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ARIEL
MINISTRIES

Plus:

**Are the Jews
Poisoning
the Wells Again?**

**Yom Kippur -
The Day of
Atonement**

**The Parables
of Mark 4**

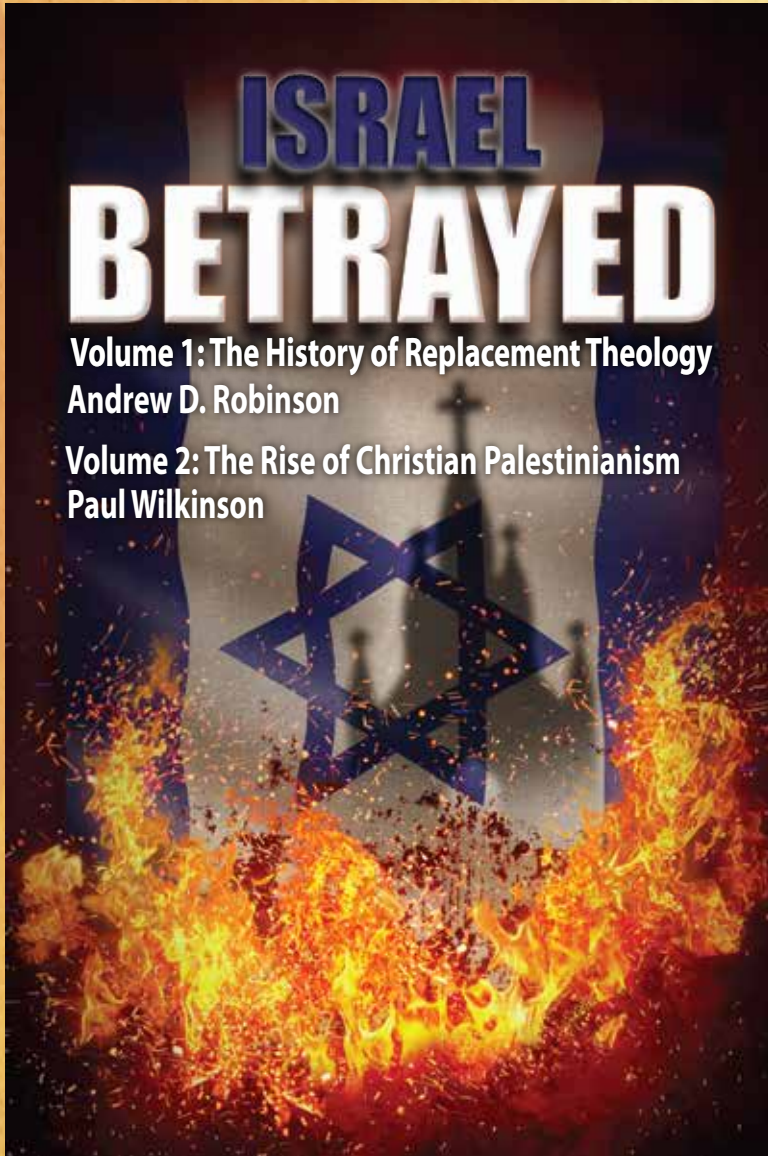
**Answering
Jewish Objections
to Messiah**

**Testimony:
Jesus, Jews, and Jet Lag**

**A Small Slice
of Suffering**



Now Available



Speaking for the American scene, I have observed the rise in anti-Semitism, sometimes disguised as anti-Zionism; the increase in anti-Semitic websites, which have revived old-world conspiracy theories; the denial of the Holocaust, some people even finding a way to blame the Jews for the Holocaust; and universities all across the United States demonstrating against the State of Israel. There has also been a massive spread of replacement theology (which I call “theological anti-Semitism”) in many churches that were once strongly dispensational, and many Bible colleges and seminaries that once were clearly dispensational and pro-Israel have also been infested.

For these reasons, I was delighted to read *Israel Betrayed – Replacement Theology and the Rise of Christian Palestinianism*. Despite its length, it is a work well worth reading. It provides a good history of replacement theology, from its earliest appearance in church history to the present day, and its influence in the rise of anti-Israelism and pro-Palestinianism today. The book clearly labels individuals responsible for this movement and also shows what the Bible *actually* teaches about these matters. This work is highly recommended.

Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

It would be presumptuous for any researchers and writers to attempt to survey, much less correct, the vast history of belief and tradition that has formed the interpretive ideas concerning Israel and the church, but that is precisely what the late pastor Andrew Robinson and historical scholar Paul Wilkinson have successfully done.

Dr. Randall Price

ariel.org



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Cover Story:

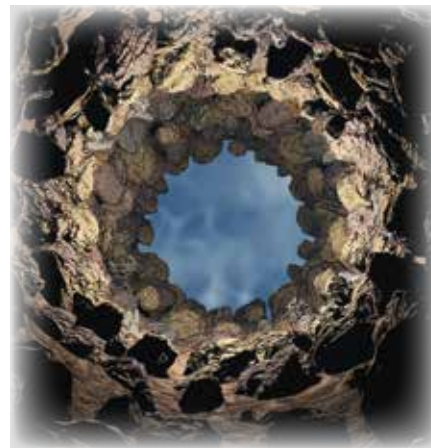
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Purpose Statement

Ariel Ministries exists in order to evangelize Jewish people and to disciple Jewish and Gentile believers through intensive Bible teaching from a Jewish perspective.

Board of Directors:

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Ariel Ministries

Editor-in-Chief

Christiane Jurik

Copy Editor

Pauline Ilsen

Contributing Writers

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum
Olivier Melnick
Mottel Baleston
Captain T.W. Velasco
Robert Morris
Jacob J. Scholtz

Art Directors

Jesse & Josh Gonzales
www.vipgraphics.net

Home Office Contact:

Ariel Ministries
11926 Radium Street
San Antonio, Texas
78216-2713
(210) 344-7707
homeoffice@ariel.org

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 792507
San Antonio, Texas
78279-2507



Shanah tovah!

The Jewish High Holidays stretch from *Yom T'ruah* (also called *Rosh Hashanah*, which this year falls on September 10th and 11th) to *Yom Kippur* (September 19). When studying the Torah to find out what God meant when He commanded the Jewish people to observe these holy seasons, some rabbis have added their own rules to the biblical law.

Take Yom T'ruah as an example. The commandment to observe this day is given in Leviticus 23:23-25. From these verses, we learn that Yom T'ruah was to be a one-day festival, and it was to be a period of rest. The shofar had to be blown, and sacrifices had to be offered. The rabbinic observance differs greatly from these simple rules. For example, the festival is now being celebrated over two days, and penitence has replaced the sacrifices. The great Rabbi Maimonides (ca. 1135-1204) explained the reason for this change in his *Mishneh Torah*: "At this time, when the Temple no longer exists, and we have no atonement altar, there is nothing left but repentance. Repentance atones for all transgressions."¹ However, according to Leviticus 17:11, *it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life*.

Please, do not get me wrong. Men like Maimonides were called "sages" for very good reasons. It is truly fascinating to delve into their discussions in the Talmud or any of the medieval writings! What is sad, however, is that the rabbis often missed important truths.

According to Dr. Fruchtenbaum, the significance of Yom T'ruah is twofold: For Israel, it speaks of her final return to God – after the trumpet has been blown (Isa. 27:13; Mt. 24:31). For believers in Messiah Yeshua, the day will be fulfilled by their rapture – at the sound of the last trumpet (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:50-58).

Now, here is a simple, yet very comforting thought, also by courtesy of Dr. Fruchtenbaum: "Yom Kippur follows Yom T'ruah. Based on the fact that Yom Kippur is fulfilled by the tribulation and Yom T'ruah is fulfilled by the rapture, it is obvious that the rapture will occur before the tribulation."²

This, to me, is good news! While many Jewish sages have tried to discover some hidden meaning of God's commandments regarding the High Holidays, they missed very simple truths. The chronology of the feasts, for example, points to a wonderful reality: Those who believe in Messiah Yeshua will be caught up in the air before the great and terrible day of the Lord!

Let us engage our Jewish friends and relatives in conversations about the law. Let us reason with them and show them the difference between God-ordained commandments and man-made rules. Let us point the way to a life set free from the destruction of the law (Jn. 8:36), a life in God's Son, Messiah Yeshua, our Redeemer!

In His service,

Christiane Jurik

Editor-in-Chief

editorarielministries@gmail.com

¹ As cited in Philip Goodman, *The Yom Kippur Anthology* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1971), p. 44.

² Excerpt from Dr. Fruchtenbaum's *The Feasts and Fasts of Israel*, a book Ariel Ministries will be publishing in the near future.



Ariel Mission Branches & Representatives

ARIEL BRANCHES



Ariel Australia Chris & Lisa Savage

Website: www.ariel.org.au
Email: info@ariel.org.au

Chris and Lisa Savage represent Ariel Ministries in Australia. Based in Victoria, they teach the Scriptures from the Jewish perspective in weekly and bi-monthly classes and day seminars.



Ariel Canada Jacques Isaac and Sharon Gabizon

Website: www.arielcanada.com
Email: info@arielcanada.com

J. I. and Sharon Gabizon represent Ariel Ministries in Canada. Their projects include door-to-door evangelism of Jewish homes in Montreal and translating Ariel's manuscripts into French. Ariel Canada established a messianic congregation in Montreal called Beth Ariel.



Jackie Fierman

Jackie Fierman has been with Ariel Canada since January of 2005, traveling and sharing about the ministry and teaching Ariel material in Canada and the U.S.A.



Ariel India Bakul N. Christian

Email: bakulchristian@yahoo.co.in

Bakul Christian represents Ariel Ministries in India and resides with his wife in Ahmedabad. He teaches Ariel's material all over the country and is responsible for the translations into the Gujarat language.



Ariel Israel Sasha & Lilian Granovsky

Email: sashag@ariel.org

Sasha and Lilian Granovsky represent Ariel Ministries in Israel. The husband and wife team has been representing Ariel Ministries in Israel since October 2009. They are responsible for coordinating the translation of our manuscripts and books into Hebrew and Russian.



Ariel China

For safety issues, we must protect the identity of this branch. Please keep them in your prayers.



Ariel Germany

Website: www.cmv-duesseldorf.de
Email: cmv-cmv@t-online.de

Thanks to Manfred Künstler and his wife Hanna, Ariel Ministries has had a presence in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland since 1985. In 2002, the work was passed on to Georg Hagedorn who, eight years later, turned it into a full branch. Today, this branch is led by a team of brothers and sisters.



Ariel Hungary Ivan & Rita Nagy

Email: hungary@ariel.org

Ivan and Rita Nagy represent Ariel Ministries in Hungary. The husband and wife team has developed a Come & See website in Hungarian. They also host several home Bible study groups, teaching from Ariel's materials. Their goal is to make teachings available to Jewish and Gentile believers and unbelievers in Hungary.



Ariel New Zealand

Web: <http://ariel.org.nz/>

This branch is led by Johan Jansen van Vuuren, Nigel Christensen, Matthew Lord, and John Cavanagh. For information about the many activities of this branch, please contact info@ariel.co.nz.



Ariel Ministries Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas

This branch is devoted to teaching the Word of God from a biblical Jewish perspective in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. We also travel throughout the United States. If you are interested in hosting a teaching session, symposium, or seminar contact us at dfwariel@gmail.com.

ARIEL REPRESENTATIVES



Michael & Hannah Gabizon – Students (Hamilton)

Email: michaelgabizon@gmail.com

Michael and Hannah Gabizon are missionaries representing Ariel Ministries in Canada. The young couple has actively been involved in teaching and discipling people through God's Word. Their goal is to identify other young people within their sphere of influence who may be interested in becoming involved with Ariel.



John Metzger – Field Representative (Pennsylvania)

Website: www.promisestoisrael.org

Email: johnmetzger@ariel.org

Missionary and author John Metzger represents Ariel Ministries in Pennsylvania. He is a teacher and speaker who actively travels throughout the central and eastern part of the U.S., speaking at various churches and conferences.



Gary & Missy Demers – Camp Representatives (New York)

CampShoshanah@ariel.org

Gary and his wife Missy are the managers and camp facilitators of the Shoshanah campus in Upstate New York. Every summer they help host Ariel's Program of Messianic Jewish Studies.



Roberto Anchondo – Field Representative (El Paso, Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico)

Roberto Anchondo represents Ariel Ministries in parts of the Southwest regions of the U.S. and some cities in Mexico. He is currently discipling groups of men in the Jewish perspective. He also works with numerous churches in Mexico, teaching the importance of standing by Israel.



It was in Jerusalem, in 1966, that a burning seed of desire was planted in the heart of Arnold Fruchtenbaum. On December 1, 1977, in San Antonio, Texas, Ariel Ministries was born, and the seed began to bloom. Ariel means "Lion of God," representing the Messiah Yeshua as the Lion of Judah. It is also an alternate name for Jerusalem (Isaiah 29:1) — the city of peace now waiting for the Prince of Peace to return. Today, the ministry has eight branches around the world and a school of Messianic Jewish Studies.



New Zealand

This year, New Zealand was blessed by Dr. Fruchtenbaum's intensive two-week tour in March and April. The tour commenced in Wellington, where Arnold spoke at Abundant Life Centre. In spite of a street carnival on Sunday that blocked the roads around the church and put parking at a premium, the meetings were well attended.

From Wellington, Arnold flew one hour south to Dunedin, where he taught for three nights. We were pleasantly surprised at how many young people attended. The visit to Dunedin ended with a Passover demonstration at Caversham Baptist Church, a beautiful historic building.

The next stop was Christchurch, and the meetings there were again well attended. In the opening session, the pastor of the local Calvary Chapel who hosted us asked how many people had never heard Dr. Fruchtenbaum teach. It was great to see that at least ten people put up their hands. There was even a lady who had travelled from Sydney in Australia to hear Arnold speak. She could not make the meetings over there and decided to come to New Zealand instead!

After a short flight from Christchurch to sunny Nelson, on top of the South Island, Arnold taught for one night. It was greatly encouraging to experience the largest audience of the tour, with hundred and fifty people, and we decided that next time, we will endeavor to spend more time in Nelson.

Dr. Fruchtenbaum finished his visit to New Zealand in Auckland. What was most encouraging during the tour were the book sales. Auckland was no exception, and many people left with a myriad of titles for what we know will be some fantastic reading.

This was a short but intense tour, and we hope to get Dr. Fruchtenbaum back in the not too distant future.





Hungary

The ministry highlight of this year was the fourth Messianic Conference with Dr. Fruchtenbaum in Budapest. We chose to organize the conference without any direct church support, because we preferred an independent place and invited people who came only because of Arnold's teaching. Instead, we partnered with Midnight Call, who provided the location for the one-week conference.

The conference was very successful, and there were about sixty to eighty participants each day. The topic was Life of Messiah, especially the trial, the crucifixion, and the resurrection. We finished the series with Acts 2 and the Feast of Pentecost. After each session, Arnold would answer questions, and he never forgot to tell Jewish jokes.

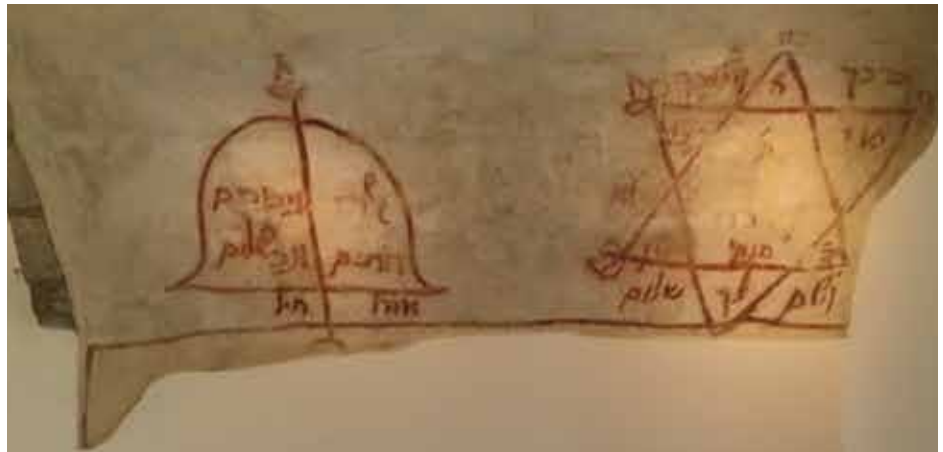
We recorded every teaching, which allows even those who were unable to attend the meeting to fully enjoy the conference on our Ariel website. Many new people signed up for our newsletter. We got several messages with positive feedback, and one attendant wrote: "We cannot express by words what we received at the conference."



Former Camp Shoshanah teen, Noemi Nagy, teaching Dr. Fruchtenbaum how to be cool

Besides the wonderful teaching, we had great fellowship with Arnold, ate at the only glatt kosher restaurant in Hungary, and also went for a short visit to a 13th century synagogue.

The highlight of the second half of 2018 will be Mottel Baleston's European tour in September. It is a great honor and privilege for us to organize a teaching event for him in Budapest.



Hung(a)ry students listening to Dr. Fruchtenbaum's teaching in Budapest



Branch leader Ivan Nagy translating for Dr. Fruchtenbaum



Dr. Fruchtenbaum and the leaders of Ariel Hungary with the Danube River in the background



Dr. Fruchtenbaum visiting an old synagogue in Budapest, Hungary



Eye on Israel



How an Arab Israeli Became the Pastor of a Messianic Congregation

By Lynn Rosenberg

The story of Pastor Shmuel Aweida, an Arab-Israeli who loves the Jewish people and the land of Israel, was shaped by his own parents' faith and a special congregation in the city of his birth.

In northern Israel, a three-tiered city of approximately 280,000 people spreads over the western slopes of Mount Carmel down to the Mediterranean Sea. This is Haifa, Israel's third largest city and a model of co-existence between Arab and Jew, world-class education, and hardworking people.

In Haifa, a community of believers was started by Norwegian pastor Magne Solheim in 1949, only one year after Israel was born. Pastor Solheim had been shepherding a large congregation of Messianic believers in Romania before and during World War Two. After he and his wife

were expelled from Nazi aligned and then occupied Romania, they came to Haifa, where by God's amazing grace, some of their former congregation members arrived through the fires of the Holocaust. Pastor Solheim's new congregation in Haifa, *Beit Eliyahu*, began to get filled with these survivors. In 1976, a home for the elderly was also built for members of the congregation, Arab believers and other non-Jewish believers of the country.

Meanwhile, two Arab Christians, the Aweidas (not a couple yet), moved from their small village near Nablus to Haifa and got married there in 1967. Mr. Aweida, born in 1913, worked for the Haifa municipality before Israel became a modern country, under the British Mandate. As a Christian, he believed that the Jews were God's chosen people and that it was a fulfillment

of prophecy to see them returning to their homeland. He helped new Jewish immigrants, who began escaping from war-torn Europe, to find work in Haifa; and he even learned to speak Yiddish.

When Mr. Aweida was 55, in 1968, Samuel was born. In Hebrew, his name is pronounced "Shmuel." Shmuel grew up going to the Beit Eliyahu congregation, under the spiritual shepherding of Norwegian pastors and staff. As a young man, he went to Norway to pursue theological training and to learn to pastor a church. In 1997, Shmuel became the first local pastor of Beit Eliyahu, which at that time became an independent Messianic congregation. He is the first Arab Israeli to pastor a Hebrew-speaking, Messianic congregation in the land.

While his mother tongue, literally, is Arabic, his first language was Hebrew, as Shmuel grew up going to Hebrew-speaking schools. 95% percent of his childhood friends were Jewish. Sometimes people ask him if he has any kind of identity crisis, but he says that his faith in Yeshua has always been where he finds his identity. He believes that what the Bible says about the Jewish people and their destiny is far more important than what anyone else has to say about it. He and his lovely wife, Bjørg, along with a team of staff and volunteers, serve Beit Eliyahu with a passion for God's Word and a great love for people from all backgrounds. They are serious about making disciples of people young and old who find their identity in knowing Yeshua and the Scripture. He is particularly dedicated to helping the young people in the congregation thrive and be a witness in their required army service. His three children have all served in the IDF.

In March of 2003, Shmuel and the congregation experienced a terrible tragedy. A terrorist detonated a suicide bomb on a bus one afternoon, killing 17 people and wounding 53 others. Most of the people on

the bus were young, and among those killed was the fourteen-year-old daughter, Abigail Little, of one of the congregation's core families. Abigail's parents were Americans, and her father studied in one of Haifa's premier universities. This Christian family from the USA came to Israel because of their great love for the people of Israel, and their love was tested to the utmost. Shmuel was the first one who made it to the hospital and was able to identify Abigail's body. He was there when the Littles arrived and stayed beside them through the many days and years of grief.

There were more than 1,400 mourners who attended Abigail's funeral, including the US Ambassador, the mayor of Haifa, a member of the Knesset (Israel's parliament), and a myriad of classmates and neighbors. Everyone who gathered there was deeply touched and amazed to find an American Christian family so deeply connected to Israel and so involved in a Messianic congregation pastored by an Arab Israeli.



In March of 2003 a terrorist detonated a suicide bomb on a bus one afternoon, killing 17 people and wounding 53 others.

The amazing love and hopeful unity expressed by the followers of Yeshua was bright and clear to each person, especially as Shmuel led the service and preached the gospel.

Growing up in a city that stresses peaceful coexistence, with a wise father who

taught him God's Word and God's love for the Jewish people, gave Shmuel the opportunity to approach the complex world of modern Israel, with all its conflicts and contradictions, from a unique point of view: truth and love. In the end, it is really about God's faithfulness to His promises.



In 1997, Shmuel became the first local pastor of Beit Eliyahu, which at that time became an independent Messianic congregation.



A Small Slice of Suffering

By Robert Morris

One of the many important topics studied at Camp Shoshanah, Ariel's Messianic Jewish Bible Study Center in New York, is the spiritual life of the believer. Robert Morris, a long-time associate of the ministry, confronts one aspect of the spiritual life in this article: our suffering. He does so without shying away from addressing the hard questions: Why do bad things happen to God's people? If He is all-powerful, how come He does not protect us from evil and from our own sin nature? And what is the purpose of our suffering? In this article, the author answers these and other questions from a very personal and heart-felt perspective.





One hot, sunny Sunday afternoon in 1988, my wife Susan and I, our kids, David and Jenessa, and Mark, a fellow seminary student, were enjoying a picnic in our back yard. We had just finished lunch under our shade tree and were discussing how to plant a Messianic congregation when Susan suddenly groaned, “Ooooh,” and arched backward.

“Grand mal seizure!” I yelled as I jumped to catch her. As I laid her twitching body gently on the grass, Mark ran to call 911. By the time the medics came, she had stopped jerking and was becoming coherent. I followed the ambulance as the medics took her to the hospital.

The seizure came unexpectedly. Susan had experienced no earlier symptoms of anything amiss. On the following Tuesday, we received the news that Susan had a life-threatening brain tumor, and this was a life-or-death situation.

Nine days later, she underwent an eight-hour operation. The neurosurgeon removed an aggressive tumor the size of my fist from the speech area of her brain. Our doctor was concerned that the aftereffects would be paralysis of her right side and/or a speech impediment. She experienced neither.

Then came the monthly MRIs and the maximum dose of radiation therapy her body could absorb. Doctors gave her three months to three years to live. We were devastated. How could I finish raising our children without Susan? I begged the Lord to give me those three years. Please let Jenessa have her mom around, at least through high school.

Why did that brain tumor strike Susan? Was it punishment for some hidden sin in her life? Could it be a sadistic slap from Satan or his henchmen? Was it just plain

bad luck? Did God deliberately orchestrate her illness? Was the tumor somehow my fault? Is our God a God of cruelty? Where did her suffering come from?

Sources of Suffering

One source of suffering is the broken world in which we live. Author M. H. Manser notes that human wickedness impacts our lives, causing suffering from murder, injury, cruelty, rioting, warfare, injustice, oppression, adultery, theft, broken relationships, hatred, jealousy, and persecution. He adds that suffering can also result from misfortune: accidents, sickness, famine, poverty, and disasters. Add to that list suffering resulting from aging: decline of mind and body and finally death. Suffering also results from foolishness and anxiety.¹

We also endure suffering that the enemy of our soul brings on. Satan and his demons can influence our lives. However, the ultimate responsibility for suffering lies with God Himself. All suffering is under God’s sovereign control and according to His purposes. He is able to use our suffering for his glory.²

This may be hard to accept, especially in light of biblical passages that tell us God is powerful, loving, and good. However, if God is as the Bible says He is—all-powerful, sovereign, characterized by love, and all-knowing—He is neither too weak to prevent suffering nor cruel and unloving when it occurs.

Ultimately, God is responsible for suffering. He is strong and loving enough to prevent it. However, He usually does not. For example, He could have sent 12 legions of angels to rescue His Beloved Son, Yeshua, from suffering (Mt. 26:53), but He did not. God could have prevented Job’s suffering.

Instead, He encouraged it (Job 1:6-12, 2:1-6). He could have healed the Apostle Paul of his thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7-10). Instead, He told Paul to endure his chronic physical ailment.³

Reasons for Suffering

The Holy Scriptures reveal to us God’s reasons for allowing suffering. A short paragraph from *The Dictionary of Bible Themes* summarizes these reasons:

Believers ought to expect to suffer as an inevitable part of their calling. To believe is not to evade suffering; it is to face it with new confidence and hope. Rightly approached, suffering develops the character of believers, equips them for more effective service, draws believers closer to Jesus Christ and prepares them for eternal life.⁴

Character development, effective service, a closer relationship with Yeshua, and preparation for eternal life—in our Father’s mind, these reasons, and many more, justify His decision to allow suffering. Can we trust His love and wisdom?

Common Responses to Suffering

When we experience suffering, going to God in our pain is perfectly proper. He accepts the ultimate responsibility for suffering. He is our loving Heavenly Father who desires to comfort us.

When we go to Him, we often bring strong emotions: anger, blame, doubt, self-pity, loss, frustration, despair, disillusionment, etc. These common emotions accompany suffering. I am not belittling these reactions. As I cared for Susan when

¹ See Manser, M. H. (2009). *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser.

² Ibid.

³ See Michael Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, Gen. Eds. *Moody Bible Commentary*. Chicago, Moody Publishers, 2014.

⁴ Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes*.



she suffered, we endured some of these emotions ourselves. Susan desperately wanted to be there when Jenessa got married. My most nagging thoughts were, Am I to blame? Is her suffering somehow my fault?

We must understand these emotions for what they are. They are not constructive. We must live in the truth because the truth will set us free (Jn. 8:32). The truth will enable us to endure and conquer suffering.

The truth is this: When our suffering overwhelms us, we are actually looking in the wrong places for comfort and understanding. We are looking inward at ourselves, or we are looking outward at the circumstances. When we look inward, we see a weak, powerless human being. When we look at the circumstances, we become overwhelmed because we cannot change them.

Most of all, we cannot answer the question, “Why?” When I asked the question, “Why,” the response was silence. Neither place will provide us with solace and peace. If we focus on self or circumstances, we will only agonize as Job did during his suffering. Job asked the question “Why?” 21 times. For example, he questioned why he had not died at birth (Job 3:11-12). He asked if he had sinned (Job 7:20). He wondered if God was condemning him (Job 10:2). He asked why God was hiding His face from him (Job 13:24).

Proper Responses to Suffering

What is the truth that will set us free? We must reverently accept suffering. If men such as Yeshua, Job, and Paul experienced suffering, what makes me think I will be exempt?

Instead of focusing inward on self or outward on circumstances, we need to focus upward, trusting God. He is our Heavenly Father who desires to comfort us while we suffer. We have to choose to trust His character. This is an act of the will.

Emotionally we may not feel like trusting God. We have to choose to trust what the Bible reveals about His character. Not only is He our Heavenly Father, but also He is the God of all comfort.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Cor. 1:3-4, emphasis added.)

He promises to comfort us internally. The Scriptures speak of the Holy Spirit of God within us as “The Comforter” (Jn. 15:26, 16:7). God’s promises include promises of comfort when we are worried, lonely, weary, and discouraged.

When we approach our Heavenly Father in prayer regarding our suffering, we should speak to Him honestly and openly. After all, He already knows what is going on in our hearts (Ps. 139). Don’t try to hide anything or fake something. Psalm 62:8 tells us to trust Him and pour out our hearts before Him.

However, while our prayers may be heartfelt, we must do our best to remain reverent. God is our Heavenly Father and Friend who loves us and understands us, but at the same time, He is the sublime Creator of the universe and our magnificent King. Try to maintain that balance. Reverence and deep emotion are compatible.

Not only does God’s comfort come to us internally, but it also can come externally through friends, relatives, parents, and our local congregations.⁵ During Susan’s subsequent struggles because of the tumor, we received irreplaceable help and comfort from our relatives and church family.

As we struggle with our suffering, we need to take the long look at God’s plans as revealed in Scripture rather than the short look at self or circumstances. This world is not all there is. God has an incredible future for us. We have to look beyond this world as

Abraham did. He looked forward to a city with eternal foundations whose architect and builder is God (Heb. 11:9-10). We have to trust in God’s good plans for us and for the world.

Finally, we have to trust that our Heavenly Father has taken responsibility for the suffering in this world. Yes, He could have dealt with sin and suffering back at the Garden of Eden or even before that, when Satan rebelled. However, in His own infinite and inscrutable wisdom, He chose to let sin and suffering proceed on its course until the proper time. When the time was right, He sent His Son to bear the full penalty for sin and suffering. Yeshua never sidestepped the issue. He never dodged the responsibility. Instead, all sin and suffering was laid on Yeshua’s shoulders, and He willingly bore the penalty for you and me.

God has accepted the responsibility for suffering. When He returns, He will end suffering, misery, and grief.

Preparation for Suffering

We need to prepare ourselves in advance for personal suffering. This is why we have to immerse ourselves in the study of Scripture. We have no other real options. If we submerge ourselves in Scripture now, we will have a well from which to draw when the drought of suffering descends upon us. Please notice I did not say “if.” I said “when.”

We don’t have to know why suffering is strangling us. Job never knew why he suffered. God has no obligation to give us those details now. When Job asked the question “why,” God did not comfort him with a detailed description of the heavenly contest that centered on him (Job 1:1-2:7). Job received comfort when God revealed His glory. We may not see the glory of God in as dramatic a manner as Job (Job 38:1-41:34); however, we can get a glimpse of it through His Word. We probably will

⁵ Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes*.



learn the answers to our “Why?” questions in eternity.

So where did Susan’s tumor, which precipitated her suffering, come from? I don’t know. Why did it appear? Why did it afflict her? I don’t know. However, I do know all I need to know: God is good, and His lovingkindness is everlasting (Ps. 119:68; Ps. 136). If you have nothing else to hang onto, grasp that truth; and never, for any reason, let it go. God is good, and His lovingkindness is everlasting. I have had to cling to that truth time and time again.

Final Thoughts

Although the medical community gave Susan between three months and three years to live, God gave her 28 more years.

One year after the surgery, her neurosurgeon, Dr. Larry, visited our Messianic congregation in Portland, OR. While we were talking after the Shabbat service, he said he still remembered Susan’s surgery because it was “different.” Then he looked me straight in the eye and said, “Bob, during Susan’s surgery, God took me beyond what I can normally do.” I will never forget that sentence.

Dr. Larry, who believed in God, although not in Yeshua at that time, glorified God through his acknowledgement of God’s sovereign, overruling, superintending power. He became an enthusiastic follower of the Messiah a few years later. I believe Susan’s surgery somehow contributed to his faith journey.

She thrived for 20 more years, serving God as a wife, mother, grandmother, and ministry partner. Then, in 2006, she suffered a small stroke in the surgical area but recovered quickly. However, a few years later (approximately 2010) another stroke occurred. She had trouble rebounding from this one and began to decline. Soon she had to stop driving. Next came the walker. After that another grand mal seizure hit, and she was wheelchair bound. Then confined to

bed. Toward the end of her life, she could barely eat, drink, or talk. Her battered brain was reaching the end of its capabilities.

I often read to her. Close to the end of her life, I read her the book of Ephesians. As I finished Ephesians chapter 3, I read: “To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.” (Eph. 3:21)

She looked over at me and managed to whisper, “Forever and ever.” A week later, she could neither eat nor drink. She lapsed into a coma. Susan survived eight days without food or water, and then God took His good and faithful servant home to glory. During the entire time, I never heard a word of complaint from her. We had been married forty-eight years.

Now, when the grief bombs of loss explode in my soul, I feel the bereavement deeply; but I am able to contain the collateral damage by focusing on God’s promises. The “eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison” mentioned in 2 Corinthians 4:17 has eclipsed her momentary suffering.

The following truths from the Word of God soothe my soul. They turn my grief into praise and thanksgiving.

My wife has shed her humble body for one that is fit for eternity:

Yeshua... will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Phil. 3:21)

For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Cor. 15:53)

For her, the first things have passed away:

and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away. (Rev. 21:4)

She also stands faultless before God’s throne, experiencing great joy:

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the

presence of His glory blameless with great joy, (Jude 24)

She stands before Yeshua wearing her imperishable crown:

Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. (1 Cor. 9:25)

Her crown consists of at least two features—righteousness and life:

in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Tim. 4:8)

Blessed is a man (or woman) who perseveres under trial; for once he (or she) has been approved, he (or she) will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (Jas. 1:12)

Susan fought the good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith. Her story brings worshipful praise to God whenever it is told. At this moment, she is content, immersed in the resplendent beauty of heaven. Suffering is not the end of her story. Her story, and ours, stretches into eternity:

*“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”
The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah.*

(1 Cor. 15:55-57)



The Parables of Mark 4 and the Mystery of the Kingdom¹

By Jacob J. Scholtz

MARK 4

Introduction

Regarding the parable of the lamp in Mark 4, Cranfield (1966:164) rightly says that Mark does not regard verses 21 and 22 as “proverbial wisdom or moral exhortation, but as containing the mystery of the kingdom of God.” When discussing all the mysteries of the New Testament, however, the parable of the lamp and some of the other parables of Mark 4 receive little mention. Instead, the Matthean mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 13:1-52) receive almost all the attention, only to be appended by a unique Markan parable (4:26-29) that sticks out like a sore thumb. But Mark 4:1-34 contains an integrated set of parables that collectively describes the mystery of the kingdom of God. The purpose of this article is to briefly summarize the context in which Yeshua reveals the parables of Mark 4, to comment about New Testament mysteries as they relate to parables, and then to provide a brief overview of the parables of Mark 4:1-34.

¹This article is an extract of Scholtz, J.J., 2018, “Mark 4:1-34: A simple structure for the mystery of the kingdom,” *In die Skriflig* 52(1), a2236. Download the full article at: www.indieskriflig.org.za/index.php/skriflig/article/view/2326/5041.



Historical Context

During His first advent, Yeshua offered to establish the messianic kingdom in Israel (cf. Mk. 1:14-15). Even though Yeshua is the anointed, beloved Son who received the right to rule the kingdom in Israel (Mt. 3:16-17; Mk. 1:10-11; Lk. 1:32-33), His exercise of this rule is contingent upon Israel accepting Him as the Messianic King (Deut. 17:14-15; Woods 2016:55). The Messiah authenticated His messianic claims through His words and deeds—including exorcizing a demon from a blind and mute person (Mt. 12:22-32; Mk. 3:20-30). However, the religious leaders, who represented Israel, not only rejected the Messiahship of Yeshua, but did so on the basis that Yeshua had “an unclean spirit” (Mk. 3:30). This blasphemy of the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven (Mk. 3:29), and the result was that Yeshua rescinded the offer of the messianic kingdom for Israel at that time and for that generation of Jews, who lost out on the privilege of seeing the kingdom established in their day. This kingdom “is now destined to be re-offered to the Jewish generation of the Tribulation, and that generation will accept it” (Fruchtenbaum 2004:665).

While the scene depicted in Mark 4:1-34 may appear tranquil (Yeshua taught while sitting on a boat), the tumultuous events of that day set the historical context in which Yeshua taught the parables. Why did Yeshua suddenly reveal mysteries about the kingdom? In Daniel 2, God revealed mysteries about what will happen while Israel has no king on the Davidic throne. But now, even though the Davidic Messianic King had already come, when “this generation” blasphemed the Holy Spirit, God again revealed mysteries (Mk. 4:1-34; cf. Mt. 13:1-52) about what will happen while Israel has no king on the Davidic throne. During the Inter-Advent Period, the kingdom “exists in this intercalation only in the sense that the sons [and daughters] of the kingdom are present” (Toussaint 1980:172). “Jesus is offering new truths about the

kingdom while still maintaining the expectation of the earthly kingdom as foretold by the OT prophets” (Vlach 2017:325). In agreement with Vlach,

“Two extremes must be avoided. First, it is wrong to deny any connection between the kingdom and the present age. The kingdom program is related to the present age in regard to the message of the kingdom and the growth of kingdom citizens. Second, it is incorrect to hold the kingdom reign itself has been established in this age. That will occur at Jesus’ second coming.” (Vlach 2017:332)

New Testament Mysteries and Parables

The parables of Mark 4 are explicitly said to contain the mystery of the kingdom. The same is not said of other parables. When Yeshua presents the mysteries of the kingdom by uttering things kept hidden since the foundation of the world (Mt. 13:11, 35; cf. Mk. 4:11; Lk. 8:10), what is meant by the term “mystery”? How may this mystery-component influence an understanding of the parables of Mark 4?

Fruchtenbaum (2004:651) defines a New Testament mystery as “something that was totally unrevealed in the Old Testament, and [is] only revealed in the New Testament.” This means if something “is knowable from the Old Testament, it is not a mystery” (Fruchtenbaum 2004:651). So, the New Testament mysteries contained in the parables of Mark 4 (and Mt. 13) cannot refer to what is clearly known from the Old Testament.

Another way this mystery-component may influence an understanding of the parables of Mark 4 is that these parables may contain unconditional new prophecies that will be fulfilled literally or directly (Scholtz 2015:2-3). If so, then one can expect some specific referents contained in these parables. Snodgrass (2008:22) rightly remarks that the “more a parable is a prophetic instrument the more we should

expect the reality to show through.” Regarding these parables that contain New Testament mysteries, Yeshua showed that some of the characters or objects mentioned therein do stand for or correspond to something or someone other than themselves (Mk. 4:3-8, 14-20; cf. also Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43).

An Overview of Mark 4:1-34

Having discussed the context of Mark 4 and after highlighting how mysteries and parables may (or may not) be related, an overview of the teaching of Mark 4:1-34 is now presented.

The Parable of the Sower (Mk. 4:2b-9)

In Mark’s presentation of the parable of the sower, not only is Yeshua the sower of the good news regarding the kingdom of God (Mk. 1:14-15, 38; 2:2; 4:3), but the early chapters of Mark show the various paradigmatic responses to this proclamation. Later, with authority received from Messiah, disciples will also sow the word. The four different kinds of soils depict different levels of effective or ineffective hearing (Mk. 4:4-8).

Mystery of the Kingdom of God (Mk. 4:10-13)

If unbelievers respond to the word that has been sown, God will give them the mystery, but if they do not turn to Messiah and be forgiven for their sins, they will see without perception and hear but not understand (Mk. 4:11-12; cf. also 1 Cor. 2:6-3:3). If the presentation of direct truth in the form of the word has not been met with an effective hearing response, Yeshua still presents truth to unbelievers, but now only indirectly, through parables (Mk. 4:11-12, 34). To Yeshua’s followers the mystery is given by God, but even these “insiders” still need Messiah to explain it all to them (Mk. 4:11, 34).



Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower (Mk. 4:14-20)

The reception of the word is not only resisted by Satan, but also via tribulation and persecution or by the deceitfulness of riches and other desires (Mk. 4:15-19). When Messiah returns to establish His kingdom, then satanic opposition to the sowing of the word will cease. Yeshua's followers hear and respond to the word with receptive hearts, albeit with varying degrees of fruitfulness.

The Parable of the Lamp (Mk. 4:21-23)

Regarding the parable of the lamp, it is often thought that the light "represents the parabolic revelation which is the subject of this chapter *and in particular the secret of the kingdom of God*" (France 2002:208; italics added). According to this understanding of the parable, "this image tells strongly against any interpretation of vv. 11-12, which suggests that that knowledge is meant to be kept hidden rather than made as widely available as possible" (France 2002:208). While this interpretation is popular, it may partially contradict what Yeshua had just said (Mk. 4:11-12).

Part of the reason why Yeshua taught in parables was to reveal new truths to His followers, but also to conceal it from unbelievers (Pentecost 1982:10). If unbelievers were exposed to further directly revealed truth about the mystery of the kingdom, and if they rejected this truth as well, then their guilt would increase (Cranfield 1966:171; Pentecost 1982:13). God wants unbelievers to become believers, and disciples of Yeshua are to preach not only the good news (see Mk. 1:14-15; 3:14), but these parables too. But "understanding the kingdom of God is not a human ability but a capacity created by Jesus Christ within the heart of the believer" (Edwards 2002:141). Unbelievers will be given the mystery of the

kingdom if they turn to Yeshua and are forgiven (Mk. 4:11-12).

As many commentators note (Cranfield 1966:164; Edwards 2002:139; Lane 1974:165), the lamp is referred to with the definite article (*the* lamp) and is also made the subject of the sentence. Edwards (2002:139) points out that "the reference to the lamp *coming* (Greek. *erchetai*) is more suitable of a person than an object, and has indeed been used of Yeshua earlier" (Mk. 1:7; 3:20). In the Old Testament, David compared God to a lamp, saying, "You are my lamp, O LORD" (2 Sam. 22:29). More specifically, in both 2 Kings 8:19 and Psalm 132:17, the Davidic Messiah is compared to a lamp. When the kingdom is established, the glory of the LORD shall be revealed to all (Isa. 40:5; Mk. 13:26; cf. also Jn. 8:12).

The view taken is that in this parable in Mark 4, Yeshua is represented by the lamp that comes to bring light (see also Cranfield 1966:164-165; Edwards 2002:139-140; Lane 1974:165-167).

If Yeshua is the lamp that comes to bring light and revelation, what is the mystery being revealed? Just as a lamp comes not to be placed under a basket or a bed, but to be put on the lampstand, if Israel had accepted Yeshua as the Messiah, then the unveiled glory of the King would have become visible for all to see. There is, however, indeed in verse 22 an "explicit reference to a period of hiddenness" (Cranfield 1966:165). Because Israel did not prepare the way of the LORD as instructed (cf. Mk. 1:2-3), but instead blasphemed the Holy Spirit and rejected the Messiahship of Yeshua, the establishment of this kingdom is postponed for a time, but Messiah and His kingdom will still be brought to light. Later, three disciples were given a sneak preview of this light and glory of the Lord, for, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the glory of the Lord was briefly revealed before being concealed again (Mk. 9:2-3). But there will come a day, Lane (1974:166) writes, "when the veil is taken away and He

will be known as the Bearer of the Kingdom in a disclosure which all will see." This refers to the second coming.

The Parable of the Measure (Mk. 4:24-25)

The warning to hear is yet again sounded (Mk. 4:24a). "Precisely because there is going to be an unveiling which unravels the enigma and reveals the mystery, hearing with true perception is important *now*" (Lane 1974:167). Every person will receive according to the measure of how one hears, so that those who hear will be given more (see Mk. 4:24b). To the degree a person pays attention to what Yeshua says, to that degree God blesses such hearing and graciously gives disproportionately more. Obedience to God's revealed truth results in more truth and insight being given, including a better understanding of the kingdom of God (see Mk. 4:25a). For followers of Yeshua, this may explain the varying levels of fruitfulness that the parable of the sower mentions (Mk. 4:8, 20). Likewise, the inverse of the same maxim is true: Lack of effective hearing and response to God's revelation will eventually result in the ability to respond being lost altogether (Mk. 4:25b; cf. vv. 15-19). The mystery that the parable of the measure may reveal is that receiving rewards of authority in the kingdom, when it is eventually established, depends on effective and continued hearing *now*.

A Unique Markan Parable (Mk. 4:26-29)

There is often debate about whether this parable focuses attention on the man who sows, the seed, the period of growth, the harvest, or on the contrast between sowing and the harvest (Cranfield 1966:167; Snodgrass 2008:180). It helps to keep in mind that the entire process that the parable describes is important.

There cannot be much doubt that it is God who initiates the sowing and authoriz-



es the harvest. In agreement with Blomberg (2012:355), being told so soon after the parable of the sower, “the most natural interpretation would link the man who sows the seed first of all with God and then, derivatively, with Jesus and all who preach God’s word.” Yeshua started this sowing of the word (see Mk. 1:14-15, 38; 2:2), and He is also the one with the authority to put the sickle in (Mk. 4:29; cf. Jn. 3:13).

But God is not only involved in the sowing and the harvest, but in the *entire process*: It is God who causes the seed to sprout and grow (Mk. 4:27b-28). The parable provides a picture of the “time of Christ’s sowing until the eschatological harvest,” and so Yeshua recognized that “sowing was being accomplished in His disciples which He confidently trusted God would bring to its future fruitful consummation” (Hiebert 1994:119).

The mystery of the kingdom this unique Markan parable may reveal is that, from Messiah’s first advent until His return to the earth, God will grow a harvest of sons and daughters who will inherit the messianic kingdom when it is established at Messiah’s return.

There is another aspect of this parable to consider: It is written that the earth brings forth fruit “all by itself” (Mk. 4:28). This alludes to growth during a Sabbath year (Lev. 25:1-7). Such growth happens *after* a prior sowing had already taken place, for when the farmer is inactive on the earth in obedience to God’s instructions, it is God

who gives the increase. Yeshua is the sower who will eventually put the sickle in for the harvest. During the time that Yeshua (in His humanity) is not on the earth, God ensures the success of the harvest through Messiah’s disciples, spearheaded by the Apostle Peter, commencing on the day of Pentecost (Scholtz 2015:5-6).

The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mk. 4:30-32)

Given that Yeshua is the sower in the earlier seed parables of Mark 4, it seems reasonable to conclude that He is again the implied sower. The mustard seed was proverbial for its smallness, but in this parable, when it grows, the mustard plant becomes greater than all the herbs. “Since the comparison is with ‘all the seeds,’ a superlative meaning seems required” (Snodgrass 2008:220). This hyperbole not only emphasizes the remarkable growth of this mustard seed, but also that it grows into a plant in which birds of the air may nest in its branches. In this article, the allusion to the “birds of the air” (see Ezek. 17:22-23; Dan. 4:12) is understood to have Gentiles in view as the great commission moves from Jerusalem to all the nations of the world (Edwards 2002:145; France 2002:216-217).

The Old Testament teaches that when the kingdom is established, many people from all over the world will go up to Jerusalem to learn the ways of the Lord (Isa. 2:3;

60:3; Jer. 3:17; Zech. 8:20-23). The mystery the parable of the mustard seed may teach is that during the Inter-Advent Period, many Gentiles from all over the world will turn to the Lord, prior to the kingdom being established on earth. The message of the kingdom will spread across the globe, the number of people that believe this message will increase, and many will experience the blessings of this kingdom when it is established (cf. Vlach 2017:331).

Conclusion

Why did the Holy Spirit inspire Mark to string *these* parables together? The collective message that Mark 4:1-34 may be conveying is that while the establishment of the messianic kingdom has been postponed, God is sowing the word, not only in Israel, but all over the world. When the sowing of the word meets with a responsive ear and heart, God gives that son or daughter the mystery of the kingdom and, viewed collectively, God will bring a harvest of sons and daughters into the kingdom when it is established. It is important for all to hear, not only so that they can become believers and bear some fruit, but also because God promised to graciously bless to the extent that one listens effectively. Even if we are believers and have received the ability to understand the mystery of the kingdom of God, we still need Yeshua to explain it to us. When the Lamp comes to the lampstand, we will behold the unveiled glory of the King, and His kingdom will come in power.

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Understanding Jewish Objections to Effectively Share Messiah

By Mottel Baleston

Christians who are serious about their faith know that when Jewish people see the prophecies about Messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures, they often recognize the many similarities with Jesus. For those of us who are Jewish believers in Yeshua, these prophecies were instrumental in bringing us to saving faith.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. (Rom. 10:1)

As a result, some Gentile believers imagine all that is needed for Jewish friends to be convinced that Yeshua is the One prophesied is to be willing to look at the Scripture passages. In reality, we all know that very often, even after being shown the proper verses, Jewish friends are reluctant to come to any decision.

One reason for this is that every human being has an inner rebellion against God and thinks he has no need for Him.

For many Jewish people, there are additional barriers, such as teachings within the Jewish community that describe Yeshua and Christianity as something very different from the New Testament truth. That negative view arose from the regrettable and sinful actions of people throughout history who imagined that they were Christians, yet engaged in a consistent pattern of violence against and persecution of the Jewish people.

A short history lesson is in order here: The biblical Christianity seen in the New Testament had started to shift into error just 100 years after it came into being. By the year 325 A.D., an institutional Christendom was in power and had introduced some doctrines that contradicted New Testament teaching. Nowhere was this more apparent or toxic than in the Christians' stance toward the Jewish roots of their faith, which they now attempted to repudiate and erase. In A.D. 400, an influential early "Church Father," John Chrysostom, advocated violence against the Jewish people. He is revered in both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church circles. Those are the two church denominations that were dominant in Europe and Asia Minor where Jewish people interacted with Gentiles in those early years. The horrible legacy of pillage, violence, and rape against Jewish communities that resulted from the teaching is well documented.

It then becomes understandable that many Jewish people associate biblical Christian theology with the violence and corrup-

tion of what became institutional Christendom. You and I may know the difference, but when church members were rioting through my grandmother's village in the Ukraine and targeting Jews, my ancestors were left to think that it was New Testament theology that had influenced that horror.

Because of that sad history, many Jewish people have a caricature of what actual Bible Christianity is about. How could they not? Most Jewish people have lived in areas where the two previously mentioned church denominations were most numerous over the centuries and not in areas where biblical churches were numerous.

There is a special urging at the heart of the New Testament to declare the good news of atonement through Messiah Yeshua

to the Jewish people. Recognizing the history of violence by Christendom, we need to use every opportunity to first correct the misunderstandings. Pushing our Jewish friends and relatives to look at proof texts without first clearing up these most basic misunderstandings often results in strained relationships and an unwillingness to continue the discussion.

At the same time, many thousands of Jewish people have been led to Messiah through the witness of lay people in the church. Jewish evangelism is different because it requires more patience, understanding, and knowledge. So, here are three main categories of misunderstanding in Jewish circles and even in some church circles:



1. Your Jewish friend is thinking: "They want me to stop being Jewish."

Most Jewish people equate being a Gentile with being a Christian. Since they were born as Jews, they feel that you were born a Christian. They see your faith as something similar to an ethnic identity. When they realize that you would like them to come to faith in Yeshua, they feel that you are threatening their very identity and family ties.

Answer: Communicate that being Jewish is a gift from God that is theirs forever. Clarify that either a Jew or a Gentile can place his faith in the Jewish Messiah and that all the early Jewish followers of Yeshua continued to identify as Jews. Emphasize that:

- a. Most Gentiles are not Christians.
- b. Jewish believers in Yeshua are free to practice Jewish culture and maintain family ties.
- c. Biblical Christianity was first practiced by Jewish people in a Jewish cultural setting.



2. Your Jewish friend is thinking: “This is an ecumenical, interfaith discussion.”

When you share your faith with your Jewish friends, they will often assume that you are simply excited about your culture and background and want to explain it to them. They will usually not assume that it could have any relevance or meaning to them, since you are a Gentile and should believe in Yeshua, and they are Jewish and should not.

Answer: At some point in the conversation, you will need to muster some holy boldness and share with your Jewish friends at least one of the following points:

a. That atonement through faith in Messiah was given to the Jewish people first and that a third of the Jewish people in the first century were believers in Messiah Jesus (Eusebius).

b. What could be more Jewish than for a Jew to believe in his own Jewish Messiah?

c. Explain that there are almost a quarter million Jewish people who have come to faith in Messiah. Among these are rabbis whose study of the Messianic prophecies in the Jewish Bible led them to the conclusion that Yeshua is the long-awaited Messiah. There are now dozens of videos viewable on the Internet with solid testimonies by believers with strong Jewish backgrounds. This is probably one of the most effective means of demonstrating that it is possible to be Jewish, continue to be Jewish in identity, and believe that Yeshua is the Messiah.



3. Your Jewish friend is thinking: “I would never be a Christian. They caused the Holocaust.”

Many Jewish people will point to the millions of Jews who were murdered by so-called Christians with the approval of certain churches. They will mention the Crusades, Inquisition, Pogroms, and Holocaust.

Answer: What they are saying is absolutely true, and you should immediately agree with them. However, you must quickly point out that these people were only Gentile church members, not biblical Christians! Their loyalty was to an institutional church, not to Yeshua the Messiah. Explain that the true, genuine Christian loves the Jewish people. This will be a new concept for them and difficult for them to believe at first, but you must stress it and identify yourself and your Bible-believing church as friends of the Jewish people. Remind them of the many genuine Christians (“righteous Gentiles”) who risked their own lives during the Holocaust to rescue and hide Jewish people.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. (Rom.1:16)

Yom Kippur— The Day of Atonement

By Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum



Of all the Jewish holy days, *Yom Kippur* holds the most special place in the mind and imagination of the Jewish people. This year, the Day of Atonement begins on the evening of September 18 and ends on the evening of September 19. This article surveys the messianic implications of *Yom Kippur*. It is based on a more detailed teaching by Dr. Fruchtenbaum, which will soon find its way into a book on the feasts and fasts of Israel.

Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement, is the sixth of Israel's holy seasons. Because *Yom Kippur* is not a festival but a day to afflict one's soul and a day of rest, the expression "holy season" is a better way to describe it.

The main passages discussing this holy season is Leviticus 23:27-31:

²⁷ Howbeit on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement: it shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. ²⁸ And ye shall do no manner of work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement,

to make atonement for you before Jehovah your God. ²⁹ For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day; he shall be cut off from his people. ³⁰ And whatsoever soul it be that does any manner of work in that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people. ³¹ Ye shall do no manner of work: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

According to these verses, *Yom Kippur* was both a day of affliction for the soul and a day of individual and national atonement.

In modern Judaism, *Yom Kippur* is considered to be the most solemn and culturally important holy day of the Jewish year. Even Jews who do not observe any other holy day will refrain from work, fast, and attend synagogue service on *Yom Kippur*.

The basic tenet in modern Judaism concerning *Yom Kippur* is that man, by his "own effort, not by an external power,"¹ can achieve atonement for his sins. The *Yom Kippur Reader* introduces this idea with the following words:

If there were no possibility of wiping the slate clean, man could have no hope of rising above his frequent sins. They would always remain to condemn him, never allowing him to escape the inevitability of judgment and punishment. For this reason, the concept of *teshuvah* [repentance] had to be created before the universe, for God would not create a world that was doomed from its inception (*Nedarim* 39b). But though the possibility of repentance always exists – *must* exist – it is uniquely acceptable during the ten days ending with *Yom Kippur*. During the period, God waits – anxiously and expectantly, as it were – for the Jewish people and the Jewish person to return to His embrace.²

¹ Theodor H. Gaster, *Festivals of the Jewish Year: A Modern Interpretation and Guide* (New York City, NY: Morrow Quill, 1978), p. 136.

² Rabbi Nosson Scherman, *Yom Kippur Reader: Overviews, Laws, and Insights Anthologized from Talmudic and Traditional Sources* (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1992), p. 8.



Modern Judaism has inaugurated certain substitutions for the biblical observances of Yom Kippur. In place of the affliction of the soul, the rabbis allowed the affliction of the body. Thus, Yom Kippur has become a day of fasting and prayer.

Yom Kippur in the Law of Moses

There are three passages in the Law of Moses that speak of Yom Kippur: Leviticus 16:1-34, Leviticus 23:26-32, and Numbers 29:7-11. Before surveying these verses, a few preliminary points need to be made.

Yom Kippur served three basic purposes: It provided the opportunity to cleanse the people and the tabernacle once every year; it was intended to remind Israel of her national standing before God, which is why national atonement was being provided; and it called for individual repentance.

The Hebrew word for atonement, *kaphar*, simply means “to cover.” In the Hebrew Scriptures, this word is found a total of 110 times, mostly within two books, Leviticus and Numbers. In Genesis 6:14, it is used in a more mundane way, referring to the pitch that covered and thereby protected the ark. So, in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Hebrew word “atonement” has a limited meaning. It means “covering,” and it emphasizes “at-one-ment” in that it brings together two parties who have been at enmity with each other. The word is not found in the New Testament.



Yom Kippur was the time of national atonement. Within the sacrificial system, the sacrifices were largely individual, but the atonement on this particular day was national. This atonement was to cover all sins that were not covered by the individual atonement. The picture is that on Yom Kippur, atonement was provided for the entire nation. However, it was

applied only to those individuals who believed. In the words of Leviticus 23, the atonement only applied “to the individual who afflicted his soul.” It did not cover deliberate sins of rebellion. It was for unacknowledged sins and defilement.

A. Leviticus 16:1-34

Leviticus 16 is a key chapter in the book, and it is a section unto itself. The chapter emphasizes what the high priest must do on Yom Kippur. What it reveals is also the foundation for the truth of the statement in Leviticus 17:11 that atonement is made only by the shedding of blood: *it is the blood that makes atonement for your souls*. Leviticus 16 gives the most detail as to how Yom Kippur was to be observed in accordance with the Law of Moses, and seven deductions can be drawn from this chapter:

1. The approach to God was always limited. It was never true that many ways lead to God. There always was only one way. Under the Law of Moses, the one way was by means of the Yom Kippur sacrifice. Today, it is by the final sacrifice: the blood of the Messiah.
2. The atonement was always by blood (cf. Lev. 17:11).
3. There was the necessity of a mediator. Under the Law of Moses, the mediator was the high priest.
4. Because the human mediator, the high priest, was himself a sinner, he needed the protection of blood. For that reason, a bull had to be offered to atone for the high priest's sins, because his own sins had to be dealt with before he could begin to deal with the sins of the people.
5. The two goats were the atonement for the people. The story of the two goats illustrates that the removal of sin comes only after the shedding of blood. Only because the blood of the first goat was shed could the second goat take away the sins of Israel.

6. The atonement included the covering of both known and unknown sins. The entire Mosaic system was based upon the premise that sin was an ever-present problem. Because on this assumption, Yom Kippur included atonement for both known and unknown sins.

7. Confession of sin always followed the shedding of blood. After the blood was shed and the atonement was made, then sins were confessed.

B. Leviticus 23:26-32

The second passage of the Torah that speaks of Yom Kippur is Leviticus 23:26-32. The verses explain what the people must do on the day the sacrifices were offered by the priesthood. Three things can be deduced from this passage:

1. Yom Kippur was a day of personal affliction for sin. The sin referred to here is internal sin or the sin nature.
2. There was to be a blood sacrifice for sin. The blood sacrifice was for external sin.
3. There was to be no work so that there would be no distraction from the matter at hand.

C. Numbers 29:7-11

In Numbers 29:7-11, the Israelites were again commanded when and how to observe Yom Kippur. On the tenth day of Tishrei, they were to have a holy convocation; they were to afflict their souls (but they were not commanded to fast); and they were to do no manner of work. When speaking about work, the Scriptures usually say that the people were to do “no manner of servile work,” meaning occupational work. Here, the term is more inclusive. Yom Kippur was to be the holiest day of the year, so they had to abstain from *all* work.

Verses 8-11 teach that there were to be three offerings on this occasion in addition to the other offerings that would normally be required on that day.



The Messianic Implications

When studying the messianic implications of Yom Kippur, several Scriptures need to be considered, some from the Prophets, some from the Writings, and others from the New Testament.

A. In the Prophets

The messianic implications of Yom Kippur are primarily found in Isaiah 49:5-8 and Isaiah 52:13-53:12, and six deductions can be drawn from these passages:

1. The Messiah would be abhorred and rejected by His own people Israel and be despised among the Gentiles.
2. The Messiah would die as the final Yom Kippur sacrifice.
3. The Messiah will bear the sins of the believer. While the Messiah will shed His blood for the sins of the world, only those who believe on Him will have their sins borne by Him.
4. For a period of time following Israel's rejection of Him, the Messiah will be a light to the Gentiles.
5. After the period during which the Messiah will be the light to the Gentiles, He will then be accepted by His own people, Israel.
6. As a result of their acceptance of Him, the Messiah will return to set up His Kingdom and restore Israel.



B. In the Writings

In the Writings, two psalms contain messianic implications regarding Yom Kippur: Psalm 22 and Psalm 110. From these passages, two deductions can be drawn:

1. The Messiah will be both priest and king. Psalm 110 emphasizes not only His priesthood, but also His royalty.

2. Not only will the Messiah be both priest and king, He will also be both priest and sacrifice. As sacrifice, He will suffer and die for sin; as priest, he will offer that sacrifice.

C. In the New Testament

In the Hebrew Scriptures, Yom Kippur foreshadowed a permanent cleansing of God's people, which was to be accomplished by a better sacrifice. The New Testament, particularly the book of Hebrews, stresses the superiority of the death of Messiah in contrast to the Mosaic sacrifices. The book of Hebrews is the counterpart to the book of Leviticus. It contains six segments that relate to Yom Kippur. The background to what the book of Hebrews says about Yom Kippur is found in Psalm 110:4: *Jehovah has sworn, and will not repent: You are a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek*. The book of Hebrews has much to say about this statement.

The first passage, Hebrews 4:14-16, emphasizes that Messiah the high priest has a better position in that He functions in heaven, not on earth.

The second segment of the messianic implications in this book, Hebrews 5:1-7:28, points out that the believer has a spotless priest. He also has a sufficient sacrifice. The Aaronic priesthood was carried on through sinful men, but the priesthood of Yeshua is based on His sinlessness.

The third segment is Hebrews 8, where the writer shows that the new priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood because the New Covenant is superior to the Mosaic Covenant. The writer makes two points in this segment of the messianic implications of Yom Kippur in the book of Hebrews: first, the Messiah's priesthood is better because it rests on a better covenant with better promises; second, instead of being temporary and transitory, it is eternal and permanent.

The fourth segment is Hebrews 9:1-10. It points out that the Messiah functions in a better sanctuary; it is better because this one is heavenly and not earthly. The background

to this section is found in Exodus 25-31 and 35-40.

The fifth segment is Hebrews 9:11-10:28. It emphasizes that the new priesthood is based on a better sacrifice because the sacrifice upon which it is based is human, not animal blood.

The sixth segment is Hebrews 13:10-16. The writer points out that the believer has an altar that those outside the faith have no right to. This altar is the place where the Messiah offered His sacrifice, which is superior to the sacrifice that the Levitical priests offered. According to Leviticus 16, what was left of the bull that was sacrificed on behalf of the high priest and what was left of the goat that was sacrificed for the people was taken outside the camp of Israel and was burned. Normally, the priest could partake of a sacrifice, it could be eaten; but of the Yom Kippur sacrifice, the priest could not partake. It had to be taken outside the camp and totally burned. This portrayed the removal of sin. It is no accident that Yeshua suffered on an altar that was outside the gate, outside the city walls of Jerusalem. That which was outside the gate was not available to those still inside. Therefore, Yeshua suffered outside the camp to emphasize the fact that those who were still inside the camp will have no right to partake of it.

From these six sections in the book of Hebrews that deal in some way with the messianic implications of Yom Kippur, two deductions can be drawn:

1. Yeshua of the New Testament is the Messiah of the Hebrew Scriptures. Everything that the Hebrew Scriptures said would be true of the Messiah in terms of His first coming was fulfilled by Yeshua of Nazareth.
2. In relation to Yom Kippur, Yeshua is a superior priest. As to position, He functions in heaven, not on earth. As to the priestly order, He is after the order of Melchizedek, not after the order of Aaron or the Levitical order. As to covenant, the priesthood of Yeshua is based upon the eternal new



covenant, not on the temporary Mosaic covenant. As to the sanctuary, the sanctuary where Yeshua offered His blood was the heavenly one, not the earthly sanctuary that was merely a copy of the heavenly one. As to sacrifice, His blood is better because it is Messiah's blood, not animal blood; the blood of the perfect Messiah is superior to the blood of an animal.

The Fulfillment of Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur will be fulfilled by the great tribulation and Israel's national atonement in the tribulation. Ezekiel 20:33-38 prophesied a time when God will regather His people from all parts of the world *with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm*. This regathering has been observed with the modern State of Israel. However, at some point, God, will again *enter into judgment* with His people (Ez. 20:35). By means of the tribulation judgments, the rebels will be purged, and the unbelievers will be regenerated. They will turn away from seeking to establish their own righteousness and will seek the righteousness of God through Yeshua the Messiah. This will bring about their national regeneration. It will be a new nation, a regenerate nation, that will enter the millennial kingdom under King Messiah.

To better understand how the great tribulation will fulfill Yom Kippur, one has to consider the biblical practice and the Jewish observance. First, the key word is "affliction." In the case of the biblical practice, the affliction was that of the soul. In the case of the Jewish observance, it is the affliction of the body. Second, the key concept of Yom Kippur is atonement. On Yom Kippur, atonement was made for the nation, not the individual. By the sacrifice of the two goats, national atonement was made for the people of Israel, but the national atonement would not be effective if there was not the affliction of the soul by the individual. In other words, while the blood of the animal provided atonement for the nation as a whole, the atonement only applied to

those in the nation who would also afflict the soul.

Now, two key passages will be surveyed: Hosea 5:15-6:3 and Zechariah 12:10-13:1.

A. Hosea 5:15-6:3

Hosea's description of the tribulation centers around the term *affliction*. In the tribulation, both the body and the soul of Israel will be afflicted. Hosea 5:1-14 describes in some detail the affliction of the body of Israel during the great tribulation. Then God, who has been speaking throughout the passage, states in verse 15: *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly*. Before anyone can return to a place, he must first leave it; only after having left it, can he then return to it. God states that He is going to "return to His place." God's place is heaven; but before He can return to heaven, He must first leave it. When did God ever leave heaven? God left heaven at the incarnation, when He became man in the person of Yeshua of Nazareth. Then, because of a certain offense committed against Him, He went back to heaven, which would be when Yeshua ascended from the Mount of Olives. The specific offense committed against Him was the rejection of His Messiahship. The verse goes on to point out that He will not come back to this earth until that offense is confessed. God added the statement: *in their affliction they will seek me earnestly*. So, Israel is to suffer a period of affliction, and this physical affliction of the body will lead to her confession of that sin.

The demand that a certain offense be confessed is met by the appeal of Hosea 6:1-3. In the closing days of the tribulation, the leadership of Israel will finally discover that the reason they have suffered so much is because of their rejection of the Messiahship of Yeshua. They will then issue this call for the nation to undergo a period of repentance that will lead to their salvation. While Hosea 5:15 speaks of the physical affliction of the body, Hosea 6:1-3 speaks of the spiritual affliction of the soul. By means of the physical affliction of

the great tribulation, Israel will undergo a spiritual affliction of the soul that will lead to her national salvation, so that a national atonement is going to be made. The point is that Yom Kippur will be fulfilled by the great tribulation; Israel's sufferings in the great tribulation will lead to her national salvation.

B. Zechariah 12:10-13:1

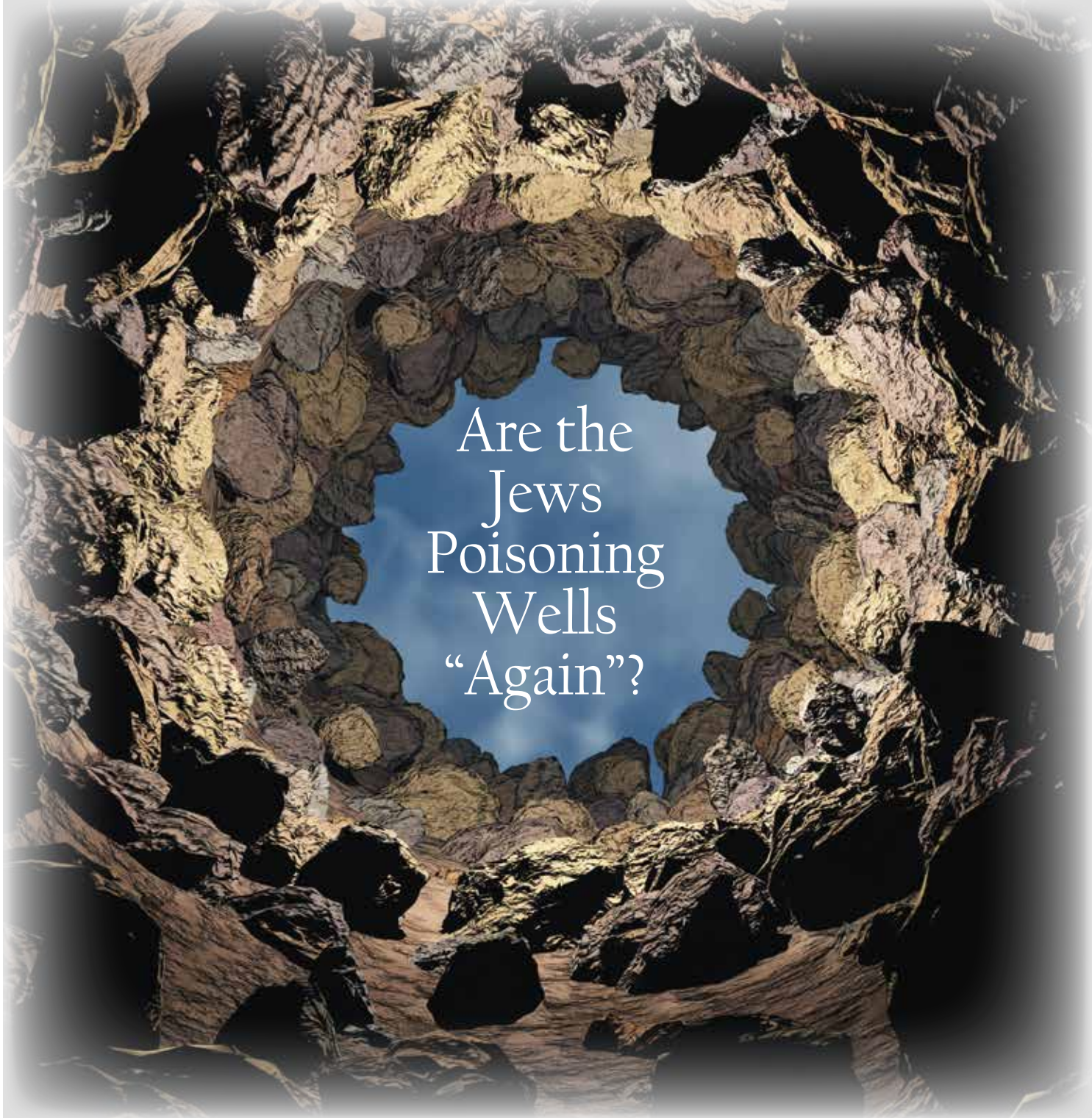
Zechariah 12:1-9 provides details of the battle for Jerusalem, when all nations come against the Jews under Antichrist. With the invasion, the people will suffer a physical affliction, the affliction of the body. It will lead to the spiritual affliction described in Zechariah 12:10-13:1. The great tribulation, the physical affliction, will lead to Israel's spiritual affliction, and therefore to Israel's salvation. This, in turn, will lead to the second coming (Zech. 14:1-15) and the messianic kingdom (Zech. 14:16-21).

Conclusion

Yom Kippur is the sixth of the holy seasons of Israel. The first four festivals, *Pesach*, *Hag Hamatzot*, *Hag Habikkurim*, and *Shavuot*, come close together—within 50 days of each other. All four of these were fulfilled in the program of Messiah's first coming. This first cycle of feasts is followed by a four-month interval, separating them from the second cycle of feasts. This four-month interval is now being fulfilled by the church age; therefore, the sequence of the festivals reveals that God's program for the church interrupts His program for Israel. Just as the first four festivals come close together, so do the last three—within two weeks of each other. *Yom Truah*, the fifth holy season, precedes Yom Kippur by a number of days. It will be fulfilled by the rapture while, Yom Kippur will be fulfilled by the tribulation.

Hence, the very sequence by which the feasts of Israel will be fulfilled teaches that the rapture will occur before the tribulation just as Yom Truah comes before Yom Kippur.





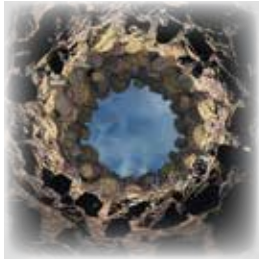
Are the Jews Poisoning Wells “Again”?

By Olivier Melnick

The Dark Ages were a difficult time of history for much of the world, and they turned out to be quite a bit darker for the Jewish communities of Europe. The chasm between Christianity and Judaism continually widened. Early

theological differences had morphed into the social ostracism that would eventually lead to the racial anti-Semitism that allowed for the Holocaust to take place. A myth had developed in the early 1320s that the king of Tunisia, some lepers, and the Jews had

conspired together and were determined to destroy Christianity. Apparently, they had concocted a magic recipe for a poison made of lizards, spiders, frogs, human hearts, urine, and sacred hosts. The legend of the poisoning of the wells of Europe



Are the Jews Poisoning Wells "Again"?

was emerging, and the Jews were about to be held responsible.¹

With the mid-1300s advent of the "Black Death" or "Black Plague," the world was about to experience death like never before. It was the most devastating pandemic in the history of mankind; from 1347 to 1350, it was responsible for the death of about 75 million people worldwide (25 million in Europe alone). It would take 150 years for Europe's population to recover, while other minor plagues hit the continent until the 19th century.

It is now believed that the plague was caused by a bacterium found on fleas carried by black rats from Asia onto ships sailing to Europe. In the Middle Ages, however, people did not know this; and as the continent appeared to be on its way to total extinction, they started to look for a cause. It was not long before the Jews were once again used as the convenient "scapegoats of humanity."

Jewish people also died during the "Black Death," but generally in much smaller numbers. There are several possible reasons for this: Firstly, the Jewish people lived in somewhat communal isolation from the rest of the people, which, to an extent, allowed them a safe distance from infected areas. Secondly, the mandatory liturgical washing of the hands before meals was sure to help with hygiene. Finally, the strict kosher laws that religious Jews were bound to follow²

forced them to maintain a stricter hygiene as well, and thus resulted in fewer casualties in the Jewish communities. However, this did not stop the masses from destroying over 200 Jewish communities, numbering Jewish fatalities in the tens of thousands.

The accusation that the Jews had poisoned the wells would stick for a while, and this year, the myth made it back into the news—not from a Middle Eastern country indoctrinated to hate the Jews as one would expect, but by a Daily Mail British columnist who wrote on June 26, 2018: "In an unequivocal breach of international law, Israeli settlers have taken much of the best agricultural land, while depriving the Palestinians of water supplies and, according to a number of respectable sources — and I have witnessed this for myself — burning their olive groves and poisoning their wells."³

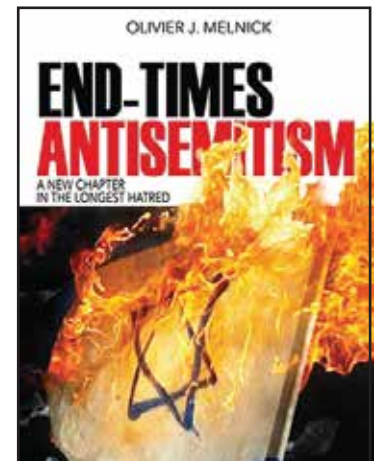
To further validate the columnist's unfounded claim, the Daily Mail came to his rescue. The original statement made by author Peter Osborne did not include the phrase "according to a number of respectable sources" but was later added by the newspaper editorial staff⁴, making the staff as guilty of anti-Semitism as the columnist.

One wonders if the Dark Ages ever came to an end for the Jewish people. It is difficult to fathom that people in the West would continue to spread canards against the Jews such as the poisoning of wells. It is even harder to believe that people would accept

this as verified news and join the enemies of Israel in further ostracizing and demonizing the Jews.

Satan hates the Jews because God loves them. His twisted creativity is unlimited. As he sees his end coming soon with the return of Yeshua, when all Jewish people call upon Him (Zechariah 12:10), he will redouble his efforts to stop the Jews from calling on their Messiah. The most irrational libels against the Jews will be believed by many. The poisoning of the wells of the Palestinians is just one more example of Satan's devious agenda to destroy the Jews.

In his new book *End-Times Anti-Semitism: A New Chapter in the Longest Hatred*, Olivier Melnick uncovers "end-times anti-Semitism," a rapid increase in frequency and severity of hatred towards Jewish people and the nation of Israel. He points out that this new chapter in the longest hatred of history was predicted in the Bible and paves the way for the greatly anticipated second coming of the Messiah.



¹Flannery, Edward H. *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism*. Rev. and updated ed. Studies in Judaism and Christianity (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), p. 106-111.

²Nicholls, William. *Christian Antisemitism: A History of Hate*. Northvale, NJ: J. Aronson, 1993. p. 247

³Osborne, Peter *The minefield Prince William must tiptoe through today as becomes the first senior member of the Royal Family to pay an official visit to Israel* (Daily Mail) Last accessed on June 27, 2018. <http://tinyurl.com/ya9w75kw>

⁴Plosker, Simon *Bigoted Columnist: Jews 'Poisoning the Wells'* (Honest Reporting). Last accessed June 27, 2018 <http://tinyurl.com/y8p97dsp>



I was saved when I was about nine years old at a Christian camp near Goiania, Brazil. I know that because I distinctly remember sharing the gospel with one of the kids whose father was a handyman at the camp. He had not attended the previous evening's bonfire-side altar call, so I figured this was my chance to share what I had received. We were sitting by the flag pole the following day, and I told him about Jesus and His sacrifice for sin. I don't know what happened to him after that, but I would like to think that a seed was planted there that day. Yet, the seed that had been planted in my heart the night before was soon covered in thorns. Like the testimony of so many other believers, it was drowned out by the cares of this world. It was always there underneath, ready to "save me" when I got into trouble I could not handle myself, but it was not transforming me into the new man God wanted me to be.

Forty years have passed since the day I was saved. And now it is 2:30 a.m., and I am wide awake, staring at the dimly lit ceiling of my east Jerusalem hotel room. The night silence is accompanied by an occasional distant siren, the intermittent bark of a dog, and the rhythmic breathing of my eighteen-year-old son, sound asleep in the bed next to me. Oh, to be young and sleep like that! As a professional airline pilot, I have my remedies for jet lag; but truth be told, they don't really work. My mind is a hive of activity. But my heart, oh my heart, is here now, in Jerusalem. I mouth out the word slowly, but quietly so as not to wake my son, imitating my best Israeli accent: *Ye-ru-sha-la-yim*, the city of my King.

I remember the first time I saw Jerusalem. My wife had agreed to let me go by myself to visit my new Israeli friends. Yet, she made me promise that I would not enter the gates of the old city of Jerusalem. We would do that one day together, she said, and we later did. Hence, to honor my wife's request, I sat on a park bench on the south west side of the city, staring at its ancient walls. I remember being approached by someone who started asking me for directions in Hebrew. At the time, my knowledge of Hebrew was limited to maybe three words. The person immediately realized I was a tourist and politely moved on. However, I was deeply intrigued by this interaction. I am white, blond, and have blue eyes; yet this person, an Israeli, did not think twice to speak to me in Hebrew; and only after I was unable to respond did he



say “excuse me” in broken English and moved on. This intrigued me because I am the product of two cultures. Born and raised in Brazil, yet because of my physical appearance, I always felt awkwardly Brazilian; and when I came to the US as a college student, I felt awkwardly American due to my ignorance of the culture. Yet, here, in this foreign land, all barriers had been broken in this one interaction. This stranger did not think twice about my appearance and simply assumed that I was an Israeli as well. That day, I looked around me as I headed back to my friend’s house, and what I noticed was a vast range of colors and cultures, Jews from the four corners of the earth, together as one nation. That day, many years ago, I felt strangely accepted as a sojourner in a foreign land.

My mind returns to the now, and it’s 3:00 a.m. in my east Jerusalem hotel room. I quietly get out of my bed and sneak behind the curtain to look out the window. I see the street below bathed in yellow lights as a fire burns inside me. I think deeply on all that has transpired in my life prior to this moment in time. As I reflect, my favorite psalm comes to my mind: “In your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them” (Ps. 139:16). What an awesomely deep and profound truth! I rack my brain trying to understand how this works. How can God know my days, yet free will remains? I quickly give up. I simply bask in the certain and awesome reality that God, my God, is in control; yes, even in a world that is so upside-down. And as David the king said in verse 6 of the same psalm: “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain it.” But how did I get here, to this moment? How did I end up with so many Jewish friends? How did I, this boy from Brazil, end up in east Jerusalem preparing to volunteer for my fifth archeological dig with Associates for



Near the author's dig square, looking to the SW



View from the South-West



The Shilo dig site looking south. The visitor center is seen at the top.



The Shilo site

Biblical Research, three times at the site of the Biblical Ai of Joshua, and now, for my second season at Tel Shilo? The answer is simple: I prayed, and I asked.

The day I prayed in the name Jesus—or, as I prefer to call Him now, Yeshua—and asked for one Jewish friend was a summer day with my house bathed in bright and beautiful sunlight. I was about to head out to the airport to fly. I was alone at home, my wife at work and my son at school. I had just completed my devotional time. At that point in my spiritual walk with Yeshua, I did not know His voice as I do now. The words of the Bible were still new to me and often seemed like distant smoke signals, lacking the solid rock-like quality I have learned to trust and depend on. I knew what the words meant, I thought, but I did not know what in the message contained in them was for me and what was just, well, smoke. Later, under the thoughtful and clear teaching of Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, I was to learn that all of it was crafted with perfection and expertly delivered. A love letter to me and to the world.

That specific day during my devotional time, I had been again confronted with these strange and foreign people who seemed to have invaded my Bible. They were everywhere. From Genesis starting with Abraham, all the way to the book of Revelation, they were there: Jews!

I could not escape them. I was particularly mesmerized and fascinated by the idea that Jesus, my Jesus, was a Jew. How could I have missed this critical piece of information as a college student at two different Christian universities in the United States? How could I have missed this during my many years of Sunday school in my mainline denominational church in Brazil? The son of a pastor and seminary professor and grandson of missionaries to Brazil on my mother's side, one would think I would have known that fact; but no, I did not. I blame only myself, but the fact remains: This truth was unknown to me. A mystery. However, God through His Word was making this mystery known and absolutely and unequivocally true in my life: Jesus was indeed a Jew. Yet, I knew nothing about the Jewish people. I don't ever recall a single thought or moment or event that involved anything even remotely Jewish in my life. So, as I got ready to head upstairs to don my uniform and go to work, I paused at the bottom of the steps, knelt, and prayed: "God, give me one Jewish friend. In Jesus' name, Amen." Little did I fully understand then that the Lord indeed hears our prayers and will answer us when we pray in accordance with His will (Prov. 15:29; Jn. 14:13).

Two months later, I was on a layover in Manhattan and was headed to JFK airport for my flight to Seattle. The fact that there are about six million Jews in the New York area alone, many in Manhattan, had not yet become part of my conscious reality. Looking back now, from a human perspective it would seem New York City was the best place to have God's purpose in my prayer for a Jewish friend answered; and it was, but not in the way that I expected. God's ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts our thoughts (Isa. 55:8). I entered my Boeing 757 from the middle door at JFK terminal 2 and noticed a pilot in uniform sitting on a passenger seat. The aircraft had not been boarded yet, and only the flight attendants were present, preparing the

aircraft cabin. I recognized the uniform as not one of our airline. I assumed the pilot was traveling as a passenger and had requested to be boarded early. I made my way to the cockpit without another thought and sat on the right seat; I was not yet a captain as I am now. A few minutes later, the lead flight attendant came up to me and said that there was a pilot here who wanted to meet me. This was not the normal protocol, but nonetheless I acquiesced. As the pilot entered the flight deck, I instantly recognized above his left breast pocket a symbol I had only recently become familiar with: a star of David, the Magen David. I thought I heard a voice deep inside of me say: "Here is your Jew." What followed this seminal event in my life was a whirlwind of friendship that has remained and grown to this day, and has taken me and "my Jew" on many adventures around the world—literally. Space precludes me from elaborating more on these adventures. Through this one gift of one man, I now have a secular Israeli family I can call my own, but that is not all.

Two months after this answer to prayer, I was depressed. I had been educating myself on all things Jewish, specifically Israeli. In my search, I had been confronted with the fact that if I had been a German Christian in Germany in 1938, steeped in my previous ignorance, I would have been complicit in the murder of my precious friend's family! There was simply no way around that fact in my mind. My ignorance had the potential to be fatal. So, I did what any normal person who knows the grace of God would do: I prayed. I turned from my previous ignorance. But I was angry. I was angry at God for not giving me any directions on what to do now. During another layover in Manhattan, as I was walking and praying and arguing with God over this perceived oversight on His part, I found myself in front of a bronze plaque that baffled me. The plaque read something like this: "Chosen People Ministries -



founded by Rabbi Leopold Cohen.” I was confused. Like a pilot reading a checklist, I thought: “Rabbi” is Jewish...check. “Ministries” sounds Christian...not check, not check! This does not compute! So, I walked in and introduced myself to the receptionist. I asked her about this apparent misprint on a bronze plaque. She said a lot of things, but in my confused state I only remember her matter-of-factly saying: “I am a Jew, and I believe in Jesus.” Thunder and lightning! Wind so strong it could split rocks! Then silence... I stood there in stunned shock. An overwhelming wave of emotion started to roll from a place deep inside of me that I did not know existed. And it gushed forth into tears. Here I was, a pilot crying in front of a stranger. Pilots don’t cry. But again, I was like a child. All this was new to me. My ignorance started to vanish as it was being replaced with knowledge.

As I later learned through the teaching provided by Ariel Ministries, God speaks today through His Word, and all my experiences and my thoughts must be sifted through the filter of God’s Word, the Brazilian “me” with his emotions and emphasis on experience and the analytical, American “me” with his emphasis on knowledge. Both must be in subjection to the Word of God.

God was not speaking from a distance using smoke signals anymore. His words now were solid, and they came from the mouth of one of His servants. My God was speaking through a sister in the Lord right there in front of me, confirming what I had begun to understand from Scripture. Now I cried, and I did not care. I sat down, tissue in hand, and tried to regain my composure, only to be invited as a guest to a Hanukkah party that afternoon by someone in leadership in the ministry. My reaction was: “Hanuwhat?” So, I came. And as Arnold taught me years later at Camp Shoshanah, when God calls, He equips. That first day of Hanukkah, I received many gifts, precious human gifts, new faces who helped me understand the Jewishness of Jesus and helped me better express my faith in the Jewish Messiah to my precious Jewish friends. I also received a new family, and now, when I travel to Israel, I have a second Israeli family of brothers and sisters in Yeshua. Some of those faces were people who had been discipled by Arnold himself many years previous. What a small world.

As my mind turns back to my hotel room in east Jerusalem, it is now 3:30 a.m. and I am tired of staring at the street. I tiptoe to the bathroom and take a nice, long shower, all the while thankful for the many ways in which the Lord has blessed this child of His. I dress and gently wake my son. I head downstairs to the hotel lobby, dark and deserted except for a faint light coming from a door to my left. I walk in the direction of the light and find myself in a brightly lit dining hall in a flurry of activity, the only noise that of plates, glasses, silverware, and some muted voices. A long and delicious buffet line to my right and many familiar faces to my left. My Arab friend makes me a strong coffee, for which I am very grateful. I sit down with my square supervisor and a few of the other archeological volunteers. Not a lot of words are said at our table, but the excitement is palpable—after all, we are in Eretz Israel, about to head up to Shilo,

where the tabernacle of the Lord dwelt for more than three hundred years! This is the place where little Samuel was awakened from sleep by the Lord’s voice. And for me, this coming Shabbat, I will be spending time in the company of my Israeli brothers and sisters in Yeshua at my “home” congregation in Netanya. The next week, I will be in the Negev on a 4x4 trip with one of my secular Israeli friends; and of course, I will spend time with “my Jew” at his home, a home to which I have a key. Ignorance has been replaced with knowledge, and the love of Yeshua permeates and engulfs me and those around me. I pray every day for my brothers and sisters in Yeshua in Israel and throughout the world, and for my many friends who have yet to know Him. Seeds are being sown. That is all I can do. The growth belongs to the Lord, and I await His harvest (1 Cor. 3:6).

I would like to leave you, dear reader, with this thought: God has a powerful and wonderful plan for this love that He has put in your heart for the apple of His eye, His precious Jewish people. This love comes straight from His heart to yours. This is a blessing and a great gift! I know that countless other Gentiles like me can share similar stories of being saved by the grace of God and then being completed by this calling of love for His Jewish people. What is your story? Has it started yet? Have you prayed and asked God for a Jewish friend?

I dare you to do it
and then wait on
Him who both
listens and answers
our prayers
according to His
good pleasure.

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Email: homeoffice@ariel.org

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