

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE



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Christmas

THROUGH JEWISH EYES

CELEBRATING THE SEASON | HANUKKAH AND THE BIBLE | HANUKKAH RECIPES



THE NEW TESTAMENT, CHRISTMAS, AND HANUKKAH

Celebrating
the Season!

Dear friend,

Shalom and happy holidays! I am sure you are looking forward to celebrating the two great holidays observed in December. On Hanukkah, we focus on the rededication of the Temple during the days of the Maccabees, a family of Jewish warriors who saved the Jewish people from the Greek leader Antiochus Epiphanes. Christmas, of course, points us to the redemption of both Jews and Gentiles through the One who was born to be the Savior of the world.

We see similar patterns in both holidays, including themes of light, generosity, deliverance, and giving glory to God.

HANUKKAH AND CHRISTMAS: THE CONNECTION?

I also see the connection between Hanukkah and Christmas in the ways that the stories complement one another. After all, if Antiochus Epiphanes had turned the Jewish people into idol-worshipping Greeks who tossed out the Bible and embraced Greek philosophies, then the Jewish people could very well have disappeared. If that had happened, why would anyone be looking for a Jewish Messiah? And who would understand the prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures that paved a path through history, enabling Jewish people to identify the true Messiah?

All would have been lost if this small band of priestly zealots had not overthrown the Greeks.

Stated simply: Without Hanukkah, there would be no Christmas!

The Savior of the world did not enter earth's atmosphere un-announced or pop onto the scene through some mystical vortex that would make any New Ager jealous! Rather, His birthplace, parents, tribe, and even the timing of His birth were

predicted with extraordinary specificity, which allowed us to recognize Him as the Son of God and Messiah of the Jewish people.

Jesus was Jewish! He was born a Jew, both of His parents were Jewish, He lived a Jewish life,

celebrated Jewish holidays such as Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles, and He lived a perfect life according to the Torah (Law). He grew up in the land given to the Jewish people, and when the moment came for the prophecy of His death to be fulfilled (Isaiah 53), He went to the cross without complaint, with love for His people who, for the most part, had rejected Him. He became the Savior and quintessential Passover lamb for all who, by faith, trusted in the blood of the Messiah, painted by grace on the doorposts of their hearts.

There literally would be no Christmas without Hanukkah, as there would be no Messiah without the Jewish people.

EARLY FAITH DISCOVERIES

I remember the first time I read the New Testament. I had previously thought this thin volume, compared to the Older Testament, was the fountainhead of antisemitism. I grew up believing that Jewish people were not supposed to read this book. Yet, one day I found a New Testament and began reading it. It struck me with the simplicity of its message and the love and kindness of Jesus. I quickly understood that He was Jewish, and I was fixated on His celebration of the Jewish holidays—as this is one of the ways we, as Jews, define ourselves. We celebrate Passover, not Easter, and Hanukkah, not Christmas. After I finished reading the Gospels for the first time, I came face to face with a Jewish book and a Jewish Messiah that was consistent with the Old Testament and that crushed my prejudices against the New Testament.

After reading “the book,” I knew I had to decide. Although as a Jewish person I was raised to reject Jesus, how could I do that after realizing that He fulfilled the prophecies predicted of the Messiah? I knew in the depth of my soul that if I did not believe in Jesus, I could never believe in anything! I was that convinced.

And so I accepted Jesus as my Messiah. For a moment, I feared I would wake up the next morning and find myself transformed into a Gentile, but the opposite was true. I never felt so Jewish in my entire life.



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THE NEW TESTAMENT IS KOSHER!

I soon became convicted that Jesus is God in the flesh and that the Lord had called me to tell my fellow Jewish people that Jesus is the Messiah and that the New Testament is kosher!

There are two magnificent passages in the Hebrew Scriptures that each of us should reflect on during this holiday season: Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:6-7. The first passage is a clear prophecy of the virgin birth! You can only imagine how surprised I was to discover this prediction of the incarnation and virgin birth in *my Bible!* The prophet Isaiah writes, “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” (Isaiah 7:14).

I am well familiar with the traditional objections that challenge this prophecy finding fulfillment in Jesus. The principal objection I had as a Jewish person to this possibility had nothing to do with the passage, but, rather, with the fundamental belief that God could not become flesh. In fact, as a Jewish person, I believed that this was tantamount to idolatry. The second of the Ten Commandments tells us that we should not create graven images of God. I recognized graven images are made of wood or stone, but Jewish people generally assume that a manifestation of God in the flesh is an idol. Therefore, for Jews, believing that Jesus is God is idolatry.

The other arguments are minor compared to this. Scholars debate whether the Hebrew word for *virgin* means “young woman” or “virgin,” and the son mentioned is also traditionally believed to be one of Isaiah’s children. There are good answers to these objections, but the primary challenge is encouraging Jewish people to be open-minded to the possibility that the eternal God could take on humanity. For some reason, this made sense to me and I believed it. I became convinced that God could become flesh because of this passage.

I then jumped a couple of chapters and found this new insight strengthened by another passage in 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. (Isaiah 9:6-7)



Christmas and Hanukkah in Haifa, Israel

all eternity?” The answer, of course, is God Himself. At that point, as a new believer, I began to fully understand that Jesus was both the Messiah of Israel and Lord of the universe. He took on flesh to reveal the character of God to all mankind, identify with humanity, live a perfect life, and die as a worthy sacrifice for our sins.

Whew! What a journey through Scripture.

Jesus is God’s Hanukkah present wrapped in flesh!

I hope you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy Hanukkah, and enjoy this special holiday edition of *The Chosen People* newsletter.

Your brother in the Messiah,

Mitch
Mitch



Messiah's Birth

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BETHLEHEM BIRTH

BY ROBERT WALTER

Nestled in the Judean hills just south of Jerusalem stands Bethlehem, the ancient town whose claims to fame include being the site where David was anointed king and where the Messiah was born. Both Matthew and Luke mention this important location and how it relates to Jesus in their respective birth narratives.

Certain chief priests and scribes answered Herod's paranoid question about where the Messiah would be born. *"They said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"* (Matthew 2:5-6). This appears to be a loose quote of Micah 5:2-4, where the prophet spoke of a unique, future ruler in Israel who would come from Bethlehem but who would also have divine, eternal roots. Micah states that this ruler's *"...goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."* For Matthew, Jesus' birth in Bethlehem fulfills this prophecy: He was born as a man in Bethlehem but was ultimately God in the flesh.

In Luke 2:1-7, a Roman census called for Joseph to take Mary to register in the *"city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David."* In that city, Mary gave birth to Jesus, wrapped him in cloth, and laid him in a manger. The humility of the scene is striking. The true King of Israel was born not in a palace but in a manger; and not in a free, sovereign Israel but under the compulsion of a Gentile ruler who forced Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem. For Luke, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem meant the true King had arrived in the humblest fashion.

VIRGIN BIRTH

BY BRIAN CRAWFORD

In this season, we celebrate not only the birth of Yeshua, but also His reason for coming into the world. The Gospel accounts teach that Yeshua was *"conceived...of the Holy Spirit"* in His mother's womb (Matthew 1:20, cf. Luke 1:35). Many skeptics deny that the virgin birth could have happened because of

assumptions about the supernatural, but Yeshua's miraculous conception is essential if our faith has any truth at all!

Any Messiah who could redeem us from our sins would have to be sinless himself. But how can a human being, descended from Adam, live without sinning from birth to grave? Likewise, any Messiah had to be born from David's line (2 Samuel 7:16). But if someone is descended from David's line, then surely he is tainted by humanity's sinful nature!

The virgin birth was God's solution to this paradox. Just as God created Adam as a perfect living being out of nothing, so too the Holy Spirit miraculously provided twenty-three perfect chromosomes to fertilize the egg in Mary's womb. It was through this fusion of the miraculous and the natural that the pre-existent Son of God was made incarnate. On the one hand, this broke the chain of sin inherited from Adam (Genesis 3, Romans 5), enabling Yeshua to have a human nature untainted by sin. On the other hand, by having Mary as his physical mother and Joseph as his adopted father, Yeshua was born from David's line (Matthew 1:6).

Thus, the virgin birth enabled Yeshua to be our sinless, perfect, unblemished lamb for the forgiveness of our sins and guaranteed that Yeshua could fulfill the Messianic prophecies about the Redeemer coming from David's line. Only God could have come up with such a profound and awe-inspiring solution for our sin. For this reason and many others, we come and adore Him, Messiah the Lord.

MATTHEW CHAPTER 1

BY NEAL H. SURASKY

Matthew was the consummate Jewish evangelist. He had come to faith in Jesus and now had a burden to see his Jewish brothers and sisters come to the same saving faith. As a Jewish man, he understood just what it would take to convince his people. It started with proving that this man Jesus, who the Jewish people would know as Yeshua, fulfilled the required prophecies. First and foremost, he had to establish the proper lineage.

Of all of the prophecies regarding the Messiah, there were two that had to precede the rest. First, the Messiah had to be Jewish, a descendant of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. Second, he

had to be a descendant of David in order to sit on his throne as king. Matthew begins his proof with the statement, *“The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham”* (Matthew 1:1). It is interesting to note that the only other genealogy of Jesus is found in the Gospel of Luke, who takes His lineage all the way back to God. For the Jewish people, it was a given that God was the ultimate creator. It was more important to show that the Messiah was a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and thus Jewish, and that He had the right to sit on the throne of David.

God promised Abraham not once, but twice, that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3; 18:22). Through Jacob, God promised that the rule of Israel would be forever in the hand of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10). And He promised King David, *“...your throne shall be established forever”* (2 Samuel 7:16). At this season for remembering His birth, Matthew teaches us that even Jesus’ lineage is the fulfillment of prophecy, as it was written.

MATTHEW CHAPTER 2

BY MICHAEL HERTS

One of my childhood memories was when a school music teacher took class time to sing Christmas carols (in those days it was permitted). Since Jewish children were not required to participate, we would go over to the corner of the room and talk about life. One of the songs they would sing was *“O Little Town of Bethlehem,”* which meant nothing to me then because I did not connect the town with Israel and the Jewish people. It was not until years later that I understood the significance of that song.

The Jewish prophet Micah’s ministry took place during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, three kings of Judah, between the years of about 750-686 BC. Micah was calling the people to repentance. He let them know that, even though judgment was coming, God loved His people and would one day bring a deliverer. In doing so, he named a small town where the Messiah, the Anointed One, would be born.

When Matthew wrote his Gospel, he was bringing incredible news. He quoted prophecies from the Hebrew Scriptures to make his point

that our long-awaited Messiah had come and His name was Jesus. In quoting Micah 5:2, Matthew wrote, *“And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd My people Israel”* (Matthew 2:6). In verse 2, we are told that a star indicated where this shepherd had been born. This star was the sign that the prophecy of Micah had come to pass. And now I know the real meaning of the song, *“O Little Town of Bethlehem.”*

HANUKKAH & CHRISTMAS

BY CHARLOTTE MACHADO

The Feast of Dedication is first mentioned in John 10:22. In fact, this is the only place in Scripture where the holiday of Hanukkah is mentioned. In this passage, Jesus goes to the Temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the festival. The word Hanukkah comes from the Hebrew verb *hanakh*, which means to dedicate.

Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees over the Greeks and the rededication of the Temple. Approximately two hundred years later, Jewish people gathered around Jesus in the Temple court and asked him plainly whether or not he was the promised Messiah. At that time, they were waiting in hopeful, anxious anticipation for the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies. They desperately wanted to know if Jesus was the one for whom they were waiting. After some discussion with the onlookers, Jesus acknowledged His deity by saying, *“I and the Father are one”* (John 10:30).

As written in Ezekiel 8-11, the Divine Presence had not been seen in the Temple since the glory of the Lord departed. In Solomon’s Temple, the glory of God was present and hovered over the mercy seat. Ezekiel 8-11 describes the glory of God—which can be interpreted as the Holy Spirit—leaving the Temple because of Israel’s disobedience. With Jesus’ presence in the Temple, the Holy Spirit had indeed returned.

Hebrews 1:3 describes Jesus as the *“radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature.”* There is tremendous significance that on the Feast of Dedication, or Hanukkah, Jesus announces His deity and returns the Spirit to the Temple. Through Messiah, we, who are now His temple, are made clean and filled with His Holy Spirit. This is the meaning of Hanukkah and it is truly something to be celebrated.

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Dr. Rich Freeman, D. Min. serves as the Vice President for Church Ministries and Conferences with Chosen People Ministries and lives in South Florida with his wife, Julia.

During this time of year, we tend to focus on the first coming of Messiah. Various prophecies tell us how He would come (Isaiah 9:6), to where He would come (Micah 5:2), when He would come (Daniel 9:24-27), and even why He would come (Isaiah 53). That is not going to be the focus of this study. Instead, I am going to be looking at a prophecy of Jesus' second coming in Zechariah 12-14 and its fulfillment in Paul's amazing statement in Romans 11:26, *“And so all Israel will be saved.”*

For many, the timing of this prophecy is understood to be at the end of the seven-year tribulation period, when the antichrist, satanically inspired, is trying once and for all to destroy Israel and the Jewish people. All the nations of the world, under his leadership, will come together as one and gather as a vast army surrounding Israel. This final battle is what is commonly called Armageddon and will be focused primarily in the Jezreel Valley near Megiddo in northern Israel. Israel, hopelessly outnumbered is given supernatural empowerment by the Lord to withstand the onslaught. Zechariah 12:8 describes it in this way: *“In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and*

the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the Lord before them.” That is the context of Jesus' return to earth. Israel is under attack from all the nations of the world, holding them at bay but ultimately needing the Lord's intervention to save them.

Zechariah 14:3-4a describes what happens next. *“Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east.”* One of the blessings of my ministry with Chosen People Ministries is that I get to lead tours to Israel every year. One of my favorite places to go on those tours is the Mount of Olives so that I can take the opportunity to teach about this particular prophecy of Jesus' second coming. Israel is in a hopeless situation and in need of the intervention of the Lord to save her. Jesus returns to fight on Israel's behalf, and the place He comes to first is the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

At this point we need to ask an important question. Why does Zechariah write, *“In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives?”* He could have said, *“In that day He will come back to earth on the Mount of Olives.”* The meaning would have been virtually the same. However, Zechariah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is painting a picture for us of our Messiah with the visible nail scars on His feet and hands. The parallel to Zechariah 14:4 is 12:10, *“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced.”* When Yeshua (Jesus) returns to save Israel from that final onslaught, He will be visible for all to see.

When the Jewish people see Him and recognize that Jesus truly is the promised Messiah of the Hebrew scriptures, that will be the fulfillment of Romans 11:26, *“And so all Israel will be saved.”* This does not mean that every Jewish person who has ever lived gets a free ticket to heaven because they are Jewish. Rather, all the Jewish people alive when Yeshua returns will recognize who He is and come to faith in Him as their Lord, Savior, and Messiah. Even so, *“Come Lord Jesus.”*



Hanukkah Recipes

HANUKKAH IN NEW ZEALAND

Our New Zealand team had a wonderful time lighting Hanukkah candles, singing songs, and sipping coffee with our Israeli guests at the Yellow House, one of our Israeli youth hostels. One guest was Reuven*. Our staff members Teresa and Michael talked with him for over an hour as Reuven shared about his life in the army, his work in Tel Aviv, and his travels with his sister, Yael*. They also arranged to host Reuven and Yael later on when they arrived in Christchurch. Teresa and Michael were completely surprised to run into him again, the next day, four hours away! Later, Teresa and Michael met friends hosting two Israeli girls from Haifa, Ronit* and Shira*. This is what commonly happens in New Zealand—the Lord orchestrates these encounters again and again!

REACHING ISRAELIS THROUGH CAMPUS MINISTRY

Chosen People Ministries has an active ministry at two prominent universities in New York: one in lower Manhattan on Fridays (with its 10,000 to 11,000 Jewish students) and one in upper Manhattan (8,000 Jewish students) on Mondays. In lower Manhattan, quite a few Israeli students have been stopping at our table, especially when they see an old Israeli newspaper in Hebrew, *Maariv*, from 1948 when Israel became a state. Kiran* and Yoav* took literature in Hebrew as did the other Israelis. Yoav introduced us to his new bride of just a few days, Shoshana*, and took the excellent testimony book *Why Me?* by Yaakov Damkani. In Queens, we can set up even on cold, wintry days as our space is indoors in the Jewish dining hall. It is quite spectacular that we can be in the Jewish dining hall! Ours is the only group given this particular table space...the other groups are in the main dining hall. We thank you for your earnest prayers for these ministries on these three campuses! Paul's heartfelt request is ours too: *"Pray on my [our] behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel"* (Ephesians 6:19).

*names changed

POTATO LATKES

INGREDIENTS:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 4 large potatoes – peeled and grated | ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper |
| 1 large onion – peeled and grated | |
| 2 large eggs | 1 cup of vegetable oil |
| ½ cup all-purpose flour (or matzah meal) | 4 oz. of sour cream |
| 2 tsp. kosher salt | 4 oz. of applesauce |

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place the grated potato and onion in a colander and press lightly to remove most of the moisture and let stand 30 minutes.
2. In a bowl, mix the potato mixture and eggs with your hands. Then add the flour, salt, and pepper. Mix thoroughly.
3. Take an ice cream scoop of the potato mixture and place in your hands and then form a round patty (latke). Repeat 8 times and place the patties on a baking sheet.
4. Heat ½ cup of oil in a large skillet over medium heat.
5. Place 4 latkes in the skillet and cook for 3 minutes or until the bottom is a golden brown color. Turn the latkes over and cook another 3 minutes. When the latkes are done, place them on a paper towel to absorb some of the oil. Add the remaining oil into the skillet and cook the other 4 latkes just like above.
6. Serve latkes with a dollop of sour cream and applesauce.

Yield: 8 servings

SUFGANIYOT

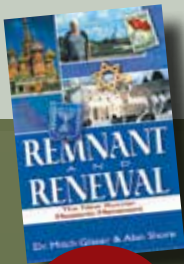
INGREDIENTS:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| • 1/3 cup lukewarm milk or water | • ¼ teaspoon of cinnamon |
| • 1 teaspoon dry yeast (1 small packet) | • ¼ stick of butter (softened) |
| • 1 whole egg plus 1 egg yolk | • 2 cups flour |
| • 5 tablespoons sugar | • ½ cup thick raspberry jam |
| • ¼ teaspoon salt | • Vegetable oil for deep-frying |
| • ½ teaspoon vanilla extract | • Confectioners' sugar for dusting |

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Warm milk in the bowl of a mixer. Add the yeast with 2 teaspoons of sugar and let stand for 10 minutes or until the mixture starts foaming.
2. Add eggs, remainder of sugar, and vanilla and beat until smooth. Add the butter, salt, and cinnamon and mix together until there are no lumps.
3. Add the flour a little at a time - make sure the flour is incorporated into the mixture - and mix on slow speed for 3-5 minutes until the mixture is smooth and soft to the touch. Place the dough in an oiled bowl and cover for at least 4 hours or overnight in the refrigerator.
4. Roll out your dough on a floured surface to ½ - ¾ inch thick. Take a 2-inch cookie cutter and cut out 12 donuts. Place donuts on a lined baking sheet and let rise for 30 minutes.
5. Heat 2 inches of vegetable oil in a pan to 375°. Drop the donuts in the hot oil and cook until the bottom is golden brown (1-2 minutes). Flip the donut over and finish cooking until the donut is golden brown all over.
6. Place donuts on a rack with paper towel and let stand to cool down. Place the raspberry jam in a pastry bag fitted with a small round tip and fill the middle of the donut and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Yield 12 Donuts



MESSIANIC RESOURCES

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Who are the Jewish people of the former Soviet Union and what is their relationship to the gospel? **Remnant and Renewal: The New Russian Messianic Movement** tells the story of the Russian-speaking Jewish people and those who have sought to bring the gospel to them with testimonies compiled by Dr. Mitch Glaser and Alan Shore.

SPECIAL 3-BOOK SET

Deepen your love for God's chosen people with these three books. **The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel** walks through the role of Israel and the Jewish people—both now and in the future—as seen in the Bible. It includes links to short videos by the authors. **Messiah in the Passover** is a reference book for Passover—its history, biblical references, and rabbinic traditions. It also includes a *Messianic Family Haggadah* (Passover guidebook) as well as recipes and children's lessons. This book will give you a deeper appreciation for the Passover celebration within the Jewish community and enable you to share the message of the Lamb of God through the Passover with your Jewish friends. **Israel, the Church, and the Middle East** is an objective and interdisciplinary treatment of the Middle East conflict which is both irenic and respectful in tone. It explores the wider effects of the conflict, such as the growing antipathy within the Church toward the evangelization of the Jewish people.



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Share the Messiah with Jewish people

— and maximize your impact this year

Did you know...one of your best options for year-end giving and bringing the gospel "to the Jew first" is to give appreciated assets?

If you have stocks or property you have held for more than one year, you can donate them to Chosen People Ministries and receive a tax savings this year. This way, your gift will go further than it would if you chose to sell the property and donate the proceeds.

Why? You likely will avoid capital gains tax by making the donation...and the entire value of the asset will go toward Your Mission to the Jewish People.

That is what one friend of Chosen People Ministries did. She says:

"Soon after I placed my trust in Jesus as my Savior 55 years ago, I recognized His love for His Jewish brethren (John 1:11-13 and Romans 1:16) and began giving to Messianic ministries. As I've heard Mitch Glaser speak over the years, there is no doubt in my mind that he, too, has a deep love for his Jewish brethren. After my husband went to be with the Lord, I became responsible for the care and distribution of the funds he spent his life acquiring. The Holy Spirit has clearly guided me to transfer appreciated stock to Chosen People Ministries. It is apparent to me that God is using this ministry to further Jesus' message to us, to go and preach the gospel."

If you, too, want to help share Messiah with Jewish people in this powerful and effective way or would like more information — please contact Cindy Forbes today at 212-223-2252 or cforbes@chosenpeople.com.

Thank you!

Shalom

Bringing the message of peace to New York City.

July 27 through August 11, 2019

NEW YORK

For more information, visit chosenpeople.com/shalomnewyork

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

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