CHOSEN PEOPLE

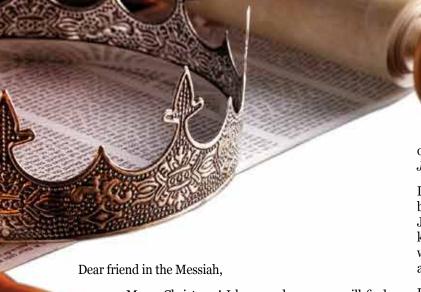


Volume XXVII, Issue 11

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but thou Bethlehem...

THE SON OF DAVID | THE INCARNATION: A ROADBLOCK TO JEWISH EVANGELISM | MICAH REVEALS THE PLACE OF MESSIAH'S BIRTH

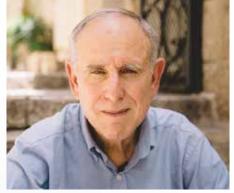


Merry Christmas! I hope and pray you will find this wonderful season of the year to be filled with the presence of the Lord.

How does a Jewish person come to faith in Jesus the Messiah? In my case, it was by discovering the ways Jesus fulfilled dozens of Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. Growing up in a Jewish

> home in New York City, I would have never imagined the Hebrew Scriptures pointed to Jesus. It would never have even occurred to me that such a thing was even possible!

Yet God can reach even the least likely person, in a most unlikely way. One day, I found a New Testament in a phone booth in the middle of the Redwood Forest in



FROM THE PRESIDENT. DR. MITCH GLASER

Northern California. I was nineteen years old and asked God earlier that day to show me the truth-especially if Jesus really was the promised Messiah. Two of my best friends had recently become believers, and during my efforts to talk them out of it, I became intensely interested in finding out if Jesus was the Messiah of Israel.

The Son of David

My favorite Bible hero growing up was King David. I admired David but never gave much thought of him as the great...great-grandfather of the Messiah. Though raised a modern Orthodox Jew, I was still very secular. I could read the Bible in Hebrew by the time I was ten years old, but I did not really know what I was reading!

I still remember reading the New Testament I found and was simply stunned by the first verse of the first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew: "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

Immediately, the New Testament, which I thought was a book for Gentiles, warmed my heart. When I read about Jesus' relationship to King David, I was encouraged to keep reading. Linking Old Testament prophecies with what I saw in the Gospels eventually helped me come to accept the Lord.

I cannot overstate the importance of this connection. It is essential to show Jewish people how Jesus fulfills the Messianic promises of the Hebrew Scriptures as they demonstrate that Jesus is the promised Messiah to a Jewish person who is sincerely seeking. Without the reassurance of this Jewish connection, even the most indifferent Jew will hesitate and turn away.

The Davidic Covenant

The covenant God made with my hero David, including the promise of the Messiah, has come to mean a lot to me over the years. It all hinges on that frequently misunderstood title, "Messiah." Let's unpack it a bit and trace the connection between David, Jesus, and the role of Messiah.

The writers of the New Testament clearly believed that the Old Testament spoke of a Messiah who would save Israel from her enemies. Not only that-they taught that Jesus is that Savior. He rescues all who believe in Him from sin and judgment!

"Messiah" and "Christ" are the same term. The Hebrew word Messiah literally means anointed and refers to the process of oil being poured over the heads of key leaders within the nation of Israel as a symbol of God's Spirit empowering them for their ministry. Christ, our English term, is derived from the Greek term christos, which is actually the Greek word for Messiah.

The Hebrew Scriptures describe three anointed offices in Israel: prophets, priests, and kings. In our understanding, the Messiah is the one who combines all three offices in one anointed person.

That is, the Messiah is God's prophet, priest, and king, and we proclaim that Jesus fulfilled each of these anointed offices. He spoke for God as His prophet, He is the high priest interceding for us, as well as the once-for-all sacrifice for sin, and He is also our king, both today and tomorrow.

We read in 2 Samuel 7:12–16 the following prophecy of King David's eternal kingdom described by Nathan the prophet,

When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.

Often, covenants in the Hebrew Scriptures are delivered as prophecies. For example, in Genesis 12:1–3, what is usually known as the Abrahamic Covenant, God promises that the patriarch and his descendants would become a nation, inherit a land, have a relationship with the God who chose them, and be a blessing to the world. It is a prophecy and also a covenant, and God is the one who makes sure these wonderful promises come to pass.

The promises in 2 Samuel are usually referred to as the Davidic Covenant. It is a prophecy and a covenant promising David a son who will be the future king of Israel and reign forever.

In the past, the Jewish people demanded a king, and God allowed them to anoint Saul as their first regent. Yet this choice came to the children of Israel without God's blessing. Israel failed in following their chosen king, and the king failed to lead his people. He disobeyed God's instructions regarding proper worship and lost his kingdom (1 Samuel 13:13–14).

God then chose a shepherd boy to be the king of Israel. Unqualified according to the standards of the world, He was nonetheless qualified in God's sight and was also from the promised royal tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10) and born in Bethlehem, the city of David.

God, speaking through the prophet Nathan, promised that the kingdom of David would endure in perpetuity! The Lord assures King David that his dynasty would last forever. Even if David's sons were disobedient, as was Solomon, the dynasty would still endure.

The Davidic Covenant falls into a category of covenants that are described as unconditional.

In Isaiah 9:6–7, we read about this coming Davidic King in majestic terms, spoken by the prophet Isaiah.

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His

shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

The predicted names of this child reveal that He would be God in the flesh. Only Jesus the God-Man and King could fulfill this prophecy; He is the ultimate and eternal Davidic king.

These prophecies came to pass and provide a powerful rationale for our faith.

As a Jewish believer, I could not believe Jesus is the Messiah unless I was convinced that all He did was consistent with what was predicted in the Hebrew Bible. I was . . . and still am, more than ever!

Our Message of Hope for the Jewish People

I am privileged to be the seventh president of Chosen People Ministries. Our Mission was founded in 1894 by a rabbi who left Hungary to find freedom on the golden shores of our great country. Leopold Cohn found far more than he expected. He found Jesus, who provides true freedom and joy. We want our Jewish people, family, and friends to find that same peace, so we will continue to proclaim His love for all—to the Jew first and also to the Gentile—until the Son of David returns to set up His throne.

But we cannot do this without you. We are partners in this ministry to the Jewish people. Whether we are reaching Jewish people in the United States, Israel, France, Argentina, or the other countries where we serve, our message is the same. He is the Messiah, the Anointed One, and when we place our trust in Him, we receive the glorious gift of eternal life.

Thank you for your prayers and generosity. Have a Merry Christmas, knowing that the promised Son of David has come and will come again to fulfill every last detail of the promise to King David.

Serving Him,

Mitch Glaser

THE INCARNATION:

A Roadblock in Jewish Evangelism

he Christmas holiday season, when we celebrate the coming of our Messiah, is an annual reminder of the nearness of God. He is a God who knows our innermost thoughts and whose presence is never far away (Psalm 139). God was physically near His people throughout the Old Testament, but it is ultimately through Messiah that the nearness of God has found its fulfillment; He is Immanuel, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

The Apostle John continued the theme of "God with us" when he wrote, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). This taking on of flesh is referred to as the *Incarnation.* The significance that the Son of God "took on flesh" is that He entered a fully human experience during His life on earth. The author of Hebrews wrote, "He had to be made like His brethren in all things," except without sin (Heb 2:17; 4:15). At the same time, we rejoice that "it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him" (Col 1:19). In a mysterious and awe-inspiring way, He remained the sovereign and all-powerful King of the universe while also living as a human with a human mind, body, and emotions. The Incarnation is truly the miracle of miracles!

The Incarnation: A Roadblock in Jewish Evangelism

Unfortunately, the Incarnation is a significant obstacle to faith in Jesus (Yeshua in Hebrew) for many of the Jewish people to whom we minister. Before ever considering the New Testament or even the prophecies about Yeshua in the Hebrew Scriptures, many Jewish people choose to look the other way because they believe that God cannot become a man. This is partly due to the teachings of the widely respected twelfth-century rabbi, Moses Maimonides, who asserted in his principles of Jewish faith that God has no physical form whatsoever. Followers of Jesus can agree that "God is spirit" (John 4:24), but that fact does not limit God from taking on human form. Thus, the divinity of Jesus is a pressing concern in Jewish evangelism, as many Jewish people resist the gospel due to their disbelief in the possibility of the Incarnation.

The Word made flesh, however, is not something we can stay silent about. The entire gospel message depends on Messiah's divine nature. Here are just a few examples.

To begin with, if Jesus is not God in the flesh, then we are still in our sins. The Pharisees knew that only God had the authority to forgive sin. They asked an insightful question of Jesus: "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2:7). Indeed, the Hebrew Scriptures assign the power of forgiveness to God alone (Exodus 34:7; Daniel 9:9). Thus, when Jesus told people that He had forgiven their sins (Mark 2:5; Luke 7:48), He was either truly God in the flesh, or the forgiveness of which He spoke was a lie.

Yeshua also made claims of divinity that were unmistakable to His Jewish audience. We see this most often when He was accused of blasphemy by His opponents in the crowd. He was almost stoned to death for proclaiming, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). awe-inspiring w The high priest also condemned Yeshua to death when He claimed to be the divine Son of Man spoken of in Daniel 7 (Mark 14:61-63).

If these claims were fraudulent and Jesus were just a mere man, then He was a liar who should not be trusted for anything about God. Even His miracles should be distrusted, as Moses warned Israel in Deuteronomy 13. If Jesus were a liar who blasphemed God by falsely claiming He was divine, then His miracles should be viewed as mere magic, as in the case of the wicked magicians of Pharaoh's court (Exodus 7:11-12).

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The stakes are high. Everything hangs on whether Jesus is the incarnate Son of God, especially in Jewish evangelism. If He is our incarnate Lord and King—as we believe—then His miracles are confirmations of His identity, His words are the words of God, and His forgiveness is the most precious thing we can obtain. How can we convey the truth of these things to our Jewish friends and family members? Here are a few suggestions.

God Can Perform Miracles beyond Our Comprehension

Maimonides was a great twelfth-century Spanish rabbi who helped shape the Jewish religion—even until today. He and his contemporary Jewish followers said that God cannot become a man, they were effectively "putting God in a box." Nowhere in Scripture do we read that God cannot appear in physical form. Instead, we are told to be more humble and open-ended concerning God's abilities and His very existence. The Lord



said, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9). Based on this and other verses like it, we should expect that some things about the infinite God will be beyond our grasp.

For example, in the Scriptures, we learn that God is present everywhere (Jeremiah 23:24; Psalm 139). We also read that God dwells far beyond the universe

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(1 Kings 8:27; Isaiah 66:1). God is described as being near and far away at the same time. How are these two concepts to be rationally understood together? The only

answer is that God's ability to exist in both ways simultaneously goes beyond the ability of human minds to comprehend. Nevertheless, we believe the mystery because the words of Scripture are true.

One of the ways we can dialogue uman mind, body, with Jewish people on this issue is to consider that, perhaps, the teachings they have heard about the Incarnation put limitations on an infinite God. Jesus is not just God (alone) and not just a man (alone); rather, in the same way that God is both near and far at the same time, which Jewish people almost universally accept, Jesus is both fully God and fully man at the same time. Therefore, the confusing mystery of the Incarnation in itself ought not be an automatic disqualifier. There may be a

God Has Shown Israel His Ability to Be in a Place and in a Physical Body

mysterious truth in the person of Jesus.

In the Exodus account, God shows up in physical locations and through physical forms. He shows up "in" a bush (Exod 3:2), "up" on Mount Sinai (Exod 19:3, 20), "in" a pillar of fire (Exod 14:24), and He is beheld by Moses as having a "form" (Numbers 12:8) and a "back" (Exod 33:23). These are astonishing accounts about God appearing in physical form, which Bible scholars call theophanies. Theophany is a Greek word roughly meaning an appearance of God.

How is this language possible if God is spirit? Maimonides and his followers have responded by interpreting every single one of those examples as allegorical and mystical language that should not be read literally. However, nowhere does the text of Scripture instruct readers to interpret these passages as anything but literal.

Instead, we should be open to reading these passages as positive evidence that God, even though He is spirit, has the mysterious ability to appear in physical form while yet remaining spirit. Each of these instances foreshadowed the miraculous moment when God would not just appear in physical form and then disappear—as in the Hebrew Scriptures-but rather would take on a whole human nature for our salvation. Our incarnate Messiah is the apex and fulfillment of these theophanies.

Jesus' Divinity Does Not Require That **God Ceases to Be Fully Divine**

Some Jewish people think that worshiping Jesus is idolatry because no one can be both God and man. We have illustrated that this is not the case. God did not cease to be God when He sent His Son to live among us. The Son of God remained omnipresent, omnipotent, and spiritual while also living as a finite and frail human being.

In telling Jewish friends about Jesus, we should always try and clarify that Jesus is not some mixture—half man, half God—nor did his Incarnation change the attributes of the infinite God. He is fully God, and fully man, living in a mysterious union. Once these things are correctly understood, our worship of Jesus can no longer be understood as idolatry.

O Come Let Us Adore Him!

Volumes have been written on the Jewish objections to Jesus being the Messiah. Our approach to sharing the gospel with the Jewish people must address each person's concerns. It is not practical to prove that Jesus is the Son of God if it is an impossibility in the mind of the Jewish person. However, if one can first be convinced that it is possible to be both God and man, both near and far, then the evidence becomes overwhelming that the person who took on those qualities is none other than Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel. This simple fact makes addressing the Incarnation foundational in proclaiming the good news of Messiah to God's chosen people.

Pray for Your Mission to the Jewish People as we share this life-changing message of God's nearness in our Messiah Yeshua. His Incarnation is Israel's hope and consolation and yours and mine as well!

The Place of Messiah's Birth: Micah 5:2-5a

As we focus on the birth of our Savior and Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) during this Christmas season, it is important to recall the number of significant prophecies that Yeshua fulfilled with His first advent. These prophecies give us answers to some critical questions about the Messiah.

Micah 5:2 answers the question of where the Messiah would be born. "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity." As land belonging to the tribe of Judah, Bethlehem Ephrathah was near Jerusalem. There was also a Bethlehem in the north, belonging to the tribe of Zebulon. By the time of Micah's prophecy in about 720 BC, the northern kingdom of Israel had been taken captive into Assyria, and Judah was about to go through the same turmoil.

Bethlehem, as the hometown of David, makes the familial connection with King David. Just as David was least among his brothers in terms of status, Bethlehem was the least honorable and one of the smallest towns in Judah. This prophecy tells us that what was possibly the most insignificant place in Judah would bring forth the most significant person for Israel, the promised Messiah. He is the One who would be ruler in Israel, the promised Son of David.

As Isaiah said in 9:6-7,

"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore."

Micah's messianic prophecy not only provided the birthplace of the Messiah, thus confirming His humanity, but it also asserts His deity. Micah wrote about one who would be born in Bethlehem, but "His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity." Jesus stepped out of eternity and entered human history; He was sent by the Father to die for the world's sins. But just as He is entirely God, He is also fully man, as He was born a human child in the town of Bethlehem. John wrote in His gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with

God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14).

Micah wrote that this Messiah King "will arise and shepherd [God's] flock" (Israel) in the Lord's "strength" and "majesty" and indeed in harmony with His character (Mic 5:4). Contrast this with the failure of Israel's leaders in Micah's day. Micah wrote about them in 3:1–3: They do not know justice and hate good and love evil. It is the pastoral role of Israel's Messiah-King to lead and care for His people. His greatness ultimately guarantees their security.

While this seems to focus on Yeshua's first and second coming, especially as it pertains to how the King would shepherd His flock, this passage in Micah is primarily about the Messiah's first coming. It answers the questions of how He would come, where He would come, and why He would come. He would be born fully human, born in Bethlehem Ephrathah in Judah. He would be fully God as His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.

Finally, Micah 5:5 says, "This One will be our peace." He would come to bring us peace with God, as He would die on that horrible Roman cross to pay the penalty for our sins. That ultimately is the message of the season. "For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).



Bethlehem Old Town

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MINISTRY NEWS BRIEFS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

RELATIONSHIP IS THE KEY THAT UNLOCKS THE DOOR TO THE GOSPEL

Recently, one of our staff members had dinner with a younger Israeli couple who are Messianic believers in Jesus. The couple also brought two of their family members who were not believers. Orel* and Yoel* (not their real names) knew that our staff member was a Messianic believer who worked for Chosen People Ministries. In fact, they had heard and talked a lot about religion with the believing members of their family. So, the conversation with our staff was nothing very new for them. They hit it off well, especially when Orel and Yoel found out that our staff member was Romanian because they love visiting Romania—they have been there three times. They could not stop talking about how wonderful the people, culture, and food of Romania are! Moreover, our staff member told them about taking Hebrew lessons through an organization in Tel Aviv, which led to a conversation in Hebrew. All this instantly connected them, of course, and it brought to mind how critical cultivating authentic relationships is for Jewish missions. Sometimes, there is a feeling that Jewish evangelism means rushing into sharing the gospel when, in fact, there is a right time for it. The right time comes on the heels of right relationship. In their case, what Orel and Yoel needed at that point was to interact and get to know other believers. Relationship opens doors to the gospel, allowing us to share our example with unbelievers—which is often harder than sharing the gospel message itself. Please pray for Orel and Yoel to meet their Messiah!



PRAY FOR A JEWISH MAN SEEKING ANSWERS **ABOUT JESUS**

Bennie* continues to join one of our weekly Jesus Bible studies led by a staff member in the Southwest (United States). Several weeks ago, after we discussed the feasts of the Lord, emphasizing their fulfillment in the Messiah, our staff member asked Bennie what he thought about Jesus. Without pausing, he blurted out, "I'll *never* believe in Jesus." When that staff member asked him what was standing in the way of his believing in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, Bennie became more embittered and shouted, "Why did all the Gentiles kill the Jews? Is it because they think we killed Jesus?" Our staff replied, "The persecution of the Jewish people was a travesty. Man's inhumanity to man was on display. Jesus came to die for our sins. Our sins put Jesus on the cross. Jesus' dying for man's sin was God's plan." No more outbursts. Bennie left smiling that day.

Bennie usually remained mostly guiet during our lessons, waiting until the end to release what has been on his mind. "Why are the Jews called 'chosen'? If you think Jews are the chosen people, what's in it for you? Why do you love the Jewish people?" The responses to Bennie revealed thankful hearts, explaining that the Messiah is Jewish, that God has given us His Word through the Jewish people, and God is using the Jewish people as His instrument of blessing for the world. Bennie thanked our staff for teaching him and assured them that he would return the following week. The next week, at the end of the Bible study, Bennie clutched a pamphlet in his hand. He released his fist revealing Billy Graham's Steps to Peace with God. "I would like you to explain this, and can you give me a write-up summarizing what you've been teaching?" One week passed. After the Bible study, our staff member handed Bennie the write-up with the testimony of a Jewish believer. When asked about the pamphlet, Bennie said, "It's in my walker compartment." As he reached for it, he conveyed that ultra-Orthodox Jewish men turned their backs on him in Israel. That story and Bennie's next words spoke volumes, "I hear of many Jewish people believing in Jesus." Another week is upon us, and please pray Bennie will hear more about Jesus with open ears.

A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR IN ISRAEL BECOMES **JEWISH BELIEVER**

The last two months have been very eventful. But one event became especially important. The Lord allowed our Israeli staff to organize a retreat for a group of Holocaust survivors. They spent four days together in the city of Haifa. These people were not yet believers, but many were open to the Word of God. In the morning and the evening, they gathered for fellowship and spiritual conversations. They read psalms and talked about King David and Jesus. One person did not like what was said about Jesus being the God of Israel. He began to swear and left the hall. Then, one of our staff members caught the eyes of Ezra*, an 86-year-old, who was sitting directly opposite him, and there was something unusual in Ezra's eyes. It resounded in our staff member's heart, leading him to write to his friends asking that they would pray with us for Ezra. Later that evening, as they were sitting outside, Ezra approached our staff and asked them to tell how they came to faith. As soon as they started talking, eight more people joined them around the table. For more than two hours, they talked about faith and how the Lord found them. In the end, Ezra opened his heart and accepted Jesus as his Savior. Hallelujah!

MESSIANIC



Based upon the biblical mandate to take the gospel "to the Jew first," this comprehensive resource looks at the historical, theological, and biblical context for Jewish evangelism, and provides encouragement for Christians and Messianic Jews engaged in this task.

To the Jew First includes contributions by Richard Averbeck, Craig Blaising, Walter

Kaiser, Richard Pratt, Jr., and ten other evangelical scholars.

To the Jew First • PRICE: \$12.95^{us}

We often find it difficult to share the gospel with those we do not know well or feel we do not understand. This manual, *How to Introduce your Jewish Friends to the Messiah,* will help you reach Jewish people with the message of salvation! A must read.



How to Introduce Your Jewish Friends to the Messiah • PRICE: \$9.95^{US}



Do you have questions about the meaning of life and spirituality? Maybe it is time to go right to the source and rethink your relationship with the Creator? *Isaiah 53 Explained* will help start your personal pilgrimage and introduce you to a chapter in the Scriptures that has the potential to revolutionize your life! *Isaiah 53 Explained* makes the story of the Bible

understandable, practically and simply explaining how you can have a soul-satisfying relationship with God and revealing the surprising key that makes this relationship possible. (Paperback)

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Order using the enclosed card or call 1-888-2-YESHUA in the U.S. For more resources, visit us online at store.chosenpeople.com.



Maximize Your Year-End Giving to SHARE THE MESSIAH!

Your support of Chosen People Ministries is crucial to sharing God's love and the promise of salvation with Jewish people around the world—

When you strategically plan your year-end giving, you can maximize the impact of your gift and get a great tax advantage, too. One great way to give ... an IRA distribution

- If you are age 70½ or older, you can transfer up to \$100,000 from your traditional individual retirement account (IRA) to a qualified charity, like Chosen People Ministries, without adding a penny to your taxable income—while receiving tax benefits that don't require you to itemize on your tax return!
- This is possible when you make the donation as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD)—with a direct transfer of the amount you choose from your IRA.
- If you are age 72 or older, this kind of gift also counts toward your required minimum distribution.

Consider these additional ways to maximize your year-end giving . . .

- Appreciated stocks or property: Donate appreciated stock or assets you have held for more than a year. You will receive a tax deduction for the value of the assets (up to 30% of your adjusted gross income), likely save on capital gains tax, and have more to give.
- The CARES Act allows for an additional "above-the-line" deduction for charitable gifts made in cash of up to \$300, or \$600 for married couples filing jointly. If you are not itemizing on your 2021 taxes, you can claim this deduction.
- Cash gift: Any generous donation you give—when dated and postmarked or given online by midnight December 31—will apply toward this year's taxes.

For answers to your questions regarding year-end giving options, contact Cindy Forbes at 212-223-2252, ext. 1208 or cforbes@chosenpeople.com today!



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