

Borough Park Symposium IV: Messianic Jewish Perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

These papers represent those of the fourth Borough Park Symposium, a Messianic Jewish forum for theological engagement, reflection, and discussion. Each symposium focuses upon a theological issue that the steering committee has deemed to be especially relevant to our wider Messianic Jewish community. The first three symposia addressed theological topics related to, respectively: “The Gospel and the Jewish People,” “The Deity of Messiah and the Mystery of God,” and “How Jewish Should the Messianic Jewish Community Be?”

The topic of this fourth symposium engages, like its former symposia, a topic of theological import and relevance to our community; however, it distinguishes itself from its former symposia in that this is the first time that non-Jewish participants are part of the plenary sessions. Although they do not present papers, they are part of a panel that represents a major session of the symposium. The panel includes both Palestinian and Arab-Israeli Christians who have graciously agreed to listen to our symposium papers and also share with us their perspectives as Arab-Israeli and Palestinian Christians.

The theme of this symposium cries out for theological discourse in the context of the present ecclesial and political climate. While Israel continues to find a sympathetic and supportive base among many Evangelical Christians, recent years have also witnessed an increasingly pro-active series of books, conferences, films and official denominational statements that call into question the theological perspectives of most Messianic Jews related to the modern State of Israel. This forum is not intended as a collective response to these trends, but rather our desire as Messianic Jews to have a discussion on this crucial and timely issue and at the same time provide a dialogical forum for refining our theological perspectives on the various aspects of this topic.

All of the papers and responses are presented by their authors as their own personal views on given aspects of our theme. The ethos of the BPS symposia not only welcomes a diversity of views, but also encourages the participants of our symposia to respectfully consider one another’s views and to express disagreements in a gracious and irenic spirit.

The symposium papers of BPS IV address various aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: biblical prophecy; promise and inheritance; Messianic-Jewish responses; Jewish and Arab believers in Israel;

Messianic Jewish interaction with the wider Christian church; and our own Messianic community's discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As Messianic Jews our identification with our fellow Jewish people and also with the universal body of Messiah present us with both an opportunity and challenge to engage the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a unique vantage point.

As noted, these papers are not presented here as the final word on any aspect of this theme, but rather as individual expressions on a continuing dialogue among Messianic Jews. Moreover, this symposium affords an opportunity to those outside the Messianic Jewish community to become better acquainted with our dialogue on this important topic.