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Messianic Perspectives®

God has not forgotten the Jewish people, and neither have we.

**SEVEN
THINGS EVERY
CHRISTIAN SHOULD
KNOW ABOUT
ISRAEL**

PART II

BY DR. GARY HEDRICK

This second installment of “Seven Things Every Christian Should Know about Israel” is continued from the previous edition of *Messianic Perspectives*.

In Part I, we saw that:

1. The modern State of Israel is a miracle.
2. God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob didn’t come with an expiration date.
3. Today’s State of Israel is a modern-day continuation of biblical Israel.
4. National Israel is the linchpin that keeps God’s plan for the world moving ahead.

5. The Church has not replaced Israel in God’s plan.

This might seem obvious to us (i.e., that Israel and the Church are two distinct and continuing entities, and one doesn’t replace the other); but, to people who embrace Replacement Theology (RT), not so much.

RT says that ethnic Israel (i.e., the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) has been replaced (or superseded) by the Church (i.e., NT believers in Jesus Christ). The theological term for this is “supersessionism.” It’s nothing new. It’s an ideology that’s been around for a long time.

For centuries, in fact, supersessionism—the theological position that claims the Church has replaced Israel in God’s plan—has been the majority position in Christendom.¹ For many theologians, it’s a given and beyond debate. To question it (to them) is like doubting that water is wet or that the earth is round.

Many supersessionists don’t like the term “replacement theology.” They prefer the more innocuous term “fulfillment theology.” That is, the Church has *fulfilled* Israel rather than *replaced* her. But, it’s just playing with words. Either way, the meaning is the same: ethnic Israel is out of the picture forever because she rejected Yeshua as her Messiah in the first century. If they’re right, the Church has taken up the Abrahamic mantle and become the New Israel.

From the first century onward (according to replacement theologians), national Israel has been *passé*. Jewish people only participate in God’s plan now by “converting” to Christianity and becoming part of the Church.²

As I said earlier, this has been the dominant view in the Christian world for millennia. In fact, we can trace supersessionism as far back as the Early Church Fathers. They couldn’t envision two “peoples of God”—Israel and the Church—at any given point in time. It had to be one or the other. So, their solution was to say that Israel forfeited her position and is no longer in the picture. The Church is the

New Israel and has inherited Israel’s blessings.³ Strangely, however, they don’t have much (if anything) to say about the Church inheriting Israel’s curses, judgments, or punishments. They only want her blessings! Evidently, they see it as a sort of theological buffet where you pick and choose the “dishes” you like and leave the rest.

One Plan on Two Tracks

Dispensationalists in the 19th century are often said to be the first believers in the modern era to propose a formal framework that would allow God’s plan to run on two distinct (yet parallel and synergistic) tracks—one for Israel and another for the Church. But crediting Darby and his Brethren followers with this “discovery” gives them far too much credit. They weren’t the only ones who saw two tracks in prophecy, nor were they the first.⁴

The Israel track is grounded in God’s unconditional promises to Abraham.⁵ *The Church track* also traces its roots back to the grace-based Abrahamic Covenant and its successor, the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31). The Church track was *instituted* at Calvary around AD 30 (“this is My blood of the new covenant,” from Matthew 26:28), and was *formalized* on the Day of Pentecost (50 days after the Resurrection) when God breathed life into the mostly-Jewish New Covenant community in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-21).⁶ Paul punctuates all of this with his own “amen” when he declares that NT Gentile believers are grafted into the Olive Tree of grace-based Abrahamic faith through their faith in the Jewish Messiah and His sacrificial work on Calvary (Rom. 11:17-24).

The word “Israel” occurs 75 times in the NT. In every instance, it refers to ethnic Israel, the physical progeny of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. *Not once is it applied spiritually, symbolically, or allegorically.* If there was any legitimate allegorical or symbolic use of the term “Israel,” shouldn’t we expect it to have been employed that way at least once in the NT?

What we find in the NT, though, is that Israel (i.e., the nation) and the Church (the faith community) both stand on their own. So, it’s not an either-or proposition after all! God works on both tracks contemporaneously. Yes, Israel was set aside for a time; but the Lord is already beginning to work in and through her once again.

These two tracks will jointly lead the world into the Millennium, the future, earthly reign of Israel’s King-Messiah.⁷ At that time, the New Jerusalem will be populated by believing Israel (resurrected and/or glorified Jewish believers from all ages, “the Israel of God,” which will no longer be a minority remnant) and believing Gentiles who will also have been resurrected and/or glorified.⁸ Today, there’s one track for pre-believing Israel (in spiritual stasis until recently) and another for the Church (lit., “called out” saints, both Jewish and Gentile).⁹ As far as we know, the two complementary, corresponding tracks continue indefinitely into the future.

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Who is “the Israel of God”?



Sometimes critics of this view think too spatially. They say things like, “God can’t have two brides/wives because that would make him a bigamist.”¹⁰ Or, “God can’t have two entities, both known as ‘the People of God.’” But who says the laws of physics—like the one that says two objects can’t occupy the same space at the same time—apply to spiritual realities? The critics are seeing contradictions where none exist. Any sentence that begins with “God can’t” is on shaky ground from the get-go. God can do anything He wants, whether we understand it or not.

Proof-Texting Replacement Theology

Still, some people insist that it has to be one or the other—not both. If the Church is now “the” People of God, then Israel has been rejected and is out of the picture permanently. One of the supposed “proof texts” for this brand of RT is 1 Peter 2:4-10, which reads, in part:

But you [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once [were] not a people but [are] now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy (vv. 9-10).

Most commentators assume that the pronoun “you” here refers to the Gentile Church. They say that Peter is here applying “Israel” terminology (“chosen generation,” “royal priesthood,” “holy nation,” and God’s “own special people,” all describing Israel in Exodus 19:5-6 and Isaiah 43:20) to the predominantly Gentile Church. Therefore, they say, the Church must be God’s new, upgraded “special people,” the New Israel! The old Israel has been replaced!

However, they’re overlooking another possibility: namely, that *Peter’s epistle is addressed primarily to Jewish believers*. At this point in church history (AD 62-63), it was still a

Jewish Church. So, Jewish believers are the believing remnant of Israel, the same subset of the Church referred to by the Apostle Paul as “the Israel of God” in Galatians 6:16.¹¹

In fact, Peter helps us out by telling us whom he’s addressing. Right at the outset, he says he’s writing to “the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Peter 1:1). So, who are those pilgrims? They are Jewish believers who had been scattered throughout the Roman Empire in the *Diaspora* (“Dispersion”) during the lead-up to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and *Peter was the apostle to the Jews* (Gal. 2:8). So, Peter wasn’t writing primarily to Gentile believers. He was writing to his fellow Jewish believers in Yeshua, the believing remnant of Israel!¹²

Note that Jewish people from these same areas—Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia—had been in Jerusalem years earlier on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:9-11).¹³ These Jewish pilgrims from all over the Roman Empire heard the Good News proclaimed by Peter and the other apostles on that day and droves of them became believers in Yeshua as Messiah and Savior. Luke informs us that the crowds on that day consisted of “both Jews and [also] converts to Judaism” (v. 11), but no Gentiles are mentioned. Non-Jews routinely visited Jerusalem, of course, but most of the people in this setting on the Day of Pentecost would have been Jewish.¹⁴

Now go back and read those verses again, bearing in mind that he’s talking to his fellow Jewish believers. You’ll see the passage in an entirely different light. The Gentile Church is not a “New Israel.” Instead, Jewish believers are the true Israel, the remnant of Israel, the Israel of God, “. . . a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people.” They are the embodiment of everything Moses and Isaiah were talking about!

Paul: Israel's Rejection Is Only Temporary

In Romans 11, Paul makes it clear that God is not finished with Israel. He says the Jewish people have collectively experienced a spiritual “hardening”¹⁵ that has three aspects:

- a. **It's a mystery** (“this mystery,” v. 25a). When the NT uses the term “mystery,” it usually means something that was concealed in the OT but has been revealed in the NT. The fact that God's earthly people would become spiritually hardened (or “blinded,” KJV) for a time and for a purpose was a phenomenon that wasn't foreseen in the OT. In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul says it's like a “veil” of unbelief that keeps many of our Jewish friends from seeing Messiah Yeshua as the fulfillment of the prophecies (v. 13-15). When a Jewish person comes to the Lord and submits to Him in faith, the veil is taken away (v. 16).¹⁶
- b. **It's partial** (“blindness in part,” v. 25b). Not all Jewish people remain blinded. Many, like Paul himself, have come to faith in Yeshua. Jewish believers are called a “remnant” among Israel because they're in the minority (11:5). But the remnant is growing right before our eyes—hallelujah! So the hardening, or blindness, isn't total. It's only partial.
- c. **It's temporary** (“until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in,” v. 25c). The Jewish hardening isn't permanent. It ends with “the fullness of the Gentiles.” One reason God's plan for Israel has been put on hold for a time is so that non-Jews can have their turn to hear God's message of life and hope and respond to it. Once the full number of non-Jewish believers has entered the Family of God (fully populating the Gentile wing of the Church), God will resume His working among the People of Israel. The sovereign outworking of that divine plan will culminate in the ultimate and glorious salvation of “all Israel” at the end of the Tribulation (v. 26).

6. Israel cannot be separated from her believing remnant.

Conjoined twins can sometimes be separated surgically. Doctors are able to do amazing things these days in that regard. But there are many cases where the two bodies are so intricately intertwined and combined with each other, they cannot be separated without endangering the life of one or both of the twins. This is also true of Israel and her Jewish believers. They are inextricably linked and cannot be separated.

While it's true that most Jewish people today are unbelievers, with the majority self-identifying as “secular” or non-religious, it's also true that there's a robust, enthusiastic, and growing remnant of Jewish people (especially in Israel) who believe Yeshua is the Messiah and are deeply committed to Him. In the Holy Land, Jewish believers are making their presence felt in the military, in political life, in business, in media, and in local communities all over the country. Some of them are second and third generation Jewish believers who—like their parents and grandparents before them—were born in Israel. They speak Hebrew and they love their country.

An Internet-based, Hebrew-language Messianic TV station, *Yeshua Chai* (“Jesus Lives”), has been broadcasting in Israel for several years now and its listenership continues to grow.¹⁷ Israel's main cable TV stations, Channel 1 and Channel 2, have both done favorable stories about the Messianic Community in recent years.¹⁸

One for Israel, under the auspices of Israel College of the Bible (ICB) in Netanya, has had amazing success presenting Jewish testimonials online. Hundreds of thousands of Israelis to date have logged in to watch these videos where Jewish men and women, many of them Israelis, sit in “the chair” at ICB and share in detail who they are, where they are from, and how they came to faith in Yeshua as their Messiah and Savior.¹⁹



The Believing Remnant in Israel

The Apostle Paul says an unbelieving husband is sanctified by his believing wife (and vice versa; 1 Cor. 7:14). That doesn't mean the unbelieving husband is automatically saved because he has a believing wife; rather, it means that he is “sanctified” in the sense that he benefits, even as an unbeliever, from his life being intertwined with hers. When God blesses her, he's blessed, too. Would God withhold His goodness from her because her husband is an unbeliever? Of course not.

In a similar way, the destinies of unbelieving Israel and believing Israel (the Messianic Community in Israel) are intertwined. When one suffers, the other suffers, too. When one is blessed, they're both blessed.

The point here is that Israel today includes a remnant of Jewish believers in Yeshua. You cannot indiscriminately rain down criticism and condemnation on the Jewish State without also criticizing and condemning the Jewish remnant of believers in Yeshua of Nazareth.²⁰ When someone hurts the State of Israel, they're also hurting her believing community, whether they mean to or not.

Christians in the world today who are campaigning against the State of Israel should reconsider what they're doing. BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) activists think they're supporting and helping suffering Palestinian Christians by harming the Jewish State.²¹ However, the worst thing that could happen to everyone in the Middle East—including local Christians—would be for the State of Israel to fall. Israel is the only democracy in the entire region and the only country that guarantees religious freedom for all of its citizens, whether they're Christian, Jewish, or Muslim.

Palestinian Christians in areas like Bethlehem have literally had to flee for their lives because of threats and persecution. For years, Marcia and I had Christian friends in Jericho who helped us with our tours; but, they finally had to move to Morocco because of threats from Palestinian factions who considered them “collaborators.” If the State of Israel was disbanded a week from this coming Tuesday and the whole region became “Palestine,” does anyone seriously entertain the fantasy that Palestinian Christians would somehow be treated better than they are now?

Why don't these anti-Israel religious groups campaign against Saudi Arabia, where it's illegal for Christians to conduct church services and where Muslims who become Christians can be convicted of apostasy and sentenced to death? Most Arab countries are Islamic theocracies where Sharia law prevails and where freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press are non-existent. Yet, the BDS crowd picks on tiny Israel, the only democracy in the region. It doesn't make any sense!



Is it possible that the BDS movement is really a thinly veiled form of anti-Semitism? Yes, I think so. Their concern really has nothing to do with freedom or justice; they just don't like Israel or the Jewish people. That would explain their vitriol against the free and democratic Jewish State while they give dictatorial, terror-funding, anti-Christian Arab states a free pass.

Pray FOR Israel, Not AGAINST Her

We should pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces” (Psalm 122:6-7).

Praying for Israel is one of only a few commands in Scripture directly connected to a divine promise of blessing! I mentioned this verse earlier: *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee* (Psalm 122:6 KJV). Praying for Jerusalem and the Jewish people brings blessings from God himself. Inversely, when we oppose Jerusalem and the Jewish people, we are setting ourselves in opposition to God (Gen. 12:3)—a very precarious place to be.

People who say, “I'm against the Israelis because they discriminate against the poor, disenfranchised Palestinians” need to recognize that the Palestinians have no greater partner in their quest for peace, health, and prosperity than Israel (including Messianic Israelis). I know

that may go against everything you've ever heard about the Mideast peace process; but it's true. Think about it. Has any Arab nation ever offered to take in the Palestinian people or to give them land? Egypt doesn't want them; Jordan doesn't want them. Both of these neighbors have barriers to prevent Palestinian incursions and both destroy tunnels when they detect them.

It's true that some Arab countries provide token financial support for Fatah (the Palestinian government); however, it's a drop in the bucket compared to what Israel, the European Union, and the United States have done for them. Only Israel has turned over territory to them and tried to assist them in truly helpful, long-term ways.²² Our own CJFM staff members in Israel—along with many other Messianics—routinely reach out to Palestinians, sharing the Gospel with them, helping them with material needs, and advocating for them, especially in the northern part of the country. CJFM has been partnering with an Arab congregation in Haifa for several years now to help young Arab believers who serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Before you jump on board with an anti-Israel movement (whether it's BDS or any one of a number of others), then, consider that when you boycott Israel, you're also boycotting her believing community. When you divest yourself financially from Israel, you're divesting yourself from the Messianic believers, too. And, when you sanction Israel, you're also sanctioning your Jewish brothers and sisters in the Lord. In what possible universe is it okay to treat our fellow believers like that (John 13:34-35)?²³

7. Jewish people are entitled to hear the Good News of Yeshua just like everyone else.

God has a non-discriminatory policy. He loves the world—and that includes everyone (John 3:16). Anyone who wants to can benefit from His pre-paid plan of salvation. It doesn't matter who you are or where you're from. It doesn't matter what you've done. Status, religion, education, and wealth are all irrelevant. The invitation is for anyone:

And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).

We should share the Good News of Yeshua with our Jewish friends and pray for them faithfully. That doesn't mean we clobber them over the head with a NT or threaten them with Hell when they disagree with us. We should earn their trust by showing them that we are their friends. The Jewish people have learned through experience that true friendship in this world is hard to come by. Evangelicals have been accused of “needing” Israel to bring about the fulfillment of the biblical prophecies—hence, our support of the Jewish State. The Jewish people have been used and abused by many people, including some who claimed to be “Christian,” throughout their long history. They have every right to be skeptical.

But when our Jewish friends see God's love reflected through us, that obstacle can be overcome.

The word “Gospel” comes from a Greek term (*euangelion* or εὐαγγέλιον) meaning “good news.” Let's remember that when we're sharing our faith with our friends and acquaintances. Too many of us have a tendency to make it sound more like *bad* news! We shouldn't make good news sound like it's bad news. Our message is one of hope, redemption, renewal, blessing, freedom, deliverance, and ultimate victory!

NEIGHBORHOOD BULLY (A Satirical Ode to the State of Israel) By Bob Dylan

Well, the neighborhood bully, he's just one man,
His enemies say he's on their land.
They got him outnumbered about a million to one,
He got no place to escape to, no place to run.
He's the neighborhood bully.

The neighborhood bully he just lives to survive,
He's criticized and condemned for being alive.
Not supposed to fight back, and have thick skin,
Supposed to lay down and die when his door is kicked in.
He's the neighborhood bully.

Neighborhood bully been driven out of every land,
He's wandered the earth an exiled man.
Seen his family scattered, his people hounded and torn,
He's always on trial for just being born.
He's the neighborhood bully.

Well, he knocked out a lynch mob, he was criticized,
Old women condemned him, said he should apologize.
Then he destroyed a bomb factory, nobody was glad.
The bombs were meant for him.
He was supposed to feel bad.
He's the neighborhood bully.

Well, the chances are against it and the odds are slim
That he'll live by the rules that the world makes for him,
There's a noose at his neck and a gun at his back
And a license to kill him given out to every maniac.
He's the neighborhood bully.

Well he got no allies to really speak of.
What he gets he must pay for, he don't get it out of love.
He buys obsolete weapons and he won't be denied
But no one sends flesh and blood to fight by his side.
He's the neighborhood bully.

Well, he's surrounded by pacifists who all want peace,
They pray for it nightly that the bloodshed will cease.
Now, they wouldn't hurt a fly.
To hurt one they would weep.
They lay and they wait for this bully to fall asleep.
He's the neighborhood bully.

Every empire that's enslaved him is gone,
Egypt and Rome, even the great Babylon.
He's made a garden of paradise in the desert sand,
In bed with nobody, under no one's command.
He's the neighborhood bully.

Now his holiest books have been trampled upon,
No contract he signed was worth what it was written on.
He took the crumbs of the world and he turned it into wealth,
Took sickness and disease and he turned it into health.
He's the neighborhood bully.

What's anybody indebted to him for?
Nothin', they say.
He just likes to cause war.
His pride and prejudice his superstition indeed,
They wait for this bully like a dog waits to feed.
He's the neighborhood bully.

What has he done to wear so many scars?
Does he change the course of rivers?
Does he pollute the moon and stars?
Neighborhood bully, standing on the hill,
Running out the clock, time standing still,
Neighborhood bully.

© Bob Dylan (1983)

Here's how the Prophet Isaiah proclaimed the Good News:

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD [is] upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to [those who are] bound;

To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified" (Isa. 61:1-3).

Some Christians say, for various reasons, that it's not appropriate to share our faith in Yeshua with Jewish people. Some of the reasons proposed are these:

- Christianity is a Gentile religion (and therefore not for Jewish people);
- Jewish people already have their own covenant with God (and therefore don't need the New Covenant); or
- We have forfeited our right to share our faith with Jewish people due to "Christian" anti-Semitism.

Nonetheless, the fact remains that the Bible says everyone—whether Jew or Gentile—must come to God the same way: through His Son, Yeshua the Messiah. The Apostle Paul said that with respect to our standing before God, there is "no difference" between Jew and Gentile (Rom. 3:22). Yes, that's a hard pill for an observant Jewish person (or a self-righteous Gentile!) to swallow; but it's the truth. No matter who we are, where we're from, or what our pedigree is, we're all sinners and need the Lord (v. 23).

The Bible tells us that someday, when the Jewish people respond collectively (and individually) to the Good News of their Messiah, the entire nation will be "born" (spiritually) in a day:

*Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day?
[Or] shall a nation be born at once?
For as soon as Zion was in labor,
She gave birth to her children (Isa. 66:8).²⁴*

Let's not discriminate against our Jewish friends by excluding them. They should have the opportunity to take a seat at Yeshua's table just like anyone else. After all, He was *their* Messiah before He was *ours*! Here's His invitation:

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20). 



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¹ We would be doing a disservice to many of our supersessionist friends if we lumped them all together in one broad category. In his book *Has the Church Replaced Israel?* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), Michael Vlach outlines three types of supersessionism: (1) punitive, (2) economic, and (3) structural (13-17). He also identifies a “moderate supersessionism” that is not so exclusionary or hostile toward Israel (ibid., 20-23). Many supersessionists are not anti-Israel or anti-Semitic. In one way or another, though, they all say essentially the same thing: i.e., the Church has become New Israel, replacing the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

² “Conversion” is a term that many Jewish people find offensive. To them, it means converting from one thing to another—like converting electrical current from 110 to 220 volts or converting a garage into a bedroom. In this case, they think it means converting someone from being Jewish to being a Christian, with the end result being that they’re not Jewish anymore. Our founder, Charles Halff, found this notion particularly noxious. He often said, “I was born a Jew and I will die a Jew.”

³ The much-venerated, second-century Church leader Justin Martyr (AD 100-165) wrote, “As, therefore, Christ is the Israel and the Jacob, even so we [Gentile believers], who have been quarried out from the bowels of Christ, are the true Israelite race” (*Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapter 135, quoted in *Has the Church Replaced Israel?* by Michael Vlach [Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010], 37).

⁴ *Dispensationalism: Essential Beliefs and Common Myths* by Michael Vlach (Los Angeles: Theological Studies Press, 2017), 96-97.

⁵ Some people would say that the Israel track began at Mount Sinai; however, the Prophet Jeremiah points out that the performance-based Sinai (Mosaic) Covenant was “broken” and is therefore no longer enforceable as a legal covenant (Jer. 31:32; Heb. 8:13). Israel’s relationship with God flows from the earlier, grace-based Abrahamic Covenant. The New Covenant (which harkens back to the Abrahamic Covenant) explains how Jews and Gentiles alike enter into a personal relationship with God through their faith in the sacrifice of His Son, Yeshua the Messiah, on Calvary.

⁶ However, more recent research has shown that the followers of Darby in the 19th century were not the first Bible interpreters in modern times to codify two distinct tracks of God’s plan (one for Israel and the other for the Church). See *Dispensationalism Before Darby: Seventeenth-Century and Eighteenth-Century English Apocalypticism* by William C. Watson (Silverton, OR: Lampion Press, 2015).

⁷ We see the complementarity of these two tracks in Revelation 21, for instance, where the New Jerusalem is said to have 12 gates (named after the 12 OT tribes of Israel; v. 12) and 12 foundations (named after the 12 NT apostles of Yeshua; v. 14). For all we know, the different identities—Jew and Gentile—continue into eternity. After all, the LORD is a God of infinite diversity and variety and He has built these traits into His creation.

⁸ It’s important to recognize that Jewish people and Gentiles will live side-by-side in the new creation (or, Millennium). Ethnicity is part of our identity as people, and we have every reason to anticipate that cultural and ethnic diversity will continue into the new earthly order. The same thing is true of male and female distinctions. Gender is part of our God-given psychology, personality, and identity as humans. Paul’s point in Galatians 3:28 (see the next end note) is that whether we’re Jewish or Gentile, male or female, we all have the same spiritual standing (as justified saints) in Yeshua the Messiah. Adam and Eve were male and female in the pre-Fall Garden of Eden, so Yeshua’s statement in Matthew 22:30 doesn’t mean there won’t be any gender distinctions in the restored Paradise (i.e., the Millennium). This duality of roles (e.g., male/female, yin/yang, provider/nurturer) promotes balance and harmony in a healthy society.

⁹ *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in [Messiah Yeshua]* (Gal. 3:28).

¹⁰ Arnold Fruchtenbaum has an illuminating study on Israel and the Church as the “wife of Jehovah” and “the Bride of Christ” respectively at the Bible Prophecy Blog (“The Wife of Jehovah and the Bride of Messiah” at bibleprophecyblog.com).

¹¹ “Eusebius, a historian from the fourth century, believed that [1 Peter] addressed an audience of Jewish people living in exile. Jewish people in the Diaspora would relate to being addressed as strangers and sojourners (1:1; 2:11)” (*The Messianic Jewish Family Bible: Tree of Life Version* [Syracuse, NY: Messianic Jewish Family Bible Society, 2015], 1348).

¹² Peter’s admonition that his readers should conduct themselves honorably “among the Gentiles” (2:12) makes more sense if he’s writing to Jewish believers.

¹³ The Day of Pentecost is known in Hebrew as *Shavuot*, or the Feast of Weeks.

¹⁴ For a scholarly treatment of this issue and its theological implications, see “You Talkin’ to Me? 1 Peter 2:4-10 and a Theology of Israel” by Jim Sibley, PhD, in *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, Vol. 59, No. 1, Fall 2016 (available at oneforIsrael.org). Also, note (with respect to Luke’s reference to converts to Judaism) that such converts are no longer considered Gentiles. Even today, converts are considered just as Jewish as if they had been born Jewish. So it’s likely that the number of Gentiles present at the Temple complex in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost would have been negligible, if there were any at all. Even if some non-Jews were present, they would not have been allowed to enter beyond the Court of the Gentiles anyway. In ascending order of access: Court of the Gentiles (everyone)→Court of Women→Court of Israel (Jewish men only)→Court of the Priests (*Cohanim*; inner sanctum).

¹⁵ The Greek word *porosis* (πώρωσις) literally means “hardening,” like a callous (or thickening of the skin) that develops in response to an irritation.

¹⁶ The context here indicates that Paul is talking about Jewish people. Note, for example, that he says they attend synagogue services where the Torah (“Moses”) is read weekly (v. 15). Such a statement wouldn’t apply to non-Jews. The veil is lifted when they trust Yeshua as Messiah and Savior. Note that unsaved Gentiles also suffer from

a form of spiritual blindness (Eph. 4:18), so we’re all in the same boat in that respect before we come to the Lord and our spiritual “eyes” are opened.

¹⁷ If you understand Hebrew, you can tune in at yeshuachai.tv and enjoy the programming. Some of their programs have English subtitles.

¹⁸ Both of these stations, as well as others, provided fair and sympathetic coverage when the Messianic Ortiz family in Ariel, Israel, was attacked viciously in 2008 by a crazed anti-missionary bomber. Their 15-year-old son, Ami Ortiz, almost died from his injuries (bpnews.net/27695/messianic-pastors-son-injured-by-bomb). Israeli civic leaders (including the mayor), educators, and other townspeople, believers and unbelievers alike, rallied around the family during their ordeal. The demented bomber was eventually caught and brought to justice.

¹⁹ See the *One for Israel* website at oneforIsrael.org.

²⁰ God told Abraham that He would spare the wicked city of Sodom if only ten believers could be found there (Gen. 18:16-33). An entire city—thousands of sinners—would be spared due to a very small believing presence. That’s the sanctifying power of the believing remnant. God wouldn’t pour out His vengeance and anger on Sodom as long as there were believers there—even backslidden ones!

²¹ Thankfully, the anti-Israel BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement is losing traction worldwide. Their efforts to hurt corporations that do business with Israel (like Caterpillar Tractor Company, Volvo, Dell Computers, Apple, Hewlett Packard, RE/MAX, and Motorola) have largely failed. Anti-Israel hardliners in the Presbyterian Church USA (not to be confused with the smaller, more conservative Presbyterian Church in America) continue to push their evil agenda, along with their comrades in other liberal, mainline denominations, but with diminishing effect.

²² The Israelis have helped the Palestinian people in countless ways, but seldom receive recognition for it. Israeli hospitals treat hundreds of Palestinians every year free of charge. The Israeli government has helped them with roads and other infrastructure, including many miles of pipelines they’ve laid to pump much-needed water into parched Palestinian areas. They’ve helped them with technology so they can process sewage and waste safely without spreading disease. Roughly half of Gaza’s electricity is provided by the Israel Electric Corporation (IEC). At various times, the Israelis have forked over millions of shekels so the Palestinian Authority could pay salaries and other expenses. They have also dramatically increased the number of work visas so Palestinians can enter Israel to work and support their families. (For supporting documentation, see reporting from the United Nations at unrwa.org.) Palestinian leaders, in fact, are concerned these days because many of their people no longer buy into the party line that the Israelis are their main persecutors. Thousands of Palestinians, in fact, are expressing a preference to live under Israeli governance. They are applying for Israeli citizenship in unprecedented numbers. See “Why Palestinians Want Israeli Citizenship” by Khaled Abu Toameh on the website of The Gatestone Institute & International Policy Council (gatestoneinstitute.org). Eyes are slowly being opened and even the Palestinians themselves are finally realizing that their greatest oppressors are their own leaders, who have enriched themselves at their expense—not the Israelis. Millions of dollars and euros in American and European aid have never reached the poor Palestinian masses. Day-wage laborers in Palestinian areas are lucky if they get \$17 a day (and many are unemployed); those who cross into Israel or work on a Jewish settlement can make around \$75 a day. That’s why Palestinian politicians are becoming more strident and extreme in their rhetoric, and why they turn away virtually all overtures for peace. It is to their advantage to prolong the so-called “peace process” because it’s a cash cow and they’ve been using it for decades to enrich themselves! This is precisely why Arafat ultimately rejected Rabin’s offer in the 1993-94 Oslo Accords, even though he was offered 95 percent of what he was asking for. Observers at Oslo were left scratching their heads; but now we know that Arafat was funneling millions of dollars into his own, private coffers and didn’t want the gravy train to end. His wife moved to Paris, where she was often seen on the front row at lavish fashion shows, while the Palestinian people back home languished in unbearable squalor. All of this information is readily available online from a quick Google search. It’s not a secret—and it goes to the point that the real enemy of the poor, suffering Palestinian people isn’t the Israelis. It’s their own corrupt, elite, ruling class.

²³ In the meantime, some Palestinians attempt to bolster their claim on the Land by asserting, without proof, that they are descended from the ancient Canaanites, the original, pre-Israel inhabitants of the Land we call Israel today. The recent discovery of ancient Canaanite DNA in a previously undisturbed tomb in Megiddo, Israel, may make it possible to put this claim to rest once and for all. See “Exclusive: Royal Burial in Ancient Canaan May Shed New Light on Biblical City” in *National Geographic* magazine (March 2018).

²⁴ The reference in Isaiah 66:8 to the future (re)birth of Israel “in a day” might seem a bit oblique; but it’s the best interpretation in this context. Much more than Israel’s return to the Land in 538 BC (after the exile) is in view here. The Prophet’s application of poetic language to the fulfillment of prophecies about “Zion” (v. 8) and “Jerusalem” (v. 10) going through a process of labor (v. 8) and giving birth to “children” (v. 8) at the end of days (when Messiah returns) is unmistakable. *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Michael Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, Eds.; Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014) notes: “Interestingly, the Targum (ancient rabbinic paraphrase) renders the final line of this verse as ‘her king will be revealed,’ which suggests a messianic reading referring to what happens immediately following the second coming of Christ. The series of rhetorical questions in vv. 8-9 underscore the uniqueness of the events that will occur, so that it is clear that only God could bring them (v. 8) and that God is certain to restore Zion (v. 9).” Some respected interpreters, including our friend David Stern in Israel, have a different view. They apply this prophecy to the events of May 14, 1948, when, in their view, the nation was born “in a day” (“1948: Israel Is Reborn in a Day” in *The Complete Jewish Study Bible* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2016], 604).

ISRAEL

DID YOU KNOW?

Sources: *Jewish Virtual Library* (jewishvirtuallibrary.org) and *Wikipedia: the Free Encyclopedia* (en.wikipedia.org)

Geography:

- Israel is only 1/6 of 1% of the landmass of the Middle East, or roughly the size of New Jersey.
- The Sea of Galilee, at 695 feet below sea level, is the lowest freshwater lake in the world. It's home to some of the largest catfish in the world—some reportedly weighing in at up to 60 pounds. Catfish aren't kosher, so they are shunned by Jewish fishermen.
- The Dead Sea is the lowest surface point on earth, at about 1,312 feet below sea level. Its seabed is even lower—more than 2,300 feet below sea level.
- Israel is the only nation in the world that entered the 21st century with a net gain in its number of trees.
- Jericho is the oldest continuously inhabited town in the world.
- The oldest, continually-used cemetery in the world is found on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. It was left undisturbed by the superstitious Romans in AD 70 (and again in AD 135) and today contains an estimated 150,000 graves.

Business & Economics:

- Israel has the largest number of startup companies per capita in the world.
- Israel has its own stock exchange in Tel Aviv.
- Israel is the world's largest wholesale diamond center, finally surpassing Antwerp in the 1970's.
- Most of the cut and polished diamonds in the world come from Israel.
- Israel has the largest number of NASDAQ listed companies outside of the US and Canada.
- Israel was the first country to have a free trade agreement with the US.
- Apart from Silicon Valley in the US, Israel has the highest concentration of hi-tech companies in the world.
- Israel's per capita GDP (gross domestic product) is \$35,220, compared to an average of \$3,539 for the 22 countries comprising the Arab world.



Beekeeping in Israel
Eitan f

Books and Learning:

- Israel publishes more books per capita than any other nation in the world.
- Israel publishes more books translated from other languages than any other nation in the world.
- Israelis are intensely curious and love to learn. They read more books per capita than any other nation in the world.
- The most independent and free *Arabic* press in the Middle East is in (wait for it) Israel.
- Israel is the second most educated country in the world (trailing only Canada), with 46% of Israeli adults being college graduates (according to the OECD).
- Israel's adult literacy rate is 98%, compared to 86% for the United States, 97% for Canada, and 99% for Finland (#1 in the world).
- In a 2015 survey by the QS World University Rankings, 11 of the top 100 universities in the world were located in Israel. The survey ranked the world's best schools in 42 areas of study.

Justice Issues:

- Employers in Israel aren't allowed to discriminate on the basis of gender, religion, ethnicity, or any other arbitrary litmus test.
- Palestinians who feel they have been wronged by the State of Israel can file (and have filed) lawsuits in Israel's court system. In some cases, the courts have agreed with these claims and awarded damages into the millions of shekels. Advocacy groups will provide an attorney for anyone who can't afford one.
- Unlike their Arab neighbors, Israelis of all faiths enjoy religious freedom.
- Contrary to popular belief, it is not illegal to witness or share the Gospel in Israel. The only legal restriction is that underage children cannot be evangelized without the knowledge and consent of their parents. Religious groups may oppose evangelistic work, and often do so; but the government cannot.
- Israel has a security barrier (sometimes called a fence or a wall) along its 440-mile border with the Palestinian territories, constructed from 2003 to 2013. Critics of the barrier accuse Israel of discrimination or even apartheid. However, the barrier is defensive in nature and has effectively reduced terror attacks by up to 90%. It's hard to argue with success!
- The much-maligned security barrier is designed to limit terrorist access to Israel proper and to save lives. Palestinians with job opportunities or other business in Israel can still enter Israel at specified checkpoints, where they undergo standard security checks. Thousands of Palestinians do this every day as part of their normal routine.



The stock exchange in Tel Aviv, Israel.

Yaniv Morozovsky

Agriculture:

- Israel's dairy cows are far and away the most productive bovines in the world. They average a whopping 25,432 pounds of milk per cow per year, compared to just 18,747 pounds from American cows, 17,085 from Canadian cows, 13,778 from European Union cows, 10,207 from Australian cows, and a meagerly 6,600 from Chinese cows.
- Honey production in Israel continues to grow, with the output of Israeli bees rising almost 10% per year since 2011. No wonder the Bible describes Israel as "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 3:8)!
- Speaking of bees, Israel is home to more than 1,100 species of bees, including the honeybee. In other parts of the world, including North America, honeybees are considered a threatened species; however, Israeli bees continue to thrive.
- Tour guides used to tell visitors that the "honey" mentioned in the Bible was actually a sweet, distilled secretion from dates (i.e., the fruit that grows on trees). However, more recent archaeological finds have shown that ancient Israel (c. 1000 BC) had many apiaries, suggesting that honey production (by bees!) during the time of David and Solomon was a thriving industry.
- Jaffa oranges are some of the best in the world.
- Israelis, per capita, are the world's biggest consumers of fruits and vegetables. Lamb is the most popular meat. Israelis consume very little beef.
- Due to kosher restrictions on mixing meat with dairy, it is very difficult to find a pizza in Israel with meat on it. For the same reason, Israel is the only country in the world where McDonalds doesn't serve cheeseburgers.

Language, Culture & the Arts:

- Hebrew is the only example in world history of a dead language being revived after many centuries and spoken again as a national language.
- Hebrew had not been spoken as an official native tongue since the destruction of Israel in AD 70. Today, thanks to the efforts of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858-1922), it is the native tongue of millions of Israelis. Some speak nothing else.
- Israel has more museums per capita than any other nation in the world.
- Israel has more orchestras per capita than any other nation in the world.
- Israel's film industry has been producing motion pictures since the founding of the country in 1948.
- Most Israeli motion pictures today are in Hebrew.
- Israel has been nominated for more Academy Awards in the "Best Foreign Language Film" category than any other Middle Eastern country.



Eliezer Ben-Yehuda in Talpiot, Jerusalem
Widener Library

Science and Technology:

- The popular Waze GPS navigation system was developed in Israel.
- The drip irrigation system widely used in agriculture and other applications was pioneered in the Israeli desert.
- Rooftop solar hot water systems were invented in Israel.
- The Israeli PillCam (i.e., capsule endoscopy via a tiny camera that's swallowed by the patient) is now used worldwide to detect diseases of the intestinal tract.
- Israel has more in-vitro fertilization per capita than anywhere in the world, and it's free.
- Early warning collision and lane-safe, self-driving systems now available on many automobiles worldwide (including General Motors in the USA) were developed by MobileEye, an Israeli company.
- USB memory sticks (thumb drives) were invented in Israel, rendering CD-ROM drives no longer useful for many users.
- The cell phone was developed at Motorola's R & D center in Tel Aviv, Israel.
- The technology for voice mail was developed in Israel.
- In the early 1980's, IBM chose an Israeli-designed computer chip as the brains for its first personal computers.
- The first anti-virus software for computers was developed in Israel in 1979.
- Intel Israel is considered a world leader in computer processing technology. In fact, they developed the 8088 processor, the "brain" of the original IBM personal computer in the early 1980s.
- Both the Pentium-4 and Centrino processors were entirely designed, developed and produced in Israel.
- Israel has the fifth highest number of home computers per capita in the world. She is surpassed only by Switzerland, San Marino, Sweden, and the US.
- The technology for AOL's Instant Messenger and ICQ was developed in 1996 by four young Israelis.
- Israel has its own space program. In fact, Israel was the first Middle Eastern country to launch a satellite, the Ofek 1, on September 19, 1988.
- The popular Kindle E-reader owes much of its functionality to Israeli technology.
- The software that makes the popular Internet (VoIP) phones possible was developed in Herzliya, Israel.



IBM's R&D building in Haifa
Orlring

Medical:

- All working adults pay into Israel's national health insurance program and they have one of the world's most advanced healthcare systems. There are no exclusions due to preexisting conditions and no one who suffers from a catastrophic illness in Israel loses their home or is otherwise bankrupted while trying to pay for medical treatment.
- Medical and biotechnological tools and procedures pioneered in Israel include:
 - State-of-the-art surgical lasers;
 - Fully computerized no-radiation diagnostic instrumentation for breast cancer;
 - An intelligent medical sensor that can be used to track and direct instruments to an exact three-dimensional location in the heart or other organs via a real-time virtual image;
 - The fully flexible waveguide fiber for endoscopic surgery;
 - Unique computerized monitoring systems for critical care patients;
 - Pain-relieving transcatheter devices; and
 - A revolutionary autoclave design to combat AIDS and other infectious diseases.
- Roughly 180,000 Palestinians a year are treated in Israeli hospitals at no charge.
- Children are airlifted from points all over the Middle East to Israel for life-saving surgeries.
- For a time, the Palestinian government in Gaza restricted its citizens from crossing the border to be treated in Israeli hospitals. Thankfully, those restrictions were lifted in 2017.

Military/Security:

- The oldest extant, non-Jewish inhabitants of the Middle East are the Bedouins, nomads whose tribal beginnings are traceable to the Sinai some 4,000-7,000 years ago. Today, they are generally loyal to the Jewish State and serve in the IDF. They are reputed to be the best trackers in the world and know how to make themselves "invisible" to enemies.
- Israel dominates the world of cyber security technology, with more than 50 companies leading the way. Recent cyberattacks on US companies and political entities have shown that cyberspace (i.e., technology interconnected via the Internet) is the battleground of the future, making Israel a valuable ally in that war.
- Israel has the largest fleet of F-16 aircraft outside of the US.
- Israel has the world's simplest yet most impenetrable airline security. And yes, it incorporates common-sense profiling.
- Israel spends more money per capita on its own protection than any country in the world.
- As recently as 2016, women in Saudi Arabia weren't allowed to drive a car; but in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), women are trained to pilot F-16s.



The Israeli Air Force flying over Tel-Aviv.
Israel Defense Forces

Demographics:

- Israel's population is half the size of Metro New York City.
- Israel has only 2% of the population of the Middle East.
- Israel has the highest ratio of university degrees per capita in the world.
- Israeli scientists produce more scientific papers per capita than any other nation in the world—by a large margin.
- Israel has the highest number of scientists and technicians per capita in the world—again, by a large margin.
- Israel has the highest number of engineers per capita in the world.
- Israel has the highest number of accredited PhD's per capita in the world.
- Israel has the highest number of physicians per capita in the world.
- Israel has the largest percentage of its workforce employed in technical professions in the world.
- Israel is the largest immigrant-absorbing nation in the world, per capita.
- Israel is the only country in the Middle East where the Christian population has grown over the last 50 years. In contrast, Christians have largely fled Palestinian areas, like Bethlehem, due to persecution.
- Israel is the only country in the Middle East where Christian, Muslim, and Jewish citizens all have the right to vote.
- Israel is the only country in the Middle East where women enjoy full participation in the political system.

Bible Questions AND Answers

by DR. GARY HEDRICK

Have a Bible question?

Submit it to Dr. Hedrick at garyh@cjfm.org, or mail it to 611 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78215.

You may see your question addressed in a future issue of *Messianic Perspectives*.

QUESTION: *I had lunch recently with a new co-worker from our office and he shared with me that he's an atheist. He knows I'm a believer but he says he can't believe the Bible because it's full of mistakes and contradictions. When I asked him for an example, he cited the Christmas story in Matthew, where it says the wise men in Babylon saw the star in the east and used it as a guide for their journey westward to Israel. He wants to know how a star in the east helped guide them to a destination in the opposite direction (to the west). How would you answer this objection?*

ANSWER: King Solomon said, "There's nothing new under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9). How true! Skeptics are hard pressed these days to come up with arguments that haven't been analyzed over and over and dispensed with in previous generations.

This particular point of criticism (about the Bethlehem star in the Book of Matthew), among others, was raised by the famous revolutionary skeptic Thomas Paine in his booklet *Examination of the Prophecies* (1807). The text is available online at Google Books (books.google.com).

Paine was a remarkable intellect and a great man in many ways. He deserves our respect as one of the founders of our country. However, he surely missed the boat on this question. Matthew doesn't say the Star was east of where the Wise Men were. It was actually to the west of Babylon, where they most likely began their journey. When they said, "We have seen His star in the East" (2:2), they meant that *they were in the East when they first saw it*. They were saying, "We saw His star (when we were) in the east." The Star itself was toward the west. It would be like me saying, "I saw the lunar eclipse in San Antonio." That doesn't mean the moon itself was in San Antonio; it simply means I was in San Antonio when I saw it.

Several years ago, we published an article entitled "The Star of Bethlehem" in *Messianic Perspectives* where we discussed this and other, related questions. To access it, just go to our online archive (at cjfm.org), click on "resources," and select the Nov-Dec 2014 issue. Feel free to print a copy for your friend. 

Fruit from the Harvest

A Different Arrow

Richard Hill, CJFM representative (Las Vegas) and pastor of Beth Yeshua Messianic Congregation and his team recently arranged an evangelistic sortie at a worldwide Archery Shoot in Las Vegas. More than 3,500 archers attended, and hundreds of booths were set up by organizations and businesses selling their respective wares. A number of these booths were run by Jewish Israeli individuals. Since Rich and his volunteers were wearing "I Love Israel – Jesus Loves You" T-shirts, they attracted a lot of attention. Rich had the privilege of sharing the Gospel message with two Jewish Israelis. "L," especially, was very interested in learning about Messianic Judaism and the center of their worship—Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus the Messiah. She was surprised that they engage in water immersion (mikveh), observe Shabbat and celebrate the Feasts of Israel. She asked Rich a number of questions and was genuinely interested until a rude sales colleague purposely interrupted them. However, Rich praises the Lord for their conversation and that she heard and listened to the Good News. Please pray for L's salvation.

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth, it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

No Accident

CJFM representative Ruth Nessim (Israel) has had numerous opportunities to share with her Muslim plumber. Following his last bathroom repair, Ruth had not heard from him for several months, until he suddenly called and asked if he could stop in to see her. Five minutes later, he was at Ruth's door and began pouring his heart out over one of his sons. He told Ruth, "When all goes well, we forget God, and when trouble comes, we start to pray." He then proceeded to pray Psalm 23 in Hebrew. Ruth was able to encourage him, and at the end of a long conversation he let her pray for him and thanked her—that he had learned a lot from her. Ruth asks, "Pray for this man who spent 12 years in a Christian school, and then met me and heard the Gospel again 40 years later in a Jewish home. I told him it was no accident that God brought him to my home as a plumber."



© iStockphoto.com



by Violette Berger

And Also for the Greek

Violette Berger, CJFM representative/staff writer (Phoenix) and *Tikvah BaMidbar* (Hope in the Desert) celebrated their 25th Annual Citywide Passover Seder at the Orange Tree Golf Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, this year. “I always arrive early to review the program with the staff, when I noticed an early arrival sitting at the table by himself. He was a young East Indian man who told me that he was on a spiritual journey—seeking God. We discussed the polytheistic religions of India, and he shared that he had never been to a Passover Seder. He had been invited by a Christian man who was mentoring him and challenging him to consider Jesus. But he still was not sure. When we ended our conversation, I told him that I prayed today would be the day of his salvation. And, PTL, it was!! At the end of the Seder, David Wimbley, one of the leaders, gave an invitation and this bright, young man prayed to receive Jesus as his Lord and Savior, along with another individual. We thank God for the salvation of two souls that we know of, and for everyone who attended (250 people) and heard for the first time that Jesus is indeed the promised Passover Lamb of God. An Israeli Jewish woman who attended a Messianic Seder for the *first time* said that she found it ‘very interesting.’ Please pray that the seeds that were planted may come to fruition.”

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

Passing it On

Michelle Beadle, CJFM Southeast representative (New Orleans) has shared Passover presentations numerous times in local churches. On one such occasion, a woman who attended became very interested in Jewish evangelism and began supporting Michelle’s ministry. A few years later, this woman’s son began dating a Jewish woman. She became acquainted with her son’s girlfriend, had many conversations with her about Yeshua (Jesus), and had an opportunity to share the Gospel message. Eventually, the young lady prayed with her to receive Jesus as her Messiah. She then invited her and her son to attend Michelle’s annual springtime event—an

“Abbreviated Messiah in the Passover Model Seder.” It was the first time the Jewish woman heard about Jesus in a Jewish context and also had the opportunity to meet other Jewish believers in Jesus. She exchanged contact information with Michelle and has been meeting with her for weekly discipleship Bible study. Michelle asks that we pray for this young lady (and her boyfriend), that she will remain strong in the Lord and grow in wisdom. She has also discussed with Michelle her desire for immersion, but wants to wait until her out-of-town family visits her in New Orleans. Michelle also asks that we join her in “praying that the family would be open to witnessing her immersion and to hearing about their Messiah—that they would come and also embrace the same faith in Yeshua.”

Van Attack

Jenya Drazman, CJFM Canadian Office Manager (Toronto) writes: “On April 23, 2018, a rented van mounted a sidewalk on Yonge Street in Toronto, killing 10 people and injuring 16. The carnage went on for about a mile, affecting hundreds who witnessed the attack. It is a busy stretch, which includes many businesses and pedestrians. I live in this neighborhood and the CJFM Canadian office is also close by. Shortly afterwards, I was asked to help out with mobilizing forces among the Christian community. We called ourselves, ‘We Love Willowdale,’ after the name of our neighborhood. We organized a walk to ‘reclaim Yonge Street,’ and thousands of people showed up, including the mayor, the premier, and the prime minister. Now the city is including us in planning a permanent memorial and special event for the community in remembrance of the victims. In addition to the help made available, a few of us have taken it upon ourselves to offer support and comfort by visiting some of those who witnessed the attack and tried to help the injured, and to also follow up on grieving families. It will provide opportunities to share the Gospel as well. May God use this unprecedented tragedy for believers to get involved and be the hands and feet of Yeshua!”

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:15a)



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