



**CELEBRATE
MESSIAH**

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*In Partnership with Chosen
People Global Ministries*

ROMANS 1:16

24 Years of Bringing the Message to the Original Messengers



Lawrence Hirsch
Executive Director of
Celebrate Messiah Australia

Dear friend,

Shalom and Happy New Year! It is hard to believe that Your Mission to the Jewish People is entering its 24th year. Next year we will be celebrating 25 years of God's faithfulness in providing for and using Celebrate Messiah in dedicated service to the Lord in bringing the gospel to the Jewish people.

It has been our passion to see Jewish people come to faith in their Messiah, and we have certainly seen many "original branches" grafted back into their own Olive Tree. What a blessing it is to see these new Jewish believers pick up the baton and start serving the Lord and sharing the Gospel with their fellow Jews. Please pray for Mark who came to the Lord about three years ago and who is doing just that as he works with Celebrate Messiah in our digital evangelism department and who is now preparing himself for further ministry.

My wife Louise and I have just returned from what was possibly the largest gathering of messianic Jews in Rome since the second or third century. We were part of the team who hosted Muchan Rome which is a conference for young messianic believers. This year we

"BRINGING THE MESSAGE TO THE ORIGINAL MESSENGERS"

had 153 young adults from 10 countries around the world. The theme of the conference was of course, the Book of Romans: “Ready to be Right.”

This is the 5th Muchan conference which is sponsored by Chosen People Ministries USA. Muchan is a Hebrew word meaning “ready” and the conference idea was birthed when Louise and I visited the Auschwitz extermination camp in 2007. Muchan conference has been strategic in helping to facilitate the growth and encouragement of young adult believers in the messianic movement.

We believe that many of these young believers were positively impacted with the Gospel this year in Rome and more READY than ever to go take the message of the Messiah to a needy world.

We certainly do value your continued prayer and support for all our missionaries working across Australia, New Zealand, Far East Russia and Israel. And we also praise God for our partner ministry in the USA, Chosen People Ministries, which is this year celebrating its 125th year of faithful service to the Lord.



Founder of Chosen People Ministries, Rabbi Leopold Cohn

A JANUARY TRADITION

Every January almost since the founding of the Mission, we have written articles to explain to our readers why we bring the gospel to the Jewish people. So let us continue to follow this tradition, especially as we begin this 24th year of our ministry. It is an honor to present to you the biblical basis for our ministry and the reasons we bring the gospel to the Jewish people.

EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT

Of course, our ministry is founded upon the Bible. The rationale for our service to the Lord and the Jewish people is unquestionably biblical. The foundational passage upon which our ministry is built is found in the book of Romans where the Apostle Paul teaches the new believers in Rome that the first step in reaching the world with the gospel is to reach the Jewish people.

Paul writes in 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.

Romans 1:16 is written in the present tense. Logically, if the gospel is *still* the power of God “for” salvation and is *still* for “everyone who believes,” then the gospel is *still* “to the Jew first.” The gospel is God’s power unleashed for the Jewish people and for all peoples of the earth, as the Apostle writes, “to everyone who believes.”

The Greek word used by Paul and translated as “first” is *proton* (πρῶτον). This term implies a priority rather than a sequential order of events.



The women’s section for prayer at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem

¹ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, second rev. F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 726; Wilhelm Michaelis, “*proton*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 6:869.

² So C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:90–91; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 28; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 69; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1988), 40; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 62.

³ See Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 23; William R. Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse* (Chicago: Moody, 1938), 22.

THE NEW TESTAMENT PAULINE PATTERN

Perhaps the best way to understand what the Apostle teaches in Romans 1:16 is to see his strategy worked out in his ministry, which is recorded in the Book of Acts. Wherever Paul went in his ministry among the Gentiles, he also tried to preach the gospel to the Jewish people living in that area (Acts 13:13-52; 14:1-5; 18:7-11; 19:8-10).

What the Apostle did in Iconium is a good example of his strategy:

In Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a manner that a large number of people believed, both of Jews and of Greeks. But the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them against the brethren. Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands. But the people of the city were divided; and some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them, they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region; and there they continued to preach the gospel. (Acts 14:1-7)

He would regularly attempt to evangelise the Jewish people of a particular city before he spoke to the Gentiles. The salvation of the Jewish people was an ever-present concern for Paul, and his actions in the Book of Acts reveal the motivation behind his words in Romans 1:16.

A NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT THE TEXT

The word “first” suggests that the Jewish people are to be viewed as a priority in evangelism. The word is also used in Matthew 6:33 where the Lord Jesus reminds us to “seek **first** the kingdom of God...” The Kingdom of God should always be sought as a priority in our lives, even before we seek other things. In a similar way, reaching Jewish people with the gospel must be a priority concern for all who know the Lord Yeshua as their Saviour.

Reaching the Jewish people is a priority based upon God’s gracious choice of His call upon Abram in Genesis 12:1-3. It is also a priority **based upon God’s prophetic plan** for the future! Paul describes the future salvation of the Jewish people and the impact this will have on the rest of the world. I can only imagine that this is what he had in mind when he penned Romans 1:16.

Knowing the future plan of God, it is clear that the Church should somehow continue to prioritise Jewish evangelism, especially as we see the day of His second coming drawing near. Bringing the gospel to the Jewish people first should not be viewed as a *priority of privilege but as a priority founded on the Lord’s strategy to heal a broken world.*



The Damascus Gate on the north side of the Old City of Jerusalem

The Lord chose the Jewish people to reach the Gentiles, but my people failed, so He sent His Son, the greatest Jewish person who ever lived, to complete the task. And now He calls upon Gentiles who believe the gospel to bring the message back to the original messengers!

TO THE JEW FIRST TODAY!

So how do we apply Romans 1:16 and the priority God gives to Jewish evangelism to our present day? He makes this clear in Romans 11, which I believe is a biblical mandate for Gentiles in the Body of Messiah to reach Jewish people for Yeshua.

⁴ For a helpful discussion of this subject, see the essay by Wayne A. Brindle, “‘To The Jew First’: Rhetoric, Strategy, History, or Theology?” *BSac* 159 (2002): 221 – 33.

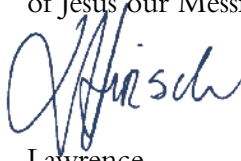
In fact, according to Paul's statement in Romans 11:11, the Gentiles are supposed to cause Jewish people to become jealous of the Jewish Jesus who, by His Spirit, lives within them.

I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

We can prioritise reaching Jewish people because of God's choice of Abraham's seed according to the flesh and still reach the world as commanded by our Messiah prior to His ascension. It begins with you! Through your prayers, giving, and witnessing to your Jewish friends – and by making them jealous – the plan of God will go forth in power!

Thank you for your support and prayers. Together, let's ask the Lord to make this year fruitful in His service. And please pray that the Lord will help us reach our goal of sharing Yeshua with many Jewish people – either directly or by helping Gentile believers become equipped to tell their Jewish friends about Him through our missionaries, publications, congregations, and online ministries.

Blessings in the great name
of Jesus our Messiah,



Lawrence



P.S. For your gift of \$100 or more, and in honor of Israel's 70th anniversary, I would love to send you a copy of *Israel: The Land and the People*, which is filled with seventy spectacular photos that I have taken.



2019 COMMUNITY PASSOVER CELEBRATIONS

6pm Tue 16 April

SUNSHINE COAST

Caloundra RSL

6pm Sat 20 April

MELBOURNE

St Kilda Town Hall

6pm Sat 20 April

SYDNEY

Northridge Vineyard Church, Thornleigh

**For more details including cost and booking please go to our website
www.celebratemessiah.com.au or call the office on 03 9563 5544**



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"BRINGING THE MESSAGE TO THE ORIGINAL MESSENGERS"

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Donations can be deposited directly into the Celebrate Messiah bank account. Account name: Celebrate Messiah Ltd; BSB: 633-000; Account: 161768080 • Please include name and purpose of gift in direct deposit reference.

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