

The Chosen People



Volume XIV, Issue 9 December 2008

Yeshua

The God Man

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The Message of the Baby of Bethlehem



Shalom from a chilly New York City!

I wish you could come to Brooklyn and accompany me on a holiday tour of this borough of three and a half million people—25% of whom are Jewish! You would be amazed at the creativity and diversity of the decorations adorning the rows of houses and apartment buildings.

There is little doubt which holiday the family inside is celebrating. In some sections of Brooklyn, the decorations range from small Christmas trees in front windows to elaborate evergreens strung with yards of colorful lights. The Jewish homes, of course, have *Hanukkah menorahs* glowing in their windows.

I don't have to tell you that most people are missing the true meaning of the season. I find that each holiday has the potential to point to the One who redeems us from the oppression of evil rulers and the destruction of soul resulting from man's sin.

May I share a few thoughts about this season and why it is so personally meaningful to me?

Since the first moment I read the New Testament as an eighteen-year-old Jewish young man, I have been

deeply moved by the Incarnation. I am still amazed when I consider that the God of the universe took on the life and limitations of a man for the benefit of sinners (Romans 5:8).

Why would He do this? After all, being a human is no picnic. We are subject to sin, weakness and death. Ever since the Fall, we have labored with difficulty, endured pain and faced the challenges of interpersonal conflicts. Why would God Himself leave the glory of heaven and take on these human battles and burdens?

There is a passage of Scripture that is not usually thought about during the Christmas season, but that I believe captures the heart of the Incarnation. These verses refer to the *unique priesthood* of the Savior:

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:14-15).

The Creator of the universe has first-hand experience in being human. He was born and lived the life of a toddler, child and teenager. He participated in all the rites and

passages of every Jewish male of His day: circumcision, Bar Mitzvah, the celebration of the holidays and more. The Savior knew what it was like to have parents, friends, teachers and rabbis.

Jesus chose to experience the effects of the Fall, though He never fell. He could have lived a normal Jewish life, but instead He chose to fulfill His mission and to subject Himself to disrespect, misunderstanding, rejection and eventually the humiliation of a public trial and the resulting execution.

The pain of the cross went far beyond the physical torture of crucifixion, as the innocent Savior found Himself separated from His Father at the very moment He needed Him most.

Jesus did all of this for you and me. I believe the nativity scene is a wonderful reminder of our Savior's birth, but misses the deeper and more profound implications of the Incarnation. According to the prophets of Israel, the Messiah was born to die.

When I reflect upon the Incarnation, I consider that God loved you and me with such divine affection that He sent the Son of His love to live with us and then to

die for our sins. I appreciate this season of the year because I am reminded of the magnificence of the message we are called to preach—"to the Jew first" and to the entire world.

Rejoice, dear friend! God sent His Son to free us from sin and death and to refashion us into the type of people He intended us to be. And I can say from personal experience—the Savior knows what He is doing! As we face the difficulties that come when we live for the Lord in a fallen world, this same Savior sits at the right hand of His Father pleading our case and offering us the grace and acceptance that comes from His sacrifice.

That is a reason to rejoice! The old adage is true: *"The Son of God became a son of man, that the sons of men might become the children of God."*

Have a blessed holiday season—and thank you so much for helping us bring the message of the Baby of Bethlehem to His kinsmen according to the flesh. We could not do this without you!

Your brother in the joy of Messiah,



Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

The Jesus Challenge: Rediscovering Jesus the Jew

DR. DARRELL L. BOCK

Jesus was a unique figure. Many regard Him as one of the greatest religious prophets in history and one of the greatest Jews of all time. Recent scholarship has rediscovered just how Jewish Jesus was. He called Israel to be faithful to her covenant God and discussed Sabbath, law, righteousness, true purity, justice, and the call to love one's neighbor. Although this rediscovery is interesting, seeing Jesus as a Jewish prophet cannot explain His claims about Himself and His authentic relationship with God.

To see what I mean, consider one of the key Jewish controversies during His ministry. Jesus got into trouble by healing on the Sabbath, resulting in a debate about laboring on the Sabbath. Did such acts of mercy violate the command about Sabbath rest? Were these actions disrespectful of God's command? Does this issue even matter?

Jesus replied to such challenges, giving a series of reasons why His actions were not an affront to God (Mt. 12:3-8). He noted how David and his men were not struck down after they ate the shewbread that was reserved for the Temple priests. Second, He pointed to priests who labor on the Sabbath in obedience to God. Third, He observed how God, through the prophets, called for mercy over sacrifice. These are all very Jewish arguments, rooted in the sacred Hebrew Scripture.

But then Jesus made a point that went beyond these arguments. He claimed that the Son of Man was Lord of the Sabbath—an affirmation

of personal authority over a day God Himself had set apart as special. This is not the remark of a prophet; it is an assertion that He presides over the sacred calendar. But how can one test such an affirmation? Anyone can make an audacious claim, but how does one assess whether or not it is true?

Jesus faced this challenge head on. He discussed His healings, observing that if He cast out demons by the power of God, then the kingdom of God had come upon God's people. This is yet another bold assertion. There was an idea in Jewish thinking that God does not work through or honor sinners who seek to claim divine authority or seek to share God's glory. So the dilemma was this: how can healings be taking place, if Jesus is making sinful, blasphemous theological claims about Himself?

The official Jewish answer was that Satan was responsible for His actions—but Jesus confronted that argument as well. He pointed out that His healings were restorative, whereas what Satan does is destructive. So if the evil one does good acts, he is actually working against himself. Since that is not likely, Jesus' claim remained.

In fact, Jesus repeated this idea when He was examined by the High Priest before He was brought to Pilate (Mt. 26:57-68). Caiaphas asked Jesus if He was the Messiah, yet another Jewish question. Jesus answered by noting that whatever was going to happen to Him, God would vindicate Him and allow Him to sit at God's own right hand. Of all

continued on page 5

The Deity of Jesus

ROY SCHWARCZ

One of the greatest stumbling blocks for Jewish people is the teaching in Scripture that Jesus is God. However, the Jewish Scriptures contain a number of passages that testify that the Jewish Messiah would be God.

The first is Psalm 2:6-12, which is a dialogue between God and His Son:

"I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'" Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

Here we see the Lord speaking of His Son who is to rule the nations, and the rabbis agree that this refers to the Messiah. We see that this Son is to be worshipped—for the

word "kiss" means "to bow low before." If He is not worshipped, the Son will be angry and will cause men to perish in their way. The Son has wrath, and the only means of escape is to trust in Him for deliverance. How could both the Son and the Lord have such qualities? The answer is that the Lord is the Son, and the Son is the Lord, for this prophecy could not apply to any mere man.

One of the more specific prophecies concerning the Messiah is Isaiah 9:6:

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Here we read about the birth of the Messiah. In this passage, the child is called "Wonderful." This is the same description that was used by Manoah and his wife when they encountered the Angel of the Lord in Judges 13, where we find the narrative of Samson's birth. After a long conversation concerning the birth of Samson, Manoah asks the angel's name. The response in Judges 13:18 is this: "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?" It is the same Hebrew word used in Isaiah 9:6. Usually angels have names like Gabriel or Michael, but this angel has a name too wonderful to mention. After the Angel of the Lord departs, Manoah makes an important statement in Judges 13:22, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." This Angel of the Lord whose name is too wonderful to mention is *God Himself*.

This helps us understand Isaiah 9:6. The Messiah is God, and His name is beyond understanding. However,

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR
A JEWISH PERSON TO
BELIEVE THAT GOD
BECAME A MAN?
BEN VOLMAN

DID GOD FULFILL THE
PROMISE OF EMMANU-EL:
GOD WITH US?

Many of us who grew up in Jewish homes were told, "It's

impossible for God to become a man." But the issue is much more profound. How does God promise to be present with His people?

Isaiah framed the promise in the name of a miraculous child yet to be born: "Emmanu-el" meaning "God with us" (Is. 7:14). The Jewish Scriptures repeatedly show God communicating with His people in human form.

Consider Abraham, who welcomed three strangers to his tent in Mamre. The Scripture says, "The LORD appeared to him" (Gen. 18:1). These men predicted the birth of Isaac and warned Abraham of divine judgment about to fall on Sodom and Gomorrah.

Consider Jacob, who wrestled all night with "a man" and called the

place Peniel, "For I have seen God face to face" (Gen. 32:30).

Consider David, who rejoiced when the prophet Nathan revealed that his descendants would occupy Israel's throne forever. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel all affirmed that God would personally reign on David's throne for eternity.

In the light of these promises, we see why Yeshua's Jewish followers said, "And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten" (John 1:14). In Yeshua's miracles and ultimately in His resurrection, they realized that the promise of God was being fulfilled in their midst and will be fully realized when He ascends the throne of David in days to come. 🌈

the prophecy in Isaiah does not stop there. The Messiah is not only called Wonderful, but also called Mighty God. If this is not explicit enough, the prophecy also calls Him the Everlasting Father. This prophetic verse of Isaiah tells us three times that the Messiah is God—once subtly as Wonderful, once explicitly as the Mighty God, and once more as the Father. It is another example from the Jewish Scriptures showing that the Messiah is not only the earthly Redeemer, but also the Mighty God of the Ages.

We find another prophecy of the Messiah and His birthplace in Micah 5:2. Not only does this verse prophesy the birthplace of the Messiah, but it also marks His dual nature—the One to be born in *everlasting*.

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.

The “goings forth” of the Messiah are “from everlasting.” The Hebrew word here is *olam*, meaning “eternity.” In this passage, the Messiah is given an attribute of God—eternality. Only God is everlasting, yet we see in this verse that the One born in Bethlehem has this characteristic of God, whose days are from eternity.

These and many more prophecies from the Jewish Scriptures foretell the coming and the divinity of the Messiah—prophecies which were fulfilled in Jesus. 🌈

The Jesus Challenge continued from page 3

the claims Jesus made, this one was among the most radical. In effect, He was saying, “Let’s see what God does”—thus putting a challenge in front of His accusers and those who doubted Him. Think of this as the “Jesus Challenge”: not a test of God, but a promise that God would act to show who Jesus is.

Three days later, God took up the challenge and changed the world. After Rome had placed Jesus on the cross and buried Him in a tomb, the unclean space His dead body once occupied became vacant. God did indeed act, emptying the tomb and removing the uncleanness of death. Jesus’ challenge told us ahead of time what this meant—that God

had been with Jesus in all He had accomplished in His ministry, including on those Sabbaths. The Kingdom of God, that faithful Jews had awaited, was realized in Him.

The resurrection of Jesus was the vindication of the One that God had sent to represent Him. Now this Messiah was shown to be anointed by God, having divine authority like that which He exercised on those Sabbaths, sharing in God’s glory at God’s initiating invitation. No longer was there any doubt about the truth of Jesus’ claims. God embraced the “Jesus Challenge” to show who He was. This showed that Jesus’ words and actions were indeed God’s plan in action—and that is worth taking seriously. 🌈



Celebrate Hanukkah with Zhava’s Quite Unhealthy Potato Latkes

Hanukkah, which starts on December 21 this year, isn’t Hanukkah without a steaming plateful of savory latkes (potato pancakes) fried in oil.

- 4 medium potatoes
- 1 medium onion
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- tons of oil for frying
- applesauce or sour cream (optional)

Grate potatoes (OK, you have my permission to do it in a food processor—just don’t tell anyone). Now here’s the important part: MAKE SURE you remove as much liquid as possible from the grated potatoes! Now grate the onions, combine with the potatoes, and mix together with the eggs, salt and flour. That’s all! Now drop by heaping tablespoonsful into hot oil in a frying pan, and smooch a bit with your spoon until they measure about 3” across. Fry until the latkes turn nice and brown. Don’t turn them over more than once, though, or they’ll get soggy, and I’ll have to say, “I told you so!”

Latkes are traditionally served with applesauce or sour cream—I like them with both! Come on, this recipe is way too easy and too delicious NOT to try it.

Makes about 12 small latkes, which is definitely not enough! Have a Happy Hanukkah! 🌈

See the THROUGH JEWISH EYES Bible

by Daniel Goldberg, Th.D., D.D.

THE PROTO- EVANGELIUM: THE FIRST GOSPEL GENESIS 3:15



In Genesis 3:15 we have the first announcement of the Gospel. Before a sentence was passed upon Adam and Eve, God uttered these words to Satan: *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”* Both Jewish and Christian interpretations regard Genesis 3:15 as a Messianic passage.

THREE IMPORTANT PROMISES CONTAINED IN GENESIS 3:15

1. The Promise of a Conflict:

“And I will put enmity...” The conflict would commence between the woman and Satan, who spoke through the serpent. The woman declared, *“...the serpent deceived me...”* (Gen. 3:13).

Evidently the woman had been on friendly, speaking terms with Satan.

The Lord first broke up the confederacy of humankind with the devil. Think how different it would be if humans had been able to settle down and be content with Satan. If there had been no conflict with Satan, this earth would have become a hell a long time ago.

The promise was of a conflict to continue between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

Messiah Jesus made reference to this conflict when He declared to the Pharisees, *“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning . . . for he is a liar and the father of it”* (Jn. 8:44). Today the conflict continues between true believers and the world (1 Jn. 3:10-13), and tomorrow there will be war in

heaven until Satan has been “cast out” (Rev. 12:9).

2. The Promise of a Conqueror:

The conqueror would be “the Seed of the woman” or virgin-born Messiah (Isa. 7:14; 9:6), and would be bruised at His heel. All His life Jesus was made to suffer. The greatest bruise was on the cross, when He died for the sins of the world. It was a threefold bruise:

(1) the Lord bruised Him (Isa. 53:10); (2) Satan bruised Him (Gen. 3:15); and (3) our sins bruised Him (Heb. 9:26).

3. The Promise of a Conquest:

Although the conflict is a long one, Satan’s effort is futile and his head (the seat of life) was crushed (Gen. 3:15), when the Redeemer died at Calvary and was resurrected from the tomb. This victory would be obtained not only by the Messiah Himself; indeed, in Him, every believer will soon crush Satan (Rom. 16:20).

To add insult to injury, the bruising of Messiah’s heel will in no way hinder the Divine purpose, for the “gates of Hades (hell)” will not prevail against God’s will (Mt. 16:18).

The intent of Satan and the curse upon the earth for man’s sake will ultimately be removed (Isa. 11:1-10; 35:9). The entire creation awaits redemption (Rom. 8:21-23). Only the serpent shall “lick the dust” in a redeemed world as a reminder that the Messiah is the conqueror (Isa. 65:25).

Many generations lived and died with only the promise of Genesis 3:15. We are most thankful to God for a complete Bible and a finished redemption by Jesus the Messiah who conquered death and hell on our behalf. ✨

Music, Mendelssohn, and More

Staff members Jeff and Kathy Kipp recently held a creative outreach in Pittsburgh: a concert called "Music, Mendelssohn, and More." All the musicians were believers, and the beautifully done program included information about Felix Mendelssohn, who was a Jewish believer in Jesus, as well as the testimony of each of the musicians.

It was a full house with 300 people in attendance—many from the local Jewish community. The music was "world-class" and the Gospel was preached! Jeff spoke about how music was a manifestation of God's great love for us as we sense His perfection in music's harmonies. Then he shared that there was an even greater expression of God's love and glory in Yeshua (Jesus). Many seeds were sown in Jewish hearts—please pray that the Lord will reap a harvest through this event and others like it!

Unity through the Prince of Peace

Brooklyn-based staff member Peter Shirokov recently traveled to Seattle and participated in a unique gathering—an evening fellowship of Arab and Jewish believers. After sharing a meal together, the participants gave their testimonies. One after another, Palestinians, Iraqis, Kurds and Egyptians shared how God had changed their hearts towards Christians and towards Jews. They told how the hatred they once lived with each day turned into love and compassion. Testimonies from Jewish believers followed, also describing deliverance from irrational fear and prejudice towards Arabs and Muslims.

Peter was deeply moved by the experience: "We sang together, we prayed, we wept, we rejoiced. Only God can take thousands of years of hatred and turn them around. The unity in that room was genuine, and the work of God's Spirit was evident." Praise God for this unity that only Jesus, the Prince of Peace, can bring!

New Faith in Argentina

Ricardo Chemi, the director of Chosen People Ministries' work in Argentina, recently had the opportunity to speak at an event organized by a group of over 35 churches in Argentina. After Ricardo explained the importance of preaching the Gospel to the Jewish people, a Jewish woman named Laura* approached Ricardo and told him that right then she had been moved by the Spirit to put her faith in Jesus!

Ricardo writes, "Laura's background is the same as that of many people—she is confused by the principles

of New Age philosophy. As she grows in her faith in the Messiah, Laura will have to leave behind everything in her life that ties her to her former beliefs. Pray that she will grow spiritually and that we will be wise in the manner in which we disciple her."

Transformed by Messiah

Kirill Swiderski shares the Gospel with Russian Jewish people in Chicago. Recently Lara,* an elderly Jewish woman, listened very intently to every word of the message. After the service, Kirill asked her about her understanding of salvation, and she answered that she wanted to be saved.

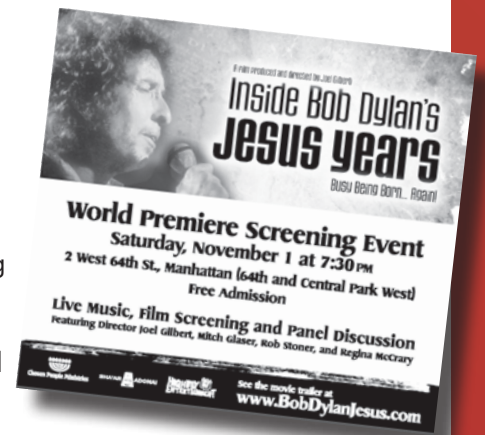
"What do you think about Yeshua (Jesus)?" Kirill asked. Lara said with a low voice, "I try to pray to him." After talking for a while, Kirill and Lara closed their eyes and prayed together. Lara started to cry, but the Lord gave her enough power to continue praying. Kirill described the immediate transformation in Lara: "As I opened my eyes, I saw a totally different face on this woman; her face now reflected the Holy Spirit in her." Please pray for Lara as well as for her daughter, who works in a synagogue. As she observes the new life in her mother, may she seek the reason behind the change.

Inside Bob Dylan's "Jesus Years"

More than 300 Jewish seekers attended a screening of the documentary *Inside Bob Dylan's Jesus Years*, followed by a panel discussion.

Although it is often difficult to get Jewish people to come and hear about Jesus, this event drew a larger crowd of seekers than most of our workers had ever thought possible! For many who attended, it may have been the first time they had ever heard about Jesus in a Jewish way.

The Gospel went forward in power through Mitch's personal testimony as well as through one of the born-again women who was Dylan's backup singer during his "Gospel years." Her witness was both powerful and winsome as she spoke of the ways the Gospel had impacted Dylan's life! Pray for the follow-up, as many Jewish people gave us their names and indicated that they wanted to know more.



*indicates name has been changed

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Yeshua: The Reason for the Season

The flickering lights of the nine-branched Hanukkah menorah remind us that God is mighty to save and that Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah, is truly the Light of the World. Hanukkah is a time of celebration! Now you can own this beautifully-crafted Hanukkah menorah from Israel to place in your home as a statement of your faith and hope in the Messiah of Israel and of all the nations of the world.

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