

Will the Real Messiah Please Rise?

by Michael L. Brown

Michael L. Brown explores the historical and contemporary claims of various messianic figures, contrasting them with the biblical portrayal of Jesus as the true Messiah.

Duration: 1:23:50

Scripture: Isaiah 42:10, Isaiah 49:6, Isaiah 52:13-15, Daniel 9:24, Haggai 2:9, Malachi 3:1, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Messiah Prophecy", "Israel Restoration"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the prophecies about the Gentiles and the Messiah. He challenges the audience to examine their lives and see if they are living in accordance with the reality of who the Messiah is. The speaker highlights that seeking God requires earnest and honest effort, and that the Messiah is the ideal Israel who will fulfill what Israel was created to do. Despite the rejection and ignorance of many Jewish people towards Jesus, the speaker imagines the Messiah looking out at the lost sheep of Israel and feeling a sense of waste, but ultimately trusting in God's plan to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel.

Transcript

And according to this book, the first great false messiah in Judaism was Jesus. That was the view of this particular author. And then through the rest of the book, he lists others that came and claimed to be the messiah.

In his mind, they were not the messiah. They were not the deliverer that the people of Israel were waiting for. About a hundred years after Jesus, there was a Jewish general whose name was Bar Koziba, and then his name was changed to Bar Kochba, which means in Aramaic, son of the star.

There was a prophecy in the book of Numbers that a star would rise up out of Jacob, and this was taken to be a prophecy of the messiah. And this man, this great Jewish general, claimed to be the messiah. Now, he didn't claim to be the messiah because of his spiritual credentials.

It wasn't because he stood out as a leader of the people in bringing them into the knowledge of God. Rather, he was a great general, and the major battle that they had in those days was with Rome. Beginning in 132, from 132 to 135, Bar Kochba led the second Jewish revolt, revolt against Rome.

He proclaimed Israel's independence. They began counting years based on his time in leadership, and he was ruthless. He was a warrior.

He wanted those, according to tradition, he wanted those that joined him to chop off the end of their little finger as a sign of solidarity with him. Those that did not join him and fight on his side were ruthlessly butchered. And the leading rabbi of the day, Rabbi Akiva, hailed him as king messiah.

Other rabbis rejected it, but he was hailed as king messiah. And ultimately, he and hundreds of thousands of Jews were put to death in the revolt. And of course, it was clear to all that Bar Kochba, in fact, was not messiah.

Well, centuries later, the 17th century to be exact, in Smyrna, there was a Jewish man named Shabbatai Tzvi who was born. Shabbatai Tzvi was a little bit different than Bar Kochba. He was not a general.

He was not a military leader. Rather, he was a mystic. Later scholars have claimed, in fact, that he was a manic depressive.

If you want to read about Shabbatai Tzvi, the great study of him is by Gershom Scholem, almost a thousand pages on his life. Well, Shabbatai Tzvi began to do some odd things. He began to break certain laws and traditions, was married, didn't consummate his marriage, and then separated from that wife.

Anyway, he began to get a following, it seemed, because he was different. He was a handsome man. He claimed to have certain mystical revelations.

Most of the populace rejected him. And ultimately, he began to get a prophetic following. A man named Nathan of Gaza claimed that God had revealed to him that Shabbatai Tzvi was actually the messiah.

He claimed to be born on the ninth of Av, which according to some Jewish tradition was the birthday of the messiah. And ultimately, because of a great time of persecution, oppression, there was a terrible slaughter of Jewish people, terrible pogroms in the middle of the 1600s in Poland. And there was a longing, there was a hope for redemption to come, much like we could see in a post-Holocaust era with the slaughtering of so many of our people.

A desire, a longing for redemption. And there was great hope put on Shabbatai Tzvi. Most of the leading sages didn't accept his messianic claims.

But there was a fervor, and many rich people sold all of their possessions. They were going to follow him to the Holy Land. And he marched in to the sultan of Turkey.

And he declared his messiahship and ordered the sultan to bow down before him and acknowledge him. Instead, he was put in prison. They continued to allow him to hold his royal court in prison for a while.

And ultimately, they decided enough is enough. And they gave him the choice of convert to Islam or die, at which point he converted to Islam. Not only did he convert to Islam, though, the story doesn't end there.

Some of his followers also converted to Islam. And they believed that according to certain Talmudic traditions, the world would either be perfectly righteous when the messiah came or perfectly wicked. And because the world was not worthy of receiving him, he then had to bring in and initiate the last great apostasy.

And in doing so, bring the world to the point where the messiah could be revealed. What makes the story even more bizarre is not just that he died as a Muslim, and that many of his most loyal followers died as Muslims, but that they continued on in Islamic society. And right up to the middle of the 20th century, they were still an identifiable remnant within Islam called the Donmeh.

And they secretly prayed Jewish prayers. And where it spoke of the messiah, they instead inserted the name of Shabbatai Tzvi. Well, what about today? You might think 20th century enlightened society.

Maybe people don't believe in these things anymore. I mentioned Jesus. And if you read about my background, then you know that I'm a Jewish believer in Jesus.

You might say, how could people still believe in this kind of thing? Aren't people in a place where they have outgrown these primitive messianic beliefs? Well, on my recent trip to Israel, last trip over there in October, I was struck by the banners on all of the Chabad buildings, the Lubavitch buildings. Hikono leviat ha-Mashiach, prepare for the coming of the messiah. Just a few years ago, I was with a group of Orthodox Jews on a Saturday evening in Cleveland.

And they stood there out on the street with the police, watching and trying to figure out what in the world was going on. I stood in the midst of them and they stood with hands raised to heaven, reciting the words of Rambam, Maimonides, I believe, complete faith in the coming of the messiah, even though he tarries, yet I'll wait for him every day expecting that he'll come. Well, what is it that some people are believing about the messiah? What's the great messianic fervor and expectation that's going on these days? Well, as I was leaving a Ben-Gurion airport, I saw that there was a little Lubavitch stand and they were giving out some free literature.

So I picked this up across the top. It says in Hebrew, prepare for the coming of the messiah. And it's a track basically saying, what are we waiting for? What is the nature of the hope of the messiah? What are some of the wrong messianic hopes people have had? What's happening in this day and age and who exactly is the messiah? And then on the back, a picture of the Lubavitch Rebbe, the spiritual leader, looked to maybe by a half million people that identify themselves on one level or another with Lubavitch.

The man's now 90 years old. And according to what his followers have written, said, people I've spoken to personally, they either believe that he is the messiah or that he is about to reveal the messiah. So let me tell you a little bit about Menachem Schneerson and then we're going to do a comparison.

We're going to look at what the scriptures say. And by the way, if your perspective is that you don't believe the scriptures of God's word are inspired or speak of our day, we can deal with that afterwards. I'm going to speak as one who believes ultimately that the scriptures speak to us today, whatever their meaning and context in ancient Israel was, that ultimately there's a meaning and relevance to us today.

But we're going to do a comparison of the claims of Lubavitch Rebbe or what's said about him or the messiah in those circles. And what the scriptures say about Yeshua. And you're going to find out why I believe what I believe.

And I want to challenge you to think through why you believe what you believe. But in any case, Menachem Schneerson was not born in Bethlehem. He was not born in Israel.

He was born in the former Soviet Union. Excuse me. Excuse me.

You'll have plenty of time afterwards. Excuse me. The format is when I'm through, we'll take all questions very gladly.

By the way, did I say the messiah was supposed to be born in Bethlehem? Sir, this is the second time you've appeared here. You've appeared here last year. You've appeared here on Earth.

You've appeared here and said the root of anti-Semitism is the devil. Obviously you're tempted to come here. Excuse me.

Excuse me. I appear here on the same day. Okay.

Speaking on different subjects, representing you very clearly. Why I'm here. Now, if you'd like to stay, you're welcome to.

And if you'd like to have time afterwards to ask questions. Otherwise, if you'd like to book a separate hall for those that would like to listen to you today. Let's have a little respect, okay? Respect for what, sir? Respect for the format.

That's all. This has been booked by mail. What intrinsically exists in this town is right to speak.

Okay, great. Those who want to hear what Mr. Browning has to say, please stay. Those who don't want to hear what he has to say, who want to sit and heckle, please leave.

Nobody's allowed to heckle. I would like to clarify what he said. I'd be very happy to speak to you publicly, privately, at length, under any circumstance.

Simply, we booked the hall for this reason. If it was your lecture, I'd let you speak, and when we're done, I'd ask further questions. It's actually for us based on my experience in the movement.

Please go ahead. I will. Thank you.

Dr. Brown, who is we? Excuse me? Who is we? Who is the Yale Standard? Why is the Yale Standard not going to enable religious faith councils, which govern all government religious councils under Yale? And why won't the Yale Standard debate this in an open format? Sir, I didn't come here to hear you speak. I came here to hear Mr. Brown. Please shut your mouth.

That's a very important point. Okay. The one thing I'd recommend--excuse me, excuse me.

Can you hear me, sir? Who is we? Excuse me. Who is we? Shut your mouth. Who is we? I represent the Yale Standard.

Who is the Yale Standard? Yes. No. Let's debate this now.

Who is the Yale Standard? Who is the Yale Standard? Why are they not going to engage in religious councils under Yale? Why do they approve their violence? You know, it's extremely interesting. Why would you not argue this? We're afraid, guys. And we're afraid to sit down and discuss.

I'm not afraid to facilitate. This is basically actively offensive to me. Okay.

Listen. Let's just have a little order here. I've dealt with religious Jews, rabbis that are friends of mine.

I've dealt with people in Kabbalah. I've dealt with people of various backgrounds. But if you're going to say things which are-- Excuse me.

Afterwards. Excuse me. You mentioned that there are not-- God is my witness of every word I say.

Will you bring him here, please? In any case, it's an interesting thing. But we're always challenged that we won't bring the facts out openly in public dialogue. It's a common charge that's been brought.

Here we have an opportunity. I'm giving you an opportunity. Here we have an opportunity.

It's not a dialogue you're giving. You're giving a speech. That's exactly right.

And I'm glad we have a debate of 15 minutes on each side. I laid it out. I gave you two hours.

That's exactly what we want. That's exactly what we want. Your objective in doing this is to convert Jews.

It's not to present a Christian idea. If you are a Jewish speaker, you should be registered through Alel. All Jewish speakers are registered through Alel.

I'd like to challenge you. Why are you not registered through Alel if you consider yourself a Jew and are speaking on a Jewish subject? Why did you not register through Alel, Dr. Brown? No, because I registered through Alel. All Jewish speakers on Yale campus, according to the Interfaith Religious Council, must be registered through Alel.

Why did you not register through Alel, Dr. Brown? These people are here for a reason. So, in any case, back to what we were saying. As I said, Menachem Schneerson was not born in Bethlehem or in the Holy Land.

He was born in what would now be called the former Soviet Union. He just turned 90 years old, and he is the son-in-law of the former Lubavitcher Rebbe. Basically, there are several generations of Hasidic rabbis.

Schneerson now stands as the last in a line of several generations of what is known as Chabad Hasidism, that goes back to a rabbi named Schneer Zalman Liadi. Menachem Schneerson's wife recently died, and he had no children. Now, one Lubavitch representative told me years ago on Queens College that the rebbe was sinless.

Now, I'm not representing this as the official Lubavitch position. Nonetheless, this individual told me that, and so that you can get an idea of the esteem with which this man is held by his followers, this individual told me that the only sin that the rebbe had ever committed was causing his mother pain and childbirth. Now, that may be somewhat of a preposterous statement for you to hear, but nonetheless, I just want you to hear that.

When I spoke with Sholem Hecht and Rabbi Flint and some others many years ago, at Lubavitch, the Hecht brothers, some others, they began to tell me some of the wonders of their rebbe. Of course, he studied the Sorbonne in France, which was an unusual thing for a Hasidic leader to study at a secular institute, but he did that. Not only that, they claim that anyone that's ever come to speak to him from anywhere in the world, he spoke in their language fluently, and many of them claim to know various miracles, etc., that were done by his hands.

But when I first interacted with Lubavitch in 1974, there was nothing overt that was being said at that point in terms of his messiahship. What's happened, though, is that there has been a spreading fervor-- Excuse me, that is incorrect. There is nothing now being said that was not said before.

Please, be accurate. We will debate later, but please don't say blatant falsehoods. Excuse me, they're not blatant falsehoods.

They are. Right, you have your opinion. No, no, this is the fact.

You are making a statement, and I can assure you that this is not the fact. We're dealing with a fact right now. Excuse me.

If you'd like to have respect for the other individuals here, please self-control to be able to be able to agree with them. I just remind you of the Scripture. The Talbar have found me before, and I shall be told.

You will hate the year. It's amazing that you spent all the time to study the Hebrew Bible. It's absolutely amazing.

But you're saying things which are not true. Please confine yourself to facts and debate on the basis of that. Continue.

If there's another interruption, I will ask you to leave. Thank you. I stand by every word that I said, and I will at any time be glad to get other rabbis, even though they disagree with me theologically, who will back up what I'm saying factually.

In any case-- Yes, you both. In any case, we're in a situation now where there's literature being put out by Lubavitch that was not being put out in the past with very bold messianic claims. Let me just read this to you, some verbatim quotes.

It says, speaking of the Messiah, that that great Jew that is about to be revealed very quickly as the Messiah is alive and is active and working even now, even though his identity has not yet been revealed and known to everyone. Now, it does not blatantly say, in fact, that Menachem Schneerson is the Messiah. Nonetheless, it does give the whole description of who he is, of what he'll do, saying that the Messiah will be a king, that the Messiah will be one who will bring Israel into the knowledge of Torah, that the whole world will acknowledge his messiahship.

And it also says that he will ultimately be a prophet as well. And it lists some of his prophecies on the back, prophecies concerning the Gulf War, prophecies concerning the Yom Kippur War and the Six-Day War, etc. In any case, what I'd like to do is honestly ask on what basis can he be looked at as a messianic pretender or as a potential candidate or as one who's about to reveal the Messiah? And what are the basic claims for the messiahship of Jesus? Now, remember, traditional Jews believe that Jesus was a false messiah.

And as I mentioned, the book by an Israeli scholar, Benjamin Hamburger, on false messiahs. He specifically says that that man, he won't call him by name, that man, Jesus, was the first of the false messiahs. What I'd like to do is look at Scripture.

And I'm pleased if you're here with a different perspective. If we can act in a civil manner towards one another, you'll have your opportunity to air your side. I would only just remind you of this one point, that if I

came to your forum and I've been in forums where I militantly disagree, I still have to respect the forum, as frustrating as it may be for you.

I know when you feel strongly about something that you want to speak up, and when you disagree about something, you want to speak up. But, again, it's a simple forum, and afterwards, if you've got something persuasive to say, you can be heard. And if you've got something that requires its own forum, then you're welcome to have it and get people to come and hear you.

So I disrespectfully say that again so that we can have something accomplished. If people are extremely opposed to what I have to say, I would hope that they have good reason for it. That goes beyond emotion and that they have good reason for disagreeing so vehemently.

And if not, I'd encourage people to think once again. In any case, let me just make a few points. If you have Scripture and you want to write some references down, you can.

But the prophet Malachi, the third chapter of his book, remember writing in the days of the second temple, possibly about 400 BCE, declared that the Lord would suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant that Israel was waiting for would come to that temple. Haggai, the prophet, in the second chapter of his book, declared that the glory of that second temple would be greater than the glory of the first temple and that God would establish his shalom there.

And then an interesting passage in Daniel, the ninth chapter. Some translate it differently in terms of how they divide the verses and how they divide the whole chronology that's listed there. But there's an interesting passage there that speaks of everlasting atonement being made and prophetic vision being sealed in terms of the days of the second temple.

I just want to underscore something. If I make reference to a rabbinic interpretation or to a Talmudic interpretation, it's not to say that I agree with everything that the rabbis or the Talmudic scholars say. Rather, it's to indicate that there are traditions that say these things.

Again, not every Talmudic or rabbinic tradition is binding. However, it's just interesting to note a few things, and I want to point them out to you. There is a Talmudic tradition.

There is a major section on the Messiah in tractate Sanhedrin, beginning in folio 96b. Messianic speculation by the rabbis of the Talmud. And one of the traditions states that there were two thousand years of desolation, two thousand years of Torah, and then two thousand years of the Messianic era.

But because of all of our sins, those days have been lost. Now, that's variously interpreted. But what is interesting is that two thousand years ago, there was a great expectation in the coming of the Messiah.

The second temple was still standing. There were prophecies that said the Lord would visit that temple. Prophecies that said that the glory of that temple would be greater than the glory of the first temple.

Remember the first temple, according to the scriptures, fire came down from heaven and God manifest himself there. There was no fire that came down from heaven, no manifestation of God in the second temple. And yet the prophets believed that.

By the way, I just want to note from my viewpoint, the reason that I'm not interested in your active performance. No, I do want this forum, this is what I was invited for. But I can assure you factually that the

Talmud from this side of the room is not active.

I'm not up here because I have thought and a dream and an idea that I've made facts up. When it comes time for facts and information and sources and verifications, in any case, in any case, it's interesting. There is the prophetic expectation of special glory in the second temple.

The rabbis listed five things that the second temple didn't have. It didn't have the fire. It didn't have the divine presence.

Didn't even have the tablets of the law. And yet there was an expectation and a promise that the glory there would be greater than the first temple. And there were clear prophecies in the book of Daniel that redemption would be set in before the destruction of the second temple.

Now, I just want to point something out to you. There's already enough tension in the air and already enough minds made up that have no interest to hear me out. Rather, they're just here to argue, which is fine.

If I were in your shoes, I might have the same mindset. There is great expectation. You can find it in the writings of the Dead Sea Scrolls as well.

That the Messiah was to come almost 2000 years ago. In the days of the second temple, there was expectation that Messiah would come. Now, there is probably the greatest scholar in Judaism in the last 200 years was a man named the Vilna Gaon.

Certainly one of the greatest scholars in Judaism. And he has an interesting commentary on some of these sections in the Talmud. And he has an interesting thing to say about the Messianic era.

Namely, that the Messianic era actually did begin in his mind about 1800 years ago. But that what happened was not the bringing in of the reign of the Messiah and peace and blessing. But rather, the bringing in of apostasy.

But even the Vilna Gaon, even if you read Rashi's commentary, the foremost biblical Jewish commentator on Daniel 9. You will see that there was expectation for the coming of Messiah or the Messianic age to begin almost 2000 years ago. Now, the Talmudic tradition says because of our sins, those days were lost. I wonder, is it that the Messiah did not come and the prophecies were not true or that the Messiah did come and because of our sins, we did not recognize him? Now, it's interesting that we have a major Jewish leader, a tremendously gifted genius living in this century with the eyes of many hundreds of thousands of Jews upon him.

The problem is, according to the prophetic scriptures, he's over 1900 years late. I would say that that raises strong questions about his claims or the claims of his followers and points us back, not looking in this generation or another generation, but looking back 1900 plus years and raising the question of all those that came that could have been the Messiah before the Second Temple was destroyed. Who was the most likely candidate? Now, not only that, the question was raised about the place of the Messiah's birth.

Now, I didn't say it was Bethlehem. I just mentioned that Menachem Schneerson was not born in Bethlehem. And yet, if you will check the Targum, the Aramaic paraphrase to Micah, the fifth chapter, you will see that the Targum tells us that that verse, speaking of the birth of the king in Bethlehem, refers to the

Messiah.

So there is Jewish tradition, Targum Yonatan Micah 5.2 in the English Bible, 5.1 in the Hebrew Bible. In any case, there is Jewish tradition, as well as being written in the Hebrew scriptures, that the king of Israel would be born in Bethlehem. Now, just a point.

This is not the big proof to me. I'm not state basing everything on this. But, again, you raise the question, who was born and who came to the Temple in the glory of God and fulfilled scripture 1,900 years ago? What view did it that could have fit the Messianic scriptures? Another question was, where was that individual born? Now, you say, you're trying to argue your point 100%.

That's why I'm here, and that's what we put on the poster. But if I didn't have a point to argue, I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't be spending my hours in my life seeking to open the heart of Jew and Gentile to these things.

But let's just go on. Let's just go on. It says here that one of the traits of Messiah will be that he's a prophet.

And it lists some of the prophecies of Menachem Schneerson. But in case you're unaware, I just want to tell you some of Yeshua's prophecies. Some of the prophecies of Jesus that have been reported that scholars accept go back, in fact, to him and to the first generation of his followers.

He warned that Jerusalem was going to be destroyed. He warned his people that because he was not recognized and because he was not accepted by the masses of his people, that Jerusalem would be destroyed and it would be a horrible destruction, and that Jerusalem would be tread underfoot by Gentiles for an incredibly long period of time until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled. Excuse me.

Really. If you can't sit here quietly, you must leave, and we'll get a police escort to have you out. What you said is incorrect.

No, no, no. It is factually incorrect, sir. Do you want to discuss it later or not? I would gladly discuss it later.

But will you play in front of these people? I will not speak. I won't pretend to play. Carry on.

There's no reason for you to touch anything. You are here to exploit the ignorance and vulnerability of your people. You are not here to present any bona fide religious viewpoint whatsoever.

And I will challenge you on anything you have said that I have challenged you on. I will give you the right to challenge me, but if you keep interrupting me, you will have no right to do that. What are you afraid of that you won't let him speak? I'm not afraid of anything.

Not you. But I'm afraid of him. What is he afraid of that you won't let him speak? Really.

I'm not afraid of anything. What are you so afraid of that you won't let him speak? What is he afraid of? He's doing it. He's coming here.

We're here to hear him. I guarantee you, if I went into the synagogue and the rabbi was speaking in front of this room, I'd wait until he was done. I'm not going to get up and give ridiculous claims that I don't represent any bona fide religious position.

Or that... Anyhow. So Jesus told us several things. He told us, by the way, 450 years before the Talmud was written down, Jesus told us that Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Romans.

And it was. Jesus told us that many would come in his name saying, I'm the Messiah. I'm the Messiah.

And in fact, there would be false claimants. He said, you'll know it's me because I come in the clouds of heaven. Not only did he say that, he warned.

Now let me point out something interesting. We have a bearded Orthodox Jewish gentleman here. And a non-bearded, non-Kippaz Jewish gentleman over here.

Both militantly opposed to me because of Sanctity. You know, Jesus said that it was going to happen. You know that he said that we would be put out of the synagogue for our faith? He prophesied that it would happen.

By our own people, tragically enough. And, of course, the natural disasters, the increase in earthquakes worldwide. These are all things that he said would take place, that he declared in advance.

Now, the most important prophetic word that has come. It may be denied by people here. That's not a major concern.

It was published. It was spoken publicly that redemption was coming in September of 92. There was tremendous anticipation in the Lubavitch community of the Messiah being revealed.

Or redemption coming in 1992. Instead, you know what we had in 1992? In the fall of 92? The race riot in Crown Heights. Now, the great and most important prophetic utterance that has come forth from the leader of Lubavitch has been patently false.

As I said, it will be denied. But it was published. Sir? Excuse me, sir.

How can you just say a clear flaw, a lie? It's not a lie. God is not witness. God is not your witness.

How can you speak the word of God? You do not speak the word of God. God is a one and one and only entity. How can you mix the Holy Spirit and Jesus into God? Open your eyes.

Open your eyes. I don't understand where you have the gall to say something which is open your eyes. Open your eyes.

Open your eyes. We have one testimony. Hang on.

And, sir, if you could just stay here one second. Please don't speak and interrupt me while I ask you a few questions. Okay? I would just appreciate it if you would help me one minute here.

Number one. The reason you don't understand is because I have answers. And if you are open to God, I will give you the answers.

Okay? And I have friends in Lubavitch that I've spoken with that are open-minded people. And you can set your dialogue with one another. Okay? But we do have a testimony now that Menachem Schneerson, this one here, is the greatest man living on the earth today.

So whatever charges there are that I'm exaggerating, I mean, number one, I'm reading from a publication that these folks have put out. Okay? And number two, you have a testimony from one of his followers that he's the greatest man living on the earth today. In any case, as a published prophecy that we verified with Lubavitch leaders, he did declare redemption coming in September of 92.

In any case, there's something interesting. You wonder why, as Jewish people, have we had the hardships and calamities come upon us all these centuries. As Jewish people, why have we suffered as you suffered? You know, there was a warning.

There was a warning in the book of Deuteronomy, and there was a warning by a Jewish follower of Jesus in the book of Acts, that if we did not listen to God's great and last and final prophet, we would be cut off as a people. You say, what's happened to us? Forty years after Messiah comes into the world, Jerusalem is sacked by the Romans and the temple destroyed. A hundred years later, terrible suffering.

Every century since then, terrible suffering. Why? There was a word. God's prophet came into the earth.

He declared. Our leaders called on us to repent as Jews. We did not, as a people, hear and repent just as tragically we failed to do through the prophets and the scriptures throughout history.

And judgment has come on us because we did not listen to the words of God's prophet. But there's more. And I want you to just consider this.

I heard an Israeli fellow speaking a moment ago. Let's take a look at something in the Hebrew scriptures. Let's read it.

Look at it in Hebrew. Let's look at the book of Isaiah, the 42nd chapter and then the 49th chapter. The city of Israel and the area were just annihilated, wiped out.

The destruction was absolutely awful. What happened? This man gave hope to the people. We're going to throw off the yoke of Rome.

He wasn't going to do anything for them spiritually. He wasn't going to bring them to God, but he was going to free them from the oppression of the Romans. He was a great general.

He almost won, but they were crushed. And really the exile of the Jewish people from the land was greatly accelerated from that time on. Did he bring redemption? Did he bring life? No.

They followed him. They did what they knew how to do. They fought side by side.

And what did it bring? Destruction. Well, many centuries later, in the 17th century in Poland, the Jewish people had a terrible uprising against them. Some Cossacks rose up against them in the 1600s, middle of the 1600s.

Terrible uprising. About 100,000 or more Jewish people were slaughtered. Hundreds of Jewish villages destroyed.

I mean, these people were just butchered. And again, great depression, great hopelessness. What are these sufferings for and what's it leading to? Well, there was a man named Shabbatai Tzvi who was born in 1625.

And he was a manic depressive. He was a kind of weird guy. Couldn't keep a marriage or a home together.

And he would go from fits of depression to total ecstasy. And in these states of ecstasy, he would break Jewish laws. Now, sometimes you've got to be weird for people to follow you.

If you're just average, nobody follows you. You've got to be somewhat weird and out of the ordinary for people to think you're anybody. So he would have these total mood swings.

And then when he would get in this exalted state, he would somehow be above the law and break it. And he'd get expelled from different communities. He'd pronounce the name of God, which was forbidden to do, and engage in these strange acts.

Well, anyhow, according to tradition, he was born on a day that the rabbis said the Messiah would be born. And he went and consulted with this young prophet named Nathan. And Nathan had seen him in a vision that he would be the Messiah.

So in 1665, in the midst of the depression and hopelessness of the Jewish people, looking for some type of redemption, he announced himself as the Messiah, and people went wild. Now you say, what did he do for them spiritually? Did he set them free from sin? Did he bring them into a relationship with God? What was it that he did? Was he a great general like Bar Kokhba? No. But somehow he gave them a ray of hope, because they knew there had to be something more.

So he proclaimed himself to be the Messiah, and leading Jews, rich Jews, educated Jews, followed him in mass. Many Jews sold all their possessions, getting ready to just go back to the Holy Land for the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. And then the next year, he now marches into Constantinople.

He's going to meet the Sultan, and demand that Israel, Palestine, be turned over to him. So the Sultan found all this pretty amusing, and finally placed him under house arrest. And there, in his prison, he kind of had royal court.

All the people would come, and rabbis examined him. Some said he's not the Messiah. Others would come to worship him.

People changed prayer books, and put his name where it said the Messiah, instead of put his name there, and thank God for his arrival. Well, finally the Sultan thought enough with these games. He gave an ultimatum.

You either convert to Islam, or you die. So he converted to Islam. Now hang on, the story doesn't end there yet.

Well, of course, most of his followers were dejected, hopeless, that was it. But, others of his followers found in Jewish mysticism an answer. That because this generation that he lived in was not worthy of receiving the Messiah, what happened was he had to go and bring in the last great apostasy.

You see, there is a Talmudic tradition that said the Messiah will come when the world is completely righteous, or when the world is completely wicked. And if the world is worthy to receive him, he'll come in the clouds of heaven. And if it's not worthy, he'll come on the back of a donkey.

And what happened was that they began to teach that because the world was not worthy, that he had personally to descend into the depths, and bring in kind of a last great apostasy. So his closest followers also became Muslims. But the story doesn't end there.

As recently as a generation ago, and probably to this day, there are still followers of Shabbatai Tzvi, called the Donmeh. They live outwardly as Muslims, but secretly they still pray those prayers and believe that he was the Messiah. And there are examples of their wills.

People, you know, who left things in their wills, and made it very clear that they were still followers of Shabbatai Tzvi, as recently as the last generation, that have been written up and published and discussed. Well, those are maybe the two most famous false messiahs in Jewish history. And now we have in our day something really interesting going on.

I just want to read you a little bit of what's happening with the Lubavitcher Rebbe here. It says this. This is from Time Magazine.

Israeli members of the large and powerful Hasidic movement, Chabad, are convinced that at any moment the Redeemer will arrive in Jerusalem. In a burst of fervor, they have erected yellow billboards across Israel, instructing passerby to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. Bumper stickers carry the same message as do electrified signs atop Chabad cars.

A full page ad announcing the time for your redemption has arrived has run in the New York Times. And Chabad speakers have been crisscrossing the U.S. to deliver their message. And who might the Messiah be? Well, I just found out from some friends in Brooklyn that one of the spokesmen for this Hasidic group was on the Bob Grant show here in New York on the radio.

Bob Grant, you would say, is anything but a pious religious man. Bob Grant had a spokesman on for Lubavitch. And this spokesman on radio made it very clear with all the Gentiles that would be listening to this show, this was not a closed in-house thing for ultra-Orthodox Jews.

He made it very clear that they believe that Menachem Schneerson is the Messiah. Let me just tell you a little bit about him. There are these different Hasidic groups, ultra-Orthodox groups, that have an emphasis on mysticism and have an emphasis also, although they keep all the Jewish laws rigidly, they have an emphasis on looking to their particular spiritual leader whom they claim is a miracle worker and the greatest genius of the generation.

And you can go into any of their homes. You can look in the crib of a baby and they've got pictures of the Rebbe, pictures of the Grand Rabbi there. Someone said if it wasn't Judaism, you'd just call it a cult.

Others would say, yes, it's definitely a cult even though it is Judaism. But in his particular line of Hasidic Rabbis, he is the seventh in the line. Not only that, he and his wife never had any children.

In fact, I once spoke to one of his followers when I was a student at Queens College and this fellow told me that he has never committed any sin in all his life. The only sin he ever committed was causing his mother pain in childbirth, but he repented of that sin. Now, this is not an official word from Lubavitch headquarters.

I'm saying this is what one individual, somewhat fanatical follower, told me. He had an interesting career. He studied in France at a secular university at the Sorbonne, was a brilliant student, went out of the purely

ultra-orthodox fold, and then upon his father's death came and headed up this group.

Since he's come, they've grown in mushroom. There may be 100,000 direct followers that are now Lubavitch throughout the world. They have Jewish educational centers throughout the United States and throughout the world.

They have what are called mitzvah mobiles. They're on the streets. You've seen them in New York City and they come up to you.

Mister, are you Jewish? And if you're Jewish, they get you to come in and say a blessing or fill in some of the rituals of Jewish prayer, etc. They're very active and people claim, look, in this generation, he has done more to bring the Jewish people back to Judaism than anybody else. In this generation, he's the most likely candidate.

Now, a big question arises. He's almost 90 or he just turned 90. He's never been to Israel.

Still, if he is the Messiah, he's got a lot of work to do yet. What if he dies? Let me read to you the opinion of one of the most renowned Talmudic scholars of our day, one of the most respected rabbis in the world today. This is what he says.

And I'll read the introduction first. Even Schneerson's death would not disprove his messianic potential. Even his death wouldn't disprove it.

And this is what this leading rabbi says. The Redeemer will be mortal. Someone who will eventually die and have successors.

Almost sounds like shades of the Shabbatai Tzvi thing. Even if he dies, he could still be the Messiah. Well, this is interesting.

But how in the world can we know? How can we be absolutely sure? My friend told me listening to this radio broadcast that people called and asked very specific and direct questions to the spokesman for Lubavitch. Very specific questions about the Messiah. Some were coming from a Christian viewpoint.

Some were coming from a Jewish viewpoint. Some from maybe a totally skeptical viewpoint. This friend said none of his answers were convincing at all.

And yet these people are willing to stake their entire life on it. Some of them have lived like this for several decades, waiting for this man to, quote, reveal himself as Messiah. How can we know? Well, we've got to go back to the scriptures.

And I want to point something out to you. If you ask the rabbis about the Messiah, you will get as many different opinions as you ask that many different rabbis. If you go ask a Reform rabbi, he'll tell you, we don't believe in a personal Messiah but a Messianic age or the Jewish people will bring redemption to the world or something like that.

If you talk to different Orthodox messiahs, if you go to one Hasidic sect and say could it be the Lubavitcher Rebbe, they say the Rebbe, no, he's a false Messiah, he's a heretic. You go to another Orthodox sect, they have another view. In fact, over 1,000 years ago, religious Jews in one community had a right to their leader and say, would you tell us the facts about the Messiah? I mean, what's going to happen when he comes? What's he going to be like? What's he going to do? You say, well, what does the Talmud say?

What is the most authoritative Jewish religious books? What do they say? Well, you go read them and you've got every possible opinion in there.

You know there's the joke, it's not a put down but it's true, if you have 10 Jews in a room, you have 11 opinions. Well, if you read the Talmud, it's the same thing except you can't figure out what the 11 opinions are. You go from one page to another to another to another to another.

The only certain thing we can do is go back to the scriptures. And what I basically want to do is just show you some things in terms of what the Messiah had to do, who he had to be, and then really challenge each of you individually to see if your life is living in accordance with that reality. Now, if we go back to the scriptures, understand this.

The Bible doesn't say, if you've ever read it carefully, it doesn't say stop everything. You know, the prophet is speaking and he says, stop, stop, stop the music, stop the show, stop the service. I'm about to give you a messianic prophecy.

Everybody listen. It's not so easy. God didn't make it like mathematics.

He requires us to seek him and seek him earnestly and seek him honestly. But there are certain things that are clear, that are unmistakable to anybody with an open heart. Now, one of the first things that rules out Menachem Schneerson is the fact that he wasn't born in Bethlehem.

Now, I don't want to be silly about the fact, but just hear it. If you go back 2,000 years when there were rumors that the king was coming, the king of Israel was coming, the Messiah was born. We read in the Gospel of Matthew, an early Jewish follower of Jesus, Yeshua, that Herod the king, he was from a line of Jewish converts.

Herod the king wanted to find out where is he going to be born. So he asked the wise men of his day, the rabbis and sages of his day, where is he going to be born? They all knew the answer. The city of David, where David was born, is going to be born in Bethlehem.

Now, you say, well, listen, maybe there's somebody in Israel that was born in Bethlehem, or maybe there's someone that's going to be there. So maybe it's not Schneerson, but that doesn't really prove anything. Kids are born in Bethlehem, and it wouldn't be hard in the past or the future for Jewish kids to be born in Bethlehem.

So what? Well, let me say this. If there's going to be a Messiah, just hear me carefully. If there is going to be a Messiah, he had to have come already.

In fact, he had to have come and fulfilled his messianic role almost 2,000 years ago. Otherwise, we have no Messiah. You may say, how can I say that? On what basis? Let me first give you one of the traditions from the Talmud, and then I want to open up the scriptures to you.

It says in Sanhedrin 97a and then b, this is the classic discussion of the Messiah in the Talmud. It says there that there's 6,000 years of human history that the rabbis were looking at. The first 2,000 years were desolation and chaos.

The second 2,000 years were the years of the Torah, the law of God, the instruction of God. And then the last 2,000 years were the years of the Messiah. It says, but because of our sins, all these days have come

and gone, basically, and we've lost out.

In other words, figure it out. The years of the Torah, according to the rabbis, begin with the time of Abraham, and Abraham lived, according to modern scholarship, we accept Abraham lived about 2,000 BCE. So you've got 2,000 years of Torah, and then, in other words, the last 2,000 years were supposed to be the time of the Messiah, according to Jewish tradition.

So the rabbis asked, what happened? Some traditions say, well, we sinned, so the Messiah didn't come. Another tradition says it differently. The last 2,000 years have been the time of the Messiah and the era of the Messiah.

In fact, let me just read you a quote. This is from the greatest rabbinic sage of the last 300 years. Let me just read to you what he says.

Although the Jews had not merited Messiah's coming by their deeds, nevertheless, the era of Messiah had indeed arrived at its appointed time. In other words, he recognized, yes, that was when Messiah had to come, and maybe he didn't come, but his era began, so that the last 2,000 years have somehow been preparing the way for him. Now, think of the excuses.

He was supposed to come 2,000 years ago, but because of our sins he didn't, or he was supposed to come 2,000 years ago, and now the last 2,000 years have been times of his preparation, or maybe another possibility. Maybe he did come 2,000 years ago. Now, I just want to show you three scriptures from the Hebrew prophets.

I'll read them in English for simplicity's sake, because that's the language basically everybody here understands, but if you have any questions about the Hebrew, just come and ask me afterwards. Let's go first to Haggai, the prophet Haggai. Now, he prophesied, just to give you rough figures, about 2,500 years ago.

Listen to what he said. In his day, the temple was rebuilt, the one that was destroyed a generation after Jesus came. He saw the temple being rebuilt, but hang on for a second.

There was a problem with this temple. What happened when Solomon built his temple? According to the scriptures, fire came down from heaven. The glory of God was there.

Here they dedicated the new temple. There's no glory. There's no fire.

There's no sign of the presence of God in the midst of the temple. There's a problem. So God gives Haggai a prophecy.

Haggai 2, beginning in verse 7, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord Almighty. The silver is mine and the gold is mine, declares the Lord Almighty. The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house, says the Lord Almighty, and in this place I will grant peace, declares the Lord Almighty.

Now, did that happen according to historians? No. Peace wasn't granted. That was the temple that was ultimately destroyed right after it was rebuilt.

In many ways it was an incredible structure. Herod rebuilt it. It was an awesome structure outwardly.

But in terms of the glory of the Lord, no, the glory of the Lord wasn't there outwardly. And yet here's a prophecy, a definite word. God's saying that His glory in the second temple will be greater than the glory in the first.

What does that mean? Now just keep going over to the prophet Malachi. His name Malachi in Hebrew, my messenger. Look at what he says in the third chapter.

He wrote about 2,400 years ago. It says, see, I will send my messenger, chapter 3. Same name as the prophet, my messenger. I will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me.

Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His temple. The messenger of the covenant whom you desire will come, says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of His coming? Who can stand when He appears? For He will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap.

He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord as in days gone by, as in former years.

Here's a prophecy that the Lord that they are seeking will suddenly come to where? That temple. Haggai says that the glory of this temple will be greater than the glory of the former temple. Malachi says the Lord whom you are seeking will come to that temple.

But who's going to stand when He comes? What's going to happen? Because when He comes, He's going to purify His priests and Levites. And then go over to the book of Daniel, the ninth chapter. There have been as many arguments about this chapter as you can imagine.

There are liberal scholars who say that this was written in the second century before Yeshua and has nothing to do with the Messiah. There are orthodox Jews who say it speaks of the messianic age, but not about Jesus. There are Christians who say this prophecy pinpoints to the year when the Messiah was to come into the world.

Let me show you something that you can't dispute and you can't deny. Daniel chapter 9. Daniel here is writing from exile. He's waiting for the temple to be rebuilt.

This is the context. And he's praying and God shows him as he prays and seeks God, seeks the scriptures. It's time for the Jewish people to come out of exile.

It's time. There's been a prophecy of 70 years exile. It's time for them to come back.

And as he seeks God, God says there's something more. There are 77s that are determined, accepted by virtually all to mean 77s of years. 490 years in terms of God's plan of redemption unfolding.

Now look at what it says in verse 24. 77s are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. And as you read through this passage, you can study it carefully when you get home, you will see that all this had to take place before the second temple was destroyed.

Now I want you to understand three things. God said in his word that the glory of the second temple would be greater than the glory of the first. He said that the Lord they were seeking would suddenly come to that

temple and perform a purging, purifying work and hear that sin would be atoned for and everlasting righteousness brought in before the second temple was destroyed.

Now I want you to turn over to another scripture. And I want to make a couple more points and then explain something to you that's of tremendous spiritual importance. Go back to Isaiah, the 52nd chapter.

Some of you may have heard a debate that I had about a year ago with an Orthodox rabbi on a Christian radio show that was aired live in New York and New Jersey. And we got into a little discussion about Isaiah 53. Is it a messianic prophecy? Does it speak of the Messiah dying? And he asked me a question.

If he can prove to me that no rabbi ever said that Isaiah 53 was a prophecy of the Messiah, son of David, would I give up being a messianic Jew? Well naturally I studied the issue out enough even though the point in itself was kind of meaningless in terms of my faith. I'd studied the issue enough and couldn't resist the challenge. And I said, you bet.

And when it came back to me I said, let me ask you a question. If I can show you that rabbis did say that this referred to Messiah, the son of David, would you become a messianic Jew? So there on radio he said it's done. And because there was a video, the thing was taking place on live camera also, we shook hands on it.

I guess the only way you can have a camera is live camera. But you understand what I'm saying. It wasn't aired live by camera.

But we shook on it. Because he said it's done or you know it, something like that. So we shook on it to seal it.

Well then the squirming started. I called my friend Sid and I said, all right, here are all the quotes. And I gave it to his business manager.

And I said, tell him I checked every quote in the Hebrew and it's exactly right. So Sid gets the rabbi on the air the next week. And we agreed I wouldn't be on the air because we didn't want to be unfair about it.

And he begins to read him this quote and that quote and another quote. And anyway he said, well how do you know if the Hebrew is accurate? Unfortunately Sid didn't get the message from me that I checked the Hebrew and it was accurate. So the battle went back and forth.

It finally went on a couple more weeks. I got a call from this rabbi. And we talked until about 2 in the morning one night.

And I went through things. I said, look, you simply cannot get out from this simple fact. I mean you just can't.

It's clear. It's too clear. He said, what I meant to say was that no rabbi said that the Messiah, son of David would die according to Isaiah 53.

But that's not what I said. I said, look, if you're going to try to argue the point over the air, it's going to make you look bad. It's going to make rabbis look bad.

It really is. Because it's going to be so clear as I read the quote. It's going to be undeniable.

So he agreed to get on the air and say he didn't say what he meant to say. What he meant to say was this. But what he actually said was this.

So he didn't say what he meant to say. And what he did mean to say was right. But what he did say was wrong and so on.

Anyway. So we got on the air. You know, I wanted to make it clear that I was just fighting fire with fire when I asked him would he become an Orthodox Jew, a Messianic Jew.

Well, a true Orthodox Jew. You know, would he if I could demonstrate that to him. But, you know, I wasn't expecting him to follow through on that.

Anyhow, you know, he did get on the air and we settled it on the air. Well, the one thing interesting that came out of it was this. You see, Isaiah 52 beginning in verse 13 is the accepted beginning of this passage.

The chapter divisions were put in later. And there are many rabbinic traditions that accept Isaiah 52, 13 through 15 as definitely being about the Messiah. So I said to him, listen, that's all we need.

Let's look at it. Interestingly enough, some of the recent publications among the Dead Sea Scrolls may indicate that use of Isaiah 53 was much more widespread in that day, but still needs to be studied out more carefully. But look at this, Isaiah 52, verse 13.

See, my servant will act wisely. He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. So here's a prophecy.

The rabbi said he'll be more exalted than Abraham, higher than Moses, and more lifted up than the angels. Just as there were many who were appalled at him, his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man, and his form marred beyond human likeness. So will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him.

For what they were not told they will see, and what they have not heard they will understand. Here in these little three verses accepted by many rabbis as speaking of the Messiah, it tells us that he will be raised up, lifted high, highly exalted, but first marred and bruised to the point of hardly being recognizable. And I said, that's all you need, this one little section, one and the same.

First bruised and battered and rejected, and then raised up, highly exalted. Not only that, that his ministry and his word will go to many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. I want you to understand something.

Not only did the Messiah have to come, he's the only explanation for the greater glory coming to that first temple, the second temple rather. He's the only explanation for the Lord coming to the temple that they've been seeking. He's the only explanation to everything in Daniel 9, about the anointed one being cut off, and about bringing in atonement and everlasting righteousness before the second temple was destroyed.

Not only that, I want you to understand three other essential qualifications of the Messiah. And if these are not fulfilled, he can't be. The question is raised, well, what about Schneerson? What if he dies? That's not the question.

The Messiah had to die. The Messiah had to be born in Bethlehem, and come before the second temple was destroyed, and he had to do three things. He had to die.

Now that anybody can orchestrate. If you want to prove you're the Messiah by dying, and go and jump in front of a car here, you can prove that. But then he had to rise from the dead.

And I don't think that I'm going out on much of a limb to say this, but I can assure you that when Menachem Schneerson dies, he will not rise from the dead and ascend to heaven, and be seated at the right hand of God. But he had to die. And I'm going to explain why in a minute.

He had to rise from the dead according to the scriptures. People say, well, Jesus just orchestrated everything. He just planned the whole thing out.

Well, if you can plan out your own death and your resurrection, then I'll put my faith in it. He had to die. He had to rise.

And, as I'm going to show you in a minute, on the one hand, he had to be rejected by his people, and his message had to go throughout the entire world. Now, I want you to consider this for a minute. People make a big deal about the fact, look, look, I mean, front page, New York Times Magazine.

This is getting famous here. On his birthday, you know, he'll get a letter from the president. Congratulations.

Look, Time Magazine, International. Well, I dare say, if you go throughout the entire world, and you ask most Jewish people, what do you think of Menachem Schneerson? They'll say, who? I can guarantee you, if you go to Gentiles around the world and ask them, what do you think of the Lubavitcher Rebbe? They'll say, please speak in English. I didn't understand what you were saying.

But consider this. See, here's the strange thing. You had Jews who were willing to say, after Shabbatai Zvi died, that he was still the Messiah, as preposterous as the whole thing was.

You have Jews here in Crown Heights and other parts of the world willing to say that this dear old man, unfortunately deceived, is the Messiah. They're willing to say that and follow that. But the one Jew who came, recognized by Jewish and Christian scholars today as the most Jewish of Jews, and you can read through the accounts about Jesus in the Gospels over and over, nowhere did he break the commandments of God.

Here the most Jewish of Jews who comes and heals the sick and delivers the oppressed and brings the life and truth of God to his people. The most Jewish of Jews who has brought people around the world to worship and know the God of Israel. Consider this for a minute.

Just out of curiosity here, everyone here who's not of Jewish parents, would you raise your hand? Okay. Thanks. Just wanted to illustrate something.

Here's a perfect example. You've got right here in this room people who I'm sure were drug addicts, people who were alcoholics, people who were perverts, people who were successful business people, people who were religious this and religious that, but they didn't know God and they didn't care about Israel. And through Yeshua, through Jesus, they have come to love the God of Israel and many of them pray daily for the Jewish people.

I want you to understand something. Right now, there are hundreds and millions of people in over 2,000 different languages scattered throughout the entire world praising and worshiping the God of Israel who

have had their sins forgiven, who have come into new life, who have been radically transformed, many of them actively loving Israel and the Jewish people through Jesus. Now, if that's not what the Messiah is supposed to do, what is? I've been to different countries in the world and I have been shocked to find it.

You know, I could tell you stories about Korea, I could tell you stories about Kenya, different parts of the world I've been to where I meet people and hear people from every different pagan background, whether it was Buddhist or whether it was Atomist, whatever it was, they now love the God of Israel and they have a passionate love for the Jewish people. One man was speaking in Africa recently, had a crowd of well over 100,000 people. As he preached in the name of Jesus, the risen Messiah, there were many miracles that took place of every imaginable kind.

And at the end of that meeting, he said, how many here will pray for Israel three times a day at every meal, morning, noon and night? And how many will fast one day a week, make a commitment to pray and fast for the peace of Jerusalem? He said, 100,000 black hands raised and swung in the air. You've got to understand something, the Scripture said it would happen. The Scripture said it would happen.

You see, you go on and you read this account here in Isaiah 53, which, again, was more widely used as a Messianic chapter than many rabbis today might be willing to accept. But it says very clearly, not just would he suffer, but the Hebrew says it in many different ways, cut off from the land of the living, every different way that he's going to die. It speaks of being cut off from the land of the living.

It speaks of going as a sheep to the slaughter. It speaks of his grave. It speaks of his death.

I mean, absolute clear that he would die. And then it goes on to say that he will see offspring in prolonged days and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. In other words, he'll be raised up from the dead.

Now, flip back a couple of chapters in the book of Isaiah, and I want you to see something. Go back to Isaiah 49, a dialogue between the Messiah and God. It speaks in the early verses of how the Lord has called him from birth and made mention of his name.

And then it goes on, identifies him as his servant. He is the ideal Israel. He is the one that will fulfill what Israel was created to do.

But what does the Messiah say? Verse 4, I have labored to no purpose. I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is with my God.

Could you see Yeshua saying those words? I mean, look, most Jewish people today don't recognize him, don't regard him, ignore him or are ignorant of him or are hostile towards him. Most Jewish people, when they know about Jesus, is what false Christians and hypocrites have done in his name through the ages. Could you see him looking out at the lost sheep of the house of Israel, looking down at Crown Heights, looking at Williamsburg, looking at Israel, looking around the world and saying, what a waste.

Here I labored and I did everything for no purpose. Just humanly speaking, easy to feel that way. But what does God say? Verse 6, it is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and to bring back those of Israel I've kept.

In other words, that's going to happen too. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth. Sometimes we get this idea that God has always intended for the Jewish people, the religious Jew, to be kind of in a religious ghetto and to just, you know, the only real

purpose for the goyim is to do the things on the Sabbath that, you know, you can't do kind of thing.

But God's purpose for the Jewish people and then for the Messiah was to go and be a light to the nations. Now let me ask you a question. Is the Lubavitcher Rebbe sending his ambassadors to the jungles of Africa? Is he sending his ambassadors to the millions in India? Is he sending his ambassadors into the jungles of Central America where people haven't heard the truth of the God of Israel? Of course not.

Of course not. Have you met any religious Jews who are passionately concerned with the salvation of the Gentiles? Hardly. And yet this Jew who came when he had to come before the Second Temple was destroyed, who was born where he had to be born, who was rejected by his own people, who died and who rose from the dead is the most influential Jew, a billion to one of any who have ever lived.

And the most known and the most recognized and the one who single-handedly has transformed the lives of millions and millions and millions of people. And you know the neat thing is that you say, well, one prominent rabbi says that Schneerson could die and then he could have followers. The Messiah could die and have followers.

It could be kind of like a dynasty, you know. And that's how the Messianic age will be brought in. But we say, no, listen, the Messiah died and he rose from the dead.

And the proof that he rose from the dead is he's doing the same things today. Some years ago, a fellow that became a student of mine had a wonderful experience as he sought God and asked God honestly about the Messiahship of Jesus, a Jewish fellow from Richmond, Virginia, and really came to know the Lord. And his sins were forgiven and he was changed.

And his parents were really upset. And they said to him, if we can find a Jew who knows God, will you talk to him? He said, sure. If you can find a Jew who knows God, I'll talk to him.

So they made a lot of phone calls and they finally said, we found someone in Brooklyn that you can talk to. Which he got a kick out of because he said, I could bring you to any number of my friends. And you knew what they used to be before.

You can meet them now and they know God and they're walking with God and they have a relationship with God. God answers their prayers. You know, we don't have to go searching around the world.

I've heard all of so-and-so had this blessing by the Rebbe and he was healed or this or that. We could take the next 10 weeks if we wanted, one by one, just have you stand up and tell me what God has done miraculously, supernaturally that can only be explained by the power of God in your own life personally in Yeshua's name. There's a woman here visiting from Indiana.

Her husband was down in Mexico recently and he was spending some time with a man that's been a missionary in Mexico for almost 20 years now. And he said, you know, I met one fellow. He said, it was the grandfather of a child who was raised from the dead.

He said, it was a real neat story. The grandfather was telling him that they brought this child. They gave it to the grandfather.

The child had died. They brought this child. Hours later, they got it over to this missionary and they said, pray that the child will be raised from the dead.

And the missionary prayed and said, in Jesus' name, the child is raised from the dead. And he gave it back to the grandfather, stiff and dead just as before. And the grandfather then carried this dead, stiff child all the way back to the parents and brought it to the parents and said, this man says, in Jesus' name, the child is raised from the dead.

And the moment he put the child into the parents' arms instantly the child was restored and came back. And I just use that to say there's still that supernatural, awesome power. And you know, you could mingle.

If you were a skeptic, you could just mingle and start asking people here. I don't know most of the people here. Ask them.

What's happened when you've prayed? Not that we have miracles at our command, but that God is still demonstrating the truth. You've got to realize. People debating, you know.

People asking all these questions and religious disputes and back and forth and trying to argue out, well, how are you going to know? And what's he going to do? And how can it be this and that? Listen, the evidence is all around. It is all around. And I want you to understand one other thing and then I need to explain why the Messiah had to die.

You can ask an honest question and say, how could Jesus possibly be the Messiah? Okay, fine. There are millions and millions of people around the world who've been transformed by him. You know, I wrote a book recently called *Our Hands Are Stained With Blood*, dealing with the tragic story of the church and the Jewish people, dealing with the ugly history of so-called Christian anti-Semitism.

I'm fully aware of it. But you know the thing that's funny? Is as I've spoken to believers, just came back from this church in Indiana, people came up to me, we didn't know there were any Christians who did anything but love the Jew. How could you be a Christian and not love the Jew? The publisher of the book said, Mike, he said, I'm embarrassed to say it, but when I first was born into God's kingdom and received new life through the Messiah, he said, I wanted to hug and kiss every Jew I met because I had such a supernatural love for the Jew placed within my heart.

In other words, the things that alleged followers of Jesus have done have had nothing to do with his truth and his claims and the reality of what he does in human lives. But anyway, you could say, look, history has been too bloody since Jesus came. Has there been peace on earth? No.

Have wars increased? Yes. Has famine increased? Yes. Have plagues increased? Yes.

Have the troubles of the Jewish people increased? Yes. Well, what else do you expect when we reject him? In other words, the only possible way to explain what's happened to us in the last 2,000 years and the degree of suffering that we've had and being driven out of our land for 1,900 years and all the pain and all the brutality and all the hatred and all the harm, the only possible way to explain it is that we've rejected God's answer of salvation. It's because he is the Messiah that all this has come on us.

We've got the thing backwards. It's not God's fault when we reject his chosen answer and his vessel of redemption. That's why all this has come on us.

But you see, it's really important to understand this. I'm not just trying to say, hey, isn't this amazing? Look, the Bible's got it all figured out. It's all prophecy and you can read all about it.

It's amazing. No, I want you to understand something much deeper than that. Look in your own heart and be honest with yourself.

There's as much sin there as there was 20 years ago. You're still just as selfish. I'm talking about if you have not received forgiveness of sins and had your life transformed through the Messiah.

You look at your life. You still judge others for the things that you allow in your own heart? The most fundamental commandment that God gave the Jewish people, love him with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, is almost meaningless to most Jews today. And whether you're a Jew or Gentile, look in your own heart.

And there's the same lust and there's the same greed and there's the same hatred and there's the same bitterness and there's the same self-centeredness. Down the list. So what if some guy in Brooklyn gets a lot of people involved in Jewish education? How does it change your very nature? It doesn't.

How does it prepare you to meet with God? It doesn't. You see, we leave this body, but our inner nature doesn't change. You know, here you've got some kid, 15 years old, you know, drug addict, murdered several people in cold blood, child molester, he gets killed in a car accident, people say, well, he's in a better place.

Who says? Based on what? If he rejected God in this world and had no place for God in this world and fellowship with God and loving God, he's not going to have a place for God when he leaves this world. You know, here you move to a brand new town and you love the Lord with all your heart and all you want to do is serve Him and please Him. And a neighbor of yours also moves to this town, this person is an alcoholic to the core.

Well, you're in a brand new town, what's going to happen? You're going to find people who love the Lord and you're going to live a moral, godly life with them and this guy's going to find the first bar he can. The change of environment doesn't change the inner nature. And all the Jewish Messiahs and all the Jewish claims and all the pretenders miss the whole thing.

We need a change of our inner nature. We need a transformation, not just of outward habit, but a change of our inner nature because at core, at root, we are sinful. You know, my wife and I have done a wonderful job of raising our two daughters.

Whatever you see wrong in them, boy, I don't know where it came from. But I'll tell you something honestly, with all the things we've done wrong and with all the wrong things that they've learned from us along the way, we never had to teach them to lie. We'll look at certain things and say, where did you get that from? You never got that from us.

Plenty of things, I can look at my daughters and say, oh man, all of my weak points they have. One or two of the strong points and almost all the weak points. They'll go on with a story in absolutely endless detail and bore everybody in the car.

So I can't blame them because they learned that from me. But we didn't teach them to rebel. We didn't teach them to be stubborn.

We didn't teach them to cast off authority. You know, what's the first word that a child actively puts to use? No. You know, now that they have this power, you know, and they'll test it out.

I can still remember, you know, our older girl as a little baby touching something she shouldn't, holding it and looking and saying, no. She knew that's what we're saying, but she's going to do it. And people grow up, you can grow up in the finest environment.

And there's still going to be hatred, there's still going to be strife, there's still going to be all the types of junk. Why? Because human beings are sinful. And some guy with a nice religious program or with a nice message or with a lot of charisma can't do anything about that.

It's like somebody suffering from cancer. Well, you can pet them and caress them and hug them, but it's inside. It's like fire in their bones or in their blood.

And that's how sin is. And you see, in the Bible, if you've ever read through the scriptures, punishment, there must be justice. And God, in His mercy, sends His spotless Son, the perfect Lamb, the perfect sacrifice, who lays down His life and says all the abuse, all the sin, the sins of an Adolf Hitler? Come on my shoulders.

The sins of an Idi Amin? Come on my shoulders. The sins of some father who torments his two-year-old girl and abuses her every night? Come on my shoulders. The sin of some proud professor somewhere who mocks God? Come on my shoulders.

I'm going to take their punishment. When God sends the Messiah to do that, and then we, in our arrogance and stubbornness, choose not to turn from our sins and believe, we have no excuse. If God pronounces us guilty forever and casts us away into darkness, we have no excuse and no one to blame.

I urge you tonight, if you hear this message any other way, I urge you not to mock what God has done. I urge you to soften your heart and to cry out to God for mercy. Turn from your sin.

They're your downfall. Turn from your way, your selfish will. You're doing it your way and rejecting God.

That is your downfall. That is your destruction. Turn from it.

And call on the name of the Messiah. Call on Yeshua's name. Put your trust in Him and what Jesus has done.

And you will see that God will instantly honor that sincere prayer and begin to work in your life. And if you cry out to Him and earnestly turn to Him, prophets would say it over and over and over. Turn back to me, God says.

And I will turn back to you. If you will turn back to God in repentance with a broken heart before Him, not doing Him a favor, but recognizing this is your only hope and your only salvation for this world and the world to come. God will turn away from His anger and God will turn back to you.

And God will cleanse your heart. And God will set you free from your sin. And God will give you a new nature.

And He will become your Father. And you will walk with Him all the days of your life. Just stop and pray for me for a moment.

Father, in Yeshua's name, I pray now that your Holy Spirit would speak. Lord, you know the heart and the condition of those here. You know why they've come.

Lord, I pray if there are any who have come in unsure, undecided, skeptical, or with questions, that they would recognize that they are undone before you. That if they were to be judged by your standards and laws, they would be forever cast out. But that, Lord, you have prepared a way of mercy and salvation and forgiveness for them through the sacrifice of your Son, the Messiah.

And through Him, they can receive forgiveness and life. Father, minister life to them. And have mercy.

Have mercy. And open our hearts that do know you to boldly proclaim and live out the reality of the Messiah's sacrificial life and death and the power of His resurrection. In Yeshua's name, amen.

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