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Talmudic Evidence for the Messiah at 30 C.E.

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by N. Federoff & T. Peterson

In the centuries following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (70 CE), the Jewish people began writing two versions of Jewish thought, religious history and commentary. One was written in Palestine and became known as the Jerusalem Talmud. [see *special endnote at the end of this article concerning the Talmud*] The other was written in Babylon and was known as the Babylonian Talmud.

We read in the Jerusalem Talmud:

"Forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the western light went out, the crimson thread remained crimson, and the lot for the Lord always came up in the left hand. They would close the gates of the Temple by night and get up in the morning and find them wide open" (Jacob Neusner, *The Yerushalmi*, p.156-157). [the Temple was destroyed in 70 CE]

A similar passage in the Babylonian Talmud states:

"Our rabbis taught: During the last forty years before the destruction of the Temple the lot ['For the Lord'] did not come up in the right hand; nor did the crimson-colored strap become white; nor did the western most light shine; and the doors of the Hekel [Temple] would open by themselves" (Soncino version, Yoma 39b).

What are these passages talking about? Since both Talmuds

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recount the same information, this indicates the knowledge of these events was accepted by the widespread Jewish community.

1) The Miracle of the "Lot"

The first of these miracles concerns a random choosing of the "lot" which was cast on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The lot chosen determined which of two goats would be "for the Lord" and which goat would be the "Azazel" or "scapegoat." During the two hundred years before 30 CE, when the High Priest picked one of two stones, again this selection was governed by chance, and each year the priest would select a black stone as often as a white stone. But for forty years in a row, beginning in 30 CE, the High Priest always picked the black stone! The odds against this happening are astronomical (2 to the 40th power). In other words, *the chances of this occurring are 1 in approximately 1,099,511,627,776* or over one trillion to one! By comparison, your chances of winning your local state or municipal-run cash Lottery would be much more favorable!

The lot for Azazel, the black stone, contrary to all the laws of chance, came up 40 times in a row from 30 to 70 AD! This was considered a dire event and signified something had fundamentally changed in this Yom Kippur ritual. This casting of lots is also accompanied by yet another miracle which is described next.

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2) The Miracle of the Red Strip

The second miracle concerns the crimson strip or cloth tied to the Azazel goat. A portion of this red cloth was also removed from the goat and tied to the Temple door. Each year the red cloth on the Temple door turned white as if to signify the atonement of another Yom Kippur was acceptable to the Lord. This annual event happened until 30 CE when the cloth then remained crimson each year to the time of the Temple's destruction. This undoubtedly caused much stir and consternation among the Jews. This traditional practice is linked to Israel confessing its sins and ceremonially placing this nation's sin upon the Azazel goat. The sin was then removed by this goat's death. Sin was represented by the red color of the cloth (the color of blood). But the cloth remained crimson that is, Israel's sins were not being pardoned and "made white."

As God told Israel through Isaiah the prophet:

"Come, let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet [crimson], they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as [white] wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

The clear indication is that the whole community had lost the Lord's attention in relation to something that occurred in 30 CE The yearly

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atonement achieved through the typical Yom Kippur observance was not being realized as expected. Atonement apparently was to be gained in some other way. Who or what would provide the atonement for another year?

Concerning the crimson strip though not mentioned in the Scriptures and long before 30 C.E. during the 40 years Simon the Righteous was High Priest, a crimson thread which was associated with his person always turned white when he entered the Temple's innermost Holy of Holies. The people noticed this. Also, they noted that "the lot of the LORD" (the white lot) came up for 40 straight years during Simon's priesthood. They noticed that the "lot" picked by the priests after Simon would sometimes be black, and sometimes white, and that the crimson thread would sometimes turn white, and sometimes not. The Jews came to believe that if the crimson thread turned white, that God approved of the Day of Atonement rituals and that Israel could be assured that God forgave their sins. But after 30 CE, the crimson thread never turned white again for 40 years, till the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of all Temple rituals!

What did the Jewish nation do in 30 CE to merit such a change at Yom Kippur? By some accounts, on April 5, 30 CE (i.e., on the 14th of Nisan, the day of the Passover sacrifice) the Messiah, Yeshua, was cut off from Israel, himself put to death as a sacrifice for sin. To this event there is a transference of the atonement now no longer achieved through the two goats as offered at Yom Kippur. Like an innocent Passover lamb, the Messiah was put to death though no fault was found in Him! But unlike Temple sacrifices or the Yom Kippur events (as detailed above) where sin is only covered over for a time, the Messianic sacrifice comes with the promise of forgiveness of sins through grace given by God to those who accept a personal relationship with Messiah. This is essentially a one time event for each person's lifetime and not a continual series of annual observances and animal sacrifices. The mechanism providing forgiveness of sin changed in 30 CE

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3) The Miracle of the Temple Doors

The next miracle, which the Jewish authorities acknowledged, was that the Temple doors swung open every night of their own accord. This too occurred for forty years, beginning in 30 CE The leading Jewish authority of that time, Yohanan ben Zakkai, declared that this was a sign of impending doom, that the Temple itself would be destroyed.

The Jerusalem Talmud states:

"Said Rabban Yohanan Ben Zakkai to the Temple, 'O Temple, why do you frighten us? We know that you will end up destroyed. For it has been said, 'Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars' " (Zechariah 11:1)' (Sota 6:3).

Yohanan Ben Zakkai was the leader of the Jewish community during

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the time following the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, when the Jewish government was transferred to Jamnia, some thirty miles west of Jerusalem.

Might the doors have opened to also signify that all may now enter the Temple, even to its innermost holy sections. The evidence supported by the miracles described above suggests the Lord's presence had departed from the Temple. This was no longer just a place for High Priests alone, but the doors swung open for all to enter the Lord's house of worship.

4) The Miracle of the Temple Menorah

The fourth miracle was that the most important lamp of the seven candle-stick Menorah in the Temple went out, and would not shine. Every night for 40 years (over 12,500 nights in a row) the main lamp of the Temple lampstand (menorah) went out of its own accord no matter what attempts and precautions the priests took to safeguard against this event!

Earnest Martin states:

"In fact, we are told in the Talmud that at dusk the lamps that were unlit in the daytime (the middle four lamps remained unlit, while the two eastern lamps normally stayed lit during the day) were to be re-lit from the flames of the western lamp (which was a lamp that was supposed to stay lit all the time it was like the 'eternal' flame that we see today in some national monuments) . . .

"This 'western lamp' was to be kept lit at all times. For that reason, the priests kept extra reservoirs of olive oil and other implements in ready supply to make sure that the 'western lamp' (under all circumstances) would stay lit. But what happened in the forty years from the very year Messiah said the physical Temple would be destroyed? Every night for forty years the western lamp went out, and this in spite of the priests each evening preparing in a special way the western lamp so that it would remain constantly burning all night!" (The Significance of the Year CE 30, Ernest Martin, Research Update, April 1994, p.4).

Again, the odds against the lamp continually going out are astronomical. Something out of the ordinary was going on. The "light" of the Menorah representing contact with God, His Spirit, and His Presence was now removed. This special demonstration occurred starting with the crucifixion of the Messiah!

It should be clear to any reasonable mind that there is no natural way to explain all these four signs connected with the year 30 CE. The only possible explanation has to be supernatural.

After 30 CE, and the death of the Messiah, great trouble and awesome trials began to come upon the Jewish nation. Yeshua Himself foretold it. As He was led away to be crucified, Yeshua warned the women of Jerusalem:

But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For

Read the Bible:

KJV of Hebrew (Tanach) and Greek (Brit Chadeshah); plus other translations added as available.

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indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" "For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:28-31).

When we take an objective look at the events of 30 CE, who can doubt that it was indeed the true year of the crucifixion and resurrection of the true Messiah God sent to Israel? Who can deny that He is the one and only true Messiah? Who else has fulfilled all the prophecies of the Old Testament including the amazing prophecy of Daniel 9 and the "70 weeks," coming at the very year predicted for the Messiah to appear?

[Editor's note: A detailed study of Daniel, including the prophecy of 70 weeks appears in Chapter 15 of the Creator's Window. This chapter is available as a PDF file to read online or to download for reading offline. The riddle of the 70 weeks is essentially a time line that leads one to the same conclusion drawn above.]

For additional evidence of the Messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures (a.k. a., the Tanach or the Old Covenant) we suggest a reading of Dr. Arnold Fructenbaum's book 'Messianic Christology,' see our book list for reference. This publication is a wonderful study of the numerous Messianic prophecies that were all fulfilled by Yeshua.

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Additional Commentary from Visitors

by T. Peterson, Ph.D.
Director, WindowView.org

We have received responses to this article from around the world. One comment in particular adds to the content above in a most significant way. While we present this without further confirmation, we believe the source is credible and the information simply magnifies the evidence. The following is from the Netherlands:

It is good to give comment from the Talmud and Midrash and exiting to see historical interesting facts, in this case with the crimson thread on Yom HaKipurim.

One text could be added: "and it has further been taught: 'For forty years before the destruction of the Temple the thread of scarlet never turned white but it remained red.'" (Bavli Rosh Hashanah 31b).

And according to my searching the text: "Said Rabban Yohanan Ben Zakkai to the Temple, 'O Temple, why do you frighten us? We know that you will end up destroyed. For it has been said, 'Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars' " (Zechariah 11:1)" comes not from Talmud Yerushalmi tract Sotah, but from Yoma 6:3 [33b], directly after "Forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the western light went out, the crimson thread remained crimson, and the lot for the Lord always came up in the left hand. They would close the gates of the Temple by night and get up in the morning and find them wide open" (also from Yoma 6:3 [33b]).

Warm greetings,

Sam

If there are other related evidences, let us know by sending correspondence to:
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Additional Source Information

Endnote:

The following three descriptions come from the front page of a booklet entitled: *The Messiah of the Targums, Talmuds and Rabbinical Writers*. 1971. by F. Kenton Beshore.

"TARGUM

The Aramaic translation of the Jewish Bible. It forms a part of the Jewish traditional literature, and in its inception is as early as the time of the **SECOND TEMPLE**. The use of the term "Targum" itself was restricted to the Aramaic Version of the Bible. ... As an interpretation of the Hebrew text of the Bible the Targum had its place both in the synagogal liturgy and in Biblical instruction, while the reading of the Bible text combined with the Targum in the presence of the congregation assembled for public worship was an ancient institution which dated from the time of the **SECOND TEMPLE**, and was traced back to Ezra by Rab when he interpreted the word "MEFORASH". ... as referring to the Targum.—Jewish Encyclopedia (vol. 12, p. 57, cols. a, b.)

W.B.

"**PALESTINE TARGUM**" (or Targum Yerushalmi). "A responsum of Hai Gaon already cited with reference to the Targumim, answers the question concerning the Targum of the land of Israel (Palestine) in the following words: "We do not know who composed it, nor do we even know this Targum of which we have heard only a few passages. If there is a tradition among them (the Palestinians) that it has been made the subject of public discourse since the days of the **ANCIENT SAGES**. ... it must be held in the **SAME ESTEEM AS OUR TARGUM**, for otherwise they would not have allowed it. But if it is less ancient, it is not authoritative." – Jewish Encyclopedia (vol 12, p. 7, col. b).

W.B.

"**TALMUD**"

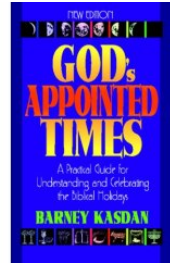
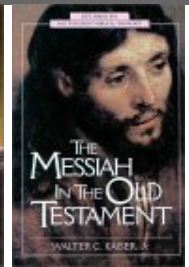
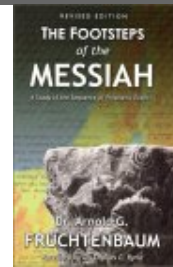
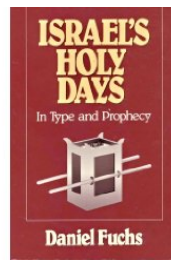
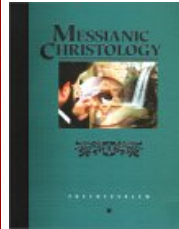
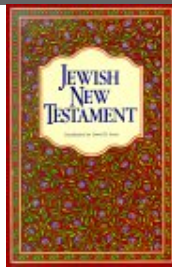
Name of two works which have been presented to posterity as the product of the Palestinian and Babylonian schools during the Amoraic period which extended from the third to the fifth century, C. E. One of these compilations is entitled, "Talmud **Jerusalami**" (Jerusalem Talmud), and the other Talmud **Babli** (Babylonian Talmud). Linguistically, the Palestinian Talmud is Aramaic. ... The Aramaic, which assumed a fixed literary form in **Yerusalami**, is almost the same as that of the earliest Palestinian midrashic works, differing from them only in a few peculiarities, mostly orthographic. ... The first complete edition of the **Bab. Tal.** Was printed at Venice, 1520-23, by Daniel Bomberg, and has become the basis, down to the present day, of a very large number of editions.—Jewish Encyclopedia (vol 12, p. 7. Col. b).
W.B."

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