

PROGRAM 66 TEASER

You wouldn't know it by asking your local rabbi. But real Christianity is real Jewish. Jesus—Yeshuah—comes out of the Old Testament. John the Baptist? No Baptist he! He was a Jew. As was Jesus. As were Peter, James, John, Paul. Why the whole gospel is Jewish—in spite of 2000 years of my Jewish friends pretending it isn't. So today let's take a look at the Jews and Jesus. After all, God Himself is planning a great reunion when Jews will embrace their one and only Messiah—rather than push Him away. Here is number two of four adventures: Jews, Israel and the Church—People of Prophecy. It's a whole lot More Than Talk.

PROGRAM 66 PAGE 1

JEWS, ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH—PEOPLE OF PROPHECY THE JEWS AND JESUS

PAGE 1 The Lost Jewish Gospel

Which of these two statements rings true:

1) “Christianity is nothing but a continual experience in feeling that you have no sin, although you sin...sin cannot detach us from Him were we to commit a thousand fornications a day, or as many murders.”

2) “Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers...shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

The former was written by Martin Luther, who aimed to distance himself from Tetzels Roman Catholic indulgence scandal (Werke, XI 436, XXV 330,142, 130). The latter was penned by a Jew, Saul of Tarsus (I Corinthians 6:9,10), whose teaching on the gospel of Christ’s death and resurrection declared salvation was a right relationship with God accomplished within the heart by the Holy Spirit and not through human effort.

How then could two men with the same “The just shall live by faith” message differ so greatly on conduct associated with such belief? Obviously, Luther’s coming on the scene after 1500 years of a corrupt, crusading, conquering Christianity would shape any reformer’s thinking. But biases aside, what was the essence of the spiritual revolution effected by the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ? And has that Jewish gospel—traced by Old Testament Jewish prophets, faced by New Covenant Jewish disciples and graced by a Jewish Church after Pentecost—been in large part lost by, most surprisingly, us evangelicals? Hear me out.

“Gospel” simply means “good news.” And “good news” means salvation that brings forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. The roots of the gospel are as old as Torah. In short, God promised a solution to sin as far back as Genesis 3:15, Moses spoke of the Prophet-Redeemer to come (Deuteronomy 18:18), David described the grace of God and joy of forgiveness (Psalm32:1,2), Isaiah wept as he foretold the price Messiah would pay in order to offer such grace (Isaiah 52:13 through Isaiah 53:12), and Jeremiah narrated how this awesome act of God’s grace

and power would transform the inner man by means of a “new covenant” (Jeremiah 31:31-33).

So far, so good. Jewish John the Baptist appeared on the scene repeating what is always God’s condition for a relationship with Him: “Repent...” (Matthew 3:2). Then the one John announced, Jesus, preached the same message of repentance and faith (Matthew 4:17) and announced that “salvation is of the Jews”(John 4:22).

The same faith message requiring repentance and obedience was sounded after Pentecost as Peter said, “Repent and be baptized every one of you...” (Acts 2:38). Paul never deviated from this “Jewish gospel,” as he preached “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

It was a revolutionary message. Jesus Christ’s sacrifice had satisfied the justice requirement of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). His resurrection had opened the very holy of holies to the lowliest (Hebrews 10: 19). And man’s futile and failed attempt to live through human strength a righteous life pleasing to God could now be exchanged for a life of glorious freedom—sins forgiven by God’s mercy, and the resurrected Christ formed in the human heart by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5, Galatians 4:19).

True repentance on man’s part (the very desire to turn from sin being itself a gift of God) would allow God to effect his full and free work of salvation. And because of such powerful grace and enablement given by Christ, those who truly loved him would become “new creations” (2 Corinthians 5:17). In fact, only through the power of the indwelling Christ would followers be able to keep God’s commandments (I John 5:3)—told to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:13).

PROGRAM 66 PAGE 2

JEWS, ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH—PEOPLE OF PROPHECY THE JEWS AND JESUS

PAGE 2 The Great Christian Deception

This “Jewish gospel” never allowed for unrighteous living by so-called “saved” people. No man could be committing adultery and dare say, “I’m saved, because I’ve accepted Christ.” No one could be a fornicator, liar, drunkard or a host of other evils and not know that they were deceived if they were hoping to enter God’s kingdom (I Corinthians 6:9,10).

And always following the good news of God’s free gift of salvation was the result such an act of grace would bring about—a changed heart resulting in changed behavior. Romans 10:9,10 (confessing Christ with the mouth and believing with the heart) was attached to Romans chapter six, a clear warning that continual living in sin makes one the servant of sin and Satan, no matter the howls to the contrary. Even the well known “by grace are ye saved” verses (Ephesians 2:8,9) are followed by the “forgotten” scripture, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”

On and on this “Jewish gospel” lays out God’s work of redemption and man’s call to obedience and righteous living. Any temptation to trust in “cheap grace” (i.e. “I just have to believe—it doesn’t matter how I live”) is blown away. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done...” always leads to “be careful to maintain good works” (Titus 3:5,8).

How far the evangelical church has fallen from this Jewish gospel. Rightly wanting to distance ourselves from the false message that man can earn salvation, we have become just as cultish in not requiring righteous living as a proof of true salvation. The result is a Laodicean church honey-combed with ugly sins, material smugness, theological arrogance, and preaching that centers on decisions and not disciples; on comfort and not the Cross; on man’s wants and not God’s will.

I was part of this. I’m still ashamed of the “contests” I entered with other “soul winners” to see who would get the most “decisions”—like one Indian reservation where I induced almost everyone I met to “pray a prayer with me”—by stepping lightly on repentance, obedience and righteous living. It didn’t take a genius to discern why so many thousands of decisions we were bringing over the years as

“great radio reports” resulted in only a handful of changed lives under the ownership of the Lord.

One of these days, we’ll be forced back to the “Jewish gospel” that still speaks of Jesus Christ’s life-changing grace and power that turns men from darkness to light.

Persecution may do it. The word “Christian” may become a label to be shunned by the insincere. Or perhaps “Christian” will continue to be the label of the lukewarm who will then apply another name—a pejorative one—to those followers of Jesus who refuse to compromise the Word of God.

I long for that day, because I feel God’s grief over the present condition of much of Christianity. While condemning cults for preaching “another gospel” (Galatians 1:8,9) because of their usual emphasis on works as a substitute for Jesus Christ’s atoning sacrifice, we are often guilty of offering a message of perverted grace. The great Christian deception today is a form of replacement theology—substituting grace for obedience.

But it is “the true grace of God” (of which Peter spoke in I Peter 5:12) that results in new behavior. In Christ’s Church, there should not be the slightest doubt as to whether or not men and women can believe in Jesus while living in habitual sin. All we need do is forsake our human traditions and return to the forgotten Jewish gospel and its thunderous reply of “God forbid.” Then watch the world sit up and take notice!

PROGRAM 66 PAGE 3

JEWS, ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH—PEOPLE OF PROPHECY THE JEWS AND JESUS

PAGE 3 Let Jesus Speak For Himself

When Jesus healed a Jewish blind man, an argument with the Pharisees took place. Some called the healing a miracle; others a trick. When the frightened parents of the man who though born blind could now see were questioned by angry leaders, they said, “He is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.” What they said concerning their son I would like to propose concerning Jesus. Most people speak for or against Him. Few ever let Him speak for Himself. I’d like to give Him that opportunity.

Most folks with an ounce of sense agree that our entering a new millennium still shows no peace on earth and very little good will toward men. The planet erupts in wars. Puny dictators strut their stuff while millions starve, sigh and suffer. From a merely human perspective, Israel moves toward annihilation as more and more enemies gain “the bomb” that the Jewish state once held as their “trump card” against neighboring madmen. And science and technology only lead to more refined and clever ways to cheat, control and destroy.

What does all this have to do with Jesus who was called “Messiah” by many Jews? Everything! Today religious Jews and Christians have a biggie in common—both say “We need Messiah now!” They have correctly seen that man left to himself is hopelessly lost. And that’s where Jesus comes in. He agreed with that assessment when He walked in Israel and declared Himself the only hope for the nation and the world. Then He offered His credentials as no one else could or ever did—sight to the blind, life to the dead and miracles that left a nation, even His enemies, gasping.

1. He did not start a new “religion”. “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”
2. He did not come to reach the Gentiles, but His own people, the Jews, and through them the world: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”
3. He won’t force Himself on Israel, though He says that He will be there at the end as their only hope: “Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you

will not see me again until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

4. He claimed to be the Lamb of God-Israel’s atoning sacrifice. If He wasn’t, why at His death would He offer nothing but love in saying, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”?

5. He not only said He came to offer His life for Israel’s sins (and those of the world), but guaranteed His resurrection: “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days...the temple he had spoken of was his body.”

6. It’s no use calling Him a nice Jewish boy or even a prophet. He would have to be a liar, a mad man or the Messiah for answering an earnest woman who said (as do many Jews today) “I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us” with seven pointed words, “I who speak to you am He.”

To my Jewish friends, please don’t call this a “conversion” article. I’m just letting Jesus the Jew speak for Himself. You’ve listened to Barak, Clinton, Arafat and others. How have they helped Israel?! If Jesus is alive like He says He is, you don’t think He could do better!? I dare you to ask Him!

PROGRAM 66 PAGE 4

JEWS, ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH—PEOPLE OF PROPHECY THE JEWS AND JESUS

PAGE 4 Time To Put Up Or Shut Up!

I missed the call but it was left on my answering machine. A Jewish leader whom I respect—and who holds me in regard because of my defense of his people—took offense at my allowing Jesus to speak for Himself (The Jeremiah Connection, March 2001). My friend applauds me for fighting antisemitism, accepts my acknowledging Jesus as the strength of my convictions and admires my stand on unconditional love—that no person need believe like I do in order to earn my support. But when I insist that Jesus is still the one and only promised Messiah, he does a slow burn as do other Jewish leaders and rabbis.

Never mind that they can deny all the truths I hold sacred: Jesus' miracle birth, His magnificent love in being our atoning sacrifice and His resurrection—and still have my unconditional support. They wish me to deny that Jesus is for Jews. When I insist that He is for everyone—Gentile and Jew—blood pressures rise as happened with my friend. After telling me of promises not yet fulfilled—no global peace, no swords beaten into plowshares, no lamb and lion as good buddies, my dear friend said, “Frank Eiklor, it's time to put up or shut up!” What he is saying is that I believe in the tooth fairy.

So I accept the challenge—to put up, of course. Future messages will offer evidence of why I believe that Jesus' appearance as Israel's Messiah is clearly seen by those who take the time to examine facts rather than invent excuses. Even a pagan Gentile with no biblical background and no great love in his heart for Jews or people of color surrendered to the evidence and was overwhelmed by a living Presence—Jesus Himself—while locked on a Pacific island courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps. A study of the prophecies of the First Testament and the incredible Personality of the Gospels turned me into a Bible student without minister, priest or rabbi. A Saul-of-Tarsus-like encounter took place and I became a new creation—converted from hate to love; bigotry to brotherhood; lies and deception to truth and integrity. That was 57 years ago. What might I have turned into without that encounter with Jesus? Don't even think about it!

So call this opening “put up” chapter my personal testimony. And am I ever a debtor to the Jews! Hebrew prophets. Jewish Scriptures—both Testaments. John

the Baptist—no Baptist but a Jew. Yeshua Himself. Jewish apostles (not one Swede, German or Italian among them!). First Church in Jerusalem (not Chicago like I thought). First missionaries—all Jews—sent to convert poor dummies like me who worshiped sticks and stones and dead men’s bones.

Yet how’s this for a paradox—here I am the former pagan calling many Jews back to their own Scriptures?! For my friend who told me to “put up or shut up” told my wife (who answered one of his calls and asked him if he read his Scriptures), “No, I’m just a common man. I can’t understand the Bible. The rabbis study for that and need to teach me.” That’s what good folks were told in the dark ages when only the priestly hierarchy had access to the Bible. Yet Jews—the people of the Book—would buy that baloney in the 21st century?! Future messages will offer reasons for my beliefs— including words of ancient rabbis (no believers in Jesus) who only make me more certain that I am right.

PROGRAM 66 PAGE 5

JEWS, ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH—PEOPLE OF PROPHECY THE JEWS AND JESUS

PAGE 5 I Agree With The Ancient Rabbis

This is written to my Jewish friends world-wide. You know my track record. God has helped me defend you from hate for over 35 years. I have been an open book—neither forcing any to believe my views on Yeshua—Jesus—nor hiding my convictions that He is the promised Messiah of Israel. None can truthfully deny that my support has been unconditional.

Yet some Jewish leaders still resent my insistence that on Jesus I'm right and they are wrong. That I'm in good company with ancient rabbis who believed the Messiah first had to suffer for Israel's—and the world's—iniquities.

From the Talmud—Sanhedrin 98, p.2 “Rabbi Yochanan said, ‘The Messiah—what is his name?’ ...And our Rabbis said, ‘the pale one...is his name,’ as it is written ‘Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows—yet we considered him stricken by G-d, smitten by him and afflicted.’” And from Midrash Ruth Rabbah, “Dip your morsel of bread in the vinegar (Ruth 2:14). This refers to the Messiah’s sufferings, for it is said in Isaiah 53:5; ‘He was pierced through for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.’” These ancients—and many others—were referring to the following scriptures:

“Who has believed what we have heard? To whom has the arm of Adonai been revealed? For he grew like a sapling or like a root from arid ground: he had neither form nor grandeur; we saw him, but without such appearance that we could desire him. He was despised and isolated from men, a man of pain and accustomed to suffering. As one from whom we would hide our faces; he was despised, and we had no regard for him. But in truth, it was our infirmities that he bore, and our pains that he carried, but we regarded him diseased, stricken by God, and afflicted. He was pierced because of our rebellious sins and oppressed for our iniquities; the chastisement upon him was for our benefit, and through his wounds, we are healed. We have all strayed like sheep, each of us turning to his own way, and Adonai inflicted upon him the iniquity of us all...After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his

life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” (Tanakh, from Isaiah 53)

I agree with the ancient rabbis of whom it was said, “I may remark then, that our Rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah, and we ourselves shall adhere to the same view.” (Rabbi Mosheh El-Sheikh regarding Isaiah 53) Like them, I do not believe that one can be true to the Hebrew Scriptures and leave out the Messiah’s sufferings. I just go one step further and say that it is Jesus who fulfilled this and other prophecies as Israel’s suffering Servant and who shall return as Israel’s Hope and Deliverer.

If I’m challenged again to “put up or shut up,” I’ll be glad to quote pages of proof from the Talmud and other ancient Jewish writings concerning many scriptures. They all read like “Jesus” to me. But since my care for Jews, Israel, and all humanity does not force others to believe like me, why should anyone resent my saying that Jesus came once and will come again? Is it because deep down they know that I’m right?