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# The Chosen People

SERVING THE JEWISH PEOPLE SINCE 1894



## Christmas

THROUGH JEWISH EYES

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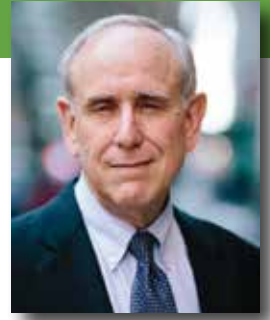
THE NEW TESTAMENT, CHRISTMAS  
AND HANUKKAH

UPDATES FROM OUR MISSIONARIES

HANUKKAH RECIPES

MESSIAH'S BIRTH

Dr. Mitch Glaser  
International  
Director  
Chosen People  
Ministries



# The New Testament, Christmas, & Hanukkah

**S**halom and happy holidays! I am sure you are looking forward to celebrating the two great holidays observed in December. On Hanukkah, we focus on the rededication of the Temple during the days of the Maccabees, a family of Jewish warriors who saved the Jewish people from the Greek leader Antiochus Epiphanes. Christmas, of course, points us to the redemption of both Jews and Gentiles through the One who was born to be the Savior of the world.

We see similar patterns in both holidays, including themes of light, generosity, deliverance, and giving glory to God.



## *Hanukkah and Christmas: The Connection?*

I also see the connection between Hanukkah and Christmas in the ways that the stories complement one another. After all, if Antiochus Epiphanes had turned the Jewish people into idol-worshipping Greeks who tossed out the Bible and embraced Greek philosophies, then the Jewish people could very well have disappeared. If that had happened, why would anyone be looking for a Jewish Messiah? And who would understand the prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures that paved a path through history, enabling Jewish people to identify the true Messiah?

All would have been lost if this small band of priestly zealots had not overthrown the Greeks.

*Stated simply: Without Hanukkah, there would be no Christmas!*

The Savior of the world did not enter earth's atmosphere unannounced or pop onto the scene through some mystical

vortex that would make any New Ager jealous! Rather, His birthplace, parents, tribe, and even the timing of His birth were predicted with extraordinary specificity, which allowed us to recognize Him as the Son of God and Messiah of the Jewish people.

Jesus was Jewish! He was born a Jew, both of His parents were Jewish, He lived a Jewish life, celebrated Jewish holidays such as Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles, and He lived a perfect life according to the Torah (Law). He grew up in the land given to the Jewish people, and when the moment came for the prophecy of His death to be fulfilled (Isaiah 53), He went to the cross without complaint, with love for His people who, for the most part, had rejected Him. He became the Savior and quintessential Passover lamb for all who, by faith, trusted in the blood of the Messiah, painted by grace on the doorposts of their hearts.

There literally would be no Christmas without Hanukkah, as there would be no Messiah without the Jewish people.

## *Early Faith Discoveries*

I remember the first time I read the New Testament. I had previously thought this thin volume, compared to the Older Testament, was the fountainhead of antisemitism. I grew up believing that Jewish people were not supposed to read this book. Yet, one day I found a New Testament and began reading it. It struck me with the simplicity of its message and the love and kindness of Jesus. I quickly understood that He was Jewish, and I was fixated on His celebration of the Jewish holidays — as this is one of the ways we, as Jews, define ourselves. We celebrate Passover, not Easter, and Hanukkah, not Christmas. After I finished reading the Gospels for the first time, I came face to face with a Jewish book and a Jewish Messiah that was consistent with the Old Testament and that crushed my prejudices against the New Testament.

After reading "the book," I knew I had to decide. Although as a Jewish person I was raised to reject Jesus, how could I do that after realizing that He fulfilled the prophecies predicted of the Messiah? I knew in the depth of my soul that if I did not believe in Jesus, I could never believe in anything! I was that convinced.

And so I accepted Jesus as my Messiah. For a moment, I feared I would wake up the next morning and find myself transformed into a Gentile, but the opposite was true. I never felt so Jewish in my entire life.

## *The New Testament is Kosher!*

I soon became convicted that Jesus is God in the flesh and that the Lord had called me to tell my fellow Jewish people

that Jesus is the Messiah and that the New Testament is kosher!

There are two magnificent passages in the Hebrew Scriptures that each of us should reflect on during this holiday season: Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:6-7. The first passage is a clear prophecy of the virgin birth! You can only imagine how surprised I was to discover this prediction of the incarnation and virgin birth in *my Bible!* The prophet Isaiah writes, *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel!"* (Isaiah 7:14).

I am well familiar with the traditional objections that challenge this prophecy finding fulfillment in Jesus. The principal objection I had as a Jewish person to this possibility had nothing to do with the passage, but, rather, with the fundamental belief that God could not become flesh. In fact, as a Jewish person, I believed that this was tantamount to idolatry. The second of the Ten Commandments tells us that we should not create graven images of God. I recognized graven images are made of wood or stone, but Jewish people generally assume that a manifestation of God in the flesh is an idol. Therefore, for Jews, believing that Jesus is God is idolatry.

The other arguments are minor compared to this. Scholars debate whether the Hebrew word for *virgin* means "young woman" or "virgin," and the son mentioned is also traditionally believed to be one of Isaiah's children. There are good answers to these objections, but the primary challenge is encouraging Jewish people to be open-minded to the possibility that the eternal God could take on humanity. For some reason, this made sense to me and I believed it. I became convinced that God could become flesh because of this passage.

I then jumped a couple of chapters and found this new insight strengthened by another passage in Isaiah:

*For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forever-more. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.* (Isaiah 9:6-7)

I view the son born of the virgin as the same child who is given this litany of spectacular names. I envision the names as characterizing the child and as windows into the character of



this extraordinary individual. He is God in the flesh as depicted in the names.

Finally, it became clear to me that this child would become a king and reign on His father David's throne for all eternity. I asked myself the simple question, "Who lives for all eternity?" The answer, of course, is God Himself. At that point, as a new believer, I began to fully understand that Jesus was both the Messiah of Israel and Lord of the universe. He took on flesh to reveal the character of God to all mankind, identify with humanity, live a perfect life, and die as a worthy sacrifice for our sins.

*Whew! What a journey through Scripture.*

**Jesus is God's Hanukkah present wrapped in flesh!**

I hope you are encouraged reading reports from our missionaries Simon, Fiona, and Emily. Many blessings for a Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah, and enjoy this special holiday edition of *The Chosen People* newsletter.

Your brother in the Messiah,

Handwritten signature of Mitch Glaser in green ink.

Mitch Glaser  
International Director

As we enter this festive season we are rejoicing as we make Yeshua the focus of our activities. This week I am off to Latvia to hold a Hanukkah outreach. While I was in Finland in September we heard that the ladies now really want to hear more from us. While we were there last Purim we discovered a secret believer among the ladies from the synagogue. It was a wonderful surprise and we had the joy of seeing one lady give her life to the Lord. What remarkable change - on my first visit the ladies talked the whole time I was

speaking but last time we could see that they were listening.

In London things in the congregation are going well. We held an open event for Hanukkah, inviting people we had lost touch with, and were very encouraged by the good attendance. We are seeing people step up to new challenges. We have a new leader to help as he gains experience in this new role. Our weekly Bible study is coming to the end of Hebrews after nearly three years and we will be moving on to one of the prophets.



**FIONA SORBALA REPORTS**

We now have a pianist, flautist and french horn joining our worship group, which is an exciting development and one which we are working to incorporate in our services, and also a drummer in training. One day, hopefully in the not too distant future, we will have quite a team.

A congregation member invited me to join him for afternoon tea and a concert, and we shared a wonderful evening where we were both able to talk about our faith with his Jewish friend. The Lord has given

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Hanukkah reminds us of a great victory against a powerful tyrant who tried to destroy the Jewish people and a miraculous turn of events that saw them win against all the odds.



**SIMON LISSAK WRITES**

So we say "Nes Gadol Haya Sham", or "a great miracle happened there". We spin a dreidl that has the first Hebrew letter of each word, written on each of its four sides. But this victory was not a "game of chance" - it was won before the battle had begun.

When the LORD's people stand firm in their faith, the victory is already theirs. And that's when we re-engage with the words spoken to Moses and Jehoshaphat: "Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today... The battle is not yours, but God's."

(Exodus 14:14 and 2 Chronicles 20:15). That's what we need to remember this Hanukkah.

This year I have much to be thankful to the LORD for. I have listened to my sister Sophie tell me how much she is enjoying church and how she has made some "amazing" friends who are teaching her the Bible. I have listened to those same friends tell me how excited they are to be teaching a new Jewish believer who is so full of joy and excitement as she sees the Gospel for the first time!

I have listened to my son Felix preach to me from Job 19 and tell me that Job knew that "only a Righteous Redeemer can Rectify our wrongs" and quote Victor Frankl saying: "Suffering ceases to be suffering the moment it finds a meaning".

I have completed the first term of my second year at Oakhill and been able to read some of the Tanakh in Hebrew for the first time! The excitement of hearing Moses speak in his native language is difficult for me to find the words to describe. Other courses on Youth Work and Apologetics have opened my eyes to huge opportunities for growth in my responsibilities as a disciple, husband and father, and shown me new ways for us to engage Jewish people.

When Jehoshaphat grasped the truth about Hanukkah he went out and told the people to have faith in the LORD and his prophets. He went out at the head of his army singing!

This Hanukkah may we joyfully sing "Give thanks to the LORD for his love endures forever." With blessings,

For the last two months I have been living in Los Angeles, the city that has three times more Jewish people than the whole of the U.K. I have been living with my Jewish father, and every day I am surrounded by Jewish people. It feels a lot like being in Israel sometimes! I have been building beautiful friendships with some of the younger people in the neighbourhood and there is a huge openness to talk about spirituality and my faith.

There has been a sudden rise in Anti-Semitism in America. The horrific attack



**EMILY EMANUEL SHARES**

in the synagogue in Pittsburgh where 12 worshippers were killed, one being a Holocaust survivor, is the worst Anti-Semitic attack that America has ever witnessed. I attended a candlelight vigil for the Pittsburgh attack in the Jewish neighbourhood of LA along with my outspoken Christian friend who loves the Jewish people. Some of the most important Jewish figures in that area, including the Jewish mayor of the city, attended. It was amazing to be there as a Jewish believer in Jesus and carry a candlelight (which

for me represents the light of Yeshua) in solidarity with them.

After the vigil my outspoken Christian friend starts talking to a prominent Jewish man in the community and tells him how much she loves the Jewish people and how her favourite Jew is Jesus. She then naively signals to me and says "how cool that Emily is a Messianic Jew". He looks at me shocked and says "You?!... You believe in Jesus?!" I reply yes, and to my surprise he isn't hostile but instead intrigued, and we end up having a brief and respectful conversation about Jesus being the Messiah.

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“FIONA” continued from page 4

me a real heart for the lonely so that those who have no family or who are far from home can find a family with us. This is especially important for Jewish believers, whose families often reject them because of their faith in the Messiah.

It has been exciting to watch the change in one of our members’ family as they have come to really appreciate the change in their life and this has opened the door for many wonderful and life-changing conversations. This is the reward of our faith as together we pray and partner with the Lord to reach the Jewish people with the good news of Messiah.

May the Lord bless and encourage your heart this festive season.

*Fiona*

“EMILY” continued from page 4

I am also regularly hosting and attending Shabbats. At one of my Shabbats that I hosted my Jewish friends were talking with my Christian friends who were sharing stories of hearing from the Lord. Listening to their stories, my Jewish friends kept on asking them how they hear from God and how “Christian prayer” works!

I am excited to see the Spirit of God moving amongst the Jewish community in Los Angeles and I believe the Jewish people that live here are some of the most influential people in the world. Please pray for God to pour out his Spirit on the Jewish people living in LA.

Thank you for your support this year and have a Merry Christmas!

*Emily*



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TERRY@CHOSENPEOPLE.ORG.UK  
or on 0208 455 7911

## POTATO LATKES

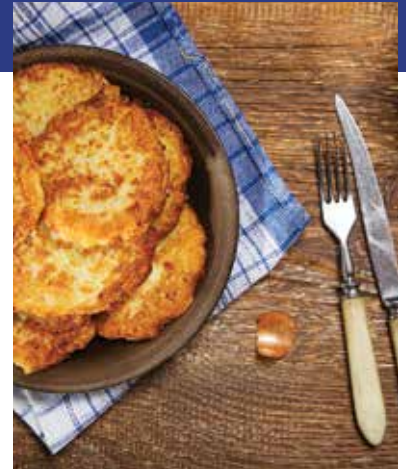
### INGREDIENTS:

- 1kg/2lb 4oz old or baking potatoes, peeled, soaked in cold water until needed
- 1 onion, peeled
- 25g/1oz plain flour or fine matzoh meal
- 1 free-range egg, beaten
- salt and freshly ground white pepper
- olive or vegetable oil, for frying

### METHOD:

1. For the latkes, finely grate the potatoes and onion and mix together.
2. Place the grated potato and onion into a colander and squeeze out as much moisture as you can. Or roll up the potato and onion in a clean kitchen tea towel and wring well to extract the liquid.
3. Mix the potato and onion with the flour, egg and salt and freshly ground white pepper.
4. Heat the oil in a frying pan until moderately hot and then place heaped tablespoons of the mixture into the pan to shallow-fry. Lower the heat to medium, flatten each latke with the back of a spoon and fry for about five minutes on each side, turning over when the edges turn golden-brown. If the heat is too high, the latkes will become dark-brown on the outside before they are cooked inside.
5. Remove the latkes from the pan and drain on brown paper bags (they absorb the oil, leave the latkes crisper and the latkes won't stick to the paper).
6. Serve the latkes hot with soured cream.

Preparation time: 10 minutes › Cooking time: 15 minutes › Serves 1-10 pancakes



## HANUKKAH SUFGANIYOT (JAM DOUGHNUTS)

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 teaspoon dried active yeast
- 50ml lukewarm water
- 1 tablespoon caster sugar
- 1 sachet vanilla sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 egg yolk
- 3 tablespoons soured cream
- 1 pinch salt
- 250g plain flour
- apple jam or other fruit jam for the filling
- oil for deep-frying
- icing sugar for dusting

### METHOD:

1. Mix the yeast with the lukewarm water and caster sugar. Set aside for a few minutes until it foams.
2. Add the vanilla sugar, egg, egg yolk, soured cream, salt and flour and work into a smooth dough by hand or by using the dough hook of a stand mixer.
3. Cover with a clean tea towel and let rise for 2 hours in a warm place.
4. Roll out the dough on a floured surface and cut out 24 circles with 5cm diameter. Gather the leftovers and knead them together until smooth, then roll out again.
5. Place a teaspoon of jam in the centre of each circle. Brush the edge of the circle with cold water, place a second circle neatly on top and press the edges together with your fingertips to seal.
6. Cover a large serving tray with clean tea towel. Place the doughnuts on the tray with plenty of space between them (they will expand in height and width) and cover with another clean tea towel. Let rise for 30 minutes in a warm place.
7. Heat the oil in a large heavy pot or a deep-fryer. To test whether the oil has the right temperature, drop a breadcrumb into the oil; if it sizzles, the oil is hot enough. Deep-fry the sufganiyot in batches from both sides until golden brown. Remove with a slotted spoon and place on kitchen paper to soak up excess oil. Dust with icing sugar while still warm and serve as soon as possible.

Prep: 30min › Cook: 10min › Extra time: 2hr30min › Ready in: 3hr10min › Makes: 12 doughnuts





## VIRGIN BIRTH

By Brian Crawford

In this season, we celebrate not only the birth of Yeshua, but also His reason for coming into the world. The Gospel accounts teach that Yeshua was “conceived...of the Holy Spirit” in His mother’s womb (Matthew 1:20, cf. Luke 1:35). Many skeptics deny that the virgin birth could have happened because of assumptions about the supernatural, but Yeshua’s miraculous conception is essential if our faith has any truth at all!

Any Messiah who could redeem us from our sins would have to be sinless himself. But how can a human being, descended from Adam, live without sinning from birth to grave? Likewise, any Messiah had to be born from David’s line (2 Samuel 7:16). But if someone is descended from David’s line, then surely he is tainted by humanity’s sinful nature!

The virgin birth was God’s solution to this paradox. Just as God created Adam as a perfect living being out of nothing, so too the Holy Spirit miraculously provided twenty-three perfect chromosomes to fertilize the egg in Mary’s womb. It was through this fusion of the miraculous and the natural that the pre-existent Son of God was made incarnate. On the one hand, this broke the chain of sin inherited from Adam (Genesis 3, Romans 5), enabling Yeshua to have a human nature untainted by sin. On the other hand, by having Mary as his physical mother and Joseph as his adopted father, Yeshua was born from David’s line (Matthew 1:6).

Thus, the virgin birth enabled Yeshua to be our sinless, perfect, unblemished lamb for the forgiveness of our sins and guaranteed that Yeshua could fulfill the Messianic prophecies about the Redeemer coming from David’s line. Only God could have come up with such a profound and awe-inspiring solution for our sin. For this reason and many others, we come and adore Him, Messiah the Lord.

## BETHLEHEM BIRTH

By Robert Walter

Nestled in the Judean hills just south of Jerusalem stands Bethlehem, the ancient town whose claims to fame include being the site where David was anointed king and where the Messiah was born. Both Matthew and Luke mention this important location and how it relates to Jesus in their respective birth narratives.

Certain chief priests and scribes answered Herod’s paranoid question about where the Messiah would be born. “They said to him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: “And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”’” (Matthew 2:5-6). This appears to be a loose quote of Micah 5:2-4, where the prophet spoke of a unique, future ruler in Israel who would come from Bethlehem but who would also have divine, eternal roots. Micah states that this ruler’s “...goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.” For Matthew, Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem fulfills this prophecy: He was born as a man in Bethlehem but was ultimately God in the flesh.

In Luke 2:1-7, a Roman census called for Joseph to take Mary to register in the “city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David.” In that city, Mary gave birth to Jesus, wrapped him in cloth, and laid him in a manger. The humility of the scene is striking. The true King of Israel was born not in a palace but in a manger; and not in a free, sovereign Israel but under the compulsion of a Gentile ruler who forced Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem. For Luke, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem meant the true King had arrived in the humblest fashion.

## MATTHEW CHAPTER I

By Neal H. Surasky

Matthew was the consummate Jewish evangelist. He had come to faith in Jesus and now had a burden to see his Jewish brothers and sisters come to the same saving faith. As a Jewish man, he understood just what it would take to convince his people. It started with proving that this man Jesus, who the Jewish people would know as Yeshua, fulfilled the required prophecies. First and foremost, he had to establish the proper lineage.

Of all of the prophecies regarding the Messiah, there were two that had to precede the rest. First, the Messiah had to be Jewish, a descendant of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. Second, he had to be a descendant of David in order to sit on his throne as king. Matthew begins his proof with the statement, *"The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham"* (Matthew 1:1). It is interesting to note that the only other genealogy of Jesus is found in the Gospel of Luke, who takes His lineage all the way back to God. For the Jewish people, it was a given that God was the ultimate creator. It was more important to show that the Messiah was a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and thus Jewish, and that He had the right to sit on the throne of David.

God promised Abraham not once, but twice, that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3; 18:22). Through Jacob, God promised that the rule of Israel would be forever in the hand of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10). And He promised King David, *"...your throne shall be established forever"* (2 Samuel 7:16). At this season for remembering His birth, Matthew teaches us that even Jesus' lineage is the fulfillment of prophecy, as it was written.

## MATTHEW CHAPTER 2

By Michael Herts

One of my childhood memories was when a school music teacher took class time to sing Christmas carols (in those days it was permitted). Since Jewish children were not required to participate, we would go over to the corner of the room and talk about life. One of the songs they would sing was "O Little Town of Bethlehem," which meant nothing to me then because I did not connect the town with Israel and the Jewish people. It was not until years later that I understood the significance of that song.

The Jewish prophet Micah's ministry took place during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, three kings of Judah, between the years of about 750-686 BC. Micah was calling the people to repentance. He let them know that, even though judgment was coming, God loved His people and would one day bring a deliverer. In doing so, he named a small town where the Messiah, the Anointed One, would be born.

When Matthew wrote his Gospel, he was bringing incredible news. He quoted prophecies from the Hebrew Scriptures to make his point that our long-awaited Messiah

had come and His name was Jesus. In quoting Micah 5:2, Matthew wrote, *"And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd My people Israel"* (Matthew 2:6). In verse 2, we are told that a star indicated where this shepherd had been born. This star was the sign that the prophecy of Micah had come to pass. And now I know the real meaning of the song, "O Little Town of Bethlehem."



THE FEAST OF  
DEDICATION  
(HANUKKAH) IS FIRST  
MENTIONED  
IN JOHN 10:22 WHEN  
JESUS GOES TO  
JERUSALEM. THE  
WORD HANUKKAH  
COMES FROM THE  
HEBREW VERB  
HANAKH, WHICH  
MEANS TO DEDICATE.

## HANUKKAH & CHRISTMAS

By Charlotte Machado

The Feast of Dedication is first mentioned in John 10:22. In fact, this is the only place in Scripture where the holiday of Hanukkah is mentioned. In this passage, Jesus goes to the Temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the festival. The word Hanukkah comes from the Hebrew verb *hanakh*, which means to dedicate.

Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees over the Greeks and the rededication of the Temple. Approximately two hundred years later, Jewish people gathered around Jesus in the Temple court and asked him plainly whether or not he was the promised Messiah. At that time, they were waiting in hopeful, anxious anticipation for the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies. They desperately wanted to know if Jesus was the one for whom they were waiting. After some discussion with the onlookers, Jesus acknowledged His deity by saying, *"I and the Father are one"* (John 10:30).

As written in Ezekiel 8-11, the Divine Presence had not been seen in the Temple since the glory of the Lord departed. In Solomon's Temple, the glory of God was present and hovered over the mercy seat. Ezekiel 8-11 describes the glory of God—which can be interpreted as the Holy Spirit—leaving the Temple because of Israel's disobedience. With Jesus' presence in the Temple, the Holy Spirit had indeed returned.

Hebrews 1:3 describes Jesus as the *"radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature."* There is tremendous significance that on the Feast of

Dedication, or Hanukkah, Jesus announces His deity and returns the Spirit to the Temple. Through Messiah, we, who are now His temple, are made clean and filled with His Holy Spirit. This is the meaning of Hanukkah and it is truly something to be celebrated.

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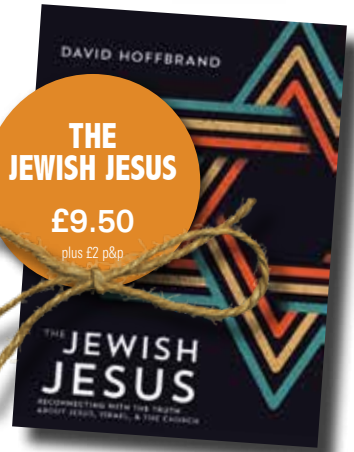
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