

David Mishkin. *Jewish Scholarship of the Resurrection of Jesus*. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017). xiv+256 pp. \$33.

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The book under review opens a door to one of the most important discussions of interreligious discourse and thought: the attempt to understand the common foundations of the different religions. It also does a few other things, each of which warrants attention in its own rite and facilitates thoughts and ideas that are found neither in the research nor in the book itself.

In studies of considerable importance, a number of scholars have presented us with historical and textual questions regarding the messianic idea itself and the messianic idea as depicted in the design of both the death of Jesus and his resurrection. To properly position ourselves with regard to the story told in Mishkin's book, however, we must refrain from placing it in the Christian context of the messianic covenant and the manner in which it was depicted by the Gospels and shaped by the Christian traditions, some of which are better known than others. Rather, readers must detach themselves somewhat from the messianic religious perspective and adopt a more distant view, as readers of a text about a different culture and religion with its own interests. What is the source of this approach? The benevolent eye of the reader.

David Mishkin's *Jewish Scholarship of the Resurrection of Jesus* is the product of comprehensive research of all the Jewish articles and essays that have dealt with the story of Jesus, as well as studies and articles that have sought to identify the Jewish view of this figure. In this sense, the book serves as a wonderful user's guide for those seeking their way in the realm of Judaism's perception of Jesus, Jesus as messiah, and Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection. The book is divided into five chapters, three of which offer a detailed and comprehensive survey of the Jewish scholars and writers who have addressed the issue.

This review will focus on two of the book's chapters, which in my view justify the book's unique quest for the Jewish perspective on messianic thought and on the resurrection of Jesus.

The book's second chapter, which is titled "Previous Studies," highlights the extent to which the concept of the resurrection has not been of interest to Jewish scholarship. Mishkin presents 16 studies carried out by Jewish scholars, which relate to Jesus but nonetheless pay almost no attention to this idea. This disregard of one of the central aspects of the Christian religion is clearly scandalous from the perspectives of faith and interreligious discourse, but it is also a major fault of scholarship when important scholars working on Christian theology ignore (or almost ignore) the critical importance of Jesus's resurrection. Though Mishkin may be correct here, it may have been preferable for him to provide the theological perspective that is relevant to the discussion and to look for other aspects that are closer to the world of Jewish theology.

The third chapter, "Preliminary Issues," appears to be only an initial presentation of the topics discussed by the study. In my opinion, however, it is a crucial chapter in understanding the Jewish view of the New Testament and the Gospel of Jesus the messiah. Mishkin effectively outlines what he regards as some of the fundamental issues of the

discussion, which are not limited to the interreligious encounter and relations between Judaism and Christianity as sister religions. This chapter is a call to rethink the significance of the Christian Holy Scriptures from the perspective of the Jewish Holy Scriptures. This is more than a semantic exercise of categories and words; it reflects an understanding that, from the internal perspective of the Holy Scriptures, the Gospel represent a logical and coherent continuation of the biblical text. In this sense, it is not only an observation of the ideas themselves and of the Jews' view of the Gospel, but a focused understanding of the fundamental issue: that it is first necessary to examine the religious status of the Holy Scriptures and of the Gospel as their continuation.

Another topic of major importance is Judaism's perception of the messiah and messianism, which is given a certain interpretation in the gospels of Christianity and Jesus. Here, too, Mishkin succeeds in drawing attention to the concept of messianism, which was a cornerstone of biblical and Second Temple Judaism and the point at which observation of the life and messianism of Jesus must begin. For the sake of this discussion, Mishkin considers the pagan concept of the messiah, the divine aspect of the messiah, and, particularly, the theological meaning of the concept of the "dead messiah."

A third fundamental question of far-reaching theological consequence pertains to the New Testament, specifically to the theological possibility of two covenants. Readers from a Christian perspective focus their attention on the verses that are devoted to Jesus's and Paul's perceptions of the covenant. For readers from the Jewish perspective, however, the central question revolves around the very possibility of a dual covenant—a possibility based on one of the most important foundations of Judaism: the concept of atonement.

Although the book explores other subjects, such as miracles, the Jews' place in the Holy Scriptures, and the idea of resurrection, I—as a reader seeking to examine the book's Jewish perspective—was impressed by the attention it draws to the organizing fundamentals of biblical and post-biblical Jewish theology that make possible the relocation of Jesus's messianism into Jewish theological discourse.

A particularly comprehensive survey undertaken by the author reviews the Jewish scholars and thinkers who devoted research and writing to Jesus, whether they be Jewish studies' scholars in Germany, participants in the dialogue and research of the Paris and France schools, or later scholars working in Israel or the United States. Even though it may be possible to identify a few holes in the survey or specific writers which the book fails to address, it is difficult to avoid being extremely impressed by the scope of the texts that the book discusses.

At the book's conclusion, Mishkin expresses his expectation that Jewish scholarship on this topic will continue. It is a sentiment articulated out of a sense of disappointment with the diverse yet limited Christian scholarship on the subject, which is written from a conservative, devout perspective. In contrast, he maintains, research from the Jewish perspective reignites the discussion and comprehension of the meaning of the messianic idea: crucifixion, death, the empty grave, and resurrection. The understanding that this idea must be reconsidered from the Jewish perspective is both provocative and exciting.

In a certain sense, the entire book can be viewed as an assertion of the precedence of the Jewish scholarship on Jesus and a call for its rejuvenation and further development. Scholarship from a Jewish perspective, Mishkin holds, could facilitate further exploration of the New Testament regarding the theological significance of the the messiah. I find myself in agreement with the author on this point, and I recognize the provocative potential of his call.

The possibility of rereading the scriptures of the New Testament—this time as part of a continuum of the Holy Scriptures, from the internal Jewish perspective of the Bible to the literature of the sages of the Mishna and the Talmud—can enable a deep and challenging theological understanding of the messianic idea in general and the idea of universal redemption in particular.

As a Jewish reader, I was impressed by the unique perspective the book proposes: that of Jews' renewed search for the historical and religious image of Jesus and the possibility of relocating the New Testament and faith in Jesus within Jewish discourse. However, it is also important to note the limitations of this discussion and of biblical and post-biblical discourse. In a profound sense, it is critical to continue the scholarship and to rethink not only historical Jesus (in light of the biblical belief in prophecy, miracles, and the possibility of resurrection) but also the development of the messianic perception in Jewish thought, from the period of the Mishna and the Talmud, to the literature of the Kabbalah, to the Jewish philosophical literature of the modern era. The image of the messiah, the expectation of faith in the messiah, and the miraculous possibilities pertaining to the image of Jesus are only parts of a broader Jewish perspective in which it is not only possible, but also appropriate to relocate faith in Jesus. In my view, this study stands to make significant contributions, both implicit and explicit, to our understanding of the unique potential of the concept of believing in a messiah, as manifested in the world of those who believe in the Christian Gospel within the deep, enduring, and evolving context of Jewish messianic faith. Another reading of the literature pertaining to Sabbatai Zevi, the self-proclaimed messiah, and the Sabbatean messianic movement could provide the important contribution necessary for understanding and refining the Jewish messianic idea as expressed in the Christian theological world.

David Mishkin should be thanked and congratulated for his outstanding accomplishment. *Jewish Scholarship of the Resurrection of Jesus* facilitates a rebuilding of interreligious discourse as one in which the contribution to understanding every religion on its own terms, and understanding the different religions within a common context with different perspectives, is indeed a reading to which we should be attentive and for which we should be grateful.

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