



Light of Messiah Ministries

...Bringing Jesus to the Jewish People

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Hopelessness Apart From Messiah

The Jewish High Holidays are over. Jewish people around the world have spent time in the synagogue asking God to forgive their sins. **The Shofar (ram's horn) has been blown, announcing the Jewish Rabbinical New Year, and calling my people to repentance.** Another season, another Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), has come and gone. And so, the New Year for Jewish people has begun. The cycle continues.

I spent the day of Yom Kippur in a local synagogue. It is my time to pray for my people. It is my time to connect with the Jewish community in a special way, on a special day. Yom Kippur, the most holy of days for Jewish people, is a day of fasting and repentance. And yet, if one were to ask a Jewish person if they knew they were written in the "Book of Life", their answer would be, *"Nobody can know if they are going to heaven. We must try to live a good life and hope that God will be merciful."* As we have come to the end of another Jewish year, according to the Rabbis, I would like to help you understand the spiritual situation of my people.

I want to preface what I am about to say with a word of caution. When communicating the spiritual condition of my people I am taking many risks. I am taking the risk that some may misquote me or take something I say out of context. I am taking the risk that some may misunderstand what I say and begin to think negatively about the Jewish community. Some may even think I have a negative attitude towards my people. This could not be further from the truth.

I love my Jewish people. I desire for



them to know the hope that I have in our Messiah Jesus. **My purpose for writing this letter is to help you know my people better.** I will take the risk because it is not only my responsibility to uphold the Jewish community, but it is my responsibility to give you relevant information so that your heart may be extended to them. **My hope is that you will respond by praying more fervently for my people and for our ministry.**

My People Are Spiritually Hopeless

Hear the sad words of a Jewish woman, Amy Klein, from her article entitled "Sin...A Yom Kippur Essay" in an issue of Chai Magazine, a local Jewish periodical. Her words echo the thoughts of countless Jewish people.

"Yom Kippurs pass, awesome in their familiarity...I am repentant at times and questioning at others. 'For the sin we have sinned before you through denial and false promises...' This is the one (confession) I have the most trouble with. My false promises. Yes, I know the three steps of repentance—acknowledgement of the sin, regret for the sin, and a promise not to do the sin

again—I am clear on the first two. But year after year, I find myself in schul (synagogue), making the same promises, having the same regrets, seeing the same failures—with new ones added to boot. And I grow weary. Wary. How could I be here every year saying the same things, knowing I wouldn't manage to keep my word? How meaningless is that? It is like a Hollywood marriage—they say the vows, but everyone knows it will never last...All my life I worried so about my sins, my wrongdoings, my faults, my failures, that the only image I had was of a vengeful, exacting God towering above us mercilessly...I recently returned to services...Maybe my sins—whatever they are, however and whoever is counting—are forgiven. Maybe."

Any hope, without knowing Messiah Jesus, is fleeting at best. Humanity is separated from God because of sin. My people are no different. Striving to please God in our own power gets us nowhere because we are powerless against sin. And so my people strive, humanity strives, hoping but never knowing, praying and always wondering, striving for a relationship with God that only Jesus can give us.

My People Are Spiritually Directionless

Some have called the Jewish people a missionary people without a mission. In the Old Testament my people were called to be the people who carried the truth of the One True God to the rest of the world. **God knew that my people would fail in their mission. Though chosen of God, we dropped the ball.** We failed. But He never does. And so, He promised Messiah would carry the ball for everyone that through faith in

Him we could enter into relationship with the Holy One. Because of our transgression salvation came to the world (Romans 11).

My people have generally, as a community, rejected God's provision in Messiah Jesus. And so my people have lost the "mission" mindset. No longer are we a missionary people for God. Instead we have replaced that God given mission. Spiritual fervor has been replaced by a desire to "make the world a better place in which to live." Today we witness the world being blessed by the humanitarian and philanthropic endeavors of many in the Jewish community. This is a good thing. **However, what God wants from my people is purposed living focused in the direction of the One who loves them so much and died for their sins.**

My People Are Without God

Dennis Prager, best selling Jewish author and radio host, writes in an article entitled "Ignoring God" (Kosher Spirit Magazine)...

(Mr. Prager, an Orthodox Jewish man, does not out of respect write the name God, he instead writes G-d. I have used G-d where he did)

"The people who brought G-d to the world don't have much to do with Him. Perhaps the saddest aspect of modern Jewish life is how unimportant G-d is to most Jews. Reasons for this include Jews identify religion with persecution and secularism with freedom; Jews are the most highly educated ethnic group in America and therefore secularly influenced from kindergarten to graduate school; even religious Jewish life often has little G-d centeredness. Whatever the reason, it is a fact that G-d plays little role in Jewish life...It is a tragedy for Jews individually, since without G-d in one's life, one's sense of purpose and level of happiness are dramatically affected. Human beings are wired for the transcendent, and children, in particular, suffer from the absence of G-d in their lives...That most Jewish parents are unable to say to their child, 'G-d loves you' or 'Look at that gorgeous sunset—isn't



G-d amazing?' is sad beyond words. Many Jewish parents fear that their child may become 'too religious' but never worry that they might become too secular...Yet 'too secular' is exactly what most Jews have become, even many who observe some Jewish laws. The average Bar-Mitzvah is devoid of G-d and sanctity; and the average Jewish education, even in many Jewish day schools, may be Hebrew-centered or even observance-centered, but it is rarely G-d-centered."

It shocks people when I share in churches that, statistically speaking, less than 15 percent of the Jewish community would be considered religious by Orthodox Jewish standards. Seventy two percent of the Jewish community in Atlanta is not affiliated with a synagogue. Most Jewish people in Israel are either atheists or agnostic. Either they do not believe in God or they are not sure there is a God.

It is a sad fact that my people have abandoned their relationship with God who loves them so much. Jesus looked over the city of Jerusalem and wept as He saw how far my people had strayed from their Maker.

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My people need to return to God. Jesus is that way.

My People Are Searching

I have been involved in Jewish ministry for over 30 years. Jewish people are searching like never before. Unfortunately, there is a dark side to the spiritual searching most Jewish people are going through. Jewish people are experimenting in other religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism. Many Jewish people are dabbling in the occult. The reason that Jewish people are looking for spiritual satisfaction outside of mainstream Judaism is the lack of spiritual substance that most Jewish people are getting in the synagogue, from their Rabbis, and within the Jewish community.

But, God has His hand on my people and will continue to draw them to Himself. I have never seen openness to Jesus within the Jewish community the way we are experiencing it today.

We are working hard because my people are searching and in need of understanding the Good News that our Messiah has come and that His Name is Jesus!

The spiritual condition of my people is not the prettiest of pictures. However, the picture must be seen so that the urgency of taking the Gospel back to my people is understood.

THANK YOU!

As tensions rise in the Middle East not only do we need to pray for peace but we need to share our hope.

Thank you for standing with us in our efforts to reach Jewish people with the message of Jesus. Your prayers and financial support help to make our ministry possible.

In His service,

Murray Tilles...for the staff
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