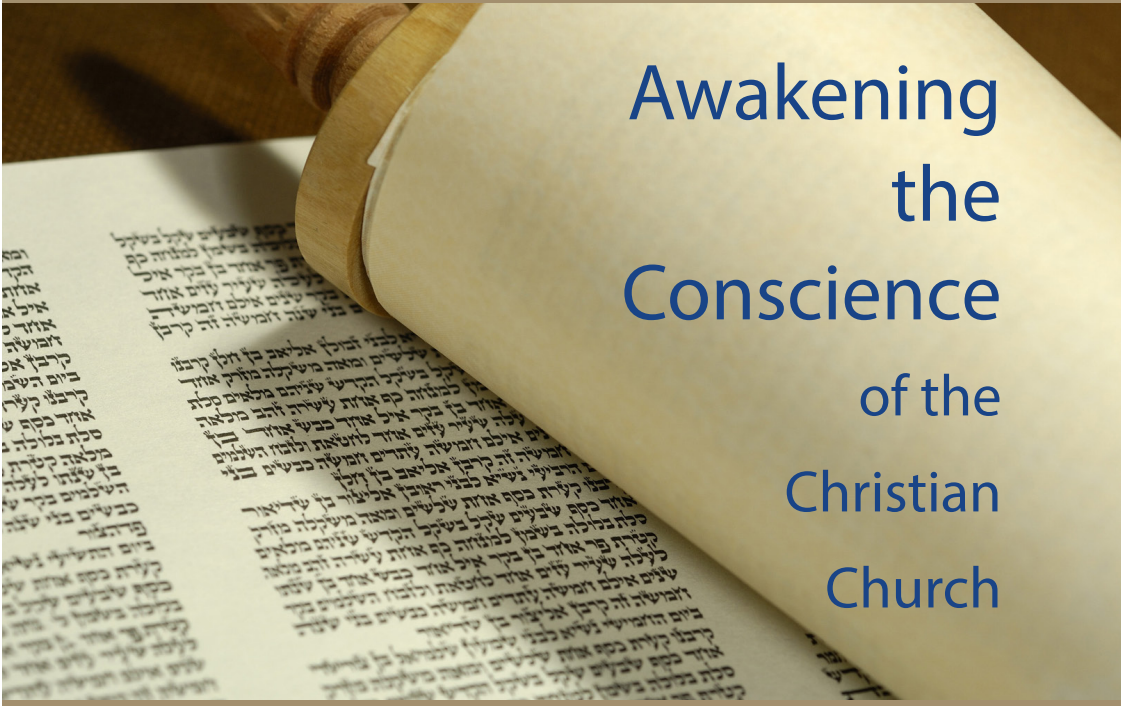


A resource of Christian Witness to Israel (N. America)
to challenge, assist and equip in local Jewish evangelism.

THE AC COURSE



Awakening
the
Conscience
of the
Christian
Church

THE BIBLICAL BURDEN

4. THE MANDATE

4b The Cosmic Chorus

COMPLETE COURSE OUTLINE

The Biblical Burden for Jewish Mission The Hope throughout History for Jewish Redemption Contemporary Connections for Jewish Salvation

THE BIBLICAL BURDEN

<i>The MOTIVE</i>	<i>Psalm 67</i>	<i>The Praying patriarchs</i>
	<i>Romans 9-11</i>	<i>The Praying apostle</i>
<i>The METHODOLOGY</i>	<i>Isaiah 63</i>	<i>The Longing of the prophet</i>
	<i>Luke 4</i>	<i>The Liberation of The Prophet</i>
<i>The MISSIONOLOGY</i>	<i>2Cor 3&4</i>	<i>The Ministry that is glorious</i>
	<i>Acts 20-22</i>	<i>The Ministry that is blessed</i>
<i>The MANDATE</i>	<i>Psalm 150</i>	<i>The Holy Hallelujahs</i>
	<i>Rev 4&5</i>	<i>The Cosmic Chorus</i>

THE HOPE OF HISTORY

<i>PROTECTIVE PROVIDENCE</i>	- <i>Past, Present, Future</i>
<i>PIRATES OF PROVIDENCE</i>	- <i>Expulsion and Expansion</i>
<i>REPLACEMENT AND DEFACEMENT</i>	- <i>Forgotten and Forsaken</i>
<i>REFORMATION AND RE-EMBRACEMENT</i>	- <i>The Puritan Hope</i>
<i>The LIE OF THE LAND</i>	- <i>Too much love will kill you</i>
<i>REWRITING THE RAPTURE</i>	- <i>Confusion and correction</i>

CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS

<i>The CHALLENGES TO CONNECTING</i>	<i>The separated and the assimilated</i>
	<i>The atheist and the evangelical</i>
<i>The FRAGRANCE OF FRIENDSHIP</i>	<i>The aroma of Christ</i>
<i>The WISDOM OF WORDS</i>	<i>(Un)common language</i>
<i>RABBINIC REINTERPRETATIONS</i>	<i>Jewish objections</i>
	<i>Peter and Pentecost</i>

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

1. As you begin each study, pray for the Lord's grace and wisdom.
2. Discipline yourself to set aside one hour for each paper.
3. Keep a personal 'physical' notebook.
4. Begin with the questions and in your own notebook, answer each question in one sentence, prior to engaging in the study.
5. Read through the paper in one sitting, with note-taking.
6. Answer the questions again; this time, a paragraph each.

Feel free to send your answers to me, ask further questions, or simply make appropriate comments.

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THE BIBLICAL BURDEN

THE MANDATE

4b The Cosmic Chorus

QUESTIONS for CONSIDERATION:

1. Have you ever walked by an open door without looking in?
2. What do you understand by the term Sovereignty of God?
3. Does God 'show off'?
4. Is the earth and all mankind a hopeless case without the Messiah of Israel?
5. How crucial is Jewish mission to the mandate of God?

THE MANDATE

We have sought to develop our Biblical Burden under the 4 headings of: Motive, Methodology, Missiology, and Mandate.

Motive: We considered the ancient people of God at prayer for the Gentiles (Psalm 67) and then the apostle's great angst for his own lost people until the Divine climactic redemption story was breathed into his pen (Romans 9-11).

Method: In these studies, Old Testament longings, met New Testament liberation as we thought about the holy desires of the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 63/64), and the Holy Desire of The Prophet, Christ, to bring saving liberty to captives (Luke 4).

Missiology: We were brought to think through the glorious nature of the Old Covenant and the Surpassing Glory of the New, and we followed that by looking at how the Apostle applied this in his mission practice.

We come now to the final heading of our 'biblical burden' section: the **Mandate**. What are we 'mandated' to do?

A dictionary answer to that question will explain that a mandate is an official order by an assigned authority. So we further ask - what is the assigned authoritative official order of God?

In our final two 'Biblical Burden' studies, I want to suggest that all things; all ministries, all kingdom activities must return to the mandated order. I would summarize that as follows: our very breath 'sings' unto God. Everything we say, do and live for, ultimately must redound to the glory of God.

The ultimate reality is clear. Heaven and earth will sing the praise of the Creator and Redeemer. Therefore the burden from the mandate is simple. Since the cosmos will ultimately chorus heaven with praise and hallelujah, let us be about our Father's business.

4a The Cosmic Chorus (Revelation 4 & 5)

While I am tempted to reprint Revelation 4 & 5 in full here, instead I am simply asking you to please first read the passage and keep your Bible open at Revelation chapters 4 & 5. Do not neglect the reading of Scripture – it is more important than my comment!

We began our Biblical Burden studies by considering the 'Praying Patriarchs' and specifically the longing of Psalm 67 for the whole earth to know the God of Israel and worship him. We end our Biblical Burden studies section with the fulfilment of that desire – a cosmic chorus of worship.

In Revelation 4 & 5 we are enabled to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and stand in awe of His presence. Truth be told however, in these chapters we are given an image of God that is largely lacking in much of today's evangelicalism and therefore in much of today's evangelism – Jewish and Gentile. But it is an essential image for us who are intentionally engaged in evangelism and also essential for those who may not be on the front line but are true prayer warriors.

So what we have here and what we need to have burned into our souls, is a sight of the absolute sovereignty of God (chapter 4) and a glimpse of the awesome strategy of God (chapter 5). This is of ultimate importance in our mission mandate and truly of ultimate importance in all aspects of our Christian lives. If we grasp the divine sovereignty and strategy we will engage faithfully in evangelism, until He comes or calls. This is what 'life' is all about. This is our Biblical Burden: an ultimate cosmic chorus. (Thus fulfilling Psalm 67:6 – 'the earth has yielded its harvest!')

1. The Absolute Sovereignty

Revelation 4:1 *'After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven!'*

The opening words and the intriguing image of an open door causes us to ask: 'What's behind the door, and what's going on?' And the simple answer is: A Sovereign ruler whose Will, will be done.

(i) What's behind the door? Answer: the War Room.

An open wardrobe door was the iconic image of CS Lewis's famous 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. I wonder where he got that idea from? I'm tempted to suggest Revelation 4:1! An open door is a tease; something our curiosity is drawn to. Have you ever passed an open door, without having a look in? (Be honest!) But here we read not only of an open door, but a beckoning voice (4:1b). Thus we find the apostle John is drawn into the Command & Control Center of the Cosmos: the War Room.

Notice that this 'scene' in heaven is both sensory and supra-sensory. What do I mean? Well, the scene affects John's senses and has a certain physicality to it. He hears, sees, smells. There is a gripping carnality to this vision. But there are also things that are way beyond his sense abilities.

If you or I were taken into the Pentagon (or perhaps even some secret bunkers that we don't even know exist) there is much we would not understand. But our eyes and ears would be drawn in, even if some things were beyond us. At any rate we could at least grasp that these guys seem to know what's going on... and even what's going down!

As an ultimate and conclusive thought our whole Awakening the Conscience course, and specifically our (Biblically burdened) Mandate, we truly need to see this. We need a glimpse of the throne room; gripping our earthy senses with

some supra-earthly stuff. We need to reckon on an Absolute Sovereign, and by grace gain a glimpse of his War Room. Just as we had reason for exultation last time, rather than resignation, so also here we have reason for faith rather than fear. We do not live in a random universe with maverick molecules even of a pandemic nature! There is a Control Center, a War Room... and something's going down!

(ii) What's going on? Answer: the Strategy of a Sovereign

I readily confess to enjoying very many kinds of Board Games and video games particularly 'wargames' and I even have an 8x4ft layout of Gettysburg and some 300x15mm painted Civil War miniatures to prove it! I particularly like games that have a thoughtful strategic element.

Our strategy based board-games are taken to a whole new level by our military. In military 'war-rooms' there will be intelligence processing, setting up scenarios with an awareness of enemy positions, including their fire-power and potential attacks. The back and forth responses (the wargame chess moves) are each then considered for their military and strategic merit.

As we transfer this imagery to Revelation 4 things are similar but also hugely different. Here we don't see a frantic wartime scenario even though we are at war. Instead, the image we have here is of a sovereign that is seated. It is war, but it is also over: there is no 'competition'. For the lonely apostle John, exiled on the island of Patmos during a time of intense persecution for the infant church, this is a welcome sight.

But also for us, 2,000 years later, even if our cause for fear rather than faith is somewhat pathetic compared to John's. In the American evangelical scene, we might be a little disheartened at the loss of the America dream, or the decline of our nation's morals, and the deterioration from those

Happy Days of the Fonz and the Diner.

Or perhaps thinking more spiritually, there might indeed be righteous weeping, as the foundations are being destroyed... and streams of tears are flowing from our eyes, as God's law is not obeyed. We see the divinely created order of man and woman being perversely and inversely paraded in trans and 'q'; and as we see the image of man in the womb is being shredded by the butchers to Molech. But shall we despair?

No, let's take a walk through this open door. See a Sovereign, seated, even laughing in holy derision at the petty nuisance of perverse power hungry politicians. His strategy, His Will, will be done.

Or, maybe we are embarrassed and saddened at the lack of success in mission, local and global. Maybe we would love to see full churches, and endless numbers of folks signing up for mission. How I would love to have several of you who take this course, become full time missionaries to the Jewish people! How I would love to hear of all your stories of the interactions you have had with your Jewish friends. And yet, our numbers remain small, our success, humanly speaking is limited.

Well again, we need to walk the corridors of the Divine Pentagon. Read your Bibles and let Him take you into those bunkers you never even knew existed! Go through the wardrobe into Narnia. *'Aslan is on the move...'* The sovereign is implementing his strategy.

(iii) Who's in the room? – the King and his Court.

We are shown the image of rich and precious stones, red and emerald. (Does this signify blood justice and evergreen mercy?) We are shown a court of elders, spirits and multi-eyed creatures.

I hope I don't disappoint by not giving an extensive paper on

the nature and function of the hosts in heaven. I simply want to say that in our man-centred, 'God bless me,' generation, we need to recognize that there are many things, invisible, mysterious, in the War Room, that are way beyond our ability to comprehend. And that's ok. We don't need to know, what we don't need to know!

The 24 elders are most likely bearing some reference to the 12 patriarchs and 12 apostles, combining the unity of O&NT saints in unified chorus. The seven spirits represent the fullness and perfections of the Spirit of God. The creatures of the servant court suggest an angelic guard; all-seeing. These images remain a mystery but also a mercy. This incomprehensible court of War Room associates are glorying in the victory of the Sovereign. His holiness is declared; his eternity is declared; his power, majesty and sovereignty are declared. We can look up, and smile.

Application:

1. When praying for mission, in the midst of difficult and troubled times, Christians are summoned to enter the Command & Control Room; the War Room.

Are we not taught to pray: Our Father, in Heaven...?

Yes, we have an enemy and we are at war. But we are not unaware of his schemes. Even if, in the will of God, Satan hinders us, as he often did the Apostle, yet there is a Seated Sovereign.

We are not entering our mandated mission, according to the signs of the zodiac. Bow your head Christian and pray: Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed be your Name. Enter the War Room and join the cosmic chorus of worship.

2. When praying or witnessing, either in mission or local church work, Christians need to know that all events on earth have their origin in heaven.

It is not simply the case that in this War Room scene, God is 'on it'. Instead we have a principle, (that we find in v11 and more fully presented in chapter 5): human history is purposeful. Yes, 'Aslan is on the move'. Our existence is not random, fatalistic or even dualistic. We are neither machine nor puppet but are governed by a personal Sovereign with an agenda! All events on earth originate in heaven.

Why are we engaged in Jewish mission? Wherein lies our motive, methodology, missiology, and mandate? Is it not that the Bible says so? Why have we been at pains to develop the 'Biblical Burden'? The events that are playing out in time and history have their origin in the mind and will of a Sovereign God, who has a Serving Court, worshipping a Seated King!

The 17th century Scots Presbyterian Samuel Rutherford prayed that God would hold back heaven so that he might see the engrafting again of the Jewish people. It was his prayer: Don't take me yet, Lord – I want to see you *'act out that prophesied part, bringing into your kingdom, the kirk of the Jews'*. From Romans 9-11 Rutherford knew the will of God was this grafting in again of the natural branches, the Jewish people. Rutherford wanted to gaze on that. He has seen through the open door that this was the plan of a Seated Sovereign.

And so also we pray confidently: Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed be your Name; Your kingdom come...

3. When seeking God's kingdom advance, Christians need to be aware of God's self obsession with self expression.

God is truly the only one who can 'show off' and He will!

I love all kinds of excellencies. In particular I have a love of excellent music. Even if you can't plumb the depths of the detail, the skill of a musician is easily recognized. Watch a virtuoso or an opera diva. Watch those who have spent their

lives in honing their craft. They want to 'perform'.

It is not wrong to say that the very principles of cosmic history revolve around a Divine Being displaying his glory and character. Moses said – 'Lord, show me your glory'. And Jesus taught us to pray: Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth! May the earth be full of glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Bring it on, Lord! May the earth yield its harvest! Sing! – cosmic chorus!

Do you pray for mission like this? Enter the War Room and Worship – and get a praying tongue. God desires to 'show off'!

4. Having gained insight into the War Room of God, we know there are things that 'must' take place.

The divine imperative follows the divine initiative. Whatever your eschatology, Jewish mission should be part of it! As we long for His appearing, as we live godly lives in such expectation, as we labor as faithful servants, and as virgins with oil in lamps ready for the Bridegroom, we work, while it is Day. There is work to be done.

There is an ominous verse in Ecclesiastes 9:6: 'for ever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun'. One day, you will no longer have any impact on this world. That is a sobering reality, for any of us, who feel we have a life purpose – and every Christian should! But one day, it's over and your part is done! Until then there are things that 'must take place', and we have a part in them!

How much are we filling our lives with comfort and cushions? This is WAR. To arms! Go, labor on; spend and be spent!

2. The Awesome Strategy

(Please open and read Revelation chapter 5)

In a nutshell, chapter 5 brings us the picture of a Lamb who opens the scroll of God's purposes – the strategy. But we shall

ask two questions again: What does John see? What's going on?

1. What does John see? Answer: A sealed scroll and a slaughtered lamb

In the right hand of the Seated Sovereign is a scroll, written on both sides, and perfectly (v7) sealed/unopened. This is the decreed, predestined, but not yet unfolded, purposeful plans of God for his created cosmos. The Sovereign is 'seated' in complete calm control. The scroll, written on both sides, is in his 'right hand'; in the hand of power. The image is of the Almighty Sovereign, who has a sealed purpose driven plan, comprehensive and filled to capacity.

Take note that this scroll is the most significant thing in the universe. We should pause and reflect on that: does anything else matter – but the outworking of the purpose driven life of God? But as the narrative unfolds, this scroll remains unopened, and as such it causes John intense agony that he weeps and weeps.

Just as an open door is an invitation to look within, an unopened letter is begging to be revealed, particularly when you know who it's from! You've seen the address in the upper left corner. I've got to open this first! John, in the Spirit, is given a sight of amazing proportions and potentialities, and it grieves him deeply when no-one is worthy to unfold the Divine Decree. It is as if all history is suspended. It is as if all is truly vanity. In a sense we are at a cosmically suicidal moment.

But then he sees something else - the slaughtered Lamb of God, yet not dead, standing! The seven horns speak of a perfection of might and power. The seven eyes depict one who is all seeing; even all penetrating! But above all, this Lamb has the W-Factor: the Worthy Factor. John need not weep for there is One worthy.

So we read from Revelation chapter 6 onwards, seven seals are unfolded which involve, conquering, slaughtering, empty economics, death, martyrdom, and divine judicial closure. (But that is beyond our considered thoughts here!)

2. What's going on? Answer: A question, an action, and a response

A Question – of unique importance

An Action – of a Unique Person

A Response – of a uniquely worshipful cosmos.

1. A Question of unique importance

The reason John weeps, was due to the impotence of all creation to unfold the good purposes of God. Who can do it? There is none righteous; none worthy.

We live in an age in which man doesn't like being made impotent. Living with an incurable disease or virus is simply not acceptable. We, humans, need to solve humanity's problems; we humans need to solve the earth's climate problems. But we haven't begun to solve our sin-problem! But wait, we have! We simply don't call it sin anymore.

And oh, how we live with the arrogance of scientific noises concerning billions of years, and mother earth, and evolutionary progress and process.

'What scroll is being unfurled? And who is rolling it out? Mr God is dead Dawkins? What have you to offer this scene?

What scroll is being unfurled, Mr Hindu, or Mr Buddhist?

Mr Mohammed, has Allah got a scroll at all, or is it all sealed up in some distant galaxy, calling you to blow yourselves up for 72 virgins and a river edge Paradise?

What scroll is being unfurled, Mr Rabbi? In a works righteousness religiosity where doing enough is never enough? Is that the scroll you are setting before your people?

Or Mr Jewish atheist, what scroll are you involved in breaking open? Is it an atheistic version of Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World) where you take on the role of god and cure all ills?

I'm sorry but permit me a little righteous indignation here. As this question is posed in this Scripture, we are at a cosmically suicidal moment. Specifically for our purposes, putting it into a Jewish mission context, rabbinic Judaism is bereft of an answer, and the poor 'captive' Jewish people are lost.

Yes, weep, weep for yourselves. Gentiles, and weep for them, the Jewish people. Cosmically impotent, grief is the right Jewish response from Jewish Johanan. John is bereft of an answer, until...

2. An Action of a Unique Person

The Lamb: He is worthy; He has acted. The perfect life, atoning death, victorious resurrection, and divinely affirmed ascension displays Yeshua the Moshiach, Jesus the Christ of God as the One name given among men whereby we must be saved.

He is the executor of the will. He has the password to open the presentation. He has the key to the safe of unsearchable riches. As our impotence brings uncontrolled weeping, so His competence brings inexpressible joy. There is no-one like Jesus! If our mandated mission doesn't bring this unique Person before all people, we fail in presenting the Strategy of God.

3. The Response of a Uniquely Worshipful Cosmos

Following the revealed 'competence' of the Lamb, the servant court falls down and sings a new song. But just like the commercial that says, 'Wait, there's more...' So, suddenly John's vision is enlarged and the movie camera pans out. 'Wow, myriads, thousands of thousands singing with a deafening triumphant voice: WORTHY IS THE LAMB!'

Can you imagine the sight, for this old apostle? Can you imagine the contrast from a few verses earlier? The War Room that he entered into, now opens out into the battlefield; or the more limited view he had of a throne and a court of servant creatures now pans out to the universe, no longer at war, but in cosmic chorus.

This aged, and persecuted old saint, writing in his closing years, is graced a vision, that would be to the encouragement and strengthening of a church troubled on all sides. They needed a sight of victory. They needed a sight of a controlling God; they needed to see they were on the winning side. They needed to see the Sovereign and the Strategy! And so too do we!

Angels are singing, and though they don't need a savior, they sing nonetheless. They have earned their PhD in seeing the amazing work of God upon fallen humanity (check out Ephes 3:10). This is a Romans 8:28 moment as John 'sees' that all things are for good. The commentator Mounce writes, *'With the handing of the scroll to the Lamb we enter into one of the greatest scenes of universal adoration anywhere recorded.'* Amen!

Have you moved from weeping to worship? From seeing your own impotence to seeing His competence? And in the War Room, or rather the Throne Room of heaven, as we come to pray, 'your kingdom come', have the lights gone on to see the innumerable hosts of heaven – 'for us'?

Mandated mission is under the sovereignty and strategy of the commander of the cosmos. His will, will be done. We can have confidence as we engage our lifesong in the Master's business.

*Even so Lord quickly come, to your final harvest home
Gather all your people in, free from sorrow, free from sin*

*There, forever purified, in your presence to abide
Come, with all your angels, come, raise the glorious harvest home.*

CONCLUSION:

We began our BIBLICAL BURDEN in Psalm 67, and it is to that passage we briefly return as we draw this section to a close.

Can you remember how the ancient church of Israel 3,000 years ago, prayed? Specifically, their Prayerful Desire?

- 'that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.'

Can you remember their Pre-determined Doxology?

'The earth has yielded its increase... let all the ends of the earth fear him.'

The gospel of God, in his saving and redemptive purposes, has been made known, is being made known, and shall be made known, from Jerusalem ('salvation is of the Jews') unto the ends of the earth. You, in going forth with this gospel to your Jewish friends, are fulfilling that glorious purpose. In that redemptive plan, as we considered in Romans 9-11 (the panorama from the pinnacle), Jewish mission is key.

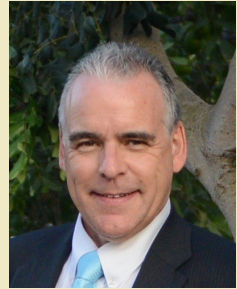
Thus Biblically burdened, with right motive and method, theologically driven mission and mandate, together we are now intentionally seeking Jewish people to be savingly blessed, as the scroll opens up to the grafting in again of the natural branches, ushering in final day mercies, and ultimately the Eternal Day Cosmic Chorus!

Soli Deo Gloria.

WHO ARE WE? WHAT DO WE DO?

DIRECTOR: STEPHEN ATKINSON

As **Director of Ministry** and 35 years of preaching experience, Stephen has been engaging with churches on behalf of CWI since 2004. With a Biblical mandate, historical reasoning, and present day missionary urgency, Stephen makes the case that every Church must have Jewish mission on its agenda!



MISSIONARY: MITCH TEPPER

As a **Jewish believer** Mitch has the apostle's burden for his own 'kindred after the flesh'. A graduate of Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, his Scriptural knowledge and personal passion drive him in his street evangelism, one on one relationships, and household bible studies, with the singular purpose of 'Telling Jewish people about Jesus'.



International Mission to Jewish People

As an **international ministry** we have been sharing Jesus with Jewish people for almost 180 years. Today we have missionaries in the USA, UK, Israel, France, Holland, Hungary, Australia, all faithfully witnessing to Jewish communities across the world.



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