

The Chosen People

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO HANUKKAH

INSIDE: The Gospel According to Hanukkah • Messiah in
Prophecy • Hanukkah and the Destruction of the Temple



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO HANUKKAH

Shalom dear friend,

I remember the first time I read the New Testament like it was yesterday. I was attracted to the book—especially to the words of Jesus, but had sweaty palms as I turned each page.

You see, I was raised in a traditional Jewish home in New York City and though my family was not religious I was raised modern Orthodox. Everything I knew about Judaism was Orthodox and nobody needed to tell me that I should not read the New Testament. I cannot even begin to describe the guilt I felt in reading and enjoying the New Testament.

May I step back for a moment? I probably never would have even read from the New Testament—I was 19 years old at the time I encountered my first New Testament. And again, I would not have read it unless I had received it in a miraculous way. I was becoming interested in the message of Jesus, because the lives of my two best Jewish friends were transformed right before my eyes once they believed in Jesus.

They witnessed to me, but I resisted and tried to talk them out of it. I was trying to get them out of what I felt was probably some kind of weird cult. Instead they kept encouraging me to read “my Bible”—what is commonly called the Old Testament. As you probably know, Jewish people do not call the Bible the Old Testament—even though we do not read the New—because, in the Jewish mind, there is no New Testament! That’s the book that Christians read—not the book that Jews follow.

I loved what I was reading in the Old Testament and found myself wanting a relationship with God that was personal, intimate and even supernatural, just like Abraham, Moses and King David experienced. I had never noticed that what made these forefathers of mine so great was their relationship with God.

Weeks and months passed and I became more and more interested in knowing more about the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I just did not want to believe in Jesus, because I would have to tell my family and I knew that I would be rejected.

One day I just could not take it anymore, and I prayed my first spontaneous prayer (Jewish people usually pray in Hebrew and follow written prayers). I asked God, “If you are real, please show me and show me how to get you.”

That night, believe it or not, I found a copy of *Good News for Modern Man*—a modern English version of the New Testament—in a phone booth in the middle of a campground in the redwood forest where I was working at

the time! I began reading the New Testament and fell in love with Jesus. He was the smartest person I had ever met—He knew how to answer people and was nobody’s fool. What really struck me was how Jewish He was!

I soon found myself wrestling with Jesus the Jew rather than Jesus the Gentile and I began to be attracted to the very person that the Jewish people mistakenly thought had inspired antisemitism and hatred of the Jewish people. I just could not figure out how a Jewish person would have inspired antisemitism. Of course He didn’t, but like most Jewish people I really didn’t know a lot about Jesus.

The more I read in the New Testament the more I understood that He was Jewish, celebrated the Jewish holidays and held the answers I was seeking. I finally came to the point where His words brought peace to my heart.

Finally, I accepted Jesus as Messiah and Lord in November 1970. The first holiday I celebrated was Thanksgiving, and that was really wonderful.

Soon after, I came upon a dilemma because both Hanukkah and Christmas were approaching. Some of my new Christian friends thought that I would really enjoy celebrating Christmas and of course I was raised in Jewish New York and we celebrated Hanukkah, almost as a protest holiday to the majority who celebrated Christmas. I loved Jesus, but I was not yet comfortable with the holidays usually associated with Him, as I was not raised that way.

Someone pointed out to me that Jesus celebrated Hanukkah. I think at that point I was still trying to figure out when and how Jesus celebrated Christmas. I was a little slow and it took me awhile to get the point! But I was very intrigued by His celebrating Hanukkah.

In fact, the only time Hanukkah is mentioned in the Bible is in the New Testament. It is not mentioned in any of the Hebrew Scriptures. After reading

John 10 and studying the passage, I finally understood that the Gospel and Hanukkah were intertwined...it was really the Gospel according to Hanukkah!

One of the greatest statements Jesus ever made about Himself was during the feast of Hanukkah. As you will read in this newsletter, Hanukkah is a post-Old Testament holiday that developed during the centuries immediately prior to Jesus’ birth.

I believe that Hanukkah is all about the Gospel. Please take a moment and read this text!



At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, “How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them,

and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand (Jn. 10:22-29).

The above statement is simply incredible! To think that the Messiah said this during the great festival of Hanukkah is astounding to me, having grown up in a Jewish home. But Yeshua did not stop there as He continued to infuse new meaning to the traditional festival of lights and redemption by showing the linkage between Himself and the Father.

The Apostle John records Jesus saying,

I and the Father are one (Jn. 10:30).

Believe me, the Jewish people of the day knew exactly what He was saying and His statement was not well received!

Look at what happens next,

The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him (Jn. 10:31).

The idea that a man would claim to be God is understandably offensive to the Jewish people who are taught that God cannot take on human form. I was taught this as well growing up in a Jewish home. And ordinarily this would be true. But, this perfect man would be the Messiah who died for our sins.

Dear friend, this is the Gospel according to Hanukkah. God sent His only Son as His greatest gift to you and me—better than any Christmas or Hanukkah present by far! And through this divine Messiah we have true spiritual freedom that will endure forever.

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah—May the Lord fill your home with His light and joy.

Your brother in the Messiah,


Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President



WHO IS THE MESSIAH IN PROPHECY?

Messiah Would Be Born in Bethlehem

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 (Micah 5:2).

Bethlehem Ephrathah was in the territory of the tribe of Judah, five miles south of Jerusalem (Ruth 1:2). There was another Bethlehem just northwest of Nazareth, but the birthplace of the King was to be Bethlehem of Judah—and so it was (Mt. 2:1 and Lk. 2:4-7). It is clear that the Jews knew that the Messiah could not come from Nazareth, but that He would come from Bethlehem, the city of David (Jn. 7:42).

The One born there was to be Ruler in Israel. When Pontius Pilate asked Yeshua if He was the King of the Jews, He affirmed the title (Lk. 23:3). But just claiming to be an earthly king alone would not qualify Yeshua as the Messiah, for the Messiah must be from everlasting (literally, from “days of eternity”). When Yeshua declared that “before Abraham was, I AM” (Jn. 8:58), the Jewish people understood Him to be saying that He was from eternity. By His statement “I AM” (not “I was”) He identified Himself with the God of Israel, who also called Himself “I AM” (Ex. 3:14).

The Redeemer Would Be Born of a Woman

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel (Gen. 3:15).

This prophecy is the first Messianic prophecy in the Bible. God Himself speaks to the serpent, Satan, who had successfully tempted Eve into disobeying Him. In prophesying the ultimate demise of Satan, God said that the woman would bring forth a seed (a descendant) that would be at enmity with Satan. In addition to Galatians 4:4, the narratives concerning Yeshua’s birth give ample evidence that He was born to Miriam

(Mary), the wife of Joseph of Nazareth.

As to enmity with Satan, the most notable of the confrontations between Satan and Yeshua occurred in the wilderness at the beginning of Yeshua’s ministry (Lk. 4:1-12). Their enmity resulted in the death of the Messiah, but just as Genesis 3:15 predicted, Messiah’s wounding was not a final wound, since He rose from the dead—as He Himself predicted (Mt. 27:63).

Finally, the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 is fulfilled in the ultimate destruction of Satan and his works by Yeshua. Revelation 20:10 depicts the final victory of Yeshua, the Seed of the woman, over the serpent.

Son of Abraham and Blessing to the Nations

Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).

“...just as the scriptures foretold.. .”

It is obvious from the Old Testament that God chose Abraham to begin a heritage that would ultimately be a blessing, not only to Israel, but to the entire earth. Specifically, we know from Isaiah 42:1-8 that the way in which God would bless the Gentile nations of the earth was through His servant, the Messiah. Therefore, whoever claimed to be the Messiah of Israel must be one who was descended from Abraham, and whose ministry included not only the nation of Israel, but the Gentiles as well.

Matthew clearly records in the genealogy of Yeshua that He is a descendant of Abraham. Yeshua obviously ministered to Jewish people during His earthly life, but also to Gentiles (Mt. 15:21-28; 8:5-13). He sent out 70 of His followers to preach the Gospel, a number that many believe parallels the list of nations in Genesis 10. Finally, when Yeshua called Saul of Tarsus to be an apostle, His specific commission to Saul (or as he was known in the Roman world, “Paul”) was to “bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:5,15).

The Lion from the Tribe of Judah

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples (Gen. 49:10).

From the first prophecy given to Abraham, the line of promise progressed through Isaac and then through Isaac's son, Jacob. On his deathbed, Jacob prophesied over his twelve sons, telling them what would happen to them in days to come (Gen. 49:1).

Jacob predicted that the descendants of Judah would be the tribe through whom kingship will pass. Therefore, the Messiah must be a descendant of Judah, which He was, as the New Testament affirms (Mt. 1:2-3,16; Lk. 3:33).

The Messiah Would Be Born of a Jewish Virgin

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel (Is. 7:14).

This passage, which should be carefully studied in context, is a direct prophecy of the virgin birth of the Messiah (Lk. 1:26-27). The translators of the Jewish Bible use the word “young woman” instead of “virgin”—but culturally, the Hebrew word *almah* almost always referred to an unmarried young woman, which in Isaiah's day implied virginity. In addition, the authors of the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testament completed before Yeshua's birth, translated this word as “virgin,” which was its meaning in biblical Hebrew. Given the very explicit reference to this verse by Matthew (1:22-23), there can be no question that Miriam, the virgin mother of Yeshua, unquestionably fulfilled this prophecy about the birth of Messiah.

A Son of David

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 (2 Sam. 7:12-13).

This prophecy, spoken to David, traces the Messianic line to one of his descendants. It refers in part to David's son, King Solomon, but there is a Messianic fulfillment beyond Solomon. Messiah would have to be a person from the tribe of Judah and from the House of David. This perpetual dynasty of the House of David—and Yeshua's fulfillment of these promises—is one of the best-attested Messianic relationships in all of the Bible (Ps. 89:30-38; Isa. 9:1-7; Mt. 1:1; Lk. 1:31-33, 69; Acts 2:30; 13:23; Rom. 1:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 3:7; 22:16).

The Messiah Would Be God in the Flesh

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 (Is. 9:6-7).

These all-important names given to Messiah in Isaiah 9 reveal His deity. Traditional Judaism does not teach that Messiah will be God, but this idea is clearly presented in the Hebrew Scriptures. The four names given to Messiah in Isaiah 9 bring us to the conclusion that this eternal ruler is God Himself. In fact, many Jewish versions of the Bible do not even translate the names, but rather transliterate them so that their meaning is not obviously seen!

If these references to the Mighty God and Everlasting Father are not enough to demonstrate that Messiah is God, John tells us that Yeshua is God who became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:1). Having already established that Yeshua is the descendant of Abraham and David, it is easy to see that this One who is Wonderful Counselor and the Prince of Peace is Yeshua, from Isaiah's words in Isaiah 11:1-5. There, the “stump of Jesse” (David's father) is said to possess wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, justice and righteousness.

Who else but Jesus could have fulfilled all of these prophecies? He is the Jewish Messiah for all and God's greatest gift of love for mankind. As the first verse of the New Testament claims:

The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Mt. 1:1).

HANUKKAH AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

IMAGINE THE SCENE:

The blasphemous king ascends the steps of the Temple in Jerusalem. He has conquered the nation of Israel and now wants to eradicate the Jews by eradicating Judaism. The king enters the Temple, declares himself to be God manifest on earth, and then sacrifices a pig upon the holy altar. He follows up this abominable act by requiring every Jew to present copies of the Bible for burning.

If you are thinking that this is describing the coming of the antichrist, you are only partially correct. The king is actually Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a pagan king who conquered Israel in the 2nd century BC. He desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem and used his full political force to destroy the Jewishness of the Jewish people. None of this took God by surprise; in fact, it was actually prophesied by the prophet Daniel hundreds of years before. Daniel 11:31 speaks of a coming king who would set up an “abomination of desolation” in the Temple and would do blasphemous things, and most interpreters agree that this is a reference to Antiochus.

But this section of Daniel is often confusing to believers. Many of the things in chapters 11 and 12 were not accomplished during the reign of Antiochus, not least of all the tribulation and the resurrection of the dead! In addition to this, there are several other references in Daniel that refer to the “abomination of desolation”

(Dan. 9:27, 12:11, cf. 8:13) without a clear picture of how they match up. How can all of this refer to Antiochus?

The Jewish authors of 1 Maccabees (in the *Apocrypha*—biblical writings not part of the accepted canon of Scripture) believed that Antiochus’ actions in the Temple were the “abomination of desolation” prophesied by Daniel (1 Mac. 1:54). This act of sacrilege left the Temple defiled, requiring that the Temple be purified and rededicated to God. After God enabled the Jewish people to defeat Antiochus, they purified the Temple and decided to enact a new celebration to remember the Temple’s restoration: The Feast of Dedication, as it is called in John 10:22, or Hanukkah, as it is called today.

Yet, as we should expect from the Lord, Yeshua takes the common Jewish understanding of Daniel in a whole new direction. He refers to the “abomination of desolation” several times (Mt. 24:15, Mk. 13:14, cf. Lk. 21:20), but always speaks of it in the future tense. Instead of referring the phrase *back* to Antiochus, Yeshua has His listeners look

ahead. One day, a king even greater, and even worse, than Antiochus will stand in the Temple of God—the antichrist. Yeshua does not deny that Daniel 11:31 refers to Antiochus; rather, for Yeshua, Antiochus is merely a foreshadowing, or a type, of the greatest enemy of God’s people.

This should not be a cause for despair, especially during this Hanukkah season. The sovereign hand of God enabled the Jewish people to rise up and defeat Antiochus, and we celebrate Hanukkah still to this day because of it. Think of it—thousands of years later, and still we celebrate! How much *more* will we celebrate when God brings His great and awesome deliverance from the antichrist through His Messiah? That battle will be over before it begins (2 Thes. 2).

If Antiochus is merely a foreshadowing of the antichrist, then the joy of Hanukkah is a foreshadowing of Yeshua returning and bringing the full deliverance of His kingdom! During this holiday season, *that* is something to look forward to!

REACHING ISRAELI BACKPACKERS IN ARGENTINA

For the next six months, our worker Steven A. will be serving at a guesthouse ministry in Bariloche, Argentina. This guesthouse is only open from November to May and many backpackers will hear the Gospel. Please pray for Steven and his ministry. Typically, these backpackers are very open to discussing spiritual issues. Pray that this guesthouse will be seen as a safe place to discuss religion, God, and of course, Jesus the Messiah.



PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALING IN GERMANY

Vladimir Pikman, who leads the Chosen People Ministries Messianic congregation in Germany, reported that a Jewish member of the congregation became seriously ill and fell into a coma with the expectation that she would soon die. Her daughter, Ilena,* came from California to say goodbye to her. The mother was praying for Ilena and had been sharing the Gospel with her for a number of years, but Ilena was not interested. Because of the circumstances of her mother's illness, Ilena decided to attend the Yom Kippur services at the congregation.

While the congregation was praying and worshipping, the Spirit of God touched Ilena's heart, and she decided to pray. God instantly responded to her, filling her soul with joy, light, love, and the understanding that she is forgiven! She could not stop talking about new life with Yeshua! And, at that very moment as the congregation prayed with her for her mother at the service, her mother opened her eyes and woke up from the coma! She left the critical care unit and was taken to a regular room. The doctors could not believe what they saw—but we can!

ISAIAH 53 CONTINUES TO MAKE AN IMPACT

Ben Alpert, who serves in South Florida, was blessed with a special time of outreach by attending “Jewish Heritage Day” at the Miami Marlins baseball game. Because the game was against the New York Mets, there were thousands of Jewish people from New York in attendance. Many of them were taking pictures of Ben and his group with their Isaiah 53 t-shirts on and visiting Isaiah53.com on their smart phones. They had several great conversations and were even invited to afternoon prayer by a group of Orthodox Jewish men. Please pray for the seeds that were planted as a result of this outreach.

ISRAELI JOURNALIST EXPERIENCES THE LOVE OF CHRISTIANS

Scott Brown shares an encouraging story from New Zealand and the work at the Zula Lodge: “God’s blessings continue to overflow in our backpacking ministry. Eitan,* an Israeli journalist, was so moved by the free accommodation and loving hospitality that he experienced that he is writing an article about the Zula Lodge. He asked me dozens of questions about my faith as a Jewish believer in Jesus, which gives evidence of his own seeking heart.

Eitan was particularly moved by the love of the Christians in New Zealand. He wrote in his article:

“As an Israeli, I was very surprised to see the amazing love and support I was given by the [Christians in NZ who host Israelis in their homes]. It was incredible to see that in the place which is the furthest away from Israel—the other side of the world, literally!—we are so loved,



while in other Christian countries, such as in Europe, we are not treated in a similar way, and sometimes even treated in the opposite way! How do you explain the fact that in New Zealand [there are so many] Israeli-loving Christians?”

Eitan is one of many thousands of Israelis whom God is touching in the uttermost parts of the earth. Pray for him that he finds Messiah Jesus.”

*names changed

BIBLE CONFERENCE

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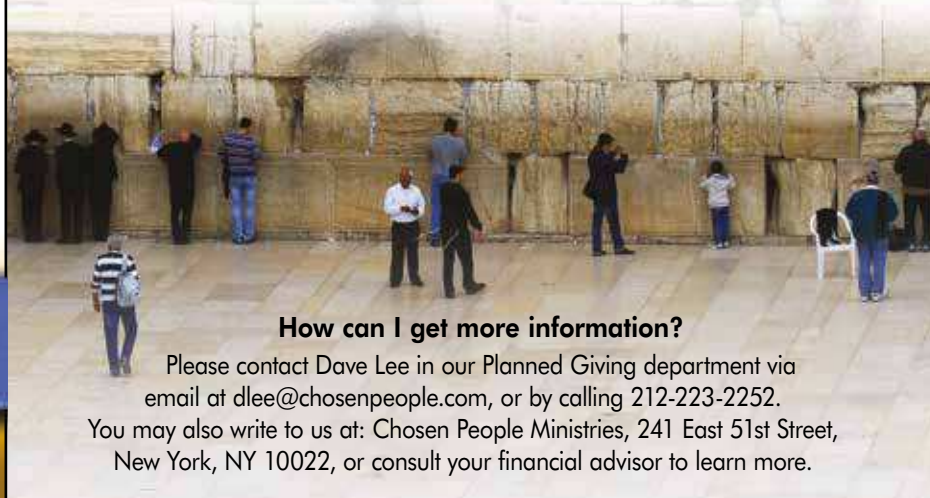
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Thank you for leaving a legacy of love to God's chosen people!



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MESSIANIC RESOURCES

for the holidays

As the nation of Israel struggles to regain control of the land... as Arabs fight and riot against her... how can we know that Israel's future will indeed be glorious? By exploring the ancient prophecies, this book reveals the faithfulness of God to His everlasting covenants. By Harold Sevens.



Israel's Glorious Future • 3038 • \$10.95^{US}

The flickering lights of the Hanukkah menorah remind us that God is mighty to save and that Yeshua is truly the Light of the World. This item is manufactured in Israel.



Hanukkah Menorah • 5023 • \$24.95^{US}

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The Chosen People Newsletter

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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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