

## THE DEFENSE RESTS

by Bruce Nahin

I was sitting in Destiny II, an L.A. nightclub just around the corner from where I lived. Though it was a hotspot at night, during the day it was quiet. I often went there during the day to study for the bar exam. There was a comfy couch, and sometimes the janitor brought me coffee.

On this particular day, a heavysset, dark-skinned man walked into the club and we started up a casual conversation. His name was Steve and he was planning to buy Destiny II. He couldn't afford a lawyer and asked if I would help him out with the business in exchange for a percentage of the company.

I was just a law student studying for the bar and this guy was offering me part-ownership. It sounded exciting, and the extra money wouldn't hurt. So I took him up on his offer. Neither of us had any idea where that partnership would lead.

Steve decided to change the club's name. Back then, clubs changed their names and/or motifs frequently to bring in new customers. I suggested that Steve name the club after the existing décor so he wouldn't have to refurbish the club. And so, Chippendales was born.

A couple of years later someone suggested turning Chippendales into a male strip joint—a place for women to have a good time. It was the late '70s—the sexual liberation movement was still in full swing and the idea was an instant success. When the dancers started touring the country, business exploded. My status zoomed from lowly law student to Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel in a company that was becoming a national craze. It was quite an ego trip!

I had always figured I would be successful. Ambition seemed to run in the family. My father was, and still is, a successful attorney. He and my mother always stressed the importance of getting a good education, making a good living, having a “good life.”

I was born in 1953 in Los Angeles, California. Both my parents were Jewish, but neither was raised in a particularly religious home. We lived in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood, but we adopted a more secular Jewish lifestyle. For us, being Jewish was all about culture and ethnicity. There were certain things that Jewish people did and, being Jewish, we did them.

*Continued on page 2*

We attended services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but never went to temple any other time of year. We kept matzo in the house during Passover—right next to the rye bread. In short, we kept very few traditions, and those we did keep seemed arbitrary. As for God, I never doubted his existence—I always assumed he was out there somewhere. I just didn't care where. I pictured him like a Greek sort of god—impersonal, abstract and irrelevant to my life. After my bar mitzvah I stopped attending temple services.

After high school I enrolled in UCLA as a political science major. My plan was to eventually become an ambassador, perhaps in the Soviet Union or East Germany, but then the Yom Kippur War of 1973 broke out, and with the war, the Arab boycott. The Soviet block and its allies refused to allow any Jews to serve as diplomats to their countries. That destroyed my plans.

It seemed unfair that I could not pursue my career just because I was Jewish, but I didn't dwell on it for long. I decided to pursue a career where I could advance without hindrance. I was somewhat familiar with the legal profession because of my father's law practice. I knew that I could build a successful life for myself as a lawyer, so after graduation I entered Loyola Law School in Los Angeles.

During college and law school I got caught up in what seemed to be the typical West L.A. lifestyle—drinking, drugs and nightclubs. When Steve approached me about becoming co-owner of

myself becoming the swing vote in many decisions, from where we toured, to whom we hired and how we handled our finances.

I began postdoctoral work in entertainment law at UCLA. One of my instructors was involved in a company that promoted concerts at the Forum, one of the country's biggest venues. I worked backstage at some of the gigs to learn the business.

I was hanging out at these huge concerts with all the big-name bands of the time—Ted Nugent, The Police, The Cars. Eventually, I got to know some of the celebrities. Many seemed impressed by my Chippendales connection, and before long I was representing a lot of musicians and professional athletes. I was working for my father by then, bringing my new clients to his firm. Eventually, he made me a partner.

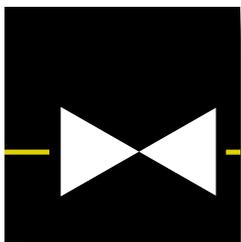
Between Chippendales and the Forum my life was pretty much sex, cocaine and rock 'n' roll. I was fast on my way to becoming a real coke-aholic. The company I was keeping encouraged this lifestyle. But in 1981 a couple of people caused me to clean up my life. I developed a friendship with a narcotics officer in the LAPD. Oliver was the arresting officer on a big gang raid. I was involved in the trial, and we went out to lunch a couple of times. A few weeks after the trial, Oliver called. He was going to be working some nights in the Marina and wondered if he could crash at my place so he wouldn't have to commute from the San Fernando Valley.

He offered to help out with the rent, and I agreed to the arrangement.

Oliver and I agreed on one basic rule: no drugs in the house or he'd arrest me. Despite this, now and then I gave in to my cravings. One time Oliver caught me, and flushed several hundred dollars worth of drugs down the toilet. I was lucky he didn't flush

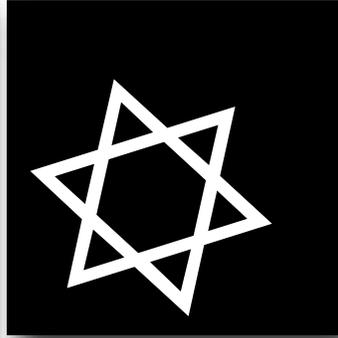
me down the toilet along with it.

Then there was Debrah. She was my stockbroker's secretary. We met as I was signing some forms in his office. I was immediately attracted to her, and we agreed to get together for lunch sometime. Debi



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Chippendales, I figured the position would only make life even more fun. We brought in a third partner, Nicholas, a leading choreographer on Broadway. He really helped develop the Chippendales show. But Nicholas and Steve did not get along, and I found



moved in with me two months after our first date.

Debi was not into drugs, and she and Oliver forced me to clean up. It took about two months to break my addiction. I never had to go into a rehab program—I had a 220-pound roommate who gave me his own version of “tough-love” on the one hand, and a beautiful woman on the other. Believe me, I was motivated to quit.

Even though I stopped using drugs, I was still involved with Chippendales and all the celebrities—there was still plenty of alcohol, plenty of money and plenty of power to enjoy. Once I was off cocaine, Debrah didn’t mind my involvement with the L.A. party scene. In fact, sometimes she came down to the club and helped the performers with their makeup and that sort of thing.

Debi was from a nominally Christian background but, like me, religion was not a big part of her life. At one point, she and I took classes on Jewish culture that were designed specifically for gentiles and mixed couples. We asked the rabbi who taught these classes to marry us but, oddly, he refused. I was upset, but we found another rabbi and, two years after we first met, Debi and I got married. We had a traditional Jewish wedding ceremony, complete with the chuppah, yarmulkes, Hebrew prayers and the breaking of the glass. But beyond the cultural classes and the wedding ceremony, religion and God were not issues for us.

Our first son, Jake, was born in 1985. By this time we were living in Santa Clarita, north of Los Angeles. It seemed I had achieved everything I had ever wanted: a good law practice, money, enviable social

status and a family. I would have been happy to continue living that life. Slowly, however, things began to change.

The Chippendales club in L.A. had grown to dozens of clubs across the continent, as well as touring shows, calendars, coffee mugs—the works. But Nick and Steve’s relationship continued to worsen. As Chippendales became more successful, it became increasingly difficult to have two partners who did not agree on anything.

And in 1987, Nicholas was murdered. His was the first of a string of murders and shady dealings that seemed to hover over Chippendales. I suspected that Steve had been involved in Nick’s murder, and I feared my own life might be in danger. I didn’t want to deal with people and places that had contributed to my friend’s death, and I lost interest in the whole venture. Debi and I had been very close to Nick, and when our second son was born a year later, we named him Nicholas.

I no longer frequented the club or had anything to do with running the business, but I remained a part-owner and continued to receive checks from the profits. A few years later, Steve was arrested for Nick’s murder, and when convicted, he hanged himself in his jail cell. At that point, I decided it was time to get away from Chippendales completely. Whereas I once loved the fun, the money and the famous people the club brought me, now I saw nothing but evil coming out of it. I gave my part of the company to Steve’s widow, told her to do whatever she chose with it and broke all remaining ties.

Debi and I moved with our two sons to another

*Continued on page 4*

small community north of L.A. I decided to leave the partnership with my father and start up my own law firm. My life was not as glamorous as it had been, but I was still successful and happy.

One summer, I noticed signs around town promoting something called Adventure Club. I didn't really know what it was, but it sounded fun and I decided my two boys, then about four and six, should go. If I had known it was sponsored by a local church, I would never have dreamed of sending my kids. I learned it was a church event through one of our babysitters. By then I had my mind set on my children going, and I was not prepared to backtrack.

The Adventure Club wasn't something where you drop your kids off; parents participated in an adult program while their children played. I was planning to bring the boys, but just a few days before the first meeting, I herniated two disks in my back and was in no shape to drive the kids there. So Debi took them.

Since our move, Debi had started attending a church. Whereas she had previously been a Christian in name only, now she seemed to truly believe all this Jesus stuff. She occasionally tried to tell me about her beliefs, but I was not interested.



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Debi and the kids loved the club, and the next week I was well enough so that we could all go together. When I walked into the church, the place didn't make a big impression on me. There was some kind of Bible lecture for the adults, but I don't really remember anything about it. The one thing I noticed was the people—they had such an air of community and camaraderie about them. Everyone knew everyone else, and they were all so friendly and outgoing.

After a few weeks of the Adventure Club, I decided to check out one of the church's Sunday services, and Debi and I began attending regularly. Before we knew it, we were hosting the church's Bible study in our home. But I still had little interest in spiritual matters; I just liked being with these people.

One week Tom, the man who led the Bible study,

announced that we were going to do a series of Bible studies to prove that Jesus was the Messiah.

I was the only non-believer in the group, and the only Jew, so it was fairly obvious that this series was for my benefit. I didn't have any problems with that—I'm always up for a challenge—but when Tom started by opening to the New Testament, I objected. "After all, if Jesus isn't the Messiah, then the New Testament is nothing but lies and fiction, so you can't build your case from there," I told him. I said that if he wanted to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, he would have to do it from the Hebrew Scriptures.

So our group began to take an in-depth look at the messianic prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures. Each week we read a passage from the Prophets. Tom would try to show how it pointed to Jesus as being the Messiah and I would argue the opposite, making objections and posing questions. We discussed several prophecies, such as Isaiah 53. What was originally meant to be a six-week study stretched on for two years.

Somewhere along the line, my involvement with this group evolved from social enjoyment to genuine curiosity. I really wanted to learn whether or not Jesus was the Messiah, and I started soaking up information like a sponge. I kept reading, I kept listening and I kept debating.

I'm not sure when, how or even why the idea that Jesus is the Messiah started making sense to me. It wasn't any one passage or argument in particular that convinced me but, at some point, I started to understand more and argue less.

However, I still was not ready to accept Jesus as Messiah.

One obstacle held me back—one objection I couldn't seem to overcome—Jews do not believe in Jesus. I'd been taught that Jesus was "their" thing, a gentile thing. Neither he nor the New Testament was for the Jews. It wasn't that I felt particularly hostile toward Christians. I simply felt that, because of certain attitudes and events in history, I as a Jew should not believe in Jesus.

But, as I studied the Bible, I began to realize that my assumptions didn't match up to what I was seeing. For example, I found that the New Testament was not anti-Semitic. In fact, it's a very Jewish book. Paul was not a Jew-hater, as I had always been taught. He was Jewish and proud of his heritage. I also realized that the teachings of Jesus were not anti-Semitic either.

I concluded that if the teachings of Jesus were not



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anti-Semitic, then those who called themselves Christians and yet hated the Jews must have been misguided. They took on the name of Jesus, but they did not act in the spirit of what he taught. I decided that if Jesus really did fulfill the messianic prophecies, there is no reason why I or any other Jewish person should not believe in him. But still, it was as if I'd seen the path leading out of the forest, without realizing that I was lost and needed to take that path.

After all, I was a very successful attorney; I had built a good life for myself and I had done it on my own. It took me a couple more years to finally realize that God was an even bigger big-shot than I or any other big-shots I had known, and that no matter how successful, how self-reliant, how self-important I was, I could not impress God or achieve his approval on my own. In 1995 I prayed and told God that I knew I could not climb my way up to him on my own. I asked him for his forgiveness and accepted Jesus' sacrifice for my sins as the way to have a relationship with my God. It felt wonderful.

My parents' reaction to my faith has been mixed. My father wasn't particularly pleased, nor was he particularly disapproving. From time to time he and I talk about my beliefs. My mother, on the other hand, does not discuss religion with me, although she does make passing comments at times.

As for my clients, a good number of them were (and are) devout Persian Jews. Sometimes they try to

dissuade me from my beliefs. I now hear many of the objections I once raised. One Orthodox client always brings me information from his rabbi about why I shouldn't believe in Jesus. We go back and forth debating over lunch—defending my position on an issue is, after all, what I'm trained to do.

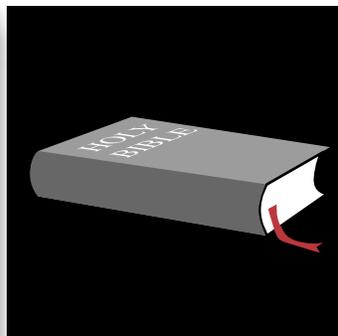
Ultimately, most clients don't care what I believe, as long as I do my job. Some of them even appreciate the influence my faith has had on my practice. Instead of being quick to file a lawsuit, I try to pay more attention to my clients' problems and see if there's another way to settle matters. I'm also much more aware of moral and ethical issues involved with my practice.

The most significant result of my faith has been in my overall attitude toward life. I try to give more attention to the needs of people around me. I am less impressed with my own accomplishments, because I realize that no matter how much I can accomplish, I could never impress God on my own. Rather, I rest in the knowledge that God wanted to be with me so much that he sent Jesus, so that I could know God and be with him forever. This has changed my priorities on a grand scale.

I might have entered the legal profession because I was concerned about my social status and material success. But now I know that the most important case I could ever build is to defend and to prove the claims of Jesus.

Believe me, I never would have imagined that I would come to believe these things. Maybe you feel as I did, that you have everything you could want and don't need help from God or anyone else. But if there is a God, you need to know him and live by his standards. And if Jesus is the Messiah, then you need to know that, too. I hope you will be willing to consider the evidence for Jesus with an open mind. ■

*The Nahin family*



*Bruce Nahin and his wife, Debi*



# A Mingan of Messianic Prophecies

In his article, Bruce Nahin mentions that it wasn't one specific argument or prophecy that convinced him that Jesus is the Messiah. But when all of the evidence is considered, it is hard to dismiss. Following are some of the prophecies that have persuaded Bruce Nahin and thousands of others that Jesus is who he claimed to be.

Subject	Prophecy	Fulfillment
The Messiah would be born of a virgin.	Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.	Luke 1:34-35 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God."
The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.	Micah 5:2 But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.	Matthew 2:1-2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."
The Messiah would be a prophet like Moses.	Deuteronomy 18:15,17-19 "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. . . . The LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.'"	John 6:14 Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."  Matthew 21:11 And the crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee."  John 1:45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."
The Messiah would be God.	Isaiah 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.	John 12:45 "He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me."  John 10:30 "I and the Father are one."

## Subject

## Prophecy

## Fulfillment

The Messiah would enter Jerusalem on a donkey.

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Matthew 21:1-5 When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: "SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.'"

The Messiah's hands and feet would be pierced.

Psalms 22:16c They pierced my hands and my feet.

Luke 23:33 When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.

The Messiah would be killed before the destruction of the Temple.

Daniel 9:26 . . . the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.

Matthew 24:1-2 Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down." (Note: Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by the Roman general Titus in 70 C.E., 38 years after Jesus was crucified.)

The Messiah's garments would be divided.

Psalms 22:18 They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

John 19:23-24 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be"; this was to fulfill the Scripture: "THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS."

The Messiah would be an atonement for the sins of the world.

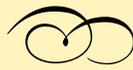
Isaiah 53:8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

The Messiah would be resurrected from the dead.

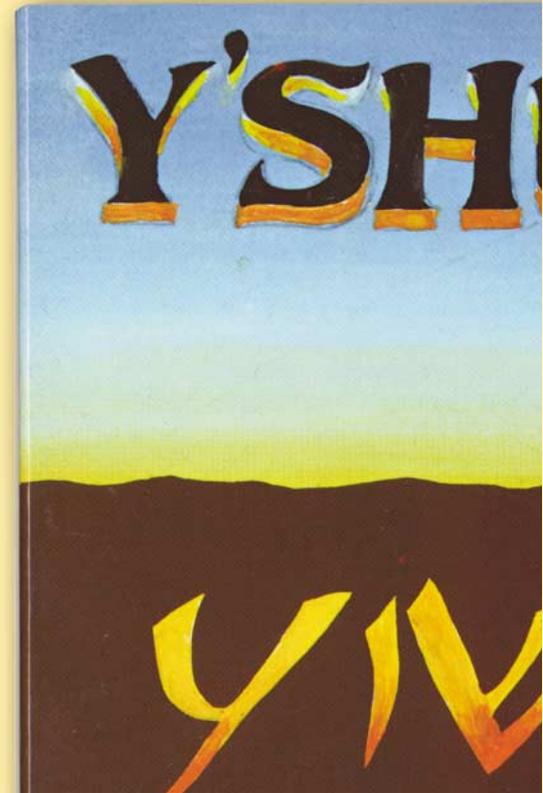
Psalms 16:10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

Matthew 28:5-6 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying."



God has a case against all sin and injustice in the world. And none of us has lived a life that enables God to declare us innocent. Jesus not only lived an innocent life, but he is willing to be our advocate if we admit our shortcomings and desire God's forgiveness and mercy. Maybe you find that hard to believe, but feel it's important enough to investigate.

A logical place to begin your discovery is to talk to God about it. There are all kinds of resources to present the case for Jesus as the Messiah. One such resource is a book called *Y'shua: the Jewish Way to Say Jesus* by Moishe Rosen. This book discusses several messianic prophecies and how Jesus fulfills them. For a free copy of *Y'shua* please fill out this coupon:



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