

## Coming Through the Gate

During the summer of 1972 Dr. Abraham Gagin, head of the Israeli cloud seeding program, was a visiting professor at Colorado State University while I was a graduate student there. Abe, a practicing Jew, and I, a young enthusiastic biblical literalist, became good friends during several of his visits to the U.S. and maintained contact for several years.

We attended an Atmospheric Science Department picnic in July of 1972 and struck up a conversation about his experiences as a fighter pilot in the Israeli Defense Force during the '67 war against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. He told me that the day before the war broke out he was piloting a small aircraft seeding clouds north and south along the coast of Israel and the next day was flying a jet fighter bombing tanks and eluding Egyptian aircraft in the same clouds.

I wasn't knowledgeable about details of the war and didn't realize at the time the unique opportunity I had during that discussion to learn first-hand knowledge from a participant in the '67 air war. I regret being uninformed about the significance of his role and not having taken the opportunity to interrogate him more fully. Unfortunately, Abe died several years later, and I had no further chance to reopen that conversation after I became more knowledgeable about the history of Israel and the end times.

However, during that same conversation Abe and I turned to another topic of even more interest. I was woefully ignorant of Judaism and a neophyte in eschatology (The study of the end times). I asked a question that I didn't realize, at the time, was at the heart of the difference between Judaism and Christianity.

I asked, "Abe, do you think the Messiah will come through the Golden Gate on the east side of the Old City?"

He enthusiastically replied, "Yes, I do! My rabbi teaches that Messiah will miraculously enter the city through the Eastern Gate and rule and reign in Jerusalem. Therefore, the Muslims sealed up the gate and placed a cemetery just outside the wall, to prevent Him from entering. But, it will be miraculous, and He will enter anyway."

"That's what I believe," I said. "That's amazing. I didn't realize Judaism and Christianity had this in common."

We continued to talk about this for several minutes as I grew more enthusiastic about our common beliefs. We had more in common than I had thought. I've had several Jewish friends, but we never talked religion. But, then it hit me. I had forgotten a critical difference in belief.

"You believe the Messiah is to come, but you don't believe He has already come once before, do you?" I said. "Jesus, who Christians believe is the Messiah and came the first time to offer His life as a sacrifice for sin, believe He will come a second time to rule and reign. So, you and I essentially believe the same about the Messiah coming through the Eastern Gate, but you don't believe Jesus is the Messiah, and I do."

"That's right," he said. "I don't believe Jesus was the Messiah."

I wasn't prepared at that time to argue effectively that Jesus was the Messiah to my friend, Abe. Since then I've become much more knowledgeable about how the Old Testament shows that prophecy points to Jesus as the Messiah and the New Testament shows that Jesus fulfilled those prophecies. Furthermore, Jesus claimed He was the Messiah and fulfilled all requirements of the Messiah.

I've regretted for years I wasn't prepared and didn't make the effort to be a better witness. I anticipate not being awarded any crowns for witnessing to Abe and others I had a responsibility to speak to, at the Bema seat of judgement, but fortunately, my salvation is not in jeopardy. I still wish I had done better by my friends.