

Israeli Youth Shocks National Television Audience With Yeshua Confession

The symbolism is powerful. For eight days in December, we take one candle called the *servant candle* and light eight other candles. In the same way, Yeshua came as a servant and gave us light.

In Israel being a light can be scary. You never know how someone will react to your faith. On Christmas Eve, when 20-year-old Shai Sol testified of her faith in Yeshua before the whole country, every believer in Israel was challenged and encouraged.

My wife Elana and I were hosting the leaders-in-training group from our congregation, Tiferet Yeshua for the last night of Hanukah. After lighting the candles and eating Sufganiot (1,000-calorie fried donuts), we turned on the television at to watch Israel's newest reality show—*HaKochav Haba*—The Next Star. And we waited to see Shai.

Her audition began around 9:45 p.m. On the show, the hosts first talk to the contestant before he or she sings. Shai got right to the point. "I think I will reveal that I am a Messianic Jew." The interviewers were confused and asked, "What does that mean?" Shai responds, "Jews who believe in the *Tenach* (Old Testament) and the New Testament."

Her mother then goes on to share that the New Covenant was first given to Israel first (Jer. 31:31-33). Shai proclaims, "We believe in Yeshua ..."

One of the hosts then encourages her not to share her faith with the judges until after they judge her song. "Let them judge you according to the music." The male host told her that

the culture of Israel has a very accepting side but also has an ugly side. However, his female co-host interrupted and said, "This is who she is. If people don't receive her that's not her problem."

Israel Today's Ryan Jones wrote, "So intriguing was the revelation by 20-year-old contestant Shai Sol that she believes in Yeshua (Jesus) as Messiah that the top-rated *Kochav Haba* made her pre-audition interview the focus of its promotional commercials earlier in the week."

In the end, she chose not to tell them up front, which I think was the right decision. She had already shared it with all Israel in the interview and if she passes the audition she will have more opportunity to testify.

Shai has a very unique style. The judges were enthralled by her—as were the interviewers back stage as they rooted for their new Messianic friend. One judge said, "I am in love!" However, one judge didn't vote while she was singing and she was left a few percentage points short of entering the competition.

The male host was so shocked that he didn't vote for her that he said if he doesn't put her through "I am going to stop talking to him." The judge who "fell in love" said that until now that was the song of Idan Raichel, a famous Israeli artist, but if he heard it for the first time last night, he would have thought it was hers.

In the end, the lone judge who was withholding his vote relented and Shai is now competing in *HaKochav Haba*.

You have to understand the significance of this. If someone on *American Idol* in a country with millions of believers testifies to their faith, it is a big deal. I remember Colton Dixon singing a worship song on *American Idol* and it was amazing. Believers felt empowered to see someone take such a bold stand.

But imagine doing that in a country where people are taught that you are an apostate; where your community of faith makes up less than one quarter of one percent of the population. And let's not forget the hostility, harassment and persecution from the ultra-Orthodox. No, this is a big deal!

A young adult from Haifa wrote on Facebook, **"For the first time in history a Jewish person declared their belief in Yeshua on prime time television!"** Our youth leader Moti said that someone created a Facebook post this morning saying in Hebrew, "Gam ani Yehudi Meshihi" (I am also a Messianic Jew) and young people, who would never have done it without Shai's testimony, are now posting it on their Facebook walls.

And to watch it with close to 20 other Messianic Israelis who just happened to be at our home ... well, it was like she was representing us. It was special.

No, it is not the revival we are still praying for—but when you think of how hard the enemy has worked to keep Jewish people from Yeshua and how he has sought to turn the Messianic faith into something foreign to Jews, it is encouraging to see a 20-year-old girl from Ashdod, Israel, go on TV and tell the country, "I believe in Yeshua!"

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