

The Real Jewish Messiah, Rabbi Blumenthal Debates Dr. Brown – Part 3

We have arrived at the third and final segment in the debate about the real Jewish Messiah. Where do we stand? What have we learned thus far?

Dr. Brown has shared a narrative, a portrait of what he believes about the Messiah. His narrative has a sinless Messiah dying for the sins of the world, rejected by the Jews and accepted by the gentiles. Dr. Brown encourages his audience to put their trust in this Messiah of his. From the standpoint of a Jew who trusts in God Dr. Brown is telling us that until we put our trust in his Messiah, our trust in God remains inadequate and incomplete. As part of his Messianic narrative, Dr. Brown looks forward to a day when those who do not trust in his Messiah will be put to shame, despite the fact that these people do trust in God.

In an effort to establish a Scriptural basis for his narrative Dr. Brown quoted many passages from the Jewish Bible and he accuses me of ignoring and overlooking these passages. My response to this accusation is that I have actually read these passages and it is these passages that tell me to reject Dr. Brown's Messianic narrative; these very Scriptures testify clearly and unequivocally that Dr. Brown's narrative is false.

For the purpose of illustration let us look at Dr. Brown's citation of Psalm 22.

Dr. Brown points to Psalm 22 in his effort to establish a Scriptural basis for his Messianic narrative. Again, Dr. Brown's narrative tells us that the Jewish trust in God is empty and insufficient until this trust is supplemented with trust in his Messiah. But the underlying spirit of Psalm 22 points us to the Jewish trust in God. In the beginning of the Psalm David identifies God as the One who sits enthroned upon the praises of the Israel (verse 4). And you know Whom it is that Israel praises and whom they don't praise. David then addresses God and says; "It was in You that our fathers trusted and You delivered them. It was to You that they cried out, they trusted and were not put to shame" (Verses 5,6). The Psalmist is looking up to the trust of the Jewish people as an ideal to emulate, as a goal to strive for. The Psalm ends with all of Israel coming to the knowledge that God hears the outcry of the poor. The song of this Psalm is a song of the power of Israel's trust in God and Dr. Brown wants his audience to read it as a teaching on the weakness of Israel's trust in God. That is like quoting the Declaration of Independence as if it exalted despotism and tyranny. It is like quoting a song about love and loyalty as if it were a song of hate and treachery.

Dr. Brown's narrative violates the very heart of our Scriptures.

In my presentation I shared the Jewish narrative that sees the Messiah as King of the Jews and as one who sits on the throne of David. As King of the Jews the Messiah will lead Israel to its destiny. This is the destiny promised to Abraham, that his children be a blessing for all the nations. As one who sits on the throne of David, the Messiah will continue and uphold the legacy of David.

Dr. Brown did not dispute my understanding of the Scriptures. Dr. Brown acknowledges that the Messiah is King of the Jews and that he sits on the throne of David. Dr. Brown recognizes that the Messiah will validate Israel's message and continue the legacy of David. Dr. Brown accepts that I read the Scriptures correctly concerning these foundational Biblical teachings.

So where does Dr. Brown disagree with me? How does he respond to my narrative?

Let's break this apart. There are 3 areas where Dr. Brown disagrees with me.

The first of these is not directly related to the concept of the Messiah. I mentioned in passing that even before the final redemption, Israel fulfills its destiny, in a minor way, to be a blessing to the nations. As a

priestly nation Israel is the guardian of God's truth, we bear God's message through the corridors of history. And by carrying God's message we bring blessing to those around us who hear our message and are inspired to serve God.

Dr. Brown spent a lot of time in his rebuttal arguing against this aspect of our role in God's plan. Dr. Brown argues that Israel did not bring blessing to her gentile neighbors. Dr. Brown quoted Scripture after Scripture which records God's rebuke to us and which describe how we profane God's name. Instead, Dr. Brown claims that it is his Messiah that brought blessing to the nations.

I don't understand how these Scriptures are a response to what I have said. I never said that it is our behavior that brings blessing to the nations. I said that it is our message that inspires and uplifts the people around us. Our message is bigger than us because it is not our message, it is God's message. Dr. Brown did not present one passage that says that we no longer bear God's testimony. Throughout history the Jewish people carried a message of trust in One God who is the Father of all creation. And our message did uplift and did inspire.

But once Dr. Brown has brought our behavior into the discussion I will take the time to respond. The fact of the matter is, wherever Jews go, like their ancestor Joseph before them, they elevate the economy of their host country. They raise the standard of justice, of education, of medicine, of innovation and they encourage the rights of the individual and respect for human life. John Adams wrote about the Jewish people that they have done more to civilize men than has any other nation. Even if you want to think that this is a generous exaggeration let's contrast the blessing of our nation with the impact of Dr. Brown's Messiah.

The foundational texts from which Dr. Brown draws his Messianic narrative tell us that the Christian Messiah defined the Jew as a child of the devil, as a murderer, as an enemy of God and as a liar. These same texts describe the religion of the Jews as legalistic, cruel, arrogant and hypocritical. Those who trusted in Dr. Brown's Messiah have been teaching these murderous lies to their children for the past 2000 years. The result of this ceaseless slander was the tragic history of the Jewish people in Europe. But as tragic as our history was, the far greater tragedy was the fact that so many people were persuaded to hate and to persecute. Yes, there were many righteous Christians who did not participate in these crimes, but so many more people were moved by this slander to kill and to hate. What "blessing" is Dr. Brown talking about?

The second area of disagreement relates to the message of Israel. Dr. Brown accepts my understanding of Scripture when I say that the Messiah is King of the Jews. If the Messiah is King of the Jews it would follow that the Messiah ought to validate the message of the Jewish people, not contradict it. And Dr. Brown agrees with this principle. However, Dr. Brown makes the outrageous claim that the Messiah of Christianity confirms and validates Israel's message.

For 2000 years the Jewish people have been forcefully declaring that the message of the Church is NOT our message. With our very lifeblood we have testified that the worship that the Church is demanding is idolatry, the deepest violation of the covenant that we share with God. And Dr. Brown nonchalantly reassures his audience that the message of the Church is the message of Israel. In essence, Dr. Brown is telling you to ignore what the Jewish people are saying, and instead let the Church tell you what the Jewish people ought to be saying.

This behavior is nothing new. This goes back to the very foundations of Christianity. The foundational texts of Christianity provide a narrative not only about what Christians believe, but also what the Jewish people believe. The Christian Scriptures tell the world why it is that the Jewish people do not accept the claims of the Church. Instead of telling the truth, that the Jewish people do not accept their claims

because they love God and they believe that every iota of trust that exists in the human heart belongs to God alone, the Church tells the world that the Jews reject their claims because the Jews are children of darkness who hate God.

But despite all of the Church efforts to silence us, the Jewish people are alive and well. We can speak for ourselves. And if God established His testimony in Jacob, as Psalm 78 declares, then you go to Jacob to hear that testimony, not to Jacob's opponents. And if God called us His witnesses, as Isaiah 43 teaches, then you go to the Jewish people to hear God's message, not to a book that was canonized by those who would silence us and who reject our message.

The third disagreement that Dr. Brown has with my narrative has to do with the Messiah sitting on the throne of David. Dr. Brown acknowledges that the Messiah does indeed sit on the throne of David, and as such, the Messiah will uphold and continue the legacy of David. Dr. Brown agrees with my understanding that if we want to understand what it is that the throne of David stands for we need to look into the Book of Psalms, the book in which David opened his heart. However, Dr. Brown tells us that the Book of Psalms point to the Christian narrative.

The entire thrust of the Book of Psalms is trust in God. The Psalms have been guiding the Jewish people since they have been written nearly 3000 years ago. The Psalms gave us the fortitude, the strength and the calmness of spirit to withstand the ridicule and the persecution of the Church and Dr. Brown would have us believe that the Psalms confirm the Christian message that the God of David is inadequate!? That you cannot approach God without first bending your heart to the Messiah of Christianity!? Where does Dr. Brown see these concepts in the songs that loudly declare the very opposite message?

Dr. Brown tells us that I forgot Psalm 110 and Psalm 22. It is in these two Psalms that Dr. Brown sees this Christian message. What part of Psalm 110 is Dr. Brown talking about? It is not verse 3 which speaks of Israel gladly following their king. No, Dr. Brown is looking for a narrative of Israel rejecting its Messiah. Perhaps he is referring to verses 5 and 6? But they refer to the destruction of the nations, not something that fits Dr. Brown's narrative. So what is Dr. Brown talking about?

Dr. Brown is talking about 1 word in the Psalm, the word "priest." He invests that word with a Christological meaning that has nothing to do with Scripture. The Scriptures clearly indicate that the Messiah is a guardian of God's truth and in this sense he fulfills a priestly function. But Dr. Brown insists that the Messiah needs to effect atonement, a function assigned by Scripture to the Levitical priests and to them alone. When Dr. Brown accuses me of "forgetting Psalm 110" he means that I forgot the theology that he imposes upon one word in that Psalm. It is he who forgot what the Psalmist took the pains to spell out explicitly and clearly, but for Dr. Brown, Psalm 110 is not about what the Psalmist actually says, but rather it is about the Church theology that is imposed upon the words of the Psalmist.

Dr. Brown accuses me of forgetting Psalm 22. What is so significant about Psalm 22? Dr. Brown tells us that this Psalm speaks of a righteous sufferer who is saved. And the salvation of this righteous sufferer brings the entire world to turn to God. Who could this be but the Christian Messiah, argues Dr. Brown.

Let us remember, the Christian narrative has the Messianic age move from the Messiah as an individual to the gentiles and then and only then to the Jews. But the Psalm speaks of the Jews being moved by the salvation of the individual sufferer (verses 23-27) before it speaks of the nations coming to serve God (verses 28 and 29). The Psalm confirms the Jewish narrative that has the nations coming to God only after the Jewish people fulfill their calling to serve and to praise God.

Psalm 69 describes the same sequence of events; an individual sufferer, the salvation of this individual, the salvation of Israel and it is only when Zion is built and only because Zion is built that the nations are inspired to serve God (Psalm 69:36).

Furthermore, Psalm 69 reveals to us that this suffering individual is not perfectly sinless as required by the Christian narrative. In verse 6 of that Psalm our righteous sufferer speaks of his sins before God. The righteous sufferer that triggers off the salvation of the world has nothing to do with the Christian narrative.

The individual of Psalm 22 and Psalm 69 is our King, David. His own experience has inspired Israel for the past 3000 years. The prophet is promising us that ultimately our loyalty to David and his message will lead us to our destiny, to be a blessing to the all the nations.

This debate was about the real Jewish Messiah. What does the Scripture teach us about the real Jewish Messiah? The most important word that the Scriptures gave us to describe the Messiah is "David." The Scriptures called the Messiah by David's name 6 times (Jeremiah 30:9, Ezekiel 34:23,24, 37:24,35; Hosea 3:5). The prophet describes our yearning for the Messiah as yearning for our King David (Hosea 3:5). There is no person in all of Scripture that we know as well as David. David's heart is the most open heart in all of Scripture. His heart is bare for all of us to read in the Book of Psalms.

Everyone agrees that if you want to know what the Messiah is all about then you need to read the Book of Psalms. But I encourage you, don't read the Psalms like Dr. Brown, searching for a word or a phrase that you could exploit to support what the Church would have you believe. Instead read the Psalms as the followers of David have been reading them for 3000 years, feeling David's heart. Open your heart to the song and to the spirit of the Book of Psalms.

When you open your heart to the Book of Psalms you will discover the personality of the Messiah. You will see a king who leads with humility, emphasizing his own utter helplessness before God and his total dependence upon God. You will not see a king who emphasizes his supposed superiority over other people. You will see a king who recognizes that every breath of air that God grants him is an expression of God's love and he encourages you to look at your existence the same way. You will find a king who brings every fear, every worry, every problem and every sin directly to God and to God alone and he directs you to do the same. In the Psalms you will see a king who directs all of mankind's devotion and worship towards God and he doesn't divert an iota of that devotion towards himself. And you will see a king who does not stand apart from other men, emphasizing the differences that separate him from others. Instead, you will find a king who stands shoulder to shoulder with mankind inviting all of humanity to sing God's praises together with him.

The Messiah will sing David's song. He will take that same song and bring it home to all of humanity. The Messiah will make David's song resonate in every heart. The Messiah will take the same message of David and make it the message of all mankind.

Psalm 148 gives us a taste of the Messiah. In that Psalm David invites all of creation to sing the praises of God together with him, the heavens, the earth and all of mankind. And when the Messiah comes he will bring all of mankind to join in David's song of praise to the God of Israel.

Additional Notes

1. A Note on Additional Notes

This exchange of videos between Dr. Brown and myself has a long history. Back in 2007, I wrote "Contra Brown," a critique of Dr. Brown's "Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus," which, at the time,

consisted of 4 volumes. On that occasion Dr. Brown declared that he would refute my arguments with an article of his own. He told the public that the name of his response will be “Correcting Contra Brown.”

In 2010, when Dr. Brown completed his series of Answering Jewish Objections with a fifth volume, I wrote a general critique of all 5 volumes entitled “The Elephant and the Suit.” Again, Dr. Brown announced that he would be responding to my critique with an article entitled “The Stained and Dirty Window.” Dr. Brown repeated his assurances to provide a written response to my articles for some time until he told me in a personal communication that he will not be responding anytime soon.

About a year ago I began putting my writings in video format. I launched a series of videos entitled “Unanswered,” focusing on the challenges that Dr. Brown had not responded to. My videos did elicit a public response from Dr. Brown (in video format) and one of the primary points that he repeated in his presentations was that he challenges me to engage him in a live debate.

I responded to this challenge with the explanation that my responsibility is to educate and not to entertain. I feel that in a format of a live debate I do not have the time to arrange my thoughts in a way that conveys my intention accurately. I need time to formulate my thoughts in a way that communicates effectively and with clarity.

Dr. Brown acknowledged this concern and he proposed a debate with time allowed between the segments so that each party can gather and arrange their thoughts. My counter-proposal was this video debate which you have just watched. Each of us would make an original presentation of 20 minutes followed by a rebuttal, followed by closing statements, each of these separated by a month of space. Dr. Brown accepted this counter-proposal and here it is, this 6 segment video debate about the real Jewish Messiah.

Dr. Brown’s opening presentation contained many quotations from Scripture, all of which I have already addressed in my writings. Furthermore, his presentation contained statements that are refuted by open Scripture. It was clear to me that I could not expose all of the errors that he crammed into his presentation in the short space of 20 minutes that were allotted for my rebuttal. So I chose to expose the flaws in the general approach to Scripture employed by Dr. Brown in my rebuttal and to share the refutation to the rest of his errors in the notes appended to the transcript.

As soon as Dr. Brown became aware of my plans, he sent me a message accusing me of violating the spirit of the debate. He demanded that I not share the notes with the public and he demanded that I remove the reference to my notes from my video presentation.

I did not agree with the basis of Dr. Brown’s demands (as I shall soon explain) but for the sake of going forward with this video debate, I agreed not to share the additional notes with the public until the debate is over. I refused to remove the reference to the notes from my video presentation and that reference went up together with the rest of my presentation as scheduled.

My question to Dr. Brown is simply this; what is the “spirit” of this debate? Is this debate a sports event? Or is the spirit of this debate the education of our combined audiences? How do my notes violate the spirit of the debate?

My understanding is that the spirit of this debate is to educate our viewing audience. By preventing me from telling the audience where they can find answers to the questions he posed, Dr. Brown is violating the spirit of this debate.

Furthermore, I feel that for the sake of the audience it is my responsibility to consider any counter-arguments that Dr. Brown's has presented before I share my own arguments. If the audience were to hear Dr. Brown's counter-argument and consider my argument refuted, or even weakened, then it would be dishonest for me to present my original argument as if it were flawless.

Despite the fact that I have presented counter-arguments to almost every argument that Dr. Brown has raised, he continues to repeat the same arguments without modifying them or telling his audience why he disregards my counter-arguments. This being the case, we are left with two options. Either Dr. Brown considers my arguments so ridiculous that he assumes that the audience will see right through them and it would simply waste the audience's time if he were to share my counter-arguments with them. The other option is that Dr. Brown is trying to hide my arguments from the audience.

If the first option is true and Dr. Brown believes that my arguments are so transparently ridiculous then why does he have a problem with me sharing my notes with the audience?

2. The Plain Teachings of the Jewish Scriptures

In my opening presentation I put forth the argument that every student of the Jewish Bible, be they atheist, Jewish, Hindu or Christian, acknowledges that the Messiah is to be a king of the Jews and is to sit on the throne of David. The Author of the Bible made these teachings so clear that no one could doubt His intention.

Dr. Brown responded with the claim that the Christological teaching which requires the Jews to reject the Messiah while the gentiles receive him is equally clear and plain in the Bible.

This claim has no basis in reality. Dr. Brown himself acknowledges (<https://judaismresources.net/2011/06/13/response-to-th-line-of-fire-9/>) that the disciples of Jesus identified Jesus as the Messiah without expecting him to die, be rejected by the Jewish people, be accepted by the gentiles or resurrected. They read the Bible and saw none of these teachings there. They only understood these teachings when their eyes were "opened" healing them of their "supernatural blindness."

The teachings that the Messiah is to be king of the Jews and to sit on the throne of David can be discerned in the Bible by all readers, supernaturally blinded or not. Dr. Brown's Christian doctrine can only be seen by people who have been "healed" of their blindness. The two sets of teachings are not equally clear in the Bible.

Dr. Brown further demonstrates his lack of regard for the clear teachings of the Bible when he complains to his audience that I tied the mission of the Messiah to the people of Israel and that I put too much emphasis on David and on Israel.

His complaint should be directed against the Author of the Jewish Scriptures. It is He who tied the mission of the Messiah to the people of Israel (Isaiah 60:1-3) and it is He that emphasizes Israel and David. Search the Bible and see how much space is devoted to describing Israel and David and contrast that with the amount of words devoted to describing the Messiah.

3. The Joseph Narrative

Dr. Brown invokes the Biblical narrative of Joseph in his effort to create a Biblical basis for his Messianic argument. In the book of Genesis (chapters 37 thru 45) describes how Joseph, one of Jacob's younger sons, told his older brothers about his dreams. In these dreams Joseph saw how he

would rule over his brothers. His brothers were provoked to jealousy and they sold Joseph into slavery. Joseph is carried to Egypt where he is enslaved, accused of a crime, thrown into prison and ultimately appointed as viceroy of Egypt. Eventually Joseph meets his brothers and they acknowledge their sin towards him.

Dr. Brown sees this as a parallel to the historical career of Jesus. Jesus, like Joseph, is rejected by the Jews, represented in the Joseph story by Jacob's sons. Jesus, like Joseph, is accepted by the gentiles, represented by Egypt's appointment of Joseph as viceroy. And only afterward will Jesus be accepted by the Jews, or so claims Dr. Brown, just as Joseph's brothers only accepted his status as ruler after the gentiles.

The most significant problem with Dr. Brown's argument is that the Bible never tells us that the Joseph story teaches us anything about the Messiah. That is Dr. Brown's own invention and it has no basis in the text of the Bible.

If we will insist on finding a parallel to the Joseph story in the stage of world history, we would not look to Jesus. We would see the experience of Joseph reflected in the history of the Jewish people.

The Jewish people come to the world with a message that places them at the center of God's plan for the salvation of mankind. The people who should most readily appreciate this message, namely, those who have dedicated their lives to seek religious truth, are the ones who decry Israel's message and vilify the bearers of the message. This slander sells the Jewish people into centuries of degradation and persecution. This is parallel to the older sons of Jacob, the insiders, who should most readily understand Joseph's message, vilifying Joseph, rejecting his message and selling him off into slavery.

Israel suffers in pain for years and years, still bringing economic blessing to those who have the good sense to work with them. This parallels Joseph's experience as a slave in Potiphar's house (Genesis 39:1-13). Throughout our history we were accused of crimes we did not commit, reflecting Joseph's experience (Genesis 39:14-19). Eventually, the secular powers of the world recognize our capabilities and harness our trust in God's goodness to build their economies just as Joseph is recognized by Pharaoh who employs Joseph for the benefit of Egypt's financial success (Genesis 41:38-49).

It is only after the secular powers flourish on the basis of the Jewish nation's trust in God's goodness that the religious authorities are slowly coming to recognize the beauty and the strength of Israel's message.

4. Scriptures that Dr. Brown Claims I have Overlooked

Dr. Brown claims that I have ignored many passages from the Scriptures. I wonder how Dr. Brown can make this accusation. He is well aware that I have addressed the passages that he quotes with lengthy articles. Perhaps he disagrees with my understanding of these verses, but I haven't ignored or overlooked them. And if Dr. Brown does disagree with my interpretation of these verses, he never shared his arguments with the public.

For the record; the article entitled Contra Brown addresses: Psalm 22, 110; Isaiah 53; Haggai 2; Zechariah 6; Malachi 3; Daniel 7; 9; and the article entitled Armor Bearers addresses Isaiah 42; 49 and 53. Zechariah 12 is addressed in an article of that name. Here are the relevant links:

Contra Brown:

<https://judaismresources.net/contra-brown/>

Armor Bearers:

- <https://judaismresources.net/2012/07/24/armor-bearers-isaiah-5211/>

Zechariah 12:

<https://judaismresources.net/2013/01/17/zechariah-1210/>

Additional Relevant articles:

<https://judaismresources.net/2010/11/23/daniel-713/>

<https://judaismresources.net/2013/01/17/daniel-924-27/>

<https://judaismresources.net/unanswered-video-series/>

<https://judaismresources.net/of-whom-speaketh-the-prophet/>

<https://judaismresources.net/2017/01/16/did-dr-michael-brown-misapply-malachi-3-haggai-2/>

5. How Do the Rabbis Understand the Servant of Isaiah? And Why didn't they Expunge the Messianic Interpretation?

Dr. Brown argues that there are rabbinic interpretations that read Isaiah 53 as a reference to the Messiah. There is a tradition within Judaism about the suffering of Messiah. Dr. Brown points to these teachings in his effort to demonstrate how this doctrine is so deeply imbedded within Judaism. Otherwise, Dr. Brown argues, the rabbis would have expunged this teaching so as not to provide support to the arguments of the Church.

I have addressed the rabbinic teaching about a suffering Messiah in Contra Brown. I explained that the national and Messianic interpretations of Isaiah 53 are not mutually exclusive. The Messiah will emerge from the community of Israel which is despised and loathed. And when the Messiah is exalted, the nations will be surprised because they had seen the suffering of his community as an indication that the true message of the Messiah, which was carried by Israel, cannot be true.

Dr. Brown's surprise at the rabbi's failure to expunge these references from their literature is built on three false premises. First, Dr. Brown assumes that the rabbis have the same moral compass that Paul advocates, namely, that it is right to lie to spread his message (Romans 3:7; Philippians 1:18). Second, he assumes that the rabbinic teaching on a suffering Messiah supports the Christian narrative. And third, Dr. Brown assumes that the Christian arguments posed a threat to the world-view of the Jewish thinkers.

Each of these premises is false. The Jewish teachers valued truth and would not lie to their students in order to propagate their message. The Jewish teaching on the suffering Messiah never advocates worship of or devotion to that Messiah, thus it has no relation to the Christian Messianic narrative. And finally, no Jewish thinker felt threatened by the arguments of the Church. The counter-missionary activities of the Jewish thinkers consisted in exposing the Christian manipulation of the Jewish Scripture to the masses. The overall message of the Christian missionary is so obviously contrary to everything the Scriptures stand for that there was never a need to engage in drastic, panic mode tactics to counter the persuasions of the Church.

The only weapon the Jew needed to use to counter the missionary threat is the truth.