



*Treasures New and Old*  
*(Matt. 13:52)*

**CELEBRATING**

**35 YEARS**

*of*

**Jerusalem**  
**P E R S P E C T I V E**

1987 - 2022

*edited by*

David N. Bivin and Joshua N. Tilton

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Treasures New and Old (Matt. 13:52):  
Celebrating 35 Years of *Jerusalem Perspective*

Thirty-five *JP* articles from our first thirty-five years.

*Edited by*  
David N. Bivin and Joshua N. Tilton

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**Jerusalem**  
P E R S P E C T I V E

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## Foreword

*by David N. Bivin*

The desire to better understand the words of Jesus has been a lifelong personal quest. It began when, as a teenager, I became a follower of Jesus and found many of his sayings to be incomprehensible. Over the years my personal quest to understand Jesus' words has grown into a passion for sharing that understanding with others.

In 1963 this quest led me to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where I studied the Hebrew language and Jewish history. It was during my six years of full-time study there that I discovered knowledge of Hebrew is the key that unlocks the meaning of Jesus' sayings. This discovery came as a surprise, since all Jesus' sayings have been preserved in Greek.

The idea for creating a new periodical was conceived in the mid-1980s as Jeffrey Magnuson and I were working on chapters of my projected book (alas, never completed), which attempted to explain the Jewish backgrounds and Hebraic nuances of some of Jesus' sayings. "We're working and working, but not publishing anything," Jeff said. "Let's publish a monthly newsletter where your insights about the words of Jesus can reach the public." Thus in October of 1987 *Jerusalem Perspective* (**JP**) was born.

Although *Jerusalem Perspective* began as merely a four-page newsletter, it quickly expanded into a bimonthly, sixteen-page, two-color publication, and eventually became a quarterly, forty-page, full-color magazine. Jeff served as **JP**'s editor from 1987-1992 (Issue 1 [Oct. 1987] to Issue 37 [Mar.-Apr. 1992]), and Joseph Frankovic, a tremendously gifted researcher, edited **JP** Issues 55 and 56 (Apr. 1999-Sept. 1999).

As *Jerusalem Perspective* grew in size, it also started to include viewpoints other than my own. **JP** began to publish articles by Jewish and Christian scholars (such as David Flusser, Shmuel Safrai, Ronny Reich, Steven Notley, Randall Buth and Magen Broshi) who brought their expertise in archaeology, biblical geography, Jewish history, Second Temple Jewish literature, and ancient languages to bear on the words of Jesus. The

contributions of many of those scholars are contained in this volume. *JP* also highlighted the groundbreaking approach to the Synoptic Gospels pioneered by Robert L. Lindsey, who believed that Luke was the first of these Gospels, and that behind the majority of the stories and sayings contained in the Synoptic Gospels there stood a Hebrew—not Aramaic!—source.

After twelve years as a print publication, *Jerusalem Perspective* migrated to an online format, where it now reaches a world-wide audience. On its website *JP* continues to publish articles that explore the Jewish and Hebraic backgrounds of Jesus' sayings. *JP* also continues to highlight the work of outstanding scholars like John C. "Jack" Poirier, Guido Baltes, Jeffrey P. García, Huub van de Sandt and Serge Ruzer, and, by hosting "The *Life of Yeshua: A Suggested Reconstruction*," *JP* is advancing the approach to the Gospels propounded by Robert L. Lindsey.



## Introduction

*by Joshua N. Tilton*

The essays contained in this thirty-fifth anniversary volume span the breadth of *Jerusalem Perspective*'s history, from articles published in its very first issue (Bivin's "Was Jesus a Confirmed Bachelor?") to articles only published online (e.g., Poirier's "666: One Number or Three?"). They also range from the simple (e.g., Wilson's "The Appearance of Jesus: Hairstyles and Beards in Bible Times") to the complex (e.g., Flusser and Safrai's "The Apostolic Decree and the Noahide Commandments"), address readers from beginners (e.g., Lindsey's "Introduction to Synoptic Studies") to the advanced student (e.g., Ruzer's "Notes on the New Testament as a Witness for Broader Jewish Patterns in Jesus' Times"), and were authored by people ranging from amateurs such as myself ("Shake the Dust from Your Feet': What Did the Apostles' Action Signify?") to leading authorities like Huub van de Sandt ("The Didache and its Relevance for Understanding the Gospel of Matthew").

By including in this volume such diverse contributions as Suess' "Lilies of the Field" and Safrai's "Jesus and the Hasidim," we hope to display *Jerusalem Perspective*'s insatiable curiosity about all aspects of the world in which Jesus taught, healed, and mentored disciples, and to demonstrate *JP*'s appeal to a wide array of audiences. This volume also hopes to prove that *JP* is an indispensable resource for Bible and seminary students, an aid to pastors and teachers, a guide to those engaged in interfaith relations, and a forum for scholars to introduce their research to readers beyond the enclave of the university.

*Jerusalem Perspective* stretches the worldview of simple believers, deepens the faith of questioning students, challenges outdated assumptions (e.g., that Hebrew was no longer a spoken language in the first century), combats dangerous prejudices (viz., anti-Semitism) and helps bridge the chasm between Christian and Jew. How do I know *JP* has the ability to do these things? Because it did all those things for me. And I suspect I am not alone in this regard. Over its thirty-five years *JP* has undoubtedly transformed the lives of untold numbers of readers.

As *Jerusalem Perspective* looks ahead to the next thirty-five years, the one thing we can

foresee with certainty is that change is on the horizon. Just as *JP* changed its format from newsletter to magazine to online publication, so it will continue to evolve, finding new ways to meet readers—and now also viewers (see *JP*'s [YouTube channel](#)) and listeners (check out [Audio JP](#))—wherever they are. *JP* also hopes to reach out to new audiences, informing new generations of students, leaders and laypersons about the world in which Jesus lived, the deeds he performed, and the message he proclaimed, so that the Kingdom of Heaven, God's redeeming power among the faithful, may more forcefully erupt into our increasingly chaotic, divided and imperiled world.

In the coming years *Jerusalem Perspective* also expects to witness a changing of the guard. New authors and contributors will be needed to carry on the tradition of academic excellence and intellectual curiosity so admirably established by the likes of Robert Lindsey, David Flusser and Shmuel Safrai. And it is to be hoped that among these new contributors will be found more women and people of diverse backgrounds, so that the global reach and universal relevance of Jesus' message will be more accurately represented among the contributors to *JP*'s content. Likewise, *JP*'s leadership and staff will inevitably undergo transformation as David Bivin hands the torch to a new generation.

Change is inevitable, and, as part of the created order, it is to be embraced. But whatever changes may come to *Jerusalem Perspective* in the future, we can count on some things to remain the same. *JP* will carry forward David's quest to better understand the teachings of Jesus. *JP* will continue to highlight the research of Jewish and Christian scholars in the fields of biblical archaeology, Second Temple Judaism and ancient languages. And, with God's blessing and the support of *JP*'s members, *Jerusalem Perspective* will continue to pursue its transformational mission for many more years to come.

## Authors

**David N. Bivin** is founder and editor of *Jerusalem Perspective (JP)*. Bivin has lived in Israel since 1963, when he came to Jerusalem to do postgraduate work at the Hebrew University. He studied at the Hebrew University until 1969, specializing in Jewish history and literature under professors Menahem Stern, David Flusser, Shmuel Safrai and Yechezkel Kutscher, and in archaeology under professors Yigael Yadin, Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah. During those six years, and for many years afterwards, Bivin also studied the Synoptic Gospels with Jerusalem scholar-pastor Robert L. Lindsey.

**Randall Buth** is director of the Biblical Language Center and a lecturer at the Rothberg International School of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the Home for Bible Translators. He is a member of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research. Buth received his doctorate in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures from the University of California, Los Angeles (1987). His dissertation, “Word Order in Aramaic from the Perspectives of Functional Grammar and Discourse Analysis,” was written under the supervision of Professor Stanislav Segert. Buth’s research has been published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics*, *Maarav*, and elsewhere. Buth has dedicated his life to communicating Jesus’ teaching to other cultures and languages. From 1977 to 1996 he lived in Africa and served as a translator and translation consultant with Wycliffe Bible Translators, and as a translation consultant with the United Bible Societies. Buth is the author of *Living Biblical Hebrew for Everyone*.

**David Flusser** (1917-2000) was a founding member of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research. Flusser received his doctorate from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1957, where he later taught in the Comparative Religions department for many years. A member of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Professor Flusser was frequently recognized for his scholarship: he was awarded the Israel Prize (1980), the State of Israel's most prestigious honor, as well as the Rothschild Prize for Jewish Sciences (2000). He was a recipient of honorary doctorates from, among others, the Catholic Faculty of Theology of Lucerne, Switzerland (1989), and Hebrew Union College (2000). He authored over 1,000 scholarly articles in Hebrew, German, English and other languages. Among the books he wrote are *Jesus* (3rd ed., 2001) and *Judaism of the Second Temple Period* (Volume 1, 2007; Volume 2, 2009). His collaboration with Robert Lindsey, beginning in 1961, inspired a new approach to the Synoptic Gospels.

**Joseph Frankovic** graduated with a Master of Arts degree in American Studies from Northeastern State University. He holds additional degrees in other disciplines, including Biblical Literature, Classical Studies, and Midrash. He earned these degrees at state and private universities and accredited Jewish and Christian seminaries.

**Robert L. Lindsey** (1917-1995) was the long-time pastor of Jerusalem's Narkis Street Congregation. His research on the Synoptic Gospels led to the creation of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research. Lindsey's publications include his three-volume *A Comparative Greek Concordance of the Synoptic Gospels*, *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark*, *Jesus, Rabbi and Lord: A Lifetime's Search for the Meaning of Jesus' Words*, and *The Jesus Sources: Uncovering the Literary Sources Used by Matthew, Mark and Luke*.

**R. Steven Notley** is Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at the New York City campus of Nyack College. A member and past director of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research, Notley earned his Ph.D. in Comparative Religions at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1993). He studied in Jerusalem under the direction of the late Professor David Flusser, writing his dissertation on "The Concept of the Holy Spirit in Jewish Literature of the Second Commonwealth and Pre-Pauline Christianity." With Flusser he collaborated on the historical biography *Jesus* (3rd ed., 2001). Among his most recent books are *Parables of the Sages: Jewish Wisdom from Jesus to Rav Ashi* (2011), co-written with Ze'ev Safrai, *In the Master's Steps: The Gospels in the Land* (2014), and *Jerusalem: City of the Great King* (2015).

**Mendel Nun** (1918-2010) was a Galilean fisherman, kibbutz member, author and foremost expert on the Sea of Galilee. Born in 1918 to a Zionist family in Latvia, Nun immigrated in 1939 to Palestine, where he became a member of Ein Gev, which today is a thriving, modern kibbutz on the lake's eastern shore. For the next twenty years Nun worked as a fisherman on the lake. It was during this period that he became interested in ancient fishing methods. In 1964 his book, *Ancient Jewish Fishing* (in Hebrew), was published. For it he was awarded the prestigious Ben-Zvi Prize. Nun's Hebrew monograph on the Sea of Galilee appeared in 1977.

**Ronny Reich** was head of the Department of Archaeology of Haifa University in Israel. Reich received his Ph.D. in Archaeology in 1990 from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Reich deciphered the inscriptions on the ossuaries found in the Caiaphas tomb and supervised the excavations at the recently discovered Pool of Siloam. Reich is the author of numerous articles and books, including *Jerusalem as Jesus Knew It* (2012).

**Serge Ruzer** is a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he teaches in the Department of Comparative Religion. He has authored numerous articles and books on the Jewish background of the New Testament. Among the most important of these are *Mapping the New Testament: Early Christian Writings as a Witness for Jewish Biblical Exegesis* (2007) and *Early Jewish Messianism in the New Testament: Reflections in the Dim Mirror* (2020). Ruzer also edited two volumes of collected Hebrew essays by David Flusser which have now appeared in English translation as *Judaism of the Second Temple Period* (2007-2009).

**Chana Safrai** (1946–2008) was a member of the faculty of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. She received her M.A. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and her Ph.D. in Judaics from the Catholic Theological University. A member of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research, she was also a member of the Jewish-Christian Relations Research Center. Safrai wrote numerous scholarly articles and co-authored with Samuel Belkin *The Midrash of Philo* (1989, in Hebrew).

**Shmuel Safrai** (1919-2003) was a founding member of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research. Safrai was a professor of Jewish History of the Mishnaic and Talmudic Period at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Safrai was the recipient of many literary prizes for his research, including the Jerusalem Prize (1986) and the Israel Prize (2002), the State of Israel's most prestigious honor. He wrote over eighty articles and twelve books, including *Pilgrimage in the Period of the Second Temple* (1965, in Hebrew) and *Haggadah of the Sages* (2009), co-authored with his son, Ze'ev Safrai.

**Ze'ev Safrai** is a professor in the Martin Szusz Department of Land of Israel Studies at Bar Ilan University in Israel. Safrai has written and edited ten books, among them *Haggadah of the Sages* (2009), co-authored with his father, Shmuel Safrai, and *The Economy of Roman Palestine: The Missing Century* (1994). His ground-breaking *Parables of the Sages: Jewish Wisdom from Jesus to Rav Ashi* (2011) was co-authored with R. Steven Notley. Safrai also has written numerous articles on Jewish history, culture, and the land of Israel in the Second Temple, Mishnaic, and Talmudic times.

**Gloria E. M. Suess** (1932-2010) lived in Israel for several years. The amazing multitude and variety of Israeli wildflowers inspired Suess to start photographing all she could find. As volunteer secretary, editor and artist for the Institute of Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem, she was able to accompany the students on their field trips throughout Israel at various seasons of the year. Started in 1987, Suess' slide collection of Israeli flora included thousands of photos. These images have been digitized and published by [BiblePlaces.com](http://BiblePlaces.com).

**Joshua N. Tilton** studied at Gordon College, where he earned a B.A. in Biblical and Theological Studies (2002), and at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, where he obtained a Master of Divinity (2005). While at Gordon-Conwell, Joshua had the opportunity to study Biblical Hebrew at Harvard Divinity School. After seminary Joshua studied at the Rothberg International School of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he completed an M.A. in Religious Studies (2007). In 2013 *JP* published Joshua's first e-book: *Jesus' Gospel: Searching for the Core of Jesus' Message*. In that same year Joshua and his wife Lauren began their collaboration with David Bivin on the *Life of Yeshua* (LOY) project.

**Huub van de Sandt** of Tilburg University in the Netherlands is a professor of New Testament Studies. Two important foci of his research are the Didache and its place in early Christianity, especially in relation to the Gospel of Matthew, and the use of the Septuagint by the author of Luke-Acts. Professor van de Sandt has written numerous articles that have appeared in various collections of essays and scholarly journals. Among his most important books is *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity* (2002), which he co-authored with David Flusser.

**Marvin R. Wilson** was the Harold J. Ockenga Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts. Wilson has authored or edited several books and also penned numerous articles in both scholarly and popular periodicals. Among his most important works is *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (2nd ed., 2021), a textbook on the Hebrew heritage of the church. His most recent book on Jewish-Christian relations is *Exploring Our Hebraic Heritage: A Christian Theology of Roots and Renewal* (2014). Wilson has also co-edited four different volumes with rabbis dealing with Christian-Jewish relations and thought, served as an Old Testament translator and editor on the *New International Version*, and contributed notes to books in the *NIV Study Bible*.