

The Chosen People



Volume IX, Issue 11 December 2003

*"For unto us
a Child is born, unto us
a Son is given;
and the government will be
upon
His shoulder.
And His name
will be called Wonderful,
Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace."
Isaiah 9:6*

The Gift That Never Fails

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Dear friend,

I just love the holiday season here in New York City! The lights strung across the trees of Park Avenue are twinkling every evening. The enormous Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center now towers above the skating rink, which is crowded every day and night.

The presence of the Jewish community is also in evidence, as the larger-than-life Hanukkah menorahs in various public locations proclaim the precious freedom from tyranny that means so much to all of us in a post-9/11 New York City.

The streets are also crowded with New Yorkers and tourists making their last minute pilgrimages to Macy's, Bloomingdale's and the other

massive department stores lining the streets of Manhattan.

Which God Will We Worship?

It is apparent to me now more than ever that materialism still reigns as the god of New York City. The holidays clarify the contrast between the *real meaning and reason for the season* and what we have created in its place.

The citizens of this world worship the things of this world and show their love through the giving of material things. The custom of gift giving at Christmas was once, perhaps, meant to remind us of God's great gift. Now, it has become the sole object of the world's attention. Many of us have forgotten that God's gift is His Son—the Messiah. He endured unimaginable suffering so that we can be saved from enduring the same. He died and rose—and through Him, we can receive the gift of everlasting life.

So as we give, let us remember to praise and thank the great Giver of what is true and lasting. And please let me say that we at Chosen People Ministries are also grateful for your love throughout the year. We could not reach out to our Jewish people without your support and prayers.

God's Greatest Gift

In 1 Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul reminds us of the beautiful and simple message that “love never fails.” God's love is the lasting basis of everything worthwhile. This message needs to occupy its rightful place at our celebrations, so that our children, family and friends are reminded of the One who is eternal. Unlike the gifts found under the tree or near the menorah, the gift of His love never wears out or rusts. As His children, we can never tire of His beauty.

I hope this newsletter will help you to remember God's greatest gift—Jesus. May you be encouraged by the truth of His Word as you see His light through the Feast of Hanukkah and learn more about His person through the wonderful articles that predict His birth and work.

I am especially grateful for our former president and dear brother Harold Sevenser and for his excellent article on Daniel chapter 9. I am likewise thankful for board member Dr. Gregg Hagg's thoughtful contribution.

May Yeshua our Messiah shine brightly in you and through you. Happy holidays!

Your brother,



Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

The Gift That Never Fails

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL

By Dr. Harold A. Sevener

Christmas, like Hanukkah, should always remind us that Israel is “God’s Time Clock” for the nations. When the angel Gabriel told Mary she would conceive the Messiah Yeshua, it was no coincidence! Centuries earlier God sent Gabriel to Daniel.

Daniel was told “Seventy Weeks” (Hebrew “sevens” or 490 years) was the time God had placed upon Jerusalem before the Messiah would come (Daniel 9:24-27). The 490 years measures three periods of time on God’s “Time Clock.” Jerusalem is the “event hand” moving prophetic history to fulfill God’s Word.

When Gabriel appeared to Mary, Jerusalem was in the second period of the seventy sevens. The first period of seven sevens lasted 49 years from Nisan 445 B.C. to Nisan 396 B.C. (see Daniel 9:24; Ezra 7:11-26; Nehemiah 2:1-6).



The second period of sixty-two “sevens” (434 years) began after Jerusalem was rebuilt. This period spanned the years from 396 B.C. to Nisan 33 C.E. During this period of “sevens” Hanukkah occurred on the 25th of Kislev, 164 B.C. to prepare Jerusalem for the coming of the Messiah Yeshua, His death, and His resurrection. So

exactness is God’s Divine Time Clock, the Scriptures declared, “*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law*” (Galatians 4:4).

The “fullness of the time” corresponds to the seventy weeks of Daniel, also fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy, “*Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel*” (Isaiah 7:14; see also 9:6). Like Daniel, Isaiah knew the Messiah who came in “the fullness of time” would be killed and resurrected (Isaiah 53).

The “fullness of time” continues under the terms of the New Covenant that Yeshua inaugurated at His last Passover (Luke 22:14-20). It was confirmed in His death and resurrection, and then sealed by the Holy Spirit who dwells in the lives of believers.

In God’s grace, the New Covenant caused the “event hand” on God’s Time Clock to pause. It will resume when a world ruler confirms a peace treaty with Israel that guarantees their total control over the city of Jerusalem. The treaty will be broken. The last seven-year period ends with the return of the Messiah Yeshua to rule and reign as the Prince of Peace.

Until He returns, Hanukkah and Christmas are the reminders on God’s Time Clock that we need to share the glorious news of “*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, good will toward men*” until our Lord Yeshua returns.

Dr. Harold Sevener was President of Chosen People Ministries from 1979-91. He is the author of numerous books, including *A Rabbi’s Vision* and *Israel’s Glorious Future*.

Isaiah 9:6 and the Names of Messiah

by Mark Ellick

In ancient Israel, names mattered. A name might be the embodiment of someone’s character. A name change could indicate a kind of rebirth into a whole new purpose in life.

The practice of assigning names to people in prospect of what they would accomplish or in recognition of their character is beautifully expressed in Yeshua—“*you shall call His name Yeshua, for He will save His people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21). The Hebrew word *Yeshua* (Jesus) means, “The Lord is salvation” (a clear reference to what He would do).

Messiah’s Character in Isaiah 9:6

An example of names being used prophetically to signify the character of Yeshua is found in Isaiah 9:6—“*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*”

This verse, which stresses the royalty of Messiah and His authority, speaks prophetically of Yeshua. We are told that “*the government will be upon His*

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HANUKKAH

Countdown to Messiah



On Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication, Jewish people remember one of the shining moments in Israel's history. It is a glorious story of the best kind—a righteous underdog battling against seemingly insurmountable odds and prevailing. The mighty Maccabees rallied a beaten and dispirited people and turned them into winners.

Today, Hanukkah is a festival with special foods and activities for Jewish people everywhere. Jewish children play with the *dreydl*, a top with Hebrew letters that proclaim “A Great Miracle Happened There.”

Families also celebrate together and eat *latkes*—potato pancakes fried in oil—or *sufganiyot*—jelly-filled deep-fried doughnuts—to commemorate the great miracle. For as the legend is told, when the Jewish people recaptured and cleansed the Temple in Jerusalem, a one-day's supply of holy lamp oil lasted the eight days necessary to procure more. For this reason, Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days. Each evening, another light of the *menorah* is added in gratitude for God's faithfulness.

United Under Persecution

The Temple was liberated by a family named the Maccabees (Maccabee means “Hammer”—a title born of their bravery and seemingly supernatural strength). The Maccabees, or Hasmoneans, were a family from the town of Modi'in that was headed by a priest named Mattathias. The courageous Maccabees embody the story of Hanukkah and the Jewish resistance to oppression that has inspired generations.

At that time, Antiochus Epiphanes, the wicked Seleucid monarch, had done all he could to stamp out the

Jewish faith. When at last he ordered the Jewish people to worship him, Mattathias and his sons, Judah, Jonathan and Simon, rose up, rallied their followers and defeated him.

After Mattathias died in about 166 B.C., Judah assumed the mantle of leadership. Under his able command, the Jewish people scored victory after victory. Traditionally, Hanukkah celebrates the capture of Jerusalem and rededication of the Temple in 164 B.C. But as we follow history's tale, we shall see that it leads us directly to a world that saw the arrival of Messiah Jesus.

Victory and Its Aftermath

The Hasmoneans gradually extended the borders of Judea and gained independence. The challenge that now faced them was to make the transition from a guerrilla fighting force to leading an independent country. During centuries of exile, the dream of a Davidic king had seemingly died. Under Persian rule, the High Priesthood had become the most powerful office in Jewish life.¹

In 140 B.C., the Great Assembly, the ruling body of the Jewish people, made Simon Maccabee the High Priest—despite the fact that he was unqualified to hold this all-important office. For although the Hasmoneans were a well-respected priestly family, they were not descendants of Zadok (I Chronicles 24:1-3), the family line through which the high priesthood had been chosen.

The Great Assembly also vested Simon with authority as the ruler of the Jewish people and made these offices hereditary. However, the Great Assembly added this “sunset clause” to Hasmonean authority: “until a

true prophet shall arise” (1 Maccabees 14:37).

Even so, the Hasmoneans were poised to consolidate their political power even as they had consolidated their military strength.

The Fall of the Hasmoneans

The ruling houses of the Ancient Near East were hotbeds of intrigue and corruption. The Hasmoneans, with whom the hopes of Israel had been so firmly placed, fought among themselves as they spiraled downward in successive generations. Simon, the last of the brave sons of Mattathias, was murdered at the instigation of his son-in-law.

Although Simon's son, John Hyrcanus, assumed power and continued to add to Israel's territory, the Greek style of the Hasmonean court became increasingly at odds with the mood of the people. John's heir, Aristobulus, further angered the populace by taking the title of King. This greatly antagonized the rising party of the Pharisees, who rightly pointed out that the Hasmoneans were not of the line of David.

Things grew even worse when Aristobulus' widow, Salome Alexandra, married Alexander Jannaeus and proclaimed him High Priest. Again, the Pharisees were offended, for the Torah explicitly forbids the High Priest from marrying a widow (Leviticus 21:14). An uprising broke out in 90 B.C., and Alexander responded with mass executions. He crucified 800 rebels, many of them Pharisees.²

The rise of the Roman Empire proved to be too much. The final

defeat of Antigonus Mattathias, the great-great grandson of that first courageous Mattathias, came in 37 B.C. The end of the house of the Hasmoneans ushered in the house of Herod and with it, the earthly ministry of Jesus the Messiah.

A True Prophet Arises

The history of the Hasmonean dynasty is an object lesson about imposing “man's way” upon God's will. There is only one figure who fulfills the job description of the “true prophet” envisioned by the Great Assembly. It is Jesus, the rightful holder of the office of High Priest, who has offered Himself as the lasting and perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 7:23-28). He alone is the true Son of David, the King of Kings Who shall reign forever (Revelation 17:14).

These lessons from Israel's ancient history should not be lost on the Israel of the 21st century—or on us. Although Israel may be tempted to trust in ambassadors or weapons to guarantee the security that only God can provide, the nation will one day know that prophecy, priesthood and royalty flow from only one source: the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and the Messiah whom He has sent.

¹ *A History of the Jewish People*, edited by H.H. Ben-Sasson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 229.

² Judah Gribetz, *The Time Tables of Jewish History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 49.

Micah 5:2

by Gregory Hagg, Ph.D.

Jewish and Gentile Christians have delighted in the literalness of this prediction of the birth of Yeshua. The Gospel writers clearly connect Micah 5:2 with the Messiah. Just as King David was born in relative obscurity in Bethlehem, so too will King Yeshua be born in the king's birth town.

But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.

The *Encyclopedia Judaica* states that Micah "looked forward, in a much broader eschatological sense, to an ideal ruler (the basis of Royal Messianism) who would be of the Davidic

dynasty, coming from David's native town of Beth-Lehem (5:1-3)" (Volume 6, p. 866). It is true that the Messiah will come to Israel someday as Conquering King, but He will first be born a babe in a manger in Bethlehem. Other prophecies will be literally fulfilled by Him in His death as a substitute for the sins of His people and in His victorious resurrection from the dead.

It is this Messiah whom the Chosen People must receive before He appears again as "the One to be Ruler in Israel." And this Messiah, though invading the realm of human history, is not bound by time. His existence and activities are from the ancient of times, from the very days of eternity. No wonder Isaiah describes this Child to be born, this Son to be given, as the Father of Eternity (Isaiah 9:6). No wonder John the Baptizer, although older than his cousin, said in understated praise, "After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me" (John 1:15, 30).

So in this marvelous Messianic promise in Micah 5:2 we see His humble first coming, a babe in the little town of Bethlehem. But Yeshua is also seen in His glorious second coming, the Ruler in Israel, the Eternal God, and the One who will "stand and feed His flock . . . this One shall be our peace" (Micah 5:4-5). As we celebrate the Lord's Bethlehem birth this year, may we maintain our focus upon His unique majesty as Messiah of Israel, Savior of the world.

Dr. Gregory Hagg is Professor of Bible and Theology at Somerset Christian College and has been a member of the Mission's Board of Directors for the past six years.

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shoulder," thus fulfilling God's promise to David that "your throne shall be established forever" (2 Samuel 7:16).

Messiah's Deity Emphasized in Isaiah 9:6

The verse lists a number of names by which He will be called, each prophetically indicative of His work or His character as Messiah. He is called "Wonderful Counselor" in anticipation of the wise counsel that He would give.

Next, the verse refers to the Son as the Mighty God. When Yeshua calmed the sea and stilled the storm (Mark 4:39-41), He demonstrated that he was "the LORD your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared" (Isaiah 51:15).

The New Covenant testifies that Yeshua was, as Isaiah prophesied, the "Eternal Father." He was in the beginning with God (John 1:1), and was one with the Father (John 10:30). He was "before Abraham" and was the eternal I AM who gave birth to and has preserved His people Israel (John 8:58).

Finally, Yeshua was the Prince of Peace anticipated in Isaiah 9:6. In His final discourse to His disciples, Yeshua said, "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). The New Covenant says, "He Himself is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14).

As we read through the Hebrew Scriptures, we find that the names attributed to the Messiah paint a prophetic picture of His character and works. Moreover, we see that all of these prophetic utterances were fulfilled perfectly in Yeshua, our Savior and our God.

Mark Ellick is a missionary with Chosen People Ministries serving as evangelist and teacher in Irvine, California. He is a recent graduate of Talbot School of Theology.

**OUTREACH PLUS FRIENDSHIP
LEADS TO CRUCIAL WITNESS**

While distributing flyers in an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood in the Toronto area, Chosen People Ministries encountered opposition. However, according to staff member Carole Bahm, one incident made it all worthwhile. Miriam,* one of the Jewish women from the Messianic congregation Carole attends, was shopping in a local supermarket with her Jewish friend, Rivka.* When Rivka saw the Gospel literature, she wanted to know if it was from a Messianic group. Miriam said it was and went on to tell her about the Messiah.



That week, several other believers came across Rivka's path. The next week, quite suddenly, Rivka passed away. Praise the Lord for the opportunity to speak to this precious soul! We pray that she opened her heart to the Lord.

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

The power of God's Word is active in Irvine, California. Recently, while staff member Mark Ellick was teaching a Bible class, he noticed a visitor—an unbelieving young man. Mark began to emphasize the salvation message and after the study, Mark met with the young man and carefully reviewed the Gospel message. Then the young man prayed, acknowledged his sin and asked Jesus to be his Savior. After expressing his joy, he said he wanted to continue coming to the congregation. Pray for this young man as he is discipled and grows in his faith.

**CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES
REPRESENTED AT FILM FESTIVAL**

One of Chosen People Ministries' staff members recently had the opportunity to be a witness for the Lord as a panelist at a film festival where *Joined Together?* was being shown. The panel and the audience represented a variety of spiritual traditions. During a discussion of Mel Gibson's *The Passion*, our staff member had the opportunity to tell about what it means to be a Jewish follower of Jesus the Messiah. Among those in the audience were a number of Jewish

people. After explaining the Jewishness of the Gospel, this staff member spent the better part of the day and evening answering questions of a spiritual nature.

A MESSAGE FROM MUNICH

Sometimes, it takes a while for truth to penetrate the heart. This was the case for Martin,* an elderly Jewish man, who had been attending worship services with Chosen People Ministries in Munich for a year. Although he had heard the Gospel presented many times, he did not seem to "get it." However, after a message about the law of sin and death, the veil of blindness seemed to be suddenly lifted. After the service, Martin prayed with Chosen People Ministries staff member Boris G. to receive the Lord. Boris also writes, "Thank you for your continuous prayers for the Jewish people of Munich." Praise the Lord!

**PROFESSIONAL WOMAN'S OUTREACH IN
NEW YORK CITY BEARS FRUIT**

Laura Fels, who is "on loan" to Chosen People Ministries from Campus Crusade for Christ, has a special ministry to "high-powered" business executives. At a special outreach evening for professional women, speaker Marilyn Lebowitz, who has worked in the film industry, gave a moving testimony of her journey to faith in Messiah. Of the more than a dozen women present, six were unbelievers. After Marilyn's testimony, two of the Jewish women present indicated that they prayed to receive the Messiah. Follow-up and an introductory Bible study are now under way.

**JEWISH MAN IN ARIZONA
"INTRIGUED" BY JESUS**

A concerned Gentile believer brought his Jewish friend Rick* to the Messianic fellowship in which Chosen People staff member Cathy Wilson ministers. During the potluck dinner following the service, Rick shared that he had been "intrigued" with Jesus since childhood. He told Cathy's husband, Bob, that he was close to believing in Jesus as the Messiah. Several days following the service, Rick called the Wilsons to share that he had knelt in his kitchen, confessed his sins and received the Lord. Immediately, he dove into the Scriptures and has continued attending classes and services. Within a few weeks, Rick was baptized amid much rejoicing.

* Names changed



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Now you can order *Joined Together?* on DVD (item 8024) as well as VHS (item 8025), for a suggested donation of \$20^{us} plus shipping. Just visit www.chosenpeople.com, call 1-800-333-4936 or write to Chosen People Ministries at 241 East 51st Street, New York, NY 10022, or in Canada write to Box 897, Station B, North York, ON M2K 2R1.



Seeing the Fruit of Your Gifts

by Doug McEvoy

As Director of Stewardship, there's no greater pleasure than talking with our faithful ministry partners who have made up their mind to give of their estate during their lifetime. Many want to be able to watch the fruit of their gift impact the growth of Messiah's kingdom.

I recently spoke with a faithful donor who made a generous gift to the Mission for just this reason. Before we closed our conversation he said, "I wanted to experience the joy of seeing my gift at work for Jewish evangelism."

Another benefit is that giving in this way can often provide estate and federal tax advantages. What this means in practical terms is that more support can flow to missionaries and ministry projects in Israel and throughout the world. Such giving is a great way to say "Thank you" to the Lord for His blessings in 2003.

Call me at 800-2-YESHUA to see how you can enjoy the fruits of your gift to the Lord.

Hanukkah Menorah

Hanukkah is a time of celebration! The flickering lights of the nine-branched Hanukkah menorah remind us that God is mighty to save and that Jesus the Messiah is truly the "Light of the World." Now you can own this beautifully crafted Hanukkah menorah, made in Israel, to light in your home as a statement of your faith and hope in Messiah.

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Festivals of Light by Marty Goetz

Though Messianic musician Marty Goetz grew up with the music of Hanukkah, he always enjoyed hearing the songs of Christmas. Now, as a Jewish believer in Yeshua, he loves singing them both. We invite

you to celebrate with us these Festivals of Light!

Festivals of Light CD

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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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The Chosen People newsletter is published monthly by Chosen People Ministries. For more information, or to receive *The Chosen People* newsletter, write to: Chosen People Ministries, 241 East 51st Street, New York, NY 10022. In Canada, write to: Box 897 Station B, North York, ON M2K 2R1. In Australia, write to: Celebrate Messiah, PO Box 5006, Glenferrie South VIC 3122 (www.celebratemesiah.com.au)

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