

# The Chosen People



Volume VII, Issue 7 July 2001

# The Jewish Apostle Paul

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# Jerusalem – The Heart of Israel and the Heart of Paul

Shalom dear friend  
of the Jewish people,

I recently returned from Israel, where I went to encourage our workers who are laboring in the midst of terrible difficulties and real danger. I also went because the work of Chosen People Ministries is growing—even in the midst of daily violence and national instability; incredible, isn't it?

Perhaps, but it fits with a principle of the spiritual life expressed by the Apostle Paul when he wrote to the Roman believers, *“But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more”* (Romans 5:20).

The troubles of today have caused many in Israel to search for the greater spiritual realities of life. A genuine openness has fallen upon the Jewish people in Israel, especially among the hundreds of thousands of recent Russian Jewish immigrants among whom your mission to the Jews is working day in and day out!

## On to Jerusalem

This growth in our Israel ministries has created the demand for greater resources. Where better to commit our efforts than in Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish people?

In response to what we believe to be God's leading, Michael Z., our team leader

in Israel, has moved his family to Jerusalem from the Tel Aviv area. He has started a Bible study among a group of Russian Jewish immigrants near the Old City and plans to begin a congregation there.

I went to Israel to help Michael find an office in Jerusalem that could serve as a base of ministry operations. We have also begun looking for a site where we can

develop a Messianic Center that will provide even greater facilities for ministry in the Land. This is the dream I have—a dream I share with our Board of Directors and staff.

Israel does not have the same opportunities for spiritual growth as we have here in North America. The things we take for granted, such as radio broadcasts, Christian books and Biblical counseling are scarce or nonexistent there. We hope to help provide many of these spiritual resources for the growth of the body of Messiah in the Holy Land. I will keep you posted on the development of our dream!

## The Jerusalem Messianic Center

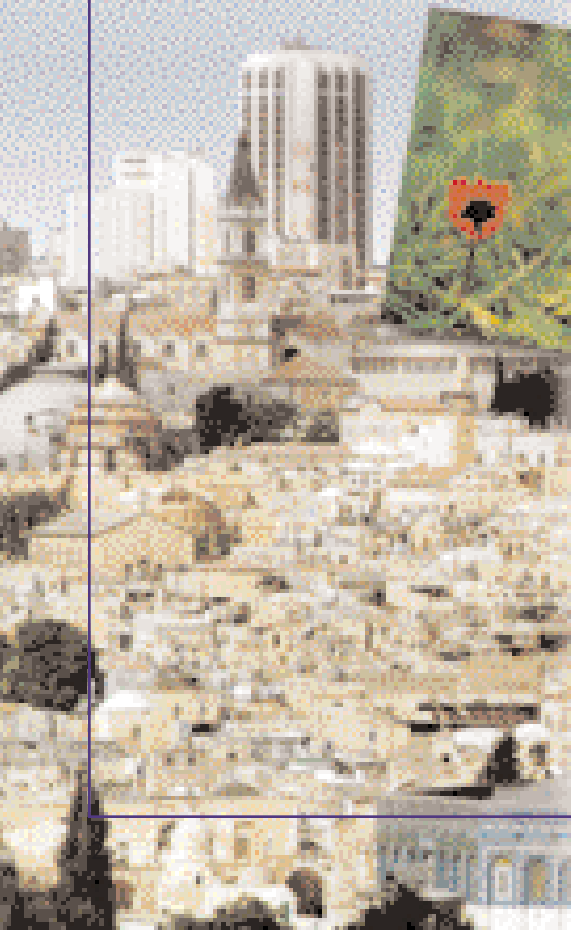
To this end, we have started an **Israel Endowment Fund**. Your gifts to this fund will be used to help purchase this Center for our growing work in Israel. Although I have never mentioned this before in a Chosen People newsletter, I do want to tell you that our Israel Endowment Fund is a wonderful way to leave a legacy to the Lord's work.

I usually don't mention including Chosen People Ministries in your will. Yet, were it not for saints in previous years who have included our Mission in their estate planning, we would probably not be able to do what we are already doing in Israel to bring the Gospel to the Jewish people. We have been able to fund some of our most important outreach ministries in Israel through their very generous gifts.

Won't you please give some serious thought and prayer to including Chosen People Ministries, and even our special Israel Endowment Fund, in your will?

## Human Stories and Transformed Lives

One of the reasons I even bring this up is because of how moved I



was by what I saw in Israel! I wish you could have been with me to meet Michael, Henry, Leonid and others who are part of our Chosen People Ministries Israel outreach.

I especially enjoyed meeting some of the new Russian Jewish believers who are part of our Israel work. To think that just a few years ago, these dear brothers and sisters were enslaved to a godless atheism—without hope and soured by the joyless environment created by

Communism. Now, you should see their faces. These precious believers are alive with the joy of the Lord and committed to sharing their faith in the midst of life's most difficult circumstances. I desperately want to help them reach the four million Jewish people living in Israel!

In light of recent events, this is all the more urgent. You cannot be in Israel for a few days and not sense that the situation is explosive.

We need to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and especially for Michael and his team as they reach out to Israelis with the Good News of the Messiah.

### The Jewish Apostle to the Gentiles

I hope you enjoy the articles in this month's newsletter, which share the Jewishness of the Lord's great ambassador to the Gentiles—Rabbi Saul, the Apostle Paul.

To think that the most prominent and well-known Christian who ever lived was Jewish! The words of this Jewish rabbi are more widely read throughout the world than any other person—but the Savior Himself. If the greatest Jew who ever lived is

Jesus, then the Apostle Paul is surely His best-known disciple!

It is my prayer that each of our lives will mirror the priorities of the Apostle Paul—especially as he bares his heart regarding his own people. Though often misunderstood and derided in the Jewish community, there is no one who loved his own people more than Paul. He offered his life in the fullest measure to the glorious and redemptive task of reaching both Jews and Gentiles with the Gospel message.

Far from abandoning his own people when he accepted God's call to be the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul understood the deeper things of the Word of God. He knew that the Lord would reach the remnant within Israel through the outsiders He had grafted in to the covenants and promises of God.

He writes in Romans 11:11, *"I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles."*

How extraordinary! In the mercies and mysteries of God's plan for the ages, it is the role of the Gentiles to make Jewish people "jealous" with the Gospel. Yes, Messianic Jews like myself and others on our staff have also been called to reach our people for Yeshua.

However, we recognize that we have joined hands with our Gentile brothers and sisters in this holy task.

It is my prayer that each of us will be used by God to answer the anguished prayer of Rabbi Saul, who cried out, *"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved"* (Romans 10:1).

Thank you for your love for Israel and the Jewish people.

Yours in the Messiah,

  
Mitch



Mitch Glaser  
President



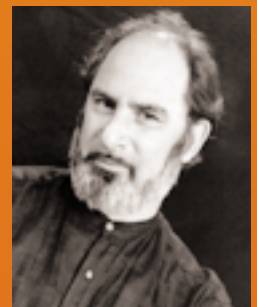
### A Chosen Vessel— The Life and Times of the Apostle Paul

Staff member Alan Shore has developed a special relationship with the Apostle Paul. For the past eight years, he has been presenting a one-man drama on the Apostle's life entitled, "A Chosen Vessel."

Written by playwright John Martin, "A Chosen Vessel" is a scripturally faithful account of Paul's ministry that highlights Paul's Jewish identity and the burden he undertook to preach the Gospel throughout the ancient world to both Jews and Gentiles.

Alan says, "It is a wonderful experience to portray something of the depth of Paul's devotion to the Lord and to explore the many facets of his dynamic personality. When people come up to me afterwards and say they felt as though they were in the presence of the Apostle himself, I am humbled beyond description."

If you would like to schedule "A Chosen Vessel" at your church, call our Church Ministries department at 1-888-405-5874.



# The Jewishness of the Apostle Paul



Paul's love for his own people was never far from his prayers. One need only read his heartfelt words to the Romans to sense the grief he felt as he considered his "beloved kinsmen"—*"I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites"* (Romans 9:2-4).

## The Jewishness of the Apostle Paul

The rapid spread of faith in the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah is almost as much of a marvel as the message itself. From a small group of disciples based in Jerusalem, the Good Tidings burst upon the world like an unstoppable tidal wave. It is one of the great ironies of history that the Lord used the most important legacies of Israel's last two conquerors—the Greek language and the Roman roads—to spread so quickly the Gospel of God's Kingdom throughout the known world. No one is more responsible for the establishment of that faith than Saul of Tarsus—the Apostle Paul.

## Saul of Tarsus – A Hebrew of the Hebrews

Paul's Jewishness was an integral part of his identity. His letters make many autobiographical references to his Jewish background and education. For instance, in the account of his testimony recorded in Acts 22, Paul stressed his education under the well-known teacher Gamaliel and his zealous obedience to God's Law. In his argument against those among the Philippians who were seeking to distort the Gospel, Paul matter-of-factly laid out his credentials: *"circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews"* (Philippians 3:5).

## Paul's Gospel – Fulfillment of the Promises to Israel

The unbelief of many of the Jewish people did not discourage Paul. Indeed, he saw it as a necessary, though temporary, part of God's plan. The rejection of the Gospel by some Jewish people created the opportunity for Gentile inclusion in the Kingdom. The Gentiles would in turn preach the Gospel to the Jewish people. Then, in the fullness of time, Israel's repentance would signal the return of Messiah and the fullness of the Kingdom.

Paul understood the integral part the Jewish people have yet to play in the final act of history. This allowed him to say with confidence, *"Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!"* (Romans 11:12).

## Paul's Message for Us

The Apostle's declaration in Romans 1:16 that the Gospel is "for the Jew first and also for the Gentile" is as true today as when he first penned it. As we go on bringing the saving message of Jesus the Messiah to our Jewish friends and loved ones, we may do so with all of the assurance of the Apostle Paul. Through faith, his words may also become ours—*"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13).



# The Apostle Paul in Jewish Thought

By Noel Rabinowitz

**O**bservant Jew, Religious Apostate, Pious Pharisee, Founder of Christianity—all these descriptions reveal modern Judaism's assessment of Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle Paul. It is an assessment that remains controversial to this day.

## Who Was Paul?

Was Paul a faithful Jew who discovered the Messiah—or simply a charlatan who duped others? There are some within Judaism who believe the worst. Modern antagonists assert that Paul was a fraud of the worst kind and that he misinterpreted the Scriptures in order to convert Jews to Christianity.

Most Jewish scholars do not assign such malicious intentions to Paul. This is partly because what has been called “the Jewish reclamation of Jesus” has changed the way Jewish scholars think about Jesus of Nazareth. Where once Jesus was viewed with animosity, many Jewish scholars now place Him squarely in the world of first century Judaism. Although they disagree with Jesus’ Messianic claim, many acknowledge that He was a loyal Jew who merely called His people back to the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

However, many scholars view Paul—not Jesus—as the founder of

this new religion called “Christianity.” Historically, most Jewish scholars have drawn a sharp distinction between Jesus and Judaism on one side and Paul and Christianity on the other.<sup>1</sup> The

**It is becoming increasingly evident that Paul's theology and practice were firmly grounded within the world of first century Judaism.**

Jewish background of Jesus is understood to be the rabbinic Judaism of the land of Israel, whereas Paul's Jewish background is understood to be tainted by the influence of Greek religious ideas. Paul, then, becomes the culprit.

## The Apostle Paul – Jewish Through and Through

This is a very important point, for many Jewish scholars believe that Paul developed Christianity by mixing Greek religious ideas into the theology of Judaism. Jewish scholars like Claude Goldsmith Montefiore, Solomon Schechter, Kaufmann

Kohler and Samuel Sandmel concluded that Paul's teachings were thoroughly foreign to Judaism.<sup>2</sup> Sandmel argued that the Greek environment in which Paul lived had influenced him to the extent that Pauline Christianity was “a completely Grecian phenomenon.”<sup>3</sup>

The academic community, however, has gradually realized that Greek religious ideas impacted Judaism in the land of Israel even before Paul's time. More importantly, modern Jewish scholars have now placed Saul of Tarsus firmly within the context of first century Judaism.

Renowned scholar Schalom Ben-Chorin insists that Paul's thought remained firmly grounded in the Jewish world.<sup>4</sup> The past accusations that Paul's teachings were foreign to rabbinic thought have now been replaced by the conviction that his theology is deeply rooted in the world of Pharisaic Judaism.

## Christianity Is Jewish

Although many within Judaism persist in seeing Paul as the founder of a new religion, this view continues to lose ground. It seems, therefore, that a Jewish “reclamation” not only of Jesus, but also of Paul, is now in order. Paul did not pit Judaism against Christianity. He argued that Jesus was the hope of Judaism, the Messiah of Israel.

This is a message that Chosen People Ministries continues to proclaim to the Jewish people and to the Church to this day.

<sup>1</sup>Donald A. Hagner, “Paul in Modern Jewish Thought,” in *Pauline Studies: Essays presented to Professor F.F. Bruce on his 70th Birthday*, ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 143-165.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 143 - 165.

<sup>3</sup>Samuel Sandmel, *A Jewish Understanding of the New Testament* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1957), p. 104.

<sup>4</sup>Schalom Ben-Chorin, *Paulus: Der Völkerapostel in jüdischer Sicht* (München: Paul List, 1970).

# See the Through Jewish Eyes Bible

by Dr. Daniel Goldberg



## Micah's Messianic Message

For a minor prophet, Micah certainly had a major message. His prophecies highlight five features of Israel's future Messianic Age. Believers everywhere can draw strength and encouragement from Micah's words of hope.

### *The Jewish People Shall Proclaim God's Word to the Nations*

*"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days...out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem"* (Micah 4:1, 2).

Today our Jewish friends need the Good News of the Gospel and we encourage Gentile believers to share God's Word with them. In the Messianic Age, Micah envisions that Jerusalem will evangelize the Gentile world and carry out the Great Commission that Jesus gave His Jewish disciples in the first century.

### *The Nation Will Be Regenerated through Travail and Judgment*

*"Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a*

*woman in birth pangs...and to Babylon you shall go.... There the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies"* (Micah 4:10).

God's Spirit enables Micah to see beyond the Babylonian siege to the last attack of the nations against Israel. Other great prophetic passages, such as Joel 3 and Zechariah 14, also highlight the travail and judgment upon Israel that will precede her deliverance. Jeremiah 30:7 calls it "the time of Jacob's trouble."

### *Israel Will Be Restored and Governed by the Ideal King of David's Line*

*"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah...out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from...everlasting"* (Micah 5:2).

Both the First and Second Advents of Messiah are predicted here. In the verses that follow, Micah also introduces a beautiful image of Messiah ruling over Israel as a shepherd watching his sheep, a theme found elsewhere in the Old Testament, particularly in Psalms 23 and 100.

### *Idolatry Will Be Removed Forever*

*"I will cut off sorceries from your hand...you shall no more worship the work of your hands"* (Micah 5:12,13).

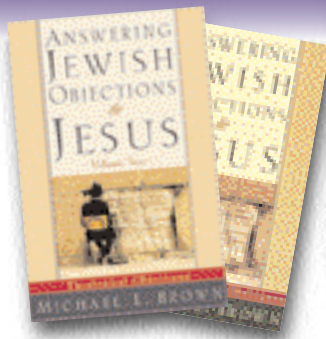
God will root out all the earthly things in which the Jewish people have foolishly trusted, such as horses and chariots (5:10). Then, when they have nowhere else to go, Israel will finally return to God. Then God will send a spiritual awakening to transform Israel.

### *Zion Will Be a Permanent Medium of Universal Peace and Instruction*

*"They shall beat their swords into plowshares...nation shall not lift up sword against nation....But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid"* (Micah 4:3-4).

The Messiah's coming will mean peace for Israel and for the world. Messiah will defend Israel against her foes, empower her to overcome her enemies and destroy all weapons of warfare.

This wonderful blessing of peace will be the heritage of Israel when Messiah returns. Until then, if we have faith, we can live under Messiah Jesus' promise, *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"* (John 14:27). ✨



### Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus

by Dr. Michael Brown

Well-researched, thoughtful, biblical responses to difficult questions that arise when Christians share their faith with Jews. Ideal for reaching Jewish family members, friends, or coworkers.

#3070 Volume One  
#3072 Volume Two  
price each: **\$15.95<sup>us</sup>**



### 2001-2002 Jewish Art Calendar

Order now to start the Jewish New Year off in September with the Chosen People Ministries Jewish Art Calendar. Each month features a stunning photo of the Holy Land, highlighted by Scripture. Order two or three—they make great gifts, especially for Jewish friends who need to hear about the Messiah.

#5005 price: **\$12.95<sup>us</sup>**



### Up to Zion

Worshipful music led by Paul Wilbur, former lead singer of Israel's Hope. *Up to Zion* is a chorus of beautiful voices and great brass and instrumental sections backed by a praising, clapping congregation. Songs include *He Shall Reign*, *Worthy is the Lamb*, and *The Song of Moses*. A great CD to listen to while jogging or walking!

#4020 CD price: **\$16.95<sup>us</sup>**



### Israel Through Jewish Eyes

# A Point of View You Won't Forget

Journey to Israel and retrace the footsteps of Jesus the Messiah. Dr. Ben Alpert, Chosen People Ministries' Israel guide and teacher, will open your eyes to the wonders of the Promised Land. You'll travel from the River Jordan to the Sea of Galilee, with additional stops in Jerusalem and other Biblical sites along the way. Dr. Ben Alpert's in-depth teaching brings Biblical events alive in the very locations where they took place. Trips take place in November and March. For a full-color brochure, call **1-800-459-9402** now.

### The Faithfulness of Paul

All of us want to be remembered as Paul was for his faithfulness (2 Timothy 4:7-8). We can show our own faithfulness to the Gospel by including Jewish evangelism in our estate plans.

Chosen People Ministries has resources for helping plan a financial future that will allow you to be faithful to your family and Jewish evangelism. For more information, please contact us at 1-888-293-7482 or indicate your interest on the enclosed response card.

### A Monthly Giving Program for Partners of Chosen People Ministries



Now you can help us put your financial gifts to work immediately when you sign up for the *Watchmen for Jerusalem* automatic giving program. Your gift will go farther because automatic giving reduces mail costs and frees more resources for evangelism. All you do is fill out a simple form. **Check the box on the response card** to send for a complete brochure.



### The Chosen People Newsletter

Chosen People Ministries has been taking the love of the Messiah to Jewish people worldwide since 1894.

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Please remember Chosen People Ministries in your will. "I will bless those who bless you." (Genesis 12:3)