

The Chosen People

FEBRUARY 1986 ISSN 0164-5323

Goldie: Could God Reach a Girl on Top of the World?



GOG & MAGOG: What do the Rabbis think? Part II



I am always impressed with the power of a single piece of Gospel literature. Many a Jewish life has been changed for eternity simply from the reading of a Gospel tract.

A major part of our missionary program is the distribution of Gospel literature to the Jewish people. Each day hundreds and thousands of tracts are distributed. Some are handed out on the street corners in Jewish-populated areas. Some on college campuses. Literature is passed out at airports, in shopping malls, and in door-to-door visitation programs.

Each tract has been carefully written to present the Gospel to the Jewish people. Invariably, out of the thousands of tracts distributed, one will find its way into the hands of a Jewish person who is seeking God. I am convinced that God can use that single piece of literature to bring that person unto Himself. This is the joy of tract distribution.

In the parable of the sower (cf. Mt. 13:1-23), Yeshua (Jesus) tells us that there is only one kind of living seed—the Word of God—but there are four kinds of soil. The four kinds of soil represent four types of people. There is the barren ground, representing those who are really not concerned about the Word of God. There is the rocky ground, representing those who are offended by the Word of God and cannot endure any hardship, toil, or persecution. There is the thorny ground, which represents those individuals who are more concerned about the things of this world than about the Word of God. Finally, there is the fertile ground, which represents those who receive the Word of God, act upon it, and become fruitful within the Kingdom of God.

Interestingly, in the parable of the sower, the four types of ground are in the path of the sower as he casts forth his seed. The sower doesn't discriminate. He is looking for a harvest. His eyes are always looking for the fertile ground, for he knows that it will produce the harvest he is looking for.

So it is with our literature program. Our missionaries faithfully hand out the Word of God in printed form. They too are looking for fertile hearts. For needy hearts. For broken and lonely hearts. For sinful hearts.

We know from experience and from the promises in God's Word that only He is able to mend a broken heart. Only He is able to supply the needs of the searching heart, to comfort the lonely heart, to forgive the sinful heart.

The prophet Isaiah wrote, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

As you read through this issue of *The Chosen People*, I know you will rejoice with me to see the way lives have been changed through the Word of God.

Please continue to uphold us in prayer as we seek to make the living Word real through the written Word. Thank you for standing with us in this vital ministry of reaching all Jews everywhere with the Gospel.

In our Messiah,

HAROLD A. SEVENER

The Chosen People

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Goldie: Could God Reach a Girl on Top of the World?

TESTIMONY OF GOLDIE ROTENBERG

I was a nice Jewish kid from the Bronx, one of two daughters of immigrant parents who were survivors of Nazi death camps.

We were raised with a lot of Jewish culture and spoke Yiddish at home. During my teens, after school or on weekends, I went to a Workmen's Circle School (a school where Jewish culture was taught). Yet despite all my Jewishness, what little sense of God I had disappeared while I was still in junior high school.

Even our family's religious ceremonies drew me closer to culture than to God. I still remember the seder meals every Passover at my uncle's house. He was the patriarch of our family, the stalwart who kept his home strictly kosher and zealously guarded the Law.

I was usually impatient during those long evenings, eager to be done with the story of redemption, always ready to eat the holiday meal. Yet they were special evenings, times I knew linked me to an ancient heritage.

Perhaps more than anything in my childhood, though, I was influenced by my parents' special background.

Like many children of immigrant parents, there was almost a role reversal in our home. My sister and I quickly learned to cope with the alien culture and wanted to take care of our parents. Plus, because of what they had been through during the war, I wanted to protect them from being hurt.

Even in college, when my friends were rebelling against authority, I was very aware of my need to watch out for my parents. One time, on hearing that I was going on a peace march to Washington, my mother became frantic. She knew, firsthand, that you didn't have to do something illegal to go to prison. I gave up my seat on the bus and stayed in New York, working on posters.

Between my staunch Jewish pride and my strongly developed sense of logic, I wasn't interested in hearing about Jesus. To top it off, I was quite hostile toward "Christians," a term I considered synonymous with Gentiles and some of whom had been among the Nazis. Without Margaret Reitz, I probably would have continued to accept that idea as fact.

Margaret Reitz was a quiet, gentle country mother and wife, not quite

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Goldie was on her way to becoming a high-powered New York lawyer. She considered the Bible folklore and God nothing more than man's invention. The whole picture began to change after an "accidental" detour into Pennsylvania Dutch Country.



Photo illustration

My letters to Margaret (a quiet, gentle country mother) reflected much of what I was thinking about God. Despite all my Jewishness, what little sense of God I had had disappeared while I was still in junior high school.

old enough to be my mother but somehow very mature, established, and peaceful. I was a fast-talking, fast-thinking, city kid.

We were so different that it is amazing we became such dear and abiding friends. Yet from the first time I met her, I knew she had two qualities no one else I had ever known had: a very special calm and an extraordinary sense of love.

I met Margaret in 1971, the summer after I was graduated from Harpur College. I had planned to help a girl friend move to Albuquerque where she had a new job, but the night before we left, her new job was canceled. Since we had already rented a car and



Photo illustration

packed our bags, we decided to take a short vacation in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Through a series of word-of-mouth referrals, we ended up staying at a tourist house run by the Reitz family.

For those first few days I stayed at the Reitz home, my conversations with Margaret reflected the friendly differences I sensed. Seeing the "Chai" necklace I wore, she remarked on my being Jewish.

"If I weren't born a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, I would have liked to be a Jew," she said. "The Jews are God's chosen people."

"Chosen for what?" I responded. "Slaughter?"

Another time she asked what I would do when I got to the end of my rope and couldn't depend on myself.

"I'd probably invent God, just like everyone else does," I told her, completely confident that I would never come to such an end. "Then, when the crisis was over, I'd come to my senses and realize I had made the same mistake everyone else who believes in God makes."

Yet despite all differences, our friendship grew. After I left, we frequently exchanged letters and visits. My letters to Margaret over the next few years reflected much of what I was thinking about God:

1972

"Dear Margaret: There's a certain logic (of the 'soul' if not the pure mathematical logic of the mind) to at least some of what you say. If you keep it up, you may yet convince me of something, though I'm not altogether sure of what. . . . I was, however, genuinely tickled pink by your letter, and I promise if you make no progress with me, I will someday give you a chance with my children. I don't know

if you will have much influence with them either in terms of religion (you know what they say about the mother's influence), but it wouldn't take them long to learn love from you."

"Dear Margaret: . . . Let me (for a change) disagree with another of your theories. Evil in the world proceeds not from man's refusal to bow his will, intellect, and body to anybody greater than himself, but rather from some men's desire to subjugate others to their will. I don't believe I have argued that man is basically good. In fact, my tendency is to believe he is not. His failure is not so much in not bowing to greater powers than himself but rather in not recognizing the value of other human beings to be as great as his own."

"Dear Margaret: . . . You should, I think, understand it is precisely [my successes and accomplishments] that make me so closed to philosophies that are outside the realm of what I already believe. I just have a constitutional aversion to changing. I've had more than my share of successes, [and] every incident is just a reinforcement that . . . I must be doing something right."

1973

"Dear Margaret: . . . [The letter begins with a very long, complicated sentence.] I just reread that sentence—it's grammatically atrocious—which makes me as good a grammarian as you are a missionary."

"Dear Margaret: . . . I trust you will let me know if there's anything to keep you from being here on March 9 (except I don't want a dissertation on why you can't go to the opera on Sunday). I'd like to get tickets for Neil Simon's

God's Favorite, unless you already know there's no good reason to see it—like maybe it didn't get a good review from one of those Christian magazines from which you get your preconceived opinions about such things."

Another time she asked what I would do when I got to the end of my rope and couldn't depend on myself. "I'd probably invent God, just like everyone else does. Then, when the crisis was over, I'd come to my senses and realize I had made the same mistake everyone else who believes in God makes."

"Dear Margaret: . . . Something in your letter has touched my Achilles' heel, and I resolve to avoid teasing or baiting you in this letter, but if any appears, it will be the uncontrollable expression of my personality."

Despite (or perhaps underneath) my glib and frequent barbs to Margaret about her faith, I was quite aware of some things that I found very difficult to express. One was a genuine envy of the surety Margaret had in her faith. The second was a deep desire that this dear friend be completely justified in her trust of a loving God who cared for the fate of individuals.

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"Dear Margaret: . . . I've been putting off for about a page now trying to tell you something that I'm not sure I've got straight enough in my mind to express adequately. And even if I do, I'm sure you'll never hear me admit it in a face-to-face meeting. Even though I can't get past the intellectual block and therefore can't really approach it with anything bearing a vague resemblance to an open mind, I would like to be able to believe in God and have been in that position for almost as long as I haven't believed.

"I suppose the reason now of wanting to be convinced is the worst one I've come up with in a long time. But it's true nonetheless. I would like to believe now because I would like to know that you are right. Both because it is so important to you as an individual and because I find you so special a person."

Thus it went until 1975. I even went so far as to read parts of the Bible. Though I was impressed by Romans 9, 10, and 11, it was with a cool intellectual appraisal, acknowledging that the barrier between Jews, Gentiles, and Christians might not be as firm as I had considered it. I continued to be unmoved and untouched spiritually, and if at times there did emerge an honest quest for God, I completely suppressed it.

In 1975, having completed law school, I went to spend a few days with the Reitzes. On Sunday evening we went to a slide show on Israel.

The accompanying narrative traced the biblical prophetic record alongside Israel's history. That night, for the first time, I faced a crisis of faith.

I had looked at God as man's invention and the Bible as folklore. Yet someone had taken the Bible and compared it with history. Confronted

with the facts, I knew that I would finally have to admit that perhaps, even probably, God was real. Given the amount of energy I had spent denying God, this was a crushing blow.

Four years of my words and wisecracks suddenly dried up. As Margaret and I sat to the wee hours of the morning, we barely spoke. Instead I sat silently as much of what I'd heard for the past years about a loving God fell into place, a God who cares, a personal God, the God of Israel who was and is and always will be. He is a God

Four years of my words and wisecracks suddenly dried up. I had placed logic on a pedestal, and now I realized logic had taken me as far as it could. The only "logical" conclusion was to take a leap of faith. I saw in one flash that the Bible was valid. It had something to say to me.

of fact as well as faith; He is a God who is real not only for gentle, soft Margaret Reitz, but also for a fast-thinking, overachieving Jewish lawyer from New York.

Margaret gave me a choice, perhaps the only one I was capable of making just then. "Are you willing to give God a chance to show you?"

For several hours I was unable to answer that question. I knew what it meant, what I would be acknowledging. I was afraid God would show me that Jesus was real. I sat quiet at times,

crying at times, tormented by my need to avoid causing my parents any pain.

I had placed logic on a pedestal, and now I realized logic had taken me as far as it could. The only "logical" conclusion was to take a leap of faith. I saw in one flash that the Bible was valid. It had something to say to me.

Finally I was able to break through and I answered yes.

It took me almost a week before I understood what I had done. I started to read the Bible and talk to Margaret every day. Within a couple of days, everything fell in place.

Once I realized the Bible was true and that God wanted something from me, I felt like I had no choice except to obey Him by accepting the Messiah. Later that summer I met Sam and Miriam Nadler and learned more about what it means to be a Jew who believes in Messiah.

I waited until the fall before I told my parents about my faith. To this day they consider my belief a betrayal to them and to Judaism.

Looking back on the time I spent writing to Margaret, I see how each of my well-reasoned thoughts and arguments were so much a part of me that I couldn't have given in to God during a moment of weakness. If I had, I would have always been haunted with the idea that I had created Him.

Instead, through the love of a friend and the patience of the Lord, He showed me the truth of Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." □

Goldie Rotenberg is a real estate attorney in Manhattan. Her parents did not understand her profession of faith, and she requests your prayers on their behalf. The editors also gratefully thank Mrs. Margaret Reitz for sharing Goldie's letters with us.

Albert Pasche 1918-1985



Albert Pasche entered into our Lord's presence on December 6, 1985. He was an active member of the Christian community and since 1977 a valued member of the Board of Directors of the American Board of Missions to the Jews.

For years before his election to the Board, he labored together with our Dallas, Texas, staff. With his characteristic humility, he worked behind the scenes, but his active leadership greatly expanded and increased our ministry. His home, his heart, and his keen mind were open to all ABMJ workers in every capacity.

Mr. Pasche's deep interest in the ABMJ was based on his convictions. He believed the Bible is God's Word and truly felt the depth of God's calling in the Abrahamic Covenant: "I will bless them that bless thee" (Gen. 12:3). He was thoroughly convinced that ABMJ's calling is to reach all Jews everywhere with the Gospel.

At the memorial service in Dallas, his daughter, Yvonne, captured the love and appreciation many of us felt for her father when she described him by saying, "He felt that the people who had contributed to the American Board of Missions to the Jews needed to know how much they were appreciated. Daddy always taught us that if you really love Jesus, you can't help but love His people."

In speaking of her father's love for Israel, Yvonne warmed our hearts by reminding us of her father's vision: "Daddy truly loved Israel and her people. He often commented how God had blessed him in allowing him to see with his own eyes prophecy being fulfilled."

Of a trip to the Holy Land, she recalled, "We were there on Father's Day and Mark [Mr. Pasche's son] and I arranged for Daddy to plant four little trees on one of the hills around Jerusalem."

Four trees were planted, one for each member of his beloved family, four people through whom his life was multiplied many times over.

Brother Pasche ministered to the Jewish people because he loved the people and he loved Israel. This love was the result of his love for the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the

greatest testimonies that could be given of our brother.

Since he retired from Mobil Oil, Brother Pasche was able to give more time to the needs of the Mission. A few years ago he personally visited every Mission worker on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts. It was not long before the workers loved him and opened their hearts to him.

This dear brother didn't just ask questions of these laborers; he worked *with* them. He gave out tracts on street corners, openly witnessed on the campuses, and accompanied them when they visited Jewish homes. He prayed with them and for them, and shared their burdens for the unsaved souls who struggled to find their personal Messiah.

Brother Pasche ministered in many ways, and we are grateful to have shared his love for the Lord through his work with us. He was a strong man: strong in his faith, in his love, and in his actions.

It is in love that we extend our prayers and fellowship to his wife, Dorothy, and children, Mark and Yvonne. Although we share their loss to a lesser degree, we also share much of their rejoicing for the great joy and fulfillment this man of God has found in the presence of his Lord. □

GOG & MAGOG

& What do the rabbis think?

By HAROLD A. SEVENER

In the last issue of The Chosen People we looked at the Jewish scholars' symbolic interpretations of the term Gog and Magog. In this final segment we will study their literal interpretations relative to the present crisis in the Middle East.

Literal Interpretation

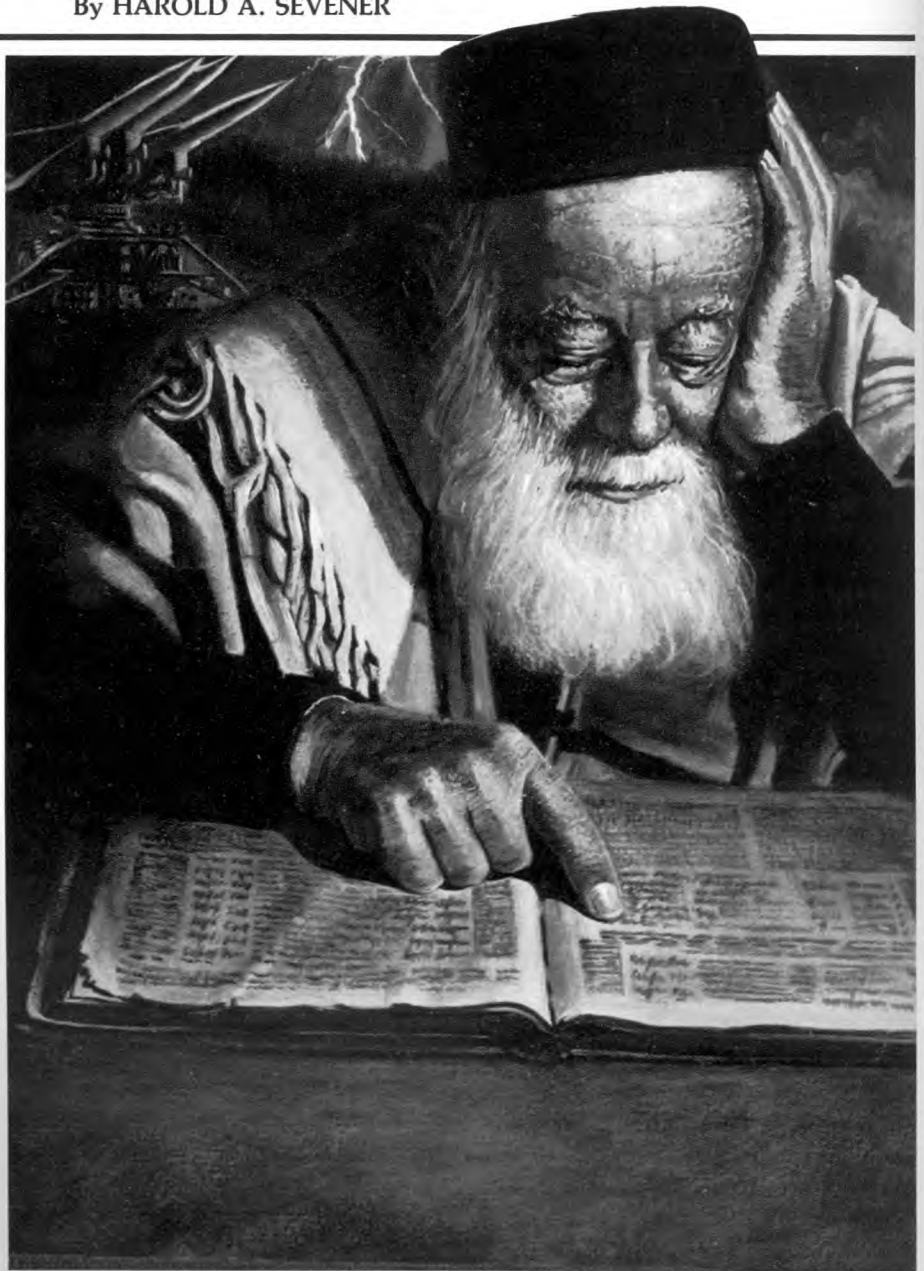
The rabbis who interpret Gog and Magog to mean the seventy nations also see that Gog and Magog had a literal historical reference in Ezekiel's time and that Gog is an actual person who would lead the evil forces against the Messiah when He came.

Let's look at some of the literal interpretations held by Jewish writers concerning Gog and Magog.

Old Testament Background: In rabbinic literature, the term *far north* referred to in Ezekiel 38:15 is not only seen as the symbolic seat of the forces of evil. It is also seen as a definite geographic location. The rabbis believe that Magog must have been located at the northernmost extremity of the then-civilized world.

The Table of Nations (see Gen. 10:2-32) tells us that Magog is one of the sons of Japheth (v. 2). Tradition places the land named after Magog in the southeastern European region of the Soviet Union called Caucasia. This region lies between the Black and the Caspian seas.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, identified Magog as the Scythians, an



ancient people who inhabited this area. He stated, "Magog founded those that from him were named Magogites, but who are by the Greeks called Scythians." Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, p. 161.

The *Yerushalmi Megillah* 3:9 identifies Magog as Gotia, or the Goths, which is a group of nomadic tribes that destroyed the Scythians and made

Tanchuma Bo continually refers to Gog and Magog as Edom. In fact, much of the midrashic literature indicates that Gog and Magog is a title conferred upon Edom because of its animosity toward Israel.

The Midrash implies that the Messiah, when He comes, will fight against a king who is not of the same nationality as the nation over which he is ruling. This is emphasized in *Bereishis Rabbah*

GOG AND MAGOG HERALDING THE MESSIAH

Tensions in the Middle East are increasing between Israel and her Arab neighbors, just as they were in the time of Ezekiel's vision. The Arab world is in a religious struggle with the militant Shiite Muslim belief. This, in turn, fuels the fire of hatred toward Israel.

The Western nations of the world are being drawn into the Middle East conflict because of economic and political reasons. Certainly the stage of world history is being set for the final conflict of Gog and Magog, a battle that will ultimately result in Armageddon.

Many Jewish scholars today are searching the pages of Scripture, of Talmud, and of rabbinic writings to see how all of these contemporary events taking place in the Middle East fit into the ancient prophecies. As a result, *many are looking for the Messiah to come.*

It is our task and responsibility to share with these dear Jewish scholars and rabbis as well as with the average Jewish person that the Messiah, for whom they are looking, has *already* come, has died, was buried, and has risen again in order to provide forgiveness of sin. We need to tell them that this *same* Messiah will come again in the clouds of heaven, even as He promised.

Thus, while Gog and Magog may loom as a threat upon the horizon, we believe this is the sure hope of the soon coming of the Lord Jesus, our Messiah and Savior, who can and will bring peace. □

In the pages of Scripture, of Talmud, and of rabbinic writings, Jewish scholars are finding that contemporary events taking place in the Middle East are lining up with the ancient prophecies. As a result, many are looking for the Messiah to come.

their home in the Scythian territory. The *Targum Yonasan* to Genesis 10:2 identifies Magog as Geramemaia, which is a reference to the Germanic peoples, or the Goths.

The rabbis who wrote the Talmud believed that the Japhethic tribes would be in the forefront of the battle. Their numbers would include the tribes of Meshech and Tubal, which are the names of two other sons of Japheth. Persia, or the modern country of Iran, is identified with Japheth's son Tiras and his grandson Togarmah, who is the son of Gomer (see Gen. 10:2, 3).

Japheth or Edom? At this point, however, the rabbis have a conflict. Historically, descendants of Japheth have never created a problem for Israel. The enemy of Israel has always been Edom, known today as the country of Jordan.

In the Old Testament, Edom is identified as the epitome of evil and the enemy of Israel. The rabbinic tractate

76:5, where the Midrash comments on Daniel's vision of the four beasts (cf. Dan. 7) that were to conquer Israel. In the vision, Daniel sees that the fourth beast has ten horns from which an eleventh horn sprouts.

The Midrash then comments that the ten horns symbolize ten kings of the fourth kingdom and the eleventh horn is the final king whom Israel will confront. All of these kings, the Midrash stresses, are to be descendants of Esau.

Thus, talmudic and rabbinic literature emphasizes that the king described in Daniel 11, who is seen as the rebellious king, will be the initiator of the war of Gog and Magog against Israel. This king will be a descendant of Esau, which is Edom.

The fighting force, however, will be drawn from the ranks of Japheth and Ham, along with those from Ishmael's descendants. The other forces will come from the other "seventy nations of the world."

News from Israel

Economy at Last Coming Under Control

Since the Arab oil boycott of 1973, Israel's economy has reeled under skyrocketing inflation. The year 1985 at last brought positive news: November figures showed the lowest increase since January 1977 and the lowest inflation since 1970. It is likely that the final 1985 figures will show an inflation rate under 190 percent compared with 445 percent in 1984.

Scripture Fulfilled in Ceremony

Scripture clearly indicates that those who sin against the people of Israel will repent (Isa. 60:14). A fulfillment of these words took place on September 15, 1985. Fifty years to the day from the declaration of Germany's infamously anti-Semitic Nuremberg laws, 7,000 German Christians held a Day of Reconciliation at the former Reich Party Grounds in Nuremberg. There they collectively repented for the persecution of the Jews by the German people and the Church and asked the forgiveness of the Jewish people.

Is It Safe to Go to Israel?

Recent world events prompt this question from several Christians. The answer is an unqualified yes. We travel via El Al, Israel's own airlines — the safest airline flying internationally! Yes, Israel's sophisticated security measures and special luggage handling techniques cause some inconvenience but all agree they are worthwhile as they allow us to sleep soundly as we fly from New York to Tel Aviv. I look forward to being with you in Israel with Chosen People Ministries Israel Tours. Shalom! Irwin Rocky Freeman, Tour Director

Tour Prices

June 2-12, Sept. 22-Oct. 2, \$1795 from NY (\$2475 Canadian).

For further information write Tour Director, Box 2000, Orangeburg, NY 10962.

Dave, Are You Saved Yet?

Sometimes, as our worker Mitch Triestman found, these forthright words are the only ones left to say.



By MITCH TRIESTMAN
Missionary, Philadelphia, PA

From the very first time I talked to Dave, we hit it off. We were sort of kindred spirits, two "people people" who enjoyed exchanging ideas and opinions. At first it bothered Dave that I was a missionary, a Jew who believed in Messiah. But even though he was cautious and a little suspicious, I could tell he liked me as much as I liked him.

Dave's ex-wife was the friend of a woman in a Bible study I taught. Not a very close contact to work on, but when I stopped by Dave's shop the

first time and started to talk, we never even got around to how I had come about visiting him.

We just sort of started talking about business and family and the world in general, and pretty soon I was telling him why I believed in Jesus!

It became almost routine for me to stop in his small, family-owned store whenever I was in the area. It was a couple of hours from my house, so I didn't get there regularly.

Whenever I did stop by, he tried to get away from waiting on customers or rearranging his inventory of books, jewelry, and gifts to chat with me.

Sometimes we talked about spiritual things, other times about business or politics. A few times he had a helper there, and we were able to get out for a cup of coffee.

After about two years, I had less and less occasion to get over Dave's way. Frankly, over the months in between visits I pretty much forgot about Dave, only occasionally remembering and praying.

The months piled up into years, and soon I realized I hadn't seen Dave for almost five years. Then, just a couple of months ago, I was in his area, and I decided to stop by for a visit.

I was sadly surprised when I saw him. He had aged a good bit—he was heavier and balder than I remembered, and even though he was only forty-two, he looked closer to fifty. Five years is a long time, and I wondered if he would even recognize me.

He recognized me immediately, and he wasted no time in telling me he was hurt that it had been so long since I had stopped by. I didn't need to explain the tyranny of the urgent to Dave, so I just apologized.

"I'm sorry," I said.

His response surprised me. "If I didn't love you, I wouldn't care, and there would be nothing to forgive. Since I care, it must be because I love you. Since I love you, I'll forgive you."

This was almost an exact quote of what I had told him five years before when he had neglected to read my testimony when I left it with him. We both laughed. Then I felt led to boldly ask, "Dave, are you saved yet?"

He got very serious. He told me how he had gotten remarried to a lovely girl, how he had bought the business outright, and how he had become so successful.

But he confessed, "I'm not happy. I haven't really been happy since my college days. In college I was always

poor. I had nothing and yet I was happy. Now I've got everything except happiness."

"Dave," I said softly. "You *don't* have everything. You still lack one thing. Before you can be truly happy, you have to have a personal relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Knowing Him makes life worthwhile. Yet we can't know Him because of sin. Sin keeps us from our holy Heavenly Father.

"But because of His love for us," I continued, "He has provided a way for us to be forgiven of our sins. The way

**"Dave," I said softly.
"Before you can be
truly happy, you have
to have a personal
relationship with the
God of Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob.
Knowing Him makes
life worthwhile."**

is Jesus. He is the sacrifice on our behalf; He is the forgiveness of our sins. God became a Man and suffered in our place, so we can enjoy fellowship with Him and be truly happy.

"Our job, Dave, is to *believe* it, to place our faith in the sacrifice God has provided on our behalf, to recognize we are sinners and that the Messiah died for us."

I was speaking so quickly that I didn't even notice Dave's response. He had removed his glasses and had begun to cry. He said he had known this to be the truth for years. But he was afraid of ridicule, afraid of what others would think, so he had been running from God.

Now Dave decided to stop running. Very simply he acknowledged what God had done for him and said, "Thank You, God. It's finally over."

As we smiled, two kindred spirits now sharing the kinship of Messiah Jesus, I thought, "No, Dave, it's not over at all. *It's just the beginning!*" □

Every Ending Is a Beginning

When our missionaries are invited to local synagogue groups, the evening ends, the questions are answered, but the story isn't over when they walk out the door. The Gospel is planted in hearts, and we pray that for many it is just the beginning.

When we go into the homes of Jewish people, they are often ready to receive the Lord. But sometimes they say no. Recently a Jewish man told one of our missionaries, "Your mission is going to be mad at you, but I am not ready to believe."

He thought the missionary was a failure. But the missionary knows the story is still being written.

Your prayers and gifts really determine the ending to many of these stories. You enable us to go back to situations that look like dead-ends and make them passageways into eternity.

If you are not already a part of our mission family, praying for our work in the synagogues and streets, homes and offices, please consider the matter prayerfully. Your "yes" could help one more ending become a beginning in the Lamb's Book of Life.

I promise to pray for ABMJ

I also enclose \$_____ in support of ABMJ missionaries.

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From the Exile To the Christ:

The Jews Under Persia

By DR. DANIEL FUCHS

The fall of Babylon was sudden, startling, and complete. Nebuchadnezzar died in 561 B.C. He had ruled forty-four years. He was succeeded by his son, Evil-Merodach, who is mentioned in 2 Kings 25:27-30. From this passage we learn that he liberated Jehoiachin and apparently recognized him as Judah's king.

Evil-Merodach's reign was short—only two years. He was assassinated by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, who also ruled only two years. His son, Labashi Mardok, reigned less than a year when Nabonidus usurped his throne. Nabonidus was the father of Belshazzar.

"King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. While Belshazzar was drinking he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them.

"So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

"Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way.

". . . That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom" (Dan. 5:1-6, 30).

It is important to study the story of the Temple vessels in the Bible. On each of the three occasions that the Scriptures describe Nebuchadnezzar's assaults of Jerusalem, the Temple vessels are noted. (See Dan. 1:1, 2 for the first assault; 2 Chr. 36:10 and Jer. 27:16 for the

second; and 2 Chr. 36:18 for the final destruction.)

The removing of the Temple vessels was not merely an act of looting. Nebuchadnezzar considered himself to be the servant of his god, Marduk. When he attacked Judah, it was not just a battle between Babylon and Judah; to him it was a battle between Marduk and Jehovah!

When Nebuchadnezzar defeated an enemy, he not only deported its peoples; he also "captured" its gods and set them up in "the treasure house of his god" (Dan. 1:2). However, when Nebuchadnezzar sacked the Tem-

When Nebuchadnezzar sacked the Temple, he took the treasures of the Lord's Temple with him. These vessels represented the God of the Jews to the Babylonians. Belshazzar's feast was not a mere orgy; it was a direct challenge to Jehovah.

ple, there were no idols; he took the treasures of the Lord's Temple with him instead. These vessels represented the God of the Jews to the Babylonians. Belshazzar's feast was not a mere orgy; it was a direct challenge to Jehovah.

Dr. Charles L. Feinberg explains Daniel 5:30, 31 as follows:

"Verse 30: That same night, so soon after the judgment was pronounced, its provisions were fulfilled. Belshazzar was slain, and the connection between his sin and his fall was inescapable.

"Cyrus the Persian showed great military prowess. He

diverted the Euphrates River into a new channel and marched his army into Babylon through the dry riverbed while the Babylonians were still carousing.

"Verse 31: Although the city was actually taken by Cyrus, it was done in the name of Cyrus's uncle, Darius the Mede. Thus Babylon came to a disgraceful end when it impiously laid its hands on the sacred vessels of God. Remember, God has means of bringing the proudest down to destruction."

Charles L. Feinberg, *Daniel*, p. 70.

There are few events in history that are as significant as the reign of Cyrus the Great. The facts of his birth are obscure; he just suddenly appeared on the pages of history. Isaiah prophesied of him: "I will raise up Cyrus in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free" (45:13).

In another place, Isaiah says: "Who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid." ' This is what the Lord says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut" (44:28; 45:1).

Isaiah said that Cyrus would subdue nations before him. In 560 B.C. he became the king of Anshan, a petty kingdom state. He soon incorporated the province of Parsua. Ten years later he became king of Media. Eleven years later he conquered Babylon. Before his final battle he transferred his kingdom to his son Cambyses.

The new Persian Empire then extended from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indus River in India. It included twenty provinces or "satrapies" from Israel, Syria, Phoenicia, Lydia, Phrygia, Ionia, Cappadocia, Calicia, Armenia, Assyria, the Caucasus, Babylonia, Media, Persia, modern Afghanistan and Baluchistan, as well as India, west of the Indus River. Never before had one government controlled such a wide area!

"After four millenniums of Semitic civilizations, Asia Minor fell under the rule of a new people, the Persians, and a new race, the Aryans, late-comers to the circle of culture bearers. In the sixth century B.C., when Babylonia stood at the height of her power, there was no Persia.

"Who in 1910 would have believed that England, then the undisputed ruler of the seas, in another fifty years would sink to the status of a third-class power, and that Russia, then a third-class power, in the same time would rise to be a dominant world force?

"Who in 600 B.C. would have believed that in another fifty years Babylonia, then the ruler of the world, would be wiped off the face of the earth by a people who did not as yet exist? Yet history had slated this unknown people to become the inheritors of the civilized world."

Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God, and History*, p. 69.

Cyrus was a different kind of king. Both his political

Cyrus was a different kind of king. Instead of humiliating the people he conquered, he did everything possible to reconcile them. Instead of forcing his new subjects to acknowledge his gods, he encouraged them to continue to worship their gods. In many instances, he actually joined his subjects in their worship.

and religious deeds were in contrast to all of the world rulers who preceded him. Instead of humiliating the people he conquered, he did everything possible to reconcile them. Instead of forcing his new subjects to acknowledge his gods, he encouraged them to continue to worship their gods. In many instances, he actually joined his subjects in their worship.

"Cyrus, whose personal religious views are not easy to determine, had no intention of offending his subjects' religious susceptibilities by such a policy; on the contrary, he would conciliate these susceptibilities by playing the part of a worshipper of their various gods. 'The Great King,' as one scholar has remarked, 'had no objection to bowing in the house of Rimmon if there was anything to be picked up on the floor.' There is evidence from other parts of the Persian Empire that this policy was not followed in Babylonia only.

"Against this background we can appreciate the political motives of Cyrus's action with regard to the Jews."

F. F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations*, p. 100.

In the centuries before Cyrus, world rulers used different policies to maintain control of their realms. Assyria had a policy of permanent transportation: They settled their vanquished people on the lands of other nations they conquered. This meant that there was no hope for the ten tribes of Israel to return to their homeland. They were assimilated.

The Babylonians, on the other hand, also deported conquered people. However, when the Jews were deported to Babylonia, Nebuchadnezzar did not resettle the land; there were no new owners. This made it possible for the Jews to return.

But the policies of the Assyrians and the Babylonians filled their empires with multitudes of discontented, rebellious, displaced peoples. They were in a constant state of revolt. The Babylonians, for instance, could never conquer Egypt, because their armies were constantly quelling rebellions all over the empire.

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When Cyrus conquered a nation, it became a satrapy. He allowed the defeated peoples to worship their gods and keep their old customs; thus they were content. However, Cyrus's motives were not humanitarian: He used the Persian armies for further conquest.

It was easy for Cyrus to win the loyalty of the defeated nations. As his policy became known all over the world, his fame increased. Thus, when he entered Babylon, he came not as its conqueror, but as its deliverer.

"When Cyrus became lord of Babylonia, the dependencies of Babylon likewise came under his control. He adopted a benevolent policy toward those former Babylonian provinces on the principle that the happier their lot, the more likely they would be to co-operate with Persian aims and goals. Phoenicia pledged its loyalty and its fleet, which was the match of any the united Greeks could raise.

"The policy of the restoration of captive deities and captive peoples had special application to the Jews, whose religious ideals were respected by Cyrus and his successors as superior to those of the other nations with whom they dealt. To be sure, the Jews had no image that must be restored to its shrine, but Nebuchadnezzar had taken utensils from the Temple at Jerusalem. They had been used in Belshazzar's feast. If the gods of the other nations were restored, certainly the vessels used in the worship of the God of Israel must receive similar treatment."

Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Between the Testaments*, pp. 18, 19.

Cyrus called himself the "Great King." He made "a proclamation throughout his realm and put it in writing." This proclamation released the Jews within his kingdom to return to Jerusalem and to worship the Lord there. Cyrus was God's instrument to bring the Jews back to the land to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Chronicles are the last books in the Hebrew Bible, and they close with the decree of Cyrus. The last verses of 2 Chronicles read, "[Nebuchadnezzar] carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. The land enjoyed its Sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah.

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"In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: 'This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you—may the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up"' (2 Chr. 36:20-23).

Cyrus called himself the "Great King." He made "a proclamation throughout his realm and put it in writing." Centuries earlier, a Greater King made another proclamation and put it in writing: "And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:3).

Cyrus was called "the Great" because the Greater One used him to bring the Jews back to the land to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant—the coming of the Messiah. □

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Questions and Answers

By GARY DERECHINSKY

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the term *Messiah*? And what does Judaism teach regarding the Messianic hope?

ANSWER: The twelfth of the "Thirteen Articles of the Jewish Faith" simply states, "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and though he tarry, I will wait daily for his coming." As this doctrine was further developed, elaborated upon, and became host to a variety of interpretations, Judaism emphasized two major features: (1) the personal Messiah and (2) the Messianic Age.

Joseph Klausner in his work entitled *The Messianic Idea in Israel* defines Judaism's understanding of the Messiah and the Messianic Age as follows:

By belief in the Messiah is meant "The prophetic hope for the end of this age, in which a strong redeemer, by his power and his spirit, will bring complete redemption, political, and spiritual, to the people of Israel, and along with this, earthly bliss and moral

perfection to the entire human race" (p. 9).

By belief in the Messianic Age is meant "The prophetic hope for the end of this age, in which there will be political freedom, moral perfection, and earthly bliss for the people of Israel in its own land, and also for the entire human race" (p. 9).

Modern Jewish thinkers reflecting a naturalistic interpretation of the doctrine of the Messianic hope, as opposed to a supernatural explanation, conscious of the fluctuating opinions of the rabbis throughout the ages, critical of the fanciful legends and anecdotes of the sages, and perturbed by the seemingly endless debates on this or that minor detail, have reinterpreted the doctrine.

Two major approaches have prevailed. Reform Judaism has rejected the notion of a personal Messiah, interpreting the Messianic hope in terms of social progress and the brotherhood of man. The other is that of Zionism, which has interpreted the phenom-

enon of the emergence of the modern State of Israel as the Messianic hope. Religious Zionists have explained the rebirth of the state as the "beginning of redemption."

How important it is to maintain a perspective that is firmly rooted in the revelation communicated through the Scriptures—a view that admits to a personal Messiah and a Messianic Age. Perhaps no other chapter in all of Scripture has as effectively interwoven both aspects as Isaiah chapter 11.

QUESTION: In what year on the Hebrew Calendar was Jesus crucified?

ANSWER: Scholars disagree concerning the year in which Jesus was crucified. Some take as early a date as A.D. 27, whereas others hold to either A.D. 30 or A.D. 33.

The year 1985 is the year 5746 on the Hebrew Calendar. Therefore, the years mentioned above correspond to 3788, 3791, and 3794 on the Hebrew Calendar.

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