

THE JEWISH RESPONSE OF MISSIONARIES

SPECIAL - ISAIAH 53 - EDITION

An Urgent Message from Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz

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Jews for
Judaism

KEEPING JEWS JEWISH

An Urgent Message from Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz

I have many Christian friends and we agree on a variety of issues and respectfully disagree on others. Some of these friends are equally outraged when aggressive missionaries target the Jewish community for conversion.

Unfortunately, not all evangelicals are so enlightened. Many evangelicals are engaged in a multi-million dollar crusade targeting Jews for conversion. They infiltrate Jewish neighborhoods, distributing DVDs, and they flood the internet and airwaves with propaganda that misquotes our bible, fabricates rabbinic statements, and promotes a hybrid Christianity that masquerades as “kosher pork.”

The most well known deceptive missionary group is Jews for Jesus with 120 staff members and an annual budget of \$20 million.

The second largest missionary group is Chosen People Ministries with centers throughout the world, including Israel. Now, they have turned their attention to the Los Angeles Jewish community. Their goal is to bring as many Jews to Jesus as possible. Starting March 2012 they will spend hundreds-of-thousands of dollars promoting a misinterpretation of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah via billboards, advertising, leaflets, and a 30-minute television program.

This publication was especially created as an educational response to this latest missionary campaign.

Our sages say the loss of a single Jew equals an entire world. Today we have a crisis. According to the 2008 American Religious Identification Survey, “More than 500,000 adults who had a Jewish mother follow another religion, overwhelmingly some form of Christianity.”

Despite much appreciated Christian friendship for Israel, we cannot turn a blind eye to the millions of evangelicals who lead Jews away from their heritage and families, all in the name of Christian love.

Christian friends who demonstrate respect and honesty should be commended. We hope they also appreciate that we draw a line in the sand when our community is deceptively targeted for conversion.

Please join us by using this publication and our newest website to educate and empower yourself, your friends and your family. Your support of Jews for Judaism at this time is also greatly needed because together we can unite the community in a common cause, keeping Jews Jewish.

Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz

Founder, Jews for Judaism, International

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**Jews for
Judaism**

KEEPING JEWS JEWISH

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THE JEWISH RESPONSE TO MISSIONARIES

TARGETING LOS ANGELES

There is a long history of deceptive missionary activity targeting Jews for conversion. More than 250,000 Jews have already fallen victim.

In 2002, the Jewish community and many Christian friends united together to counter a massive Jews for Jesus crusade. Now, the second largest mission to the Jews, Chosen People Ministries, is targeting the Greater Los Angeles Jewish community and their goal is to convert as many Jews as possible.

Starting March 2012 they will spend hundreds-of-thousands of dollars promoting their message via billboards, advertising, leaflets and a 30-minute television program.

Jews for Judaism uncovered this new threat and immediately notified community leaders. In recognition of the urgent situation, many Jewish organizations – including the Los Angeles Jewish Federation, Board of Rabbis and BJE (Builders of Jewish Education) – asked Jews for Judaism to lead a unified community response.

Please join us by using Jews for Judaism's resources and newest website to educate and empower yourself, your friends and your family. ■

Here are action steps you should follow if you or your children encounter missionary activity:



UPDATE US

Keep your eyes and ears open for anything suspicious and report it to Jews for Judaism:
Twitter: @JewsforJudaism
Facebook: facebook.com/jews4judaism;



ONLINE RESOURCES

Take advantage of resources on www.jewsforjudaism.org/53 and share it with friends on Facebook and other social media;



THINK CRITICALLY

Encourage your friends and family to use their critical thinking skills. Don't accept missionary claims blindly; and



SCHEDULE A PROGRAM

Organize a Jews for Judaism program at your synagogue, organization or youth group.

HOW TO COPE WITH A MISSIONARY ENCOUNTER

Missionaries targeting Jewish communities are active on the internet, radio and television, on high school and college campuses, and in our neighborhoods. According to a survey of 2,000 high school and college students there is an 84% chance that students will encounter someone who will attempt to convince them to believe in Christianity. Adults are being targeted by new campaigns as well.

THE FOLLOWING STEPS WILL HELP IF YOU HAVE SUCH AN ENCOUNTER:

STEP 1:

Avoid getting drawn into a conversation you don't want. Ask direct questions like "Are you part of a religious group?" Don't give away personal contact information or agree to be contacted later. Politely and quickly disengage. "No thank you!" is often the best answer.

STEP 2:

Remember just because you don't have an answer doesn't mean the missionary is correct. Missionaries are trained to pull you into a conversation. If they ask "Who do you think Jesus was?" they are hoping you won't have an answer so they can tell you their viewpoint.

STEP 3:

If you feel uncomfortable or confused find someone knowledgeable to speak with. You are more vulnerable when confused so get a second opinion from someone you trust like a rabbi, teacher, friend or parent. Use critical thinking before making a decision.

STEP 4:

Encounters with a good friend, peer, or teacher are less obvious and difficult to avoid. Ask them to respect your desire to not engage. Tell them you are happy in your own faith. If they try to discuss a bible passage invite them to a meeting with your rabbi. ■

THE BEST DEFENSE IS A GOOD OFFENSE

5 TIPS TO HELP YOU TURN THE SITUATION AROUND:

When confronted by someone who wants to change the way you think you will often find yourself on the defensive. Here are 5 useful tips to help you turn the situation around and go on the offensive.

TIP 1: GET INVOLVED IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. Take a class, join a synagogue or youth group, and attend Jewish events. There are many resources in your community to strengthen your connection to your heritage and people.

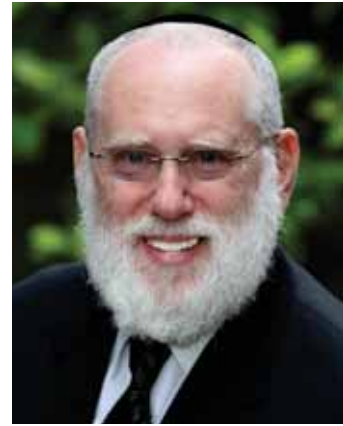
TIP 2: EXPLORE YOUR OWN FAITH AND TRADITIONS. There are abundant opportunities on the internet and in person to discover that Judaism is fun, dynamic and relevant.

TIP 3: ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING. Open communication and questioning are core Jewish values. These are especially important in times of confusion, loneliness and crisis.

TIP 4: BEWARE OF DECEPTIVE AND MANIPULATIVE PRACTICES. Sincerity doesn't prove a message is true. We can be manipulated by misleading information such as mistranslated and out-of-context Bible passages.

TIP 5: ASK FOR HELP FROM FRIENDS, FAMILY AND PROFESSIONALS. Don't be ashamed to turn to others for help. Seeking advice is actually a sign of strength. ■

ISAIAH 53... IN 53 SECONDS



Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz

Chosen People Ministries has focused on Isaiah 53 because it believes this passage is one of its most powerful proof-texts. When read out of context and mistranslated, Isaiah 53 gives the impression of a prophecy describing the suffering and death of the messiah, specifically Jesus dying for our sins.

This Christian interpretation is absolutely incorrect for several good reasons. Isaiah commonly uses familiar metaphors and often speaks of the people of Israel as a single individual referred to as the Servant of God. Moreover, in nine previous passages, Isaiah identifies the Servant to be Israel, as we see in Isaiah 41:8, “Israel is my Servant...,” and Isaiah 43:10, “You are My witnesses says the Lord, and My Servant whom I have chosen....”

Chapters 52-53 describe the reaction of the nations of the world when they witness the future and ultimate redemption of the Jewish people.

Initially, the nations viewed the Jewish people scornfully and considered them to be rejected by God and deserving of suffering and His divine punishment. Isaiah states that in the future, the nations will be shocked and dumbfounded when they witness God’s unexpected and glorious redemption of the Jewish people.

The nations will then contrast their new realization of Israel’s grandeur with their previous beliefs. Ultimately, they will conclude that the Jews were not rejected by God, but in fact,

they suffered from the unjustified and disproportionate persecution inflicted upon them by the nations of the world.

To validate their biased misinterpretation, missionaries intentionally avoid mention of a critical fact. In Isaiah 53:5, they deliberately mistranslate the word “**from**” as “**for**,” and thereby claim that the Servant will suffer for the sins of the Jewish people. In fact, the verse says that the nations of the world will actually admit that Israel – the Servant of God – “was wounded **from** our transgressions, bruised **from** our iniquities.” In the original Hebrew, the letter “מ – mem” which serves as the prefix to the words “transgressions” and “iniquities” means “**from**,” not “**for**.” Therefore, this verse cannot be read as supporting the Christian view that the Servant, namely Jesus, suffers **for** the sins of the world.

In fact, many Christian commentaries including *The New English Bible: Oxford Study Edition*, *The New Interpreters Study Bible* and *The Harper Collins Study Bible* agree with the Jewish interpretation of Isaiah 53. For example, the *Oxford Study Edition* states, “Israel, the servant of God, has suffered as a humiliated individual.” ■

LOS ANGELES JEWISH COMMUNITY MISSIONARY ONLINE AWARENESS WEEK MARCH 26 – 30, 2012

WEEK
SCHEDULE

MARCH 26 COMMUNITY ALERT
MARCH 27 CONFERENCE CALL WITH STUDENT WHO RETURNED
MARCH 28 ONLINE FACEBOOK & TWEET OFF
MARCH 29 VIDEO EMAIL
MARCH 30 SHABBAT CONVERSATION TID BITS

STAY INFORMED & UP-TO-DATE: Online www.jewsforjudaism.org/53 | [Twitter@Jewsforjudaism](https://twitter.com/Jewsforjudaism)

ISAIAH 53, MICAH 7 AND ISAIAH 62

By Rabbi Yisroel Blumenthal



Isaiah 53 (52:13 – 53:12) describes the servant of the Lord who shocks the world with his unexpected exaltation. The prophet presents us with the shocked words of the onlookers as they express their astonishment. From these words we learn that the onlookers were intimately familiar with the servant long before his exaltation. But they knew him as a wretched sufferer. The exaltation of the servant will cause them to reevaluate all of the theories that they had been propounding to explain the suffering of the servant.

Who is this servant?

I propose that in order to discover the identity of the servant we search the Scriptures to see who it is that will be exalted in the Messianic era and who it is that will be shocked and shamed when the Messianic era unfolds.

We do not need to wander very far to discover who it is that will be exalted at the time of the final redemption. Throughout the same book of Isaiah we learn that it is Israel who will be exalted and vindicated on that day and her enemies that will be shamed (Isaiah 26:2; 29:23; 30:26; 34:8; 41:11; 54:17; 60:2,14,15; 62:2).

Micah 7:9-10 and 16 also describe the shame of Israel's enemies when Israel is ultimately vindicated. Micah speaks of Israel's enemy who taunted her with the words: "Where is the Lord your God?" This seems to indicate that the shame that Israel's enemies will experience will be a result of their own rejection of God. Isaiah, on the other hand, seems to focus on the revelation of Israel's righteousness (62:1). According to Isaiah, it is the nations' malicious evaluation of Israel that will cause them to be embarrassed when they see her righteousness shining bright.

So what is it that will bring shame upon Israel's enemies? Is it their rejection of God? Or is it their vindictive attitude towards Israel?

My understanding is that these two are actually one and the same.

Throughout our long exile, we have been accused of many wrongdoings. But there is one "sin" that, in the mind of Christianity, towers above all the others – and that is our rejection of Jesus. According to the Christian Scriptures, it is only a child of the devil and an enemy of truth itself that could find it within themselves to reject the claims of Jesus (John 8:44).

In the eyes of the Christian, all of the suffering that the Jews experienced is the just consequence of this "sin."

When that great day comes, and God alone is exalted on that day (Isaiah 2:11), Christendom will realize that God is God and that Jesus was just another one of His subjects. They will recognize that their devotion to Jesus was – to put it mildly – misplaced. At the same time they will realize that what they had considered to be the greatest "sin" of the Jewish people was actually their greatest virtue. It wasn't a rejection of Jesus as much as it was a fierce loyalty and love for God. They will realize that in a world steeped in idolatry, Israel, with all of her faults, maintained her loyalty to

God – through fire and water, through the Crusades and the Holocaust. This is the righteousness of Israel that

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**...Throughout
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vindicated...**

WHO IS THE NARRATOR IN ISAIAH 53?

By Gerald Sigal

Who is the narrator in Isaiah 53? Who is to be astonished by the ascendancy of he who was formerly despised?

This is clarified in chapter 52:15, in which God, whose particular message concerning the servant began with verse 13, poignantly targets the narrator's identity. That verse declares: "So shall he startle many nations, kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which they had not been told shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they perceive." The words "their" and "they" here refer to "many nations" and "kings." It is neither Isaiah nor Israel, but the "many nations," which are startled and left dumbfounded by what they shall see and come to realize concerning the servant.

This will occur in the day of God's vindication of Israel when the nations, astonished and in terror, will feel ashamed for their oppression of the Jewish people. Of this new perception the prophets declared: "As in the days of your coming out of the land of Egypt will I show to him marvelous things. The nations shall see and be put to shame for all their might; they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf" (Micah 7:15-16) and "Behold all those who were incensed

against you shall be ashamed and confounded; those who quarreled with you shall be as nothing and will perish" (Isaiah 41:11).

At that juncture in time the startled nations personified here as a Gentile spokesman ask the opening Question of Isaiah 53:1: "Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" The prophet himself, as stated above, is merely a channel for transmitting the divinely given statement which foretells the Gentile confession of guilt as they realize the servant's proper role in history. An abrupt change in speakers from God to a Gentile spokesman takes place in verse 1. The prophetic text utilizes the literary device of the Gentile spokesman to narrate this Gentile admission of unjust mistreatment of the servant. Written in poetic style there is use of metaphorical language throughout the entire passage. ■



...the nations, astonished and in terror, will feel ashamed for their oppression of the Jewish people.

ISAIAH 53, MICAH 7 AND ISAIAH 62 (continued)

will blaze brightly to the eyes of the whole world.

Israel's enemies will realize that their vindictive assessment of Israel is rooted in their rejection of Israel's God, and both of these will bring them shame together.

Israel's exaltation is not something separate from the

exaltation of God. When God is exalted, it will be evident that those who had hoped to Him and maintained their loyalty to Him were truly His representatives on this earth, and they will know no shame (Isaiah 49:23). ■

For a more in-depth study visit: www.jewsforjudaism.org/53



PROGRAMS THAT INSPIRE AND ENLIGHTEN

In addition to counseling, an essential component of JEWS FOR JUDAISM's mission is presenting inspiring educational programs. During the past year our five international centers provided 45,000 client services including 26,500 participants in our educational programs, and our websites received more than 1.6 million hits.

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What Do Cults, Telemarketers & Terrorists Have in Common?

Missionary Impossible

The Jewish Response to Missionaries

Kabbalah and The Red String

Cult or Consciousness?

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