

for the Christian who wants to know more about Jews and evangelism

JEW^S F^{OR} JESUS[®]

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Our mysterious family *by David Brickner, executive director*

A Jews for Jesus staff member recently made some amazing discoveries about her family. She knew she'd been adopted as an infant, and that she had a family she'd never met. She prayerfully awaited the right time, then diligently pursued their identity and the opportunity to meet them.

we can become in this world. This is just as true—sometimes even more so—of our spiritual family, the body of Messiah.

Without pushing an analogy too far, consider that all followers of Jesus have a family in addition to those who have cared for and raised us—and discovering our “other” family should be a transformative experience. But how much do we value that family, and how much do we pursue discovery?

as those are. Our family, the body of Christ, is central to our identity in Him. That identity continues to unfold as we learn to function as His family members. A poignant report from Paris tells of a young man who, without even knowing what the body of Messiah is, intuitively felt that he'd found “a brother” by finding someone who could teach him about Jesus (see page 8).

The details of God's family remained a complete mystery to His chosen people, the Jewish people, for generations. But the apostle Paul tells us “by revelation He [God] made known to me the mystery . . . that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ *(Continued on page 2)*



The middle wall of separation is now gloriously broken down in Christ.

Before long, she met two brothers she never knew she had and learned of her biological mother's tragic death. Soon after, she met her biological father. She's been both blessed and challenged by the implications of this sometimes gut-wrenching process. Many children of adoptive parents find a journey such as hers to be transformative.

Families can be our greatest blessing—and also the source of our greatest pain. Family is amazingly influential in forming our identity, the foundation of who we are and who

undervalued. Perhaps that's because of our overly-developed sense of individualism, especially in Western culture. As believers in Jesus are discipled into the faith, personal redemption tends to be the central focus. Yet the Scripture—and Jesus' entire life and ministry—clearly reveal that God's plan was not just to save individual souls, but also to establish this new and mysterious family.

Something wonderful happens when we gather with others to worship God—something that can't happen in our private devotional times, as crucial

Often the body of Messiah (also known as the church) is

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(Continued from page 1) through the gospel" (Ephesians 3:3,6).

Previously, God's laws had dictated strict separation between Jews and people of the other nations. The old "before Christ" estrangement between Jews and Gentiles was well established, even inscribed for all to see in the Temple in Jerusalem. In fact, if you visit the Istanbul Archeology Museum, you can see a remnant of that inscription on a slab of limestone from the Jerusalem Temple, discovered in 1871. Known as the "Soreg Inscription," it says:

No stranger [Gentile] is to enter within the balustrade round the Temple and enclosure. Whoever is caught will be responsible to himself for his death, which will ensue.

I don't imagine that encouraged an attitude of worship for non-Jews visiting the Temple! Paul refers to the structure on which this warning appeared as the middle wall of separation, a spiritual metaphor to the much more significant barrier now gloriously broken down in Christ. The two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, have become one new family in Him, a family named by Him and for Him (Ephesians 2:14; 3:15).

We have mysteriously and supernaturally gained siblings among people who were previously estranged. For a Jewish person suddenly to discover Gentiles in the family can be quite a surprise. The converse is also true. Many

Christians have confided to me that they may have some Jewish ancestry from generations back that was kept a big family secret. But from the Bible's perspective, Gentile believers have Jewish family members in their lineage going back to the book of Acts!

Sadly, it becomes all too easy to allow estrangement to creep back into the family, and sometimes God's children erect barriers that Jesus died to tear down. Estrangement

Sometimes God's children erect barriers that Jesus died to tear down.

may ensue between spiritual siblings who make a big deal over their differences. They may be cultural differences or perhaps theological differences that are not central to the gospel*—a whole host of barriers can get in the way of celebrating our family heritage.

Such barriers are understandable among those who don't yet know Yeshua (Jesus). For example, many Jewish-Gentile couples in which one or both partners don't know the Lord experience culture clash. This actually becomes an opportunity for ministry, especially for those who are reaching out in hopes of finding spiritual harmony (see pages 6–7). An important principle in cross-cultural communication is listening, and then asking questions to learn what is

actually meant by words that might mean something different to each partner.

It's very sad when those who do know the Lord allow cultural differences (and you might be surprised how many seemingly theological differences have cultural inferences or underpinnings) to cause division in God's family. We should be longing for spiritual harmony with our brothers and sisters. We should be listening to one another and asking questions to be sure we do not misunderstand one another. And we need to fend off the temptation to erect walls that divide us.

Can you think of any barriers that we might have allowed to creep into the structure of our spiritual family? Let no more inscriptions be metaphorically inscribed on the walls of our churches and or/in the recesses of our hearts and minds. Amen?

My dear Jews for Jesus family, we are indeed brothers and sisters and I am grateful for your presence in God's family. Thank you for being loving toward your Jewish brothers and sisters. We really do need each other and we should find ways to reinforce and celebrate the diversity of our family heritage.

As much as I appreciate the love that so many of my brothers and sisters have for me and all my Jewish people, I have to tell you, I get uncomfortable when someone looks at me wistfully *(Continued on page 3)*

We exist to make the messiahship of Jesus an unavoidable issue to our Jewish people worldwide.

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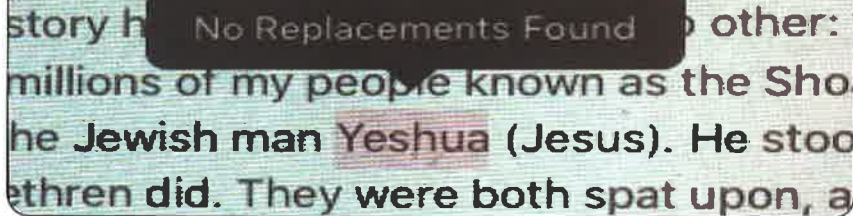
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"Even my iPad knows the truth . . ."

Editor: Those of us who function in today's world of high-tech phones, tablets and laptops have all experienced bouts of frustration and bursts of laughter over "autocorrect" and "spellcheck" functions. I remember how these gadgets often tried to replace my father's name, "Moishe," with "Moist." So thanks to one of our London missionaries, Ziggy Rogoff, for sharing his comment "even my iPad knows the truth" with the accompanying photo:



story h... No Replacements Found... other:
millions of my people known as the Sho...
he Jewish man Yeshua (Jesus). He stood...
ethren did. They were both spat upon, a

(Continued from page 2) and says, "I wish I were Jewish." I want anyone who might feel that way to know that you are just as loved and special to God as the Jewish kids in the family. There is no favoritism with Him, no hierarchy, no preferential standing, because, guess what? All of us are actually adopted! Think about that. None of us can even be a part of this mysterious family unless we are adopted (Ephesians 1:5).

We have a great big beautiful new identity in Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) that is deeper and far more enduring

than anything established through flesh and blood. God chose us all. He adopted us all: Jews and Gentiles together as one in Messiah. That should make us all feel very special indeed.

Find out more about David Brickner, his writings, speaking schedule and possible availability to speak at your church at jewsforjesus.org/david-brickner.

**Theological integrity must be maintained, but hopefully we are very circumspect concerning which theological differences hinder fellowship.*

prayer prompters

Please pray for:



believers throughout the church to cherish our identity in Messiah Jesus, and to value our family members in Him



salvation for Sofia and Lara (Kiev); Jocilyn (Washington, DC), Jack and Mark (Paris)



growth in grace and utter dependence on God for new believers Danny in Israel, and Carl (Melbourne, FL)



increased ministry to Jewish-Gentile couples through the new workbook (see p. 6)



this month's evangelistic outreaches, as well as those that are coming up soon (see insert)

Pray for our summer outreaches



Photo © Jews for Jesus/Rachel Friedlander

This month's banner photo is of Lizzy Cohen, long-time friend and family member of Jews for Jesus. Photo by Rachel Friedlander.

bits from **BRAND**



Igal

Photo ©Jews for Jesus/Vlad Mitnitsky

From **Israel, Igal Vender** reports, "Danny* is eighteen years old, lives in the north of Israel and will soon be going into the army. We've been having regular Skype meetings for months, thanks to a friend of his with whom I've also been studying the Bible, and who has been a believer for almost a year now. Praise God that he is bold in sharing the gospel!

"Recently, I asked Danny what he expects from Yeshua and what he understands about receiving Yeshua into our hearts and living according to His Word. Danny said that he understands that Yeshua is the Messiah who was sent for salvation of the Jewish people and for all the nations. He knows the price Yeshua had to pay for our sins. Danny said he wants Yeshua to change him and teach him to live according to His way. We read together from Romans 5:1-5 and discussed how Yeshua is our way to God, as well as our best friend who will never cheat or give up on us. After this, I asked Danny if he was ready to accept Yeshua into his heart, and Danny finally said, 'Yes.' He prayed with me and received Yeshua as his King and Savior. Praise God! Please pray for Danny's growth

as a believer and follower of Yeshua and His way.

(Igal is a missionary with Christian Witness to Israel, working in partnership with our Jews for Jesus team in Tel Aviv.)

From **Kiev, Alexander Vasserman** reports, "We sometimes feel the greatest joy and the greatest sorrow at the same time, and such was the case with me over

Aaron, an elderly Jewish man who had been raised to be an atheist. When I met with him, his only wish was to pass away. He was so tired, and didn't want to be a burden on his daughter and grandson. He



Alexander

Photo ©Jews for Jesus/Bob Mendelsohn

actually considered different ways to end his life, but I warned him that if he chose to end his own life, his family would suffer far more. God was keeping him on this earth for a reason. 'Reconcile with God and then you will be ready for the transition,' I told him, 'and He will take you at the right time.' I believe he understood.

"Three days later Aaron fell and hurt his elbow. It didn't seem like a terrible injury; no bones were

broken. But serious bruising required him to go to the hospital. I visited him there and we talked about the need to make peace with God. I shared the gospel with him again. This time, he prayed to receive the Lord. Three days later, God took him home. Joy and sorrow . . . but the sorrow will pass and the joy will last forever."

Also from **Kiev, Anatoli Emma** reports, "Someone asked if I would visit their Jewish friend. I took down the information on my phone and, I am extremely sorry to say, forgot about it for a few weeks. (It is standard for us to contact such a person right away.) During a visit with Sofia, a Jewish woman who

does not know the Lord, I asked how she was doing after her father's death. Sofia explained that when her father became ill, they had to sell their two-bedroom apartment to pay for his surgery, and that is why they now live in a one-bedroom apartment. (The surgery prolonged his life a little, long enough for him to receive the gospel, repent and pray with me to receive Christ.)

"I asked Sofia where they lived before the move. She answered

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by actually telling me her previous address, and something inside me squirmed. Remembering the referral I'd received a few weeks before, I took out my phone and looked at the address. It was the exact address Sofia had just told me! I asked if they sold that apartment to a woman named Lara. Surprised, Sofia said yes, and that they were happy to be able to sell the apartment to a Jewish lady.

"I felt terrible that I'd forgotten to contact Lara, but I knew this was a sign from the Lord! As soon as I finished my visit with Sofia, I stopped by Lara's apartment. She was home! I

and even if we fail at times, still God is at work!"

Co-Laborer **Ron Neumann**

McDevitt reports from **Melbourne, Florida**, "It was a great day at the flea market. We witnessed to a lot of people and two were saved. One of them, Carl,* was visiting his son, who is a believer, at the university. He told me that he didn't think other Jews believed in Jesus until he met us. I'm sure his son must have witnessed to Carl, as he was very open and receptive to the gospel. His son had the opportunity to see his dad come to faith and it was fun to see him rejoicing. The Lord is so good; it is always such a blessing to see Him work!"



Photo ©Jews for Jesus/Karl deSouza

Ron

over lunch, I found her more open to talking about God. 'How do you pray? What do you say?' she asked. *What a great springboard to begin a conversation!*

"Jocilyn is at a crossroads, as her divorce is being finalized. As this chapter of her life closes, she is searching for a new purpose and for strength to cope with the many changes. I explained to her that Jesus Himself taught us to pray, and as she took out her notebook and began writing, I was encouraged that she is truly interested. I've asked her to keep an open mind and a willingness to search for the truth about Jesus. Please pray for Jocilyn's salvation."

**not their real names*

Deb Dubin reports from

Washington, DC: "Several years ago, I met Jocilyn* while volunteering at our local Jewish Community Center. During our first get-together after the art reception where we'd met, the conversation turned toward spiritual matters. When I asked her what she believed, she said 'I'm still trying to figure that out! Look at the trees and the flowers . . . they had to come from somewhere!' she said.

"Well, they did!' I said, as I began to share my belief in God. We met several times, but

then, as she was dealing with a separation from her husband of twenty years, she stopped returning calls and emails. Recently, she called to apologize for being 'off the radar' and wanted to get together. As we met



Photo ©Jews for Jesus/Sarah Smith

Anatoli

introduced myself, but she didn't want to open the door—until I told her that we have a mutual friend. As soon as she realized I knew Sofia, she invited me in. We had a good conversation, I prayed for her and she invited me to come visit her again! Once again, I saw that there are no coincidences—



Photo ©Jews for Jesus/Rachel Friedlander

Deb

IT'S FINALLY HERE!

In April, we gave you a sneak peek at an important new resource: a workbook for how to help Jewish-Gentile couples find spiritual harmony. The workbook, titled *He Said then She Said: Helping Jewish-Gentile Couples Find Spiritual Harmony*, has just been released!

The sneak peek told an inspiring story and gave an example of how to become a cross-cultural translator. The book has plenty of stories and practical applications that demonstrate how to help people who are talking past one another, so that they can actually understand what their partners are trying to say.

In this book, Tuvya Zaretsky recounts how adamantly Mark, who had been diagnosed with cancer, announced at their first meeting, "I will never believe like you!" And yet, eventually he did believe. What happened?

After Mark's opening declaration, Tuvya asked if he would be willing to talk about other things, specifically Mark's and Susan's interest in being married. Mark calmed down and welcomed Tuvya into their home. He and Susan explained why they wanted to get married. After hearing their reasons, Tuvya asked if it would be okay to look at the Bible to see what it had to say about marriage. They read together from Genesis, and that opened up a discussion of why it is so difficult for two broken people to forge a life together. That is only possible because of a loving God who forgives each of us.

This was a new thought for Mark, who had been raised in the traditions of Orthodox Judaism in New York City. He welcomed further contact, since the Bible study had encouraged him. He was permitting the conversation to continue around the subject of marriage, but wasn't open to much more at first. He appreciated the fact that we were talking about the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and not something "foreign" to him.

In the months that followed, the three of them continued having Bible studies together. They discussed how people can have a relationship with God and with one another. The subject of brokenness was very much at the forefront of the conversations. Mark had never wrestled with the issue of selfishness. He didn't know about reconciliation with God. These areas were part of Susan's faith. Mark wanted to understand why she had so much concern for his state after death. That had never been part of his practice in Judaism.

As Mark came to trust Tuvya, he opened up more and more about his fear of dying. He was painfully aware that his life had not lived up to his hopes. There'd been regrets about how he had lived some aspects of his life.

Susan was turning back to the Lord through her relationship with Jesus. She was attending church regularly. Mark began to go with her. After eight months or so of meetings with Mark, he was finally ready to allow discussions of sin and the Savior.

As the three of them studied the Gospel of John together, Mark understood more about God's love and His forgiving grace. He read about the atoning death of Jesus. He went through a Christmas season, attending services with Susan. Tuvya says,

It was about that time that I sensed something change in Mark. I knew that he was spiritually open.

Susan called and asked if I could come to their house one weekend. Mark was bedridden by this time. He asked me to come close. He said, "I'm ready." I honestly wasn't sure what he meant. I asked, "Ready for what?" He told me that he was ready to believe in Jesus.



I actually needed a few moments to compose myself and to collect my thoughts. I have prayed with people many times over more than four decades of ministry as they confessed their faith in the Savior. Working with Mark had brought me close to him. I was watching a friend struggling physically and spiritually.

We prayed and it was clear that Mark was grateful to God for all that Jesus now meant to him. His spiritual search had finally come to a conclusion. We called Susan up to the bedroom, and I asked him to tell her what had just happened. With great joy and tears, they were able to thank God together.

I was finally able to perform a wedding ceremony for them. They declared their desire to be one before the Lord and united by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. We had a ceremony in their home with several friends.

In the months that followed, Mark asked me if I would officiate at his funeral. He wanted me to give testimony of his faith to his son, Zachary, and his high school friends. I was to give voice to his faith at his funeral. And that is just what happened the autumn after he received the Lord. Can you see how God was at work in the heart of someone who said, "I will never believe like you do!" Such a declaration is often the signal that a gentle, patient relationship, yielding to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, seeking permission to take one more step in a conversation, can lead to a spiritual change of heart. This is when we see how it works so beautifully—to the glory of God.

Do you wonder how Tuvia brought up the possibility of studying the Bible, and how he conducted those discussions? Are you curious about other topics a Jewish-Gentile couple might be willing to look at from the Bible, when the Jewish partner is not yet open to discussing Jesus? Do you wonder what you *don't* know about Jewish culture that might create obstacles to your ability to witness

to Jewish people? You can work through answers to all those questions and more in *He Said . . . then She Said*.

The book not only gives practical wisdom on helping people of different cultures listen and understand one another, it also gives so much insight about how to share the gospel, not only with Jewish people, but with anyone! Each chapter provides exercises to help you apply what you've read, so that you are not merely downloading information, but interacting with insights in a way that will increase your understanding, your confidence and your desire to share with others. We are using this workbook to help our own staff in their ministry, but it was designed to be helpful to missionaries, ministers and lay people alike.

We are very excited to be able to offer this resource to you, with free shipping if you order online by July 31 at j4j.co/bk406 and use the code JGSHIP at checkout.

The book not only gives practical wisdom on helping people of different cultures listen and understand one another, it also gives so much insight about how to share the gospel.

Whether or not you feel a need to learn more about cross-cultural witnessing, we need you to pray for us as we minister to more and more couples like Susan and Mark. The demographic of Jewish people has changed and continues to change. More than 50% of Jewish people are marrying Gentiles. That means more and more of the Jewish people we meet are partners in Jewish-Gentile relationships. There are challenges—sometimes very painful and confusing challenges—for which many are seeking answers wherever they may be found. By showing them new ways to understand their challenges, we have opportunities to build relationships, win trust, and often this leads to opportunities to tell of the One who is the source of reconciliation and the answer to the truest longing of human hearts.



Photo © Jews for Jesus/Paige Saunders

Tuvia

Much to lose, but more to gain

by Joshua Turnil, Paris branch leader

Only 5% of Jewish people attend synagogue every Sabbath, eat strictly kosher and adhere to a host of other Torah imperatives. Many secular Jewish people don't really understand or relate to "the religious" (as they are often referred to in Israel). But Yeshua (Jesus) certainly understands and can relate to this minority of Jewish people and, bit by bit, we are seeing more religious Jewish people respond to Him.

I've come to understand these passages over the years—this rabbi understood at first glance.

A group of InterVarsity missionaries reached out to some religious Jews at a local medical school. One said to me, "After we explained a passage in the Gospel of John, the Jewish students responded: 'No, you don't really understand what Jesus is trying to say.'" To the stupefaction of the InterVarsity missionaries, after these students explained the significance and pertinence of Jesus' words, they were all the more powerful.

Most of my job is trying to move obstacles to clear a path for Jewish people to meet Jesus one-on-one. But the obstacles are great and the cost to follow Jesus for someone who is part of a religious Jewish community can be daunting.

Recently, Jack,** a religious Jew, felt compelled to visit our office. He said, "I don't know why I came, but I just feel good about it." He promised to return the following week. When he didn't show up I was disappointed, though not surprised.

I decided to go to lunch with my colleague, but the local sandwich place was closed, as was the next place we tried. We wandered farther and farther from the office, but it seemed every place was either closed or too pricey. My colleague was getting really hungry . . . when should I see passing by? Jack.

I called his name, and he turned, shocked to see me.

"You didn't come. I was disappointed."

"Yes. So was I, but my friends and family—especially my wife—were so upset that I went to see you. They put tremendous pressure on me not to go back."

"You see, God wanted us to meet after all!"

Jack agreed, and came to the office the following week. We've begun to read the Bible together. His wife doesn't know, however, and he'd like to keep it that way!

Then there is Mark.** After studying for years in an Orthodox Yeshiva,*** he began reading the New Testament secretly—and eventually made his way to our office. We spoke briefly about Jesus, I gave him our book of Jewish testimonies, and we agreed to stay in touch. His email after we met: "Thank you so much for your gift. Curiously, wonderfully, I feel as if we'd known each other for ages . . . as if we were brothers finding each other. It really touches me. I can't wait to study with you the Scriptures; I have so many questions! I have so much to learn!"

Thank you for praying and supporting our ministry to make interactions like these possible. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will move in the hearts of Jewish people who may have much to lose, but far more to gain, by receiving and trusting Jesus.



Joshua

Photo ©Jews for Jesus/Paige Saunders

Photo ©Jews for Jesus/Margot Van Lindenberg



An Orthodox man stops to chat

I remember the first time I read Matthew 5:17 with a (former) rabbi. He was flabbergasted that Jesus said He had not come to destroy but to fulfill the Law, because he (the rabbi) reasoned that there is only One who can claim to fulfill the Law—the One who wrote the Law—God Himself. Another rabbi, and a prominent one at that, said upon returning a Gospel of Matthew I had lent him: "The story of Yeshua is like the story of Israel. Israel comes out from Egypt, Yeshua comes out from Egypt. Yeshua was in the desert 40 days, Israel was in the desert 40 years. Yeshua is baptized in the river Jordan, Israel crosses the river Jordan and comes into the Promised Land."

*the Hebrew Scriptures **not their real names ***School that provides upper level training in Judaism