

# The memra of God – part 1



# Cross Iron Mills



# Heart of stone



Heart of stone



# The Jews are lost

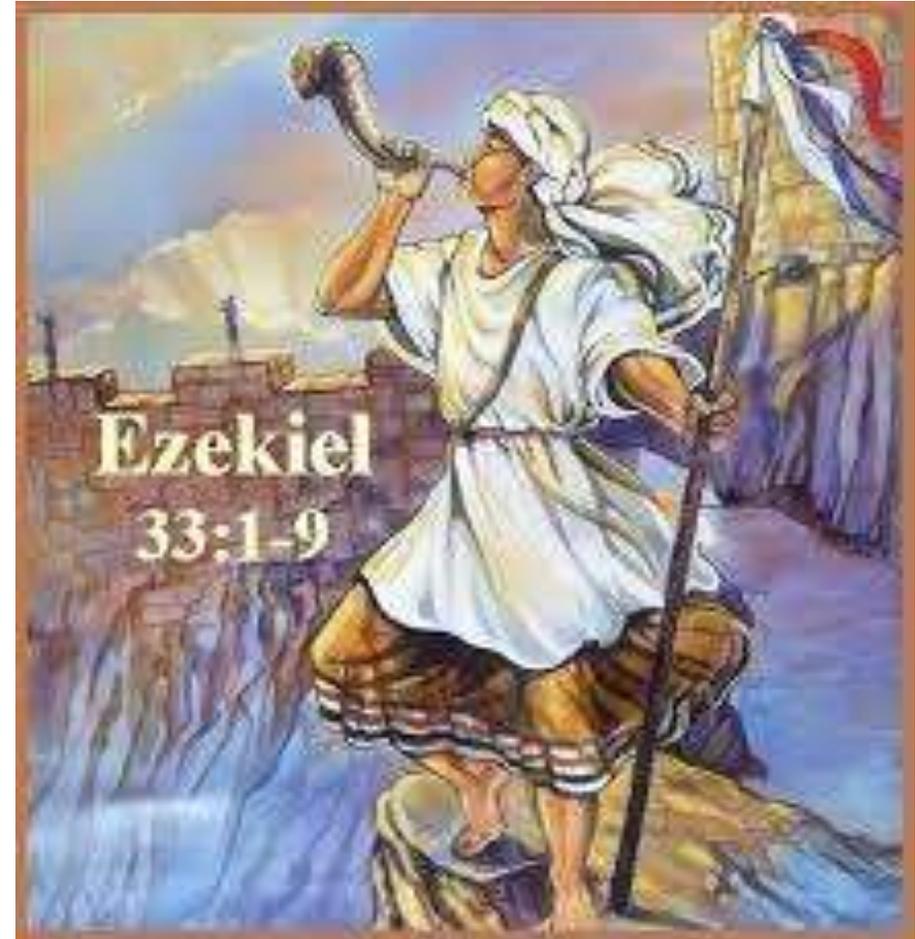
- Romans 10:1-3 1Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, **that they might be saved.** 2For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Zechariah 13:8 And it shall come to pass, *that* in all the land, saith the LORD, **two parts therein shall be cut off and die**; but the third shall be left therein.

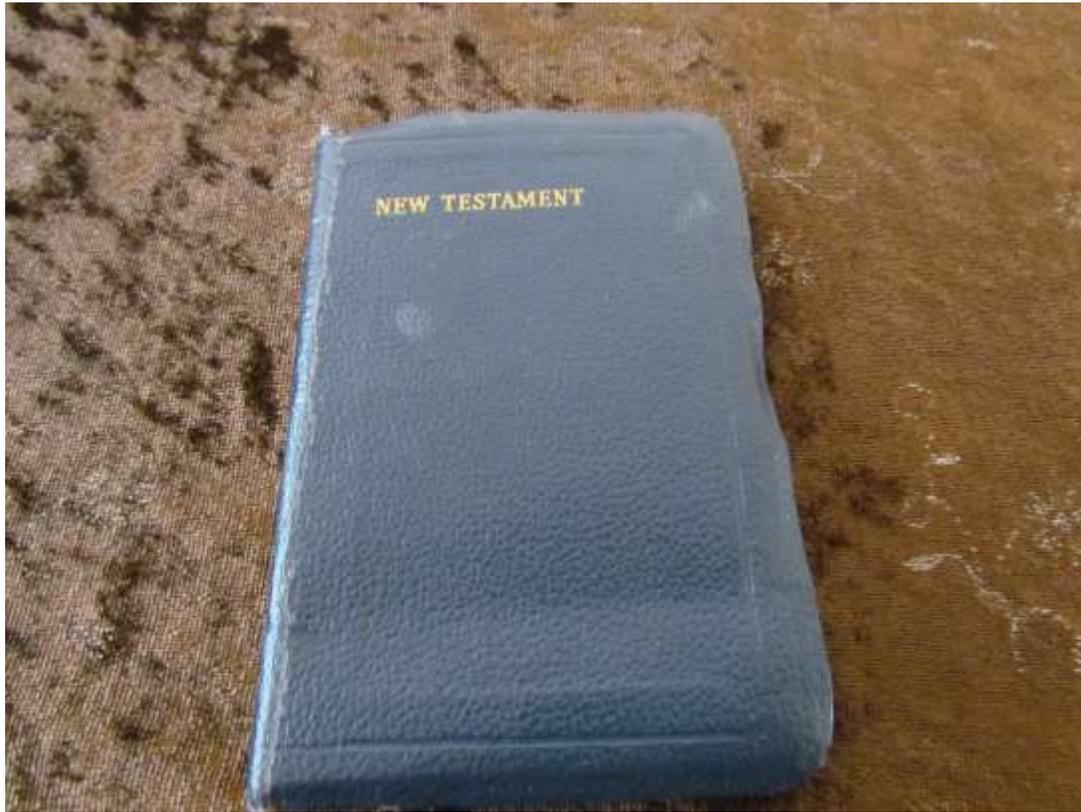
- ***Zechariah 14:2*** For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and **the women ravished**; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

We need to preach the gospel to our Jewish friends.

- Ezekiel 33:8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked *man*, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; **but his blood will I require at thine hand.**



# Religious Jews do not accept the New Testament.

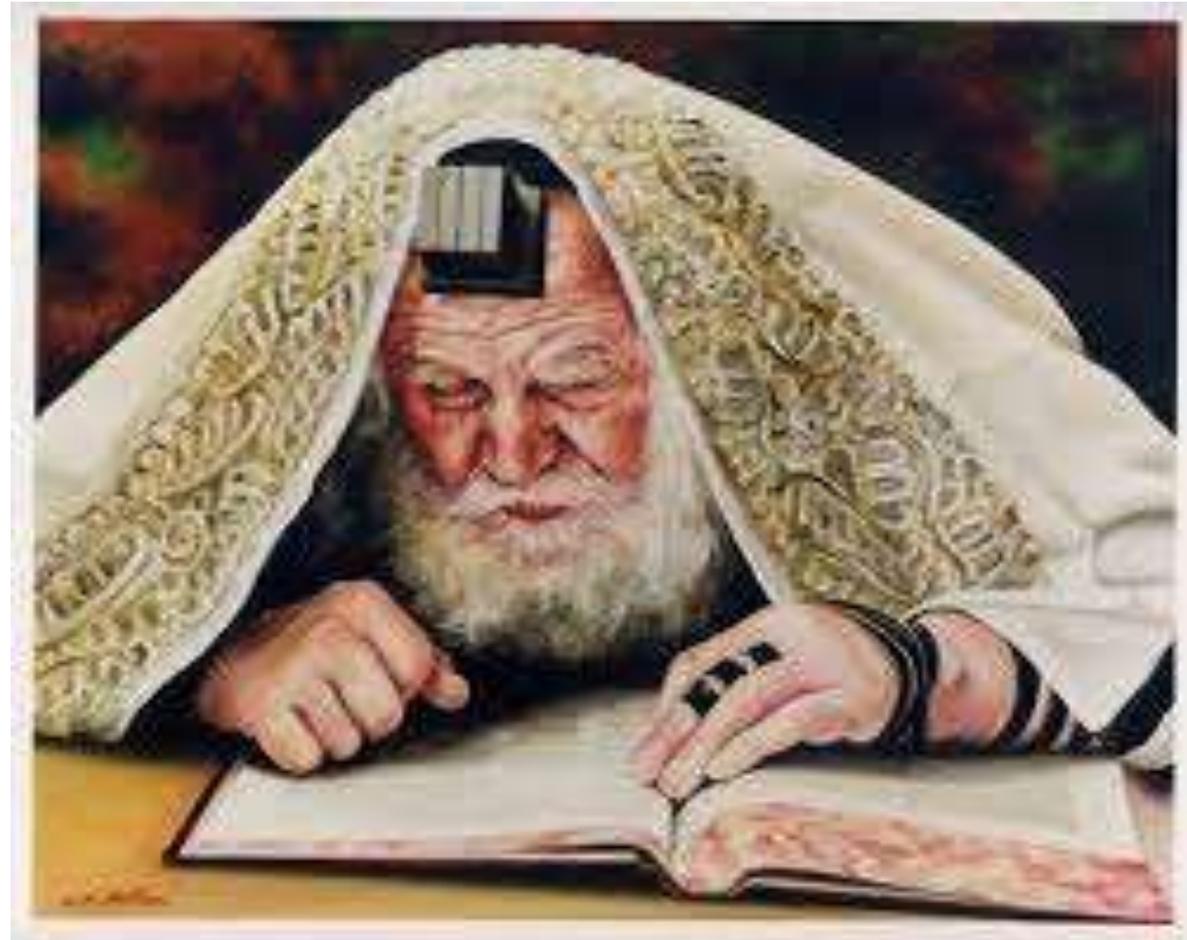


- Therefore normally using the verses that we might use for a sincere Gentile seeker will probably not have the desired results with a Jew.
- John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

# Most Jews have a mistrust of the Old Testament prophets.

- So beginning our witness using this passage will also have limited success.
- Isaiah 53:3-6 3He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The most effective tool in witnessing to the Jews is through the Torah (the first five books of Moses)



# The key to an effective witness



# Father Abraham

- Galatians 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, **preached before the gospel** unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.
- **Preached the gospel? When?**
- **A clue!!!**
- **Galatians 3:6** Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.
- **Genesis 15:6** And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

It occurred when the Lord showed Abraham the stars.

- Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to **thy seed, which is Christ.**
- Genesis 15:5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, **So shall thy seed be.**

So let us turn to Genesis 15 and see if we can see the messiah.

- **Genesis 15:1** After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward.
- **Did you see the messiah?**
- **You have to stop thinking like a Gentile!!!**
- **1 Corinthians 9:20** And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;
- **Genesis 15:1** After these things **the word** of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward.

# The memra (debar) of the Lord

- "The Word," in the sense of the creative or directive word or speech of God manifesting His power in the world of matter or mind; a term used especially in **the Targum as a substitute for "the Lord"** when an anthropomorphic expression is to be avoided... In the Targum the Memra figures constantly as the manifestation of the divine power. *Memra*  
<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10618-memra>
- "The *Word* in Hebrew is **dabar**. In the Targums, which are ancient Aramaic translations or paraphrases of the Old Testament, it was translated as **mimra**. {*memra*} The Targums, which pre-date the Talmud, give us some insight into how the ancient synagogue understood the concept."  
<Http://www.messianicgoodnews.org/rabbis/theword.htm>

# The memra of the Lord

- “The ancient Jewish Aramaic translation of Genesis 1:1, as found in “Targum Neofiti” which dates before Yeshua was born reads as follows: “In the beginning, with wisdom, **the Son and Memra of the Lord, created** and perfected the heavens and the earth.”  
[Http://yeshuatyisrael.com/life002.htm](http://yeshuatyisrael.com/life002.htm)
- The reading of the scroll text alongside the Targum was common during the Second Temple Period. Whenever physical manifestations of God appeared in the text or when God was mentioned more than once in the text the Targum (Aramaic translation) used Memra. Steve Herzig notes on Memra (Last Days Bible Conference)

# The memra of God

- The use of the word memra helped people understand God as transcendent and yet immanent (philosophical and metaphysical) theories of divine presence at the same time.) The memra was the site of God's presence in the world and as a mediating figure. If the Memra is just a name {utterance} that simply enables avoiding asserting that God himself has created, appeared, supported, saved, and thus reserves his absolute transcendence, then who, after all, did the actual creating, appearing, supporting, saving? Either God himself, in which case, one has hardly 'protected' him from contact with the material world, or there is some other divine entity, in which case, **the Memra is not just a name**. Daniel Boyarin - Harvard Theological Review

# What the Targum taught - That the Memra was God

- **Genesis 6:6** And it repented **the LORD** that he had made man on the earth
- And it repented the **Lord through His memra** that He made man on the earth. Targum
- **Exodus 20:1** And **God** spake all these words, saying,
- The **memra of God** is the torah giver. Targum.
- **Exodus 3:14** And **God** said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM:
- And the **memra of the Lord** said to Moses: Targum.

# What the targum taught – the memra is the creator

- **Genesis 1:27** So **God** created man in his *own* image
- And the **memra of the Lord** created man. Targum
- **Psalm 33:6** By the **word of the LORD** were the heavens made;
- By the **memra of the LORD** were the heavens made; Targum

# What the targum taught – we are saved by the memra.

- **Genesis 15:6** And he believed in the **LORD**; and he counted it to him for righteousness.
- Abram believed in the **name of the memra** of the Lord. Targum
- **Isaiah 45:17** *But* Israel shall be saved in the **LORD** with an everlasting salvation:
- Israel will be redeemed by **the memra of God**, an everlasting redemption. Targum.
- **Hosea 1:7** But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the **LORD their God**,
- I will have mercy of them with **the memra of the Lord** their God. Targum

What the targum taught – the memra was the manifestation of the Lord. (theophany)

- **Genesis 3:8** And they heard the voice of the **LORD God** walking in the garden
- They heard the voice of the **memra of the Lord** walking. Targum
- **Genesis 18:1** And the **LORD** appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre:
- The **memra of the Lord** appeared to him by the terebith tree. Targum
- **Isaiah 30:30** And the **LORD** shall cause his glorious voice to be heard
- And God shall cause the glorious voice of **His memra** to be heard.  
Targum

What the targum taught – the memra was the covenant giver.

- **Genesis 17:7** And I will establish my covenant between **me** and thee and thy seed
- And I will establish My covenant between **my memra** and between you. Targum
- **Genesis 9:12** And God said, This *is* the token of the covenant which I make between **me** and you
- And the Lord said, “This is the sign that I set for covenant between **my memra** and you. Targum
- **Joshua 2:12** Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the **LORD**,
- Now swear unto me by the **memra of God**. Targum

# What the targum taught - The memra was a revealer of God.

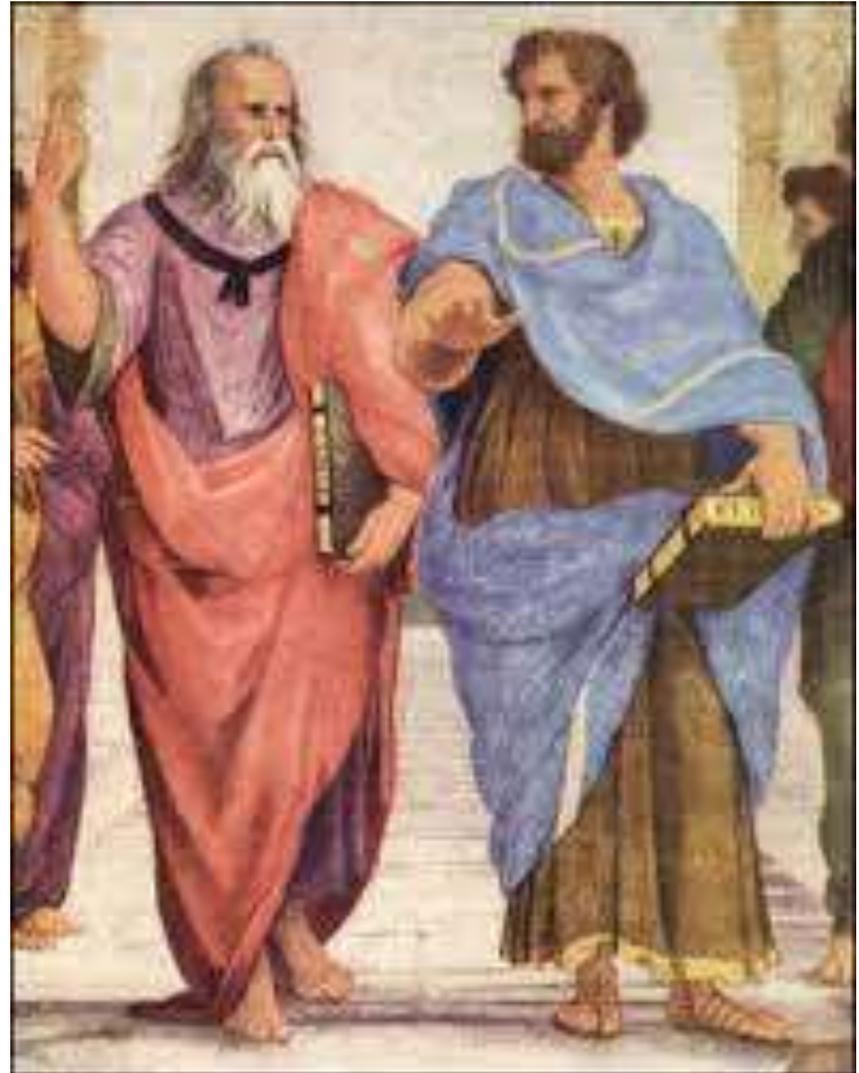
- ***Isaiah 48:16*** Come ye near unto **me**, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there *am* I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.
- Draw near unto **my memra**, hear this
- ***Deuteronomy 32:39*** See now that I, *even* I, *am* he, and *there is* no god with me: **I** kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand.
- When the memra of the Lord shall reveal Himself to redeem His people...and there is no God beside Me. **I in My memra** kill and make alive.

J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981 by J. Vernon McGee.

- “The Word” is one of the highest and most profound titles of the Lord Jesus Christ. To determine the exact meaning is not easy. Obviously the Lord Jesus Christ is not the *Logos* of Greek philosophy; rather He is the *memra* of the Hebrew Scriptures.

# Is he the God of the Jews only?

- Romans 3:29 *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:



# The logos of God.

- Philo - Jewish philosopher from Alexandria
  - Taught Dualism
    - God is holy and matter is evil
    - God did not create matter.
    - Matter and God are co-eternal
- Philo used the Memra to explain Logos theology

# Aristotle

- The logos is designed to distinguish the beneficial from the harmful, and thus also the right and the wrong. For this, in distinction from the other animals is the property of man; that he alone has the ability to perceive good and bad and right and wrong and other qualities. And it is communication of these things that makes a household and a city state.

# Logos

- John borrowed the use of the term word not only from the vocabulary of the Old Testament but also from Greek philosophy, in which the term was essentially impersonal, signifying the rational principle of divine reason, mind or even wisdom. *The McArthur Study Bible*, John McArthur, Word Bibles, 1997, page 1573

# The Archaeological Study Bible, Zondervan, 2005, page 1721

- The word logos, however had a rich tradition in Greek thought. While logos can be a very general term meaning simply “word, account, explanation of a thing” the philosopher Heraclitus (535-475 BC) used it in a sense of an ordering principle for the universe. Thus logos is the divine logic that gives order to the universe. Heraclitus appears to have associated it with fire and to have linked it with reason within human beings.

# The Archaeological Study Bible, Zondervan, 2005, page 1721

- The sense of logos was most fully developed by the Stoics, who taught that the universe was permeated with the logos that gave order and rationality to all things. In late Stoicism this logos could be equated with the pneuma “Spirit” a kind of compound of fire and air, permeated by reason. There was a logos within each individual person (that is human reason) and a logos that pervaded the universe. (that is the rationality that governs the world) By extension the logos within human beings enabled them to move in harmony with the logos of the universe.

So when John wrote his gospel, his description of the Word of God would speak to both his **Greek** and his Jewish audience.

- **John 1:1-3** 1In the beginning was the Word, (logos – Divine reason) and the Word (Logos – Divine reason) was with God, and the Word (Logos – Divine reason) was God. 2The same was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
- **John 1:14** And the Word (logos – Divine reason) was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth

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- **1 Timothy 3:16** And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.
- **Genesis 15:1-2** 1After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward. 2And **Abram said, Lord GOD**, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?