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CONSULTATION  
ON JEWISH  
EVANGELISM**

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ON JEWISH EVANGELISM  
BULLETIN**



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From the coordinator

## Jerusalem 95

It is still possible  
to register  
for the conference.

Participants from Israel who do not  
wish to stay at the hotel are kindly  
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Fifth International  
LCJE Conference  
18-23 June, 1995  
Jerusalem

## Three Portraits of Caleb: A Man of Vision, A Man of Vitality, and a Man of Virtue

By Dr Jack Estep

The saying reads, "No one is completely useless; you can always serve as a bad example." The Scriptures tell us of many men who serve as bad examples, but there are others who serve as good - even great examples. Such is the man Caleb. Consider the three portraits which the Scriptures paint of Caleb.

We meet him first as one of the twelve spies surveying the promised Land. Ten came back with the report, "Great land, big enemy. Forget it!" Then Caleb speaks saying, "Let's take the land." Caleb was not denying reality. He knew that the people in the land were big, strong and scary, but he also knew God. Rational thinking would indicate they should abort the plans to take the land. But Caleb had right theology: His theology confessed God for who He is, recognized God's purpose and plans for His people, and acknowledged man's responsibility as instruments to accomplish these plans. Whenever our thinking and our theology are in conflict, right theology will defeat rational thinking every time. So the first portrait is "Caleb: A Man of Vision." A vision that is rooted in God and is controlled by God's terms and by God's timing. Later the Israelites said, "Let's go; let's take the land." But that

was after the Lord had sentenced them to 40 years in the wilderness. God said, "You can go if you want, but I won't be there. You will be defeated." A person with spiritual vision must seek to do God's will in God's way and at God's time. Such was Caleb: A Man of Vision.

The second portrait of Caleb comes 45 years later. The Israelites are in the process of taking the land. There have been some glorious victories and a few embarrassing defeats. While most of the land was not theirs, the remaining portion posed some sizable challenges. This is where we again meet Caleb. He claims to be as strong as he was 45 years ago, and at 85 he desires the big challenge. "Let me go after the hill country where the strong enemy lives." In the King James Version Caleb says, "Give me that mountain ere I die." No retirement for Caleb, no resting on laurels, no easy chair. Caleb was a man of untiring vitality. Two people are modern-day Calebs for me. One is Mrs Dessie Webster, a black woman, a mother, a teacher, an administrator of a school and a hospital chaplain. At age 82 she earned her PhD. At 90 she was still teaching, serving as chaplain in a large San Francisco hospital, and being very active in her

church. The second example for me is my dad. At 94 he drives, reads extensively, lives by himself, and does not miss church - even when it means walking through snow and the cold. Reflections of Caleb? Yes, for Caleb was a Man of Vitality, and for him life never lost its challenge.

The third portrait, not vividly painted, but nevertheless, is Caleb - A Man of Virtue. This portrait is 40 years long and covers the time Caleb and all the other Israelites wandered through the wilderness. Several million people wandered because of their sin, and two others wandered because of no fault of their own. Caleb could have complained everyday, "I'm here because of your stupid decision." The bumper sticker on his chariot could have been "Don't blame me, I voted to go in!" Caleb had every "right" (by human measurement) to be bitter. Day after day, the same food, dust and sand in his eyes and mouth, tired feet, unappealing scenery - not because he chose it but because someone else's decision overruled his.

How often do we find ourselves in a situation not of our own choosing; not governed by our own decisions - such as a strained marriage, a difficult work situation or unpleasant

church relationship. As a pastor, your Board made a decision you could not agree with, or your immediate boss is not one you would have chosen, or you are trapped in a body that has many limitations. Been there 40 years yet? It's often the middle years that challenge our vision and our vitality the most. It's here that the testing becomes most severe. You can react with bitterness and rebellion, or you can resign yourself to

your fate and become a zombie, or you can proactively do as Caleb did and follow the Lord.

Caleb – Man of Virtue – survived because he "wholly followed the Lord". Caleb testified of this, Moses confirmed it, Joshua said the same thing and even God Himself said that "Caleb has wholly followed me." The "wholeness" relates to our word integrity, so with integrity Caleb followed the Lord. His public life, his

private life, his lifestyle, his preaching, and his relationships were all marked with integrity. Any slice of Caleb's life revealed the same ingredient of "following the Lord". Only with sound integrity can we go through years of suffering which are the result of someone else's bad decision.

Caleb – a Man of Vision, a Man of Vitality and a Man of Virtue/Integrity. The world desperately needs many Calebs today.

### Personal reflections on the LCJE NA meeting in Las Vegas, 27/2 – 1/3

By Daniel Strull, President of the Fellowship of Messianic Congregations  
Pastor of the Olive Tree Congregation, Glenview Illinois

I remember my first reaction when I heard that the 1995 LCJE-NA conference was to be in Las Vegas Nevada. "What? Are you kidding?" Now that I am back from the conference, the first thing people ask me is not "How did the conference go?" but "How much did you lose?" The fact is, I left the conference a big winner.

One liability of leading a local congregation is becoming provincial in perspective: our sheep, our flock, our community ... What a joy it was to speak with brothers and sisters from places such as Vancouver, BC, Atlanta, GA, and even Norway and Israel, all of whom are giving their lives to reach our people with the



gospel. Meeting these brothers and sisters enabled me to get my eyes off my little corner of the harvest field and back on to the Lord of the harvest. I left Las Vegas enriched by a restored perspective.

Our North American "microwave" culture makes

longevity and "stick-to-it-iveness" rare commodities. The sometimes sparse fruit and difficulty in Jewish evangelism have taken their toll among those who have ministered among our people. Helge Aarflot's overview of the 150-year history of the Norwegian Church Ministry To Israel reminded me of the need to take a long-term view of ministry. Helge's report and the presence of a several elder-statesmen of the Messianic Jewish movement in North America demonstrated the value of building on a firm foundation. I left Las Vegas richer for being challenged to make sure that my efforts to get the job done "now" are built firmly



Intense listening

upon the only foundation that endures, Messiah Jesus.

As an amateur carpenter, I appreciate having the right tool for the job. The LCJE conference reminded me of how vast the job of Jewish outreach is – and that we need to be able to effectively utilize all possible "tools" to accomplish the task of bringing the Gospel to our people. Rich Robinson's paper on the

Internet was exciting and sobering. What excites me is the potential for disseminating information, evangelistic and missiological, quickly and inexpensively through the Internet. Perhaps we will be able to read the papers delivered at next year's meeting by accessing an LCJE "page" on the World Wide Web! The world-wide communication made so

easy by the Internet also reminded me that mankind has not forsaken the quest it began at Babel. Mankind scrambles ever higher up the "tower" of advanced technology in its search for ultimate autonomy ... The end envisioned in Revelation draws near.

Carpentry takes more than just good tools. It also requires expertise in using them. These meetings provided practical insights into effective ministry. Whether it was in the presentation of a paper or the response, or casual conversation, I was delighted by the depth of practical wisdom and insight offered by the participants. Michael Rydelnik's paper on reaching intermarried couples through local messianic congregations was particularly pertinent for the FMC. (The irony here is that Michael attends the congregation I



Praising the Lord with dance. Dancers from the Lev HaShem Congregation.

pastor! If we had not been at the LCJE meeting together, who knows how long it would have been before I tapped Michael's experience. Perhaps next year we will be able to report on the effectiveness of this outreach as applied in our congregation.) I left Las Vegas with my spiritual "toolbox" brimming with practical insights for building Messiah's body more effectively.

As one whose job is feeding the flock from God's Word, it is always a pleasure to sit down and enjoy a nutritious meal prepared by someone else. There was no lack of food in Las Vegas. Dr. Louis Goldberg added new ingredients to my understanding of the oral law. Kai Kjær-Hansen presented a beautiful recipe for unity and love to the debate of how we should identify ourselves as Messianic Jews. Dr. Arthur Glasser added fresh seasonings to my appreciation of Paul's letter to the Romans. I am still chewing on Art Katz's challenge to consider the holocaust as it relates to calling our people to repentance and faith. The relatively young Messianic movement, which often challenges cherished ideas about Christian praxis, has a great need for solid biblical scholarship. I am grateful for the light of God's Word as it applies to life and Messianic Jewish ministry.

The yellow "caution"

**Papers from LCJE North America,  
1 Feb. - 1 March, 1995**

1. Names Used about Jesus-Believers - Then, in Acts, and Now. Kai Kjær-Hansen, 16 pp.
2. The Holocaust as Judgment. Arthur Katz, 13 pp.
3. Martin Luther and the Jewish People: Lessons for Jewish Ministry Today. Bill Bjoraker, 28 pp.
4. Paul, Romans 7, and Jewish Evangelism. Arthur Glasser, 12 pp.
5. Update on Media Coverage in the Field of Jewish Evangelism. Susan Perlman, 15 pp.
6. Using Commercial Online Services and the Internet for Evangelism and Networking. Rich Robinson, 8 pp.
7. The Torah - When is it Authoritative and When is it not? Louis Goldberg, 28 pp.
8. Reaching Intermarrieds: A Marketing Strategy for Messianic Congregations. Michael Rydelnik.
9. Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel: 150 years. Helge Aarflot. Can be ordered directly from Helge Aarflot, DNI, Collettsgt. 43, 0456 Oslo 4, Norway

Photocopies and postage to be paid for on receipt. The papers are available from the North American LCJE Secretary. Murray Tilles, P.O. Box 98249, Atlanta, GA 30359, USA.

lights flashed a few times during the conference, too. Bill Bjoraker's paper on Martin Luther, and Tuvya Zaretsky's briefing on Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding offered a thoughtful challenge to complacency or spiritual myopia. In seeking to understand the matrix from which Martin Luther arose, I was reminded how blind each of us can be to our own hate and prejudice. Hearing about the E.M.E.U. made me realize how easily our desire to reach the unreached can lead us to compromise the very truth we want to proclaim.

I learned something else in Las Vegas. The unabashed pagan trappings of the casinos and hotels, and the throngs of joyless people transfixed before slot machines confirmed afresh the vanity of life apart from God. In radiant contrast, the smiles of my brothers and sisters attending the LCJE meeting reflected the reality of a risen Savior. His power to redeem all men and give them life abundantly far outshines the neon and glitter that man can offer.

How much did I lose in Las Vegas? Nothing, really. In fact, in the light of eternity, I came out a big winner.

# Update on Media Coverage in the Field of Jewish Evangelism

presented by Susan Perlman  
to the 12th North American Coordinating Committee Meeting  
of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism  
February 27-March 1, 1995

This media report covers the time period of March, 1994 through February, 1995. Between these dates, over 675 newspaper articles were published and over radio interviews conducted on topics related to Jewish evangelism.

This year I've chosen to concentrate on some of the larger feature articles that were done, as well as touch on several categories. The categories are: Schneerson - the Aftermath, Messianic Congregational News, Countering Missionaries, Jewish Evangelism among Russian Jews, Current Jewish Thought on Jesus, and How the Jewish Community Defines Us and How We Define Ourselves.

## 1. Schneerson-the Aftermath

There were literally hundreds of articles done in response to the death of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. An article in the *Detroit Jewish News* on June 17, 1994, Rabbi Daniel Schwartz of Temple Shir Shalom said of him, "He didn't make himself the Messiah. His followers did. His followers put perfect faith in him. The potential is



Susan Perlman

there for all rabbis, doctors, lawyers - those in a position to make life-affecting decisions. There's a saying, 'a rabbi's only as good as his next miracle.' Obviously, Schneerson was good. People followed him."

On June 17, a full-page advertisement appeared in the *Jewish Press*, proclaiming Schneerson would be resurrected and reveal himself as Messiah and lead the people to redemption. The implications of that were taken up not only in the *Jewish Press*, but in the *Forward*. The front page

article was entitled, "Rabbis Blast Lubavitcher Messianism" with a subhead, "Warn Resurrection Talk Echoes Christian Themes."

One of the loudest opponents to the resurrection theory, with regard to Schneerson, is David Berger, professor of history at Brooklyn College and Graduate School. Berger, who wrote *Jews and Jewish Christianity*, together with Michael Wyschogrod, maintains that the new teachings of the Lubavitch will make it easier for Jews to consider Christianity. He reasons thus, "...because one of the fundamental Jewish arguments in response to Christian missionary efforts was that Jesus could not be the Messiah because he died before redeeming the world, by saying the late Rebbe is Messiah aborts the standard Jewish response."

In another article, Berger went on to say, "The belief in a dead Messiah cannot be allowed a shred of legitimacy within Judaism. It must be extirpated in its infancy."

On a lighter note, the *Jewish Week* reported in the July 29-August 4, 1994

issue that "Messiah Business [is] Hurting." The Crown Heights outlet for Messianic bumper stickers, key chains, tambourines and general chatchkes found its doors padlocked and its electricity cut off for refusal to pay several months worth of rent and Con Edison bills.

A reflective issue of *Sh'ma - A Journal of Jewish Responsibility*, October 28, 1994, was devoted to monograph the situation since the Rebbe has died. The lead article by Neil Gillman, who teaches Jewish Philosophy at J.T.S., was entitled "When the Messiah Dies." He contrasts the death of Jesus with the situation confronting the Chabad community and concludes that "The single most regrettable offshoot of this entire episode is that for many Jews, the eschatological impetus itself has become suspect."

Meanwhile, in a January 13, 1995 article entitled "The Moshiach Controversy Lives On," Ari Goldman reports that in Crown Heights and in Kfar Chabad the Rebbe's face still appears on billboards and posters, accompanied by the words, "Techef Ashuv (I will return)," and in the daily prayers offered at 770 Eastern Parkway, the words of the messianic song, "Yechi," are often called out.

On the other hand, the head of Chabad in Yorba Linda, California says, "no one shouts 'Yechi' here. There is no question that we

are deeply in pain over the loss of the Rabbi, but to suggest that 99.9% of the Lubavitch are waiting for the Rebbe to return as Moshiach can only be said in that place down the road from here, Disneyland."

It is likely that more articles will appear throughout this year and beyond with regard to the Lubavitcher movement and their messianic hopes.

A word of commendation to Kai and Bodil for getting the Schneerson book as quickly as they did.

## 2. Congregational News

There are several articles that came out this year which centered on Messianic congregations, and most of them appeared in Jewish publications. I will cite a few.

*The Jewish Sentinel* printed a story on how the *Montreal Gazette* refused an advertisement from Kehilat She'ar Yashuv Messianic Congregation after receiving a complaint from B'nai B'rith League for Human Rights. The advertisement was an invitation to come to a Passover seder and included a menorah, Star of David and fish symbols. The League is quoted as saying, "Our sole concern is with publication of an advertisement containing false or misleading statements or representations. In this instance the ad contains nothing that would advise the unwary that this is a Christian rather than a

Jewish sponsored seder." Percy Johnson, the leader of the congregation is quoted as saying that he strongly disagrees that the ad is misleading.

The *Kansas City Jewish Chronicle* did a piece entitled, "Jesus or Judaica, What does controversial new store sell?" In it, Jerry Feldman, who is identified as a leader of Adat Yeshua Congregation, is profiled as the manager of the Shalom Emporium which "sells merchandise which promotes the belief in Jesus as the Messiah alongside traditional Judaica items." The Kansas City Rabbinical Association has opposed the shop and are quoted as saying, "We should not support a group which is committed to converting Jews to beliefs contrary to Jewish Judaism."

An interesting dilemma for the editor and publisher of the *Kansas City Jewish Chronicle* is that while he agrees with local rabbis and their "outrage over the store," he is "put in the awkward and painful position of accepting advertising from this organization. Because they are the only Jewish newspaper in Kansas City, to deprive them of their right to buy ads would be to inhibit their right and their ability to conduct business, since their prime customers are Jews." The editor goes on to say that "we really have no choice but to accept their advertising."

July 15, 1994, William Frankel, a Brit, wrote an

article for the *Jewish Chronicle* of London entitled, "Minhag for the Melting Pot." Frankel visited the States and among other things, went to a worship service at Beth Messiah Congregation in Rockville, Maryland. He goes on to describe finding out about the service through a Bolivian woman who was working at his temporary Washington home. He goes to a service, hears "Ein Keloheinu" sung, realizes that the words were transliterated on a large screen behind the musicians. He comments on the preponderance of "Hallelujahs" during the service, alternating readings between the Pentateuch and the Gospels and the rapture of the worshippers. "It could have been a scene from 'Elmer Gantry,' but with a Hebrew accent, as could the sight before the service ended, when a black congregant was invited to perform the Torah service." Frankel goes on to share the guest packet that was handed to him before leaving and concludes the article by saying "None of the Washington Jews to whom I spoke of this experience knew of any committed Jew who had become involved with the Beth Messiah Congregation. Its Jewish supporters appear to have come from the unaffiliated. Nor is it simply a version of 'Jews for Jesus,' for most of its adherents are not Jews. The phenomenon can, perhaps, best be classified

under the heading 'only in America.'"

One of the most extensive series of articles on messianic congregations came out in the south Florida papers known as the *Jewish Journal*. The front page of both *Broward Jewish Journal* and *Palm Beach Jewish Journal North* ran a series of articles on local Jewish evangelism and congregational work being done in the area.

The large headline reads, "Jews Believing in Jesus - Community leaders say don't mix Christianity with Judaism." To the far left is a cross; to the right is a Star of David. An article by Suzanna Spiro on Ayts Chayim leads off by claiming to be "America's largest Jewish newspaper." The description of the services is much more objective than most. For instance, "... at Ayts Chayim, men wear yarmulkes and prayer shawls, several traditional Jewish prayers are said in Hebrew and a Torah scroll is paraded around. A person without much knowledge of Jewish practice and liturgy might not be able to tell that this was anything other than a Jewish service. After all, words and phrases that would be a dead giveaway, like 'Jesus Christ' and 'New Testament' are scrupulously avoided except in Hebrew translation."

However, a refreshing testimony by Frieda, a 70-plus worshipper at Ayts Chayim, is included. She

says, "If anyone had told me years ago I'd believe in Yeshua, I'd say you were meshugge. I came from an Orthodox Jewish home and sent my children to yeshiva...I was born a Jew. I'll die a Jew. You don't convert what you're born into." She then goes on to say that what does make her different is her personal relationship with God. The article also includes some of the testimony of Avi Mizrahi, from Israel, who was a guest in the congregation that day.

It also includes a section on Melech Yisrael of West Palm Beach and recounts the story of Trudi Lewkowitz, who attended a service there and was misled into thinking that it was a traditional Jewish congregation. They do say, however, that if you phone Melech Yisrael today and ask what type of synagogue they are, "the woman on the phone will tell you that it's a messianic congregation which believes in Jesus." Charles Kluge gives a bit of his testimony and points out that the congregation, which he leads, is 55-60% Jewish.

The *Palm Beach Jewish Journal North* did a feature article on Temple Aron Kodesh in Lauderdale Lakes in which they had a photograph of the facility where the congregation meets and recounted what the messianic service was like. They pointed out that in Harvey Koelner's sermon he spoke about "the recent

demographic study which showed that the fasted growing Jewish population in South Florida was now living in Western Broward County where Aron Kodesh is located." Among the stories recounted in the article is one by Elaine Cohen whose Russian cousins were taken to an Aron Kodesh service by a Russian believer. According to Cohen the Russians were duped into coming to services because of a promise of possible employment.

According to Koelner 65% of the people who attend Aron Kodesh are Jewish. His testimony is also included in the article. Ellen Farber's testimony is included as well.

Also profiled in this article is Aaron Schwarzbaum who is executive director of a group that "saves the Jewish lives who come into his path." Schwarzbaum says, "I have never in 21 years met a Jew who believes in Jesus because of the verses. They claim they do but basically it comes down to it feels good in here." He said beating his chest emphatically with his fist." Schwarzbaum says that there are between 125,000 and 400,000 Jews who have been "lost to the missionaries in the last 20 years since the San Francisco based Jews for Jesus was founded and the other messianic movements took off gaining popularity."

Finally, on this topic I want to point out an article

that appeared in the *Spectator* on December 3 of last year which is a British paper entitled "Rabbis in the headlights." Shema Yisrael synagogue in Hove is profiled. According to this article there are 40 small messianic congregations in Britain. Most of them are springs of the American movement which claims a world wide membership of over 100,000. The article tells a little bit about the service and the opposition to messianic Judaism in the UK.

It's important to note that all of the articles that focused on the messianic congregations and appeared in Jewish publications sounded the same note. Namely, that to be involved in a messianic congregation means one is trying to be deceptive and misleading about the person of Christ. Most of the incidents of deception or blurring of distinctives cited in these articles are not verified. As is the case in opposition to the larger movement of Jews to the person of Jesus, when one doesn't want to speak out against Jesus' claims for messiahship, then the attack ends up being directed to methods or materials used. Which brings me to the section on articles countering Jews who believe in Jesus.

### 3. Countering Missionaries

Jews for Judaism's rabbi Tovia Singer continues to put forth his material and is quoted in a significant

number of both Jewish and secular publications. A good example is in the June 11 issues of *The State*, the Columbia, South Carolina paper. In an article entitled "Group seeks to reclaim lost Jews," Singer says that there are 125,000 of us in the US today and that 50,000,000 born again Christians are "obsessed with converting the nation's 5,000,000 Jews."

A most amusing counter missionary article appeared as an editorial in the *Jewish Press* on November 18, 1994 entitled "Yad L'Achim Uncovers Missionary Master Plan In Israel." Those of us who work in the field of Jewish evangelism looked very carefully to find out what our master plan was by reading this article. In essence what they did was take the Chosen People Ministries newsletter that dealt with their Shalom 2000 program and uncovered it as the master plan for missionary work in the next six years. This material was called "classified information." Considering the fact that the Chosen People newsletter must go out to at least tens of thousands of people, they've come up with a new definition of classified according to Rabbi Sholom Lifshitz director of Yad L'Achim.

An article that was undoubtedly read by many of the 33,000,000 readers of *Modern Maturity*, the AARP monthly magazine, in June 1994 entitled "Let Us Prey,"

included a section on how cults prey on older people. A four paragraph portion under the section the institutional connection cites Jews for Jesus, though not as "meeting all definitions of a cult," but says that "its recruiting practices are indicative of tactics cult or cult-like organizations use." It also included some comments from Ellen Kamensky who was a professing Jewish believer and later renounced the faith. Though some letters to the editor appeared in a later issue, the effect of this article on the movement was quite negative to those who had no first hand experience with Jewish Christians.

June 15, 1994 the *National Jewish Post & Opinion* did an article entitled "Favorite Adversaries meet again," in which Arlene Peck, one of their regular columnists, interviews Moishe Rosen. She is a friendly adversary and a photograph of her in front of the Jews for Jesus headquarters as she poses in tight leather pants and a broad smile says it all.

December 16, in another anti ad that should make us smile. It was in the *Cleveland Jewish News* and included a portion of the Jews for Jesus advertisement with Stan Telchin's face in a wreath and some of the copy from the ad. Beneath it it says "If it's December it must be an ad from Jews for Jesus." The article quotes Mark

Powers from Jews for Judaism and calls for individuals to write letters or call the publications to complain when such ads appear in the future.

Finally, in the countering Jewish missions section was a full page ad in the *Detroit Jewish News* on May 20, 1994 that had the statement in large reversed out letters saying, "Some guy from Jews for Jesus was on campus last week. You know, Dad, he made a lot of sense." From that there is a bit of copy which goes on to say, "They're not the words you want to hear, not if you want your kids and their own kids to be Jewish. Not if you want the Jewish people to survive." A pitch is then made for Jewish education and making a pledge to the allied Jewish campaign.

The final article in this section appeared in the January 6, 1995 *Jewish Press*. It features a group called the Jewish Action Group. According to the J.A.G., there are over 150,000 Hebrew Christians in the United States. J.A.G. was established by Israel's Yad L'Achim. As they say, "...bringing over 40 years of experience to the United States in combating groups that attempt to separate Jews from their heritage and people." Given that Yad L'Achim is the same group that uncovered the master plan for evangelism for the next six years, you can just imagine the caliber of the J.A.G. activists in the United

States. According to this Jewish Press article, a Hanukkah party being held by the Hope of Israel (the Russian ministry of Jews for Jesus in Brighton Beach) was "foiled...and none of the intended guests joined the party." Interestingly, all references to Jews for Jesus were written out as "Jews for J---s." Is that like G-d? According to believers who were present at the event, the details as stated in this article are fallacious, but it makes for very interesting and amusing reading, nonetheless.

### 4. Testimonies

It is particularly encouraging to see any number of testimonies of Jewish believers in mainline Christian publications, reinforcing to the larger church the fact that there are Jews that come to believe in Jesus and have a commitment to seeing other Jews consider Him as Messiah, as well.

On August 21, 1994, Steven Greenhut did a feature article for the *Pentecostal Evangel* entitled, "Sharing the Gospel with our Jewish Neighbors." He gives his own testimony, having come to know the Lord in the Philadelphia area and offers some pointers to non-Jewish Christians on how they can share their faith with their Jewish friends.

*Christianity Today*, August 15, 1994, did an interview with Peggy

Wehmeyer, who is a broadcaster on "ABC's World News Tonight." The story of the discovery of her Jewish identity has appeared in any number of secular publications, as well.

There is a delightful story in a Christian newspaper, called *Maranatha Manna*, on Norman Schimberg. The article is entitled, "Local Jewish Man Finds his Messiah." Schimberg's testimony tells of how he first considered Jesus at age 70. He is now 72.

The April, 1994 edition of *Decision* magazine includes a testimony of Michael Brown, who pastors Adat Y'shua ha Adon in the San Fernando Valley. His testimony was picked up from the Southern Baptist Convention publication. However, it will speak into the homes of a significant number of born-again Christians, who will see that upon becoming a believer, Michael trained for the ministry in a mainline Christian seminary, was ordained through a mainline denomination, and yet has a strong commitment to presenting the gospel in a Jewish way to our people and ministering to a congregation that is committed to its Jewish roots.

Two final testimonies that I would like to mention appeared in secular publications. The *Dallas Morning News*, May, 1994, profiled radio talk show host, David Gold. Gold, who is

well known in the Dallas area as a conservative "talk jock," came to faith in 1994 and has toned down some of the spirit behind the criticisms in his broadcasts. He remarks on how he is still concerned about telling his father, who is retired in Florida, about his faith in Christ, knowing that his dad probably won't take the news very well.

The other testimony is that of Marvin and Margie Rudolph, which appeared in the *Birmingham News*, June 5, 1994. This Jewish couple came to faith a number of years ago, but never went public with it. They have been publishing the *Jewish Star* since 1976 and have been believers for many of those years. It was only in 1994 that their faith became public, and this has sparked a number of articles and discussions on radio talk shows in the Birmingham area. The *Jewish Star* has a circulation of 8,000. Local rabbi, Jonathan Miller, is quoted in the article as saying of the Rudolphs, "I wouldn't consider them any more Jewish than I would consider the Pope." However, the Rudolphs share their testimony, going all the way back to confirmation at Temple Beth El in Birmingham as youths.

#### **5. Significant Feature Articles**

There are four significant feature articles that came out that I'd like to cover in this report. One came out in the

winter of 1993, in the publication *Reform Judaism*, and I did not refer to it then. However, it has been reprinted, in part, in at least 50 different publications in 1994, and therefore merits discussion here. It is entitled, "Inside Jews for Jesus," by Sheri Ross Gordon. You'll notice any number of articles with her byline that quote from part of this piece. It begins by telling the Ellen Kamentsky story, as it's written in her book, *Hawking God*. It casts Jews for Jesus and other missions in very cold and calculating metaphors. For instance, when dealing with finances, she speaks of missionary contributions as "good return on their investment." Moishe Rosen is described as a "Jew turned Baptist." The Liberated Wailing Wall are referred to as "another lucrative fundraising tool." The article includes a sidebar called, "other Hebrew Christian Groups to Avoid" and features Stuart Dauermann and Ahavat Zion Messianic Synagogue. According to the sidebar, "One-third of the messianic synagogues in the united States were created by the Assemblies of God, the denomination of former TV preachers Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker. The North Carolina-based American Board of Missions to the Jews and the Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry in New Jersey, together with Jews for Jesus, spend \$24 million a year targeting

Jews." Zola Levitt, Jewish Voice Broadcast and Messianic Vision are also cited.

There is another sidebar from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations' Department of Interreligious Affairs Committee on Cults and Missionaries in which they offer information, resources and a video to be used by member congregations in the "battle against the deceptive techniques of cults and missionary groups." This article was particularly mean-spirited and provided less than truthful information of an inciting nature.

The Jewish magazine, *Moment*, in its August, 1994 issue, also did an extensive piece entitled, "Jews who Choose Jesus," by Alan Edelstein. It begins by recounting the setting for "Messiah '93" in Grantham, Pennsylvania. A dramatic photo of Robert Cohen of Jacksonville, Florida, holding up a Kiddush cup is on the lead page. The article goes on to describe Jews for Jesus as "the most visible and, among the Jews, the most reviled of 150 groups specifically targeting Jews for conversion." Philip Abromowitz, of New York's J.C.R.C., estimates that messianic Jewish groups spend \$100 million a year to missionize Jews. Some other "major messianic proselytizers" include "Sol Roth's Messianic Vision, U.M.J.C., Lederer Missionaries, Ariel Ministries

and Chosen People Ministries."

The figures given for the number of Jewish believers in the United States vary. M.J.A.A. is quoted as saying well over 100,000. Tovia Singer says 150,000. Mark Powers says 250,000. And Jews for Jesus says 35,000. New York's messianic Beth El Congregation is profiled as is Shuva Yisrael in Baldwin, New York.

Sura Grodin, who attended Shuva Yisrael, led by David Rosenberg on Long Island, is quoted as saying, "I left the church because I felt it didn't acknowledge Judaism, whatsoever. It was very Christological. It had no use for the Old Testament. The article then goes on to quote Bruce Cohen in New York, explaining what he means by keeping "Biblically kosher" and Michael Schiffman of Kehilat Y'shua Messianic Congregation in Manhattan, responding to whether messianic Jews celebrate Hanukkah or Christmas. David Rosenberg then points out that the messianic movement has matured enough for groups like Jews for Jesus to feel confident in referring contacts to them these days.

There are any number of inaccuracies, such as an account of how a messianic group offered \$3,000 to each of eight Russian Jewish families who agreed to have their sons baptized.

The article also includes an excerpt from Elie Wiesel's

book, *Smashing the Idols*, in which he calls us soul snatchers, dishonest and hypocrites. The Beresford case is also explained, and Art Bernstein, a Jew who had confessed faith in Christ and was later seduced by David Zaslow, who uses a Jewish renewal, mystical approach to bringing Jews away from Christianity says, "It is tragic that I had to hire a private rabbi to gain such knowledge."

Sura Grodin, who had problems with Christology earlier, meets Tovia Singer and becomes a Ba'alei Teshuvah. The article ends by posing some questions. The author muses out loud that messianic Judaism is facing a similar quandary to that of normative Jews, "How can it sustain its distinctly Jewish character when so many of its members are Gentiles. Are the children and grandchildren of today's messianic Jews going to have any interest in maintaining a Jewish identity." Congregations that have established messianic yeshivas, like the Chalutzin Academy of Beth Yeshua in Philadelphia speak with confidence of their staying power. The writer, however, points out that many believe that distinctly messianic congregations will fade away as "younger generations assimilate into mainstream Christian denominations. As to threat level of messianic Judaism, the final comments are these. "Ultimately, it is less a threat than it is a

challenge, goading us to confront questions of God and spirituality that have long been cast aside."

I have saved the more positive, lengthier feature articles for last. *New Voices* is a publication that goes out nationally to Jewish students at secular universities. Last July, Alexandra Wall, senior staff writer with *New Voices*, came to the Jews for Jesus office in New York in the heart of the Campaign. She interviewed myself, Stephen Katz, Joshua Sofaer and Moishe Rosen. To give you an idea, she said, "While I was hoping to instantly hate [Rosen] and all the people in the building, it is disappointing to realize that I am immediately taken in by their warmth. The instant Jewish click is there. I feel that connection binding us, uniting us, except for one tiny, minor discrepancy. They believe in Jesus Christ." Ms. Wall allows each of us to give an extended testimony and edits those testimonies minimally. Most encouraging is the testimony by Joshua Sofaer, who during this interview was a full-time student at Brooklyn College. He tells how he came to know the Lord, and then even shares the prayer of repentance that he made to the Lord. The reporter is really taken by his story. She says, "I am amazed by his tenacity and chutzpah to be able to defend his belief in Jesus in a class on traditional Judaism taught by a rabbi. Sofaer is quoted as

saying that he hopes his presence in Jewish studies classes causes his fellow students to challenge themselves on their own beliefs. "Seeing someone intelligent in class, who believes in Jesus, shows them that it's not a cult, or a brainwashing group, but that we thoughtfully go about what we do," he says.

The final cover story came out most recently in the *Jerusalem Report* January 26, 1994 issue. It was entitled, "For the Love of Jesus" and had several contributing writers. Vince Beiser wrote from New York, whereas Yossi Halevi did a section from Jerusalem and Alexander Lesser did a Moscow section. The Israeli writer profiled David and Martha Stern. Halevi points out that the number of messianic Jews in Israel remains small but is growing. The Russian piece includes the testimony of Vladimir Leibovsky, who works with Avi Snyder in Moscow. However, the majority of the article centers on Jewish ministry in the U.S. The article starts out by profiling David Rosenberg's son, Matthew, and goes on to talk about their messianic congregation in Long Island. According to the article, there are "at least 207 in the United States." In some ways, the article tries to set the Jewish mission agencies against the messianic congregations and vice-versa. Most are not buying it. The article does a

brief history, as well as a modern-day account, of the movement of Jews to the person of Christ and features some quotes by Bruce Cohen, David Chernoff, Jeff Forman and others. Some of the statements they allow us to make are quite good. For instance, Forman speaks about being unfairly stigmatized, "I feel it's a double standard. Jews who believe Rabbi Schneerson is the Messiah are accepted as Jews. How many Jews don't believe in God at all, yet are accepted as Jews? Reform and Conservative Judaism were not accepted in Israel for many years, and still the only people who can perform marriages are Orthodox rabbis. Who defines belief?" The writer profiles the "typical messianic Jew" as "one being raised in a normal, middle-class Jewish home with at best a superficial Jewish education, a perfunctory bar or bat Mitzvah, and is now working as a pharmacist, teacher, banker or similarly mainstream occupation." Joel Chernoff is quoted as saying, "We feel we are a significant and growing part of the mainstream Jewish community and our prophetic destiny is to become a major part of it."

The February 23, 1994 issue of the *Jerusalem Report* included three letters in response to the article. One was from a rabbi, one was from a Jewish believer and another was from a Gentile believer. Let me read

the Jewish believer's brief letter.

*I applaud your courage and integrity in printing an honest report on Messianic Judaism. Such objective reporting on this highly charged issue is rare.*

*As a Messianic Jew I am personally saddened by the inevitable rejection I face from many of my own people to whom I am so deeply bonded but I am at least heartened to be rejected for real ideological differences rather than self-defensive ignorant fabrications.* - Rachel Wolf, Cincinnati.

I don't know how many of you enjoy "Dry Bones," but after the death of Schneerson, a particular "Dry Bones" cartoon came out that I found very hopeful. It starts out with a drawing of Hassidic Jews carrying placards with the Rebbe's face on them. It says above it, "They thought he would be revealed as the Messiah." The next panel says, "We looked on with both nervousness and trepidation. The next panel says, "But now that the Rebbe has been laid to rest, let's admit the truth." And lastly, "It would have been nice if they had been right."

I hope that does reflect more of the thinking than we are even aware today - that there are those among our people who are looking to find out that there truly is a Messiah.

## Jerusalem 95

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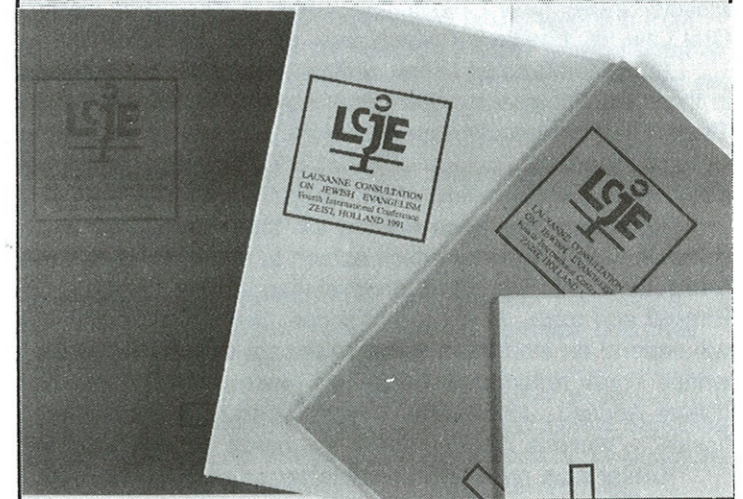
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# THE TORAH – WHEN IS IT AUTHORITATIVE AND WHEN IS IT NOT

Louis Goldberg, M.A.; Th.D.  
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When considering the Written Torah, or the Word of God, this writer has always been intensely interested in its authority and implications for the wider issue of biblical theology. Jewish people have been known as the people of The Book, largely because they are the ones who have been entrusted with the very words of God (Rom. 3:1). Unfortunately, the phrase today might not have reference to the Word or Torah as God gave it, but rather, to The Books, or what has been produced by Jewish writers on a number of subjects. Somehow, when it comes to the sacred writ God gave, and how it should be interpreted, a critical problem exists over its authority ever since the days of the Enlightenment.

Our task will be to examine how the more conservative rabbis and scholars assessed the Written Torah, and then what happened to its interpretation as seen in the Oral Law. At the North American conference of Lausanne, consideration was also given to how the philosophical theologies of the Middle Ages and the modern period of the Enlightenment handled the Written Torah as well, comparing it with a Messianic Jewish analysis. Offhand, there might not seem to be any question concerning the Written Torah, but on the other hand, one could wonder what happened to the written Torah when examined from the point of view of what various Jewish thinkers have stated.

## Terms

### The Meaning of Torah

The term, Torah, comes from the Hebrew verb, *yarah*, meaning "throw, cast, shoot."<sup>1</sup> A noun from the verb, (*moreh*) is "teacher," who aptly, "throws," or "casts" instruction at his disciples! Another noun from the verb is: (*torah*), defines instruction.<sup>2</sup> A wise father who instructs his son is actually imparting Torah, as model of wisdom pictures it (Proverbs 1:8). God likewise, as the divine Teacher (*moreh*), imparts His "instruction" to Israel. With this meaning for Torah, as it is applied to the Written Law, no taint of legalism exists in it. In time, Torah has also come to have several wider meanings, such as: the Torah of Moses, or, the Mosaic Covenant or Constitution, which is also divine instruction, as well as the entire body of Oral Law, or, traditions,<sup>3</sup> which may, or may not reflect the written Torah.

An understanding of the written Torah from the more conservative perspective is viewed in three specific areas: *Gillui Shekinah* (revelation), *Torah Min HaShamayim* (inspiration), and *Torah Lo BaShamayim* (interpretation).

### *Gillui Shekinah* (Unveiling of the Shekinah)

Revelation has been defined as "the manifestation of God in acts of appearance which overawe man," a theme which occurs in many areas of Talmud and Midrash.<sup>4</sup> From this perspective, the "unveiling" or revelation of God is where He seeks to bridge the gap between Himself and man. In a general sense, God reveals Himself in nature and the universe and it will depend on what man wants to accept of this kind of revelation. In a specific sense, the written Torah reflects what God has made known to man through the revelation of His Word (*Devar Adonai*). Other biblical terms used for revelation are: "*mahazah*, *hazon*, and *hizayon*, "vision" – whence *hozeh*, "seer"; or *mareh*, "sight," whence *roeh*, "seer."<sup>5</sup>

Kohler also provides a twofold sense of revelation: "First, God's self-revelation, which

the rabbis called *Gillui Shekinah*, "the manifestation of the divine presence," ... "which overawes man and impresses him with what he hears, sees, or otherwise perceives." But another sense also appears in revelation which is the "manifestation of God's message through oracular means, signs, statutes and laws."<sup>7</sup>

In the first sense, Kohler provides an excellent understanding of the biblical idea of revelation, but in the second sense, Kohler provides the various forms that revelation takes.

### The Forms of *Gillui Shekinah*

As already noted, God's message appears in words which He speaks to man, signs, visions and dreams. Revelation is both oral, when God speaks to man directly, but can also be written when the recipient records what he experienced.

*Oral Revelation* -- In revelation, we note how God spoke to man, in various ways, but to Moses, "He spoke mouth to mouth...as a man would speak with his neighbor" in clear sight of all.<sup>8</sup> One would expect this because Moses is preeminently the one God used in delivering Israel from Egypt, who led Israel to Mt. Sinai, and the one who became the channel through which Israel was bound to God in a covenant. Subsequently, in the Jewish mindset, Moses became *Moshe Rabbeinu*, or Moses our teacher.

*Visions* -- The prophets also received revelation from God in what was called "the vision." Kohler notes that this was also provided to "non-Israelites as well as to the patriarchs and prophets of Israel, -- to Abimelech and Laban, Balam, Job, and Eliphaz."<sup>9</sup> Kohler, however, notes the difference between the prophets of Israel and other nations in that "the Jewish genius perceived God as the moral power of life," suggesting that the prophets of Israel perceived God as a *moral God*.<sup>10</sup>

*History* -- The *Gillui Shekinah* was also revealed through His dark acts in the accounts when God states, "I AM," (Exodus 3:14), but this is seen as God acts through Moses to bring Israel out of Egypt. The revelation of God is seen in historical events, "The Lord is the God who brought Israel out of Egypt, and Who guides them through history. The God of Israel thus reveals Himself as acting in historical events...history is the milieu of God's revelation."<sup>11</sup>

*The Climax of Gillui Shekinah* -- Fishman suggested that after the revelation at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:19), whereby "You yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven," explaining that this is intended to mean that all the people of Israel were present at Sinai. So, at this juncture of history in the greatest climax of revelation, everyone in Israel are to then be bound to this revelation and revelation has reached its climax at Mount Sinai.<sup>12</sup> Kohler describes the revelation of God to the people of Israel as part of the great world – drama of history ... we see here the dramatized form of the truth of Israel's *election* by divine Providence for its historic religious mission.<sup>13</sup>

### *Torah Min HaShamayim* – The Torah From Heaven

While *Gillui Shekinah* can be described as the revelation of God whereby He reveals Himself to man and shares with him what he must know, *Torah Min HaShamayim* becomes the subject of inspiration whereby what is recorded becomes Scripture.

The subject of inspiration is a complex one. No difficulty seems to appear when considering direct revelation which, upon its reception, Moses or any of the prophets recorded directly what was shared. The problem begins to compound when those portions of Scripture are also considered inspired when writers use: 1) historical records from the archives,

gathered and placed there by historians, and, 2) other outside materials which have been passed on orally from generation to generation. A Biblical view of inspiration suggests, however, the Holy Spirit is sovereign in leading sacred writers to select the materials and enable them to commit to writing what God actually desired.

As early as the period of the Mishnah, this phrase, *Torah Min HaShamayim*, is already noted, which insists that the Israelites who have no portion in the world to come are those who deny that the Torah is from Heaven (*Torah Min HaShamayim*).<sup>14</sup> Later in the Amoraim period of the Gemara, a Baraita states that:

"With reference to him who maintains that the Torah is not from heaven ... if he has searched that the whole Torah is from heaven, excepting a particular verse, which (he maintains) was not uttered by God, but by Moses himself, he is included in those who despise the Word of God."<sup>15</sup>

*Testimony to Torah Min HaShamayim* -- Various writers have recognized the high view of *Torah Min HaShamayim* whereby this concept is "associated primarily with the notion that every syllable of the Bible has verity and authorship of the Word of God. The contents of the sacred books are to be regarded throughout as conscientious and homogeneous, with no contradiction in them, ..."<sup>16</sup> Such a view recognizes the Written Law as inspired, or, God breathed.

Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, who restructured a traditional Judaism in a modern setting, stated:

"Is the statement 'and God spoke to Moses saying,' with which all the laws of the Jewish Bible commence, true or not true? Do we really and truly believe that God, the Omnipotent and Holy spoke thus to Moses? Do we speak the truth when in front of our brethren we lay our hand on the scroll containing these words and say that God has given us this Torah, that His Torah, the Torah of truth and with it of eternal life, is planted in our midst?...This Word of God must be our eternal rule superior to all human judgement, the rule to which all our actions must at all times conform: and instead of complaining that it is no longer suitable to the times, our only complaint must be that the times are no longer suitable to it."<sup>17</sup>

Schechter declared:

"It is the Torah as the sum total of the contents of revelation, without special regard to any particular element in it, the Torah as a faith...the Torah in this abstract sense, as a revelation and a promise, the expression of the will of God..."<sup>18</sup>

Even though many other scholars of various persuasions in the field of Judaism will disagree with these assertions, nevertheless, many thinkers in the Jewish community, both ancient and modern, did and continue to hold to a high view of inspiration, assigning to it the greatest revelation that God could give to any nation on earth.

*The "How" of Inspiration* -- Granted that the Torah is special because of a high view of *Torah Min HaShamayim*, a serious question arises as to how was it accomplished. How did God interact with the writers of Scripture, how did it get from God to man, and how did it end up as holy writ.

Kohler is helpful when he describes:

"This is not merely a psychological process in which the human imagination or mental faculty constitutes the main factor, but that man is but the instrument upon which a suprahuman force exerts its power."<sup>19</sup>

The point is that God somehow worked through man so that he wrote His words. But do the

rabbis speak in terms of how did it come about? Three possibilities seem to predominate: a) Through a means difficult to understand, God prompted the biblical writers to communicate His word.<sup>20</sup> b) Moses and other men of God "acted as a scribe writing from dictation, as was the case with Baruch and the prophet Jeremiah"<sup>21</sup> c) Parts of the Scripture could have been dictated, but other parts could have been by the writer, e.g. Moses, in which God had confidence Moses would not inject his own ideas into the Torah, "but even if he did he could be trusted to represent reliably the divine will."<sup>22</sup> It would appear that in later assessments of inspiration, the rabbis and scholars took a more moderate position in the view of inspiration, allowing for the writer to reflect what God wanted as he put it in his own words, but that God would superintend the final product.

Nevertheless, because of the different views by different Jewish writers, the "how" of inspiration seems to be left open and, in a sense, a mystery. Some statements appear quite puzzling, suggesting that the transmission of the text of Scripture itself is inspired.<sup>23</sup> This brings up how Scripture is inspired and Rav Shaul (Paul) states that, "All scripture is God-breathed..." (II Timothy 3:16), therefore, the Scripture itself is inspired, or God-breathed, and not the writers who are "inspired." On the other hand, Peter states that "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit," and here the apostle describes the unique work of the Holy Spirit within the mind and heart of the writer to produce the sacred text.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, God somehow does a work within the writer and he is led to provide an authoritative text. Perhaps this is good reason to suggest why the rabbis never provided a full definition of inspiration because of its complexity, but did assert that "when the Voice went forth" at Sinai, "coming to each Israelite with a voice proportioned to his individual strength. God addressed each person with a voice he could endure."<sup>25</sup>

Given the different views today in evangelical circles concerning the method of inspiration, perhaps the more conservative Jewish scholars were wise in not saying too much about the "how" of inspiration. The final product would be regarded as from HaShem Himself.

*Degrees of Inspiration* -- In a peculiar understanding of the authority of the sacred text, Schechter points out that:

"It is true that in rabbinic literature the term Torah is often applied to the Pentateuch to the exclusion of the prophets and the Hagiographa (Exodus Rabba 31:15). ...It is also true that to a certain extent the Pentateuch is put on a higher level than the prophets -- the prophetic vision of Moses having been, as the Rabbis avow, much clearer than that of his successors (*Jebamoth*, 49b; *Leviticus*, *Rabba* 1)."<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, Schechter hastens to add that the prophets also had the Scriptural authority of the Torah (Num. 12:6-8; Deut. 34:10). On the other hand, nothing is ever found in the prophets which could take away from the superior authority of Moses. In other words, the prophets themselves recognized Moses' authority. To a certain extent, one of the qualifications of the prophet is that he did indeed derive the content of his preaching from the writing of Moses and then shared it in specific applications on numerous occasions with their generations.

Nevertheless, the particular understanding of inspiration nags at the conscience if it is asserted that the prophets are less inspired than Moses. While Moses did speak to God face to face and saw more clearly what was revealed, no one must never deprecate the message God gave to the prophets which have great significance concerning the future of Israel, its land and people. If it is affirmed that Scripture is *Torah Min HaShamayim*, or God-breathed, then the implication is that God intended man to consider the writings of the prophets on a

par with Moses. To not do so would detract from the authority of the Written Torah, or Word, which includes the Prophets as well as the Writings.

#### *Torah Lo BaShamayim*

An account by some of the rabbinical leaders among the Amoraim in the Gemarah period over a point of law describes how a voice from Heaven confirmed a minority opinion held by Rabbi Eliezer, but Rabbi Joshua sought to block the affirmation, stating that the *Torah* is *Lo BaShamayim*, or Torah is not in Heaven. Another rabbi, Rabbi Jeremiah, affirmed that the Torah had already been given and it was up to the leaders to interpret it.<sup>27</sup> This phrase became the means by which Torah, or the Word, is interpreted and applied to the needs of every generation.

*Hillel's Rules of Interpretation* -- Hillel the Elder (d. 10 B.C.) was one of the outstanding leaders in Judea, having founded one of the main schools for study. One of his formulations for hermeneutics were the seven rules for interpreting Scripture,<sup>28</sup> although indications exist that these rules are earlier than Hillel.<sup>29</sup> These were expanded a little more than a century later by Rabbi Ishmael, although without materially changing the substance of Hillel's work,<sup>30</sup> and eventually these rules became one of the standards for Talmudic Rabbis engaging in exegesis.

The original paper included these rules with some explanation, but space forbids including them here. In general, the rules reflect the major rules used in evangelical hermeneutics and therefore reflects an honest attempt to exegete carefully the Written Law. For that reason, as the rabbis interpreted the Written Law as indicated in the Oral Law, a good part of the latter represents a good exegesis of God's revelation in His Word.

*The Oral Law* -- The story goes that when someone in eastern Europe would ask his rabbi,

"Pray, tell me some Torah.' The Rabbi would never answer him by reciting verses from the Bible, but would feel it incumbent on him to give him some spiritual or allegorical explanation of a verse from the Scriptures."<sup>31</sup>

This illustrates the example that the Written Law is not sufficient in itself to help Jewish people in their daily lives to live piously for God, or have hope for the future. Rather, the rules of interpretation helped to provide the literal, allegorical, spiritual and mystical understanding of the Written Law, resulting in Oral Law, which in turn is what helps a person live the Written Law.

Offhand, the assessment that the Written Law is not sufficient to help a person live for God almost seems to border on heresy, except as we stop to reflect that when we attend services to hear the Word, we likewise do not wish to hear a message based only on a long string of Scripture passages! Our desire is hear the Word interpreted and then applied to our lives, where we live, to enable us to face our day and its problems. The only difference was that Jewish people codified their interpretations and applications into what has come to be known as Oral Law, or Traditions, while the Evangelical has no such procedure.<sup>32</sup> What remains now is to see in a few instances how the Written Law was interpreted by the ancient leaders and if or any use can made of Oral for today. Offhand, Messianic Jewish people have various ideas on it, rejecting it altogether, using some of it, or, taking more of it than might be warranted. This writer would suggest three possibilities: 1) As already noted from Hillel's and Ishmael's rules of hermeneutics, a good part of the Oral Law reflects good interpretation of the Written Law by the rabbis and can be used appropriately on many

occasions when seeking to witness to the more identified religious Jew; 2) features of the Oral Law can be adapted by believers in seeking to express a Scriptural faith; and 3) certain elements of the Oral Law go far beyond what the Written Law declares and is even contrary to it. In the brief space of this paper, only a few suggestions for each area will be noted.

#### (1) Oral Law substantiated by the Written Law

Many rabbis had keen insights in their interpretation of the Written Law. For example, when commenting on Leviticus 19:16, "Do not go about spreading slander among your people," "The suggestion is that slander is the third tongue and with it, three people are killed."<sup>33</sup>

The rabbis once discussed the phenomenon of the red string which was fastened to the wall of the temple on the Day of Atonement.<sup>34</sup> If God accepted the atoning sacrifice on this Day, the red string turned white but He did not accept the sacrifice, the string remained red. After discussing the obvious curiosity of Israelis, looking more at the string than the sacrifice, and what eventually happened to this string, the rabbis turned to discuss other issues. However, one rabbi came back to this specific conversation and made a very pointed statement: For forty years before the temple (the second) was lost, the red string never turned white again! The destruction of the temple took place in 70 C.E.; what therefore transpired forty years prior to this date that made it so important for R. Nahman b. Isaac to say that God never again accepted the atoning sacrifice?

Another lesson in morals, somewhat similar to what Yeshua himself had said (Matt. 7:3, 4) that we are not to judge others because we can fall in similar situations. The rabbis chided that if one asks his neighbor to remove the splinter from his eye, he may well retort, "First take the beam from thine own."<sup>35</sup> Or, credence and integrity should always be the example with one's word, "Let your 'Yes,' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No,'" (Matt. 5:37).<sup>36</sup> The rabbis also indicated we cannot overlook sin or wrong doing. A sin is always a sin. The wife of Rabbi Meir suggested that we must still pray that *sin* may disappear from the earth, while interpose a kindly word for the sinner so he could repent.<sup>37</sup>

#### (2) The Oral Law Can Be Adapted.

Portions of the Oral Law can be adapted for use by Messianic Jews for a biblical lifestyle which will reflect the sense of the Written Law. Yeshua himself did so with the Mishnaic observance of the Pesah, introducing the special use of Masah after the meat, and then giving it a special application as to how he will in his own body bear our sins (Matt. 26:26). He also adapted the meaning of the third cup, The cup of redemption, marking the deliverance of the nation from Egypt, but he added to its significance the element of personal redemption because he is our atonement.

The rest of the holidays were also adapted to demonstrate the uniqueness of Yeshua as the Messiah and Redeemer (cf. John 7:37, 38; Isa. 12:3). The *Shabbat* liturgy can be adapted into a Messianic *siddur*, reflecting accurately the truths of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Covenant.<sup>38</sup>

#### (3) Drawing the Line with the Oral Torah

Lessons do exist in the Oral Law which cannot be supported by the Written Law. Whatever interpretations are brought forth in the Oral Law for a specific message or application to lifestyle must always be under the guidance of revealed truth.

Yeshua himself commented on the plethora of Sabbatical practices, making it quite clear that "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). On another occasion, Yeshua stressed that people had let go the commands of God and were holding on to the traditions of men (Mark 7:7-13), and His observation was intended to mean *some* and

not all the traditions. Man's ideas about work on Shabbat can go far beyond what God ever intended, and mere outward observances must never minimize the Written Law but enhance a right attitude for belief, lifestyle and worship.

While the rabbis at the Council of Yavneh might have felt their decisions regarding sacrifice would only be in force until a new temple could be built, thinking perhaps the interval would be as short as what occurred between the first and second temple, yet what was spawned was an emphasis other than what Moses had ever intended. Simon the Just had issued a profound statement at about 200 B.C.E., "By three things is the world sustained: by the Law, by the Temple—service, and by deeds of loving-kindness."<sup>39</sup> He had encapsulated the biblical message, the necessity for repentance, the offer of the sin and other offerings in the temple, followed by a godly lifestyle. At Yavneh, with no temple available and trying to meet the desperate cries of other rabbis and people, Yohanan ben Zakkai declared to Rabbi Joshua in particular:

"My son, be not grieved. We have another atonement as effective as this, and what is it? It is acts of lovingkindness, as it is said, 'For I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'"<sup>40</sup>

Neusner adds further on this assessment for the substitute regarding

sacrifice:

"Yohanan likewise thought that through *hesed* the Jews might make atonement, and that the sacrifices now demanded of them were love and mercy ... just as the Jews needed a redemptive act of God of compassion from God, so they must act compassionately in order to make themselves worthy of it."<sup>41</sup>

At Yavneh, Judaism became a religion with no substitute atonement. Oral Law, from then on, interpreted atonement in the light of Yavneh's decision, in view of the fact that no temple was ever constructed as soon as perhaps ben Zakkai imagined. Ever afterwards, when the rabbis speak of salvation, we always have to assess specifically what they have in mind, physical, nation, spiritual, or whatever else. If it relates to one's standing before the LORD, then this Oral Law from Yavneh must be assessed in light of what Moses proclaimed through the sin offering, and how the New Covenant proclaims Yeshua as the only sin offering now. The Yavneh pronouncement on this issue represents a serious break with the Written Law.

The Torah is likened many times to water, wine, oil, milk, honey, and so on, and while Torah is meant to include Written and Oral Torah, yet many times, the *sense* is created on a number of occasions that the Oral Law is somewhat higher than the Written Law. But, the supremacy of Written Law is an order of authority established by God, was recognized by most authorities in the ancient world and echoed by Rav Moshe ben Nachmani (Nachmanides) when he defended Judaism as a religion alongside Christianity.<sup>42</sup> It was his assertion in his deliberation with the Dominicans in a theological tournament before King James I in 1263 that Written Law takes precedence over that of Oral Law.

Long ago, the Prophet Isaiah declared: "To the Torah and the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no light of dawn" (8:20). His proclamation recognized the Written Law as authoritative and therefore provides the direction on how we are to proclaim our faith and live our lives. To this task we dedicate ourselves to assert a Written Torah and the New Covenant as authoritative truth.

## NOTES

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2. Ibid., pages 435, 436.
3. Harry Cohen, Basic Jewish Encyclopedia, (Hartford, CT: Hartford House, 1965) p.28
4. Joshua J. Ross, "Revelation, in Talmudic Literature," in Encyclopedia Judaica (New York: MacMillan, 1972), page 119.
5. Kaufman Kohler, Jewish Theology (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1968, reprint), p.35, footnote 1
6. Ibid., p.34
7. Kaufman Kohler, "Revelation," The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. X, Isadore Singer, ed. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1908), page 396.
8. Ibid.
9. Kaufman Kohler, "Jewish Theology," Op. Cit., page 35.
10. Kaufman Kohler, "Revelation," Op. Cit., page 396. This emphasis on moral could also, no doubt, come from Kohler's theological persuasion as a reformed Jew.
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15. Sanhedrin 99a in Nezikin III, H. Friedman, ed. (London: Soncino, 1935), page 672.

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18. Solomon Schechter, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, (New York: Behrman House, 1936), p.127
19. Kaufman Kohler, "Revelation," Op. Cit., page 397
20. Kaufman Kohler, "Inspiration," The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, Isadore Singer, ed. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1904), page 608.
21. Joshua J. Ross, "Revelation—in Talmudic Literature, Op. Cit., page 121. See also Baba Batra 15a in Nezikin II, The Babylonian Talmud, M. Simon, ed. (London: Soncino, 1935), page 72.
22. Exodus Rabba 47:9, S.M. Lehrman, ed. in Exodus Midrash Rabba, H. Freidman and M. Simon, eds. (London: Soncino, 1939), page 545.
23. Kaufman Kohler, "Inspiration," Op. Cit. page 608.
24. In fact, the very word, "they were carried along," (II Pet. 1:21) is the same word which describes how the wind of the storm caught the ship, "we were driven along" (Acts 27:15), on which Paul and other prisoners sailed and no one could control it. This could serve to picture how the writers were under the strong guidance of the Holy Spirit, and while they were free to choose the words, yet the final product was what God wanted.
25. Exodus Rabba 5:9, Op. Cit., page 87.
26. Solomon Schechter, Op. Cit., p.118.
27. Baba Metzia 59b, in Nezikin I, H. Friedman, ed., The Babylonian Talmud, Op. Cit., page 53
28. Avot de Rav Natan (The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan), Judah Golden, tr., (New York: Schocken, 1955), Chapter 37, page 54.
29. Louis Jacobs, "Hermeneutics," Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. 8, Cecil Roth, ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1972), page 567.
30. Ibid. pages 567–570.
31. S. Schechter, Op. Cit., page 126.
32. It just might be, however, some believers might, tongue in cheek, of course, use the writings of the founders of their denominations in the Middle Ages as the means to interpret the Word for today through their writings!
33. Arachin 15b, in Kodashim III, The Babylonian Talmud, Leo Jung, ed., (London: Soncino, 1948), page 89.

34. Rosh HaShanah 31b, in Moed IV, The Babylonian Talmud, Maurice Simon, ed. (London: Soncino: 1938), page 152.
35. Baba Bathra 15b, in Nezekim II, The Babylonian Talmud, M. Simon, ed. (London: Soncino, 1935), page 76.
36. Baba Metzia 49a, in Nezikin I, The Babylonian Talmud, H. Friedman, ed. (London: Soncino, 1935), page 291.
37. Berakot 10a, in Zeraim, (The Babylonian Talmud), I. Epstein, ed. (London: Soncino, 1948), page 51.
38. John Fischer and David Bronstein, Siddur for Messianic Jews (Palm Harbor, FL: Menorah Press, 1988).
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41. Jacob Neusner, A Life of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, Ca. 1–80 C.E. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962), page 144.
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# "JESUS CHANGED NOTHING!"

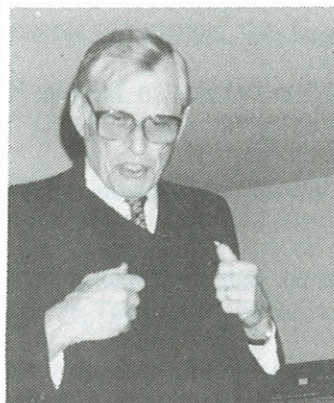
By professor Arthur F. Glasser

"Jewish people don't believe that Jesus was the Messiah. After all, the world is no different today because of him. Where is the Kingdom of God he talked so much about? He didn't even deliver his Jewish people from their enemies. The Messiah, when he comes, is supposed to bring peace to the world. And look at the mess the world is in. Jesus changed nothing."

When a Jewish person speaks like this, his aim is apparently to bring a stop to further conversation. He is honestly convinced he is right and that it is futile to challenge his judgment. Why should he not change the subject?

Years ago a rabbi said something of this sort to me. I had been attempting to speak to him of Jesus. After listening politely for a brief moment, he became restless, then abruptly came up with this sweeping judgment. Apparently, he felt there was nothing further to say. I can still recall my sense of having been brought to a full stop. The idea was preposterous: "Jesus did nothing that changed the world?" Unbelievable! But I remained speechless.

Why didn't I attempt a reply? Did my reluctance arise from the painful realization that the world was indeed in a mess?



Professor Arthur F. Glasser

Probably. But you can be sure that the rabbi's words sent my mind racing. What should one say by way of reply? Something that would reach him?

Have you ever encountered this particular conversation stopper? Actually, I've since learned that it is frequently used by Jewish people when confronted by zealous Christians eager to speak to them of Jesus. They have found that it turns off evangelicals, especially when they mention the Holocaust: "When most Christians did nothing to help us!"

How should we react? Should we admit that Christians failed the Jewish people during the Nazi years? Of course, and do so with genuine contrition. Furthermore, we should pray for the State of Israel and for

peace with justice throughout the Middle East. But by no means should we draw back from sharing the gospel with the Jewish people. We must be loyal to the Lord who gave us this task. We should not forget that not a few well informed Jewish people remain uneasy about Jesus: his authority and deeds, his claims and worldwide influence.

During World War II while serving as a Navy chaplain, largely among Marines in the South Pacific, I became acquainted with a Jewish chaplain. We struck up quite a friendship after I happened to show him a copy of an exam in biblical Hebrew from my seminary -- although to this day I cannot conceive how I happened still to possess an exam taken several years before! Was it functioning as a page marker in one of my books? What matters is that he was surprised at its complexity.

At any event, this strange incident drew us together. One day he became unusually frank and out of the clear blue said: "You Christians have it easy: a Marine is dying and you speak to him of Jesus' resurrection. We Jews can't speak with such certainty." A real conversation was brewing, so I turned to him and said: "But your Scriptures, which are ours, speak of heaven and life

after death."

His reply was quick: "Show me one statement about this in Torah" (by which he meant the Pentateuch). Naturally, I replied by referring to Enoch who "walked with God, and was not, because God took him." I can still recall how my friend ran across the room to his small bookrack, pulled down his Jewish commentary, and turned to Genesis 5:24. Then the silence. He showed me what he had found. Together we read that God had taken Enoch "to heaven."

I cite this, because deep in the Jewish consciousness, despite all their "conversation stoppers" is the awareness that the frequent biblical witness to Jesus' bodily resurrection cannot be convincingly dismissed -- although the tendency of Jewish scholars is to say that "it never happened" (Vermes 1983, etc.). Christianity was "invented by Paul" (Maccoby 1986).

However, a few years ago a rather prominent Jewish scholar, Pinchas Lapide, scoffed at all such easy dismissals of an event of such worldwide significance. He argued in his book (The Resurrection of Jesus, 1983) that one must grant the emptiness of Jesus' tomb and the radical transformation of his disciples during the 40 days after his resurrection. Only thereby can one explain the

launching of the Messianic movement in Jerusalem on Pentecost ten days later. Significantly, its joyous keynote was that death had been conquered. And Jesus' enemies couldn't produce his corpse! God had been faithful to his promise to King David that the Messiah would not experience physical corruption following death (Ps 16:9,10 and Acts 2:22-28,31; 13:34,35).

Is the world any different because of Jesus' triumph over death? Should we call attention to the manner in which his disciples down through the centuries have faced death with serenity because he made glorious conquest of it? Jesus' bodily resurrection is fundamental and essential to Christian faith (Rom 10:9,10). Did not Paul say: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile . . ." (1 Cor 15:17).

Furthermore, one has only to contrast the words spoken today by officiants at Jewish and Christian funerals. It is only the disciple of Jesus who says: "Because he lives, we shall live also." This note of certainty profoundly removes all despair from the hearts of the bereaved and assures them of ultimate reunion with their deceased loved ones when Messiah returns.

Yes, but is the world any different in ways that can only be attributed to Jesus? Actually, by his Easter victory he accomplished a great deal. I will refer to

only one specific matter, because it is the sort that cannot but impress the Jewish people. We should keep in mind that the Apostle Paul -- "a Hebrew born of Hebrews," as he designated himself (Phil 3:5) -- said that Jewish people "demand signs" to persuade them of the truth of the gospel (1 Cor 1:22). Well, is "a sign" of such significance that one becomes silent in the face of its reality, and cannot but point to the radical change that Jesus has wrought in the world as a result of it?

Not all Christians might agree with my selection. Some would want me to mention Jesus' sending the Holy Spirit, who was sent into the world to indwell his people and make them holy and happy. But the rabbi knows too well that often the most vocal Christians can be greedy, proud and quite unholy.

Others would want me to mention a popular Christian theme in our day: that Jesus disarmed and rendered ineffective the devil and those who serve him. The rabbi would smile and dismiss this by referring to the tragic record of "Christian anti-Semitism" and its culmination in the Holocaust, perpetrated by Germans from the heartland of Protestantism.

If I were a woman, I would speak of the ways in which Jesus by his instruction, conduct and care for women drastically

changed their status and role throughout the world. The evidence is multiple. In this regard Jesus brought radical social change to human society.

As a man, however, I desire to call attention to a sign that is becoming increasingly apparent in our day -- that is, to all who take time to grasp its full, empirical reality. Recently, I've been studying Isaiah 49 and its portrayal of the Messiah (the embodiment of Israel), the Servant of Yahweh. The prophet has projected himself into the situation facing Jewish exiles in Babylon at the end of their years (70) of captivity. The servant is told by God that to confine his activities to enabling the exiles to return to the land of Palestine is "too light a thing" for him to undertake (vs 6a). There is a larger task: "I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (vs 6b). Often, the phrase, "Israel -- a Light to the Nations," is removed from this context and made the rubric under which one lists the significant and positive contributions that Jewish people have made to world civilization. We are profoundly grateful for their positive contributions to the performing and visual arts, to the physical and behavioral sciences, and to philosophy, government and literature. The world's indebtedness to the Jewish people is incalculable. But this

particular biblical mandate does not refer to these achievements. Being a light to the nations -- biblically speaking -- involves taking the good news of God and his salvation to the Gentile world.

This latter activity has been largely missing over the centuries in the Jewish contribution to the world. True, they welcomed proselytes on an informal basis in their early history. But over the centuries they formed no mission societies, sent out no missionaries, neither produced nor distributed translations of the Scriptures for Gentile peoples, and made no attempt to inform non-Jews of the early laws God gave Noah for the nations following the Flood. As a result, the Gentile world does not know the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Hold on! This is not true! The Gentile world does know the God of Holy Scripture. It was Jesus who called into being a band of Jewish disciples. They submitted to his lordship and instruction. He gave them the task of proclaiming his gospel of the Kingdom of God to the peoples of every tribe, tongue and nation. He commissioned them through bestowing a foretaste of the New Covenant predicted by Jeremiah (31:31-34). He gave them the Holy Spirit to transform their lives and write his law on their hearts. He particularly empowered them for worldwide witness

(Acts 1:8).

We must never forget that it was that first generation of Jewish believers in Jesus that became Messiah's "Light to the Nations." They spearheaded a movement of mission into the Middle East, North Africa, the Mediterranean world and Europe whose outgoing momentum remains to this day. As increasing numbers of Gentiles responded, the Messianic Jewish mission naturally enlarged and widened so that Gentile Christians increasingly became prominent in this outward and onward expansion of the message of the Messiah of Israel and Savior of the world.

We recall the sober counsel the great Rabbi Gamaliel gave to the Jewish Sanhedrin when the High Priest wanted to destroy the Jewish witnesses in the vanguard of this new missionary movement: "Men of Israel, take care what you do with these men. . . . Let them alone . . . if this undertaking is of men, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God" (Acts 5:35,38,39).

Is the world different by virtue of what Jesus launched? I'll say! Here is hard, tangible, irrefutable evidence of a radical and decisive contribution which the advent of Jesus brought to the world. His pattern of personally seeking out

spiritually needy persons because he loved them was something distinctly new in human experience. Of course, the rabbis welcomed sinners in their repentance. But seeking them out, then cultivating their friendship in order to share the gospel with them -- this was quite new in the religious history of Israel.

But does the story end here? Hardly, we should not forget that Jesus told his disciples on the occasion of his ascension that he would return in power and glory. He would then make full and final conquest of human evil and enable "righteousness to reign" by virtue of his presence in the midst of Israel and the nations (Is 32:1). Significantly, the initial event of his second coming will find him calling his people "from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens" (Mark 13:27).

It is most significant that the Isaiah 49 passage does not end with reference to the exiles returning to the land following the 70-year Babylon captivity. True, one gains the impression that the restoration of Israel is achieved. But further details are added. The one who was "despised and abhorred by the nation" of Israel (vs 7) shall not only enable the nation to be reestablished, but will in his "Day of Salvation" call peoples from afar -- from the north, from the west, and from Sinim (China? vs 12). The

implication is that this ingathering is from areas of the world not related to the captivity in Babylon. Israel shall not enter her final deliverance, exaltation and glory without an innumerable company drawn from all parts of the Gentile world (Rev 7:9) to rejoice in his universal triumph and to add to her glory. Obviously, the prophet was peering into the far distant future.

One has only to review the history of the expansion of the biblical faith of Jesus throughout the world and the significant role of Messianic Jews in the 1st century and even today in making this possible. Then the conviction grows that a long historic period would have to elapse before the stage would truly be set for the return of the Messiah. But that worldwide task of proclaiming a universal faith is so close to completion in our day that believers in Jesus, whether Jews or Gentiles, do well to put heart and soul, energy and resources to this priority task, always remembering that the gospel ever remains: "first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" (Rom 1:16). Let all God's people hold fast Jesus' promise that "this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then -- and only then -- will the end come" (Matt 24:14).

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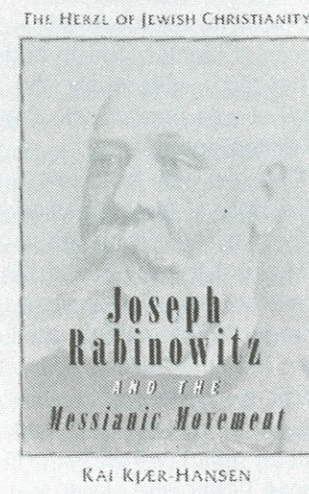


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## Book Review

### JOSEPH RABINOWITZ AND THE MESSIANIC MOVEMENT by Kai Kjær-Hansen

This scholarly study of Joseph Rabinowitz (1837–1899) by an outstanding European evangelical scholar is most timely, and most illuminating. Prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, it was widely assumed in Jewish mission circles that such phenomena as Messianic Jewish congregations were neither practical nor desirable. Indeed, they were not regarded as theologically defensible. Even a Jewish theologian of the stature of Jakob Jocz argued that to establish such congregations throughout worldwide diasporal Jewry was to demonstrate that the middle-wall of partition between Jew and Gentile still existed (1949:239). But once Israel was established in 1948 and messianic congregations emerged there in open rejection of rabbinic Judaism, even the local citizenry began slowly to regard the disciples of Jesus with diminishing hostility. This spirit of toleration was nourished by academic studies that were challenging the older thesis that only one form of Judaism was normative in the first century. Indeed, it was being realized that the first century was



characterized by a variety of competing Judaisms. After 1900 years of diasporal religious stagnation, largely the result of the evolution and normative claims of rabbinic Judaism during the five hundred years following the destruction of the 2nd Temple, religious pluralism was once again surfacing, and this meant the growing toleration of religious communities in Israel that confessed Jesus as Messiah and King.

When we meet Rabinowitz in this book he is a prominent and popular solicitor in Kishinev, the capital of the province of

Bessarabia in south-western Russia. He is already a lover of God and deeply concerned for the welfare of his people. Indeed, we might think of him as a shining and zealous member of what the prophets called "the remnant" in Old Testament Israel. He has been stirred by the literature of several incipient Zionist movements that will take form years later in 1896 under the secular leadership of Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist World Organization with its vision of Judenstaat. But Rabinowitz has also been reading a Hebrew New Testament given him by a friend.

Under the compulsion of new and disturbing thoughts, Rabinowitz felt impelled to go to Palestine. But he was depressed by what he encountered there. Before leaving the country, however, he ascended the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem. In his loneliness, sorrow and uncertainty all thoughts of a political restored Israel evaporated. A new conviction gripped him. "Jesus our Brother – He holds the key to the Jewish problem." Rabinowitz returned to Kishineff a new man.

## Book Review

You must read this account for yourself. How Rabinowitz began drafting a creed about Jesus, the new center of his faith. How this creed became thoroughly evangelical as he continued to study the Scriptures. How he sought permission from the Russian Orthodox authorities to form a fully biblical Hebrew-Christian church, but was turned down. How he was able to circumvent this by securing permission to convene gatherings under such banners as: "Israelites of the New Covenant" and "The National Jewish New Testament Congregation." How the Lord gave him several prominent gentile friends, particularly Franz Delitzsch and John Wilkinson to encourage his efforts to contextualize what he stood for in the midst of Jewry. How Protestant churchmen were not of one mind concerning Rabinowitz. Some approved of the Jewishness his community sought to maintain, others disagreed, and bluntly told him so. But he persevered in his biblically informed missiological perspectives and thereby initiated a new era in Jewish congregational confession of Jesus Christ.

One might also speak of Rabinowitz' ministry; how his faithful preaching gathered a sizeable

community of Jewish people around him that was both creative and venturesome in its outreach. How he was continually anathematized and belittled by the Jewish Press. How his congregation maintained its Jewishness by faithfully adhering to the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, to circumcision and to the Jewish Sabbath, but refused to accord authority to either the Talmud or other rabbinical writings. How he maintained his personal integrity and humility of spirit after he achieved worldwide recognition and found himself intrusted with financial assistance from the West. Then, how the Lord called his servant home after more than a decade of diligent service: preaching the Word, writing articles, pamphlets, poetry and innumerable letters.

This book goes on to relate how this unique community in Kishineff faltered after his death, largely due to the lack of a vigorous successor, but particularly due to the April 1903 pogrom that broke out during Holy Week when "Christians" of the Russian State Church turned upon the Jews, plundering, smashing, molesting and killing -- all in the name of Jesus Christ.

Hence, the appearance of

this study of Rabinowitz is most opportune for he was the founder of the first truly Hebrew-Christian Messianic Jewish community without the outside direction of either gentile churches or missions. As a result, this record of his creative service among Russian Jews during the last fifteen years of the 19th century is replete with insights that are of tremendous value to all those engaged in Jewish evangelism in our day. Especially, is it valuable to those who as Jews are struggling to relate their faith in Jesus to their desire to maintain and publicly express the Jewishness they have received from their God and their Jewish parents.

If ever there was a tract for our day it is this book. I've already read it twice, and will probably read it again! And again!

Arthur F. Glasser