



Going for the Gold

Steve Cohen

Now that the 2022 drama of the Winter Olympics is over, we can look back at the years of preparation these elite athletes endured for just one shot at the coveted gold medal. As the old Wide World of Sports intro used

to say, "The thrill of victory and the agony defeat!" While the world was captivated by the Olympic events, life continued - births, deaths, wars, rumors of wars, Covid continues, masks on, masks off, and lonely people become lonelier as feelings of isolation overwhelm.

Psalm 149:4 tells us that the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory.

Imagine that, the humble are awarded a crown of victory for loving a life of humility before the Lord...

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This seems so contrary to the ways of this world... having the most or biggest or fastest or being on top after clawing our way up the ladder disregarding those whom we have climbed over. The ways of the world are not in the Lord's economy of measuring things. We are part of an upside-down kingdom, seeking to serve others rather than being served for our own self-interests.

Nancy and I were recently on a long trip, and we met people from all over. Those who served the food and kept the rooms up were extremely humble, not taking anything for granted. They had been out of work for the past 18 months and are just now getting back on their feet. And much of the money they make is sent back to their home country where economies are even more hard hit.

The so-called golden rule of spiritual life is to Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul, and to love your neighbors as yourself. How are you love showing today? Many who name the name of Jesus seem so mumbly-grumbly that an on-looker might find it hard to know that they were a believer in Jesus. So how would that engage our world with witness to the Gospel?

During our trip, we met with three Jewish couples from different parts of the US. They were each unknowledgeable of the basics of the Gospel. We prayed that our life, love, and words of hope would plant seeds that the Lord would water through His holy spirit.

Where does this leave us as the Olympics become a memory? My prayer is that we would take up the torch and lift high the cross that more people will have their reservations in hell canceled and future hope in Jesus firmly established in their hearts.

Steve Cohen is the founder of Apple of His Eye
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We Are Now Available to Speak at Your Church!

Since our beginning in 1996, we have given presentations in over 1,800 churches around the United States and Europe.

As we move through the COVID era, we are trusting the Lord to open churches for us to speak in. We are now solidifying our speaking calendar for 2022-23.

Schedule an Apple of His Eye team member to speak in your church by contacting our itinerary coordinator, Jordan Merrifield. Or just ask your pastor to call us!

Our presentations include:

- The Power of Pentecost
- The Fall Festivals of Israel
- Y'shua the Light of the World
- Unwrapping Romans 11
- To the Jew First
- Our Jewish Roots
- Jewish Evangelism Seminar
- Winsome Witnessing

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Missio Dei: The Missional Jesus

Bob Roegner

Drawn from Genesis 3:8-15 and Luke 4:14-30.

Last month I focused our attention on the Missional God and the genesis of mission. Now in this second month, I turn our attention to the Missional Jesus who embodies or represents the mission. So, it is my hope and prayer that by the time you get to the end you will recommit yourself to God as he calls you to testify to God's Kingdom and plan of salvation where you live, sharing this Good News with your neighbors, and connecting people to Jesus wherever you go!



Follow me, Jesus said. Follow me. And I will make you fishers of people. Real people. From every tribe, every nation, every tongue. Real people. Black, red, yellow, and white. Real People.

But also, hear this. Jesus said repentance from sin is involved if you're going to join him on God's Kingdom mission. This means that we all must change, repenting and receiving God's forgiveness, through the power of God's Holy Spirit! We cannot stay the same, there must be room for the reign and the rule of God in our lives so he might fashion us into his likeness. This is the only way we can follow him and fish for real people!

So, following the Missional Jesus and taking all his words and actions into account, we see that Jesus viewed himself as the fulfillment of the Old Testament. All of those who were sent before him; the characters, the stories, all of it points to him.

He is God and the Kingdom of God embodied. Everything converges in the person of Jesus Christ, the Missional God who came down to be with us. This is why Jesus is described in John 1 as "the Word" of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

And Jesus will say "Follow me," and do these things because he believed that he himself was sent by God for this very purpose. Yes, Abraham was sent. Moses was sent. Joseph was sent. Isaiah was sent. Many were sent before him, sent to further the promise that God would redeem and bless all the peoples of the world, but none of them were uniquely sent like Jesus, the only begotten Son of God.

So, we must recognize that this is where the Good News begins. It begins by recognizing that the Missional God has sent his Son, the Missional Jesus, to fulfill the promise. Nobody else could do it. God must come down and do what we could not do for ourselves.

So, let's look at our two Scripture references and see how this plays itself out.

First, from Genesis 3:8-15 (ESV)...Our Missional God says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

There are two Messianic prophecies in this verse. The first Messianic prophecy is, "he will bruise your head." The Hebrew word for "bruise" can also mean "crush!" So, we understand, that he, the Missional Jesus, will crush the serpent's head. The second Messianic Prophecy is, "you shall bruise his heel." So, we understand, that he, the serpent, who is Satan, will crush the Missional Jesus' heel. The contrast here is a fatal blow to the serpent's head in contrast to just an injured heel.



Continued...*Missio Dei: The Missional Jesus*



This passage points to the promise of the Missional God to send the Missional Jesus. The crushing of the serpent's head was a picture of Jesus' triumph over sin and Satan at the cross. The crushing of the Messiah's heel was a picture of the wounding and death of Jesus on the cross! The contrast here is death on the cross, a temporary setback in contrast to Christ's resurrection from the dead, the final victory!

Second, from Luke:

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:16-21 ESV)

This is the central text when it comes to Jesus' identity and mission as he describes for us what he has come to do. Again, we have another Messianic prophecy. This one proclaimed by Isaiah and there in the synagogue in Nazareth, the Missional Jesus tells everyone, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." The Missional Jesus is telling everyone, this is the mission of God, and I'm bringing it. Jesus is saying, "God has sent me. I'm the Messiah. I'm bringing the Kingdom. And this is what it looks like. And everyone is just thrilled about that, right? Uh, no, not really!

You'll recall that those hearing his words in this Luke 4 passage, quickly go from being his admirers to being a mob. They wanted to throw Jesus off a cliff.



Continued...Missio Dei: The Missional Jesus

That's not the God they want. They want a god they can control. Give us the god who blesses us only and dashes the heads of our enemies against the rocks. Give us the god who rules with force and might. That's the good news we want. Tell us what we want to hear. Comfort us in our complacency and be the god of our self-righteousness.

But that's not who the Missional Jesus is, is it? His way isn't the way of the sword, but the way of the cross. Jesus reveals that God's mission is about laying his life down for the sake of redemption and mercy. And Jesus says, "Look, I've not come for the righteous (or those who think they are). I've come for the sinners, the lost, the broken; those who know they need deliverance. That's the sort of Messiah I am."

This is what the Missional Jesus has done. He has blessed us by not counting our sins against us. He forgives us. He picks us up every time we fail and fall, and he puts our feet back on solid ground. Why?

So, we can walk down our road of life, and share the Kingdom of God, the hope, and the Missional Jesus with others!

And now, a little more about how we are doing personally...



Updates from Israel

With Kristi and Bob returning to Israel last week, after Bob's medical leave, we thought it would be a good time to provide for you some updates on Immanuel Lutheran Church and some of the people related to the mission and ministry of the Apple of His Eye's work here in the Holy Land.

It truly is amazing to us to see how God continues to provide for His church and His people even in the most difficult of times. While we were gone, the church continues to see new faces even while others have gone. Covid continues to dictate how we can worship with mask mandates still in place but there is no mandate on the joy worshipping brings in a place like Immanuel Lutheran Church.

While concerts have had to be cancelled because of the problem of the gathering of many people inside a relatively small space, the ministry of Immanuel's Open Church continues. It's in this Open Church ministry where the greatest opportunities exist to share Jesus as Messiah with over 250 people on average every week who pass through the church to see its beautiful architecture, organ, and stained-glass windows. It's through these windows on the north and south walls, where God's Word is shared through the Bible stories of Jonah and the whale, Peter, and the stories from Acts 9-10 and his raising of Tabitha, his vision of the great sheet, and the calling from Cornelius to come to Caesarea which all happened in Joppa, a kilometer away from Immanuel Lutheran Church. It's through these windows in the chancel area where God's Word is shared announcing the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, God's hand reaching down into the hearts of God's people with the crown of thorns in the shape of the Star of David, and the New Jerusalem as described in Revelation, chapter 21. We are blessed to get to know people in this way and answer their questions about Christianity and Jesus the Messiah.

Finally, following are a few updates regarding several of our Israeli co-workers and a request for prayer for a young woman we have been discipling.



Continued...Updates from Israel

The Sadlovsky Family (Sahar, Maria, Thea, and Adiel)



We are thankful to Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, for accepting Sahar into the STM program that is carried out in Gothenburg, Sweden. Also, a shout of thanks to the three organizations that will support him in his

theological education, Office of International Mission – LCMS, Mission Province of Sweden, and of course, the Apple of His Eye Mission Society. Sahar will take three courses per year in Sweden for three years. Would you please pray for this time for Sahar and his family and what we are praying for here in Israel, the planting of a new Lutheran Church led by Sahar.

Ben M.

If you remember, it was almost a year ago that Bob baptized Ben. Since then, Ben has begun leading the Young Adults group that meets on Thursday evenings. They are currently studying the 10 Commandments from Luther's Small Catechism, utilizing Concordia Publishing House's digital study. Ben is also assisting on Shabbat during worship and leads the Open Church on Thursdays for Hebrew speakers. Finally, Ben is working on translating Luther's Small Catechism into Hebrew. No doubt, God has blessed Ben with the waters of Baptism and in return, Ben has been called to serve, sharing Jesus as Messiah with many others.



L. N.

We have been witnessing to a young woman for approximately 10 months now. She considers herself an Agnostic but continues to keep the door open with us seeking to know more about God, Christianity, and Jesus the Messiah. It's difficult for her because she comes from a religious Jewish family and there is always tremendous pressure to follow that segment of Judaism. However, she is struggling with answers to questions like, "Is there really a God?" and "why does the world exist?" and "what is my purpose in life?" While she isn't a believer in Jesus just yet, we consider her willingness to keep the door open and meet us regularly to discuss these and other questions a true blessing. Please pray for L. N. Ask God to reveal Himself to her through the power of His Holy Spirit! Thank you!

Rev. Dr. Robert M. Roegner is an Apple of His Eye Bible Teacher to Israel
Email Bob at robert.roegner@appleofhiseye.org



Prayers Needed



Kristi Roegner

The members of Immanuel Lutheran Church congregation in Tel Aviv need your ongoing prayer support. Being a Christian in Israel brings both peace and turmoil to even the most seasoned believers. The challenges are great, but so are the opportunities! What better way to pray for God's chosen people than through using His Word?

How might you pray for these Christ-followers using Scripture?

Pray for Protection

- “But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one” (2 Thess. 3:3 ESV).
- “May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect you!” (Ps. 20:1 ESV).

Pray for Wisdom

- “For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Prov. 2:6 ESV).
- “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you” (Ps. 32:8 ESV).

Pray for Joy

- “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Rom. 15:13 ESV).
- “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17 ESV).

Pray for Spiritual Growth and Strength

- “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen” (2 Pet. 3:18 ESV).
- “Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving” (Col. 2:6-7 ESV)

Pray for Dependence on God

- “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matt. 7:7 ESV).
- “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him” (James 1:5 ESV).



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Pray for Opportunities to Share the Gospel

- “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us” (2 Cor. 5:20a ESV).
- “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet. 3:15 ESV).

Pray for Ongoing Vision and Commitment

- “Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act” (Ps. 37:5 ESV).
- “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up” (Gal. 6:9 ESV).

We know the Lord hears and answers prayer, so spending time in prayer for God’s chosen people is essential. In addition to praying for the members of Immanuel Church, please also pray for the outreach opportunities the

Holy Spirit provides them. They are among those sharing the Good News with others in the Holy Land. They need our ongoing prayer support, for the task is daunting and the enemy is fiercely aggressive. Despite that, we know that God’s Word does not return void. It is too powerful. He promises that it will accomplish what He wants it to, so let’s take Him at His word and use His Word to the utmost!

Kristi Roegner is an Apple of His Eye Bible Teacher to Israel
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NanC's Corner

Covid 19, Delta, Omicron, Omicron BA Are We Done Yet?

No, a new disease is here!

Steve and I shared the Covid 19 virus, with Steve spending time in the hospital fighting it. Later we shared the Omicron strain. Thankfully we are fine. Hopefully, this satanic attack of illness is in its final stages of world domination.

Sadly, however, I must report that there is a virus that only affects Christians. It has affected an incredible number of members in believing denominations around the world.

It is the "I can't" disease spreading through every church of believers today. It has been here since the foundation of the church and sadly – it is highly infectious. It can cause resignation to failure and is ammunition from Satan to keep the gospel from being shared.

Is there a cure? Of course! The Holy Spirit! The precious Holy Spirit will empower and refresh us with spiritual strength. Our Heavenly Father does not give us a command without enabling us to do the work: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, and lo I am with you always" (Matt. 28:19-20 KJV).

Today people are hungry and thirsty for hope, for love, for truth. We are the tools God uses to spread His Good News for mankind. Preach means to spread, as Johnny Appleseed may have done, throwing seed out on the ground.

What are you waiting for? Take the cure and pray for opportunities and fruit.

The way of salvation is clearly stated throughout the Bible:

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the scripture says, 'Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame'. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Rom. 10:9-13 ESV)

God did not give us another plan. I have read through the Bible more than twenty times and have never seen another plan for salvation.

Keep to the Bible. Seriously. If anyone presents a different way - using no scripture and/or twisting God's Word, then run (don't walk) away. Satan will use a form of the truth and twist it into his own concoction as he did with Eve (surely



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you will not die) or even with Yeshua in the desert (promise after promise to entice him to abandon God's plan of sacrifice). We need to love others, but if our love was all it took for salvation, then the blood of Yeshua was in vain.

A group of scripture commonly used to explain salvation to the seeker is called the Romans road. I was taught these salvation scriptures as a child, and my children and grandchildren also know salvation scriptures. Memorize God's Word and teach your children to. Give them the tools they need to preach (spread) the gospel to a lost and dying world. God will put opportunities in our way. Pray daily to recognize those opportunities and to rely on the Holy Spirit to speak of Him.

Love from my heart,

nanC

P.S. Do you have a prayer request? Please share it with me. I would love to hear from you.

Nancy Cohen is the Director of Women's Ministries at Apple of His Eye
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Urgent: Please Pray

Please pray for Micha and Leah Cohen, our son and daughter-in-law. Micha has been battling Huntington's disease for several years, and Leah is evaluating if this is the time for him to be in hospice care at the end-stage of his battle before his home-going to the Lord. They are in the Chicago-land area and have two beautiful daughters, Selah & Tikvah.

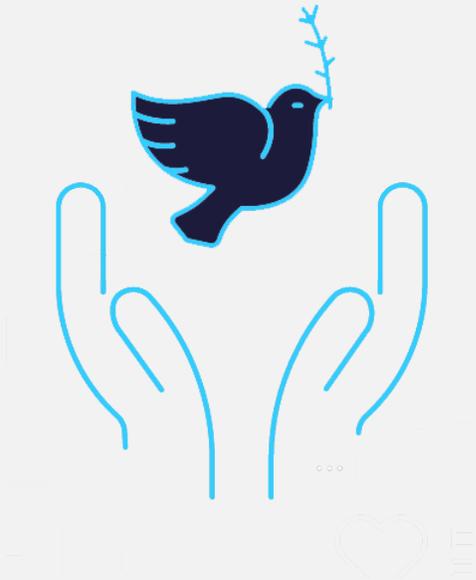




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For more information, please contact us at (888) 512-7753 or email us at giving@appleofhiseye.org

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