



CHANGES IN JUDAISM

Most Jews think Judaism has changed little since the days of Moses and David. The fact is, however, that there has been considerable change in the Jewish Faith over the millennia. Pointing out one important change in Judaism can provide an opening for significant dialogue with a Jewish friend.

The Judaism of the Scriptures states that favor with God is based on FAITH.

"And he [Abram] believed in the LORD; and he [God] counted it to him for righteousness." (Genesis 15:6)

Several important questions to ask are,

"If Abraham came to God by faith, how should WE come to God today?"

"Why does modern Judaism emphasize mitzvot (good works) as vital to receiving God's favor?"

In distinction from Biblical Judaism, Rabbinical Judaism has moved away from faith-righteousness and instead emphasizes works-righteousness. It may be helpful to ask a Jewish friend which Judaism he follows—the Judaism of Abraham, the Judaism of the rabbis, or his

own form of Judaism. It is important to share the principle of faith with a Jewish person and to remind him that faith, not mitzvot, is the Way of Abraham.

(Submitted by Jewish believer and HCF staff member, Jeffrey Kran)

WHEN YOU CARE ENOUGH...SEND A CARD!

A simple, but very effective, way to build a bridge to a Jewish friend is to send a greeting card during each of several holidays throughout the year. Following are times when it is appropriate to extend good wishes:

- Rosh Hashanah (New Year; Feast of Trumpets), celebrated September/October
- Hanukkah (Feast of Lights), celebrated December
- Pesach (Passover), celebrated March/April

Greeting cards for these holidays can be selected from most card shops. The very fact that a Gentile would take the time and make the effort to follow the calendar of Jewish holidays is a clear indication of interest and concern. You will notice that these three celebrations are spread throughout the year, so that

every few months there is an opportunity to express kindness in this very simple, but tangible way.

For the exact dates of the holidays you will need to consult a calendar, since they change each year, or you could contact us at Hebrew Christian Fellowship. We are available to answer any questions you may have concerning any of the Jewish holidays or any other subject pertaining to the Jewish people.

ON FAMILIAR TERMS

In conversation with, or reading about, Jewish people, there are certain terms which commonly occur, but are not widely understood by non-Jews. Anyone interested in Jews should become familiar with these terms. We'd like to help by presenting a Glossary of Jewish Terms on an installment basis. Here's the first installment:

BAR MITZVAH

The celebration and ceremony commemorating the arrival of a Jewish boy of thirteen at his religious adulthood. The name literally means, "son of the commandment," and comes from the idea that at this age a boy is responsible to observe the commandments. A similar observance for girls is called the BAT MITZVAH ("daughter of the commandment").

DAVVEN

(pronounced dàh-ven) Yiddish (see below) term meaning, "to pray," and usually referring to reciting of formal prayers from a prayer book, often accompanied by a "bobbing" of the head.

MITZVOT

(pronounced mìtz-vote) Plural of MITZVAH, meaning a righteous deed required by the commandment of the Law; a synonym would be, "good works."

TANAKH

(pronounced ta-nàhk) The Hebrew Bible; the term actually is an acronym formed by the first letter of each of the three Hebrew words for The Law, The Prophets, and the Writings, the categories into which every one of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament may be placed.

YIDDISH

A language formed by combining German and Hebrew and spoken by most of the European Jews from the early Middle Ages until recent times.

NOTABLE QUOTES

"All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

Mark Twain

"Only he who cries out for the Jews may sing Gregorian chants."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

(Both quotes appearing in *Jews, Gentiles, and the Church* by David Larsen, Discovery House Publishers, 1995.)

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