



The
**COMPLETE
JEWISH**
Study Bible

INSIGHTS FOR JEWS & CHRISTIANS

*Illuminating the Jewishness
of God's Word*



THE GOOD NEWS OF YESHUA THE MESSIAH,

AS REPORTED BY

Mattityahu

MATTHEW

1 ¹ This is the genealogy of Yeshua the Messiah, son of David, son of Avraham:

- ² Avraham was the father of Yitz'chak,
Yitz'chak was the father of Ya'akov,
Ya'akov was the father of Y'hudah and his brothers,
- ³ Y'hudah was the father of Peretz and Zerach (their mother was Tamar),
Peretz was the father of Hetzron,
Hetzron was the father of Ram,
- ⁴ Ram was the father of 'Amminadav,
'Amminadav was the father of Nachshon,
Nachshon was the father of Salmon,
- ⁵ Salmon was the father of Bo'az (his mother was Rachav),
Bo'az was the father of 'Oved (his mother was Rut),
'Oved was the father of Yishai,
- ⁶ Yishai was the father of David the king.

David was the father of Shlomo (his mother was the wife of Uriyah),
- ⁷ Shlomo was the father of Rechav'am,
Rechav'am was the father of Aviyah,
Aviyah was the father of Asa,
- ⁸ Asa was the father of Y'hoshafat,
Y'hoshafat was the father of Yoram,
Yoram was the father of 'Uziyahu,

1:1 This is the genealogy of Yeshua the Messiah, son of David, son of Avraham. Matthew opens with a genealogy, because in the first-century Jewish world, descent is often more important than character. Furthermore, the phrase "This is the genealogy" reflects the Hebrew phrase *eleh toldot*, which appears ten times in Genesis, framing the story of Messiah Yeshua as a reflection and continuation of the narratives of the *Torah*. This genealogy confirms that Yeshua meets all the requirements of the *Tanakh* for the Messiah: a descendant of Avraham (Abraham; Gen. 22:18), Ya'akov (Jacob; Num. 24:17), Y'hudah (Judah; Gen. 49:10), Yishai (Jesse; Isa. 11:1), David (2 Sam. 7:13), and Z'rubavel (Zerubbabel; Hag. 2:22–23). *Yeshua* is Jesus' name in Hebrew and Aramaic, which are the languages he spoke. The word *Iesous* represents the ancient Greek speakers'

attempt at pronouncing "Yeshua." The Greek word for "Messiah" is *Christos*, with the Hebrew *Mashiach*, meaning "anointed" or "poured on." More than three hundred eighty times in the *B'rit Hadashah*, "Messiah" appears as a reminder that he is revealed as the promised Messiah for whom the Jewish people have yearned.

1:3, 5–6 Tamar...Rachav...Rut...(...the wife of Uriyah). God includes these four Gentile women (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba) in the ancestry of Yeshua the Messiah, through whom Gentiles, women, and slaves are saved equally with Jews, men, and the free (Gal. 3:28). Jewish tradition teaches that they were converts to Judaism. Rut certainly was a convert, and tradition holds that Rachav and Tamar were converts as well.

- ⁹ ‘Uziyahu was the father of Yotam,
Yotam was the father of Achaz,
Achaz was the father of Hizkiyahu,
- ¹⁰ Hizkiyahu was the father of M’nasheh,
M’nasheh was the father of Amon,
Amon was the father of Yoshiyahu,
- ¹¹ Yoshiyahu was the father of Y’khanyahu and his brothers
at the time of the Exile to Bavel.
- ¹² After the Babylonian Exile, Y’khanyahu was the father of Sh’altiel,
Sh’altiel was the father of Z’rubavel,
- ¹³ Z’rubavel was the father of Avihud,
Avihud was the father of Elyakim,
Elyakim was the father of ‘Azur,
- ¹⁴ ‘Azur was the father of Tzadok,
Tzadok was the father of Yakhin,
Yakhin was the father of El’ichud,
- ¹⁵ El’ichud was the father of El’azar,
El’azar was the father of Mattan,
Mattan was the father of Ya’akov,
- ¹⁶ Ya’akov was the father of Yosef the husband of Miryam,
from whom was born the Yeshua who was called the Messiah.
- ¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations from Avraham to David,
fourteen generations from David to the Babylonian Exile,
and fourteen generations from the Babylonian Exile to the Messiah.

¹⁸ Here is how the birth of Yeshua the Messiah took place. When his mother Miryam was engaged to Yosef, before they were married, she was found to be pregnant from the *Ruach HaKodesh*. ¹⁹ Her husband-to-be, Yosef, was a man who did what was right; so he made plans to break the engagement quietly, rather than put her to public shame. ²⁰ But while he was thinking about this, an angel of *ADONAI* appeared to him in a dream and said, “Yosef, son of David, do

1:16 Yosef the husband of Miryam, from whom was born...Yeshua. The change of language in this passage reveals that Yeshua was not conceived in the usual way, for as other passages state, the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) overshadowed Miryam (Mary), causing her to become pregnant without sexual union (vv. 18, 20; Luke 1:27, 31, 34–38).

1:17 Thus there were fourteen generations. Matthew’s genealogy emphasizes the number fourteen, the numerical equivalent of the name “David” in Hebrew. Likewise, the account of Yeshua’s naming as an infant implies knowledge of Hebrew: “You are to name him Yeshua, [which means ‘ADONAI saves,] because he will save his people from their sins” (v. 21).

1:18 When his mother Miryam was engaged to Yosef. The Hebrew/Aramaic word for “betrothal” is *kiddushin*, signifying “sanctification, separation” (i.e., the setting aside and separating of a particular woman for a particular man).

According to the Mishnah (*Sanhedrin* 7:4), adultery during the betrothal period is a more serious sin than adultery after marriage. See “The Jewish Wedding,” Rev. 20:4.

1:18 The *Ruach HaKodesh*. Hebrew for “Holy Spirit,” this term appears in the *Tanakh* (Isa. 51:13; 63:10–11) and is equivalent to the “Spirit of God” (*Ruach-Elohim*), first seen in Gen. 1:2. The *Ruach HaKodesh* is divine, not less or other than God. Under the terms of the new (or renewed) covenant, Yeshua sends the *Ruach HaKodesh* to indwell all who trust God through the Messiah.

1:20 An angel of *ADONAI* appeared to him. *ADONAI* is literally, “my lords,” but grammarians consider it as the “plural of majesty.” Out of reverence, the four Hebrew letters comprising God’s name, *yud-heh-vav-heh*, known as the Tetragrammaton *YHVH* in Judaism, are never spoken or pronounced, but are expressed as Lord, *HaShem* (The Name) or *ADONAI*.

not be afraid to take Miryam home with you as your wife; for what has been conceived in her is from the *Ruach HaKodesh*.²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Yeshua, [which means ‘ADONAI saves,] because he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All this happened in order to fulfill what ADONAI had said through the prophet,

²³ **“The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call him ‘Immanu El.”**^a



THE NAMES OF GOD

Yeshua

Matthew 1:21 Yeshua was a common alternative form of the name Y’hoshua or Joshua in later books of the Hebrew Bible and among Jews of the Second Temple period. The name corresponds to the Greek spelling *Iesous*, from which through the Latin *Iesus* comes the English spelling Jesus.

The first letter in the name Yeshua (Jesus) is the *yod*. *Yod* represents the “Y” sound in Hebrew. Many names in the Bible that begin with *yod* are mispronounced by English speakers because the letter was transliterated in English Bibles with the letter “J” rather than “Y.” This is because in early English, the letter “J” was pronounced the way we pronounce “Y” today. All proper names in the Hebrew Bible were transliterated into English according to their Hebrew pronunciation; but when English pronunciation shifted to what we know today, these transliterations were not altered. Thus, such Hebrew place names as Ye-ru-sha-la-yim, Ye-ri-cho, and Yar-den have become known to us as Yerushalayim, Jericho, and Jordan. Hebrew personal names such as Yo-nah, Yi-shai, and Ye-shu-a have become known to us as Jonah, Jesse, and Jesus.

The Hebrew spelling of Yeshua appears in some later books of the Hebrew Bible, once for Joshua the son of Nun, and twenty-eight times for Joshua the High Priest and other priests called Jeshua—although these same priests are also given the spelling Joshua in the books of Haggai and Zechariah. Yeshua differs from the usual Hebrew Bible spelling of Joshua (Y’hoshua), found two-hundred eighteen times in the Hebrew Bible. It also differs from the Hebrew spelling Yeshu, which is found in Ben Yehuda’s dictionary and used in most secular contexts in modern Hebrew to refer to Jesus of Nazareth, though the Hebrew spelling Yeshua is generally used in translations of the New Testament into Hebrew and used by Hebrew-speaking Christians in Isra’el. The name Yeshua is also used in Israeli Hebrew historical texts to refer to other people called Joshua recorded in Greek texts, such as Jesus ben Ananias and Jesus ben Sira. The name Yeshua means “The LORD’s Salvation” or “Cry Out to the LORD for Help.”

^a Isaiah 7:14

1:21 “You are to name him Yeshua...because he will save his people from their sins.” This verse is an example of a Semitism, or allusion to either the Hebrew or Aramaic, revealing the Jewishness of the text. The Hebrew word for “he will save” is *yoshia’*, which has the same Hebrew root (*yud-shin-‘ayin*) as the name *Yeshua* (*yud-shin-vav-‘ayin*). The Messiah’s name is explained on the basis of what he will do. Etymologically the name *Yeshua* is a contraction of the Hebrew name Y’hoshua (Joshua), meaning “ADONAI saves.”

1:22 To fulfill what ADONAI had said through the prophet. The NT consistently presents the record of messianic prophecies fulfilled as foretold by God through his prophets in the *Tanakh*. Such conformity to statements and predictions given hundreds of years prior is evidence for the supernatural nature of the biblical texts. He knows the end from the beginning (Heb. 4:13).

1:23 “The virgin will conceive and bear a son.” Many have objected, stating that: (1) A virgin birth is impossible, which follows as a logical consequence of objecting to any and all supernaturalism. Yet ADONAI is “supernatural,” being above nature, since he created nature and its laws. (2) Isaiah, in using the Hebrew word *almah*, was referring to a “young woman.” Had he meant *virgin* he would have written *betulah*. But in the Bible, *almah* always refers to an unmarried woman of good reputation. (3) The prophet could not predict an event some seven hundred years in the future. But all of Isaiah 7, not just 7:14, shows that the “sign” was not for King Achaz (Ahaz), who is referred to as “you” (singular) in vv. 11, 16–17, but for the entire “house of David,” mentioned in v. 13, and referred to as “you” (plural) in vv. 13–14. See “The Virgin Birth,” Isa. 7:14.

(The name means, “God is with us.”)

²⁴ When Yosef awoke he did what the angel of *ADONAI* had told him to do — he took Miryam home to be his wife, ²⁵ but he did not have sexual relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Yeshua.

2 ¹ After Yeshua was born in Beit-Lechem in the land of Y’hudah during the time when Herod was king, Magi from the east came to Yerushalayim ² and asked, “Where is the newborn King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”



THE TABERNACLE (*MISHKAN*)

The Tabernacle and the Incarnation: Immanu El, God with Us

Matthew 1:23 In his commentary on Matthew, Rabbi Barney Kasdan writes:

While there is considerable debate in both Jewish and Christian circles about the meaning of this prophecy [Isa. 7:14], Matthew quotes it because it perfectly captures an important truth about the birth of the Messiah. If the Messiah is to have the uniquely divine task of removing the sins of mankind, we should expect him to have a uniquely divine nature. (*Matthew Presents Yeshua* 16)

Today, in seeking to refute Matthew 1:23, Jewish theologians have sought to discredit the concept of a divine Messiah. However, evidence exists that this was not an uncommon messianic expectation. This is affirmed by modern scholarship, such as Richard Bauckman’s *Jesus and the God of Israel* and among ancient Jewish sources such as *Midrashei Geula* (Midrashim of Redemption), which states, “In the future, the Holy One, blessed be he, will seat Messiah in the supernal Yeshiva [House of Study], and they will call him ‘Lord,’ just as they call the Creator.”

During his life and ministry, Yeshua never ascribed to himself the title of Immanu El in daily conversation. Instead as the Messiah of Isra’el, Immanu El expressed his divine nature (John 1:1–3). This points to the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) in the wilderness where *ADONAI* commanded the Israelites, “They are to make me a sanctuary, so that I may live among them” (Exod. 25:8). Kasdan further explains that “Yeshua of Nazareth is more than just a good rabbi or an intriguing philosopher. According to the Bible, he is the visible manifestation of the God of creation” (*God’s Appointed Times* 95). It is for this purpose that John 1:14 says of Yeshua, “The Word became a human being and lived with us.” The word *dwelled* from the Greek *skene* derives from the Hebrew *Mishkan*, showing that in his incarnation Yeshua made his Tabernacle with his people. Thus through Yeshua, God did dwell with his people.

For more on “The Tabernacle (Mishkan),” see reading at *Revelation 21:1–6*.

1:24–25 He did what the angel of *ADONAI* had told him to do. According to the Mishnah, “If one says, ‘This is my son,’ he is to be believed” (*Bava Batra* 8:6). The *Gemara* explains that he is believed “as regards the right of inheritance” (*Bava Batra* 134a). Thus Yeshua is the legally acknowledged son and entitled to inherit the throne of King David from Yosef (Joseph), a descendant of David (v. 8).

2:1 Magi from the east came to Yerushalayim. Magi were not sorcerers or magicians, nor were they astrologers (although they did observe the stars). The Magi were Jewish sages, wise men of Persia. These Magi came from the Medo-Persian Empire or Babylon. In the Diaspora, Jews

during and after the time of Yeshua lived in Persia and had been there since the time of the prophet Dani’el. See “The Star from Ya’akov,” Num. 24:17.

2:2 “King of the Jews.” The Greek word *Ioudaioi* should usually be translated “Judeans” and not “Jews” when the context is the Land of Isra’el. “His star” alludes to Num. 24:17 where Bil’am (Balaam) prophesies, “There shall come forth a star out of Jacob.” Judaism understands this “star” as referring to the coming of the Messiah (Herczeg, *The Torah with Rashi’s Commentary*). See also “The Star from Ya’akov,” Num. 24:17.

³ When King Herod heard of this he became very agitated, and so did everyone else in Yerushalayim. ⁴ He called together all the head *cohanim* and *Torah*-teachers of the people and asked them, “Where will the Messiah be born?” ⁵ “In Beit-Lechem of Y’hudah,” they replied, “because the prophet wrote,

**⁶ ‘And you, Beit-Lechem in the land of Y’hudah,
are by no means the least among the rulers of Y’hudah;
for from you will come a Ruler
who will shepherd my people Isra’el.’”^a**



ANTI-JEWISH SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATIONS

The Magi Replaced the Jews as First Recipients of the Good News

Matthew 2:1–12 Despite the prophetic nature of Matthew 2, certain Jewish scholars incorrectly conclude that this is the first anti-Semitic assertion of the New Testament, where God chose the Magi (presumably Gentiles) over his covenant people (Isra’el) in presenting the Jewish Messiah (v. 7). Jewish scholar Amy-Jill Levine points out, “Matthew’s second chapter has been read as a foreshadow of the passion, in which evil Jews persecute the righteous while good Gentiles seek their well-being” (Farmer 27–28).

Historically, Christian theologians have mistakenly insisted that “the term ‘magi’ was used as the name for priests and wise-men among the Medeo-Persians and Babylonians. These persons were supposed to be adept in that secret learning which in remote antiquity had its seat in Egypt, and later in Chaldea, from which latter fact they were often called Chaldeans” (Kasdan, *Matthew Presents Yeshua* 107). Most Christian scholarship thus argues that the Magi were Gentiles and of pagan origin.

However, recent biblical scholarship and archeological evidence has proven that the Magi were neither Gentiles nor astrologers (stargazers), but in fact were

Jewish sages. As noted by Kasdan, “Babylon was still the place of residence for the majority of the Jewish community even as Matthew was writing in the first century” (107). Of the origin of these Magi, scholars agree they are linked to the prophet Dani’el, near 500 B.C.E., who in the Diaspora waited for the time of return and the restoration of Isra’el. Some have even speculated that these wise men came from a Jewish school that went back to Dani’el’s day, where the prophets looked to the heavens for the promised arrival of the Messiah. The star in the east was in fact a manifestation of *ADONAI’S Sh’khinah* (Divine Presence), marking the arrival of the Son of Man. The Jewish *Midrash Aggadat Mashiach* (*Bet ha-Midrash* 3:141–43) remarks, “This is the star of the Messiah, and it will abide in the east fifteen days, and if it tarries longer, it will be of the good of Isra’el.” As to the accusation that God providing revelation to the Magi is anti-Semitic, this is refuted in that the wise men of the east were in fact Jewish sages awaiting the arrival of Isra’el’s Messiah.

For more on “Anti-Jewish Scriptural Interpretations,” see reading at Matthew 8:5–13.

^a Micah 5:1(2)

2:4 All the head *cohanim* and *Torah*-teachers of the people. *Cohanim* are the priests (singular *cohen*). The task of a priest, like that of a prophet, is to serve as spokesperson and mediator between God and humanity. The prophet speaks to Isra’el on behalf of God, and the priest to God on behalf of the people. Messianic Judaism holds that Yeshua the Messiah is the everlasting *Cohen Hagadol*, High Priest (Heb. 7:23–25), interceding with the Father, as well as the everlasting sacrifice (John 1:29; Heb. 7:27). Regarding “*Torah*-teachers,” the Greek word *grammateus* translates literally in the Hebrew as *sofer* (scribe). The function of the *sofer* (*sofrim*, plural) at the

time of Yeshua went beyond copying scrolls or secretarial duties. The *sofrim* were the primary students and teachers of the content of Judaism, that is, of the *Torah*.

2:6 “And you, Beit-Lechem in the land of Y’hudah.” In Judaism, the citation of a scriptural text implies the whole context, not merely the quoted words. Thus Micah 5:1 reads in full from the Hebrew: “But you, Beit-Lechem Efratah, though small among the thousands of Y’hudah, nevertheless out of you shall one come forth to me who will be ruler in Isra’el; and his goings-forth are from of old, from ancient days.”

⁷ Herod summoned the Magi to meet with him privately and asked them exactly when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Beit-Lechem with these instructions: “Search carefully for the child; and when you find him, let me know, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had listened to the king, they went away; and the star which they had seen in the east went in front of them until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ Upon entering the house, they saw the child with his mother Miryam; and they prostrated themselves and worshipped him. Then they opened their bags and presented him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² But they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they took another route back to their own country.

¹³ After they had gone, an angel of *ADONAI* appeared to Yosef in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave. For Herod is going to look for the child in order to kill him.” ¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until Herod died. This happened in order to fulfill what *ADONAI* had said through the prophet,

“Out of Egypt I called my son.”^a



“PARDES”

Matthew 2:15

The ancient rabbis and sages used four basic modes of hermeneutics (the system used to interpret a biblical passage), useful in understanding God’s Word, represented by the acronym PaRDeS.

P *P’shat* (“simple”): The plain, literal sense of a text, more or less what modern scholars mean by grammatical-historical exegesis, which examines the arrangement and meaning of words and phrases within sentences and paragraphs, as well as the historical setting as background for deciding what a passage means. Modern scholars often consider grammatical-historical exegesis as the primary way to interpret a text.

R *Remez* (“hint”): A word, phrase, or other element in the text that hints at an earlier text or under-

lying thought or idea not always readily seen in the *p’shat* (simple or literal) interpretation. Understanding this makes many Bible texts clearer, since they were not always meant to be taken literally.

D *Drash* or *midrash* (“search”): A homiletical or expository way of unfolding or applying a text. A sermon on a text is often called a *drash*. Many appear in the New Testament.

S *Sod* (“secret”): A mystical or hidden meaning, often arrived at by considering the numerical values of the Hebrew letters, noting unusual spellings, considering the transposing of letters, seeing connections between similar words and numbers, and the like.

^a Hosea 11:1

2:15 “Out of Egypt I called my son.” Mattityahu (Matthew) is giving a *remez*, or a hint of a larger perspective. In Jewish hermeneutics, Isra’el is called God’s son in Exod. 4:22. A few verses earlier in Matt. 1:18–25, the Messiah is presented as God’s Son, reflecting *Tanakh* passages such as Isa. 9:5–6; Ps. 2:7; Prov. 30:4. Thus the Son is the Messiah and is one with the Nation of Isra’el. This is what Mattityahu hints at

by calling Yeshua’s flight to Egypt a “fulfillment” of Hos. 11:1. Mattityahu also reveals that Yeshua in a profound way embodies Isra’el; his coming from Egypt reenacts in a spiritually significant way the Exodus of the Jewish people. For this reason, many scholars see Yeshua as “the New Moses” and/or leader of a “New Exodus” (Shapira 31).

¹⁶ Meanwhile, when Herod realized that the Magi had tricked him, he was furious and gave orders to kill all the boys in and around Beit-Lechem who were two years old or less, calculating from the time the Magi had told him. ¹⁷ In this way were fulfilled the words spoken through the prophet Yirmeyahu,

**¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah,
sobbing and lamenting loudly.
It was Rachel sobbing for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no longer alive.”^a**

¹⁹ After Herod’s death, an angel of *ADONAI* appeared in a dream to Yosef in Egypt ²⁰ and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to *Eretz-Yisra’el*, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead.” ²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother, and went back to *Eretz-Yisra’el*. ²² However, when he heard that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as king of Y’hudah, he was afraid to go there. Warned in a dream, he withdrew to the Galil ²³ and settled in a town called Natzeret, so that what had been spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he will be called a *Natzrati*.

3 ¹ It was during those days that Yochanan the Immerser arrived in the desert of Y’hudah and began proclaiming the message, ² “Turn from your sins to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near!” ³ This is the man Yesha’yahu was talking about when he said,

**“The voice of someone crying out:
‘In the desert prepare the way of *ADONAI*!
Make straight paths for him!’”^b**

^a Jeremiah 31:14(15) ^b Isaiah 40:3

2:18 “A voice was heard in Ramah.” The *p’shat* (literal meaning) of this verse from Jeremiah does not refer to the Messiah but to the slaughter of the northern tribes of Isra’el by the Assyrians. But there is a *remez* (hint) here that Mattityahu uses regarding the traditional burial place of Ya’akov’s (Jacob’s) wife Rachel in Ramah, just outside of Beit-Lechem (Bethlehem). Just as Rachel in her grave mourns for her posterity, so also the women of nearby Beit-Lechem mourn for their slain infant sons.

2:20–21 “Go to *Eretz-Yisra’el*.” The NT does not call the Holy Land “Palestine” but *Eretz-Yisra’el*, “the Land of Isra’el.”

2:23 He will be called a *Natzrati*. Yeshua is both *netzer* (branch) from the stock of Yishai (Jesse), King David’s father (Isa. 11:1), and Natzeret (Nazareth) from which Natan’el (Nathanael) mocked, “Natzeret? Can anything good come from there?” (John 1:46). This is a *remez* referring to the many “branch” prophecies in the *Tanakh* (e.g., Ps. 22; Isa. 52:13–53:12).

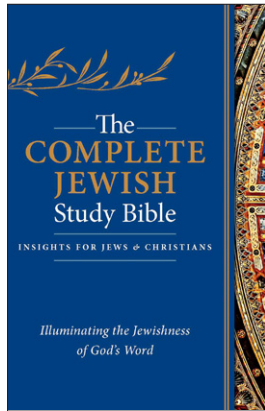
3:1 Yochanan the Immerser. To understand what “baptize” means, one must view it exclusively in its context. According to the *Torah*, one had to be ritually pure before enter-

ing the Tabernacle or Temple. Ritual purity could be lost in many ways, and the preeminent means of restoring it was through *mikveh* or washing (Kasdan, *God’s Appointed Customs* 114; Werblowsky and Wigoder 469–70). See “Baptism (*Mikveh*),” Lev. 14:1–9.

3:2 “Turn from your sins to God.” The underlying concept in the Hebrew is seen in the word *t’shuvah* (turning, returning), meaning to turn from one’s sins back to God. The Jewish understanding of repentance is that each individual must make *t’shuvah*, yet such requires God’s grace to be able to do it: “*ADONAI*, turn us back to you; and we will come back” (Lam. 5:21).

3:2 “For the Kingdom of Heaven is near!” The word *heaven* is used as a pious avoidance of the Divine Name (*YHWH*). Here, “Heaven” is capitalized when referring to God, while “heaven” refers to the sky or paradise.

3:3 “The voice of someone crying out: ‘In the desert prepare the way of *ADONAI*!’” As prophesied in Isa. 40:3, the one who cries is Yochanan (John), identified in spirit with the prophet Eliyahu (Elijah).

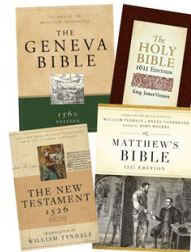


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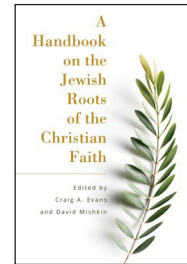


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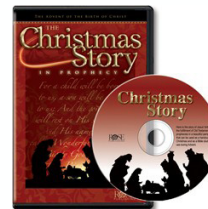


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