

# TO THE JEW FIRST

IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Dr. Albert Mohler



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# FORWARD

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It is with great joy that Chosen People Ministries has produced this booklet, which contains the magnificent message given by Dr. Albert Mohler to a group of a few thousand listeners at the First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach—now called Family Church.

Dr. Albert Mohler is the President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and is a prominent evangelical theologian and cultural commentator. His mission is to address contemporary issues from a consistent and explicit Christian worldview, as seen in his daily podcast, “The Briefing,” and his website, [albertmohler.com](http://albertmohler.com).

The address was given on Saturday evening at the conclusion of a weekend conference sponsored by Chosen People Ministries, Christ Community Church, and Family Church. Some of the lectures may be found in the volume published by Kregel Press entitled, *To the Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History*. Dr. Mohler’s message had not been included in the book and it is our hope to now disseminate what, in my opinion, is one of the most biblically articulate and passionate sermons on Jewish evangelism I have heard. We are so grateful to Dr. Mohler for delivering this message and allowing us to now share it with you!

Chosen People Ministries is a mission to the Jewish people that was founded by Leopold Cohn, a rabbi from Hungary who came to faith in Jesus the Messiah on the streets of the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1892. He founded Chosen People Ministries in 1894 and his testimony, *To An Ancient People*, is available through Chosen

People Ministries at our online bookstore ([chosenpeople.com/store](http://chosenpeople.com/store)).

The Mission has been known by a variety of names throughout the years, including the American Board of Missions to the Jews, which was our name until the early 1980s. Chosen People Ministries is reaching Jewish people with the gospel in sixteen countries and in a couple dozen cities in North America. Our website ([chosenpeople.com](http://chosenpeople.com)) has a vast amount of information to teach you about your Jewish roots in the faith and to help you reach your Jewish friends and family for the Messiah. In addition, the websites **Isaiah53.com** and **ifoundshalom.com** are evangelistic websites that you can share with your Jewish friends! Be sure to visit these sites to learn more about what it means for a Jewish person to come to faith in Jesus the Messiah.

This booklet is the first in a series of booklets entitled, *What Every Believer in Jesus Should Know About Jewish Evangelism and the Jewish People*. We hope this will be a blessing to you!

*Chosen People Ministries exists to pray for, evangelize, disciple and serve the Jewish people and to help others do the same.*

Please let us know if we can help you in any way as you bring the Good News to the Jewish people. We are also available to speak in churches, Bible study groups, and conferences. Please visit [chosenpeople.com/churchministries](http://chosenpeople.com/churchministries) for more information or to invite a speaker to your church or group.

It is my prayer that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will use this booklet to provide you with a deeper understanding of the issues we face in reaching Jewish people for the Lord.

Yours in the Grace of our Messiah,

Dr. Mitch Glaser  
President, Chosen People Ministries

# PROLOGUE

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The following message was given at a conference organized by Chosen People Ministries and hosted by both Christ Community Church and the First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach, Florida (now called Family Church). Dr. Albert Mohler, the current president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, gave the principal address. Very few modifications have been made to the transcription of Dr. Mohler's sermon. The theme of the conference was taken directly from the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:16, where he wrote:

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."*

The conference focused on bringing the gospel of Jesus the Messiah to the Jewish people, His "kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:3).



# INTRODUCTION

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Dr. Albert Mohler

I want you to know what a great honor it is to be here with you tonight. I greet you as a branch from a wild olive tree, grafted onto the tree of Israel and for that, I am so thankful. It is an honor to be here with Chosen People Ministries, Mitch Glaser, Rich Freeman, and all of those who serve to the glory of God by putting themselves on the line for the cause of the gospel. I was moved tonight to be reminded of the reach and the breadth of Chosen People Ministries' work and to be reminded especially of that work in Israel.

I am telling you what the world is unprepared to see is a person, a son or daughter of Abraham, who preaches the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah. To be very honest, that puts you at ground zero of a very important missiological opportunity, which is yours even more than ours: to preach the gospel. I just want to say, I come with a sense of indebtedness to that history, which looks all the way back to the Book of Genesis, to the promise that Mitch shared of how all the nations of the earth will be blessed through Israel. But also, a very clear sense of indebtedness in the present to all of those who have been faithful in preaching the gospel to the Jewish people, when the Christian Church, as a whole, was not faithful. That is a part of our legacy in our history that is judgment upon us, but also a catalyst to us, lest it ever happen again.

I know you are thankful for the First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach and Christ Fellowship Church. There are many congregations who would believe all the right things about the gospel but would not put themselves on the line. I am very



grateful to be here with Dr. Keith Thomas<sup>1</sup>, who is a dear brother in Christ and a colleague in the cause of the Kingdom. I have to tell you, I shouldn't speak for him, but I will anyway, the two of us felt like two Gentile boys at a Bar Mitzvah for the last couple of hours and it has been a great thing.

This is a remarkable time. God in His sovereignty is using the opportunities that seem so daunting in the present to prove His name powerful. There is something very much missing in so much of evangelical Christianity, and that is the note of triumph. We have been chased into catacombs before, but to God's glory, if that is where we are called to go, we will go again. This sense that evangelical Christianity ought to be cowering in some kind of cultural corner is pernicious, deadly, and unfaithful.

I was waiting for the song, "The Days of Elijah." I knew it just had to be coming as everything was building to it. We need that note of triumph. We don't have a tentative hypothetical gospel that we hope will work out in the end. The verdict is in. It is finished! We shall see, and every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

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<sup>1</sup> Pastor Thomas went to be with Jesus a few years ago. He was a dear friend to many and a wonderful pastor.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF JEWISH EVANGELISM

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I believe in the importance of the issue that has brought us all here tonight, and the urgency of this mission should be a sobering reality to us. I want to suggest to you **that I believe Jewish evangelism is the clearest test case for faithfulness to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in this generation.** It is very much the case now that we are going to find out just what confidence the Church has in the gospel when it comes to preaching the gospel to the Jewish people. Controversy, we know, is inevitable and that is true in the twenty-first century, but brothers and sisters, as we all well know, it was true in the first century and we should not expect it to be less so now. The gospel is explosive. It is flammable and it explodes in the midst of a secular society that wants nothing of it. The Apostle Paul told us already that, to those who are perishing, the gospel is foolishness, a stumbling block and an offense; but, to those who are being saved it is the power of God. It is our responsibility to preach the gospel and judgment will be upon us if we do not preach the gospel. As the Apostle Paul says, “Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel.” (1 Corinthians 9:16)

The theme text for this conference comes, as you well know, from Romans 1:16; “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” “I am not ashamed of the gospel.” What an amazing thing for Paul to say. He doesn’t say, “I am proud of the gospel.” He doesn’t say, “I am downright excited about the gospel.” What does he say? He says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel.” Let me ask you. In your ears tonight,

does that sound weaker or does that sound stronger? I want to suggest to you it is stronger. Paul says there is no shame in the gospel. The only shame is in resistance to the gospel. The only shame comes to the one who hears the gospel and rejects it, and the only shame comes to the one who knows the gospel and does not preach it, and does not teach it, and does not share it. Paul says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation.” It is the only gospel that saves and it is the gospel that always saves those who believe. **It is the power of God unto salvation, but, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**

To whom was Paul writing initially? Of course, to the Church in Rome. You remember the Romans. Paul was writing to a church right there at the epicenter of the one true superpower of its day, Rome—the source of culture, the source of influence, the source of art and philosophy, where Caesar sat and from whence his legions marched. They must have wondered what Paul would say when he finally came to Rome, so Paul decided to dispel any awkwardness in their wondering. He says, “I want you to know when I come to Rome (and I am eager to come to Rome), I am going to preach the gospel.” That must be our boldness and our message as well. This is Paul’s great theme, repeated, elaborated, and confirmed throughout all of his writings during his entire ministry, and written in blood with the martyrdom we know came his way because of his faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no shame in the gospel, it is the power of God. There is certainly no shame in the gospel; preaching it to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles.

# THE FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH EVANGELISM

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I want to speak first of the foundation for Jewish evangelism. We need to know why it is so urgent and non-negotiable that we preach the gospel to the Jews. Here, we confront face to face the great truth claim of the gospel—that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Messiah, the Promised One of Israel. The great dividing line running throughout humanity is not between Jew and Gentile, or between cultures, or between those of one socioeconomic status or another. It is not geopolitical, educational, cultural, but it is theological. **The great dividing line that separates all humanity, one from the other, comes down to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.** Paul understood this. The great truth claim of the gospel is that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. It is an audacious claim. It was established by Jesus Himself. It was authenticated by His words. It was demonstrated in His deeds. It was the foundation of His substitutionary death.

His Messiahship was vindicated by the Father in His resurrection. The claim that Jesus is the Messiah is not only based on a clear understanding of what, in the Old Testament, we were told by the patriarchs and the prophets to expect. It was also what the angels declared in Bethlehem when they spoke to the shepherds saying, “For unto you a Child is born, a Son is given” (Isaiah 9:6), and the words used by the angels on that night, we remember, were that He was identified as “a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

I got involved in an interesting theological dispute with a liberal a few years ago. It was in Washington, D.C., and was at a conference on the theological integrity of Baptist life. A man on the far left

fringe who had long ago left the Southern Baptist Convention said to me, “I don’t want any theology, I don’t want any doctrine, all I want is Jesus Christ.”

And I said, “Well that’s fine, and that’s a doctrine.” Did he think Christ was a name stenciled on some Palestinian mailbox in Galilee? No, that is to say Jesus the Messiah. When you say Jesus Christ, you are not just speaking a first and a last name, as if this is a European construct. That is saying, Jesus the Messiah. Yeshua HaMashiach. Jesus the Messiah; it is all there in the land of Israel. There among His own people, Jesus declared Himself to be the Messiah. He showed Himself to be the Messiah.

Matthew begins his gospel recounting the tracing of the genealogy of Jesus, the Son of David, Son of Abraham. He summarizes the genealogical structure like this, and I quote from Matthew 1:17. “So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.” This is the history Israel has been building to completion from the beginning to the dawn of the Messianic age. Jesus is the promised King of David’s line. Mark begins his gospel by declaring that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The unmistakable, undeniable claim of all the New Testament is that Jesus is the Messiah. This is central to the apostolic proclamation. It is central to the Scriptures, and to deny this is not to deny the part, but to deny the whole. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus demonstrated how the Scriptures in their entirety revealed the very details of His earthly ministry and the meaning of those events in salvation history, demonstrating that He is the Messiah. Israel’s hopes and prayers had been answered and the Messianic Age had come.

I’ll refer you to Acts chapter 2. In this marvelous text, which records for us Peter’s great sermon on the Day of Pentecost, we see this declaration made clear. Beginning at verse 14:

But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them, ‘Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words. For, these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

“And it shall be in the last days, God says, that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even on My bond slaves, both men and women, I will in those days, pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy. I will grant wonders in the sky above and signs in the earth below; blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come. And it shall be that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a Man attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs which God performed through him in your midst, just as you yourselves know, this man delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men, and put him to death; but God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for him to be held in its power.”

Now, what kind of evidence is he going to bring forth here? Who will Peter cite? In verses 25-26, Peter says,

For David says of him: ‘I saw the Lord always in my presence, for He is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken; therefore, my heart was glad and my tongue exalted; moreover my flesh also will live in hope.

In verses 29-33, Peter says,

Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this day. So, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to see one of his own descendants on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that is the Messiah, that He was neither abandoned to Hades nor did His flesh suffer decay. This Jesus, God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

You see the pattern I would suggest to you of witness to the Jewish people. It is a pattern of witness that calls forth the patriarchs and prophets of Israel as authorities. What did Peter say? Peter was saying that it wasn't just that he saw this. It wasn't just that the disciples saw this. It wasn't just that they knew Jesus was the Messiah. King David saw the Christ and he knew that he must suffer and be raised from the dead.

When we look at the boldness of Peter in Acts chapter 2, we are reminded he was speaking to a Jewish audience. He was speaking to all of those who were gathered there on the great feast day of Pentecost. You notice, he did not come and say, "I hope to gain some kind of a hearing that you might give me your ears to hear something you might find interesting, upon which later you may reflect and contemplate." He did not say, "I want to suggest to you a re-envisioning of Judaism." He says, "I declare unto you that Jesus is the Messiah." It is not the repudiation of Judaism; it is the fulfillment of Judaism. Peter had the boldness to declare it to his own people. The foundation of Jewish evangelism is nothing less and nothing other than the gospel: the gospel of the Jewish Messiah who is also King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

He is more than Israel knew to expect, but He is nothing less than Israel was promised. That is a very critical truth. Jesus Christ was more than Israel knew to expect, but never less than Israel was promised.

**Without the gospel, there is no Jewish evangelism, but, brothers and sisters, without Jewish evangelism, there is no gospel; there is no authentic gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.**





# THE PROMISE OF JEWISH EVANGELISM

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First, there is the foundation of Jewish evangelism, and second, the promise of Jewish evangelism. God was glorified in the ingathering of the Jews. Look at Acts 2:37. What was the response?

When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' Peter says to them 'Repent and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to himself.'

In verse 47, we have this wonderful note of triumph. "And the Lord was adding to their number day by day, those who were being saved." The gospel was preached to the Jewish people and what was the response? On the day of Pentecost and on the days thereafter there was response to the gospel!

I want to tell you, I believe there has been a misreading of Christian history that has been foisted upon most evangelical Christians and that is that Jewish evangelism died in the Book of Acts. That is a slander against the Church. **God has always had a remnant and that Remnant has been growing and that Remnant has been faithful, even when that Remnant has been persecuted.** That Remnant exists not to its own glory but to God's own glory as His chosen and purchased possession. The promise of Jewish evangelism is that Jewish people now, as then, respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We know to look to Acts chapter 2. I want to suggest to you that we ought also to look to Acts chapter 13. Beginning in verse 16 and following, we have not just the witness of Peter but we also have the witness of Paul. Paul, of the tribe of Benjamin. Paul as of training, a Pharisee; Paul, not an unlettered Galilean fisherman, but a student and theological son of Gamaliel. What will Paul say? This is the Paul who was struck by a blinding light on the road to Damascus when he went out to persecute the Church. This is the Paul who later said he was of all least worthy to be an apostle as one untimely born but one who nonetheless, by the grace of God, became the great apostle to the Gentiles. He wasn't just the apostle to the Gentiles. Look at what happens in Acts chapter 13, verses 16-22:

Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hands said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: The God of this great people Israel, chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm, He led them out from it. For a period of about forty years, He put up with them in the wilderness. When He destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance, all of which took about four hundred and fifty years. After these things, He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Then when they asked for a king, God gave them Saul, the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin for forty years. After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their King. Concerning him, He also testified and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all of my will.'"

Let me ask you a question. Is Paul speaking primarily here to the Jews or to the God-fearing Gentiles? He is speaking to both. He is speaking to the God-fearing Gentiles who didn't know this history and needed to know it. Otherwise they wouldn't understand the background of the gospel itself. But, he is also speaking to the

Jews because he is placing their history, your history in salvation history, demonstrating how Jesus would then come as the son of David. In verses 23-25,

From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, after John had proclaimed before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, "But what do you suppose that I am? I am not he, but behold One is coming after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie."

Brethren, sons of Abraham's family and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent.

Look at verse 32: "And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers." There is good news in the promise made to the fathers. The promise made to the fathers wasn't nullified. And the promise to the fathers was not in vain. The promise to the fathers was not empty, and the promise to the fathers does not wait! Paul says, "The Messiah has come and Jesus Christ is He. That God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that he raised Jesus as it also is written in the second Psalm, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten you.'" Verse 38 says, "Therefore, let it be known to you, brethren, that through him" that is, through the Christ, "forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you and through Him everyone who believes is free from all things, from which you cannot be freed through the law of Moses." Paul's candor here is so powerful.

And if there was a confrontation in Acts chapter 2, it has intensified greatly by the time we come to Acts chapter 13. Much has happened. There has already been the turn of the Temple authorities and the chief priests against Peter and John and against the disciples. The apostles have already been hauled in and interrogated and they say, "Do what you wish; we are going

to preach the gospel.” Well, you’ll notice, Paul is still preaching the gospel to the Jews.

I want you to notice something else. Look at verse 43. There is a response. “Then when the meeting in the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.”

You see there are some evangelical Christians who misread the Book of Acts. They speak here of the great turn to the Gentiles. **I want you to see with me that the turn to the Gentiles was not a turn against Israel.** The turn to the Gentiles was not a turn against the Jews. That is slander. It was a turn against a Judaism that had rejected the Messiah but not a turn against the Jews. The promise of Jewish evangelism is that now, as then, the Jewish people who have been seeking a messiah and looking for David’s Son and David’s King, find Him in Jesus the Messiah.

**The foundation of Jewish evangelism is the gospel itself to the extent that a failure of Jewish evangelism is a repudiation of the gospel.**

The promise of Jewish evangelism is so great that we know that whenever the gospel is preached, there will be a response. To our eyes it may be great or small, but to God’s eyes, it is the power of God to salvation. The promise of Jewish evangelism is for now, as it was for then, but it is for the “not yet” even more than it is for the now. For we live in the assurance that the promises made to Israel have not been cancelled, and we live in the assurance that there will be an even greater ingathering to the Messiah in the age that is to come. So, we look forward now with great hope and expectancy and confidence to what will happen and our responsibility in the present is to make sure that Israel is not without a gospel witness.

# OPPOSITION TO JEWISH EVANGELISM

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Not only is there a foundation to Jewish evangelism, and not only is there great promise of Jewish evangelism, there is opposition to Jewish evangelism and about this we ought to be honest. We live in a day when it is politically incorrect to say that anyone is rightly destined for hell in the judgment of God but for salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. This is a day when politeness and postmodern relativism have combined in such a way that it just isn't polite, isn't neighborly, isn't tolerant and, we are told of all things, with this perversion of the word love in our modern culture, that it is not loving to tell persons that but for the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, but for the gospel of Jesus Christ who shed His blood as our substitute and was raised by God on the third day. Without the gospel fact that He was truly God and truly man, and the true unity of the incarnation, that persons are going to hell; and that they deserve to go to hell, because it would be the righteous verdict of God; that, these days, is simply out of bounds of polite discourse. It is just not accepted. It is rude. But, brothers and sisters, it is the gospel and it is the only gospel we have and, even more importantly, it is the only gospel that saves.

**The true act of love is sharing the good news of the gospel.**

Now, the Puritans used to say, "You have to do the sin work before you can do the grace work." For all of us there is bad news before there is good news, right? There is bad news; we are sinners. That is not good news. Now it is good news to know you are a sinner if you are one, but the fact that you are one is not in

itself good news. But to one who is a sinner, the only answer is a savior and there is but one Savior and He is Jesus the Christ.

The checkered history of the Christian Church in proclaiming the gospel to the Jews is to be admitted, but it is also to be instructive.

**The Church has failed the gospel when it has failed to witness to the Jews.** True antisemitism is revealed when the Jewish people are considered outside the saving work of Christ, when it is insinuated that the Jewish people are partakers of a different covenant, that they are outside the covenant of grace. The Church has failed the gospel in the past when it has substituted coercion for authentic gospel witness, but more often when it has simply surrendered and failed to give gospel witness.

**In our generation, the Church has failed the Jews by the great sin of omission, the omission of Jewish evangelism.**

Brothers and sisters, the stakes are high. There is Jewish opposition now, and there was Jewish opposition then—the claim of imperialism, intolerance, and aggression—but evangelistic witness is the most consummate act of love we can practice, demonstrate, and share. The requirement of love is also the evidence of love. We love the Jews enough to tell them about Jesus the Christ, about Jesus the Savior, and to declare that salvation has come to the house of David, the sons and daughters of Abraham, the House of Israel. The claim is made that Jews who accept Jesus the Messiah are no longer Jews. The claim that Jesus is the Messiah is a stone of stumbling. The cross is itself an offense. Jesus is rejected as the Consolation of Israel and Christians are said to be imperialists who will not leave Israel alone—but we cannot remain Christians and allow Israel to be without a witness.

Twice now, I have come up against a rabbi, of some sort or another such as Shmuley Boteach on the Larry King Show. His logic simply baffles me. It is not necessary for a Jew to be a good

Jew to believe in God, according to this rabbi, but it is impossible for a Jew to be a good Jew and believe that Jesus is the Messiah. Does no one else see the illogic in that? I have also gone up against Alan Dershowitz, to whom I responded in an editorial column this past week. Alan Dershowitz wrote his book, *The Vanishing American Jew*, and I will suggest that if you follow the logic of that book, Judaism itself will vanish, and quickly. You see, Alan Dershowitz believes in Judaism, but he does not believe in God. He wants to be rather generous in his book, so he says those Jews who need God ought to be able to have Him, but those of us who do not need God should not be too much troubled by those Jews who do need God.

Thus, you see the great tragedy in all of this. This is a great tragedy and misunderstanding among evangelical Christians as it is in secular America. The misunderstanding is that the majority of Jews and secular Americans today are not following biblical Judaism and are rejecting Jesus the Messiah. The reality is that they are not practicing biblical Judaism. I want to say that is why Acts 13 is so important as a methodology for Jewish evangelism. We have to go back and tell the Jews their own story, remind the Jews of their own history, let them hear again the patriarchs, let them hear again the prophets, and then they will have a foundation for understanding.

Alan Dershowitz quotes Woody Allen in his book and it is a haunting quote. Woody Allen is an agnostic Jew who wants to maintain the ethnic identity of Judaism. Yet, in his book, he says his own son, who is also an agnostic Jew, married a liberal and more or less agnostic Roman Catholic. With this in mind, he said, "So you know what that marriage is like...it is one endless debate about what religion to raise their children not to believe in." The plausibility of that is the horror of that. The fact that it was found plausible enough to be humorous both by Woody Allen, then by Alan Dershowitz and now even by us, demonstrates the horror of this. There is a spiritual vacuum of incalculable size. There is a



spiritual hunger. There is an opportunity, brothers and sisters, for the preaching of the gospel and that opportunity is ours by the grace and by the sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Modern American Judaism is embroiled in a massive debate over the meaning of “Jewishness” and the question of Jewish identity. This is a flash point in Israel as well as in our own land. Perhaps a majority of American Jews define Judaism more as a tribal identity than as a theological truth claim, but there is judgment upon the Christian Church here. Soon after World War II, there developed in certain theological circles in the precincts of liberal Protestantism and then in Roman Catholicism, a two-covenant theology. This is a slander against the gospel. It emerged on the liberal side of Christianity because it takes nothing less than the deliberate repudiation of God’s revelation and His inerrant word to reach such a conclusion.

The two-covenant theology was taught and promoted by persons like Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. They said that God had one way with Israel and another way with the Gentiles, with the Church. This is a hermeneutical leap of the imagination that has to ignore the Bible itself and the very substance of apostolic preaching.

In keeping with the liberal accommodation of the gospel to the spirit of the age, liberal Christianity has been too theologically compromised to bear the scandal of the gospel. Instead, it has simply developed a theological fig leaf to cover their theological nakedness. But we need to be honest. We need to say that among evangelical Christians today, this same theology is taking root. This same two-covenant notion is being heard. We must confront it for what it is, which is a repudiation of the gospel and a slander against the Cross of Christ.

Some years ago, one of the best selling books in America was *Constantine’s Sword: The Church and the Jews—A History* by James Carroll, a Roman Catholic. It purported to be a history

of the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church in particular, but the Christian Church in general, and Judaism. What Carroll wanted was to overcome the accusation of antisemitism on the part of the Christian Church (and we all need to admit as Christians there has been antisemitism). It is certainly true that there have been horrible abuses in the name of Jesus Christ against His own people. But the cost of overcoming that accusation in this culture, according to this influential book, is nothing less than the rejection of the claim that Jesus is the Messiah. Carroll says what we need to do is go back and re-envision the gospel. We need to understand that the gospel as we have it, the gospel as is in the four gospels, the gospel as was preached by the apostles, is inherently antisemitic. He calls for a Vatican III to repeal this doctrine. Let me remind you that Vatican II repealed it in a very real way. Vatican II officially says that the Jewish people need not receive Jesus the Messiah to be accepted by the Father. Well, that is what we must overcome.

We now get down to the real issue, and with books like this, James Carroll is helpful to us in ways he does not intend. He helps us to see what really is at stake. To overcome the offense of the gospel, we simply have to give up the gospel. To overcome the scandal of the Cross, all that is required is abandoning the Cross. Conversely, if we do not bear the scandal of the Cross, we must admit that we have abandoned the Cross. The choice is between the authentic gospel as set down by Jesus and preached by the apostles, or a false, synthetic, compromised, and disguised gospel set down on the terms of modern political correctness.

Jesus Himself says, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man comes to the Father but by Me (John 14:6)." Southern Baptist conservatives did not come up with that idea. Chosen People Ministries did not come up with that at the beginning of the last century. The Reformers did not come up with that in the 16th century and the early Church did not come up with that in the first centuries of its life as it tried to come up with something to

preach. That came from the lips of Jesus Himself. And faithfulness to our Lord means that if we preach any other gospel, we must be anathematized. Paul himself says, “If I come preaching any other gospel, or anyone else comes preaching any other gospel, or even an angel comes preaching any other gospel, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8).”

In Acts 4:12, again speaking to a Jewish audience, what does Peter say? He says, “There is no other name whereby men must be saved.” Jesus, in John 14:9 says: “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” In John 10:30, He says, “I and the Father are one.” In John 8:56 He says, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day and he saw it and was glad.”

Speaking of Abraham, He even says, “Before Abraham was, I AM” and “Abraham saw Me, he saw My day and was glad.” This is so beautifully and poetically recounted in Hebrews chapter 11. Speaking retrospectively of Abraham, who obeyed by going out to the place where he was to receive an inheritance and went out not knowing where he was going. You remember what the writer of Hebrews says in verse 13: “All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on this earth.”

**An attack on Jewish evangelism is a dagger thrust at the heart of the gospel.** It is a repudiation of our Lord’s command. It is a slander against Jesus the Christ. It is a failure of nerve and it demonstrates a lack of love.

# THE PRIORITY OF JEWISH EVANGELISM

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There is a foundation for Jewish evangelism. Thanks be to God, there is the promise of Jewish evangelism. We acknowledge there is opposition to Jewish evangelism, but we also need to see that there is the priority of Jewish evangelism. Now, you wouldn't know the priority of Jewish evangelism from watching Christianity. You could never discern it by tracing the history of the Christian Church. That is judgment upon us, but it is clear in Scripture.

**Paul in Romans 1:16 says, “To the Jew first.” That wasn’t just a statement, I believe, of sequential historical progression. I believe it is a statement of priority. It is to be preached first to the Jews.**

We need to recognize there is such a reversal in our modern scandal. In the early Church, of course, the question was not should the gospel be preached to the Jews, but the great question was whether or not the gospel could be preached to the Gentiles. In the early Church there was no elaborate theological explanation for why the gospel should be preached to the Jews; it was understood that this was an essential component of the gospel. The controversial issue was God's saving purpose beyond the Jews. Then came the understanding that Jesus is the Savior of all who believe in His name. And, indeed, through Jesus, Israel has blessed all the peoples of the earth.

The great controversy in the early Church was about how the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles and what that would require. Now today you would think that the gospel was a Gentile

creation and conveniently located in the suburbs of Jerusalem. Paul provides the explanation in Romans 9 through 11. In Romans 11, we are reminded in verse one that God has not rejected His people. Already, when Paul is writing to the Romans, he was writing to the Gentile Christians, primarily, in that Gentile city. He is saying, “You want to know how the gospel came to you? Well let’s get first things first. God has not rejected His people.” It wasn’t that Israel was God’s plan A and you, the Church, are God’s plan B. **God has not rejected His people.**

In verse 5, Paul reminds the Romans that God has always had a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. In verse 11 of that great chapter, he says that “salvation nonetheless has come to the Gentiles,” and in verse 17, he tells us it is because the Gentiles have not been a replacement tree for the tree of Israel; we have been grafted on the tree of Israel. Paul is saying, “Yes it is true and there is horror and judgment in this, there have been branches that have been broken off, but there are branches that have been added to the glory of God.” He described the Gentiles as the branches of a wild olive tree, who are now partakers with them of the rich root of the olive tree of Israel. Thus, you see it is the Gentile Church, it is Gentile Christians, who are grafted on to the tree that was not rejected but is now completed. What then does Paul say to the Gentile Christians in verse 18? “Do not be arrogant to the branches.” Do not be arrogant to the tree. Do not be conceited, but fear. Remember how the apostles addressed the Gentiles who were within their hearing in Acts 2 and in Acts 4 (and Paul in Acts 13:16)? They said: “Men of Israel and those who fear God.” If you fear God, you will never slander Him as saying He has rejected His own people. To the Jew first.

Peter, again in Acts chapter 2, makes this clear. In his second sermon in Acts chapter 3, he expands it further. In speaking to the House of Israel in verse 26 he says, “This was for you first,” speaking to the Jews, “but it wasn’t for you only.” In Acts chapter 2, it is that ingathering that gives me so much hope. There is such

a clear foundation for Jewish evangelism. It is so clear that we understand that failure to witness to the Jews is a repudiation of the gospel, a slander against the gospel. We understand there is the promise of Jewish evangelism. There will be an ingathering. There is now, and always has been, a remnant. God has not rejected His people and we understand the promise of a great ingathering that is to come. We understand there is opposition to Jewish evangelism. We were reminded about it tonight. So, what is it that we ought to do?

Primarily, I believe our purpose should not be to debate. It should not be to confront with a shaken fist, but to bear witness with grace, love, confidence, and assurance. If we are rejected, it is not we who are rejected, it is the Lord Himself; but if we do not bear witness, we have rejected Him and the judgment will be upon us. In Acts chapter 2, the Jews who hear Peter preach on that day say to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Is that not the question? Brethren, what shall we do? Peter responds, “Repent and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The central event Israel remembers is the exodus from Egypt. It was such an incredible, mighty act. It is recited again and again and recounted again and again in the Old Testament Scriptures. It is recounted again, again, again, and again in the Jewish year. It is indelibly inscribed in Jewish memory. But the exodus God accomplished on behalf of His people from Pharaoh’s bondage in Egypt points to another exodus. In the fullness of time, Jesus the Messiah would bring us out from our bondage to sin. The problem is that you cannot understand the first exodus without seeing it completed in the second exodus.

Our opportunity is to preach the gospel, knowing that it sounds strange to modern secular Americans. It sounds offensive to those who simply are offended to be told they are in need of a

savior. Paul knew that almost twenty centuries ago. He knew it when he went to Rome and he knew it wherever he preached. His response to that was, still, in light of all that and more to come, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God to salvation, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

The question is whether you know Jesus as your Savior. And it is not merely whether you have come to a theoretical and theological understanding of the fact that Jesus is the Messiah; the question is, is He *your* Messiah? Do you know Him as Savior and Lord? The promise of the gospel is that all those who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Salvation is by grace through faith. It is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. It begins in the recognition that we, Jew and Gentile alike, are sinners in desperate need of a savior. We come to the point where we understand there is nothing that can save us and there is no one who can save us but Jesus Christ the Lord.

Salvation comes when that heart turns to accept and acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and then bows the knee to Jesus the Lord. Salvation is a gift. It is a gift that is declared objectively upon the authority of God Himself in His revealed Word. But it is also a gift that must be received, and thus, I preach to you what Peter preaches on Pentecost in Jerusalem. I preach to you the gospel that the apostle Paul preaches in Antioch. I preach this gospel because I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Will you pray with me. “Our Father, what a humbling honor it is to preach Your gospel and how inadequate is any human preacher, and yet Lord, you wield us by Your Spirit. Father, I pray that it is with boldness and clarity that I have declared the gospel. But in spite of the limitations of our words, despite the limitations of any preacher, I am confident that here tonight, the Holy Spirit is at work within hearts, sovereignly calling sinners unto a Savior.

Tonight, it may even be a Jewish person in this room, and Father, I am confident that Your grace is sufficient. Father, I pray your Holy Spirit will minister in that heart to bring a sinner unto Yourself, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Father, if there be a Gentile here tonight that does not know You as Savior and does not know You as Lord, Father, may Your Holy Spirit bring that same one to you. Father, tonight, may we have before us the vision of that day when men from every tongue and tribe and people and nation will surround Your throne and will sing praises to Your Name. Father, that day we await when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father, for it is in the strong name of the Messiah, Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.



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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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## THE HISTORY OF CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES

Chosen People Ministries was founded by Rabbi Leopold Cohn in 1894 to bring the gospel of Jesus the Messiah to the Jewish people. In carrying out this purpose, the Mission also seeks to inspire the Church to participate in and support the work of Jewish evangelism, helping fellow believers carry out this vital part of God's divine redemptive plan.

Rabbi Leopold Cohn founded Chosen People Ministries in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York, shortly after he received Jesus as his Messiah. In its earliest days, people affectionately referred to the Mission as the Brownsville Mission to the Jews. Rabbi Cohn established an outreach headquartered in a renovated horse stable, where the Mission offered a variety of services and classes for the growing population of Jewish immigrants. His wife, Rose, was instrumental in organizing some of the outreach programs. The Mission published the first issue of its monthly newsletter, *The Chosen People*, in October 1895.

The proclamation of the gospel to the Jewish people encountered resistance from some, but there were many in the Jewish community who welcomed the message that the Jewish people could receive Messiah's gift of eternal life while maintaining a Jewish identity.

After a few years, the Mission moved its headquarters to Williamsburg (Brooklyn), and then to Manhattan. As ministry expanded beyond a regional focus, the Mission changed its name to American Board of Missions to the Jews to reflect the wider scope of the organization. Missionaries began following God's call to reach the Jewish community throughout North and South America, Europe, and Israel. Eventually, the Mission changed its name to Chosen People Ministries, and, after a number of years in Charlotte, North Carolina, the Mission headquarters returned to its birthplace in New York City.

Chosen People Ministries continually seeks to meet the needs of each generation with both spiritual and material assistance.

The Mission has continued to develop a rich tradition throughout its history. Following Rabbi Cohn's death in 1937, Joseph Hoffman Cohn succeeded his father as Mission leader, serving until his death in 1953. A long line of godly men have served Chosen People Ministries as effective leaders. Harold Pretlove, Dr. Daniel Fuchs, Harold Sevens, and Sam Nadler have each left an indelible mark on the character of the century-old Mission. Now under the leadership of Dr. Mitch Glaser, Chosen People Ministries continues to experience an exciting time of renewal and expansion.

Just as it did over one hundred and twenty years ago, Chosen People Ministries still offers English classes and Bible studies to Jewish people. Additionally, the Mission seeks to utilize new means of communication to reach Jewish people in this new millennium with the eternal message of God's love in Jesus the Messiah through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We have a thriving online Isaiah 53 campaign and we also helped produce online Hebrew-language testimonies of Israelis. These testimonies, which can be viewed at [ifoundshalom.com](http://ifoundshalom.com), have been seen by millions of Jewish and Gentile seekers alike! Praise God, we have seen many Israelis come to the Lord and we are discipling them personally and through our congregations. Chosen People Ministries is eager, with God's help and your prayers and support, to reach the Jewish people of the twenty-first century. Yes, the world and the Jewish community have experienced enormous changes—but humanity's need for reconciliation to God remains the same. Chosen People Ministries continues to follow its calling to proclaim the unchanging message of the gospel to the Lord's chosen people.

## OUR MINISTRY PROGRAMS

Chosen People Ministries exists to pray for, evangelize, disciple, and serve Jewish people everywhere and to help fellow believers do the same. We fulfill this mission through many types of ministry programs.

### *Messianic Centers*

One of our most effective ministry strategies is to engage local Jewish communities through our Messianic Centers. Our centers are facilities that we rent or own, located in key Jewish population centers; they serve as the base of our ministry operations in the surrounding community. In addition to supporting our evangelistic and discipleship efforts, they provide a place for worship, Bible studies, spiritual counseling, and practical help ministries like food distribution and addiction recovery programs. Some of our key Messianic Centers are located in New York, Los Angeles, South Florida, London, Berlin, Moscow, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem.

### *Messianic Congregations*

Messianic Congregations are places of worship where both Jewish and Gentile believers can fellowship together in a Jewish context. In addition, they offer Jewish seekers a familiar cultural setting combined with clear gospel teaching, which communicates our commitment that one can be Jewish and believe in Jesus! We have helped launch dozens of Messianic Congregations around the world, and they continue to be an important and viable part of our ministry.

### *Evangelism and Discipleship*

Evangelism has always been the heartbeat of our ministry, and every year we lead outreach programs and events specifically designed for reaching Jewish people with the gospel. Our

traditional outreach programs include tract distribution, open-air concerts, book tables, and surveys. During our Isaiah 53 Evangelistic Campaign, we have incorporated newer outreach methods, by utilizing media and advertising to offer evangelistic literature to Jewish people. We also host seminars and debates where Jewish seekers can learn about Jesus in a neutral setting. Through each of these outreach events, we meet Jewish people who are seeking spiritual answers. Our missionaries connect with these individuals and build authentic relationships with those who are seeking the truth. As previously mentioned, online evangelism has been a turning point in the 21st century. We are able to reach more Jewish people than ever before through these platforms.

Chosen People Ministries now has two major evangelistic websites: [Isaiah53.com](http://Isaiah53.com) and [ifoundshalom.com](http://ifoundshalom.com). The [Isaiah53.com](http://Isaiah53.com) site focuses on offering the evangelistic book *Isaiah 53 Explained*, which is now in eleven languages! [Ifoundshalom.com](http://ifoundshalom.com) has over fifty video testimonies of Jewish believers in Jesus of every age and walk of life. We also have translated the Isaiah 53 website into Hebrew, Russian, Spanish, French, and Chinese. These languages cover more than 90 percent of the Jewish population in today's world.

We utilize Facebook ads to reach the Facebook community with our Messianic Jewish testimonies, Isaiah 53 Evangelistic Campaign offering a free evangelistic book, as well as our advocacy programs which include Israel-related petitions, prayer declaration campaigns, free booklet offers, and free downloads of other materials that advocate for Israel and oppose antisemitism. Since the start of this online campaign in 2014, the Isaiah 53 Evangelistic Campaign has helped Chosen People Ministries gather the names of over 2,000 Jewish seekers and almost 150,000 Jewish and Gentile believers, many of whom indicated that they ordered the book to give to a Jewish friend.

What an exciting time! Why?—because the Internet allows for some anonymity and enables a Jewish person to move at their

own speed in seeking the Lord, it is almost as if the web was built for Jewish evangelism!

### *Equipping the Local Church*

Another key focus of Chosen People Ministries is to engage and train local churches for Jewish evangelism. Throughout our history, we have observed that one of the key factors in Jewish people coming to know the Lord is the positive influence of Gentile Christians. Therefore, we have made it a priority to develop and offer resources for churches to help believers discover the Jewish roots of the Christian faith and understand the need for Jewish evangelism. We continually develop tools and help equip churches with practical ways for congregants to share Jesus with Jewish people in their communities.

### **CHARLES L. FEINBERG CENTER FOR MESSIANIC JEWISH STUDIES: MASTER OF DIVINITY PROGRAM**

Another way we are fulfilling our mission is by identifying and training new leaders in Jewish ministry through our seminary program: The Charles L. Feinberg Center for Messianic Jewish Studies. Several years ago, we recognized a tremendous need within Jewish missions for more seminary-trained leadership. Through a partnership with Biola University's Talbot School of Theology, located strategically in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, we were able to develop a cutting-edge new Master of Divinity program with an emphasis on Messianic Jewish Studies. After receiving accreditation through the New York Board of Regents and the Association of Theological Schools, we began classes in the summer of 2007.

The Feinberg Center program awards a Master of Divinity degree in Messianic Jewish Studies from Talbot School of Theology. Few Christian M.Div programs offer biblical Hebrew

and Jewish studies courses in addition to courses in the standard M.Div program. The Feinberg Center is located in the heart of Orthodox Jewish Brooklyn, so there are many opportunities for ministry and for students to apply their education! The Charles L. Feinberg program prepares leaders for Jewish ministry as missionaries, Messianic pastors, non-profit leaders, and educators. Three key components of the program make it unique: the coursework, field ministry, and cost.

### *Coursework*

We have designed the curriculum for the Feinberg Center to incorporate both a typical Jewish studies program and an evangelical seminary program, while also catering each specific class towards the current needs of Jewish ministry. Each of our Jewish studies courses such as Rabbinic Literature and Theology, Theology of the Siddur (Jewish prayer book), and Jewish History, contain practical elements on how a better understanding of Jewish tradition can enhance our work in Jewish missions. Additionally, each of the traditional evangelical seminary courses such as Pastoral Studies, Church History, and Apologetics, provide a unique Jewish perspective for the context of Jewish ministry. Our professors are all excellent scholars with a long history of personal experience in Jewish ministry.

### *Field Ministry*

We placed the Feinberg Center in Brooklyn, New York because it is the center of Jewish life in America. With close to two million Jewish people, New York City provides endless possibilities for students to immerse themselves in Jewish culture and ministry while completing their coursework. In fact, each semester we organize various Jewish-focused field ministry programs to help each student put what they have learned in the classroom into practice.

We have designed the different field ministry opportunities to expose our students to several aspects of Jewish ministry over the course of their studies. These aspects include direct evangelism, discipleship, leading Bible studies, Messianic congregation leadership, and non-profit administrative training. We also provide other unique projects each semester, such as our evangelistic Jewish holiday celebrations, Interfaith benevolence projects, debates, and café-style youth outreaches. These numerous field ministry programs take students into several areas of New York City, including Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn.

### *Cost*

We established the Feinberg Center to provide our students an affordable education and give them the opportunity to graduate debt-free, enabling them to enter vocational ministry without the tremendous burden of student loans. To achieve this affordability, we offer a wide range of scholarships and subsidies to offset student costs. Not only is our tuition a quarter of what it would normally cost, we also provide student housing for single students and offer students with families a housing scholarship to make their rent affordable. The generous and regular support from our ministry partners makes an affordable education possible.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Chosen People Ministries would not exist without the faithful support of Christians around the world who stand with Israel and the Jewish people. We are grateful for the prayers and sacrificial gifts that enable us to continue to bring the gospel to the Jewish people all around the globe.

Would you pray about supporting Your Mission to the Jewish People? I am praying that you will give generously and sacrificially as I believe we have a golden moment to join together in reaching Jewish people that may only come once in a lifetime.

There are a number of ways you can give, but the easiest way is to visit our website, **[chosenpeople.com/donate](https://chosenpeople.com/donate)**.

You can also mail your donation to our International Headquarters:  
**Chosen People Ministries . 241 E. 51st St. . New York, NY 10022**

You are always welcome to call us and give your donation with your credit or debit card over the phone. Please call **212-223-2252** Monday through Friday, between 8:30am and 5:00pm, Eastern Time.

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ISRAEL, JEWISH EVANGELISM & THE JEWISH PEOPLE



CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES

[CHOSENPEOPLE.COM](http://CHOSENPEOPLE.COM)