

# JEW<sup>S</sup> F<sup>OR</sup> JESUS

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## Tisha B'Av: Turning Mourning into Dancing

by David Brickner, Executive Director

If you have ever been to Israel (or looked at photographs for that matter), chances are you have seen the familiar view of Jerusalem from the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. There, glistening in the sun, is the golden Dome of the Rock, and just to the south sits the plainer looking El-Aksa Mosque. Both are recognised as Islamic holy sites. Both occupy a place upon the Temple Mount, Mount Moriah, the only truly holy site in all of Judaism.

It was on Mount Moriah that Solomon built the First Temple some 3000 years ago. It was there that Ezra built the Second Temple 2500 years ago. Last month, thousands of religious Jews mourned the Temple's destruction. According to tradition it was on Tisha B'Av (Hebrew for the ninth day of the month of Av) that both first and second Temples were destroyed.

Why does the memory of these ancient edifices still grip Jewish hearts? Why does their loss rend so many with sorrow? Why does the hope of rebuilding the Temple stir such passion and kindle such hopes and dreams? The answers take us all the way back to the days of Abraham and Isaac. Genesis 22 records "the Akedah", or the binding of Isaac, when the Lord commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son on a mountain in the land of Moriah. With his knife poised in mid air, we can only imagine the utter relief that rushed through Abraham when the Angel of the Lord stopped him. He joyfully sacrificed the ram



that God had provided in place of his son, and declared, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be provided" (Genesis 22:14). Both Jews and Christians recognise the place on which those events took place as the mountain of God, or Yahweh Yireh (Hebrew for "the Lord will provide").

Centuries later, Moses envisioned "the mountain of inheritance" — that same sacred place where Abraham's faith in God was tested and blessed — as the ideal site for the sanctuary of God. There God would dwell in the midst of His people; there He would provide atonement for their sins, forgive them

and make them holy. That atonement was to be secured through the blood of the animal sacrifices offered on the altar. Moses prayed prophetically for such a place:

"You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which You have made for Your own dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established" (Exodus 15:17).

Centuries passed before the answer to that prayer was realised. King David purchased the property on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem and would have commenced building, but God appointed Solomon, David's son, to the task. Even as the Temple was being dedicated, God fulfilled Moses' prophecy:

"And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 8:10,11).

What a powerful moment! There could be no doubt that God had come to dwell with His people; the Temple was now the center of Israel's worship and the anchor of her religious sensibility.

That first Temple stood for nearly 400 years. But the Jewish people began to put their confidence in the Temple itself rather than the One who dwelt within it. It was as though they thought they had God's power harnessed within the confines of a mere building. Worse yet, they had turned to idols. God warned

that judgement was coming, and in 586 B.C. that judgement came in the form of the Babylonian conquerors. The Temple of the Lord in all of its beauty was destroyed.

Words cannot describe Israel's agony. Her insides were ripped out. Her sense of calling and purpose was rooted in that Temple and in the knowledge that God was in her midst. With no Temple, there was no assurance of God's presence or His provision of forgiveness for the nation.

In 538 B.C., Ezra and a host of Israelites returned to Jerusalem in accordance with the decree of King Cyrus of Persia. Ezra oversaw the building of the Second Temple, which took 23 years to complete. But the Second Temple hardly compared to the first. The returned exiles certainly hadn't the wealth of Israel's former kings for its construction. What is more, there seems to have been no Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place—only emptiness, with nothing covering the now famous foundation stone. The very glory of God, so evident in the First Temple, seemed absent as well.

Yet God had promised through the prophet Haggai, "The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former," says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts" (Haggai 2:9).

How would God fulfill that promise? Remember that Jesus not only taught in and around that Temple, but also made an astounding claim: "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' ... But He was speaking of the temple of His body" (John 2:19–21).

By identifying Himself as the Temple, Jesus claimed to embody the very

purpose of that Temple. In one brief, yet profound, statement, He pointed to Himself as the very presence of God that had once dwelled in the Temple. And at the same time, He identified Himself with the Temple sacrifice. What God had not required Abraham to do in sacrificing his son Isaac, God Himself did in sending His son Jesus to die on a cross. And when He rose from the dead after three days as promised, He proved that His sacrifice for sin was acceptable once and for all. This was God's plan all along. Animals could not take the punishment for the sins of the people. Yet those sacrifices pointed to a time when an innocent person, God's own Son, would willingly lay down His life as an atonement for sin. And so Jesus established peace, just as the prophet foretold.

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Jesus not only foretold His own death and resurrection, He also made an ominous prediction concerning the Second Temple.

"Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you,

not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down'" (Matthew 24:1,2).

Titus and his Roman legions fulfilled that prediction as they marched into Jerusalem, destroyed the city and destroyed the Temple. This national tragedy pointed back to the words of Jesus of Nazareth. Thousands of Jews had already come to faith in Him. At the destruction of that Second Temple in A.D. 70, thousands more recognised that He had spoken truly.

Yet the majority of Jewish people did not receive Jesus, and so it remains to this day. As Jewish people mourn the Temple's destruction this month, few realise they are mourning events that were prophesied. Even fewer realise that what could not be accomplished through the Temple was fulfilled by Jesus the Messiah.

Moreover, the Temple is hardly a daily concern for most Jewish people today. Yet the hope of seeing it stand once more in Jerusalem has never been extinguished. Daily synagogue prayers have kept that hope alive. "Be pleased, Lord our God, with Thy people Israel and with their prayer. Restore the worship of Thy most holy sanctuary."<sup>1</sup> This prayer has been on the lips of Jewish people for 2,000 years. May God honour that prayer, especially for many who are mourning this month, by revealing to them the One who is greater than the Temple. May many more Jewish people welcome Jesus the Messiah into their hearts, that He might dwell within, and truly turn mourning to joy. ✨

1. *From the Amidah (Shemoneh Esreh) of the regular daily service.*

\* *Adapted from the book Future Hope by David Brickner available from our local office.*

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**WE EXIST TO MAKE THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS AN UNAVOIDABLE ISSUE TO OUR JEWISH PEOPLE WORLDWIDE**



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# Moishe's Musings

by Moishe Rosen, Jews for Jesus Founder

In times past, we have sometimes offered advice on witnessing by publishing a "What do I say when they say?" column. We've also invited our readers to submit their questions in that form.

As Moishe has mused over one reader's questions, he revised the format slightly in order to give a more meaningful answer. So, instead of "What do I say . . ." we'll look at "What should I understand when my friend says . . ."

### Question:

What should I understand when my atheist friend says he's a Jew?

### Answer:

Understand that, to your Jewish friend, being a Jew is a lot more than accepting a bundle of doctrines that describe belief. In fact, for most Jews, being Jewish has a more ethnic sense: it has to do with belonging to a certain people rather than believing in God.

Rabbis explain that Judaism is a religion of deed rather than a religion of creed: Jewish people are taught that what you do is more important than what you believe.

### Question:

What should I understand when my Gentile friend, who attends a synagogue, says he's a Jew?

### Answer:

This Gentile friend could be under the same misapprehension as you

might have been regarding your Jewish friend's announcement that he's an atheist. Your Gentile friend may think that being a Jew is a matter of declaring a set of beliefs. After all, one becomes a Christian by confessing Christ openly, so they may feel there is a Jewish equivalent by which they can identify. The fact of the matter is that most Jewish people would be suspicious of those who want to — and think that they can — be Jews just by saying so. Of course, people have a right to identify themselves in whatever terms they want. Still, when a person says they're a Jew, you'd better not try to sit on them. They might take offense.

### Question:

What should I understand when my friend, who was raised in a supposedly Christian family, says that she has converted to Judaism (Kabbalah)? Now she's very anti-Christian.

### Answer:

This is sad. You probably want to say what I would want to say: "Wake

up! Join reality!" Or, "No matter what you believe, Jesus is still the promised Messiah in fulfillment of the Old Testament and the New Testament." That's what I want to say to her. But she's already predisposed herself to reject that.

Gentiles regularly convert to Judaism; they usually do it because of marriage. But some go through a search. I think that I might ask a leading question that would cause her to think: "When did you discover Christianity to be untrue?" I think that you'll find that there was a process that began with doubt, and that doubt was fed and strengthened by someone.

Let me say that a Christian should always be kind. A Christian should always treat a person as though their profession is sincere. A Christian should understand that many people think that they have experienced Christ, and then turned away. But so far as I'm concerned, once you've tasted the goodness of God, it would be impossible to turn away and say that something else was true. ✨

HERE'S A CAST OF SPIRITUAL SUPERHEROES YOU PROBABLY WON'T SEE COMING TO A THEATER NEAR YOU. MAYBE YOU'VE MET SOME OF THESE HEROES... MAYBE YOU ARE ONE!

## HUMBLE GUY



SLOWER THAN A SNAIL TO GRAB ATTENTION OR THINK THAT HE'S BETTER THAN THE NEXT GUY.

## THE "MOUNTAIN" MOVER



OVERCOMES GREAT OBSTACLES WITH A GRAIN OF FAITH.

## THE REJOICER



FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET WHEN IT COMES TO PRAISING GOD FOR HIS GOODNESS AND MERCY, REGARDLESS OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

## GOSPEL GIRL



CASTS OFF THE CRUSHING WEIGHT OF SECULAR HUMANISM TO TELL PEOPLE ABOUT JESUS.

# Prayer Prompters

## PLEASE PRAY FOR...

- 
 the continued follow-up with more than 2,000 seekers from the first Behold Your God Israel Campaign; as well as the New York Summer Witnessing Campaign; that God will grant our staff favor to have many fruitful visits with those who indicated further interest
- 
 the planning of our next Behold Your God Israel campaign
- 
 God's provision of more staff and volunteers for the field
- 
 a rekindling of compassion for the lost in all our staff worldwide
- 
 the gospel seeds that were sewn at "Wits" and during the 702/Discovery "Walk the talk" to bear much fruit for the Kingdom of Heaven.

# What the Destruction of the Temple Reveals

In her article titled, *“Four Startling Facts About the Identity of the Messiah”*, author Susan Perlman\* shows that, according to Jewish prophecy, the Messiah has already come.

Following is an excerpt from her article, which appeared in *ISSUES*, Volume 13, number 2:

Fact One: The Messiah’s appearance was locked into a fixed time.

built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. (Daniel 9:25)

(March/April) of 444 B.C. (see chart below). That would mean the Messiah would appear by 33 A.D. History does not record anyone, other than Y’shua (Jesus), who was from that time period and claimed to be the Messiah.

Fact Two: That fixed time was while the Second Temple was still standing.

The “clock” on these 69 “weeks” (units of seven years) began ticking when Artaxerxes issued a decree to Nehemiah to rebuild the Temple and restore the holy city of Jerusalem (see Nehemiah 2:1-8). While other decrees went forth, this was the only one that involved both the Temple and Jerusalem. History records this took place in Nisan

This thought provoking article concludes, “If Daniel is right and the Messiah came before the destruction of the Second Temple, that means our rabbis have been wrong for 2,000 years.” ✨

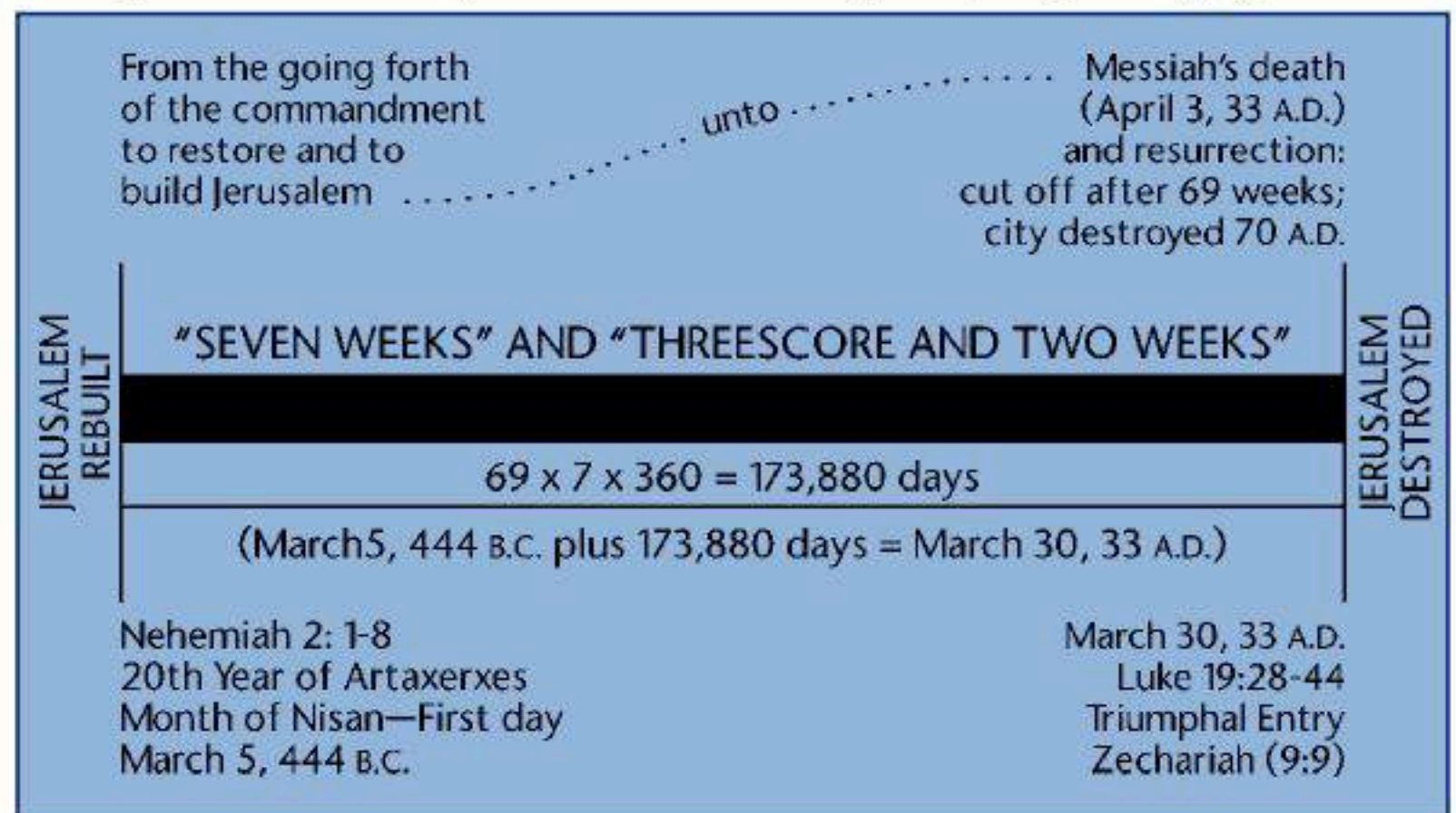
Fact Three: The Messiah had to come from a specific lineage that was only verifiable through the Temple records.

And the fourth startling fact is that the Messiah had to die a violent death. The details of these facts together present some of the strongest evidence that he has in fact already come.

Commenting on the prophet Daniel, she observes,

This prophet who lived during the time of our exile in Babylon received a vision that the Messiah would come 483 years after the command to restore Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple:

... that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be



Adapted from a chart prepared by Dr. Harold Hoehner for the book *Future Hope* by David Brickner, 1999. Note: *Future Hope* is available at R80 including post and packaging from our local office.

If you would like to read the full article, please go to: [www.jewsforjesus.org/messiah-facts](http://www.jewsforjesus.org/messiah-facts)

*ISSUES* is a bi-monthly publication we offer to Jewish people who are willing to hear why we believe that Jesus is the Messiah. While we cannot afford to mail *ISSUES* to our Christian friends, it is available to you via computer. To search our

*ISSUES* archives, go to: [www.jewsforjesus.org/issues](http://www.jewsforjesus.org/issues)

\* Susan Perlman is the first assistant to the executive director of Jews for Jesus; she is editor-in-chief of *ISSUES*, and oversees our multimedia outreach.

IF YOU HAVE A JEWISH FRIEND WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN EXPLORING ARTICLES LIKE THIS

ONE, we will gladly offer him or her a free subscription to *ISSUES*. While we need your name for our own records (and offer the subscription on the basis that “a friend thought you might be interested”), we will not disclose your name to your Jewish friend without your express permission. Simply fill out the form below and return it to: Jews for Jesus, Suite 296, Private Bag X11, CRAIGHALL, 2024



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mail to: **JEW'S FOR JESUS.**

Suite 296, Private Bag X11,

CRAIGHALL, 2024.

# Sowing the Gospel Seeds

Jason handing out broadsides during lunch



## Christians on Campus

We recently had an opportunity to partner with the Student Christian Organisation at WITS University. The students were eager to receive brief training in street evangelism and then we went out on the campus byways to practise.

Four brave students joined me along with another volunteer. We were able to hand out over 1200 broadsides during the one-hour lunch break to many curious students. Most passersby noticed us and were talking about the bright green t-shirts proclaiming "Jesus is Messiah" as well as our tract entitled *The Trouble with Superheroes*.

Quite a few were also open to talking about who their superhero is and wondering whether Jesus may be the greatest superhero of all. Please pray for these gospel seeds to take root and also for continued boldness amongst the Christians on campus.

At the end of July, there was a "Walk the Talk" day in Johannesburg, sponsored by 702 and Discovery. We had a team of 12 volunteers and staff who "walked the talk" with us. Many of the thousands of people who entered saw us.

## Teresa's Report



Jews for Jesus talking the walk while walking the talk

"As I was walking along, I heard someone reading the Hebrew on my t-shirt behind me. The group were discussing what they read and I heard someone ask if we represented Jews for Jesus. I turned around and said yes. There were two Jewish women behind me and one of them said she was also Jewish but was waiting for Messiah to come; she didn't believe that Jesus was the Promised One of Israel.

The younger of the two women me said that she could read the Hebrew on my shirt, which she fully identified with because she is Jewish, but my shirt also said that Jesus is the Messiah. She said that she is waiting for Messiah.

I replied that I believed that Messiah has already come and that His name is Y'shua and that He came for all people. They disagreed with me and made it quite clear that the conversation was over. I moved on with a few parting words pleased that I had been able to introduce them to Messiah Jesus. My prayer is that these words were meaningful to them and that what I said would have made an impression on them."

So many of our Jewish people are blinded to the fulfilled promises of God in the Scripture. Please pray with us for the many gospel seeds that are planted every day through our ministry.