Shana tova

ISRAEL: THE APPLE OF GOD’S EYE | YOM KIPPUR AND THE TEMPLE EXPLAINED | HEBREWS BIBLE STUDY
Dear Friend,

Shalom in His peace! We are still following up on the hundreds of contacts we received through our Shalom New York outreach this summer, during which more than 125 staff and volunteers shared the gospel in New York City. What a wonderful start to the fall season of new beginnings.

In fact, the Jewish community worldwide is getting ready to celebrate the Jewish New Year, known in Hebrew as Rosh Hashanah (literally, the “head of the year”). Our staff around the globe will have “High Holiday” services, where we will celebrate the holidays and, through the worship and messages, point to the One in whom we have new and everlasting life. Please pray especially for the many Jewish seekers who will be coming to our services, as there will be hundreds!

Thank you again for caring and praying!

We also continue to celebrate our 125th year of ministry among the Jewish people by looking back on our rich history to encourage us for the bright future God has prepared for Israel and the Jewish people (Romans 11:25ff). We continue to be inspired by the lasting legacy of Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg who came to faith through Chosen People Ministries—then known as the American Board of Missions to the Jews—in the early part of the 20th century. Dr. Feinberg went on to become the first dean of Talbot Theological Seminary and one of the finest Bible scholars of the modern era. In honor of Dr. Feinberg and our 125th anniversary, we are happy to reprint one of Dr. Feinberg’s articles on Israel.

One of our staff was reading through our archives and found this article from 1964. I enjoyed it so much, I wanted to share it with you!

Please continue to pray for Israel and the Jewish people, the apple of God’s eye, especially during this holiday season. I hope and pray you enjoy this newsletter, as we explore the Holy of Holies, which is central to the Day of Atonement just a few weeks away.

Happy New Year!
Your brother in Messiah,

Mitch

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

A SEASON OF NEW BEGINNINGS

Please pray for the many Jewish seekers who will be coming to our High Holiday services.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Israel, the Apple of God’s Eye

Zechariah was one of the prophets who lived after the Babylonian captivity in the time of the restoration of Israel to their own land. He had a message of spiritual importance for the remnant of God’s people who returned to Palestine [Israel]. He also warned those who were remaining in Babylon of the coming judgment upon all those nations who had afflicted God’s people, Israel. In the midst of this prophecy he stated that those who touch Israel, the Jew, touch the apple of God’s eye. Zechariah declared: “For thus says the LORD of hosts, After glory He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye” (2:8).

Why did God call Israel the apple of His eye?

This designation is a beautiful figure and picture of Israel because it speaks of, first, that which is so precious.
That Which Is So Precious
A man guards the apple of his eye because it is dear to him. It is considered by every man as one of his most precious possessions. The psalmist prayed to the Lord: “Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me in the shadow of Thy wings” (Psalm 17:8). No one is interested in bargaining away the apple of his eye, nor in exchanging it for some trifling object. God considers the Jew as His precious possession. God has set His love on Israel and they are very precious to Him. Moses told them in the wilderness: “The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 7:7–8).

Second, the apple of the eye indicates that which is so easily injured.

That Which Is So Easily Injured
It is not necessary to thrust a knife into the eye to cause excruciating agony and injure it. A splinter, an eyelash, a speck of dust, or a touch will bring real pain. We need to be exceedingly careful how we conduct ourselves toward the Jew. He may appear without protector, but any injury hurts the heart of God, as He has repeatedly stated in the Word of God.

Third, the apple of the eye is that which is impossible to repair.

That Which Is Impossible to Repair
Parts of the human body can be injured and mutilated, and yet some type of replacement can be made. Hands, feet, and bones in the body have been replaced by skillful surgeons, or so treated that they are still useful. But the pupil of the eye cannot be repaired once it is severely injured. Some injuries to Israel, God’s people, cannot be repaired. How can the slaughter of six million Jews in Europe ever be repaired? How can this multiplied injury be righted? Impossible! And to think that everyone who touched them—let alone cremated them—was touching the apple of God’s eye!

Fourth, the apple of the eye is that which allows the light to penetrate.

That Which Allows the Light to Penetrate
The pupil of the eye is the entrance through which the light rays from without penetrate to the retina so that we may see the objects before us. Israel is God’s entrance way for the light of His Word and His salvation to enter the world. One day Jesus the Messiah said to a Samaritan woman: “You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22). These words of the Messiah and Savior were in perfect accord with the declaration in Isaiah (43:10–12); “‘You are My witnesses,’ declares the LORD, ‘and My servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me. I, even I, am the Lord; and there is no savior besides Me. It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, and there was no strange god among you, so you are My witnesses; declares the LORD, ‘and I am God.’” This was the intention of God for Israel and still is.

Fifth, the apple of the eye is that which is so carefully protected.

That Which Is So Carefully Protected
Remarkable and abundant provision is made for the protection of the pupil of the eye, of which many people are unaware. The protection consists of: (1) the strong frontal bones (to guard against a blow); (2) the brow and eyelash (to protect against dust); (3) the lid (to guard against painful glare); and (4) the tear glands (to provide continuous cleansing). With Israel is the omnipotent power of God committed to protect them. The psalmist clearly recounts the protecting hand of God over His people:

He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac. Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan, as the portion of your inheritance,” when they were only a few men in number, very few, and strangers in it. And they wandered about from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people. He permitted no man to oppress them, and He reproved kings for their sakes: “Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm.” Psalm 105:8–15

Remember, God’s hand of protection is upon Israel as a nation, and He will not suffer them to cease as a people.

That Which Causes Intense Pain When Injured
When a man’s pupil has been injured, he feels intense pain. And this pain can be so great that he becomes sick. To injure Israel is to cause God intense pain. He says: “In all their affliction He was afflicted” (Isaiah 63:9). When Israel is mistreated, God reckons that His very name, His own excellence, is blasphemed (Isaiah 52:5).

We never dare to forget that he who touches Israel for ill will not go unpunished. Nations as well as individuals have proved the truth of this passage of Scripture. On the other hand, we must also remember that he who touches Israel for good, will not go unrewarded (Matthew 25:40). You, too, have something you must keep in mind. You must be willing to open your eyes to see the glory and the beauty of the Messiah or you will never be able to behold the glorious sight!
God commanded that once a year, on the tenth day of the Hebrew month Tishrei, Israel’s high priest was to enter the Most Holy Place—the Holy of Holies—and atone for the sins of the Jewish people. This day, called the Day of Atonement, or in Hebrew, Yom Kippur (literally the Day of Covering), was the most solemn day of the Hebrew calendar, and it remains the most sober and reflective holiday among Jewish people today.

The Lord gave Moses strict instructions for Aaron and succeeding high priests to follow regarding how to enter the holy place and how to perform the atoning sacrifices on the Day of Atonement. First, the high priest was required to ritually cleanse himself in water. Then he had to adorn himself with special linen vestments: a tunic, turban, undergarments, and sash around his waist (Leviticus 16:3–4).

After the high priest readied himself, he then filled an incense burner with coals so that smoke would rise and cover the Ark of the Covenant as he entered the holy place. The high priest was required to ritually cleanse himself in water. Then he had to adorn himself with special linen vestments: a tunic, turban, undergarments, and sash around his waist (Leviticus 16:3–4).

After the high priest readied himself, he then filled an incense burner with coals so that smoke would rise and cover the Ark of the Covenant as he entered the Holy of Holies (v. 13). No one was even permitted to be in the Tabernacle or Temple once the high priest entered this holy room (v. 17).

The first offering the Lord instructed the high priest to make in the holy place was a bull offering to atone for his sins and those of his family. The high priest would dip his finger in a bull’s blood, sprinkle it on the east side of the mercy seat (the Ark’s lid or cover), and then sprinkle it seven times in front of the mercy seat (vv. 11, 14).

After the bull offering, the high priest would cast lots between two goats, “one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat” (v. 8). The goat on which the “lot for the Lord” fell would then be offered as a sin offering for the people of Israel. He would sacrifice the goat on the altar, take its blood into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle it on and in front of the mercy seat, just as he did with the bull’s blood (v. 15).

After the sacrifices and sprinkling of the blood in the Holy of Holies, the high priest would exit the room and sprinkle more blood on the altar itself. He would sprinkle some of the bull’s blood and the goat’s blood “on the horns of the altar on all sides” seven times to cleanse it “from the impurities of the sons of Israel” (vv. 18, 19).

Last, the high priest would take the live scapegoat and place both his hands on the goat’s head, symbolically transferring Israel’s sins onto the goat. Someone would then take the goat into the wilderness and release it (vv. 20–22). According to Jewish tradition the one leading the goat into the wilderness would push the animal down a cliff emphasizing the role of the animal in removing the sins of the Jewish people.

All of this was done year after year on the Day of Atonement in the Holy of Holies to atone for Israel’s sins. These sacrifices provided a picture of the coming, once-for-all sacrifice of the Messiah, “for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). Praise the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that now “we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh” (vv. 19–20).

Forty years after Jesus’ death and resurrection, the Romans burned Jerusalem to the ground in AD 70, destroyed the Temple stone by stone, took its treasures, and captured the remaining Jewish survivors as slaves. Jesus predicted these events (Luke 19:41–44), which are etched in stone in the Arch of Titus at the Roman Forum next to the Colosseum.

Most of us are familiar with the Indiana Jones movie, Raiders of the Lost Ark, in which Harrison Ford makes haste to find the lost ark before the Nazis find it. While this makes for great entertainment, we do not know exactly what happened to all of the items from the Temple, and where they are now. As far as we know, the Ark of the Covenant was never recovered after the destruction of Solomon’s temple by the Babylonians in 587 BC. The rabbis disagree over whether it was taken away to Babylon or hidden to prevent capture. The spot in the Second Temple where the ark should have stood was marked by a single slab of stone, where the high priest would place the censer of incense once a year on the Day of Atonement.1 The haunting site would have reminded the High Priest that the words of Ezekiel the prophet had come to pass and the glory of God was removed because of the sins of His chosen people. (Ezekiel 10:18, 11:22)

According to Josephus, the menorah was touted as a spoil of war during the triumphal procession of Vespasian and Titus. The Arch of Titus in Rome depicts soldiers carrying the seven-branched golden menorah, as well as the gold trumpets, the fire pans for removing the ashes from the altar, and the table for the showbread. Afterwards, it was on show at the Temple of Peace in Rome and remained there until Rome was conquered in 455 by Vandal armies. The exact fate of the menorah after this is unknown. Some say that it was melted down into chunks of gold, others say that it was taken to Carthage, or that it sank in a shipwreck. More likely than not, the menorah was taken as a spoil of war again by the Vandal army during the conquest of Rome and taken to Carthage,2 and then to Constantinople in 533 by the Byzantine army.3 It is possible that the menorah was later sent back to Jerusalem but there is no record of this.4 Today, the whereabouts and final fate of the golden menorah are still unknown, as is the table for the showbread, and the altar of incense. The ark of the covenant, of course, has been a source of mystery, rumor, and legend since the destruction of the Temple. We do not know where it is!

There are several theories as to the exact spot where the Holy of Holies stood. All of them are, of course, on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

At the top of the Temple Mount today, there stand three structures. The most famous is the Dome of the Rock, with its large, golden dome, easily recognized from most of the photos of Jerusalem. Just to the south of it...
stands the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and just to the north a relatively small, octagonal cupola called the Dome of the Spirits, sometimes also referred to as the Dome of the Tablets.

The Temple Mount is “what is left of Herod’s enlarged temple platform, the masonry of which may best be seen in its Western Wall, the holiest place within Judaism since the Roman destruction of Herod’s temple.” Mount Zion is actually part of a ridge of hills. “The southernmost hill was conquered by David and called Zion, the city of David, and Ophel.” Clearly, “the evidence from both history and archaeology is conclusive for the Jewish Temple having existed on the Temple Mount.”

The Holy of Holies was the most sacred space in Jewish spiritual life. It was the innermost chamber of both the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple, both Solomon’s Temple and Herod’s. One theory suggests that the Holiest Place was built on the spot where the Dome of the Rock now sits. Others suggest the Holy of Holies is a little north of the spot where the Dome of the Spirits now stands.

According to another tradition, a mysterious sealed tunnel running below the Western Wall, is thought to be very close the site of the Holy of Holies, just to the north of Warren’s Gate. The area is now a place of prayer for women.

Yet, even though evidence for the precise site of the Holy of Holies remains inconclusive, we do know it must be close to the Temple Mount. Whether or not the Dome of the Rock would impede the rebuilding of the Temple is not clear. It would seem so.

What we do know for certain is that one day a Temple will be rebuilt, during times of great tribulation and the man of lawlessness will be revealed at that moment. As Paul writes:

“…the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4).

The search for the Holy of Holies will continue, but only God Himself knows the exact place where it stood. Yet, in due course the Temple will be rebuilt, with or without the Dome of the Rock still standing. At that future moment, it will be a sign of the times to the faithful and will be one of the signals of the Lord’s soon return to reign as Israel’s true and only King.

In light of this expectancy of the Shekinah’s return, the words uttered by the Apostle John about Jesus are stunning. The beloved Apostle of Yeshua wrote, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (1:14). The Greek term “dwelled” reflects the Hebrew word for “tabernacle”—more of a reference to the Tabernacle than the booths designed for the last Festival of the Jewish calendar. The tabernacle predated the Temple and was where the Shekinah glory dwelled with all the divine radiance. John viewed Jesus as the embodiment of the Shekinah and in fact was declaring that through Jesus the long-hoped-for Shekinah presence of God had returned!

Whereas previously Moses and the High Priests were the only ones who could approach the Shekinah, now through Yeshua, He could be approached by all. Yeshua’s incarnation allowed people to see, touch, and speak with God Himself. If the Shekinah indwelling the Tabernacle and the Temple was God’s way of bringing Heaven to Earth, how much more has this been accomplished through Jesus the Messiah. And further, He now indwells each one who received Him as their Savior and has now become an individual Temple for His Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16).

David tells us that the greatness of the Lord is unsearchable (Psalm 145:3) and His understanding beyond measure (Psalm 147:5). The God of Israel knows everything (omniscient) and is present everywhere (omnipresent) in ways we cannot fathom. How can we know a God who is beyond knowing? How can we comprehend a God who is beyond our physical senses?

To address this, God instructed the Israelites to construct a Tabernacle where He could dwell in their midst (Exodus 25:8). The Tabernacle was where God brought Heaven to Earth. This awe-inspiring feat overwhelmed the people of Israel as the glory filling the Tabernacle in the form of a cloud (Exodus 40:34–35), through which Moses could not pass. Even the priests were overwhelmed by the glory filling the Tabernacle (1 Kings 8:10–11).

At the heart of the Tabernacle was the Holy of Holies, which housed the Ark of the Covenant. Two golden cherubs (angels) stood atop the Ark’s cover, also called the mercy seat. From between those two cherubs, God spoke to Moses (Exodus 25:22; Numbers 7:89) and Aaron (Leviticus 16:2–3) to deliver His word and provide atonement in response to the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on the mercy seat.

The rabbis used the Hebrew verb literally translated, dwelling—sh-k-n—as their primary way of referring to this magnificent presence of God dwelling in the Temple. Through this Shekinah—the glorious presence of God, the Israelites received revelation, comfort, and experienced a palpable sense of His divine presence. One of the most poignant moments in the history of Israel described by the prophet Ezekiel was the step by step removal of the Shekinah’s presence from Solomon’s Temple (Ezekiel chapters 8-10). It never again resided in either the Temple rebuilt in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah or the far grander Temple built by King Herod. The leaders of Israel longed for the return of the Shekinah.

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Hebrews 12:12-17
OBLIGATIONS OF A MATURE BELIEVER

This study begins with an exhortation regarding the obligations of a mature believer in Hebrews 12:12: “Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble.” Since discipline from the Lord is intended to help believers to bear “the peaceful fruit of righteousness” (v. 11), the stronger, more mature believer has an obligation to help strengthen the weaker believer. This weaker believer would be someone who is struggling in their faith because of a constant barrage of difficult and harsh circumstances. The writer of Hebrews uses three illustrations of the human body as a means of helping us to understand how it is done. I believe this is a continuation of the thought in 12:1, to run the race with endurance.

The weaker believer is pictured as a marathon runner who is running out of gas and is barely able to stand, let alone run. In a race, “hands that are weak,” or “hands that hang down,” are an indicator that the runner is tired and about to give up. When we read, “knees that are feeble or tottering,” picture legs that are unable to run properly. It becomes the privilege as well as the obligation of the mature believer, the one “running the race with endurance,” to identify those that are weak, and impart some strength to them. And then, when making “straight paths,” the more mature one will enable the weaker one not to veer off course and drop out but rather to finish the race.

In Hebrews 12:14, the writer now deals with the mature believer’s obligation to himself. “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord is positional sanctification—that which all believers in Messiah receive upon salvation. One pursues that through practical sanctification, seeking to live holy lives in Messiah as He conforms us to the image of Himself.

Lastly, in verses 15–17, the writer sees three dangers that might challenge believers. The first is a failure to continue to grow toward maturity. There is a danger that a believer might become so preoccupied with negative situations and circumstances that he will not take refuge in God’s grace to enable him to endure the adversity. Therefore, that believer might face a second danger, that is, he may become embittered. That “root of bitterness” would not only affect the believer, it would very likely influence others to become bitter, as well.

Finally, this would likely lead to a third danger, best illustrated by the life of Esau. In order to satisfy his physical appetite, hunger, Esau voluntarily surrendered every privilege to which he was heir as a son. The physical gratification from the food he received from Jacob was very brief, whereas the benefits he would have received, had he held on to the promised blessings, would have been eternal. The decision he made to exchange God’s blessings for physical gratification determined Esau’s future. The comparison is that these Jewish believers who are being warned, like Esau, were willing to exchange incredible spiritual blessings of a mature faith in Messiah for physical gratification, in this case momentary relief from persecution and suffering. Just as Esau found no place for repentance, Isaac could not withdraw the blessing on Jacob and give the blessing to Esau. Immature believers who go back to the traditional Judaism of the day have been warned that they will lose blessings available to them in this life and rewards in the life to come.
A HOT SUMMER FOR MINISTRY IN GERMANY

“This summer is hot in Germany!” says staff member Vladimir. There have been many days with temperatures around 100 degrees (F). Since Germany is mostly not air-conditioned, it is really hot both inside and outside, with the exception of the air-conditioned car, making ministry travel much more enjoyable! This summer has also been “hot” ministry-wise. Vladimir gave us a quick rundown of a recent “week in the life” as an example. They arrive on Friday. Saturday includes preaching, leading a baptism service and counseling believers. Sunday is a writing day. Monday through Wednesday is a Christian leadership conference. On Thursday, there are meetings with the German administrative staff and potential new missionaries. Then on Friday the planning team meets to prepare for outreach in Croatia. In addition, his team hosted an open-air Messianic Jewish festival in central Germany. Some of the best worship teams and artists from the country came together for the second time to worship the Messiah together. The air was filled with praise and God’s glory was manifested powerfully during the two days of the festival. Many local people and others from around Germany attended the event and hearts were touched. Vladimir believes the festival impacted the whole of Germany and the staff members were greatly encouraged and strengthened—you should be too!

“A PASSOVER PROMISE” CONTINUES TO BLESS AN ISRAELI IN NEW ZEALAND

Our staff member Teresa reports, “Most of the time, as hosts, we never know what lasting impact we have with our travelers. We love them, feed them, pray for them, and send them on their way, often not knowing if anything we shared ‘took root.’” However, Teresa was recently encouraged by her co-laborer, Laura, who hosted Ori,” an Israeli guest that Teresa and her husband had recently hosted. Laura said to Teresa, “Ori’s visit was delightful! While I was cooking dinner one night, I had your CD on and the song Passover Promise was playing. Ori recognized the song and with great excitement said, ‘This is Teresa! This is my favorite song on her CD. I listen to it all day long in my car when I travel!!!’” Well, the back story is that Ori stayed with another host in Christchurch after he left Teresa’s home, and heard her CD while there. Ori then called Teresa and asked if he could come back and receive a copy. Teresa happily gave him a CD, and prayed for him as he left once again, but never knew what came of it... until she met Laura! What an encouragement it was to hear, months later, that Ori listened to (and loved) the words and message of the song Passover Promise—that Yeshua is our Passover Promise, our beloved Afikomen, and He alone sets us free!

You can listen to Teresa’s song at: https://teresathomasmusic.com/track/561453/passover-promise

COMMUNITY ART PROJECT PROMOTES PEACE IN ISRAEL

Recently Emily, one of our staff members, was serving in Israel. One of the highlights of her time there was visiting Livya*, a Jewish lady who lives on a moshav (community) next to the wall between Gaza and Israel. Livya told Emily what life was like living next to Gaza and how her family has experienced a lot of fear and trauma from the constant threat of rockets. To deal with the trauma, Livya decided to start an art project for the community. It is a mosaic that can be seen on both sides of the wall. It was created by thousands of people to promote peace. As Livya was showing Emily and her team around, they asked if they could lay hands on her and pray. To their surprise, she said yes. Livya asked what she needed to do, and Emily replied, “Just receive.” They prayed for her and her family and for her to know the truth of God’s love, praying in the name of Jesus.
To celebrate our 125th anniversary, we are praying for the Lord to move 125 people to include Chosen People Ministries in their wills or estate plans. What an impact this would have in reaching Jewish people for many generations to come!

Please join others and include Chosen People Ministries in your will during this special anniversary year. You can bequeath either:

1. a set amount, or
2. a percentage of your estate (this is a portion of the remainder after you have provided for the living expenses and healthcare arrangements for you or you and your spouse).

By making a provision in your will or estate plans for this historic mission this year, you can leave a lasting legacy of sharing Yeshua (Jesus) with the Jewish people. By God’s grace and through your participation in Legacy 125, our evangelistic programs will continue into the future. Make your mark through Legacy 125!

Please contact Cindy Forbes, Partnership Director, at 212-223-2252, extension 1208 or at cforbes@chosenpeople.com to learn more and to request a helpful Wills and Estates brochure. If you have already included Chosen People Ministries in your estate plans, please let us know so that we can thank you personally!

It is not too late to register for the November 13–15 Heritage Tour in New York City with Dr. Mitch Glaser. Go online to learn more and to register: chosenpeople.com/heritagetour

You are invited to join us on November 15, 2019 in New York City as we remember God’s faithfulness—125th Anniversary Gala celebration from 6:30 – 9:00 PM at The Grand Prospect Hall in Brooklyn.

Register by 10/15/19
chosenpeople.com/anniversarygala
For more info contact Liz Crawford:
212-223-2252
AnniversaryGala@chosenpeople.com

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