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The Chosen People

SERVING THE JEWISH PEOPLE SINCE 1894



JESUS: THE HOPE OF HANUKKAH

| MISSIONARY REPORTS | NEWS FROM ISRAEL | BIBLE STUDY |

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Hanukkah: Jesus Is Our Hope

Dear friend in the Messiah,
Shalom in His peace, Merry Christmas, and
a very Happy Hanukkah!

Most of what we know about Hanukkah comes from the writings of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus and the apocryphal books of 1 and 2 Maccabees, which Jewish people and Christians view as history, not Scripture.

Though Hanukkah is not one of the major festivals listed in Leviticus 23, it was a recognized Jewish holiday when our Messiah walked the earth. The apostle John explicitly mentions the Feast of Dedication—Hanukkah—in John 10:22. Jesus celebrated the holiday and used it as the occasion for one of His most straightforward statements of His deity, “*I and the Father are one*” (John 10:30).

The Hanukkah Story

Allow me to present a brief summary of the holiday story.

We begin with the role of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Syrian Greek ruler of the Holy Land during the second century BCE. He persecuted Jewish people, trying in every way to turn the children of Israel into Hellenists and worshippers of the pantheon of false Greek gods. His nickname among Jewish people was Antiochus the Madman, and he did not win many popularity contests in Israel at the time!

He sent representatives to towns throughout Israel, demanding Jewish people bow to his statue as an expression of their political and religious loyalty. As with similar pagan leaders, Antiochus presented himself as a god and not as a mere mortal.

The Jewish citizenry in the little town of Modi’in, still a vibrant city today in modern Israel, refused to bow to the pressure of idolatry. They killed the emissaries of Antiochus and began three tough years of guerilla warfare led by the Levitical priest Mattathias and his sons, whom we know as the Maccabees. They won the war and overthrew Antiochus’

rule over Israel. However, the Maccabees discovered Antiochus had commanded his soldiers to slaughter a pig on the holy altar within the Temple. This desecration was tragic and infuriated Judah Maccabee and his small cadre of priestly warriors.

Judah and his brothers considered cleansing the altar but tore it down to the last stone and built a replacement altar instead.

The Miracle of the Oil

In Jewish tradition, there is another story of a miracle taking place at the same time. It seems the Maccabees only had enough olive oil to fuel the eternal light in the Temple for one day, and it took eight days to crush the olives and cure the oil to make a new batch. The great miracle of Hanukkah is the one day of oil lasting for eight, which is why we celebrate Hanukkah for eight nights. This tale is wonderful and charming, but since this miracle does not appear in the Bible, we cannot be sure it really happened. Nevertheless, I grew up enjoying this story as it became the basis for receiving eight presents during the holiday—one for each night!

Soon after becoming a believer in November 1970, I began to ponder the relationship between Hanukkah, the holiday with which I was raised, and Christmas, a holiday brand new to me. The holidays were just around the corner, and as a new Jewish believer, I felt I had to choose between the two. Often, our friends and family who do not know the Lord believe the holidays identify whether you are a Jewish person or a Christian when we know we can be both! We have a saying I like, “Christmas is really a Jewish holiday,” which celebrates the birth of the Jewish Messiah and Saviour of the world.

Parallels between Hanukkah and Christmas

Some of my brothers and sisters might differ on the date and details of Christmas and various traditions associated with

the season. Yet, we all agree Jesus—or *Yeshua* (His Hebrew name)—was born of a Jewish virgin, as Isaiah predicted (Isaiah 7:14).

He is God in the flesh, and the deliverance we experience through Him is greater than the deliverance Jewish people experienced at the first Hanukkah. Our salvation brings the gift of eternal life and enables us to overcome slavery to sin and death. The national deliverance celebrated during Hanukkah commemorates the deliverance of Jewish people from Greco-Syrian rule and a return to self-governance.

Both are wonderful, but there is no comparison between the two, as Jesus Himself said, *“So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed”* (John 8:36).

These two great holidays are “joined at the hip,” yet the bonds go much further than giving presents, lighting candles, and even the wonderful family togetherness we enjoy during this season.

The most profound linkage is this . . . *if it were not for Hanukkah, there would be no Christmas*. Had Antiochus destroyed all Jewish people during the first Hanukkah, the Messiah could not have been born to a Jewish virgin, as promised.

God Preserves His People

We might also look at the continued existence of the nation of Israel as another Hanukkah miracle! Every year, Hanukkah reaffirms our belief in God’s faithfulness to His covenants and promises (Genesis 12:1–3 ff.). The Lord will keep His covenant with Israel—His chosen people will never be destroyed (Jeremiah 31:35–37; Romans 11:29).

We can never forget what happened to innocent Israelis on October 7, 2023. Hamas terrorists crossed into Israel with the sinister purpose of destroying human life in the most gruesome ways. They came to kidnap, rape, and slaughter—in effect, trying to burn Israel to the ground. The attacks were inhuman!

The hatred of Jewish people we see today is part of the devil’s plot to destroy Jewish people, embarrass God, and prevent Israel from fulfilling her role in the plan of God!

Jewish people have been the object of Satan’s ire for millennia, and the evil one has used complicit nations to attack His chosen people. We know the battle will be over one day as our one true and all-powerful Messiah, the son of David, will ascend His rightful throne to reign as King over a redeemed and renewed earth.

The Lord promised to preserve His people:

Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the Lord of hosts is His name: “If this fixed order departs from before Me,” declares the Lord, “then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever.” Thus says the Lord, “If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done,” declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 31:35–37)

We need to remember the future is glorious, according to the prophets of Israel. Isaiah wrote, *“The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord will designate. You will also be a*

crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God” (Isaiah 62:2–3).

Hope During War!

We have hope for tomorrow, but we also are grateful for all He is doing today during the difficult and dark days of war. The staff of Your Mission to the Jewish People in Israel is providing love and comfort, meeting both the physical and spiritual needs of those Israelis suffering during the war.

We are serving Israelis who are displaced and evacuated from their homes active soldiers who need blankets, toiletries, food, and more. We are also serving the elderly by providing nourishment and spiritual comfort. So many of them cannot even make it to bomb shelters. They are alone and scared and desperately need our prayers and the comfort that only God can give.

I recently heard from one of our staff serving the Lord in the North, where they are under attack from Hezbollah operating in Southern Lebanon.

Here in Nahariya, we are in a war and waiting for the fighting to spread. Nahariya is a massive military base, and the IDF has set up fighting points on the beaches and main highway. There are armed soldiers all over the place.

The artillery fire on the border six miles away can be seen and heard almost every day. Surprisingly, there have only been two red alerts in the past two weeks. I am reminded we are at war, and the artillery is a harsh reminder.

Pierre and I have been out giving away our soldier gift bags, which have been well received. We are preparing a second wave of gift bags. Or HaGalil Congregation is holding regular meetings and trying to encourage one another.

Hope from Heaven

Israelis are now looking for hope beyond this world. Our missionaries are bringing the message of Jesus to Israelis person to person and heart to heart. God will use your support to help our staff help those hurting and grieving in Israel today and tomorrow. Our staff is what our Mission is all about.

Thanks so much for your faithful prayers and very generous support. Israel will survive. God’s work among the Jewish people will continue until He returns, so please help us this holiday season when we think about His gifts to us and our gifts to others!

Israelis will need our new Tel Aviv Messianic Center more tomorrow than today, considering the growing spiritual openness of Israelis due to the suffering of the last few months. The world has changed, Israel has changed, and Israelis are changing. Help us meet the needs of those suffering, especially the spiritual needs of Israelis, young and old, who are now seeking answers to life beyond politics and are more open to God’s help for earthly problems than ever before.

Thank you for standing with us and for caring!

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah!

In Him,



Mitch Glaser

International Director

OUR GOD DESIRES TO BE KNOWN

This festive season is a reminder for us that *the God of creation longs to be known*. When God told Israel to build the Tabernacle, He explained its purpose: "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." God was not saying that He wanted to live in the Tabernacle. His intent was to invite His people to draw close to Him. The greatest evidence of God's desire to be known is the coming into the world of Jesus.

God made an incredible promise to the Jewish people but it's also a promise for everyone; that a day is coming when *"you will call on Me, and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you will search for Me with all your heart."* (Jer 29:12-13)

At this time of year, as we celebrate the incarnation of the Saviour, His coming into the world; may God remind us that His promise is not that we will find God if we search for Him but rather that He will be found by us when we search for Him with our whole hearts. This is a powerful reminder that the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth wants to be found by us, wants to be known by us, and indeed longs to reveal Himself to us. God spoke through Isaiah to give us a promise, a tremendous word of hope: *"My people will know*

My name; therefore, in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it." (Is 52:6)

The prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah even down to the place of His birth. God's self-revelation to the Jewish people and all peoples finds its fullest expression in the person of His

Son. *"For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Messiah. (2 Co 4:6)*

Jesus is the evidence of the Lord's desire to make Himself known and dwell among us: *"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."* (John 1:14)

Jesus through His own declarations explains not only what He does but also who He is. He declared: *"I and the Father are one."* He wanted humanity to know: *"If you have seen me then you have seen the Father!"* (Jn 10:30). In His I AM declarations Jesus wants us to know that all that the LORD is, He is. And to know Him is to know the Father.

In the Messiah, we come face to face with God, who enters human history and reveals Himself as the God of salvation. The Apostle Paul, who loved quoting the Scripture proclaimed: *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* (Rom 10:13 / Joel 2:32) Jesus Himself reveals that He came *"to seek and to save the lost."* (Luk 19:10)

This festive season in our joyous celebration of His birth; let's also remember the divine purpose in His coming. *"Jesus came into the world to save sinners"* (1 Tim 1:15) Paul reminds us that Jesus came to make known the Father's love, and to provide salvation for us. Salvation came at great personal cost both to the Father and especially to Jesus, the Son. Paul proclaimed: *"God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* (Rom 5:8)

The sacrifice of Jesus is the ultimate demonstration and evidence both of God's love for us and of His desire to be known by us.



SERVING GOD AND ISRAELIS IN WARTIME

Over the past couple of months, our staff in Israel have been hard at work faithfully serving God and Israelis during this difficult time. Since Israel is such a small country—and the Messianic community even smaller!—they all know people who have died, are mourning immediate family members, or are serving in the military. In the midst of their own trauma and grief, they do all they can to assist those in need and proclaim the gospel. They could not do it without the grace of the Holy Spirit and your support. Here is what our workers on the ground in Israel have to say about how we can bless Israel during wartime.

Do not underestimate the power of prayer! A worship leader in Sderot—one of the southern cities terrorists attacked on October 7—was in a prayer meeting and reports they did not hear a single gunshot or missile during that time. As soon as they finished, the violence resumed. We trust God can do more than we can imagine. Many organizations are helping Israelis in need, but it is a privilege for us to bring what others do not bring—the message of eternal and abundant life in Jesus.

So please persevere in prayer for us and for Israel. • Pray for our staff, as we are all under immense stress trying to help others while grappling with our own grief. • Pray God will protect innocent lives caught in this conflict. • Above all, pray many in Israel will come to believe in Jesus our Messiah.

FIONA SORBALA REPORTS



As we reflect on the year and plan for the coming year, we are grateful for your love and support. Your partnership with us has been vital enabling us to reach out to Jewish people with the Gospel in the past year and in the year to come.

This year has been tumultuous for many of us. The war in Israel has touched so many lives even here in the UK. And the rise in anti-Semitism has deeply affected the Jewish community. Jewish people have told me that they feel unsafe. Most Jewish people even here, including me, either know someone who died, was injured or kidnapped in Israel on 7th Oct or know someone who does.

Our challenge to pray for the peace of Jerusalem is that our prayer is not only for political peace which both Israel and Gaza need but to pray for the spiritual peace that only Jesus brings. Join us in praying daily for the Gospel to go forth.

It's been a really busy year of travel for me, including several trips to Latvia. During Hanukkah, I will make another trip to Latvia for an outreach event that we are putting on. We will be working with a Messianic Congregation in Riga. We are seeking to reach out to the Jewish people in the area and hold a Hanukkah celebration. Our focus will be Jesus God's servant whose light fills our lives.

The highlight of the year for me was our first Riga outreach. We mobilised local Christians and I ran seminars on reaching Jewish people with the Gospel. And, as a result, we saw five people put their faith in Jesus and two of them were Jewish.

Our Tuesday night study series will focus on the Tabernacle and how it speaks prophetically about Jesus, with some fascinating insights from a Jewish perspective. Please contact our office at info@chosenpeople.org.uk for the link.

Our messianic congregation in London will celebrate Hanukkah too, and similarly, we will be reflecting on the same theme of how Jesus fulfils this feast. We are raising up more leaders and one of them we hope will be starting an online course run by The Chosen People Ministries Feinberg Centre, in the US (via zoom).

THOMAS FRETWELL

The Ezra Foundation works in partnership with CPM (UK)



It has been a busy season at the Ezra Foundation with a number of conferences and speaking events taking place. The recent situation in Israel has demonstrated just how necessary it is for Christian's to have a biblical view of God's plan for Israel. The Ezra foundation is committed to serving the church in this way.

Please pray for the upcoming USA tour in Los Angeles, California which will be happening 2nd-10th March 2024.

Also the ministries' two books on Israel (see back cover) have recently been published in German, and I will be doing a small speaking tour in Germany next year to promote them.

Please pray for the final stages of my PhD and the writing of a third book in the Israel series.

Blessings, Tommy

MINISTRY IN WAR-TORN SOUTHERN ISRAEL

On the tenth day of the war, our staff arrived with humanitarian aid in Moshav Sapir, about eighty miles north of Eilat (the southernmost tip of Israel). The government transported 2,500 people from areas bordering Gaza to this small settlement. Our staff discovered they had a significant need for basic necessities and helped with those needs as much as they could. In addition to the physical work, our team engaged with people who had been on the front lines and offered support. Some asked for prayers (they all knew our staff were believers in Jesus).

Our staff heard the story of Tal* and her two sons. They are from the city of Sderot, one of the cities Hamas brutalized on October 7. Tal showed a video of terrorists heading toward her house. She said she had never been able to fathom the horrors of the Holocaust until she witnessed firsthand what occurred in her neighbourhood. Tal expressed feeling like Anne Frank as she hid in her home for hours, praying they would not be discovered and harmed. Her eldest son, who is nine years old, experienced the trauma so deeply he stopped talking. Her eyes welled with tears when our staff informed her of many Christians worldwide who are praying for and supporting Israel and Jewish people. Please keep Tal and her children in your prayers for healing and salvation.

BELIEVERS IN ISRAEL FIND ENCOURAGEMENT AT THE TEL AVIV CENTER

We have received numerous testimonies of believers in the Messianic community in Israel expressing their gratitude for the Tel Aviv Messianic Center and its impact on their lives. Many said they appreciated gathering with fellow believers in a safe, loving environment where they could explore and express their belief in Jesus through various community events. To some, it feels like home.

Others told how their time at the center led them to grow in their knowledge of God and His Word. They were looking forward to spending more time with fellow believers. It is especially meaningful and important for them to connect with other believers since Israel's believing community is much smaller than the United Kingdom. They can experience God's power as they pray for and encourage one another, even through difficult times. The center offers worship nights, Sabbath meals, Bible studies, game nights, and many other opportunities for fellowship. The Tel Aviv Messianic Center is a tremendous blessing to the body of Messiah in Israel.

* name has been changed



2024 Messianic Jewish Calendar!

This year's calendar features photographs of Jerusalem, Israeli people, and varied scenes from around Israel. Use this calendar as a personal prayer guide and to learn more about our ministry among God's chosen people. This calendar is special as it marks the seventy-fifth birthday of Israel as a modern nation and as an amazing testimony to God's faithfulness and the fulfilment of biblical prophecy. 18-month calendar features September 2023 to December 2024.



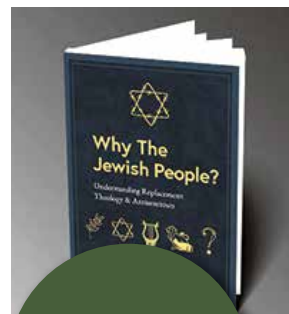
A new trend of antisemitism is surfacing world-wide. With the result of the chilling reality found in this book, *They Have Conspired Against You: Responding to the New Anti-Semitism*, Jewish people are again the target of antisemitism around the world. The hope of this book is that it will expose, educate and call many to action. This book is an excellent primer for those new to the history of anti-Semitism. In addition to providing historical context, it also contains material generated from Europe in recent years. Taken altogether, this is a thought-provoking study—written by Chosen People Ministries' staff member, Olivier Melnick—in a lively and readable style.



WHY THE JEWISH PEOPLE?
£5
plus £2 p&p

Why Israel? is the first book in a series from the Ezra Foundation that explores the topic of Israel through the lens of scripture, bringing clarity to a controversial topic.

Has the Church replaced Israel in the plan of God? Does ethnic Israel still have a future? What about Israel today? These questions and more will be answered by providing readers with an outline of a biblical theology of Israel.



WHY ISRAEL?
£5
plus £2 p&p

Why the Jewish People? is the second book in the Israel series from the Ezra Foundation. Providing an in-depth study of the origin and impact of replacement theology throughout the centuries to the present day. This book examines the disastrous consequences of replacement theology and its links to antisemitism. A concise and comprehensive examination of history and theology that brings clarity and understanding to this often-misunderstood topic.

Book a speaker – we can speak at churches/fellowships and Bible groups

You will be encouraged and amazed to find out how Jesus is revealed in the Old Testament and the Jewish Feasts. You and your fellowship will gain a deeper insight and understanding of the Word of God.

Contact: NatalieC@chosenpeople.org.uk / 0208 455 7911

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