

Brazilian Jews: One of Most Unreached of the Chosen People

When the Jewish people were scattered across the world during the Diasporas of AD 70 and 135, they were truly spread to the four corners of the earth. The scattering winds eventually brought the Jews of the Mediterranean to Brazil only 17 years before Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church.

According to the Jewish Virtual Library, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw.Brazil.html, most of the Portuguese Jews fleeing the Inquisition did so under the guise of being **Conversos** (Jewish converts to Christianity). However, most of the new Brazilian Jews were not Christian in their hearts and lives. They were desperate to avoid the tortures of the Inquisition and so did whatever was necessary to stay alive. And we should note that the horrors of the Inquisition are just one of the reasons why Jewish people are wary when true Christians share the Gospel of Messiah Jesus. In fact, the evil of the Inquisition and the malevolence of the Holocaust have done more to harm the work of Jewish evangelism than anything else in Christian history.

Pages could be written regarding the history of the Jewish people in Brazil. Brazil was one of the first nations to vote for the U.N. Partition and the modern state of Israel in 1947. Brazil has been a relative bastion of safety for the Chosen People. The numbers of Portuguese speaking Jewish people in Brazil are prominent and influential. And what is

true around the world is true in Brazil. Brazilian Jews need Jesus as their Messiah.

Just how many Brazilian Jews are there? It is estimated that there are presently between 130,000 and 150,000 Jews in Brazil. Approximately half of that number live in Sao Paulo – a city rich in Jewish history and influence. However, the presence of an active and thriving Gospel witness to the Sao Paulo Jews and Jewish people throughout Brazil is limited at best.

Tzedakah Ministries did an internet search of Messianic ministries in Brazil and the result was more than discouraging. I was able to find only three Messianic congregations in the entire nation of Brazil. Another Jewish evangelistic mission has two missionaries but they are limited by resources available and the sheer, vast number of people they must reach for Jesus.

However, the Lubavitch Jews are busy and working hard in Brazil. According to their own website (www.chabad.org), Lubavitch emissaries (*shliach*) have outreach centers in eight Brazilian cities. In fact, many of these cities, specifically Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, are home to multiple

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centers. Hasidic Judaism takes the country of Brazil very seriously. So why don't Christians, churches, and denominations who know the truth of the Messiahship of Jesus?

The Jewish people of Brazil have been on my heart and in the heart of Tzedakah Ministries for well over a year now. My prayer is that by the June 2009 edition of *Tzedakah Times* I will be able to report on the glorious success of the mission endeavor outreach in Brazil. Will you join Tzedakah Ministries in this prayer?

Thank you as always for your prayers and encouragement. Let me know what you think of this newsletter edition. And please be sure to read about the ministry of [Elijah's Witnesses](#). Shalom!

Amy Downey

Jesus in the Talmud:

What Was Their Intent and Purpose?

If you were to google the phrase, "Jesus in the Talmud", you might be shocked by what you found. There are websites devoted to explaining away the visceral reactions regarding Jesus found in the Talmud. There are other websites who use the Talmudic diatribes as weapons to justify their anti-Semitic heart. There are still other websites which are confused by why the rabbis very so angry about Jesus' claim (truth) to be the Messiah for whom the Jewish people had been waiting for since the days of Moses. So just what was the rabbi's purpose in

writing some pretty nasty things about Jesus? Well, I am glad you asked!

The Talmud does make some vicious claims about the Virgin Conception, his life, and his death and resurrection. We must admit this truth. However, I would propose that it is not out of vicious anger but out of a very real fear that those claims made in the early years after Jesus' resurrection and ascension were true!

The Talmud and Jewish scholars never respond to another religion in their writings; however, Jesus they mentioned. Why? I think for two reasons.

First, they did not see Jewish followers of Jesus as another religion but as a sect of Judaism. They were attempting to respond to what they viewed as heresy within Judaism. This is important because it goes to prove the argument that Christianity is not an offshoot but Judaism but a realization/fulfillment of it. This is important to the Jewish rabbis who state that you can't be Jewish and believe in Jesus. This is also important to those "Christian" folks who seem to want to forget that our Messiah was and is Jewish and the Gospel was for them ... FIRST!

There is so much more that I could write on this subject. However, I hope you will explore this issue yourself. I am finishing Peter Schäfer's *Jesus in the Talmud* and will seek to review it for you later.

However, let me give you one quote that I thought was fascinating and revealing – "Hence, the Palestinians sources are aimed at the origin of the Christian sect, emerging out of the common ground of Judaism." Something to think about!

Paul's Relationship to the Jewish People ... The Book

God has blessed the mission of Tzedakah Ministries. The blessing is so important because this work at times borders on the impossible!

One joyful moment from the last few months for Tzedakah Ministries is the publication of *Paul's Relationship to the Jewish People: An Analysis of 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 and Romans 9:1-5* (Emanuel University, Romania). This work is hopefully one of the beginning steps to rectifying the separation between Christendom and the Jewish people.

The book examines one of the most positive Pauline passages (Romans) as well as one of the most controversial (1 Thessalonians). For while we have all been moved by the heart wrenching lament of Paul in Romans, pastors avoid the diatribe against his people in his letter to the church at Thessalonica.

The passage to the Thessalonian church is uncomfortable. It creates a desire to squirm in one's seat. What was Paul doing when he declared his own brothers and sisters in the flesh as murderers of the Lord and killers of the prophets? What was Paul's purpose in writing something so strident?

This book, while recognizing the awkwardness of the Thessalonian passage, believes that confronting and comparing the two passages is one of the first steps in healing the breach between God's Church and God's Chosen Ones.

Please join Tzedakah Ministries in prayer as we seek to find an American publisher for the book. I personally believe that this book needs to be read, needs to be discussed, and needs to be evaluated.

April 6, 2008 – "Ministry Testimony (p.m.)," Heritage Baptist Church, Waxahachie, Texas

April 20, 2008 – "Jesus in the Passover Meal (a.m.)," Abbott Baptist Church, Abbott, Texas

April 21-23, 2008 – "Ministry/Display Booth," Baptist Missionary Association of America National Meeting, Waco, Texas

May 2, 2008 – "Facing the Unthinkable ... The Holocaust," Adat Shalom Messianic Congregation, Dallas, Texas

May 17, 2008 – "Facing the Unthinkable ... The Holocaust," Yaine Chadosh Fellowship, Farmers Branch, Texas

May 25, 2008 – "Jesus in the Passover Presentation (a.m.)," First Baptist Church, Granite, Oklahoma

August 31, 2008 – "Ministry Testimony (a.m.)," Nutrioso Bible Church, Nutrioso, Arizona

September 28, 2008 – "Ministry Testimony," Calvary Baptist Church, La Verne, California

October 14, 2008 – "Mothers of the Messiah," SW Arkansas District WMA, Emerson, Arkansas

ARE YOU ONE OF 7,000?

Tzedakah Ministries has established **Elijah's Witnesses** – a prayer team committed to pray for the salvation of the Jewish people.

An **Elijah's Witness** will receive weekly email prayer requests about Jewish people who are in need of the Gospel message of Messiah Jesus.

Will you commit to praying for the Jewish people? Email info@tzedakahministries.org and let Tzedakah Ministries know that you will be a Prayer Warrior for God's Chosen People.