

FACE TO FACE

DIVINE ENCOUNTERS

My Jerusalem Encounter

Focus God will go to great lengths to reach us and to have a face-to-face encounter with us.

Open What book are you currently reading? If you are not reading a book, is there a blog that you follow?

Read Gateway Church embraces the belief and the practice of taking the gospel to the Jews first. This is not based in favoritism, but on God's divine order. In the Old Testament, Moses was instructed to build the tabernacle exactly according to the pattern that God gave him because it replicated the tabernacle in Heaven (Exodus 25:9, 40). In the same way, God has a pattern for building His Church on earth, a living tabernacle. Part of this pattern is to take the gospel to the Jew first (Romans 1:16).

Pastor Geoffrey Cohen is a Jewish believer and Pastor of Jewish Ministries at Gateway Church. His grandparents emigrated from Lithuania to South Africa because of personal hardships. This spared his family from being killed by the Nazis in World War II. When God has a plan for our lives, nothing on heaven or earth can prevent it from happening.

In South Africa, Pastor Geoffrey grew up in an anti-Semitic (anti-Jewish) culture. He thought that all Christians hated Jews, and that Jesus was the first Catholic, and not a Jew. Pastor Geoffrey became a believer when Jesus physically appeared to him in Jerusalem. His face-to-face encounter with Jesus revealed that He was Jewish, was more than a man and that Jesus knew all of his sins, yet still loved him unconditionally. Jesus loves us with an unswerving, unmovable, unconditional love and goes to great lengths to reach us and have face-to-face encounters with us.

Talk

1. What stood out to you about Pastor Geoffrey's testimony?
2. Read Romans 1:16, Matthew 15:22–24, Acts 13:2–5. These are examples from the New Testament of taking the gospel to the Jew first. Had you heard of this biblical pattern before Pastor Geoffrey's message? Have you ever had the opportunity to tell a Jewish person about the Messiah?
3. Have you ever lived in a racist or anti-Semitic culture? What were the challenges of living there? How did you handle those challenges?
4. Pastor Geoffrey probably would not have been born if his family had stayed in Lithuania. Can you see events in your family's history or your own life where God spared you because He has a purpose and a plan for you?
5. Just as Jesus physically appeared to Pastor Geoffrey, He has appeared to people in the Middle East and all over the world. Have you or anyone in your family had such an encounter with Jesus?
6. What is *unconditional* love? What causes us to doubt that Jesus loves us unconditionally? Read Romans 5:8. What does this tell us about God's love for us?

Live

Memorize Romans 8:38–39: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Pray

Thank You, Lord, for giving each of us a testimony of how You revealed Yourself to us. We praise You that You alone are able to fulfill your plans and purposes in our lives. Please help us to have face-to-face encounters with You.