

# The Chosen People



Volume XIV, Issue 5 June 2008

## A Bright & Promising Future

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# The Messianic Movement

## A Bright and Promising Future

Dear friend,

Shalom from New York City, where I am writing to you from Chosen People Ministries' International Headquarters. We are in the midst of a very busy and exciting season of outreach. We have teams sharing the Gospel all over New York City this month. Dozens of young people are already in Israel on our short-term missions trips.

As we read the news and watch world events unfolding on our television screens, it is impossible not to compare what we see and hear with what is written in the Bible. We have witnessed the return of Jewish people to the Land of Israel. Clearly this fulfills, at least in part, the promises of God, proclaimed by the Jewish prophets, that the day would come when



the Jewish people who were scattered across the face of the earth would return to Zion.

The Scriptures teach that the Land of Israel was promised by covenant to the Jewish people. And when we see this land in Jewish hands, as we do on the 60th birthday of Israel's re-establishment as a nation, we are assured that the coming of the Lord is near.

How close? That is a mystery! But we would be prudent to take careful note of the signs of the times as we see prophecy unfold before our very eyes.

### Our Growing Messianic Movement

One of these signs is the growing number of Jewish people who are coming to know Jesus as their Savior. Sometimes this is known as the Messianic Jewish movement, as one of the most popular terms used for Jewish believers today is *Messianic Jew*. It is clear that this movement of Jewish people believing that Jesus is the Messiah is growing all across the globe—although we have a long way to go! I do not think that our movement includes more than 1% of the worldwide Jewish population of about 14 million.

But I believe that the remnant of Jewish people who have faith in Jesus the Messiah will grow as the day of His appearing draws closer.

Is it possible that we are seeing this prophecy coming to pass? I believe so! Let me explain.

### A Brief Look Back

When I became a Jewish believer in Jesus at age 19, there were less than a half-dozen Messianic congregations in the world. Now there are

[A synagogue in Berlin](#)

*The Chosen People*

hundreds. The Messianic Jewish movement is alive! We have Messianic versions of the Bible, commentaries and wonderful Messianic music. The network of alliances, multi-national fellowships, conferences, camps, publishing houses and other resources that have been developed through the gifts and commitment of so many Messianic Jewish believers is truly a blessing beyond description.

Last year, we held a conference in Germany where we invited Russian Jewish believers who were planting congregations to participate in what turned out to be an excellent training program. Representatives from almost 90 Russian-speaking congregations came to the conference—from Russia, the Ukraine, Israel, Canada, Australia, the United States and many other countries. The most remarkable thing was that not one of these congregations existed before 1989.

In Israel, we are witnesses to the doubling and tripling of the Messianic Jewish community in the Land. Today, there are more than a hundred congregations in Israel of every stripe—Hebrew-speaking, Amharic-speaking, Russian-speaking and also French- and Spanish-speaking. One day, they will all be speaking and conducting their services in Hebrew as their children become full members of Israeli national life. We do indeed have much for which to be grateful!

### **The Messianic Movement – A Bright and Promising Future**

We live in a very different day than we did a few decades ago. There are now many of us who are Jewish and believe in Jesus. We are in the midst of raising a new generation of

sons and daughters who affirm their Jewishness and also follow Yeshua (Jesus) as Messiah.

We are growing—in numbers, understanding, ability, scholarship, wisdom and in almost every conceivable area where dynamic movements tend to and need to grow. Who would have ever thought the Lord would be working in such power in the modern State of Israel? In my estimation, we are at the dawn of a

movement that will one day find its fulfillment as described by the Apostle Paul:

*For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins” (Rom. 11:25-27).*

I believe that the *Messianic congregations*—or to describe them in another way, the Jewish-Christian churches—that are growing across the globe are an exciting sign of the vitality of our modern Messianic movement. Therefore, although there is no doubt that most Jewish believers in Jesus come to faith through the witness of Gentile Christians and attend conventional churches, there is a growing need for Messianic congregations.

My wife and I have attended churches for most of our lives, and our daughters—who identify as Messianic Jews—were raised going to churches. Chosen People Ministries

intentionally plants Messianic congregations because we believe that Jewish people should have a choice. Messianic congregations are culturally comfortable places where Jewish people can worship the Lord and bring their non-believing Jewish family and friends.

This gives us options! Certainly many Jewish people will go to a church and find the Lord, but not every Jewish person who is open to the Gospel will feel comfortable in a church. So we plant Messianic congregations to give those Jewish people who prefer the comfort of a more “Jewish” environment the opportunity to hear the Gospel, be saved and then to grow in grace as part of a Jesus-focused Jewish community.

I know that you will learn a lot about Messianic congregations through the remainder of this issue of *The Chosen People* newsletter. We also have quite a bit of additional information posted on our website at [www.chosenpeople.com](http://www.chosenpeople.com).

### **Can You Introduce Us to Your Friends?**

We are hoping to send *The Chosen People* newsletter to many Christian friends who will pray for us and become more familiar with our ministry among the Jewish people. You can help us significantly by filling out the enclosed form and giving us the names of a few friends who you think would benefit from our publications. So please take a few moments as you read the newsletter and pray about supporting Chosen People Ministries in this way.

Enjoy the newsletter and keep looking up. Jesus is coming soon!

Your brother,

  
Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser  
President



This interview with congregational leaders Dr. Ben Alpert, Steve Fenchel and Lawrence Hirsch sheds light on the nature of Messianic congregations and the commitment of their leaders.

### *How did your congregation start?*

**Ben:** Our congregation started in July of 2002. We are in the second most populous Jewish area in the United States, and the Lord opened the door for Chosen People Ministries to establish the South Florida Messianic Center in Boynton Beach, which is the epicenter of the Jewish population here.

**Steve:** We started up almost four years ago. My wife, Carol, and I had been leading a Messianic congregation in New Mexico. The Lord directed us to Manhattan, where we planted a congregation that now meets just off Central Park West. It is a great location to reach the Jewish people of the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

**Lawrence:** My wife, Louise, and I began the ministry of Celebrate

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[www.chosenpeople.com](http://www.chosenpeople.com)  
 for more questions  
 and answers about  
 Messianic  
 congregations!



## What Is a Messianic Congregation?

The growth of the Messianic movement is one of the most compelling stories in the recent history of world missions. From a total of just a half-dozen Messianic congregations almost forty years ago, there are now over four hundred around the world, with over a hundred in Israel alone.

Messianic congregations are faith communities that stress the Jewish context of the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah. By utilizing features of the synagogue that are consistent with New Testament teaching, Messianic congregations provide a familiar environment for Jewish seekers. Messianic congregations often employ Jewish forms of worship, use Hebrew in their liturgy and stress the connection of Messiah to the Hebrew Scriptures.

At the very beginning of New Testament times, there were nothing but Messianic congregations. As the first Jewish followers of Jesus gathered

to worship and learn, they saw their new faith as a continuation of Jewish life. An illuminating snapshot of their practice is found in Acts 2:46-47: “*So continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*” The early believers practiced their faith as Jewish disciples of Messiah.

Although history and prejudice combined to obscure the Jewish roots of Christianity, Jewish followers of Jesus the Messiah have existed throughout the centuries. Today, the emergence of modern Messianic congregations owes much to them.

Chosen People Ministries has planted over two dozen Messianic congregations and has seen the Lord draw Jewish seekers through them to “*taste and see that the Lord is good*” (Psalm 34:8).

# Leaders' Perspectives

Messiah in February of 1995 with the clear vision of reaching Jewish people in Australia. We had already been working among Jewish people for five years in South Africa, where we had seen many Jewish people come to faith in Yeshua (Jesus).

*Tell us about the life of your congregation and its activities.*

**Steve:** Our congregation has a very full worship day, with a Bible study before our morning worship service. Our music style is very Jewish, with traditional Jewish songs and Messianic music. We have a message on the weekly Scripture reading, food and fellowship, and Hebrew language classes. There are also classes for children during the worship service, and we hold special events and services for the holidays.

**Lawrence:** We are strategically placed in the heart of the largest Jewish community in Australia. The congregation is made up of about 50% Jewish and 50% non-Jewish believers who meet together for services, home groups and different classes.

*How does your congregation do outreach?*

**Ben:** We like to partner with traditional churches for short-term ministry. We have an outreach called "Fun in the Son," where we do beach evangelism with a book table, engaging people in meaningful conversations. This season, we have been using the upcoming elections as a means to approach people with a survey, and we finish with a question about the Messiah. People down here in Florida just love to express their opinions.

**Steve:** We do a lot of outreach during holidays such as Purim, Hanukkah and Passover, mailing out thousands of invitations to attend events and services. Last year, we sponsored a debate between Rabbi Shmuley Boteach and



Messianic Jewish scholar Dr. Michael Brown. Over 600 people attended this event, and we followed up with those who had further questions about Jesus the Messiah. We also do occasional street ministry as a congregation.

*Why do you think Messianic congregations are important?*

**Steve:** Messianic congregations are a testimony and a reminder of how we began as believers in Messiah. They minister to Jewish seekers who may be uncomfortable in traditional church settings. Whether or not one is Jewish, familiarity with the Jewish context of the Scriptures is very important for a fuller understanding of Messiah's teachings.

**Lawrence:** A Messianic congregation provides the context and the community for Jewish believers to express their Jewish identity, bring up their children as Messianic Jews, be disciplined in their Jewish identity and also reach out to their Jewish family and friends.

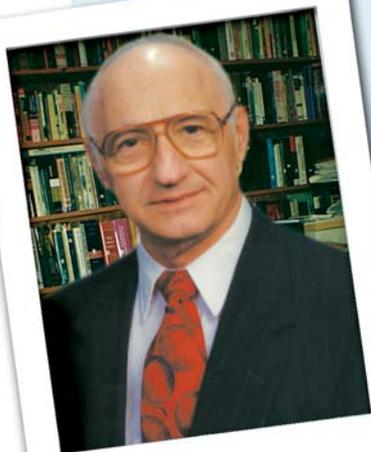
**Ben:** You can tell Jewish people that one can believe the Gospel and remain Jewish, but it makes a much more powerful statement to show that this is true. The Jewish character of the congregation's setting and fellowship make a world of difference. That is why presenting the Gospel in a culturally sensitive manner will help Jewish people to be more receptive to the message of Messiah.

# See the THROUGH JEWISH EYES Bible

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

## THE MIRACULOUS VIRGIN BIRTH OF THE KING-MESSIAH

(Matthew 1:18-25)



For the account of the birth of Yeshua (Jesus), we are dependent upon a good woman (Mary), a good man (Joseph), a faithful recorder (Matthew), the word of an angel and the Word of God, which reveals both the prediction and its literal fulfillment.

### **The Virgin Birth – A Fulfillment of Jewish Prophecy**

The characteristics of the King-Messiah may be gleaned from the Scriptures that bear witness to His mysterious nature. About Him it is written that He would be “the seed of the woman” (Gen. 3:15), “the son of man” (Dan. 7:13), “the Son of God” (Ps. 2:7), “the seed of Abraham” (Gen. 22:8) and the “the fruit of David’s body” (Ps. 132:11).

How in the world could one person embody all of these characteristics?

Wonder of wonders, Yeshua was both God (Jn. 1:1) and man (Jn. 1:14). He is both the “Son of man” (Ezk. 19:10) and the “Son of God” (Jn. 3:16). Christ Jesus is both perfect man and God Himself (see Col. 2:2; 4:3; I Tim. 3:16).

John the evangelist explains the supreme mystery of God the Father and of Messiah Jesus by saying, “...and the Word was with God...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:1, 14).

### **The Miraculous Birth of the King-Messiah – A Work of the Holy Spirit**

How can one be a “son of man” and yet have no human father? And how can He be the “seed of the woman” when the woman knew not a man? Here is the miracle of the ages, that King-

Messiah Jesus was “...conceived by God the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 1:20). The text asserts the personality and creative power of the Holy Spirit, the innocence of Mary and the legitimacy of Jesus’ birth.

Mary and Joseph were “betrothed” (Matt. 1:18), the equivalent of actual marriage, involving the taking of vows in the presence of witnesses. But Jesus was “born of the Holy Spirit” before the marriage was consummated by sexual relations (Matt. 1:16-18).

### **The Miraculous Birth of the King-Messiah Supported by the Hebrew Text**

The Hebrew word *almah* is used in Isaiah 7:14 to prophesy the virgin birth of Yeshua 700 years before it transpired. Unfortunately, some versions of Scripture, such as the Revised Standard Version, err by suggesting that the term *almah* may be translated “a young woman.”

There are only eight instances where *almah* is used in the Old Testament, and none indicate the legitimacy of such a translation (Gen. 24:43, 44; Ex. 2:8; Prov. 30:19; Song of Sol. 1:3 and 6-8; I Chron. 15:20; Isa. 7:14; 68:25). *Almah* was never used to describe a married woman in Hebrew or Ugaritic literature. Another Hebrew word, *bethulah*, had that latitude. Also, the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (200 BC), translates *almah* as *parthenos*, which always means virgin.

Moreover, the context of Isaiah 7:11-14 demands a sign of great magnitude—a sign that was indeed fulfilled through the virgin-born King-Messiah, Jesus. He is truly the sinless Son of God, come in the flesh to save sinners! ✨

## Holocaust Survivors Celebrate Passover at Jerusalem Messianic Center

Twenty Holocaust survivors celebrated the Passover with our staff at the Jerusalem Messianic Center. These precious souls were especially blessed to be together, as many of them live alone. The evening was wonderful, with songs, laughter and lots of food. It was the first time some of these folks had ever heard the Gospel. Our Israel team writes, "We were thrilled and honored to host them and pleased to hear that there were some who wanted to attend a Bible study or worship service. Please pray for these future gatherings and studies together!"



## "Messiah in the Passover" Wins a New Heart

Over the years, the "Messiah in the Passover" presentation has been one of the most potent messages for winning Jewish people to the Lord. But it is not only Jewish seekers who respond to this powerful teaching. Olivier Melnick relates, "I was blessed when I realized the universal power of the Passover message. As I retold the story of Jewish redemption from years of slavery, a young African-American man drew the connection between the message, his own people and himself—what Yeshua (Jesus) did for the children of Israel and the whole world. At the end of the service, he came forward without hesitation to receive the Lord. What a blessing it was!"

## Passover Seder Draws Seekers at Yale Club in Manhattan

The Passover celebration at the Yale Club in New York City is becoming a Chosen People Ministries tradition. This year, over 90 people shared a memorable evening of great food, fellowship and compelling teaching about the Jewish people and the Passover's fulfillment in Messiah. Laura Fels, who was instrumental in organizing this event, brought a Jewish guest who has been struggling in

her newfound faith. At the end of the evening she said, "Finally, what you have been telling me has come together—I don't have to choose between being Jewish and believing that Jesus is the Messiah." A number of Jewish seekers gave us their names for follow up.

## Landmark Ruling in Israel for Messianic Believers

The Israeli High Court of Justice has ruled that Messianic Jews are entitled to Israeli citizenship according to the Law of Return if their father is Jewish. This overturns 15 years of decisions by the State, which had consistently ruled against Messianic Jewish applications for citizenship. This is a major victory for members of the Messianic Jewish community who had petitioned the High Court for new immigrant status and citizenship because they were the offspring of fathers who were Jewish.

## Welcome Back, Roy Schwarcz



Chosen People Ministries is blessed to welcome Roy Schwarcz as Midwest Regional Director. We are grateful that Roy and his wife, Joanne, have rejoined Chosen People Ministries, where they previously served for 17 years. Roy was born in New York City and at the age of 13 he became Bar Mitzvah in the Orthodox tradition. After receiving the Lord in 1971, Roy graduated from Moody Bible Institute, majoring in Jewish Studies. He has been involved in Jewish ministries since 1975 as a pastor, Bible teacher, author and congregational planter. Roy also served for eight years as Pastor of Evangelism at Moody Church in Chicago. He presently leads a Messianic congregation in Evanston, Illinois. Roy and Joanne have four grown daughters. We are thrilled to have them back!



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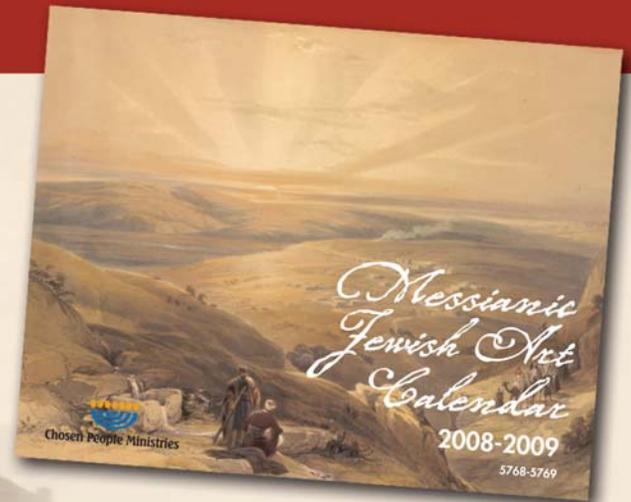
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# Messianic Jewish Art Calendar

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Order now to start the Jewish New Year with the Chosen People Ministries' Jewish Art Calendar. As the months unfold, your sense of wonder will be renewed as you reflect upon the beauty of the Land and the promises of God that are given through it—promises that are indeed fulfilled in the Messiah He has sent. These calendars make great gifts, especially for Jewish friends who need to hear about the Messiah.

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

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