

## ***Melchizedek as a Messiah at Qumran***

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*Contrary to many scholars who argue or assume that the mysterious figure Melchizedek in 11QMelchizedek should be identified as an angel, perhaps as the angel Michael, this paper argues that he is a messianic figure perhaps even the Davidic Messiah. The angelic interpretation is problematic at several points, while the messianic interpretation coheres with Qumran's apparent expectation of a Messiah of Israel who would serve faithfully alongside an anointed priest. These two figures were perhaps thought of as counterparts to the "wicked king" (melki-resha) and the "wicked priest" (hak-kohen ha-rasha), arch enemies of the Qumran community.*

*Key Words: Melchizedek, Melkî-Rešha<sup>c</sup>, messianism; Isa 52:7; 61:1-2*

A manuscript found in Qumran Cave 11 in the year 1956, numbered 11Q13, and first published by A. S. van der Woude in 1965,<sup>1</sup> contains several occurrences of the name Melchizedek, and so is named 11QMelchizedek, even though Melchizedek may or may not have been as central in the work as he seems to be in the preserved portion. The manuscript consists of thirteen badly mutilated fragments representing parts of a column of text (and a few words of perhaps two other columns) from a document of unknown length. So little of the text can be established that not only are many readings of words and lines in question, but even the relative placement of some fragments has yet to be agreed, thirty years after publication.<sup>2</sup> Only so-called column two is well enough preserved to offer useful data, but

I am grateful to Professor Christopher Rowland for an invitation in 1995 to present my thoughts on the present subject to the New Testament Graduate Seminar in Oxford; and to Dr. William Horbury of Cambridge for several helpful comments and corrections to the paper.

1. "Melchisedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt in den neugefundenen eschatologischen Midraschim aus Qumran Höhle XI," *OTS* 14 (1965) 354-73.

2. Compare J. T. Milik, "Milkî-Şedeq et Milkî-Reš<sup>c</sup> dans les anciens écrits Juifs et Chrétiens," *JJS* 32 (1972) 95-144; and Émile Puech, "Notes sur le manuscrit de XI Melkîsédeq," *RevQ* 12 (1987) 483-513.

enough can be read or guessed to assign the original composition of the work to around 120 BCE, tentatively on literary grounds.<sup>3</sup>

What exists of column two may be translated as follows.

- 1 [3.4cm] °° your God °°° °° [8.5cm]
- 2 [2.6cm] And what he said, *In [this] year of jubilee* [7.4cm] °
- 3 [1.8cm] *of the release: every creditor shall release what he has*  
[ent] [6.8cm] *the release*
- 4 *for God* ° [0.7cm] for the last days: to the *captives* of whom  
[6.0cm] he bound
- 5 °°°°°° °°°° °°°°°° and from the inheritance of Melchizedek °  
[2.7cm] and they [1cm] [Melchize]dek who
- 6 will return them and will *proclaim liberty to them* to relieve  
them from [1.1cm] all their iniquities and [1.1cm] ° [0.3cm]  
this matter
- 7 °°°°° of the first jubilee after [1.5cm] jubilees. And the d[ay  
of atone]ment is [1.6cm] of the tenth jubilee,
- 8 to atone on it for all the sons of [0.9cm] people of the lot of  
[Melchi]zedek [1.0cm]-s for [the]m °° [0.6cm] °° [1.3cm] of  
them. For
- 9 it is the time of the year of favor for Melchiz[edek] °°°° [1.4cm]  
° holy ones of God for °°°°° of judgment, as it is written
- 10 about it/him in the songs of David, who said, *God takes his*  
*place in the c[ouncil of God, a]mid the gods he holds judgment.*  
And about it/him ° [0.6cm] *Over it*
- 11 *return on high. God judges the peoples.* And what h[e said]  
[2.5cm] [you] *judge unjustly and s[how] partiality to the wicked?*  
[Se]lah,
- 12 its pesher pertains to Belial and to the s[pirit]s of his lot,  
wh[o] [2.8cm] when they turned [from] the statutes of God  
to ° [1.5cm]
- 13 And Melchizedek will carry out the *ven[geance]* of the judg-  
ments of God [5.0cm] [Be]lial and from the hand of all [1.7cm]
- 14 to his help all the gods [1.7cm] [h]e ° [4.9cm] [a]ll the sons of  
God, and he will [1.8cm]
- 15 This is the day of the [1.0cm] [ab]out which spoke [4.2cm]  
[Isa]iah the prophet, who said, [*How b]eautiful*  
*upon the mountains are the feet of the her[ald who pu]blishes*  
*peace, who he[r]alds [4.0cm] salvatio]n, [s]aying to Zion, "[Reigns]*  
*your God."*
- 17 Its pesher: the *mountains* [are the] [1.7cm] [of] the prophets  
w[ho] [4.5cm] °° to all °° [2.0cm]

3. Milik, "*Millî-Sedeq et Milkî-Reša*," 126; Puech, "Notes sur le manuscrit de XI Melkîsédeq," 509-10.

- 18 And the *herald* i[s the an]ointed of the spirit ab]out whom  
Spoke Dan[iel] [7.5cm]
- 19 *good, publishing [salvation]*, is the one about whom it is  
w[rit]ten [7.3cm]
- 20 *to comfo[rt]* the [2.8cm] to teach them all the times of the  
ep[ochs] [7.3cm]
- 21 in truth °° [13.0cm]
- 22 [3.2cm] ° which was turned away from Belial and ° [7.8cm]
- 23 [3.7cm] in the judgment[s of G]od, as it is written about  
him, [*Saying to Zi]on, "Reigns your God."* [Zi]on i[s]
- 24 [4.2cm] who establish the covenant, those who turn away  
from walking [in the way] of the people. And *your [G]od* i[s]
- 25 [4.3cm] ° [han]d of Belial. And what he said, *You shall send  
abroad the loud tru[m]pet* [1.5cm] °° °°

The best preserved portion of the document thus weaves around someone named Melchizedek several themes of biblical eschatology, including the liberation of Israel from captivity, their return to the land, a final atonement for their sins, the judgment of their captors, a proclamation of peace to Israel, and the inauguration of God's reign.

After careful analysis the editor concluded that the figure bearing the name Melchizedek was an exalted angel playing the role of an eschatological redeemer and judge, known in other Qumran writings as the Prince of Light or the archangel Michael.<sup>4</sup> Most scholars since have followed this line, to the extent that it is now spreading in the literature as the received view.<sup>5</sup> A few, however, have judged otherwise. The Melchizedek in question can be understood as a human messiah, not an angel.<sup>6</sup> The aim of the present paper is to commend the minority view, that is, the royal messianic identification of Melchizedek in 11QMelchizedek, showing that the exegetical considerations which support this view seem weightier than those on the other side. At least I want to call for a debate that does justice to the issue.

4. Van der Woude, "Melchisedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt," 367-72.

5. It has found its way into major reference books. See Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (rev. Geza Vermes and Fergus Millar with Matthew Black and Martin Goodman; 4 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973-87) 3.449-51; George J. Brooke, "Melchizedek (11QMelch)," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman; 6 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 4.687-88.

6. Jean Carmignac, "Le document de Qumran sur Melchisédeq," *RevQ* 7 (1970) As 343-78; Anders Hultgård, "The Ideal Tevite; the Davidic Messiah, and the Saviour Priest in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism* (ed. John J. Collins and George W. E. Nickelsburg; SBLSCS 12; Chico: Scholars Press, 1980) 93-110 (esp. 93); David Flusser, "Melchizedek and the Son of Man," in *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1988) 186-92. None of these authors has argued the case at length.

For his identification of Melchizedek with Michael, the editor gave three reasons. None proves, on scrutiny, to be decisive for a choice between the alternatives. First, he believes the two quotations from biblical Psalms about God as judge (11QMelch 2:10-11, quoting Ps 82:1; Ps 7:7b-8a) have Melchizedek for their referent (על יו, "about him," twice in line 10). Van der Woude infers that Melchizedek bears the title אלהים and therefore ranks among the angels.<sup>7</sup>

Even granting the premise that 11QMelchizedek takes the "God" of the Psalm quotations to be Melchizedek, the conclusion would not follow. For in certain ceremonial contexts the human king of Israel too could be called "God" (Ps 45:7 MT; cf. Isa 9:5) by virtue of his official exaltation to share in unique prerogatives of Yahweh (Ps 110:1; 1 Chr 28:5; 29:23).

But whether the quotations are in fact meant to refer to Melchizedek is far from sure. Psalm 82 was sung in the temple as part of the regular, weekly liturgy during the second temple period (*m. Tamid* 7:4), and the supreme judge it mentions was generally understood to be God (John 10:34-35; *Mek. Bahodeš* 11:49-50 to Exod 20:24; *b. Sanh.* 6b, 7a). In 11QMelchizedek, a gap between the two main fragments (1 and 6), as well as holes in the latter, prevent our reading with confidence any of the significant words in line 8b, or the two words missing in the middle of line 9, so we just do not know who performs what actions in the preceding context. The dual על יו which introduces the two Psalm quotes (11QMelch 2:10) may hark back either to this unknown acting subject or subjects (whom the editor takes to be Melchizedek), or to the noun "time" (קִי 11QMelch 2:9), or to a missing word such as "day" (יו" supplied conjecturally by carrying on the paraphrase of Isa 61:2 in line 9: see pp. 188-92 below).<sup>8</sup> A choice for one of the latter options would yield in line 10, ". . . as is written about *it*" rather than "about *him*," in which case the Psalm quotes would refer to the time or day of divine intervention rather than to Melchizedek. In line 13 the phrase "judgments of God" seems to pick up the motif of God judging, which unites the two Psalm quotes in lines 10-11. As Carmignac pointed out long ago, the "God" of the quotations is most likely God himself.<sup>9</sup> Surely that is

7. Van der Woude, "Melchisedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt," 367-68.

8. P. W. Skehan's suggestion that על יו refers back to מִשְׁפָּט was taken up in Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Further Light on Melchizedek from Qumran Cave 11," *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971) 245-67 (esp. 261). Its improbability, on the ground that מִשְׁפָּט stands in an attributive genitive relationship to the preceding noun, was pointed out in Fred L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition* (SNTSMS 30; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) 74-75.

9. Carmignac, "Le document de Qumran sur Melchisédeq," 365-67. In replying to Carmignac's arguments, M. Delcor was overly confident about the subject of the

reasonable in the absence of clear indications to the contrary. Indeed the idea that the author understood "God" in the Psalm quotes to refer to Melchizedek squares ill with line 13, which specifies Melchizedek as the agent of God, rather than as "God" in his own right.

The fact that the judge "returns" on high (line 11, quoting Ps 7:7) does not require the judge to be someone other than God, in view of OT theophany texts where God himself comes down to exact judgment (Ps 18:9; 50:2-3; 68:17-18; Isa 63:1-6; 64:1-2; Hab 3:3-15). Van der Woude's conjectural restoration at 11QMelch 2:24-25—"And *Your [G]od* i[s Melchizedek . . .]"—is best taken up later, after studying the whole document.<sup>10</sup>

Second, according to van der Woude, Melchizedek has a position and functions parallel to those of Michael in other Qumran writings. Melchizedek, as the principal angel over the  $\square \text{ל} \text{ל}$ , stands in opposition to Belial, as does the Prince of Light (1QS 3:20, 24). Melchizedek also has a special relation to Israel as her protector, savior, and eschatological redeemer, as does Michael (Dan 12:1; 1QM 17:5-9).<sup>11</sup> But all of this rests largely on van der Woude's questionable reading of lines 10-11. Moreover, the same position and functions are predicated of the messiah in some Jewish apocalyptic writings. The messiah too can judge angels and destroy Satan (*T. Levi* 18:12; *T. Dan.* 5:10-11; *1 Enoch* 55:4; 61:8; 69:27-29; cf. Rev 19:19-20:3). That the messiah is a protector and savior of Israel in a wide spectrum of Jewish hopes needs no demonstration.

Finally, van der Woude highlights contemporary interest in the angelic high priesthood of Michael as a possible background to the figure of Melchizedek in 11QMelchizedek (*3 Apoc. Bar.* 11-12; *Herm. Sim.* 8.1-3; *b. Hag.* 12b; *b. Zebah.* 62a; *b. Menah.* 110a). He urges that there was speculation about the heavenly cult precisely at Qumran (4QShirShabb).<sup>12</sup> True, but is speculation about the archangel Michael

actions in lines 8-9 ("Melchizedek from Genesis to the Qumran Texts and the Epistle to the Hebrews," *JSJ* 2 [1971] 115-35 [esp. 134]).

10. For the arguments evaluated in this paragraph, see van der Woude, "Melchizedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt," 368.

11. *Ibid.*, 369-70.

12. *Ibid.*, 370-72. The recent editor of 4QShirShabb, influenced by the consensus which sees an archangel in 11QMelchizedek, has hesitantly restored the name "Melchizedek" in lines 11 and 23 of 4Q401. See Carol A. Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (HSS 27; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985) 133-34, 143-44. But 4Q401 is a short text which Newsom has reconstructed from some thirty-eight tiny fragments, and the ones she thinks might each contain a few letters of Melchizedek's name "occur in that part of the document which is the least well preserved" (p. 38). Newsom depends on the existing literature on 11QMelchizedek (pp. 37-38, 78 note 9) and actually cites that text in support of both her readings. There is little in either fragment of 4Q401 to warrant her restorations rather than others.

necessarily relevant to a document about someone named Melchizedek? It is illegitimate to presuppose what one hopes to prove, namely, that Melchizedek and Michael are to be identified. 11QMelchizedek has nothing about an angelic liturgy. The atonement spoken of in lines 6-8a is "for all the sons of [. . .] and for the men of the lot of Melchizedek" (line 8).<sup>13</sup> There is no reason to imagine the cult as taking place in heaven. Michael's name is absent.

Qumran apart, there is no clear instance of an angel named Melchizedek anywhere in Jewish literature until the medieval period.<sup>14</sup> By that time, sectors of Judaism had imbibed influences from Christian Gnosticism. Gnostic fancy, for its part, took off from a naïve reading of Heb 7:3 ("He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest for ever"),<sup>15</sup> and so was the first known movement in the history of biblical exegesis to hold that Melchizedek was a divine or angelic being.

The pre-Christian Jews of Qumran, on the other hand, had at their disposal, so far as we know, only the two references to Melchizedek in the Hebrew Bible: Gen 14:18-20, where Melchizedek appears as a Jebusite priest-king (cf. 1QapGen col. xxii), and Ps 110:4, where the warring Davidic king of Jerusalem claims the priesthood of his Jebusite forebear. These two passages contain sufficient material to suggest the essential contours of Melchizedek in our document. While Genesis 14 made Melchizedek a priest (11QMelch 2:6-8), Psalm 110—and it alone in the Bible—can account for his other role as international judge (esp. 11QMelch 2:13).<sup>16</sup>

13. Though Milik and Puech agree in restoring [𐤌𐤍] in the first lacuna in line 8, yielding a reference to an atonement for all the "sons [of God]," i.e., angels (Milik, "Milki-Sedeq et Milki-Rešc," 98, 104, 136 with note 58; Puech, "Notes sur le manuscrit de XIMelkisédeq," 494-95), others suggest [𐤌𐤍] to fill up the space (van der Woude, "Melchizedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt," 364; Paul J. Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchireša*<sup>c</sup> [CBQMS 10; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981] 15), in which case the reference would be to an atonement for all the "sons [of light]," namely, the Qumran covenanters.

14. Van der Woude cites *Yalkut Hadash* f. 115, col. 3, num. 19. See also 3 *Enoch* 10:1; 48C:5.

15. Birger A. Pearson, "The Figure of Melchizedek in Gnostic Literature," in *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 108-23.

16. Contra Fitzmyer, "Further Light on Melchizedek," 254, who can find almost no influence of Psalm 110 on 11QMelchizedek. John J. Collins agrees (*The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* [New York: Doubleday, 1995] 142). Observe that the name "Melchizedek" must have come from one or the other of the two named passages of the Hebrew scriptures. Melchizedek's victory over evil forces (11QMelch 2:13-14) is present in only one (Ps 110:1-2, 5-7). See also David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973) 27.

Whatever parallels exist between Melchizedek in 11QMelchizedek and Michael, then, also hold good for the messiah. To decide between the alternatives we must focus on other factors.

Another factor has entered the discussion through scholars who set 11QMelchizedek against a cluster of other Qumran fragments, two of which contain the name Melchiresha (4QAmram<sup>b</sup> 4Q544] frag. 2, line 3; 4QBerakot<sup>f</sup> [= 4Q280] line 2). These scholars assume that Melchiresha, the popular etymology of whose name ("king of evil") is the inverse of Melchizedek ("king of righteousness": cf. Philo *Leg. Alleg.* 3.79; Heb 7:2), is the chief angelic watcher opposed to Michael, and that this implies the identity of Michael and Melchizedek.<sup>17</sup>

Making such big assumptions is problematic. While in 4QAmram<sup>b</sup> the head of the evil watchers and Melchiresha seem to be closely associated, it goes beyond the evidence to maintain that they are the same being. Between the broken answer to Amram's query about the infernal watcher, "Who is he?" (frag. 2, middle of line 2) and the occurrence of the name Melchiresha (middle of line 3) there is space for about 46 characters.<sup>18</sup> That is a good deal of space to fill up with sheer conjecture, in a six-line fragment riddled with lacunae and containing no biblical quotations for a modern editor to lean on. Dare we infer from the (probably) three names of the good archangel missing from yet another two-line fragment (frag. 3, line 2) that the satanic figure in frag. 2 has Melchiresha as one of three corresponding names?<sup>19</sup>

We are on securer ground in 4QBerakot<sup>f</sup>, where Melchiresha is the object of a series of conventional curses. Yet precisely here he is a human being. Need Belial anticipate being separated "for evil from the midst of the sons of l[ight]"—who are usually the Qumran community (line 1)? Would Belial tremble at the hand of the avengers (line 3)? Would Belial call on God for compassion (line 3)? Whenever would there be a "Peace" for Belial in the mouths of those who "hold fast to the Father[s]" (line 4)? Does Belial have a "remnant" (line 5)? To these clauses there is no analogy in the actual curses of Belial (4QBerakot<sup>a</sup>, frag. 7, ii 1-13). Paul J. Kobelski hazards a theory of redaction to get around the evidence of 4QBerakot<sup>f</sup> for the humanity of Melchiresha, but if he is right, the redactor made a remarkably sloppy job of transferring the curses to Belial.<sup>20</sup>

17. See especially Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchiresha*<sup>c</sup>; Émile Puech, *La croyance des Esséniens en la vie future: immortalité, résurrection, vie éternelle? Histoire d'une croyance dans le Judaïsme ancien* (2. vols.; Paris: Gabalda, 1993) 515-61.

18. J. T. Milik, "4Q Visions de <sup>c</sup>Amram et une citation d'Origène," *RB* 79 (1972) 77-97 (esp. 79).

19. Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchiresha*<sup>c</sup>, 33.

20. *Ibid.*, 39-42.

If we accept the liturgical curses as they stand, Melchiresha appears to be the ringleader of the armies who gather against the Qumran community ("Cursed be those who practi[se their wicked designs] and [es]tablish in their heart your (evil) devices, plotting against the Covenant of God": 4QBerakot<sup>f</sup> 5-6). He is therefore the antagonist of the Israelite king who figures in the liturgical blessings (1QSb). These blessings, with the curses, may be genetically related to the blessings and curses in 1QS 2:2-18, and so form a group of related texts.<sup>21</sup> The blessing of the "Prince of the Congregation" is a pastiche of phrases from classical messianic texts including Gen 49:9-10 and Isa 11:1-5. The opening sentence, "May the Lord raise you up to everlasting heights" (1QSb 5:23) is reminiscent of Ps 110:1. Could this have any bearing on the Melchizedek in our document?

To explain why Melchiresha's name appears so near a visionary representation of Belial in 4QAmram<sup>b</sup>, he could be identified with the human accomplice of Belial known from the *War Rule*. For the last of all battles, Michael and his angels will go forth against Belial and his minions (1QM 13:10-11; 17:5-6), coming to the aid of the sons of light on the one side and of the sons of darkness on the other. The terrestrial armies will each have a leader too. Michael will help the Israelite "Prince of the battle" (1QM 19:12),<sup>22</sup> while Belial will aid "Gog and his assembly" (1QM 11:16), also called "the king of the Kittim" about whom the whole host of Belial will gather on that day (1QM 15:2-3). God "will raise up the principedom of Michael amid the gods, and the kingdom of Israel amid all flesh" (1QM 17:7-8). Assuming the king of the Kittim cooperates just as closely with Belial, it would not be surprising for his name to crop up in 4QAmram<sup>b</sup> in a description of Belial's identity.

In 1QM, the human double for Michael is the "scepter" that "shall rise out of Israel" (Num 24:17), who will come forth from the line of Israel's kings going right back to David who slew Goliath (1QM 11:2-7). In a closely related document about the eschatological war, the protagonist who goes into battle against the forces of the Kittim is a shoot from the stump of Jesse, the bud of David (4Q285 frag. 5, lines 2-3).<sup>23</sup> The Isaiah commentary on Isa 11:1-3, which refers to the messiah as the Branch of David (4Q161, frags. 8-10, line 17), also mentions his victory over Magog (cf. Gog in 1QM 11:16). This may be the person who can boast, in another Qumran hymn, of

21. For the view that the fragments 4QBerakot<sup>a-c</sup> (= 4Q286-90) represent a later edition of the annual ceremony of the community, see Bilhah Nitzan, "4QBerakhot (4Q286-290): A Preliminary Report," in *New Qumran Texts and Studies* (ed. George J. Brook and Florentine Garcia Martínez; STDJ 15; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 53-71.

22. The textual conjecture is that of M. Baillet in DJD 7.48—49.

23. See Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 58-60.

his exaltation to a "throne of strength in the congregation of gods" (4Q491, frag. 11, line 12).<sup>24</sup> Morton Smith has recently poured acid on the earlier attribution of the speech in 4Q491, frag. 11 to Michael rather than to a human being.<sup>25</sup> Again it smacks strongly of Ps 110:1 and may provide a context for 11QMelchizedek.

Far-reaching hypotheses about Melchiresha on the slim basis of 4QAmram<sup>b</sup> and 4QBerakot<sup>f</sup> should not blind us to a number of interesting word-plays that might shed a different light on the subject. If *melkî-reša<sup>c</sup>* is the "king of evil," could he and the "wicked priest" (*hak-kôhên hâ-râšâ<sup>c</sup>*: 1QpHab 8:8) form some sort of a pair? Several Seleucid overlords forged a working relationship with Jonathan and Simon Maccabee while the memory of what Antiochus IV Epiphanes had done to the faithful still smarted. For that matter, could the eschatological priestly "teacher of righteousness" (*yôrêh haš-sedeq*: CD 6:11; cf. 7:18-19) and the coming "king of righteousness" (*melki-sedeq*) be their godly antipodes? In that case, would not *melkî-sedeq* be the same as the Davidic "Messiah of Righteousness" (*měšîah haš-sedeq* 4QP Bless 3), alias the "Messiah of Holiness" (*měšîah haq-qôdeš* 1Q30, frag. 1, line 2)? It is hard to be sure. The puns are at least tantalizing.

Let us now turn to a fresh analysis of what 11QMelchizedek tells us about Melchizedek, taking care to cite only words and phrases that can be verified by cross-checking the editions against the published photographs.<sup>26</sup>

11QMelchizedek belongs to the genre of eschatological midrashim typical of Qumran, as the double occurrence of the term *peshet* (11QMelch 2:12, 17) and the phrase "for the last days" (11QMelch 2:4) require.<sup>27</sup> It is no commentary on a single passage, but a weft of four principal biblical texts that have thematic connections with one another—Lev 25:8-13; Isa 52:7; 61:1-2; and Dan 9:24-25—together with yet other, subsidiary texts.

To specify the biblical material used, according to the biblical order: 11QMelchizedek's chronological scheme based on jubilees (line 7) presupposes the definition of a jubilee year in Lev 25:8, 10-12.<sup>28</sup> The document quotes Lev 25:9 (sounding the trumpet on the day of

24. Note also similar phrases in 4Q427, line 7 ("as for me, my station is with the gods"), and in 4Q471b 6 4 ("who is like me among the gods?").

25. Morton Smith, "Ascent to the Heavens in 4QM-a," in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman; JSPSup 8; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) 181-88. Smith's proposal that the speaker is someone like the author of the *Hodayot* receives a sympathetic hearing in Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 136-53. Collins even notes the possibility that the speaker is "a royal messiah" (p. 147).

26. In van der Woude, "Melchizedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt," before p. 357.

27. Correctly observed in *ibid.*, 357.

28. For a fuller discussion of the jubilee scheme in the setting of other contemporary documents, see Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchiresha<sup>c</sup>*, 49-51.

atonement in a jubilee year) beginning at line 25. Lev 25:10 contains the phrase *proclaim liberty* used in line 6. A broken quotation of Lev 25:13 begins in line 2, and links with the subsidiary text Deut 15:2, quoted in lines 3-4.

Isa 52:7 (*How beautiful are the feet of the messenger . . .*) may be the source of the only legible word in line 1, your God (cf. lines 23, 24). The full verse is quoted in lines 15-16 and forms the subject of an extended *peshet* in lines 17, 18, 19, 23, and 24.

Isa 61:1 (*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me . . .*) echoes in the phrase [*the an*]ointed of the spirit in line 18.<sup>29</sup> Isaiah's *to proclaim liberty to the captives* supplies vocabulary for lines 4 (*captives*) and 6 (*to proclaim liberty to them*), overlapping at this point with Lev 25:10. From Isa 61:2 comes the phrase *the year of favor for* at line 9, and the word *vengeance* at line 13.

We may conjecture that the phrase *and the day of vengeance* from Isa 61:2 also stood in the lacuna in line 9. The phrase וְלַיּוֹם נָקָם has the right number of characters to fill up the space, and fits the few traces of letters showing along the ragged edges of manuscript fragments 12 and 6 here.<sup>30</sup> This restoration would yield for line 9 overall the reading הוֹאֵה הַקֶּץ לְשָׁנַת הַרְצוֹן לְמַלְכֵי מִן־דָּק וְלַיּוֹם נָקָם] קְדוֹשֵׁי אֱלֹהִים לְמַשְׁלַת מְשֻׁפָּט, "For this is the appointed time for *the year of favor for Melchizedek*, and for *the day of vengeance*] of the holy ones of God for the kingdom (?) of justice, as it is written . . ." Instead of the original *the*

29. The reading of this difficult line, an improvement over van der Woude's in the preliminary publication, was suggested in Yigael Yadin, "A Note on Melchizedek and Qumran," *IEJ* 15 (1965) 152-54 (esp. 153). Fitzmyer highlighted the allusion to Isa 61:1 ("More Light on Melchizedek," 253, 265).

30. E. Puech has most recently restored the breach in line 9 by putting in the phrase וְלַהֲרִים בְּדִין, yielding: "For this is the appointed time for *the year of favor for Melchizedek*, and *to exalt in judgment*] the holy ones to the kingdom of justice, as it is written . . ." ("Notes sur le manuscrit de XIMelchisedeq," 488). My proposal accepts Puech's restoration of the *waw* and the *lamed*. Only a trace of the next letter remains: Puech supposes it to be the left sprig of the horizontal crossbar of a *he*, sloping downward to the left, but it could just as well be the left leg of a *yod*. The next letter has too sharp a corner, I think, to be the round shoulder of a *resh*, as Puech suggests, and the tick which his transcription shows cannot be verified from the photograph in the original publication; the letter is more likely a *waw* with a hooked head. After the tear, only a small mark of the last letter in the missing phrase is extant. Puech takes it to be the slightly pointed head of a final *nun*; but his transcription shows it sloping in the wrong direction (downwards to the right rather than to the left as in the photograph), and in any case the stroke is too long to stand comparison with the final *nuns* in lines 7, 9, and 16. It looks more like the intersection of the tick or short stroke added to the crossbar, and the left downstroke, of a final *mem*, as comparison with that in line 24 indicates. When Emmanuel Tov examined the microfiche photograph with me in the spring of 1995 in Yarnton, he was dubious about identifying this mark at all; unfortunately the original photograph was misplaced and we could not consult it.

*year of favor for Yahweh*, the author has substituted "*the year of favor for Melchizedek*," making Melchizedek the beneficiary of Yahweh's year of favor; while he paraphrases *the day of vengeance for our God* as "*the day of vengeance of the holy ones of God for the kingdom (?) of justice*," making God's angels the executors of his vengeance, and those who form "the kingdom of justice" the beneficiaries, together with Melchizedek. Mention of *the day of vengeance* in line 9 would explain the connection of that line with lines 10-12, which go on to cite the subsidiary texts Ps 82:1-2 and 7:7b-8a, tied together by the *Stichwort* "to judge."

*To comfort* in line 20 comes from the end of Isa 61:2.

Dan 9:24 (seventy times seven years to atone for iniquity and to bring in the eschaton) informs the scheme according to which atonement will be made in the tenth jubilee (ten times forty-nine years) in lines 7-8. The "*anointed of the spirit about whom spoke Daniel*" (line 18)<sup>31</sup> can only refer to "an anointed one, a prince" in Dan 9:25 (cf. "to anoint a most holy one": Dan 9:24).

Several thematic threads join these passages together. "Atonement" in the jubilee year links Lev 25:8-9 and Dan 9:24, when the latter passage is read against the grid of a system of eschatology based on jubilee periods. Lev 25:10 and Isa 61:1 share the phrase to *proclaim liberty*, and this ties in with the idea of the messenger in Isa 52:7. The מַבְשֵׁר of Isa 52:7 echoes in the לַבְשֵׁר of Isa 61:1. Isa 61:1 and Dan 9:25 both speak of God's anointed one.

In early Jewish exegesis beyond Qumran, three of the four principal texts in 11QMelchizedek ring of the messiah. The author of Luke–Acts applies Isa 52:7 to Jesus Christ at Acts 10:36. R. Jose the Galilean (ca. 110 CE) also thought the same biblical text pointed to the King Messiah, acting as God's herald (*Perek Haš-Šalom* 13 (59b); *Pesiqta* 51a, 20),<sup>32</sup> and *Lev. Rab.* 9:9 reports "the rabbis" saying, "When the Messianic king is to come, he will commence with peace," quoting the same verse. Isa 61:1-2 forms the basis for a messianic claim on the lips of Jesus at Luke 4:18-19. In *Lam. Rab.* 3:9 the passage is one of three that the rabbis associated because all three mention the Holy Spirit "in connection with the redemption." And Dan 9:25-26, as the only passage in the OT that uses the title מְשִׁיחַ in an

31. The reading is not certain, for line 18 is broken, showing only a ׀ followed by a trace of a probable ׀. It was proposed in Fitzmyer, "Further Light on Melchizedek," 265-66, and has been widely accepted.

32. For the references I am indebted to Fitzmyer ("Further Light on Melchizedek," 253), though he refers to *Derek Eretz Zuta* rather than *Perek Haš-Šalom*. I cannot find the quotation of R. Jose the Galilean in *Derek Eretz Zuta*.

eschatological context, was widely understood as a reference to the messiah.<sup>33</sup>

Prima facie, the selection of biblical texts that form the subject of the midrash in 11QMelchizedek inclines us toward a messianic reading of the document.

Qumran, as is well known, developed a distinctive form of Jewish messianism which expected two or three eschatological figures: perhaps a prophet, and certainly an anointed king and an anointed priest.<sup>34</sup> In 11QMelchizedek there are two. This is clear in the *pesher* on Isa 52:7 in lines 17-25, where the individual elements of the verse are expounded consecutively, the "mountains" having to do with the prophets, and so forth. An introductory formula in each case quotes the part of the verse to be interpreted, followed by **הוֹאֵה**, then the identification (lines 18, 19, 23, 24; probably the plural **הַמְה** stood in the lacuna in line 17). Curiously, the two occurrences of **מְבַשֵּׂר** in Isa 52:7 are taken to denote two different heralds, rather than one, for each has its own **הוֹאֵה**-clause (lines 18, 19). The **מְבַשֵּׂר** *who brings good tidings, who publishes peace* is said to be "*the anointed of the spirit* (Isa 61:1) about whom spoke Daniel (9:25) . . ." (line 18); while the **מְבַשֵּׂר** *who brings good tidings of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns"* is identified by quoting from Isa 61:2 (we can infer this from *to comfort*, line 20). The effect is to split not only Isa 52:7, but also Isa 61:1-2 between the two figures, a pattern of exegesis already familiar from the distribution of phrases in Num 24:17 to the two messiahs of Qumran at CD 7:18-21.

Since Dan 9:25 speaks of an anointed *prince* (**נְגִיד**), the identification in line 18 probably refers to the royal messiah, otherwise known at Qumran as the messiah of Israel. This impression grows stronger if we make the sober guess that the Qumran author understood all

33. That Dan 9:25-26 denotes the high priest Onias III (early decades of the second century BCE), as most critics now suppose, is possible but questionable in view of the fact that in v. 25 he bears the title **נְגִיד** ("prince"), a title which in the Hebrew Bible more often than not designates a royal or a military leader (but note the few references of **נְגִיד** to priests: Jer 20:1; 1 Chron 9:20; 2 Chron 31:12). In any case, Jews in the latter half of the Second-Temple period generally understood Dan 9:24-27 as a messianic prophecy (note esp. Josephus *J.W.* 6 §312; *Ant.* 10 §276; cf. *b. Abod. Zar.* 8b-9a; *b. Nazir* 32b). See also Roger T. Beckwith, "Daniel 9 and the Date of Messiah's Coming in Essene, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Zealot and Early Christian Computation," *RevQ* 10 (1981) 521-42. Interpretations which saw the fulfillment of parts of Dan 9:24-27 in the Maccabean period (*1 Enoch* 89:68-90:27; *LXX Dan* 9:26-27; *T Levi* 16-17; *1 Macc* 1:54) actually reinforce the conclusion that the earliest Jewish exegeses of the passage were messianic in nature, for many Jews of that period thought the campaigns of the Hasmoneans would usher in the messianic age.

34. Scholarship on Qumran messianism is summarized in Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 2.550-54.

but the last clause in Isa 61:1-2 in reference to him (further considerations below will confirm it). The twin eschatological roles of the royal messiah will be to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor to the captives, and the day of God's vengeance to their oppressors. He is expected to come as liberator and judge.

More space is devoted to the description of the second *מבשר* of Isa 52:7 (lines 18b to 23). At this point the preserved parts of the manuscript are spotty. Presumably line 19 had some form of Isa 61:2c-3, *to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion*—, for line 20 digresses from the main *pesher* of Isa 52:7 into a secondary one of *to comfort* (Isa 61:2), before returning to the former verse at the end of line 23. *To comfort* means to teach (*לְהַשְׁכִּיל*) eschatological mysteries (line 20). The teacher has a special relationship to *Zion* (line 23), interpreted in turn as the movement of which the Qumran community is a part (line 24). He is, therefore, the final Teacher of Righteousness (CD 6:10-11; 7:18-19), the messiah of Aaron.<sup>35</sup>

How does Melchizedek fit into these expectations? Let us list the things 11QMelchizedek definitely says about him, in the order of their appearance. The holy land is "the inheritance of Melchizedek" (line 5). In the last days Melchizedek will return dispersed Israel to the holy land (lines 5-6). Melchizedek will *proclaim liberty to the captives* (line 6 in the light of line 4). Melchizedek will "relieve them from . . . of all their iniquities" (line 6). Probably this means that Melchizedek is the one who will act on the last and greatest day of atonement to atone for Israel (lines 7-8). Israel belongs to "the lot of Melchizedek" (line 8). Melchizedek is a beneficiary of the *year of favor* (line 9). Melchizedek will be God's agent to carry out God's *vengeance* against Belial and the spirits of his lot (line 13). All the gods will come to Melchizedek's help (line 14). Further comments are required on some of these points.

As for "the inheritance of Melchizedek" (line 5): in biblical usage, when *נחל* stands in a construct state expressing possession, the ruling noun is far more often human<sup>36</sup> than it is divine.<sup>37</sup> In the usage of Qumran, the ruling noun is invariably human (1QS 4:16, 24; 4Q171 3:1, 10; 11QT 62:13; 64:13). Likewise in the Bible a "lot" (line 8) usually falls to the man or Israelite tribe who inherits a plot of ground. So the phrase "the inheritance of Melchizedek" means that Melchizedek will inherit the promised land of Canaan, when he causes

35. For evidence that the eschatological High Priest is identical with the eschatological Teacher of Righteousness, see Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 114-15.

36. Num 27:7; 36:2, 3, 4, 7, 8; Josh 13:23, 28; 14:3; 15:20; 16:8, 9; 18:20, 28; 19:1, 8, 9, 16, 23, 31, 39, 48; Judg 20:6; 1 Kgs 21:3, 4; Isa 54:17; 58:14; Jer 3:19; Ezek 35:15; 46:18; Ps 111:6.

37. 1 Sam 26:19; 2 Sam 14:16; 20:19; 21:3.

the elect to return there, in perpetuity. This makes sense if Melchizedek is the king and benefactor of the whole people of Israel. One is reminded of the "district of Onias" around Leontopolis in Egypt at about the same time as our document was written.<sup>38</sup> There are also messianic parallels. "Behold, O Lord, and raise up for them their king, the son of David. . . . May he expel sinners from the inheritance. . . . And he shall gather together a holy people . . . And he shall divide them up by their tribes over the land . . . And he shall be a righteous king, taught by God, over them" (*Pss. Sol.* 17:21, 23, 26, 28). "And on that day I will cause my Chosen One to dwell among them . . . And I will transform the dry ground and make it a blessing, and I will cause my chosen ones to dwell upon it" (*1 Enoch* 45:4-5). That Melchizedek will receive his inheritance on earth does not square well with what is said of Michael in the *War Rule*: God "will raise up the principedom of Michael amid the gods" (1QM 17:7).

Melchizedek's proclamation of liberty (line 6) to the captives (line 4) shows him to be the preacher of Isa 61:1-2, who is further described as "*the anointed* of the spirit about whom spoke Daniel" in line 18. The reference to Dan 9:25 probably identifies Melchizedek as the royal messiah.<sup>39</sup>

There is a Qumran parallel for Melchizedek's priestly function of making atonement for Israel (lines 6-8) at CD 14:19: ". . . [the messiah of Aaron and Israel, and he will make atonement for their iniquity."<sup>40</sup> In all likelihood the ascription of a sacerdotal role to the coming Davidic king at least partly explains the author's choice of the name "Melchizedek" to designate him in this work (cf. Ps 110:4).

Melchizedek's key role in bringing *the year of favor and the day of vengeance* of Isa 61:2 (lines 9, 13), connected in line 18 with the messianic passage Dan 9:25, removes from the realm of conjecture our guess that the Qumran author ascribed all but the last clause of Isa 61:1-2 to the royal messiah. If my proposed restoration for line 9 be

38. Josephus *J.W.* 1 §190; 7 §421; *Ant.* 13 §287; 14 §131; W. Horbury and D. Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 90-94 (no. 38).

39. When van der Woude first laid out the angelic interpretation of Melchizedek in this document in 1965, he did not yet have the benefit of the improved readings of line 18 proposed by Yadin and Fitzmyer, clarifying the reference to Dan 9:25. It is frankly worrying to see how constructs can persist in scholarship despite progress in our appropriation of the facts on which they rest.

40. Moses provided an historic model for the expectation that the coming king would make atonement for Israel. In the Bible Moses generally serves as lawgiver, commander, and judge of the nation, thus fulfilling the functions of a king over against the priestly role of his brother Aaron. But 4Q504 1-2 ii 9-10 states, "Moses atoned for their sin," probably with reference to Moses' intercession in the debacle of the golden calf (Exod 32:31-32).

accepted (*the year of favor* for Melchizedek . . . *the day of vengeance* . . . for the kingdom of justice"), then Melchizedek will be seen, moreover, as instrumental in establishing the reign of justice.

Melchizedek's carrying out God's judgments is amply illustrated by apocalyptic passages where the messiah or the son of man acts as God's agent for judgment (*Pss. Sol.* 17:22-29; Matt 25:31-46; *1 Enoch* 45:3; 55:4; 61:8; 69:27-29; 4 Ezra 12:32-34; 13:5-13, 37-50; 2 Bar. 40:1-2; chap. 72).

The gods' coming to Melchizedek's aid (line 14) compares favorably with similar statements in other Qumran writings, which speak of angels helping the human community of the covenant. See 1QS 3:24-25; 1QM 12:8-9; 13:10; 17:6.<sup>41</sup>

In sum: many converging lines of evidence points, to the conclusion that Melchizedek in 11QMelchizedek is none other than Daniel's *anointed one, a prince*, whom a later age would call King Messiah.

All of this makes it hard to accept the common restoration of Melchizedek's name in the *peshar* of the last clause of Isa 52:7 in lines 24-25. Although it is a pure guess, most modern editors recommend it.<sup>42</sup> Textual considerations are decidedly against it. The extended *peshar* in lines 17-25 interprets the two מַבְשָׁרִים of Isa 52:7 by referring, not to other figures, but to the same figures in other verses of Scripture (lines 18, 19). The *peshar* of *your God* in line 24, then, need not refer to some other being called God, but needs only to describe God in terms of some other Scripture about him. And the "he said (אמר)" that introduces a scriptural quotation in the next line presupposes mention of God himself in the lacuna of lines 24-25.

Would a messianic interpretation of 11QMelchizedek fit the historical realia of the Qumran community in about 120 BCE? There is evidence that the Hasmoneans from Simon (142-134 BCE) onwards used Ps 110:4 to legitimate their recent assumption of the high priesthood together with the military role they had inherited (1 Macc 14:41; *As. Mos.* 6:1; Josephus *Ant.* 16. §1.63; *b. Roš Haš.* 18b).<sup>43</sup> Because of such changes in these several decades, the Essenes seem to have reversed diametrically their view of the Maccabean house, from regarding Judas Maccabeus as the harbinger of the messianic age (*1 Enoch* 90:9-16), to calling Jonathan or Simon the "Wicked Priest"

41. Carmignac, "Le document de Qumran sur Melchisédeq," 366-67. This is a strong point in Carmignac's argument for a human messiah in 11QMelchizedek, to which no other scholar has yet made a reply.

42. The three most recent editions of the text include the name [Melchizedek] in square brackets (Milik, "*Milki-Sedeq et Milki-Reša<sup>c</sup>*," 99; Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchireša<sup>c</sup>*, 6; Puech, "Notes sur le manuscrit de XIMelkisédeq," 489).

43. Jakob J. Petuchowski, "The Controversial Figure of Melchizedek," *HUCA* 28 (1957) 127-36; Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, 24-26.

in Qumran writings. In response to these their arch enemies, they might have insisted that it was only in the final jubilee that the Davidic ideal of Psalm 110 could truly be fulfilled, in partnership with their own Teacher of Righteousness.

In doing so, the Essenes were champions of the traditional Jewish exegesis of Psalm 110 with reference to David and his heirs. The Pharisees of the first century CE and the early Christians agreed in assuming that Psalm 110 was messianic (Mark 12:35-37), and the same view is found in *Aboth de R. Nathan*, chap. 34. As the Essene and the Pharisaic-Rabbinic branches of Judaism were not in fruitful dialogue with one another after about 150 BCE, the fact that both groups could simply take for granted the royal understanding of Psalm 110 constitutes evidence that it was part of the common heritage of Jews in the last two centuries BCE, from probably much earlier. Indeed, for want of contrary evidence, it is reasonable to posit an unbroken tradition of interpretation of Psalm 110, from the court of the kingdom of Judah, through the priestly scribes who finally edited the Psalter and those who made the Septuagint translation of it (which preserves touches of the old royal ideology more faithfully than the MT does), to circles of priests and scribes late in the second temple period, and even on into the Talmudic/patristic period.<sup>44</sup> This pre-Christian Jewish tradition notably left its mark on the messianology of another Jewish sect, the earliest Christian church.<sup>45</sup>

Dogmatism is excluded when we have to deal with incomplete and enigmatic ancient documents. That Melchizedek in 11QMelchizedek is Michael will doubtless remain a possible interpretation. The state of preservation of the manuscript is not such as to yield clinching arguments. If this paper has shown that the messianic understanding of Melchizedek arises naturally from the text of 11QMelchizedek, and provides a comprehensive, coherent and cogent explanation of the details of the document in its historical setting, I will have achieved my goal.

44. Note, for example, the mention of Melchizedek along with Elijah, the Messiah, and the War Messiah, in *Pesiq. Rab Kah* 5.9; *Cant. Rab.* 2.13.4.

45. For the use of Psalm 110 by the early church, see Martin Hengel, "Setze dich zu meiner Rechten!": Die Inthronisation Christi zur Rechten Gottes and Psalm 110,1," in *Le Trône de Dieu* (ed. M. Philonenko; WUNT 69; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1993) 108-94 (ET: M. Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995] 119-225).