

Messiah in the Tanach, 07

Psalms 22:16

"A company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet." NRSVue (2022)

"A pack of evil ones closes in on me, like lions [they maul*] my hands and feet." NJPS (1985)

*Note: "With Rashi; cf. Isa. 38.13".

Isaiah 7:14

"The Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son." NRSVue

"Look, the young woman is with child and about to give birth to a son." NJPS (1985)

- When were these predictions fulfilled?

Who was Rashi (רש"י)?

- Rabbi Shlomo (Solomon) Yitzhak
- Salomon ben Isaac de Troyes
- Circa 22 February 1040 – 13 July 1105.
- Wrote commentaries on the Tanach.
- Using Hebrew, Aramaic & (old) French.
- Wrote commentaries on the most of the Babylonian Talmud.
- Included in all printed Talmuds.

What is Sensus Plenior ('fuller meaning')?

- Future (of messiah) or historical?
- Dual fulfillment? (near and far term)
- Typical? (similar far-term fulfillment)
- Midrashic? (arbitrary assertion)
- Medieval and later rabbis.
- Rationalist, anti-supernaturalist.
- Certain Catholics and Protestants.
- Why?

Classic rabbinical PRDS methods

P *peshat* = simple, i.e., plain meaning.

R *remez* = hint, allusion to other texts.

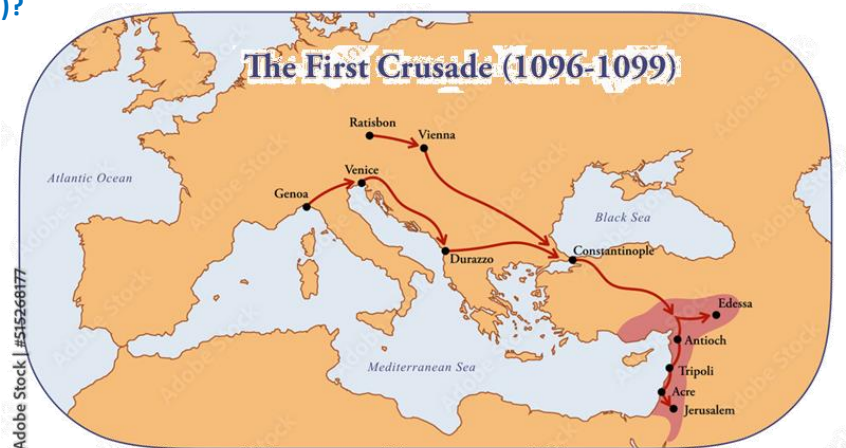
D *derash* = search, i.e., political relevance & application.

S *sod* = secret, i.e. mystical interpretation.

- In the Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 63a, Rashi comments, "A verse cannot depart from its plain meaning (*pashat*)."

11th century France

- Jews and Catholics enjoyed cordial social and economic relations.
- Until the 1st French crusade in 1096 CE.
- Jewish-Christian debates intensified, and religious tractates were published.
- Stupid crusaders destroyed Moslems, Jews and eastern Christians, alike.



- Jewish communities were in distress.

Jewish-Christian debates

- Was Jesus the awaited Messiah?
- Christians appealed to allegory.
- Rashi appealed to the biblical text.
- When dealing with Christians, Rashi equated plain meaning (*peshat*) with historical fulfillment.
- With persecuted Jews, he taught “the future hope of the Jewish people.”
- Passages which Christians related to Jesus’ first coming, Rashi interpreted as fulfilled before Jesus’ lifetime.
- Rashi combined *peshat* with *derash*. Thus, the child born to Ahaz’ ‘young woman’ became Judah’s crown prince.
- Other passages he relates to a yet unfulfilled future for national Israel.

Isaiah 11:1

Tanach: “And a shoot shall spring forth from the stem of Jesse, a twig from his roots.” NJPS

Rashi: “If you say, ‘The glory has ceased and the dominion has departed from the house of David,’ know that it is not so. Rather, a shoot shall spring forth from the stem of Jesse.” *Comm. Isa. 11.1*

Since Rashi

- Jewish commentators reject midrash for *peshat*, interpreted to be fulfilled historically by Israel or by David, otherwise by Israel’s future glory.
- Most Catholic commentators parroted Rashi, although some departed from him on messianic texts.
- Reformers learned Hebrew from rabbis who also taught them Rashi’s commentaries. This contributed to Christianity’s doctrine of *Hebraica veritas*, accepted as the Word of God.
- Thus, polemical Jewish exegesis led Christians to their anti-messianic, historical interpretations of messianic texts, such that the literal sense is made to equate to the historical sense.

Quandary

- If the Tanach was fulfilled historically, then how does it predict Messiah?
- Petrus Cunaeus (Dutch, 1586-1638) appealed to a messianic kabbalah (oral tradition) passed down along side the Tanach, separately from oral Law.

Religious authority

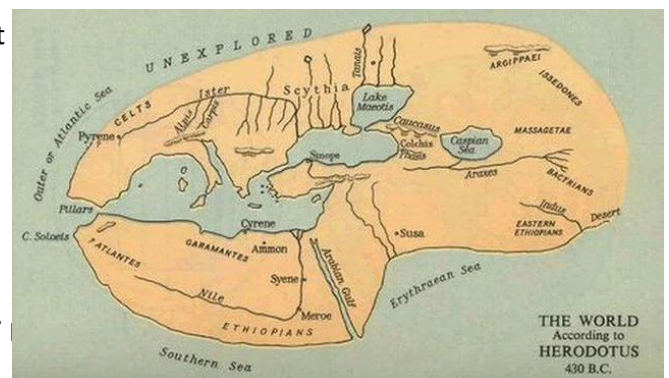
Religion	Scripture	Tradition
● Judaism	Tanach	Talmud
● Islam	Quran	Hadith
● Catholic	Bible+Apocrypha	Papal edict
● Orthodox	Bible+ Pseudepigrapha	Ignatius
● Protestant	Bible 66-book	Theology
● Evangelical	Bible 66-book	Scofield

Genesis 3:15

“They shall strike at your head,

And you shall strike at their heel.” NJPS

“He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”



- Midrash: "This is the King Messiah."
- David Kimchi: "Messiah, the Son of David, ... shall wound Satan." 1928-2010
- Rashi: "You will bite him on the heel, and ... you will kill him." (Naturalistic)
- Calvin: "There should always be the hostile strife between the human race and serpents." *Gen.*, 1:167
- Walton: "A continual, unresolved conflict... It is ... haphazard to adopt a messianic interpretation."

NIV App Comm (2001), 226, 235-36

Psalm 2:8

Ask it of Me,
and I will make the nations your domain;
your estate, the limits of the earth." NJPS

- Midrash: God, speaking to the Messiah, says: The nations, already they are thine inheritance." Tehillim 2:10
- Gerald Wilson: "A psalm regarding the powers and blessing of the human David kings." He identifies Psalm 2 as part of the "liturgy at the enthronement of the Davidic king in preexilic times." Psalms, NIV App Comm (2004), 44

Isaiah 9:6 [Hb 9:5]

"A child has been born to us ...
a peaceable ruler." NJPS

- Midrash: "I have yet to raise up the Messiah, of whom it is written." Dt Rab 1:20
- Rashi: "The Holy One, blessed is he, ... called Hezekiah's name, 'the prince of peace.'" Comm on Isa 9:5
- P. D. Wegner: Identified the child as having one very long theophoric name: "A wonderful planner is the mighty God; the Father of eternity [is] a prince of peace." In VT 42 (1992), 111-12.
- John Goldengay: "The verses do not function as messianic predictions in this context." Isaiah New Intl Bib Comm (2001), 176.

Isaiah 42:1-9

¹"This is My servant, whom I uphold,
My chosen one, in whom I delight.
I have put My spirit upon him,
He shall teach the true way to the nations."

- Midrash: "Behold my servant, the Messiah, whom I bring, my chosen one, in whom one delights." Jonathan 42:1
"All these goodly promises are in the decree of the King, the King of kings, who will fulfill them for the lord Messiah." Tehillim 2:9 in Midrash on Psalm 1:40-41.
- Rashi: "Israel is called 'My chosen one.' (Psa 135:4)... 'For the sake of My servant Jacob and Israel My chosen one.'" Followed by Goldengay (239) and JDW Watts, Isaiah 34-66 (1987), 119.

Conclusion

- In Jewish-Christian debates, medieval Christians appealed to allegory.
- Whilst medieval Jews invented Midrash.
- Rashi corrected both by insisting on *peshat*, the plain meaning of texts.
- However, Rashi applied the plain meaning to history or to the end-times.
- Some self-loathing evangelicals do the same.