

## Chapter 15

### *"SO THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS!"*

The next morning the three of us entered the classroom. It was buzzing with excitement as Ari took his seat in the corner and Rabbi S. began to speak in Hebrew. I looked around the room and realised these were not the same students as previously. There were fifty students in Grade 13 and these were 'the other half' of that group. Soon, the Rabbi turned to me and invited me to speak. He took a seat right in front of me ... in 'spitting distance' if I should lisp!

"Seeing you are a different group to those I spoke to last time, let me tell you what I told them," I began. A student interrupted me.

"Please sir, we have all heard what a Christian isn't, how you became one and how you became a Jew. That's all we've been talking about for the last two days. Will you please let us ask you questions?"

The students were just as eager as those of the other class - though better prepared. A few questions were designed to trap me but most showed genuine interest. A young lady asked how I, a scientist, could possibly believe in a virgin birth. When I mentioned in answering, that one of their prophets had foretold such an event, she demanded to know where. It was the Rabbi who turned to her and suggested she should read the book of Isaiah, chapter 7.

Then Rabbi S. said, "May I ask you a question?" I felt the hair rising on the back of my neck. This was it! This was to be the big expose! Every student in the room leaned forward to catch every word that was to be spoken as their 'champion' showed the Gentile how foolish he was in believing that christian myth. One could be sure that every word was going to be repeated over 25 home dinner tables that evening.

"Mr. Evans," he began, "I have read your New Testament many times, and I, with many other Jews, believe that the greatest man who ever walked upon this earth was Jesus of Nazareth. I am proud that he was a Jew. He and his followers were righteous men, calling the people to holiness and orthodoxy. They were faithful in their worship and celebrated all the feasts and holy days. In fact, your Bible tells me that he 'fulfilled the Law in all its demands'. What I do not understand is this. If you claim to be a follower of his, why don't you also become a Jew?"

I was amazed at his confession in front of these students, as I began my reply.

"I also have read your scriptures, our Old Testament, and seen how God told Moses that for every form of uncleanness among the people, there was one remedy - the offering of a blood sacrifice. It might be the blood of a goat or a lamb or a bird but, in all cases, the blood was required. I also read that, once a year on the day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, a male lamb, one year old and without any blemish, was to be taken and slain. Its blood was to be taken by the High Priest into the Holy of Holies in the temple, and there, be sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat where God dwelt".

The Rabbi nodded.

I continued, "On that day, no one worked in all of Israel as they waited, with bated breath, to see if God would accept this offering as a covering for their sins for another year. Everyone celebrated when the High Priest returned from the presence of God. The sacrifice was accepted!" Their sins were covered for another year! It could be said in truth that 'without the shedding of blood there was no covering for sin'."

Again the Rabbi nodded.

"Both our Rabbis, Hillel and Shimei agreed the whole Law may be summed up in that statement."

It was my turn to nod in agreement. "Sir, there was another Jew who came before Jesus, calling people to repentance. His name was John. I do not find it strange that, seeing Jesus approaching, he should say to the crowds, 'Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World'. He recognised that all the sacrifices of the Law were only foreshadowing the day when the perfect lamb would be found to take away all sin for all time. You said yourself, that Jesus was the most perfect man who ever lived. He was the lamb who, alone, could satisfy the requirements of the Law. He fulfilled the Law in all its demands. That is why, one day, this little Gentile lad could kneel by his bed and, looking towards a cross in Jerusalem, ask the Jewish God to accept that sacrifice for my sins also."

Rabbi S. had his head bowed at this time. All was quiet as I had no more to say. Then I heard his voice as one speaking to himself.

"So that's what it means! So that's what it means!" Then looking up at me, "I see it now. I see it now."

I do not know if I have ever experienced a more thrilling moment than that. I have often wondered why the Lord should grant that taste of Heaven to me when others have laboured so long for Him among His Chosen People without seeing anything like it. Furthermore, He had evidently planned all this many years before when I questioned His reasons for closing the door for our coming to Canada. Our disappointment was proving to be His appointment!