

CITATION BY *IT-1* OF THE SONCINO COMMENTARY ON EZEKIEL

In its article on “Chronology” and in the direct context of “From 997 BCE to desolation of Jerusalem”, page 462 of *Insight on the Scriptures* cites the 1950 edition of *Soncino Books of the Bible, Commentary on Ezekiel*:

The guilt of the Northern Kingdom extended over a period of 390 years (Seder Olam, Rashi and Ibn Ezra). Abarbanel, quoted by Malbim, reckons the period of Samaria's guilt from the time when the schism took place under Rehoboam . . . until the fall of Jerusalem. . . . The *right* indicates the south, i.e. the Kingdom of Judah which lay to the south or right. . . . Judah's corruption lasted forty years beginning soon after Samaria's fall. According to Malbim, the time is reckoned from the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah . . . when Jeremiah began his ministry. (Jer. i. 2).” (pages 20, 21) [The explanatory insertions made by *it-1* have been removed.]

This citation by *it-1* is made during its discussion on the subject of “chronology”.

As *it-1* states, the *Soncino Commentary* presents the Jewish understanding: the pages of the book number from the right; the English translation of Ezekiel it employs is from the Jewish Publication Society of America; the original text was prepared by Rabbi Dr. S. Fisch which was later revised by Rabbi A. J. Rosenberg. When Soncino released its revised edition in 1994, the Foreword provides the following:

Whereas the earlier edition drew from various non-Jewish, as well as Jewish sources, the publishers now feel that there is a need to acquaint the reader with the pure Jewish view of these holy books, and this revised edition therefore is based entirely on the traditional classic Jewish commentaries and source material.

The *Soncino Commentary* thus reflects a purely Jewish understanding, not influenced by Christian scholars. Comparison of the citation at *it-1* and the following provides the strong indication that the 1950 edition and its 1994 Revision are identical here. The highlighted words in the following citation from the *Soncino Commentary* were omitted by *it-1*, including the dates “c. 932 BCE” and “626 BCE”, the latter date being for the 13th regnal year of Josiah.

4-8 SYMBOL OF THE PEOPLE'S SINS

The prophet now reverses his role First he personified the enemy, now he represents the sinful nation which is to suffer calamity.

4. *lie thou upon thy left side.* The hardship which he suffered by lying on one side for a considerable time is emblematic of the iniquity of which the people was guilty. *The left side* is symbolic of Samaria and the Northern Kingdom of Israel whose territory was in the north (cf. xvi. 46).

the number of the day. Each day was to represent a year for the condemned nation (Rashi).

5. *three hundred and ninety days.* The guilt of the Northern Kingdom extended over a period of 390 years (Seder Olam, Rashi and Ibn Ezra). Abarbanel, quoted by Malbim, reckons the period of Samaria's guilt from the time when the schism took place under Rehoboam (c. 932 BCE) until the fall of Jerusalem. Corresponding to the 390 years of Israel's sinning, the prophet was ordered to lie on his left side the same number of days to atone for their iniquity.

6. *when thou hast accomplished these.* viz. the 390 days (Metsudath David).

thou shalt lie on thy right side. The *right* indicates the south, i.e. the Kingdom of Judah which lay to the south or right. (Metsudath David).

forty days, each day for a year. Judah's corruption lasted forty years beginning soon after Samaria's fall. According to Malbim, the time is reckoned from the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah (626 BCE) when Jeremiah began his ministry. (Jer. i. 2). Ibn Ezra suggests that the prophet's lying on his sides for a great number of days occurred in a vision.

Since the article in *it-1* is focused on Chronology, it is instructive to read the position taken on dates throughout the Jewish *Soncino Commentary on Ezekiel*.

The fifth year of King Jehoachin's captivity (i. 2) i.e. 593-592 BCE. (page xv)

Commenting on Ezekiel 17:

This oracle was delivered shortly before the disaster in 586 BCE. (page 100)

Commenting on Ezekiel 24:1:

in the ninth year. Of the reign of Zedekiah, early in 587 BCE (Rashi, Kimchi). The same date is given in 2 Kings xxv. 1; Jer. lii. 4. (page 161)

Commenting on Ezekiel 26:14:

The city now called Tyre, which was captured by Alexander the Great in 332 BC, is another city with the same name, built on the mainland opposite of the old Tyre. (page 176)

Commenting on Ezekiel 33:21-29:

The captivity of Jehoiachin (i. 2), which began in 597 BCE. ... The city [of Jerusalem] fell in the fourth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah (cf. Jer. Xxxix. 2). i.e. Tammuz 586 BCE. (page 225)

Since *it-1* is discussing Chronology, the author should have revealed what its reference source says on that topic. Indeed, the dates contained in the section cited from the *Soncino Commentary* have been excised.

Doug Mason

doug_mason1940@yahoo.com.au