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Getting tested for Rosh Hashanah

We eat apples and honey, honey cakes and sweets, all to wish each other a sweet New Year for Rosh Hashanah. Yet, Rosh Hashanah actually signals the beginning of a time of testing—spiritual testing.

The blast of the shofar (ram's horn) associated with this holy day calls us to a period of self-examination known as "the Days of Awe." This is to prepare us for Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar. At this season we test ourselves to see where we stand in our spiritual lives. We must examine our hearts to see if we are truly living for God as we should. If we discover sin in our lives (not too hard of a hunt for me) we need to repent of that sin and turn towards the Lord, seeking forgiveness and restoration.

But we can also find ourselves being tested by God in this season. Testing is a fact of life. From the womb to the tomb we endure various kinds of tests. For some,

life seems to be a constant test. Many wish for the time of testing and stress to be over for good. But God intends His testing to be a blessing that strengthens our faith and draws us closer to Him. God knows how to design a test that goes straight to the heart of a matter to accomplish His exact purposes.

Throughout Scripture we see that God tested His people. Look at Abraham. It is traditional at this time of year for Jewish people to read the "Akedah" (the binding of Isaac.) Take encouragement from the fact that not only did Abraham endure the test (willingness to give up his only son), but as a result of passing that test, he received the precious promises of God: "... Because you have done this thing ... blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore." (Gen.22:16b-17)

Today we all benefit from



Our Messiah Yeshua endured a horrific test on our behalf. But because He endured and passed this terrible test, we who trust in Him stand forgiven and cleansed of all our sin.

Abraham's faithfulness, even in the midst of great testing. The binding of Isaac was a prefiguring of Yeshua's (Jesus') passion and suffering, as well as of His death and resurrection. It was predicted concerning the Messiah that God would test him in this way: "Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer." (Isaiah 53:10) We can only imagine the struggles Jesus endured, knowing what lay before Him. He told His disciples in advance of the emotional toll this test was having on Him. "... My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death" (Mark 14:34)

Our Messiah Yeshua endured a horrific test on our behalf. But because He endured and passed this terrible test, we who trust in Him stand forgiven and cleansed of all our sin. We have a hope that will never fade, a confidence of our eternal life with Him in glory. Our Day of Atonement came about when we trusted Messiah Jesus to be our Redeemer and Savior from sin. Now we can come before Him with the assurance of His grace each and every day of our lives.

Still, it doesn't hurt to pause to reflect and test our hearts. Perhaps this season is a good time to do just that. Our confidence in God's forgiveness doesn't preclude us from being tested, and it may be that some are enduring difficult trials even now. The good news is that God promises to be with us and to help us endure, even as He helped Abraham and our Messiah Jesus to endure.

Lamentations tells us, "Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD." (Lamentations 3:40) Are you being tested this Rosh Hashanah? Don't fear the test or try to avoid it. Instead, look for the blessing and find out what God intends to do through the test in your life. That kind of trust will help to make for a sweet New Year.

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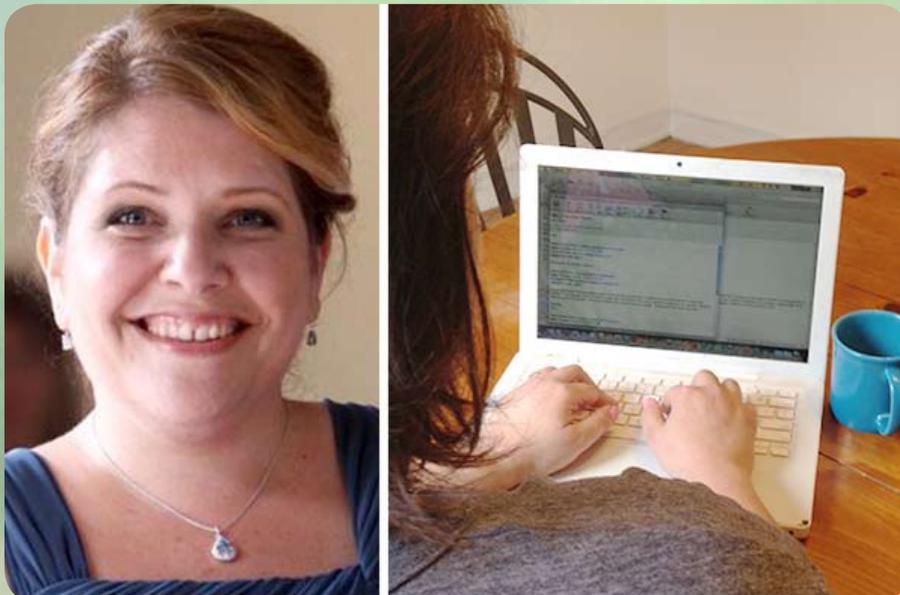
Avi Snyder reports, "One of our faithful volunteers, Istvan, brought a Jewish atheist named János to our Yom Kippur service last year. Istvan started as a volunteer with last year's 'Life from the Dead' Budapest campaign. He took part in a training class I conducted on one-on-one evangelism and began accompanying me on visits as a translator. Eventually he began meeting with János on his own, which was the plan. "János' brother, also not a believer, came to make a video of the service. However, he failed to film the very end of the service, because he was busy praying to receive the Lord as the invitation was given! After subsequent meetings, János also prayed to receive the Lord."

"A year later, János still comes regularly to our monthly Havurah meetings as well as to Kata's Shabbat dinners/Bible studies every other Friday night. According to Istvan, 'János is reading the Bible day and night. It is amazing to see his transformation from atheist to Jewish believer in Jesus.'"

Please pray for fruitful High Holiday services in Budapest as well as in Sydney and all our branches around the world!



ONLINE NETWORKING I



Heather Drake has recently joined our South Florida branch. She reports,

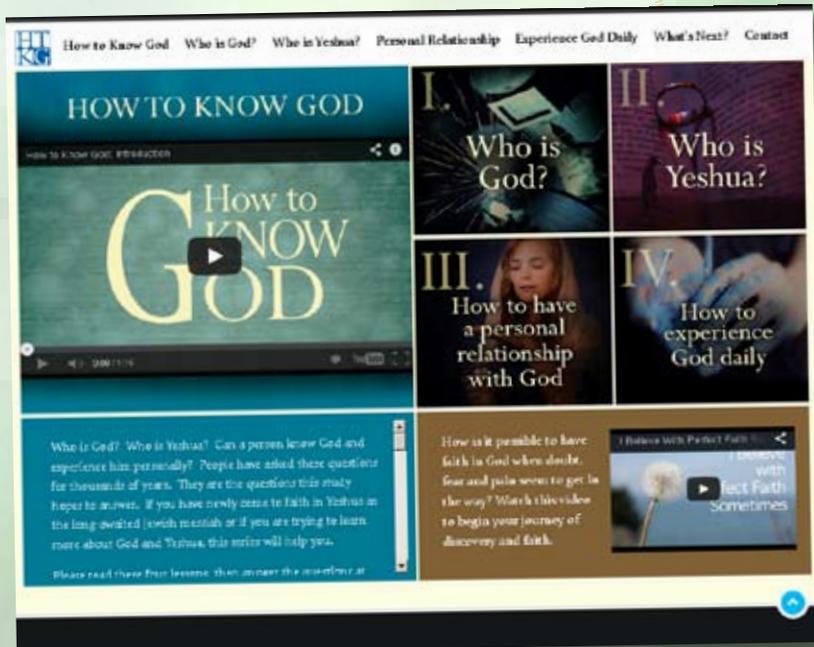
"I met Mark on Echo Chat.** He is a Conservative Jew who is very curious about Jesus. He was checking out our website and was excited to talk to another Jewish person about Jesus. He said he had a New Testament and wanted to talk later. He asked if there would there be someone to talk to him 'when he was ready.' I told him we have staff and volunteers around the world, many Jewish, who would be able to talk to him when he returned. He replied 'awesome.' Please pray for Mark's salvation."

ONLINE NETWORKING II

Sam Rood reports: "While logged in on Echo Chat, I received a chat request from Mel.* He was very interested in what the Bible had to say about the Messiah dying for our sins. He thought that it must be true that Jesus is the Messiah. I asked if he'd been able to speak with anyone about this. He said he hadn't and explained that he is nervous and wants to take things slowly. I asked him if it was all right if I gave him a call. Mel preferred to call me, so I gave him my phone number, hoping that he was a sincere seeker.

"He called me the next morning, still clearly nervous, and told me that he believed that Jesus is Messiah. He said that Jesus had been on his mind for 30 years. Back at uni he had friends involved in a campus outreach who used to tell him about Jesus, and they made a real impact on him. More recently he started exploring our website. From there he found our 'How to Know God' site and had been closely studying it over the course of a week.

"I asked if he understood what it means to follow Jesus. He had a New Testament with him (though he said he'd never read it before), so we read Romans 10:9 and John 3:16. He was amazed. We talked about the verses, and I explained what salvation means. Mel understood, so I asked him if he was ready to pray and surrender his life to Yeshua. He wanted to take his time and think it over. I prayed with Mel that God would give him wisdom, clarity and courage. Then I encouraged him to read from the Gospel of John.



"A few hours later Mel called again; as he was reading John he became even more convinced. We talked a bit, and I asked again if he was ready to pray. We started praying, but when we got to the part about receiving Jesus, Mel stopped and explained why he wasn't ready. He was very concerned about how his wife and kids would feel. He said that before he takes this step he needs to hear a confirmation from God. I'm still waiting to hear back from Mel, because he said that he would rather initiate contact and that he wants to take all of this slowly. Please keep Mel in your prayers."

*not his real name

Share our "How to Know God" Website

You may have friends and family who aren't ready to talk to you about God but that doesn't mean they won't quietly explore ways to know Him on their own. Our interactive "How to Know God" website has videos, photos, Scriptures and more to point the way to Jesus. Here's the URL: <http://bit.ly/discovergod>
Link to the site from your website or Facebook page . . . try tweeting it to your followers or find your own creative ways to use it to share your faith.

** Interested in volunteering to help us in the "Echo Chat" chatroom? Go to:
<http://www.jewsforjesus.org/join/net>



AroundSydney

Bob Mendelsohn
Regional Director - JFJ AustralAsia



Gospel Interactions

This winter we have been visiting with Jewish people in their homes and offices, handing out Gospel tracts mostly in the City, and continuing to teach at our weekly Jewish Bible classes and monthly fellowship nights. Here are some representative highlights of Jewish people who drop into the bookshop.

Eileen* grew up in Los Angeles in a Jewish home, but now lives in New York City as a lawyer. Along with her female friend she was traveling around the world in August when they both stopped in, asking for directions. But twenty minutes later after some debate-like conversation, Eileen left with a New Testament and more questions than ever about her messiah.

Lior* grew up in Israel and now along with her husband live in Sydney. She was looking for a gift for a friend, and spent 15 minutes with us at the shop. She left with a Hebrew New Testament and plans to return for gifts and for more conversation.

April* grew up in the former Soviet Union and moved here about four months ago. She's not yet 21. She has been in the shop several times, first seeking a synagogue, then seeking God, and even attending our Bible classes. God is not even close to 'done' with her.

Brett* grew up in Israel, but did not fight in the army, nor learn Hebrew as a child. He was insulated from the rest of the Jewish community as his parents were ex-pats and preferred staying with 'their own.' He has been in several times, now owns a Bible, and is trying to figure out the relationship between Jesus and being Jewish.

Holiday services:

The Jewish High Holidays are Rosh Hashanah (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). This year we are celebrating them on Thursday 25 September and Friday 3 October. All info is at bit.ly/OneNMan online. On Rosh Hashanah we will share a meal together after the service and on Yom Kippur, we will hear Kol Nidre and pray concertedly for the people of Israel. In fact, we will dedicate much of our gathering to be in prayer for many global situations as well. You are invited to attend and certainly to bring a Jewish friend or work colleague. An offering will be received at each meeting for the ongoing work of Jews for Jesus.

Book shop finances update:

We are humbled by the generous response of so many of you to our request for increased financial support. We receive ongoing donations, of course, but also money and notes from Sunday school classes, from the sale of certain assets, from friends who give out of their 'extra' money they find in old jackets and purses, and prospectors who tithe of their findings. We have not yet had to dip into reserves since we moved in March; this is awesome. Thanks for those who continue to support us at \$42 a month OVER and ABOVE their regular giving so that our rental increase is easily offset. We hope to have a barista coffee machine purchased and installed very soon.

The calendar informs us



The Hebrew calendar is made up of twelve lunar months, beginning with Nisan (the month in which Passover [and usually Easter] occurs). The weekly Sabbath is the first biblical holy day that God commanded, but Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are the first of the annual feasts mentioned in Leviticus 23. The High Holidays (the Feast of Trumpets, commonly known as Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement and the most solemn day of the

Hebrew calendar) occur in the seventh month, the month of Tishrei. Rosh

Hashanah as the Jewish New Year is a traditional rather than biblical concept. It makes for an interesting juxtaposition of solemnity, joy and introspection leading up to the day of Yom Kippur and happy holiday wishes for a sweet New Year.

Rosh Hashanah is actually a civil holiday, reminding us that 5775 years ago, God created the world. In Sydney, our staff will be celebrating Rosh Hashanah (25 September) with a daytime service and pot luck lunch (11 am) and Yom Kippur (3 October) with an evening service (7 pm). We are renting Church in the MarketPlace at Bondi Junction. These are great opportunities to bring Jewish mates and relatives to hear the Good News

of Messiah. Why not this year?

Ring our office for more information. 9388.0559.

Following is the list of Hebrew calendar months in their proper order: Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Av, Elul, Tishrei, Cheshvan, Kislev, Tevet, Shevat, Adar.

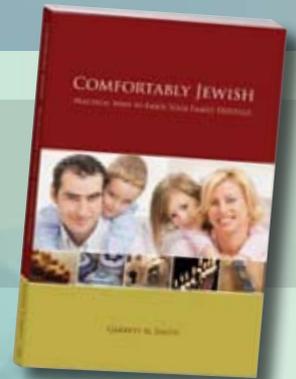
Read more [link to <http://www.jewsforjesus.org/judaica>] about the Jewish holidays and other Jewish lifecycle events, particularly from a Messianic perspective. And use the coupon to buy this year's 16-month calendar (through December 2015) and keep up with these dates all year.



For orders on our website over \$150, we pay all shipping costs.

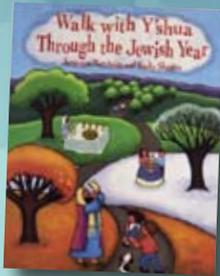
Comfortably Jewish

A great book you can give as a gift to a Jewish friend, especially if they are married to someone not Jewish. It gives lots of practical tips for things they can do as a family, and they will really appreciate it. **Price: \$18**



Walk with Y'shua, through the Jewish year

Year round curriculum for the Jewish holidays for children. A great way for parents to learn about the feasts as well. Great illustrations, includes work projects and crafts. **Cost: \$18.**



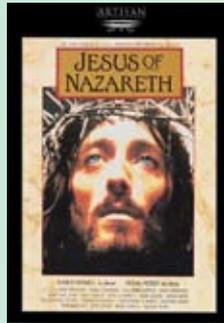
Marty Goetz: Songs of Israel

CD. Marty Goetz lends his crooner voice and piano to the classic songs of modern Israel. From showtunes and movies, from folk songs to the national anthem. You will fall in love with these very singable and most enjoyable (mostly 20th century) classics. **Cost: \$26.**



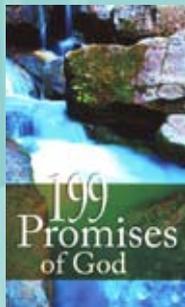
"Jesus of Nazareth" by Franco Zeffirelli

DVD. Praised by critics and religious leaders worldwide, this epic movie accurately portrays Yeshua's life, death, and resurrection. Filmed on location in Israel, it features an all-star cast including Sir Laurence Olivier, Anthony Quinn, Olivia Hussey, and Robert Powell as Jesus. Digitally mastered DVD features extras: scene access, cast and crew information, and "Living in Biblical Times" segment. Approx. 6 hours. **Cost: \$28.**



199 Promises of God

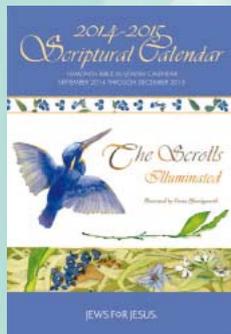
Booklet. Whatever life brings your way, you'll find trustworthy and faith-fortifying nuggets in this pocket-sized treasure. Ideal for visitation ministries. 96 pages, softcover from Barbour. **Cost: \$7.**



Calendar

- September 2014- December 2015
- All Jewish biblical dates as well as Latin calendar dates
- All major Jewish and Israeli holidays are highlighted
- All 16 reproductions appropriate for framing.

Cost: \$25.



Anointing oil

Frankincense and myrrh. prayers to offer and a bright-colored bottle. Open, touch a person or item of concern and pray God brings his blessing. **Cost: \$25**



All costs include shipping in Australia. For other countries, please add \$4 per item. Sorry, that's Aussie Post for you.

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