THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

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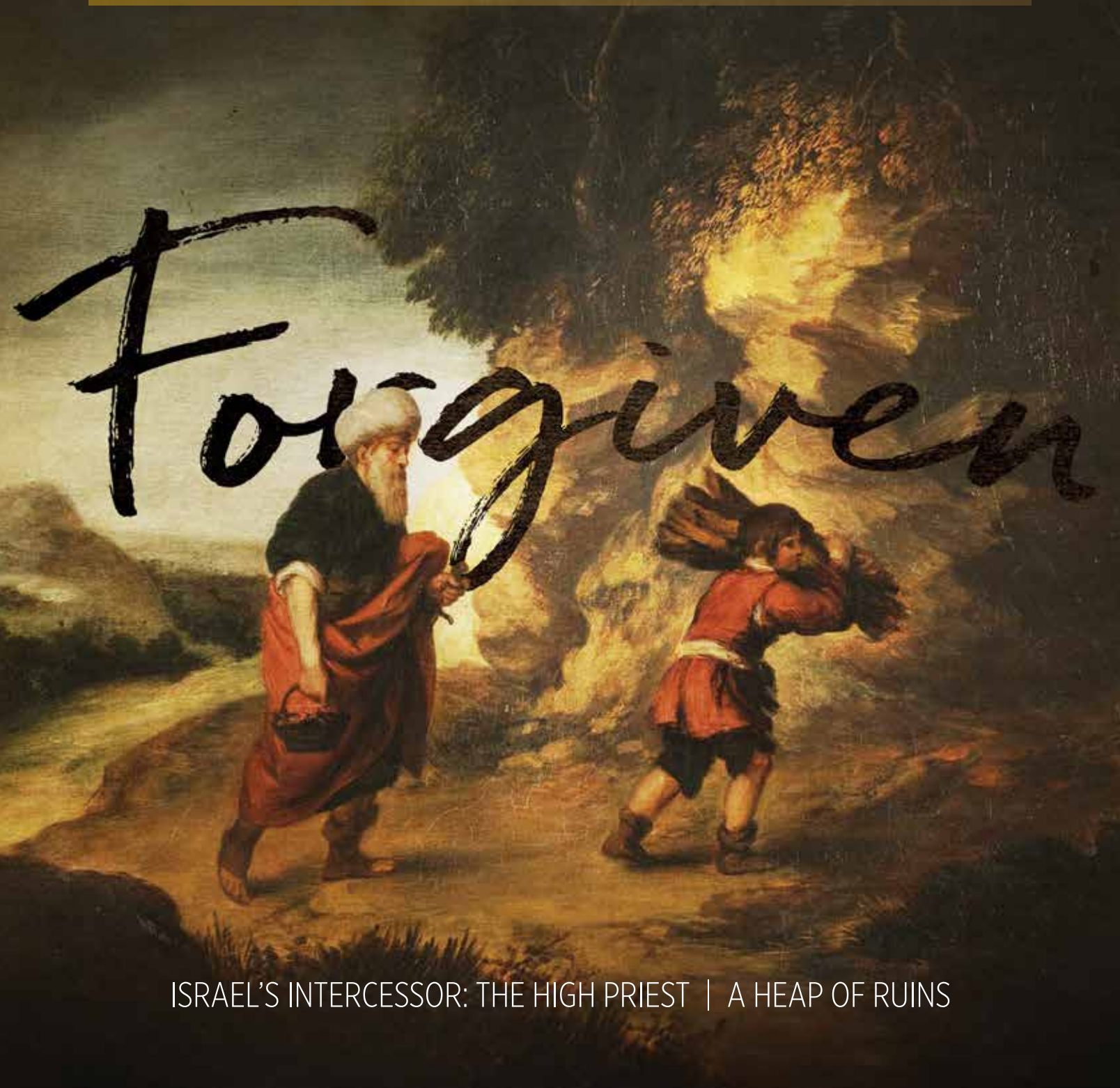


ISRAEL'S INTERCESSOR: THE HIGH PRIEST | A HEAP OF RUINS

FROM THE PRESIDENT, DR. MITCH GLASER

Shalom and Happy Jewish New Year!

I am greeting you with a Happy New Year because Jewish people around the globe recently celebrated the Jewish New Year, called Rosh Hashanah. This month, we begin the Hebrew year 5782. Jewish tradition dates the new year from when creation is believed to have taken place.

I was born into a very traditional Jewish home in Brooklyn, New York, and grew up in Queens. I am not quite old enough to be a Brooklyn Dodgers fan, but I became a Mets fan, which is almost mandatory if you grew up in Queens!

I spent my childhood in a tightly knit Jewish community. I had a large and loving extended Jewish family surrounding me, and almost all my friends were Jewish, as were most of the kids at school.

I had my Bar Mitzvah at the age of thirteen, as is usual for most Jewish boys. I studied at Hebrew school for five years in preparation for this major event and rite of passage. As part of our training, we read through the Bible, studied Hebrew and the Jewish traditions, and celebrated all the Jewish holidays at synagogue and at home.

The Time Has Come—Again!

The Jewish New Year is not like the secular New Year. In Leviticus 23:24-25, you will not find the words "new year" used to describe the festival; instead the Bible describes the day as the *blowing of the trumpet*. On this day, according to the rabbis, God opens the books of life and death. Jewish people have ten days to get right with God, so the Jewish New Year begins a sobering and serious season of reflection. The trumpet blown on Rosh Hashanah is called a *shofar* (a ram's horn) in Hebrew, and it is sounded to call the Jewish people to repentance before the Day of Atonement, the most sacred day of the Jewish year that follows ten days later.

According to Leviticus chapter sixteen, the high priest offered sacrifices of a bull and a goat on the altar. He then sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat to make atonement for sins not previously atoned for because of disobedience or ignorance. It was only on this day of Yom Kippur that the high priest stepped into the Holy of Holies, beyond the veil, and did what human beings could never do for themselves. The Hebrew Scriptures clearly teach that none of us can do anything to merit forgiveness of sin. The "making of atonement" is always done by someone other than ourselves.

The Ten Days of Awe

At the end of these ten days of repentance (known as the Days of Awe), we sound the shofar once again. Tradition tells us that God shuts the books of life and death as His last act on the Day of Atonement. At that moment, the fate of every Jewish person is sealed for the coming year. If we performed an adequate number of good works and thoroughly repented of our sins, then we will have a good year and find favor with God. If not, we will experience some type of judgment during that year. The results of our efforts—repentance, prayer, and fasting—last only a year as the process must be repeated annually.

However, as believers in Messiah Jesus, we have complete confidence that Messiah died for our sins "once for all," according to Hebrews 7:27. We are forgiven! That is the reason I wish my believing friends a *Happy* New Year and Day of Atonement.

The psalmist promised that one day God would remove our sins as far as the east is from the west (Ps. 103:12). In Jeremiah 31:31–34, the prophet told us that the day is coming when the Lord will write His law on our hearts and forgive our sins. This hope of forgiveness caused the Jewish people to look forward to this great day of redemption throughout the darkest periods of Jewish life.

The Prophecy of the Binding of Isaac

The binding of Isaac in Genesis chapter twenty-two presents a beautiful prophetic portrait of this predicted hope of an ultimate sacrifice for sin. In this chapter, which is read every year in synagogues on Rosh Hashanah, God asked Abraham to

climb Mount Moriah and sacrifice his son, Isaac.

Abraham and Isaac began walking toward the mountain. On the third day, Isaac innocently asked his father, *"Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"* What a haunting question! Abraham responded that *"God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son"* (Gen. 22:7–8).

Upon their arrival, Abraham bound his son and laid him on the altar. At that moment, I am sure Isaac thought his question was answered and that he was the sacrifice. But when the patriarch raised his knife, the angel of God stopped him!

> *The angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."* (Gen. 22:11–12)

Abraham looked toward the bushes and saw a ram caught in the thicket by his horns, and he sacrificed the ram instead of Isaac (Gen. 22:13). The horns that trapped the ram are why in traditional Judaism we sound the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. Hearing the sound from the ram's horn reminds us that God provides the sacrifice.

We also understand that the Temple, the holy place where God ordained sacrifices to be made, was built on this same Mount Moriah. *"Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite"* (2 Chronicles 3:1).

My heart of faith wholeheartedly believes that Genesis chapter twenty-two points to Jesus. He is the beloved Son of the Father, just as Isaac was Abraham's promised beloved son. Jesus was willing to lay down His life, but unlike Isaac, who was spared, Jesus was slain. Ultimately, He was crucified and died on this same mountain range within eyesight of the Temple Mount where many thousands of animals were sacrificed between the almost-death of Isaac and the atoning death of our Messiah Jesus.

Abraham named the sacred site, as described in verse fourteen, *"Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide, as it is said to this day, 'In the mount of the Lord it will be provided.'"* He identified God Himself as the provider of the one sacrifice that really counts! In the fullness of time, God allowed His Son to die on a cross made of unhewn wood to accomplish what neither the potential sacrifice of Isaac nor the blood of bulls and goats for centuries could ever achieve. It was on Mount Moriah where God provided the gift of His only beloved Son, and it is through His shed blood that, by faith, we find everlasting atonement for our sins. We have peace with God through the death of Jesus, who died and rose for our sins.

As the Apostle Paul wrote, *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1).

He did not stop there, though. The rabbi from Tarsus continued:

> *For while we were still helpless, at the right time Messiah died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Messiah died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.* (Romans 5:6–9)

Having embraced this great salvation through the Messiah Jesus when I was nineteen years old, I can tell you that it is true, and this decision changed the way I have observed the Jewish high holidays for all these years. I personally know the joy of forgiveness, and I hope you do as well!

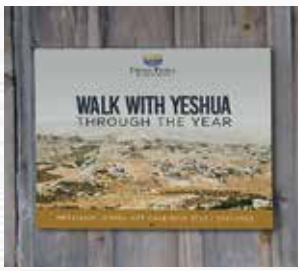
Please pray for Your Mission to the Jewish People as we proclaim the glorious message of Yeshua's atoning work as prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures. I also hope this will help you pray for your Jewish friends. Please pray, as we share the message of salvation through the "greater" son of Abraham during the rest of this month. Finally, please pray the Lord will open the eyes of our beloved Jewish people to see that He is the true Messiah for all.

Thank you for your prayers and support of our 127-year-old ministry among the Jewish people. Your partnership is deeply appreciated.

Blessings and again Happy New Year,

Mitch

P.S. We have a beautiful Chosen People Ministries calendar that you can order. We provided space on the enclosed card to request this beautiful calendar, which will help you learn more about the places in Israel where Jesus walked and enable you to dig deep into the Jewish background of your faith.



ISRAEL'S INTERCESSOR: The High Priest

Whenever the Israelites had the privilege of encountering the living God, they were *terrified*: *"Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips…. My eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts,"* the prophet Isaiah exclaimed in terror (Isa. 6:5). Imagine what it would have been like to see what Isaiah saw—to experience the depth of his shame before the holy God!

The Israelites at Mount Sinai had a similar experience. Each of them visually experienced the glory of the Lord *"like a consuming fire on the mountain top"* (Exodus 24:17), and they learned that *"the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God"* (Deuteronomy 4:24). Here is how Exodus describes the people's initial response to their experience of God:

> *All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die."* (Ex. 20:18–19)

The people were ill-prepared to stand in the presence of God. After reassuring them of God's purposes, Moses alone climbed to the top of Mount Sinai to hear from God (Ex. 20:20–21). God spoke to Moses (v. 20:22ff.) and later *"face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend"* (Ex. 33:11). Although God desired a close relationship with all Israel, the relationship between Moses and God was unique and intimate. At the request of the people (v. 20:19), God allowed Moses to stand in an intercessory place between Him and the nation.

The God of Israel had called the Jewish people to receive His promised covenant blessings sworn to Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3). The Lord also chose the children of Israel to be a holy nation (Exodus 19:6), but throughout biblical history, we see that their sins often alienated the chosen people from God.

Thankfully, the Lord of Israel is also a compassionate and gracious God (Exodus 34:6). By His mercy, He provided sacrifices and Levitical intercessors so Israel could be restored and live in fruitfulness and joy in the Promised Land. Moses was the first and most significant of the intercessors between Israel and God. He was the first mediator; he alone ascended Sinai and appealed to the Lord on behalf of Israel, standing in Israel's place as the nation's representative. Moses passed his intercessory role on to his elder brother, Aaron, and his sons. Aaron had the privilege of serving as Israel's first high priest (Exodus 28:1).

The Lord instructed Aaron and his sons *"to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean, and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them through Moses"* (Leviticus 10:10–11). The function of the high priest was also to be the final judge of the nation, the leader of the high court (cf., 2 Chronicles 19:11).

Teaching the sons and daughters of Israel was an essential role for Aaron and the priesthood, but their most important responsibility was interceding for the people of Israel.

The Hebrew Bible uses a variety of terms to describe sin. One term, *avon*, עָוֹן, is usually translated "iniquity." The Hebrew root means "bent or crooked," thus envisioning our iniquity as causing our souls to appear bent and misshapen when compared to the straight line of the perfect image of God in which we were created. Sin is also portrayed as a weight that rests upon a person's soul, which is why the Bible describes the individual sinner as "bearing his iniquity" (Leviticus 7:18, 17:16). This phrase vividly pictures a person weighed down with sin, laboring as he or she carries this weight upon his or her shoulders until atonement lifts the burden through an acceptable sacrifice.

The Hebrew Scriptures describe the burden of iniquity as transferable. When a Jewish person committed a sin, they were required to select a clean and healthy animal, often described as one without blemish, and bring it to the priests. The priest would sacrifice the offering, thereby transferring the burden of sin to the animal. As Leviticus 17:11 affirms, *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement."*

Nowhere is this transferable burden of iniquity displayed more powerfully than on the Day of Atonement. God provides a vivid picture in the biblical teaching of the scapegoat:

Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness. (Leviticus 16:21–22)

The process of atonement is worth noting carefully. As the priest confesses Israel's sins, he places his hands on the goat, symbolically transferring the nation's iniquities upon the animal. The scapegoat then carries the sins of the Israelites into the wilderness, far away from the Jewish people. The goat would perish, according to the instruction in Leviticus chapter 16, and carry the sins of Israel away with his death.

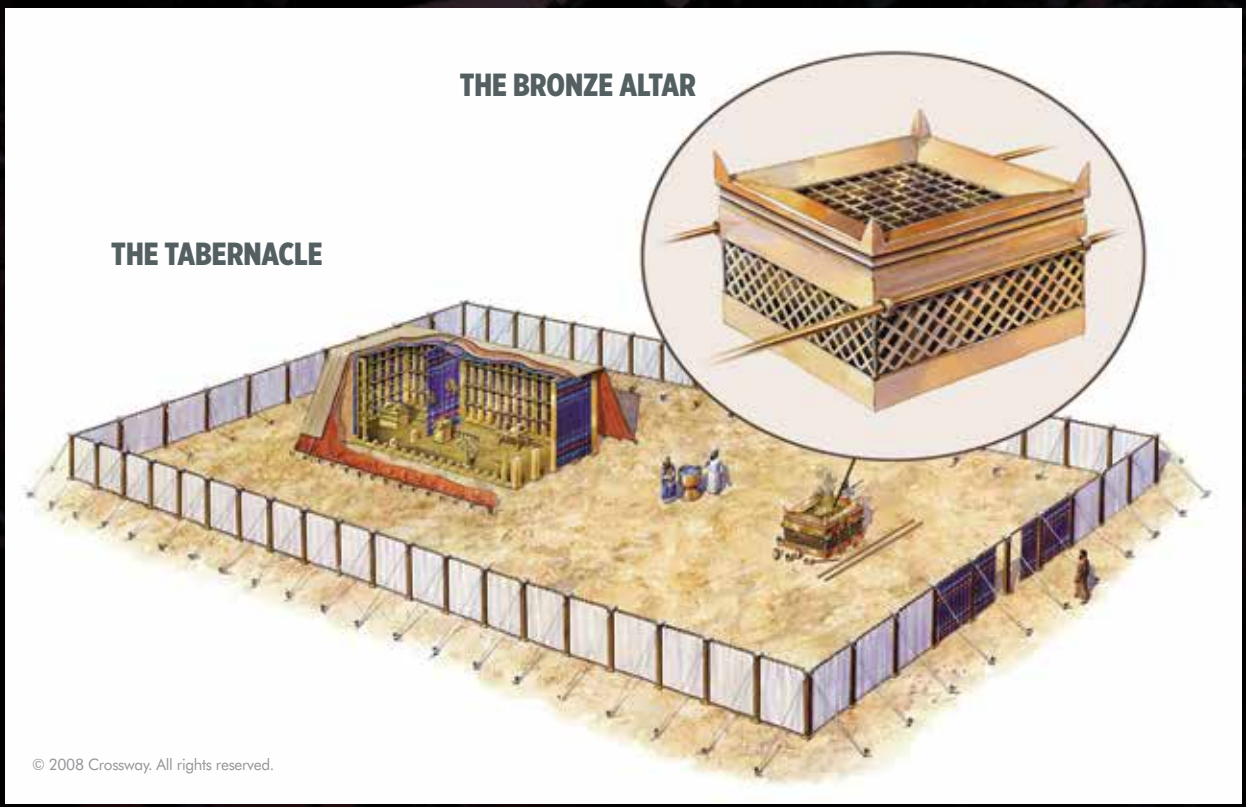
The scapegoat and the work of Aaron and his sons serving as Israel's intercessors pointed to something greater! As the centuries went by, God began filling in the details of this hope and expectation of a greater and more permanent atonement. Ezekiel spoke of a day when God himself would atone for the people's sins (Ezek. 45:17). Daniel prophesied a day when there would be a final end of sin and atonement for iniquity (Dan. 9:24).

The pinnacle of this prophetic expectation is in Isaiah 53, where we encounter the Suffering Servant who would one day bear our sins and take them away, just as the scapegoat did. At the end of this glorious chapter, Isaiah exalts the Servant who would be pierced through for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. The prophet announces that God will *"allot [the Servant] a portion with the great . . . because he poured out Himself to death,"* whereby He *"bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors"* (Isa. 53:12).

Thankfully, we are not left without a high priest today. Although the Temple was destroyed in AD 70, extinguishing the flames upon the altar fanned by the Aaronic priesthood, Yeshua the Messiah established a greater priesthood through His resurrection for all who believe. Now, our Messiah intercedes as our high priest, carrying our burdens day in and day out...if we let Him!

As the author of Hebrews wrote,

But Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens. (Hebrews 7:24–26)



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The Book of Micah: A Heap of Ruins

We ended our last study picturing God treading on the high places of the earth. We now come to Micah 1:5–7:

> *All this is for the rebellion of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the rebellion of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? What is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? For I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the open country, planting places for a vineyard. I will pour her stones down into the valley and will lay bare her foundations. All of her idols will be smashed, all of her earnings will be burned with fire and all of her images I will make desolate, for she collected them from a harlot's earnings, and to the earnings of a harlot they will return.*

Micah often used "Jacob" as a title for all Israel, though he also used it to describe the Northern Kingdom, as he does in this verse. He uses it to refer to the patriarch Jacob later in Micah chapter seven. Jacob's name was changed by God to "Israel" after Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed in Genesis 32:28. Micah uses the name Jacob to recall the rebelliousness that marked the patriarch for most of his early life and now applies it to his descendants as well.

Israel's capital, Samaria, stood on top of a mountain, but God said He would make it a "heap of ruins" in a field; that is, He would both destroy and humiliate it. Rather than being a cosmopolitan area, God would erase the city and turn it into a field. He would "pour her stones"—her buildings and structures—into the valley below and lay bare their foundations. The fulfillment of all this destruction came with the Assyrian overthrow of Samaria in 722 B.C.

Even today, the foundations of Samaria's buildings lie exposed. The very highest place in Samaria is the Acropolis, and if you look down the steep embankment from it, you will see all kinds of pillars and stones that had formerly been hewn out and used in their buildings. They have been rolled down deep into the valley—a very literal fulfillment of, "I will pour her stones down into the valley."

Israel had made a covenant with the Lord. Through His prophets, God often spoke of this relationship as a marriage covenant. He was the husband, and Israel was His bride, as Isaiah 54:5 says. Therefore, when Israel engaged in idolatry, worshiping false gods, God considered it spiritual "adultery." Israel had "prostituted" herself with foreign nations and their false gods according to Jeremiah 3:1, which is why Micah says that Samaria had collected the wages of a prostitute. Yet, all her wealth would be carried off by another prostitute, another idol-worshiping nation.

The prophet places the blame on the capital cities—Jerusalem and Samaria—and therefore, by association, the religious leaders responsible for the spiritual welfare of the people. Jerusalem was the place where they were to worship God. Were they worshiping Him there? Well, yes, they would certainly go to the Temple, but they also were going to the high places where idolatry and the grossest forms of immorality took place. God says that it is for these things He is going to judge these two great cities.

God would smash Samaria's "idols." He would burn the luxurious adornments that the prostitutes offered as temple gifts in the coming Assyrian firestorm that would accompany Samaria's overthrow. Wages paid to temple prostitutes were in turn given by them to the temple as "temple gifts." Apparently, this practice had permeated Samaria. All the pagan "images" that the people had made would perish. The Israelites had committed adultery with temple prostitutes, but the invading Assyrians would destroy the gifts that the Israelites had brought into their temples.

The ruins of Samaria, courtesy Biblewalks.com.

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.

MINISTRY NEWS BRIEFS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

CONVERSATIONS AT THE JORDAN RIVER

Recently, our Israel director and his wife were at the baptismal site on the Jordan River, where some filming for an episode for their daily program was done. Our staff member noticed a large group of Hebrew-speaking Israelis going down to the river. Immediately, he went to them, and they, for unknown reasons, started to ask questions about the place. Of course, the first thing he did was tell them about the events of Jesus' baptism. They continued to ask questions, and our staff member explained that the event that happened there two thousand years ago was completely Jewish and in accordance with the Hebrew Bible, and he later read from the New Testament. They were surprised to learn that what they considered exclusively a Christian sacrament was and is a fully Jewish ritual. Even more shocking to them was the revelation that Jesus remained a faithful Jew, coming to save His own people. If that was not enough, they read a few prophecies (by Jewish prophets!) together that clearly made the case for Jesus being the promised Messiah of Israel. They spent longer than half an hour together, exchanged contact info, and agreed to continue this conversation.

MINISTRY GROWS IN UKRAINE

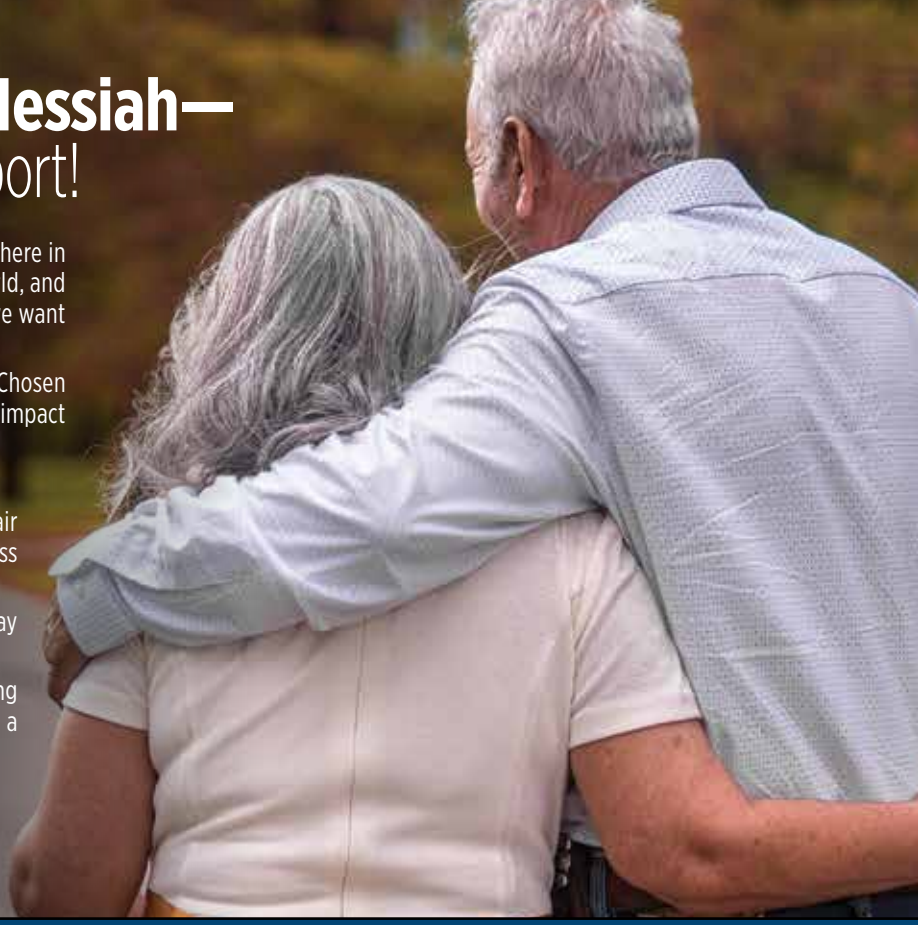
This summer, our staff members visited eight cities in Ukraine and twelve Messianic congregations and churches, as well as organized and taught at two conferences: one for Messianic leaders and another for church leaders from the western part of Ukraine. The staff couple were the main speakers at a five-day retreat, with almost 150 participants from Messianic congregations all over the country. They taught twelve different seminars and more than thirty Bible studies. They also visited more than fifty Jewish people in their homes and prayed for their salvation and healing from different physical and spiritual problems. There were countless personal consultations and counseling, prayers, and deliverances. Messianic believers in Germany collected $2,000 for humanitarian aid for disabled, sick, and elderly Jewish people and orphaned children as well, and our staff members distributed this help through six Messianic congregations. There were many thankful tears and words from the recipients. As one elderly Jewish man said, "I don't know that Yeshua is the Messiah yet, but I see and feel His love through you." Those words are invaluable. Our staff member writes, "Honestly, some moments were overwhelming, but praise the Lord everything went very well and so many people were thankful for this help and what they have received through our ministry to them."

***names changed**

ISRAELI COMMANDER TALKS FAITH

Recently, a special person contacted one of our young staff members—his former commander from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), who was his drill officer when he started his military service and had been a very important figure in his formation as a soldier in the IDF. Out of the blue, Commander Levy* texted our staff member in the middle of June and asked him about his faith. Our staff member was not sure exactly what he was asking, so he offered to reconnect over the phone. They talked a few days later and spoke for two hours. Our staff member explained his faith and why he believes that Jesus is the Messiah of the Jewish people. Commander Levy asked a lot of questions, and in the end, they prayed together. He was open to reading the Scriptures and admitted that Jesus could possibly be the one about whom the prophecies are speaking. Please pray for him that Jesus will continue working in his life. Our staff member agreed to set up weekly meetings to go through the Scriptures together to give him a better understanding of who Jesus is and how he can grow closer to Him.

Share the message of Messiah—
through your generous support!



You are helping to evangelize, disciple, and serve Jewish people here in the United States and in eighteen other countries around the world, and we are so grateful! Your heart for Jewish ministry is the reason we want to be sure you are aware of a great way to fuel this passion.

You can donate appreciated assets, such as stocks or property, to Chosen People Ministries. This way you can likely make an even greater impact than if you sell the assets and donate the proceeds.

Just look at the advantages of donating appreciated assets:

- You will receive a charitable giving deduction for the fair market value of the asset (up to 30% of your adjusted gross income) if you have owned the asset more than 12 months.
- You will probably avoid capital gains tax that you would pay on the appreciation if you sold the asset.
- Donating the appreciated assets directly—rather than selling them and then donating the proceeds—allows you to make a BIGGER impact. The chart on the right shows you how.

Contact Cindy Forbes at cforbes@chosenpeople.com or 212-223-2252 ext. 1208.

WE ARE HIRING!

Our Church Ministries office is currently hiring for the position of **Church Ministries Coordinator (CMC).** Primary responsibilities include interacting with pastors, church secretaries, or missions committee chairpersons to secure speaking engagements and presentation opportunities for Chosen People Ministries' missionaries and representatives. Working primarily through the database we provide and the internet, coordinators will have assigned calling areas and access to the missionaries' calendars. Church contact will be made through phone calls, email, and social media. This position is part-time, requiring 20 hours per week. The salary will be based on experience.

The CMC is a position within a Christian/Messianic ministry. Therefore, the individual is expected to maintain the highest level of moral character and faith as outlined in Scripture and to agree with and implement the mission statement of Chosen People Ministries: "to pray for, evangelize, disciple, and serve Jewish people everywhere and to help fellow believers do the same."

To apply, please send your resume and cover letter to Julia Freeman at jfreeman@chosenpeople.com and Joanna Schwarz at jschwarz@chosenpeople.com.

Requirements include:

- Tenacious, positive, persevering, go-getter personality
- Excellent computer skills with the ability to use Word, Excel, and Gmail/Outlook
- Able to consistently reach weekly and monthly goals set by the Church Ministries Manager
- Clear speaking voice, easily understood, excellent telephone skills, use proper grammar in speech and writing
- Self-starter, quick learner, able to trouble-shoot and problem-solve as the need arises
- Ability to research the internet and other sources for leads
- Standard organizational skills and basic office training

Experience in Jewish ministry and marketing/sales as well as a basic understanding of Christian denominations are preferred.

One opening is in our South Florida branch in Boynton Beach. The other position will be performed from one of our branches or remotely from your location if you are not near a branch. There is a mandatory week of training in the Florida office.

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

CHARTER ECFA MEMBER
A higher standard. A higher purpose.

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