature of the Messiah was an integral aspect of the messianic idea. Klausner (1956, p. 466) is not to be followed in the dogmatic statement that "there is not a trace" of such an idea "in the authentic writings of the Tannaitic period." He did not say "tanaitic *writings*," but "authentic writings" of the tanaitic period. Enoch is an authentic writing of the tanaitic period, a period which is to be understood as incorporating the proto-rabbinic era from Ben Sira to Yohanan b. Zakkai, and the early rabbinic era from Yohanan's introduction of ordination to the compilation of the Mishnah.[5] That Enoch was ultimately not accepted into the canon does not negate its importance and wide circulation earlier, especially among messianic groups, a reality verified by its discovery at Qumran. Furthermore, when the Jew Trypho in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* (49) expressed the view that all Jews expect the Messiah to be *anthrôpon ex anthrôpôn*, 'a man from men,' we must see his argument as part of second-century polemic in which the argument for a human Messiah would be part of the argument against the Messiahship of Jesus. This does not mean that prior to the advent of Jesus and for long afterwards Jews had "not a trace" of an idea of a divine Messiah. The originators of Chrisitianity were Jews, and they found their notion of a divine Messiah in their own heritage.

The tensions among various strands within Judaism, including the

---

acceptable in proto-rabbinic circles. For efforts to deal with this text see Moses Buttenwieser (1969, p. 785); Mitchell Dahood (1968, p. 184).

At Babylonian *Sanhedrin* 98b, at what can hardly be a serious passage, and certainly late, the difficult word of Ps 72:17b is read as *yinnôn*, and the verse is taken as 'may his name remain forever before the sun, *yinnôn* is his name.' This evidently reflects an alternative tradition, perhaps even a facetious anti-Christian polemic. The same *bāraytā* also occurs at Babylonian *Nedarim* 39b; *Tanhuma Naso* 11; cf. Palestinian Targum Zech. 4:7 where we read that the Messiah's name was "proclaimed at the beginning." Thus *Genesis Rabbah* 1:4 which states that the name of the Messiah was only "contemplated" or "in the mind" before creation, but not actually created is alone. Klausner (1956, p. 461, n. 17) argues that in early Jewish literature the name cannot be identified with the person but offers no evidence for that.

5. Sigal (1980b, Part Two, Chapter One); see especially pp. 19-23. My dating of Enoch, based upon the plausible analysis of Nickelsburg (1981) discussed in n. 1 above, sees Enoch as falling precisely into the proto-rabbinic era, 200 B.C.E.-70 C.E., the early tanaitic period. Furthermore, while the whole thorny question of dating rabbinic and targumic texts cannot be entered into here, it is my judgment that the targumic texts and the anonymous *bārayṯôṯ* here cited are proto-rabbinic and pre-Christian. See Daniel Patte (1975, pp. 49-74).

pharisaic, the proto-rabbinic, the priestly-Sadducean, the Christian Jewish and the growing Gentile Christianity motivated the tanaim to suppress this idea along with locking Enoch out of the canon. And yet, its venerability helped it surface again in later midrashim as Klausner (1956, p. 466) concedes.

The foregoing has adumbrated three interesting aspects of the complex we call "the messianic idea." First, Moses was a prototype Messiah. Second, there was a belief in the pre-existence of the Messiah. Third, this belief translated itself at least in some circles into a notion of a divine Messiah. It is in the light of these considerations that the question of the divine conception of the Messiah is of considerable interest.

It appears to me that Klausner has gone far afield in attributing to Christianity the notion that the term "Son of God" expressed "an actual genetic relationship of Jesus to God" (1956, p. 527). It is one thing to speak of divine conception and to see an eminent person such as Pythagoras or Plato as of divine conception, and another to see the object of divine conception as *genetically* related to God. Even if some gentiles fell into that category when thinking of Jesus in comparable terms to the man-gods they adored, there is no evidence for this in Pauline literature or in the early Christian writings.[6] It must be borne in mind that if Jesus was

6. Certainly if there were such evidence it would be furnished by Joseph Klausner and others who tend to polemicize against Christianity in an effort to place the concept of Jesus as "Son of God" as being outside the pale of Judaism from the outset. Klausner (1956, p. 528) concedes Paul did not call Jesus "God." But Klausner also makes too much of other facets of the treatment of Jesus (ibid). For example, the notion that God created the world with the Word (Mishnah *Abot* 5:1) was a perfectly acceptable Judaic notion arising from the earlier biblical conception of pre-existent Wisdom who was present with God at Creation. The Wisdom/Word concept expressed by the term *logos* was not merely "a sort of angelic being" for Philo as Klausner (1956, p. 528) purports, but was a "second God," and it was this idea of *logos* that materializes in the Gospel of John. See Philo, *On Husbandry* 12(51), where *logos* is God's firstborn son. Although Philo there exegeted Exod. 23:20 which used the term *mal'ak* 'angel,' it is clear that he takes it in its more literal sense of "messenger," and sees the *logos* as God's "deputy" guiding the government of the cosmos.

If a conservative, traditionalist Jew such as Philo articulated this notion, it can be assumed to have been a legitimate Judaic idea. "Heresy" and "orthodoxy" had not yet been delineated, and later, when Philo was excluded from rabbinically approved literature it might have been because of the rabbinic polemic with Christianity. But this cannot be argued for the first half of the first century. That is to say, the Philonic *logos* which takes a special place in the person of Jesus in Christianity was an idea current during the first century. Furthermore, deserving of greater study is Philo's concept of God as a triad of Himself, Father of all and the Unknowable, and the two ways in which the *logos* acts, as creative power and as sovereign power, for its influence upon the Christian trinity: Father, Son or *logos* in its sovereign power; and the Holy Spirit in its creative power. See Winston (1981, pp. 22-30).

made into a "God-man," whatever happened in the process of deification later on, at the time of the early church, when these notions were coming to the surface, there also existed similar ideas about Moses as "half-God, half-man." (*Deuteronomy Rabbah* 11:4). Philo (*Moses* I: 6, 27) already earlier informs us that people could not determine whether Moses was really human or divine or a mixture of both.[7] It would only be gratuitous to attempt to explain away the midrash by delimiting it to metaphor or hyperbole while taking Christian expressions literally. There is no reason not to take as literally intended the rabbi's remark, "even in heaven he [Moses] was a god for he had no physical needs" (ibid.).

In the light of these considerations we will turn to examine the question of the conception of the Messiah. I am in agreement with the distinction between conception and birth made by Raymond Brown (1977, Appendix IV, especially p. 519).[8] The Messiah might be conceived without a human father, yet born in the natural way of all human births. In other words, when we speak of a divinely "begotten" Messiah we refer to the conception. The birth would be human. The central question is whether there was a Judaic background to the Christian notion of the divine conception of Jesus. Raymond Brown (1977, pp. 523ff., and notes 18–21) rejects all suggestions made previously by other scholars. But some of these sources for a Judaic idea of divine conception deserve further thought. For example, Brown (ibid., p. 524f. n. 21) denies the validity of seeking a source at Jubilees 16:12f., because he thinks Jubilees 16:1 "suggests that what 'the Lord did unto her' (verse 12) was to remove her barrenness so that Abraham could beget a child of her . . ." There is no such suggestion at 16:1. There

7. It would take us too far afield here to review Samaritan speculations on the nature of Moses, and it would be too technical a discussion to digress to date the sources. The reader would be rewarded, however, by a study of the Moses of *Memar Marqah*, a major Samaritan theological tract. Rabbinic literature preserved the tradition that Moses did not die but is present in heaven where he ministers before God (Babylonian *Sotah* 13b; Sifrei Deuteronomy 357; and as a heavenly Intercessor Paraclete, in the older collection, Assumption of Moses, 12:6). If we understand the rabbinic terms used of Moses' celestial activity, *mešammēš* and *mešārēt* 'to minister,' as priestly ministrations as intermediary we have a synonymous idea with the role of the Paraclete. All of these ideas were Jewish, known and legitimate in their day within Judaism, and were applied to Jesus. The agonizing problem of the first century was not whether these ideas were Jewish, but whether to apply them to Jesus.

8. See Brown (1977, p. 61) where, in his commentary to Matthew 1:16 he correctly draws attention to how Matthew indicated he intended to say Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus. This implies that Jesus was the product of divine conception. The question of "virginal" conception is not germane to the focus of this article which is only interested in conception by divine intervention or miraculous impregnation. I therefore speak throughout of "divine conception" and avoid Brown's terminology "virginal conception."

we read "And on the new moon of the fourth month we appeared unto Abraham . . . and we announced to him that a son would be given to him by Sarah his wife." We have here the annunciation, and Abraham's prospective role as adoptive father, no mention of removal of barrenness. The conception will be by divine fiat. Contrary to Brown, Jubilees 16:1 strongly supports a theory of divine conception. Furthermore, when we think of Jesus' self-perception as Isaac of the *'aqēdāh*, the relationship between the tradition of the divine conception of Isaac and that of Jesus becomes even more meaningful.[9] Isaac's birth on the fifteenth of Sivan (Jub. 16:13), the day apparently observed as the festival of the first fruits in the circles that adhered to Jubilees, is striking. For as the *'aqēdāh* he was to be the supreme first fruit offering.[10]

Brown (1977, p. 524, and n. 19) rejects Philo's discussion (*On the Cherubim* 12–15) as reflecting a pre-Christian tradition of virginal conception. Nevertheless it is clear that Philo (ibid. 13 (43–44)) indicates that there are certain saintly women who conceive without contact with mortal men and that if they receive seed of generation it is "the Father of all that is, the unbegotten God, begetter of all things" who sows the seed within them. Philo supports this explicit meaning of his words when he offers the example of Sarah (ibid. 13 (45) in reference to Gen. 21:1) whom God visits alone in *monōtheisan*, 'her solitude,' at which time she conceived . . . *kyousan hote ho theos autēn monotheisan episkopei*'. . . conceiving when God visted her in her solitude.' Obviously Philo is taking *pāqād* of Gen. 21:1 to mean 'visit' and not as we generally translate 'remember,' a perfectly legitimate thing for him to do. God visited her and in His own inimicable divine way caused Sarah's conception.

In his Appendix to *On the Cherubim* 13 (45) F. H. Colson wrote, "*In her solitude*. Apparently a fanciful deduction from the fact that Abraham's presence is not mentioned in Gen. 21:1." Fanciful deduction or not, Philo has grounds to make it, and it might not be so fanciful if we hypothecate two things. First, that Philo himself already had a midrashic tradition of divine conception upon which he was basing himself, as for example, the implications that might have been current from contemplating Jubilees 16. Second, that much midrash is "fanciful," but whether fanciful or not, midrashic exegesis establishes traditions for the future students of the material to contend with. Brown (1977, p. 524, n. 19) accepts the negative conclusion of P. Grelot (1972, pp. 462–87, 561–85), that there is no divine conception idea in Philo, but offers no significant reason of his own for doing

9. Sigal (1980a, Vol. I, Part One, pp. 394 ff.; 399 ff.; 467, n. 50; 470 ff., n. 62)

10. For "first fruit" concept referred to Jesus see I. Cor. 15:20.

so. Grelot's conclusion might be questioned despite his meticulous analysis, but the focus of this paper does not permit it. While it cannot be pronounced as definitive it appears to me that we have some ground in Jubilees 16 and in Philo to posit a tentative hypothesis that a notion of divine conception was in the air prior to the development of the Christian doctrine concerning the conception of Jesus.[11]

It is precisely here that Robert Gordis' note on the divinely begotten Messiah can be helpful. The text which Gordis discussed (1QSa II, 11-22) is one of pre-Christian venue, and Gordis himself, in the aforementioned article (1957, VT 7:191-194), concluded that his "proposed restoration" of the text would offer evidence for a pre-Christian tradition of a divinely begotten Messiah, and believed that this reading "has much to recommend it" (p. 194).

The pertinent text and commentary are found in D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik (1956,pp. 108-118), and photographs of the manuscripts are on Plate XXIV in the second section of their work. The scroll in question is that which has been termed the "Rule Annexe," (Dupont-Sommer, 1973), "The Rule of the Congregation," (Barthélemy, 1956), or "The Messianic Rule" (Vermes, 1975). This "Rule Annexe" is a supplement to the scroll variously referred to as "The Manual of Discipline," *Serek hayyahad*, "The Order of the Community" (Burrows, 1956), "The Community Rule" (Vermes, 1975), "The Rule" (Dupont-Sommer, 1973). The words under consideration are found in Column 2, lines 11-12 and are here reproduced in transliteration in accordance with the text rendered by Barthélemy (1956, p. 110). The square brackets indicate missing, indistinguishable, or barely recognizable words in the photograph.

Line 11 [zeh mô] šaḇ *anšê haššēm* [*qerî'ê*]
mô'ēd la'aṣat hayyahad 'im yôlîd
Line 12 *'el 'ê[l] hammāšî'ah*

This text is translated variously as '[Concerning the mee] ting of the men of renown [called] to assembly for the Council of the Community when [Adonai] will have begotten the Messiah . . .' (Dupont-Sommer, 1973,

11. Many scholarly monographs considering Jesus and the Judaic matrix explain away parallels or argue later dating of Judaic materials in order to affirm the uniqueness of Jesus' life and teachings. But in my presentation of him as a first-century charismatic proto-rabbi with the self-perception in which he viewed himself as the Servant of Yhwh and in terms of the sonship of Isaac destined for the *'aqedāh* we have a premise upon which to build objective dialogue concerning a Judaic approach to the Christian concept of Jesus. (See Sigal, 1980a, *Emergence* I. Pt. One, Chapter Seven). Just as Judaic midrash contemplated a divine-human Moses, Christian midrash inevitably considered the divine-human Jesus.

p. 108), or 'This is the session of the men of renown, summoned to the meeting for the council of the community when God begets the Messiah' (Burrows, 1958, p. 395). Vermes (1975, p. 121) does not translate the word *'el* at the beginning of line 12, apparently not accepting that as a proper restoration. Similarly Van DerWoude (1957, pp. 98–99) who wrote before he saw Gordis' article rejected the reading of both *yôlid* and *'el* because, he said, *Die . . . scheinen mir nicht gesichert*, 'these appear to me not to have been established.' Since D. Barthélemy (1956) accepted the proposed restoration of *'el* by Milik he printed that word without square brackets. But it is not clear on the photographic plate. The commentary to these lines is found in Barthélemy (1956, pp. 117–118), and it is there indicated that on the basis of the usage elsewhere of the *hip'il hôlîḳ*, 'to cause one to go' or 'to lead' with God as subject, it is appropriate to understand *'el* here as the subject, and to see the original of *yôlîd* to have actually been *yôlîḳ*, with Ezek 36:12 in mind, although Barthélemy appears to suggest that the reading *yôlîd* is almost certain: . . . *la lecture de ce mot apparaît pratiquement certaine*. Nevertheless he does have some reservation. Dupont-Sommer's choice of Adonai as the translation of the questionable *'el* is based upon referral to Ps. 2:7 "Yhwh said to me: . . . I have this day begotten you." Dupont-Sommer adds in his note (ibid), "According to the terminology of the Psalm, therefore, this Messiah will be the 'son of God.' " Dupont-Sommer, reading this idea into the Rule Annexe, did so after Robert Gordis wrote his article.[12]

Returning to Gordis, we find that he suggested the reading of both *yôlîd* at the end of line 11, and *'el* at the beginning of line 12. Gordis' conclusions were reached on the basis of Hebrew syntax and usage, neither of which were gone into any great extent by Barthélemy, Dupont-Sommer, Van Der Woude or Vermes in the works cited. It is true that there is a shadow over the edge of the photograph, but Barthélemy, who had the original Ms in front of him said, as noted, *yôlîd* is practically certain. Furthermore, Gordis suggested (1957, pp. 192 f., 194) emphatically that the proposed emendation of J. T. Milik to read *yôlîḳ* is to be excluded by consideration of both syntax and usage. It should be emphasized as Gordis

12. A. Dupont-Sommer is still a useful source for an overview of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Many monographs and larger works on the individual scrolls have been published since Dupont-Sommer wrote his book in French in 1959, but it is not germane to the focus of this paper to supply a bibliography here. For the Rule Annexe see Dupont-Sommer, ibid. pp. 104–109, and the French version (1959, p. 123, n. 1). A later work to that of Dupont-Sommer first published in 1962, revised several times over the years and reprinted, is that of G. Vermes (1975); for the Messianic Rule see pp. 118–121.

pointed out, and as Barthélemy was aware (1956, p. 118) that where the Masoretic text of Ezekiel reads *vehôlaḳtî* the LXX translator read *vehôladtî*, for he translated as *kai gennēsō* 'I will increase', that is 'cause to be born.' Since there are other instances where the Qumran texts agree with the LXX against our present Masoretic text, it is quite possible that here too the Qumran scribe either selected the LXX reading or had another Hebrew version of Ez. 36:12, if indeed he was thinking of Ez. 36:12 at all. Certainly it is logical that the original Ezekiel text should have read *vehôladtî*, or at least for the Greek translator to have assumed that to be so and therefore corrected the text. For Ezek 36:10 and 11 read *vehirbêtî*, 'I will increase,' appropriately translated by the LXX as *kai plēthyno*, and at 36:12 we should receive the same sense of 'increase,' very nicely rendered by *vehôladtî*, and now rendered by the LXX with an appropriate Greek term, *gennesō*.

Nevertheless, whether the Qumran scribe of the Rule Annexe was thinking either of Ezekiel or Ps. 2:7 when he wrote Col. 2 lines 11 and 12, is not germane to our question.[13] We are only concerned with the question of whether there was a pre-Christian concept of a divinely conceived Messiah. Considering that Gordis, Barthélemy (if not Milik), Burrows and Dupont-Sommer all read *yôlîd* at the end of Col. 2, line 11, it appears reasonable to conclude that the writer of Rule Annexe was indeed reflecting such an idea. The legitimate challenge could be made to this as to what grounds he had for such a notion. The cautious response must be that he might have received it from Jubilees 16, from the logical implication of the incarnation of a pre-existent concealed Messiah at Enoch 48, or from his familiarity with other traditions that also served Philo. The present unavailability of literary evidence of such additional traditions does not negate the possibility that such other traditions existed. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library should caution us to consider that other such literature might yet appear. Furthermore, targumic literature that appeared at Qumran has taught us that the genre was very old and that we must not judge the *content* of our extant "canonical" texts by the dates of the available versions. In any case the widespread use and the importance

13. It should be noted here that in a recent communication Dr. Gordis brought to my attention his article "Virtual Quotations in Job, Sumer and Qumran" (1981, pp. 410-427). The analysis of the art of quotation at Qumran might suggest that the scribe of Rule Annexe was quoting Ezekiel. A further discussion of this, however, would take us too far afield and in any case not be possible within the assigned space of this article. See also Gordis (1971, pp. 104-159).

of Jubilees and Enoch at Qumran has already been established as was early indicated by Burrows (1958, pp. 178f., 407).[14]

Gordis' assistance to the idea that the notion of a divine conception of the Messiah existed before the birth of Christianity compels us to rethink such near-dogmatic statements as that of Rudolf Bultmann (1958, p. 316, and n.3) "that the unheard-of motif of the Virgin Birth could not have been held on Jewish soil."[15] Much earlier David Daube (1956, pp. 5–9) discussed a midrashic use of Exod. 2:25 "and God knew" to interpret "our affliction" of Deut. 26:7 in the sense of marital continence, that is, that the Israelite men and women were compelled to eschew sexual relations.[16] The implication of the polite euphemism is that God "knew," that is, God caused generation, taking the root *yada'* in its sense of sexual 'knowing.' The underlying assumption was that divine conception was necessary if sexual relations were not engaged in, and Daube's argument, therefore, is that such an idea was known in Judaism. Daube recognized that the question of virgin birth was not the issue in Moses' case for Miriam and Aaron had already been born to his mother. What was involved was divine conception. And the antiquity of this Passover midrash makes it quite likely that this can join Jubilees 16, Enoch 48 and Philo, and the Rule Annexe as literary sources that reflect the idea of divine conception in pre-Christian Judaism. Daube (ibid., p. 8) recognized the difficulties of dating the midrash, but he correctly argued the antiquity of the midrash as well as the likelihood that in the post-Jesus environment such an implication would have been suppressed. It may be added in support of Daube's suggestion that the other sources under discussion (Jub. 16, En. 48, Philo, 1QSa) were also suppressed in rabbinic Judaism. Louis Finkelstein (1972, pp. 21–26) established the date of this midrash as third century B.C.E. If we are speaking of a time around 200 B.C.E. as Finkelstein posits, before Palestine reverted to Syrian control, we are not far from recent redating of Jubilees, as indicated by Vander Kam (1977, pp. 214–285), and others.[17]

14. On Jubilees and Qumran see further Sigal (1980a, pp. 245–247); M. Testuz (1960).

15. W. D. Davies (1977) made no reference to Gordis' article. Davies (ibid., p. 63) translates Bultman: "that the story of the Virgin Birth could not have arisen on Jewish soil." Bultmann (1958, p. 316, n. 3) adds that this idea of divine birth is not only strange, "sondern er ist in ihrer sphäre auch unmöglich, "but, on the contrary, in that sphere it is also impossible."

16. David Daube (1956, pp. 5–9) discusses another possible example of a Judaic source for divine generation. He cites an ancient midrash now only found in the Passover Hagadah which comments on Deut. 26:5–8. This midrash is at the heart of the liturgical portion of the Seder (Mishnah *Pesahim* 10:4). It is to be noted that elements of this midrash are still preserved at *Sifrei Deut.* 301 with variations.

17. See Sigal (1980a, pp. 270–272, n. 66), where I accept a probable era of composition to be 190–160 B.C.E.

In concluding this discussion it might be of interest to note that there are other significant allusions to a pre-existent Messiah which would have to result in an incarnation of that entity through a divine conception. Thus, Micah 5:1, when taken in reference to the eschatological figure, is saying his "origin is from the earliest time, from eternity," and the Hebrew word here translated 'origin' is *môsā'ōtav*, the same term used at Ps 19:6–7 for the sun. The notion of the presence of divine light at the birth of Moses (B. *Sotah* 12a, 13a; *Exodus Rabbah* 1:20, 22) is an allusion to his redeemer-status, and explains the star at Luke 1:78 as well as *anatolē* in the LXX at Jer. 23:5 for the word *ṣemāh*.[18] Even more telling in the light of the interesting relationship between Jesus and Isaac are the traditions concerning the birth of Isaac in addition to the divine conception.[19] We are told that when Isaac was born all of creation was saved, for had he not been born, the cosmos would have ceased (*Tanhuma Toledot* 2); on that day the sun burst forth in such radiance as unknown since the sin of Adam and to be experienced again in the messianic age (*Pesikta Rabati* 42:4). In exegeting Isa. 61:10 "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord" the midrashist brings Sarah's joy into the equation, saying that when Sarah gave birth to Isaac ". . . all the deaf were given hearing, all the blind were given sight, all the mute were given speech . . ." and ". . . added strength to the sun and the moon . . ." The midrashist further alludes to Esther 2:18 "the king . . . gave a release to the provinces." All of these midrashic statements (*Pesikta de R. Kahana* 22:1) are intimations of the eschatological passages of Isa. 42:6–7 and Isa. 61:1.

When one takes into consideration the long-continuing tradition of a pre-existent Messiah which requires incarnation at the appropriate time, and the various pre-Christian strands that point to an idea of divine conception and the Isaac allusions it might be considered reasonable to hypothecate that this, as in other facets of Christology expressed in the New Testament, we are dealing with elements of Judaic theology and not with original post-separation Christian concepts or hellenistic philosophical encrustations.

18. In reference to this W. D. Davies (1977, pp. 445f.) has an interesting discussion on the pre-existent Messiah.

19. On the question of Isaac and Jesus, in addition to the material in Sigal (1980) cited above at n.9, text and notes, see now also James Swetnam (1981).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barthélemy, D. and Milik, J. T. 1956. *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* I. Qumran Cave I. Oxford.

Brown, E. 1977. *The Birth of the Messiah*. Garden City, New York.

Bultmann, R. 1958. *Die Geschichte der Synoptichen Tradition*. Göttingen.

Burrows, M. 1956. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. New York.

_____. 1958. *More Light On The Dead Sea Scrolls*. New York.

Buttenwieser, M. 1969. *The Psalms*. Prolegomenon, Nahum N. Sarna. New York.

Dahood, M. 1968. *The Anchor Bible Psalms II*: 51-100. Garden City New York.

Daube, D. 1956. *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*. London.

Davies, W. D. 1977. *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*. Cambridge-New York.

Dupont-Sommer, A. 1973. *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, trans. Geza Vermes. Gloucester, Massachusetts.

_____. 1959. *Les Écrits esséniens découverts près de la mer Morte*. Paris.

Finkelstein, L. 1972. *Pharisaism in the Making*. New York.

_____. 1938. "The Oldest Midrash: Pre-Rabbinic Ideals and Teachings in the Passover Haggadah" *Harvard Theological Review* 31:291-317.

Gordis, R. 1957. "The 'Begotten' Messiah in the Qumran Scrolls." *Vetus Testamentum* 7:191-194.

_____. 1971. "Quotations in Biblical, Oriental and Rabbinic Literature," *Poets, Prophets, Sages*, Bloomington, Indiana.

_____. 1981. "Virtual Quotations in Job, Sumer and Qumran." *Vetus Testamentum* 31:410-427.

Grelot, P. 1972. "La naissance d'Isaac et celle de Jésus" *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 94:462-87, 561-85.

Justin Martyr. 1909. *Dialogue Avec Tryphon* ed. Georges Archambault. Paris.

_____. 1930. *The Dialogue With Trypho* trans. A. Lukyn Williams. London.

Klausner, J. 1956. *The Messianic Idea in Israel* trans. W. F. Stinespring. London.

Nickelsburg, G. W. E. 1981. *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*. Philadelphia.

Patte, D. 1975. *Early Jewish Hermeneutic in Palestine*. SBL Dissertation Number 22. Missoula, Montana.

Philo. 1966. *Moses* I and II. Trans. F. H. Colson. Loeb Classical Library. London-Cambridge, Massachusettes.

Sigal, P. 1980a. *The Emergence of Contemporary Judaism* Volume One, *The Foundation of Judaism From Biblical Origins to the Sixth Century A. D.* Part One: *From the Origins to the Separation of Christianity*. Pittsburgh.

_____. 1980b. *The Emergence of Contemporary Judaism*. Volume One, *The Foundation of Judaism From Biblical Origins to the Sixth Century A. D.* Part Two: *Rabbinic Judaism*. Pittsburgh.

Swetman, J. 1981. *Jesus and Isaac*. Rome.

Testuz, M. 1960. *Les idées religieuses du livre des Jubilées*. Paris.

Torrey, C. C. 1945. *The Apocryphal Literature*. New Haven.

Vander Kam, J. C. 1977. *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees*. Missoula, Montana.

Vermes, Geza. 1975. *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. Harmondsworth, England.

Winston, D. 1981. *Philo of Alexandria*. New York-Toronto.

Woude, A. J. Van Der. 1957. *Die Messianischen Vorstellungen Der Gemeinde Von Qumran*. Assen.