

מנקודת ראות ירושלמית

# Jerusalem Perspective

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A Bimonthly Report on Research  
into the Words of Jesus

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Two of the pottery jars in which some of the first seven Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. These jars were found in Cave 1, about a kilometer to the north of Qumran. The actual height of the taller jar is 70 centimeters. The Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research believes that the original biography of Jesus was a Hebrew scroll similar to those found in the Dead Sea caves.

*Courtesy of the Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum.*

*(Photo: David Harris)*







**Why is your research focused on the synoptic Gospels? Why leave out the Gospel of John?**

—A reader in Rochester, New York, U.S.A.

The synoptic Gospels — Matthew, Mark and Luke — are so similar in form and content that it is convenient to view them together. In modern times the three often have been printed in books with parallel columns to make it easier to compare their versions of the life of Jesus. Such a book is called a synopsis, from a Greek word meaning “seen together.”

Although the synoptic Gospels show signs of interdependence and share many parallel passages, the Gospel of John is unique in content and style. John’s account is perhaps the most beautiful and inspiring book in the New Testament, yet it is so different from the synoptic Gospels that there is limited value in trying to view it “synoptically” with the other three Gospels.

Furthermore, one of the reasons for the Jerusalem School scholars’ assumption that the first story of Jesus’ life was transmitted in Hebrew is their discovery that translating the Greek texts of the synoptic Gospels into Hebrew usually provides significant insight into Jesus’ biography. The Gospel of John, however, does not translate easily to

Hebrew and shows every sign of having been composed originally in Greek. For that reason, it often is omitted in discussions about the earliest form of the biography of Jesus. **JP**

**I understand that the scholars of the Jerusalem School are preparing a detailed commentary on the synoptic Gospels which will include a new translation of the Gospels. When will this translation be available?**

—A reader in Whittier, California, U.S.A.

The *Jerusalem Synoptic Commentary*, a work of some thirty volumes, will require several more years to complete. However, the first volume is nearing completion. It will include approximately 250 pages of introductory articles and an additional 250 pages devoted to a detailed analysis of the “Rich Young Ruler” story.

We will continue to publish excerpts from the commentary in popular format until the commentary project is completed. The March 1988 issue of *JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE* contained a preview of the *Jerusalem Synoptic Commentary*, and the March 1989 issue offered a Hebrew reconstruction of the Lord’s Prayer.

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## Jerusalem Perspective

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# Pilgrimage in the Time of Jesus

by Shmuel Safrai

Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the Feast, according to the custom of the Feast. When they had fulfilled the days [of the Feast], his parents started home, unaware that the boy Jesus had stayed behind in Jerusalem. (Luke 2:41-43)

Luke states that Joseph and Mary made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem every Passover. The requirement of pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem is mentioned in the passages of Scripture which deal with three annual festivals. Exodus 23:17 states: "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Sovereign, the LORD." Exodus 34:23 repeats this command almost verbatim, and the book of Deuteronomy characteristically adds further details:

"Three times a year — on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Feast of Weeks, and on the Feast of Booths — all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place that He will choose. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed" (Deuteronomy 16:16).

During the Second Temple period these verses were not understood to mean that one was obliged to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year, but rather that pilgrimage was associated with these festivals. Pilgrimage was considered a commandment which "has no measure," as stated in Peah 1:1: "The following are the things for which no definite quantity is prescribed ... appearing [before the LORD]..."

Thus, the commandment to "go up" to

Jerusalem might be observed once every few years or perhaps only once in a lifetime.

## Once a Year

A number of rabbinic traditions refer to people who were rather strict in observing the commandment of pilgrimage, but who nevertheless made pilgrimage to Jerusalem only once a year and not three times as mentioned in the Bible. One such tradition is found in Tanhuma, *Tetsaveh* 13, which reads, "There was a scribe who used to make pilgrimage every year. He was recognized by the residents of Jerusalem as

being a great scholar. They said to him: 'We will give you fifty gold pieces a year if you will take up residence in our city.'

The midrashic (homiletic) account of the pilgrimage of Elkanah, the father of Samuel, to the tabernacle in Shiloh also indicates that pilgrimage once a year was quite acceptable:

Elkanah used to take with him his wife, children, sisters and all his relatives, and make the pilgrimage [to the tabernacle in Shiloh]. They slept in the squares of the towns and villages through which they passed. Their coming aroused great excitement in each community and the inhabitants would ask, "Where are you going?" They would answer, "To the house of the LORD in Shiloh from where Torah and commandments go forth. Why don't you join us and we will go together?"

Immediately their eyes filled with tears. "We will go with you [next year]," they answered. "Very well," the pilgrims said to them.

By the next year five families [of that community] had joined them on the pilgrimage, a year later ten families, until finally everyone was making the pilgrimage. (Yalkut Shim'oni, Torah, *remez* 77)



*Shmuel Safrai, one of the senior members of the Jerusalem School, is professor of Jewish History of the Mishnaic and Talmudic Period at the Hebrew University. He is a noted authority on pilgrimage, having written a lengthy book, Pilgrimage at the Time of the Second Temple (Tel Aviv, Am Hasefer Publishers, 1965 [in Hebrew]), as well as many articles on the subject.*

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**"Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Sovereign, the LORD."**

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This midrash, which reflects the practice of the first century, praises Elkanah even though he goes on pilgrimage only once a year. The account in Luke agrees with such Jewish traditions about righteous individuals or families who made pilgrimage once a year.

## Purpose of Pilgrimage

Young Jesus took advantage of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to question the learned teachers about interpretations of Scripture, as well as to express opinions of his own. This is also in keeping with the rabbinic motif that one of the most important purposes of pilgrimage is to study Torah:

Rabbi Eliezer says: "When one brings the sacrifices that one has vowed to the Temple, he enters the Chamber of Hewn Stone and sees sages and their disciples sitting and engaging in the study of Torah. The sight inspires him also to study Torah."

Rabbi Ishmael says: "When one brings the second tithe to the Temple, he enters the Chamber of Hewn Stone and sees sages and their disciples sitting and engaging in the study of Torah."

The sight inspires him also to study Torah." (Midrash Tannaim to Deuteronomy 14:23)

Both Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Ishmael lived while the Second Temple was still standing and their words reflect the reality of that period.

## Jesus in Jerusalem

The study of Torah while on pilgrimage in Jerusalem likewise agrees with events in the life of Jesus as described in the Gospels. Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Feast of Hanukkah and taught in Solomon's porch in the Temple compound (John 10:22-24). When Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, he also taught in the Temple (John 7:14). And, when he went to Jerusalem for the last time at Passover, he sat opposite one of the treasuries of the Temple and taught Torah (Mark 12:41, Luke 21:1, John 8:2).

When Jesus was finally arrested, he berated his captors for coming to arrest him at such a late hour when he had been sitting daily in the Temple courtyards teach-

*(continued on page 12)*

# Pilgrim's Graffito

In 1969, as excavators cleared centuries of debris away from the western wall of the Temple Mount, they made an unusual discovery. On the face of a monumental stone just above the level of the Byzantine street was a crude inscription in a Hebrew script typical of the Byzantine period.

*(Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Fund, Temple Excavations)*



The words of the inscription, with slight modifications, had been taken from a passage in Isaiah which reads: "For this is what the

LORD says: '...As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; you will find comfort in Jerusalem.' When you see this, your heart will rejoice and your limbs [literally, bones] will flourish like grass" (Isaiah 66:13-14).

Inscribed on the

stone is: "When you see this, your heart will rejoice and their limbs like grass."

This inscription may have been a pilgrim's expression of anticipation that the Temple would soon be rebuilt. In 362 A.D., the Roman emperor Julian gave per-



mission to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, a decision which evoked immense enthusiasm among the Jewish people. Work did begin on the Temple, but an earthquake interrupted it. In 363 A.D. while the work was suspended, Julian died and building was never resumed.

It may have been during the few months of euphoria at the prospect of the Temple being rebuilt that a Jewish pilgrim was inspired to inscribe this graffito on one of the stones near where the Temple had stood.

Rabbinic literature shows that during the Byzantine period this passage from Isaiah frequently was interpreted messianically, and was the basis for many messianic sermons. Thus it could have been used by a pilgrim to express his anticipation that the messianic age was dawning. **JP**



# Synagogue Guest House for First-Century Pilgrims

*"Theodotos, son of Vettenu, priest and synagogue head, son of a synagogue head, grandson of a synagogue head, built this synagogue — whose foundations were laid by his ancestors, the elders and Simonides — for the reading of Torah and for instruction in the commandments, and the guest house with its rooms and water installations as lodging for needy [pilgrims] from the Diaspora." (English translation of the inscription)*



**T**his Greek inscription was cut into Jerusalem limestone late in the first-century B.C. It was discovered by Captain R. Weill in 1914, in excavations on the Ophel hill south of the Temple Mount. The inscription provides evidence of the accommodations that were provided in Jerusalem for pilgrims.

The name Vettenu mentioned in the inscription is a Latin name, and scholars have suggested that the father of Theodotos was a freedman who had been captured in Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. and carried away to Rome as a slave. When he was freed, according to custom he adopted the name of his former master, and returned to Jerusalem. If so, the synagogue referred to in this inscription may have been the Synagogue of the Freedmen mentioned in Acts 6:9, "...those of the synagogue which is called the Synagogue of the *Libertini* [Freedmen]."

It is not certain from the inscription that Theodotos lived in Jerusalem. He may have sent funds for the building project from

Rome. The text of the inscription seems to imply that the synagogue itself originally had been built by Theodotos' ancestors and others, and that Theodotos only added additional structures, perhaps renovating the synagogue as well.

This is the only remnant of the many synagogues that existed in Jerusalem before the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. According to the Jerusalem Talmud in a saying of Rabbi Hoshaiiah quoted by Rabbi Pinhas, the Roman emperor Vespasian had all the synagogues of Jerusalem destroyed: "There were four hundred and eighty synagogues in Jerusalem and each of them had its own school [בית ספר, *bet SE-fer*, house of the book] and seminary [בית תלמוד, *bet tal-MUD*, house of study] — a school for [the study of] the Written Torah, and a seminary for [the study of] the Oral Torah — and Vespasian destroyed them all" (jMegilah 73<sup>d</sup>).

Dimensions of the stone: 42.2 cm. high, 74.5 cm. wide, 22 cm. thick.

*(Courtesy of the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums. Photo: David Harris)*



# Hebrew Idioms in the Gospels



David Bivin is co-author of *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus and the home-study Hebrew course, Fluent Biblical and Modern Hebrew. He has lived in Israel since 1963, and serves as director of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research.*

by David Bivin

There are many expressions in the Greek texts of the synoptic Gospels that seem to derive from Hebrew idioms. These are phrases that mean something different from the literal meaning of the words they use. Every language has its own idioms, many of which seem strange when translated literally out of their native setting.

Think of such common English idioms as “hit the ceiling,” “kill time,” “eat one’s heart out,” “lose one’s head,” “be in hot water,” “throw in the towel,” or “kick the bucket.” A non-English-speaker who heard these idioms translated literally into his own language would probably find them amusing. However, if he did not suspect that they were literal translations of English idioms and took them at face value, the information he received would be very misleading.

The Hebrew language has hundreds of idioms. For example: בארבע עינים (*be-<sup>3</sup>ar-BA<sup>c</sup> e-NA-yim*), literally “with four eyes,” means face to face without the presence of a third person, as in, “The two men met *with four eyes*.” לא דבים ולא יער (*lo<sup>3</sup> du-BIM ve-LO<sup>3</sup> YA-ar*) is literally “[There are] neither bears nor forest,” but means that something is completely false. And קמן את ידו בעלטה (*ta-MAN<sup>3</sup> et ya-DO ba-tsa-LA-hat*), “buried his hand in the dish,” means that someone idles away his time. A translator faced with putting these idioms into another language such as English must be careful to find an equivalent idiom for each Hebrew expression. If he merely translates them word for word, he will not end up with English

but Hebrew in English dress.

## Literal Translation

Because biblical texts generally have been translated very literally, many idioms have found their way into the English versions of the Bible that most of us know. The words are there, but their meaning has often been left behind.

These literal translations of the Scriptures might prove useful for scholars of ancient languages, however they tend to confuse or mislead the general reader. I am reminded of the story about a little boy who thought that God had to do everything with his left hand, because he had always been taught that Jesus was sitting on the right hand of God.

Most English translations of the Hebrew Scriptures are full of

Hebrew idioms. In Genesis 6:8, for instance, we read that “Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.” This does not mean that Noah looked into God’s eyes and found in them the quality of grace. Rather it means simply that God was fond of Noah.

## Elevated Vision

English translations of the Gospels also preserve Hebrew idioms, such as “lift up the eyes and see,” which appears in Luke 16:23 in a parable about a miserly rich man and a poor man named Lazarus. This same expression, נשא את העינים וראה (*na-SA<sup>3</sup> et ha-e-NA-yim ve-ra-<sup>3</sup>AH*), had been current in Hebrew since biblical times, and appears thirty-five times in the Hebrew Scriptures. For instance, in the dramatic account of the first meeting of Isaac and his bride-to-be

“It is important to realize that there may be Hebrew idioms preserved in translations of the Gospels.”

Rebekah, Isaac “lifted up his eyes and saw” the approaching Rebekah, and she “lifted up her eyes and saw” Isaac (Gen. 24:63-64).

Note that the Hebrew expression uses two verbs, whereas in English one simply would say, “He looked” or “He saw.” This doubling of the verb seems superfluous to English-speakers, but it is part of the beauty of the Hebrew language.

There is no evidence of this expression being used in the normative Greek of Jesus’ day, yet it is found in the Greek texts of the synoptic Gospels. When Luke 16:23 is translated word-for-word into English, the result is a Hebrew idiom other examples of which are found in Hebrew literature of the period (e.g., Ta’anit 4:8).

## Detecting Hebraisms

Overly literal translating seems to have produced Hebraisms such as “lift up the eyes and see” in the Greek texts of the Gospels. If one is fluent in both Greek and Hebrew, many Hebraisms become readily apparent. They are detected in the same way that we would immediately notice alien elements in the speech of a non-native English speaker.

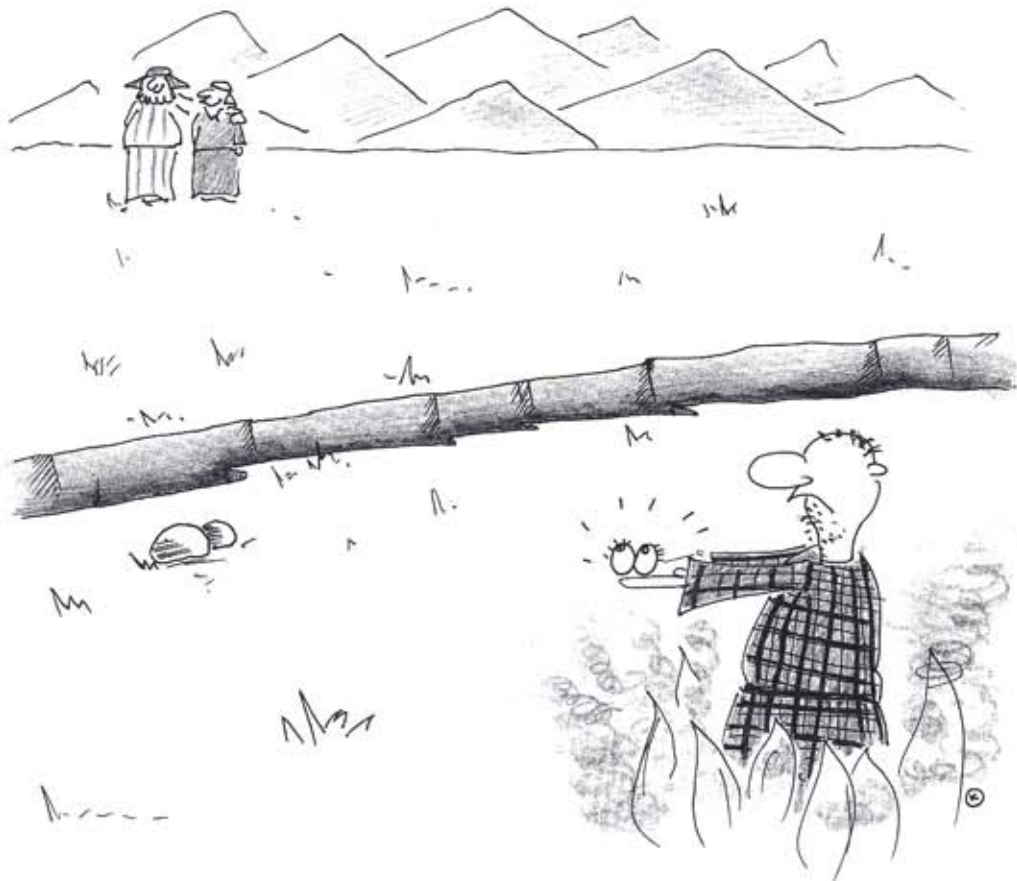
If you have ever heard someone speaking English who was thinking in another language, you probably have heard several non-English expressions. And if you also happened to be familiar with the speaker’s native language, you probably could identify the language in which the speaker was thinking. For instance, if a native German speaker told you to “mind your own beer,” there would be no need to check that your mug is nearby. Your knowledge of German language and culture would tell you that he meant “mind your own business.”

In the same way,

scholars who are familiar with Greek and Hebrew are able to recognize Hebrew idioms in the Greek texts of the synoptic Gospels. The many Hebraisms such as “lift up the eyes and see” are part of the evidence which leads scholars of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research to conclude that the story of Jesus as found in the synoptic Gospels is based upon a Hebrew document.

If the Greek of the synoptic Gospels was originally translated from Hebrew or perhaps Aramaic, an English translator’s task is first to put the Greek back into Hebrew, understand the Hebrew idiom, and then translate the Hebrew — not the Greek — to English. If the translator does not recognize Hebraisms for what they are, his translation is likely to create confusion.

It is important to realize that there may be Hebrew idioms preserved in translations of the Gospels. Just being aware of this can help us read English versions of the Gospels with more understanding. **JP**



*“He lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off.” (Luke 16:23)*





Mendel Nun was born in Latvia in 1918, immigrating to Israel in 1939. In 1941 he joined Kibbutz Ein Gev, and for the next twenty years worked as a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. In 1964 his book *Ancient Jewish Fishery [in Hebrew]* was published, for which he was awarded the Ben-Zvi Prize. His Hebrew monograph on the Sea of Galilee appeared in 1977. Presently he divides his time between the offices of the Kinnereth Sailing Company and research on subjects connected with the Sea of Galilee. This article is the first of a series based on Mendel Nun's forthcoming *The Sea of Galilee and Its Fishermen in the New Testament*.

The Sea of Galilee was the scene of most of Jesus' ministry. Fishermen and sailors were his earliest followers, and it was to them that he first preached, standing on the shore of the lake. As his audience grew, he began to preach

from fishing boats. For longer trips Jesus sailed in the boats of fishermen to teach in the towns and villages of the region.

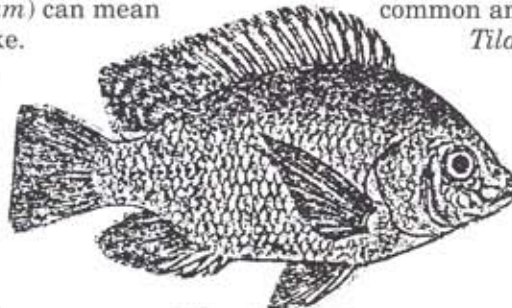
Because of its significance in the life of Jesus, the New Testament contains vignettes, parables and descriptions of the fisherman's life. But even so, we cannot expect to find detailed professional accounts.

Little is said about fishing in the Hebrew Scriptures. Although the main implements of the fisherman's craft are named, we find no reference to any particular fisherman nor to any event directly concerned with fishing; what is said is in the form of parables and allegories. Yet it appears that most of the prophets were familiar with the fisherman's occupation.

## Names of the Lake

The "Sea" of Galilee is actually a freshwater lake whose surface is only 170 square kilometers. The use of the Greek *θάλασσα* (*THA-la-sa*, sea) in the Gospels seems to be influenced by Hebrew or Aramaic. In these languages *יָם* (*yam*) can mean either sea or lake.

The lake is mentioned in both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. The former refers to it four times by its oldest biblical name, *יָם סוּפֵרֵת* (*yam ki-NE-ret*, Sea of Kinnereth), in connection with the borders of the Promised Land and the allotment of the twelve tribes.

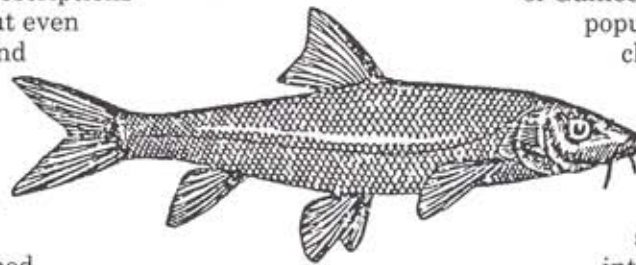


*Tilapia galilea*  
(St. Peter's Fish)

The name Sea of Galilee appears for the first time in the New Testament, which also gives several other names: Sea or Lake of Gennesar or Gennesaret, and Sea of Tiberias. It is mentioned many times, and provides the background for daily life.

## Fish Population

Fishing methods on the lake did not change from the time of the Second Temple until the 1950s and 60s, when the techniques used on the lake were revolutionized. Then fishermen began to use motorized fiberglass boats and electronic fish detectors, and cotton thread was replaced by transparent nylon lines invisible to the fish which made possible daytime fishing with the same nets. Enormous innovations thus changed the face of the Sea of Galilee. The fish population



*Barbus longiceps* (Biny)

changed as well. Indigenous species declined, and new species were introduced. The indigenous fish population consists of eighteen species, ten of which are commercially important, and most of which are endemic to the lake or to the Jordan water system. According to tradition, the edible fish of the Sea of Galilee are divided into three main groups: 1) musht, 2) biny, 3) sardines.

Musht means "comb" in Arabic, and the five species of this group are so named because they have a long dorsal fin which looks like a comb. The biggest, the most common and the most important of these is

*Tilapia galilea*, the so-called "St.

Peter's Fish," which can reach a length of 40 centimeters and may weigh 1.5 kilograms.

Its flat shape makes it suitable for frying, and its easily detachable backbone and relatively few small bones, make it easy to eat.

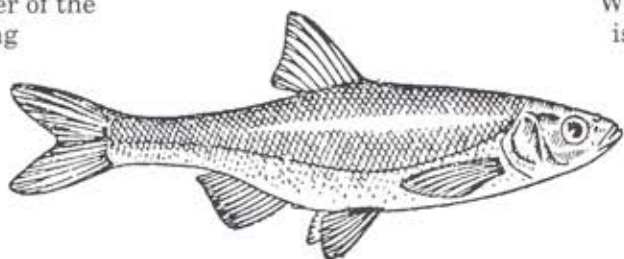
With the cooling of the waters as winter starts, the musht congregate and move in schools, especially toward the northern part of the lake. The musht is the only large fish in the lake



which moves in schools.

The biny is part of the carp family. Its name comes from a Semitic word for "hair," which refers to the characteristic barbs at the corners of the fish's mouth. Two particular species of biny have always had an important place in the land of Israel because they are well-fleshed and popular as a dish for the Sabbath and feasts. The Talmud describes how Tiberias fishermen brought seven of these fish as a gift to the compiler of the Mishnah, the patriarch Yehudah ha-Nasi, during his stay in the city.

The Sea of Galilee sardine is the smallest of the commercial fish, yet it has great economic importance because of its extensive distribution. It resembles the saltwater sardine, and like it can be found in enormous schools. At the height of the fishing season, tens of tons of sardines are caught every night. That is why already in antiquity they were conserved by pickling. Sardines were an important part of the daily diet throughout the country, especially for those who lived near the lake. The center of the sardine pickling industry was the town of Magdala, the home of Mary Magdalene, on the western shore of the lake.



*Acanthobrama terraesanctae*  
(Sea of Galilee Sardine)

## Fisherman's Suburb

Tabgha is located two kilometers southwest of Capernaum, along the shores of the Sea of Galilee. The name is a corruption of the Greek Ἑπτάπηγον (*Heptapegon*, seven springs). And indeed in the vicinity of Tabgha is a group of springs varying in volume, temperature and salinity. Josephus Flavius referred to the largest as the Well of Capernaum, thus pointing to the connection between Heptapegon and Capernaum.

The springs of Heptapegon have great economic importance. In the winter the warm water draws schools of warmth-lov-

ing musht to the vicinity. The Capernaum fishermen stayed in this area during winter and early spring, making Heptapegon an important commercial suburb of Capernaum. A small harbor which served the fishermen was discovered in 1975.

When Jesus began his ministry, he left his native Nazareth and came down to the lake.

Capernaum became "his own city," and he lived with the family of Peter the fisherman. It was probably winter and the members of the family were all working in Heptapegon.

Here on the shore Jesus began to preach, and here he also found his first followers among the fishermen. Most of the events of the Gospels connected with fishing therefore took place in Heptapegon. According to Christian tradition, this is also the place where Jesus met with his disciples after the resurrection. **JP**

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*In the next article we will learn about the different methods of fishing in the Sea of Galilee, and see how they are quite accurately described in the Bible.*

# Fish & The Sea of Galilee

by Mendel Nun

*The Sea of Galilee viewed from the point where it exits into the Jordan River. Across the lake on the left, nestled under the Golan Heights, is Ein Gev, the author's kibbutz home.*

*(Photo: David Harris)*





*The discoveries of Dr. Robert Lindsey, Pastor Emeritus of Jerusalem's Narkis Street Baptist Congregation, became the foundation of a new school of New Testament thought — the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research. His research is challenging many conclusions of New Testament scholarship from the past 150 years.*

by Robert L. Lindsey

*This is the sixth article in Dr. Lindsey's introduction to the field of synoptic studies and the "synoptic problem."*

In our previous article we looked at two facts that make it necessary to suppose interdependence among the synoptic Gospels. On the one hand, only the first of the forty-seven common Matthean-Lukan Double Tradition pericopae can be said to be given the same place in pericope-order. This suggests that Matthew and Luke did not use each other's work. Had Matthew or Luke derived his Double Tradition stories from the other, it is difficult to imagine that so few of the forty-seven would have been in the same sequence.

On the other hand, fifty-nine of the seventy-eight Triple Tradition pericopae appear in the same general order in all three Gospels. This suggests that Matthew

and Luke were influenced by Mark in arranging their Triple Tradition pericopae.

These similarities and differences in pericope-order have led most scholars to accept the theory of Markan Priority. However, it is also possible that Mark caused the common order not because his was the first Gospel written and was used by both Matthew and Luke, but because the author of Mark copied one of them and then was copied by the other.

## Verbal Identity

There is another difference between the Double and Triple Traditions which can help to settle the issue of who wrote first.

This difference was noticed by Markan priorists, but its significance seems to have been overlooked.

If the Theory of Markan Priority is accurate, one would expect to find high verbal identity in Triple Tradition material where there is high identity in pericope-order, because Matthew and Luke supposedly are copying from Mark. Likewise one would expect to find low verbal identity in Double Tradition where there is low identity in pericope-order, because they are not copying from Mark. Yet in fact one finds just the opposite. Verbal identity is relatively high in Double Tradition stories — Matthew and Luke agree on approximately sixty percent of the wording of their stories. While in Triple Tradition stories verbal identity is low — Matthew and Luke agree on approximately twenty-five percent of the wording in stories they share.

This would seem to contradict the conclusions of Markan priorists based on pericope-order evidence. The high



*"Do you have something for my synoptic problem?"*



verbal identity in Double Tradition apparently indicates that either Matthew or Luke copied from the other, or that both copied from some common source such as the hypothetical Q. The low verbal identity in Triple Tradition seems to indicate that Matthew and Luke did not both copy from Mark.

If Matthew and Luke sometimes copied faithfully from a common source as the Double Tradition pericopae seem to demonstrate, why did they not do the same when copying Mark? According to the theory of Markan Priority, Mark is their source for the material they share with him. Why would Matthew and Luke have treated the vocabulary of the conjectured Q document with greater regard than Mark? The theory of Markan Priority provides no answer.

## Markan Cross-Factor

I believe the only satisfactory solution to this problem involves abandoning the theory of Markan Priority. It is preferable to suppose that Mark's Gospel was written second, that Mark copied either Matthew or Luke, often rewording the text as he copied, and that Mark was then copied by the third synoptist. In this case, the verbal distance between Matthew and Luke would have been caused by the synonyms Mark introduced.

I have called the contrast between the Double and Triple Traditions in both pericope-order and verbal identity the Markan Cross-Factor. One finds high verbal identity but low pericope-order agreement in Double Tradition, and low verbal identity but high pericope-order agreement in Triple Tradition. This correlation between Double and Triple Tradition strongly argues against Markan Priority. Both in pericope-order and verbal identity it is apparently the presence of Mark which distinguishes Triple from Double Tradition. Mark stands between Matthew and Luke, causing agreement and non-agreement in pericope-order and most of the difference in wording found in the synoptic Gospels.

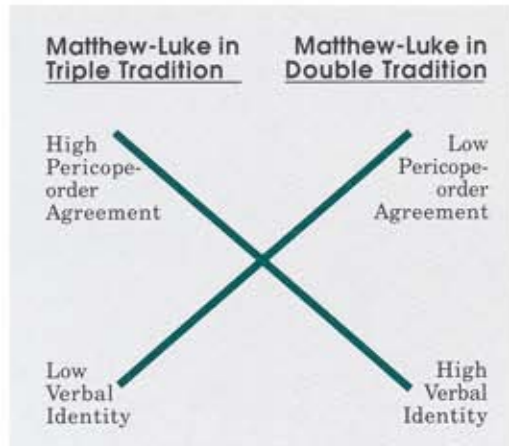
## Minor Agreements

Another weakness of Markan Priority is what are called the "minor agreements." These are the 400 or so instances within the Triple Tradition pericopae where Matthew and Luke exhibit verbal agreement not shared by Mark. (See "The Synoptic Problem," JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE, April 1989, and my *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark*, pp. 14–19.)

There are many agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark in stories they all share. It is hard to explain how this could be if, as Markan priorists claim, Matthew and Luke were both dependent on Mark. There are too many such agreements to write off as coincidence.

Again I find that the best explanation is that Mark was the second not the first of the synoptic Gospels. The writer who was third in order copied Mark's text, combining it with the source he shared with the first writer.

In my next article we will consider whether it is possible to identify the first and third writers if one abandons a theory of Markan priority in favor of simple linear interdependence between the synoptic Gospels (Matthew → Mark → Luke, or Luke → Mark → Matthew). **JP**



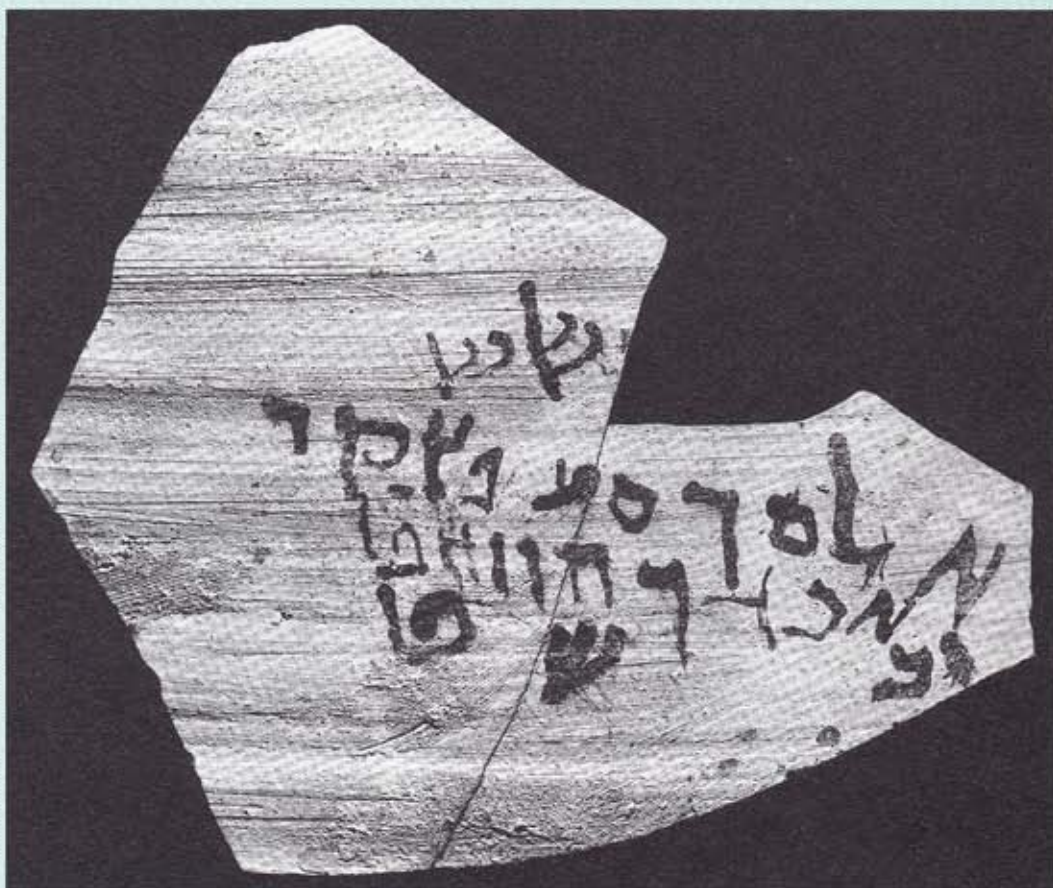
## Glossary

- ◆ **Double Tradition** — the pericopae that are shared only by Matthew and Luke.
- ◆ **pericope** (pə-rik-ə-pē) — one of the episodes or story units in the synoptic Gospels; a division of a synopsis. Plural: pericopae.
- ◆ **synopsis** — a book in which the first three Gospels are arranged in parallel columns.
- ◆ **synoptic** — adjective from *συνόψεσθαι* (*su-NOP-ses-thai*), a Greek word meaning "to view together"; specifically refers to the first three Gospels of the New Testament.
- ◆ **Synoptic Gospels** — Matthew, Mark and Luke.
- ◆ **Synoptic Problem** — the scholarly debate concerning the order in which the synoptic Gospels were written, and the literary sources used by each.
- ◆ **Triple Tradition** — the pericopae that are shared by all three synoptic Gospels.
- ◆ **verbal identity** — use of the same words, sometimes implying the same forms or sequence of words.



# “Abecedarium”

An ostracon found at Qumran dating from the first century B.C. This is called an “abecedarium” because it contains the letters of the alphabet, in this case in Hebrew. The inscription seems to be an exercise in writing, perhaps the practice of a novice scribe. The letters are written in ink from right to left beginning with the bottom line. The upper right corner of the sherd is broken, thus the final letter of the alphabet, the ט (tav), is missing. By the first century Hebrew script already had adopted the square letters of Aramaic, and the letters of this inscription look very much like the printed letters of modern Hebrew. Dimensions: 11 cm. high, 13.2 cm. wide.



(Courtesy of the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums)

## *Pilgrimage in the Time of Jesus* (continued from page 4)

ing (Mt. 26:55, Mk. 14:48–49, Lk. 22:52–53, cf. Jn. 18:20). Jesus apparently taught in the Temple courtyards in a manner similar to that of Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai who used to “sit in the shade of the sanctuary and teach for the entire day” (Pesahim 26<sup>a</sup>).

### **Length of Stay**

In Luke 2:43 it is stated that Jesus’ parents returned home when they had “fulfilled the days.” This implies that they not only spent the first day of Passover in Jerusalem, but a number of days there.

When the Bible discusses the Passover sacrifice, it adds: “And in the morning you may start back on your journey home” (Deuteronomy 16:7). In other words, the

Passover pilgrim could return home any time after the first day of the seven-day festival (traveling was forbidden on the first day of the festival).

However rabbinic tradition dating from as early as the Second Temple period interpreted “in the morning” in this verse as referring not to the first day of the festival but to the whole seven-day festival: “Scripture treats all of them [the days of Passover] as one morning [i.e., as one day]” (Zevahim 11:7; Zevahim 97<sup>a</sup>).

Thus, in the time of Jesus’ parents, the Passover pilgrim did not return home after the first day of the festival but only after he had “fulfilled the days.” A family of pilgrims stayed in Jerusalem for the entire seven days of the Feast of Passover, or the eight days of the Feast of Tabernacles. **JP**



# Israel in Review

by David Bivin

The third letter in ישראל is *resh*, the Hebrew “r” sound which we learned in Lesson Fourteen. It is followed by one of two “a” sounds we have learned — (ka·MATS).

## Final Syllable

א (ʿA·lef) is the first letter in the final syllable of ישראל. We first were introduced to ʿA·lef in Lesson Six. Remember that it is silent. Our transliterations represent it with the symbol ʿ.

Under the ʿA·lef is the vowel sign (tse·RE). We learned this vowel in Lesson Two in connection with the word ישׁוּעָ (ye·SHU·aʿ, Jesus).

The tse·RE is classified grammatically as a long vowel, and there is some evidence that in ancient Hebrew a difference in the length of vowels did exist. No such difference is found in the pronunciation of modern Hebrew. For instance, Israelis sometimes pronounce the tse·RE like the “e” in net, sometimes like the “e” in hey, and sometimes somewhere in between. In our transliterations the tse·RE is represented by the letter “e.”

A tse·RE often appears in a word followed by yod. The addition of yod to tse·RE, like the addition of yod to hi·RIK (see Lesson Twenty), has no effect on the pronunciation of tse·RE. Therefore a yod following a tse·RE is silent.

The final letter of the word ישראל is LA·med, the letter which stands for the Hebrew “l” sound. We first met this letter in the word הללֵיָהּ (ha·le·lu·YAH).

## Names for God

The final syllable of ישראל can stand

alone as a separate word. אֱל (ʿel) is one of two words in the Hebrew Scriptures translated “God.” The plural of אֱל is אֱלִים (ʿe·LIM). ʿel apparently is related to the other word for God, אֱלֹהִים (ʿe·lo·HIM), whose first two letters are א and ל.

The central meaning of ʿel seems to be “power” or “strength,” and it was the basic Semitic word for deity. The father and the creator of the gods in the

Canaanite pantheon, for instance, was the god El.

Two other Canaanite gods were Baal and Asherah, El’s children.

In Genesis 17:1, God tells Abraham, “I am אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָם [ʿel sha·DAI].”

The traditional translation of ʿel sha·DAI is “God Almighty.” However, the meaning of

sha·DAI, like that of the tetragrammaton, יהוה (YHVH), is not certain, and it is doubtful whether “almighty” is the correct translation (cf. E. A. Speiser, *Anchor Bible*, Genesis, p. 124).

אֱלִי (ʿe·LI), meaning “my God,” is found doubled in a characteristically Hebraic way in Psalm 22:2, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” אֱלִי also is found in many biblical names which are compounded from אֱלִי plus a Hebrew noun:

- Eliezer = my God [is] help (Genesis 15:2)
- Elizur = my God [is] a rock (Numbers 1:5)
- Elimelech = my God [is] king (Ruth 1:2)
- Eliab/Eliav = my God [is] father (Numbers 1:9)
- Eliel = my God [is] God (I Chronicles 5:24)
- Elijah/Eliyah = my God [is] Yah (II Kings 1:3). **JP**

In our next lesson we will begin the study of one of the most stirring words in the Hebrew language: מְשִׁיחַ — Messiah.

**Lesson 22**

*In the first syllable of the word ישראל (yis-ra-ʿEL), we met a new vowel sign — hi·RIK. We also met for the first time a silent she·VAʿ. In this lesson we will review the sounds — all introduced in previous lessons — contained in the last two syllables.*





David Pileggi is a free-lance journalist who has lived in Israel for nine years. His articles have appeared in such publications as *The Jerusalem Post* and *Charisma*. He currently is working on a book about William Hechler, the Anglican priest who befriended Theodor Herzl, the father of modern Zionism.

***Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*** by Marvin R. Wilson. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, and Dayton, Ohio: Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, 1989. 395 pp., \$15.95.

by David Pileggi

For too long discussion of the Jewishness of Jesus has remained academic. Few scholars have had the interest or ability to unfold the practical meaning of the Gospels' Jewish roots for today's Church. Marvin Wilson, professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Gordon College, has finally filled that void with *Our Father Abraham*. And the result is simply revolutionary. For the first time someone has given the person in the pew an understanding of just what the Jewishness of Jesus means for his or her everyday life.

*Our Father Abraham* begins with a useful survey of the Jewish origins of the Church and provides some fresh perspectives on the early relationship between Jews and the Jewish disciples of Jesus. For example, Wilson points out that according to recent historical research from Israel, the *ברכה המיני* (*bir-KAT ha-mi-NIM*, a first-century prayer against heretics) was not specifically formulated for use against Jewish followers of Jesus, as has often been maintained. The book also clears up a number of popular misconceptions about Judaism. One of the most widespread is the belief that Judaism teaches salvation by works, when in fact Judaism in the time of Jesus, and today, maintains that it is only through the mercy of God that salvation is obtained.

Wilson continues with a review of anti-Semitism, primarily emphasizing the de-Judaization of the Church. This process was completed by the end of the second century and resulted in a tidal wave of Christian anti-Judaism. Wilson focuses on what the twin diseases of anti-Semitism and de-Judaization have cost the Church. Spiritually severed from its Jewish foundations, the Church adopted much of the Platonic thought that prevailed in the Greek world.

Perhaps the best example is the influence of Platonic thought on Christian understanding of sex and marriage. Platon-

ism sees the body as imperfect and a source of evil, while the spirit is viewed as something pure that demands release from the body. Because of this, celibacy came to be considered a holier state for the Christian, with marriage reserved for the spiritually weak and those unable to control their "earthly passions."

The Hebrew concept of marriage is quite different. From biblical times until today, Jewish teaching has consistently affirmed the goodness of marriage and family. As Wilson notes, "the Song of Songs celebrates sexuality and human love in bold terms. The Hebrews were far from those who displayed an indifference or blandness about life. Though not hedonistic, their lifestyle was physical and robust." Except for the Essenes, it was almost unknown in Jewish tradition to remain unmarried. With this in mind, Wilson points out, "it is not surprising that biblical Hebrew has no word for 'bachelor.'"

The author warns that once the Church strays from its Jewish heritage, distortion is bound to follow. He illustrates this with selected studies on community, family life and discipleship. In each of these areas he shows how the Church has lost sight of the biblical/Jewish ideal.

Wilson offers a number of helpful suggestions that will enable Christians to adopt "a Hebraic orientation toward life and the world." He suggests three general areas for this: personal interaction, personal education, and personal action or righteous living. As regards the latter, the author states: "Orthodoxy (correct or straight thinking) must lead to orthopraxy (right doing)... Christianity must be careful that it does not allow *dogma* (the way to believe, prescribed by creed) to overshadow *halakhah* (the way to walk or live). Both concepts must be held in balance."

Developing a Hebraic orientation after 1900 years of de-Judaization is not easy. One needs what Wilson calls "a Jewish heart ... a personal living feel for the world of Judaism." Ultimately this will allow Christians to gain a fuller understanding of what the Bible teaches, and a richer appreciation of life. **JP**



# New Computer Received!

In a previous issue we mentioned a project to upgrade the Jerusalem School's computer equipment. The response has been very good, and we are happy to announce that we now have our new Macintosh SE/30. We wish to thank the many people who have generously contributed and made it possible for us to reach this goal.

We also wish to thank Dr. William Bean, our associate in the United States who coordinated the effort to raise the money for the SE/30 and who flew to Israel to personally deliver the equipment.

This represents a significant increase in our computer capabilities. The extra memory in the computer allows us to make use of sophisticated new graphics, layout design and database programs, and the tremendous increase in operating speed makes our work much more efficient. Also we now are able to make use of The

PerfectWord, a program enabling searches of the Bible in Greek and Hebrew, which requires more computer memory than we had previously.

Meanwhile we find that our appeal moved one reader in Virginia, U.S.A., to donate the largest and newest computer in the Macintosh line — the Mac IIcx with a full-page color monitor and laser-jet printer — a \$10,000 value. Right now, however, this equipment is sitting in the offices of the Jerusalem School's U.S. affiliate, the Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, in Dayton, Ohio, waiting to be shipped to Israel. Before it can be shipped, we must raise approximately \$3,500 to pay Israeli customs.

If you would like to help the School acquire this additional equipment, please send your donations to the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research, P.O. Box 31822, 91317 Jerusalem, Israel. To

obtain a tax-deductible receipt in the United States, send donations care of the Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, P.O. Box 293040, Dayton, OH 45429 (Tel. 513-434-4550), or the Centre for the Study of Biblical Research, P.O. Box 5922, Pasadena, CA 91107 (Tel. 818-796-8001). Please designate your check "For Mac IIcx."

*A pleased editor, Jeffrey Magnuson, at the keyboard of the newly-arrived Macintosh SE/30. Looking on is Dr. William Bean, director of the Centre for the Study of Biblical Research.*



## *Readers' Forum* (continued from page 2)

The commentary will include literal, idiomatic and paraphrastic English translations of the conjectured original Hebrew biography of Jesus. We hope to publish a preliminary edition of that part of the commentary within the next two years. **JP**

### **W**as Jesus a rabbi?

—A reader in London, England

Although it was only after 70 A.D. that רַבִּי (*ra-bi*, my master) became a formal title for a teacher, this term may be more helpful than any other in conveying a correct image of Jesus to the average Christian reader. In Jesus' day "my master" was a form of address like "sir" in English.

From the Gospel accounts, Jesus clearly appears as a typical first-century Jewish

sage and was famous enough to draw students to himself. Perhaps the most convincing proof that Jesus was a sage was his style of teaching, for he used the same methods of Scripture interpretation and instruction as other Jewish sages of his day. A simple example of this is Jesus' use of parables to convey his teachings.

Because this question is crucial to a full understanding of Jesus, we published an article entitled "Was Jesus a Rabbi?" in the June 1988 issue of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE. Back issues can be obtained by writing to JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE, P.O. Box 31820, 91317 Jerusalem, Israel. For prices of back issues, please refer to the Editor's Box on page two of this issue. **JP**

JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE welcomes the opinions of readers. Although space is limited, we will use Readers' Forum to share as many of our readers' comments and questions as possible.



## The Jerusalem School

**T**he Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research (מכון ירושלים לחקר האוונגליזם הסיופטיים) is a consortium of Jewish and Christian scholars who are studying Jesus' sayings within the context of the language and culture in which he lived. Their work confirms that Jesus was a Jewish sage who taught in Hebrew and used uniquely Hebraic teaching methods.

The Jerusalem School scholars believe that the original life story of Jesus was written in Hebrew, and that it can be successfully recovered from the Greek texts of the synoptic Gospels. The School's central objective is to retrieve this first biography

of Jesus. This is an attempt to recover a lost document from the Second Temple period, a Hebrew scroll which, like so much Jewish literature of the period, has been preserved only in Greek.

As a means to its objective, the Jerusalem School is creating a detailed commentary on the synoptic Gospels which will reflect the renewed insight provided by the School's research.

The Jerusalem School was registered in Israel as a nonprofit research institute in 1985.



## International Synoptic Society

**R**eaders of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE can become members of the International Synoptic Society. Membership dues promote the research of the Jerusalem School.

The goals of the Society are to:

- Publish the research of the Jerusalem School.
- Present technical research in a distilled and popularized form.
- Support new research into the synoptic Gospels.
- Sustain and expand JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE, the popular voice of the Jerusalem School.

Annual membership in the Society is:  
*Regular* — £60 or US\$100 (or equivalent in other currency)

*Fellow* — £180 or US\$300

*Sponsor* — £300 or US\$500

*Patron* — £600 or US\$1000

*Lifetime membership* — £3000 or US\$5000

Members of the Society will receive a special membership certificate, and publi-

cations of the Jerusalem School will carry the names of contributing members.

Checks should be made payable to "Jerusalem Perspective." United States members can receive a tax-deductible receipt by sending their dues via the Jerusalem School's U.S. affiliate, the Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, P.O. Box 293040, Dayton, OH 45429.

Many of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE's readers are as interested as the scholars of the Jerusalem School in the exploration of Jesus' biography. By becoming a member of the International Synoptic Society, you will be instrumental in helping us all to better understand the words of Jesus. Your membership dues will help expand the horizons of Gospel research, and enable JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE to more fully report on the work of the Jerusalem School.

