

*New Testament*, pp. 92-3): 'And they heard a voice out of the heavens saying: Hast thou preached unto them that sleep? And an answer was heard from the cross, saying, Yea.' M. Vaganay, the erudite editor of this apocryphal 'Gospel' concludes that so slight a resemblance to the canonical epistle is insufficient to prove any interdependence of the writings. But he adds: 'It only remains noteworthy that our evangelist, desirous of passing for the apostle Peter, should have inserted into his work an episode that finds its precise development in the first epistle of Peter'. (Cf. *L'Évangile de Pierre*, Gabalda, Paris, 1930, pp. 301-2).

JOHN M. T. BARTON.

*What became of the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom after Sargon's capture of Samaria?*

I may be allowed to refer to my paper on 'Old Testament History to Alexander the Great' in the Cambridge Summer School volume on *The Old Testament*, Burns Oates, London, 1939, pp. 134 ff. 'Samaria fell in 722, and, following the practice of his predecessor Tiglath-Phalasar III, Sargon carried away a large portion of the population. He himself records the deportation of fifty chariots and 27,290 Israelites (text in Gressmann's *Altorientalische Texte zum alten Testament*, 1926, p. 348). The cuneiform texts tell us nothing about the destination of those carried into captivity, but there are letters and contracts of a later date (between 650 and 606) which make known the existence of Israelite signatories and witnesses from Kannu and Kar-A-U, towns in the same region as Ḥalaḥ and the Ḥabûr and the country of Guzana, and these signatories were doubtless the descendants of Israelites deported in 722.'

Sargon, as we know from the Bible, introduced, in place of the 'displaced persons' carried off into Assyria, convoys from Babylon, Kutha, 'Awwâ, Ḥamath and Sepharvaim; the newcomers brought their own gods with them, some of whom can be identified from the data given in the Bible. So Sochoth-benoth, introduced by the men of Babylon, is the same as Sarpanit, Marduk's consort. This process of introducing Mesopotamians into the Northern Kingdom was a gradual one, and from the mixed race of Israelites and Mesopotamians came the Samaritans, familiar to us from the books of Esdras and Nehemias and from various references in the New Testament.

JOHN M. T. BARTON.

*The words of Christ 'Before Abraham was made, I am' (John viii, 58), are generally taken to involve a reference to the Divine Name in Exodus iii, 14 and hence to constitute a claim by Christ to Divinity. May we see a similar reference and claim in other passages where Christ uses this phrase 'I am' (usually translated as 'I am He')?*

The phrase ἐγώ εἰμι is used in various ways in the Greek Bible. It is often used to give emphasis or to make an impression, and in this

connexion the phrase is used of God Himself, e.g. 'I am thy God' (Genesis xvii, 1). In the New Testament it is used with what appears to be conscious reference to its Old Testament application to God. Thus in St John's Gospel Jesus uses it in connexion with various metaphors which He applies to Himself, 'I am the Bread of Life' (John vi, 35); 'I am the Light of the World' (John viii, 12). Christ seems here to be drawing attention to His Divinity. The phrase is also used, alone, in answer to questions. Thus e.g. in Mark xiv, 62 it seems to mean no more than simply 'Yes, I am'.

It is used absolutely in the Old Testament as a translation of the Hebrew phrase '*ani hu*', : I (am) He. It is the phrase which God uses to designate Himself in the prophetic and historical books, e.g. 'See that I am He, and that there is no God beside Me', (Deut. xxxii, 39). There are some passages in the New Testament where the phrase seems to be used thus; for example, 'I am (He), do not fear' (Mark vi, 50). It is possible that Jesus means only 'I am here'. But it seems more likely that He wants to convey the O.T. meaning of '*ani hu*'.

The most important text is that of John viii, 58, quoted above, where besides the separate 'I am' there is also the contrast between the verbs *become* (*γίνεσθαι*) and *be* (*εἶναι*). Jesus here is 'claiming for himself the timeless being of Deity, as distinct from the temporal existence of man', Bernard, *St John*, in loc. The phrase occurs again in this sense in viii, 24: 'Unless you believe that I am (He), you shall die in your sins'; and in xiii, 19: 'I tell you now, before it happens, so that, when it comes to pass, you may believe that I am (He)'. John xviii, 5 seems to be another example; Jesus says to his would-be captors 'I am (He)', and they go back and fall on the ground. It may be that Jesus is merely indicating that it is He whom they seek—and that their falling to the ground is to be ascribed to the overpowering effect of His personality and moral ascendancy. But perhaps the effect was accentuated by a claim to Divinity which they recognized to be such.

In conclusion, we may say that when our Lord uses the phrase of Himself absolutely it seems to refer in varying degrees of clarity and emphasis to the self-designation of God in the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament, and is thus a claim to Divinity on the part of Christ.

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*When and where did the Magi visit the Holy Family (Matthew ii, 1-12)?*

Herod was still on the throne. We know he died in April of 4 B.C. and that his last illness was at least of some months duration, of Josephus, *Antiq.* xvii, 6-8. He was apparently in sufficiently good health to suggest with plausibility that he should go and adore the new-born King of the Jews.