

HOW TO REACH THE JEW FOR CHRIST

by

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN ADDENDUM

During the lifetime of my dear father, Dr. Leopold Cohn, he published in *The Chosen People*, a series of articles containing suggestions to Christian workers who were meeting with Jews in their daily rounds of life. The articles were received with such gratitude on the part of the readers of *The Chosen People* that it has been thought best to collate the series, and they are now presented herewith exactly as they appeared in *The Chosen People*, each article being numbered serially. It is hoped that these scattered thoughts will prove of help to Christian people who may be brought into contact with Jews and who do not know exactly how to approach them with the Gospel message.

- Joseph Hoffman Cohn

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL WORK (I)

It is most remarkable that the Church of Christ which was originally composed exclusively of Jews has become almost entirely non-Jewish. There is between the two a deep gulf which is almost impassable. Most church members have little real knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures and hence have difficulty in reaching the Jews with the Gospel. We have been receiving thousands of inquiries from good Christian people as to how to talk to a Jew about Christ. Even ministers of the Gospel have told us personally and by letter that they do not know how to preach to Jews. We have therefore been led to begin this series of articles which we trust will be a help, especially to those who are acquainted with Jews or have approachable Jews in their neighborhood, and who are willing to deal with them. We have pointed out in our opening letter that it is the high privilege and sacred duty of every follower of Christ to officiate as priest in administering the word of reconciliation “**to the Jew first.**” May these articles be used of the Lord to aid in such witnessing.

FIRST LESSON

The old adage, “Don’t ask the doctor but the patient,” is true to some extent in this respect. The one who has been cured can often give better advice than the physician, and so may we give the suggestion which has proved of value with others and has in a number of cases, resulted in conversions?

Please take one of our tracts, for instance, the one called, "*Behold, a Virgin Shall Conceive and Bear a Son.*" It is printed in Jewish and in English. Read it carefully for yourself. Study it until you know it by heart. There is not much in its contents, so that you can easily apply and use it. After you have done this, hand it to the Jew of your acquaintance. Tell him that you received the booklet from a Jewish friend who wrote it himself and you would like to have his opinion of it.

Knowing that one Jew understands another better than a Gentile, you would like him to read it carefully and give you his view of it. If you think of it, you would really without anyone's suggestion, be interested to hear any Jew's opinion along that line, so that you are on the side of truth in making this proposition.

When the time comes for a second meeting, when he is ready to give you his judgment, you must be prepared for a kindly argument. All you have to do is to hold him to the Word of God from the Old Testament Scriptures which are quoted in that tract. The Jew may have many questions to ask and he does it with the purpose of evading the main question, but you must stick to your text, namely, that the word "*Alma*," which is the Hebrew for "**virgin**," is proven from the Old Testament Scriptures beyond the shadow of a doubt to mean absolutely a virgin.

Then the question must be pressed, "Where in the history of the Jews has there been an occurrence tallying with that prophecy?"

Tell your Jewish friend kindly that for the present you only want to know about that one question. Some other time you may have an occasion to talk with him about other matters but at this time you want to know how he, as a Jew, knowing that the Old Testament Scriptures are true, explains the prophecy that a virgin would have a son.

This will, if he is honest with himself, cause him to stop and think, and if the opportunity develops, you can then tell him of the Son who was born of a Jewish girl by the name of Mary and offer him a New Testament in whatever language he likes best.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL WORK (II)

Before you give your Jewish acquaintance a New Testament, requesting him to read it carefully, there is one rather lengthy explanation needed, regarding the words "Christ" and "Christian."

You must remember that in that diabolic Inquisition of Spanish Christendom, one of the awful tortures inflicted upon the Jew was branding with fiery stencils a cross upon his left arm where the phylacteries had been laid in the performance of his prayers. Another method used was to torture him until he would kneel before a crucifix and kiss it.

These historical facts have been engraved upon the heart and soul of every Jew and they are still written there with indelible ink. There is no object in the world so hateful to the Jewish mind as the cross, and from childhood he has been taught not to look at a banner or a picture of a building on which a cross is displayed.

About a year ago we witnessed a sight which was rather puzzling to the American mind but was very plain and natural to our understanding. A group of Jews bought a Christian church for the purpose of turning it into a synagogue. We passed by and noticed the building in process of preparation for its new use. There was an iron fence on two sides of the building which was wrought between the spikes, in a curious manner, into crosses. To the surprise of many passers-by, a Jewish workman was seen with a large file in his hand, destroying the cross formations by cutting off the top of each one.

Now, owing to the ignorance of the Jewish people with regard to Christ, they do not know the definition of the word "Christ." The Jew upon hearing that word, associates it with the word "cross." Likewise, when he hears the word "Christian," his thoughts run along the same line.

Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that you ask the Jew whether he knows what the word "Christian" means. In nine out of ten cases he will be unable to give a right answer. Give him a definition as follows: The word Christ is taken from the Greek word *Christos*, which is the translation of the Hebrew word "Messiah," hence, the English word Christ means, "the Messiah."

A Christian means one who follows the Messiah.

Tell him also that the New Testament is the life story of the Messiah written by Jewish men who believed in the Messiah. Tell him also that for the first fifteen years there was not a single church for Gentile Christians, as there were only Jewish congregations which believed in their own Messiah. Explain to him the word "church," which is from the Greek *ekklesia*, a gathering out, from among the peoples, of a group of people who believe in the Messiah; that He came to give His life as a sacrifice for the sins of those who accept Him.

Then tell him that in reading the New Testament he will find an exclusively Jewish book. The Messiah concerning whom the book was written was of Jewish descent. The apostles, who were the messengers of the Messiah, were also all Jewish. Therefore, the Jew will feel himself at home when he reads the New Testament. Please do not tell the Jew that he must become a Christian or that he must go to church. Use only Jewish terms: namely, "You must accept the Messiah in His sacrifice for your sins; you must associate with His followers, who love Him and love God and the Word of God which is the Bible," etc.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL WORK (III)

After you have talked with your Jewish friend as suggested in the previous issues of *The Chosen People*, his Jewish mind will assert itself by being stirred up to ask questions. You must then allow him to query as much as he desires, only be prepared to answer aright. The first question he will ask is this: "If it be true that faith in Christ belongs to the Jew and that Christ was of Jewish descent and that you Christians believe in the Jewish Bible, why is it then that you do not observe and keep the commandments of God set forth in the Bible? Why do you not keep the seventh-day Sabbath? Why don't you keep circumcision?" etc., etc.

After you have listened patiently, your reply would be very wise if it were given in the following way:

“We Gentile Christians love the Bible because it is the Word of God and because it testifies of the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. We like to keep all that which God wants us to keep. But if you will turn to Deuteronomy 5:15 you will find that the Sabbath was given to the Jews exclusively in order to remember the Egyptian bondage from which God delivered them, and therefore He commanded them to keep the Sabbath. But we Gentile Christians have ever been under bondage and therefore the commandment of the Sabbath does not apply to us. Likewise in the case of circumcision. You will find in Genesis 17:2-14 that God gave that command to Abraham as a covenant and sign in connection with the promise of the land. This land, Palestine, belongs to you Jews according to God’s promise, but we Gentiles have not been under that covenant and so it does not refer to us.”

But upon this the Jew will ask another question.

“Why is it then that you changed the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday, the first day of the week?” Then enlighten him as follows:

“We never changed the Sabbath, neither did the pope of Rome, as you might think. There is no proof in history or in the New Testament to that effect. But if you will carefully read the New Testament you will find that the early Christians, mostly Jews, took upon themselves to hold a meeting on the first day of the week because the Lord Jesus Christ rose on the third day from the grave and He appeared to them subsequently several times on the first day of the week.

“Therefore the Holy Spirit led them to observe that day on which to commemorate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. But we do not keep it as the Sabbath.

“The Sabbatical laws are very strict. You must not kindle a fire, neither cook, nor bake on that day. Neither you nor your servants can do any work on the Sabbath day. You Jewish people think that by hiring a Gentile to do your work on the Sabbath, you have evaded the sin of breaking God’s law, but practically it is all the same sin because the minute you employ someone to do your work he becomes your servant and the law forbids the servant to do such work.

“We Gentile believers in Christ are under the law of love and grace. For instance, we love God and so we would not provoke Him by serving strange gods or taking His Name in vain, etc. We love our neighbor as ourselves, therefore we cannot covet anything that is our neighbor’s. We cannot bear false witness against our neighbor; neither can we steal anything that belongs to our neighbor, because we love our neighbor as ourselves.

“And so we do not need to be told of the laws, ‘Thou shalt not do this or that,’ because the love of God through the Lord Jesus Christ is in our hearts and therefore we naturally cannot break any of those commandments.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL WORK (IV)

When you are trying to help a Jew to understand something of the truths of the New Testament, he is likely to ask you, "If I become a believer in Christ, how can I identify myself with you Gentile Christians of different habits and customs than ours?"

You may then reply about as follows:

"We are told that in Christ **'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'**"

The following illustration may help to make the situation clear to him.

"The Jewish people received different instructions for their priests (see Leviticus), Levites (Numbers 7:5 and 8:6,26), women (Leviticus 27:1,8) and men (Genesis 17:10; Deuteronomy 16:16), yet they were all one people. The special conditions for each did not divide them into separate groups."

Another illustration may be of value.

"People from many countries compose the citizenship of the United States. When the time comes for the citizens from China to celebrate some former national holiday, they are given liberty to do so. The Irish are allowed to commemorate St. Patrick's Day, or the people from England their special days. But notwithstanding all these separate interests, when the country was involved in the World War, all citizens enrolled under the same flag with one desire to achieve victory. The celebration of different former memorials did not affect unity under the American flag.

"So likewise we Gentile Christians who trust in the sacrificial atonement through the blood of the Messiah who died for our sins and those Jews who have the same faith, are all one, under the flag (so to speak) of the Lord Jesus Christ, your Messiah and Saviour, and the Messiah and Saviour of all the world. The prophecy in Isaiah 11:12, **'And he shall set up an ensign for the nations [Gentiles], and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel [Jews], and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth,'** shows how all will be united under the ensign which is the; Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now the Jew will ask you another question. "If you say that Christians are one with the Jews, why then do the Christians persecute the Jews? Why do they make pogroms on the Jewish people, massacring men, women and children, shedding innocent blood, shouting at the same time the Name of Jesus? If, as you say, Christians are under the law of love, why do they hate us Jews? In every country wherever we go, we always find those Christians, some of whom hate us and persecute us and others who are prejudiced and do not like to be connected with Jews morally or socially."

Then you have an opportunity to make him understand that there is a difference between a Christian in name only and one in reality.

You may remind him that he will find the same condition among his own people. They call themselves Jews, even those who eat pork and publicly desecrate the Sabbath. Look, for instance, at Mr. Gompers, who never was affiliated with his Jewish people, and it is said that he never was particular about Kosher food; furthermore, he married a Gentile woman, yet at his funeral Rabbi Wise eulogized him as a member of the Jewish people. So there are those among the Gentiles, who call themselves Christians, but they have not the spirit of the Messiah who is the Son of God in them. Thus by their deeds and actions only can you know them. The religion of the Messiah, the Son of God, is not confined to Gentiles as a class but it is for every individual out of every nationality or race or people.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL WORK (V)

In our previous articles we have suggested appropriate answers for questions which a Jew might ask you and now it is your turn to ask him to permit you to put one question to him, as follows:

“You Jews had the wonderful privilege of God’s revelation to your people. He has given you the ‘Torah’ (Hebrew word for law). You professedly love that law above all silver and gold, for the Psalmist voices that sentiment by saying, **‘The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver’** (Psalm 119:72). Now, as a matter of fact, almost a fifth part of the Torah is occupied with the law concerning sin and sacrifices. I refer to the book of Leviticus. It says, **“If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the law . . .”** (Leviticus 4:2); then follows a list of the various sacrifices which the sinner has to bring in accordance with God’s instructions given there.

“Sin, according to the Bible, is a most awful thing. It separates and cuts off the soul from God. Read Isaiah 59:2: **‘But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.’** Sin makes such a thorough separation that even the prayer of the sinner cannot reach God. Therefore God in His mercy provided a remedy for the sinner in the sacrifice which made atonement and reunited the sinner to God.”

Then read to him the few verses of Psalm 51.

“David immediately upon being convinced of his sin, poured out his soul to God in prayer begging for mercy and pardon. He besought God in his great distress over sin, **‘Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.’** It shows that David realized the awfulness of sin which defiles and renders us odious in the sight of the Holy God who hates sin. So deep a sense of his sin did David have that he was continually thinking of it with sorrow and shame.

“Now, therefore, how can the Jews as individuals and as a people rest complacently in their sins against God, without any grief or disturbance? They certainly have no remedy to make atonement for their sins because God never gave any other way to insure His pardon than by sacrifice. God expressly told the Jewish people in unmistakable terms, in Leviticus 17:11, **‘For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for the soul.’**

“Then again we read Leviticus 16, where the entire chapter is devoted to the instructions of how to attain forgiveness for sin on the Day of Atonement. Referring to the scapegoat it says: ‘**And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.**’

“Since you Jews have no temple, no high priest and no sacrifice, then the entire load of that terrible sin lies heavily upon your own shoulders and separates between you and your God. Have you ever thought of this terrible condition of your soul? No wonder that God, in expressing the dreadful destruction and havoc that sin causes in our very being, says, ‘**Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them**’ (Deuteronomy 27:26). And God does not wish that man whom He created in His own image shall be banned and cursed, therefore He gave a sure remedy, namely, the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that makes atonement for sin and reconciliation between man and God.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL WORK (VI)

You may remember that in last month’s “**SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL WORK** with Jews” we advised that you ask your Jewish friend how he could complacently rest with the terrible burden of his sins upon his own shoulders, since he had no atonement for them now.

Following these remarks it would be wise to read for him the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, beginning with the thirteenth verse of the preceding chapter. “**Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.**” Call his attention to the fact that this entire chapter describes a suffering Person, but all the suffering is inflicted not because of His own sin but because of the transgression of others, as it says in verse 6: “**And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.**”

Call attention to the fact that this suffering Person will be very great, according to the thirteenth verse just mentioned above. However, it seems that His greatness cannot be commensurably described; therefore the Word of God simply uses three different expressions, “**exalted, extolled and very high,**” which give the thinking man some conception of His unlimited position. In Isaiah 52:15 we are told that this suffering Person shall “sprinkle many nations.”

To know what the word “**sprinkle**” means, let us turn to Numbers 19:19. There God commanded the people to bring a red heifer without spot. The heifer was to be burned and the ashes gathered and kept for water of purification. Thus the nineteenth verse tells us, “**And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day.**” Thus we see that the word “**sprinkling**” refers to the purifying of those who are unclean. Now the question is, who is that suffering Person who is to be so great as to make people clean and, again, who is that Person who suffers for the sins of other people? Not only was He made to suffer for the sins of others, but it says, in the fourth verse, “**Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,**” which means that He willingly took upon Himself the burdens of humanity, as it says in the twelfth verse, “**and he bare the sin of many.**”

Scripturally, we cannot understand how God can put one person's sins upon another for, we read God's Word through the prophet Ezekiel, "**The soul that sinneth, it shall die**" (Ezekiel 18:4), and it is made clear in that chapter that no one is to suffer for the sins of others. Also, humanly speaking, it seems difficult to imagine that any person would really be willing to bear such an awful burden of suffering for others.

In the light of the passage in Ezekiel and these other considerations it is strange that some Jewish commentaries have made this suffering Person mean the Jewish people.

In the first place, God would never punish His chosen people for the sins of the Gentiles, and, in the second place, the Jews themselves are certainly not willing to suffer for the sins of others.

It is the duty of every Jew to understand his Bible, especially this passage in Isaiah 53, and yet it is impossible for them to explain this chapter without the knowledge and the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ. You must go to the New Testament where the words of that great Person referred to in Isaiah are recorded, for there He said that He was going to be the sacrifice for the sins of everyone who will accept His atoning blood. He is the one of whom it says in the last verse of Isaiah 53, "**For he shall bare their iniquities.**"

Now, you compare the Hebrew word for "bare" with the one used in Leviticus 16:22, "**And the goat shall bare upon him all their iniquities**"; you will find that the same word is used in both instances. It is because the goat used on the Day of Atonement for a sacrifice, and it was a foreshadowing of the great Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL WORK (VII)

In last month's suggestions concerning the method of how to explain the Gospel to the Jew, we commenced the study of Isaiah 53, in order to prove that these words portray the Lord Jesus Christ who came to atone for sin. We also showed how the word "**bare**" in the last verse of Isaiah 53, "**And he bare the sin of many,**" is the same as in Leviticus 16:22 where it says, "**And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited.**"

These therefore have one point of identification, namely, that the atonement resulting from the sacrifice of the goat was at once symbolic of and identical with the Lord Jesus Christ who is so fully described in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah.

The same Lord who ordained the blood for atonement, as it says in Leviticus 17:11, "**And I have given it [the blood] to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls,**" also said that the goat shall bear the sins of the people and finally also stated in Isaiah 53:6, "**And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.**"

There is no room for why and wherefore; God said it and that settles it forever.

The only question is whether this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. But upon giving it serious thought we find that this is true, for the following reasons.

The description of the suffering Person who is the center of the chapter, fully tallies with the Lord Jesus Christ. Read the seventh, eighth and ninth verses and then read the narrative of Him being taken for judgment before Pilate and you will find that those verses are an epitome of all that happened during those few hours in the life of Christ. **“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.”** Of whom else can this be spoken? Have the Jews, if it means them as a nation, not opened their mouth and suffered persecution without protest? Surely this is not the case with the Jews as a people, for they have always endeavored to escape, either by protest or in some other way.

They never received persecution like a lamb, not opening the mouth. Or read the ninth verse which is literally as follows: **“And they appointed his grave to be with the wicked, but with the rich upon his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.”**

The leaders of the people, at Christ’s death, wanted to have His body buried in a place where all the criminals were buried, in order to disgrace Him more fully. God put to nought their wicked counsel because Christ **“had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.”** Therefore God would not allow that body to be buried in a disgraceful manner. He arranged that Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, should offer his new tomb.

Now we read in the last verse of that chapter, **“and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”** This is another strong identification with Christ, for one of His last acts on earth was to show that amazing love expressed by His prayer, **“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”**

Thus the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is a full description of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without Him as the suffering Person there is no way of understanding that entire chapter. It is an enigma. It appears to the reader like the earth which was **“without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep,”** but with Christ as its explanation, the Spirit of God is moving upon the words and **“behold, it is all clear and there is wonderful light.”**

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