

The Chosen People



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Thankful for Truth!

Exposing the modern Kabbalah movement

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Chosen People Ministries – Meeting the Challenge of the “New Age”

The Book of Ecclesiastes tells us that there is nothing new under the sun (1:9). This is particularly true of religious fads. Whenever you hear of the next new spiritual “flavor of the month,” you can be pretty sure it’s just a jazzed up version of something that has been here before. To complicate matters, the worship that used to be aimed at idols of stone or wood has been redirected toward walking, talking celebrities. So, when a John Travolta or Nicole Kidman embraces Scientology, you can be sure that others will follow like lemmings. How can we work to stem the tide of these misguided notions?

The latest headline-grabbing, celebrity-fueled fad is the fascination with the Jewish strain of mysticism called *Kabbalah*, which may be loosely translated as “received tradition.” This body of teaching and literature, much of

which dates from the Middle Ages, has been blended with New Age teaching to make it the newest hip spiritual cocktail for the “Now Generation.”

The question is: what, if anything, should Chosen People Ministries do about it? It is my sincere hope that the articles you will find here will help you to understand the challenges and opportunities that spring from this burgeoning trend.

Staying on the Cutting Edge

Actually, I have to chuckle a bit as I write these words. I can recall the foolishness of my own younger days. All kidding aside, there were things I tried out that were every bit as dangerous. But the Lord looked into my heart and knew that it was really Him whom I was seeking.

I have no doubt that many of the restless souls who are drawn to the New Age movement in its various manifestations are sincerely seeking after truth.

That is why we at Chosen People Ministries earnestly pray for encounters with such folks. And that is why we must be, as the Apostle Paul exhorts us to be, “*prepared for every good work*” (2 Timothy 2:21). We need the wisdom of God and we need information, so that we may answer those who are seeking in the wrong places for right answers. In short, we must make sure that we believers understand movements like these so we can all be more effective witnesses for the Messiah—not only to the Jewish people, but also to the increasing number of Gentiles who are attracted to such things as well.

Join Us in Prayer

It is easy to underrate the effect of New Age thinking. It not only shapes the thoughts of those who follow it, but it also has become a pervasive force in our culture. The latest spike in interest in Kabbalah and other forms of Jewish mysticism is only the tip of the iceberg. Anything that stands in the way of a clear understanding of the Gospel and our need for it is bad.

We covet your prayers and pray that you will be strong in the Lord as you help shoulder the burden of bringing the light of the Gospel into the arena of spiritual darkness.

Your brother,

Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

There's Kabbalah — and There's Kabbalah



Although Kabbalah worship is popular among Hollywood stars, many rabbis fear they simply make a mockery of Judaism.

Have you heard about Madonna's recent visit to Israel? It was well covered in a *New York Times* story dated September 20, where she is quoted as saying, "I'm here as a student of Kabbalah.... A kabbalist believes that he or she has the responsibility to make the world a better place." *

Traveling as the featured attraction among 2,000 members of the Los Angeles Kabbalah Center who toured Israel during the High Holy Days, Madonna was the object of so much adulation that she was unable to move

freely enough to visit most of the holy sites she had intended to see. The story goes on to say that she took part in Kabbalah sessions in her hotel's conference room, "which was converted into a synagogue, with segregated men's and women's sections."

As may be expected, her presence touched off a firestorm of controversy.

* The word Kabbalah has a number of spellings, including Cabala and Qabalah



The Kabbalah Center, the organization with which Madonna is associated, has come under fire from a number of Jewish authorities seeking to distance it from "mainstream" Judaism. Stephanie Garber, writing for the *Cleveland Jewish News*, quotes Rabbi Daniel Olgin: "*The bottom line regarding the Kabbalah Center is that it is a 'New-Agey distortion' of Judaism.... Hollywood stars simply make a mockery of Judaism...*"

Yitzhak Kadouri, a well-known teacher of Kabbalah, put it bluntly in a recent interview in the Israeli newspaper, *Maariv*: "It is forbidden to teach a non-Jew Kabbalah." The Kabbalah Center says otherwise, claiming that Kabbalah is open to all.

What's it all about? What is Kabbalah, anyway—and why all the fuss?

The Meaning and History of Kabbalah

The Hebrew word Kabbalah means "what has been handed down." In other words, Kabbalah is a tradition—and one of a certain type. Perhaps it helps to think of

Judaism as a river that branches off into many streams. One of those streams is Kabbalah—the stream of mystical teaching that deals with "hidden knowledge" having to do with the "concealed" meaning of the Torah (Jewish Law).

Tracing its roots to the Gnostic teachings of the first century—and perhaps even earlier—modern Kabbalah only dates back to the twelfth century, to the *Sefer Bahir* (*Book of the Brilliant Light*) and the *Sefer Zohar* (*Book of Splendor*), written a century later. There are a number of "schools" of Kabbalah, each of which draws upon a particular body of teachings or the work of some charismatic figure.

The knowledge of Kabbalah, which dwells in part on the secret meaning of numerical combinations hidden in the Hebrew texts, has been a legitimate, although peripheral, part of the Jewish world for hundreds of years. The father of modern scholarship on the subject of Kabbalah was Gershom Scholem (1897-1982).

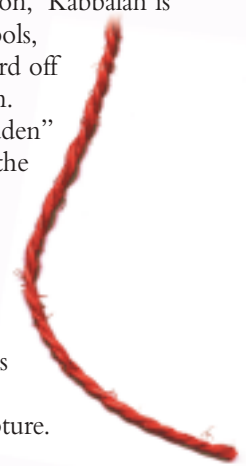
Born in Berlin, Scholem was educated in the German universities and immigrated to Israel in 1922, where he later became Professor Emeritus at Hebrew University. He produced a formidable body of academic work, much of which was devoted to Jewish mysticism. Scholem treated his subject as an historian and was careful to place it into the context of other Jewish religious and historical developments.

Kabbalah and the "New Age"

Kabbalah, therefore, is certainly nothing new. However, what is new is the recent phenomenon of detaching it from the rest of Judaism and treating it as a hobby to be dabbled in and combined with New Age teachings.

In a way, this ought not to be surprising. In a culture that exalts "spirituality" and scorns "religion," Kabbalah is ripe for the plucking. Its fascinating symbols, such as the red string bracelet (said to ward off the "evil eye"), exert a powerful attraction. Besides, the thrill of getting in on "forbidden" knowledge has always been the allure of the occult. Unfortunately, confused spiritual seekers may be getting more than they bargained for!

Careful analysis of the basis of Kabbalistic teaching—particularly in its latest New Age incarnation—will help us to answer the assertions of the New Age Kabbalists through the revelation of Scripture.



A LIST OF KABBALISTIC TERMS AND RESOURCES

Kabbalah – “Received Tradition.” The esoteric (hidden) wisdom of the Torah handed down through the generations.

Ein Sof – Hebrew for “without end.” The Kabbalists’ understanding of God is that He is so transcendent and holy that He cannot have any direct contact with the created universe.

Sefirot – “Emanations.” The Sefirot correspond to qualities of God, through which the **Ein Sof** interacts with the universe. These qualities are often found arranged in a hierarchical pattern called the “Tree of Life.” They are, in descending order, **Keter** (the crown), **Chochmah** (wisdom), **Binah** (intuition, understanding), **Chesed** (mercy) or **Gedulah** (greatness), **Gevurah** (strength), **Tiferet** (glory), **Netzach** (victory), **Hod** (majesty), **Yesod** (foundation) and **Malkut** (sovereignty).

Tikkun – “Repair.” Kabbalah asserts that the light of God that was contained in the vessels of the lower **sefirot** was so powerful that it shattered them. The 288 “sparks” of life that were scattered as a result are the substance of the “lower” worlds. They must be regathered, and this is the redemptive work to which humanity is called.

Luria, Isaac (1534-1572) – Born in Jerusalem, Luria was the founder of a new school in Kabbalah. He relocated to Safed, a center of Jewish mysticism, where he became a widely followed leader.

The Zohar (The Book of Splendor) – A great classic of Jewish mysticism, it is a mystical commentary on the Torah, written in Aramaic. Said to come from the second century, Moshe de Leon, a Spanish Jew who lived in the thirteenth century, claimed to have discovered it. However, based on linguistic analysis, the historian Gershom Scholem thinks it most likely that de Leon himself was the author.

Sources consulted:

www.faqs.org/faqs/judaism/ – addresses frequently asked questions about Judaism

www.jewfaq.org/ – Judaism 101 – good site for fundamentals of Judaism

www.kabbalaonline.org – good presentation of basics, glossary particularly helpful

dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Religion_and_Spirituality/Faiths_and_Practices/Judaism/Kabbalah/

The Kabbalah is presented, symbolically, in the form of The Kabbalistic Tree of Life said to represent the spiritual universe.

The Tree contains ten centers called sefirot, individually sefira, which are connected by 22 paths.

www.crystalinks.com/kabala.html



Kabbalah and Scripture

The heart of Kabbalistic teaching is the pursuit of secret knowledge.

It is the age-old siren song. Learn the hidden mystery, the voice coos, and you will grasp the secret of life.

One of the keystone beliefs of Kabbalah is that true interpretation of Scripture is based on knowledge that is hidden in the words, letters, numbers, and even the accent marks contained in the Hebrew Scripture. Only those who possess the secret key to interpretation may know these mysteries.

The Scripture, however, proclaims a different story. The book of Deuteronomy declares, “For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off” (Deuteronomy 30:11).

The New Testament proclaims that Jesus is open to **anyone**, not just those privy to “hidden knowledge.” The Lord declared, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:9-10). What could be clearer than His words, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6)?

Combating False Teaching

The temptations of secret, esoteric knowledge were not unknown to the Apostle Paul. That is why he penned this warning to the Colossian fellowship: “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Colossians 2:8).

Paul knew that the only mystery worth knowing is no longer a secret. It is a mystery that has been revealed and is now available to all: “the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith” (Romans 16:25-26).

This is the Light toward which the Kabbalists grope. It is up to believers to be there to help show them the way.

Sources consulted:

www.clevelandjewishnews.com

www.kheper.net/topics/Kabbalah/JudaicKabbalah.htm

Like the popularizers of Eastern Religion in the 1960s and 1970s, the New Age Kabbalistic teachings tend to focus on what “sells” most easily to the consumer. Here are a few of the commonly cited principles of Kabbalah and some witnessing tips and Scriptures to help you in your witness.

Witnessing Tip # 1

Stress the accessibility of the Scripture in its plain meaning.

The Kabbalists teach: There is a “code” encrypted in the letters of the Hebrew Scriptures that, once deciphered, reveals the hidden truth of God.

The Scripture says: “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

Witnessing Tip # 2

Stress the authority of the Messiah and His role as the “image of God” among us.

The Kabbalists teach: Everything that exists, exists within man. Man is a microcosm of all Creation. This is part of being created in the “image of the Divine.”

The Scripture says: “He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the

firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:15-17).

Witnessing Tip # 3

Stress the “superiority” of the Messiah’s person and His teaching.

The Kabbalists teach: Kabbalah is the oldest and most influential wisdom in all of human history.

The Scripture says: “*In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made”* (John 1:1-3).

Witnessing Tip # 4

Stress the uniqueness of Messiah and His ministry.

The Kabbalists teach: The spiritual light of the Zohar banishes all forms of darkness from our world. The study of Kabbalah has influenced Abraham, Moses, Muhammad, Shakespeare, Freud and **Jesus**.

The Scripture says: “*Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”* (John 8:12).

Witnessing Tip # 5

Stress that faith in Messiah is the “Way” to eternal life.

The Kabbalists teach: The way to become one with the Infinite Being is to struggle to be moral and spiritual while in this world, amidst a sea of temptations and challenges.

The Scripture says: “*Jesus said unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me”* (John 14:6).

Part of an effective witness is to identify “points of contact” with those with whom we are sharing the Gospel. Such people are “seekers,” and we should be respectful of them, gently and prayerfully steering them to Messiah.

Although there may be nuggets of wisdom in Kabbalistic teaching, nothing that deflects us from the authority of Scripture and our need for the Messiah should be trusted as a measure of truth.

Sources consulted:

“Kabbalah Made Easy” – www.kabbalahclub.com

The Kabbalah Center – www.kabbalah.com



Witnessing Tips: Comparing Kabbalah and the Scriptures

See the THROUGH JEWISH EYES Bible

by Daniel Goldberg, Th.D., D.D.



THE TRINITY OF HELL - REVELATION 13

Just as there is a Trinity of heaven, it may be said there is a “trinity of hell,” exposed in Revelation 13—the dragon, the first beast and the second beast.

THE DRAGON (Devil) – THE ANTI-GOD

“So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast” (Revelation 13:4). From the day of his rebellion against God, Satan declared, “... I will be like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:14). He offered “the kingdoms of the world” to the Messiah in exchange for worship (Matthew 4:9). The entire scheme and plan of the dragon, recorded in Revelation 13, is to secure the worship of mankind.

THE FIRST BEAST – THE ANTICHRIST (Revelation 13:1-10)

This beast arises from the sea and his description coincides with the antichrist mentioned elsewhere in the Bible (See Daniel 7:8; 9:6;

2 Thessalonians 2:8; 1 John 2:22). This man is the great deceiver and grand imitator of the Messiah. He is a savage beast, while Messiah is a sacrificial Lamb (Revelation 5:6-9). The beast experiences a false resurrection (Revelation 13:3), while Christ experienced a true one (Romans 1:4). His symbolic number is six, the number of man—created on the sixth day, while the number of Messiah is seven, the number of perfection (Revelation 5:6,12).

Antichrist’s ministry will last three and a half years (Revelation 13:5), the same length of time as Christ’s ministry on earth. The dragon-devil totally empowers the antichrist (Revelation 13:4), while Christ was energized by God the Father (Matthew 28:18).

THE SECOND BEAST – THE FALSE PROPHET AND ANTI-SPIRIT (Revelation 13:11-18)

On three occasions, this second beast is called “the false prophet” (Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). Whether he is Jewish or Gentile remains a mystery until the Tribulation. This false prophet may be seen as the third person of this hellish trinity. He will lead men into every error, while God’s Holy Spirit leads men into all the truth (John 16:13). The false prophet glorifies the antichrist (Revelation 13:12), while the Holy Spirit glorifies the Savior (John 16:13,14).

Even as the antichrist was an expert in imitating the second person of the trinity, the second beast will mimic the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He causes fire to come down from heaven (Revelation 13:13), similar to Pentecost (Acts 2:3), and places a mark on those who worship the dragon (Revelation 13:15,17)—even as the saved are marked or sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13).

ONLY TWO CHOICES

The dragon-devil desires the worship of all whom he can deceive in order to procure their soul’s allegiance. But the believer’s trust is in Jesus, our wonderful Messiah, who clearly stated, “... I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

In the final analysis, these are the only two choices available to humanity—the road that leads toward the light and love, or the other that leads toward darkness and despair. Which road are you on? ✨

“THIS CAN’T BE JESUS!”

The Montreal office received several phone messages from a Jewish man. Someone had placed a copy of *The Chosen People* evangelistic newsletter in his mailbox. When our office assistant called him back, she began to explain more about the Messiah. About thirty minutes later, they were reading Scriptures together over the phone. She had him read Isaiah 53 aloud to her. Halfway through, he stopped, and said with a nervous laugh, “This can’t be Jesus!” After reading through some other prophecies, he asked to be in contact on a regular basis. Please pray for this 83-year-old Sephardic Jewish man to receive the Lord.



JEWISH COUPLE IN WINNIPEG COMES TO FAITH

The Lord used Erle Snobel, our staff member in Winnipeg, in a mighty way just before the High Holy Days. He was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. B, a Jewish husband and wife who were seeking after truth. Erle shared his faith and showed them various Scriptures. He also gave them a Bible and other reading material and had many people praying. Erle was jubilant to learn that they both came to faith in Messiah and are regularly attending a Bible study and services at a congregation close to their home.

ISRAELI WOMAN MEETS HER MESSIAH

Michael and Lisa Cohen continue their fruitful ministry in Southern California. They shared the love of Messiah with Rivka,* their Israeli neighbor, by including her in their family life and inviting her to their congregation. Rivka was impressed, and began seriously counting the cost of placing her faith in Messiah. Then, after a service, she prayed with Michael to receive Jesus as her Lord and Savior. Rivka experienced the dramatic, life-changing joy and peace that only the Lord can give. She told the Cohens that even her family in Israel could hear the change in her voice over the phone. Please pray that she will grow and bear fruit for Messiah!

NEW KNEE LEADS TO NEW LIFE FOR JEWISH THERAPIST

Ron Baehr, who serves at our office in Southern Florida, had a total knee replacement on his left knee. The operation was successful, and physical therapy helped him to start walking again. During this time, Joseph,* a Jewish man originally from Brooklyn, was Ron’s physical therapist. Every day for two weeks, Joseph visited Ron at home. During this time, Ron had the opportunity to share the Gospel with Joseph; and on his last visit, he prayed with Ron to receive the Messiah. Please pray for Joseph, and pray that his wife and two teenaged children will also come to faith.

MESSIANIC YOUTH CAMP IN SWITZERLAND BRINGS FAITH DECISIONS

Igor Swiderski, a student missionary at the Moody Bible Institute, returned home to Germany earlier this year for a reunion with his parents (who also serve on Chosen People staff). While there, he ministered at a Messianic youth camp held in Switzerland, and two 17-year-old girls received the Messiah. After camp, many new young people attended the congregation that his father, Kyrill, leads. One of those two new believers brought her mother with her, and she also received the Lord!



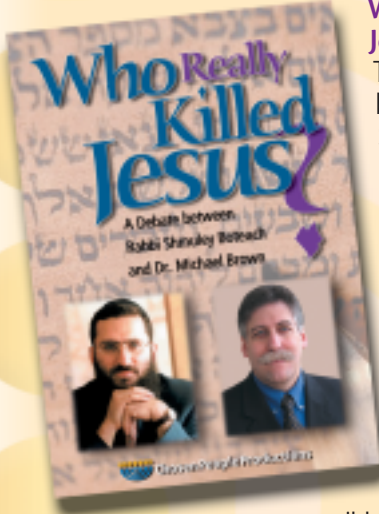
MESSIAH ADDS “FAMILY MEMBERS” THROUGH MISSION TRIP TO ISRAEL

Chosen People Ministries’ Klaudia Zhelezny recently accompanied a team from her home congregation in Brooklyn, traveling to Israel to distribute copies of the *Jesus* video. They made nearly 100 visits in the towns of Petach Tikvah, Nes Tziona, Nazareth and Yavneh. Klaudia reports that many people were open to praying, reading Scripture, or discussing serious spiritual questions. During their outreach, 14 people received the Lord. One special blessing was that among them were Klaudia’s sister-in-law and her niece! Klaudia also organized five Bible studies with new believers, and the team connected others who were open to the Lord to local congregations and pastors. Praise the Lord!

* Names changed

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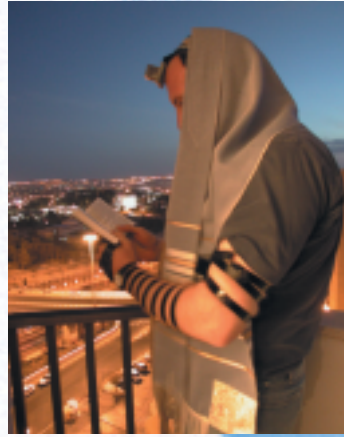
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Chosen People Ministries invites you to stand by Israel and bless her with your presence in the Land. And so, too, shall you be blessed. Mr. J. from Washington summed up his experience on a recent "See Israel through Jewish Eyes" tour.

"...I discovered that to meet the people and to see the Land is truly life-changing. When you see Israel 'through Jewish eyes,' Scripture comes alive in a new and fresh way. As you visualize the actual locations you have visited, it changes the way you read Biblical passages."

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)

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