

Toronto Hebrew Academy.

by Gareth Evans

Gareth Evans shares his transformative experience teaching at Toronto Hebrew Academy, where he engaged students in discussions about faith and sacrifice, leading to profound realizations for both him and a rabbi.

Scripture: John 1:29, Romans 3:25, Romans 4:11, Galatians 3:7, Ephesians 2:13, Hebrews 9:22, Hebrews 10:10, Hebrews 13:12, 1 Peter 1:18, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Faith Sharing", "Gods Love"

Description

Gareth Evans shares a powerful testimony of his journey from applying for a teaching position at Toronto Hebrew Academy to impacting the lives of students and the school's rabbi with his faith in Jesus Christ. Despite being a born-again Christian, he is offered the Head of Science Department position and later engages in thought-provoking discussions about Christianity and Judaism, leading to a profound revelation for the rabbi and students. Through his obedience and willingness to share his faith, Gareth experiences a mountain-top encounter with God, demonstrating the transformative power of God's love and sacrifice.

Transcript

In 1977 there were two major teaching posts in Physics advertised in the Ontario newspapers. I had my Type A certificate and was qualified for both, so off went my applications.

I had hopes of obtaining the position at Upper Canada College as there were many from UK like myself, teaching there. The other position however, could not be for me as it was Head of Science Department at Toronto Hebrew Academy, a large orthodox school in the north of the city. It is practice to send applications to all potential schools as, though one may not successful, interviewers often send recommendations on to other schools. So I applied to both schools.

At the Hebrew school there were eight of us being interviewed, the others all Jewish and all with similar qualifications. I was surprised at the interest shown in me by my four interviewers, who questioned me for nearly an hour. When they finished the Headmaster asked, "Do you have any questions for us?"

"No," I replied, "but you do realise I am not a Jew?" Then I added something which was not usually in my nature. "In fact, I am a born-again Christian, and though I do not speak of my faith in the classroom where I am paid to teach Physics, I cannot remain silent if one would ask me why or what I believe." "That's OK," said the Headmaster, "we think it is good for our students to be challenged by other faiths." I journeyed

home rather amazed at the afternoon but fully aware that it would take a miracle for me to obtain that position.

On Friday evening the miracle occurred when I received the telephone call, offering me the position as Head of Science department at Toronto Hebrew Academy. They had already contacted my principal at the French School - the only man in all of Canada who could verify that my credentials were authentic, as he had emigrated from Wales the same time as I had, and had been closely involved with me in the youth work in Bridgend. They were particularly interested in my honorary positions as President of the Satff Association and representative on the Board of Governors. See Leading #3a

I enjoyed my time at that school very much with a dedicated staff and highly motivated students. During the second year, however, the Lord began to do a strange work in my heart, calling me out of the teaching profession into the pulpit ministry of a pastor. After much agonising prayer I decided I would give my notice to the school at the end of the present term. The Lord, however, had one more purpose in bringing me to this position.

Ari was teaching a course on Comparative Religions so he asked if I would join him in a Grade 13 (seniors) class. "We are studying Christianity this week so I thought you would know it better than I" he said. The students showed little interest until I claimed to be a child of Abraham 'by faith' (Romans 4:11). Suddenly I was bombarded with questions lasting through the next ninety minutes. That evening I 'floated' home being thrilled at the opportunity to share my faith with these twenty-five students.

Next morning I came back to earth as I received a note from Rabbi S., the brilliant young rabbi at the school, asking that I come to see him. Approaching his office I was fearing I might lose my position, but remembering what I had said to him at the interview, I was prepared to defend myself. Ari could be seen through the glass door, and I assumed he had been reprimanded already.

The rabbi spoke. "Mr Evans, we have been talking about the class you took yesterday. In the years that I have been here, my major regret is how few of our students ever leave here with a love for Jahweh or His word. This morning I entered my class to find the students all eagerly discussing your teaching yesterday. They were amazed to find a scientist who is also a man of faith, and a Christian who knows much of their Law and prophets. The problem is, however, that their understanding is only in their heads and we do not know how to get it into their hearts. I have been looking at your timetable and am wondering if you would be willing to come again into Ari's class tomorrow morning?"

So it was that at 10am the next day, I stood in front of another seniors' class, this time all eagerly listening as I spoke about my faith and answered their questions. Ari sat behind me while Rabbi S. was in the front row of desks. Then the Rabbi said, "Mr Evans, do you mind if I ask a question?"

"Oh, oh! now was 'show and tell time'. This brilliant man was going to make me look a fool in front of these students." My heart sank! Instead, I was about to see the 'Everest' of my mountain-top experiences with God. He had closed a door in Germany only to open it nine years later (see earlier articles #s3, 4), to bring me to this place and time. Every student was on the front of their seats and I knew that every word spoken in this room was going home to be discussed with mum and dad.

"Mr Evans, I have read your New Testament many times (Wow!) and am proud that Jesus was a Jew. I believe him to be the greatest man who ever walked on this earth. The hypocritical leaders of his day could find no fault in him except that he claimed to be the Son of God. Indeed, your testament declares

that he obeyed the law in all its demands. My question is this: if you claim to be a follower of his, why don't you also become an orthodox Jew and obey the Jewish Law?"

I replied, "Rabbi S., I have read your Old Testament many times and have seen that, for all forms of uncleanness, Jahweh ordained one cleansing remedy. Blood had to be shed, of a bird, a goat, a bullock or a lamb. Indeed, it could be said that 'without the shedding of blood, there is no cleansing for sin'." He agreed, "Both Shamei and Hillel, our Rabbinic schools agree that this is the foundation of all our Law."

I continued, "On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would take a lamb, a spotless, pure male, and having made atonement for himself, would enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle the blood of that lamb upon the mercy seat, trusting that Jahweh would accept that sacrifice as a covering for the sins of the people for another year. All of Israel would wait with bated breath hoping for the priest's return signifying that the sacrifice had been accepted."

"You would have read in the New Testament of one called John the Baptist who called people back to orthodoxy and, as a sign of that, baptising them in the Jordan. One day, he saw Jesus coming and declared to all the people, 'Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' As you have said, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, who fulfilled all the demands of the Law, shedding his blood, the perfect lamb, not to cover our sin for one year but to cover them for all time. When he offered up his blood, he fulfilled the Law in all its demands and types."

I added, "One day, this little Gentile boy, kneeling by his bed in Wales, looked as it were to a hill in Jerusalem and, seeing a sacrificed lamb there, cried to your God Jahweh asking if He would accept that Jewish sacrifice on my behalf also. That is how I became a Christian and how I became a child of Abraham, the father of those justified by faith."

The rabbi bowed his head and I heard his quiet voice. "So that's what it means, that's what it means." Then lifting his face so that I saw the tears in his eyes, "I see it now, it see it now."

I do not know why God gave me that wonderful privilege, nor what his plans are for Rabbi S. and the students of that school, but I do know that He had led me a wonderful journey to that mountain top experience with His precious people.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gareth-evans/toronto-hebrew-academy/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net