

The Chosen People



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UNDERSTANDING THE FEAST OF WEEKS

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A NEW PENTECOST:

The Fulfillment of the Feast of Weeks

Dear friend of the Jewish people,

Shalom from the Chosen People Ministries headquarters in New York City! Thanks again for your faithful prayers and support, especially for the new Charles Feinberg Center in the heart of Orthodox Jewish Brooklyn. We are moved in, our ministries are up and running, and we are looking forward to our summer outreach campaign, **Shalom Brooklyn**, to be based from the Center.

We have just celebrated the one major holiday that both Jewish people and Christians historically have in common: Pentecost, or as Jewish people call it in Hebrew, *Shavuot*—the Feast of Weeks. I hope this edition of the newsletter will help you further reflect on this great celebration of God’s presence and power given through the Holy Spirit.

Shavuot: The Feast of Weeks

The festivals of Israel were designed by God to focus the hearts and minds of the Jewish people on various elements of God’s person and plan. The festivals also point to the coming of the Messiah.

Shavuot literally means “sevens,” as seven seven-day weeks are to be counted by the Jewish people beginning with Passover and concluding with the fiftieth day, upon which Shavuot is to be observed. In Christian tradition, the festival is called Pentecost—the Greek term which means “fifty.”

There are other biblical and traditional Jewish names used to identify Shavuot. The most important is *Zman Matan Torah*, which means “the season of the giving of the Law,” as the rabbis believed the Law of Moses was given on the day of Pentecost.

The connection of Shavuot to the giving of the Law is an important tradition for the Jewish people, and it is critical to our understanding of the Messianic fulfillment of

Pentecost recorded by Luke in Acts 2. Shavuot was also one of the three pilgrimage feasts mentioned in Leviticus 23 (Passover, Shavuot and Tabernacles) when all Jewish males were required to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem.

Jewish Traditions Associated with Pentecost

The Book of Ruth is read on Shavuot, as it is a harvest story. According to tradition, King David was born and died on this festival, and Ruth took on the obligation of the Law on Shavuot!

Many religious Jews commemorate Shavuot by spending the entire night studying the *Torah* (Law) at their synagogue or at home. They also study other biblical books and rabbinic literature, chanting the Ten Commandments and decorating synagogues and homes with roses or aromatic spices, a custom based on a Jewish tradition that connects the events at Sinai to spices and roses.

Jewish holidays often have some food-related component—and Shavuot is no different. We eat dairy foods such as cheese, cheesecake, and milk during Shavuot. The precise origin of this custom is unknown, but some think it is related to the line in the Song of Solomon that reads, “Honey and milk are under your tongue.” Many believe that this verse is comparing the Torah to the sweetness of milk and honey. In some European cities, children are given honey cakes with passages from the Torah written on them, as well as ladder-shaped challah bread which signifies Moses’ ascent up Mount Sinai.

The Messianic Fulfillment of Shavuot

It is no coincidence that God selected this Jewish festival as the day when He would send His Holy Spirit. In Acts chapter 2 we see this festival

fulfilled in some remarkable ways. The 120 disciples (Acts 1:15) were in one place, with one mind, praying and waiting for the promise of God to be fulfilled. They were waiting in obedience to the command of Jesus (Acts 1:4-5) and also in obedience to the Laws of Shavuot regarding doing “no work” (Leviticus 23:21). Many were pilgrims who had left their homes to be part of this festival, and came for a word from God about the expected Messianic redemption.

God would bless their hope and obedience, as Luke recalls Jesus’ promise prior to the ascension that He would send the Holy Spirit upon the disciples so that they would have His power to fulfill His command *to go into the world and disciple all nations* (Matthew 28:19-20).

After some days of patient waiting, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit fell upon the disciples on the fiftieth day, in a manner reminiscent of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. The disciples were first-century

Jews and would have believed the Jewish tradition that the Law was given on the day of Shavuot. The initial giving of the Torah was accompanied by signs and wonders in the heavens, as described in Exodus 19 and 20. Now, there were signs and wonders in the Upper Room, marking this *new Pentecost* as well. It was the day of a new revelation and the fulfillment of God’s promises to pour out His Spirit in the last days! (Joel 2)

Hearing the Good News in their Own Language

Tradition says that every Jew who would ever live was present at Mount Sinai, pledging their obedience to the Law. In light of this, there is also a traditional belief that the Jews present at Mount Sinai that day actually heard the giving of the Law in their own native tongues. How else could they understand what they had promised to obey?

This tradition was also mirrored and fulfilled on the day of this new Pentecost

fifty days after Jesus, the Lamb of God, rose from the grave. Those who heard the disciples preaching heard this new revelation in their own native languages.

How gracious of God to use an already-familiar tradition to communicate and confirm His truth to the Jewish people!

Shavuot: A Model for Holy Spirit-Empowered Evangelism

God Himself is our role model for missionary service and evangelism. He seeks to communicate with us in ways we can understand, despite our limitations. He took on flesh in order to communicate with you and me...to show us His love and to help us better understand the Father through His role model and example.

We too need to wrap the Good News in humanity—ours—so that our families, friends and neighbors understand our message. Through the God-given ability to love and to serve as Messiah did, we pray that those we encounter will understand that God is not far away; instead, He is close and He loves them.

I pray that we will take the lessons of Shavuot to heart. Let us give ourselves to the preaching of the Gospel, knowing that God is the one who provides the power to convict the hearts of those who will believe through our gracious words and the witness of Scripture. It is His work, not ours, and we can have confidence in the presence of the Holy Spirit in evangelism.

Enjoy the great reports of the worldwide harvest of Jewish people in a few of the 16 countries where Your Mission to the Jewish People serves.

Happy Shavuot/
Pentecost and may the
Lord fill you with the
power of His presence!

In His power,



Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

MANFRED NOCHOMOWITZ: I was born in Pretoria, South Africa and was brought up as an observant, practicing Orthodox Jew. We were very involved in the Pretoria Hebrew Congregation, and I attended and graduated from a Jewish school.

When a family member came to faith in Messiah, we would often discuss God (which I loved doing), but I would not discuss Jesus. For me, Jesus and being Jewish did not go together. I was invited to a Bible study given by a Jewish believer and I decided to attend. However, on the way, I became very angry. I decided to disrupt the Bible study and make the people sorry that they ever invited me.

The teacher was a young Jewish believer named Lawrence Hirsch. I tried to disrupt the meeting, but I couldn't—so I decided to listen. It was the first New Testament teaching that I had ever heard. After the Bible study, Lawrence asked if anyone would like to receive Yeshua (Jesus) as their Messiah and I put up my hand. Lawrence led me in a salvation prayer, and on that wonderful evening in April 1994, I came to faith.

In 1995, my wife and I joined Hatfield Christian Church, where we served in many capacities over the years. God then called me to Jewish ministry. In 2007, God birthed Emet Ministries, giving me the vision "to minister the truth of the Gospel to the Jewish people, and the truth of the Jewish people and Israel to the Church."

SOUTH
AFRICA



ARGENTINA



Branching Out to the Jewish Community of South Africa

Over this past year, the tumultuous history of South Africa has been featured in the news as a result of the passing of Nelson Mandela. Jewish people have been present for much of this history, from the early days of Portuguese exploration and the Dutch settlement dating from the middle of the seventeenth century. Jewish numbers began to swell in the 1820s, and the first Jewish house of worship was established in 1841. Today, 65,000-70,000 Jewish people live in South Africa, most of whom reside in Johannesburg.

Jewish believer Manfred Nochomowitz, together with his wife, Isit, lead Chosen People Ministries in South Africa and call this ministry *Emet*, a Hebrew word which means "truth."

Manfred recently reported:

"We are looking to set up a teaching seminar to equip people to take the Gospel to the Jewish community in Cape Town and also to meet with and motivate the Messianic community there.

I was also contacted by a Messianic Jewish lady in Durban. Apparently there are a number of Jews in Durban, and she wants me to do an 'Equipping Weekend' for her and her group so that they are prepared to take the Gospel to Jewish people in Durban. We are also looking to get some of the churches involved in this as well."

Hong Kong in Israel.....

GIDEON: For the past few years, I have used a religious survey to reach out to the Israelis in my neighborhood. This brief survey, which includes questions about Christianity and Yeshua (Jesus), has a very good response, as most Israelis are open to dialogue. After they complete the survey, I hand a Gospel tract or Isaiah 53 booklet to them. They are always amazed when they hear my testimony of how Yeshua changed my life.

In addition, I provide a tutorial class for Israelis who are learning the Chinese language. If you are a Chinese believer, this is a great opportunity to make Israeli friends and to share the precious Gospel. The Jewish people are very friendly to Chinese people, as they remember that China opened its borders to accept Jewish refugees during the Holocaust.

Two years ago, I brought my son to see a doctor here in Israel. When he realized that we were Chinese, he greeted us in Mandarin. He explained that his parents survived the Holocaust by escaping to China. After the establishment of the State of Israel, the family moved back here. I told him that I am a Chinese believer in Yeshua who loves Israel and Jewish people, and shared the Gospel with him. He said that he would read the New Testament and try to learn more about Yeshua. I always pray that more Chinese believers would share the Gospel with Jewish people. This is my passion.

Jewish Missions in Argentina: A Divine Partnership

Today there are almost one million Jews spread throughout twenty-seven Latin American countries. Since the late sixteenth century, European Jews, many of whom were fleeing persecution, sought a safe haven in Latin America. They were especially attracted to Argentina, whose government passed a law in 1864 offering forty acres of free land to Jewish immigrants. Thousands of European Jews, especially those escaping the Russian pogroms, settled in the Argentine farmlands. Argentine Jewry is one of the largest Jewish communities in South America.

Argentina is a major destination for backpackers for a number of reasons. There are half a million Jews in the country, so many Jewish travelers know somebody in Argentina. They love Patagonia, the bottom tip of Argentina, which is the southernmost part of the world. Backpackers also love the city of Buenos Aires, with sixteen million people, more theaters than London and more restaurants than Paris!

For all these reasons and more, the Chosen People Ministries Messianic Center in Buenos Aires hosted by two American couples—Rick K. and his wife Chris, and their co-workers Randy and Sandy W.—has become a warm home for our ministries among Argentine Jews as well as young Israelis passing through.

Over the years, Chosen People Ministries has developed a good relationship with Rick and Chris, who are missionaries

to the Jewish people appointed by the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. When they moved to Buenos Aires, it became clear that the partnership was a divine appointment.

With volunteer help from the United States and additional funding from Chosen People Ministries, the sanctuary and classrooms of the building were remodeled, and they are now being used for outreach. In addition to regular Bible studies and services, they began hosting Israeli tourists who traveled to Argentina after completing their military service in Israel. Hardly a week goes by without a dozen young Israelis sharing a meal in the center, where they have a chance to hear the Gospel from Randy, who is able to speak with them in Hebrew!

We look forward to expanding our ministry in Argentina. We have printed the Spanish version of *Isaiah 53 Explained* and we are also launching a web-based campaign utilizing this book as an evangelistic tool.

We are grateful for what the Lord has allowed us to do for the hundreds who have come to hear the Gospel through our partnership—yet we know that so much more can be done for the salvation of our Jewish brothers and sisters in Argentina. Rick and Chris and Randy and Sandy are gifted missionaries, dedicated to full-time Jewish evangelism, but we also need Argentine workers. That is our number one prayer request.



Meeting room in the Messianic Center in Buenos Aires

Testimonies from staff members of Chosen People Ministries-Hong Kong, currently serving in Israel

I.C.: I am a Chinese believer in Yeshua (Jesus) currently living in Israel, studying Hebrew and meeting with people. In recent months, I have been visiting a Jewish man (“Uncle E.”) who is suffering from serious depression. He is an Orthodox Jew and he receives my visits even though he knows that I am a believer in Yeshua. I remember the first time I visited him. I suggested that I pray for him before I left, and he accepted.

We have a mutual friend who is also Chinese. This friend wrote Uncle E. a letter to express her care and concern for him, and Uncle E. asked me to read the letter to him because he couldn’t read the cursive English writing. In the letter, our friend wrote about the Gospel and encouraged him to put his trust in Yeshua the Messiah. At this, Uncle E. stopped me and said, “We Jewish people could not believe in a man.”

I responded that Yeshua was not just a man, He is the Son of God. I also told him that there are indeed Jewish people who believe in Yeshua as the Messiah in my congregation. Although Uncle E. has not yet received Yeshua as his Messiah, he still welcomes my visits. I will continue to show my love and concern for him. It is a privilege to share my faith in Yeshua, and I pray that the Holy Spirit continues to work in his heart.

Please pray that I will continue to get opportunities to share my faith with God’s chosen people, and that He will give me wisdom, patience and love in my witness.



A view from Victoria Peak, looking north over Central, Victoria Harbour and Kowloon.

SEE THE BIBLE THROUGH JEWISH EYES

BY DANIEL GOLDBERG, TH.D., D.D.



Dr. Goldberg serves as International Ministries Representative for Chosen People Ministries and lives in Pineville, North Carolina with his wife, Madeline.

WORLD JUDGMENT AND WORLD BLESSINGS ISAIAH 34 & 35

The prophet Isaiah informs all the nations by warning them concerning the indignation and coming wrath of the Almighty. God has devoted the ungodly for destruction.

Isaiah is now sounding forth the alarm well before the judgments fall.

COMING WORLD JUDGMENTS (ISAIAH 34:1-17)

All the ungodly nations of earth are destined for terrible destruction in the coming Tribulation time. In the same way that leaves fall from the vine and the fig falls from the tree, the heavens will shake when God punishes the nations (Isa. 34:4). “The sword of the Lord” is responsible for these worldwide judgments (Isa. 34:5-6).

God’s indignation against the nations is unlike selfish and sinful human anger; rather, this is the holy wrath of God’s outraged majesty. Isaiah looks forward to the time when the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, will return to take control of the earth’s government. Other biblical passages also graphically depict God’s vengeance, notably in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 6-19).

Isaiah focuses on Edom in Isaiah 34:5-6 as an example of how God will handle the arrogant

nations. Individuals will seek refuge, because the earth will become a wilderness (Isa. 2:19). Not only will they hide in caves, but they will cry out for the rocks to fall on them, because it will be the only way to hide from the effects of God’s terrible wrath (Rev. 6:15-17).

All the promises and prophecies are recorded in the “*scroll (book) of the Lord...*” (Isa. 34:16). This scroll includes the writings of the prophet Isaiah, preserved for future generations. The message is that God is true to His promises.

WORLD BLESSING UNDER MESSIAH’S RULE (ISAIAH 35)

The prophets of the Hebrew Bible, Isaiah among them, constantly contemplated the glorious visible coming of the Messiah to set up His kingdom of righteousness. Isaiah chapter 35 emphatically states that God will bring justice to the earth, but it will come based on the divine plan and timetable.

The Book of Woes finally ends with a vivid picture of the glorious rule of our Lord. “*The dry desert becoming a well-watered flowery garden*” depicts the removal of human difficulties, the restoration

of relationships, and universal prosperity (Isa. 35:1).

Isaiah envisions a time of cheer for the faint-hearted. Jerusalem, a long-oppressed city, will finally become the city of good cheer: the blind will see, the deaf will hear; the dumb will sing and the earth will be safe from the lion and the bear (Isa. 35:9). All the ransomed of the Lord will visit Jerusalem to stand in Messiah’s presence with songs of joy and redemption (Isa. 35:10).

For at least a thousand years, the earth will be a safe haven and all nations shall live in peace (Isa. 2:2-4; Rev. 20:1-7). Highway One in Jerusalem will lead to the residence of the King of Kings (Isa. 35:8). The Lord’s highway is a raised way. It is lifted up, exalted and leveled. All hindrances are removed and a plain path is before our feet. This highway of salvation is a holy way (Isa. 35:8).

COME AND JOIN THE CROWD

Do you acknowledge Jesus the Messiah as your Redeemer? By trusting in the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings for salvation (Jn. 3:16) you can be among the redeemed crowd that will be singing and rejoicing (Isa. 35:10).

NEWS BRIEFS



JUST A WALK IN THE PARK

Staff member Michael Cohen loves to share the Gospel in everyday life. While walking in a park near his home in the Woodland Hills neighbor-

hood of Southern California, he began to converse with a woman who turned out to be Jewish—an Argentinean who grew up in an Orthodox Jewish community. Using the tract entitled, *Is Jesus the Messiah?*, Michael shared the Gospel with the woman, who listened attentively. Then he asked if she wanted to receive the Lord. She said yes, and they prayed a simple prayer of faith. Please pray that her new faith will become established as the Cohens begin to disciple her.

JEWISH SENIOR FINDS "CHILDLIKE" FAITH

Cathy Wilson, one of our most gifted and faithful evangelists, has a wonderful ministry to seniors in her Scottsdale, Arizona community. She excitedly reports that one of her Jewish friends, who has been attending weekly Bible studies for the past six years, has received the Lord. This friend, while often antagonistic, always assured Cathy that their time together "was a pleasure." Cathy writes, "Her approaching death has made her disposition somewhat childlike. The week prior to Passover, I shared the Exodus with her and focused, again, on Jesus. This time she did not balk. As I began praying aloud for her, I asked if she would like to confess her sins and place her trust in Jesus. In her 'childlike' way, she consented. Glory to God!"



THE POWER OF PRAYER BRINGS HEALING TO JEWISH MAN

Congregational leader Steve Fenchel, who ministers in New York City along with his wife, Carol, can testify to

the power of prayer. The Fenchels have been praying with a Jewish man who has recently come to faith; this man's

brother had been diagnosed with cancer. Recently, when the doctors did a biopsy, they found that the brother's cancer was gone! Steve writes, "Praise the Lord! What a testimony to this new Jewish believer and to his family!"

FAITH COMES THROUGH A PHONE CALL

Jeff Siegel, Chosen People Ministries' New York Area Director, followed up with a seeker whose Jewish husband also had many questions about believing in Jesus. He agreed to call her when her husband was home. Jeff writes, "What a great phone call. This Jewish man asked me how I came to know Yeshua (Jesus). He put me on speakerphone and I shared my testimony with both him and his wife. A defining moment in our conversation came—and this man and his wife invited Jesus into their hearts, repented of their sins and asked me to baptize them soon."



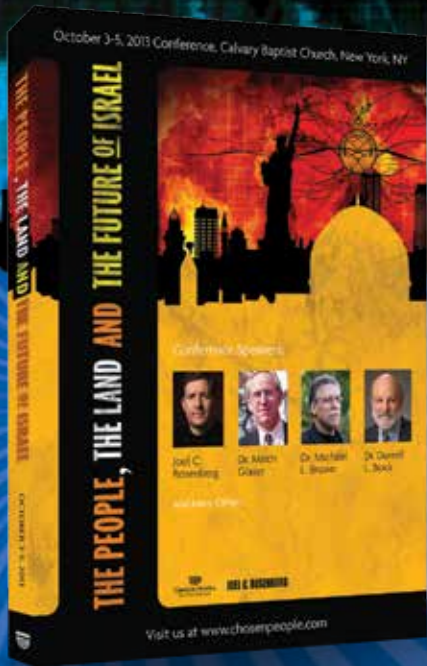
REACHING THE HIDDEN JEWS OF GERMANY

Vladimir Pikman, who directs our work in Germany, is reaching what he terms a new and growing Jewish group that is composed of Jewish people who grew up in Germany without any idea that they have Jewish descent. Fear of antisemitism and the Holocaust trauma pressured their parents and grandparents to hide their families' Jewish background. Vladimir writes, "Now these children and grandchildren, who have become aware of their Jewish heritage in one way or another, do not know what to do with this newfound identity. Please pray for us to help point them to Yeshua (Jesus), in whom being Jewish receives its fulfillment and significance."



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MESSIANIC RESOURCES



"The People, the Land and the Future of Israel!" Chosen People Ministries' conference was held in New York City in October 2013 at the historic Calvary Baptist Church. You will enjoy this DVD set of the messages from this dynamic and historic event. Included are messages from great speakers like Joel C. Rosenberg, Dr. Mitch Glaser, Dr. Darrell Bock and Dr. Michael Brown. DVD set contains 4 DVDs.

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Chosen People Ministries



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