

Prophetic Art That Points to Salvation

Imagine Christ's view from atop the mountain where He preached to the multitudes about the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, the merciful and the pure of heart. As He preached the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), Jesus looked down on a sea of faces that hung on His every word because He didn't teach as the scribes did but as one with authority—and He was moved with compassion for their souls.

A new book, *Multitudes*, helps readers imagine what Christ saw as He taught about anger, adultery, oaths, revenge, loving your enemies and charitable giving, fasting and heaven. Steffi Geiser Rubin, an artist commissioned by Jews for Jesus to create original art for the Messianic Jewish evangelistic organization's new book, says its cover gives Jesus' eye view perspective from that mount in Galilee.

"The cover, which is made up of faces from the illustration of Matthew 5-7, is to show what Jesus saw when He looked out," Rubin says. "He was able to see beyond the exterior into the hearts and souls and needs of the people. This is an image of Jesus that Jewish people can understand because there has been a lot of suffering among Jewish people, and, therefore, a lot of compassion toward those who suffer."

Reaching Jewish Multitudes

The coffee table book—combining the Messianic Jewish Tree of Life version of the book of Matthew with 20 original, full-scale paintings—is part of an artistic outreach to share Yeshua's love for the "multitudes" with the Jewish people and, ultimately, the entire world.

"I love that verse and the way Matthew paints such a graphic picture to help us understand what Jesus was feeling," David

Brickner, executive director of the San Francisco-based ministry, wrote in *Multitudes*. "If we are to care with the compassion of Messiah Yeshua, we need to see past the veneers to understand people and circumstances as He sees them. We need to see that the multitudes who are without Yeshua are lost and without hope because they are without God in this world."

Multitudes is not just a coffee table book; it's also a traveling exhibition. The paintings were displayed at recent art shows in San Francisco; Washington, D.C.; and New York City, an exhibit that drew 500 people its first night. More shows are planned this year in Paris, Tel Aviv and across Israel.

Susan Perlman, associate director at Jews for Jesus, says the shows attract the curious—just like Jesus did when He walked the earth. That curiosity opens the door for Jews for Jesus staff to introduce the curious to Yeshua.

"People are really taken by these art shows," Perlman says. "It does cause dissonance: 'Wait a minute, they're Jewish, but they believe in Jesus. But what we're experiencing is especially very Jewish and Christian at the same time.' The combination—it makes people do a double take."

Multitudes' Prophetic Inspiration

Inspiration for the project began when Marc Sternberg was teaching on Matthew and realized the apostle was a Jew writing to Jews who didn't yet believe in Yeshua as the Messiah. He thought: "*Wouldn't Matthew be a great vehicle to reach Jewish people today.*"

Later, while driving home, Sternberg says the Lord inspired him in a "waking vision-dream" to begin work on the illustrated Gospel of Matthew book that is now *Multitudes*.

"I believe that the art of *Multitudes* is a non-threatening

platform for sharing the gospel,” says Sternberg, director of the Jews for Jesus Store. “Almost each of the paintings has a Messianic prophecy that Jesus is actually fulfilling in that passage of the Bible, or that He is quoting directly from the Old Testament Scripture.”

Following the “vision-dream,” Jews for Jesus commissioned Rubin, its first art director and a founding member, to create original artwork as a vehicle for communicating the Jewishness of the Gospel of Matthew. Rubin joined Jews for Jesus after encountering ministry Founder Moishe Rosen at a Bible study at University of California, Berkeley in 1971. He asked her, “What do you think God wants from you?” After reading the Gospels, she put her faith in Yeshua.

Rubin’s paintings represent the major themes, events and messages within the book. The key verses, Old Testament references and image ideas were a collaborative effort between Rubin and Jews for Jesus.

Disrupting Jewish Thinking

“Multitudes is Jesus’ perspective of the gospel,” Rubin says. “(It’s) what inspired Him when He delivered the Sermon on the Mount. The whole background, the whole history of Jews for Jesus, is one of disruption—changing what people think when they hear ‘Jesus,’ changing what people think when they hear ‘Jews.’ These paintings are all so disruptive.”

Perlman hopes the project will not only touch hearts, but will expand the understanding Jews have of Yeshua.

“Most importantly, it will transform them in terms of their understanding of the Creator Himself, and how both visually and in the written word, we can find that He is the way, the truth and the life,” Perlman says. “It’s a gospel tool and also a validation of our faith.”

Watch how Jews for Jesus can reach people for Christ through the Multitudes Art Project at .