



A Publication of CJF Ministries and Messianic Perspectives Radio Network

# Messianic Perspectives®

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



Sometimes people say that Israel is just like any other nation.

France, Russia, Zambia, Brazil, China, the United States, Canada, or Israel—they're all the same. That's the idea.

For this reason, they say, Israel has no special status or priority in the evangelistic mandate of the Church.

Neither does she have a particularly unique role in God's ongoing plan for the world.

Once the Messiah was born, and Israel failed to recognize Him, God wrote her off permanently. She lost her special status. So now she's just like any other nation.

That's what they say.

But is that really true?

Let's see what the Bible says.

# DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

## No other group of people gave us the Bible.

God used the Jewish people to give us His Word:

What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God (Rom. 3:1-2).

The “oracles of God” means, literally, *the utterances of God*—the things God has told us in the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

When we say the Bible is “God’s word,” it’s not just trite, religious jargon—it’s a statement of fact. In the Bible, God speaks to us. That’s why it has divine authority—and why we can believe it.

Remember that printing presses are a relatively modern invention. In ancient times, books and scrolls—including the Bible—were painstakingly copied by hand. Jewish scribes copied those manuscripts, one letter, and one stroke of the pen at a time.

The scribes knew that their vocation was holy work. They were handling the Word of God. Their manuscripts were checked and double checked; if even one mistake was detected, that manuscript was set aside (or sometimes, ceremonially buried).<sup>2</sup>

This is how the Bible survived throughout the generations so it could be passed down to us. Jewish people, at various crisis points in history, gave their lives in order to protect and preserve the Holy Scriptures. No other nation or people group can make this claim.

## No other group of people gave us the Messiah.

Jesus was Jewish. His earthly parents—Mary and Joseph—were both descended from the line of King David.

The Apostle Paul observed, “Of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, the Messiah came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God” (Rom. 9:5).

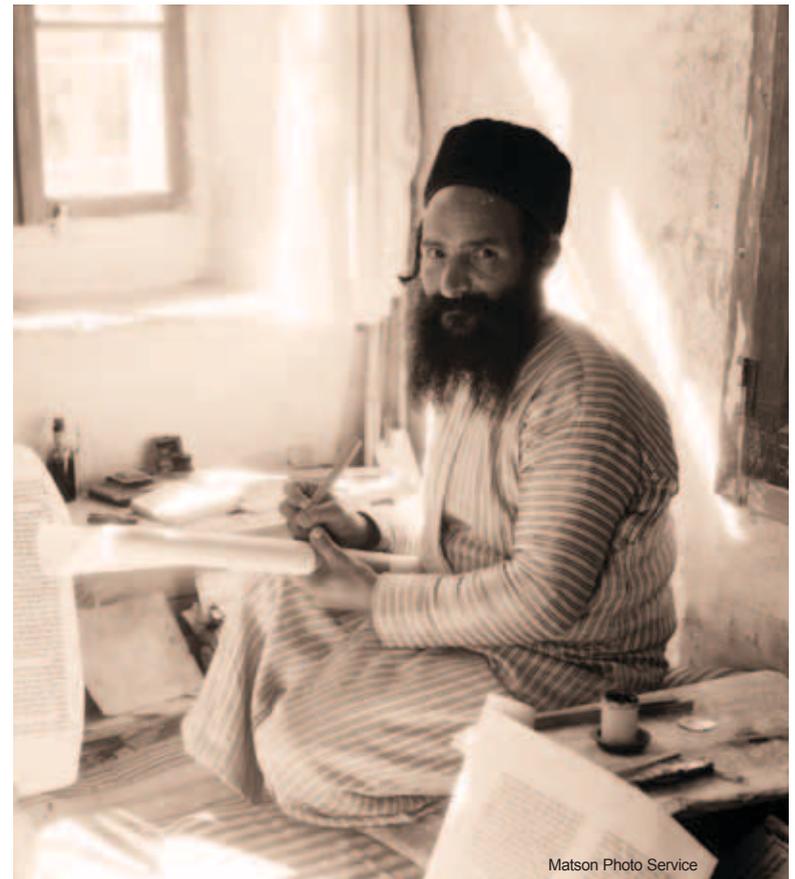
Jesus himself said, “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22).

## No other group of people has been so universally associated with a specific religious faith.

When we talk about “the Jewish people,” are we talking about a race, culture, religion, family, or nation?

The answer, strangely enough, is “all of the above.” The term *Am Yisrael* (People of Israel) encompasses all of these aspects.

There’s a racial component because there are certain genetic markers that indicate Jewish ancestry. However, some people convert to Judaism and have no genetic connection whatsoever.



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### Messianic Perspectives™

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The cultural component is also very strong because of the binding nature of Jewish tradition. But you can be Jewish even if you don't observe the traditions—at least, theoretically.

Religiously, of course, Judaism is the Jewish faith. Nevertheless, you can still be Jewish even if you have no religious faith at all.<sup>3</sup>

Officially, the State of Israel is an open and pluralistic society; her citizens enjoy religious freedom. However, everyone knows that Israel is a Jewish State. And this is how it should be.

After all, the Jewish people became a target of genocide and extermination during the Holocaust (*haShoah*). The modern State of Israel was founded in its tragic aftermath to provide them with a safe haven in a dark and often dangerous world.

Theodor Herzl, founder of the modern Zionist movement, wrote:

We are a people—One people.

We have honestly endeavored everywhere to merge ourselves in the social life of surrounding communities, and to preserve only the faith of our fathers. It has not been permitted to us. In vain are we loyal patriots, our loyalty in some places running to extremes; in vain do we make the same sacrifices of life and property as our fellow citizens; in vain do we strive to increase the fame of our native land in science and art, or her wealth by trade and commerce. In countries where we have lived for centuries we are still cried down as strangers, and often by those whose ancestors were not yet domiciled in the land where Jews had already made experience of suffering.<sup>4</sup>

So when we say “the Jewish people” (and sometimes when we say “Israel”), we're talking about *Am Yisrael*, the People of Israel. It's more than just a political entity (nation), religion, race, family, or culture—it's all of those things bundled up into one.

Even if the nation Israel was somehow, God forbid, wiped off the map, the People of Israel would live on, scattered throughout the world.<sup>5</sup> And God's promises would remain intact.<sup>6</sup>

In that event, we would simply await a yet-future ingathering and restoration of national Israel.

## No other group of people is called “the apple of God's eye.”

The Bible tells us, “*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).

The Hebrew text literally says, “He who touches you [that is, Israel] touches the pupil of His eye.” It's talking about the central and most delicate part of the eyeball. Without it, sight would not be possible.

What do we do when someone tries to touch one of our eyes? We instinctively flinch. It's a protective reflex. We protect our eyes at all costs—and we don't even have to think about it.

The Prophet is saying here that when someone hurts Israel, it's like they're poking the God of the Universe in the eye.

## No other group of people is referred to as a “light” for the nations.

The Prophet Isaiah makes it clear that Israel was called to be a beacon for the other nations, bearing the news of God's salvation to the ends of the earth:

Indeed [the LORD] says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth” (Isa. 49:6; see also 42:1-6, 52:10, 60:3).

Simeon, the elderly saint who held the baby Yeshua in the Temple, saw the first coming of the Messiah as a fulfillment of these prophecies (Luke 2:29-32; see also John 8:12, Acts 13:47, 26:23).

However, there will also be a future fulfillment when He comes the second time and Israel enters into her New Covenant blessings:

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).



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If Israel's rejection made it possible for the world to be reconciled to God (during the Church Age), then Israel's *acceptance* someday will be like a resurrection from the dead (11:15).

The People of Israel, regenerated and renewed in the Kingdom, will serve as a reminder to the nations of God's grace, forgiveness, and promise-keeping power.<sup>7</sup>

God doesn't say this about anyone else—only Israel.

### **No other earthly group of people is the inheritor of the OT Abrahamic and Davidic promises (and the New Covenant).**

In Jeremiah 31, the New Covenant is explicitly made with two earthly entities—namely, Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and Judah (the Southern Kingdom):

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (vv. 31-34).

This is not to insist that a literal fulfillment of Jeremiah 31 requires the Northern and Southern Kingdoms to exist the same way they did in ancient times; the idea here is that the New Covenant is for *all* of the People of Israel (*Am Yisrael*).

Jeremiah's mentioning of specific geographic markers also lends itself to a literal interpretation in Chapter 31:

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that the city shall be built for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. The surveyor's line shall again extend straight forward over the hill Gareb; then it shall turn toward Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and all the fields as far as the Brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be holy to the LORD. It shall not be plucked up or thrown down any more forever” (vv. 38-40)

Charles Lee Feinberg, writing in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, offers this helpful synopsis of Jeremiah's presentation of the New Covenant in Chapter 31:

- **The *time* of the covenant** (v. 31): “The time is coming.”
- **The *Maker* of the covenant** (v. 31): the LORD (vv. 3, 20, 32, 35).
- **The *name* of the covenant** (v. 31): new (Rom. 11:27; Heb. 8:6-13; 10:14-18; also Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25).
- **The *parties* of the covenant** (v. 31): “house of Israel” and “house of Judah” (cf. Ezek. 37:15-19; Rom. 9:4-5 the nation of the covenants).
- **The *contrasted* covenant** (v. 32): not like the old covenant: based on merit and works, susceptible of infraction, no enablement (non-fulfilling), did not give life (Gal. 3:21).
- **The *nature* of the covenant** (vv. 33-34): not dependent on external law nor human interpretation; law written on the heart; gives intimate knowledge of and fellowship with God, forgiveness of sins, and peace of heart.
- **The *immutability* of the covenant** (vv. 35-37): the unchanging purpose of God reflected in the fixed order of nature.
- **The *physical aspects* of the covenant** (vv. 38-40): rebuilt Jerusalem in holiness and permanence.
- **The *Guarantor* of the covenant** (vv. 31-40): “declares the LORD or the LORD says” (nine times), as though to swear by himself (cf. Heb. 6:17-18).<sup>8</sup>



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The New Covenant is between the LORD and the People of Israel. Its template is the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant rather than the conditional Mosaic (Sinai) Covenant—a covenant Israel broke (Jer. 31:32).

A bilateral covenant that's broken is no longer in force. That's why the New Covenant was necessary.

By faith, New Testament believers become a third party in the New Covenant and thereby participate vicariously in its blessings even before the principal (Israel) does!

Paul himself saw the Abrahamic Covenant as the antecedent of the New Covenant (Rom. 4:9-12). Another Pauline metaphor sees NT believers as having been “grafted in” to the “tree” of true, Abrahamic faith (11:17). That's how New Testament believers participate in Israel's New Covenant.

Again, this cannot be said about any other nation.

**No other group of people has been specifically targeted by the Enemy for national destruction.**

Satan has been defeated, but he doesn't know it yet. He is self-deluded and therefore hasn't given up his diabolical schemes and efforts to thwart God's plans.

In the OT period, he tried to prevent the first coming of the Messiah by destroying the people *through* whom the prophets said He would come. Having failed at this enterprise, his plan has shifted gears. Now his focus is on foiling the Messiah's Second Coming by destroying the people to whom the prophets said He would return.

To this end, the nation Israel will play host to the Battle of Armageddon—the end-time showdown between the forces of good and the forces of evil.



**No other earthly group of people is specifically identified with God's Name.**

In the Tanakh (the Jewish Bible, or OT), God is called either “the LORD God of Israel” or “the God of Israel” more than 200 times.

One example: “Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness””’ (Ex. 5:1).

Nowhere in the Bible is He known as “the God of Egypt,” “the God of Syria,” “the God of Babylon,” or the God of any nation other than Israel.

The Creator of the universe identifies himself uniquely with the People of Israel—and only Israel.

“And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16). Armageddon, literally, is “mountain of Megiddo” (Heb., *Har Megiddo*).

The Megiddo Valley in Israel will become a staging ground for a multinational military force as it prepares to attack Jerusalem (Zech. 12:1-5).

Note that the attack specifically focuses on Israel and Jerusalem—and not any other nation or city.

**No other single group of people is specifically said to be an evangelistic priority.**

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

In an ironic sort of way, “to the Jew first” isn’t so much about Jewish evangelism as it is a strategy for world evangelism. God says that if we want to reach the world with the Gospel, we need to win and recruit Jewish people first. They, in turn, will help us get it done.

The Church is supposed to be about missions. Every church has a missionary board showing the missionaries it supports around the world. In spite of all this activity, however, the stark reality is that we are failing in the task of world evangelization.

Right now, as you read these words, people worldwide are being born at a faster rate than they’re being reached with the Good News. The statistics prove it. We are losing ground rather than gaining it.

Could it be because we’re not doing it God’s way?

The late Moishe Rosen expressed it this way:

“God’s formula for worldwide evangelism is this: Go to the Jews first. Then the Jews you win to Christ will, with their God-endowed proclivity to preach, be instrumental in winning others . . . One cannot help but wonder if the church had followed that formula, wouldn’t the work of world evangelism be much further along today?”<sup>9</sup>

### **No other group of people is the lynchpin around which God’s end-time plan revolves.**

The Lord himself said that He wouldn’t return until His people, Israel, recognize Him as their Messiah: “*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).

Again, note that this isn’t true of any other nation. He didn’t say He would return when Americans, Africans, or Asians recognize Him in faith—as much as He rejoices when that happens. It’s the faith of the Jewish people, when they recognize, en masse, their Messiah, that signals His return to earth.

### **No other group of people prompted Paul to say that he would forfeit his salvation if they could be saved.**

Paul said, “*For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh*” (Rom. 9:3).

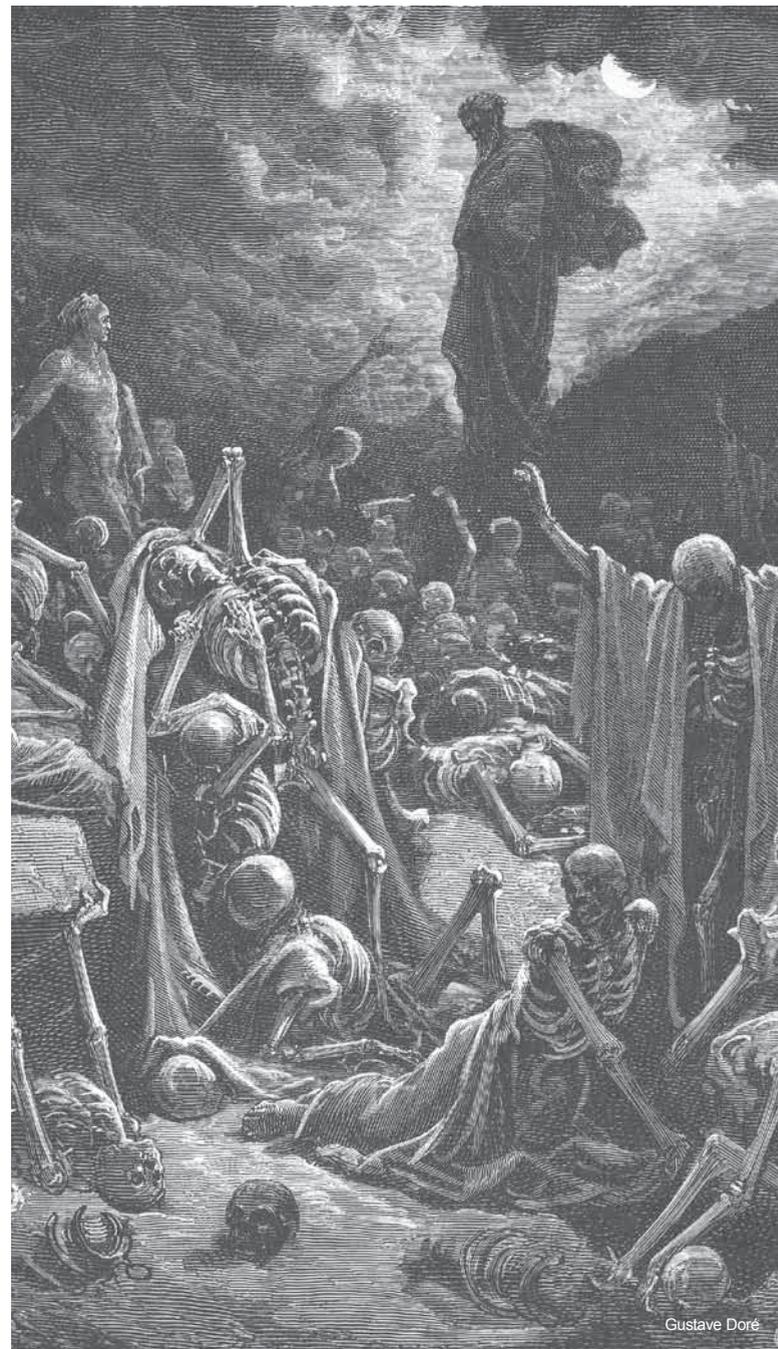
Some people see this more as an emotional outburst by the Apostle, perhaps like that of Moses in Exodus 32 (vv. 30-32). He was brokenhearted over the spiritual condition of his Jewish countrymen. If it were possible, he would forfeit even his own salvation if that could bring them to faith.<sup>10</sup>

While it’s impossible to overlook that element of poignancy in Paul’s statement, there could also be a logical aspect to it. That is, Paul knew the salvation of Israel is the one specific event that triggers events leading up to the Messiah’s return.

If Paul could hasten the Lord’s return by forfeiting his own salvation, he was willing to do so. That’s how important it was to the Apostle—and he didn’t say this about any other nation.

### **No other group of people has been resurrected as a nation after having been “dead” for nearly 2,000 years.**

In Ezekiel 37, the Prophet saw a vision of a valley full of dry bones. As he watched, the bones were reanimated: “So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army” (v. 10).



Those bones symbolized the nation Israel. She would “die” and be raised again to life (v. 11).

The Romans destroyed the nation Israel in AD 70. The Temple in Jerusalem was burned to the ground and not one building block was left standing upon another. The Temple Mount was scraped off and covered with layers of salt from the Dead Sea so that not even a weed could grow there.

Today, in our generation, the nation has been raised from the dead. As far as I know, it is unprecedented in the history of the world—except in the case of Israel.

**No other group of people has been the singular focus of worldwide genocide throughout history.**

Other peoples and nations have been the object of genocidal attacks; however, no one else has endured, over so many centuries, the type of sustained and relentless onslaught that the people of Israel have.

**No other group of people will be the catalyst for a worldwide revival during the coming Tribulation.**

One of the ironies of the prophetic narrative is that the coming Tribulation Period is described not only as a time of great apostasy and unimaginable evil, but also as a time of remarkable and unprecedented revival.

The bad will get worse and the good will get better—all at the same time.

The leaders of the end-time revival will be 144,000 Jewish evangelists. They are enumerated according to the 12 tribes of Israel in Revelation 7:3-10.

The order of the tribes in Revelation 7 is interesting. It doesn't follow Jacob's original listing in Genesis 49:1-28. Instead, it looks more like the military formation described in Numbers 2:3-34, with the tribe of Levi protected in the center of the encampment by four surrounding clusters of three tribes each.

Judah comes first in Revelation, of course, because of its messianic primacy (the Messiah is the Lion of the Tribe of

Judah in Revelation 5:5). Dan and Ephraim are replaced by Joseph and Levi in John's revised listing—possibly due to their lapses into idolatry (Jude 17 and 18, Hos. 13).<sup>11</sup>

John, then, may have designed this listing to tell us that these 144,000 Jewish evangelists constitute a Tribulation force that will go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit to do battle with the Anti-messiah and take the Good News of the coming messianic Kingdom to the ends of the earth.

When the time comes, they will be an army on the move!

This interpretation fits nicely with Ezekiel 37:10, where resurrected, end-time Israel is portrayed by the Prophet as “an exceedingly great army.”

During the coming Tribulation, then, while the Church is in Heaven, these 144,000 Jewish evangelists will form a great, end-time army—and God will favor them with extraordinary success on the earth. So many people will come to faith in the Messiah that no one will be able to count them all (Rev. 7:9-12).

Notice, too, that these preachers are distinctly and identifiably Jewish. They're not Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, or Episcopalian. They're believers in Jesus the Messiah; as we've already seen, in order to emphasize their Jewish identity, they're enumerated by tribe.

This is a problem for the *absorptionists* who say that Jewish people who come to faith are simply absorbed into the Church—with all of its non-Jewish cultural trappings—and that they should forget that they are Jewish!



## **No other group of people will be saved (that is, receive Yeshua as Savior and Messiah) in ONE day.**

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

We hear about evangelistic crusades in Africa, and other parts of the world, where people respond to the Gospel in droves—sometimes by the thousands. But in Jewish work, the response is a trickle rather than a torrent. It can be discouraging at times.

Bear in mind, however, that the current trickle of response is merely the “firstfruits” (James 1:18; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:15) of a much greater harvest that will come later:

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).

In a remarkable and unprecedented move of God’s Holy Spirit, an entire nation (Israel) will come to faith in one day.

## **No other group of people will have such a central role in ushering in the coming Kingdom Age under Messiah’s rule.**

David, Jesse’s son, was a forerunner (and ancestor) of Jesus the Messiah (Isa. 11:1-2).

When Jesus returns, He will assume His rightful position as Davidic King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16).

Furthermore, the Messiah’s reign will be distinctively Jewish and Israel-based. He won’t rule from Los Angeles, New York, Buenos Aires, Brussels, London, Beijing, Tokyo, or Moscow. The prophets say He will rule over the world from the Davidic seat of authority in Jerusalem (Isa. 9:6-7; Luke 1:30-33).

The nations (*hagoyim*) will come up to Jerusalem every year to worship in the millennial Temple (Zech. 14:16).

It will be a glorious time of renewal for a sin-scarred and battle-weary world: “*For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea*” (Hab. 2:14).

These things are true of Israel—and of no one else.

Let’s remember that.



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is president of  
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### **ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>The Greek word for “oracles” is *logion*, a derivative of *logos*, or “word.”

<sup>2</sup>Recruited from the social upper class, scribes went through years of training before they exercised their profession. Those who followed an advanced training became the scholars of antiquity. They were responsible for the creation, preservation, and interpretation of the classic texts of their time. Their professional center, materially as well as spiritually, was the workshop of the temple [in Jerusalem]” (*Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* by Karel van der Toorn [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007], 6).

<sup>3</sup>The only religious faith that excludes someone from being Jewish, it seems, is Christianity. The rabbis have ruled that you can’t believe in Jesus and be Jewish.

<sup>4</sup>*The Jewish State* by Theodor Herzl (New York: The Maccabean Publishing Co., 1904), “Introduction,” 6.

<sup>5</sup>The term Diaspora describes Jewish people living outside the Land of Israel.

<sup>6</sup>The only thing that would invalidate the promises of God would be the extermination of every Jewish person on the planet. This is precisely what the Enemy will try to do during the Tribulation—but he will fail.

<sup>7</sup>*Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* by Walter C. Kaiser (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

<sup>8</sup>Frank E. Gaebelein, Geoffrey W. Grogan, Charles L. Feinberg, et al., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Volume 6: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 574.

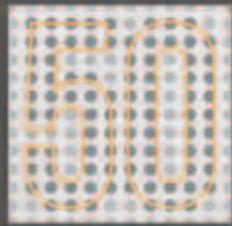
<sup>9</sup>*Witnessing to Jews: Practical Ways to Relate the Love of Jesus* by Moishe and Ceil Rosen (San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 1998), “Introduction,” ix.

<sup>10</sup>The Greek idiomatic construction in Romans 9:3 indicates that Paul knew this suggestion was, in reality, impossible. He could not suffer in the place of his Jewish brothers and sisters; only Jesus could do that.

<sup>11</sup>Some commentators express great consternation over the change of the tribal names in Revelation 7. However, this is a very Jewish thing for John to do. There are some 20 listings of the tribes in the OT and seldom are they identical. Even in the Torah, the list seems to be in a state of flux. The Tribe of Joseph, for instance, was replaced by Joseph’s two sons—the half-tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim (Joshua 14:4). So by reverting to Joseph here in Revelation, John is returning, at least in this instance, to the original listing in Genesis 49.



# The Promise of The Father:



## PENTECOST

### THE FEAST OF WEEKS: SHAVU'OT

by Vi Berger

“**A**nd being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father . . .” (Acts 1:4)

The resurrected Yeshua appeared and spoke these words to His disciples in the Upper Room. There are more than 3,000 promises in Scripture, and only one is called “the Promise of the Father”—it prophesies the Holy Spirit’s indwelling in the hearts of believers the coming of the *Ruach haKodesh* (Holy Spirit). God said, “*But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel . . . I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people*” (Jer. 31:33).

“The Promise of the Father” was fulfilled 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits (Acts 2:1-4)—exactly 50 days from Yeshua’s resurrection on the Day of Pentecost (Greek, 50). On that day, Jewish people of the Dispersion made a pilgrimage from all over the known world to celebrate the Feast of Weeks (Hebrew, *Shavu’ot*) in Jerusalem. It was a sign from Heaven—a truly supernatural event. The Jewish people from every nation heard the disciples—who were endued with the power of the Holy Spirit—speak the wonderful works of God in their own tongue. They also heard Peter speak about the death of King David and the Resurrection of Yeshua (Acts 2:29-36).

The Holy Spirit is God, and one of His attributes is omnipresence. He is always present, has always been here, and will always be here. In the Older Covenant, the Holy Spirit can be seen resting on David, Saul, and Samuel. The *Shekinah* “Presence of God” was in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21-22). It led the children of Israel through the wilderness and took its abode in the Tabernacle and the Temple, sitting on the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies. But in Acts 2, something different took place that fulfilled Pentecost. It was the Holy Spirit taking His abode in the hearts of believers—

in the lives of those who, by faith, had received *Yeshua haMashiach* as God, Lord, and Savior. This was a new and unique phenomenon.

The Holy Spirit gave the apostles the power and authority to perform signs and wonders, and to speak with boldness—with “divided tongues as of fire” (Acts 2:3). That was why Yeshua had to depart from this world, so that “the Promise of the Father” would be fulfilled—in order for the Helper to come (John 16:7). A result of the events of Pentecost, and Peter’s exhortation to “repent,” the Church—the Bride of Yeshua—was born. “*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them*” (Acts 2:41).

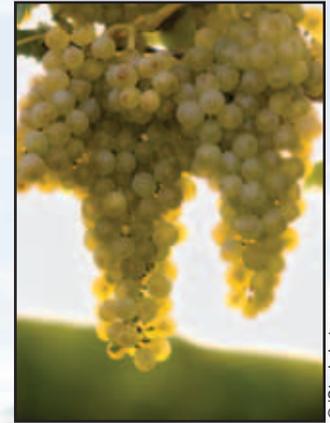
The Feast of Weeks (*Shavu’ot*) is celebrated 50 days after the day after the Sabbath following the Feast of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:15-16). The counting of these days is called the “Counting of the Omer,” a measurement used to calculate the wheat offering that was to be brought to the Temple. The Feast of Weeks falls in the month of *Sivan* on the Jewish calendar. It was an agricultural festival commemorated during the wheat harvest. During the Dispersion of the Jewish people, however, the emphasis and character of the Feast of Pentecost changed. It has been determined that 50 days after the Israelites fled Egypt, they also received the Torah (the Law). Therefore, historically, the Feast of Weeks is a celebration of the Law being given to the people when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments written upon tablets of stone.

According to Jewish custom, every year at the appointed time, the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17) are read in the synagogue during *Shavu’ot*—commemorating the “Giving of the Law.” It was for this reason that the Jewish people of the Dispersion came from all the nations to the Temple in Jerusalem during what became the first Pentecost. This, too, was God’s appointed time—Pentecost—to send, and fulfill “the Promise of the Father.” It was His divine plan for the redemption of all mankind.



by Violette Berger

# Fruit from the Harvest



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## A God-Appointed Introduction

**Marcos Morales, international CJFM worker (Mendoza, Argentina)**, was introduced to a young, married couple at a Christian summer camp in Buenos Aires that his daughters attended. The wife—who is also the daughter of the camp’s spiritual director—is a believer, and her husband was an unsaved Jewish man named “D.” Prior to the introduction, Marcos was told that D’s wife had told him the Good News numerous times during their four-year marriage. D was open to discussing Yeshua, but still expressed a number of typical Jewish objections.

When Marcos met with D, the first thing D asked was whether the church that D’s wife attended believed in the Jewish God, and if their Christian God was God. Marcos explained that the church believes in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It also believes in *Yeshua haMashiach*, who is the promised Messiah to the people of Israel; He fulfills all of the Tanakh’s prophecies about the promised Jewish Messiah. They also discussed whether the Bible his wife reads is the same as the Tanakh. After assuring him that it is, Marcos went on to also explain the *Berit Hadashah* (the New Covenant).

Following their long conversation, D said, “I’m sure I’ll end up believing in the Messiah Jesus, but I cannot even think about coming to faith in Messiah while my mother is still alive—it would be a betrayal toward my mother. Yiddish mamas are responsible for teaching their children how to be good Jewish persons.” Marcos replied, “You shouldn’t think that you would be embracing another religion. On the contrary, you would complete your Jewish faith by receiving Jesus as your Messiah and personal Savior.” D said that nobody had ever explained spiritual things to him from that perspective. Upon concluding their conversation, D allowed Marcos to pray for him.

A few days after their conversation, Marcos received an email from D’s wife with the joyful news: D told her that he now

believes in Jesus and would go to church with her and their son. Marcos was blessed to recently hear that D has grown considerably in his faith and even shares with others about Yeshua, his Messiah and Savior.

## A Change of Heart

**Richard Hill, CJFM missionary and pastor of Beth Yeshua (Las Vegas)**, met a student named “Betty” during an outreach with his group on the UNLV campus. The 20-year-old was depressed and poured her heart out about her circumstances. After two years of marriage, Betty was going through a bitter divorce initiated by her husband. Rich found it difficult to listen to the details of everything this broken, young woman had been through—especially since she had not even graduated from college yet. As Rich shared the Gospel message with Betty, he stressed that Jesus, alone, could forgive her sins and heal the pain and bitterness in her heart as well.

The next time Rich saw Betty her life had dramatically changed. She was attending a Bible church with a friend, was being disciplined, and had received Jesus as her Lord and Savior. Betty has forgiven her ex-husband and views him as a friend who is lost instead of an enemy. She is also, miraculously, graduating on time. Betty blessed Rich by telling him that their encounter and conversation was the catalyst for her salvation and the change in her life and heart.

## Redemption in Messiah

**CJFM missionary Michelle Beadle (New Orleans)** received a Jewish man’s contact information from a woman who had travelled with her on a CJFM tour to Turkey. The woman had met the man while working at a local sports venue, and she had attempted to share her faith with him. She asked Michelle to follow up, and following a number of phone conversations with Michelle, he gave his heart to Messiah.

# Bible Questions AND Answers

by DR. GARY HEDRICK

Have a Bible question?

Submit it to Dr. Hedrick at [garyh@cjfm.org](mailto:garyh@cjfm.org), or mail it to 611 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78215.

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

**QUESTION:** *Why do you often use Hebrew terms like Yeshua, Messiah, New Covenant, and Tanakh rather than their more traditional English counterparts of Jesus, Christ, New Testament, and Old Testament?*

**ANSWER:** First, let me assure you that we're not some weird "sacred name" pseudo-Jewish sect. We know there are extremist Hebraic movements that say it's wrong to use the name "Jesus Christ" because it's rooted in paganism. One group even tries to link the English name "Jesus" with the name of the Greek god Zeus. They say Jesus is really "Gee—zeus."

This is the sort of skewed conclusion you come to when you don't have your linguistic ducks in a row. It's like saying John 1:1-3 teaches that the world was created by a chunk of wood (*logos* = log). Or saying Joshua in the OT had no father because he was "the son of Nun." (Get it, "son of none"? And yes, there was reportedly a "sacred name" group that actually taught this.) The "evidence" is based purely on phonetics—which is virtually always misleading.

So then, why do we like to intersperse Hebraic terms with their more traditional, Greek- or Latin-based counterparts? We sometimes even quote from the Hebrew New Testament. Many Christians don't even know there is a Hebrew New Testament. The reason we use Hebrew terms is because it's a reminder of the Jewish roots of our faith. After all, Christianity is essentially and historically Jewish. The Messiah was born in Israel and grew up in a Jewish family. He had a Hebrew name (Yeshua). His birth had been prophesied in the Jewish Scriptures. His followers were Jewish. The writers of His biographies (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), as well as the rest of the NT, were Jewish. The early Church was so Jewish, in fact, that it had to convene a council at Jerusalem to decide if and how non-Jewish people could be admitted into its ranks (Acts 15:6-29).

This practice of using Jewish terms also makes for interesting conversations with Jewish people, especially in Israel. If you're speaking with a typical, non-religious Jewish Israeli and you use the anglicized term "Jesus" or "Christ," they will understand that you're a Christian (*Notzri*)—and they're okay with that. They lump all "Christians" together (making no distinction between Catholic and Protestant), and they know those are the folks who bring lots of tour groups to the Land—that's good for the economy. They also know that evangelical Christians in North America are overwhelmingly pro-Israel. So if they classify you with the *Notzrim*, chances are you'll be well received.

But if you use the Hebrew term Yeshua or *meshichi* (messianic), that's an entirely different ballgame. When you say you're *meshichi*, they know the pope is out of the picture. Now you're talking about a first-century Jewish rabbi who's quite

controversial in polite Jewish society (some things haven't changed much in 2,000 years). And they know that there are Jewish people, thousands of them in Israel, who follow Him as their Messiah and Savior. This input (for the culturally sensitive Jewish ear) is harder to process.

It's a historical fact that the Lord was known as Yeshua centuries before He was known as Jesus. It was His original name—and that's the name the Apostle Paul was talking about when he said it's "the name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9-10). (Remember, Paul lived 2,000 years ago and never spoke or wrote a word of English. We find the name "Jesus" in English translations that have appeared only in the last 500 years or so.)

Some folks really need to get up to speed on the history here. They think the Savior's first name was "Jesus" and His last name was "Christ." So they imagine that if you could be transported back to the first century, you could go to Nazareth and ask where the Christ family lived. You would be directed to the home of the Christs—Joseph Christ, Mary Christ, their son Jesus Christ, and His other siblings.

But that's not how it was in first-century Israel. They didn't have surnames as we have today. In His day, the Lord would have been known as *Yeshua ben Yossef* (Jesus son of Joseph). The term "Christ" was a title—not a surname. It derives from the Greek word *christos*, which means "Messiah" or "Anointed One." In Hebrew, then, He is *Yeshua haMashiach*, or Jesus the Christ. In Aramaic, the Jewish street language of His day, it would have been pronounced something like *Yeshue Meshikha*. Not much different from Hebrew.

I could go on and on, but I won't belabor the point. You're probably already way ahead of me on this.

It's really simple. We use Hebraic terminology from time-to-time because it's our way of keeping the conversation going about the Jewish roots of true, historic Christianity.

It also helps us keep the focus on interpreting the Bible from a messianic perspective. That is, in fact, the name of our bimonthly paper and our daily radio program—*Messianic Perspectives*.

It's what we're about.

It surely doesn't mean we think it's wrong to use non-Hebrew terms for these same names and concepts. Whatever language, God knows what we mean. He's more interested in what's in our hearts than He is in the words we use (Psalm 66:16-18).

And whether we call Him Yeshua or Jesus, He knows we're talking to Him.

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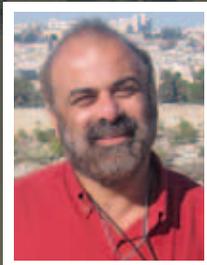
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## *Tour Host*

**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.

