

Summer 2019 / Volume 1 / Number 31

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ARIEL
MINISTRIES

Rosh Chodesh

THE NEW MOON FESTIVAL

Plus:

The
Jewish Heroes
of the
Warsaw Ghetto

No,
We Are Not All
"Spiritual Jews"!

Debunking
the Myth
of Horned Jews

A New
Perspective
on God's Grace

When
a Woman
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Rosh Chodesh, the New Moon Festival, is a frequent feast in the Scriptures, celebrated once a month, but it is seldom spoken about and rarely studied. This article by Dr. Fruchtenbaum provides an overview of the many verses that speak of *Rosh Chodesh* and shows its Messianic implications.



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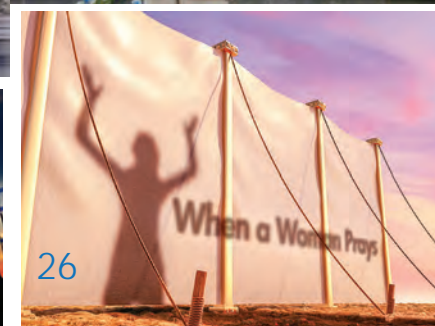
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Purpose Statement

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

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GOD'S GLORIOUS PROMISES

Our summer magazine covers the months of June to September. During this period, the Jewish people will observe *Tisha B'Av*, a fast that this year begins at sundown on August 10th and ends 24 hours later, on August 11.

Tisha B'Av means "the Ninth of Av," with Av being the fifth month of the Jewish calendar. The day commemorates several calamities that befell the Jewish people, including the destruction of both temples. In his book *The Feasts and Fasts of Israel*, Dr. Fruchtenbaum lists all of the tragedies, and when I worked on his text, it struck me again how much the Jewish people have had to endure over the course of history.

Take, for example, Tisha B'Av of 1492. On that day, a decree of expulsion—issued a few months earlier by the joint Catholic Monarchs of Spain, Fernando II and Isabella I—was carried out, and several hundred thousand Jewish people had to leave Spain. Many of their relatives and friends had converted to Catholicism under pressure of the Inquisition. These converts passed into Jewish history as the *conversos*, and their descendants were among the intellectual elite of the *siglo de oro*, Spain's Golden Age. Those Jews who refused to give up their Jewish identity were expelled from a land where their ancestors had dwelt for a thousand years. Under penalty of death and confiscation of all property, they were ordered to never return.

Interestingly, the year of the Spanish expulsion was also the year that Christopher Columbus "sailed the ocean blue." To this day, the Americas, and especially the U.S., have served as a place of refuge for the Jewish people. As believers, we know that the only real safety is when we are in God's will in Messiah, and even then, we are not promised our physical lives. Yet, over the course of history, God has always made sure that His Chosen People would not perish. His promises to Israel guarantee their survival. Studying history allows us to grasp this reality. It also provides assurance that God will keep His promises to the church. For example, the Word tells us that He who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion (Phil. 1:6). As promised, He has sent us His Spirit, the *Ruach HaKodesh*, who helps (Jn. 15:26), comforts (Acts 9:31), and guides us (Rom. 8:14). And according to Hebrews 4:16, we may come boldly before the throne of God when we need mercy and grace to *help us in time of need*.

In this assurance, let us work side by side for God's glory, *redeeming the time because the days are evil* (Eph. 5:16)!

Christiane Jurik

Editor-in-Chief

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Ariel Mission Branches & Representatives

MEET THE TEAM



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ARIEL BRANCHES



Ariel Australia **Chris & Lisa Savage**

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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**

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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**

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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**

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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

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Thanks to Manfred K nstler 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**

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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



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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)

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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.



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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.



Jack Nakashima (Ohio)

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Jack Nakashima represents Ariel Ministries in Dayton, OH. Previously serving in Israel, he is now available to teach and disciple in the U.S.



SHALOHA FROM JACKIE IN HAWAII!

Teachers always love eager learners, and for the last two years, I have been blessed to teach at women's meetings in the Hawaiian Islands, where they like to learn the Scriptures from a Jewish perspective. I arrived on Oahu in early February, where I spent three and a half weeks teaching ladies' Sunday School classes, women's Bible studies, and an inter-church ladies' conference on Messianic prophecy and topics such as "God's compassionate heart in Isaiah," "Messiah and the believer in the book of Numbers," and "Who we are in Messiah." I enjoyed getting together with someone I met at Camp Shoshanah, who is now married, with a daughter, and serving in the military. I took the picture of the rainbow (see...) after an afternoon lunch we shared. I also got to spend sweet time with Steve and Kori Knapp, who have volunteered at camp in the past. Camp stories are so fun to share! It's a distance for those here to travel to New York, but I always promote the unique opportunity to learn in the Adirondacks with believers from around the globe.

I wish I had taken a picture from a church service that usually meets in a tent outdoors. Due to inclement weather, the congregation had to meet in the associate pastor's home for the first time. My picture would have shown a large area with just bare feet on the floor! People always take off their "slippers" or flip flops at the door, so a

mountain of them got piled up at the entryway. I couldn't help but remember when a young Haitian teen many years ago told me that no one could attend church without an ankle strap on their sandals!

I took a Monday off on President's Day to visit the Polynesian Cultural Center, which has many Pacific island "villages" to explore. I must say, as a Jew watching some of the native dances, I could almost believe I was watching the prophets of Baal. It was a total suspension of reality as I was transported to faraway cultures. Praise God that people from every tribe and tongue will one day worship before the Lamb!

My six-day trip to Maui was almost cancelled when I couldn't find housing. But God always faithfully provides, and finally a home was found where I could not only sleep, but also have a car to drive. The Lord opened some unexpected opportunities to share my testimony and the ministry on my last day on the island, after having taught some groups on "Yeshua in the book of Numbers," "Jewish history," and "The new anti-Semitism." The night before leaving, a couple who owns a bed and breakfast offered me housing the next time I visit. Many good contacts were made for women's conferences, so I look forward to a longer visit in 2020, God willing.

As of this writing, I still have almost two weeks on Kauai left to speak. After

teaching my first women's study on Daniel, I have sessions planned on the books of Zechariah and Hebrews. I attended a prayer luncheon with 1,200 Christians from 47 churches (nearly all evangelical) who came together to support the newly-elected local Christian mayor. I can't say I have ever heard of, much less attended, such a colorful, enthusiastic, and passionate group of ministries and organizations, who committed to pray for their government, military and first responders, businesses, schools, and pastors. Worshipping through passionate music and graceful hula dancing was quite beautiful and moving. The Lord guided my steps through the crowd to meet nine pastors and groups I had wanted to contact. Of course, nearly every Hawaiian gathering has food and fellowship time, just like my Montreal Messianic congregation, Beth Ariel. *A hui ho!* Until we meet again!



A beautiful Hawaiian rainbow reminded Ariel Canada's field missionary Jackie Fierman of God's promises to His people



Lisa Young (left) welcomes Jackie the Hawaiian way



Hungary

After a very active period in our ministry with the visit of two internationally renowned teachers (Arnold Fruchtenbaum and Mottel Baleston) last year, we enjoyed a somewhat calmer season. Our main focus has been to teach and serve in our small Messianic fellowship. A couple of years ago, we could not have imagined the many personal needs and problems that arise even in a very small, new congregation. This is a new challenge for us, and we need to grow in many areas of pastoral ministry. It is one thing to know the truth, but it is a totally different thing to apply this truth to a specific case. To find the balance in messages, in personal conversations, and in many other areas of service is a great responsibility and a heavy burden, but it is also a tremendous blessing. We have to learn that any praise comes from our Messiah and not from people.

The main topics presented in our Messianic fellowship were "biblical election for service" and "the Jewish context of the book of Romans especially as it relates to election." We had a wonderful time celebrating Hanukkah. Our daughter Noemi, as the youngest woman in the fellowship, lit the Hanukkah candles, and in accordance with the Jewish custom, we ate.

We have been reading the Bible with a Jewish friend of ours for five years, and there were many opportunities to point out the Messianic prophecies in the Tanakh. This friend has graciously allowed us to use his home gallery for our fellowship, which is a huge blessing. He was the one who organized the Hanukkah celebration, and he also invited us to celebrate Sukkoth with him. As a new tradition, Ivan gets to blow the shofar among the Jewish participants.

Rita participated in a Jewish concert organized by a synagogue. The assistant to the rabbi asked her which synagogue she was attending and if she could put Rita on the email list. When Rita said she was not Jewish and that she was a believer, the assistant told her it was not a problem, they were very open. From that time on, Rita got many invitations to different programs. Recently, she even had the opportunity to refresh her 20-year-old studies of the Hebrew language. She has been seeking this opportunity for a long time, and in this synagogue, she got it. Currently, she is in a group reading *Megillat Esther* in Hebrew.

A Jewish couple invited us to their home for dinner. We had a wonderful opportunity to share our personal belief in the Messiah. We also talked about the perverted anti-Semitic history of the church. We got to know this couple through the pastor of an international church. The wife is a Canadian Jew, and she once visited our Seder demonstration. The husband is a Hungarian Jew and an atheist who always argues with believers. During dinner, however, he listened silently to our testimony.

Ivan continues to present messages to our Facebook community. He also participates in an evangelical Facebook group (mostly reformed theologians) where he discusses diverse topics. Recently, there was a debate on Christmas and the Christmas tree. Ivan used the topic to explain the biblical feasts. Sadly, the opposition was quite strong. Our freedom in Messiah is often accepted only until the other person's religious boundaries are reached.

Rita continued to teach the Come and See series to a woman of our Messianic fellowship. For many weeks, they studied the positional truth as presented by Dr. Fruchtenbaum and read all the verses on the topic. Both Rita and the sister said the study was a great encouragement

and that they experienced growth in their faith and walk with the Lord.



Noemi Nagy lighting the Hanukkah candles



Australia

In the first half of this year, we were once again blessed by Dr. Fruchtenbaum's coming to the Great Southland that is Australia. The DownUnder Tour 2019 has been promoted by many churches as "Australia's most exciting Bible Tour of 2019," which would cover seven states and territories in 52 days! It would be easy to assume that covering this area is not a big task, but Australia is a vast land with a sparse population. In fact, and I'm not trying to disparage any folks from Texas, we have four states and one territory that each individually are much bigger than Texas (269,000 square miles). Dr. Fruchtenbaum taught in all four of those states! With over sixty teaching sessions and almost as many topics, it was a grueling schedule in anyone's language.



The DownUnder Tour 2019 kicked off in New South Wales (NSW), home of the Sydney Opera House. For Dr. Fruchtenbaum, NSW was like the bookends of the tour, as he taught there five days at the start and six days at the end.

As we look back on the “Home Meeting,” which was the second speaking engagement of the tour, 65 people were happy to be perched anywhere they could find a seat (or a space on the floor or a step or even be propped up against a wall or table) to hear the Word of God revealed in its true context. For those present, it was like an Upper Room Discourse experience, and they attentively listened to every word.

Following the first five days in NSW, the tour moved to Western Australia (the largest state to welcome Dr. Fruchtenbaum at 1,000,000 square miles – yes, that’s ONE million!), then South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, and the Australian Capital Territory, and finally back to New South Wales.

Once again, we have been blessed to be welcomed by many denominations and fellowships throughout the DownUnder Tour 2019. It is encouraging to know that many are burdened for the Jewish people and for the nation of Israel at this time. There is a definite ground-swell, and it is great to be at the cutting edge as people seek to know more about Yeshua.



Closer to home, at the Ariel Ministries Australian office in Geelong, we are truly blessed to have a number of believers joining us at our weekly Life of Messiah study group on Thursday evenings. Most of them are in their late teens and early twenties, and they are hungry for the Word. They often stay for two or three hours after the study has concluded, just asking questions about the Bible, Yeshua, and the world that they find themselves in. Did I mention that sometimes they text questions in the middle of the night? We certainly welcome their enthusiasm and enquiring minds! Their excitement is tangible, and they are keen on inviting others along to the study. We have now commenced a Tuesday evening group to further encourage them and build them up in the knowledge and love of God. One thing that stands out is they don’t want a “diluted” gospel but the truth. Sadly, the watered-down version is often what they encountered when they first came to faith.

Good news also comes from across the Tasman Sea, the body of water that separates Australia and New Zealand. We have recently met with our brothers from Ariel New Zealand, when they joined us for a

three-day working session. We came together to share ideas and streamline some of our processes. This will enable us to effectively and efficiently spread the tremendous resources of Ariel Ministries to people groups across the South Pacific, including Australia, New Zealand, and many of the island nations to our east and north. Social Media and YouTube allow us to reach far beyond our local shores, and collaboration is ideal when technology is involved.

These are exciting times, and we don’t want to waste a minute!



USA

Matthews, North Carolina



John and Sharon Metzger

This year, we finalized our move from Lititz, PA, to Matthews, NC, just outside of Charlotte. Any churches in the southeast that might have an interest in Ariel Ministries, please check out our website at www.PromisesToIsrael.org for John’s bio and teaching topics. John has received Dr. Fruchtenbaum’s blessing to work on the *Ariel Jewish Study Bible*. This book will reflect Dr. Fruchtenbaum’s teaching and emphasize the Jewishness of Scripture, focusing on Israel, the dispensations, and the covenants. Furthermore, the study Bible will reflect the interrelationships and interactions between the authors of the Scriptures. John has already worked his way through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Both Sharon and John covet your prayers for this mammoth project.



Ariel Bible Study Group of Perth in Western Australia

Shavuot in Israel

By Lilian Granovsky and Christiane Jurik



Like many other Israeli girls and women, Keren Ohana and Liel Granovsky made wreaths of flowers and wore them in celebration of Shavuot

Shavuot takes place seven weeks and one day after the second day of Pesach, on the sixth day of the month of *Sivan*. This year, it will be celebrated on June 9-10. Among the Jewish people, *Shavuot* is also known as the Feast of Weeks. Among Gentile believers, the season is known as Pentecost.¹

Biblically, *Shavuot* is a one-day festival. The feast is mentioned extensively in the Torah, in Exodus 23:16, 34:22; Leviticus 23:15-21; Numbers 23:15-21; and Deuteronomy 16:9-12. It required leaven in the offering: *Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth parts* <of an ephah>: *they shall be of fine flour, they*

shall be baked with leaven (Lev. 23:17). This is unusual, for Leviticus 2:11 commanded, *No meal-offering, which ye shall offer unto Jehovah, shall be made with leaven; for ye shall burn no leaven*. In Scripture, leaven is often a symbol of sin. Dr. Fruchtenbaum explains: "God required leaven to be used during *Shavuot* because those represented by this offering were sinners."² The two *wave-loaves* were made of wheat flour. They were called "wave-loaves" because they were considered one offering that was not burned on the altar but waved before the Lord.

According to Rabbinic Judaism, God gave the law on *Shavuot*. This

teaching led to several interesting traditions, one of them pertaining to foods eaten during the feast. In Israel, one knows *Shavuot* is coming when he picks up a newspaper and recipe booklets drop out. These booklets promise the "easiest cheesecake" and "fastest blintzes"—goodies to wow any *Shavuot* guest. *Shavuot* is the only Jewish holiday with a dairy menu. Some people claim that the tradition is derived from the numerical value of the Hebrew letters in the word *chalav*, meaning "milk," which is 40. Since Moses spent 40 days on Mount Sinai, Israelites eat foods with milk. Other people believe that the tradition to consume dairy is derived from Song

¹ *Shavuot* is also called "the Harvest Festival," "the Day of the First Fruits," or "the Time of the Giving of the Torah."

² Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Feasts and Fasts of Israel: Their Historic and Prophetic Significance* (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2019), p. 115.



of Songs 4:11, which reads: *Honey and milk are under your tongue*. They claim that the verse references the Torah being as nourishing as milk and as sweet as honey. Since it is believed that God gave the law on Shavuot, they celebrate this holy season with an abundance of sweet dairy treats.

In Israel, Shavuot commemorates the first fruits of the season. There are agricultural festivals, special lectures at the synagogues, and child-oriented parades that remind the people of the rebuilding of their country, when Jews from all over the world came and dug their hands into the soil, helping to make the desert bloom.

Lilian and Sasha Granovsky of Ariel Israel explain how Messianic believers living in Israel celebrate Shavuot:

"Shavuot is one of the holy days where we do not ask: 'Where will we celebrate this year?' The answer is obvious: We will go to *Yad HaShmona*! *Yad HaShmona* is a *moshav* (cooperative village) located on the peaceful heights of the Judean Hills, only a few minutes away from Jerusalem. The original settlement was founded by a group of believing Finns who came to help the Jewish people to establish themselves in their new homeland. It was named in commemoration of eight Jews who, during World War II, were handed over to the Nazis by Finland. The Hebrew word *yad* means 'memorial' and *hashmona* means 'eight.'

"Every year, on Shavuot, there is a national gathering at *Yad HaShmona* to which all Messianic congregations are invited. The local congregations organize buses for their members who do not have vehicles (and there are many of those). Every family brings a basket with food and some folding chairs or mats, and we all occupy a huge piece of land in rows that proceed from the stage in the style of an amphitheater. When we first participated in the gathering, we literally knew everyone by face. There were

only two to three hundred people. Nowadays, there is NO chance for us to know everyone in the crowd. Praise the Lord!

"In order to get a parking space and then a place in one of the first rows, you have to arrive between 9 and 10 a.m. The event starts at around this time—we think. You see, after 29 years, we still do not know when it starts. Why? Because Israelis are never on time! In fact, it is not polite to be on time! ☺ Just kidding. The reality is that all of us arrive at the same time, between 10 and 11 a.m., and we all wait in our cars (frustrated and even honking) until the polite, gentle Finnish volunteer points to a free parking spot. At that time, not everyone is happy, as they have to carry heavy baskets and coolers and chairs and mats and . . . kids from where they parked the car to the place of gathering! But they finally make it.



Working on making wreaths

"Then, for a good half an hour or longer, you look for your friends that you agreed to meet, as on the way to them (who knows where they are after all?) you meet HUNDREDS of people you know, and they absolutely intentionally stop you with the questions: 'How have you been?' and 'What's new?' This is not just a polite little 'How are you?' You actually have to stop and give them the full or brief 'annual report.' Otherwise they will be offended!

"Do you think it ends there? No way! Now it is their turn to tell you how they were doing, even if you didn't ask! Afterwards, they try to 'close a business deal' with you on the spot. (Since we are already here and are talking, why not?)



Shavuot celebrations in the park

"You have to be an artist in order to keep going and to find your friends in all this multitude of people. The purpose of coming to this gathering is to bring our first-fruit offering to God. This is what happens on the stage. There is a program, a concert of sorts, where all congregations and individuals are given the chance (a month prior to the event) to sign up and bring their offerings. Some bring the babies that were born this last year, as a first fruit of the womb. Some introduce their song, dance, story, prayer, or testimony. It is really beautiful and moving! — Or so we've heard! Believe it or not, but for 29 years, the 29 times we got there, we never reached the stage! So many people to meet! So many lives to touch! So much food to eat!

"Behind where the people are sitting, there are tables and displays of ministries of believers in Israel. They bring their fliers, books, pamphlets, and products, and they talk to us believers who come to see and hear. In the midst of it all, there are children running around; dogs and babies are lost and found; teens sell homemade cookies and drinks in order to raise some money for an outreach to India, France, Germany, and so on. It is noisy! It is lovely! It is authentic and exciting! It's the Israeli style of holiday!

"This upcoming Shavuot will be our 30th attempt to get through the above-mentioned activities, to get to the stage, and to do what we meant to do when we first came to this event: to see and hear others offer their thanksgivings to the Lord for His blessings and to see the body of believers offering their first fruits! Maybe this year, we will finally succeed!"



What Do the Scriptures Say About "Spiritual Jews"?



by Mottel Baleston

Often when I have just finished as the guest preacher at a church service and am greeting people at the door as they leave, someone will say to me: "It's so wonderful that you, a Jewish man, have come to accept Jesus as your Savior, but really, aren't we all now 'spiritual Jews' because we believe in Jesus?" Then they smile, believing they have said something that will make me feel welcome in their church. They say it in a friendly manner and in full innocence. Their last statement is not really a question. They just assume it is a universally accepted doctrine that all believers in Jesus become spiritual Jews.

It would be nice if this doctrine, though false, could be overlooked simply as a minor and innocent error, perhaps just people thinking that it would serve to unite the church. However, history is full of examples where church groups and even nations who have embraced this teaching have used it as a springboard from which to form animosity toward the actual Jewish people. In its most extreme forms, this false doctrine has led to brutal violence and horror directed against Jewish families in the form of the Crusades and the Inquisition, the Pogroms which affected my family, and most recently, the Holocaust. Other than violence, what connects these events is their ideological origin: the belief that God has cast off the Jewish people forever and has replaced them with a new, spiritual Israel, the church.

That teaching came to maturity in the fourth century with the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church, who tried to distance herself from the Jewish origins of Christianity. The effort of trying to cut off and deny the Jewish roots of the faith was racist bigotry and theologically an effort to claim that God had transferred the covenant promises made to Israel to the new Church of Rome. If true, the teaching would give the mantle of authority to this church. Even the



invention of the Roman Catholic priesthood was meant to somehow transfer the authority of the Old Testament priesthood, which God had ordained, to this new man-made institution.

Part of the effort to make this teaching accepted by all was an increasingly harsh and violent series of denunciations by both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox theologians against the Jewish people. John Chrysostom, viewed as a saint in both the Roman and Eastern churches, encouraged hatred toward the Jewish people.

In "First Homily Against the Jews," Chrysostom wrote, "Jews are dogs, gluttonous, drunkards. They are beasts unfit for work . . . The Jews have fallen into a condition lower than the vilest animals . . . The synagogue is worse than a brothel and a drinking shop; it is a den of scoundrels, a temple of demons, the cavern of devils, a criminal assembly of the assassins of Christ . . . I hate the Jews . . . It is the duty of all Christians to hate the Jews."

While the period of the Reformation corrected some of the errors that had developed, not all were recognized. Martin Luther himself continued a shocking and visceral hatred of the Jewish people, writing: "First, their synagogues should be set on fire . . . Secondly, their homes should likewise be broken down and destroyed . . . travelling privileges must be absolutely forbidden to Jews . . . let us drive them out of the country for all time." Luther rejected the scriptural idea that God has an eternal, unbreakable covenant with Israel, the Abrahamic covenant, and held on to the old Roman Catholic idea of the church as a new spiritual Israel. In this mindset, it becomes acceptable to many that Jewish people can be violently persecuted, as it is believed that they have been cast off by God.

How in the world did Luther, devoted to the Scriptures, come up with

such a view? The answer is frighteningly simple: He chose to give weight and authority to a few Scriptures that seemed to support his ideas, while ignoring the majority of Scripture which teaches a different view. We say this is frightening because it is something that is still being done today and is rather common.

This Ariel Magazine publication has recently published studies that dealt with various Scripture passages which are used by some in an attempt to support the idea of replacement theology. In the spring 2018 issue, Dr. Gary Hedrick had a scholarly article proving from the Greek that Galatians 6:16 does not speak of the church as spiritual Israel, but rather firmly establishes the identity of a remnant of ethnic Jewish people within the church. These are the ones who are spiritual, hence they are called spiritual Israel. In the winter 2018 issue, I dealt with two passages that are often misused in the same way, Galatians 3:28 and I Corinthians 12:12-13.

There are two more passages that we need to call attention to since they are sometimes quoted in an attempt to establish the idea that the church has replaced Israel forever and that God has no future for the Jewish people. Here is the first:

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Rom. 2:28-29, ASV)

When you glance at just these two verses, they appear to support the idea that when anyone is born again, undergoing the circumcision of the heart, they become Jewish in the truest sense. However, should we put a mask over everything but those two verses and ignore the surrounding context? This idea reminds us of the old TV comedy sketch of a person

overhearing an alarming conversation through a closed door in which a murder is being planned. Upon rushing in, he discovers two people holding paper scripts and rehearsing for a play. Yes, ignoring the context often leads to a critical misunderstanding of the facts.

Regarding Romans 2:28-29, it is not difficult to establish the context. From Romans 1:18 through 2:16, there is a warning given to mankind in general, both Jews and Gentiles. It establishes that the evidence for God is all around us and those who ignore it do so at their own peril.

Then in Romans 2:17, there is a sudden shift, a turning to address one specific group. The text is very clear and simple, stating, *If you bear the name "Jew," and rest upon the [Mosaic] Law, and glory in God.* It then goes on to address those who are Jewish by pointing out things that are specific to what rabbinical Judaism had become by the first century: a religious system that had drifted from the original intent of Scripture. Rabbinic Judaism was confident that in holding to these outward traditions, they were acceptable to God. They believed that because of circumcision under Mosaic Law, they were automatically acceptable in God's sight. The passage in question corrects that mistaken view. In verses 28 and 29, Paul is speaking to people who were already "physically" Jewish in that they were descended from one of the 12 tribes of Israel and had received Mosaic Law circumcision. It is that group of people to whom verses 28 and 29 are addressed, and thus only to them is it applicable. In essence, Paul says, "You are not a Jew if you are merely one outwardly, you must ALSO be a Jew inwardly by having a circumcised heart." This would have been far better understood in that day than ours, because the readers understood that the very meaning of the word "Jew" (*Yehudah*) means "a praiser of God." How can one be a Jew, a praiser of God, while



having a heart in rebellion to Him? This coincides with the "remnant" sub-theme of Scripture, which traces the idea that ultimately there will only be a remnant of Jewish people within the larger group who will recognize Messiah, follow Him, and be a spiritual Israel in addition to being a physical Israel.

So, it is an unlawful hijacking of Romans 2:28-29 to apply the verses to others than to whom they were addressed. No one has the right to do that, even if the motivation is to try to make others feel more important. The fact of the body of Messiah is simple: Regardless of our ethnic origin, we are all equally beloved as sons and daughters of God. We are chosen in Him. God loves the Gentile believers as Gentiles and continues to address them as Gentiles in Romans 11. If you are a Gentile believer, you have been called into God's family in that state. This is why I Corinthians 7:19 and 21 say: "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing . . . Each one should remain in the situation he was in when he was called."

Here is the second passage that is sometimes quoted to support the idea that Gentiles have become Jewish when they come to faith, Ephesians 2:11-16:

Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Messiah, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and

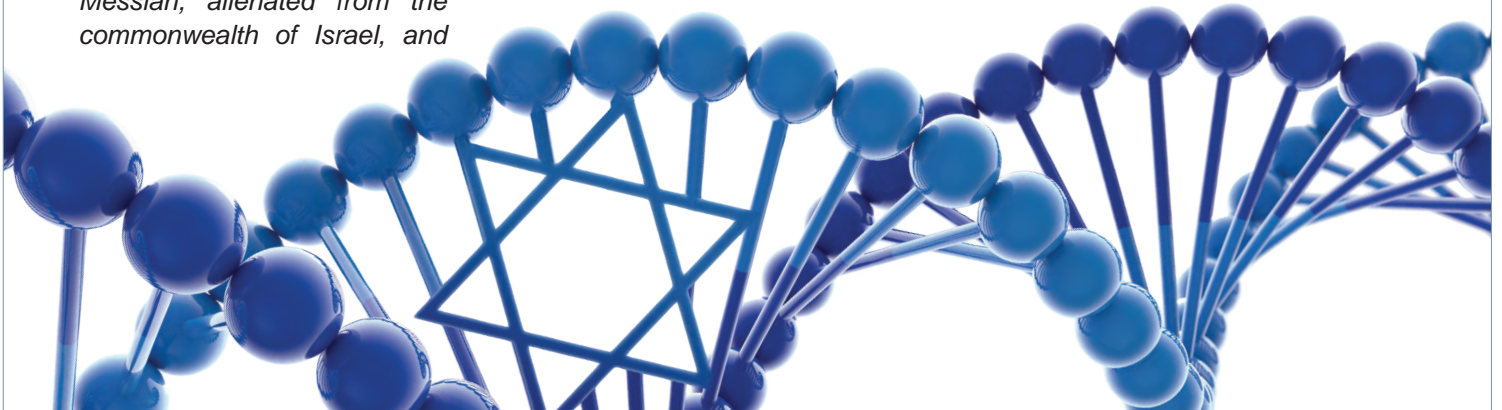
strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Yeshua ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Messiah. For he is our peace, who made both one, and broke down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross.

Ephesians 2 is a wonderful passage which instructs us that as believers in Messiah, we are part of a brand-new entity, the church. This entity did not exist in the Old Testament but was birthed in Acts 2 as the Holy Spirit came down to do a brand-new thing. According to verses 11-16, Gentile believers have full and equal status in this new entity and are no longer kept out of God's household by the barrier of Mosaic Law. Key to understanding this truth is the word "both." It is used twice in this passage, recognizing the continued Jewish or Gentile identity and distinction. This is not a division in the body any more than the continued distinction between men and women in the body, a distinction that is repeated several times in the instruction to the New Testament church.

Helpful in understanding this truth is a simple fact: Jewish identity is derived from being physically descended from one of the 12 tribes of Israel. Eventually, a subgroup within larger Israel will emerge as the remnant of Israel, that group spoken of in Romans 11:5. While the Mosaic Law is no longer the rule of life for Jewish believers in Messiah, Jewish identity was never granted by that covenant. It is the unbreakable Abrahamic covenant which establishes Jewish identity, and that covenant is still binding today (Gal. 3:17).

It is no less "Christian" to recognize this continued distinction, since all those who are born-again followers of Messiah can be called "Christians," followers of Messiah. In the same way that we do not attempt to erase the God-designed distinction between men and women, we do not attempt to erase the God-designed distinction that Israel has. This is not a matter of better or worse or more important vs. less important, but rather it speaks of God's faithfulness; He keeps His promises. He made an unconditional, irrevocable covenant with Abraham, and ultimately, the remnant of ethnic Israel that emerges as "spiritual," meaning as believers in Messiah Yeshua, is the group that Scripture identifies as "spiritual Israel."

May God bless the unity between Jewish and Gentile believers in the body today as we bring to the world the good news of the arrival of the one and only Savior for all!





Rosh Chodesh

THE NEW MOON FESTIVAL

By Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

The New Moon Festival is a frequent feast in the Scriptures, celebrated once a month, but it is seldom spoken about and rarely studied. This article is based on a chapter in Dr. Fruchtenbaum's newest book *The Feasts and Fasts of Israel – Their Historic and Prophetic Significance*. It provides an overview of the many verses that speak of Rosh Chodesh and shows its Messianic implications.



The name of the feast in Hebrew is *Rosh Chodesh*, also spelled *Rosh Hodesh*. It literally means “the head of the month,” though it is usually translated simply as “the new moon.” The feast marks the first day of every Jewish month.

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The Jewish calendar is based on the lunar system, which means that the appearance and disappearance of the moon determines the beginning and the end of each month. The day the moon reappears as a sliver on the horizon is the first day of month, and that day is called Rosh Chodesh. Because the feast is thus related to the moon, it is commonly called the New Moon Festival.

There are sixteen passages in the Hebrew Scriptures that speak of Rosh Chodesh. Once surveyed, several conclusions can be drawn.

Leviticus 23:23-25: This passage states that the Rosh Chodesh, or first day, of the seventh month was also Yom T'ruah, the Feast of Trumpets. This is the only time in the Hebrew calendar that the New Moon Festival corresponds with another festival.

Numbers 10:10: This passage calls Rosh Chodesh a day of the blowing of trumpets. The verse begins by speaking of the day of Israel's *gladness*, which is

the Sabbath day. It then mentions the *set feasts*, meaning the seven holy seasons of Israel studied in the first part of this book. It then goes on to speak of the *beginnings* of the months, Israel's New Moon festivals. The words “beginnings” and “months” are in the plural because there are twelve new moons in the course of a regular Jewish year and thirteen new moons in the course of a leap year. While other feasts, such as Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot, were celebrated once a year, Rosh Chodesh was to be observed on the first of every month. The statement *ye shall blow the trumpets* refers to the two silver trumpets of Numbers 10:2. The Israelites were to blow these trumpets over their burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of their peace offerings. Furthermore, the New Moon Festival was to be to the Jewish people for a memorial before their God, and they should obey the command to celebrate Rosh Chodesh because Jehovah is their God.

This passage leads to two observations: First, the New Moon Festival was to be announced by the blowing of two silver trumpets. And second, it was to be a day of sacrifices.

Numbers 28:11-15: This passage emphasizes that Rosh Chodesh was a day of special sacrifices. The timing of

the New Moon Festival is given in verse 11a: *And in the beginnings of your months*. At that time, the Israelites were to offer a burnt offering unto God which consisted of two young bullocks (or calves), one ram, and seven lambs a year old without blemish (v. 11b).

The meal offerings are described in verses 12-13. They consisted of a mixture of fine flour and oil. The amount offered was to be multiples of tenth parts and depended on the animal sacrificed. Each meal offering was to be burned with the respective animal sacrifice as a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto God.

Next came the drink offering, in verse 14a: Half a hin of wine was to be offered for a bullock, a third of a hin for a ram, and a quarter hin for a lamb. According to *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, a *hin* is equivalent to nearly six pints.¹ Just as the meal offerings, the drink offerings were proportionate to the animal sacrificed. The larger the animal, the more wine was offered up to God. Verse 14b then draws a conclusion, stating that these Rosh Chodesh sacrifices were to be offered up twelve times a year.

Verse 15 adds that the Israelites also had to offer a sin offering, consisting of one male goat. This and the other sacrifices were to be in addition to, not in

¹ Merrill F. Unger, “Liquid Measures of Capacity,” *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1988), ePub.





place of, the daily sacrifices. Furthermore, this was to be done twelve times in the case of a normal year and thirteen times in the case of a leap year.

I Samuel 20:5, 18, 24, and 27: These verses of I Samuel 20 lead to three observations: First, it became customary in Jewish society to have a special feast on Rosh Chodesh. Second, Saul celebrated this feast regularly with his generals, which included Jonathan, Abner, and David. And third, because Saul had tried to kill him earlier, David skipped the New Moon Feast at the king's table.

II Kings 4:23: This passage deals with Rosh Chodesh and Elisha the Prophet. The observation one can draw from it is that by the time of the writing of II Kings, it had become customary to inquire of prophets at one of two occasions: either on the Sabbath or on Rosh Chodesh. The strange thing in this context is that, contrary to the custom, the Shunamite woman wanted to inquire of Elisha the Prophet when it was neither a Sabbath nor a New Moon.

I Chronicles 23:31: The context of this passage is David's instructions to reorganize the tribe of Levi. According to this verse, David gave the commands in order to expedite the sacrificial system under the Law of Moses. He based his instructions on the two passages in Numbers that deal with Rosh Chodesh.

II Chronicles 2:4: The seventh passage deals with the purpose of the Temple. It becomes clear that one of the purposes for the Solomonic Temple was to observe Rosh Chodesh. This was in accordance with the Law of Moses, and the ordinance was being required forever in Israel.

II Chronicles 8:13: The eighth passage deals with Solomon's observance. There are two observations here: First, Solomon provided for the New Moon sacrifices; second, this was in

keeping with the practices of the Law of Moses.

II Chronicles 31:3: This passage deals with Hezekiah's observance. Like Solomon, Hezekiah provided from his wealth for the New Moon Festival. This observance of Rosh Chodesh was in accordance with the Law of Moses.

Psalms 81:3: Psalm 81:3 points out the relationship of Rosh Chodesh to Yom T'ruah, the Feast of Trumpets. Yom T'ruah is the only Jewish holy-season day to fall on the New Moon Festival.

Isaiah 1:13-14: This passage emphasizes the fact that mere formalism is rejected by God, and it shows that the Mosaic commandments on Rosh Chodesh had been reduced to ritual without reality. However, it is the formalism that is condemned by God, not the New Moon observance itself, because God Himself commanded this observance.

Isaiah 66:23: The twelfth passage deals with the observance of Rosh Chodesh in the Messianic kingdom. The one observation that comes out of the verse is that the New Moon Festival will be observed during Messiah's thousand-year reign on earth.

Ezekiel 45:17: This passage confirms that Rosh Chodesh will be observed in the Messianic kingdom.

The observance was required under the Mosaic Law; it is not required under grace, but it will be required again under kingdom law. Furthermore, the prince, who in the context of Ezekiel 45 is King David, will provide and prepare all of the offerings for the millennial New Moon Festival.

Ezekiel 46:1 and 3: This passage deals with Rosh Chodesh and the inner eastern gate. The verses reiterate that the New Moon Festival will be observed monthly during the millennial kingdom. Furthermore, the inner eastern gate of the Temple compound will play a central role in the worship on Rosh Chodesh. During the millennium, it will be shut for the six working days, but it will be opened on two occasions: every Sabbath day and every day of the new moon. People will gather on those occasions at this gate to worship God.

Ezekiel 46:6-8: The fifteenth passage deals with the New Moon offerings in the Messianic kingdom. Four observations can be made: First, not only will Rosh Chodesh be observed in the Messianic kingdom; the observance will also be obligatory. Second, the sacrifices for Rosh Chodesh will be different from those of the Law of Moses. This shows that the

Kingdom Law	Mosaic Law
Burnt Offerings	
1 bullock	2 bullocks
6 lambs	7 lambs
1 ram	1 ram
Meal Offerings	
1 ephah for the bullock	3/10 of an ephah
1 ephah for the ram	2/10 of an ephah
According as he is able	1/10 of an ephah
1 hin of oil to an ephah	No specifications





sacrificial system of the kingdom will not be a reinstitution of the Mosaic sacrificial system. The chart on the left lists the different offerings. The third observation is that the prince, the resurrected David, will be in charge of the sacrificial system. And the fourth observation is that he will come and go by way of the porch of the gate.

Amos 8:4-5: The last of the sixteen passages of the Hebrew Scriptures that pertain to Rosh Chodesh deals with Israel's frustration with the festival. By the time of Amos the Prophet, the people viewed Rosh Chodesh as a hindrance and a nuisance. Amos was a contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah. He was active during the reigns of Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.) in Israel and Uzziah (790-739 B.C.) in Judah. According to John A. Jelinek, "most scholars date Amos's ministry toward the end of this period; however, since Jotham was coregent with Uzziah during the latter part of his reign . . . a date between 760 and 755 BC is likely more accurate."² At the time of Amos, the Jewish people could not wait for Rosh Chodesh to be over with, so they could return to their business and make money.



Conclusions and Messianic Implications

From these sixteen passages, it is possible to draw eight specific conclusions about Rosh Chodesh observances under Mosaic and millennial law:

1. Under Mosaic Law, the first day of each month was a New Moon festival.
2. It was to be announced by the blowing of two silver trumpets.
3. The Rosh Chodesh of the seventh month was also Yom T'ruah, the Feast of Trumpets. This was the only time that Rosh Chodesh coincided with another holy day of the Jewish calendar. On that day, both the shofar and the two silver trumpets had to be blown.
4. Rosh Chodesh was to be observed with four extra sacrifices:
 - ✧ Burnt offerings consisting of two bullocks, one ram, and seven male lambs
 - ✧ Meal offerings mixed with oil
 - ✧ Drink offerings of wine
 - ✧ A sin offering of a male goat
 These offerings were to be in addition to, not in place of, the regular daily sacrifices.
5. The Hebrew Scriptures noted the following about Rosh Chodesh in history:
 - ✧ King Saul observed the feast with his generals.
 - ✧ Eventually, it became a day of inquiry of a prophet.
 - ✧ David reorganized the tribe of Levi to expedite the observance of Rosh Chodesh and other festivals.
 - ✧ One of the reasons Solomon built the Temple was for the observance of Rosh Chodesh.
 - ✧ Both Solomon and Hezekiah provided the sacrifices for the observance of the New Moon.
6. According to the prophets, the observance of Rosh Chodesh had become a useless formality with no reality. The people could not wait for the New Moon to end so that they would be able to go back to trading and making a living.
7. Rosh Chodesh was a day of rest. The Israelites would celebrate the day by eating a festive meal. While there was to be no trading on that day, work was not specifically forbidden.
8. While under Mosaic Law Rosh Chodesh was obligatory only for Jews, in the Messianic kingdom it will also be observed by Gentiles. At the beginning of each month, the resurrected King David will be leading the worship. This worship will take place at the inner eastern gate of the Millennial Temple, which will be opened for this occasion. There will be a sacrificial system in place, which for Rosh Chodesh will include burnt offerings and meal offerings.³

² John A. Jelinek, "Amos," *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), ePub.

³ For information on Rosh Chodesh in Judaism, please see the author's *The Feasts and Fasts of Israel: Their Historic and Prophetic Significance* (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2019), p. 365-372.





HEROES OF THE HOLOCAUST: POLAND, THE WARSAW GHETTO, AND YESHUA

By Dr. Mitch Glaser

The purpose of this essay is to introduce you to the Jewish believers of the Warsaw Ghetto, their unique testimony and witness and contributions to both Jewish life and to the church. These Messianic Jews were unlikely and involuntary heroes, but a dynamic part of a legacy that, if known and recognized, could provide some critical lessons and inspiration for a new generation of Messianic Jews and Christians of all stripes.¹

Dr. Glaser in front of the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes commemorating the Jewish uprising of 1943. The monument is located in the area that was formerly a part of the Warsaw Ghetto.



The Holocaust was the most significant challenge to the survival of the Jewish people since the Babylonian Captivity. A number of other threats reshaped the Jewish community, including the Crusades, pogroms, and the ongoing conflicts related to the establishment of the modern state of Israel, but the reduction of Jewish population and destruction of Jewish life engendered by the Holocaust is incomparable with any other modern trauma brought upon the Jewish people.

The impact of this tragedy on the general Jewish population was massive, as was its effect on the Jewish followers of Jesus who had enjoyed a thriving community in the various countries affected by the Holocaust. The Jewish believers living in Europe prior to the Holocaust numbered in the hundreds of thousands, and most were either killed or moved to other parts of the globe. This created a decades-long decline in the Messianic movement.² The ensuing shift of Jewish life and culture from Europe to North America was just one example of the impact the Holocaust had on Messianic Jewish life. We still live in the shadow of the Holocaust, and our current Messianic movement cannot be understood without developing a deeper understanding of what transpired amongst our spiritual forefathers before, during, and after the Holocaust.

The achievements and witness of Jewish believers during the Holocaust, and especially in the Warsaw Ghetto, are essentially unknown to most present-day Jewish believers. We stand on the shoulders of these heroes of the Holocaust—the Jewish believers of

the Warsaw Ghetto—and their story must be told.

The number of Jews who became followers of Yeshua during the first third of the 20th century in Europe may have been upwards of 300,000. Poland had a considerable Jewish missionary presence prior to the invasion. The Church's Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ) had stations in Warsaw and Lemberg. In both centers, many modern young Jews were being reached through English classes in addition to the regular program of evangelistic work, colportage, and itineration. The Swedish Friends of Israel had evangelistic centers in Lodz and Vilna. The British Jews Society (Christian Witness to Israel, or CWI, today) had a station in Krakow and was reaching whole districts in surrounding neighborhoods through colporteurs. In Lvov, the Danish Mission for Israel (DIM) had an evangelistic center. The Barbican Mission (CWI today) had an evangelistic and medical center in Byalostok and substations at Vilna, Lublin, Grodno, Rovno, and Brzesc. The Missions to the Jews established works in those cities where there were large populations of Jewish people, including Warsaw, Lvov, Lublin, Vilna, Byalostok, Lodz, and Krakow. All of the missions conducted regular meetings for the Jewish holidays as well as weekly services and Bible studies. Unbelievers were invited to these meetings, and many became believers.³

An Overview of Jewish Missions in Poland During World War II

The Nazis invaded Poland in 1939.

Already conditions among the Jews were terrible, but after the invasion, the Final Solution arrived in Poland like a raging storm from hell. Jews and missionaries to the Jews were rounded up and taken to concentration camps or killed. The bombing of Poland also did severe damage to the country. Chaos was everywhere, and the work of the missions ground to a full halt from which it would never recover.

An early report from the International Missionary Council Christian Approach to the Jews (IMCCAJ) states:

Thousands of executions are reported. Hundreds of thousands are in concentration camps and compulsory labor camps. Three and a half million Jews are exposed to the worst vindictiveness of the Nazis. Two hundred thousand more from all parts of the Reich form a terrible ghetto at Lublin where destitution and plague are adding to their miseries.

Here many native missionaries have been cut off by the war and the work of all British societies has been discontinued. The Danish Mission at Lvov has also been brought to an end. It is not known whether the American Board is still able to work. Some missionaries from the small Baltic states are also among the refugees.

All the missionary activities in German territories formerly carried on by British Societies have been presumed at an end. Extensive work in Poland has been suspended, including

¹ The author, Dr. Mitch Glaser, is the President of Chosen People Ministries. His essay is based on a lecture he gave during the 2018 Pre-Trib Conference in Dallas, TX. For further information, especially on the sources Dr. Glaser used, please see https://www.pre-trib.org/images/2018_Conference/Mitch_Glaser-Messianic_Jews_in_Warsaw_Ghetto-paper.pdf.

² Some question whether the movement of Jewish believers in Europe should be considered Messianic, as they seemed to be more attached to the Gentile church and expression of the faith. This is a study outside the scope of this current paper. However, it should be noted that these Jewish believers met in their own communities and Bible studies, and their services were primarily in Yiddish or Ladino. If one accepts a more sociological and ethnic understanding of Jewish identity (as Hitler did), then clearly this movement was quite Jewish in its own way.

³ Mitchell Glaser, "A Survey of Missions to the Jews in Continental Europe 1900–1950." (Ph.D. diss., in Inter-Cultural Studies Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, 1999)



that of the Church Mission to the Jews, the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews, the MMJ and the Barbican Mission.⁴

According to an early report from CMJ in Poland, most of the missionaries appeared to have been cut off, and it became impossible to continue to send them financial assistance. Discrimination against the families of missionaries as well as against the missionaries themselves became widespread. One report from the IMCCAJ noted that four missionaries from the MMJ had been cut off in Poland, and no word had been heard from them. This number included Rachmiel Frydland at Warsaw. Frydland was one of the most renowned Messianic Jewish survivors of the Holocaust whose firsthand testimony provided information about the life of the Jewish believers in Warsaw before, and to some degree during, the war. He told his story in a moving book titled *Joy Cometh in the Morning*. After his escape, he would become one of the significant missionaries to the Jews in the 20th century.

Eventually, word of what was really going on in Europe reached the American Christian press. The *International Review of Missions* followed the events closely and provided the following report midway through the war:

At the beginning of the year it was reported that there were

one and one third million Jews in eleven ghettos in Poland . . . Reports state that 165,000 had died from starvation and epidemics in the ghettos and that many of those in the ghetto were being transferred to unknown destinations farther east, and it was believed in Jewish circles that they were being sent to their death.⁵

Missions to the Jews died in Poland along with more than 2,000,000 Jewish people. The largest of the open and active fields of labor among the Jewish people for the sake of the gospel was over; the war marked the end of a people and the end of an age.

The Number of Jewish Believers in the Warsaw Ghetto

There were two major groups of Jewish believers in the Warsaw Ghetto: Catholics and Protestants. We wish we could divide the Jewish believers between Catholics, Protestants, and Messianic Jews, but for the most part, the group we would call "Messianic" would identify as Protestant, though many were also Catholic, as the influence of the Catholic Church was profound in Poland.

There is no question that the possibly thousands of Jewish people who were involved with the Jewish missions in Poland were rounded up and forced to enter the Warsaw Ghetto. It did not matter if they were socialists, Catholics, Protestants, or Jewish-mission related Jews; no Jewish person was exempt from the horrors of the ghetto and the forthcoming death trip to Treblinka—if they lived long enough to make it.

Professor Peter F. Dembowski, author of the book *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, calculated the number of Jewish believers who lived in the ghetto at its height to be between 5,000 and 6,000 people. The majority of them were Catholic. This number, it seems, is primarily based

on oral tradition, as the registries of the three ghetto parishes were destroyed and needed to be recreated after the war. Philip Friedman, a Jewish historian of the Warsaw Ghetto, asserts:

In Warsaw, more than 6,000 baptized Jews were ordered by the Nazis to move into the ghetto, where they establish their own churches. Food parcels were sent out to them by the Caritas and several priests moved in to minister to their spiritual needs.⁶

We are able to get some insight into the life of the Jewish believers in the ghetto through a brief statement by Rachmiel Frydland. However, while his anecdotal account is helpful, his counting of the numbers of Jewish people in the ghetto is massively off track, and it might simply be that he was speaking of the Jewish believers. This would confirm the numbers mentioned by others. Frydland writes:

In late 1944, by hiding in cemeteries, deserted churches, and the homes of fearful friends, I was one of the few surviving Jews in Warsaw outside the ghetto. In that enclosure were 5,000 Jews, the last of Warsaw's original 500,000. By God's enabling, I secretly slipped into the ghetto and was able to speak comfort to a few of the Jewish believers still alive. Other Jewish brethren heard the message and believed in Messiah Jesus. My friends in the ghetto insisted that I leave. They said that if God had preserved me thus far, I would be a witness to the woes they now experienced. At the end of the war, I could tell the story of their suffering. I was probably one of the last to leave the ghetto. It was only



Mordechai Anielewicz, the commander of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

⁴ IMCCAJ (minutes of the meetings, 1940), 1.

⁵ *International Review of Missions*, 1943, p. 65

shortly afterward that the Germans obliterated the entire Jewish area.⁷

Did Jewish People Come to Faith During the Holocaust?

The post-World War II activities in the Netherlands may provide us with some insight to the post-war period, but also help us better understand what transpired during the Holocaust years. After a trip to Holland, Victor Buksbazen, founder of Friends of Israel, wrote:

In Holland I visited a Hebrew Christian brother who told me how the Lord had wonderfully preserved many Jewish Christians through the kindness and friendship of the Dutch people. The Dutch people took a Christian stand against Hitler, protecting their Jewish compatriots at the risk of their own lives. Many Dutch people paid the highest penalty while doing it.

Hebrew Christians were rounded up by the Nazis and imprisoned in concentration camps together with other Jews. But there they were faithful to their Lord and testified for Him as long as life lasted. This made a deep impression upon the Jews who were forced to respect their faith and courage.⁸

We see that the nexus of Jewish people coming to faith was outside the Jewish mission and congregational groups, but rather through the local Dutch churches.

In 1949, Roeloff Bakker, a Dutch pastor and missionary to the Jews, presented a paper at the Edinburgh Conference of the Inter-



One of remaining buildings of the Jewish Ghetto in Warsaw, Poland. Photographs of former occupants are affixed to the walls.

national Missionary Council Christian Approach to the Jews entitled *Methods of Jewish Missionary Work of the Reformed Free Church of Holland*. In this paper, he stressed the need for all the Dutch churches to work among the Jewish people and not to simply put this effort off to the Jewish missions as before. He wrote of the new opportunities that Dutch Christians had because of the ways in which they helped the Jews in their midst to avoid imprisonment and death:

During the war time, many church members fought for the Jewish cause and introduced Jews into their family circles to hide them. The close contact with the family has in many cases had the results that through the blessing of God, hearts were opened to the gospel of Jesus Christ. These Jewish persons were also visited by the pastors in their parochial visits.⁹

During the war, Bakker was tried and imprisoned for being pro-Jewish. He reflected:

After spending some months in prison, I was deported, together with many Jewish prisoners, to a concentration camp. I experienced the presence of Christ in those horrible circumstances. To tell the details would take hours. Suffice it to say the Lord allowed me to be an ambassador of His and I was able to give testimony to many of the Jewish and non-Jewish prisoners. Many were saved and confessed Jesus as their personal savior and redeemer before passing away.

After being imprisoned for nearly a year it was a miracle that I got out of the concentration camp. During this time, many of our Jewish friends were brought to concentration camps. The Nazis, more and more, showed their diabolical anti-Semitic nature. All the Jews of Holland were ordered to report for deportation to Poland. The sharp protests of

⁶ Friedman, Phillip. "Their Brothers Keepers." In Peter Florian Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto: An Epitaph for the Unremembered* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), p. 66-67.

⁷ Retrieved from <http://www.messianicassociation.org/bio-frydland.htm>.

⁸ Victor Buksbazen, "Report on Trip to Holland." *Israel My Glory* March (1948): 25.



the church did not help. What was to be done? How could the Jews be saved from death? Hundreds and thousands of Christian families knew how to do it. The Jews had to be hidden in their homes all over the country. It was a big job with many very difficult aspects, too many to tell here, and could succeed only with the help of God. All had to be organized and done in a very secret way. I had my part in it. That was the new mission work. The hidden people had to be visited regularly and their needs taken care of if possible. The longer the war lasted the higher the tension grew.

Spies were active, but also were the illegal resistance or-

ganizations. Some hidden Jews were caught and together with their Christian hiders deported. Christian love for Israel was shown. Many a Jewish heart was moved by this. There were blessed experiences when the Lord opened these Jewish hearts. Many were converted and, in this way, not only the body but above all, the soul was saved by the grace of God.

Some hundreds of them who were hidden in Christian families gave their hearts to the Lord.¹⁰

Bakker was not the only Dutch Christian who paid a high price for his commitment to the Jewish people and their deliverance. After the war, he went on to serve in Belgium as a representative of Friends of Israel.

How Many Messianic Jews Survived the Holocaust?

The Jewish population of Europe in particular was drastically altered by the horrors of the Holocaust. The American Jewish Committee reported in 1946:

The Jewish population of the world decreased by one-third, from about 16,600,000 in 1939 to about 11,000,000 in 1946, as a result of the annihilation by the Nazis of more than five and a half million European Jews. In Europe only an estimated 3,642,000 remain of the total Jewish pre-war population of approximately 9,740,000.¹¹

It is very difficult to estimate the number of Messianic Jews who survived the Holocaust. We might assume that the figures are similar to the rest of the European Jewish population. If one assumes there were 300,000 Messianic Jews alive before the Holocaust, then, therefore, one third, or about 100,000 may have lost their lives during the Holocaust. What happened to the remaining 200,000?

There are anecdotal accounts that might give us some idea of the condition of the Messianic Jewish movement during the Holocaust and afterwards. The Nazis invaded Poland in 1939, and within a short time, anti-Jewish regulations were published and implemented, leading to the construction of what would become known as the Warsaw Ghetto. The Nazis also built ghettos in other cities within Poland with large Jewish populations, such as Lodz and Vilna.

The Warsaw Ghetto epitomized the horrors of destruction experience by the Jewish community of Poland and the Jewish believers in particular.



Dr. Glaser in front of the Umschlagplatz Memorial in Warsaw

⁹ Roeloff Bakker, "Methods of Jewish Missionary Work," 3. Included in J. H. Grolle, "Post-War Efforts to Reach the Jews of Holland with the Gospel" (paper presented to the IMCCAJ, Stockholm, Sweden, September 14-19, 1948), 1-2.

¹⁰ Ibid.



The Jewish Believers in the Warsaw Ghetto

The Jewish community of the Warsaw Ghetto was representative of the mainstream Polish Jewish community prior to the war. It included Orthodox Jews, assimilated or assimilationist Jews, and the Jewish Christians often described by the Yiddish word *mekhes*:

In the late 19th century a new term of opprobrium—*mekhes*—entered the Polish language from Judaism. The term, which comes it seems from the Hebrew word, *mekhes* (customs, tax, levy) and referred to the metaphorical levy (baptism) that Jews have to pay to enter Polish society, was used by both Jews and Poles as a term of opprobrium.¹²

The Jewish community and the Messianic Jews suffered greatly in Warsaw, which had one of the largest concentrations of Jewish people in Europe. Poland had three million Jewish people prior to the war. Warsaw was also a hotbed of missions to the Jews before the war. The following helps us understand the level of destruction experienced by the Jewish people in Warsaw and sets the scene for what transpired in the Warsaw Ghetto itself.

The following paragraph from the web-based *Teachers' Guide to the Holocaust* provides a very brief overview of the basic facts regarding the Warsaw Ghetto:

Established in November 1940, it was surrounded by a wall and contained nearly 500,000 Jews. About 45,000 Jews died there in 1941 alone, as a result of overcrowding, hard labor, lack of sanitation, insufficient food, starvation, and disease. During 1942,

most of the ghetto residents were deported to Treblinka, leaving about 60,000 Jews in the ghetto. A revolt took place in April 1943 when the Germans, commanded by General Jürgen Stroop, attempted to raze the ghetto and deport the remaining inhabitants to Treblinka. The defense forces, commanded by Mordecai Anielewicz, included all Jewish political parties. The bitter fighting lasted twenty-eight days and ended with the destruction of the ghetto.¹³

There is little doubt among historians that the Jewish Christians were a well-known group within Polish Jewish society and within the Warsaw Ghetto. The Jewish Christians sometimes took on important roles in the ghetto for a variety of reasons. Adam Czerniaków (1880-1942), the leader of the Jewish Council *Judenrat* of the ghetto and a secular Jew, hired a number of Jewish Christians who sometimes, because they had become believers many years before, had experience in various positions that “non-converted” Jews were unable to hold in Polish society. Czerniaków was at times accused of giving the Jewish Christians the better jobs, but his defense was that he did not care if the *mekhes* were Christians or Jews, but rather that they were productive parts of the ghetto community, and his job was to find the most effective people to do the work that needed to be done.

There are numerous discussions regarding the Jewish men who served under Jozef Szerynski, the notorious Jewish police chief accused by many of being an anti-Semite. We do not know a lot about his faith other than that he was a longer-term convert to Catholicism. He may not have been a heart-converted believer. But there are a variety of views as to the real number of Jewish policemen who

were part of the force and whether they were anti-Semitic as claimed. Socialists like Emanuel Ringelblum (1900-1944) and the Orthodox pointed to these Jewish policemen as an example of how Jews who become Christians turn their backs on the Jewish people. Again, this may have been true of some, but certainly not of all; and if it were true, the authenticity of their faith would have to be questioned.

The Jewish believers, especially the Catholics, were accused of receiving greater advantages within the ghetto, such as the opportunity to use the church gardens of the two main parishes within the ghetto, to sometimes live in Parish housing, to have their children go to Catholic schools, and to receive aid from the Catholic Charities association CARITAS. When the Jewish believers allegedly accepted these types of privileges, it caused the “non-Christian” Jewish residents of the ghetto to become even angrier at the Jewish Christians than they were before for the usual religious and historical reasons.

Hence, even though the Jewish Christians held critical roles in the operation of the ghetto, they were still viewed with disdain by both the religious and the socialist ideologues in the ghetto, including Ringelblum, who appointed one of the members of his *Oneg Shabbat* (the secret code name for his group of writers and researchers), Marian Malowist, to “research” the “converts.” Dembowski explains:

Malowist gives a history of the situation before the war, underscoring the fact that only rarely did the assimilationist and Christian Jews support the cause of the Jewish people. As with most Jews writing in the

¹¹ Jacob Blaustein, “The American Jewish Committee, 39th Annual Report.” The American Jewish Committee, New York City, 1946.

¹² Todd M. Endelman, “Memories of Jewishness: Jewish Converts and their Jewish Pasts,” in *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi*, ed. Elisheva Carlebach, John M. Efron, and David N. Meyers (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998), p. 316.

¹³ Retrieved from <http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/timeline/ghettos.htm>.



Ghetto, he presents baptism as a materialistic or sociopolitical choice. He simply does not consider the question of religious belief. He further classifies the assimilationist and neophytes according to their attitude towards Jews.¹⁴

It is intriguing, however, that even though Malowist stressed the mercenary nature of conversions, he did make mention of meeting a “real” Christian Calvinist:

An intelligent man, used to speak in a judicious manner about the Christian idea. He used to invoke the example of the Gospel. He spoke of the motivation behind his conversion without denying that he ever ceased being a Jew. He contended that Judaism had become warped and distorted which makes Jews practice their religion in a mechanical way. One has to carry one’s God in the heart — he said — and not keep him outside in the world. This he documented by mentioning the absence of commercial ethics on the part of Jewish merchants. Generally these merchants were the target of a sharp reaction against Jews, the part of converts in the assimilationist.¹⁵

Generally speaking, though, the *mekhes*, Protestant or Catholic, were viewed negatively by the mainstream Jewish ghetto community. This is



Dr. Mitch Glaser in front of a section of the Warsaw Ghetto wall

especially true of the more dominant Socialist leadership in the ghetto, who were also philosophical materialists and did not see any validity to a spiritual conversion.

Significant Jewish Believers in the Ghetto and their Contributions

The most significant testimony voice of the Catholic Jewish believers in the Warsaw Ghetto is that of Dr. Ludwik Hirszfeld (1884-1954), author of *The Story of a Life*. The book is an autobiography written soon after Hirszfeld’s escape from the ghetto and provides a very detailed description of his life and that of others, as well as providing some testimony of his faith. Hirszfeld was a well-respected scientist who had served as a medical doctor in the Polish army in Yugoslavia, where he began his lifetime work of determining and describing blood types. Most scientists would agree that he was the one responsible for naming the various blood types we commonly use today. Hirszfeld began what amounted to the first two years of medical school training in the ghetto, although he was focusing on eradicating the plague of typhus which was killing so many at the time.

There is no question that Hirszfeld viewed himself as a Pole, embracing the national religion of Poland, Catholicism. He fully blamed the atrocities of the Warsaw Ghetto on the Nazis. He had a difficult time attributing overt and ongoing anti-Semitism to the Poles. Therefore, his faith was somewhat of an amalgamation of religious nationalism, rooted and grounded in Jewish ethnicity. Very complicated indeed! On the other hand, Hirszfeld did see a distinction between those who were Christians by faith and those who were more nominal and had “converted” to survive. Reflecting on the

motives of one of his fellow believers in receiving baptism, Hirszfeld wrote:

There were many people who were baptized in the Quarter—old and young, sometimes whole families. Some of my students were among them, men and women, and I was often asked to be the godfather. What motives drove them to the baptism? They never received any benefits from it. The change of faith did not entail any change in their legal status. No, they were attracted to it by the appeal of a religion of love. They were attracted by the religion of the nation to which they felt they belonged. They were attracted to the religion to which there was no room, or least there should not be any room, for hate. Jews are so weary of the atmosphere of universal antipathy. Antipathy for what reasons?¹⁶

Building a case against those who claim that every baptism was sought for material benefit, Hirszfeld added:

Standing ready for baptism is my student. She has a Semitic nose and thick lips. I see in her eyes the deep longing for human sympathy, a sympathy which she wishes to repay from the fullness of her heart. Strong men will come, those who occupy the higher social strata, those priests of the new religion. They will take the little Jewish girl by the hand and they will protect her from hate, they will allow her to be good. After all, Christianity became powerful when it extended the rights of equality and human dignity to those who suffered and were disdained. Equality before God and perhaps

¹⁴ Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 94

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 129

before . . . men. For it is terribly painful to live with the undeserved mark of Cain. And only a religion of love can and should remove this Mark. Such were probably the thoughts that animated this girl when she was being baptized.¹⁷

The Question of Authenticity

The issue of authenticity cuts to the heart of the motives of those Jews in the ghetto who turned to Jesus or embraced Christianity. This creates an opportunity to divide between those Jewish people who had accepted Jesus and were part of churches or Jewish missions before the Nazi invasion or creation of the Warsaw Ghetto. According to the records of various churches and Jewish missions, there were many “conversions” in the time period immediately preceding the Holocaust; these continued throughout 1939 all the way until 1941 and the destruction of the ghetto. Warsaw was actually a center for Messianic activity, and there were more than a dozen Jewish missions active in this city prior to the war. In the end, only God knows the heart of those who professed to be believers. However, it does seem that many of those who claimed to be Jewish followers of Jesus in the ghetto were indeed motivated by a sincere desire to know God.

Conclusion

According to Peter F. Dembowski, Nothing more is to be found about the Christians in the Warsaw ghetto after the great Aktion. A proper ending of this sad history of the two Roman Catholic parishes in the Warsaw ghetto is to be found not only in the sympathetic

farewell offered by a Jewish friend, but also in the poetic expression of the postwar writer Hanna Krall. In her Polish short story “Salvation,” we read: “When the Germans cleared the church of all the Christian Jews, there was only one Jew left of the church: the crucified Jesus . . . Jesus came down from the cross and called (to the painting) of his mother: ‘Mame, kim . . .’. This means Yiddish: ‘Come Mama.’ She (came down and) went to the Umschlagplatz.”¹⁸

Epithet

The story is sad. It speaks of a once vibrant movement of Jewish followers of Jesus, both Catholic and Protestant or “Messianic.” They were part of the community developed by the various Jewish ministries operating in Warsaw during this time. They died along with their fellow Jewish people. The destruction of the Jewish believers in the Warsaw Ghetto is a microcosm that portrays the destruction of the Messianic Jewish community in Eastern Europe. Those who died were admittedly reluctant heroes with little chance of escape, and unfortunately the mainstream Jewish community often overestimates the advantages of these Jewish “converts” to Christianity. This deprives the dead of their dignity. In fact, the advantages of the Jewish believers in Jesus were few. Perhaps they got some help from the priests and CARITAS, but in the end, they died as Jews, along with their families and friends. Their heroism was not a matter of personal choice, but one of accepting insufferable circumstances beyond their control and making the best of their hardship for the glory of God. I am sure the stories of the ways in which these true believers in Jesus

among the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto sacrificed, aided their fellows, and cared for those around them are many, to be known only in heaven. But in the end, they simply died as Jews—with little or no choice to determine their fate. As the great Apostle Paul wrote, *In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice* (Rom. 11:5). They suffered along with their fellow Jews, and their death as Jews is their legacy and witness to God’s calling a remnant to Himself.

Available Now!



This work is devoted to those Jewish feasts and fasts that are observed on a yearly basis. The book explores the historical background, function, and order of the Jewish calendar.

ariel.org

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 133.



As surreal as such a question might seem, it continues to be asked of Jewish people. As a matter of fact, I was once asked that very question in a church I was invited to speak at. The obvious answer is NO! Yet, we must go back in history to find out how that myth came into existence and why it persists.

In Exodus 34:29 and 34-35, we read the story of Moses coming down from Mount Sinai with the tablets of the law:

*It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses' hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face **shone** because of his speaking with Him.* (Ex. 34:29, emphasis added)

*But whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would take off the veil until he came out; and whenever he came out and spoke to the sons of Israel what he had been commanded, the sons of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face **shone**. So, Moses would replace the veil over his face until he went in to speak with Him.* (Ex. 34:34-35, emphasis added)

When Moses came down from the mountaintop, his face was shining as a result of having been in the presence of God. In the original Hebrew of Exodus, the word used for "to shine" is *karan*, which comes from *keren*, a term that can either mean "ray of light" or "horn."

In the context of the passage, it only makes sense that Moses had become radiant. Any other translation would miss the author's intent, and yet, this is exactly what happened in the 4th century Latin translation from Jerome, known as the *Vulgate*. The Latin text reads, "*et ignorabat quod **cornuta** esset facies sua,*" which means, "did not know his face had become **horned**." There are several explanations for why Jerome would have translated *karan* into "horned" and not "radiant."

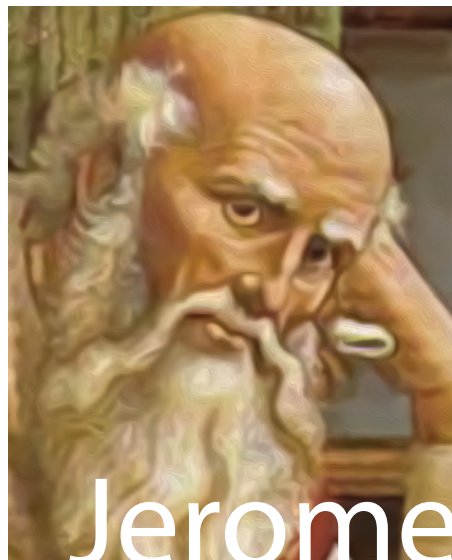
In his master's thesis, titled *Exodus 34:29-35: Moses' 'horns' in early Bible Translations and Interpretations*, Bena Medjuck claims that Jerome was not simply translating *karan* to mean "horns." He had apparently studied Hebrew with Jewish scholars and had come to the realization that Jewish idioms couldn't easily—if at all—be translated into Latin. Medjuck believed that there is enough proof in other works by Jerome (like his commentaries on Amos, Isaiah, and even Psalms) to indicate that he neither took the Hebrew *karan* nor the Latin *cornuta* literally, but rather metaphorically.

Was Jerome making an exegetical decision based on a lack of clarity from the Latin language or was he anti-Semitic? Hard to tell. Other Church Fathers, such as Justin Martyr, John Chrysostom, and even Martin Luther, have been far less equivocal in their treatment of the Jews. So, it is entirely possible that the original intent of the Hebrew original was "lost in translation."

This does not negate or excuse what happened later, as with the work of Michelangelo and his Moses statue having animalistic horns on his head. The work of art was commissioned in 1505 by the pope, and since Michelangelo was of the Catholic faith, he

would have relied on a translation of the Bible that itself came from the monumental work of Jerome done in the Vulgate. Next thing you know, Moses had horns. Thus started a series of artistic renditions of the Jewish prophet with horns on his head, a feature that persists to this day. From a set of almost inconspicuous horns, we now have sculptures, bas-reliefs, paintings, etchings, and even cartoons of Jewish people with protruding horns, pointy tails, and pitchforks, displaying the West's understanding of a full demonic regalia for the pleasure of anti-Semites worldwide.

The possible exegetical deviation from 4th century set the voyage off course, and the ship of accurate Bible interpretation got gradually diverted to arrive at the devilish Jew of today. We might never know if Jerome's translation was intentional or not, but what matters is that those who are anti-Semitic ran with the "horn" translation and used it to demonize the Jews. What we can and should do is to correct people when they venture on the shaky road of unfounded easy denigration based on an existing prejudice. This is also an invitation to study God's Word in context and in the original language whenever possible.





First Samuel begins at a time when Israel's spiritual condition was at one of its lowest points. The history leading to the first chapter of Samuel is recorded in Judges, one of the saddest books of the Bible, which begins with much enthusiasm as the people started to occupy the land God had given them, but they were surrounded by many enemy-nations. When Joshua entered the land, there were some 31 royal city-states,¹ and by the time of Samuel, many still remained within the land. Hence, the book of Judges began with the words: "*Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?*" And the LORD said, "*Judah shall go*

up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand." But there was nobody in Judah who was willing to answer the call.

Four times, the book remarks there *was no king in Israel* (Judg. 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25). In fact, the book ends with this verse and states that the land was filled with conflict and war.

One could have thought that this was the end of the nation of Israel. But God's promises do not depend on man, and so in Samuel, He begins preparing His redemption. He chose a woman, Hannah, who was barren and whom He miraculously touched. Hannah gave birth to Samuel, and Samuel became a priest, a judge, and

a prophet. He also anointed David, from whom the last king of Judah, the Messiah, would come to save the world.

This brief summary of God's plan of redemption from Hannah to Yeshua does not do justice to the fact that the process was a difficult one. It also fails to show that the story of Hannah, which began with a tragic event, turned into something joyful and hopeful.

Hannah was married to Elkanah, but he *had two wives* (I Sam. 1:2). Every time one reads that a man has two or more wives, there are problems. The verse continues: *the name of one was Hannah, and the name of*

¹ Ira Sharkansky, *Israel and Its Bible: A Political Analysis* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996).



the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. Because Hannah was barren, Elkanah's second wife persecuted her nonstop: *And her rival also provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the LORD had closed her womb* (I Sam. 1:6). The Hebrew word for "rival" is *zarah*, from *zar*, meaning "enemy." So, this was not a happy family, and Hannah was suffering.

According to verse 7, this provocation even increased when it was time to go to the Tabernacle at Shiloh and worship the Lord, and where Israel offered her firstfruits and enjoyed a great communal meal. However, Hannah could not participate, and she had nothing to offer to the Lord.

The question needs to be asked where Elkanah was during these conflicts. He was the head of the family, so why could he not stop the strife and the persecution in his own home? We are told that he loved Hannah (I Sam. 1:5), but it seems that he did not know how to bring peace to his home.

The persecution against Hannah was so great that she was unable to eat (I Sam. 1:7), and so Elkanah asked her, "*Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?*" (I Sam. 1:8). This was a very insensitive approach to a barren woman and not what Hannah needed to hear, for she was under much persecution.

The high priest at the time was Eli, a man much like Elkanah. Both were very nice, but both were out of touch with reality, and they were bad leaders who caused chaotic life-circumstances for those in their care. Eli's sons, Pinhas and Hophni, overtly and freely abused the people because of their position as priests (I Sam. 2:12-17), stealing from them and introducing women of no repute in the sanctuary. They acted as if God did not exist. In

fact, I Samuel 2:12 states that *they did not know the LORD*. Yet, they were supposed to be God's shepherds, and they were supposed to communicate with God on behalf of the people. Eli himself could not correct the lawlessness of the situation, and all Israel knew it. Both Hannah and Israel were persecuted and mistreated by these leaders, but the story is really about their rising up and out of the *Tohu va Vohu*, this chaos.

The breakthrough for Hannah began in verse 9, where it says that she *arose*. Disregarding the conditions around her, she approached God directly and started praying to Him, vowing to give Him the precious and hoped for child:

⁹ So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the LORD. ¹⁰ And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish. ¹¹ Then she made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."

Hannah approached God in humility, calling herself three times a *maidservant*, which is the word for a female slave. She made a vow and promised the best that she could ever possess as an offering to God.

The question arises why Hannah made such a promise to God. Was she concerned for her reputation and wanted to have a child so that people would look at her more favorably? Reading the text for the first time, one may conclude that Hannah sought a way out from the constant bickering with her husband's other wife. Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving in I Samuel 2 reveals that her praises and thanksgiving go way beyond her personal condition, as her prayer, her *Magnificat*, has little or no reference at all to herself or her personal situation. Instead, Hannah spoke of the complete redemption of Israel and of the world, going as far as mentioning *Sheol* and even the resurrection. She even says that the barren woman will have seven children (I Sam. 2:5). Yet, she herself would only have six children. Hence, this song is not about her. Furthermore, she ends her song of praise by speaking of the coming of the Messiah, saying that God *will give strength to His king, And exalt the horn of His anointed* (I Sam. 2:10). Some see this phrase and the whole prayer as a prophecy of the history of Israel from Abraham to the Messiah,² interpreting *His anointed* as the Messiah. And indeed, in I Samuel 2:1, Hannah unknowingly mentioned the name of the Jewish Messiah. The Hebrew *bi-shua-techa* ("your salvation") stems from the root *yasha*, the same root from which comes the name of our Messiah!

It helps to read I Samuel 1 in light of the Song of Hannah in chapter 2 because it presents the possibility that Hannah was more grieved by the condition of Israel (and especially the Tabernacle of God) than her own

² Vilna Gaon cited by Yosef Weinberger in *ArtScroll Tanach Shmuel 1* (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 2011), p.30.



suffering. Being a woman of God, she could not but be hurt for God at the sight of the evilness. This would be in line with how other men and women of God reacted when they saw how some defamed the Lord. They were hurt deep in their hearts when the God whom they loved was insulted.

First Samuel 1:10 explains: *And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish.* These are very strong words. The expression “bitterness of soul” means a severe grief deep in one’s soul. Furthermore, in Hebrew, the last words, *wept in anguish*, is really the repetition of the word “weep.” Hannah “wept, wept.” Was Hannah’s grieving like that of David’s when he said, *My eyes shed streams of water, Because they do not keep Your law* (Ps. 119:136)? Was her zeal the same as what Jeremiah felt, who, seeing the fall of Israel and the coming judgment, said, *And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people* (Jer. 9:1b). Was Hannah like Isaiah and Paul and all the others who mourned because of sin? Yeshua promised, *Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted* (Mt 5:4). But mourn for what? Mourn along with God over the sin which surrounds us. Grieve over the suffering and the abuse around us. This is when God comes down and comforts us, as He did with Hannah. Her grief brought her to be mightily used of God; this, then, is the beginning of a long life of ministry with our Creator.

Right after weeping, Hannah dedicated the son she did not have to God: *Have my son. I will dedicate him all the days of his life to You.* God heard, and it is through her son Samuel that He saved the priesthood in Israel.

This event may well have happened during the Feast of Passover at the Tabernacle in Shiloh: *This man went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh* (I Sam. 1:3). The

Hebrew word translated in most of our Bibles as “yearly” really means “from days to days.” The Targum translates it as “from festival to festival,” for there were three feasts when all Israelites would go up to the Tabernacle: *Pesach* (Passover), *Shavuot* (Pentecost), and *Sukkot* (Tabernacles). At Passover, the Israelites would offer their firstborn to God, and Hannah had no firstborn to offer except a promise of dedication if the Lord allowed her to have a male child. She had come empty-handed to the Tabernacle, but her love for Lord brought her to give the best she possibly could.

At Passover, God Himself was going to offer His Firstborn for the salvation of the world. Here, a woman comes with an offer of a firstborn for the sake of Israel. There is also a parallel between Hannah and Miriam (Mary). Hannah provided Samuel the priest and prophet to anoint David the ancestor of the Messiah, and Miriam gave birth to the Messiah.

There are a few noteworthy words in chapter one of I Samuel that underline the importance of the information given in this text. For example, for the

first time in the Scriptures, this chapter mentions one of God’s titles: LORD OF HOSTS (I Sam. 1:11). After Hannah uses this title for the first time, it is then repeated over 260 times in the rest of the Scriptures. The title describes God as ruler over all powers in heaven and on earth. It is notable that the first mention of this title is given by a woman. The LORD OF HOSTS responds to Hannah’s prayer by intervening in her life and in the life of the nation. Also used for the very first time in the Scriptures is the Hebrew word translated as “temple”: *Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the Lord* (I Sam. 1:9). So far in the Scriptures, the place of sacrifices was called *mishkan*, or “tabernacle.” In this verse, the word *hekal* is used. This is noteworthy, as there was no temple yet in Israel. There is, however, a temple that is not on this earth, but in heaven. It is the true and original Temple of God. In II Samuel 22:7, David said, *In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry entered His ears.*



Again, David could not have been speaking about the physical temple in Jerusalem, as it was not built yet. So, why did the *Ruach Ha Kodesh*, the Spirit of God, inspire Samuel to talk about God's temple at this point in time? One possible explanation is that I Samuel 1:9 was written in order to tell the people that the representative of the God of Heaven was here on earth; Eli the high priest, who was sitting on the chair of judgment, was not up to the task, and a change was needed. Hannah was the first to understand the grave situation, come to God, and be ready to work alongside the Almighty to make the change.

With this in mind, the significance of verse 11 becomes clear: *then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head*. When Hannah mentioned the razor, she might have done so in reference to Samson, her contemporary. He was the judge of Israel, yet he failed in his office because of sexual misconduct. Hannah offers a better judge, promising that this boy will be brought up in the Scriptures.

The rabbis who translated the Targums understood the extent of Hannah's offering to God, and instead of translating the Hebrew word *morah* as "razor," they used the word "fear." In Hebrew, the word sounds the same and is written the same—except for one letter. Hence, instead of saying that no razor will come upon Samuel's head, the rabbis paraphrased the verse and said, *And the dominion of man will not be upon him (Targum 1Sam. 1:11b)*. They must have thought of Eli, Pinhas, Hophni, and their gangs—those people who were feared by Israel. Another interpreter went a little further and saw that the Hebrew word for "razor," *morah*, sounds a lot like the word for "teacher," *moreh*.³ Hence, he paraphrased the

verse and wrote, *he will be serving before the Lord all the days of his life and be the teacher of Israel*.⁴ The truth is that Samuel would become both to the nation: He would be a man who did not fear and a man who taught the Word of God.

The Hebrew word for "dedicate" is *chanoch*. It is used for the dedication of something or someone to God or the Temple itself. In the biblical context, to train up a child (Prov. 22:6) is to dedicate him to the Lord and to train him in the knowledge of God, teaching from a very young age not to depart from the things of the Lord.

Hannah promised to bring him to God's Tabernacle once he was weaned: *Not until the child is weaned; then I will take him, that he may appear before the LORD and remain there forever* (I Sam. 1:22). Most people who read this will assume that she brought Samuel to Eli when he was two or three years of age. However, the term the Spirit used to describe Samuel when he was brought to the Tabernacle is "young": *Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh. And the child was young* (I Sam. 1:24). In the last phrase, *and the child was young*, that same Hebrew word *naar*, is used twice. Therefore, a better translation would be, "And the child was a child."⁵ The Scriptures use *naar* twice to describe a baby (Moses in Exodus 2:6 and Bathsheba's son in II Samuel 12:16). All other times, the word describes a young boy responsible for his actions—like those men who came to the door of Lot in Sodom (Gen. 19:4) or like Absalom the son of David when he was already a soldier (II Sam. 18:29). The word *naar* itself means "to shake," "shake out," or "shake off," as if the individual has

reached the end of his infancy and childhood. In Isaiah 7:16, it says, *For before the child [naar] shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings*. The age of reason starts around the time when a child turns 12. This is when he has learned how to *know and refuse the evil*.

The repetition of the word "child" at the end of I Samuel 1:24 does not make sense unless there is a message here. One possible interpretation is that the Lord draws the reader's attention to the fact that He would raise up a child to rule over Israel since even an adult could not. This view makes sense since Samuel did become a great hope for the remnant of the Jews as his reputation spread all over the land. It was through him, while at a young age, that God declared the fall of Eli and his family.

During the period of suffering, Hannah did not know that her grievance would lead her to see how God would use her to save Israel. God knows when we are going through a difficult time. For the believer, it is never for naught, for there is always a reason why the people of God are suffering. Often, great fruit is produced through this suffering. Israel as a nation also suffered under the leadership of her priests, and just like it was with Hannah, God prepared a time of redemption for her. About 300 years before the birth of Samuel, He raised up another woman, Ruth, who became the great-grandmother of David. So, God's plan of redemption went from Ruth to Hannah to Samuel to David. While we may not always be able to foresee the greater plan of God, faith tells us that God is always in action, always preparing the best for us, even though we may not see it at the moment.

³ b. Nazir 66a, cited in *ibid*.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ P. Kyle McCarter, *The Anchor Yale Bible, I Samuel* (Vol. 8; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980).



God's Mysterious but Wonderful

By Rev. Michael H. Brown¹

GRACE

God's grace is both mysterious and wonderful. The term is a very common word in spiritual circles. In fact, it is so familiar a term that too many may use it without really understanding its full meaning and implications. In an interview about his book *What's So Amazing About Grace*, Christian author Philip Yancey was asked to define grace. He answered: "I don't even try. Jesus talked a lot about grace, but mainly through stories . . . Many Christians understand grace only on the theological, abstract level but have not let it penetrate the soul."² In this article, we will be looking at six things about God's grace to remove any mystery of it, but also to see how wonderful it truly is!

I. God's grace involves more than just unmerited favor.

The most basic definition of grace is that it is unmerited or unearned favor. This distinguishes grace from mercy, which is God's act of withholding punishment we deserve.

Romans 11:6 shows that grace and works are mutually exclusive, stating *But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.*

The term "grace" appears at least 131 times in the Scriptures³ and is thus mentioned more often than words such as "forgive" and "forgiveness," "tabernacle," "Savior," "hell," "Satan," "devil," and so on. In the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew word for "grace" is normally $\pi\lambda$ (*chen*), meaning "graciousness, i.e. subjective (kindness, favor) or objective (beauty):—favour, grace(-ious), pleasant, precious, (well-) favoured."⁴ In the *Brit Chadashah*, the Greek word is $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$ (*charis*), and one of the Greek words for "gift" ($\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\sigma\mu\alpha$) is related to it. We get the English "charisma" and "charismatic" from this word. Hence, grace is a favor, a gift given to others.

The previously mentioned book by Philip Yancey caused one reader to write a letter to the author in which he misspelled the title, calling it *What is So Annoying about Grace?* While this was obviously a typo, sometimes God's grace is indeed annoying to people. Sometimes people don't agree with God showing unmerited favor to some, especially if they have been sinning. They are tempted to be judgmental versus showing grace. A good example of this attitude is the story of the prodigal son. The father showed not only mercy but also grace to his youngest son when he came back home. The older brother reacted angrily at the grace his father was showing to his brother.

Yet, grace involves more than just unmerited favor. As will be seen in this article, God doesn't give grace for no reason at all, but gives His grace for a purpose. His grace is unmerited favor that He gives us to bring about something in our lives (e.g. Eph. 2:8-9) or

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² <https://philipyancey.com/q-and-a-topics/grace>

³ 170 times in the KJV.

⁴ H2580 Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (KJV)



to enable and empower us to do His will in some way (e.g. I Cor. 3:10; II Cor. 12:7-9). This can be seen when substituting the word “grace” with just “unmerited favor” in verses such as II Corinthians 12:9, II Peter 3:18, and Hebrews 4:16. The expression makes even more sense when we add “unmerited favor that enables or empowers or helps (us to do something God wants based on the context).” Grace is God’s unmerited power at work in and through us to accomplish His purposes, and because it is God’s doing, His gift, we cannot take any credit for it.

II. Today we only receive God’s grace for and after salvation through Messiah Yeshua.

All three members of the tri-unity of God are involved with grace. God the Father is the source of grace (I Pet. 5:10). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace (Zech. 12:10; Heb. 10:29). Yeshua was (and still is) full of grace and truth (Jn. 1:14).

Believers receive grace through a relationship with Yeshua, as Paul points out in I Corinthians 1:4: *I always thank my God for you because of God’s grace that was given to you in Messiah Yeshua.* (cf. Eph. 1:6, 2:7; I Tim. 1:14) The following story illustrates the relationship between the Son, grace, and the Father:

During the Civil War, supposedly a Union soldier was desperate to see President Abraham Lincoln. His two brothers had been killed in battle, and then he found out that his parents were deathly sick. But his commander wouldn’t let him go home. So, the soldier went into Washington and tried to see the president and appeal, but the White House staff and guards wouldn’t let him. Discouraged, he went off to a park nearby and just cried. A boy who was playing nearby happened to notice him and asked him what was wrong. He said, “I need to see President Lincoln, but they won’t let me.” The boy said, “I can take you to the

president. Come with me.” The soldier, rather puzzled at this, nevertheless took the boy’s hand and walked with him. They came to a back entrance of the White House grounds and the guards allowed them to enter. Then they walked up a path and entered a back door of the building. Finally, after walking down a hall, they came to the president’s office and were able to walk in. President Lincoln sitting at his desk looked up and said, “Tad, what is it?” He said, “Dad, this soldier needs to see you.” And when the soldier explained his situation, the president gave him a discharge and let him go home to his parents.

The only way that soldier was able to see the president and receive the grace of his discharge was through the president’s son. The same is true for us. We only receive God’s grace of salvation through a personal relationship with His Son, Yeshua.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves—it is the gift of God. It is not based on deeds, so that no one may boast.
(Eph. 2:8-9)

In these verses, Paul makes it very clear that eternal life is unmerited favor. We cannot earn it, nor do we deserve it. It is an undeserved gift we receive when we have faith in Messiah Yeshua for forgiveness of our sins.

Acts 15:11 shows us that both Jewish and Gentile believers in Yeshua receive eternal life by the grace of the Lord. Furthermore, all the things related to eternal life—redemption, forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7), and being justified (Titus 3:7)—are all by the grace of the Lord. Finally, Zechariah 12:10 shows that in the very last days, Jewish people will receive this grace of salvation, and as a group will come to believe in Messiah Yeshua (Rom. 11:26).

III. We also need God’s grace after salvation.

Paul started and ended all his epistles with a blessing of grace upon his readers. For example, in Romans 1:7, he wrote: *To all those in Rome, loved by God, called to be kedoshim [or saints]: Grace to you and shalom from God our Father and the Lord Yeshua the Messiah!* In Romans 16:20, he ended the letter by saying: *Now the God of shalom will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Yeshua be with you.* Paul is praying and proclaiming God’s unmerited favor upon his readers in whatever way they need it or would be blessed by it. The author of the book of Messianic Jews (Hebrews) as well as Shimon (Peter) and Yochanan (in II John and Revelation) followed suit and pronounce a blessing of grace on their readers.

We need God’s grace after salvation in all areas of our spiritual life, as the following six examples will show.

A. Through God’s grace, we grow to spiritual maturity.

From the moment a believer comes to faith, he learns and matures spiritually by God’s grace: . . . *keep growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah.* (II Pet. 3:18; cf. Eph. 2:8-10; Tit. 2:11-12) *Now I commit you to God and the word of His grace, which is strong to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who have been made holy.* (Acts 20:32) The Scriptures help us grow and be built up spiritually.

B. Through God’s grace, we are empowered to serve the Lord.

Through the grace of God, Paul was called and empowered to serve the Lord in Corinth and other places: *According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and another builds on it. But let each consider carefully how he builds on it* (I Cor. 3:10; cf. Eph. 3:7-8).



In order to serve God, a believer is given spiritual gifts: *But to each one of us grace was given in keeping with the measure of Messiah's gift* (Eph. 4:7; cf. I Pet. 4:10). Whatever spiritual gifts a believer receives (whether it is teaching, serving, helping, leading, showing mercy, giving, or exhorting), they are given to him by the grace of God to serve the Lord with them.

C. Through God's grace we are empowered to handle any challenge.

In II Corinthians 12, Paul was struggling with some "thorn in the flesh." Three times, he asked God to remove it, it was so painful for him, but each time the Lord responded the same way: "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." (II Cor. 12:9). God empowers a believer to handle any trial that comes his way, if he will just trust the Lord for the strength to make it and allow His grace to work (II Tim. 2:1; I Pet. 5:12).

D. Through God's grace, we are empowered to resist temptation.

The Lord faced the ultimate temptations: first, when He was in the wilderness for forty days; second, when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane getting ready to be betrayed; and third, when He was arrested, beaten, and crucified. Therefore, He is the perfect *kohen ha-gadol* (high priest) who sympathizes with our weaknesses (Heb. 4:15). Because He was tempted in all the same ways we are but did not sin, we can look to Him for grace to empower us to resist any temptation that we might ever face (Heb. 4:16).

E. Through God's grace, we are enabled to give back to God.

By His grace, God provides for our needs and resources so that we can give **back** to His work and to others: *Let each one give as he has decided in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion—for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all*

grace overflow to you, so that by always having enough of everything, you may overflow in every good work (II Cor. 9:7-8).

F. Through God's grace, we have our responsibilities and accomplish things for the Lord.

Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:10: *But by the grace of God I am what I am. His grace toward me was not in vain. No, I worked harder than them all—not I, but the grace of God that was with me.* Paul was an apostle through God's grace. Likewise, it is only through God's grace that we have the opportunities or positions or responsibilities that we have and have accomplished what we have accomplished. It is not really us, but the Lord doing it through us. We cannot take credit for any of it, but God gets all the credit.

In summary, God's grace is needed not only to receive salvation, but also is needed in all areas of our spiritual life after salvation.

IV. We are not under law but under grace now.

John 1:17 makes it clear that the *Torah was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Yeshua the Messiah.* Some people misunderstand this verse and think that there was no grace before Yeshua came. However, in grace, God gave the Torah. In grace, He provided the sacrificial system, which covered the sin of those who by faith offered the sacrifices. Only through God's grace could people like Abraham believe in God and it was reckoned to them as righteousness (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3). So, what does John 1:17 mean?

The Torah and the Mosaic covenant were given through Moses. Grace and truth in a new and fuller way were realized through Messiah Yeshua. This is not saying that there

was not grace or truth before Yeshua, but they were not seen in their fullness except through Yeshua.

God's gift of the law was good, but His gift through Yeshua was even better, as Paul explained in Romans 5:20: *Now the Torah came in so that transgression might increase. But where sin increased, grace overflowed even more.* The law helped people to see that they were sinners. It made them realize their need not only for mercy, but also for God's grace (unmerited favor) in regard to their sins.

In Romans 6:14, Paul stated: *For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.* Through a personal relationship with Yeshua, we are no longer under the Mosaic covenant or some legalistic perversion of the law, but we are under the *Brit Chadashah* or "new covenant." This new covenant involves being *under grace*. Through His grace, God writes His Torah on our heart (Jer. 31:31-33) and puts His *Ruach*, His Spirit, within us (Eze. 36:26-27). He not only tells us what we need to do, but now motivates us and empowers us to do it. Since His *Ruach* is living within us, He actually lives His Torah out in us and through us.

V. Grace is not contradictory to Lordship.

While we do not achieve or maintain eternal life by obedience, but by grace and faith, submitting to God's Lordship is an essential part of walking in faith. The key is understanding who it is we are trusting for our salvation. In Romans 10:13, Paul pointed out that *whoever will call on the name of the LORD will be saved.* He is quoting from Joel 2:32, where it is referring to calling on YHWH to save them. Now, Paul applies this to Yeshua, pointing out that He is YHWH or deity. So, whoever will call on the name of





Yeshua will be saved. Romans 10:9 adds: *For if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.* Here, the term “Lord” is referring to Adonai. Yeshua is YHWH, and He is Adonai. When we trust Yeshua to save us, we are trusting our Lord to save us and are therefore obligated to seek to obey Him once we are saved. Serious, continuous, unrepented sins (like adultery), as well as a lack of commitment in the life of professing believers can raise serious doubts about the genuineness of their faith in the Lord Yeshua.

VI. Through God's grace, we must not neglect our responsibility in regard to progressive sanctification.

Sanctification means being set apart from sin unto God and living a holy life. Believers have two responsibilities in the area of sanctification: First, they need to avoid sin; second, when they do sin, they need to confess and repent of their sin.

As believers, if we don't avoid sin, it will get in the way of our receiving or making use of God's grace in our lives. For example, James 4:6 points out that pride gets in the way of receiving God's grace, a statement repeated in 1 Peter 5:5: *God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.* Bitterness, too, can get in the way of God's grace: *See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God; and see to it that no bitter root springs up and causes trouble, and by it many be defiled* (Heb. 12:15). Finally, Jude 1:4 points out that counterfeit believers turn the grace of God into licentiousness and deny our Lord Yeshua.

As to confession and repentance, some believers in what is called the

“hyper-grace movement” have misunderstood things and fail to take care of this responsibility in their lives. The term “hyper-grace” is used to describe a doctrine that emphasizes God's grace while ignoring other important teachings on sin and the responsibilities of believers:

One of the foundational doctrines of the hyper-grace message is that God does not see the sins of his children, since we have already been made righteous by the blood of Jesus and since all of our sins, past, present and future, have already been forgiven. [They say:] That means that the Holy Spirit never convicts believers of sin, that believers never need to confess their sins to God, and that believers never need to repent of their sins, since God sees them as perfect in his sight.⁵

In contradiction to the teaching that believers do not need to repent, Yeshua rebukes five of the seven congregations of Revelation 2-3 and demands repentance from them (Rev. 2:4-5, 14-16, 20-21; 3:2-3, 15-19). Furthermore, in contradiction to the teaching that believers do not need to confess their sins, Yochanan said in 1 John 1:9: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* To “confess” means to agree with God that our actions are sinful, and we need to repent of them. Some hyper-grace teachers contend that 1 John is not talking about believers but unbelievers. However, 1 John 2:1-3 and 3:1-2 make it clear that Yochanan was writing to believers. We believers need to confess our sins so that we are forgiven and our fellowship with the Lord is restored (Jam. 5:16).

It should be noted that despite their distorted emphasis on grace to the exclusion of other important doctrines, “Hyper-grace teachers frequently emphasize that they do not condone sinful living and that God's true grace will produce a holy life.”⁶ Yet, they basically fail to see their responsibility to the Lord in regard to progressive sanctification. That is what is required for us to live holy lives and become more and more like Yeshua in character and lifestyle.

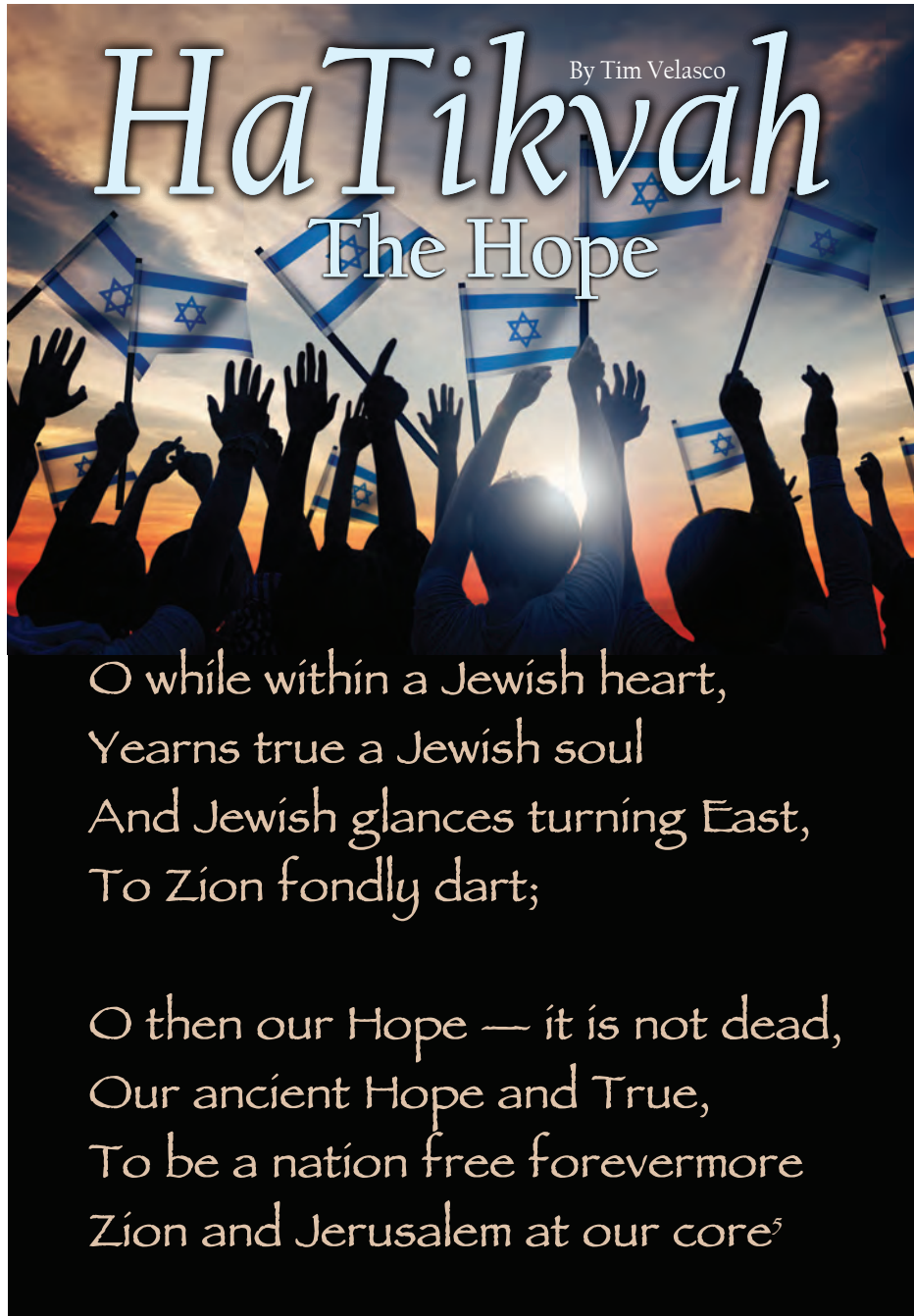
Summary

God's grace involves more than just unmerited favor. God's grace is unmerited favor with a purpose: to bring about something in our lives (like salvation) and enable and empower us to do His will (in some way).

- Today, we only receive God's grace through Messiah Yeshua.
- We only receive salvation by God's grace through faith in Yeshua.
- We also need God's grace after salvation:
 - To grow to spiritual maturity
 - To be empowered to serve the Lord, like using our spiritual gifts
 - To be empowered to resist temptation
 - To be able to give back to God
 - For opportunities, positions, and responsibilities to serve the Lord and the empowerment to accomplish things for Him.
- We are not under law, but under grace now. We are under the New Covenant now.
- Grace is not contradictory to Lordship.
- By God's grace, we must not neglect our responsibility in regard to progressive sanctification. We need to avoid sin. And if we do sin, we need to confess and repent of it.

⁵ Dr. Michael L. Brown, “Confronting the Error of Hyper-Grace.” *Charisma News | Breaking News. Spiritual Perspective.*, Charisma Media, 18 Feb. 2013, www.charismanews.com/opinion/38297-confronting-the-error-of-hyper-grace.

⁶ Dr. Michael L. Brown, “Hyper-Grace Horror Stories.” *Charisma News | Breaking News. Spiritual Perspective.*, Charisma Media, 25 Feb. 2013, <https://www.charismanews.com/opinion/38394>



O while within a Jewish heart,
Yearns true a Jewish soul
And Jewish glances turning East,
To Zion fondly dart;

O then our Hope — it is not dead,
Our ancient Hope and True,
To be a nation free forevermore
Zion and Jerusalem at our core⁵

For more than two millennia, Jews of all stripes, both secular and religious, have held to the hope of returning to the land of their fathers. This hope

grew in intensity with the advent of the nationalist movements of early 19th-century Europe, which resulted in greater opportunities for fuller integra-

tion of Jews, as Jews, into various positions within government and society.¹ These movements paved a path away from the ghettos of western Europe and the "Pale of Settlement" of eastern Europe² into a new world where "old/new"³ nations were being carved out of decaying empires. This led many Jews to hope, with renewed vigor, for the idea⁴ that had been in the soul of every Jew since the Diaspora began: "Next Year in Jerusalem!"

An extraordinary example of this great hope can be seen in the official national anthem of the State of Israel, called *HaTikvah* or "The Hope."

This anthem started as a poem in the heart of Naftali Herz Imber in 1877 as he reacted to the news of the foundation of *Petah Tikva* (Opening of Hope) in Ottoman Palestine. The poem was later put to music and adopted as the anthem of the First Zionist Congress in 1897, led by Theodore Herzl. Imber himself made *aliyah*⁶ to nascent Israel and shared his poem with many of the early Zionist immigrants. Interestingly, it was not officially adopted as the national anthem of Israel until 2004, and this in the abbreviated form rendered above.⁷

As a Gentile believer in the Jewish Messiah Yeshua and as an airline pilot, I had the privilege of seeing this *tikvah*, this hope, materialize before my eyes a few years ago in the early morning hours out of the cockpit window of an airliner. The image is ingrained in my soul, and it will never leave me. As we flew in the night sky eastward over the Mediterranean Sea, to the north in the far distance were the faint yellow lights of Leba-

¹ H. H. Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 727-858.

² Abba Eban, *My People - The Story of the Jews* (New York City, NY: Random House, 1968), Chapter 15.

³ As the novel *Altneuland* by Theodor Herzl illustrates.

⁴ As contained in the many treatments of the subject in Arthur Hertzberg, ed., *The Zionist Idea* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975).

⁵ A poetic English rendering of the official Hebrew text. Source: Wikipedia.

⁶ When a Jew immigrates to Israel.

⁷ See also: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/hatikvah/>



non, and well to the south, the dim lights of Egypt. Yet before me, looming ever larger, were the bright white lights of Tel Aviv. In the distant west, I think I saw—or maybe I simply hoped to see—Jerusalem, the city of my King.

For many Gentiles in the church, the hope of the Jewish people is simply not on their radar screens. They have no connection to the hope of return to the land that Jews have had since the Diaspora started. And why should they, when the church through the centuries has failed so miserably in the first and essential God-commanded mission of sharing the hope found only in the Jewish Messiah with the Jewish people (Rom. 1:16) and in fact has been a source of much persecution, misery, and death?⁸ The current president of one of the oldest missions to the Jews said it best: “It is the great omission of the great commission.”⁹ The church should not only share *the hope* of the Messiah with the Jewish people but also share *in the hope* of restoration to the Land of Israel, not as an apocalyptic subterfuge, but in the sincerity of God-ordained, divine love. Yet, where the church in many respects has failed, God has not. He has, by His grace, put in this Gentile’s heart, and in the hearts of countless others like me, a love and deep yearning for *The Eretz*¹⁰ and for the restoration of its people to it in faith that is impossible to translate into words. Oh, how we long for Israel and its people to see this dual hope —of salvation and restoration— finally and completely fulfilled! Nothing can bring us greater joy! This

hope is not in vain, for He who guarantees it is *mighty to save* (Isa. 63:1).

But what exactly is this hope? Specifically, what do the Hebrew word הָקוֹת (*tikvah*) and its root קוּה (*qawa*) mean? *Qawa* is comprised of the three Hebrew letters ק (*kof*), ו (*vav*), and ה (*hey*).¹¹ It carries the idea of a chord or thread used for binding together, gathering, or collecting. It also carries the idea of hopeful expectation.¹² It is this author’s opinion that the origin of this dual meaning is likely in association with the idea of the hope of the harvest, where the grain is gathered together in an annual cycle. This hope is of great importance in ancient agrarian societies, one that if left unfulfilled could spell disaster.

The dual meaning contained within the root *qawa* of both “thread or cord” and “hopeful expectation” and in its derivative word *tikvah* can be seen in Joshua 2. There, Rahab is commanded to *tie this scarlet thread or cord*¹³ in the window (Josh. 2:18) in order to alert the fighting men to leave this house and those in it alone during the conquest of Jericho. Later in the same chapter, the Hebrew term translated into English as “cord” is not the more common word חוּט used previously in verse 18, but הָקוֹת, *tikvah* (Josh. 2:21).¹⁴ Hence, one could perhaps render a more literal translation of the second half of verse 21 as “And she tied the scarlet *hope* in the window.”

Rahab had to wait for a long time for this hope to be fulfilled. She had to wait for the spies to return to camp and for Israel to cross the Jordan, build the altar of stones at Gilgal,

circumcise all the men, celebrate the first Passover in the land, meet the commander of the armies of the Lord, march for six days around her city, and finally march on the seventh day seven times followed by the great tumult of the walls falling down. One has to wonder if Rahab faltered in her “scarlet hope.” Did she question the sanity of her decision to trust in this foreign God in the midst of this crescendo of terror rising right outside her window, which was built into the walls of Jericho (Josh. 2:15)? Since this Gentile woman—and one understood to be of ill repute at that—is included in the earthly genealogy of our Messiah (Mt. 1:5), I am confident that her hope was indeed not in vain.

That the word *tikvah* and its root *qawa* also involved the concept of waiting—a logical extension of the concept of “hopeful expectation”—is further exemplified in the following interesting observation: The Hebrew- and Greek-speaking translators of the Septuagint tended to translate *qawa* not with the Greek word rendered in English as “hope,” but with other Greek words that accentuated “the notion of ‘waiting’.”¹⁵ But why? The issue is linguistically complex and beyond the scope of this article and the capabilities of this author, but perhaps the answer lies in how the Greek Gentile world of the time viewed the idea of hope as expressed in the word ἐλπίζω (*elpizo*).¹⁶ A Greek fable speaks of a jar that contained everything that was good, but man unfortunately lifted the lid and all the good escaped, leaving him only

⁸ Michael L. Brown, *Our Hands are Stained with Blood* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 1992).

⁹ Dr. Mitch Glaser, CPM, remarks made during Pre-Trib conference 2018 in Dallas, TX.

¹⁰ Land of Israel.

¹¹ *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (TDOT).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ MED - *Mounce’s Complete Theological Dictionary of the Old and New Testament*.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ TDOT

¹⁶ “Theological Dictionary of the New Testament” TDNT.



elpizo, or hope.¹⁷ Ancient Greek philosophers spoke of *elpizo* as something that is man-centered, in that man can, by his actions in the present, make what he hopes for a reality in the future.¹⁸ But the Hebrew understanding of hope is not the same. Particularly in the Psalms, in both its verb form (more frequent) and noun form (less frequent), *tikvah* carries the idea of waiting and of expectation—not in man, but in God, who alone can be trusted to deliver what one hopes for,¹⁹ and this not to the exclusion of present actions of obedience. The German theologian Rudolf Bultmann said it well:

Hope (in the OT) is not a consoling dream of the imagination which causes us to forget our present troubles, nor are we warned of its uncertainty, as in the Greek world. The life of the righteous is grounded in hope . . . This hope is naturally directed to God . . . this hopeful trust is always demanded... even in times of blessing.²⁰

To restate this simply and generally, the Greek mind tries to control a future it cannot effectively and reliably control through its own actions in the present. The Hebrew mind, on the other hand, rests in and obeys the God who holds the future in His mighty hands.

Knowing this difference, is it really a surprise to see the modern, mostly Gentile church fight so hard for what it calls “social justice,” as if to make heaven on earth? To bring its own version of hope into fruition?²¹ Is it

really so surprising that many so-called Christians have abandoned the idea of a visible, bodily return of our Savior? Is it really so shocking that most Christians have abandoned the ancient²² and biblical concept of the millennial reign of Messiah on earth (Rev. 20), and that from Jerusalem? One does not have to be a son of Issachar (I Chron. 12:32) or a modern-day Daniel to see all these things *without* being surprised. The writing is indeed on the wall; and reading the Bible from its proper Jewish perspective is a source of great *tikvah*, both in the present as a testament to the sovereignty of God and into the eschatological future in the assurance of redemption and restoration for both Jews and Gentiles.

I am not arguing for the superiority of Hebrew thought over Greek thought, but I am unequivocally arguing that the God of Israel alone, He is God. If one wishes to have hope in this life, he must first turn and tie “the scarlet cord” on his own window and trust in the God of Israel. No matter what is going on outside in the world, God alone controls the affairs of man. He does not do so in a reactionary way, as the many false gods of this world claim to do who are not gods at all (Gal. 4:8). Rather, He knows and controls the end from the beginning. This is *HaTikvah*, this is *The Hope*: to know that no matter what is going on with me or those near me—be it sickness, blessings, defeats, or victories—that whatever comes my way, the God of Israel has promised that He will be with me through His Holy Spirit

(I Cor. 1:22) and His written Word, and that one day He will take me to be with Him where He is (Jn. 14:1-4).

The song *HaTikvah* was known by many of the Jews who perished in the Holocaust not as a national anthem, but as a song of the soul, a song of hope, since the State of Israel was then still a dream. An eyewitness reported that Czech Jews in 1944 spontaneously started singing *HaTikvah* when they stood before the doors of one of the gas chambers of Auschwitz.²³ Of course, they were beaten for it and then walked to their death. What hope did they have at that moment in time? Only God knows.²⁴ What we do know is that today stands before our eyes and the eyes of the whole world a witness to the first installment of this great hope: the modern nation of Israel.²⁵ Yet, it is only in part, because the future and full hope will come when the Messiah rules the nations from Jerusalem.

I as a Gentile together with my Jewish brothers and sisters and millions of Gentile believers just like me will witness in person the fulfillment of *our tikvah* when we, in joyful unity (Ps. 133), submit to the rule of our Great Jewish King, and that from Jerusalem (Rev. 20:1-6). This is *HaTikvah*, this is *The Hope*, and this will be fulfilled!



¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ TDOT

²⁰ TDNT

²¹ True social justice comes only when true believers in Yeshua do what is right and true by Him and His Word.

²² For the antiquity of this view, ref. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (c.130), as recorded by Eusebius; found in Henry Bettenson, Chris Maunder, eds., *Documents of the Christian Church* (New York City, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 28-29. Eusebius refers to Papias as “weak of intellect” due to his “millenarian exegesis”! There is indeed nothing new under the sun.

²³ Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps* (New York City, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 154.

²⁴ For a fuller treatment on the subject, please see Dr. Mitch Glaser’s article in this magazine.

²⁵ Ariel Ministries, MBS189, by A. G. Fruchtenbaum.

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