



The Chosen People

MARCH 1981 ISSN0164-5323

Will the Church be Raptured in 1981?

From the President



MARCH 1981

The Chosen People

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE is published monthly (except August) as a medium of information concerning the Jewish people, Israel and the work of the American Board of Missions to the Jews, Inc.

For more than 86 years the American Board of Missions to the Jews has been a mission where giants have walked. Giants not in physical stature, but giants in faith. Men and women who had a vision of God and of His redemptive love through the Messiah, the Lord Jesus.

It all began when an unassuming young rabbi by the name of Leopold Cohn turned his life over to Jesus and founded the Williamsburg Mission to the Jews back in 1894. Today that mission is ABMJ. . . its program of responsible Jewish evangelism reaches around the world. . . and giants of the faith have served the Lord here from 1894 to the present day.

Many of these great men and women worked with the ABMJ until the day the Lord called them home. Others went on to found other missionary organizations. Still others became pastors and teachers in Bible colleges and seminaries.

Some of their names have nearly faded into oblivion, but their work has had a lasting effect. No one but God knows how many countless thousands of Jews and Gentiles were led to the Lord through the efforts of these great giants of the past.

In this special issue of *The Chosen People* magazine we are going to take you back in time and introduce you to some of these great men of God. We want you to see how they came to accept Jesus as their Messiah, their Lord and Savior. We want you to share in their struggles, their hopes and their dreams, realizing all the while that God has now raised up a new generation of giants to replace them. This new generation is building upon the sure foundation that has already been laid.

Naturally, we'll only be able to tell you the stories of a few, but we hope to share the stories of other giants of the faith in future issues of *The Chosen People*.

Some of the names and stories will be familiar. Others will not. But all were giants, men of God who faithfully proclaimed the Gospel despite the dangers to themselves and their families. How we praise God for them—and for you, our Chosen People family, whose prayers and support have kept the "giants in the land."

Yours for an abundant harvest,

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March 1981, Vol. LXXXVII No. 3.

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE (ISSN 0164-5323)

published monthly except August.

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THE RABBI WHO DARED TO BELIEVE

It was too late by the time Rabbi Cohn sensed something was terribly wrong. The big and powerfully built man's fist slammed into the rabbi's body, violently knocking him to the floor.

Without wasting a moment the angry attacker fell upon his stunned and helpless prey pounding his victim with his fist. The man's rage was uncontrollable. He grabbed Rabbi Cohn's ears raising his head and repeatedly slammed it to the floor. Each time his hate-filled voice thundered in Hebrew, "These ears which heard from Mt. Sinai, 'Thou shalt have no other gods besides me' and which now listen to the Christian god, must be pulled out of his head."

No one knows what would have happened to Rabbi Cohn that day if God had not intervened by sending someone to interrupt the violent attack. But God's hand was definitely upon this unusual rabbi and He would not allow His chosen vessel to be shattered by the outraged man.

Life had never been easy for Rabbi Cohn. Both his father and mother died within the same year when he was only seven. But those early years taught him to put his trust in God.

By the time the young lad reached 13 years of age he had made his first major decision. He would dedicate his life to serving his people by becoming a rabbi. In the years that followed he proved to be a good student and easily attained his goal. At last, life seemed to be going his way. He had a lovely young wife. A Synagogue. And his future looked bright and rewarding.

But God had other plans for the brilliant young rabbi. One day while studying the Talmud his mind was arrested by a puzzling passage. It

read, "The world is to stand for six thousand years, viz., two thousand (in) confusion and void, two thousand with the law, and two thousand the time of the Messiah." Instantly, Rabbi Cohn knew his options were limited. Either the rabbinic writings in the Talmud were wrong or the Messiah had already come. The second two thousand year period had ended nearly 1900 years before.

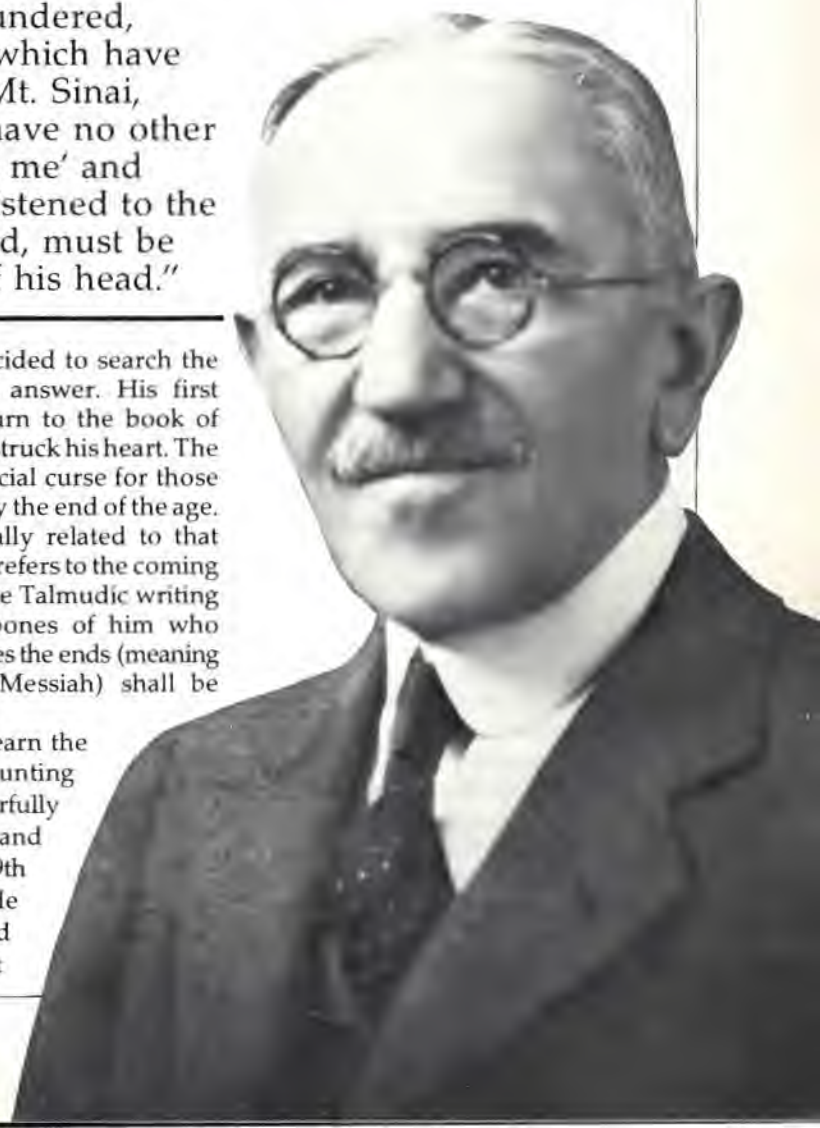
His voice thundered, "These ears which have heard from Mt. Sinai, 'Thou shalt have no other gods besides me' and which now listened to the Christian God, must be pulled out of his head."

Rabbi Cohn decided to search the Prophets for the answer. His first thought was to turn to the book of Daniel. But terror struck his heart. The Talmud had a special curse for those who dared to study the end of the age. The curse especially related to that part of Daniel that refers to the coming of the Messiah. The Talmudic writing promised, "The bones of him who studies and calculates the ends (meaning the time of the Messiah) shall be blown up."

But he had to learn the answer to this haunting question. So he fearfully opened the book and began to study the 9th chapter of Daniel. He was delighted to find that the prophet

Daniel also taught that the Messiah had to come 1900 years before at the time of the destruction of the temple. In his own words this discovery was "a joy mingled with sorrow." He could not ignore the obvious question. If both the Talmud and the Prophet said Messiah should have already come. ... where was He? Why hadn't He come?

Obviously, he needed to consult someone older and wiser. So he



“Now at last here was a book that would tell me about the Messiah.”

traveled to a nearby town to consult a colleague. The older rabbi advised him to go to America giving him the comforting assurance that they would discuss the subject of the Messiah more openly in the new world.

Rabbi Cohn didn't have to wait long before he began finding answers in America. Three weeks after he landed in New York he passed a church that advertised meetings for Jews on their bulletin board. His curiosity pulled him toward the open door. But he couldn't bring himself to go in. He was so close to finding the Messiah, yet so far away. He turned to leave but his steps were interrupted by the church janitor.

Whatever the janitor said that day is of little importance. But what he did will never be forgotten. Somehow, his love, his gentleness and his concern shattered the middle wall of partition that normally separated Jews from Gentiles. Before Rabbi Cohn departed he held in his hand a small slip of paper containing the name and address of the minister of the church. The janitor urged him to come back and talk to his pastor.

The following Monday, Rabbi Cohn found himself standing at the door of the minister's home. He was surprised to find that his new acquaintance was a Hebrew-Christian. Almost without comment, the minister gave him a copy of a Hebrew New Testament to take home with him.

What followed is best told in Rabbi Cohn's own words:

“I opened it at once and read for the first time in my life: ‘This is a book of the generation of Yeshua, the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.’ My feelings could not be described! For many years my thoughts had been occupied almost continually with the coming of the Messiah. For that reason I had suffered and left my wife and children for a strange country, which I never expected to visit. I had inquired of several rabbis, searched the Scriptures, prayed and thought;

my whole being was wrapped up in this one subject. And now at last here was a book that would tell me about the Messiah. ‘Surely,’ I thought, ‘this book has come to me directly from above. God has sent it to me, and it will give all the desired information and lead me to the Messiah.’ The words, ‘Yeshua, the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham’ were sweeter to me than angelic music. I forgot all about my troubles and became very happy, and running as fast as I could to my private room, the doors of which I locked behind me, sat down to study that book. I began reading at eleven o'clock in the morning, and continued until one o'clock after midnight. I could not understand the contents of the whole book, but I could at least realize that the Messiah's name was Yeshua, that He was born in Bethlehem, that He had lived in Jerusalem and talked to my people, and that He came just about the time indicated by the angel's message to Daniel. My joy was unbounded.

In the morning, I ran quickly to my rabbi friend, who by that time had already a prospect of securing a rabbinical charge for me, and told him of the book and my discoveries. I had not identified this Yeshua, the Messiah, with the name Jesus; I did not see at that time that this Messiah is the same of whom gross caricatures had been presented in my country, neither could I think of Gentiles believing in the Jewish Messiah. Had that been the case, humanly speaking, I could not have been reconciled to that Crucified One. I thought that this Yeshua, the Messiah, must be somewhere in this country ruling as the King, having His people, perhaps the lost ten tribes, as His subjects, and what happiness it would be for me to join them and to be under His rule! Such impossible dreams were in my heart, and when I suggested them to the rabbi, one can imagine what followed. Vehemently and with curses, he threw the book to



"It didn't take the Jewish community long to find out what had happened. Rabbi Cohn told everyone he met about his experience with Jesus."

the floor, stamped upon it, and in very unkind expressions, denounced me and said that that was the book which the Crucified One had made and it was the cause of all Jewish troubles. 'And now,' he said, 'a Jew like you should not handle that book, or talk, or think of it.'

I fled from his wrath with new struggles in my heart. 'Is it possible that Yeshua, the Messiah, the son of David, is the very same person whom the Christians worship? Why, that is idolatry! How can I have anything to do with that?' For several days my heart ached with sorrow and depression.

Halting between the two opinions, I decided to fast a day and pray God to show me what to do. At noon time when instead of eating I began to pray, I held in my hands the Hebrew Old Testament and as I cried to God my body shook and the book dropped to the floor and opened for itself. Opening my eyes, I looked down and to my great consternation, read from the open page in the Hebrew, Malachi 3:1 which says literally: 'I am sending my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me and the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the angel of the covenant' (that word is identical with the word 'testament') 'whom ye delight

in: behold, He has already come, says the Lord of Hosts!' I fairly began to shiver; like an electric shock the words went through my whole system, and I felt as if the Crucified One stood beside me, pointing to that verse and particularly to the expression, 'Behold, He has come already.' I was awestricken and fell upon my face exclaiming with all my heart. 'My Lord, my Messiah, Jeshua, Thou art the One in whom Israel is to be glorified. Thou art surely the One who has reconciled Thy people unto God. From this day, I will serve Thee.' At that moment, a flood of light came into my mind and a stream of love to the Lord Jesus into my heart, and straightway I went and took a meal breaking my fast and feeling altogether a new creature."

To An Ancient People,
Dr. Leopold Cohn, p.21-24.

It didn't take the Jewish community long to find out what had happened. Rabbi Cohn told everyone he met about his experience with Jesus. Persecution became so great that he was forced to flee to Scotland.

But he wasn't to remain long. The Lord reunited him with his wife and four children and they soon came to love the Lord. A year later they returned as a family to New York City where they established the Williamsburg Mission to the Jews in Brooklyn. The Lord blessed and prospered that work beyond Rabbi Cohn's greatest visions. Branches were established in Philadelphia and Los Angeles, and it soon became apparent that the mission had outgrown its name!

Today, that mission is known as the American Board of Missions to the Jews. Its staff of 145 dedicated Christians spreads the message of Christ's love to tens of thousands of Jewish people throughout the world every year.

How did it happen? Because a young rabbi wanted to know why the Messiah hadn't come and a janitor cared enough to take a moment to invite that rabbi to come back and talk with his pastor.



Top photo: Rabbi Cohn in the early years of his ministry. Center: Early Bible class for Jewish people. Left: Outdoor meetings held by ABMJ missionaries developed as part of Rabbi Cohn's ministry. Above photo: Rabbi Cohn after the ministry of the ABMJ had been established.

by DR. DANIEL FUCHS

The Man Who Built His Life on God's



Give me this mountain." Caleb was a grand old man when he said that. He was 85 years old. He had been born a slave in Egypt. Of all the Israelites who escaped Pharaoh's wrath only he and Joshua entered the Promised Land. Life had always been a struggle for him. Others would gladly have given up the struggle at his age. Why not? After all, the young people were doing a good job. Let them conquer Hebron and let them build him a good home. He had worked hard all of his life and deserved it. But Caleb was not that kind of an old man.

"Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing

that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that were up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the LORD my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this

word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day" (Joshua 14:6-12).

Caleb's life was one that was built on God's promise. Three times in this short plea with Joshua he repeats the basis of his plea, "the Lord said," or "the Lord spoke." God made a promise to Caleb and for 45 years Caleb had hidden that word in his heart. What faith he had! One by one all of his adult colleagues died in the wilderness but he knew two things—he would not die in the wilderness and he had a mountain that would be his in Canaan. Caleb's was a life that was built on God's promise. And now at last after 45 years he came forth to claim a perfect fulfillment at the end of his days.

"He that believeth shall not make haste." Caleb believed, and therefore he was patient. Five-and-forty long years had elapsed since Moses, the man of God, speaking in the Spirit of God, had promised him a particular inheritance in the land. It was a long time for faith to live on a promise, but, like a tree in the face of a cliff that seems to grow out of the solid rock, it derived nourishment from unseen sources. It was a long time to be looking forward; but Caleb, though he did not receive the promise during all that time, was persuaded of it and embraced it, and believed that at last it would come true."

William Garden Blaikie, "The Book of Joshua", Expositor's Bible, pp. 269-270.

Caleb not only believed God's promise, he acted on it. He almost seems like a garrulous old man as he related the old story of that never-forgotten day, when he and Joshua

Promise

faced the cowardly mob. Read his story out loud. There was no *Uriah Heep* modesty about him. He recounted that in spite of the other spies he stood firm in his conviction and gave his report speaking "as it was in mine heart." How rightly proud he twice proclaimed, "I wholly followed the Lord my God."

It was because of this that the old man could testify at the green old age of eighty-five, "I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me. As my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and come in." His words of abiding strength were not boastful. They express great gratitude and they are the basis of his request, "Now therefore give me this mountain, for the Anakims (the giants) are there, and the cities great and fenced."

Most of us older folk are much more disposed to talk about past victories than we are to fight new battles. It's easier to rest upon our laurels than it is to look for more areas to conquer. Once in a while, however, we see a noble character who after his threescore years and ten is still alert of spirit and as eager to conquer new mountains.

Danger is an attraction to the alert mind. Caleb felt that his miraculously lengthened life bound him to attain higher goals. The fact that Hebron was a fenced city and that tall giants manned its gates was just another reason for picking it out as his place to conquer. "Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb."

Your Mission has had its Joshuas and Calebs. Just remember this, however—Caleb could only undertake to capture his mountain because 45 years earlier he "wholly followed the Lord."

We are thankful for the giants of our past history but we also are thankful for our energetic, willing staff of younger people who are now guiding our paths as we seek to lead the people of Israel through the wilderness into the Promised Land.

See Israel Through Jewish Eyes

Your ABMJ tour hosts are ready to help you see Israel the way it should be seen—through Jewish eyes. Imagine—11 exciting days in the land you've read about in the Bible...and in your newspaper!

You'll see what the Israel of today is all about plus the historic sites you've always dreamed of seeing. But that's only the beginning.

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- Share the love of Jesus with Jewish people at Jerusalem's Community Center.
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Please send me full details about "Seeing Israel With Jewish Eyes."

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GIANTS FROM ABMJ'S PAST

ELIAS DEN AREND

The Jew Who Cheated the Nazis

Contempt! That was what Elias den Arend felt for those who prayed while the Nazis murdered his people. He didn't want to pray to a God who didn't hear—he wanted to do something himself to save the Jewish people from Hitler's hatred.

But Mrs. den Arend didn't share her husband's feelings. She and their son prayed daily, asking God to send the Messiah. And the Messiah *did* come. . . to her. She decided to follow Jesus.

But Elias would have no part with her new-found Savior. Although he was a scholar and a teacher of music, Hitler's occupation of Breda, Netherlands forced Elias into a new type of work—hiding Jewish children.

When his Jewish students started missing class, never to show up again, Elias wouldn't stand for it. He became part of the underground resistance movement, cheating the Nazis out of many Jewish lives.

His contact with true Christians was a matter of necessity—he could count on them to hide the Jews. But finally it became necessary for Elias and his family to go into hiding themselves. The Nazis had caught on to his secret activities.

They managed to survive by depending on others for food. But when their food supply was cut off, Elias decided that suicide for himself, his

wife and their son was preferable to torture at the hands of the Nazis.

Mrs. den Arend was willing to accept this decision, but she asked her husband to give her one day—just one day to pray for God's help. Elias granted her request. . . and so did God. The next morning they found an envelope at their door filled with cash, enabling them to obtain the necessary food.

The den Arend family experienced many other dangers and miracles, escaping as if an unseen hand was protecting them. Finally, Elias could resist the Messiah no longer.

Following the war, the den Arends moved to New York. Coming upon ABMJ's 72nd Street office by "accident," he walked in and told the story of his miraculous escape to Joseph Hoffman Cohn and Daniel Fuchs.

Then in 1949 he became a field evangelist and speaker for ABMJ. . . until his home-going on February 22, 1979. For more than 30 years, Dr. Elias den Arend served the Lord faithfully, bringing many precious souls to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

JOSEF HERSCHKOWITZ

The Man Who Hated Christians

While Elias den Arend was able to avoid the Nazi death camps, Josef Herschkowitz wasn't as fortunate. To

make matters worse, he was an atheist—without God and without hope.

Born into an Orthodox Jewish home, young Josef was taught to hate Christians. The education started by his parents was completed by "Christian" youths who pummeled Josef with their fists and the epithet "Christ-killer!"

But this abuse was overshadowed by the abuse he was soon to receive from the Nazis. Now married to a Gentile, they desperately tried to find a place to hide. Learning that the Christian mission in Vienna would be able to hide them, the couple sought help from the people Josef despised.

There at the ABMJ branch Josef was in for a surprise. He met a Jewish Christian named Emanuel Lichtenstein. . . who promised to hide them from the Nazis. While staying at the mission, Josef and his wife also heard a good deal of the Gospel. . . until that fateful day when a different sound reached their ears. It was the sound of Nazis storming into the building. They had been discovered, and Josef's next "home" would be at the very doorway of hell—the death camp known as Dachau.

Incredible as it may seem, Josef started believing in God while in the concentration camp. When those about him were losing their lives, Josef started wondering who was protecting him. And after one particularly "close call," Josef heard himself say "Thank you, God."

After six months of begging, Josef's wife was able to secure his release from the death camp. Back in Vienna, Josef again contacted Emanuel Lichtenstein who arranged to send Josef to Holland. But he wouldn't be safe there for long, for the Nazis were on the move.

Finally, all his hopes hinged on getting a visa to emigrate to America. There wasn't much hope, but Josef prayed: "If Jesus is the Messiah, move the heart of the consul to grant the visa."

God heard his prayer and Josef reached the shores of safety in 1940. His next prayer was directed to Jesus

Himself and concerned his wife. In answer to prayer, the two were reunited in New York where he was now a field evangelist with ABMJ.

Later he would go on to found the Minneapolis branch of ABMJ. Josef Herschkowitz—another giant of the faith from ABMJ's past.

EMANUEL LICHTENSTEIN

Risking His Life to Help Others

Had it not been for Emanuel Lichtenstein, a young Jewish atheist named Herschkowitz would probably have been fuel for the Nazis' ovens.

During the Holocaust, European Jews were looking for salvation—not from sin but from the horrors of Hitler's hell. Emanuel Lichtenstein daily risked his life to bring the Gospel to those he loved so dearly. Helping many Jews escape to safety—regardless of their belief or non-belief in the Lord—Emanuel's bold and loving actions were a living testimony of the Lord he loved.

In Vienna Emanuel's missionary career seemed about to end. One day he was called into Gestapo headquarters on trial for his life. He had just enough time to grab a few documents showing his affiliation with ABMJ and a Christmas issue of THE CHOSEN PEOPLE, featuring a photo of himself.

The Gestapo officer questioned him harshly about his beliefs. Then, unbelievably, he told him to "Go, in Jesus' name!" Lichtenstein was free again to help his persecuted brethren according to the flesh.

It was in Vienna that ABMJ set up soup kitchens for the penniless refugees. As many as 150 starving people at a time were given food...and Gospel food-for-thought. But now Vienna had become a place to avoid if you were a Jew.

So Emanuel fled to Argentina, taking many Jewish believers with him. In Buenos Aires he set up the ABMJ branch that continues to this day ministering to the physical and spiritual



From top: Sanford Mills, Josef Herschkowitz, Elias Den Arend, and Emanuel Lichtenstein. Each of these giants from the past faithfully served in the ministry of the American Board of Missions to the Jews leaving a legacy for each succeeding generation to follow.

needs of Argentina's massive Jewish population.

On August 22, 1979 another ABMJ giant of the faith was ushered into the presence of the Lord to hear Him say: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Continued on Page 14

ABMJ—Where Giants Still Walk

While these four ABMJ giants of the faith have gone to their eternal reward, many other "giants in the making" continue to share the Living Word of God with the Jewish people.

You'll be reading about these young giants in next month's CHOSEN PEOPLE...but they need your help *now*.

Please, *pray* for our missionaries—pray for their protection and that they will bear much fruit.

Also, if you can, help support them with your financial contributions. Jews are being saved through the faithful witness of these missionaries, so we need to keep them all on the mission field and even add to their numbers as the Lord—and His people—provides.

- I promise to pray for ABMJ missionaries and the salvation of the Jewish people.
- I also enclose \$_____ in support of ABMJ missionaries.

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Will the Church Be Raptured

1981 has been designated by some Christians as the year that Jesus will return for His Church. The basis of this speculative teaching has been the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:34. He said: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Those who teach that Jesus will return in 1981 believe that our Lord's reference to "this generation" is a direct reference to the re-establishment of Israel as a nation. They point out that a biblical generation is usually a period of 40 years. They then point out that Israel was re-established as a nation in 1948. Adding 40 years of "the biblical generation" to 1948, they schedule the year of our Lord's return as 1988. Since most of the proponents of this teaching believe in a pre-Tribulation Rapture, they subtract seven years for the Tribulation. Thus, they arrive at the date of 1981 as the year of the Rapture.

It is this kind of fanciful interpretation of God's Word which brings discredit upon the teaching of biblical prophecy. Proponents of this view completely misunderstand what Jesus meant when He stated "this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." In context, Jesus tells us what He means. He uses a parable to illustrate truth.

Jesus told His disciples, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Mt. 24:32,33).

Those who hold that Jesus will come for His Church in 1981 believe that the fig tree is Israel. And they point out in great detail that the budding of the fig tree was the re-establishment of Israel in 1948. But nowhere in all of God's Word do we find that Israel is ever called a fig tree. Israel is referred to as an empty vine (cf. Hosea 10) and a vineyard in Isaiah, chapter 5—but not a fig tree.

If, then, the reference to the fig tree by Jesus is not a reference to national Israel, what does it refer to? The clue is found in Matthew 21:17-22: "And he left them, and went out of the city

into Bethany; and he lodged there. Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

In these few remarkable verses Jesus engraved upon the minds of His disciples an amazing truth—a truth which He would later teach them in parabolic form.

Some well-meaning Bible scholars have stated that this incident should not appear in Scripture since it is seemingly contradictory to the character of Christ.

But these men fail to recognize the illustrious truth that Jesus was conveying to His disciples. We are told that the fig tree was barren of all fruit but it was fully in leaf. This is the reason that Jesus tells us the fig tree was withered up.

A fig tree is perhaps the most interesting tree in all of nature. It is the only tree that I know of which produces its fruit *before* it produces its leaves. A fruit tree will normally send forth its blossoms in the spring, then send forth its leaves, and then finally produce its fruit. But the fig tree will send forth its fruit first, and as the fruit grows and develops the leaves will appear. Thus, a fig tree in full leaf would be expected to have figs covering its branches.

The text tells us that Jesus saw the tree in full leaf. Thus, He fully expected to find fruit on its branches by natural law.

But someone could argue, this still seems cruel. After all, maybe the fig tree did produce figs and somebody came and picked them off. However, if this was the case there is another law which comes into effect. God had given to the nation of Israel a law relating to the harvest and the gleaning of the fields. In Leviticus 19:9,10 it is written: "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord your God."

Thus, according to God's law there should have been fruit on this tree.

The Bible makes it clear that fruit is a symbol of faith. In Matthew 19:21,22 Jesus uses this fig tree as just such an illustration. Likewise, in Jeremiah 24 the prophet is shown two baskets of figs. In one basket there were good figs, in the other basket rotten figs. Now read what God tells the prophet Jeremiah:

"Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

"And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil: surely thus saith the Lord, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a

in 1981?

curse, in all places whither I shall drive them" (Jer. 24:5-9).

Notice that God shows the prophet two baskets of figs—not a fig tree, but figs that have been picked. The good figs represent the faithful in Israel while the bad figs represent those who continued to sin and rebel against the commandments of God. To Jeremiah, the figs were an illustration of faith.

The illustration of the withering of the fig tree by the Lord Jesus also was an illustration of faith. Jesus had just come to Jerusalem. He had been proclaimed the Messiah by the people. But later, in Matthew 21, we read how once again the leaders of the people rejected Jesus. In the words of John, "He came unto His own and His own received Him not."

Paul tells us in the first chapter of Romans that man is responsible before God on the basis of natural revelation: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

But not only is man responsible by natural revelation, he's also responsible to produce faith on the basis of special revelation. It was unto Israel that the oracles of God were committed (Rom. 3:1). Jesus should have found faith amongst His people but there was none to be found.

In Capernaum He could perform no miracles. But to a centurion, a Gentile, He stated, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Lk. 7:9). Thus, when Jesus uses the phrase—"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh"—He is not speaking about the national restoration of Israel. He is speaking about the faith of the people of Israel.

In the Tribulation, when the nation of Israel is isolated and threatened with destruction by the nations of the world, the Word of God tells us Israel will respond in faith. In Zechariah 12:10 we read:

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

It is to this faithful generation in the

Tribulation that Jesus makes reference. That generation will be the generation that shall not pass until all of these things be fulfilled.

In the meantime, believers are not to set dates for the return of the Lord Jesus, nor are we to set dates for the Rapture of the Church. The Bible tells us this is the blessed hope. Believers are to live expectant lives, awaiting daily the coming of the Lord Jesus. It is this anticipation that should produce the fruit of faith in our lives and cause us to lovingly want to share the good news of salvation with Jew and Gentile alike. May each of us be found faithfully fulfilling that great commission when He comes.



How different the trial of Jesus might have been if these nine outstanding leaders from the modern Jewish community had given their surprising testimony.

by STEVE SCHWARTZ



Putting a dead man on trial is pretty ridiculous." That was the response I received when I told a Jewish friend about an article I intended to write—the one you are reading now.

And she'd be right if she weren't wrong about one simple fact: Jesus is *not* dead. True, He was tried, convicted and executed nearly 2,000 years ago. . . but that wasn't the end of His story. It was only the beginning!

So why put Jesus back on trial? Simply this: to call attention to the fact that Jesus is God in the flesh, come to earth to die for our sins.

Christians, of course, already know this. But most of our Jewish friends have never even considered this possibility. Most of them have never taken a close look at our Lord. They know little, if anything, about the most important Jew who ever lived.

To them, the New Testament is a "gentile Bible" and Jesus is a man whom Christians have turned into a god. Consequently, most Jews wouldn't consider reading the New Testament, thinking it is a sin or, at the very least, a waste of time.

But Jewish people *do* look up to their rabbis, their men of learning and their scholars. That's why I've decided to put Jesus back on trial. This time, however, I've asked a number of esteemed Jewish men from the past to serve as character witnesses.

Let the trial begin.

Judge: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, we have before us Jesus of Nazareth. His claim of equality with God has been stated beyond question in the historical records written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

We're here today to decide the truth of that claim. And we recognize

that if Jesus isn't who He said He is, then He must be either a lunatic or a liar. In other words, He has either been *deceived* Himself or He is a *deceiver*.

In order to determine the truth, we've called together a number of witnesses.

Their statements often elevate Jesus above the rank of a mere mortal. But sadly, they never lift him to his rightful place of full deity. The important thing is that the sentiments expressed by some of the most outstanding leaders of the Jewish community do not reflect the derision and hostility toward Jesus that is held by a large segment of the Jewish community today. These men recognized that there was something special about Jesus. With this in mind, let the trial begin.

Judge: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, we've called a distinguished panel of witnesses before us today to examine the character of Jesus of Nazareth. He claimed to be the Son of God. Was he a liar? A lunatic? Or, did the way he spoke and lived demand a serious study of the claims he made?

We call our first witness.

MARTIN BUBER (1878-1965), celebrated Jewish philosopher: "That Christianity has regarded and does regard him as God and Savior has always appeared to me a fact of the highest importance which, for his sake and my own, I must endeavor to understand . . . I am more than ever certain that a great place belongs to him in Israel's history of faith and that this place cannot be described by any of the usual categories."

SHOLEM ASCH (1880-1957), Jewish author of international fame: "Jesus Christ, to me, is the outstanding

JESUS TRIAL

personality of all time, of all history, both as Son of God and as Son of Man. Everything he ever said or did has value for us today, and that is something you can say of no other man, alive or dead. . . Every act and word of Jesus has value for all of us, wherever we are. He became the Light of the World. Why shouldn't I, a Jew, be proud of that? No other religious leader, either, has ever become so personal a part of people as the Nazarene. When you understand Jesus, you understand that he came to save you, to come into your personality. It isn't just a case of a misty, uncertain relationship between a worshiper and an unseen God; that is abstract: Jesus is personal."

RABBI STEPHEN S. WISE (1874-1949), founder of the American Jewish Congress and the Federation of American Zionists: "Even if Jesus had not been born unto Israel, even if he had borne no relation to the people of



SON OF ISRAEL

Israel, it becomes of importance for Israel to determine for itself what shall be its relation to the man who has touched the world nearly two thousand years as has no other single figure in history. . . Jesus was not only a Jew but he was *the* Jew, the Jew of Jews. . . Whatever the death of Jesus may have been, we believe that his life was Jewish, and we devoutly affirm that Jewish was his teaching."

HEINRICH GRAETZ (1817-1891), considered by many to be the greatest of Jewish historians: "He has carried the highest wisdom to the homes of the lowly and the ignorant of the world. . . The redeemer of the poor, the teacher of the ignorant, the friend of all that faint with toil and are oppressed with cares must die on the cross. Over the supreme tragedy let the angel of sorrow spread his wings. Veil thy face, sun! Be darkened, sky! Let the earth tremble and men mourn

in tears! The most angelic of men, the most loving of teachers, the meek and humble prophet is to die by the death of the cross."

DR. CLAUDE G. MONTEFIORE (1858-1938), theologian and president of the Jewish Religious Union: "I cannot conceive that a time will come when the figure of Jesus will no longer be a star of the first magnitude in the spiritual heavens, when he will no longer be regarded as one of the greatest religious heroes and teachers the world has seen."

MAX NORDAU (1849-1923), physician, author and Zionist leader: "Jesus is the soul of our soul as he is the flesh of our flesh. Who then could think of excluding him from the people of Israel?"

RABBI KAUFMANN KOHLER (1843-1926), president of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, author and Reform Judaism leader: "No ethical system or religious catechism, however broad and pure, could equal the efficiency of this great personality, standing, unlike any other, midway between heaven and earth, equally near to God and to man. . . Jesus, the helper of the poor, the friend of the sinner, the brother of every fellow-sufferer, the comforter of every sorrow-laden, the healer of the sick, the up-lifter of the fallen, the lover of man, the redeemer of woman, won the heart of mankind by storm. Jesus, the meekest of men, the most despised of the despised race of the Jews, mounted the world's throne to be the earth's Great King."

ISRAEL ZANGWILL (1864-1926), famous Jewish novelist: "To us, my brethren, in this our day, is given the

privilege to reclaim the Christ we have lost for so many centuries. Has not the crucified Christ more than fulfilled the highest and noblest of our greatest prophets? Is not he the incarnation of what the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets taught?"

CONSTANTINE BRUNNER (1862-1937), the great German philosopher: "His profound and holy words, and all that is true and heart-appealing in the New Testament, must from now on be heard in our synagogues and taught to our children."

Judge: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, we've just heard from nine esteemed rabbis and Jewish authorities. Although none of these men were willing to call Jesus a liar or lunatic—none of them, for whatever reason, called him Lord.

So the decision must be yours—who was Jesus?

In our next session, we will hear additional evidence. Then, you, the jury, will be asked to reach your final verdict.

Until then, this court stands in recess.

Jesus on Trial is the first of a two part article that was recently read by over 20,000 Jewish people across America in ABMJ's Shepherd of Israel. We will send the Shepherd of Israel to your Jewish friends for only \$1.00 per year.

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A Modern-Day Moses

The Nazis never had a chance to harm Dr. Sanford Mills. Sanford's parents moved to the U.S. in 1921, more than a decade before Hitler's rise to power.

Growing up in an Orthodox home in the Jewish section of Cleveland, young Sanford never heard the Gospel. He dropped his Jewish studies following his Bar Mitzvah and began searching for the truth about God by talking to people of other faiths.

Then he met a girl named Mildred, got married and opened a small shoe store. Approaching the age of 30, he still sought the answers to life's greatest questions.

One day Sanford turned to his young Christian sales clerk and asked him, "What makes you so different from all the other Christians I've met?" And the clerk answered, "Jesus Christ."

Sanford Mills was impressed with the Gospel the first time he heard it. Then he and his wife went with the sales clerk to a Baptist church to hear ABMJ missionary Oscar Wago. Soon after that, Mrs. Hanna Wago started visiting the Millses every Sunday, teaching them the basic Bible truths

that would change their lives.*

And their lives *did* change—for the Lord saw fit to save them.

When Oscar Wago recommended Sanford Mills for full-time employment with ABMJ, President Joseph Hoffman Cohn extended an invitation which Sanford accepted in 1940. For the next 38 years, Dr. Sanford Mills was one of the most popular conference speakers the mission has ever seen. And this in itself was no minor miracle, since he had been a chronic stutterer since childhood. Like Moses, God made him able to speak God's Word with power and skill.

He went on to found the Washington, D.C. branch of ABMJ and also wrote

Until The Last Breath It's Never Too Late To Come To Jesus

The piercing sound of the siren filled the air as the ambulance raced toward the hospital. Inside, the atmosphere was tense and filled with a sense of urgency usually reserved only for television dramas.

But this situation wasn't fictitious. Carol, a deeply troubled Jewish woman in her mid-30's lay hovering between life and death. Just moments before, she had decided to take her life in one of the most horribly painful manners imaginable. But God had intervened.

I was introduced to this drama a few days later when a friend called to ask me to contact one of Carol's close friends. When I called Myra I found she was deeply troubled by Carol's attempted suicide. I agreed to meet her at the hospital.

Before going to Carol's room, Myra and I discussed her friend's situation and her own. As we talked, Myra recognized her need to receive Jesus as her Savior. She bowed her head, ignoring the other visitors in the lobby, and asked the Lord into her life. Her son, who is in his 20's, was with her when she prayed. Although he was not ready to take this step of faith, he was quite open to the Gospel. As we walked together to Carol's room I rejoiced at this Jewish lady's newfound faith in Christ.

But I wasn't prepared for the sight

that met my eyes. I had never seen anyone look like this poor woman. Carol had doused herself with gasoline and had ignited herself with a match. Her legs and stomach were all burned. Her face was charred and scarred and puffed up. Her hair was only stubble. Lying fixed in an immobile position with bandages over most of her upper torso, she had several tubes leading in and out of her and she was wearing an oxygen mask.

After introductions and some polite talk, I traded places with Myra to get closer to Carol and to tell her that I was a minister. Carol was unable to speak. She could only communicate by raising her eyebrows for yes, or slightly moving her head for no.

I told Carol about the forgiveness of sins that can be found in Jesus. I told her that nothing that she had ever done was unforgivable if she came in faith to the Messiah. Then I quietly explained that she could pray in her heart for Jesus to come into her life.

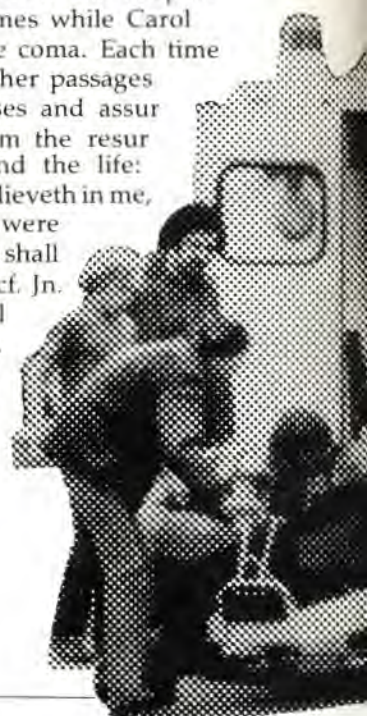
I will never forget what happened when I asked Carol if she would like to invite Jesus into her life and accept His forgiveness for her sins. As I looked intently at her badly burned and puffed face her eyebrows raised to silently say...yes.

After praying with her, we talked for a few more moments. Once again

she raised her eyebrows to indicate that she had given her life to Christ.

As Myra and I were leaving we turned to wave goodbye. We saw Carol's lips move through her clear oxygen mask. I was unable to make out the words she was saying. But Myra told me Carol had simply said, "Bless you." These were the last words I would ever hear from Carol. A few days later she slipped into a coma.

I returned to the hospital several times while Carol was in the coma. Each time I read to her passages of promises and assurance. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:" (cf. Jn. 11:25). All the while, I prayed that somehow,



☛ If there is a God, why did He allow six million Jews to die in the Holocaust? ☚



IF YOU WERE SHARING YOUR FAITH with a Jewish person who asked that, would you know what to say?

Or what about this: "Jews who believe in Jesus are no longer Jews!" Would you know how to answer?

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believers to share their faith with the Jews, you need to read...

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