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

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GOD HAS A PLAN

THE ONGOING PLACE OF ISRAEL IN GOD'S REDEPTIVE PLAN [ROMANS 9–11]

By Dr. Tim M. Sigler

Many believers in Jesus are unaware or unaffected by the fact that they believe in a Jewish Messiah, who came from—and is returning to—the people and Land of Israel. According to the way some Christians explain the Bible's grand scheme, "Israel rejected her Messiah, salvation has spread to the Gentiles, end of story."

SECOND IN A THREE-PART SERIES

However, upon closer examination of God's redemptive plan as explained by Paul in Romans 9–11, there is not only a past for the people of Israel, but a future as well. Far from obscuring Israel's role in God's plan for the redemption of mankind, Paul sees the Jewish people as central to a correct understanding of the Gospel.

This is why we are testing the claim made in part one of our three-part series that a Gospel that obscures the story of Israel will soon obscure the story of Jesus. It's a claim that may sound outrageous to some believers in Jesus. But upon examination of Romans 9–11, it is difficult to deny that Paul is arguing for a continuation of the role of ethnic Israel—the Jewish people—in God's redemptive plan. In fact, it is impossible to fully appreciate the Gospel without appreciating the role of Israel. In the Romans 9 study, we learned about

Israel's past election. Now, in part two, we examine Romans 10, which explains **Israel's present rejection** and assures us that such is consistent with Jewish history. In our next issue we will outline the nature of **Israel's future reception** that will encourage us that the current rejection is only temporary according to Romans 11. We will see that God is far from being finished with Israel. He has a plan to bring His salvation full circle—from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the uttermost parts of the earth, and back to Israel again.

Picking up Paul's argument in Romans 10, we see that Israel's rejection of the Gospel is consistent with how the nation related to the various prophets that God sent throughout biblical history. The prophets were not particularly popular people within ancient Israel. It was often their job to critique the majority culture and to speak God's truth in a way that was pointed and immediately relevant. Israel's prophets called the people on their shortcomings, and were often not appreciated for doing so. In fact, when God called some of the prophets, He let them know their future in advance. To paraphrase: "I'm sending you out to speak for Me, but the people will not want to hear you. They will not respond well. Your message will be rejected, and so will you" (see Isaiah 6:8-10, Jeremiah 1:4-19, and Ezekiel 2:3-5).

In terms of Jewish history, Jesus is in very good company. His treatment was consistent with the way the prophets were treated. And just as the prophetic messages of Israel's

SEND

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GOOD THINGS!"

(ROM. 10:15)

judgment were not the prophets' final words, so Israel's current rejection of the Gospel is not the last chapter in God's redemptive plan. Israel's rejection of the Gospel, and God's rejection of Israel, is only indicative of her *present* situation. In the end, God has a plan to receive His people whom He chose—the focus of our next study, Romans 11.

Paul's Desire for Israel, The Jewish People

For now, I invite you to open your Bible and follow along as we study Romans 10. In speaking about the Gospel, and its overwhelming rejection by the Jewish people, Paul is quick to affirm his evangelistic zeal: "*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved*" (v. 1). So when we speak about this delicate subject, we want to frame our opinions and attitudes toward the Jewish rejection of the Gospel with the same concern that Paul did. Unfortunately, throughout history Christians have made many negative, venomous, hateful statements about the Jewish rejection of Jesus. But learning from Paul, we see that the only reason he introduces this provocative issue is that he desires and prays for the salvation of his brothers, the Jewish people.

Reasons for the Jewish Rejection of Jesus (10:1-3)

Apart from the disciples and the handful of other followers of Jesus, why did most Jews reject Jesus' claims to messiahship? Paul suggests a reason: "*For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge*" (v. 2). Zeal is an important word, used to denote heat, passion, or fervency. Certainly, the Jewish people's first-century spiritual leaders were zealous for various causes—the *Torah*, circumcision, the festivals, the Temple, ritual purity, etc. But, as Paul states, this zeal for God was not in accordance with knowledge. One dilemma that hindered the Jews from receiving Jesus included their overall lack of awareness of God's ultimate plan for sending the Messiah and who this Messiah would be.

Another barrier to accepting Jesus' message is self-righteousness. Paul explains, "*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God*" (v. 3). Some approaches to *Torah* observance caused pride in imagined success. Of course, this is not solely a Jewish temptation. You can conduct your own man-on-the-street interview: "Do you plan to go to Heaven?" Most people who believe in God and Heaven will express some affirmative expectation: "Well, I hope so." Of course, you could follow-up by asking them, "Why do you hope or think you are going to Heaven?" For many, the predictable answers will include, "I'm trying to be a good person, I treat other people with kindness, I go to church, etc." Notice what all these answers have in common: the first person pronoun "I." And this is a universal problem with mankind. In understanding the Gospel, we have to be reminded that it is simply a message about God and it is a message about His plan for humanity. It's a message about His Son who did the work; and it is a message that is to be accepted, or rejected.

So the reasons for the Jewish rejection of the Gospel can be in many ways very similar to the reasons for anyone's rejection of the Gospel. There can be religious zeal without knowledge (see Verse 2). There can be a sense of self-righteousness without experiencing God's righteousness (see Verse 3a). And there can be pride in imagined success (see Verse 3b).

While such responses may describe any religious person's feelings, they are particularly true of Israel because of the unique revelation the nation has received. Israel is unique among all people because God gave them the adoption as sons, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the Temple service, the patriarchal fathers—and it was from them that the



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Dr. Gary Hedrick, *Editor in Chief*
Rachel Zanardi, *Editor/Designer*



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Messiah came (see Romans 9:4-5). Thus, while all of these things are unique to Israel, in some way they contribute their knowledge-deficient zeal for God—their deficient knowledge of the Messiah.

The Remedy for Their Rejection (10:4-17)

Thankfully, Paul spells out God's remedy for the Jewish rejection of Jesus. Simply put, the remedy to Israel's rejection will come in their reception of Jesus as God's plan of salvation. He states:

For [Messiah] is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring [Messiah] down from above) or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring [Messiah] up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him (vv. 4-12).

Here, Paul provides one of the clearest explanations of the Gospel in all of Scripture, and invites people to know exactly how to respond. Notice the key verse, "... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (v. 9). This calls for a somewhat simple response: admitting our inability to save ourselves, believing that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead, and then calling on God for salvation.

Notice this clear call for a personal response to the Gospel—especially in light of Paul's discussion of divine election in Romans 9. There, Paul was focusing on God's part in salvation, dependent on His selective process, and His plan for redemption throughout all the ages. Yet, Paul holds in tension God's selective process *and* God's call to personal response to the Gospel. God uses both His divine, selective choice, *and* the clear call to believe and respond in faith. In no way was the apostolic message simply that if you are elect, you will be in Heaven one day, so don't worry about the details! The apostles' message was clear as they called people to believe, confess, and repent—all are terms that relate to the concept of saving faith.

This personal responsibility is divinely required, without distinction between Jews and Gentiles (see Romans 10:12). Again, Paul is not saying that there is no longer *any* distinction between Jews and Gentiles. He is simply stating that there is no difference in the way that they are saved. Similarly, Paul explains in Galatians 3:28 that, "*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].*"

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION (10:4-12)

1. Admit your own inability (10:4-7).
 2. Believe the Gospel message (10:8-10).
Messiah died in your place.
Messiah was raised to give you life.
 3. Call on God to save you (10:11-12).
-

In these passages Paul is not saying that there are *no distinctions* between people who are enslaved and people who are masters. Certainly, any slave in Paul's audience would raise his hand and quickly object, "Wait a minute! Let me explain some of the distinctions." Likewise, Paul is not claiming that *no distinctions* exist between males and females. Any visit to a hospital obstetrics floor would remind us that there is still a distinction between male and female. Further, in God's redemptive plan, we know that there is a distinction between Jew and Gentile because certain promises are yet to be fulfilled in God's reception of the Jewish people (see Romans 11). In this way, God still has

PREACH

HOW THEN SHALL THEY CALL ON HIM IN WHOM THEY HAVE NOT BELIEVED? AND HOW SHALL THEY BELIEVE IN HIM OF WHOM THEY HAVE NOT HEARD? AND HOW SHALL THEY HEAR WITHOUT A PREACHER?

(ROM. 10:14)

HEAR

SO THEN FAITH COMES
BY HEARING, AND
HEARING BY THE WORD
OF GOD.

(ROM. 10:17)

a way that He is distinguishing between Jew and Gentile. But with respect to salvation, all people—male and female, bond and free, Jew and Gentile—are called to respond in the same way in faith toward the Gospel message.

The “End” of the Law (10:4)

“For [Messiah] is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (v. 4). But what does Paul mean by the phrase, “the end of the law”? Is Jesus the *termination* of the Law? In this view, the Law was God’s plan by which He was working with the Jewish people, and upon the Messiah’s arrival this plan was terminated. An alternative view suggests that the word *end* here means the *goal* of the Law. In this view, the Law was pointing to the Person and work of Jesus. The Greek word here is *telos*, and it can be used to speak of an ultimate goal. Elsewhere, Jesus is clear that He did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it (see Matthew 5:17). He is the ultimate *culmination* of all to which the Law pointed, not its *termination*.

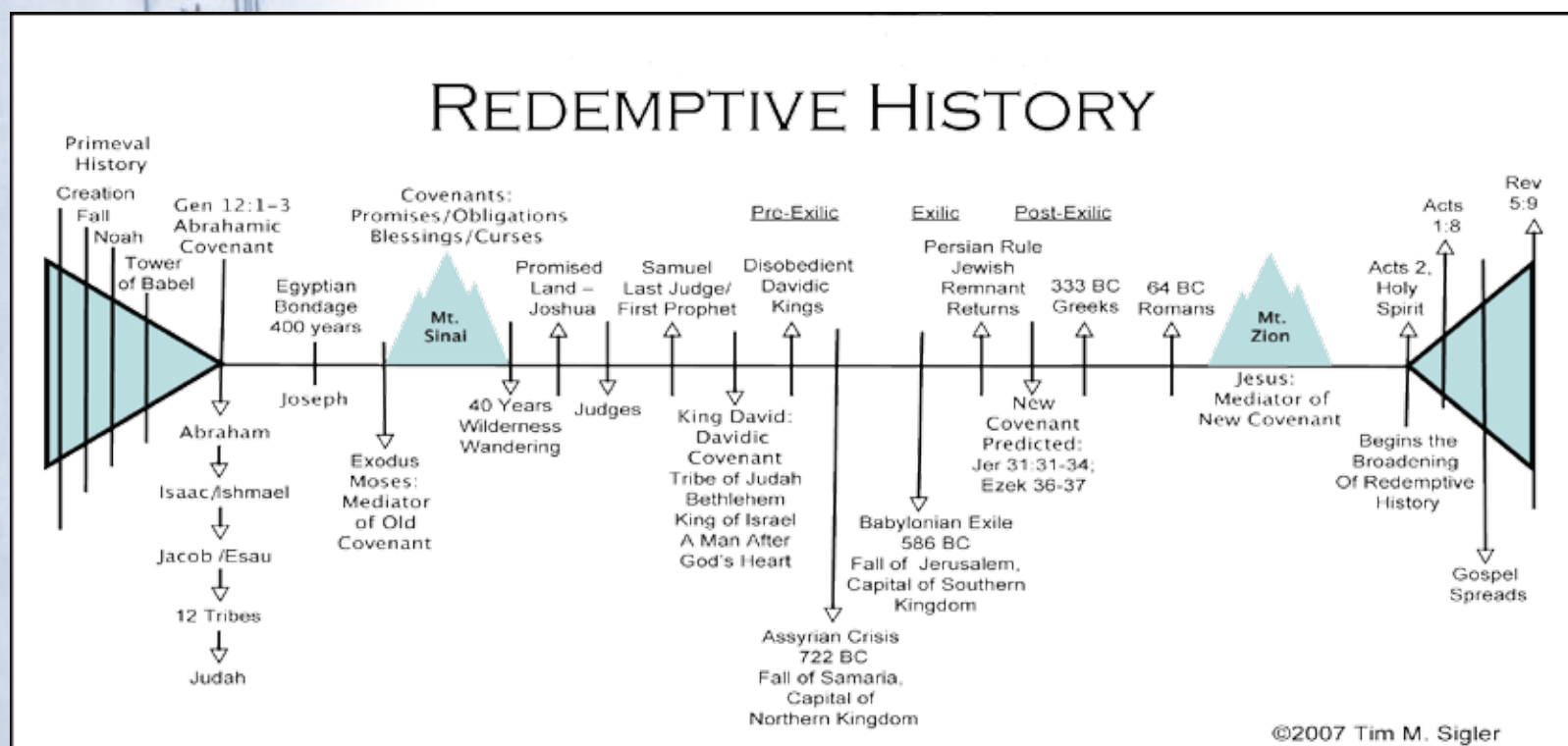
Further, the Book of Hebrews is not telling the people of Israel, “No longer read things in the *Torah* that Moses gave.” Instead the Book of Hebrews is saying, “Look at how Jesus is the ultimate goal to which everything in the *Torah* pointed!” The sacrificial system, the Levitical priests,

Moses, Sinai—all of those experiences—were pointing to the need for and fulfillment of God’s plan, found in the Person and the work of Jesus the Messiah. He is our sacrifice for sins. He is our High Priest. Just as Moses was the mediator of the covenant at Mount Sinai, so Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant, ratified at Mount Zion (see Hebrews 12:18-24).

God’s Plan for the Spread Of Salvation (10:13-17)

For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has believed our report?” So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (10:13-17).

Five verbs spell out the divinely established sequential process of evangelization and response: **send, preach, hear, believe, and call**. One can easily notice





the logical progression in Paul's argument. The ultimate response to the Gospel is found in "calling" on the name of the Lord (see Verse 13). But before this response, a person has to be provided with something to which he or she can respond. God's plan is that people would be *sent*; and Paul, a missionary himself, is familiar with being the one who was sent. In the Book of Acts we learn about his missionary journeys, and although Paul's Epistle to the Romans was long, he normally sent shorter ones to the churches he visited—like Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians—letters that were often four to six chapters long.

The Book of Romans is the *one* exception—it is 16 chapters long—and is a letter to the believers at Rome whom he had never visited. It was his desire not only to explain the Gospel, but also to enlist the citizens of this world-class, gateway city to join him on his missionary enterprise to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. When Paul realized that he was not going to be able to take the Gospel everywhere himself, he wrote the Book of Romans to encourage the people at Rome: "You do it." And how should you do it? Well, people need to be *sent*. When they are sent, they need to *preach* so people will *hear*. God will work faith into them as they hear, and what will be the response? They will *believe*. And in believing, they will *call* on the name of the Lord for salvation.

Among both Jews and Gentiles, this plan of salvation continues today. This is the plan, but notice how Verse 16 begins—with the word, "But." That's the way it will normally work with most people, *but* they—now speaking again of the Jewish people—did not all heed the Good News. You see, Paul left off with Isaiah 52:7 that says, "*How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, . . .*" Just as God predicted to Isaiah when He called him in Isaiah 6:9-10, ". . . 'Go, and tell this people:

'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' 'Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed'"—sure enough, they did not. And, this is what Paul says, "*But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'LORD, who has believed our report?'*" (Rom. 10:16). To politely answer Isaiah's question, "Not too many." He would not have been asking this if he had started a megachurch. He would not have asked this if there had been an overwhelmingly positive response to his message. Isaiah was looking for some encouragement: "Who has believed our report?" So, Paul says in Romans 10:17, "*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" This is how people hear; this is how people believe. Sadly, however, though Israel *heard*, she would not *believe* nor *call* (see Verses 16-17).

... Jesus is clear that He did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it. He is the ultimate *culmination* of all to which the Law pointed, not its *termination*.

The Results of Israel's Rejection (10:18-21)

Here, we find the results of Israel's rejection. If you have a study Bible that indicates when there is a quotation from the Old Testament, you can easily see three citations from the Old Testament in this section. In other words, Paul is citing the authority of Old Testament Scripture, especially for the benefit of any Jewish audience that might be in the church of Rome. Paul is not introducing anything that God did not already spell out in Israel's Scriptures. Paul draws from each section of the Hebrew Bible (the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings) information that confirms his message. In other words, from the Psalms, from the *Torah*, and from the Prophets, Paul will now quote and let his audience know that

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SAYS, "LORD, WHO
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REPORT?"

(ROM. 10:16)

CALL

FOR “WHOEVER
CALLS ON THE NAME
OF THE LORD SHALL
BE SAVED.”
(ROM. 10:13)

his message is in keeping with previous revelation.

In explaining the results of the Jewish rejection of the Gospel, Paul asks, “*But I say, have they not heard? . . .*” (v. 18). Perhaps the Jewish people reject the Gospel because they have never heard it. Is that it? However, he continues, “Yes, they have heard.” He also cites a Psalm of David, “. . . *Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the end of the world*” (v. 18). Clearly, a failure to hear is not the problem.

In Romans 10, Paul continues to employ this approach of absolving the Jewish people of their rejection of the Gospel. “*But I say, did Israel not know? . . .*” (v. 19). Well, maybe they heard, but they failed to understand. No, a lack of understanding is not the problem. Citing the words of Israel’s great law-giver, Paul says, “. . . *First Moses says: ‘I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.’*” (v. 19; see Deuteronomy 32:21). In other

words, it was always God’s plan to make Jews jealous by using Gentiles. Paul concludes this line of reasoning by quoting one of the nation’s greatest prophets: “*But Isaiah is very bold and says: ‘I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me’*” (v. 20).

Paul is applying this truth to the Gentiles. Consider the difference between the question asked today, and the one asked in the Book of Acts. Today, some Christians ask, “Are you sure Jewish people can believe in Jesus?” In the Book of Acts, early Jewish



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believers were asking, “Are you sure that Gentiles can believe in the Jewish Messiah?” This explains why Paul—quoting Isaiah—states, “*I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me*” (Rom. 10:20; see Isaiah 65:1). God told Isaiah

Paul draws from each section of the Hebrew Bible . . . from the Psalms, from the *Torah*, and from the Prophets. As he quotes, he lets his audience know that his message is in keeping with previous revelation.

that the pagans—those who believed in many gods, those who were idol worshipers, those who were outside the Land of Israel, those who were scattered in spiritual darkness—those pagans found Him. “. . . *I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me*” (v. 20). The Gentiles found God’s salvation.

But how did pagan Gentiles come to know the God of Israel? Just as Paul explained in Verses 14 and 15, someone was sent who preached; and they heard, they believed, and they called. Sadly, however, Isaiah’s words remind us that Israel had all of this

THE ARGUMENT OF ROMANS

Condemnation	Justification	Sanctification	Dispensation	Application
Chapters 1—3	Chapters 4—5	Chapters 6—8	Chapters 9—11	Chapters 12—16

It was (Paul's) desire not only to explain the Gospel, but also to enlist the citizens of this world-class, gateway city to join him on his missionary enterprise . . .

revelation, but they did not call. And yet, this was all a part of God's plan. And this explains why even as Paul is speaking of this positive response about the Gospel within pagan, Gentile lands (see Verses 19-20), he returns to the subject of Israel's rejection of the Gospel. "But to Israel he says: 'All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people'" (v. 21; quoting Isaiah 65:2). In other words, I was found by the pagans, but my people Israel were contrary and disobedient to the truth I had given them. And thus Paul concludes his argument, speaking about the results of Israel's rejection: Israel is guilty (see Verse 18), Israel is set aside (see Verses 19-20), and yet Israel is still invited to be saved (see Verse 21).

God is still stretching out His hand to His people. Paul concludes the chapter by restating the same evangelistic desire

with which he began: "... 'All day long I have stretched out my hands' . . ." (v. 21)—a series of words that speaks of God's patience with His people.




Tim M. Sigler, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Hebrew and Biblical Studies at Moody Bible Institute. If you would like to schedule Dr. Sigler to speak to your group, please contact CJF Ministries. Dr.

Sigler often addresses issues related to Israel and the Middle East conflict, the feasts of Israel, Jewish culture, the Land of the Bible, and biblical archaeology.


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4 Seas
TOUR
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SEA OF GALILEE
DEAD SEA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
RED SEA



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CHRISTIAN RESPONSES TO THE JEWISH REJECTION OF JESUS

Sadly, the Church's history reveals a story of impatient responses to the Jewish rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. While most Christians find it absolutely shocking to learn of the statements made by early Church fathers, Reformers, and modern theologians regarding the Jewish people, their words provide a sad testimony to the legacy of Christian anti-Semitism.

Justin Martyr (c. AD 100-165)

This early Christian philosopher and teacher debated leading thinkers of his day and wrote apologetic works in defense of the Christian faith. In one of his famous works—written between AD 138 and 161, and entitled *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*—he makes the following shocking and misguided statements:

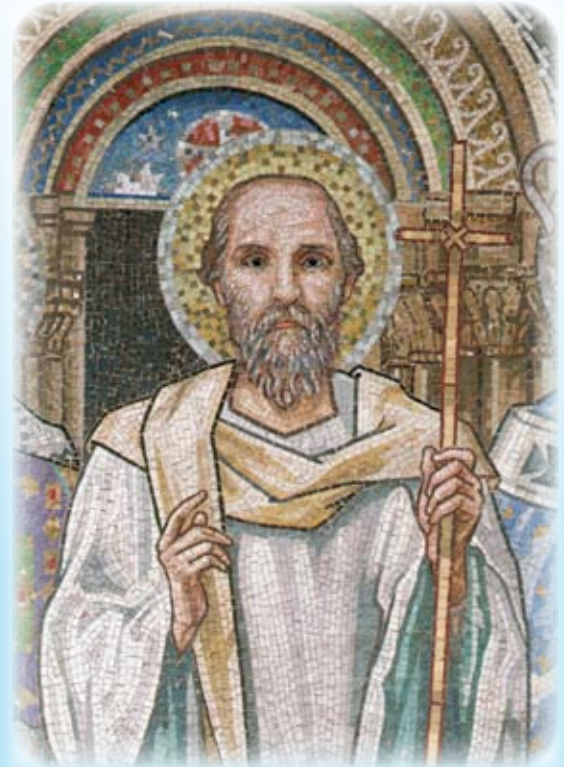
For we too would observe the fleshly circumcision, and the Sabbaths, and in short all the feasts, if we did not know for what reason they were enjoined you—namely, on account of your transgressions and the hardness of your hearts.¹

For the circumcision according to the flesh, which is from Abraham, was given for a sign; that you may be separated from other nations, and from us; and that you alone may suffer that which you now justly suffer; and that your land may be desolate, and your cities burned with fire; and that strangers may eat your fruit in your presence, and not one of you may go up to Jerusalem.²

John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (c. AD 347-407)

This early Christian teacher's preaching ability earned him the name, Chrysostom (from the Greek words *chrysos* "golden," and *stoma* "mouth"). Unfortunately, he zealously discouraged Jewish Christians to live as Jews. Eight of his sermons were filled with abusive rhetoric and *ad hominem* attacks that contributed to the rise of anti-Semitism among Christians:

I should say that the spot where the synagogue is, is less worthy of honour than any inn. For it's not only a resting place for robbers and cheats, but also for demons, which holds not only for the synagogues but also for the very souls of the Jews.³



Tell me, if someone had killed your son, could you bear to lay eyes on them? Could you bear to listen to their greeting? Wouldn't you avoid them as you would an evil spirit, as the devil himself? The Jews killed the Master's Son . . .⁴

Martin Luther (AD 1483-1546)

Great Reformation heroes were also not above venomous statements regarding the Jewish rejection of Jesus. Michael L. Brown, in *Our Hands Are Stained With Blood*, situates Martin Luther as kindly as possible by stating that as a result of the recovery of the Gospel of grace, Martin Luther hoped that the Jews would recognize its truth and convert *en masse*. But when it was evident that there was not to be an overwhelmingly positive response to the Gospel among the Jewish people, and "when Luther was old and sick, and after seeing some blasphemous anti-Christian literature written by Jewish pens, he had a change of heart: 'what shall we Christians do with this damned, rejected race of Jews.'"⁵ If that were not enough, he offered a solution—a diabolical solution that was eventually enacted centuries later:

First, to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder on them. . . . Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed. . . . Third, I

advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them. . . . Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden

When asked his thoughts on what was needed by the friends of Israel, (Robert Murray M'Cheyne) replied, "more tears."

to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb. . . . Fifth, I advise that safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews. For they have no business in the countryside, since they are not lords, officials, tradesmen, or the like. Let them stay at home. . . . Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them and put aside for safekeeping. . . . Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow, as was imposed on the children of Adam. . . . Therefore, in any case, away with them!

In brief, dear princes and lords, those of you who have Jews under your rule—if my counsel does not please you, find better advice, so that

you and we all can be rid of the unbearable, devilish burden of the Jews, lest we become guilty sharers before God in the lies, the blasphemy, the defamation, and the curses which the mad Jews indulge in so freely and wantonly against the person of

our Lord Jesus Christ, his dear mother, all Christians, all authority, and ourselves.⁶

Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813–1843), a missionary to the Jewish people, provided a welcome contrast to many of the responses to the Jewish rejection of Jesus throughout Church history. When asked his thoughts on what was needed by the friends of Israel, he replied, "more tears."⁷ Likewise, Michael Brown remarks:

"More tears" is the urgent need on behalf of the Jewish people in the State of Israel today. "More tears" must flow from the Church's eyes before tears of repentance, and then tears of joy, will flow from Israel's eyes. God grant us more tears!

We must weep and lament because of the sins of our "Christian" forefathers against the Jewish people. But we must also weep for the Jewish people themselves; they are like sheep without a shepherd.⁸

Such a plea resonates with Paul's words in our study of Romans. "*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved*" (Rom. 10:1). And further, "*I tell the truth in [Messiah], I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart*" (Rom. 9:1-2).

¹ Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 1:203.

² Ibid., 202. See also, Thomas B. Falls, *St. Justin Martyr Dialogue with Trypho* (Rev. ed., by Thomas P. Halton; ed., Michael Slusser; Washington DC: Catholic University Press, 2003), 18.

³ Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom The Early Church Father* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 156. See Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century* (1983; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2004).

⁴ Ibid., 163.

⁵ Michael L. Brown, *Our Hands Are Stained With Blood: The Tragic Story of the "Church" and the Jewish People* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1992), 14.

⁶ Martin Luther, *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen* ("On the Jews and their Lies," Wittenburg, 1543), in Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, eds., *Luther's Works*, 55 vols., (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1955-1986), 47:268-274. See also Gerhard Falk, *The Jew in Christian Theology: Martin Luther's Anti-Jewish Vom Schem Hamphoras, Previously Unpublished in English, and Other Milestones in Church Doctrine Concerning Judaism* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1992). Thankfully, there are many Lutherans who love the Jewish people today, and regret that Martin Luther ever said these hateful things. In 1983, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod issued a statement disavowing Luther's anti-Semitic comments, as did the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on April 18, 1994. See their respective websites for these documents at lcms.org and elca.org.

⁷ Brown, *Our Hands Are Stained With Blood*, 99. Citing Andrew A. Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (1966; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 192.

⁸ Ibid.



Bible Questions AND Answers

By DR. GARY HEDRICK

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QUESTION: *We subscribe to a dozen or more religious publications and enjoy all of them—but Messianic Perspectives is our favorite by far. Your articles are so balanced and informative, it's like a breath of fresh air. Our only concern is that sometimes you quote Jewish sources, like the Talmud, in your teaching. We have heard that these ancient rabbinic sources are unreliable. If that's true, why do you use them? Shouldn't you only use the Scriptures?*

ANSWER: Scripture is always our final authority, and we make that clear in our teaching ministry. However, that doesn't mean we shouldn't refer to other historical or religious sources when they are helpful. In fact, did you know that the New Testament itself refers to extra-biblical Jewish sources?

Let us first discuss what the term “extra-biblical” means, and how it differs from the term “unbiblical.” The difference is simply this: Something that's unbiblical contradicts the Bible, while something that's extra-biblical is not found in the Bible, but doesn't contradict the Bible in any way. For instance, if I say, “The Second World War ended in 1945,” I'm making a true statement that contains information not found in God's Word. Therefore, the information is extra-biblical, but it's not unbiblical because it doesn't contradict anything in Scripture.

The Apostle Paul, for example, used an extra-biblical source when he wrote about Jannes and Jambres opposing Moses in ancient Egypt (see 2 Timothy 3:8). Those

two names appear nowhere in the Old Testament Scriptures. So, how did Paul know who they were? As it turns out, Jannes and Jambres are found in other ancient Jewish sources, where they are said to have been two of the magicians who contended with Moses in Pharaoh's court (see Exodus 7:11-12). Jannes, in fact, is named in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Jannes and Jambres appear together in various *Targums* (see “The Jannes-Jambres Tradition in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Its Date” by Lester Grabbe in *Journal of Biblical Literature* [Vol. 98, No. 3; Sept. 1979], pp. 393-401). So, the venerable Apostle obviously accepted the historicity of these names. If the information was spurious, the Holy Spirit surely would have kept Paul from making this error when he penned Scripture. It's also interesting that Paul uses only the names. He says nothing to suggest his acceptance of the rather substantial body of tales and legends that later grew up around the historical figures of these two Egyptian magicians. (For instance, one legend says that Jannes and Jambres later converted to Judaism as a result of the miracles they saw Moses perform—but there is no corroborating evidence for this claim anywhere else.)

It is true that many ancient Jewish sources include folklore, speculation, and legends. Some of them, however, include information that can be illuminating at times—particularly with respect to Jewish history, beliefs, and customs. Paul evidently agreed with us on this point. If we ignore these sources entirely, we are throwing out the baby with the bathwater. So we use the

material that is helpful, and disregard the rest. But our primary authority—and the only source we trust in its entirety—is the Bible itself.

QUESTION: *I love Israel and the Jewish people, and would do anything I could to help them. But, over the years, I have signed up for several pro-Israel, Christian newsletters via email, and now it seems as if I'm being asked to sign a petition, call a politician, or fill out a ballot nearly every day! One preacher says I can save a Jewish child by sending him a donation. Another group wants me to help them keep the Iranian president from obtaining a visa to visit the United Nations (ballot enclosed). Yet another preacher claims that he has found one of the lost tribes of Israel in India, and I should send money so he can care for these needy folks and eventually move them to Israel. It's always something! If I helped everyone, I would have neither the time nor the funds to do anything else. What should I do?*

ANSWER: What a relief—I thought I was the only one who was on all of those crazy mailing lists! Yes, it can be difficult to determine who really needs and legitimately deserves the help. I understand your quandary.

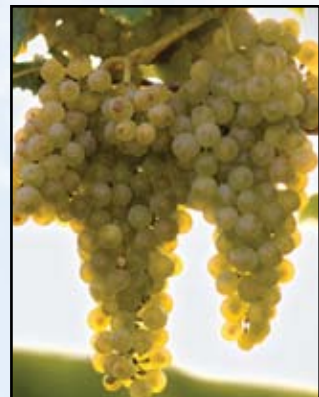
At the very outset, let's make sure we understand the primary guiding principle of NT stewardship—that each Christian is to give as he or she is led by the Holy Spirit. That means no one else dictates how or to whom we should give. Each of us makes that decision in his or her own heart (see 2 Corinthians 9:7). This

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By Violette Berger

Fruit from the Harvest



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The Great Physician Heals a Physician

A CJF Ministries' supporter recently contacted our headquarters in San Antonio inquiring if we had a worker in New Jersey who could visit an acquaintance of hers—an unsaved 95-year-old Jewish doctor.

When referring the contact to our CJFM worker in New Jersey, **Peter Parkas**, it turned out that Peter lives only 40 minutes from the nursing home where Dr. S. was residing. Peter met with Dr. S. a few times, and was moved by the doctor's openness to the Word. Peter shared the Gospel message with him and listened to the doctor's main objection: "How could a loving God have allowed the Holocaust to occur?" Peter responded by telling him, "The Holocaust is a testimony to the depravity of man. God himself suffered His own personal Holocaust when His Son died for the forgiveness of sin. Yeshua is the only way for man to be forgiven." Dr. S. welcomed his discussions with Peter; and since Dr. S. is in a wheelchair, they continued meeting in the nursing home's courtyard. Further discussions ensued concerning the triunity of God, among other objections. Then, one day the Holy Spirit touched Dr. S.'s heart, and he prayed with Peter to receive his Jewish Messiah, Yeshua, as Lord and Savior of his life. And God, the Great Physician, healed the physician, Dr. S.—*spiritually!*

Peter continues to meet with Dr. S. He brought him a large-print Bible and said, "Dr. S. was like a child with a brand-new toy. He had never read the New Testament." Please pray for Dr. S. to grow spiritually and to have fellowship with other believers. Dr. S. also informed Peter that he has a 75-year-old Jewish girlfriend, and invited Peter to go out to dinner with them, as "she, too, needs to hear the Gospel message." Pray for her salvation, "For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

Grace Upon Grace

On a recent trip to India, **John Kanter**, CJFM national ministry representative (Dallas), had the privilege of preaching six times over a seven-day period. He writes, "The highlight of those meetings was an opportunity to preach in a poor, remote rural village—where the people live in palm-branch huts pieced together with mud and manure. Through an interpreter, I presented a simple evangelistic message based on Psalm 23. When I gave an invitation to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior, two people responded." John stood in awe, for despite the profound cultural and language differences, God's grace resounded loud and clear. "We were connected by the Holy Spirit with the mutual understanding that we are all in need of the forgiveness

that only Jesus could give us." John 1:16 says, "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace."

Passover Praises

Michael Campo, CJFM midwest regional director (Chicago), looks back at Passover and remarks, "The Passover season is over; however, its meaning and message will never end." The day after he had led a Passover Seder in a local church, three attendees who witnessed the celebration for the first time made a decision to follow Jesus as their Messiah. Michael writes, "How fitting it happened that day, because Jesus refers to the period after Passover as harvesttime."

"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" (John 4:35). Michael adds, "The Passover never fails, because through the Passover we are reminded that we need salvation!"

CJFM Missionary Richard Hill (Las Vegas) also shares about their sixth annual Passover Seder: "Passover is an amazing feast that points to Jesus through its symbols and elements! The Gospel message is so prevalent." When Richard ended the evening with a call to salvation, five people prayed to receive Jesus. Of those, one was a teenage Jewish boy, "Moishe," who sat between his unsaved Jewish father and his born-again Gentile mother. Richard noted, "While we prayed as a congregation, Moishe held hands with both his father and mother. When I asked for people who had prayed the sinner's prayer to raise their hands, Moishe took his hand out of his father's and raised his up high. Although Moishe didn't notice it, I saw his father's shocked expression. Whether Moishe knew it or not, he had made a bold stand for his newfound faith in Yeshua! Please pray for Moishe's sanctification process and God's protection."

Prison Praises

Leading a regular Bible study in a local prison has been an interesting and challenging ministry for **CJFM Missionary Richard Toviah (Phoenix)**. Through perseverance and the Lord's grace, he has seen changes and a softening of the heart in the three inmates participating in his current Bible study. "Pedro," one of the inmates, recently prayed to receive Jesus as his Lord and Savior. Richard remarks, "Pedro's enthusiasm and eagerness to learn and grow has made it a joy to share the Word during our Bible studies, and has also united us, through the Holy Spirit, to pray for the salvation of 'Steven' and 'John'."

is related to the NT concept of the priesthood of the believer (see 1 Peter 2:5, 9).

Some religious leaders, however, are very clever in their use of emotional manipulation and psychological techniques to attract financial support from well-meaning Christians. And as you point out, there are preachers among our pro-Israel ranks who are quite adept at using these methods. They know very well the love and affection that many Christians have for Israel, and they exploit these sensitivities to their own advantage. One of their most effective methods is to send out a ballot and ask you to vote “for” or “against” some hot-button issue in the Middle East—like, “Should Iran be allowed to develop nuclear weapons?” Well, anyone with even a modicum of common sense knows the answer to that question is, “No.” But the people who send out these ballots know that when you fill yours out and mail it back, there will probably be a check in the envelope—and in many instances, if not most, they’re more interested in the money than your opinion. Now if that bursts your bubble, I’m sorry; but I have to tell you the truth. And the truth is that you are being manipulated when you respond to such methods.

On the other hand, we don’t want to become so cynical that we’re no longer willing to help anyone. So, here are simple guidelines to follow that will help you separate the “wheat” from the “chaff” in the pro-Israel camp. First, when you receive a request for financial help, **be proactive about your stewardship.** Contact the organization and ask some hard questions. For instance, how much of every dollar that’s donated for a specific project goes toward that project? Asking for financial statements is one approach, but financial documents can be confusing and difficult for a layman to interpret. That’s why it is sometimes better simply to ask some blunt questions—like, “Do you use an outside consultant to raise funds?” Many people don’t know that some of the biggest names in the religious world don’t even write their own fund-raising letters! Their letters are carefully composed by “experts” who use Madison Avenue strategies designed to manipulate people into giving. Once in awhile, a consultant will contact our office and request an appointment so he can “evaluate our needs.” We simply tell the person that we trust the Lord to meet our needs, and we prefer to communicate with our donors simply and directly, without any outside “help.” That’s how we’ve been doing it for the past 60 years, and the system seems to have worked pretty well so far.

Second, **ask if the organization is actively involved in Jewish evangelism.** Don’t merely ask if they believe in it; learn what they’re doing about it. This is especially important

in the Christian Zionist movement, because there are preachers and organizations in our midst who say they love Israel but do not believe in sharing the Gospel with Jewish people. They take this position because they are convinced that the Jewish people are already saved by their own covenant with God. John Hagee and his followers call it a “non-conversionary” approach. But a certain Orthodox Jewish rabbi who lived 2,000 years ago disagreed strongly with any such approach—namely, the Apostle Paul (see Romans 10:1ff).

Several of us from CJFM attended a prayer breakfast for Israel at a national Christian conference a few years ago. We sat through nearly three hours of intense programming and music, and some of it was very inspirational and even helpful. But the Lord Jesus was mentioned

only once—and that was in a prayer near the end of the program. Am I the only one who thinks this was a sad, and even tragic, omission? In approaching our Jewish friends, are we called to do anything less than lift up and magnify the Messiah of Israel who loves them and died for them? We shouldn’t be unnecessarily obnoxious or combative about it, certainly, but we should seek to be a faithful witness, nonetheless.

If you’ll ask questions like the ones I suggested, it will go a long way toward helping you determine which requests for support are legitimate. And one more thing—get the answers to your questions in writing. Don’t rely on what someone who answers the phone tells you informally. You need something official on the organization’s letterhead. Once you’ve narrowed the field down to a few good ministries, pray for specific guidance and the Holy Spirit will show you what you should do (see John 16:1-13, Romans 8:14).



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CJF Ministries®

Post Office Box 345
San Antonio, Texas 78292-0345