

JEW^S F^{OR} JESUS[®]

established 32 A.D. , give or take a year

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“Jesus Jews” of a Different Kind *by David Brickner, Executive Director*

The Politico headline read “Jews for Jesus pays Rick Santorum \$6,000 to speak.” This was news to me! We quickly assured people that Jews for Jesus has not featured any politicians at our gatherings, nor would we be backing any particular candidate for president.

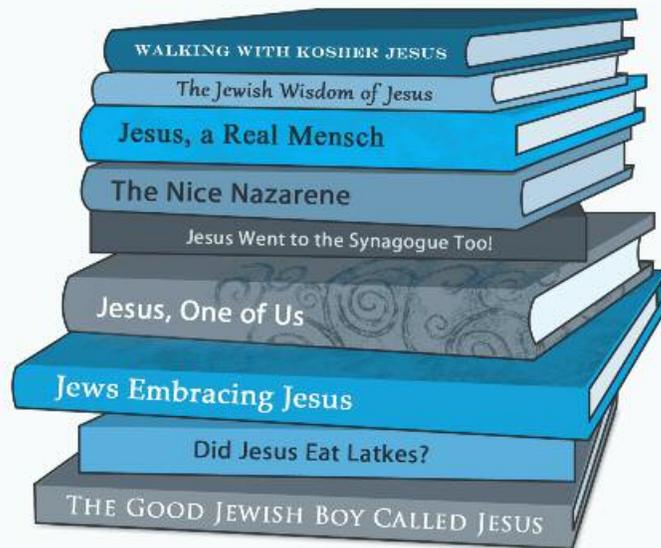
When we explained to Politico that in fact it was a different Messianic organization that had invited Mr. Santorum to speak to their conference, they agreed to take our name out of the headline and substitute “Jesus Jews” for “Jews for Jesus.”

The name of our organization, Jews for Jesus, is one of our greatest assets; it immediately lets people know who we are, where we stand and whom we serve. Not only that, but the name is so easy to remember. And because Jews for Jesus *is* so easy to remember, many use it as a generic term, particularly in the press. The truth is, whenever “Jews” and “Jesus” are mentioned in the same sentence, controversy ensues.

I have observed an entirely different group of “Jesus Jews” in the headlines over the last few months. These are Jewish people who are trying to make Jesus more widely understood and

embraced within the Jewish community—but *not* as the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world.

This is not an entirely new phenomenon. Throughout history,



Various Jewish scholars and authors have attempted to domesticate Jesus for a non-believing Jewish audience

there have also been those who have written, not to inspire faith in Jesus, but to recast Him as a Jew worthy of respect by other Jews. Various Jewish scholars and authors have attempted to domesticate Jesus for a non-believing Jewish audience—and many have found their motives and loyalty to the Jewish community called into question as a result. A notable example of this is famed Yiddish author Sholem Asch, who in 1939

wrote a novel about the life of Jesus titled “The Nazarene.” As a result, *The Forward*, the major Yiddish newspaper in New York City, fired him. The rest of his life Asch had to face suspicion and the disapprobation of many in the Jewish community because he had written favorably about Jesus.

More recently, “celebrity rabbi” Shmuley Boteach got himself into hot water by writing a book titled *Kosher Jesus*. Boteach’s depiction of Jesus is a far cry from the Son of God we read about in the New Testament, yet Rabbi Shmuley has been excoriated in the Jewish press and even threatened with excommunication for insinuating there is anything whatsoever kosher about Jesus. Don’t feel too bad for the rabbi; I am sure the controversy/publicity didn’t hurt his book sales.

Vanderbilt University professor and Jewish scholar Amy-Jill Levine has recently co-edited *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*. This version, meant especially for Jewish readers, includes footnotes and commentary by numerous Jewish scholars who are not followers of Jesus. Says Levine, “If I want to understand Jewish history, then the New Testament is one of the best sources that I’ve got.” But she also

(continued on page 2)

pointed out that just as Jesus argued with the Jewish leaders of His day, “You can’t be more Jewish than to argue with fellow Jews.” No doubt she’s found herself arguing even more than usual since the publication of her controversial New Testament.

Just a few weeks ago, Susan Perlman and I attended a lecture by Daniel Boyarin (noted professor of Talmudic culture at University of California Berkeley) held at the Jewish library here in San Francisco. The subject was Boyarin’s latest book, *Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*. The room was packed, mostly with San Francisco Jews who listened eagerly as the professor argued the premise of his book, that the Jesus of the New Testament, the Christian Jesus, is very Jewish indeed.

“My Christian friends often ask me why the Jews didn’t accept Jesus as the Messiah,” explained the professor. “I tell them ‘who do you think did accept him?’” In fact, Boyarin’s book goes further than most, claiming that such doctrines as the virgin birth, the Trinity and Jesus’ sacrificial death and resurrection from the dead were not ideas foreign to Jewish theology and the messianic expectations of the first century A.D. The audience was stunned. “I am not saying I believe Jesus *was* the Messiah,” explained Boyarin. “I don’t. What I am saying is that believing he was the Messiah and everything that the New Testament

gospels teach about him was an acceptable view in the Jewish community of the first century.”

But the professor had his own way of categorizing “Jesus Jews.” Like so many other Jewish scholars, professor Boyarin was positive toward Jesus but not at all happy with the apostle Paul. According to him, Paul was the guy who took the New Testament teaching in a non-Jewish or even anti-Jewish direction. He argued that the apostle

He went on to say he didn’t like or accept the Jews for Jesus because they are deceptive and they proselytize other Jews just like the apostle Paul did. Of course I would have loved to challenge him, but it wasn’t possible at that point. It would seem, for the professor at least, that some “Jesus Jews” are okay and some are not.

My guess is that the more widely his book becomes known, the more likely it is that Daniel Boyarin will be

castigated as a kind of “Jesus Jew” himself. A majority of Jewish leaders still consider it spiritual treason for anyone Jewish to bring the person of Jesus to the attention of other Jews, as watered down a version of the real Jesus as it may be. But Jewish fascination with Jesus will continue because there is something

about Him that is not only appealing, but life changing. More books will be written, more discussions about Jesus will take place in the Jewish community—and that should encourage all of us who pray for the salvation of Israel. It should also give us greater boldness to teach and proclaim the real Jesus, whom Jews and everyone else should follow. ✡️

JESUS



These are Jewish people who are trying to make Jesus more widely understood and embraced within the Jewish community—but not as the Messiah . . .

John was actually referring to followers of Paul in the book of Revelation when he called them “a synagogue of Satan” (Revelation 2:9). He claimed John was referring to Paul’s followers that way because they didn’t keep the Torah and they proselytized others. Someone in the audience asked him what he thought of Messianic Jews. He responded, “certain Messianic Jews are very sincere people. They are more Jewish than a lot of other Jews I know. They keep the Sabbath and keep kosher. I accept them just like I accept some other Jews who believe that their rabbi Menachem Schneerson (of the Lubavitch sect of Judaism, who died in Brooklyn in the 1990s), was the Messiah and is coming back again.”



ONLINE EXTRAS

See our response to headline at <http://j4j.co/santorum>
See Rich’s response to Rabbi Boteach at <http://j4j.co/kosherjesus1> and <http://j4j.co/kosherjesus2>



WE EXIST TO MAKE THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS AN UNAVOIDABLE ISSUE TO OUR JEWISH PEOPLE WORLDWIDE.



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Of Note

According to an article by Michael Chabin picked up by the Jerusalem RNS, certain Israeli postal workers outside Tel Aviv are refusing to deliver thousands of copies of the New Testament and other Hebrew-language Christian materials:

“Israel media reported Tuesday (March 6) that dozens of religious and secular Jewish mail deliverers jointly informed their supervisors that disseminating the materials goes against their religious beliefs.”

The Israel Postal Company told Ynet News that it is “a governmental company operating in accordance to the Postal Law, which obligates us to distribute any mail it receives. The Israel Postal Company has no right or ability to choose what it can or cannot distribute. Therefore, the mail will be distributed according to the law.”



prayer PROMPTERS

Please pray for:



our upcoming New York City Summer Witnessing Campaign: training is from June 17 to 29 and the campaign will run from June 30 to July 28. Please pray for open hearts, team unity and wisdom for Sarah Ascher as she leads this year's campaign



our new branch in Haifa, Israel, that God will strengthen the work there, especially our team (Peter, Yarden and Avigail), as they follow up from our month-long Behold Your God Israel Campaign, which just concluded in the lower Galilee region on May 24 (p.4)



God's continued blessing on the next generation of Jews for Jesus, and that He'll continue to provide more laborers to reach Jewish people with the gospel



salvation for Simon's "coffee" contacts: David, Leo, Stanley and Allan (p. 7)



God's people to take advantage of the buzz around popular books and movies to discuss spiritual truths (p. 6)



salvation for the Jewish man who witnessed our people being harassed in London; a good transition for new Jewish believer Eli, who is coming out of a strict Orthodox lifestyle in Israel; and salvation for his family; salvation for Eliezer, an older Israeli who is open to the gospel, but fearful of taking that "leap of faith," continued opportunities for Susan Mendelson to meet people at information tables in Long Island malls; and salvation for two men Ofer Levy is meeting with in Los Angeles, Charles and Eilon (p. 8)

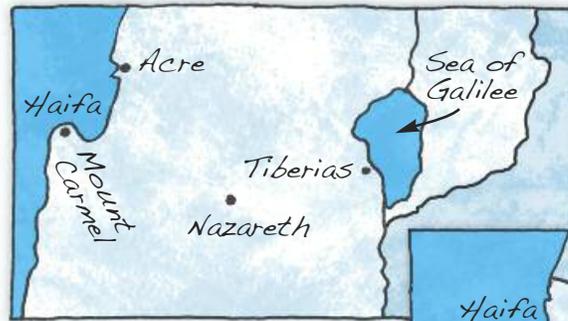


praise God for Lois, of whom we wrote in our April newsletter. Lois was touched to see her story in our newsletter, as well as the prayer request for her to keep growing. She wanted our readers to know that she has now been baptized!

New Jews for Jesus Branch in Israel

We are pleased to announce our newest branch has opened in **Haifa**, the third largest city in Israel. Haifa is located about an hour from Tel Aviv, currently the largest and most bustling branch of Jews for Jesus worldwide!

To pinpoint the city precisely, Haifa is at the southwest corner of Galilee in the north of Israel, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The center of Haifa is located on the mountain ridge of Carmel, so parts of the city are actually located on Mount Carmel.



Left: A map showing Haifa and the Lower Galilee region. Below: A map of Israel showing the location of Haifa.



Our Haifa staff is as diverse as the city itself. Peter Nasser, our branch leader, is an Arab, born and raised in Israel. His wife, Yarden, is a Jew from Ukraine, who moved to Israel when she was fifteen. The Nassers joined our staff in 2007. The third member of the Haifa team, Avigail Avnery, was born in Israel but lived most of her life in Finland before returning to Israel as an adult. She joined our staff in 2011. All three are veterans of many evangelistic campaigns—most recently, our Behold Your God campaign held just last month in the Lower Galilee, which includes Haifa.



Top: Avigail bannering; right: Yarden in conversation; bottom: Peter

Haifa is known for its diversity of people and landscape: adherents of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Druze and Bahai are all active in Haifa. The area is also known for its wonderful scenery, from its beaches and curved bay to the forested range of the Carmel Mountains.

☆ His provision as far as volunteers and all the resources needed to have a strong testimony go forward in the Land.



ONLINE EXTRAS

We will have the final results from last month's BYG campaign in Haifa in a couple of weeks via our June edition of *RealTime*, due to be emailed on the 15th. If you are not subscribed to *RealTime*, you will find it on our website (www.jewsforjesus.org) under the drop-down "Publications" menu.

Read more about Peter, Yarden and Avigail in our online newsletter archives. The Nassers are in the November 2007 edition and Avigail Avnery is in the November 2011 edition. (Go to website as suggested above and select our newsletter from the "Publications" menu. You can easily select past editions.) Scan the code on the right or see our Israel web page at: <http://www.jewsforjesus.org/branches/israel>



Our Haifa team (like all our teams!) needs and values your prayers. As you pray, please ask the Lord for:

- ☆ His Holy Spirit to touch hearts as they follow up on BYG contacts, that many will be open to receive the gospel
- ☆ His protection as Israel does have organized opposition, i.e. anti-missionaries who believe they are in the right to stop us from making Jesus known
- ☆ His love to keep the team together and strong in unity of purpose and spirit

Jesus and Elijah: comparisons and contrasts

As you’ve just read about our new branch in Haifa, remember that Elijah the prophet and the events of Mount Carmel are an exciting part of the history of this region. And according to tradition (though there is no actual proof), many believe this region to be the place where Jesus delivered the “Sermon on the Mount,” most famously known as the beatitudes—as well as the place where He multiplied the loaves and fishes.

The relationship between Elijah and Jesus is seen in both the Old and New Testament. In Malachi 4:5-6, Elijah is predicted as the one who will come before “the great and terrible day of the LORD.” When Jesus asked His disciples, “. . . Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” they replied, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets” (Matthew 16:13-14).

There are some interesting comparisons between Elijah and Jesus that give insight into the progression of God’s work in the Old and New Testaments. The following are just a few; you can easily search out many more in the Scriptures.

	Elijah	Jesus
Message	Prophetic rebuke of Israel (including her leaders) for pagan idolatry, especially the worship of Baal; urging Israel to turn from idolatry to follow the God of Israel (1 Kings 18:21)	Prophetic rebuke of religious leaders for misleading the people and for having an outward righteousness while their hearts were far from God (Matthew 23); identification of himself as the Good Shepherd Who lays down His life for His sheep, the giver of eternal life (John 10)
Miracles	<p>Prophesying rain would cease for years (1 Kings 17:1) and then finally prophesying when the rain would come (1 Kings 18:41-45)</p> <p>Multiplying oil and meal for a starving widow and her son when she was willing to share her portion (1 Kings 17:14)</p>  <p>Raising a widow’s son from the dead (1 Kings 17:22)</p>	<p>Calming the Storm (Mark 4:35-41)</p> <p>Multiplying food (loaves and fishes) for crowds who had come to hear him when a boy was willing to share his portion (John 6:1-15)</p> <p>Raising the dead: the widow’s son (Luke 7:11-16); Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:35-43); Lazarus (John 11, in which Jesus not only performs the miracle, but says He IS the resurrection and the life); and finally, Jesus Himself is raised from the dead as He had predicted (Luke 24:1-12)</p> <hr/> <p>*We know that Jesus did far more miracles, including many healings; this chart just highlights a few that parallel miracles done by Elijah.</p>
Promise to followers before departing	Elisha asked to receive a double portion of Elijah’s spirit—seemingly a double portion of miracles—and Elijah promised it would be so if Elisha remained with him and saw him as he was taken (2 Kings 2:10)	<p>That they would do greater works than He did (John 14:12)</p> <p>That they would receive power from the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8)</p>
Manner of departing earth	Elijah was the only person besides Enoch whom the Bible indicates did not die. Instead, he was taken by a chariot of fire, then caught up to heaven in a whirlwind while his protégé, Elisha, watched (2 Kings 2:11)	<p>First, through His death on the cross (John 19)</p> <p>Second, through ascending to heaven in the clouds as his disciples watched (Acts 1:9-11)</p>

Coffee Evangelism

by Simon Lissak

When you think of a “cuppa” in London, is tea the first thing that comes to mind? Then it may surprise you to hear that Simon Lissak’s ministry is percolating over cups of coffee. Pray that those to whom he’s reaching out will soon have their cups overflowing—with the joy of knowing Jesus! Simon says . . .

I recently met David, who is in his 50s and was dressed in clothing more suited to the Woodstock hippie scene of the 1970s than Golders Green in 2012! Originally from an Orthodox Jewish background, David no longer believes in God or the Bible. He trusts that science has all the answers and says that religion is evil. I explained that Jesus was known for upsetting the religious status quo, and invited David to have coffee with me and a few others in Starbucks. He replied that he would come if he could.

Later I spoke with Leo, an atheist Jew recently engaged to a non-Jewish atheist. His fiancée’s parents are evangelical Christians. Leo suggested we meet up at Costa Coffee, and I found myself there before I remembered I had told David we’d be at Starbucks! When I got to the café, I put my Jews for Jesus jacket on the back of the chair facing out into the café and sat opposite, as is my custom, so I can see how people respond. As it happened, Leo sat in the chair on which I’d placed my jacket!

Before long, a man named Stanley came over and began to challenge Leo about the Jews for Jesus jacket! I quickly explained that I was the owner of the jacket and Stanley told me in no uncertain terms that what I was doing was wrong. When I asked him why he thought so, he had difficulty finding a reason and eventually sat down with us.

Stanley said that he believed in God and the Torah, so I read him Genesis 32:22-32 and asked him with whom he thought Jacob had wrestled. He refused to believe it was God and challenged my translation and interpretation. I asked Leo, “according to the plain meaning of the text, does it sound like God was wrestling with Jacob?” Leo said it did sound like God was wrestling with Jacob, even though Leo thinks it’s all nonsense! So I challenged Stanley that if the Torah said this, then why was the idea of Jesus being God so difficult? He couldn’t answer.

At one point in the conversation Stanley asked me, “Is it possible to forgive someone who has hurt you, even though you have tried without success to forgive them for years?” He then told me that something had happened to hurt him in his teenage years and he had not been able to forgive the person. Stanley has never married, though he was engaged twice, and somehow this fact seems connected with what happened to him in his younger years.

I shared about how my past failure to forgive had generated bitterness and broken relationships in my family. I read from Hosea 6 and explained to Stanley that I believe that only God can heal his wounds. As Leo, Stanley and I were talking, David arrived. He had found us despite the change of venue! David’s religious views are similar to Leo’s. I asked David what he thought about the Bible, and he dismissed it as a collection of myths. I kept returning to Genesis 1:1 and said that if that verse is true, then all else is possible.

Then Alan joined us. He is Jewish and enjoys our coffee evenings. He does not believe in Jesus but thinks it is good to wrestle over the things of God. It turned out that David and Alan had gone to the same school and have been friends ever since!

Stanley gave me his contact details and said he might come again. David gave me his mobile number and agreed to meet with me again to examine the Scriptures. Please pray for this disparate group of men, that they might accept Jesus as their Messiah.

For more about our London branch, go to: <http://www.jewsforjesus.org/branches/united-kingdom>



Pray for Our New Campaigners as They Train!

Jews for Jesus provides an annual full two-week training course on Jewish evangelism for our summer campaigners (and anyone else who is interested) under the auspices of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. This intensive course includes classroom studies, as well as role-playing and on-the-street opportunities with our experienced Chicago missionaries to prepare campaigners for the streets of New York City. Students can earn three college credits for the two-week course, and they also begin to form the bonds with one another that will help see them through the month-long campaign. This year's training is from June 17 to June 29.

Please pray for the campaigners to use this time to best advantage to prepare spiritually, mentally and emotionally for our 2012 New York City Summer Witnessing Campaign.

To encourage you to pray, here are some snippets written by last year's campaigners during their training:

Joel: "I was handing out broadsides on Michigan Avenue and was a little discouraged because it seemed like every Jewish person to whom I offered one said, 'no,' and sped by before I could respond. Finally, a young man came to me and said, 'What is this? I've always wondered about you people but I've never asked.' I explained our mission and quickly shared the gospel. Although he didn't give his contact info, I was encouraged that Daniel told me his name and was open to hearing our message."

Phillip: "The question, 'Who do you think Jesus is?' seems to be loaded for many people—their answers seem to come from deep inside them. A Jewish Korean War veteran said that while he didn't believe everything the rabbis told him, he couldn't [allow himself to] hear the possibility that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah. Regardless of what I asked, he 'road blocked' the simple question about Jesus. In the end, however, he took a broadside and I pray that he reads it and thinks about the Messiah."

Alexander: "During my first sortie in Chicago, a fireman took my broadside and asked me in Hebrew, 'Mi Hu?' ['Who is He?']. He, like me, was from Israel. I told him, 'God must have something to say to you. He sent both of us out of our country and we meet here. It can't be coincidence!' So he told me that he wanted to know more and gave me his contact info. Maybe I'll meet him again in Israel!"

Tamar: "I spoke with a young woman who was spiritually ripe and ready to receive the gospel and the free gift of salvation right there on the street. She walked away excited and called her boyfriend to tell him about it right away."

Shmuel: "I offered a broadside to a Jewish man who responded, 'Get out of my face!' and then stormed off. About ten minutes later, I saw the same man coming right for me, so I braced myself to get yelled at some more. But instead he

Hanna (right) and Shmuel (below) in conversation on the streets in New York



said, 'I owe you an apology.' After a short conversation, I offered him a broadside and he reluctantly accepted."

Rebekah: "While broadsiding on Michigan Avenue, I met a Jewish lady called Rutie, an Israeli on holiday with her friends. She told me that back in Israel she had a friend who was a 'Jew for Jesus.' She thought it might be true that Jesus was the Messiah, but asked why it was that the rabbis didn't believe in Him. I challenged her to read the Scriptures and consider Y'shua for herself. Please pray that she continues to talk to her friend about Jesus and discovers the truth."

Warren: "I went to the Peace and Love Festival, which was a hippie event full of people on many substances. Being in recovery from substance abuse myself, I thought this would be tough. But through my weakness, God gave me His strength to face my problems and talk of His Messiah. During this sortie I got three Jewish contacts, including two who were quite open to the gospel. Please pray for them and for follow up."

London

Julia Pascoe reports: “Ziggy and I were handing out gospel leaflets outside in a Jewish neighborhood. We had a brief conversation with a young man who works for the RSPCA (UK animal welfare charity). Ziggy then met an African man and was sharing the gospel with him as an Orthodox Jewish man stood by and listened. Suddenly an Orthodox Jewish woman began protesting at Ziggy and me. As her objections got louder and louder, many people gathered round to listen. The Orthodox man began to ask lots of questions, and Ziggy started reading Isaiah 53. The Jewish man seemed to be listening as the Jewish woman continued to yell at us, and the African man was most intrigued!

“Eventually the man who works for the RSPCA returned and told us, ‘I don’t know exactly what you guys believe, but I’m Jewish and I am ashamed of the way that woman is treating you. I may not understand or agree with you, but I see that what you are doing is a good thing.’ Ziggy and I were greatly encouraged especially when the young man gave Ziggy his contact details so that they could meet later!”

Israel

Oded Cohen reports: “I completed a study on baptism with Eli,* an Orthodox Jewish man I have been ministering to. Praise God, Eli is now ready and eager to be baptized! I am helping him to prepare for persecution and loss. This Scripture especially spoke to Eli: ‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field’ (Matthew 13:44). Please pray for Eli* to have the strength and joy of his Lord, and for God to save his family.”

* not their real names

“I have been helping Eliezer,* an 85-year-old Israeli man, understand why the death of Jesus was necessary to reconcile us to God. The other day Eliezer said, ‘I am eager to have all my sins forgiven and to have peace with God, but I still can’t quite make the leap to give my life to Jesus.’ Please pray for Eliezer to trust in his Messiah for salvation and the abundant life.”

Bits from the



BRANCHES

Long Island

Susan Mendelson reports, “Some time ago, I had the opportunity to have a literature table at an outdoor concert. This came as a result of a court case I had won for free speech. I wasn’t sure it would be as effective as handing out tracts, but Susan Perlman, who had been visiting the branches during that time, encouraged me to give it a try. It turned out to be great! I made contact

with many Jewish people and we had a very good presence.

“Since then, I have explored opportunities to have information tables at some of the local malls. I began asking about costs, and was surprised to find that one of the property companies had made provision for non-profit organizations! I recently had my first table at one of the malls on Long Island. Two of our missionary trainees, Sarah Ascher and Rebekah Smith, came out from Manhattan to help. We had about 30 conversations, 17 contacts, including three Jewish seekers. I look forward to seeing what other tables I might be able to secure in the months to come.”

Los Angeles

Ofer Levy reports: “Years ago, Charles, a Los Angeles-based Jewish artist, made a sculpture of Moses’ brazen serpent (Numbers 21) and began to read the Bible. When we recently met, I explained to him that the brazen serpent was a picture of Messiah, intended to draw us to His saving work on the cross. Charles and I are currently meeting to discuss and study the Bible together in light of Jesus’ Messianic claims.

“Eilon is an Israeli I met at a local store. Eilon first came to Dallas, Texas, about ten years ago before he moved to Los Angeles.

There he met Tzachi Danor, who now serves with our Israel branch. Tzachi zealously shared Jesus with Eilon, and ever since it has sparked in Eilon an interest to study the Hebrew Bible. I am grateful for the opportunity to regularly meet and share the good news of Y’shua with Eilon. Please pray for both these men to come to know Y’shua as their Savior and Lord.”

