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# What Exactly **IS** the Gospel?

By **Shani Sorko-Ram Ferguson**

“I want to be clear...” explained the organizer, “Our decision to deny any Israel-based organization’s involvement during this time is not a stance against Israel. Our duty is to spread the Gospel as we were commanded in the New Testament and not take political sides that can distract from our mission—and potentially endanger attendees.”

This wasn’t the first time Maoz has been uninvited to an event. Interestingly enough, we’ve

been uninvited to Christian events because we are Jews—and uninvited by Jewish-sponsored events because they consider us Christians.

While both groups are coming from different perspectives, their reasoning is actually the same: Judaism and Christianity are two completely separate religions that occasionally partner together when their mutual Judeo-Christian values align. They, however, have no desire to mix their beliefs.

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**But, what if they are wrong?** What if the opposite were actually true? What if Christianity and Judaism are inherently intertwined, *inseparable* and only remain at odds because history ripped their stories apart? What if keeping them ignorant about each other is one of the most important missions of God's ancient enemy?

### Same God, Same Book

That both religions worship the same God should be the first place we all stop and think hard what we're missing. Both Jews and Christians worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is the One and Only uncreated Creator of everything that is, ever was and ever will be.

His name is so holy, Jews don't even say or write it. His name is so beautiful, Christians will sing of it for hours. Both believe God is perfect. He is the standard of what is good and right. He does not change. His plans and promises will never fail.

Blame the Jews, if you will, because the great divide between Jews and Christians largely centers around the books Jews wrote about their God.<sup>1</sup> Both Jews and Christians believe the Tanach (Old Testament) is the inerrant Word of God. It's the books written later—the New Testament and Talmud that get both sides arguing with each other.

So, what if, for a moment, in order to cover an important topic, we discuss our beliefs based on the Tanach—the book both religions accept?

I understand some Christians might consider this approach heretical. However, remember, *the early*

*disciples and apostles preached Yeshua to both Jews and Gentiles without the New Testament.* Their conclusion of the legitimacy of Yeshua as the King of the Jews and Savior of the world was based on their knowledge of the Old Testament.

It was all they had. And they spread the Gospel far and wide with it.

The New Testament was essentially born of Jews<sup>1</sup> who were documenting the events of their times *in light of* what the "Old Testament" had foretold. This is why you'll find almost 1,000 references to the OT throughout the NT. The NT was never intended to be a 2.0 version of God's Word, replacing the "outdated Jewish cannon." It was intended to demonstrate the *fulfillment* of what God had promised in the first part of His story.

This is why, when the Holy Spirit flooded the room on the day of Pentecost (a Jewish holiday), Simon Peter stood up in front of the crowd and instinctively quoted the Old Testament. It was the most obvious way to explain that what they had studied for generations was now happening before their eyes.

This is also why the response from the people was so quick and dramatic. Acts 2:37 explains, "When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart..." Quoting the OT worked because Peter knew the "fellow Israelites" he was addressing had heard those scriptures their whole lives. And now suddenly, they understood them.

<sup>1</sup> Since it does not affect the point being addressed, for brevity's sake, this article won't address the small number of books like Job, Luke and Acts that some historians attribute to pre-Jewish or non-Jewish authors.

## Third Milestone

The NT takes four books and ten additional chapters in the fifth book to reach the third major milestone of the Gospel. The first milestone being the death and resurrection of Yeshua, and the second being the infilling of the Holy Spirit. The third is the moment non-Jews are invited into the New Covenant. Just like the first and second milestones, the third milestone sends shockwaves through the Jewish community (Acts 11).

The major paradigm shift in God's plan is supernaturally orchestrated and confirmed by the Holy Spirit because in the scrolls, the message from God had been clear—stay separate from other nations.

**When the Holy Spirit flooded the room on the day of Pentecost, Simon Peter instinctively explained what was happening by quoting the Old Testament.**

Acts 10 begins with an angelic visitation and a vision that would change the world forever. Peter's vision of unclean food is often misunderstood by Christians who think it meant Jews could now eat whatever they wanted. In reality, the vision is clearly interpreted by Peter to mean Jews could now associate with Gentiles whom they previously considered unclean and unworthy of the Gospel.

To be clear, this wasn't bigotry. God had long told the Jewish people not to mix with pagans so

they wouldn't be seduced into worshipping pagan gods. While on earth, when approached by interested Gentiles, Yeshua clearly confirmed, "I came only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24)."<sup>2</sup>

Of course, **the goal was always for all the nations to be restored to God.** Responding to Jewish objections to teaching Gentiles, the Apostle Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth!"<sup>3</sup>

So now that the Gospel could be shared with non-Jews—what exactly was the message?

<sup>2</sup> Yeshua did heal a few in response to their great faith, but he did not offer them the covenant.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 13:47, Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, 51:4, 60:1-3

## What Exactly is a Covenant?

To the children of Israel, covenant was a core part of their identity. They did not live mindless purposeless lives. They existed for a reason. They were called to be a people with whom the presence of the Living God dwelt.

The Creator of the Universe had made covenants with them before. And so, when a New Covenant was prophesied, they understood its importance and looked forward to that day!

Jeremiah 31 is quoted and alluded to half a dozen times in the NT. It is the clearest portion in Scripture to describe who the covenant is *for* and *what* it would include.

*"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord.*

*But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."*

### Key Points of the Covenant

- God will initiate a covenant with Israel and Judah.
- God will instill His ways in the minds and hearts of the people in the covenant.
- God reaffirms the unique relationship between Himself and the people of Israel despite the past.
- All those in the covenant will have a personal relationship with God regardless of social status.
- All this will be made possible because God will forgive and forget the sins of those in this covenant.

## It Comes with The Territory

In Jeremiah, God explains the reason for a "new" covenant is that Israel broke the previous covenant He made with them. **Which is why it is mind-blowing when Christians argue that the New Covenant is for Gentiles because Jews rejected Him—or that Jews don't need it because they already have the Mosaic Covenant!**

Among the promises of forgiveness of sins and knowledge of God (that Christians highlight in their core beliefs) is the clear stated declaration

The intense campaign to delegitimize Zionism is designed to create a rift between Christians and Jews. In reality it creates a rift between Christians and the New Covenant.

that *despite* Israel's unfaithfulness, **restoring Israel as the people of God is an inseparable aspect of the New Covenant.**<sup>4</sup>

The entire text of Jeremiah 31, before and after the promise of a New Covenant, discusses one major theme—how passionately committed God is to the physical restoration of Israel's descendants to Himself and their land. **Meaning the New Covenant promises occur in context of the people of Israel living in the land of Israel.** (Cue the screams against “Zionism”, the movement that embodies the belief that Jews should live in their ancient homeland.)

Jeremiah 31:8 is especially striking because of the strange conspiracy theories about European Jews being imposters. **“See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth.”** The reality is, Jews were scattered everywhere so they will return from everywhere.

Multiple times in the Scriptures God explains that He Himself scattered Israel and He Himself will call them back. Only in this context can you understand the real-life phenomenon of Jews moving to Israel by the millions. There is no other explanation as to why so many people who don't know each other would uproot and move to such a culturally difficult, expensive country that is under constant threat and international criticism.

## Legal Maneuvers

Our universe has laws. Physical laws and spiritual laws.

The Law of sin and death was not made up by God to punish us. It was explained to us by God so we would understand why He would need to go to such great lengths to remedy the issue. His efforts, that would provide a way out of our state of “deserved death”, would become known to us as covenants. Essentially, contracts.

Anyone who has ever entered into a legal contract understands two fundamental principles:

1. **A contract is only relevant between the parties listed. Eliminating one party voids the contract.**
2. **Every clause in the contract matters. Unilaterally voiding a clause voids the contract.**

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And, for the record, changing your name to be the same as a listed party in a contract *does not make you part of the contract. Which is why it is so strange that some Christians believe that by calling themselves ‘spiritual Israel’ they inherit Israel’s covenant and blessings while physical Israel is excluded.*

The Mosaic covenant is full of “If you... then I.” On the other hand, the New Covenant—like the Abrahamic covenant is God-initiated, “I will...”

Most of what He declares in the covenant is untouchable by a hostile force. Who can keep God from forgiving sins? Who can keep

Him from writing His Law on the hearts of man?

**There is only one vulnerability in this covenant.** One soft spot that can be attacked.

**The people group named in the covenant.**

The covenant was **made with** Israel and Judah. The covenant **specifies** the unique role of Israel as a people before the Lord.

If you understand the importance of these two points, then it is easy to see why it has been such a priority for the Kingdom of Darkness to destroy the Jewish people throughout history. **Eliminating Israel voids the contract party and a major clause in one fell swoop.** God understood the importance of assuring the existence of Israel—and subsequently the New Covenant—so He addresses the matter immediately.

In the very next verse, He describes the grandest elements of nature—the sun, moon, stars and sea—and places them on a **parallel plane of importance with Israel.** God then concludes with one of the most solemn declarations recorded in the Bible: *“Only if these decrees vanish from my sight will Israel ever cease being a nation before me.”*<sup>5</sup>

## All or Nothing

**So what exactly is the Gospel?** Declare it far and wide! It is the **good news that God kept His promise** to make a New Covenant with Israel. And it is the **great news that He has opened the doors for the nations** to inherit these same blessings alongside Israel!

<sup>4</sup> Romans 11:1-2,15,24-27    <sup>5</sup> Jeremiah 31:35-37

That covenant is a package deal. His covenant. His terms. Hiding behind loyalty to the Gospel to avoid supporting or caring for Israel in her time of need is an oxymoron.

Early Gentile Christians understood they were inheriting another people's blessing. And so, their overwhelming reaction of gratitude in Romans 15:26-27 made sense:

*“For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord’s people in Jerusalem. **They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them.** For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.”*

**Later, Gentile Christians** became less knowledgeable about the origin of their belief and fell for the most self-defeating lie since the garden of Eden: Israel is evil and should be eliminated. It is self-defeating because for Christians **to reject the nation of Israel as an integral part of their faith is to reject the very covenant that grants them forgiveness of sins.**

The same snake that tricked mankind out of a perfect world is trying to trick the world out of the most perfect gift ever offered.

And while this concept may seem extreme to mainstream Christianity today, it only seems so because few sermons spend time on the “terms and service agreement” section of God’s contract.

Yeshua’s standard in judgment encompassed how the nations handled the least of His brethren—*His people*. God,

There is a direct correlation between the Church’s support of Israel and their familiarity with the Scriptures. Which is why you find older Christians tend to be more pro-Israel than young ones.

doesn’t just call Israel the apple of His eye. He takes personally what is done to them.

In the parable, He lists tangible examples so it is clear that action is required. But the summary simplifies everything. “When you do it to them, you do it to Me. When you don’t do it to them. You don’t do it to Me.” How would you treat Yeshua if He was the one standing in front of you?

Yeshua’s standard in judgment encompassed how the nations treated His brethren—His people. God, doesn’t just call Israel the apple of His eye. He takes personally how they are treated. If you are unsure what this looks like in your daily life, just go with the summary statement: “When you do it to them, you do it to Me.” How would you treat Yeshua if He was the one standing in front of you?

**It’s worth noting that the specifics Yeshua lists in the parable are not political in nature.** Meaning there is no demand that you blindly agree with every political decision its government makes. Ancient Israel had good kings and bad kings. And the decisions made during their reign never defined the people and their calling before the Lord.

It does, however, mean caring for Jewish people you encounter. It does mean **defending them when they are attacked** and **remembering why they are a target**. It means standing up for **what God said about them—who they are to Him and where He said they are to dwell.** ■





April 2026



Shalom from Jerusalem!

This month's **Maoz Israel Report** was written under fire. War mode means **our ears are in a constant search for anything that sounds like the beginning of a siren**. Fighter jets and air defense missiles swish overhead while the Israeli airspace remains closed.

The daily grind during war looks something like: sleep, **siren**, back to sleep... Morning coffee, drive to—(**siren**...lay flat on the side of the road)—work, film a quick war update, staff meeting—**siren**—finish meeting, drive home, dinn—(**siren**)—er and back to bed...

For the past month we've been **sleeping on the floor in a bombshelter** because it's better than **bounding out of bed with 90 seconds** to take cover.

**If you can believe it, the majority of Israelis are happy to do this.** October 7th was a war full of pain in which our highest ambition was to bring home our hostages dead or alive and provide the best PTSD treatment possible.

This war is about a better tomorrow for tens of millions of people. It is about **gutting a poisonous, cancerous evil from the heart of the Middle East and planting seeds for freedom of worship**. The only frustrating aspect is that **most people in the West won't appreciate the apocalypse they will never experience** because this evil is being addressed before it reaches their doorstep.

In the Middle East, they understand. Which is why, in the craziest plot twist you could imagine, **entities historically hostile to the West, are suddenly singing the praises of Trump and Netanyahu.**

**In the days before the fall of the Soviet Union, many ministries prepared.** As soon as the Iron Curtain fell, **they flooded the country with Gospel outreaches** and the fruit of millions of lives committed to Yeshua is evident to this day!

Whether you think going to war was a wise decision or not, it has created space for change. As such, **we are preparing for the moment Iran's rebirth could open the door for the Gospel to be shouted from the rooftops.**

The current multi-country project, (which we were working on before the war broke out), will create an infrastructure to assure humanitarian funds donated to war torn areas will not be hijacked by terrorists. **Billions are stolen every year to fund Islamic activities and you can help put a stop to this. Would you help us reach our \$75,000 goal for this revolutionary initiative?**

There are those who **read about history** and those who get to **watch it happen** in their lifetime.

**Then there are those who get to take part in making it happen.** Maoz has 50 years of experience in **pioneering change.** You can be a part of group three.

Your partners in the Harvest,

*Kobi and Shani Ferguson*

**Kobi & Shani Ferguson**



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