

Appendix 2: The Witness

(An Appeal to Open-Minded Jewish People to 'Think the Unthinkable' Concerning the Messiah)¹

It is acknowledged that, given the long history of church-based anti-Semitism, the whole concept of witnessing about Yeshua is, by its very nature, both controversial and full of potential pitfalls. However, the following article hopes to witness to the gospel in such a way as to be more precisely tailored to the needs of Jewish people. I myself am neither a missionary nor a gospel preacher but, like every other adult believer in the Messiah, I too have a responsibility to witness to the truth should the opportunity arise.² As the following extract from Romans 10:14 states, "...how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" I very much wish that mine will be a voice clearly heard by the Jewish people, a people for whom I have a genuinely strong concern. This makes it all the more necessary to share the truth in the power of the Holy Spirit- to do less than this would display a shallow and worthless love on my part. However, should those reading these words not wish to hear the following (somewhat unusual) defence of the messianic status of Yeshua then please, read no further! My intention is not to manipulate nor cajole people into hearing the message of salvation. Indeed, I take the view that this message is so good and so true that it can stand on its own merits, having no need for high-pressured manipulation. The choice remains entirely with the reader.

A Society Meeting

During May 1978, when in the third year of a four year Social Science degree course, I witnessed to a Reformed Jewish friend of mine who was on the same course. Through his good offices I had been able to attend meetings of the Jewish Society in the February of that year. There, I encountered all sorts of Jewish People – rapidly learning that Orthodox Jews did not regard the Reformed as being '*properly Jewish*,' whereas the Reformed used to annoy the Orthodox by mimicking them. It took a formidable young matriarch (who was also the chairperson) to keep the proceedings in some sort of order, at times openly cuffing the heads of the more disruptive members!³ However, when faced with the threat of anti-Zionism on the university campus this rather unruly gathering quickly banded together into what appeared to be a remarkably strong unity and very quickly it was agreed what should be done to counter this threat. Over the Sabbath meal, I overheard one girl ask another of her Orthodox peers how it was possible to obtain forgiveness of sins. His ready reply was '*repentance*.' I thoroughly enjoyed the liveliness and intellectual stimulus provided by this group.

Cafeteria Conversation

Over the following few months, my Reformed Jewish friend – if not provoked to jealousy by my faith was certainly provoked to curiosity. I had a deep liking for him and his '*clownish*' sense of humour. The following witness took place in a certain cafeteria and it was he who raised the question:

"Do you really think that Isaiah 53 refers to Yeshua?"

"Yes, I do."

"But our Rabbis make it clear that it was referring to the whole of the Jewish people."

"That interpretation doesn't make sense as it clearly refers to an individual."

(A rather detailed discussion on this passage then followed).

"How could Yeshua be the Messiah when the Church has always been our worst enemy?"

(He then backed-up his case by referring to the Spanish Inquisition and other infamous examples of institutionalised Church persecution of the Jewish people)

I replied, *"But surely such examples show that the Christian view concerning the sinfulness of human nature is the correct one and if this is so, then people need God's salvation which only Yeshua can provide."*

(I knew then that the Spirit was present because I could argue with compassion.)

"You Christians have always been our enemies. There were the Crusades..." said with growing agitation.

¹ This work was first drafted in July 1999, slightly amended in March 2003 and finally reworked by late August 2007 with some minor revisions in July 2009.

² My main passion has been to guard the purity of Biblical doctrine in what has already become a spiritual '*Dark Age*.' I have no calling as a full time evangelist or as a missionary to the Jewish people.

³ My subsequent engagement with Jewish people tended to confirm that Orthodox Judaism does place a particularly heavy burden upon its female members whose pivotal role is to preserve the family's Jewish identity.

"But they only show that Christ's warning about corruption in the Church was correct too."

The rest of the conversation went back and forth like this, with me stressing the need for faith in Christ and him saying, somewhat emotionally, that Christians had always hated Jews. Fearing that he was trying my patience (which he was not) he bought me an extra helping of ice cream after which he resumed his emotional outburst. I could see from the haunted and conflicting look in his eyes that he was both attracted to and repelled by the Messiah. Our intricate discussion ended and we parted as friends. I saw him three months later at his home in London (I'd accepted some abortive job interviews there for civil service work). He pointed to his family tree, (hanging on a wall) which showed three Eastern European members who had died in 1941. My reaction to this was one of sadness; I could only stand quietly in silence. If my memory serves me correctly that was the last time I saw him, only later hearing that he had obtained a job as a social worker in the South East of England.

By 1999, (when this article was first being prepared for publication) I more fully accepted some of my friend's valid points concerning the behaviour of the Institutional Church. Apart from a few notable exceptions, my own abiding impression of English Christianity had become one of rudeness and stupidity.⁴ Even when the Gospel of salvation had been clearly proclaimed it had been largely unheeded or totally ignored – with apathy dominating many a congregation. In response to such disinterest, many Church leaders have since tried to replace this message of salvation with their own human substitutes – Inter-faith activity being just one example. I for one am ashamed at what the Church in this country has become, but the fact remains that, to be ashamed of the Church is one thing, but to be ashamed of the Gospel is quite another. Indeed, today's modern Church in the Western World has become a fulfilment of Christ's warning that, *"the love of many shall grow cold,"* (Matthew 24:12). Christ himself foresaw the degeneration of His Church and promised that, *"He who endures until the end shall be saved,"* (Matthew 24:3). Also, the mandate to provide a gospel witness to all nations will of necessity, continue until *'the end'* comes. The decadence of the Church cannot, therefore, justify the view that states, *'The Church has done many bad things therefore it should also give up its gospel witness.'* Thankfully, each Christian's authority to share the gospel of life comes from Christ Himself and not from the Church. This means that any gospel witness should be conducted in as wise and as sensitive a manner as possible. Nowhere is this truer than in relation to the Jewish people.

Dangerous Over-Optimism

Believers in the Messiah would see Judaism, not as a bad faith, but rather as the best possible religion people could have, apart from the revelation of the Messiah. I can categorically state that building relationships with Jewish people has been one of the greatest and most enjoyable privileges of my life. I have found the Jewish sense of humour (displayed more often by the men) particularly endearing. In terms of ethics, mainstream Orthodox Judaism is admirable, in terms of scholarship, outstanding, and in terms of its many charitable activities thoroughly commendable. Without doubt, I myself, over the years have personally benefited from this faith in many, many ways over the years and I feel very much at home in a Jewish atmosphere – more so than in many Churches. In contrast to much of the English Church, Orthodox Judaism has, at least, placed great value upon learning and has followed the right moral principles. Also, as well as my personal association with Judaism (with all of its stimulating cultural activities) I have become familiar with some of the methods of Jewish Bible Interpretation,⁵ which have since revolutionised my thought by giving me insight into the various laws governing human behaviour. Both intellectually and personally, my contact with Orthodox Judaism had been profoundly enriching. I owe a lot to that faith.

Unfortunately, getting to know G-d in a deeply personal way is not dependent upon having a *'good religion.'* The tragedy of Judaism (at least in its moderate Orthodox forms) is not that it is a bad or an evil religion (it isn't), but that it demonstrates the point that, even the best of religions are never good enough to please G-d. In His utter holiness, the Almighty Creator demands perfection from his creatures and sadly, no amount of religious practice can supply

⁴ The comments made here are based upon the writer's own experiences of all of the major strands of English Christianity, from 1975 until 2009.

⁵ A fuller discussion and application of these methods will be found in Part B of the writer's earlier book, *'About God.'*

that perfection. Because I have grown up close to Judaism (having had links with it from my childhood) I can discern that, as a religious system, its central flaw has been (and still is) its hopelessly unrealistic and optimistic view of human nature. A typical representation of this flawed view is found on p. 142 of Rabbi Isidore Epstein's book, *'Judaism,'* which was first published in 1959. A very erudite (learned) man,⁶ Epstein can justifiably be taken as a sound representative of the whole post-war Anglo-Jewish community. In the Penguin edition of his book, Epstein states that "*Judaism denies the existence of original sin needing a superhuman counterweight*" to that sin. After denying that Adam's sin brought about spiritual death to Mankind, Epstein smugly opines, "*Man can therefore achieve his own redemption by penitence, being assured that God himself is ever-ready in His abundance of loving-kindness to receive the penitent sinner and purge him of all iniquity.*" In the previous paragraph he had airily dismissed "*some imaginary gulf between God and the World, or God and Man.*"⁷ His complacency about the human condition is almost obscene given the fact that it was made so recently after the Nazi's attempted genocide against Europe's Jewish population.

It needs to be stated clearly that Epstein's viewpoint contains the following doubtful assumptions: -

- 1) That the long-term effect of Adam's sin was confined only to the physical and not to the spiritual realm
- 2) That people can freely choose to get back into a relationship with G-d, through personal penitence
- 3) That obtaining a relationship with G-d does not require miraculous supernatural intervention
- 4) That human penitence alone is enough to satisfy a totally holy G-d, who requires absolute perfection from His creatures
- 5) That the human sinful condition is insufficiently serious to require a divine saviour

His theology simultaneously flattered human nature and underestimated the awesome holiness of G-d. The mistake he made was very typical of rabbinic thinking.

The evidence of Mankind's universal depravity (clearly seen throughout human history) would refute all of these assumptions. The Biblical evidence is damaging enough, with its vivid record of wars, atrocities and endless backslidings of G-d's people. However, in this last century, it must surely have been the '*Shoah,*' (meaning '*widespread disaster*' or '*destruction*') which has provided the most powerful refutation of the traditional Jewish view of human nature. This sombre tragedy threw into cruel relief the divergence between Judaism's idealised view of human nature and actual harsh reality. If Epstein had wanted concrete evidence of the reality of the doctrine of original sin then the word '*Auschwitz*' should have been enough.⁸ It was in such hellish places that human sinfulness reached its terrible zenith and the need for a supernatural redemption was brought sharply to the fore. Such overwhelming and stark evidence reduces Epstein's statements about human nature to nothing more than a faint whistling in the dark. Here was a man locked into that same kind of denial which once had caused Communist Party Officials to praise Stalin whilst being led out to be shot.

More generally, this over-optimism concerning human nature has served the Jewish community badly throughout the course of its history. Many Jewish religious leaders, during the time of Christ's ministry upon the earth, had been convinced that they could '*cut a deal*' with the power of Rome by offering a sacrifice for Caesar at the temple. (Their hope was to '*buy immunity*' from the requirement to worship Caesar's genius.) Like many such deceptions it seemed to work brilliantly for a time, but it did not, in the end, prevent Rome from brutally crushing the Jews after two failed revolts. This pattern was to be repeated in late Medieval Spain where Jewish Community leaders thought that a favoured position in the royal court as tax collectors would secure them immunity from the Inquisition. Also, in inter-war Germany many Jews stayed on in the misguided belief that they could '*ride out the storm.*' In its most recent manifestation, this naiveté about human nature has figured greatly in the abortive Palestinian-Israeli peace process, (1993-2000). Once, when attending a public meeting in a certain Synagogue I

⁶ He died in 1962 following a distinguished academic career

⁷ Epstein p.143

⁸ The writer would challenge any mature Jewish person to read Laurence Rees' (2005) book on Auschwitz and still deny the doctrine of innate human sinfulness.

challenged no less a personage than the Israeli Ambassador himself. I stated that, from the perspective of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, this same *'peace process'* represented nothing more than a *'war by other means,'* process. His somewhat vague reply was, to the effect, that all Israel could do was to hope. Later events would confirm that it was, once more, a case of *'whistling in the dark.'*

By the time of the sixtieth anniversary of Israel's foundation in May 2008, the murderous intentions of its enemies have become clear, yet there have remained elements within Israel's leadership who have continued to delude themselves into believing that land can be exchanged for peace. Such elements are as self-deceived as the community leaders of the Lodz and Warsaw Ghettos who thought they could co-operate with the Nazis. As the frequent rocket attacks from Gaza indicate,⁹ any *'land for peace deal'* would, in reality, be a *'land for genocide deal.'* The fact is that, in the Middle East and elsewhere, the enemies of Israel have one simple aim in view; they want every Jewish person dead – preferably killed in the most degrading manner possible. It's naive to believe that there can ever be any appeasement of the irrational hatred that dominates militant forms of anti-Semitism,¹⁰ yet this core view of human nature prevalent within Jewish Culture, is leading Israeli leaders to attempt just that.

At some definite point in the future (the exact timing of which God alone is aware) Judaism's inadequate view of human nature will prompt the Israeli nation to accept a global false messiah who will *'come in his own name'* (John 5:43). This Messiah is likely to gain acceptance amongst the Jewish people by appealing to both their desire for security¹¹ and their humanitarian idealism.¹² He will seduce their hearts by appealing to their best motives, even promising them an especially important *'humanitarian'* role in his New World Order. However, (again at a time of which God alone is aware) he will then suddenly turn upon the Jewish Nation, inflicting such great harm that they will once again face total annihilation. This whole scenario will be on a far bigger and more tragic scale than was ever endured under previous false Messiahs like Bar Kochaba and Shabbethai Zvi (who had beguiled the Jewish people after having gained a huge amount of support from influential Rabbis).¹³ Judaism's optimism concerning human nature is again primed to be falsified in a most cruel and terrible way. Jewish people will find that their naivety has, once more, placed them in great peril.

Sobering Evidence

For their own sake, Jewish people need to more seriously consider the sobering evidence of the last two thousand years. By a variety of persecutors (not all of them Christian) the Jewish people *'have been driven from pillar to post.'* All too frequently, expulsion, fire and sword have been their lot; not to mention the wickedness of the Shoah and other cruelties perpetrated in the Modern Age. If nothing else, this tragic history should provide striking confirmation that humankind has a perpetual inborn tendency to do evil. People are not morally neutral agents, free to choose between a good and an evil principle. The history of anti-Semitism would show that it is the evil principle which always triumphs in the soul of humanity, due to an inherent flaw within human nature itself. As has already been illustrated, overlooking this flaw has cost the Jewish people dearly – they keep on being surprised by the evil that afflicts them.

Therefore, concerning human nature, conventional Jewish thinking has got it badly wrong, and if it has been wrong concerning human nature then it may also be wrong in its view of Yeshua. It is time for honest members of the Jewish community to begin *'thinking the unthinkable.'*

⁹ These were largely halted after the Israel launched a ferocious military incursion into Gaza during December 2008. This was a move which sparked much international criticism.

¹⁰ In the writer's own experience anti-Semites can't be reasoned with. Their whole mentality is twisted and some of them delight in this hatred precisely because it is evil. An elderly survivor of Auschwitz confirmed these points in response to a question the writer asked him at a public meeting.

¹¹ Their need for security will be all the more keenly felt, should they have had to cope with yet another attempt to destroy them. The result of such an attempt would be greatly increase their psychological suggestibility and cause them to become sufficiently desperate to accept any powerful figure that is seen as guaranteeing their survival.

¹² An interview with the human-rights activist Rabbi Ascherman gave one example of idealistic humanitarianism in connection with the present Middle Eastern Conflict, (Sunday Times Magazine, 30th December 2007, P.58).

¹³ Neither of these pseudo-Messiahs would have gained the momentum they did without the support of influential Rabbis and community leaders.

Sadly, Bible prophecy appears to indicate that this will happen only when the Jewish people are, once more, on the brink of total annihilation. It is a time-worn custom for senior religious leaders (holding a prestigious position within their communities) to be singularly unreceptive to divine truth. Our Lord Himself found that such leaders were often the very last to *'think the unthinkable'*.¹⁴ They had invested too much of their personal identity and public credibility in a failing religious system.

One of the signs of spiritual dysfunction within Judaism has been the practice of Cabbala Magic. A radio feature¹⁵ (interviewing a particular Rabbi) confirmed that by the late 1990s this practice was enjoying something of a revival, especially amongst professionals and university people. (The radio programme also told of a large exhibition centred upon this very topic and on display at the Jewish Museum of London.) However, the programme seemed to put forward a dire health warning each time. It appears that it could unhinge the mind and blur the distinction between reality and fantasy. I myself have heard three independent members of the Jewish community give almost identical warnings. In contrast, the role of any true spiritual practice is to improve mental health – thereby placing people into a position where they can relate to G-d as sane and rational human beings. It should also help them to accept the reality of their sinfulness and their need for divine mercy. True spiritual practices help people to face up to rather than escape them such realities. If the spiritual practice in question persistently fails to do this, up to then it would be right to regard it as spurious.

What Cabbala involves is an attempt to control the supernatural through magical incantations and the employment of angelic names. (It also tries to look for hidden codes in scripture through a variety of esoteric methods.) This is a blasphemous attempt to usurp a work that should belong exclusively to the deity – namely the controlling of angelic powers. With arrogant presumption, the Cabbalist tries to make himself into a *'mini-Lord of hosts'*, he (or she) having heeded the serpent's lie of Genesis 3:5c which promises, *"You shall be as gods, knowing good from evil."* By trying to assume divine powers the Cabbalist breaks the First Commandment, *"You shall have no other G-ds but me,"* (Deuteronomy 5:7). The practice of cabbalism commits a wretched betrayal of one of the most essential principles to be found within Judaism. No wonder it can lead to insanity! The human psyche was never intended to accept itself as a mini-G-d. Also, it is most improbable that Cabbala is authentically Jewish; its roots appearing to lie in a mixture of Babylonian magic, folk paganism and medieval philosophical speculation. As a fully developed system, it first arose in the Jewish communities of medieval Spain. However, incipient forms of Cabbalism (with its invocation of angels) had existed centuries beforehand. It was roundly condemned in Colossians 2:18 (where mention is made of its ability to blend with early Christian heresies.) Practice of the Cabbala is, in itself, a sign of spiritual emptiness which illustrates the following maxim: *'Where the Holy Spirit is absent magic abounds.'*¹⁶ It represents one of Satan's *'substitutes'* for the true Messiah. Cabbalism's subterranean presence within Judaism also contradicts official rabbinical optimism concerning human nature. If people were as spiritually capable as Judaism makes them out to be then why should they feel the need to resort to the essentially pagan practice of Cabbala? Surely, penitence and obedience to the Law (Torah) would be enough?

In the long term, the revival of Cabbalistic practices will most probably lead to a significant proportion of Jewish people becoming more receptive to the beguiling overtures of a false Messiah. Cabbalism will *'usher in'* this Messiah through its use of dreams, visions, lying signs and esoteric interpretations of scripture, (the latter lending everything an *'air of respectability'*). A whole plethora of these things will completely dwarf the supposed Cabbalistic miracles which accompanied the rise of Sabbethai Zvi. Cabbalism's main effect will be to increase psychological suggestibility, impressing its practitioners to override their reason and conscience and go on to accept the emotional security a false Messiah will bring. The Cabbala will act as the driving force behind the Jewish Nation's near-total demise. In addition, influenced by a

¹⁴ In fairness, this stricture is even more applicable to Christian Church leaders whose spiritual blindness sometimes beggars belief

¹⁵ *'Sunday Today'* broadcast, Radio 4, Sunday 6 June 1999, (the revival in Cabbala practice it mentioned has continued)

¹⁶ Since 2001, this point has been further illustrated by the huge popularity of fantasy books (and their subsequent films) and also by role-playing PC games some of which feature very overt forms of magic.

revival¹⁷ in anti-Jewish '*conspiracy theory*,' (which will accuse the Jews of plotting to '*take over the world*' for their own nefarious purposes) other nations will think they are '*doing God a favour*' by ridding the earth of Judaism as a religion and culture. The Jewish people will be seen as a legitimate target for elimination because they will be viewed as '*not fitting in*' with the New World Order, (Esther 3:8). Thanks in part to the Cabbala; Jewish people will be in such grave peril that only direct intervention from G-d will rescue them. However, Cabbalism's seductive and disastrous influence will only be seen for what it is when Israel is on the brink of annihilation. Currently, it is the devil's tool to distract them from even considering the claims of the true Messiah.

It would seem that this innate naiveté concerning human nature constituted the major reason why the in Jewish people had felt it impossible to accept the Messiah's ministry in the first place. After all (as Jewish thought goes), if we are not depraved sinners who can never please the Holy One then why do we need a saviour to die on our behalf? Yes, humanity needs divine help to make up for its various short-comings but people surely are not so bad as to need a divine saviour? Theirs is a religion based completely on the wrong premise. Like every other religion (including false forms of Christianity like liberal Protestantism) Judaism has not sufficiently considered how sin dominates every aspect of the human condition. In reality, sin is like an all-devouring cancer, burrowing its way into the deepest parts of our being. One reason why I became a Christian during the evening of Saturday, October 18th 1975 was that it was the only Faith offering a realistic diagnosis of the human condition, (with all of its corruption). Its one reason why I still believe in Christianity – indeed a cynic would argue that, throughout its history the Church has worked rather too hard in trying to prove the doctrine of original sin!

Thinking the Unthinkable

Is it possible, even with divine help that Jewish people should '*think the unthinkable*,' especially when they have endured long centuries of persecution and experienced profoundly agonising emotions? A genuine sense of empathy is needed and a full and frank acknowledgement that the Jewish people have been deeply wounded to the core of their being by all of the ill treatment inflicted upon them by the Church.¹⁸ So-called '*missionary work*' has also, over the years been of an extremely insensitive nature. In July 1991, I was very nearly punched by a Messianic Jewish Missionary following a meeting in which he'd called some of his Jewish audience '*wolves*.' And yes I'm embarrassingly and painfully aware of the corruption of the Church – indeed it is one area in which I could lay claim to some degree of expertise.¹⁹ I too have been deeply distressed by those claiming to follow the Messiah and I can, to some extent, identify with the hurt experienced by an Orthodox Rabbi who compared the Church to a schoolyard bully. Also, I've great empathy with my Reformed Jewish friend of some three decades earlier that had been (quite rightly) defensive about the Church. However, to remain locked in this mental and emotional attitude can never, in the long term, be a viable option. Hard facts need to be faced and the following series of questions help begin to do this: -

The first asks,

'Has the traditional Jewish view of human nature been true to what is known about human conduct – as revealed in Scripture and in its own Jewish history?'

The answer is '*No, it has not.*'

The second asks,

'Have the Rabbis (who are the leading representatives of Jewish thought) adopted an over-optimistic view of human nature?'

The answer is '*Yes, they have.*'

¹⁷ By January 2008, this revival was already happening in Arab nations and in countries like Iran where the president has pledged to '*wipe Israel off the map.*'

¹⁸ Only two nights before word-processing this point (on 28 April 1999) I heard an Orthodox Rabbi compare the behaviour of the Church to a schoolyard bully. Speaking to a mainly Roman Catholic audience one could only grieve over his sense of hurt.

¹⁹ I would also admit to a being able to spot flaws within man-made religious systems (which has landed me in much trouble – not least amongst certain Church leaders). However, it's been a useful tool – allowing reality to shine through.

The third question asks,
'Has this over-optimistic view of human nature inflicted harm upon the Jewish community?'

Sadly, the answer is *'Yes, it has.'*

Finally,
'If, for all of their great learning, the Rabbis have been wrong concerning human nature then could they also be wrong concerning Yeshua?'

The answer is *'Very likely.'*

By failing to accept the terrible reality of inborn human sinfulness, the rabbinic authorities (despite their many good points) have done themselves and their own community a considerable disservice. After all, why bother having a religion if one of its core elements is a refusal to accept some of the harsh realities concerning human nature?²⁰

Taking the Initiative

If the Jewish view of human nature is wrong (and I sincerely believe it is) then the only way people can relate to the G-d of Israel is through some form of supernatural intervention. G-d must take the initiative in approaching people and not vice-versa. At this stage, the best candidate for that intervention is Yeshua of Nazareth. Only He fulfilled every promise made in Isaiah 53; only He brought large numbers of Gentiles into the worship of the Jewish G-d and only He can meet the deepest needs of sinful human beings. It is time for the Jewish community to *'think the unthinkable'* by re-considering the Messianic claims of Yeshua of Nazareth. Should there be any Jewish person who has taken these points seriously to heart my plea is that you put your faith in Him. Trust that He was sent by G-d to offer the one perfect blood sacrifice to provide a permanent atonement (*'covering'*) for your sin. Then believe that, by the power of his Holy Spirit, G-d raised Yeshua up from the dead three days after his crucifixion. Believe these things in your heart and mind and confess them with your mouth. Should faith be lacking then ask the G-d of your Forefathers to give it. The following prayer will help you make the required step of faith, (please read it through first before saying it). Above all, think carefully about what you are doing; except for the persuasion of your own conscience do not feel under any pressure to make this prayer. The freedom exists to ignore it.

*G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
G-d of Moses, Aaron and Joshua
G-d of Kings, Sages and Prophets,
G-d of all your people down the ages,
Their G-d, and my G-d,
Be faithful to your covenant promises
And remove any spiritual blindness from my mind concerning the Messiah.
Make my blind eyes see,
Allow my deaf ears to hear
And remove any hardness from my heart,
In your loving-kindness,
Regenerate me with your Holy Spirit
And grant me the strength to 'think the unthinkable.'
In your great mercy give me a true repentance that pleases you
And bestow the faith that will lead you to forgive my many sins*

*Lord G-d of Israel, please be merciful to me, a sinner,
All of my good works are useless in your sight
For they cannot meet the perfect standards that your holiness demands
Consequently, I approach you in fear and trembling, as a lost sinner
In desperate need of a Saviour;*

²⁰ This is stated, not from any vantage point of superiority but because of the terrible realisation of my own sinfulness. The profound awfulness and depravity of sin should never be underestimated.

*It is in this position of helpless dependence
That I ask you, Yeshua, to come into my heart and mind,
To fill my entire being with your gracious presence
By your grace (unmerited favour) I believe in you,
I trust that you were sent by G-d to die for my sin,
To pacify G-d's holy anger and to take the punishment I deserved,
Through the offering of your perfect blood sacrifice*

*Thanks to the faith given to me by your Holy Spirit
I believe, with all my heart, that Yeshua is Lord
And confess with my lips that G-d raised Him from the dead.
Thank you, Yeshua, for being my Lord and Saviour
Bless you for letting me know that the G-d of Israel
Is also my compassionate, Heavenly Father
Please, by your Holy Spirit, show me what I should do
To follow this step of faith, Amen*

Should you have made this prayer with any degree of faith then, 'welcome into the Kingdom of G-d,' for your new life has begun! Precisely how this new life will be worked out will be examined in later studies, but for now it is sufficient that you rejoice and thank the Lord for his great mercies. The Book of Psalms would be a good starting point for such praise. Read some aloud and you may find that they've possibly taken on a fresh meaning, unknown to you before. In addition, take time to read such Gospels as 'Matthew' and 'John' and examine the more challenging 'Letters to the Romans' and 'The Hebrews.' All of these works have much to show about the Jewish basis of your new Faith.

For all of those who are already regenerate believers in the Messiah, my final exhortation is for you to ask yourself, "Do I have a calling to pray for the Jewish people?" If so, then pray that the 'scales will fall from their eyes' and that they will receive the strength to recognise Yeshua as their Messiah which, for them, is to 'think the unthinkable.' Also, pray that a faithful witness to the gospel will take place before the Jewish people undergo a further period of suffering. Should you continue praying for the Jewish people G-d in His gracious mercy may confer some measure of divine blessing upon your life; this is because, when it comes to Israel and the Jews, powerful spiritual influences are at work. G-d is forever mindful of all of the many promises He has made to restore them. He will not fail to vindicate those who, in one capacity or another, seek the welfare of His ancient Covenant Nation. The G-d whom we follow keeps all of His unconditional promises made in scripture. His word is true and his promises of blessing aimed specifically toward the Jewish people will come to pass.

Questions

- 1. What factors hinder Jewish people from responding favourably to the belief that Yeshua is the true Messiah?**
- 2. What Biblical and historical evidence is there to disprove the over-optimistic view of the human condition prevalent within Judaism?**
- 3. Suggest how best to share the Gospel with Jewish people, (better enabling them to be receptive to its redemptive message).**
- 4. Why does the Jewish community need to 'think the unthinkable' about Yeshua?**
- 5. Suggest ways in which new Jewish believers in the Messiah may be helped to grow in their faith.**