

A silhouette of a man, likely Jesus, wearing a robe and holding a staff, standing on a beach or shore. The background is a warm, orange and yellow sunset sky over the ocean.

# Jesus & Kabbalah: *The Last Kingdom*

Discover the hidden connection between  
Jesus & Ancient Jewish Kabbalah

Paul Kolberg

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The Lost Kingdom

EXTRACT

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## The Lost Kingdom

THE HIDDEN CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CORE  
TEACHING OF JESUS & ANCIENT JEWISH KABBALAH

PAUL KOLBERG



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*For my wife and three wonderful sons,*

EXTRACT



# Jesus & Kabbalah

The Lost Kingdom

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## *Introduction*

This book is about the many questions I have asked concerning Jesus of Nazareth and the answers that have found their way to me. I deliberately say, found their way to me, since it has become clear to me that I could not have written this book without having been introduced to a founding member of the Kabbalah Centre in London. That arose as a result of another strange coincidence. I wasn't looking for Kabbalah, but it transpired that Kabbalah was looking for me.<sup>1</sup>

I was discussing some potential business with that person and in the course of a meeting, learned that she needed some help in what was a difficult and protracted legal case. I had retired as a lawyer and was ironically the subject of my own legal dispute, but I didn't let on. I knew I could help and felt compelled to do so despite my own difficulties and before I knew anything about Kabbalah.

My approach to finding solutions to apparently impossible situations was and is, as I put it, "to allow the Universe to work through me". As a lawyer, I ensured that I had a full grasp of the facts. I would then sit back

and allow the solutions to come to me. I didn't know immediately what the solutions were, but I absolutely knew they would come. It requires patience and trust, but it always works.

In assisting with the case, it became apparent that we had a shared and profound interest in spiritual matters. As a result, I was intrigued by and introduced to Kabbalah and ultimately to the Head of the London Kabbalah Centre. Over time and following many hours of discussions, it became apparent that Kabbalists know Jesus to be a highly spiritual Jewish Rabbi. The senior Rabbi told me that Jesus passionately cared about the ordinary Jews of his time but was warned by the Spiritual Sages known as Tannaim, to tone down his rhetoric. His passion and desire to give spiritual guidance was his strength and his weakness.

The Rabbi that I spoke to said very matter of factly, that Jesus was a Kabbalist. He said that Jesus practised Kabbalah, but no one had written a book to prove that assertion. I don't know why, but I said that I would attempt to do so. I was sceptical but hopeful.

Thus, began my quest to find a plausible connection between Jesus of Nazareth and Kabbalah, by comparing the Christians' New Testament<sup>2</sup> and the foundational texts underpinning Kabbalah: the Torah<sup>3</sup>, the Talmud, the Zohar<sup>4</sup> and the Sefer Yetzirah<sup>5</sup>. Each of these texts form the very substratum of the respective teachings of Christianity, Judaism and Kabbalah.

It seemed to me that the best if not only place, to look for evidence to argue for and against the proposition that Jesus was a Kabbalist, is to investigate the

central documents from which Christians, Jews and Kabbalists teach. Verbal or hearsay evidence or assertions of beliefs would not be sufficient. Evidence should be in writing and the source and provenance of the written documents validated.

The result is this book. The strength and weakness of the resulting assertions rests entirely on written documentary evidence. In turn that depends on what the documents say and how reliable they are.

My approach has been to treat the project in the same way as if I was arguing a legal case. I am not a practicing Christian nor am I a practicing Kabbalist, in the sense of a regular participant and fully paid up believer. I have tried to be even handed, providing arguments and counterarguments wherever relevant.

I have made a case and in doing so, anticipated so far as I am able, potential objections and counter arguments. This has necessitated challenging long held assumptions, to see whether it is at least possible to make a *prima facie*,<sup>6</sup> plausible case, that Jesus was indeed a Kabbalist, or not.

For example, I examined whether and what evidence there is to prove that Jesus even lived, let alone practised Kabbalah. I also looked at the reliability of the scriptures and texts especially in terms of what it is claimed Jesus said and did.

In short, I asked the many fundamental questions that are raised in reviewing and analysing the main documents relied upon by Christians, Jews and Kabbalists in the justification of their respective faiths:

- How do we know what Jesus said and did?
- Did he say it? What was his core message?
- Can we discern his message/teaching from the Gospels? Why only look at the Synoptic Gospels?
- What is the 'Kingdom of God? Who or what is the God that Jesus refers to?
- How reliable are the Gospels? Who wrote them? Who chose them?
- What was left out? Why? What did Jesus do during the so called 'missing years'?
- Did he die on the cross? What is resurrection? What did Jesus say about resurrection? Was Jesus resurrected?
- Did he perform miracles or are they simply metaphors? Why did he teach in parables?
- Was he the Messiah prophesised by the Jews? What are the requirements to be the Jewish Messiah?
- What is the Jewish esoteric teaching known as Kabbalah? Was Jesus a Kabbalist? If not, what was he?
- If he was a Kabbalist, what are the implications (if any) to Christianity and/or Judaism? Did Jesus claim to be the Messiah or did he say he was something else? What do Kabbalists say about Jesus as a Messiah?

The answers may surprise you. They did me. What I have discovered is a very different understanding of who Jesus was and what Jesus said and did, in contrast to what (as a former practising Catholic) I had previously understood. It has opened my eyes.

But of course, the answers and understandings are derived from the various texts mentioned in this book. Even if the texts and scriptures can be relied upon, and as I explain, there are several caveats in that regard, it does not necessarily mean that what Jesus taught or what Kabbalah promulgates is correct.

You may hold different views. My purpose is to argue and reason from the documents that Christians and Kabbalists themselves use. I have spent over thirty years studying and discussing with academics, priests, monks and spiritual gurus, not only Jesus and Christianity but Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism and Zen.

When it came to Judaism and Kabbalah, I needed some help and guidance. Thankfully, I received that assistance from the Heads of the Kabbalah Centres in London and New York<sup>7</sup>. They checked this book for me (and for you the reader) to ensure and confirm that what I assert about the teachings of Kabbalah and its explanations concerning the Torah and Judaism, is accurate and correct.

Writing under the pseudonym of Richard Saunders, from 1732 to 1758, Benjamin Franklin, a Founding Father of the United States of America, published a collection of sayings and advice under the title *Poor Richard's Almanak*. In the July 1758 edition can be found one of his many sayings concerning truth; "Half the truth is often a great lie"<sup>8</sup>. We know from the political and religious scandals we are currently witnessing just how perceptive and pertinent Franklin's observation is today.

From a detailed examination of the Synoptic Gospels and the main Kabbalah scriptures, it is clear to me

that organised Jewish and Christian religions have told and are telling, only half the truth concerning Jesus of Nazareth. If the Christian and Kabbalah texts and scriptures can reasonably be relied upon, then the full truth is far more powerful and profound. Whether one can rely upon them is discussed in some detail in this book.

If you are interested in the truth, you will want to read what I have discovered. It has not previously been presented by any Christian or Jewish denomination and when you read what the truth is, you will understand why it has been hidden.

Although I began this book with a view to investigating whether Jesus was a Kabbalist, it became apparent from my research and examination of the evidence, that some truly remarkable truths had been hidden from Christians and Jews that needed to be revealed. They are in this book. I am delighted to be able to share with you the simplicity and purity that lies within the actual and core teaching of Jesus. It has been hidden and obfuscated by organised religion and that is a great pity.

You can believe or not believe that Jesus is God, but based on the Synoptic Gospels, it is not possible to reasonably and rationally deny what Jesus himself declared to be his core teaching and how he presents himself to his followers.<sup>9</sup> What Jesus says of himself is not the same thing as what others claim of him. If nothing else, I am hopeful that to anyone interested in Jesus or Christianity or Judaism or Kabbalah, this book reveals some interesting new facts and insights.

This book is not *the* answer to all spiritual questions, but it will pose some interesting questions, provide some unexpected answers and point you in the direction of where you might discover more. Even today, when large numbers of people are turning away from organised religion, especially in the West, the belief in an ultimate source or creator of the visible and knowable Universe, is held by many scientists and a large proportion of the population.

I know from the many discussions I have had with people from all walks of life and with a kaleidoscope of religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds, that the issue isn't so much about believing in an ultimate Source or Creator, as believing in the Creator or God that is presented to them by the Judaic based religions. This is especially true in the Christian and Jewish religions, where the majority of followers believe in God but only a very small minority regularly attend church or synagogue.

When we reflect on human history and the things that have been said and done purportedly in the name of God, it is not surprising that we are perplexed and dismayed by the notion of a god that apparently is the creator of all things, and yet seems to allow if not condone, the infliction of such utter misery and suffering on so many.

A god that we are told is love, yet in the scriptures is demonstrably vindictive and cruel: A god that not only condones the murder and enslavement of other human beings, but positively encourages it.

“When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are about to enter and occupy, and he clears away many nations before you—the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations mightier and more numerous than you and when the LORD your God gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must utterly destroy them. Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for that would turn away your children from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.”<sup>10</sup>

This is but one of many instances in the Bible where God seems anything but loving and merciful. But what if this story and the others we find in the Torah are metaphors? What if in the above passage, it isn’t people that are to be suppressed and destroyed, but rather the ego within. If that is the case, then what we read in the Torah might take on an entirely different meaning.

That is what Kabbalah asserts. Kabbalah claims that the stories and dialogues we read in the Torah may or may not be based on an actual historical event<sup>11</sup> but they are primarily allegories and metaphors for the internal struggles we all have in the pursuit of being the best person we can be.

The very term *Israelite* has its roots in the notion of an internal spiritual struggle. The translation of the

Biblical Hebrew term Israelite, means “sons of Israel”. Israel was originally called “Jacob”. According to the Torah, Jacob’s name was changed to “Israel” because he had “striven with God and with men and prevailed”.<sup>12</sup> The founding father of Judaism is Abraham.<sup>13</sup> As any Rabbi will tell you, Abraham was chosen by God because unlike those who built the Tower of Babel, Abraham didn’t want to make a name for himself:

“Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth”.<sup>14</sup>

What is it within humans that seeks to aggrandise themselves? It is the ego. As we know, in relation to those intending to build the Tower of Babel, God intervened and defeated their objective, their egos were dismantled, brought down, destroyed. Almost immediately following the Tower of Babel incident, we are introduced to Abraham who is apparently told by God that he will be the founder of a great nation and “...all the families of the earth will be blessed through you...”<sup>15</sup>

On the face of it there isn’t any obvious reason why Abraham was chosen in this way. Indeed, on the face of it there was little or no chance of Abraham being the father of one child, let alone a great nation. Abraham was married but his wife Sarai: “...was barren; she had no child”.<sup>16</sup> Abraham is instructed by God as follows: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you”<sup>17</sup> Abraham

obeyed. According to Kabbalah, God's instruction to Abraham was for him to change his inner domain, not his external circumstances. In this way, the injunction is applicable to all of us.

In obeying God's instruction, in fact Abraham's inner demand or sensing, Abraham was subduing his ego. He had a choice as to whether he continued with his existing attitude to life or change it and move on. The story of Abraham is a metaphor of how when we primarily (not exclusively) pursue a spiritual path, we are blessed with material wealth as well.

As I demonstrate in this book, this change in direction is the central theme of the core teaching of Jesus.<sup>18</sup> The question then arises: "why are we given a choice to make changes?" Perhaps a more fundamental question than this is, "why do we exist at all to make a choice?"

As you will later see, these issues are what concerned Jesus. We are told in the Synoptic Gospels that Jesus preached with a wisdom and an 'authority' that points to something outside of the standard teachings of his time. Plausibly, as I shall demonstrate, the source of that wisdom and authority is quite possibly Kabbalah.

Moreover, once the Torah and the teachings of Jesus are understood from this new perspective, the similarities with Eastern religions and philosophies such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism and so forth, are obvious. They are all concerned with inner spiritual development and realisation. They are all concerned with the journey to the Source that lies within each of us. They are concerned with self-awareness; consciousness.

## INTRODUCTION

Jesus was not a Christian. Jesus was a Jewish Rabbi and a spiritual teacher. If we are to believe at least some of what is written in the Christian New Testament, Jesus publicly preached using the Torah as a reference, in numerous synagogues and on many occasions in the Temple in Jerusalem. He was repeatedly consulted and questioned by other Rabbis and other Jewish religious people.

This table is illustrative of this point:

### Jesus' Interactions as a Rabbi

|   | <b>Matthew</b>  | <b>Mark</b>  | <b>Luke</b>   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Synagogue(s)</b>   | 4:23, 9:35,<br>13:54  | 1:21, 3:1,<br>6:2  | 4:15, 4:16,<br>4:23, 4:33,<br>4:44, 6:6,<br>13:10   |
| <b>Temple</b>   | 21:12,<br>21:23   | 11:15,<br>11:27,<br>12:35  | 19:45,<br>19:47, 20:1,<br>21:37   |
| <b>Sadducees/<br/>Pharisees/<br/>Scribes/<br/>Seeking<br/>out</b> | 8:19, 9:18,<br>12:2,<br>12:38,<br>15:1, 16:1,<br>19:3,<br>21:12,<br>21:14, 21:<br>23, 21: 45,<br>22:15,<br>22:23,<br>22:34,<br>24:1 | 2:16, 2:23,<br>3:22, 5:22,<br>7:1, 8:11,<br>10:2,<br>12:13,<br>12:18,<br>12:28.<br>12:41 | 5:17, 5:30,<br>6:6-7, 7:36,<br>10:25,<br>11:37,<br>11:45,<br>13:31, 14:1,<br>17:20,<br>18:18, 20:1<br>20:20,<br>20:27 |

To his contemporaries, he would have been known as Rabbi Yeshua but before he was a Rabbi, he was a child prodigy. The current 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (Jetsun Jamphel Ngawang Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso) was also a prodigy, and his predecessor and his before him and so on.

Although Kabbalah is more widely heard of now, not least because of some of its famous adherents,<sup>19</sup> it was not always that way. It is thanks in no small part, to the work of the late Rabbi Philip Berg, his family (wife Karen, sons Yehudi and Michael) and many other dedicated people at the Kabbalah Centre founded in New York in the 1960s.

What was formerly revealed only to a very select and limited number of Jewish Rabbis, is available to everyone and not just people who follow Judaism. It is now accessible to anyone of any faith (or none) should they chose to enquire.

Kabbalah has its source in Judaism but of course, the original Christian Church, The Holy Roman Catholic Church, also has its roots in Judaism. The Catholic Church is fully aware of Kabbalah, both it and the Anglican Church have had a 2000 years connection and relationship with it. They have both tried to keep that connection a secret. For instance, have you ever noticed that the Pope wears a Jewish Kippah on his head? Is that a coincidence?

The paintings by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican in Rome, contain numerous Kabbalah symbols. Is this a coincidence too? It is difficult to conceive of Pope Julius II,<sup>20</sup> who commissioned

Michelangelo to paint the Sistine Chapel, being unaware of and not approving what Michelangelo painted. Indeed, the Pope and the leading clergy around him at the time, would have been cognisant of the metaphors and meanings behind the various symbols they commissioned. Moreover, Michelangelo's patrons included the di Medici family who sponsored the Platonic Academy in Florence, a group of intellectuals that included leading Kabbalists, especially Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.<sup>21</sup>

Sir Isaac Newton the famous English physicist, mathematician and astronomer studied Kabbalah and owned a copy of one of its most famous texts, the Zohar. His copy of the Zohar is still held at Trinity College Cambridge and can upon request be inspected there. Sir Isaac Newton did not believe in the Holy Trinity. He challenged many of the orthodox views and teachings of the Anglican Church.

The awareness of and connection between Jesus and Kabbalah may not be as well known amongst Christians as it is amongst Kabbalists, but that is now changing and this book is the first to reveal a plausible connection between the teachings of Jesus as found in the Synoptic Gospels of the Christian New Testament and the esoteric teachings found in the writings of Kabbalah.

Although he has often been referred to as Jesus of Nazareth, we cannot know with absolute certainty that this was his place of birth or where he grew up. The Synoptic Gospels and other parts of the New Testament may have caused confusion in variously alluding to Jesus as being an inhabitant of Nazareth (then a small village approximately twelve miles from the Sea of Galilee in

Northern Israel) and being a Nazarite (or Nazarene), a member of a religious sect of Judaism. In Numbers 6:1 of the Torah, a Nazarite is someone who is ‘consecrated’ or ‘separated’ by a particular set of vows. Samson<sup>22</sup> is specifically referred to as a Nazarite.

Even so, there is considerable evidence to establish that Jesus taught and travelled throughout a portion of his adult life in, around and even on the Sea of Galilee in Northern Israel. As any Kabbalist and Orthodox Jew<sup>23</sup> will confirm, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, one of the most respected and renowned teachers of Kabbalah, was also born in Galilee around AD 40. Like Jesus, Rabbi Shimon was a Jewish Rabbi and like Jesus his everyday language was Aramaic. He is buried at Meron<sup>24</sup> in Northern Galilee.

The book that Kabbalists claim Rabbi Shimon wrote (or rather revealed) is called the Zohar, written in Aramaic. Indeed, as I shall show, there is evidence that Kabbalah reveals itself as being at the core of Jesus’ teaching, a teaching so simple and yet profound. A core teaching that seems to have been made unnecessarily complicated; lost under layers of misunderstanding, mistranslation and distortion.

## THE ZOHAR

The First Precept as stated in the Zohar, a foundational Kabbalist text<sup>25</sup> is: “To be in awe of God – is the beginning of wisdom and the gateway through which one enters into Faith”.

Below is an extract of this precept from the Zohar in the original Aramaic together with a translation into English. I also provide a transliteration and strongly urge you to read these words aloud reading from right to left<sup>26</sup>.

“(A) The first precept:

This is the first step in developing a true connection and attachment to the Light of the Creator. To violate this particular precept is to transgress all the precepts of the Torah.

#### Original Aramaic:

189. בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים. הָדָא הִיא פְּקוּדָא קְדָמָא דְכָלָא נְאֻקְרִי פְּקוּדָא דָּא נְרָאת ה', דְּאֻקְרִי רֵאשִׁית, דְּכַתִּיב רֵאשִׁית חֻכְמָה נְרָאת ה'. נְרָאת ה' רֵאשִׁית דַּעַת. בְּגִין דְּמִלָּה דָּא רֵאשִׁית אֻקְרִי, וְדָא אִיהִי תַרְעָא לְעֵאלָא גוּ מְהֵמָנוּתָא, וְעַל פְּקוּדָא דָּא אֲתֻקְיִים כָּל עֻלְמָא.

#### Transliteration: \*

\*Read from right to left so here start at 'Beresheet, Bara, Elohim, Hada, Hee etc all the way down to Alma'.

189 בְּרֵאשִׁית BERESHEET בָּרָא BARA אֱלֹהִים ELOHIM. הָדָא HADA הִיא HEE פְּקוּדָא PIKUDA קְדָמָא KADAMAAH דְכָלָא DEKOLA נְאֻקְרִי VEIKREI פְּקוּדָא דָּא DA נְרָאת YIRAT ה' HASHHEM, דְּאֻקְרִי DEIKREI רֵאשִׁית RESHEET, דְּכַתִּיב DIKHTIV רֵאשִׁית RESHEET חֻכְמָה KHOCHMA נְרָאת YIRAT ה' HASHHEM. נְרָאת YIRAT ה' HASHHEM. בְּגִין DAAT. דְּמִלָּה DEMILAH דָּא DA רֵאשִׁית TARA אֻקְרִי IKREI, וְדָא VEDA אִיהִי IHEE תַרְעָא TARA לְעֵאלָא LEALA גוּ GO מְהֵמָנוּתָא MEHEMANUTA, וְעַל VEAL פְּקוּדָא PIKUDA דָּא DA אֲתֻקְיִים ITKAYEM כָּל KOL עֻלְמָא ALMA.

**Translation:**

**189.** “In the beginning, Elohim<sup>27</sup> created” (Beresheet 1:1). This is the first and foremost precept of all. And this precept is called “the fear of the Hashem<sup>28</sup>,” which is called the “beginning.” As it is written, “The Fear of Hashem is the beginning of wisdom” (Tehilim 111:10); “The fear of Hashem is the beginning of knowledge” (Mishlei 1:7). Because this fear (or awe) is called a beginning. And it is the gateway through which one enters into Faith. So based on this precept, the whole world is able to exist.”

What is remarkable for me and I hope also to all you non-Kabbalists, is that what is offered here is the opportunity to speak in Aramaic. When the transliteration is uttered aloud, we are speaking in the very language that Jesus, his disciples, father, mother, brothers and sisters spoke. In uttering the words above from Paragraph 189 (‘Beresheet, Bara, Elohim’ etc) you are speaking and understanding for the first time the language that Jesus, his family, his listeners and followers spoke. Amazing.

But who or what is the Elohim, the Hashem, the God that Jesus, Judaism and Kabbalah refer to? God is fundamental to Judaism, the Torah, Jesus and Kabbalah. So what is meant by the word God? It is to that fundamental issue that I now turn.