

The Chosen People

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GRACE LIGHT JOY PEACE LOVE
OFFERING
EMMANUEL LOVE LORD
SHEPHERD MESSIAH SALVATION
GLORY TRUTH
LORD HOLINESS SAVOR

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD HAS COME

RIGHTEOUS ONE LIGHT LORD
MESSIAH GLORY
LOVE PEACE HOLINESS BREAD
FORGIVENESS HOLY ONE EMMANUEL
LIGHT GRACE HOPE SAVOR
TRUTH JOY GLORY MESSIAH

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Happy Hanukkah • Jewish Expectation for Messiah • Struggle to Believe in the Incarnation • Study: Israel's Complete Deliverance

Happy Hanukkah!

Dear friends,

Merry Messiahmas and Happy Hanukkah!

I became a believer in Jesus a few days before Thanksgiving in 1970. Within a month, I was faced with my first major challenge as a Jewish follower of Jesus. My new Christian friends invited me to join them in celebrating Christmas. Their invitation surfaced one of the toughest hurdles I had to overcome in my new walk with the Lord, as I had been raised to believe that the idea of God becoming man was so very “un-Jewish!”

May I share with you how I came to believe that Jesus was God in the flesh? I am firmly convinced that anytime a Jewish person comes to this conviction—that Jesus the Messiah is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the flesh—it is a miracle!

I do not have space in this brief article to share my entire testimony, but I can summarize quickly what happened to me.

Rethinking the Jewish-Christian Divide

I was raised in a traditional Jewish home. I was trained for my *bar mitzvah* at a modern Orthodox synagogue. My family celebrated the Jewish holidays, life cycle events, etc. We participated in Jewish community and religious life, as the neighborhood where I grew up in New York City was almost entirely Jewish.

Additionally, we internally embraced the ill feelings most Jewish people feel towards “Christianity.” Most of the negative ideas we had towards Christianity resulted from the everyday Jewish conviction that Christians persecuted the Jews—during the Crusades,

pogroms, in Russia and ultimately, the Holocaust. Yet, the distance between Judaism and Christianity goes beyond an unfortunate and sometimes bloody history. There are some deep theological divides as well.

For example, Jewish people pride themselves in believing that God is one—singular—and not three! One of the core prayers of Judaism is what we call the *Shema* which is based upon Deuteronomy 6:4: “*Hear O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one.*” This is often viewed as the religious rallying cry for the Jewish community and is recited almost every time Jewish people gather for prayer.

So, you can see, the belief that God is triune would have been an anathema to me as a Jewish person. The idea that God is three-but-one is viewed as “non-Jewish” by almost every Jewish person in the world. This is a well-known Jewish distinctive!

Secondly, Jewish people do not believe that God would become a man. Jewish people are generally taught that worshiping God in any form—be it flesh or wood or stone—is idolatry. Therefore, to believe that God became a man and to then worship this individual would be something a Jewish person would avoid at all costs. You cannot imagine how deeply this resistance to the incarnation of Jesus—the idea that God could take on human flesh and become a man—is woven into the Jewish soul.

Debates over the incarnation and deity of Jesus continue to be one of the hottest issues in Jewish evangelism. It is the line in the sand, that when crossed, is seen as the point of no return. As we continue with our Isaiah 53 Campaigns throughout the United States, Israel, Argentina, and in a number of other countries, we have established online forum discussions. Through these forums we see clearly that the issue of the deity of Jesus and the nature of the Trinity are at the heart of the theological objections Jewish people have towards Jesus being the Messiah.

So what happened to me and how was I persuaded to believe that Jesus was God in the flesh?

Confronted by the Scriptures

I have to admit, the answer is simple. As I began to read the Bible, I noticed many different verses in the Hebrew Scriptures that made it clear to me that the Messiah was to be more than a man and was actually predicted to be God in the flesh. Let me share a couple of these passages, so that if you have the opportunity, you might share them with a Jewish friend who is struggling with the idea of believing in Jesus because they do not want to break with the Jewish community by believing that God became a human being.

My favorite passage indicating this marvelous truth of the incarnation is found in Isaiah 9:6-7 where the great prophet writes,

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

In this passage, the prophet Isaiah uses four different names for the coming Messiah, two of which indicate that this future son of David would be God in the flesh. Names in the Hebrew Bible often indicate character and I believe these names (especially when the two verses are taken as one unit) speak to the very nature of the Davidic King.

I believe these verses were spoken of Jesus the Messiah who is God in the flesh. As a Jewish person, I simply had to bow my heart and will to the teaching of Scripture.

A second passage that I also believe speaks clearly of the Messiah as being God in the flesh was penned by a contemporary of Isaiah, the prophet Micah. In Micah 5:2, the prophet describes the coming Messiah, the ruler in Israel, as follows:

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.

There is no need to belabor an explanation of this passage. The ruler in Israel would be born in Bethlehem—which is further defined by the word *Ephrathah* as referring to the Bethlehem located a few miles from Jerusalem. This was the ancestral home of David and the birthplace of Jesus the Messiah. This ruler is described as being eternal in nature. We understand the passage in this way because the two Hebrew phrases translated from long ago and from the days of eternity, when used elsewhere in the Old Testament, always refer to God.

There are other passages in the Hebrew Scriptures that I also believe clearly indicate that the Messiah would be God, but limited space here does not allow us to discuss them. You will find a list of these scriptures and further information that I know will bless you and strengthen your faith in the remainder of the newsletter as well as online at www.chosenpeople.com. We have done some very special articles for the Christmas/Hanukkah season on our website.

Ultimately, the Word of God convinced me that Jesus is the Messiah and God in the flesh. This makes the holiday season a very special time of joy for me as I am surrounded by reminders that *the Son of God became the Son of man that the sons of men might become the children of God!*

Have a joy-filled holiday season and remember to pray for Your Mission to the Jewish People as we bring the message of the Messiah to Jewish people around the world during the holiday season!

Warmly in Yeshua
the King,



Mitch



Dr. Mitch
Glaser President

Jewish Expectation for the Messiah

Jesus Christ is a name that is known throughout the world. For many, however, “Christ” is Jesus’ last name and not a title that is actually a Greek translation of the Hebrew word we know as “Messiah.” Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the King of Israel (Jn. 4:25-26; Lk. 23:2). But what does this actually mean?

Messiah – the “Anointed One”

The concept of a Messiah develops from the Hebrew verb meaning “to smear or to anoint.” God instructs Israel to anoint certain individuals for sacred tasks, particularly to serve as either a priest or king (Ex. 28:41; 1 Sam. 10:1). Therefore, the practice of anointing an individual for a special position led to the concept of an “anointed one,” or Messiah (1 Sam. 26:23; Ps. 2:2).

By the first century, the Jewish longing for the Messiah reflected the biblical tradition of a Davidic descendent, who would reign over Israel forever (2 Sam. 7:13; 22:51; Ps. 89:4). The Jewish community expected the Messiah to defeat the Romans and reestablish David’s throne. Longing for the arrival of the Messiah, the anointed king of Israel, prompted crowds to gather along the road leading up to Jerusalem to announce Jesus’ entrance to the city (Matt. 21:1-11). These crowds likely expected Jesus to enter the city, defeat the Romans and reestablish peace over Israel.

Jesus did not overthrow the Roman Empire and reestablish David’s throne over Israel in the manner the nation hoped; therefore, many within the Jewish community did not believe. While hope for a messianic deliverer reached its pinnacle during the first century, belief in a coming Messiah has remained a consistent part of Jewish belief. Both rabbinic literature and Jewish tradition formulate the foundation of the Jewish concept for the Messiah and his kingdom.

Jewish Messianic Hope Today

One of the central elements to the daily Jewish liturgy is the *Shemoneh Esrei* (Eighteen Benedictions), a nineteen-hundred-year-old prayer. The fifteenth blessing asks God to, “*allow the branch of David, your servant to swiftly flourish and may his horn be exalted through your deliverance.*”

The Hebrew Scriptures also convey the hope that Messiah will inaugurate a time of unprecedented, universal peace (Isa. 2:1-4). During this time of peace, the Messiah will reign from Jerusalem and produce the liberation of Israel (Zech. 14). Many Christians are familiar with these and other Messianic passages from the Old Testament.

Less familiar to Christians is the Talmud, the vast compilation of Jewish faith and practice, where the hope for a Messiah is ultimately the longing for an idealized world (b. Ketub 111b). Rabbinic literature continues the biblical tradition by describing key events leading up to the arrival of the Messiah at the end of the age. This includes significant battles against the nations, with a cataclysmic battle against Gog and Magog (m. Eduyot 2.10; b. Shabb 118b). In addition to these battles, there will also be a

significant time of sorrows preceding the Messianic Era (m. Sot. 9.15; b. Sanh 98b). This period of grief will lead to the arrival of the Messiah, who will usher in an era of great prosperity and peace (b. Sanh 97a; b. Ketub 111b; 2 Bar 29).

The Coming of Messiah in Jewish Expectation

While belief in the coming Messiah is a foundational element to Jewish thought, descriptions of the Messiah and his arrival in rabbinic literature are rather limited. Additionally, differing views within rabbinic tradition developed due to the apparent contradictory depictions of both a victorious and afflicted Messiah.

This disparity has led to the concept of two separate Messiahs: Messiah Son of David, the victorious one, and Messiah Son of Joseph, the suffering or slain one (b. Sukk 52a). Some ancient rabbis referred to this Messiah as the *Leper Scholar* (Isa. 53:4; b. Sanh 993b). The rabbis sensed the paradox between a victorious and afflicted Messiah, but they could not reconcile the differences in one person. Is it possible for us to do so?

Two Messianic Roles Combined in One Person

The Jewish community today, as in the first century, continues to hope for the Messiah. Since Jesus did not arrive in the kingly or triumphant manner expected, many Jewish people did not recognize Him as the Messiah. How then can Jewish and non-Jewish believers proclaim that Jesus is truly, nonetheless, the Messiah?

Matthew considers Jesus’ birth the fulfillment of this Jewish expectation for the Messiah of Israel (Matt. 1:1). The suffering Messiah Jesus arrived 2,000 years ago when He inaugurated peace between God and humanity, but He promises to return to earth to establish universal peace when He reigns from David’s throne in Jerusalem. Perhaps Matthew best depicts the paradox when he describes the trek of the Magi across the desert to worship the infant “King of the Jews” in the remote village of Bethlehem (Matt. 2:2). Jesus is the Messiah the Jewish people have always anticipated.

The Deity of the Messiah as Suggested in the Hebrew Scriptures

Isaiah 7:14 - His name is “God with Us.”

Isaiah 9:6-7 - A Divine Ruler who is none other than: Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Shalom.

Isaiah 53:10 - This passage alludes to the Messiah’s lasting life, despite His suffering and death. Only a divine being could conquer death in such a manner.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 - He will be a King with the name **The Lord our Righteousness**.

Micah 5:2 - He will reign as King, but He is an ancient individual who has no beginning.

Zechariah 12:10 - The nation will look at God who is pierced. Here God speaks in the first person as the one the nation mourns.

Zechariah 14:9 - God will be King over Israel.

Psalms 2:12 - The Messiah is God’s Son who reigns with God’s authority and the nations must worship Him or face certain punishment.

He Came Down from Heaven?

My Struggle to Believe in the Incarnation

BY ALAN SHORE

I am grateful to have been raised in a Jewish home where Jewish heritage was prized and Jewish values stressed; religious faith—not so much, although my parents made sure I went to Hebrew school and had my *bar mitzvah*. One thing I more or less took for granted is that Jewish people didn't believe in Jesus. If you asked me why, the one thing I would have said was, "I guess we Jewish people don't believe that a holy, invisible God, if He existed at all, could ever become a man." That was for Christians, not for us. But I had other problems with religious faith. They were not particularly original, but they mattered to me. The main objection to God was the problem of suffering. How could a just and loving God stand by and watch the unspeakable catalog of horrors that human beings are either afflicted with or else inflict upon one another?

Where Was God?

God seemed to me to be indifferent to our plight, the senseless and terrifying physical and/or spiritual pain we must endure. And for Jewish men and women who saw the struggle for faith as a lost cause from the beginning, the biggest question of all was, "Where was God during the Holocaust?" The implied answer to this was, for so many of us, "nowhere."

Or was it?

I had heard the case for unbelief loud and clear. But was there another side to the question? Although, like so many in my generation, I had fooled around with Eastern mysticism and had searched in all the wrong places for some kind of spark to kindle hope, none of it seemed to reach to that deep and inconsolable place of loneliness. Yet there came a time when I began to sense I was a little too complacent in my glum atheism. It was time to ask a new set of questions.

The Suffering Servant

I went back to square one—the problem of human suffering. Did God care? If there was a God, and He did not care, then it made no sense to pursue the question any further. But if God did care, that changed everything. And if God cared, how could we tell?

To find out, I turned again to the root that had somehow nourished me all along—Jewish identity. Where, if not there, was the mixture of God, suffering and human destiny most deeply entwined? And it was there I found something so unexpected and unimaginable that all of my preconceived ideas of God and the universe were turned completely upside down.

As my thoughts were turning in this new direction, I discovered that one of the most startling claims that the Bible makes, a claim that originates in the Hebrew Scriptures and is repeated throughout, is that the Creator of the universe has

willed a special, irrevocable, covenant relationship with human beings, starting with the Jewish people. Moreover, the Scriptures inform us that the God of the Jewish people also has compassion for us. He has determined to heal the deep, appalling wound that sin has inflicted upon His creation and the disfigurement it has wrought upon the humanity that was originally created in His own image and likeness.

But how? It was in the one way, it seems, I had been taught was impossible—by becoming one of us. I saw it, first reluctantly and later clearly, in the moving and unforgettable passage about the Suffering Servant in the prophet Isaiah 53:4-5.

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

Immanuel: God with Us

It was then that I made a life-changing connection—the claims concerning Jesus in the New Testament did not stand alone. They were firmly based on prophetic groundwork that had already been laid in the Hebrew Scriptures. The New Testament proclaims that God has taken the almost inconceivable step of coming among us: by entering our world—as a human being—to share our condition, shoulder our burdens, to suffer on our behalf and to suffer with us.

So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet [Isa. 7:14], saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

Through this unimaginable act of love, we now dare to speak of God as though He were at our side, in our world, closer to our soul's need than we can possibly be aware. To this day, as I reflect and marvel, I am drawn into what is perhaps the greatest mystery of all—what believers in Yeshua (Jesus) call the *incarnation*.

If the Lord's presence was found by Moses in the burning bush or by Job from out of the whirlwind, why not in the form of a human being, as the Scriptures proclaim? Why not, indeed?



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SEE THE BIBLE THROUGH JEWISH EYES

BY DANIEL GOLDBERG, TH.D., D.D.



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THE FINAL OVERTHROW OF BABYLON AND ISRAEL'S COMPLETE DELIVERANCE BY HER MESSIAH (Isaiah 46-48)

Babylon is an extraordinary symbol of a world gone mad with idolatry and disobedience. Isaiah 46-48 is a vivid description of God's displeasure and the impending punishment God has prepared for Babylon. The Babylonian gods are mocked for their impotence in Isaiah 46. The mighty Babylonian Empire's destruction is predicted in Isaiah 47. Even Israel sacrificed great opportunities and is reprimanded in Isaiah 48.

JUDGMENT ON BABYLON, THE GREAT OPPRESSOR OF JUDAH (Isaiah 46, 47)

Babylon's downfall should be viewed in the light of Israel's deliverance, which is the general theme of Isaiah 40-48. Israel is commanded to remember her history (Isa. 46:8-9). Remembering her history especially includes her deliverance from Egypt.

Babylon, the "queen of kingdoms" (Isa. 47:5), had been used by God as an instrument of judgment on Israel, God's own people. Now God brings judgment upon Babylon for her mistreatment of God's people. The nation of Babylon was teeming with idolatry—pagan priests, astrologers, soothsayers, charlatans, including demon-inspired religions.

Even though the nation had a high state of civilization, being advanced in mathematics, astronomy and literature, the moral character of the empire was evil. She mirrored the Babylon in the End of the Age, which will be destroyed

without a trace (Isa. 47:5-11; Rev. 18:17-24).

THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF ISRAEL'S REDEEMER AND MESSIAH (Isaiah 48)

Through Isaiah, God reminds Israel how He spoke through the ancient prophets and caused those events to take place (Isa. 48:3). Peter indicates the prophets spoke concerning the time of the Messiah (1 Pet. 1:10-12). God knew his people would fail to recognize the source of their provision and protection; therefore, He reveals future events before they occur to protect the nation from attributing their deliverance to false idols (Isa. 48:4, 5). When Israel as a nation refuses to acknowledge their deliverer, God still promises to respond with mercy and defer His anger (Isa. 48:9). This is also the case when Israel does not embrace her Messiah.

When His people rebel against Him, God seeks to restore His people when He allows Israel to pass through the furnace of affliction. As a silversmith refines silver, God purifies His nation through the furnace of affliction (Isa. 48:10). The prophet Jeremiah speaks about the future refinement as "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). The speaker in this text is none other than King Messiah Himself (Isa. 48:12).

Isaiah makes it clear that God the Father Himself has planned and prospered the coming and appearing of Israel's Messiah (Isa. 48:15). What a great testimony we see in the Hebrew Bible

in Isaiah 48:16, declaring the triune nature of the God of Israel: "*from the time that it was, there am I, and now the Lord God and His Spirit, hath sent me.*"

THE FUTURE REVIVAL OF BABYLON AND THE FINAL CALL FOR ISRAEL TO DEPART (Isaiah 48:20-22)

A future, revived Babylon is predicted in Isaiah 48:20. The Jewish people are exhorted to begin their long journey back to the land of their fathers with the Lord's assurance that it will be just as in the time of the Exodus from Egypt when, "*they did not thirst when He led them through the deserts; He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them; He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out*" (Isa. 48:21).

CONCLUSION

Isaiah closes his discourse of chapters 40-48 with this somber declaration, "*There is no peace,*" says the Lord, "*for the wicked*" (Isa. 48:22).

God does not provide peace for those who produce evil. The enemies of Messiah will face judgment and the eternal fire "*prepared for the devil and his angels*" (Matt 25:41). There is only one way to live, and that is for God, accepting Jesus the Messiah and becoming a new creation in Him. Then, by His grace, we will serve and honor Him throughout life and He will receive us into immortal glory.

NEWS BRIEFS

JEWISH WOMEN MAKE FAITH DECISIONS IN SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA

Cathy Wilson has been faithfully serving the Lord among senior citizens in Scottsdale for a number of years and takes special delight in celebrating the Jewish holidays with her friends there. This year, during the High Holy Days, two Jewish women received the Lord. At the *Rosh Hashanah* (Jewish New Year) Bible study at the Scottsdale retirement community, Helene,* a Jewish woman from South Africa who works as a caregiver at the facility, was given *The Jesus Storybook*. Later on in the afternoon, she approached Cathy and asked, “Can we meet next week and talk about Jesus?” Helene said that she couldn’t stop reading the book. After further conversation, Cathy asked Helene if there was anything standing in the way of her receiving Jesus as her Messiah. She blurted out, “No!” Helene prayed, confessing her sin and placing her trust in Jesus. She then asked, “How can I share Jesus with my religious son?”

Cathy also invited Bernice,* an 80-year-old Jewish woman, to one of the Fall Feasts celebrations. During that conversation on the phone, Cathy rejoiced that she was able to pray with Bernice to receive the Lord.

PARKING LOT ENCOUNTER LEADS TO GOSPEL WITNESS

Michael Cohen, one of our gifted missionaries in Southern California, was just wrapping up a planning meeting over lunch with one of his volunteers. As Michael entered the parking lot, a woman came up to him out of the blue and asked him what the verse, “With God, all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26) meant. She had seen a bumper sticker with this verse, and it had stuck in her mind. Michael was more than a little surprised. It turned out that the woman was Jewish and she had spotted Michael’s Bible. She explained that she was

searching. Of course, Michael shared his personal testimony of being Jewish and believing that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. Please pray that she will continue the conversation and come to accept the Lord.

SOUTH KOREANS ON BOARD WITH JEWISH EVANGELISM

Chosen People Ministries’ first ever, full-blown evangelism conference in Seoul, South Korea, enabled a team of speakers, including Dr. Mitch Glaser, Dr. Rich Freeman and internationally-known author Joel C. Rosenberg, to reach thousands of Korean Christians with the message that the Gospel is indeed still intended for Jewish people. During the course of the conference, the team attended an event at the Korean Israeli Cultural Center where they met the Ambassador from Israel to Korea and had the opportunity to share some of our Gospel literature with him. Dr. Glaser writes, “We hope to return to Korea and fan the flames of love for Israel and the Jewish people in the hearts of this very powerful evangelical force for the Lord in Asia and throughout the Korean community around the world.”

ALABAMA VS. AUBURN

During a Mission speaking tour a few weeks ago, veteran staff member Ben Alpert found himself on not one, but two college campuses—and storied football rivals at that. He shares, “I had the privilege to be at the University of Alabama and Auburn University. However I was not there for football. The Lord arranged for me to be involved in book table outreaches on both campuses. We were blessed to share 180 copies of the book *Isaiah 53 Explained!* Please pray for each person who took a book and that it would be passed on to many more people.”

*names have been changed

ENGLISH-SPEAKING MESSIANIC CONGREGATION LAUNCHES IN BROOKLYN

Beth Sar Shalom (House of the Prince of Peace) in Brooklyn is up and running! Our first service was at the beginning of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Congregational leader Rich Flashman preached the timely message on the *Akedah* (the Binding of Isaac) taken from Genesis 22, stressing the trust and obedience of Abraham as a challenge to the quality of our own trust and obedience. Rich writes, “It was a great evening with about 65 people in attendance at our new facility. A number of people told us they had been praying and waiting a long time for an English-speaking Messianic congregation to be established in Brooklyn. It is humbling to be part of God’s answer to their prayers.”

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ROMA **NS 11:11** **SO I ASK, DID THEY STUMBLE IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT FALL. BY NO MEANS. RATHER THROUGH THEIR TRESPASS SALVATION HAS COME TO THE GENTILES, SO AS TO MAKE ISRAEL JEALOUS.**



The Chosen People Newsletter

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Please remember Chosen People Ministries in your will. "I will bless those who bless you." (Genesis 12:3)

