

The Chosen People

NOVEMBER 1984 ISSN 0164-5323



ANALIA
Her Testimony Spoke
Beyond The Grave

ABMJ AROUND THE WORLD
Also in this issue: Law, Grace and The
Jewish Believer • Sukot

From the President



NOVEMBER 1984

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.

I am amazed at how many people think that the American Board of Missions to the Jews is a ministry reaching only the American Jew. Perhaps it is because of our name, the American Board.

In reality, however, the ABMJ is an international ministry reaching around the world. We have workers in Canada, in Paris, France; Jerusalem, Israel; Athens, Greece; and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In Canada, Winnie Marriner is actively seeking to reach the Jews of Montreal. Last month, after hearing the Gospel for about two years, a young Orthodox Jew received the Lord. In Toronto and Hamilton, workers from our Chicago office maintain an active witnessing and discipleship program.

In Europe, I'm excited about the ministry of Jacques Guggenheim, our missionary in Paris. Jacques translates our materials into French and distributes Bibles, tracts, and Messianic literature throughout Western Europe. There is a growing Jewish population in Western Europe that needs to hear the Gospel. Pray for Jacques. Pray that God will enable us to place more workers in Europe.

Since the Gospel is "to the Jew first and also to the Greek," we did not want to neglect the Greek-speaking Jews in Athens. It has been a joy for me to accompany our missionary Demetrius Papanikolaou as he visits downtown Athens shop by shop and introduces me to the Jewish shopkeepers. He knows them all personally. He gives them tracts, Bibles, and Messianic literature in the Greek language. Amazingly, they are open to Demetrius' loving witness.

Historically we were one of the first missions to be recognized in Israel. We praise God for Leah Goren and her faithfulness in ministering the Word there. In the months ahead, I'll be sharing with you an exciting new ministry that we are planning for Israel. God has raised up some very special workers! They are Israeli citizens studying the Word of God and participating in our missionary outreach in the United States. They'll soon be returning to Israel to begin a new type of ministry. Because of security reasons, we can't share their names with you, but pray that their ministry will go unhindered. Israel is a strategic mission field.

In this particular issue of the magazine, you'll see how God is drawing His people to Himself in the unlikeliest of places, even high in the Andes Mountains (see page 11)!

Yes, ABMJ is more than a mission simply to the American Jews. It is the ABMJ—Always Bringing Messiah to the Jews. It is a worldwide ministry with a vision to see the lost sheep of the house of Israel come to a saving knowledge of Jesus as their Messiah, their Lord, and their Savior.

Shalom, shalom!

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Law, Grace, & the Jewish Believer

By Dr. DANIEL GOLDBERG
Regional Director
Los Angeles, CA

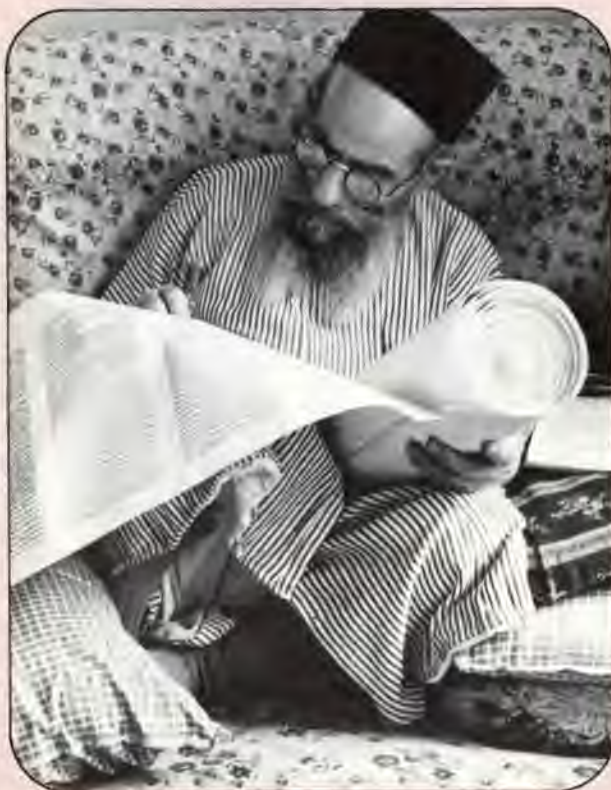
PART II

Last month we explored the Law of God which, though never written to the Gentile nations or today's Christian, still holds great purpose. The Law was revelatory concerning the nature of God, the sinfulness of man, and the grace of the coming Messiah. It was a restrainer, therapeutic in preventing men from carrying out their sinful intents. The Law was a sanctifying force, setting aside Israel as a peculiar treasure for God. The Law was governmental for the people of Israel, providing maxims of order and priority. And the Law was God's perfect, objective standard of righteousness, the moral qualities of which are not affected by dispensations.

Although most Christians understand much about the moral precepts of the Law and have an understanding of what the Law cannot do—namely, justification, regeneration, or purification—they have a misconception that sometimes hinders spiritual understanding.

Man's Ability to Keep the Law

It is erroneous to think that man cannot meet the simplest demands of the Law. Some people have concluded from Romans 7 that man is basically unable to keep the Law. But



A scribe from Yemen repairs a Torah scroll.

“The Old Testament exalted holy garments, holy places, and holy days. The New Testament has liberated us from these external elements.”

it is contrary to Scriptural truth to believe that Paul had been a consistent lawbreaker and violator of the Ten Commandments. In fact, Paul testified that he had lived in good conscience before God. To the pious Jew, which he was, this meant that he had observed the legal requirements of the moral law.

The question is this: Is man able or unable to perform the duties set forth in the moral law? If he is able, what is the relationship between ability and responsibility?

Everywhere the Law of God commands obedience. It holds men accountable for lawbreaking. Men are punished for their failure to keep the Law. If the Law could not be kept, God has laid upon mankind an impossible moral task, then punished them for failing to do the impossible. Such a teaching contradicts Scripture and outrages human reason. Throughout the entire Old Testament, the writers take for granted that Israel had the ability to keep the Law. The condemnation lay in the fact that, having the ability, the nation refused to obey.

This is the inner nature of sin throughout the ages—a willful refusal to obey God. Ability and responsibility must go together. If one assumes there is a basic *inability* to keep the Law of God, then *responsibility* for breaking the Law would never be accepted. No man is responsible for

continued on following page

that which he is not able to perform. But God never demanded that which was humanly impossible. He did not command that which men were unable to perform. Just as no father would command his three-year-old son to carry a fifty-pound sack of potatoes five miles down the road, neither has God demanded the impossible from man.

It is important to recognize this. The writers of the New Testament, as well as great preachers throughout the Church age, have followed this godly understanding. One cannot produce conviction upon sinners by telling them they sinned because they could not help it. Rather, *mighty conviction comes upon the human soul when sinners realize that they have refused to obey that which they were well able to understand and perform.* When one realizes his own rebellion against God, he can see the grace which has come to him.

Law and Grace

Because Law and grace are intertwined, it is important to ask, "Is the Christian under the Law?" We have already discussed that the Christian is not obligated to the ceremonial law nor to the civil law of Moses. Now we must further understand that Christians are also not under the Mosaic system. However, since the moral law reflects the moral attributes of God, those commands do serve today and will be valid for ages to come. Lying and perjury will be just as sinful in the millennium as they are now and as they were in Old Testament times.

No, Christians are not under a legal system; they are under grace. No, Christians should not strive to observe the Law; a life begun in faith must be walked in faith. Yet, the



“Throughout the entire Old Testament, the writers take for granted that Israel had the ability to keep the Law. The condemnation lay in the fact that, having the ability, the nation refused to obey.”

Christian should realize that the New Testament does contain laws. Even love is in constant need of definite and detailed guidance. This is the law a Christian follows: the law that comes from respect, love, and a true relationship with a holy, moral God, a God who loves us even while we are in rebellion, a God of infinite grace.

The Jewish Believer and the Law

Is there a distinction between the Jewish and Gentile believer in Jesus Christ in their relationships to the Law? No! The Jewish believer and the Gentile Christian are both under the New Covenant in the Church age. Neither Jew nor Gentile can expect to follow God unless he understands his need for grace.

There is, however, historical, prophetic, and typological significance attached to certain observances which will be more meaningful to the Jewish believer than to his Gentile brother. For instance, Jewish families are well acquainted with the Passover. Many Jewish believers want to continue the observance when they come to faith. The Passover, to them, illustrates God's mighty power in historical deliverance for Israel. Paul declares, "... Christ [is] our Passover" (1 Cor. 5:7). A *seder* (Passover) meal may be charged with evangelical tones in declaring a greater redemption than that which came from Egypt. It is the declaration of freedom in the Messiah, whose blood was shed to enforce a New Covenant relationship.

Likewise, Yom Kippur might be observed stressing the full-orbed New Testament revelation of reconciliation (cf. Rom. 5:10, 11) instead of annual atonement through animal sacrifices. Jewish Christians who choose to observe Yom Kippur worship the Messiah

who is the Lamb of God slain in the sovereignty of God before the foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:19, 20; Rev. 13:8).

When one has a heart set toward God he can see the Holy Days as pictures of the fulfillment of prophecy in Christ, just as one who reads the Law can see it as a picture of a moral God.

The Sabbath

What then of the Sabbath day? What is the Sabbath to the Christian? What is the true day of worship? The Sabbath day points to the old creation. At the conclusion of the old creation (that of the heavens and the earth), God initiated the important relationship between labor and rest. A Sabbath day of rest was enjoined upon mankind. The command to keep the Sabbath did not find its origin with the other nine Mosaic injunctions (cf. Ex. 20). Moses cautioned the Hebrew people at Mount Sinai to "remember the Sabbath day." A day of rest for both Jew and Gentile has never been divinely abolished. Even in modern society, weekly events seem to revolve around the "six days of labor."

The first day of the week points to the new creation. With the establishment of the Church at Pentecost as God's new creation, the first day of the week gained special significance. Messiah rose from the dead on the first day of the week (Lk. 24:1) and has become the firstfruits of a glorious resurrection to follow (1 Cor. 15:20-29). It is no wonder that early Hebrew Christians worshipped on the first day of the week. They celebrated God's new creation and rejoiced in their risen Lord. Nevertheless, every day is a holy day for believers.

The Old Testament exalted holy



“When one has a heart set toward God he can see the Holy Days as pictures of the fulfillment of prophecy in Christ, just as one who reads the Law can see it as a picture of a moral God.”

garments, holy places, and holy days. The New Testament has liberated us from these external elements. Now the emphasis is spiritual worship within a spiritual sphere. Already the hour has arrived when God seeks "true worshippers [who] shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:23).

In matters of practice, there must be liberty allotted to believers of variant backgrounds, both Jewish and Gentile. Christian liberty and loyal hearts saturated with the Messiah's love toward all the brethren will surely break down the walls of partition, seeing that we are one body in Christ (cf. Eph. 2:13-16).

Liberty, loyalty, love, and common sense are guides which, when submitted to Christ, produce maturity and a strong body of Christ for the glory of His Kingdom. □

We hope you have enjoyed Daniel Goldberg's two-part series, "Law, Grace, and the Jewish Believer." We welcome your comments and thoughts on this series. —Editor

Errata

It has come to our attention that the association of The New York Times with the name of its former reporter McCandlish Phillips in our September 1984 issue may have been misleading.

The use of the name of that fine newspaper should not have been construed as implying any other than a circumstantial connection to Mr. Phillips or to the content of his book, The Bible, the Supernatural, and the Jews, from which we extracted the article "Choose to Be Chosen." Mr. Phillips himself wishes to say that he has not been a full-time reporter for The New York Times since 1973.



And a little child shall lead them.

By **ROBERTO PASSO**
Buenos Aires, Argentina

When Marta phoned me, she sounded so distraught I thought she had some great personal problem. But



ARGENTINA
JEWISH POP. 233,000
ROBERTO PASSO

I was wrong. She was calling for friends of hers.

"Pastor, they're so depressed," she explained. "They've just lost their daughter and the wife wants to commit suicide."

I could not believe my ears as I listened to the story.

Her friends, Susana and Ernesto, are a young Jewish couple with a good life. One day Susana needed something from the supermarket but she was in a hurry and did not want to take her three-year-old daughter with her. She thought she would only be gone a few minutes, so she decided to run to the store alone.

When she returned she began calling the child, but there was no answer. Only a few minutes ago she was playing on the floor, now where was she? Then her eyes went directly to the balcony door. It was open! Instantly she dashed out, but it was too late. Her little girl, her only daughter, was lying on the sidewalk dead, and many people were gathered around her.

Susana could not go on living. It

was her fault. She was guilty of her daughter's death. How could these things be?

Marta concluded her story by telling me, "I am praying for them and have read some verses to comfort their souls. I have also invited them to Beth Sar Shalom. Please pray for them."

When I hung up the phone, I praised God for faithful believers who care for other people. I remembered that Marta had lost her only son and how much she had suffered. But she and her husband had been greatly comforted by the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.

At our next prayer meeting, I shared about Susana and Ernesto, and we all prayed for their consolation and salvation. During this meeting we were having a special time of thanksgiving, so we had our chairs in a circle and

were singing and praying and praising God.

Suddenly, in the middle of the meeting, Susana and Ernesto entered. It was as if a force compelled them to enter but at the same time they wanted to leave. I asked myself what Jesus would have done, and immediately to my mind came the words, "the mercies of the God of all comfort" and Isaiah's cry, "Comfort, oh comfort my people, says your God." The picture of Jesus crying for Lazarus also appeared in my mind.

"Dear brothers and sisters," I said to those gathered, "we have thanked God for His mercies. Today in our group we have two friends who are suffering a terrible trial. I think God will approve and be very happy if we try to comfort them in the rest of this service. So if any of you wants to share with them a verse, a song, or a prayer, please do it."

God really worked through the group that day. Prayer after prayer, verse after verse, song after song, everybody shared with them the love and comfort of God. After the meeting, Susana's and Ernesto's faces had changed.

"I have to admit," Ernesto told me later, "that we wanted to leave. But I asked Susana to stay a while because I felt you had something special to give us. Through your songs and your love I can tell you that God spoke to us today."

After that they started coming every Saturday, and the change in their lives also made their families come to our meetings. One week Susana's mother was helping with the tea. My wife thanked her, and her answer was a sign of what was going on in her life: "I have a great debt to the Mission," she said. "It is so incredible what you have done for my daughter!"

One day after our service I asked Susana and Ernesto to come to my

Analia's death forced her parents to examine their daughter's odd beliefs and turn to a "strange" mission, where Jews who believed in Jesus met.

office. I really felt that they were ready to accept Messiah Jesus.

"Dear friends," I explained, "I feel this is your time and moment to accept Jesus as Messiah. You have been listening to many messages and studying the Bible for a long time. You



Beth Sar Shalom, Buenos Aires staff: (left to right) Giselle Sparks, Roberto Passo and Jorge Ovando.

have also felt God's comfort in your lives and are really interested in reading and understanding the Bible."

Even as I spoke, I knew they were prepared to accept Jesus. The marvelous answer sprang from their lips, "Pastor Passo, we want to accept Jesus as Messiah. We are sure we believe in our hearts that He is God's Son."

That very moment we knelt and prayed together. But that's not the end. Just last week Susana and Ernesto came to me and said, "Do you know any evangelical children's home that allows believers to take children home during the weekend? We want to bring some children into our lives to love and take care of."

God's great work indeed continues beyond the lives of Susana and Ernesto. Susana's parents continue to come to our meetings, and just recently, after seeing a film we showed called "The Holy Land," they said they wanted to accept the Messiah. The moment they invited Jesus into their lives, they said that they wanted to help preach the Gospel to the Jews just like Susana and Ernesto were doing.

We praise the Lord that through your prayers and support, Susana and Ernesto are comforted and walking by faith. It is wonderful to work with you, but it is sad that you cannot share all the experiences we have here, for they are such a blessing. But we understand that our work is a part of your lives, and we wanted to share this story with you for the glory of God. □

Translated by G. Sparks

Susana's testimony appears on the following page.

Reverend Roberto Passo was born in 1936 in a Jewish home. When he was 17, while working with his father as a subcontractor, he began repairing an evangelical church near his home. This congregation began to pray for him, and soon after Roberto accepted the Lord there. Roberto and his wife have three daughters—Liliana, 19; Alejandra, 17; and Telma, 12.

“I Could Find No Comfort.”

THE TESTIMONY OF SUSANA SZMER
Translated by G. Sparks

Analia was like the sun. She was always happy, singing everywhere. In buses. In the streets. But the word *always* does not belong to this world. Today her black eyes, her dark curls, her tender smile, and her happiness are no longer with us. They are not in any earthly park, nor in any children's game.

She was three and a half years old when she died, tragically falling from a fifth floor balcony. Our only daughter, the only grandchild, and the only niece. She was the happiness of our whole family.

A short time before she died, she asked me what we would be giving her as presents for her fourth birthday. I laughed and explained that nobody tells what he is going to give as a present. Presents are supposed to be a surprise. She also asked me what death was. My answer was that to die was to sleep forever. Today she must

“They (Marta and Sergio) shared with us that only God could comfort us. But although I tried, I could not believe in God after what had happened.”

think, *My mother knew very little.*

Some days before she died, she asked me to take her to the graveyard. She wanted to see what it was like. I said that I would take her, but quickly forgot. She was so young. “She will have time to go,” I thought.

When she died, neither my husband nor I believed in God. The world came to an end for us. I could not find comfort anywhere, nor could I believe what had happened. I wanted to die.

Marta and Sergio came to us shortly

after Analia's death to express their sorrow. They understood because they went through the same experience when they had lost their son. They shared with us that only God could comfort us. But although I tried, I could not believe in God after what had happened.

The day they came to visit, I was really in despair. I stood looking at the sky and asked God with all my heart, “God, I want You to make me believe in You. I want to see where my daughter is. I want to see her, at least in a dream.”

That night in my dream I saw a white, bright, child-shaped spirit. I knew it was my child. It was the only and last time I saw her in that way. Now many times I dream of her, but she is always as she was when she was alive.

Although we never mentioned God in our home, Analia had a heart for God. She loved to watch films about Jesus. She would even pretend to be



Mary, pregnant with her special Child. I never said anything to her, but I was worried because as Jews we did not believe in Jesus. But since I also did not believe in God, it almost made everything seem alright: If God did not exist, Jesus could not be His Son. Jesus might have been a wonderful Man, but nothing else.

I wanted to believe what our religion said was the truth. But secretly I wondered, "Who has the right to tell me what I can think or believe?" Analia did not have such problems. She had a wisdom that only comes from the heart. After she died, I knew this.

I was looking for someone to explain her death to me. I needed to have an answer to my terrible despair. Marta and Sergio told us that God could help us. They also told us about a Jewish mission where Jewish people who believed in Jesus met. Twelve days after our tragedy, we went to the mission with our enormous burden and sorrow.

When we walked in they were having a time of thanking God and what seemed to be a joyful moment. But Pastor Passo shared with the people our problem and sorrow. They all prayed for us, and since that moment, they have shared our sadness and have been a source of comfort for us.

Shortly after that both my husband and I accepted Jesus as our own Messiah, the One prophesied in the Old Testament and whose death we also read about in Psalm 22. It was after a weekly service when the two of us knelt together with Pastor Passo

"I was looking for someone to explain her death to me. I needed to have an answer to my terrible despair. . . . Twelve days after our tragedy, we went to the mission . . ."

and prayed, "Jesus, we accept You as Messiah, the One the Old Testament speaks about. We have asked You to show us that You are God and You did. Thank You for the peace and joy and comfort You have brought into our lives."

Even as I write, my parents and others of our family are coming to the mission, finding comfort there as we did. Today we have faith and the assurance that God exists. It is the most valuable thing human beings have, and God is the only One who can give it to us.

The day I looked at the sky in such despair was the day He gave me the faith to believe in Him. To believe in God gives me the assurance that my little Analia did not disappear. Her body is not here, but her spirit is in heaven, saying, with a funny smile, "My mother knew very little."

I feel that this life on earth, with sorrow and trials and problems, is a "small tribulation," and it is just a preparation for a better spiritual life, one without tears and without pain, as the Holy Scriptures promise. □

In Israel, to be a testimony for our Lord, it is often more important to *live* for the Lord than to talk about the Lord. It is like becoming a living Gospel where people can see that I am different from others in my reactions to sorrow or joy.

Not too long ago, a man who lived across the street from me suddenly passed away, leaving his wife in a state of absolute shock. Because the Lord had allowed me to go through a similar experience, I felt even though I did not know her well, I had to comfort her.

My task was not an easy one, but by the Lord's grace, I set out for her home. "Peace to you," I smiled as she opened the door for me. But even my greeting seemed to reopen her wound, and she began to weep loudly.

"I am very sorry that I have caused you to recall your pain. My heart's intention is to share with you how the Lord helped me to overcome my own loss."

continued on following page



ISRAEL
JEWISH POP. 3,374,300
LEAH GOREN



In Israel... A Living Gospel

By LEAH GOREN Jerusalem, Israel

I was silent for several minutes and let her cry. It was then that she asked me how I overcame the despair of burying my own husband.

I prayed silently that the Lord would guide me in my response. "I praise the Lord that my dearest Jacob does not have to suffer any longer and that he has been taken to heaven—not to a home or an institution," I testified boldly. Then I asked her if she could not see the Lord's grace in that her husband does not need to suffer any more.

"Are you not thankful," I asked, "that your husband shared a life with you? Remember that in a time when we are surrounded by so many young widows with little orphans, he saw your children and grandchildren grow."

We both became silent, and I felt that I had to touch on the most valu-

"In Israel, to be a testimony for our Lord, it is often more important to *live* for the Lord than to talk about the Lord. It is like becoming a living Gospel . . ."

able reasons why she had to live, to shake her back from her pain and into the reality of her life.

"Sarah, please forgive me," I said. "I am going to touch a very painful point. Very often, through tragedy, we have to learn of the Lord's mercy. Look how the Lord has watched over your sons who are pilots; look how He has cared for them and brought

them back from the wars in good health. Many sons do not return to their mothers. And I'm sure that if the Lord had asked your husband to make a choice, he would surely have said, 'Lord, let my children continue to live.' Sarah, you have your children. You are needed. Your children need you. You have many reasons to go on living."

"Mrs. Goren," she said softly, "you are right."

A few days later, this woman met me on the street. She thanked me for my visit and said, "Mrs. Goren, you are comforter number one. I had many visitors come to me but no one else knows how to comfort as you do."

All the praise be to the Lord! It was done in His name and for His sake. May He even use this testimony to comfort those in similar circumstances. (See 2 Cor. 1:3-5.) □



FRANCE
JEWISH POP. 700,000
J. GUGGENHEIM

Frère Jacques

Solomon R. Guggenheim, the great Jewish patron of modern art and namesake of New York's Guggenheim museum of art, would have been proud of his cousin Jacques.

As a ten-year-old, Jacques fled the terrible Nazi persecution. Then, determined to be a painter, Jacques studied fine arts at Lausanne.

But Jacques' next move would probably have horrified his New York cousin. On a hospital bed in Naples, Jacques gave his life to Jesus the Messiah!

That was twenty-eight years ago, when Jacques gave up the god he had made of art ("I lived for painting only, . . . it was the principle goal of my life") and surrendered to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Since 1980, Jacques, 53, has led ABMJ's Paris ministry, reaching the more than 700,000 Jewish people in France. He holds Bible studies, sometimes finding himself in the midst of "debates" with young intellectuals where only a Frenchman can prevail. But Jacques' heart is mostly in the articles he writes for the

quarterly publication *Le Berger d'Israel* (*The Shepherd of Israel*). The correspondence this lively little "Paper" inspires sometimes surprises even Jacques.

"My parents are Egyptian Jews," wrote a Jewish believer from New York. "They speak French and I pass them on the copies of your Paper."

"My parents threw away the Bible and the copies of the paper you sent me," began a letter from Algeria. "Could you offer me another Bible? . . . Pray that my faith would not perish."

"I am in a severe disease," wrote another from Czechoslovakia. "The Bible you sent to me gave to my poor life a new meaning."

Jacques finds "great joy" in answering the many letters he receives. Remember to pray for this Jewish Christian brother as he sets up additional Bible studies in Paris, Lyon, and Marseille. □

We need literature. We need prayer." These are the requests from Bob and Joyce Wilhelmson, missionaries to the Yuqui Indians with the New Tribes Mission.

Of special interest to our *Chosen People* family is that the literature and prayers are requested for the thousands of Israelis who will visit the Wilhelmsons' mission camp this year.

It started a few years ago when some New Tribes missionaries met Israelis who were touring Bolivia. The missionaries invited the Israelis to their camp, everyone became friends, and the Israelis became very interested in the work being done among Indian tribes.

Word spread along an unofficial grapevine that Israelis who were thinking of visiting Bolivia should look up these people.

The next year, the Wilhelmsons got twenty-five calls from Israelis who were in the country. Each year it multiplied, and this year early visitors told them to expect as many as 2,000 people during their "Israeli season."

Each visitor is welcomed with coffee and friendship, a slide presentation about the work among the Indians, and a lot of time for questions and answers. Joyce writes, "Invariably someone asks, 'Why do you do this? What do you get out of it?' There is always an opportunity to go through the Gospel, starting with Abraham and ending with personal salvation through Yeshua the Messiah. Many are the times when the conversation goes on late into the night."

The Wilhelmsons report that the Israeli visitors are generally in their midtwenties. They've been in the Israeli Army, have fought for their country, and have serious questions about life. This year these soldier/citizens have been more open than ever to God's Word. "We are seeing

God answer prayer by the new tenderness of heart [in these Israeli young people] . . . toward spiritual things," a recent letter reports.

Last year the Wilhelmsons distributed all the pocket New Testaments they had—30. This year they had 200 Hebrew New Testaments, but it still wasn't enough. The same is true with literature: They didn't have enough, and what they did have didn't seem to speak to the concerns of these modern Israeli vacationers.

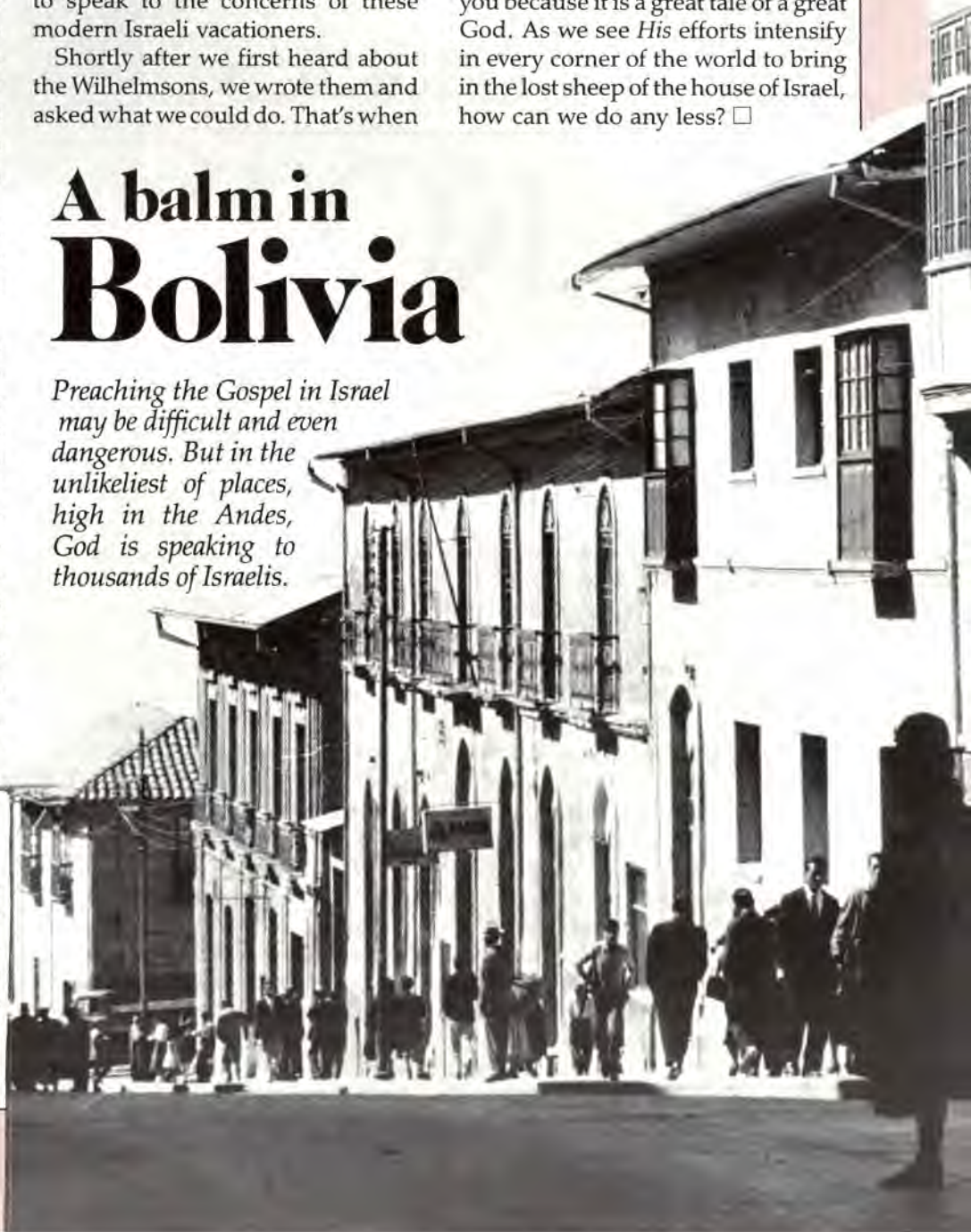
Shortly after we first heard about the Wilhelmsons, we wrote them and asked what we could do. That's when

they said they need literature and prayer. We've started to supply them with literature, both Hebrew New Testaments and Hebrew Gospel tracts, and we thought you would want to join with us in prayer for this outreach. The Wilhelmsons particularly asked for prayer that God would prepare the hearts of those who will visit them.

We wanted to share this story with you because it is a great tale of a great God. As we see *His* efforts intensify in every corner of the world to bring in the lost sheep of the house of Israel, how can we do any less? □

A balm in Bolivia

Preaching the Gospel in Israel may be difficult and even dangerous. But in the unlikeliest of places, high in the Andes, God is speaking to thousands of Israelis.





The Feast of Tabernacles

SUKKOT

Orthodox Jews pray during Sukkot
at the Wailing Wall (Photo Researchers)

By DR. DANIEL FUCHS

The most joyful of Israel's festive seasons was the Feast of Tabernacles. It came at the end of the harvest when the hearts of the people were naturally gladdened. The crops had been reaped. As they looked around them, they remembered that six months before at Passover time, they had dedicated the entire harvest to the Lord by the offering of firstfruits, and now not only were their barns full, their hearts were overflowing with joy and thanksgiving.

"But that was not all. As they looked around on the goodly land, the fruits of which had just enriched them, they must have remembered that by miraculous interposition the Lord their God had brought them to this land and given it to them, and that He ever claimed it as peculiarly His own. For the land was strictly connected with the history of the people; and both the land and the history were linked with

the mission of Israel. If the beginning of the harvest had pointed back to the birth of Israel in their Exodus from Egypt, and forward to the true Passover-sacrifice in the future; if the corn-harvest was connected with the giving of the law on Mount Sinai in the past, and the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost; the harvest-thanksgiving of the Feast of Tabernacles reminded Israel, on the one hand, of their dwelling in booths in the wilderness, while, on the other hand, it pointed to the final harvest when Israel's mission should be completed, and all nations gathered unto the Lord."

Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple*, pp. 232, 233.

The Feast of Tabernacles is two weeks after Rosh Hashanah. It is always on the same day of the week as New Year's Day. A pious Jew began his preparation for the festival as soon as the Day of Atonement was over. He had only five days to erect a *sukkah*, a

booth in which he and his family would dwell during the feast.

Historically, Tabernacles looked backward to the Exodus when Israel lived in booths. "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 23:42, 43).

Each family built a *sukkah*, which was actually a temporary outdoor structure. It had a twofold purpose—to remind the Jews of their Exodus and to indicate the transitoriness of human life.

The roof was made of slats placed closely to one another so that the "shade inside the *sukkah* is greater than the light." The roof had to rest on the walls; it could not be fastened. It was then thatched with green branches, and the entire room, walls, and ceiling decorated with flowers and fruit.

Every male who attends an Ortho-

dox synagogue during Tabernacles (Sukot) carries with him what is called "the four species"—an *etrog*, which is a citron, in his left hand; the *lulav*, a palm branch, in his right hand; two myrtle twigs; and two willow branches. The Scriptures state, "And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days" (Lev. 23:40).

Sukot not only looked back into history, it looked forward into the future when God's promise to Abraham will be fulfilled: "And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3).

The Feast of Tabernacles was the last of the three festivals when the entire population of ancient Israel thronged Jerusalem. "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty: Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee" (Dt. 16:16, 17).

The *Mishnah* gives us a vivid picture of these pilgrimages. From all over the land all roads are thronged with gaily clad people keeping the Holy Days. Everybody carried his offering to the Lord. There were olives, dates, pomegranates, wheat, barley, perhaps a pigeon or turtledove. The rich brought more; the poor less. Those who could, brought their offering in carts, heavily laden with gifts; the poor carried theirs in wicker baskets, but each brought "a gift in proportion to the way the Lord . . . God blessed. . ."

As the pilgrims journeyed, they sang the Songs of Zion, the Psalms.

On one side of the road a family would sing, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. . ." Across the road the response would come ". . . from whence cometh my help." And all together: "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Ps. 121:1, 2).

Others would sing: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord" (Ps. 122:1-4).

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It was Sukot, the Feast of Tabernacles. The tribes of Israel, their hearts overflowing with praise to the Lord, were going up to Jerusalem to render unto Him honor and praise and glory.

Every Sukot service in the Temple not only looked backward in history, it looked forward in prophecy. God had spoken to Abram from Ur of the Chaldees and promised him, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3), and the Temple service proclaimed that truth.

The services of the week were elaborate—in all there were seventy

bullocks which were sacrificed. According to the Talmud, there are seventy nations in the world and a bullock was slain each year during the Feast of Tabernacles for each of them. The ancient rabbis realized a wonderful truth about the prophetic message of Sukot. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16).

The seventh and last day of the feast is a very special day. It is called *Hoshana Rabba*, "the great Hoshana." In the synagogue during the morning service after seven circuits are made around the altar with the *lulav*, the palm branches are beaten on the floor of the synagogue or its furniture while the worshippers are chanting, "The voice announcing the coming of the Messiah is heard."

This beating of the branches is work which is illegal on the Sabbath. It is for this reason that "the calendar was fixed in such a way that the New Year would not occur on a Sunday so that Hoshana Rabba should not fall on the Sabbath which would cause the taking of the willow to be cancelled."

Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 8, p. 1027, Article, "Hoshana Rabba."

One of the ceremonies of the Sukot service was the Libation of Water procession each morning. "The water was brought in a golden flask from the fountain of Siloam and poured by the officiating Kohen into the basin near the altar. This was the most joyous of the Temple ceremonies. The *Mishnah* says that 'he who has not seen the rejoicing at the place of Water-Drawing has never seen rejoicing in his life' (Sukkah 5:1). The ceremony was accompanied by a torch-light procession, dances, singing and the chanting by

the Levitical choir of the fifteen pilgrim psalms, the songs of ascents (Pss. 120–134), to the accompaniment of musical instruments. . . . It was a symbolic act performed in compliance with the prophetic verse 'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation' (Isa. 12:3)."

Abraham Millgram, *Jewish Worship*, p. 204.

As we approach the annual season of gift-giving, thoughts of selecting tangible expressions of our care and concern for loved ones begin to occupy our attention.

While we tend to think only in terms of cash gifts to help bring the Gospel to His chosen people, equally valuable for year-end tax deductions are noncash gifts. Here's a suggested year-end shopping list which friends of ABMJ may consider:

1. Stocks and bonds purchased long ago.
2. A car no longer needed.
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4. A life insurance policy.
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6. A home soon to be vacated.
7. A farm no longer productive.

Any of these tangibles—and many more—can help ABMJ's missionaries sow "seeds of salvation" among His chosen people while providing the donor with a current income tax deduction. If the above list stirs *your* thinking, please write:

*The President,
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Picture this scene from the life of Jesus: It was Hoshana Rabba, the last and greatest day of the Feast. See the crowds in the Temple courts, watch the white-robed priests as they climb the steep ascent from Siloam to the Temple. They are carrying a golden vase of the water they just drew with joy from the well of Siloam. The water was poured into the basin near the altar. Then, as the priest stood with his empty flask, a Man who had been standing watching, cried in a loud voice, "... If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (Jn. 7:37, 38).

These were strange words to say,

"The Feast of Tabernacles was the last of the three festivals when the entire population of ancient Israel thronged Jerusalem."

anywhere, at any time. But in the Temple on Hoshana Rabba, they were not just strange, they were audacious. The entire Libation of Water ceremony celebrated God's provision of life-giving water to the Israelites who were dying of thirst in the wilderness. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." What our Lord did was to claim that the miracle in the wilderness, when the rock gushed forth water, pointed to Himself! This is just one of the messages of John's Gospel where we find our Lord claiming to be the fulfillment of incidents under the Law—Jacob's ladder, the brazen serpent in the wilderness, the

manna, and now the rock that yielded water for their thirst.

There is a future Feast of Tabernacles. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. 21: 3-6).

Christ our Passover became Christ the firstfruits from the dead. At Pentecost, the firstfruits of Israel's ripened harvest were presented to the Lord. The first sheaves were reaped from Israel. But Israel did not keep the harvest to herself. The Gospel, which was to the Jew first, has been proclaimed to the uttermost parts of the earth. It's been a long time since Pentecost, and we longingly listen for the sound of the trumpet, the return of our Lord. Then after that we look for Israel's Day of Atonement and the nations of our Lord keeping the Feast of Tabernacles.

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9-10). It's Hoshana Rabba, the great day of the feast! □

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What are the basic beliefs of Orthodox Judaism?

ANSWER: Perhaps the best way to summarize the basic beliefs of Orthodox Judaism is simply to list the "Thirteen Articles of the Jewish Faith." These articles were developed by Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (commonly referred to as Maimonides). He was born in Cordova, Spain, on March 30, 1135, and died in Israel in 1204. He was perhaps the greatest rabbinical scholar of his day, and is well known as a philosopher, physician, astronomer, Talmudist, and prolific writer.

The "Thirteen Articles," according

to *A Book of Jewish Concepts* by Philip Birnbaum, are as follows:

- 1) There is a Creator.
- 2) He is One.
- 3) He is incorporeal.
- 4) He is eternal.
- 5) He alone must be worshipped.
- 6) The prophets are true.
- 7) Moses was the greatest of all prophets.
- 8) The entire Torah was divinely given to Moses.
- 9) The Torah is immutable.
- 10) God knows all the acts and thoughts of Man.
- 11) He rewards and punishes.
- 12) Messiah will come.
- 13) There will be resurrection.

QUESTION: Are Israel's feast days currently observed in the land of Israel?

ANSWER: Jews have continued to observe their festival days both inside and outside the land of Israel since ancient times. During periods of war and since the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, these observances have necessarily been either interrupted or modified. They have, nevertheless, served to unify the people during times of great persecution and to distinguish the Jews from all others as God's chosen people.

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