

Arutz 7 questions Rabbi Riskin over ICEJ speech

Written by Chris Perver

Tuesday, 30 June 2009 05:58

[Arutz 7](#), the staunchly Orthodox news outlet in Israel, have published another article aimed at dissuading Christians from witnessing to Jews and discouraging Jewish believers in Yeshua (Jesus). Arutz 7 frequently prints such articles in support of anti-missionary groups such as Yad L'Achim (A Hand to our Brothers). Sometimes the outlet circulates false conversion stories of Jewish believers who have been 'rescued' from Christian missionaries. I [commented](#) on one such article a few years back, but was warned by a friend living in Israel that they had never heard of the individuals named, and that the story was likely a fabrication in order to put pressure on Jewish believers. And recently I commented on another true story, the persecution of a young Jewish girl who was in the running to win the [International Bible contest](#)

, much to the dismay of the anti-missionary groups. The following article, which also discourages Jewish belief in Jesus, also caught my eye. It concerns an Orthodox Rabbi who appeared on a video published by the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, urging Christians and Jews to work together for the sake of peace. The Rabbi claimed that Israel had a duty to fulfil its obligation to Isaiah 56, that the Temple Mount become the 'house of prayer for all nations' and that it was critical for Jews and Christians to join hands in unity. His statement, citing the grafting in of the Gentiles to God's olive tree in Romans 11, drew condemnation from certain Jewish groups. But the Rabbi explained that he was not envisioning an infusion of religions, but simply that Christians and Jews ought to work together to promote peace in the world through their common adherence to the seven Noahide laws. He also made another very interesting statement which I would like to comment on.

Quote: *"Rabbi Riskin: "I once spoke before a very large ICEJ convention in Jerusalem, and I told them: 'I think I know your theology pretty well, and I think it is this: Right now, you're not out to proselytize Jews. Right now, you believe we should be good Jews, and come to Israel to live, and then there will be what you call Armageddon – a war of Jews and Christians versus the Moslems. The Jews and Christians will win, then there will be a resurrection of the dead, and then you believe that all the Jews will be converted to Christianity. I told them that of course I clearly can't accept this, but in any event, it will be a few hundred years before this all happens, and so in the meantime, since you're not out to convert us now, we need all the friends we can get.' They all applauded with great enthusiasm. "However," I continued, 'I want to emphasize this: Our sources say that Redemption will follow Repentance. Yes, there will be a Resurrection of the Dead, and Jesus may very well be among those who will be resurrected; he was basically a religious Jew. But when he wakes up, he'll look around and ask, 'What's this Sunday business – the Sabbath is on Saturday! And what's this Easter stuff – it should be a regular Passover seder! And why are you eating bacon and eggs, when the Torah forbids pig meat?' And so what will happen is that there will be conversion – but in the other direction.' This time, there was no applause – just silence." In conclusion, Rabbi Riskin said, "I will not cooperate with any Christian group or person that I learn is taking active steps to proselytize Jews. But I can say that in any event, what I'm seeing is the opposite; I don't see that the groups that I'm dealing with are converting Jews, but rather many of them are coming close to keeping more of the Torah. I truly think that when we look at the extent of that phenomenon, it seems that these truly are times of the Messiah."*

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The Rabbi's views of Christian theology are of course somewhat skewed. I believe it comes from their misconception, that during the tribulation period Christians are to invade the land of Israel and forcibly convert all the Jews to Christianity. This will not happen. Perhaps this belief stems from the verses in Revelation that talk of the 144,000 Jewish believers (Revelation 7, 14), and the idea of Jesus Christ coming back to reign in Jerusalem. Perhaps it stems from Paul's statement in Romans 11 that all Israel will be saved. The Bible declares that it will be the nation itself that will turn to Jesus Christ for salvation, when they look on the One whom they pierced (Zechariah 12:10). To many Orthodox Jews, Christianity is a Gentile 'religion', and you can't be a Jew if you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. Unfortunately they don't understand their own Scriptures, which prophesied of the Messiah's coming (Isaiah 7:14, 9:16, Micah 5:2), of His sacrifice for sin (Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, Zechariah 9), and His Second Coming to this earth (Psalm 2, Zechariah 14). They don't understand that Jesus never came to start a new religion. He said in Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I am not come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil

". As I have been reading of late, many Orthodox Jews don't even have their own Bible. They study commentaries such as the Talmud and Mishnah, but the Bible is simply recited every Shabbat at the synagogue. Many Jews don't even understand what they are reading. They talk of keeping the Torah, but ignore the one of whom it speaks (John 5:39). Like in Catholicism, the Rabbi is the only one authorized to give the proper interpretation of the Scriptures, and thus many ordinary Jews have not even studied the Bible for themselves. They are kept in darkness. If Christians are not out to 'proselytise' Jews, if they are not interested in making them aware of their own Messiah and their need for the forgiveness of sins, there is something seriously wrong. Paul said the Gospel is to the Jew first (Romans 1:16). There is no dual covenant. Despite Israel being judicially blinded to the identity of the Messiah so the Gospel could be preached to the Gentiles (Romans 11:25), individual Jews who do not trust in the Messiah for salvation will still perish. We Christians, who have the great privilege of knowing the Messiah, have a great responsibility towards the Jewish people. Many Jews remain in spiritual darkness simply because we Gentile believers have not had the courage to speak up. We think to ourselves, they have their own religion and it's not up to us to interfere. That kind of thinking is from the devil. It's not about religion, it's about a living relationship with the Messiah (John 1:12). Do you know a Jewish man or woman who is still in spiritual darkness? They may be just waiting for someone to show them the way. Do you know of a Jewish man or woman who would like a Bible? The

[Society for the Distribution of the Hebrew Scriptures](#)

provides Hebrew Bibles free of charge for Jewish people. Do you have a personal relationship with the Messiah? If not then the Hebrew Scriptures declare that there is salvation for you in Christ Jesus. Trust in Him for salvation today.

Isaiah 49:6

And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

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