Speakers and Abstracts

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A Comparison Between Zoroastrian Aša and Jewish Righteousness

Abstract:
This paper seeks to examine just one possible link between Pharisaic and Zoroastrian theologies. Whilst direct co-dependency remains difficult to demonstrate, the convergence of shared moral dualism, the emphasis on righteousness, eschatological accountability, and the primacy of ethical praxis suggests a shared conceptual environment in which right action becomes the principal criterion of ultimate vindication It is surely no coincidence that righteousness with all of its interpretations may be said to have been effectively hegemonised within each post-exilic sectarian group's theological self-understanding. That is, whilst no single sect exercised total or lasting dominance over Second Temple Judaism as a whole, each treated righteousness as the defining criterion of religious authenticity, structuring its doctrinal, ethical, and communal life accordingly. It is true that the specific focus of righteousness varied slightly depending on which sect was concerned, viz.: the Essenes appear to have focussed more on sectarian rigor, communal purity, and a distinctly dualistic maintenance of righteousness, whereas the Pharisees concentrated on the halakhic expansion of righteousness into everyday life. As regards the Sadducees, they appear to have been more concerned with cultic correctness and priestly-temple legitimacy as the primary expression of righteousness. Regardless, the functional role of righteousness remained strikingly consistent. It is fair to state that in all of these denominations, righteousness was to be pursued, maintained, and embodied as the primary expression of fidelity to Yahweh. In that specific context, righteousness operated less as a precisely definable category, and more as a normative ideal whose meaning is shaped within particular interpretive frameworks. A comparable difficulty is faced when attempting to ratiocinate the Avestan concept of Aša, which, as Prods Oktor Skjærvø has already noted, is better understood in terms of "cosmic" or "ritual order" than as "truth" in a narrowly propositional or Western sense. Nevertheless, the exhortation to align oneself with Aša, whether in its Iranian or broader Indo-Iranian context, similarly entails the active maintenance of a beneficial moral and social order characterised by harmony, justice, and right conduct. Thus, despite differences in formulation, both traditions converge in their prioritisation of a lived and sustained alignment with an overarching principle

of order, suggesting a functional correspondence between Judaic conceptions of righteousness and the Iranian ideal of Aša, even where precise semantic equivalence remains elusive.

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"I have called you": in righteousness or for righteousness? The correct interpretation of the mission of the servant in Isa 42,1-6

Abstract:
Out of the four so-called servant songs the first one is found in Isa 42,1-6 which sums up the call and some aspects of the mission of the servant. One of the most important tasks of the servant is to bring forth or to establish מִשְׁפָּט. However, 42,6 ("I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations," NRSV) uses the term צֶדֶק when it refers to the call of the servant. Is the servant called in righteousness or for righteousness, and what does it mean? Does it refer to the characteristics or state of the servant in which he is called or to the task he is to carry out? What is the relationship of מִשְׁפָּט and צֶדֶק? On these questions the issue of the identity of the servant can shed light. Can he be identified with Cyrus, the king of Persia whom God has chosen to deliver the exiles from Babylon? If yes, what מִשְׁפָּט andצֶדֶק mean in light of the context of 42,1-6 (42,1-13) especially taking into consideration verse 5 ("Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it") and the polemics against the "gods" of the nations found in 42,8-13? What is the relationship of this song to the context or to the other servant songs? The paper attempts to answer these questions by reflecting not only on the text of Isa 42,1-6 but also on the composition of the servant songs, especially that of Isa 42,1-6.

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The Dead Sea Scrolls Messiah: The Search for the Identity of the Teacher of Righteousness

Abstract:
The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran transformed scholarly understanding of Judaism during the Second Temple period. These texts provided unprecedented insight into the religious beliefs, scriptural traditions, and sectarian movements of the second and first centuries BCE, while simultaneously raising new historical questions. Among the most enduring of these is the identity of the enigmatic Teacher of Righteousness, the founding leader of the Qumran community. The scrolls portray him as a divinely inspired teacher who was opposed by a figure known as the Wicked Priest and challenged by another adversary designated the Spouter of Lies.

Numerous scholars have proposed candidates for the Teacher's identity, drawing upon a wide range of historical and textual evidence. While many of these theories offer compelling arguments, they often fail to give sufficient weight to the chronological framework preserved in the Damascus Document, particularly its reference to a period of 390 years followed by an additional twenty years. This paper argues that any attempt to identify the Teacher of Righteousness must begin with the chronological parameters provided by the sect's own literature.

By correlating the chronological data of the Damascus Document with the historical narrative preserved in *2 Maccabees*, this study proposes a new identification of the Teacher of Righteousness. It argues that a specific historical individual not only fits the timeframe indicated by the Damascus Document but also exhibits striking biographical parallels with the Teacher, including persecution at the hands of a hostile high priest who sought his removal. Through a reassessment of the chronological and historical evidence, this paper seeks to offer a more historically grounded solution to one of the most persistent enigmas of Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Tobias as Moral Exemplum: The Book of Tobit and the Christianisation of Jewish Reverence, Rectitude, and Righteousness

Abstract:
This paper examines Tobias in the Book of Tobit as a paradigmatic exemplum of reverence, rectitude, and righteousness in early Christianity. It builds on my earlier work on the Christian Greek and Latin reception of Tobit (2nd–5th centuries CE), but shifts the focus from the Book of Tobit in general to Tobias as a morally formative character mediating Jewish ethical traditions into emerging Christian discourses. Close readings of key passages (Tb 1–4, 6–8, 12–13) show Tobias embodying filial piety, obedience to paternal instruction, ritual and ethical reverence, and rightly ordered relationships to wealth, kin, spouse, and the dead, with Tobit's paraenesis in chapter 4 providing the interpretive framework for his subsequent actions. The paper then traces how early Christian authors appropriate Tobias as a moral *exemplum*. Latin writers in particular employ him to articulate Christian rectitude in practices such as almsgiving and financial justice, payment of wages and avoidance of usury, reverent care for the dead, and chaste, prayerful marital intercourse ordered toward procreation. Tobias' wedding-night prayer and collaboration with the angel Raphael become focal points for reflection on purity of intention, resistance to lust and demonic temptation, and cooperation between human righteousness and angelic mediation. The paper argues that Tobias emerges in patristic literature as a distinctly Jewish yet readily Christianised model of youthful masculinity, whose virtues serve a broader Christian pedagogy and function as a bridge through which Second Temple Jewish ideals of piety are appropriated and reshaped in late antique ecclesial contexts.

Finally, the paper problematises the very categories of reverence, rectitude, and righteousness as they are taken up from Jewish Scripture into early Christian discourse. While Tobias is received as a profoundly Jewish figure of piety—formed by Torah-shaped practices of almsgiving, endogamy, care of the dead, ritual purity, and reverent prayer—many of the Christian texts that appropriate him do so within a discursive field that is increasingly anti-Jewish. Early Christian authors frequently appropriate Tobit for moral exempla while simultaneously marginalising or superseding the living Judaism from which these exempla emerge. In this light, Tobias becomes a paradoxical figure: he is indispensable as a model of reverent worship, ethical rectitude, and covenantal righteousness, yet his Jewishness is often the very element that is theologically diminished or overwritten. The paper therefore argues that

any contemporary appeal to Tobias as exemplum must reckon with the ambivalent legacy of early Christian anti-Judaism, in which Jewish moral capital is appropriated even as Jewish communities are rhetorically delegitimised. Re-reading Tobias today invites a more self-critical Christian engagement with Jewish piety—one that acknowledges Christian dependence on Jewish ethical traditions, resists supersessionist erasures, and opens space for engaging creatively with Jewish reverence, rectitude, and righteousness on their own terms rather than only as raw material for Christian moral formation.

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Reckoned as Righteousness: 4QMMT and the Definition of the Eschatological Community

Abstract:
Identity construction is fundamental to the formation of any community, defined by specific markers—from nationality and genetics to shared ideology. In the multifaceted sectarian landscape of Second Temple Judaism, these markers became questions of eschatological survival. This lecture explores how the Qumran document 4QMMT (Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah) and the apostle Paul utilize the specific biblical idiom "it will be reckoned to you as righteousness" to define the boundaries of God's people. While 4QMMT employs this phrase (likely echoing Psalm 106:31) to validate the meticulous observance of specific halakhah (works of the law), Paul famously adapts the same concept (via Genesis 15:6) to argue for a community defined by faith apart from works of the law. By comparing the use of the verb ḥšb (to reckon/account) across the Hebrew Bible, 4QMMT, and the Pauline corpus, this study, inter alia, elucidates a pivotal shift in Second Temple theological anthropology. It will address Paul's use of the expression "works of the law," and how "actual behavior" versus "divine imputation" functioned as the definitive marker for those claiming to be the true eschatological Israel.

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Righteousness and reward: Ezekiel the Tragedian's rehabilitative reading of Exodus 3:22

Abstract:
Even in antiquity, Exodus 3:22, in which Moses and the children of Israel are instructed to strip, or despoil, the Egyptians of their gold, silver, and clothing, posed a problem to writers. For the most part, early Jewish authors writing for Hellenistic audiences, such as Philo and Josephus, do not adopt the militaristic diction used in Exodus 3:22. Philo, in the *De vita Mosis* (140-142), portrays the plunder as a noble action of newly-freed men, being careful to note that it was motivated not by love of money or covetousness of their neighbours' possessions, but by a sense of fairness and justice. Philo describes the action in terms of demanding payment from unwilling payers for labour performed, and in terms of the conquests of war from conquerors who initially set the terms by treating them as captives of war instead of respecting them as strangers and suppliants. Josephus, in contrast, in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, does not describe an act of plunder at all, but turns it into an act of giving on the part of the Egyptians, some motivated to encourage the Hebrew people to leave as quickly as possible, and others stirred by feelings of good neighbourliness.

This paper investigates Ezekiel the Tragedian's rehabilitative reading of Exodus 3:22, in light of dramatic literary works and early Jewish accounts of the Moses narrative. Although justice (*dikē*) is an explicit concern of numerous Attic tragedies, Ezekiel's Midrashic drama eschews the diction of justice and injustice later adopted by Philo. In Ezekiel's *Exagogē*, God informs Moses that just before they depart from Egypt, they will be compensated for their labour by their Egyptian neighbours in the form of gold, silver, and clothing. They will not need to demand this compensation; the Egyptians will pay it willingly. Unlike Josephus, Ezekiel does not present this payment as a gift. Instead, it is presented as a fair reward for the labour performed by God's righteous people, willingly paid by the Egyptians once they are exposed to God's power through the plagues. This is not the only example of righteous work rewarded by fair pay in the fragmentary play. In the prologue speech, the nursing work performed by Moses' mother is rewarded with wages paid by Pharoah's daughter, preparing the audience for the notion that the other Egyptians, too, will pay the wages that are due to the Hebrew people. Ezekiel, then, offers a rehabilitative reading of Exodus 3:22, portraying the Hebrew people as deserving of compensation, and the Egyptians as willing to pay what they owe, an aptly diplomatic solution for a play possibly performed in Alexandria.

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The concept of righteousness and its conjunction with solar imagery in the Book of Qoheleth

Abstract:
In this paper, the chosen topic is the concept of righteousness, with special attention to its place in the book of Qoheleth (Eng: Ecclesiastes). After some introductory observations on the applicable (Hebrew) words in the text, a summary of the available related research is provided. The gap identified therein concerns the absence of a satisfying explanation for the conjunction of the concept of righteousness and solar imagery, specifically in the contexts of Qoh 3:16-17; 7:15,16, 20; 8:14, and 9:1-2. The research question raised in response is whether these texts could be used as test cases for the author's own hypothesis about the possible significance of solar imagery in the book as a whole (Gericke 2002). The core of the presentation will be focussed on the exegesis of each text, a comparison with earlier perspectives on solar imagery in the book, and bringing to bear the latest research on righteousness as property/interest of solar deities in the world behind the text. The study will conclude with a critical assessment of the findings, unanswered questions for future research, and a few remarks on what all this implies for associated themes that Qoheleth scholarship shares with the philosophy of religion (e.g., the problem of evil, the relationship between religion and morality, etc.)

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Terms and Conditions: The "Not so Righteous" Being Bailed out in the Afterlife in 2 Maccabees 12:38–45.

Abstract:
This study takes the acknowledged Deuteronomistic system of punishment and reward for 2 Maccabees seriously. The focus is mainly on two sections. The first one is the martyr narrative of 2 Maccabees 6:18 – 7:42. Here, it is argued that the reward for a righteous life is shifted to a new dispensation. Likewise, the punishment for an unrighteous life is also transferred to the afterlife. It thus seems that 2 Maccabees 6 and 7 set a precedent for what will happen after death. However, this changes in 2 Maccabees 12 38-45. Here, a mortal sin, idolatry is committed. The fallen soldiers all had amulets of a foreign god under their tunics. These soldiers, who committed a heinous sin acted unrighteously and should most definitely qualify for severe punishment in the afterlife. Judas Maccabees takes up a collection and sends it to the temple in Jerusalem as an atonement offering. This deed of Judas Maccabee solves the problem of those fallen while being unrighteous. It seems that under certain "terms and conditions" they can escape damnation. This paper explores this fascinating phenomenon focusing on the "terms and conditions".

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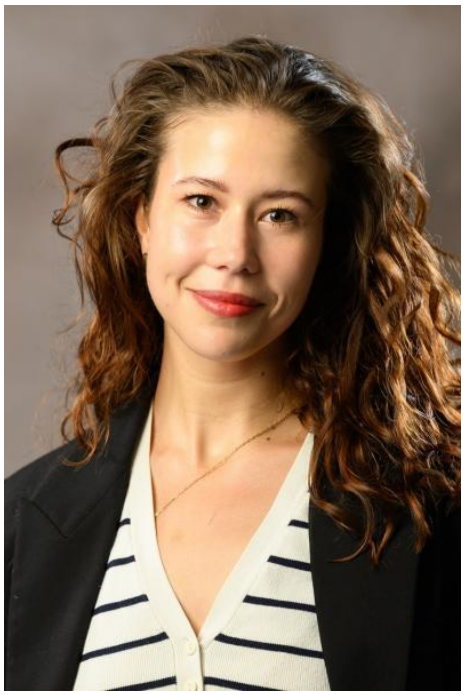


The Concept of Rectitude in the Targum to Song of Songs

Abstract:
The hermeneutics of the targumists may be characterized by the continuation of the Priestly and Deuteronomistic modes of interpretation in the Hebrew Bible, with their moral framing of textual meaning and their moralizing perspective. For this reason, the targumists are often approached as moralists.

But how does moral ethics manifest itself in literary texts? How can morality and poetics be reconciled?
My presentation focuses in particular on the Targum to Song of Songs, which, as an allegorizing reworking of the biblical Song of Songs, abounds in moral reconfigurations, at least on the surface. However, when examined more closely through a deconstructive method, the text reveals a far more complex situation with regard to the question of rectitude.

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Job in the Arena: Athletic Imagery in Latin and Medieval Jewish traditions

Abstract
The imagery of Job as an 'athlete of righteousness' and 'revered wrestler' is a common find in many of the Latin commentators' works on Job. This is seen in Ambrose (De intepel 1. 2.4), Pelagius (Ad Demetriadem 6.1), Cassian (Conl, 13.4; 4.6), Adhelm (Aenigmata Epistola ad arcicium. I. 30), Zeno of Verona (Tract. 15. I, 18–25; IV, 54-56), Augustinus (Ad Julianum II. 8, 27), Augustine (De perf. Ius. Hom. 11. 27), and Cassiodorus (Exposito in Psalmum XXXVII) among others. While prevalent in early Christian and later Latin exegesis, the athlete imagery is strangely not a frequent appearance in medieval Jewish interpretations. This paper investigates the athlete imagery in the Latin Job commentaries, the absence thereof in medieval Jewish Job commentaries, and presents preliminary ideas on the development and the cause of this interpretive divergence.

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Reverence and righteousness contested: The Job–Eliphaz debate as wisdom disputation in Early Jewish Literature

Abstract:
The question of what constitutes a truly righteous person who lives in reverence before God stands at the heart of early Jewish wisdom traditions. This paper examines how the Book of Job negotiates the concepts of reverence, moral rectitude, and righteousness through the dialogue between Job and Eliphaz (1st cycle). Attention is given to the ways in which competing claims to moral authority are articulated and contested within this exchange. The study situates the debate within the broader ethical reflections of biblical wisdom literature and early Jewish thought. The investigation is motivated by the observation that the narrative introduces Job as an exemplary figure of piety — "blameless and upright, one who fears God and turns away from evil" (Job 1:1). This characterisation reflects the wisdom ideal of yirʾat ʾĕlōhîm ("fear/reverence of God"), which functions as a defining marker of righteousness and establishes the conceptual framework for the subsequent debates concerning moral integrity and divine justice. Methodologically, the paper interprets the Job–Eliphaz exchange through the lens of the Ancient Near Eastern disputation or diatribe genre, known from Sumerian compositions such as Summer and Winter, Bird and Fish, and Farmer and Shepherd. Within this framework, the dialogue is analysed as a structured rhetorical contest in which opposing voices present arguments to establish authority, legitimacy, and normative values. The analysis suggests that Eliphaz constructs his authority through revelatory knowledge received in a nocturnal vision (Job 4:12–21), presenting himself as a spokesman of traditional wisdom. Job, however, contests this claim by appealing to his own moral standing and experiential authority, portraying himself as a Geber. The study argues that the disputational structure functions as didactic wisdom discourse, demonstrating how claims to righteousness and reverence for God are constructed, debated, and critically examined within the intellectual world of biblical wisdom.

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Righteousness in the Book of Tobit

Abstract:
This essay explores the participatory, mimetic, and revelatory aspects of righteousness in the Book of Tobit, arguing that to be righteous is to participate in, imitate, and exhibit what is fundamentally a divine attribute. The text establishes this by first attributing *dikaios* to God and all his works (Tob 3:2), while it portrays Tobit and his descendants as righteous through their steadfast adherence to divine commandments (Tob 1:3; 4:5; 13:9; 14:8-9). The study demonstrates that the practice of righteousness made concrete through almsgiving and acts of charity leads to an experience of divine care and providence (Tob 4:6; 14:11).

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Habakkuk 2:4 in Masoretic and Septuagint Perspective, and Its Appropriation in Pauline and Early Christian Understandings of Righteousness

Abstract:
The phrase צדי קבאמונתו יחיה) ṣaddiq beʾĕmūnātō yihyō) in Habakkuk 2:4 constitutes one of the most hermeneutically significant and theologically contested phrases in the entire Hebrew canon. Rendered in the Septuagint as ὁ δε δίκαιος εκ πίστεως μου ζήσεται (ho de dikaios ek pisteōs mou zēsetai), the phrase introduces a possessive pronoun — μου ("my"), which is absent in the Masoretic Text; thus, fundamentally shifts the locus of faithfulness from the human subject to the divine. This paper undertakes a comparative textual and theological analysis of Habakkuk 2:4 across its two principal ancient witnesses: the Masoretic Text (MT) and the Septuagint (LXX), and examines the patterns of citation and adaptation that emerge in the three explicit New Testament appropriations of this verse in: Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38. In the Masoretic Text, אמונה) ʾĕmūnāh) most naturally denotes steadfastness, reliability, or faithfulness

as a lived disposition of the righteous person in the face of the Babylonian crisis addressed by the prophet. The Septuagint's rendering πίστις (pistis), however, introduces an ambiguity that would prove generative for early Christian theology; the term can signify both human faith and trust in God, and divine faithfulness to covenant. The additional possessive μου in the LXX, depending on its grammatical attachment, can modify either δίκαιος ("my righteous one") or πίστεως ("my faithfulness"), thereby introducing a theocentric dimension largely absent from, or at least less explicit in the MT. Paul's citation in Romans 1:17 deploys the phrase as the programmatic thesis of his exposition of the gospel, stripping it of the possessive pronoun and linking "faith" intimately to the revelation of divine righteousness (δικαιοσύνη θεου). In Galatians 3:11, Paul marshals the same text as a counter-argument to law-observance as a means of justification, opposing "faith" to "law" with exegetical precision rooted in his reading of the LXX tradition. Hebrews 10:38, by contrast, preserves the LXX's possessive pronoun and recontextualises the citation within a paraenetic discourse on endurance and eschatological hope, suggesting a closer alignment with the Septuagintal tradition and its theocentric emphasis. This paper argues that the New Testament writers do not employ a single uniform text-form of Habakkuk 2:4, but rather demonstrate selective and theologically motivated engagement with both the MT and the LXX traditions. These divergent appropriations are not arbitrary but reflect coherent interpretive strategies shaped by the distinct rhetorical and theological purposes of each author. The paper further contends that understanding the textual prehistory of this phrase is indispensable for a responsible treatment of the theme of righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) in the New Testament and invites fresh reflection on the interplay between divine faithfulness and human faith within early Jewish and Christian constructions of rectitude and right-standing before God.

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Law and Love, Lawlessness and Lovelessness in Matthew

Abstract:
This presentation explores the significance of law and love in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus teaches that loving God and neighbour is the greatest commandment (Matt 22:34–40; cf. Mark 12:28–34; Luke 10:25–28). He interprets the law as requiring his disciples to love even their enemies (Matt 5:43–47; Luke 6:27–36). These exhortations emerge in a context in which lawlessness increases and love grows cold (Matt 24:12). Matt 24:12 anticipates a rise in both lawlessness and lovelessness. Although this verse has no Synoptic parallel, it is crucial for understanding Matthew's intention. It is therefore regrettable that

commentaries and monographs tend to address this verse only briefly. This presentation seeks to address this lacuna. While the Gospel predicts that love will grow cold in the last days (Matt 24:12), this does not negate the principle that the Torah and the Prophets are grounded in love (Matt 22:34–40), nor the call for disciples to love their enemies (Matt 5:43–47). Such love constitutes the righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) that Jesus presents as a condition for entering the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:20).

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The Exaltation of the Righteous in Psalm 91

Abstract:
The idea of this paper emerged while I was collecting parallel texts in the Psalter and related literature. I observed that Psalm 91:15 presents a close parallel to Psalm 50:15. The two verses share vocabulary but differ in content and theology. In Psalm 50:15, YHWH concludes his speech to Israel with the following words: "And call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you, and you shall honour me". In Psalm 91:14–15, however, YHWH speaks about the psalm's "protagonist": "Because he loves me, I will rescue him, I will set him on high, because he knows my name. He calls upon me, and I will answer him, I am with him in distress, I will deliver him from it and bestow honour upon him (וְאֲכַבְּדֵהוּ)". In Psalm 50:15, the object of the verb כבד is YHWH himself, so according to this text the supplicant, after being delivered by YHWH, will honour God. The formulation of this verse also corresponds to what is found in other parallel texts (Ps 4:2; 86:7; 145:19; 11Q5 Col. 24:16). In Psalm 91, however, the deliverance is not followed by the human answer, but by the glorification of the supplicant. In this paper, I refer to this glorification as the exaltation of the righteous (though Psalm 91 uses neither the term צַדִּיק, "righteous" nor the hiphil of the verb עלה, "to exalt"), echoing the title of David Noel Freedman's monograph, Psalm 119. The Exaltation of Torah (Winona Lake, 1999).

Some passages of the Hodayot also speak about some kind of exaltation of the praying one (e.g., 1QHa col. 11:20–22; 19:13–17). In 1QHa col. 11:20–22, he describes himself as being lifted up by God to eternal heights and formed from the dust for the eternal council, to enter in the community of heavenly beings (צבא קדושים, עדת בני שמים). In this text, the focus is on the elevation of the righteous person to heavenly worship. In my view, Psalm 91 goes even further, attributing to the righteous something that properly belongs only to YHWH himself.

Psalm 91 is also preserved in two scrolls from Qumran. 4Q84 shows no significant differences from the Masoretic Text. 11Q11, however, is notable in three respects: 1) the psalm

is preserved here in the context of apotropaic texts as the final piece of the composition; 2) Psalm 91:15, which speaks about YHWH bestowing honour on the righteous is entirely missing from this scroll; 3) in Psalm 91:14 here it is not YHWH who speaks as in 4Q84 and in the Masoretic Text, but the narrator: “Because you love [YHWH], h[e will rescue you] and [set you on high]”.

The legacy of Psalm 91:15 is evident in New Testament passages that affirm that God glorifies Christ. In Acts 3:13, this glorification is linked to the resurrection, while in Jesus’ high priestly prayer (John 17:2; 5), it is associated with his crucifixion.

Psalm 91 contains another striking formulation. In verse 9, we read about the righteous: “You have made Elyon your dwelling place (מָעוֹן)”. What is surprising that this sentence claims that the righteous person himself has made God his own dwelling place. Apart from this verse, God is described as a dwelling place only in Psalms 71:3 and 90:1 in the Psalter. The connection with Psalm 90 is particularly important, since in the Psalter that text immediately precedes Psalm 91. Psalm 90:1 confesses that God was the dwelling place of the people from generation to generation, whereas Psalm 91:9 emphasizes the righteousness of an individual by asserting that he has made God his dwelling.

As these examples demonstrate, Psalm 91 uniquely presents the relationship between God and the righteous by subtly reworking traditional vocabulary, formulas, and motifs. In my proposed paper I would like, on the one hand, to demonstrate how deeply this innovative imagery is rooted in the Early Jewish psalm literature, and on the other hand to examine to what extent these striking expressions may have played a role in the development of messianic concepts.

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"Bring Me a Higher Righteousness"

Abstract:
This paper offers a new challenge to Adolf Harnack's influential manifesto of Liberal Protestantism, *What Is Christianity*? in which he expounded the preaching of "the historical Jesus" as set forth most clearly in Matthew's gospel, using Pharisaic Judaism as a foil, characterizing it as mere fossilized legalism: Harnack's mirror-reflection Jesus taught "the higher righteousness and the commandment of love." This liberal gospel is set forth, Harnack claimed, positively in the Sermon on the Mount and negatively (i.e., by contrast) in Matthew chapter 23, an excoriating tirade against Pharisaism. Paul, a la Harnack, continued this agapaic approach as crystalized in 1 Corinthians 13. Price's paper argues instead that Matthew writes against the rival leadership faction of the

Yavneh rabbinate. Matthew, speaking as a ventriloquist through "Jesus," never criticizes the niceties of Jewish piety but only accuses his rivals of hypocrisy, self-promoting insincerity. For him "righteousness" amounts to careful observation of Jewish custom.. As for "righteousness" (or "justification") in Torah-free Christianity for Gentiles, it amounts to acceptance of Jesus as the true Messiah, much the same as, centuries later, the sect of Sabbatai Sevi would restrict salvation to those who "backed the right horse' in the Messianic Derby. "Justification by faith" meant "Salvation by shibboleth" --as it still does in Christianity today.

Perhaps ironically, the kind of "higher righteousness" Harnack ascribed to Jesus *did* exist in first-century religion, but it was to be found, not in the enlightened self-interest of the gospels, but in the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees: "Be not like a servant who serves his master for the sake of reward, but like the servant who does his duty with no thought of reward."

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Remaining righteous in Qumran: Expressions of Identity and Self-Definition of a Hellenistic Jewish Religious Group in Narrative and Eschatological Contexts

Abstract:
The precise definition and coherence of Qumranic ideas continue to generate recurring debates in scholarship. Nevertheless, it can be said that texts of various genres and origins (regulations, narrative biblical and eschatological texts, wisdom and exegetical writings) consistently speak of righteousness as an ethical category. At the same time, the components that constitute it are expressions of the identity of the Hellenistic Jewish religious group under examination. Following a more general presentation of these, I wish to focus on specific aspects recently raised in the literature and offer a possible new interpretation regarding the priesthood of the time.

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Reverence, Rectitude, and Righteousness – (Missing) Features of a High Priest: Alcimus in the Books of Maccabees and in Josephus

Abstract:
The expectations placed on the Jewish high priest elevate him above ordinary people. On the one hand, his encounter with the Holy One and his role as a two-way mediator—linked to his duties in the cult—binds him to the sacred, secluded inner circle. On the other hand, the nature of his duties in his everyday relationships and activities obliges him to adhere to stricter regulations. For all these reasons, moral and ethical expectations are also higher for them. The moral framework of Reverence, Rectitude, and Righteousness must manifest itself naturally in his life and activities.

Alcimus, the first high priest of the Maccabean revolt, serves as a kind of unique counterexample to these expectations. In my presentation, I will attempt to highlight the moral shortcomings found in his actions in the 1 and 2 Maccabees and in Josephus and, at the same time, shed light on the historical enigma of his person.