

The Chosen People



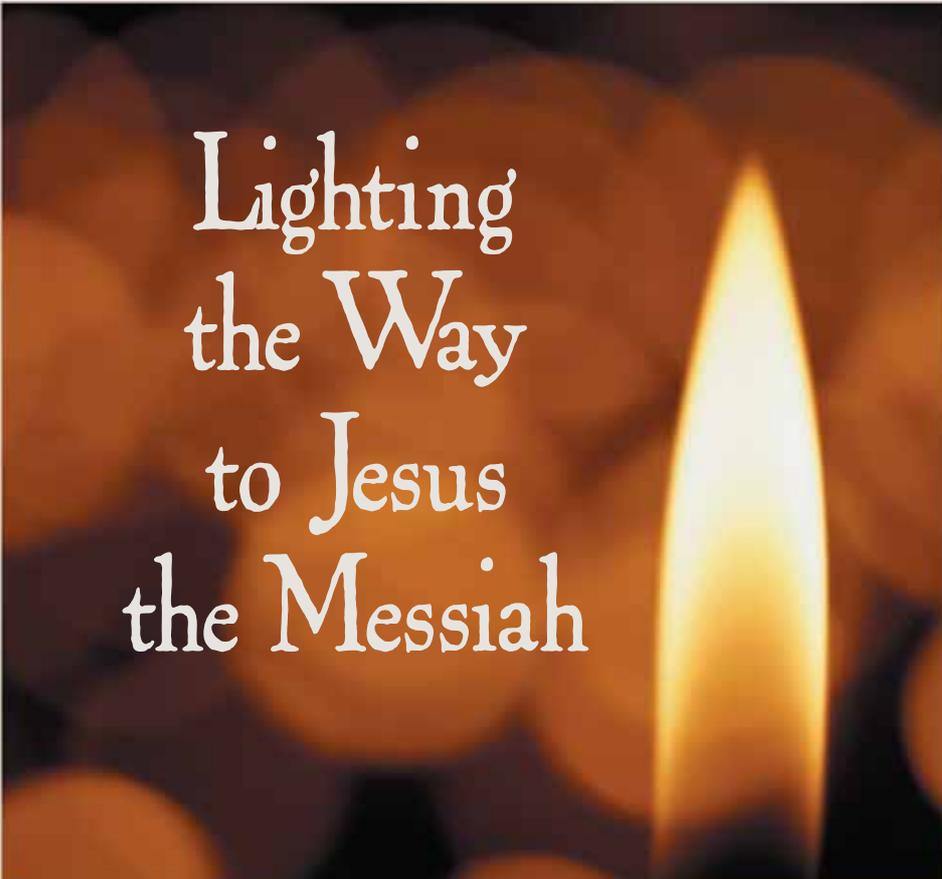
Volume XI, Issue 10 December 2005

Messiah: the Light of the World



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Lighting the Way to Jesus the Messiah

Dear friends in the Messiah,

Shalom and Happy Holidays! This is an unusual year, as Hanukkah and Christmas are being celebrated at virtually the same time! This makes for a very busy season!

I am often asked to try and tie Hanukkah and Christmas together, particularly when they come as close together as they do this year! However, this is not an easy task. For in reality, the two have less to do with each other than many people think.

It's true that there are similarities—at least on the surface. Both holidays provide for the giving of presents and are usually associated with family gatherings and lots of food! The theme of light is also associated with both holidays—and there is no place in the world like Brooklyn, my home, to see this in extraordinary display!

Unlike other communities, where you might have Christmas lights and

Hanukkah lights in homes side by side, Brooklyn is divided into neighborhoods—and you can really identify the community by the type of lights it displays. It is a sight to behold, and at times, I have thought (but not too seriously) about offering tours of Brooklyn during the holiday season!

But while there is a hope—especially among my Gentile brothers and sisters—that we can somehow link these two holidays, I assure you that from the Jewish perspective, it's not easy!

Hanukkah and the Jewish People

Most Jewish people growing up in our nation are never more aware of the differences between Jews and Christians than during this season of the year. This is because the Jewish people are a minority in a society that is dominated by the symbols of a non-Jewish culture. How well

I remember this yearly celebration in my family, growing up in New York. Hanukkah was a time when you stuck out your chest and stood an inch higher in your shoes as you lit the Hanukkah menorah, affirming your Jewish identity. Although we were a minority, we were proud to publicly “illuminate” the fact that we were Jews.

This sense of pride at Hanukkah—which I do not really think was a bad thing—was so intense that it caused me some grief. I always liked Christmas carols, and boy, did I ever feel guilty when I heard and enjoyed them! I did not understand in those growing-up years that the songs were about Jesus. Only when I began seeking the Lord did the words of many of the carols take on a new meaning for me. I enjoy them now and especially appreciate the many Messianic Christmas carols (in a minor key!) that have been written by creative Jewish believers. What a wonderful way to express our love for the Messiah!

The True Christmas-Hanukkah Connection

So, dear friend, what is the real connection between Christmas and Hanukkah—if there is one at all? That is simple. There are two very wonderful connections that I believe have solid biblical grounds for us to enjoy.

The only mention of Hanukkah in the Bible is in the New Testament. This passage is found in John chapter 10, as Jesus was walking on the portico of Solomon. It was during the winter, and John refers to the Festival as the Feast of Dedication. The Hebrew word Hanukkah means “dedication.” The name comes from the Hanukkah story, which was all about the rededication of the altar in the Temple after Antiochus

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Hanukkah:

The Eight-Day Party in Praise of God

*O Hanukkah, O Hanukkah
A festival of joy
A holiday, a jolly day
For every girl and boy*

*Spin the whirling dreidls
All week long
Eat the sizzling latkes
Sing a happy song*

Hanukkah! Even the most sophisticated, secular Jewish person cannot help feeling merry when Hanukkah rolls around. Who wouldn't? It's a celebration that combines the unique blend of history and faith that has sustained the Jewish people throughout the centuries. Plus, it's simply a ripping good story of an underdog standing up to a bully and teaching him a lesson.

Taking a Stand for the Lord

The bully in question was Antiochus IV—a descendent of Seleucus, Alexander the Great's general, who ruled over the region

that included Israel. Antiochus IV was a vicious and brutal despot and forbade the Jewish people from practicing their faith. He also desecrated the Temple by carrying out pagan sacrifices there.

The underdog was, of course, the Jewish people—led by the priestly family of Mattathias. His son, Judas, earned the nickname Maccabee—the Hammer—for he pounded the armies of Antiochus IV until they were soundly beaten. The recapture of Jerusalem and the rededication of the Temple in 164 BC was the triumphant moment that gave birth to Hanukkah—the Feast of Dedication.

As legend tells us, a single cruse of holy oil burned in the Temple for eight days until more could be procured. Each of the eight nights of Hanukkah, a candle is added until all eight candles of the *hanukkiah* (candleholder), plus the *shamash* (servant candle), burn brightly in the windows of Jewish homes throughout the world.

Celebrating Hanukkah

Hanukkah is celebrated beginning on the 25th of the Jewish month of Kislev—which just happens to fall on Christmas Day this year. But while Christians traditionally give gifts on Christmas, many Jewish people give gifts on all eight nights of Hanukkah!

Like most Jewish holidays, Hanukkah has its own special activities and foods. One of the most popular activities is spinning the *dreydl*, a tradition that originated in Germany. The *dreydl* is like a top with four sides. Each side has a Hebrew letter that together form an acronym for the Hanukkah proclamation, “A Great Miracle Happened Here” (or “There,” if you are outside of Israel).

You can spin the top and play for matchsticks—or else gold coins! Well, not really gold, perhaps, but chocolate coins covered in gold foil. You can't spend them in stores, but they sure taste good! Another tasty Hanukkah treat is *latkes*—fried potato pancakes. Eat them with applesauce or sour cream. Either way, they're delicious!

The candles of the menorah remind us that the Eternal Light of God pierces through every darkness. They also point us toward Jesus the Messiah who said, “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).

If we will accept Him, His light will burn brightly in us, making us beacons of His love, power and peace in this troubled world.

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Epiphanes had, according to Jewish tradition, desecrated the altar by sacrificing a pig.

The Maccabees, who defeated the Syrian Greeks, recaptured the Temple and cleansed and rededicated the altar. Actually, this story is mostly found in the Apocryphal book of I Maccabees in chapters 1-4.

There is another beautiful connection, however, between the festivals. For if the Maccabees had lost the battle, the Syrian Greeks would have turned the Jews into Greeks and the Jewish community would have lost its identity and ceased to exist. At least, that was Antiochus' plan!

However, because of the Jewish victory over Antiochus, the Jewish people survived. It would be less than two hundred years later that Jesus the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. In other words, if Antiochus had destroyed the Jews as he hoped, Jesus would have been born into a Greek-speaking, pagan family—or perhaps not born at all.

Let me put this another way: *without Hanukkah, there would be no Christmas*—not in the true sense of Messiah's being born of a Jewish virgin!

That, dear friend, is the deepest and most profound connection between the holidays. This connection speaks of a faithful and all-powerful God who loved us so much that He orchestrated the events of history so that, at the right moment in time, the Savior of the world, Yeshua, would be born in a Jewish home in Israel.

And so, with Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, we praise the Lord:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David . . .
(Luke 1:68-69).

Have a wonderful holiday season, and thank you so much for a year in which your mission to the Jewish people has witnessed some of the greatest achievements in our history. We now have a Messianic Center in Jerusalem . . . and one in Berlin as well, which I will tell you more about later. We have seen the numbers of Jewish believers grow in Israel and around the world and our staff is at an historic high point.

Through His faithfulness, He is using you and the Chosen People Ministries staff together to bring the Light of the World to His chosen people. Thank you for your steadfast partnership. We look forward to even greater days in the year ahead!

Your brother,

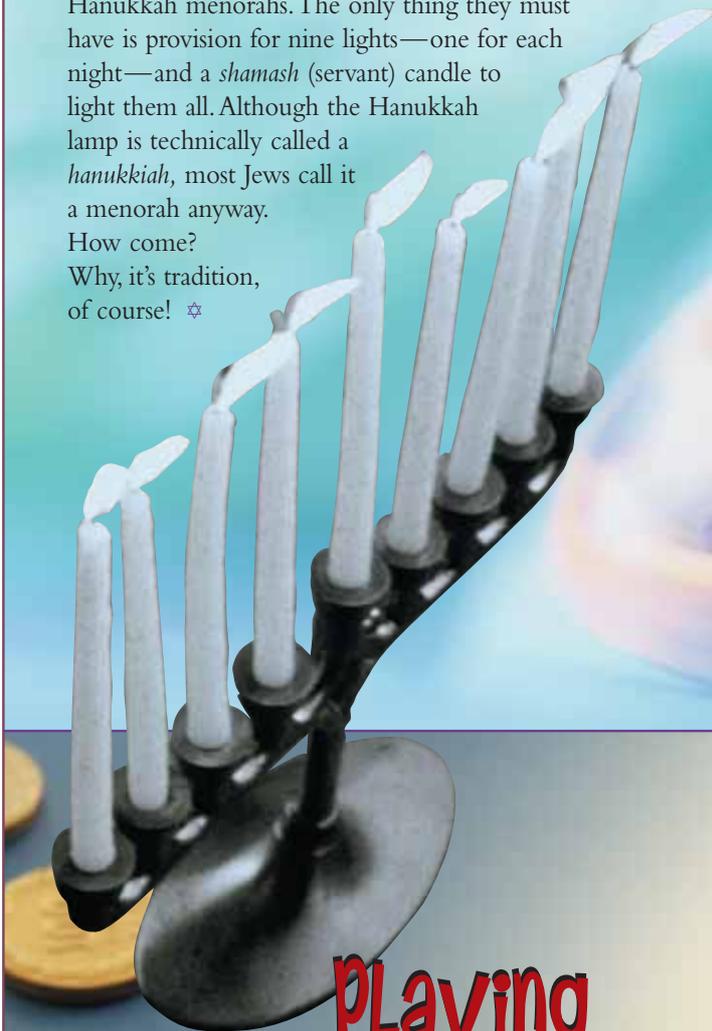
Mitch
Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

MENORAHS

They're large, they're small. They're made of metal, ceramic or even glass. They use candles, oil or electricity. They are stately, modernistic and everything in between. The Jewish creative impulse finds full expression with Hanukkah menorahs. The only thing they must have is provision for nine lights—one for each night—and a *shamash* (servant) candle to light them all. Although the Hanukkah lamp is technically called a *hanukkiah*, most Jews call it a menorah anyway. How come? Why, it's tradition, of course! ☆



Playing
With The Dreydl
— Give it a Whirl



Hanukkah

Traditional



Ha nu kkah, Ha nu kkah, hag ya feh kol kach, Ohr ha viv, mi sa viv, gil le ye led rach.



Ha nu kkah, Ha nu kkah, se vi von sov sov sov sov sov, sov sov sov, ma na im va tov!

Hanukkah, Hanukkah, a very lovely holiday,

Surrounded by beautiful light,

Joyful for little children,

Spin the dreydl, spin spin spin,

How wonderful and fun!

▶ Mitch and I just returned from the dedication of our new Jerusalem Messianic Center. At Hanukkah, you can smell these delicious, fresh Sufganiyot, or Hanukkah Jelly Donuts, from every bakery in Jerusalem. Why don't you try your hand at making a batch? They're not the healthiest, but it's a tradition at Hanukkah to eat something cooked in oil—and these deep-fried donuts certainly are! Go ahead and splurge! Just this once! And have a Happy Hanukkah!

Zhava



ZHAVA'S JERUSALEM SUFGANIYOT – (HANUKKAH DONUTS)

Ingredients:

3/4 c. water	1/4 cup orange juice
1/3 cup sugar	2 packets of yeast
1/3 cup margarine, melted	1/2 teaspoon salt
3 egg yolks	4 1/2 cups flour
oil for deep frying	1/3 cup jam or jelly

Instructions: Mix water, orange juice, sugar, and yeast. Leave alone for 15 minutes. Add the melted margarine to the mixture. Beat in salt and egg yolks. Add the flour and use your hands to mix to form a soft dough. Allow the dough to rise for 1 1/2 hours. Roll the dough about 1/4 inch thick and cut out circles (1 1/2 to 2 inches). Place on a greased cookie sheet about 2 inches apart. Let the dough circles rise for half an hour more. Deep fry in hot oil at 400° F for about 3 minutes, turning once. Pipe in the jam or jelly and roll in confectioner's sugar—and enjoy! ☆

Nun Gimmel Heh Shin stands for *Nes Gadol Hayah Sham*—"A Great Miracle Happened There." The Dreydl is a spinning top with one letter on each side. If you want to play, find a partner or two or three and divide up some chocolate Hanukkah coins.



The rules are: everyone puts in one coin. Then someone spins the dreydl, taking turns. If the dreydl shows *Nun* (נ), nothing changes. If it shows *Gimmel* (ג), the player takes the whole pot. If it comes up on *Heh* (ה), the spinner takes half of the pot; and if it shows *Shin* (ש), the spinner puts in a coin. Everyone adds a coin if the pot goes empty. Keep going until one player has all the coins. Then the winner divides up the chocolate coins again!



See the THROUGH JEWISH EYES Bible

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

CREATION AND CONSUMMATION – GENESIS AND REVELATION

This is the last in our series of articles on the Book of Revelation. As we look back at the magnificent sweep of God's salvation plan to reconcile Creation to Himself, we are struck

gathered together for a grand worship celebration (Revelation 4,5).

God presented Adam with one bride and conducted the first marriage ceremony. The final wedding ceremony between the Bride (God's redeemed people) and Groom (Messiah) will take place in Heaven (Revelation 19:7-9).

The Beginning and Lasting Destiny of the Hebrew People

Abraham and the Hebrew people are introduced in Genesis 12. Their history is recorded throughout the Old Testament and their future destiny is found in Revelation. The Hebrew tribes are identified in Revelation 7:4-8, and their names are inscribed on the city gates of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:12). What a marvelous future for Israel!

The Inauguration and Fulfillment of Redemption

One of the most precious of God's gifts to the Jewish people has been the Sabbath. Just as God "rested" after His labors on the seventh day of Creation, Revelation states that those who "die in the Lord" will rest from all their labors (Revelation 14:13).

But meanwhile, there is much that remains unresolved in our present age. Genesis 3:15 prophesies a conflict, a conqueror and a conquest. Messiah's heel would be bruised, but Satan's head would be crushed at Calvary. Revelation foretells the victory when the "trinity of hell" (Satan, Antichrist, and the False Prophet) are all tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10).

With Genesis 3:15 in mind, Paul pronounces the benediction to the Roman assembly: *"And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen"* (Romans 16:20). May all who are found in Him dwell in that same blessing. ✠

*Watch for the start of Dr. Goldberg's
new series on the life of
King David early next year.*

that it was set in place "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). In fact, a comparison of Genesis and Revelation presents us with an overview of God's program from creation to the consummation of the age.

The Old and New Worlds

The first work of God was the creation of the heavens and the earth in an actual six-day period (Genesis 2:1-2; Exodus 20:11). The new world (Revelation 21:1,2) will take a longer period of time and is now under construction by Messiah Jesus (John 14:2).

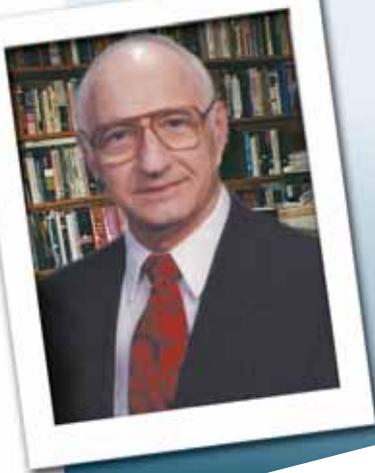
Moreover, Genesis presents us with Adam as the father of the human race (Genesis 1:26-2:25).

Messiah is the head of a redeemed, heavenly society (I Corinthians 15:47), where God is our heavenly Father (Revelation 21:7).

One man, Adam, introduced sin into this domain (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12). Through faith in Messiah, our sins are purged and we will enter a new, sinless society (Revelation 21:27; 22:15).

The First and Final Families

The beginning of family life is recorded in Genesis 4:1-15; in Matthew 12:50, Jesus stated that, "...whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." On this basis (Ephesians 3:15), we are the "sons of God" (I John 3:1). John sees all the redeemed of all the ages



NEW CONGREGATIONS ARE PLANTED IN EUROPE

We are excited to report on how our overseas ministries are growing. In Germany, a new work is being started in Frankfurt that should be officially open early next year. Avi Yampolsky, who directs the work in Russia, is in the process of planting two new Messianic congregations in cities outside of Moscow, in addition to the three that are already flourishing within Moscow! Alexander Sereda, who works in Ukraine, recently returned from an outreach trip to Donetsk, one of the largest cities in eastern Ukraine, where he hopes to plant a congregation soon. Please pray for the leaders of these new works, and for wisdom and blessing as we expand this evangelistic work.

JERUSALEM MESSIANIC CENTER UPDATE

Though the new Jerusalem Messianic Center was only dedicated last month, our workers have already begun new outreach projects, with exciting results. A seekers' Bible study has been meeting there regularly, with new people joining frequently and asking many questions about the Lord. In addition, there is a burgeoning "Video Club" which meets in a comfortable room at the Center to watch films of a spiritual nature in English, Russian or Hebrew. This sort of group has a strong appeal in Israel, and it's already clear that the discussions which take place after the films—not to mention the relationships that are cultivated in that sort of social setting—will provide ample opportunities to share the Gospel with Israelis. Please pray for the continued growth of these and other outreach efforts based out of the Center.

TURKEY, TORAH, AND THE TRUTH

Chosen People Ministries' staff worker in Phoenix has a fruitful ministry to retired people in her area. She's recently been attending a seniors' lunch hosted by the Jewish Community Center at a local synagogue. She said, "While most of the seniors engage in a lively bingo game following lunch, several gather at our table to ask questions about the Messiah, the end times, and eternal life! Our Bibles are open and our voices are not muffled!" Our staff member was initially invited to the lunches by Lilly and Isaac,* two new Jewish believers. Lilly is especially passionate about sharing her faith, telling her friends, "If you would only read your Bible!" Please pray for our staff worker, Lilly and Isaac as they share the Messiah with these Jewish senior citizens!

ANTI-MISSIONARIES STEP UP EFFORTS IN ISRAEL

Please continue to pray for persecuted believers in Israel. We recently received this unsettling report from Henry N., one of our longtime workers in the town of Ariel: "Recently, an anti-missionary organization here in Israel has been more active against us than usual. The anti-missionaries said horrible things in the Israeli newspapers about us, calling us 'spiritual fascists' who are preparing 'a spiritual Holocaust for the Jews.' Please pray for their spiritual transformation." In addition, we ask that you pray for the safety and spiritual encouragement of the struggling believers in the Holy Land.

GROWING MINISTRY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Michael Cohen, director of our Los Angeles branch, reported excitedly of his recent visit with Melvin,* an 84-year-old Jewish man who had been hospitalized.



Michael wrote, "During our time together, I read Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 to him. I explained to him the Jewishness of our faith in the Messiah and exhorted him to trust in Jesus. He said that he would and then repeated after me that he trusts Jesus. Please pray that the Lord will give him comfort. Also, pray that Melvin will continue to place his trust in Jesus." Michael has just founded a Messianic student group on a local university campus as well!

AUSTRALIANS ENJOY A JOYFUL WEEKEND

Chosen People Ministries' Australian partner, Celebrate Messiah, just hosted their annual national Messianic conference, Simcha (Joy). The conference was attended by 240 people, many of whom were "not yet" believers. The weekend served multiple purposes: discipling believers, encouraging families in their faith, and witnessing the truth of the Messiah to seeking Jewish people. Please pray especially for Lana,* a Russian Jewish woman who is suffering from a terrible case of cancer. She enjoyed Simcha very much, and proved to be quite open to the Gospel. Pray that she will find comfort in Yeshua.

*Names changed

Breaking News!

Did you know that the Katrina Relief Act will enable you to deduct 100% of your voluntary contributions made to any charity this year?

And all gifts postmarked on or before December 31, 2005 will be counted toward the 2005 tax year.

Your mission to the Jewish people will benefit so much from your year-end gift!

MORE HANUKKAH & CHRISTMAS ITEMS

Festivals of Light

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
item #4050 • price: \$19.95^{US}

Hanukkah Menorah

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, as a statement of your faith.

Hanukkah Menorah
item #5023 • price: \$33.95^{US}

In the U.S. call 800-333-4936. Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.
Please note: items will not arrive in time for this year's holidays.

See Israel through Jewish Eyes

Tours to Israel every March and November with those who have a love for the Word and a heart for the people.

Plan now to accompany Chosen People Ministries' Dr. Ben Alpert on the trip of a lifetime. While touring biblical sites, he will teach on our common Judeo-Christian heritage and the Messianic traditions among Jewish believers at the time of Jesus.

A friend from Washington summed up his experience on a recent "See Israel through Jewish Eyes" tour:

...to see the Land is truly life-changing. When you "see Israel through Jewish eyes," Scripture comes alive in a new and fresh way...it changes the way you read Biblical passages.

CALL 1-800-459-9402

for a full-color brochure, or
see a full itinerary when you visit us at
www.chosenpeople.com/tour

Simcha South 2006

A Messianic Celebration! February 4-6, 2006
Bradenton, Florida

This year's special speakers will be Dr. Mitch Glaser, Dr. Rich Freeman, and Dr. Ben Alpert

CALL 1-888-405-5874
for more details

Registration deadline January 10



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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Our Spanish website is www.pueblolegido.com. ©2005 Chosen People Ministries.

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