A JEWISH LOOK AT THE
RESURRECTION
OF JESUS

CHosen PEOPLE MINISTRIES
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When you think about what will happen after you die, what comes to mind? You have trusted in the grace of our Lord Yeshua and have been born again. Now is your day to go and be home with the Lord – what happens next? Beyond the pearly gates, what awaits for believers like you on the other side?

Many believers have a hard time putting into words what they think heaven will be like. The words of the Apostle Paul seem appropriate: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor. 2:9). Taking our cue from this, we envision an unimaginable world of spiritual bliss, where God is our all-in-all.

When many of us think about heaven, words like clouds, singing, floating, worship, and angels come to mind. When we attempt to picture eternal life, we come up with an otherworldly, disembodied existence that sounds like a never-ending church service in the sky. Is this the hope we have to look forward to?

You may be surprised to hear that this version of “heaven” has more to do with Greek philosophy than it does with the hope of the New Testament. Instead, the New Testament rests upon the Jewish understanding of the resurrection of the dead as the hope for the age to come.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESURRECTION

One of the great ideas the Greeks gave the world was the belief that the soul is opposed to the body. The body is temporary and plagued with problems; the soul is immortal and pure. At death, the
soul is separated from the body and freed to live eternally in bliss. This idea was profoundly influential and was adopted in varying degrees by Christian thinkers. Consequently, it continues to shape believers’ views of heaven today.

In contrast, the New Testament’s vision for believers’ future is a bodily resurrection to live with Messiah eternally on a restored earth. A believer’s eternal existence will involve everything that bodily life requires: eating, drinking, laughter – even architecture and interior design! Believers will arise to new life – resurrected, embodied life – but this time, without sin. Yes, there is a time period between a believer’s death and his ultimate resurrection (called the “Intermediate State” by theologians), but a believer’s hope is to be grounded in his or her resurrection from the grave.

The idea of resurrection was so important that the Apostle Paul sternly warned the Corinthians that their Greek understanding of the afterlife undermined the faith (1 Cor. 15:12-19). Some in the Corinthian church were saying that there is no resurrection from the dead (v.12). These people may have viewed eternal life in disembodied terms like Greek philosophy. But this cannot be so, says Paul. If the dead are not resurrected, then not even Messiah has been resurrected, and if Messiah has not been resurrected, then everyone who has died in Messiah has perished. In Paul’s mind, the alternative to resurrection is not souls floating on clouds; it is eternal loss.

Paul has dug in his heels and made it clear: a believer’s hope must be centered on the resurrection of the dead. Yet surprisingly, this is nothing new for Paul. He believed much the same thing before he put his trust in Yeshua (Jesus). As a Pharisee and a scholar of the Hebrew Bible, Paul knew that belief in resurrection was a very Jewish belief.

RESURRECTION IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

The afterlife in the Hebrew Bible is, at best, a murky subject. The Torah of Moses (the Pentateuch) was more interested in moral and procedural issues on earth, rather than discussions about heaven. Every so often a reference is made to She’ol, the realm of the dead, but this

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1 For example, medieval Catholic theology, which attempted to integrate Greek philosophy with Christianity, had the idea of the “Beatific Vision” in which a Christian’s soul peers into the depths of God’s essence, eternally.
too is dimly illuminated. Some prophets had visions of heavenly scenes (Isa. 6, Zech. 3), but they did not dwell on what happens after Israelites die. All of this is understandable with Yeshua’s teaching: “No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man” (Jn. 3:13). Because Yeshua descended from heaven in His Incarnation, it would make sense that he would speak more clearly about the afterlife than any Israelite before. Yet, although the New Testament gives clarity where the Hebrew Bible is hazy, the Hebrew Bible still supports the unmistakable teaching of the resurrection from the dead.

The Book of Job is one of the earliest written books of the Hebrew Bible. In the midst of his suffering, Job puts his trust in the resurrection. At first, Job questions whether anyone who dies will live again (Job 14:12-14). Job is wrestling between what he believes and the pain he is currently experiencing. Then later on, his faith in God breaks through and he powerfully declares,

*For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!* (Job 19:25–27)

For Job, the decay of his flesh was not the end. Somehow, some way, God would enable Job to see Him with resurrected eyes.

The great prophet Isaiah agrees and writes that God will one day “swallow up death for all time” (Isa. 25:8). He will wipe away the tears of His people Israel. This is wonderful news. But Isaiah continues:

*Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.* (Isa. 26:19)

The prophet Ezekiel uses the image of resurrection to describe Israel’s
physical and spiritual rebirth in the land of Israel (Ezek. 37). Hosea said that God would resurrect fallen Israel after three days (Hos. 6:1-3). The sons of Korah said that God would redeem their souls from the hand of She’ol (Ps. 49:14-15). Likewise, David said that God would not abandon him to She’ol, and that God would not allow His “holy one” to see bodily decay (Ps. 16:10-11). All of these references are enough to show that Israelites hoped in a coming resurrection from the dead, but Daniel removes all doubt when he describes a great resurrection that will come after “a time of distress”:

}\n\textit{And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.} (Dan. 12:2)

Daniel tells us that all people will be resurrected, but only some will awake to “everlasting life.” This serves as a capstone text for the Hebrew Bible’s (Old Testament) theology about the resurrection from the dead. By the time of Jesus, resurrection was a central doctrine of the Jewish faith.

\textbf{RESURRECTION IN SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM}

After the Jewish people were released from the Babylonian exile and began living in the Land again, they began to separate into different groups based on doctrinal differences. The resurrection was one of the main points of disagreement.

From the New Testament, we learn that the most prominent group, the Pharisees, accepted the resurrection of the dead, but another group, the Sadducees, rejected it (Acts 23:8). Other groups had problems with the resurrection too. Philo of Alexandria attempted to fuse Greek philosophy with Judaism, and the doctrine of resurrection was a casualty of that effort. He avoided all talk of resurrection or “arising,” and rather employed the Greek-friendly concept of “immortality.”

Although it is common to think about the “intertestamental period” as a “silent era” of 400 years between Malachi and Matthew, the Jewish people did not cease writing religious works during this time. On the contrary, there are many Jewish works from the period that are usually

grouped into two categories: the Apocrypha\(^3\) and the Pseudepigrapha\(^4\). These Jewish texts were not inspired by the Holy Spirit and are not Scripture, but they give us a window into Jewish thought at the time. The apocryphal book of Sirach (written 2\(^{nd}\) century BC) is an example of one of these works, and it shares the Sadducees’ rejection of resurrection (Sirach 17:30, 38:21). However, resurrection-rejecting views were in the minority.

A brief survey of these Jewish works will show how pervasive the resurrection hope was, and why the Pharisees had the support of most Jewish people. The apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees\(^5\) tells the story about several Jewish martyrs who were tortured to death by the Greco-Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the king ruling over Israel during the Hanukkah time period (2\(^{nd}\) century BC). One of the martyrs boldly proclaimed to Antiochus that a martyred Jewish man like himself would be resurrected by God, but “there will be no resurrection to life for you” (2 Macc. 7:14).

The Psalms of Solomon,\(^6\) written a generation or two before Yeshua, declares a hope in the resurrection:

\[
\text{The destruction of the sinner is forever,} \\
\text{and he will not be remembered when (God) looks after the righteous.} \\
\text{This is the share of sinners forever;} \\
\text{but those who fear the Lord shall rise up to eternal life,} \\
\text{and their life shall be in the Lord’s light, and it shall never end.}^{7}
\]

Likewise, the pseudepigraphal book of 1 Enoch was written before the New Testament era\(^8\) and contains a fascinating passage describing how the Messiah will be personally involved in raising Jewish people to life:

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3 The word means “hidden,” i.e. works that are not included in Scripture. The Apocrypha is accessible in some Bible translations, including the NRSV and expanded KJV.

4 The word means “false-writing,” i.e. works that were written as if the author were a specific historical person. This was a common practice in literature of the period. The Pseudepigrapha is accessible in two volumes here: James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 volumes (New York; London: Yale University Press, 1983-1985).

5 From the 2\(^{nd}\) or 1\(^{st}\) centuries BC.

6 From the Pseudepigrapha. It claims to be written by King Solomon, but it was written by a Greek-speaking Jewish author in the name of Solomon.


8 1 Enoch 1:9 is quoted by Jude 14-16. This shows that Jewish people held 1 Enoch in respect and reflective of what Enoch would have said, but this does not mean that it is Scripture.
In those days, Sheol will return all the deposits which she had received and hell will give back all that which it owes. And he shall choose the righteous and the holy ones from among (the risen dead), for the day when they shall be selected and saved has arrived. In those days, (the Elect One) shall sit on my throne, and from the conscience of his mouth shall come out all the secrets of wisdom, for the Lord of the Spirits has given them to him and glorified him. In those days, mountains shall dance like rams; and the hills shall leap like kids satiated with milk. And the faces of all the angels in heaven shall glow with joy, because on that day the Elect One has arisen. And the earth shall rejoice; and the righteous ones shall dwell upon her and the elect ones shall walk upon her.

This passage shows that Jewish people before Yeshua believed that the Elect One – the Messiah – would “arise” and would take righteous Jewish people out of She’ol and make them walk again upon the earth.

This idea of the Messiah’s involvement in the resurrection is not only present in 1 Enoch, but also in a fascinating text found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. This text, probably the product of an Essene community, describes the expectations for the Messianic age:

[... For the heavens and the earth shall listen to His Messiah [and all which is in them shall not turn away from the commandments of the holy ones. Strengthen yourselves, O you who seek the Lord, in His service. Will you not find the Lord in this, all those who hope in their heart? ...]

For He will honor the pious upon the throne of His eternal kingdom, setting prisoners free, opening the eyes of the blind, raising up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:7–8) ...For He shall heal the critically wounded, He shall revive the dead, He shall send good news to the afflicted (Isa. 61:1), He shall satisfy the poor, He shall guide the uprooted, He shall make

This intriguing text associates several actions to either God or to His Messiah during the Messianic age. It is difficult to tell who is doing the actions, but it is reasonable to assume that it is God acting through His Messiah. Consequently, the Messiah will set prisoners free, open the eyes of the blind, heal the critically wounded, revive the dead, and send good news to the afflicted, among other things. This list of Messianic actions is astonishing for its parallel with Yeshua’s words in Matthew 11:2-5 and Luke 7:22. In those accounts, John the Baptist has just sent messengers to Yeshua to ask Him whether or not He is the Messiah. Here is Yeshua’s response, from Matthew:

“Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.” (Matt. 11:4–6)

Now look at the parallels between the Scroll and the Gospel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dead Sea Scroll 4Q521</th>
<th>Matthew 11:2-5</th>
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<tr>
<td>Opening the eyes of the blind</td>
<td>The blind receive their sight</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The lame walk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heal the critically wounded</td>
<td>The lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revive the dead</td>
<td>The dead are raised up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send good news to the afflicted</td>
<td>The poor have good news preached to them</td>
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The parallels between these two passages are striking to behold, but are mostly explainable by their shared dependence upon Isaiah 35:5-6 and 61:1. This shows that the Essenes and Yeshua agreed that those passages referred to Messianic actions. But one thing stands out. In neither of those Isaiah passages is it mentioned that the Messiah will “revive the dead.” Perhaps Jewish people looked at the ministries of Elijah and Elisha and believed that Messiah would revive dead people like those Hebrew prophets did (1 Kings 17, 2 Kings 4). We don’t exactly know where this Messianic expectation comes from. However,
Jesus knew that Jewish people of His day expected the Messiah to revive the dead, and He shows by His authoritative teaching that their expectations were correct.

We could cite many other examples of resurrection hope in the Jewish literature produced around the time of Yeshua.\(^{\text{11}}\) This hope was embraced by Rabbinic Judaism, when the resurrection-believing Pharisees were the only sect who survived the Roman invasions.\(^{\text{12}}\) The resurrection was so important to the rabbis that they made sure to praise God for His resurrection power in their Amidah prayer. This prayer is still recited by religious Jewish people three times a day:

The Amidah - Gevurot

*You, O Lord, are mighty forever. You are the Resurrector of the dead. You are greatly able to save. You sustain the living in lovingkindness. You revive the dead with great compassion. You support the falling, heal the sick, set free the bound and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust. Who is like You, O Master of mighty deeds? Who compares to You, a king who puts to death and restores to life, and brings forth salvation? And You are faithful to revive the dead. Blessed are You, O Lord, who resurrects the dead.*

RESURRECTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

As a collection of books with Jewish authors, the New Testament is a thoroughly Jewish work. It affirms the teaching of the Pharisees regarding the resurrection. Not only were Pharisees a part of the early church (Acts 15:5), but the best-known Messianic Jew of his day publicly declared 25 years after his “conversion” that he was still a Pharisee (Acts 23:6) – a Pharisee who believed the resurrection of the dead had begun with the resurrection of Yeshua!

Resurrection is the lynchpin that holds the entire New Testament

\(^{\text{11}}\) For example, 2 Maccabees 14:46, 4 Ezra 7:28-37, Testament of Benjamin 10.6-11.

\(^{\text{12}}\) A small sampling of rabbinic teachings includes: m. Pirke Avot 4:22, b. Sanh. 90b; b. Ketub. 111b.
together. Each of the Gospels is written in light of the rising tension about Yeshua’s future fate, with the Resurrection of Yeshua as the climax of the story. It is from the Gospels we learn the details of Yeshua’s death, burial, resurrection, and appearances to His disciples.

Rabbi Saul, known as the Apostle Paul to the believers in the Greek city of Corinth, wrote in the year 50 AD to affirm the importance of the resurrection. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul wants to remind his readers of “the gospel” he had preached to them, which is not something he came up with himself. Paul received this gospel soon after becoming a believer, perhaps directly from Ananias after his Damascus Road experience (Acts 9):

_For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me._ (1 Cor. 15:3-8)

This “good news” is a brief recounting of Yeshua’s death and burial, followed by the report of His resurrection and a long series of details about individuals who saw Yeshua alive after His death. Here, at the earliest strata of New Testament teaching, we find the resurrection of Yeshua as the bedrock for belief.

**EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF YESHUA**

Later on in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul makes his statement (referred to earlier) that faith in Yeshua is futile and leads to eternal loss if Yeshua was not raised from the dead. Paul is telling people that the Gospel can be falsified in an instant if we can show that Yeshua remained in the grave. However, on the flipside, belief in Yeshua as Messiah can be vindicated in an instant if we can demonstrate that Yeshua rose from the grave. It is here, in the resurrection of Yeshua, that we find the surest evidence that our faith stands upon a solid rock.

Present-day evangelical scholars have served the body of Messiah well
by devoting their academic efforts to defending the historicity of the Resurrection. “Historicity” is a word used by historians to indicate fact rather than fiction, and reliable accounts rather than legendary ones. Was the resurrection of Yeshua a historical fact? Yes, beyond all reasonable doubts, yes, say these scholars.

These scholars present a case based upon what they call “the minimal facts.” Instead of trying to prove too much from the outset, they limit their foundation to only the facts that are accepted by a large variety of believing and non-believing scholars. William Lane Craig limits his facts to these three:

1. The tomb of Yeshua was empty
2. The disciples claimed to have experiences with Yeshua after his death
3. The growth of the church in the mid-1st century

Any explanation for the resurrection of Yeshua has to be able to account for the “minimal facts.” The best explanation will be the one that resorts to the least ingenuity to explain all the details.

1. THE EMPTY TOMB

There is unanimous agreement among ancient sources that Yeshua of Nazareth was crucified by Rome. The Roman historian Tacitus (1st-2nd centuries AD), the Letter of Bar-Serapion (1st century AD), the satirist Lucian (2nd century AD), and even the rabbis wrote that Yeshua was put to death. Only later fables like the Koran deny that Yeshua was executed. So, if Yeshua was executed, then He was laid to rest in some type of grave. Paul’s gospel message referred to Yeshua being “buried.” Each of the Gospels report that Yeshua was buried and laid in a tomb. Based on this multiplicity of sources, even skeptical scholars believe that Yeshua was executed and buried in a tomb.

However, this creates a problem for people who do not believe in Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. If Yeshua was buried in a tomb, then His burial location could be found by any Jerusalem dweller that looked for it. Jewish people who believed in Yeshua (such as the disciples) knew where He was buried just as much as the Jewish people who didn’t believe in Yeshua (such as the high priest). Even the Romans knew where Yeshua was buried, since a detachment of Roman guards was dispatched to the tomb. If everyone knew where the tomb was, then everyone could go and verify whether the tomb was actually empty, like the disciples claimed. If the stone was rolled away and no corpse was inside, then even the high priest could see that the tomb was empty. Conversely, if the stone was in place, the high priest could have exhumed the body and proven that the “empty tomb” story was a farce. However, the Gospel of Matthew records that the high priest could not do even this, since the tomb was actually empty. Instead, the chief priests bribed the Roman guards into perpetuating a story that the disciples stole the body (Matt. 28:11-15). Even here, Yeshua’s enemies are conceding that the tomb was empty.

The public nature of Yeshua’s tomb location leads the majority of scholars to conclude that Yeshua’s tomb was in fact empty by the time the apostles started preaching about Yeshua’s resurrection. Non-believers have come up with several possibilities to account for this, but all of them are the fruit of fanciful conjecture. Yeshua was not buried in a tomb, some say, but in a criminal’s mass grave; Joseph of Arimathea moved Yeshua’s body after the Sabbath; the disciples went to the wrong tomb! All of those conjectures might account for a missing body, but the best explanation will not only deal with the empty tomb, but also with the remaining two “minimal facts.”

2. THE RESURRECTION APPEARANCES

The second fact that must be explained is in regard to the reports by multiple eyewitnesses that they saw Yeshua alive after His death. They talked with Him, ate with Him, and touched Him. In his Gospel outline, Paul mentions resurrection appearances to Cephas (Simon Peter, see Luke 24:34), the twelve (presumably including Matthias, Acts 1:26), 500-plus brothers, James, the apostles (supposedly a wider group than the 12), and finally to Paul himself. In the Gospels we find mention that Yeshua’s women followers, like Mary Magdalene, as well
as Clopas and his companion, and others also saw Yeshua alive after His death. Several of these people mentioned wrote their own accounts of Yeshua’s resurrection, including the Apostle John, who claimed to be an eyewitness of Yeshua’s resurrection (John 21:24, 1 John 1:1). Peter, too, wrote about the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah from the dead (1 Peter 1:3).

In a court of law, all a prosecutor needs is two or three accounts from independent witnesses to establish an event beyond a reasonable doubt. In this case, we have a multiplicity of witnesses all saying the same thing: they saw Yeshua alive after His death.

This, too, creates a problem for people who do not believe in Jesus’ resurrection. They either have to conclude that everyone mentioned is guilty of a conspiracy theory, or that everyone was somehow misled by group hallucinations. The conspiracy theory is implausible on many counts. What motive did the disciples have? Their motivation could not have been power, fame, or fortune. The resurrection-claimers soon learned how deadly it was to preach their message, and nearly all of them became martyrs while holding to their story. The conspiracy theory is implausible because it cannot explain a reasonable motive. The hallucination theory is also a quagmire. How do a group of people hallucinate the same thing? Some have conjectured that the disciples were taking mind-altering drugs to cope with their grief, and these drugs produced the hallucinations. But the sources do not only describe resurrection in group settings where cult practices could have been at play. Paul’s vision of Yeshua took place while he hated Yeshua, and we have reason to believe that James was an unbeliever before Yeshua appeared to him (see John 7:5). Why would people who rejected Yeshua have the same hallucination as those who followed Him?

Somehow, anyone who is confronted with the evidence has to explain why all of these Jewish people started telling the whole world that Yeshua rose from the dead.

3. THE GROWTH OF THE EARLY CHURCH

From the Roman historian Suetonius (1st-2nd centuries AD) we learn that the Jewish people were arguing about whether or not Yeshua was the promised Messiah in 49 AD. They caused such a nuisance that the Emperor Claudius expelled them from Rome (cf. Acts 18:1-2).
From Tacitus (1st-2nd centuries AD) we learn that the sect called “the Christians” (many of whom were Messianic Jews) were hated by all Romans and were present in great numbers in the city of Rome in the 60s AD. From the Roman administrator Pliny the Younger (1st-2nd centuries AD) we learn that Roman officials were hunting believers for prosecution because of their religious devotion to Messiah. He wrote the Emperor Trajan, “This contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread its infection among the neighboring villages and country.” He wrote this concerning an area in Asia Minor, nearly 700 miles away from where “the infection” began in Jerusalem. Why was this infection spreading?

The Book of Acts, which has served as a treasure map for modern archaeologists, records dozens of locations within the vast Roman Empire where groups of Jews and Gentiles were coming to believe in Yeshua. This spread of Yeshua-belief, as recorded in Acts, was happening between the 40s and the 60s AD. Everywhere these believers were present, they believed in the resurrection of Yeshua, the Son of God.

What accounts for this belief? Why did the early church grow so quickly? Why were Gentiles calling a Jewish carpenter from the Galilee “God”? A sufficient explanation must deal with all of these factors.

CONCLUSION

Only the historical, factual resurrection of Yeshua from the dead can adequately explain each of these minimal facts. All other theories fall short of explaining all three. A hallucination theory can only go so far; it does not explain the empty tomb. Likewise, a conspiracy theory can explain the empty tomb and resurrection experiences, but not why the apostles risked their lives to grow the Church.

What we are left with is the very Jewish, very ancient belief that God raised Jesus from the dead. The idea of resurrection was present in

the Hebrew Bible, became a core hope in Judaism, and became the cornerstone of faith for Jewish and Gentile believers in Yeshua. If God alone is the One who resurrects from the dead, then Yeshua’s resurrection is His vindication and seal of divine approval.

Where does this leave us, as believers in Yeshua’s resurrection? Paul writes, “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his” (Rom. 6:5). Because Yeshua rose from the dead, we can have assurance that death is not the end for us. We too will be resurrected from the dead to everlasting life. Just like Yeshua, we will be resurrected to live in glorious, spiritual bodies (1 Cor. 15:42-49). We will eat and drink and have campfires around the Sea of Galilee just like Yeshua did. We will be able to touch His wounded side and He will be able to embrace us. We will live eternally without sin on a renewed earth.

This is the hope of every believer in Yeshua. Because of Yeshua’s resurrection, we too will rise from our graves.

Belief in the resurrection is biblical and Jewish, and the resurrection of Yeshua is true. This is the very grounding of our faith in Yeshua the Messiah. However, our belief in the resurrection should not simply be a doctrine we agree with; we need to make the resurrection personal. How do we do this? First of all, we need to recognize our own human frailty and that our future without God’s presence is bleak at best. The resurrection gives us hope that God will raise us with Yeshua to live forever. Death is not the end. In some ways, it is the beginning of life for those who put their trust in Messiah Yeshua, who died for our sins and rose to conquer sin and death. He offers us the hope of new life today and everlasting life for all eternity.

The decision is yours. Do you believe that Yeshua died? Do you believe He rose from the dead? The resurrection is at the heart of the biblical hope described in both the Old and New Testaments. It can be your hope too. You can live forever in the presence of your Creator by turning from your sin and putting your faith in the Jewish Messiah who
died for the world. We need forgiveness and power to live differently, and this is possible only through accepting Yeshua as your Messiah.

As Yeshua once said to a Jewish leader,

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” (Jn. 3:16–17)

Eternal life and resurrection can be yours today if you put your trust in Yeshua as the one who removes your sin. We would encourage you to get a copy of the New Testament and start reading it. At Chosen People Ministries, we are praying for you. We want to help you grow in this new beginning with Yeshua. Please call or write to us, and we will gladly help you in your journey.
He will be a Descendant of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3)

The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

He will be from the Tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10)

The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.

He will be from the House of David (2 Samuel 7:12-13)

When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

He will be Born of a Virgin (Isaiah 7:14)

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

He will be Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) (5:1 Heb.)

But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

He will be God Himself (Isaiah 9:6-7; 9:5-6 Heb.)
For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

He will be a Prophet Like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15)

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.

He will Come Humbly (Zechariah 9:9)

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

He will be Crucified (Psalm 22:16-18)

For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.

He will be a Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53:5-6)

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Israel Will Mourn for Him (Zechariah 12:10)

And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

There is no person in all of recorded history who fits these descriptions more perfectly than Yeshua (Jesus)!
About Us

Chosen People Ministries exists to pray for, evangelize, disciple, and serve Jewish people everywhere and to help fellow believers do the same. The mission was founded in Brooklyn, New York in 1894 by Rabbi Leopold Cohn, a Hungarian Jewish immigrant with a zeal to share the knowledge of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah with God’s chosen people.

Today, Chosen People Ministries serves in 16 countries across the globe. Our outreach programs include evangelism and discipleship, Messianic centers and congregations, equipping the local church for Jewish evangelism, print and web publications, and benevolence work. With your help, we will continue proclaiming the Good News through Jesus the Messiah to Jewish people around the world.

Our Vision and Core Values

Chosen People Ministries...

- Exists to glorify God, proclaim the Gospel to the Jew first and also to the Gentile, and develop resources and programs to accomplish this task.
- Places the worker above the work.
- Is concerned with and promotes the welfare of the Jewish community.
- Is a Board-governed organization whose ministry is planned and implemented by missionaries and supported by the administrative staff.
- Is dependent on God’s provision for the Mission through the prayer and financial support of fellow believers.

We need your help in becoming a Jewish Mission for the 21st Century!
OUR OUTREACH WEBSITES

In order to meet the challenges of the 21st century, and especially to reach our new generation of young Jewish people, we must get ready! We have already begun to develop our digital media team. Now we need your help to make this dream a reality. We will continue Isaiah 53 Campaigns (Isaiah53.com) throughout the United States and around the globe for the next five years. We are learning so much with every campaign and believe that the best is yet ahead as we initiate the Campaign in some of the great Jewish population centers in the United States and across the globe.

I Found Shalom
We created a new outreach website with dozens of beautifully done, personal testimonies of Messianic Jews. Please take a moment and enjoy these wonderful stories of redemption through the Messiah, then pass the word to friends and family so they can view them as well. Simply visit ifoundshalom.com to access these powerful testimonies!

THE HISTORY OF CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES

Chosen People Ministries was founded by Rabbi Leopold Cohn in 1894 to bring the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah to the Jewish people. In carrying out this purpose, the Mission also seeks to inspire the Church to participate in and support the work of Jewish evangelism, helping fellow believers carry out this vital part of God’s divine redemptive plan.

Rabbi Leopold Cohn founded Chosen People Ministries in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York, shortly after he received Jesus as his Messiah. In its earliest days, people affectionately referred to the Mission as the Brownsville Mission to the Jews. Rabbi Cohn established an outreach headquartered in a renovated horse stable, where the Mission offered a variety of services and classes for the growing population of Jewish immigrants. His wife, Rose, was instrumental in organizing some of the outreach programs. The Mission published the first issue of its monthly newsletter, The Chosen People, in October 1895.

The proclamation of the Gospel to the Jewish people encountered
resistance from some, but there were many in the Jewish community who welcomed the message that the Jewish people could receive Messiah’s gift of eternal life while maintaining a Jewish identity.

After a few years, the Mission moved its headquarters to Williamsburg (Brooklyn), and then to Manhattan. As ministry expanded beyond a regional focus, the Mission changed its name to American Board of Missions to the Jews to reflect the wider scope of the organization. Missionaries began following God’s call to reach the Jewish community throughout North and South America, Europe and Israel. Eventually, the Mission changed its name to Chosen People Ministries, and, after a number of years in Charlotte, North Carolina, the Mission headquarters returned to its birthplace in New York City. Chosen People Ministries continually seeks to meet the needs of each generation with both spiritual and material assistance.

The Mission has continued to develop a rich tradition throughout its history. Following Rabbi Cohn’s death in 1937, Joseph Hoffman Cohn succeeded his father as Mission leader, serving until his death in 1953. A long line of godly men has served Chosen People Ministries as effective leaders. Harold Pretlove, Dr. Daniel Fuchs, Harold Sevener, and Sam Nadler have each left an indelible mark on the character of the century-old Mission. Now under the leadership of Dr. Mitch Glaser, Chosen People Ministries continues to experience an exciting time of renewal and expansion.

Just as it did over one hundred years ago, Chosen People Ministries offers English/Bible classes to Jewish immigrants. The Mission also seeks to utilize new means of communication to reach Jewish people in this new millennium with the eternal message of God’s love in Jesus the Messiah. Chosen People Ministries is eager, with God’s help and your prayers and support, to reach the Jewish people of the twenty-first century. Yes, the world and the Jewish community have experienced enormous changes—but humanity’s need for reconciliation to God remains the same. Chosen People Ministries continues to follow its calling to proclaim the unchanging message of the Gospel to the Lord’s chosen people.
OUR MINISTRY PROGRAMS

Chosen People Ministries exists to pray for, evangelize, disciple, and serve Jewish people everywhere and to help fellow believers do the same. We fulfill this mission through many types of ministry programs.

**Messianic Centers**
One of our most effective ministry strategies is to engage local Jewish communities through our Messianic Centers. Our centers are facilities that we rent or own, located in key Jewish population centers; they serve as the base of our ministry operations in the surrounding community. In addition to supporting our evangelistic and discipleship efforts, they provide a place for worship, Bible studies, spiritual counseling, and practical help ministries like food distribution and addiction recovery programs. Some of our key Messianic Centers are located in New York, Los Angeles, South Florida, London, Berlin, Moscow, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem.

**Messianic Congregations**
Messianic Congregations are places of worship where both Jewish and Gentile believers can fellowship together in a Jewish context. In addition, they offer Jewish seekers a familiar cultural setting combined with clear Gospel teaching, which communicates our commitment that one can be Jewish and believe in Jesus! We have helped launch dozens of Messianic Congregations around the world, and they continue to be an important and viable part of our ministry.

**Evangelism and Discipleship**
Evangelism has always been the heartbeat of our ministry, and every year we lead outreach programs and events specifically designed for reaching Jewish people with the Gospel. Our traditional outreach programs include tract distribution, open-air concerts, book tables, and surveys. During our Isaiah 53 Evangelistic Campaign, we have incorporated newer outreach methods, by utilizing media and advertising to offer evangelistic literature to Jewish people. We also host seminars and debates where Jewish seekers can learn about Jesus in a neutral setting. Through each of these outreach events, we meet Jewish people who are seeking spiritual answers. Our missionaries connect with these individuals and build authentic relationships with those who are seeking the truth.
Equipping the Local Church
Another key focus of Chosen People Ministries is to engage and train local churches for Jewish evangelism. Throughout our history, we have observed that one of the key factors in Jewish people coming to know the Lord is the positive influence of Gentile Christians. Therefore, we have made it a priority to develop and offer resources for churches to help believers discover the Jewish roots of the Christian faith and understand the need for Jewish evangelism. We continually develop tools and help equip churches with practical ways for congregants to share Jesus with Jewish people in their communities.

THE MASTER OF DIVINITY PROGRAM
Another way we are fulfilling our mission is by identifying and training new leaders in Jewish ministry through our seminary program: The Charles L. Feinberg Center for Messianic Jewish Studies. Several years ago, we recognized a tremendous need within Jewish missions for more seminary-trained leadership. Through a partnership with Biola University’s Talbot School of Theology, located strategically in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, we were able to develop a cutting-edge new Master of Divinity program with an emphasis on Messianic Jewish Studies. After receiving accreditation through the New York Board of Regents and the Association of Theological Schools, we began classes in the summer of 2007.

The Feinberg Center program contains 98 credits and awards a Master of Divinity degree in Messianic Jewish Studies from Talbot School of Theology. Our program is still the only one of its kind in the world; it offers unique coursework to prepare leaders for Jewish ministry as missionaries, Messianic pastors, non-profit leaders, and educators. Three key components of the program make it unique: the coursework, field ministry, and cost.

Coursework
We have designed the curriculum for the Feinberg Center to incorporate both a typical Jewish studies program and an evangelical seminary program, while also catering each specific class towards the current needs of Jewish ministry. Each of our Jewish studies courses, like Rabbinic Literature and Theology, Theology of the Siddur (Jewish prayer book), and Jewish History, contain practical elements on how
a better understanding of Jewish tradition can enhance our work in Jewish missions. Additionally, each of the traditional evangelical seminary courses, like *Pastoral Studies*, *Church History*, and *Apologetics*, provide a unique Jewish perspective for the context of Jewish ministry. Our professors are all excellent scholars with a long history of personal experience in Jewish ministry.

**Field Ministry**

We placed the Feinberg Center in New York City because it is the center of Jewish life in America. With close to two million Jewish people, the city provides endless possibilities for students to immerse themselves in Jewish culture and ministry while completing their coursework. In fact, each semester we organize various Jewish-focused field ministry programs to help each student put what they have learned in the classroom into practice.

We have designed the different field ministry opportunities to expose our students to several aspects of Jewish ministry over the course of their studies. These aspects include direct evangelism, discipleship, leading Bible studies, Messianic congregation leadership, and non-profit administrative training. We also provide other unique projects each semester, such as our evangelistic Jewish holiday celebrations, interfaith benevolence projects, debates, and café-style youth outreaches. These numerous field ministry programs take students into several areas of New York City, including Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn.

**Cost**

We established the Feinberg Center to provide our students an affordable education and give them the opportunity to graduate debt-free, enabling them to enter vocational ministry without the tremendous burden of student loans. To achieve this affordability, we offer a wide range of scholarships and subsidies to offset student costs. Not only is our tuition a quarter of what it would normally cost, we also provide student housing for single students and offer students with families a housing scholarship to make their rent affordable. The generous and regular support from our ministry partners makes an affordable education possible.
HOW YOU CAN HELP

Chosen People Ministries would not exist without the faithful support of Christians around the world who stand with Israel and the Jewish people. We are grateful for the prayers and sacrificial gifts that enable us to continue to bring the Gospel to the Jewish people in 16 countries around the globe.

There are a number of ways you can support our ministry, but the easiest way is to visit our website, chosenpeople.com/donate.

You can also mail your donation to our International Headquarters:

Chosen People Ministries  
241 E. 51st St.  
New York, NY 10022

Of course, you are always welcome to call us and give your donation with your credit or debit card over the phone. Please call 212-223-2252 — Monday through Friday, between 8:30am and 5:00pm, Eastern Time.
Israel’s Holy Days in Type and Prophecy – $8.95 (3013)

In Leviticus 23 God presents seven annual sacred feasts of Israel. At first this passage seems to simply list Israel’s holy days, but the more one studies the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, the more one realizes that this passage is more than just a list of holy days; it is actually an outline of God’s calendar from eternity to eternity. *Israel’s Holy Days in Type and Prophecy* is a brief but thorough review. By Daniel Fuchs.

Isaiah 53 Explained – $12.95 (3135)

*Isaiah 53 Explained* will help kick start your personal pilgrimage and introduce you to a chapter in the Scriptures that has the potential to revolutionize your life! *Isaiah 53 Explained* makes the story of the Bible understandable, practically and simply explaining how you can have a soul-satisfying relationship with God and revealing the surprising key that makes this relationship possible. (Paperback)

The Fall Feasts of Israel – $14.95 (3042)

Israel’s three most significant biblical festivals – Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot – are examined in full, including a look at their biblical roots, their celebration in the time of Messiah, and by Jewish people today. *The Fall Feasts of Israel* is an invaluable guide to help you understand these wonderful biblical festivals as well as their significance for your spiritual life as a believer in Messiah, whether Jew or Gentile. Soft cover.
FEATURED RESOURCES ORDER FORM

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery

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Add Shipping & Handling*   

TOTAL

*Add the amount below that matches your product total and shipping destination.

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**Depends on weight

PAYMENT/DONATIONS:

You can also give online at chosenpeople.com/donate

My check or money order is enclosed for $______________

☐ Make checks payable to Chosen People Ministries

☐ I authorize Chosen People Ministries to deduct a one-time gift of $______________

from my credit card

☐ Please charge my credit card for my purchase.

☐ Visa  ☐ MasterCard  ☐ AMEX  ☐ Discover

Credit Card #: ______________________  Exp. Date __/____

Verification Code: _______  Phone: ______________________

Signature: ______________________  Date: ________________

We appreciate those who can give regularly, as it allows us to plan our evangelistic outreach. Would you like to support Chosen People Ministries every month? You can. Join our convenient Watchmen for Jerusalem program & authorize automatic payments from your credit card or bank.

☐ I authorize Chosen People Ministries to deduct a monthly gift of

☐ $100  ☐ $50  ☐ $25  ☐ $_____ from my credit card (see above).

☐ I prefer to give monthly via bank draft and have enclosed a voided check for account verification. Please arrange automatic withdrawals of

☐ $100  ☐ $50  ☐ $25  ☐ $_____ to be deducted once a month, beginning ________________. (month/year)

Chosen People Ministries • 241 E. 51st Street • New York, NY 10022 • 212-223-2252