

The Chosen People



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To the Jew First!

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8

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To the Jew First



Dear friend of the Jewish people,

Shalom from New York City and Happy New Year. His mercies are new every morning and each New Year brings with it new hopes, dreams and challenges.

One of the areas of greatest challenge we face within our Chosen People Ministries family is our work in Israel. There is no place like it on earth—not even New York City!

Chosen People Ministries has had a work in Israel for more than fifty years. Let me share a little bit of Chosen People Ministries' *ministry history* in the Holy Land to help you pray for our efforts today in Israel.

Years of Faithful Outreach in Israel

Frank Boothby was our first missionary to Israel. His ministry in the 1930s continued until his passing in 1940. Sigourd Biorness, a Messianic Jew from Europe, settled in Israel that same year and continued this work. These men faced incredible obstacles and persecution, especially from the early Zionists. They preached the Gospel to the Jewish settlers at great personal risk.

Herbert Singer, another European Messianic Jew, continued the work throughout the Second World War. He especially served his fellow European refugees escaping almost certain death in Europe.

The end of the war brought an influx of Holocaust survivors desperately seeking a place of safety and hope. Haim Haimoff and the McClenahan family led this work until 1953.

The 1960s brought a renewed vision for evangelism in Israel as Peter Gutkind, another European Jew, began work in Haifa. He used radio as an evangelistic tool from 1969 to the mid-1980s.

Jacob and Leah Goren, Messianic Jews and European refugees, also began their ministry in Jerusalem at this time and helped plant one of the first Hebrew-speaking Messianic congregations in Israel.

The 1970s and 1980s were seasons of growth and struggle for our outreach in Israel. Messianic Jews experienced considerable hardship and opposition from their fellow Israelis.

Today's Opportunities

The 1990s brought a renewed sense of vision as hundreds of thousands of Russian Jews began to immigrate to Israel. These new refugees have been very open to the Gospel and today, Chosen People Ministries has four workers in Israel reaching these very receptive Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Let me share with you a slightly abridged summary of a recent e-mail I received from Michael, the Russian Jewish brother who leads our work in Israel. I sent the full text to those of you whose e-mail address I had—which is one of the reasons I hope you will complete the card enclosed with the newsletter. We want to make sure we have your e-mail address so we can share “breaking news” and you can pray.

Here is what Michael had to say—I hope it blesses you as it did me!

Shalom Mitch!

Saturday evening was one of the most significant in our congregational life.

After Henry Matarrita [Chosen People Ministries' worker based in Hawaii] invited people to commit their lives to Jesus, five (!) people made faith decisions. Then we took Henry and his wife up to Jerusalem, thinking to have a late supper somewhere on Ben Yehuda Street. But because it was late and we had children with us, I decided to go home instead. Then I heard ambulances starting to run one after the other--non-stop!

We turned on the TV and learned that ten people were killed by a suicide bomber on Ben Yehuda Street, with 170 wounded. Next morning, another 15 were killed and 40 more wounded by another suicide terrorist on a bus in Haifa--some of them critically.

We believe it could be the beginning of real war. The staff is safe so far. We continue to share the Good News even more intensively than before. We pray daily for Israel and for our families. We no longer feel safe sending our kids to school. However, so far we are well. For how long? God knows. Thank you very much for continuing prayers.

Michael

A Messianic Presence in the Holy Land

It is our prayer and hope for the New Year that our work in Israel will grow. We have already moved our Israel headquarters to Jerusalem and we expect to plant a Messianic congregation there this year.

Michael is also involved with producing an evangelistic magazine in Russian and hopefully in Hebrew to reach modern Israelis.

One of these days, we also hope to purchase a large facility near the Old City that will serve as a base of operations for Chosen People Ministries in Israel. I will share more about our plans for a Jerusalem Messianic Center in the days ahead.

For now, we are grateful for what God has provided and we look forward to the day when the Lord enables us to purchase a Center.

Would you pray with us for this?

First in Jerusalem

One final thing. Do you remember the final words of our Savior before He ascended? *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"* (Acts 1:8).

We have ministry in Jerusalem. We have also planted a Messianic congregation on the West Bank, in Samaria. Chosen People Ministries also has ministries in eight other countries besides the United States and Israel. In fact, we minister in countries where more than 96% of the world's Jewish population resides. We are doing our best to follow the direction of our Savior.

Every January I like to remind you, our beloved readers, prayer partners and supporters, of the great need to prioritize Jewish evangelism.

The New Year is a time when we reestablish priorities and set new goals. I hope that sharing the Lord with Jewish people will "creep" up your list of priorities for 2002 and that you will be more involved in reaching the Jewish people for the Messiah this year.

You can do this through your personal witness, your prayers and your financial support.

You can also do this by involving your local church in Jewish evangelism. We have speakers who would love to come to your church and share the burden we have for



reaching the world for Christ—to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

Would you take a moment to fill out your e-mail address on the enclosed card—and provide us with some information about your church? Let us know whom we can contact about having a Chosen People Ministries worker speak at your congregation—or perhaps even to involve your church in supporting our ministry.

May the Lord fill you with His joy and power in this New Year. Remember, above all else, *"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you'"* (Psalm 122:6).

And may the blessing promised to those who pray for His chosen people be yours!

Your brother in the Messiah,

Mitch



Mitch Glaser
President

How Not to Share the Gospel With Your Jewish Friends

It helps to use wisdom in any witnessing situation and the following tips are offered to help you avoid some pitfalls in Jewish evangelism. Here is a list of things **not** to say when sharing the Good News with your Jewish friends:

1

“You’ll feel much better once you’ve stopped being Jewish.”

Jewish people value their Jewish heritage and the single greatest obstacle for a Jewish person in the process of receiving the Gospel is the fear that he or she will not be Jewish any longer; besides...it isn’t true! A Jewish person who receives the Messiah does not cease to be Jewish, but understands Jewish identity in a whole new light (Romans 11:1).

2

“I can’t wait to tell my friends I helped you convert.”

For the Jewish seeker, the word “convert” conjures up the image of the forcible conversions that were made under the threat of torture or death. No one wants to feel like a trophy about to be mounted on a wall.

3

“Come on down to the pot-luck dinner. We’re going to pork out on lobster and crab legs.”

Although many Jews no longer keep the kosher food laws, enough do so that you would be wise to check before asking a Jewish friend to any event where food is going to be served. This includes your own home.

4

“If you accept Jesus we can celebrate Christmas together. I’ll help you decorate your tree.”

We should understand that although the real Christmas (the Incarnation) was predicted by the Jewish prophets, most Jewish people view the “cultural trappings” of Christmas as non-Jewish. We need to let our Jewish friends know that they can celebrate Hanukkah, Passover, and other Jewish holidays beautifully fulfilled in Jesus!

5

“You need to become a completed Jew.”

This term is theologically correct. Jesus does complete all of us and the New Covenant does fulfill the Old. But we can offend a Jewish person for the wrong reasons. To a Jewish person, it sounds condescending and contemptuous. You might want to use the term, “Messianic Jew” instead.

6

“Let me show you some prophecies from the ‘Old Testament.’”

Jewish people do not use the term “Old Testament.” The Christian “Old Testament” is the *entire Bible* to the Jewish people. Unfortunately, the word “old” implies “used up.” Use the phrase “Hebrew Scriptures” instead. It’s friendlier.

7

“We love the Jews!”

Don’t say that too loud! Jewish people are skeptical of these kinds of statements. As Jews, we know some of our own who are not that easy to love. It is a general statement that many believers say with sincerity, but it makes Jewish people suspicious. Most Jewish people do not even know what God says about Israel and His everlasting love for His people in our own Scriptures (Deuteronomy 7:7-13; Jeremiah 31:35-37). It’s best to show love rather than proclaim it.

Don’t Get Discouraged!

Sharing the Gospel with your Jewish friends may seem like a daunting task. Make no mistake, the cultural sensitivities are there and they are real. Centuries of misunderstanding are not easily wiped away. However, the Scriptures assure us that God is able to supply us with all that we need to do His will. As the Apostle Paul writes, *“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work”* (2 Corinthians 9:8).

The Prodigal Son has come home... in more ways than one! This is Steve Fenchel, one of our newest New York City-based missionaries.

Born into a Jewish home in Brooklyn, Steve learned the traditions of Orthodox Judaism from his earliest days. Steve's father was a cantor (worship leader) at synagogues in the New York City area. Steve's mother, although not religious, respected his wishes, so along with his younger brother, Steve was raised in a kosher, observant Jewish home.

Family Tragedy

When Steve was eight years old, his father became seriously ill. He underwent extended hospital stays and was away from home for long stretches of time. Steve himself became ill with mononucleosis and there were several weeks when father and son were home sick together. It was an important time to them—all the more so because a year later, his father died. Steve remembers him: "He was a gentle, nurturing man and I became very attached to him."

The family entered a dark, difficult time as Steve was inconsolable in his grief, and the family tried to adjust.

Distance From God

Steve's religious responsibility was to offer prayers at the synagogue in memory of his father. He attempted to do so, but found that he was angry and afraid of God. Why had He taken his beloved father away from him? After a short time, Steve stopped attending synagogue and stopped

praying. He walked away from Judaism and went so far as to hide his Jewish identity. As far as God was concerned, Steve had had enough.

So began a time of restless rebellion. Steve did poorly in school and started to take drugs. His life was filled with anxiety and even periods of deep depression.

God's Long Reach

Things went from bad to worse. By 1971, Steve was still on drugs and living on the street much of the time.



Steve and Carol Fenchel, Chosen People Ministries workers in New York City

Then, one day in Manhattan, Steve accepted a Gospel tract from someone. His spiritual interest quickened and he began to recognize the authority of Jesus. Later that year, old friends called him with marvelous news—they had become believers in Messiah!

Steve's friends shared the Gospel with him. He knew they were speaking the truth, but there was one last, major hurdle. After everything he had done, how could God ever love or forgive him? Steve's friends took him to meet some other believers in Vermont, and through their fellowship and the power of God's Word, Steve put his faith in the Lord.

Steve Fenchel: Rebellion to Reverence

New Life in Messiah

Steve reflects, "When I prayed to receive Messiah, I left all my anger and fear behind. I found my Heavenly Father, and finally felt at peace."

Shortly after this, Steve met his future wife, Carol, who also became a believer. They were married in 1972 and now have three grown daughters. Steve and Carol are both Chosen People Ministries staff members and recently relocated from New Mexico to New York City, where they will be planting a Messianic congregation among the hundreds of thousands of Jewish people on the West Side of Manhattan.

See the Through Jewish Eyes Bible

by Dr. Daniel Goldberg



THE PROPHET HAGGAI Getting with God's Program

At one time or another, we've all heard the exhortation, "Get with the program!" It's usually offered by someone wiser than us who sees us wasting time and effort because we have lost sight of our priorities. So it was with the prophet Haggai.

Haggai addressed a people who gave major attention to minor matters. As a result, big problems arose.

Historical Background

Haggai (520-504 BC) is known as a "post-exilic" prophet because he spoke to the returned Jewish remnant after the 70-year Babylonian exile. He belonged to the group of the first exiles who returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel, the first governor of Judah, and Joshua his high priest.

In 536 BC, work on the Second Temple was begun. The Book of Ezra describes how the Samaritans hindered the building of the Temple. Bowing to the Samaritans' pressure, the people halted Temple construction.

This was clearly a departure from God's will. Without the Temple, the continuity of Israel's religious faith could not be maintained. It was up to Haggai to remind the people of their true priorities.

Masters of Misdirection

Haggai spoke against Israel's misdirected efforts and their confused understanding. The first thing he brought to their attention was how they were misusing the most precious commodity of all: time.

"Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built'" (Haggai 1:2).

Haggai replied with sarcasm—"Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to

lie in ruins?" (1:4). God accused His people of having plenty of time for their own pursuits, while pleading a lack of time for Him.

Is it any different today? God's people often neglect witnessing, tithing and serving responsibilities in lieu of their personal pursuits. And too often, some of us offer up the same catalogue of excuses.

Next, Haggai thunders against God's people for having plenty of money for their own creature comforts, while claiming not to have enough for the house of God. Their emphasis was on sowing, eating, drinking, clothing and earning wages (1:6).

Haggai explains the resulting discipline of God: *"You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?... Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house" (1:9).*

Are not such misplaced loyalties in the areas of time management and material pursuit the essence of idolatry?

Getting the Message

God blessed Haggai's preaching with great success. After fourteen years of Israel's neglect, Temple rebuilding was resumed in 520 BC and completed in 516 BC (Ezra 6:15).

The Lord expects His people to complete the good work that they have begun. And we needn't go it alone, for it is God's determined purpose to complete His good work in every believer:

"...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). ☆

God's Love is Even Stronger

When Chosen People Ministries staff member Lauren Bockisch recently returned to Maryland for a visit, she was introduced to Deborah,* an 85-year-old Jewish woman. In the course of their visit together, Deborah confided to Lauren how much she missed her deceased husband, who loved her so much. Lauren shared about how God's love is even stronger and how much He wants us to have faith in Him. Then Lauren shared the Gospel and read some passages in the New Testament with Deborah. When Lauren asked Deborah if she was ready to receive the Lord, Deborah said, "Yes!" Pray for Deborah as she begins her new life in the Messiah.

Gospel Light in Israel at Hanukkah

Hanukkah celebrates God's miracles of salvation in Israel, both then and now. Just ask Chosen People Ministries' worker, Neriya A., who is studying in Israel as part of his studies at Philadelphia Biblical University. This Hanukkah, he had a visit from a classmate and some friends. While walking in Old Jaffa, they were approached by a number of residents who recognized that they were visitors and asked why they would come to Israel at such a difficult time.

They answered that love of the Jewish people brought them to share the message of the Gospel. Two people received Messiah as a result of this love in action. The Gospel Light shines forth, even in the darkest of times.

Shout It From the Rooftops!

Ken Alpren, who serves in Florida, recently shared, "Every once in a while, God grants us a salvation story that is so thrilling it needs to be shouted from the housetops!" Larry,* an



Accountant Needed in New York City

Are you an accountant or do you know someone who is? You could be the answer to our prayers! Chosen People Ministries is looking for an accountant at our New York City headquarters. We are praying for someone to be called of God to join us for a number of years—but we would also welcome a retired person with administrative or financial experience to help on a short-term basis. Call Carmella Simmons at 1-212-223-2252 if you or someone you know would like to serve the Lord through accounting skills.

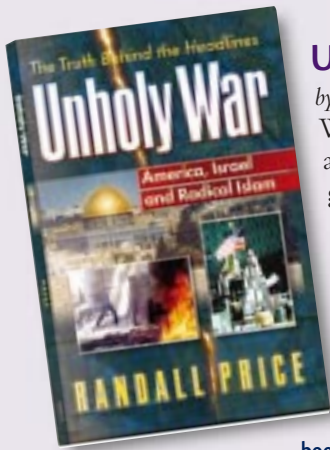


Orthodox Jewish man, attended services at our congregation with his wife. He vehemently denied that Jesus could be the Messiah. But Larry began reading the Scriptures daily, seeking the truth. Finally, before one service, Larry came racing up to Ken to say, "I did it! I asked Him into my life—on my grandson's birthday." Now, Larry is challenging his Jewish friends to read the Bible and urging them to trust the Messiah.

A Family Victory

As any Chosen People Ministries staff member will tell you, it is a heartfelt prayer to lead a family member to the Lord. Not long ago, one of our staff members had the blessing of leading his 51-year-old sister to the Messiah. Ron* had spoken to her many times in the past, but she was not receptive. However, a number of family troubles led her to ask Ron how he seemed to be able to handle it all. When Ron told her what the Lord has done in his life, she said, "I wish I had that!" That's when she prayed to receive the Lord.

*names have been changed



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by Randall Price

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