

The Chosen People



AUGUST 1981 ISSUE #164-5323

THE AGED OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

*Just Because I Am Old,
Do Not Forget Me,
Do Not Neglect Me.*

*—from a Jewish
prayer book*



The Chosen People

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE is published monthly (except July) as a medium of information concerning the Jewish people, Israel, and the work of the American Board of Missions to the Jews, Inc., 100 Hunt Road, Orangeburg, New York 10962.

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AUGUST 1984, Vol. XCI, No. 1,
THE CHOSEN PEOPLE (ISSN 0164-5323)
published monthly except July.
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CREDITS: Magnum, 1
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"Oy vay, I'm so lonely!" These words spoken by an elderly Jewish lady sitting next to me on a recent flight to Dallas hit a responsive chord in my heart. She wanted to talk. She wanted someone to listen. I laid aside the book I had been reading while working on future messages and articles and I listened.

She was typical of so many elderly Jewish people living in the giant concrete jungles we call American cities. She was widowed, living in a home for senior citizens. She saw her family only once or twice a year and then only when they sent enough money for her to visit them. She could no longer afford to be a member of a synagogue or temple. No rabbi ever visited her. She had no one to give her spiritual counsel or guidance. As she shared the deep things on her heart, I was able to explain to this dear Jewish lady the comfort and faith that I had found in the Lord Jesus.

She listened politely and, again typical of so many elderly Jewish people, blurted out that it was impossible to believe in Jesus and remain Jewish. She went on to list the hatred, persecution, and pogroms which she claimed Christians perpetrated upon the Jewish people. Her heart had grown cold to the things of the Lord. The Bible was a sealed and closed book. Her heart was bitter. She was lonely. She was hurting. She wanted and needed the comfort of close friends and family.

I thought to myself, "There are so many Jewish people just like her. They need a friend who knows Jesus; a friend who can visit with them on a regular basis, who can help and pray with them." I then thought of our faithful missionaries, those for whom you pray and support. Praise God, they do make house calls! They visit Jewish people in senior citizen homes and in convalescent hospitals. They visit Jewish shut-ins and those who are confined to hospital beds. They lovingly and carefully present the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, both by their living example of being someone who is there and by their loving witness for the Lord Jesus.

The problem of loneliness among the Jewish elderly is a very real one. Recent statistics indicate that between 12 and 15.5 percent of the total Jewish population in America is over 65 years of age. These same statistics tell us that by the end of this decade, the over-65 segment will have grown to 16 to 18 percent of the total Jewish population; whereas between 12 and 13.5 percent of the over-65 segment are Gentiles. Indeed there is an urgent need to reach the senior citizens of the Jewish community with the Gospel.

Please pray for our missionaries as they call on these dear Jewish people. Pray that God will remove the bitterness, that He will soften their hearts, and that He will give them eyes to see that Jesus is indeed the Messiah and their personal Savior. Pray as well that our missionaries will have opportunity to visit with the younger family members of these senior citizens. We need to reach them with the Gospel before they too become embittered with the passing of time.

God gives us many opportunities to witness. Please pray that we might be found faithful, redeeming the time. Thank you for your prayers and loving gifts that enable us to reach all Jews everywhere with the Gospel.

Shalom, shalom,

HAROLD A. SEVENS



the aged of the house of israel

“DO NOT FORGET ME.”

By HAROLD A. SEVENER

“I could never accept Jesus as the Messiah. I am a Jew. I was born a Jew and I’ll die a Jew. My father and mother were Jews. They died believing that I would always be a Jew. For their sakes, and for my own sake, I cannot change. I cannot become a Christian. I cannot believe in Jesus.”

These quiet and sincere words came from a Jewish man named Jack, who was struggling with inner turmoil, struggling with many years of tradition and teaching that had told him that Jesus was not the Messiah. I remember him wondering aloud that if, in fact, he accepted Jesus and found salvation, where did that leave his mother and father, who, as far as he knew, died without Christ.

Jack Gingold, a man who had prided himself on being Jewish, had to make a decision. Jack had retired from his business and with his wife had been attending a weekly Bible study that Grace and I held in our home. We’d come to love Jack, his quiet sense of humor, his *Yiddishkeit* (pronounced “Yiddish-kite,” meaning “Jewish culture and vocabulary”), and his probing questions regarding the Bible. Jack and I had prayed together

continued on following page

“Isadore was a great blessing to me as he recited the Hebrew benedictions. But my heart still ached for him to know the Lord. After the Gospel message, Isadore would softly say he wished he could believe in Jesus. But he just couldn’t.”

many times about him receiving Jesus as his Messiah and Savior. Other Christians had prayed with him as well, but somehow Jack could not surrender his heart to the Lord. He was a Jew. To him, Jesus was the Gentile god.

A number of months ago, we received a telephone call telling us that Jack had been rushed to the hospital. He was not expected to live. Christian friends began to pray for him. We then learned that a close friend of Jack’s, a Christian businessman, had met with him just before he entered the hospital. After a time of study in the Word and prayer, Jack had surrendered his heart and had really accepted Jesus as his Messiah.

Jack died, but we do have the assurance that he is now in the presence of his Lord. I often think of Jack and other senior citizens like him in the Jewish community, and wonder what their lives would have been like had they found the Lord Jesus earlier.

Sometimes in our ministry, we tend to concentrate on the younger people because we feel they have a lifetime to serve our Lord. While that is certainly true, there is an urgent need to reach the senior citizens, the elderly, with the Gospel. But this is a difficult ministry and sometimes very discouraging, because in many cases we’re dealing with lives that will soon come to a close. For this reason, there needs to be great patience, love, and understanding.

The story of Jack is very typical of many older Jewish people. Their eyes and ears have been closed to the Gospel message because of tradition and peer pressure, the fate of past family and friends, and persecution and attitudes within the Jewish and Gentile communities.

Reaching the elderly for the Lord is a difficult and challenging ministry, but it pays great dividends. When senior citizens in the Jewish community find their Messiah and Savior, the Lord Jesus, to be real, they

become some of our best missionaries. Others become prayer warriors, while still others become concerned for the salvation of family members. It’s wonderful to see how God can take an aged, embittered heart and transform it into a heart of love.

Some years ago, a Jewish man named Isadore Roth attended our meetings in Los Angeles. He was president of his *schule* (pronounced, “shool,” meaning “synagogue”); he was an Orthodox Jew, a direct descendant of the Pharisees.

His wife had become a believer through the ministry of ABMJ and was baptized by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg. Ida was a radiant believer and continually witnessed to and prayed for her husband. Isadore, however, was adamant. He did not want to believe in Jesus. But

since he attended our meetings from time to time, I would invite him to sit with me under the *Sukka* (pronounced “sook-a,” which means “booth”). The *Sukka* is a kind of makeshift outdoor shelter that the Jewish people build usually at their synagogue during Sukot (the Feast of Tabernacles), commemorating the time when Israel dwelt in booths. In

Los Angeles, we constructed one about 8 by 10 feet with an aluminum frame and walls of bamboo and palm leaves.

Isadore was a great blessing to me as he recited the Hebrew benedictions he knew so well from his Orthodox background. But my heart still ached for him to know the Lord. At the end of the service on this Jewish feast day, after the Gospel message was preached, Isadore would softly say he wished he could believe in Jesus. But he just couldn’t. Like Jack Gingold, tradition, family, peer pressure, and everything else stood in his way.

Then one day shortly after Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, Isadore was taken to the hospital. He was diagnosed as terminally ill with cancer. At the hospital, he told me with tears in his eyes that he had fasted on Yom Kippur. He had prayed and asked for the forgiveness of sin, but he had received no peace, no



Isadore
Roth

“Fay Cohen was also nurtured in Orthodox Judaism. When her daughter became a believer, Fay promptly disowned her. If an acquaintance brought her daughter’s name up in conversation, Fay said she didn’t know anyone by that name.”

assurance of salvation. He did not know if his sins had been forgiven. Once again, I shared the Gospel with Isadore and told him how he could find peace and the forgiveness of sin through the Lord Jesus, but he stubbornly refused to believe.

Now all I could do was pray. I remember squeezing his hand, earnestly praying that God would give him more time; enough time to make a decision for the Lord.

A few days later, one of our missionaries, Ken Reeves, along with Isadore’s wife, Ida, paid him a visit. This time, Isadore’s stubbornness had melted away. He was ready to receive the truth. Isadore prayed to accept the Lord Jesus right on his hospital bed.

The change in his life was miraculous and instantaneous. He began to tell everyone about Jesus—doctors, nurses, patients, anyone who would listen! He became a missionary in that hospital ward. A few months later, God called him home, but for those few brief months, Isadore Roth was God’s messenger in that hospital.

And yet, naturally speaking, what hope would we have held that Isadore, steeped in the traditions of Orthodox Judaism, would even *consider* the Person of Jesus? That’s why I tell believers who are concerned for the salvation of elderly parents and grandparents to never give up praying and sharing the Word. It never returns unto Him void.

Fay Cohen was also nurtured in Orthodox Judaism. When her daughter became a believer, Fay promptly disowned her. Fay refused to see her daughter or her grandchildren. If an acquaintance brought her daughter’s name up in conversation, Fay said she didn’t know anyone by that name.

Then Helen Graber, one of our missionaries, somehow won Fay’s trust. Helen sensed that no amount of persuasion could convince Fay to accept the Lord, but her loving witness continued.

After several years, Fay softened—but only enough to

reestablish contact with her daughter. The issue of faith was still a closed book. Fay did, however, promise her daughter that she would attend one of our Bible classes. At her first meeting, she was surprised at how much she was drawn to the friendly faces and the fellowship.

For a year, Fay attended our Tuesday night classes. But she still had not accepted the Lord.



Fay
Cohen

What would it take to bring Fay to Jesus? She had certainly heard the Word, and Christians were praying for her. But Fay needed a personal touch from the Lord.

For over two years, Fay had suffered from severe arthritis in her right shoulder and arm. The pain and stiffness made it impossible for her to even comb her hair. She had tried most of the prescribed medication, but nothing helped.

One morning Fay awoke, got dressed, and proceeded to comb her hair. All at once, she realized she was doing the impossible. Her arthritis was gone! In her bedroom she fell on her knees, thanked God, and invited Jesus the

Messiah into her heart. From that moment,

Fay’s life was dramatically changed. She joined a church and became active in its program. She joined our staff in Los Angeles, spending her days and evenings witnessing for our Lord.

Just the presence of a beautiful Jewish grandmother like *Mommelleh* Cohen at our meetings blessed me. (*Mommelleh* is a term of affection in Jewish households.) It reminded me of the special role senior citizens like Anna the prophetess who “was of a great age” played at the birth of our Lord (cf. Lk. 2:36-38).

The fact that Jewish senior citizens like Fay, Isadore and Jack could and did accept the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and Savior gave credibility to the ministry. They were a testimony to the truth of the Gospel to doubters and young Jewish believers.

The stories of Jack, Isadore and Fay do not end here. Each in their own way made an indelible impression on

My mother came to this country when she was many stories about my grandmother, there was

my life and the lives of countless other believers and unbelievers alike.

Yes, there are great rewards in working with senior citizens. More and more I'm impressed with the sovereignty of God in the gifts that He gives to men. There is no age requirement, nor does it make any difference how frail or vibrant the body may be. When one comes to know the Lord Jesus, they are empowered by His Spirit.

There is a great untapped harvest, a great resource of power among the senior citizens in the Jewish community. Pray that our missionaries will have an effective witness as they reach out to them in love with the Gospel. □

"Just Because I Am Old, Do Not Forget Me, Do Not Neglect Me."

These words from a standard Jewish prayer book are the silent cry of untold numbers of aged people in America, a great number of unreached people right in our own back yard.

Yet God hears this prayer, and as you see from many of this month's *Chosen People* stories, He honors it. Many times your ABMJ missionaries have had the privilege of going to these people and offering what might be their last opportunity to hear God's Word.

We would like you to come along with us to the hearts and homes of these people. We'll take you with us to nursing homes and to street corners, to death beds and to Bible studies, wherever God has scattered the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

If you are not already part of our prayer and support family, please accept this invitation to join us. God has already said He will not forsake His ancient chosen people.

Are You Telling Grandmother

By ELAINE FENCHEL
ABMJ, New York City

"Do you mean to tell me that my darling grandmother is in hell?" So often when witnessing to Jewish people, especially young people, I am asked this. I understand the question, and in reply I often tell a little story about my own grandmother.

My grandmother died in Russia during World War II. I never met her, and I automatically assumed she had never heard of the Lord. My mother came to this country when she was a young woman, and though she told me many stories about my grandmother and growing up in Russia, there was one story I didn't hear until after I accepted the Lord.

When I became a believer and started working for the ABMJ at our former office on 72nd Street in Manhattan, my mother came to visit me. She brought me lunch and, though she didn't say it, she probably wanted to see what this Jewish mission her daughter was working for was all about. She was startled, as she put it, to see "it's so Jewish!" It was shortly afterward that she told me the following story about my grandmother.

One day in the early 1900s, my grandmother had to visit a dentist in the big city of Kishinev. She was gone several days, and when she returned

home she told everyone that in Kishinev she saw a building with a large window that displayed a Torah, a Jewish candelabra, and other Jewish artifacts.

In czarist Russia, well-known for its anti-Semitism, these items were rarely displayed. But what was really strange was the open book that was also on display. It was a New Testament! My grandmother had apparently stumbled upon a place where Jews who believe in Jesus as the Messiah came to study and pray.

I couldn't contain my curiosity. "Was Grandma angry when she saw this?" I blurted out, expecting the worst. "No," my mother replied nonchalantly. "She thought it was interesting."

Did my grandmother really happen upon what could have been perhaps the only Jewish Christian congregation in all of Russia? Maybe she was confused and simply returned home with nothing more than a *bubbeh miceh* (pronounced "bub-eh mice-eh;" in Yiddish, "a grandmother's story, a fanciful tale").

Sometime after this, I began to think about grandmothers (and grandfathers) dying without the Lord, when I came across a book called *Famous Hebrew Christians*. One particular chapter was about a Jewish man from Kishinev (the city my grandmother visited) named Joseph Rabinowitz,

a young woman, and though she told me one story I didn't hear until after I accepted the Lord.

Me That My Darling Is In Hell?

who visited the Holy Land in the late 1800s.

While climbing the hill near Golgotha, the words of Isaiah 53 came to him, and he knew in that instant that Jesus was the One spoken of who was wounded for our transgressions. Rabinowitz returned to Kishinev and established a congregation of Jewish believers in Jesus. This was during the time my grandmother lived near and visited Kishinev.

I'm not saying that my grandmother was a believer, that she was a member of Rabinowitz's congregation, or that she had even met Rabinowitz. What I do find interesting are the "odds," if you will, of a Jewish woman in czarist Russia stumbling across a Jewish Christian congregation.

What a coincidence that after my mind was gripped by the question of grandparents dying without the Lord, I should find a book confirming the existence of such a congregation—the tiniest shred of evidence that maybe my grandmother did know the Lord. I've seen enough "coincidences" in my life to know when the Lord is working. Then maybe again He wasn't. The story does prove, though, that we don't always know the details of another's life.

When I found the Lord, my children were away at summer camp. If I had died before they returned, they would

never have known of my new birth. My grandson, Joshua, would wonder if I were in heaven just the way I wonder about my grandmother.

The ways of God are far above our human understanding. Perhaps the view to take is one I posed to a young woman who was worried about her dead grandmother. "How would you like to end up in hell," I asked her, "only to find out that your grandmother is in heaven? First make sure you are going to be with the Lord. Then trust the Lord for your grandmother. After all, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right' [Gen. 18:25]?" □

Elaine is still sharing the Messiah in a nursing home with her own mother, 93. Won't you join Elaine in praying for her mom's salvation?



NEW LIFE FOR OLD HEARTS

By **FRANK POTTER**
Missionary, Rockland County, N.Y.

Their names come to me as easily as those of my own children: Anna, Sam, Mimi, and Victor, just to name a few.

Who are these people, and why are their names important to me—and to you? These dear souls are a very small, but significant cross section of the elderly Jewish residents—some sick and dying—of the nursing and adult homes in the Rockland County area of New York.

As you might guess, people like Anna and Victor are here primarily because their families can no longer



care for them. All too often, however, that means total abandonment, because they have become a burden and an imposition on the families they raised and nurtured and for whom they sacrificed so much in their productive years.

I have commiserated much with these beautiful mothers and fathers as part of my ministry to the elderly in nursing homes and homes for the elderly. Although my heart has often been heavy as I ministered to them, there has also been much fruit and moments of ecstatic joy.

I think of the blessing that will always be mine for having known Louis, who was a diabetic and an amputee. Louis had also been crippled by a severe stroke. His speech was slurred, and when I first began to visit and share the Gospel with him, I could hardly understand his replies.

Then as I tuned in more carefully each week, I began to decipher his utterances and communicate with him in a more meaningful way. Louis placed his faith in Messiah Jesus, and I continued to minister to him from the Word of God until he went to be with the Lord.

Then there was Jack, a wonderfully warm and beautiful man. A grandfather many times over, he was terminally ill with a severe kidney disease. What wonderful conversations we had and times of sharing together in the Psalms, which he so dearly loved. Jack too gave his heart to Messiah Jesus and several months later joined Louis in the presence of his Lord.

But the joy of introducing these men to their Messiah was tempered by the heartbreak of my uncertainty about Nathan. For six months or so I had witnessed to him and shared with him from the Scriptures. Then one day Nathan was rushed to the coronary care unit of a local hospital. I remember standing over him while he struggled to survive with the aid of a respirator. He was in a semicomatose state.

“I have commiserated much with these beautiful mothers and fathers as part of my ministry to the elderly in nursing homes and homes for the elderly. Although my heart has often been heavy as I ministered to them, there has also been much fruit and moments of ecstatic joy.”

I'll never forget Nathan's eyes as I told him one final time of Messiah's love for him and his need to be cleansed, forgiven, and saved. I watched the life force slowly and systematically slip away as Nathan entered an eternity from which there would be no return, no second chance.

I prayed the sinner's prayer with Nathan, and hoped that he had prayed it with me and had meant it in his heart. As I left the hospital to continue my rounds, all I could think of was the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. I sat in my car and wept and hoped that Nathan had not met that same fate.

Yes, there is joy and sorrow in reaching out to the aged “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” The rewards are indescribable and they are also available to you! These precious souls are all around you—in your neighborhood,



In college, Frank searched for his Jewish roots and talked to rabbis but didn't find peace until his wife-to-be shared the Messiah with him.

your local hospital and nursing home, your city or town.

Please seek the Lord in your own heart, and see if He might lead you to minister to these abandoned, forgotten, and disenfranchised people for whom Jesus came to earth to die. Remember what Jesus said: “For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10).

These people certainly are lost and don't have much time left to hear the message of salvation that you and I need to bring them. Ask the Lord of the harvest to use you in this needy and often neglected mission field. Sow the seeds of Messiah's love and reap a blessing. □

Perhaps you are wondering what you can do in this crucial ministry to the Jewish aged. The Jewish calendar is a traditional item in many Jewish households, especially those of the elderly. As next month signals the start of another Jewish year, we have prepared a beautiful Jewish calendar with full-color pictures of Israel, a real Gospel witness through the personal testimonies of Jewish believers, and a Messianic portion from the Talmud for each month. It makes an impressive and appropriate gift and a “foot in the door,” as many of our missionaries hand deliver them to Jewish homes. You can order one or more of these calendars for yourself, your family, and your Jewish friends with the coupon elsewhere in this issue.



PORTRAIT *of a* MISSIONARY COUPLE

STEVE AND LISA CAGAN

"To my 12-year-old mind, the synagogue was a holy, awesome place," Steve Cagan recalls. "One day as I finished my lessons in preparation for my Bar Mitzvah, I walked into the sanctuary. With the eternal light glowing at one end, it seemed to be the 'gate to God.' I walked through the rows of scarlet-covered seats. Although they were empty, they would soon

hold my family and friends, who would be there to listen to my reading of the Torah. On that day I would be proud but nervous. But there in that synagogue alone, I wanted to talk to God just for a moment.

"Hello there, God. This is Steve. I guess You already know me, but even though I've learned all my prayers, I don't really feel like I know You."

"I don't remember exactly what I said, but even now, 16 years later, I still remember that I wanted to know God.

"Years later when I first heard the Gospel, I wrote to the rabbi of that synagogue: 'Tell me, what should I make of all that I've heard about Jesus? Can He possibly be the Messiah?' When I got the rabbi's reply, I realized that the answer to knowing God would not be found in the synagogue. The rabbi seemed to be discussing doctrines that were abstract and impersonal. The Christians who told me of Jesus spoke of a living and real God. I began reading the New Testament, and by the time I got to Matthew 8, I realized I had found God at last. Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, the only way any person, Jew or Gentile, could know God."

Steve and his wife, Lisa, are two of ABMJ's newest missionaries. Steve is a musician with a degree in music education from the University of Bridgeport. He came to Christ while he was traveling with the ever-popular "Up with People" musical troupe. From the time he was saved, he knew he wanted to be a missionary, but it wasn't until he was studying at Multnomah School of the Bible that he realized God was calling him to Jewish missions.

"I was always a little frightened of Jewish missions," Steve explains. "I remembered how hostile I had been when I heard the Gospel, at once being both attracted to the message and repelled by the implications of accepting the Lord. However, while I was studying for a graduate certificate in Bible at Multnomah, it slowly began

to dawn on me that I could be an especially effective witness to my own people. Precisely because I understood their resistance and hostility, I knew that I could help break through these barriers. It wasn't until I attended a missions conference at school, however, that I told God I was willing to go wherever He wanted me. At the end of the conference, we had a challenge to stand up if we would go wherever God sends us. When I stood, it was to present myself to God. By that time, I knew He was sending me to the Jewish people. Heartbreaks and heartaches included, I was going to my own stiff-necked people, and for the first time I had a real joy about that decision."

"It was different for me," Lisa explains. "I grew up in a Christian home, and my family was always interested in missions. Dad was a minister of music, so I knew the pressures of being in full-time ministry. Still, I wanted to go wherever God wanted me. In high school, I became aware of Jewish missions when I met a number of Jewish youngsters. I could see that they had a different culture than I did. They reacted to the Gospel differently

"I began reading the New Testament, and by the time I got to Matthew 8, I realized I had found God at last. Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, the only way any person, Jew or Gentile, could know God."

— Steve

from others I had known. There was a sort of hostility and unwillingness and at the same time a special receptivity. A friend lived with us for a while whose father was Jewish, and I realized from knowing her that Jewish people weren't likely to come to faith one, two, three. However, when she did accept Christ, I felt a special excitement and thrill that made me realize how much I loved this field of ministry."

Even before Steve and Lisa got married, they agreed they were both called to be missionaries to the Jews. Lisa had also attended Multnomah,

where she graduated with an associate of arts degree in biblical studies. While she was at school, she was very active in the Jewish prayer group. Like Steve, Lisa is very musical. She plays the piano and guitar and has written a number of songs.

Both Steve and Lisa were excited about becoming full-time missionaries and applied for staff positions on the American Board of Missions to the Jews shortly after being married in December 1982. They were told, however, that they would have to go through the special Summer Training and Evangelism Program (S.T.E.P.) the next summer before their applications could be accepted.

"Frankly," Lisa admits, "I was a little put off. Both Steve and I had a lot of Bible education, and we both had experience in witnessing to Jewish people. We planned to spend the summer of 1983 in Israel, and the thought of canceling our trip just to go on a witnessing and training program was frustrating."

S.T.E.P. was a surprise to both of the Cagans. Despite Steve's background, he discovered there was a lot about

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his own Jewishness that he didn't understand. Lisa felt that her Christian upbringing taught her many of the things she learned in the S.T.E.P. classroom sessions, but the experience she gained on the streets was eye-opening.

Steve says, "Living like a missionary every day showed me a lot about what being a full-time missionary is like. Meeting so many people who come from such a wide range of interests was also a lesson. I was always challenged and constantly needed to turn to God. If I hadn't been committed to full-time ministry before S.T.E.P., I would have been by the end of the program."

Lisa adds, "I saw the special problems and blessings involved for a Gentile in Jewish missions. One man I witnessed to in Birmingham, Alabama, was a special blessing. He was Jewish and not at all hostile to hearing the Gospel. At the same time, he wasn't ready to believe and accept. At one point in our conversation, he asked, 'Are you trying to get me to convert?'"

"I was able to say, 'No, you don't need to convert. As a matter of fact, I as a Gentile had to be converted to the God of Israel. Now I'm bringing His message back to His chosen people. You only need to return to the God of your fathers.' He was so moved when he heard that, it was like a light that he hadn't seen before. I realized that being a Gentile in Jewish missions didn't have to be a disadvantage."

Steve and Lisa successfully completed the S.T.E.P. program. They are now explaining their work in various churches before they go to their permanent assignment in New York. We hope you will pray for the Cagans and for the other men and women who are serving the Lord in this mission field. We believe that as long as God provides friends and family like you as part of our mission, along with dedicated evangelists like the Cagans, His Word will surely bear fruit among the Jewish people. □

PASSOVER LORD'S SU

By DR. DANIEL FUCHS

During our Lord's ministry, Passover was a festive occasion. At no other time of the year was Jerusalem so joyously thronged with Jews from all over the world. It was the first of three annual feasts during which all males living in Israel had to appear before the Lord in the Temple. The other two were the Feasts of Weeks (Pentecost) and Tabernacles, but Passover held an additional fascination. No matter where a Jew lived, Jerusalem was the holy city, and the highest wish of all Jews everywhere was to walk in the inner court of the Temple to sacrifice the Passover, to pray, and to listen to the Levitical choir.

"In all his wanderings the Jew had not seen a city like his own Jerusalem. Not Antioch in Asia, not even imperial Rome herself, excelled it in architectural splendour. Nor has there been, either in ancient or modern times, a sacred building equal to the Temple, whether for situation or magnificence; nor yet have there been festive throngs like those joyous hundreds of thousands who, with their hymns of praise, crowded towards the city on the eve of a Passover" (Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 6).

It was a joyous time for all Israel. From all parts of the land and from all over the world the festive pilgrims came in bands, singing psalms and bringing with them burnt and peace offerings as the Lord had blessed them. No one would appear before the Lord empty-handed.

We have no means of knowing definitely how many Jews were in the area of Jerusalem on any given Passover. The Jewish historian Josephus says the number of lambs slain at one Passover was 256,000, but this number seems incredible when we realize that there were at least ten persons for each lamb!

In any event, Jerusalem and its environs were besieged by pilgrims from all over the world. Most of these pilgrims camped outside Jerusalem. Every inn in the area was filled to capacity. Those who were fortunate enough to get lodging in the city were given their

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accommodations without cost. In return they left behind the skins of their Passover lambs and the vessels they had used for the Passover meal.

Our Lord's parents "went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover" (cf. Lk. 2:41). We know that our Lord Himself kept the Passover feast, and the Last Supper was held in the upper room that had been made ready by the owner for Him (cf. Mk. 14:12-16).

But not all the pilgrims went to Jerusalem to pray! The Passover was also a wonderful business opportunity. Merchants from around the world offered spices, herbs, and condiments for sale. Jerusalem was always a thriving marketplace, but especially at Passover. The markets were jammed with pilgrims. It was at the cattle market, however, that the crowds were largest and the bedlam the greatest as sheep and goats were driven to the market and put up for sale.

Preparations for the Passover

In the days of our Lord, it was customary for the Roman procurator to travel from Caesarea to Jerusalem weeks before Passover to prepare for any uprising that might occur. His headquarters was set up in Herod's palace, which was actually a wall-encircled fortress with towers and ramparts.

Preparations for Passover began one month early on the fifteenth of Adar (February-March), when bridges and roads were repaired for use by the pilgrims. Two weeks before Passover (as well as two weeks before Pentecost and Tabernacles), the flocks were tithed and the Temple treasury chests were publicly opened and emptied. We learn from John 11:55 that when Passover "was nigh at hand . . . many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves." We believe that Paul was applying this custom to our Lord's Supper when he said in 1 Corinthians 11:27, 28, "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

In the homes, the special preparations for Passover began on the evening of the thirteenth of Nisan. (Since the Jewish day was always reckoned from evening to evening, this was actually the start of the fourteenth of Nisan.) At that time the father of the household lighted a wax taper, took a spoon and a brush made of several feathers, and carefully searched out and removed all the leaven from the home. Leaven is a symbol of sin in the Scriptures, and it was to be completely removed from the home at Passover. This search was made in complete silence.

Paul referred to this custom in 1 Corinthians 5:7: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Rabbinic tradition interprets this custom prophetically according to Zephaniah 1:12, when God will "search Jerusalem with candles."

Next on the agenda was the selection of the Passover lamb. It must be free from any blemish and at least eight days old but not more than one year old. In addition, it could not be eaten by 1 person alone. There had to be between 10 to 20 people in a group to eat the Passover meal.

The group at the Lord's Passover supper included Him and His disciples. While our Lord tarried outside Jerusalem with the other disciples, Peter and John were sent to prepare the Passover. They purchased their lamb before joining the festive pilgrims, some of whom were leading, others carrying, the sheep to be sacrificed.

The first of three divisions of the worshippers was then admitted to the Court of the Priests. The massive gates were closed behind them, after which the Levites sounded a threefold blast and the sacrifice began. It was an impressive scene. The priests stood in two rows holding gold and silver bowls.

As each Israelite slew his lamb, its blood was caught up by a priest who handed it to a colleague, receiving in return an empty bowl. When each bowl of blood reached the priest at the altar, he threw it at the base of the altar. Throughout the sacrifice, the Levitical choir led the people in singing Psalms 113 to 118. This was the "Egyptian Hallel," known as such because it commemorated the exodus from Egypt. The Psalms were sung antiphonally; that is, the choir sang the first line and the worshippers responded. Psalm 113 began,

CHOIR: "Hallelu Yah." ["Praise ye the Lord."]

PEOPLE: "Hallelu Yah." ["Praise ye the Lord."]

CHOIR: "Praise [Hallelu], O ye servants of the Lord."

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PEOPLE: "Hallelu Yah."

CHOIR: "Praise [Hallelu] the name of the Lord" and so forth.

It was the Hallelujah chorus! If the entire *Hallel* was completed before the sacrifices of a division were finished, it was repeated a second or even a third time. The first division of worshippers was then dismissed, and the second entered. The same ritual was repeated, and then once more for the final division of worshippers, who were called "Lazybones." When the whole service was concluded, incense was burned, the lamps were trimmed for the night, and the priests cleaned up the court.

As the sun descended on Jerusalem, many thousands of Jews rushed from the Temple through the city streets bearing their slain lamb carefully wrapped in its own skin. As darkness descended on the city, Peter and John passed courtyards of homes as the owners lighted Passover ovens, portable clay stoves. They could smell the aroma of the sheep, spitted on fragrant pomegranate wood, roasting in the ovens. Relatives and friends from everywhere had gathered. The rich invited the poor to celebrate the Passover, because every Israelite had been poor at the Passover in Egypt. All partook together—rich and poor, bond and free, the aged and little children.

"It was probably as the sun was beginning to decline

in the horizon that Jesus and the other ten disciples descended once more over the Mount of Olives into the Holy City. Before them lay Jerusalem in her festive attire. All around pilgrims were hastening towards it. White tents dotted the sward [grass-covered soil], gay with the bright flowers of early spring, or peered out from the gardens and the darker foliage of the olive plantations. From the gorgeous Temple buildings, dazzling in their snow-white marble and gold, on which the slanting rays of the sun were reflected, rose the smoke of the altar of burnt offering. These courts were now crowded with eager worshippers, offering for the last time, in the real sense, their Paschal lambs. The streets must have been thronged with strangers, and the flat roofs covered with eager gazers, who either feasted their eyes with a first sight of the Sacred City for which they had so often longed, or else once more rejoiced in view of the well-remembered localities. It was the last day-view which the Lord had of the Holy City—till His resurrection! Only once more in the approaching night of His betrayal was He to look upon it in the pale light of the full moon. He was going forward to 'accomplish His death' in Jerusalem; to fulfill type and prophecy, and to offer Himself up as the true Passover Lamb—'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' " (Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple*, pp. 194-95). □

Author's Note: This series of articles on the Passover will be concluded in a future issue of *The Chosen People*.

An Important Reminder

Drafting one's own will or trust without professional help is a practice fraught with *extreme hazard*. In fact, experienced counselors routinely advise against it despite the ready availability of preprinted forms intended to encourage the practice.

How many times we have seen the unintended results of a handwritten will prepared by someone who either did not seek counsel or ignored this warning! Here's a case in point:

Ruth had a modest estate. Not having executed a new will since being widowed several years previously, she wrote one herself using a preprinted form. Intending her entire estate to be shared equally by several Christian ministries rather than by her two adult children, who had no financial need, she meticulously recorded the name and address of each organization.

Unfortunately, because she lacked knowledge of the law, Ruth failed to include two essential provisions in her new will.

After her death, Ruth's sons, being of a different persuasion than their mother, retained an attorney who petitioned the probate court on their behalf to have their mother's will set aside. Their petition was granted, Ruth's estate passed under the law of intestacy (i.e., as though she had no will), and the sons divided the estate between themselves.

Thus, Ruth's sincere desire to advance God's Kingdom on earth was unhappily thwarted. Neither ABMJ nor any of the other ministries Ruth named in her will received any part of her estate, contrary to her wishes.

For help with the preparation or revision of your will, you may consult an attorney yourself or, if you prefer, we can offer you sound legal guidance in this important process. Please let us know if we can be of service. Write to the President, ABMJ, Box 2000, Orangeburg, NY 10962. □

Questions and Answers

By GARY DERECHINSKY

QUESTION: What are the origins of the names *Hebrew*, *Israelite*, and *Jew*?

ANSWER: In the Old Testament, the chosen people are referred to as Hebrews, Israelites, and Jews. Each term has its own distinct origin and significance.

The name *Hebrew* is first mentioned in Genesis 14:13, where Abraham is called "the Hebrew" (see also Gen. 40:15; Ex. 3:18). The etymology of the word is disputed, but it is generally believed to consist of one of the two following meanings: Either the word is derived from Abraham's ancestor, *Eber* (a name meaning "the other side" or "across") (cf. Gen. 11:10-14) and thus associates Abraham as "descending from Eber," or the word is derived from the verbal form *Abar* (meaning

"to cross over") and thus identifies Abraham as the one who "crossed over" the Euphrates from Haran to Canaan in migration with his family to the land that the Lord showed him.

The term *Israelite* is derived from the name *Israel*, which had been given to Jacob after his struggle with the angel at Peniel (cf. Gen. 32:28 and also Hos. 12:4). The 12 sons of Jacob became the progenitors of the 12 tribes, and this name passed on to these tribes. After the exodus, the chosen people are commonly referred to as *Israelites*.

After the death of King Solomon, the United Kingdom consisting of the 12 tribes of Jacob became divided. The 2 tribes of Benjamin and Judah formed the kingdom of Judah in the south. The remaining 10 tribes formed

a northern kingdom called *Israel*. Thus the term *Israelite* during this period came to be used in a more restricted sense to denote those inhabitants making up this northern kingdom. However, even then the application of the name *Israel* to both kingdoms was never completely lost (cf. Isa. 8:14; Rom. 11:1, 2).

The term *Jew*, on the other hand, is derived from the tribal name of Judah (meaning "a praiser of God") and refers to a subject of the Kingdom of Judah. It is clear from Esther 3:6, 10 and Daniel 3:8, 12 that the term *Jew* was applied to all the chosen people during the Babylonian captivity (586-535 B.C.). It continued to be used after the captivity (cf. Ezra 4:12; 5:5; Neh. 1:2; 2:16; 5:1, 8, 17) and on into the first century, as evidenced by New Testament usage (cf. Jn. 4:9; Acts 18:2, 24).

So today, when we speak of a Hebrew, an Israelite, or a Jew, we are referring to the same group of human beings, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

For more information about introducing your Jewish friends to the Messiah, please contact a regional director near you.



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