



A Publication of CJF Ministries and Messianic Perspectives Radio Network

# Messianic Perspectives®

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

Post Office Box 345, San Antonio, Texas 78292-0345

Elul–Tishri–Cheshvan 5770–5771 / September–October 2010

# JEWISH EVANGELISM

THE GREATEST WORK IN THE WORLD  
BY DR. GARY HEDRICK

“You should have been there, Gary! The stadium was packed, and over 300 people responded to the invitation!”

My friend, a Baptist evangelist, had recently returned from a crusade in Africa. Two weeks of meetings and street evangelism had culminated in an open-air service at a gigantic soccer stadium in the capital city. He was bubbling over with excitement about what he had seen the Lord do—and I rejoiced along with him.

Later, however, as I reflected on this conversation, I felt an ever-so-slight twinge of sadness. In Jewish outreach, we don’t fill soccer stadiums in exotic, far-away lands. We don’t see, at one time, hundreds or even dozens of people coming to faith in the Messiah. Our work is on a smaller scale. It’s often slow and sometimes discouraging.

But on this occasion, the Lord spoke to my heart. He reminded me that even though Jewish people aren’t responding to the Gospel in overwhelming numbers, they are responding. The statistics are not large—but that is God’s business, not ours.

It hasn’t always been this way. According to the Book of Acts, the numbers were huge in the beginning. Luke says that in the aftermath of the Resurrection (c. AD

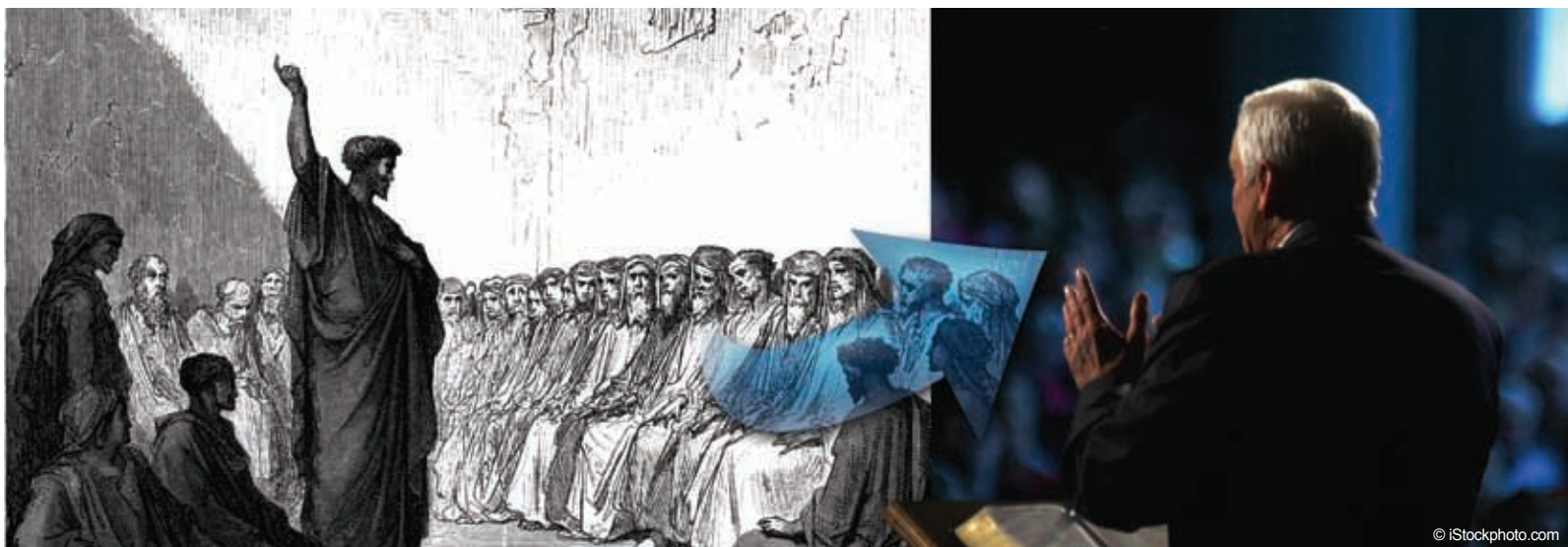
30), there were times when thousands of Jewish people were saved in and around Jerusalem in a single day (2:41; 4:4).

Luke also says that “a great many of the priests” (from the party of the Sadducees) came to faith in those early days (6:7). He doesn’t say what convinced the Sadducees that Yeshua was the Messiah; however, since they were in charge of the Temple priesthood, it may have been something they witnessed in the Holy Place (Matt. 27:50-51).

But as the years passed, Jewish evangelism became more difficult. By the time the Apostle Paul came along (c. AD 40-67), Jewish believers were described as a “remnant” of Israel (Rom. 11:5). A remnant, by definition, is a small number. So Paul was saying that there was a small minority of Jewish believers in the first century—and he was part of that minority.

In the 21st century, the remnant is still relatively small. However, it is growing. In fact, someone has suggested that the percentage of Jewish believers (from within the total Jewish population) may be higher than the percentage of non-Jewish believers (again, compared to total population). I don’t know if that’s true; I do know that there’s a subtle undercurrent of the Spirit’s working among His earthly people, Israel—and it is exciting to see!





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We still acknowledge that, at least for now, the numbers are miniscule compared to the success some missions are having among other, non-Jewish people groups in places like Africa and South America.

In spite of the small numbers, however, I believe that Jewish evangelism is the greatest work in the world. Of course, it's important to reach all people everywhere with the Good News of salvation through Jesus the Messiah. That's a given. But it does not diminish the fact that Jewish outreach is a uniquely fulfilling and particularly strategic work.

## The Five Why's of Jewish Evangelism

Why is Jewish evangelism really that important?

### 1. Because it's close to the heart of God.

Proclaiming the Good News of salvation through God's Son to Jewish people is a cause that's close to His heart.

A core value of messianic evangelism is that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are God's earthly, covenant people (2 Kings 13:23). As such, the Jewish people represent a visible expression on earth of God's faithfulness and His promise-keeping power.

This is why the powers of darkness have always been so intent on

destroying the Jewish people; they've been trying for thousands of years. They almost got it done in the days of Queen Esther, when the evil Haman came troublingly close to wiping out the Jewish bloodline and the messianic promises with it (Esther 7:3-6).

Episodes like the one in Queen Esther's time often leave people wringing their hands in bewilderment and lamenting that they just cannot understand anti-Semitism. Why do people hate the Jews? How can they say and do such horrible things? The answer is simple: anti-Semitism is essentially satanic. Its underlying dynamic is spiritual—not psychological or intellectual. The devil hates the Jewish people because of what they represent. Satan has ways of imparting that hatred to individuals who come under his influence; they become pawns in his quest to rid the world of the "Jewish problem."

However, anyone wishing to do harm to the Jewish people should proceed with extreme caution. They would do well to remember that the Jewish people are beloved of God in spite of their shortcomings.

Some people point to Israel's many sins—up to and including her rejection of the Messiah in the first century—and they say, "See, that's why God has rejected and replaced Israel." However, the Bible says nothing of the sort. In fact, it says something quite different: "*Thus says the LORD: 'If heaven above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out*

*beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel For all that they have done, says the LORD'"* (Jer. 31:37, emphasis added). This is simply another way of saying that no matter what they have done, He will never cast off His people, Israel.

Yes, they were judged for rejecting the Messiah (the nation was utterly destroyed by the Romans in AD 70)—afterward, they were set aside (or "hardened") for two millennia. But in Romans, Paul says that the current hardening of Israel is both partial and temporary (11:25). It's partial because not all Jewish people are hardened against God's message; that is, there's a remnant of Jewish believers. It's temporary because it will end when the last, chosen Gentile has come to faith in the Messiah. That's when God's end-time plan shifts into high gear—and Israel plays a crucial role in that final, climactic scenario.

Remember, even when Israel is in a state of unbelief and disobedience, God still loves her. If you're a parent, don't you still love your children when they're disobedient? Is there anything one of your children could do that would cause you to stop loving him/her? I hope not!

The Prophet Jeremiah underscores this truth when he quotes the Lord as saying that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was "My servant" (Jer. 43:10). This is quite a remarkable statement. His armies came against Israel, decimated the Holy City, killed

## Messianic Perspectives®

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*Messianic Perspectives* is published bimonthly by C.J.F. Ministries, P.O. Box 345, San Antonio, Texas 78292-0345, a 501(c)3 Texas nonprofit corporation: Dr. Gary Hedrick, President; Brian Nowotny, Director of Communications; Rachel Zanardi, Editor; Erastos Leiloglou, Designer. Subscription price: \$10 per year. The publication of articles by other authors does not necessarily imply full agreement with all the views expressed therein. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982). Visit us online at [www.cjfm.org](http://www.cjfm.org). Toll-free OrderLine: (800) 926-5397. © 2010 by C.J.F. Ministries. All rights reserved.



thousands of Jewish people, and forcibly relocated most of the remaining population to Babylon; still, God says Nebuchadnezzar was His servant.

It's not hard to figure out that Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant because he was an instrument of divine judgment on His disobedient people. But a few chapters later, God says that He will repay those same Babylonians for what they did to Israel (Jer. 51:24).

Let that thought sink in for a moment. Why would God punish the Babylonians for doing what they were supposed to do? I can imagine Nebuchadnezzar saying, "Wait a minute, Lord. You said that I was Your servant and that we were doing Your will; now, You say You're going to punish us! How is that fair?"

Here's what Nebuchadnezzar didn't understand: even when the Jewish people are out of fellowship with God, they are still His earthly people and He loves them.

*"For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye'"* (Zech. 2:8).

No wonder the Bible promises a blessing for those who bless Israel and a curse for anyone who curses her (Gen. 12:2-3).

## 2. Because it was a priority of the Early Church.

Throughout his missionary journeys, the Apostle Paul always went "to the Jew first" (Rom. 1:16)—wherever he went. For him, this was not merely a matter of chronology, but one of priority. When he arrived in a new town, the first place he went to share the Good News was the local synagogue (Acts 9:20; 13:5; 14:1; 17:1-2, 10; 18:4, 19; 19:8).

Wayne Brindle writes, "The context of Romans 1:16 is theological, not historical, thus implying something more than mere sequence. The promise of the gospel has a special applicability to Israel" (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, April-June 2002, p. 226).

Hudson Taylor, the renowned 19th-century missionary and founder of China Inland Mission, recognized this "special applicability to Israel." Although his own work had enormous financial needs, and his heart-beat was for China and its people, Taylor nonetheless supported Jewish outreach before he did anything else.



R. A. Higbee

## What's Wrong with the Term "Missionary"?

In a word, nothing.

Nonetheless, we use it sparingly when referring to our workers around the world—especially in Israel. Here's why:

To most of us, a missionary is someone who takes the Good News of Jesus the Messiah to people in desperate need of hearing it. In third-world countries, for instance, missionaries encourage the poor and lift up the downtrodden by telling them that God loves them and sent His Son to die for them. They also help in practical ways by drilling wells so people can have safe drinking water, and by providing medicines and medical care, among other things. A missionary is thought of as a noble, and even heroic, calling. We respect, encourage, support, and pray for our missionaries.

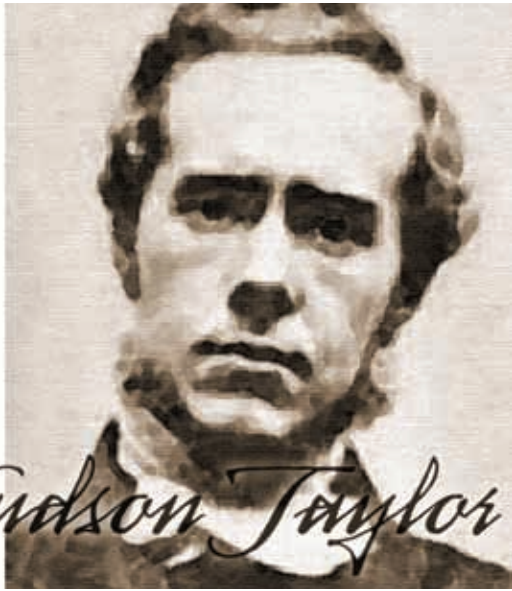
This is not the case in the Jewish community, where the word "missionary" (Hebrew, *misyonery* or מיסיונרי) has a bad connotation—almost like the term Nazi. It reminds Jewish people of periods in their history (like the Catholic Inquisitions) when "Christians" tried to "convert" Jewish people by force—often under the threat of death. (Google the term "Jewish forced conversions" and you'll find a myriad of informative articles about this.)

Furthermore, when a Jewish person hears the term "conversion," he believes it means to change from one thing to another—like converting 110 volts of electrical current into 220 volts, or converting a garage into an apartment. He thinks that if he converts to Christianity, he won't be Jewish anymore. The rabbis reinforce this notion that a Jewish person who becomes a believer in Jesus isn't Jewish anymore. (Sadly, some Christians contribute to the same misconception by insisting that a Jewish person who accepts Jesus must cease any Jewish cultural or traditional practices and begin living as a non-Jew.)

This is why we limit our use of terms like "missionary" and "conversion." We know what these words mean to us; however, they have very different meanings to many of our Jewish friends. We need to be aware of their sensitivities and respect them.

After all, the whole purpose of language is to communicate meaning. A word is only useful if it conveys its intended meaning. This is the singular challenge of sharing the Gospel with not only Jewish people, but with people from all cultures.





On the first day of every year, he sent a generous check to Mildmay Mission to the Jews in London—included on it was a handwritten notation, “to the Jew first.”

Sadly, in many churches and denominations today, “to the Jew first” has become “to the Jew last,” and in some cases, “to the Jew not at all.” In this latter category, there are even people who say that Jesus is for Gentiles, but not for Jews. According to them, Jewish evangelism is unnecessary.

One notable example of this declining emphasis on Jewish evangelism is found in the Anglican-sponsored Church’s Ministry among Jewish People (CMJ). CMJ has been active in Israel (and other parts of the world) continuously since the mid-1800s, making it one of the oldest and most recognizable Jewish outreaches in the world. (Such notable Anglican leaders as William Wilberforce and Lord Ashley Shaftesbury were instrumental in the early development of CMJ’s ministry.) More recently, however, liberal church leaders have been systematically distancing themselves from CMJ’s work. In the 1980s, George Carey became the first archbishop of Canterbury in 200 years to decline patronage (endorsement) of CMJ and its work among the Jewish people.

However, the problem isn’t limited to the more liberal, mainline groups. Even in conservative-evangelical circles, it’s not uncommon to find churches that sponsor missionaries to every conceivable people group—including Asians, Hispanics, Europeans, Africans, and many others—with the exception of the Jewish people. Just look at a church’s missionary budget and that will tell you if its leaders believe in Paul’s priority as expressed in Romans 1:16.

Other groups are more forthright and declare unabashedly that Jewish evangelism is wrong. One jointly issued Jewish-Catholic statement, for instance, says, “Targeting Jews for conversion to Christianity is no longer theologically acceptable in the Catholic Church” (“Reflections on Covenant and Mission,” August 12, 2002).

However, doesn’t the Great Commission say we’re supposed to make disciples of “all the nations,” and shouldn’t that include Israel (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8)?

Didn’t the Lord Jesus himself tell Nicodemus, an observant Jewish leader, that he needed to be born again to see the Kingdom of God (John 3:3)? If being Jewish and attempting to keep the Law wasn’t good enough for Nicodemus, what makes critics of Jewish evangelism think it’s good enough today?

And what caused “great sorrow and continual grief” in Paul’s heart (Rom. 9:2) if it’s true that Jewish people are fine without Jesus? The answer should be obvious: it’s a grave contradiction. The Apostle was grieved over the lost condition of his Jewish kinsmen. Without the Messiah, the Jewish people (in particular, as well as all people in general) are lost like sheep without a shepherd (Zech. 13:7).

Paul clearly said that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile when it comes to salvation (Rom. 10:9-13). Jews and Gentiles alike are all lost and alienated from God—and all of us need salvation and restoration. As they say, the ground is level at the foot of the cross. Rich or poor, male or female, Jew or Gentile—we’re all in the same predicament without Jesus.

The notion that the Good News of salvation through the Messiah isn’t for Jewish people is not only wrong—it’s ridiculous and maybe even a bit diabolical. It turns the Great Commission into the Great Omission, and it grieves the heart of God.

### 3. *Because we have a debt to repay.*

A debt is something we owe due to an obligation or deficit. It represents an amount that needs to be repaid. Indebtedness isn’t a big deal in our culture anymore. If we want something, and we don’t have the money to pay for it, we just use a credit card. And if we can’t pay our credit card bills, we declare bankruptcy.

In the old days, however, debt was serious business. People went to “debtor’s prison” if they couldn’t meet their obligations. Defaulting on a debt was like stealing. Deadbeats were treated like thieves. The Bible has a lot to say about debt. In the Torah, for example, Moses regulates the charging of interest on loans because of the impact of debt on poor people (Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:36).

In the NT, Paul talks about the debt that was created by our inability to keep the Law of God (Col. 2:13-14). He says that God has “forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross” (ESV).

In Luke 7:40-43, the Lord Jesus gives Peter a personal parable about debt. A moneylender, He says, canceled the debts of two people. One of them had a large debt and the other had a small debt. He asks Peter which of the two



debtors will have more love for the one who forgave them. Peter gave the right answer: the one who is forgiven more will love more.

However, one of the most important debts may be the one we owe the Jewish people. We are in their debt because they have given us far more than we have given them. Jesus said, “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). The blessings of salvation came to us through the Jewish people.

In his letter to the congregation at Rome, Paul provides an itemized accounting of this debt: “*who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, [Messiah] came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen*” (Rom. 9:4-5).

Verse 4 lists six specific things that the Jewish people gave the world: (1) the adoption, (2) the glory, (3) the covenants, (4) the giving of the Law, (5) the service of God, and (6) the promises.

In Rabbi Paul’s teaching, we often find an underlying structure—and this verse is one such instance. His list of six items is really three sets of couplets:

1. The adoption	4. The giving of the Law
2. The glory	5. The worship (service) of God
3. The covenants	6. The promises

“The adoption” parallels “the giving of the Law” because it was through the Exodus experience (which led Israel to Sinai, where the Law was given) that God adopted the Jewish people and made them uniquely His people. Adoption is bestowing the status of son or daughter upon someone. Even before the Law was given, God instructed Moses to tell Pharaoh: “*Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD: ‘Israel is My son, My firstborn’*” (Ex. 4:22). Paul builds on this theme in the NT: “*For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’*” (Rom. 8:15).

“The glory” parallels “the service of God” because of their connection to Tabernacle (and later, Temple) worship. “The glory” (Heb., *kavod* or כבוד) was the visible Presence of God among His people, Israel (Ex. 16:7, 10; 40:34; Lev. 9:6, 23; Num. 16:19). Even today, we often refer to our worship times as “services.”



“The covenants” parallels “the promises” because they relate to the commitments God made to Abraham and his posterity (e.g., Gen. 12:2-7; 13:14-17; 15:17-21; 17:1-8; 22:16-18; 2 Sam. 7; 23:5). Each of the biblical covenants includes specific, divine promises.

In Romans 9:5, Paul says that the Israelites gave us “the fathers” (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), and they provided the physical line through which the Messiah came. Then he makes a dramatic statement about the Messiah being “over all, the eternally blessed God.” Hallelujah!

Think of Romans 9:4-5 as the Apostle Paul’s invoice itemizing our debt to the Jewish people. In a sense, we owe them everything. Our heritage as believers in Yeshua has been passed down to us through them.

The people of Israel have blessed us by making it possible for us to know the Messiah; now we can reciprocate by helping them to know Him. That’s how we repay the debt.

#### 4. Because it can “hasten” the Lord’s return.

The Bible says we should be “looking for and **hastening** the coming of the day of God” (2 Peter 3:12). The Greek word for “hastening” here is a form of *spendo*, meaning “to hurry” or “to speed up.”

The term “Day of God,” like “Day of the LORD” (v. 10), is an eschatological term pointing to end-time events leading up to and including the coming Millennial Kingdom.

So, what we have here is a rather remarkable statement that believers can speed up the Lord’s return! Some commentators have tried to explain Peter’s statement in other ways; however, it’s very difficult in either Greek or English to avoid the obvious meaning of the passage: We can speed up the coming of the end-time Day of God.

Although it can have other nuances of meaning, virtually all English translators in the last 400 years have taken *spendo* in this sense:

KJV – “Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God”

NKJV – “Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God”

NLT – “Looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along”

NIV – “As you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming”

ESV – “Waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God”

NASB – “Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God”

Darby – “Waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God”

Tyndale – “Looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God”

How are we to understand this? Well, whenever the Bible talks about events that occur in linear time, it’s important to determine which perspective it’s employing—human or divine (that is, temporal or eternal).

From God’s perspective, of course, the timing of prophesied events is already fixed. He is eternal and transcendent.



## When Will God Reject Israel?

*Thus says the LORD: "If heaven above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel For all that they have done, says the LORD."*

—Prophet Jeremiah, c. 597 BC

Some say that the Jewish people today are no different than anyone else; they forfeited their special calling when they rejected the Messiah 2,000 years ago. But is this really true?

Interestingly, the Bible states certain circumstances under which God might permanently reject His earthly people, Israel. Two of them are found in Jeremiah 31:37.

This verse could be employing hyperbole (a figure of speech that utilizes deliberate exaggeration to make a point); however, its import could just as easily be literal. If that's the case, the two preconditions become all the more intriguing.

**If Heaven above can be measured.** In the 21st century, we can see farther into deep space than ever before. The Hubble Telescope, for instance, has extended our view to a distance of nearly 15 billion light-years (astronomers call this distant region the Hubble Deep Field). Even at this vast distance, we can't see any end to the universe.

Once the Next Generation Space Telescope (NGST) is ready and the aging Hubble retires, astronomers hope to extend that range and catch a glimpse of the outer edge of our space-time universe. But even then, what lies on the other side of this cosmological horizon? Do space and time exist at all outside that bubble?

Scientists admit that they don't know. Ironically, the farther and deeper we are able to see into the universe, the more mysterious it all becomes. One thing is clear: we're not even close to being able to quantify or comprehend the extent of what lies beyond our world. The more our knowledge expands, the more questions we have.

**If the foundations of the earth can be searched out beneath.** Here, the focus shifts downward into the interior regions of our planet. Earth is a sphere (roughly speaking) with a radius at the equator of almost 4,000 miles. The crust of the earth is only about 40 miles thick; the rest (except for a small, central core of solid iron) is churning, red- and white-hot molten rock. (Comparing the earth to a tennis ball, the earth's hardened crust would be like the outer skin of the ball. The air inside the ball would represent the earth's liquid molten interior.) This means that even if you could take a snapshot of the earth's interior, and then analyze its structure, that analysis would be obsolete a split second later because the earth's liquid "foundations" are constantly shifting and changing.

Furthermore, the deepest anyone has ever drilled into the earth is about six and a half miles (think of it as a scratch on the skin of that tennis ball). That's six and a half miles out of a total radius of 4,000 miles—which means we have penetrated less than two-tenths of one percent of the earth's interior. So it's really true that no one can "search out" (the Hebrew term implies a first-hand examination or investigation) the earth's subterranean foundations. The best scientists can do is make theoretical observations based on seismic experimentation and computer models.

Whether it's meant to be taken figuratively or literally, God's point in all of this is that He will never reject Israel. He set the nation aside temporarily during the Church Age; but that's far from a permanent rejection. He loves the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and has a plan for their future:

*"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).*

He created time and He sees all of history—past, present, and future—at once (Rev. 4:8). The Lord Jesus said the Father already knows the day and the hour when He will return (Mark 13:32; see also Acts 17:31).

However, there is also a temporal perspective. As humans, we see life as a series of events. We are limited to living in the present, so we can't see or experience future events until they happen. God, knowing that we can't see what He sees, sometimes graciously provides us with information about the future. We call this information "prophecy."

From a temporal perspective, then, there are certain events that must take place before the Lord returns. And it follows logically that if we do what we can to expedite those things, there's a sense in which we are hastening His return.

One key event that must occur before Yeshua returns is Israel's recognition of Him as Messiah and Savior. Not long before He returned to Heaven, He told the nation, "*For I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'*" (Matt. 23:39).

This messianic cry comes from Psalm 118:26. In Hebrew, it's "*Baruch Haba BaShem Adonai*" (ברוך הבא בשם יהוה). (Adonai replaces YHVH in traditional Jewish usage.) "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!" At Yeshua's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the crowds greeted Him with those words (Matt. 21:9), indicating that many common people believed He was the Messiah. Unfortunately, we find later that the nation's official leadership did not agree (26:57-68).

From a temporal perspective, then, Jewish evangelism is something we can do to speed the Lord's return. As we faithfully sow the "seed" and cultivate the "ground" in Jewish hearts, we are hastening the coming harvest (Rom. 11:26).

### **5. Because it makes us participants in the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham.**

In Genesis 1, the LORD God blessed His creation (v. 22) and saw that it was "good" (vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). Then something horrible happened: Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden and the world fell under a curse (3:1-19). It became, as Milton would later describe, "Paradise Lost." Things changed—and they changed radically. The once-perfect



creation was now marred with death, pain, tragedy, and heartache.

But God didn't give up on us. He immediately went into redemption mode, putting a plan into place that would make it possible for the world to be returned someday to the way it was initially created—and for the original blessing to be restored. At the core of that plan would be a series of covenants God would make with certain, key individuals.

In these covenants, God made specific promises to Abram/Abraham (Gen. 12:2-3, 7; 15:5, 18; 17:4-8; 18:18-19; 22:17-18), Isaac (26:2-4), and Jacob (28:13-15; 35:11-12; 46:3). He also made promises to King David (2 Sam. 7:8-17), and to others (e.g., Moses in Ex. 3:6-8; 6:2-8).

These divine promises include provisions about both physical and spiritual restoration. The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be restored to their Land and to their God. People sometimes ask why such a small piece of "real estate" is so important to the Jewish people. The answer is that their relationship with the Land is intertwined with their relationship to God. The Land represents God's promises to them. It's their inheritance.

The Jewish people are destined to dwell securely and permanently in the Promised Land (Gen. 15:18-21; Jer. 31:40; Amos 9:15)—and that includes all of the Land they were promised rather than the little sliver of land they currently possess (which the United Nations has tried to break up and make even smaller).

In the past, every time they have been restored to the Land (like after the Babylonian Captivity) it was only to be uprooted again. This is how we can be certain that the ultimate fulfillment of this promise—which says that when the Jewish people are ultimately restored to *Eretz Yisrael*, they will never be removed again—awaits a future fulfillment. (The only alternative would be to say that God failed to keep His promise—and that, we may be certain, is impossible.)

*Am Yisrael* (the People of Israel) will also be restored spiritually. God will write His Law on their hearts and their sins will be forgiven (Jer. 31:31-34). This isn't going to happen because God waves a magic wand and saves the nation collectively; it will happen because individual Jewish people (virtually all of them) come to personal faith in the Lord Jesus. When the nation receives Him officially, it will

likely be through the agency of a body similar to the Sanhedrin in the NT (Matt. 26:57-68)—but with a more favorable outcome this time because the council's members will be believers.

These covenants point Israel (and the whole world) to a wondrous and glorious future. However, the Jewish people won't enter into the full realization of these covenant promises until they obey God, repent of their sins, and receive their Messiah, Yeshua of Nazareth (Josh. 1:8; Matt. 23:37-39).

When we share the Good News with Jewish people worldwide, we then become participants in the ultimate fulfillment of those divine promises. We are, in effect, showing the sheep the way back to their Shepherd.

There is nothing we can do that puts us closer to the center of God's will than telling His chosen people about their Messiah.

## The Cycle of Evangelism

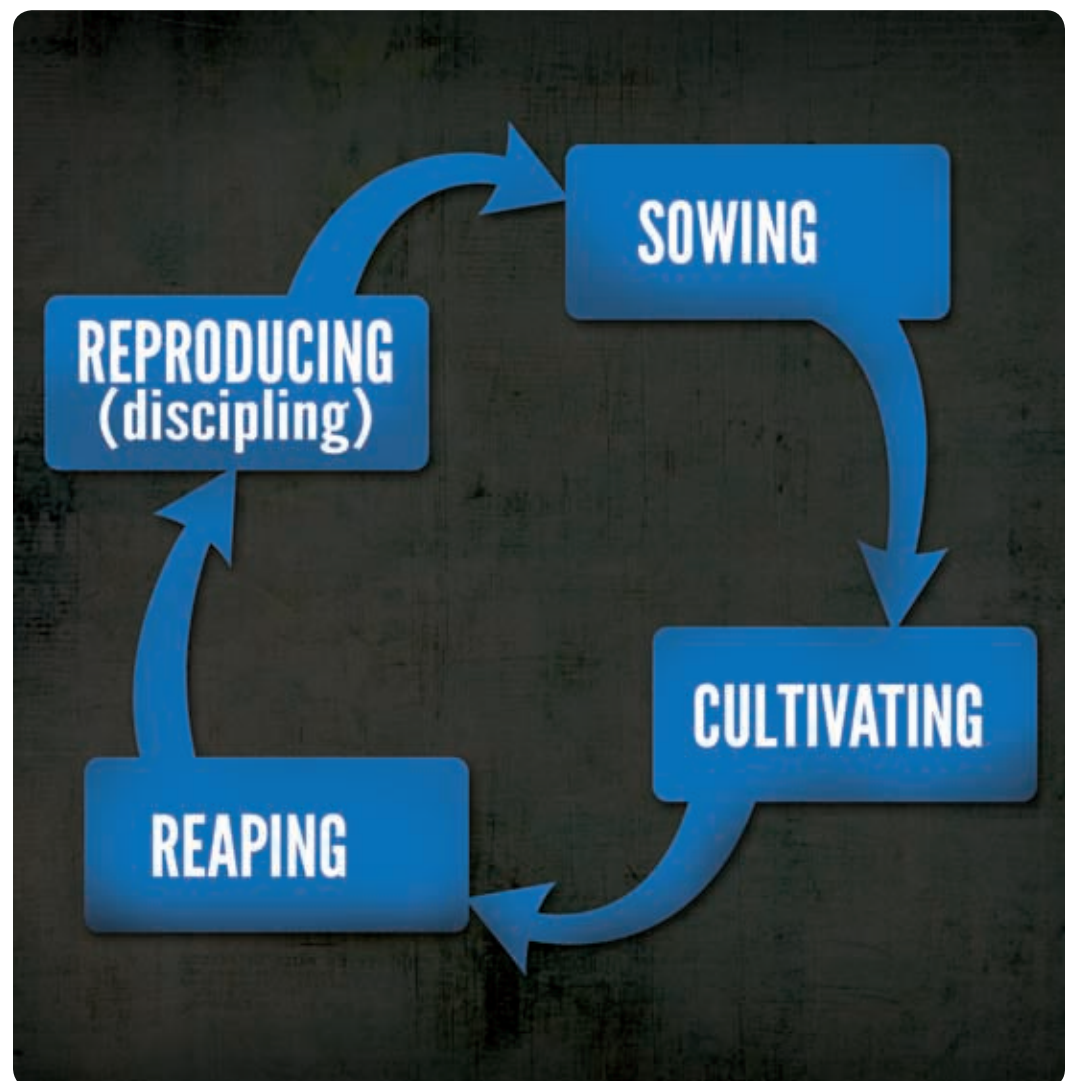
Biblically, evangelism occurs in a cycle (see chart). It begins with sowing, followed by cultivating, reaping, and reproducing (discipling). Then the cycle

repeats itself when new disciples begin sowing the seed of God's word.

We all know that this cycle applies to the evangelization of individuals. However, may we entertain the possibility that it can also apply to the Jewish people collectively, as a nation? A nation, after all, is essentially a collection of individuals. In this case, we're talking about Israel, a people for whom God has a unique plan and purpose.

For centuries, the "valley" of national Israel was dead and dry (Ezek. 37:1-2). Jewish people who believed in Jesus were rare. But in the early 1800s, God began to burden Christians (like Andrew Bonar, who was born in 1810) for the salvation and restoration of Israel. Presbyterians, Anglicans, and other denominations began to organize "societies" for Jewish evangelism. Thus a period of sowing and cultivating began—and it continues to this day.

Today, the messianic (Jewish-Christian) movement is coming into its own and includes many Jewish believers from all over the world. The numbers, however, continue to be relatively small. (The movement has its problems, but so does Christendom.) The





present, growing Jewish remnant is a sort of “first fruits” (James 1:18) before the coming harvest when “all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26).

During the Kingdom Age, the evangelistic cycle will be complete when the people of Israel become a witness to the world and make disciples of all nations (Isa. 66:19).

The next time I see my friend (the Baptist evangelist), I’m going to ask him if, in all of his travels, he’s ever seen or heard of an entire nation coming to faith in Jesus in one day (Isa. 66:8).

It’s not unprecedented; in fact, something similar happened to Nineveh 2,800 years ago (Jonah 3:5). Nineveh, one of the greatest cities in the ancient world and the seat of the mighty Assyrian Empire, was saved because her people received Jonah’s message and repented of their sins.

The Bible says this is what will happen at the end of this age when the Jewish people recognize their Messiah en masse, and come to Him in repentance and faith:

*“And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins’”* (Rom. 11:26-27).

*Dr. Gary Hedrick  
is president of  
CJF Ministries.*



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Gideon Levytam is an Israeli believer in Yeshua (Jesus). He was born in Jerusalem on May 14, 1955, seven years to the day after the founding of the modern state of Israel. According to tradition, Gideon’s ancestors were from the tribe of Levi and fled to Yemen when Solomon’s Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Gideon was in the 1973 Yom Kippur War and later came to faith in Yeshua as a result of his study of the *Berit HaChadashah* (Hebrew New Testament). He now lives in Canada and serves as CJFM’s director of international ministries.





# A Jew Defends Evangelical Christians

by Dennis Prager, *Jewish World Review*  
October 24, 2002 / 18 Cheshvan 5763

Evangelical Christians believe that it is necessary for a person to believe in the Christian savior in order to be saved. According to every liberal I know—Christian, Jew, or other—Jews are supposed to find this theology offensive and frightening. According to liberals, the evangelicals' doctrine that no non-Christians can be saved is so awful that all other evangelical views must be held suspect—even their unique support for Jews and Israel.

I would therefore like to announce, as a practicing, believing Jew, that I am in no way offended, let alone frightened, by evangelical Christians who believe that it is necessary to have faith in Jesus in order to be saved. Why should Jews not be offended by this evangelical Christian belief?

First, since all non-Christians are unsaved, this doctrine is in no way anti-Jewish. It is pro-salvation, not anti-anybody. The evangelical view of who is not saved is applicable, by definition, to all non-Christians. There is, therefore, no reason whatsoever for a Jew to be personally offended. It is no more applicable to Jews than to Hindus. When most evangelicals single out Jews, it is only to support them and Israel, and to reaffirm Jewish chosenness. It takes paranoia, ignorance, and ingratitude for a Jew to join the anti-evangelical critics.

Second, exclusive views of salvation are hardly unique to evangelical Christians. Liberals, of all people, should honor such exclusive views. Don't most liberals think that liberalism is the only way to save America (and don't most conservatives think that of conservatism)? If Christians are intolerant and offensive because they believe they have the only way to salvation in the next life, why aren't liberals intolerant and offensive because they believe they have the only way to salvation in this life? And if Christians must declare that all religions are equally valid paths to salvation, shouldn't liberals have to declare that all political and social doctrines are equally valid paths to America's salvation?

Third, all those who condemn evangelicals for their belief in the necessity of affirming Christ for salvation are doing exactly what they accuse these Christians of doing—judging and condemning people solely for their beliefs. Here is the liberals' rule: Christians may not judge others by their religious beliefs, but liberals may judge Christians by their religious beliefs.

Fourth, one of Judaism's core teachings is that G-d judges all people by their behavior rather than by their faith alone, and that we are to judge people in the same way. I apply this teaching to evangelicals. I judge them not by their theology but by their behavior. I find that behavior often exemplary, and

I regard them as America's best hope to stem the country's cultural and moral decline.

Fifth, insofar as offensiveness and tolerance are concerned, who do you think has it tougher—a Jew living and working among evangelical Christians or a conservative living and working among strongly committed liberals? As one who is in the former situation, I can tell you that I receive only respect and tolerance. On the other hand, ask conservatives, not to mention evangelical Christians, in Hollywood how they feel. Most keep their views to themselves, so fearful are they of repercussions from the liberal majority.

Let's also compare the evangelicals to the "open" and "tolerant" Protestant Christian denominations as represented by the National Council of Churches. We find moral confusion, anti-Americanism and support for those who wish another Jewish genocide. True, just about everyone in the NCC believes that it is not necessary for anyone to affirm faith in Christ to be saved and that I as a Jew can therefore attain salvation. But so what? Their doctrines that pertain to me, here and now, on earth, not in the hereafter, are the doctrines that frighten me.

Evangelical Christians, almost alone, affirm that America has a divine mission, that this country has better values than Europe, that the United Nations is a moral wasteland, that G-d's law is higher than international laws devised in New York or The Hague, that secularism is wonderful for government but fatal for society, that Israel must be protected against those who wish to exterminate it, that the Jews have a divinely chosen role in history, and that America must remain a Judeo-Christian country.

If the only way a Christian can hold these precious beliefs is to maintain that faith in Jesus is the only way to salvation, here is one Jew who says: More power to you. Keep your faith strong. And thanks.

*Dennis Prager is one of America's most respected radio talk show hosts. His popular radio show became nationally syndicated in 1999 and airs live, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon (Pacific Time) from his home station, KRLA, in Los Angeles. He has appeared on Larry King Live, Hardball with Chris Matthews, Hannity & Colmes, CBS Evening News, The Today Show, and many others. Committed to his traditional Jewish heritage, Dr. Prager teaches Bible courses at American Jewish University in Bel-Air, California. He has also found a great deal of common ground among socially conservative, evangelical Christians—many of whom he considers close, personal friends. For more information, visit [www.dennisprager.com](http://www.dennisprager.com).*





by Violette Berger

# Fruit from the Harvest



## Showers of Blessings

We praise God that **Ruth N.**, our tireless **CJFM worker in Israel**, is successfully recovering from a recent heart attack. Ruth also praises the Lord that her son, Michael, and his family will be moving closer to assist Ruth with the responsibilities of a growing messianic congregation. (Ruth's husband, Albert, led the congregation until the Lord called him home in 2007.)

Ruth writes, "This turn of events was quite a surprise for us. We take it as one of God's blessings that He is showering upon us. Michael has some leadership experience, as well as being a musician and translator." Another blessing is the confession of faith made by Rania, a single mother with a Muslim background, who has sought refuge with her five-month-old baby. Ruth asks that we "pray for the safety of Rania and her baby from the vengeful hand of Islam."

## Victory in Messiah

**Yossi O.**, a **CJFM worker in Israel** and pastor of *Kehilat Haderach* (The Way)—a messianic congregation in Israel—praises the truth of the Word of God. "Although we are in a constant spiritual battle, evident in our daily walk with the Lord, we need to remember that the Lord has already won the war. Paul reminds us in Colossians 2:14-15 that God has won the victory through Jesus, and disarmed the powers and authorities on the cross—presenting them in His triumphal parade."

With that in mind, Pastor Yossi praises God and asks for prayer for:

- the growing ministries within his congregation;
- the 100 people who traveled to Mount Tabor (considered the traditional site of the Mount of Transfiguration) to see biblical history come alive;
- the new immigrant families who have joined, and the difficulties they face while settling in a new country;
- the new men's group and young adults' group;
- the leadership team;
- 10 single mothers;
- equipping of people for service; and
- the children in Shabbat School, and more teachers who fluently speak Hebrew.

## Giants for Jesus

When **CJFM missionary Richard Hill (Las Vegas)** volunteered to coach his son Isaak's flag-football team, he wanted to make playing football more meaningful for the children and their parents. So, he recommended establishing a Christian theme. They adopted the NY Giants, and "Giants for Jesus" as their motto. Richard writes, "The idea was to glorify and honor God through our playing, rather than focus on the worldly 'must win at all costs' mindset. We prayed before, during, and after practices and games. In the huddle, we yelled 'Giants for Jesus!' so everyone knew what our team was all about. God truly blessed us with miraculous events during the season, and the children knew that God was the only one who could have accomplished them. We actually made it to the championship game, but finished in second place."

More importantly, however, Rich relates how he shared the Gospel with the boys a few days before the championship game. Rich thought most of the boys were already saved, however, five of the nine players eagerly prayed to receive Jesus right there on the practice field. It was apparent that although they knew of Jesus, the Gospel had not been presented to them in a way they could totally grasp in order to *receive* Him. Praise the Lord for these spiritual touchdowns!

## God's Bag Lady

This year, **Louise Newmark, CJFM worker (Johannesburg, South Africa)**, celebrates 50 years of faithfully serving the Lord among the Jewish people—20 of those years with CJFM. Without the help of a car, Louise has walked from door to door, sharing the Gospel message with the Jewish people of Johannesburg, whose population consists of nearly 50,000.

As a never-married single woman, Louise is commonly referred to as "the woman with bags who talks about God." In those black bags are tracts and pamphlets she distributes while fervently sharing the Gospel message with everyone she meets and visits—encouraging new believers and witnessing to the unsaved. Please pray that God continues to protect Louise—despite the high violent crime and unemployment rates—and gives her strength as she proclaims, "God is always in the business of freeing us and bringing us to depend totally on Him . . . my life is not always easy, but it's exciting!"

May the words of Jesus continue to encourage Louise: "And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet" (Matt. 10:14).



# Bible Questions AND Answers

by DR. GARY HEDRICK

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**QUESTION:** *I just finished reading a book, When Bad Things Happen to Good Prophecies, in which the author lowers the boom on our view of future prophecy. He argues against the Rapture with this statement: "There cannot be a translation, or Rapture, without a general universal judgment, even at the so-called secret snatching away of the church. At the moment of the Rapture, God has to make a divine judgment between believers and unbelievers" (p. 207). How would you answer this?*

**ANSWER:** The point the author tries to make, as I understand it, is that the Rapture can't happen unless there's first a formal judgment where everyone on earth is declared either saved or lost. Otherwise, when the Rapture takes place, the Lord won't know who to take with Him and who to leave behind. Since there is no mention in the Rapture passages (like 1 Thessalonians 4:17) of any such judgment, the author's conclusion is that our futurist interpretation of those passages must be wrong. There is no Rapture because there is no judgment to go along with it. That's the idea.

First of all, let's dispense with the notion that the Lord doesn't know who His people are without first convening a formal inquiry. The Bible clearly says, "Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of [Messiah] depart from iniquity'" (2 Tim. 2:19). When we trust in the Lord Jesus, we are instantly conveyed from one kingdom into another (Col. 1:13; 1 Peter 2:9). Our sins were judged on Calvary 2,000 years ago, when He bought us with His precious blood (1 Peter 2:24; Col. 2:13-15). The only future judgment required for believers is the Judgment Seat (Gk., *Bema*) of Messiah, which determines our rewards, not our eternal destiny (1 Cor. 3:12-15; see chart). Make no mistake about it, then—the Lord knows every one of His sons and daughters. In fact, He knew us even before He created the world (Eph. 1:4)!

And second, anyone who accepts this author's premise (i.e., that there can't be a Rapture because God cannot differentiate between believers and unbelievers without conducting a formal judgment) has another problem; namely, is there a judgment every time someone dies? Are there thousands of

judgments every day all over the world as people die, one by one? Yet following the writer's logic, God wouldn't know if a deceased person should be in Heaven or Hell unless there was a judgment. The argument, very simply, is neither logical nor biblical—and has no impact whatsoever on our view of the Rapture as an eschatological event.

## Five Future Judgments

**The Judgment Seat of Messiah** (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10): For believers in Heaven during the Tribulation, it determines rewards and position in the coming Kingdom.

**The Judgment of OT and Tribulation Saints** (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19; Rev. 20:3-5): For believers at the close of the Tribulation, it determines rewards and position in the Kingdom.

**The Judgment of the Nations** (Matt. 25:31-46): A specialized judgment for the nations that survive the Tribulation (sometimes called the Sheep and Goat Judgment). The criterion is a nation's relationship to God as reflected in its citizens' treatment of persecuted Israel during the Tribulation. It determines which nations are allowed to enter into the Millennium.

**The Final Judgment of Satan and the Fallen Angels** (Rev. 20:1-3, 7-10; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6-7; 1 Cor. 15:24-26): For fallen angelic powers at the end of the Millennium, it seals their fate once and for all.

**The Great White Throne Judgment** (Rev. 20:11-15): For all unbelievers, both the living and the resurrected dead, at the end of the Millennium. It is based on works and determines the level of punishment in the Lake of Fire.



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