



JEW FOR JESUS®

THE NEWSLETTER
FOR CHRISTIANS WHO
**WANT TO KNOW ABOUT
JEWS & EVANGELISM**

REPENTANCE: IS IT YOUR LIFESTYLE?

by David Brickner, executive director

Rosh Hashanah (Festival of Trumpets) marks the beginning of a ten-day Jewish season that ends on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement.* This season, called the “Days of Awe,” is all about repentance (turning to God and away from sin). Yet most of my people, if they focus on repentance at all, wait until the Day of Atonement to do so.

Few folks today—Jewish or not—think of repentance as a lifestyle. But repentance is so important for spiritual life and health that God invites people to repent, not just once a year, but each and every day.

Many miss the blessings of “lifestyle repentance” because they have a wrong impression of God. Either they fear that he is a judgmental tyrant out to exact

vengeance, or else they imagine him as a kindly old man who turns a blind eye to the moral condition of His children. In fact, God is neither!

Psalm 51, the powerful prayer of King David, is a great example of repentance. David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and then murdered her husband Uriah to try and cover it up. How on earth could he approach God after that?

True repentance is based on an understanding of God’s character, and in this Psalm we see David’s deep and true understanding of the nature of God. David affirms that God is righteous, just and blameless when He judges. God wants truth in our “inner parts” and a “contrite spirit” when we sin. *(continued on page 2)*

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True repentance is based on an understanding of God’s character.



A reason people miss out on lifestyle repentance is a wrong or incomplete idea of what repentance truly is.

Photo by Getty Images/Spapiba

David laments that it's not just what he does, but who he is, that calls him to turn back to God for forgiveness.

A third reason people miss out on lifestyle repentance is a wrong or incomplete idea of what repentance truly is. Many things that may seem like repentance are not: simply acknowledging a mistake, admitting embarrassment or shame or feeling disappointment in oneself. Any of these might help us see our need to repent, but on their own, each falls short.

David's views, first of God, and then of sin, deeply inform his understanding of repentance. He knows that true repentance is ultimately a supernatural work of God. That's why David cries, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Only the creator God can do what David is asking. The cry for mercy comes from a person who has no more tricks up his sleeve.

God did forgive David's sin, and yet it still bore a tragic consequence: the child Bathsheba conceived would die. Some rabbis have taught that David's son had to die in his place. About this they are correct—but they have the wrong son.

"Son of David" is a Messianic title—and it is used over and over in the Bible to refer to Yeshua (Jesus). Yeshua's once-for-all sacrifice for sin is how David ultimately found forgiveness. Repentance is possible because Jesus took our sin upon Himself. God's greatest demonstration of love for us is found in Him.

My Jewish people desperately need to know about this great gift of repentance in David's greater Son. But for all who have received this gift, a lifestyle of repentance is a blessing. It daily reminds us of God's relentless love and forgiveness for us. That, in turn, makes us more loving and forgiving people—and don't you think God enjoys that?

David Brickner is also an author, public speaker and avid hiker. Find out more about David, his writings, speaking schedule and possible availability to speak at your church at jewsforjesus.org/david-brickner

**This year the Jewish calendar date corresponds with September 30.*

(continued from page 1) At the same time, David also knows that God is full of grace, lovingkindness and tender mercies. He's a generous Spirit, "the God of my Salvation." That's why David asks God to be merciful "according to" His true character.

Like David, we can rely upon God to act according to His nature. We don't need to wonder what kind of mood God is in before we approach Him. He won't need to be convinced, placated or cajoled. He *always* acts consistently. When we turn back toward God, seeking His forgiveness and grace, He freely gives it each and every time.

A second reason why so many people miss out on a lifestyle of repentance is a false understanding of sin. Some think of sin as only the very worst behaviors—serious but not something of which they are guilty. Others see sin as more common but less serious—more like mistakes that anyone could make (and easily dismiss) because "nobody's perfect."

David's understanding of God's nature deeply informs his understanding of sin. David knows that Somebody is perfect. When David speaks of transgressions (the crossing of a boundary) and iniquity (missing the mark), it all relates back to that perfect Somebody—God. God sets boundaries and identifies the mark that is being missed.

Sin is first and foremost an assault on the very nature of God, as though He and His standards are irrelevant, as though He does not merit our trust and obedience. Our careless and rebellious disregard for God separates us from Him just as much as our actions/inactions. In Psalm 51

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We exist to make the messiahship of Jesus an unavoidable issue to our Jewish people worldwide.

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*Your ministry partners in Budapest
and Odessa have news for you!*

bits from the BRANCHES

Attila Varadi reports from **Budapest**, “I met with Geri for the first time in spring of 2016 at a fast food restaurant in Budapest. My colleague, Ildi, was with me as we shared the gospel of Jesus. Geri realized he was a sinner and prayed with us to repent and receive Jesus as his Messiah.

“Geri occasionally came to our meetings and attended a local congregation, but he was depressed and seemed bound in his old way of life. One day I met with him for Bible study at his home. I was surprised to see his room full of mystical relics, amulets and images.

“We opened the Bible and read 2 Chronicles 29, about how the priests entered the Temple to purify it from anything unclean. Then we looked at 1 Corinthians 6:19. I explained to Geri that we are God’s temple. He loves us

so much and wants to cleanse us.

“I asked Geri to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to remind him what he needed to confess. As he began to write down his sins and the negative influences from his past, slowly the paper filled. We went through the list, asking the Lord to cleanse Geri and take over.

Geri immediately took a bag and together we started to gather his various relics. When I returned for another Bible study, he told me with joy that he’d smashed the contents of the bag into little pieces and thrown them in the trash. He was baptized and began seeking the Lord’s will and calling for his life! This is my greatest joy, when I see the Lord saving our people. To Him be all the glory!



Attila

Photos © Jews for Jesus

Galina Bogomolova reports from **Odessa**, concerning her daughter in **Germany**, “My husband Igor and I came to know the Lord through Jews for Jesus in 1995 and immediately began sharing the gospel, first as volunteers and then as staff. Our oldest daughter, Olga, served with us for a time and now lives in a small German town with her family. We’ve been blessed to see how she still puts to use what she learned from our ministry, as you can see from her letter to us:

“We found a wonderful church here, with parishioners who care very much for our Jewish people. I began to conduct special services there for Jewish holidays, always inviting unbelieving Jews and Gentiles to join us.

“As we planned and prepared a party for Rosh Hashanah, I kept asking the brothers and sisters, ‘Please, pray that God would bring unbelieving people, including Jews, to our party—at least one Jewish person!’

“God answered our prayers and more than one Jewish person came—including the chairman of the town’s Jewish society, Dima, and his wife Sveta.

“Two days after the event, Dima phoned me. ‘The attitude of Christians toward the Jews has not been very kind. Why does your community have such a good attitude toward us?’

“‘It is because the Jews gave Messiah to the world. Christianity is rooted in God’s promises to the Jewish people.’

“‘I know that,’ Dima said. ‘I liked the holiday service you conducted.’ He then asked if we would come and conduct similar holiday services for their group! Please pray for our continuing relationships with the Jewish people in our area, and that they would come to know Messiah Jesus.”

Names of many people we meet are changed to protect privacy.



Photo © Jews for Jesus

Galina

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PRAYER PROMPTERS

You'll be making a difference in the lives of people we meet as you pray for:



Jewish people to attend our holiday events with an open heart to the gospel



continuing preparations for our next Behold Your God Israel campaign



fruitful follow-up from last month's outreaches in Budapest, Manchester and New York City



continued opportunities for Olga to share the gospel with Jewish people in Germany



God's blessings as we invest in the next generation of Jews for Jesus

WHY IT'S WISE TO APOLOGIZE

"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." (James 3:17)



Photo © Jews for Jesus/Pige-Standers

I've always been interested in wisdom, though maybe not for the best reasons. For years the idea of having or wanting wisdom made me feel good about myself. But that's not what real wisdom does. Not at all.

Real wisdom is "from above" and focuses on how good God is. It equips us to care about what He cares about. That's why real wisdom makes us peaceable, gentle and willing to yield. It enables us to repent and apologize when we are wrong.

Some are better at apologizing than others. Those of us who rarely apologize might:

- be unaware that we've done anything apology-worthy because we're not paying attention
- allow pride to prevent us from apologizing even when we know that we should
- have insecure hearts whispering that, if we apologize, we'll appear weak and people will take advantage of us.

The good news is, we can ask God each day to help us be alert and responsive to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. When we really want to know where we're falling short, God shows us for our good and His glory. He gives us the grace to repent. And true repentance leads to "making it right"—not only with God—but also with one another.

When it comes time to apologize, it helps to give the kind of apology we would appreciate receiving. Most of us have received at least one "epic fail" apology.



Some say they're sorry, but we get the feeling they don't believe they did anything wrong: "I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings, but I didn't know you would get that upset over something so small."

Others can't seem to resist the parting shot: "I'm sorry that I was late for our meeting. But maybe if you ran the meetings more efficiently we wouldn't have to start so early."

Remember how that insincere or defensive apology made you feel. Refrain from making "apologies" that add insult to injury. A good apology comes from a place of genuine humility. It leaves the other person feeling you understand and regret what you did wrong. It builds trust and respect.

I like the James verse because it reminds me to check on whether my dealings with others are wise in the ways that God counts wisdom. The end is an especially important reminder that true wisdom demonstrates the same care and concern to all people, whether they are our peers, in authority over us, or under our authority.

Just imagine what could happen if God's people offered meaningful and heartfelt apologies more often. How might it affect our families, our congregations and our workplaces?

—Ruth Rosen, editor

For your convenience

The enclosed envelope is not a request, but a convenience for those who want to give. For those who want to give online, this URL makes it easy and secure:

j4j.co/nl1710