



Showers of Blessings

Steve Cohen

*Salvation belongs to the LORD;
your blessing be on your people!
Selah (Psalm 3:8, ESV).*

A question to begin: Where are we now?

We are two years plus into the covid pandemic. Ukrainians are two months plus into the hellish atrocities of war. Deaths, poverty, homelessness, mass shootings, fires, spiraling inflation, stocks plummeting, and more invade our minds and hearts through instant media cycles blasting 24/7 around the world.

It seems like many struggle just to muddle through life, seeking safe harbor and a place for a brief respite of hope.

Yes, this is all going on around us.

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But God, in His mercy, brings to us great hope and blessings through His promises, His Word, and His Holy Spirit!

Karen, a Jewish inquirer in Wisconsin, met with Nancy, and now she is a baptized child of God receiving her blessings.

Jessica came to our Passover seder in our home and saw how her Jewish roots could indeed be expressed while being a follower of Jesus. She took my latest book, *Jewish By Discovery*, and is eager to know more.

Jordan Peiser will graduate from seminary this May and begin his career as a minister of the Gospel. More on Jordan later.

Patricia L. has a passion to see the Gospel go out to the lost sheep of Israel and reached out to us. She sacrificially joined many like you who care, pray and give over and above their church giving to make this ministry possible.

Now in our 26th year, we are blessed so greatly by faithful friends and ministry partners like you who believe the Bible wholeheartedly and sustain our mission to: Boldly declare Jesus as Messiah and urgently equip the church to do the same!

It is indeed time to count our blessings and see what God has done and is doing in our midst even today!

Count Your Blessings

*When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

*Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

*Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,*



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And you will be singing as the days go by.

*When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold.*

*Count your many blessings, money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven, nor your Lord on high.*

*So amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.*

Author: Johnson Oatman (1897)

Tune: Edwin O. Excell

Steve Cohen is the founder of Apple of His Eye
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In the Quiet

Jordan Merrifield

The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing. (Zeph. 3:17, New International Version)



It is strange to think that we are already in April, when it seems as if we rang in the new year just a few weeks back. The past few months have held several changes for me and Apple of His Eye, including my transition from part-time to full time itinerary coordinator. The extra work time has allowed me to take on new projects, dig into networking, and exercise my creativity muscles from time to time. You can now find AOHE on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/theappleofhiseyemissionsociety/>), and I hope you will follow us there.

The new year has also brought on a few other changes as well. Like many people, I make New Year's resolutions, and like many, not all of mine have yet been accomplished. I take comfort in knowing there is plenty of time left in this year for me to make it to the gym 5 days in a row.

One practice that I have found challenges and supports me more than any New Year's resolution is holding a Bible verse as my mantra for the year. I post this verse on my phone, computer, bathroom mirror, etc., and doing so reminds me to ponder this verse repeatedly.

This year, I have selected Zephaniah 3:17 because each time I read it, I find myself drawn in by its different phrases. Through the Lenten season, I have been uplifted in the knowledge that God's love has the power to accomplish so much. God is mighty to save and yet, that same power which raises mountains and the dead can also quiet the wind, quiet the waves and quiet ourselves.





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As a newer member of the AOHE team, I spend much of my time on the phone building relationships with the churches that support us. Between those phone calls and conversations, I can occasionally find moments of quiet, when I have not yet opened another email or received another call, when my voice and mind settle into the quiet. Here I marvel at how God does not hush us into stillness but embraces us with a love that is so powerful, so mighty that the voices of the world are quieted in awe.

In this Easter season, I pray that between songs of praise you will also be quieted by God's mighty love, the same love that led Jesus to the cross and out of the tomb.

Jordan Merrifield is the Itinerary Coordinator of Apple of His Eye
Email Jordan at jordan.merrifield@appleofhiseye.org

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:

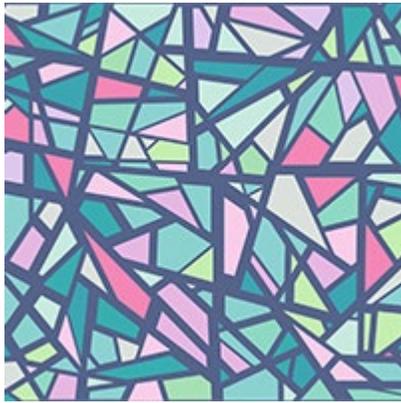
- The Power of Pentecost
- The Fall Festivals of Israel
- Yeshua the Light of the World
- Unwrapping Romans 11
- To the Jew First
- Our Jewish Roots
- Jewish Evangelism Seminar
- Winsome Witnessing

Email Jordan: jordan.merrifield@appleofhiseye.org

Phone Jordan: (636) 326-4040, ext. 2.



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NanC's Corner

Christ Killer! Christ Killer!

Nancy Cohen

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father. (Jn. 10:18, New International Version)

Everyone who has seen the movie Schindler's List remembers the Germans lining the streets during Kristallnacht¹ screaming "Christ Killer! Christ Killer!" at the Jews who were being paraded to the ghettos for confinement. This was not something a screenwriter dreamed up; it was reality. So-called Christians have given this label and other atrocious monikers to Jews since shortly after the death of Jesus.

I find it hard to believe that Christians would do this (I would rather call them church attendees). Christians read their Bibles (don't they?) and the Bible clearly quotes Yeshua (Jesus) referring to his body and death in John 10:

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father. (Jn. 10:18, NIV)

This means that no one killed Jesus. Rather, he laid down his life of his own accord. Where does this idea come from? Let's look at Matthew 27:

Now it was the governor's custom at the feast to release to the crowd a prisoner of their choosing. At that time they were holding a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. So, when the crowd had assembled, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him. While Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message: "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered terribly in a dream today because of Him."

But the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus put to death. "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they replied. "What then should I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify Him!" "Why?" asked Pilate. "What evil has He done?"



But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify Him!" (Matt. 27:15-23, Berean Study Bible)

It sure looks like the crowd, led by the religious leaders, wanted to murder Jesus. But who was in control: man, or God Almighty? Consider Matthew 26:

And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?" (Matt. 26:51-54, New King James Version)

We see that it was all part of God's wonderful plan of redemption! But then the Jewish leaders who had asked for Yeshua's crucifixion say in Matthew 27:25 (English Standard Version), "And all the people said, 'His blood shall be on us and on our children!'" Oy! That verse gives more fodder to those who want to persecute the Jews for the death of the Messiah...or does it? Remember, he laid down his life; no one took it.

Sadly, the Jewish leaders of that day (like some of today's Christians), either forgot or missed the passage from the prophet Ezekiel:

The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. (Ez. 18:20, ESV)

So, they could not put a curse on their offspring. Little did they realize when they said his blood will be on us and our children, how right they were in a completely different way. As he went to the cross Yeshua asked his Abba, Adonai (God Almighty) "...forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34, NIV). The blood Jesus shed would cover their sins, and he forgave those sins.

Did they know what they were doing? Or were they tools in God's divine plan for our redemption? This plan had been in process since God cursed Adam and Eve.

Some might ask why God holds people responsible for events he plans, like the death of Yeshua? Is this a paradox? I think not.

Proverbs 6 shows us this:

There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers. (Prov. 6:16-18, NKJV)



Each of these issues that God hates applies to the leaders, elders, etc. who called for Yeshua's death. Every single point. Haughty eyes, lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, devising wicked plans, feet running rapidly to evil, false witness who mutters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers!

Did God make these men puppets and plan all the evil against Yeshua, culminating in his death? Not at all. As we read in Proverbs, which the people in the days of Yeshua also had access to and read: God hates the sins perpetuated on His only son. The community knew God's stand on the evil they were planning, and they had a choice. It was within their power to choose evil or good, just as it is within us to make that same choice. It was as if Satan, who really thought he would have a win in all this, laid out the ideas and sat back to watch who would take it up and follow through. Silly Satan, all of this was prophesized. Of course, we know what this was all about and the triumph for us that it produced.

God, even though He knew this would happen, must have been hurt, besides angry, at the men who brought such disregard and malice against his son. We give our earthly children boundaries and are often disappointed to see the child disobey or be deceived into sin. We know that our sowing will reap more than we expected.

I can only imagine the horror and fear people must have experienced when, at Yeshua's death, the ground shook, the dead arose from their graves, the earth became dark, and the temple curtain was torn in two exposing the holy of holies. I often wonder if God tore the sacred curtain in two as a representation of His grief. It is a sign of grief to tear your garment in two for the Jewish people even to this day. God was angry and grieving for Yeshua. It was a horrendous sight for Him to behold, even though he knew it was necessary and had commanded Yeshua to pay the cost for our sins.

While 516 people are recorded as having seen the resurrected Messiah, there could have been many more not recorded. Were some of the elders and priests in that count of witnesses? That would have been interesting.

While the recollection of the trial and suffering and crucifixion of Yeshua was beyond horrible, we do not camp there. He gave us the victory over sin through His love for all mankind. My Yeshua no longer hangs on a cross! I remember asking my grandmother, who wore a small gold cross necklace, why we don't wear rocks as a necklace to honor the resurrection? I was seven or eight, so I didn't realize how absurd that remark was, however it made a point. My grandmother took me to a Bible bookstore and she bought a new necklace for herself. It was a grain of mustard seed. She then explained to me that faith was all we need to follow the Savior – faith as small as a grain of mustard seed (see Matt. 17:20).

So, what do we learn from all of this?

- We cannot and should not malign the Jewish people over something that was planned by God.
- We need to read and discern God's Word diligently to understand its truth.
- We should not treat the cross as a decoration; it is the emblem of repulsion and suffering, but also of victory.
- We cannot add to nor diminish from what was done on our behalf through Yeshua's precious life-saving blood. His blood was the sufficient sacrifice for our (my) sins now and forever. To add to his sacrifice is to spit in his face. Ephesians 2 reminds us that "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9, King James Version).
- We should remember that Yeshua was a Jew, the first followers of Yeshua were Jewish, and the entire Bible was written by Jewish men.



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He is alive! Hallelujah!

As we face increased anti-Semitism in our nation and around the world, please take time to pray for our Jewish friends and neighbors. Please pray for the salvation of God's chosen and for the peace of Jerusalem. Please read the Bible and pray for discernment.



On a personal note, we had a glorious Passover with our family and friends and then celebrated a joyful Resurrection Sunday with many at Zion Lutheran hearing an incredible message by Kevin Hintze. There is nothing finer than worshipping with my children and watching them live godly lives.





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.

¹ Kristallnacht: night of broken glass. A pogrom carried out by the Nazis. The name resulted from all the glass, crystal (that was not stolen by the Germans), and store windows of Jewish businesses being smashed on that night.

Nancy Cohen is the Director of Women's Ministries at Apple of His Eye
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From the Mail Bag...

Dear Nancy,

Just want to thank you for your blog posts; they are so encouraging to me. The most recent post about religion versus gospel is so true. Jesus didn't die to give us a religion but a relationship with Him. So many are concerned about "head" knowledge (knowing about Him) but fail to understand that "heart" knowledge (knowing him personally) is the key.

I am wondering if you could pray for my husband who will have a cardiac catheterization on February 3rd. He had an abnormal finding on his annual cardiology visit and is now requiring this procedure to determine whether there is an actual abnormality or if it was just an aberrant reading.

Please pray that all goes well during the procedure and that no abnormalities are found. Thanks so much for your ministry and willingness to lift my husband Peter up in prayer!

God's Blessings and Shalom,

Marcy

Hi Steve,

As I celebrate my 78th birthday today, I am indeed aware of Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day). My hobby is working on the genealogical information of my family. I have been able to trace my maternal grandfather's ancestry as far back as the 1600's. I have found that our family includes Ashkenazi Jewish ancestors! This came as a huge surprise to me. I discovered this portion of the family is mostly from what is today the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, and Germany.

Many ancestors were killed in the pogroms of the 1880's in Eastern Europe. Many others were murdered in the Holocaust. I'm grateful that you mentioned Yom HaShoah in your article. Some of my ancestors left relatives who are in Israel. Other ancestors came to North America and some to South America. My father's family were from Moldovia.

I join you in offering prayers that the lessons of the Holocaust and pogroms should never be forgotten. Please know that I also pray for you, Nancy, and your entire family. I'm aware that Micha (your oldest son) is very ill and pray for him too.

Respectfully,

Lynn



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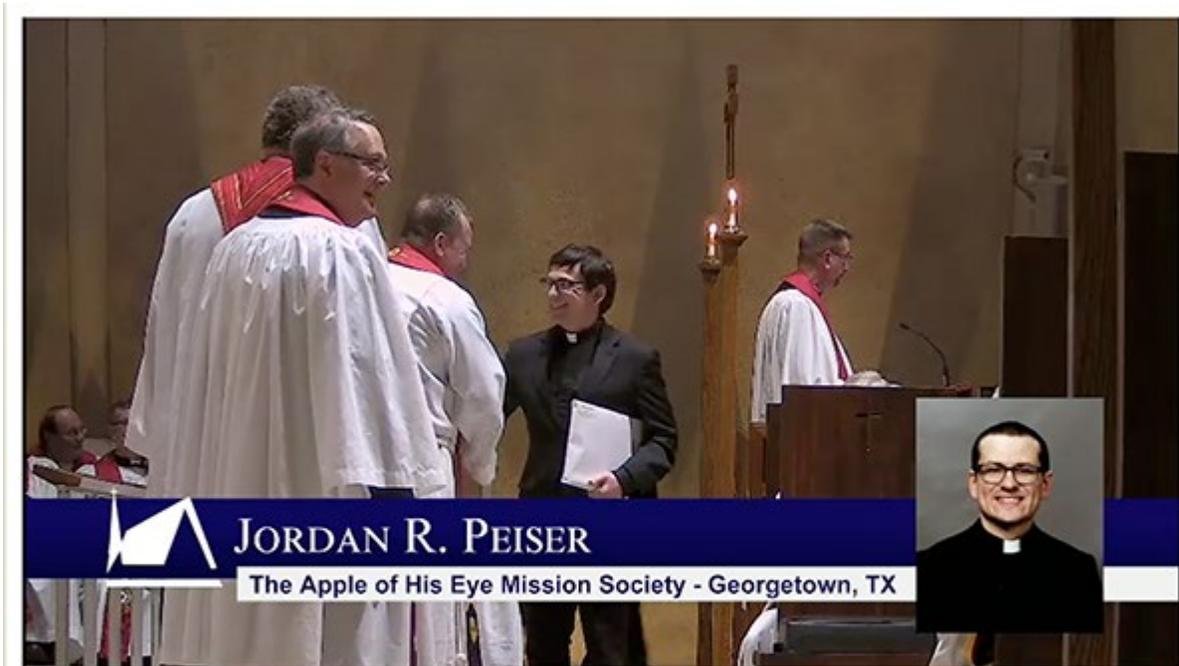
Jordan Peiser Called by AOHE

Steve Cohen

Please pray for the newest member of the Apple of His Eye team, Jordan Peiser. Jordan is being called jointly by Zion Lutheran Church in Maywood, NJ and AOHE.

Jordan will be developing a strategy for direct outreach to individuals in New Jersey, a state with the second highest percentage of Jewish people in the United States (only New York is higher).

Jordan will also be available to speak in area churches and will be building an 18th month calendar for speaking engagements starting in September 2022. If your church would like to get in on the ground floor of supporting this new endeavor, please contact us at 636-326-4040 ext. 1.



**Service
Bulletin**

“Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
Ephesians 4:1-3



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The Hour is Short

You can bring salvation to those who don't know Jesus.



Your partnership makes our ministry possible. Support us with a gift at www.appleofhiseye.org/support/give

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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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