



Jewish Believers and Christians working together for Israel's salvation since 1963



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political activist. Formerly the executive director of the Arab American Association of New York, she was co-chair of the 2019 Women's March until the organization recently broke ties with her over her anti-Semitic activity.

Yair Netanyahu is the eldest son of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. An Israeli Jew as well as a conservative social media activist, he is an ardent defender of both his father and the State of Israel. He publishes on Internet websites such as Twitter—a service which allows people to post information and interact with each other through short messages limited to about 50 words each.

Not long ago, a Twitter user initiated what became a rather lengthy discussion about Yeshua's ethnicity. Ms. Sarsour joined the conversation and commented, "Jesus was Palestinian of Nazareth and is described in the Quran as being brown copper skinned with wooly hair." According to Israel Today, this comment was "similar to the ludicrous pronouncements of Palestinian Authority leaders every Christmas that Jesus was the 'first Palestinian freedom fighter,' the term they use to describe what the rest of us call 'terrorists.'"

A recent exchange on social media highlighted a shifting view of Yeshua/Jesus among the Jewish people—a change that can both encourage us and remind us to be ever-vigilant.

As you may know, Linda Sarsour is a first-generation Palestinian-American political

Mr. Netanyahu—responding to Ms. Sarsour none too courteously—replied, "Are you that stupid? On the cross above Jesus' head was the sign 'INRI'— 'Iesvs Nazarens Rex Ivdaeorvm', which means in Latin— Jesus of Nazareth king of the Jews! The Bible say[s] that Jesus was born and raised in Judea!"

Certain details aside, this response by Netanyahu is remarkable on several levels.

First of all, as far as we know, Netanyahu is not a believer in Yeshua. Since Christians and Americans are widely considered to be Israel's best friends, it makes some sense that Netanyahu would defend the central figure of Christianity, especially over the propagandist fabrications of a Palestinian activist. However, Netanyahu's specific and fact-based rebuttal indicates that he has more



Update from Israel

A short time ago, I received an update from our friend Aviel, sharing about the outreach he has been doing thanks to your generous support. He wrote, "Summer has come to an end. The heat is leaving and it is getting cool, but everything is always hot in the spiritual world! On a very warm day here in Israel, I was able to lead an excursion that I had organized for a group of fifty-two Jewish people who do not yet know Yeshua. I took them on a trip to visit and eat at the biblical places around Jerusalem. The theme of the tour was, 'The God of Israel wants to speak with His people!'"

"The tour was amazing, and these people all heard God's way of salvation through Yeshua. They heard how God spoke in the Old Testament and how He speaks to His people today. At the end of the tour,

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eighteen people left me their contact information, saying they wanted to know more about these things!

"As I now begin to contact these people, getting together with them one on one and explaining the Good News to them, please pray that God will open their eyes and their hearts, and that they will understand that they need Yeshua as Savior! I want to thank you for your love, support, and prayers. We are together participating in God's work!"

than a working knowledge about a religion that is presumably foreign to him. The fact that this religion is about Yeshua—who, according to some, is an enemy of the Jews—makes it all the more remarkable.

Netanyahu's response is also extraordinary, not just because he is citing the Bible in his response, but because he is clearly citing the New Testament, *and calling it "the Bible."* Judaism does not consider the New Testament to be part of the Bible at all—it is not an accepted sacred text of Judaism. Since it is possible—perhaps even likely—that Netanyahu is not a particularly religious Jew, his reference to the New Testament as "the Bible" may be nothing more than generic nomenclature on his part. Nevertheless, for a Jew to put the New Testament inside the Bible proper—even casually—is an incredible concession.

Not only does Netanyahu reference the New Testament, but he alludes to a specific passage—namely, John 19:19-20,

"And Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the execution stake, and it was written, **יֵשׁוּעַ הַנָּצְרִי מֶלֶךְ הַיְּהוּדִים**, Yeshua HaNatz'ratiy, Melekh HaY'hudiym [Yeshua the Nazarene, King of the Jews]. Therefore, many of the **יְהוּדִים**, Y'hudiym [Jews] read this title, because the place where **יֵשׁוּעַ**, Yeshua was crucified was near to the city, and it was having been written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek." (MJLR)

Although Netanyahu's explanation about "INRI" is not in the biblical text, this detail may be extrapolated from the fact that the sign was "written... in Latin." The fact that he gravitated toward the Latin translation, rather than the Hebrew—which is also indicated in the biblical text—may indicate that the source of Netanyahu's information on this topic was indeed Christian.

But even more than the citation itself, Netanyahu's explanation explicitly mentions Yeshua's manner of execution—"the cross." Netanyahu could have used many other passages from the New Testament to prove Yeshua's Jewishness—from the fact that He was circumcised on the eighth day (Luke 2:21), to his celebration of the Passover (Mat-

thew 26:18), to the people's recognition of Him as the Son of David (Mark 10:47). Yet the one he leapt to not only concerned Yeshua's sacrificial death for the salvation of Israel and all mankind, but—from Netanyahu's own mouth—he proclaimed Yeshua as "king of the Jews!" How unbelievable to hear a non-believing Jew say such things!

Netanyahu's words and tone reflect a growing acceptance of Yeshua among

Jews not just as an historical figure, but as a fellow-Jew. According to Israel Today, "Mainstream Israeli newspapers have also taken up the fight to protect the Jewishness of Jesus in response to the maddening claim that Jesus was a Palestinian. Numerous Hebrew-language articles are being published around the

country defending the fact that Jesus was in every way a Jew, and even an important figure in Jewish history."

My friend, the acceptance of Yeshua among Jews as a fellow-kinsman is an astounding and exceptional development. While there is cause for hope, there is also a potential danger we must address. Should Yeshua become reduced in Jewish minds to merely an influential Jewish historical figure, the true meaning of his life and sacrifice will be lost. As increasing numbers of Jewish people come to accept Yeshua as a real Jewish *person*, we need to be tirelessly at work making sure that they also accept Him as the real Jewish *Messiah*! Will you join me in helping to make Yeshua real to the Jewish people? Please use the enclosed card and envelope, or visit www.mjmi.org to send to send your most generous gift of **\$10, \$25, \$100 or more** today!

Thank you for your support, as we work toward the salvation of all Israel!

Blessings in Yeshua,



Kevin Geoffrey, President, MJMI

