

# The Chosen People

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"Rabbi, how do you know that Jesus is not the Messiah?" The question hung silently in the air. The rabbi, a gentle man with the knowledge and wisdom of Torah and Talmud written in the wrinkles on his face, paused to think. He gently stroked his full, gray-white beard, pausing every now and then to look over the glistening silver rims of his eyeglasses. I could see that the question bothered him.

We were friends, and he wanted to give an honest answer, a clear answer. Yet, he did not want to get into a debate over who is the Messiah. Finally, looking up, he caught my eye. I could sense his uneasiness. He spoke very openly and honestly. "I really don't know," he said. Then he paused and added, "All I do know is that Jesus was not the Messiah we were expecting."

How very sad. Simply because Jesus was not the Messiah the people *expected* Him to be, they refused to believe in Him. The rabbi was right. The world has not changed. Jesus is still not the Messiah the people expect.

We live in a world that has sought to create God in its own image. Our society, as with all societies of the past, is trying to put God into a mold that allows people to be what they want to be, not what *God* intended them to be. Jesus did not fit into the world's mold. He is a King born in a stable. He is God wrapped in swaddling clothes. He is the Author of life, but was willing to die for the sin of the world. He is the great Lion of the tribe of Judah, who came as a Lamb led to the slaughter but opened not His mouth (cf. Isa. 53).

Almost two thousand years have passed since the Lord Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Messiah of Israel. He still doesn't fit the mold. As my rabbi friend said, "Jesus was not the Messiah we were expecting."

In the hustle and bustle of our twentieth-century life, man continues to mold his god after his own image. Man's god is a god of pleasure, not peace. He is a god of lust, not love; a god of selfishness, not sacrifice; a god of rebellion, not renewal; a god of confusion, not confession; a god that seeks to gratify self rather than give freely of grace unto salvation.

Jesus will never fit the mold of this world's system. The true meaning of Christmas can never be commercialized. We who believe in Jesus find Him to be exactly what we were expecting and more. He satisfies and meets our every need. As believers, we find ourselves, as Jesus did, in the world but not of the world.

How I praise God for the faithful and steadfast witness of our missionaries. Day by day, hour by hour, they seek to bring the Gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you celebrate the Christmas season, remember whose birthday it is that we celebrate. Pray for the Jewish people, that their hearts might be open and receptive to the Word of God. Pray that they will see Jesus as the Messiah they have been waiting for, so that, in faith believing, they too might have the full assurance of hope and salvation. Have a blessed holiday season!

HAROLD A. SEVENER

## The Chosen People

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God answers prayer, but not always in the way we expect. Some time ago, I challenged our staff to earnestly pray for the salvation of rabbis. "Wouldn't it be great," I mused, "to have a 'resident rabbi' on staff? That is, a rabbi who believes in Jesus." I never had the privilege of meeting Rabbi Leopold Cohn, the founder of ABMJ. Those who did, tell of his keen insight into the Bible and the Talmud, his wonderful love for the Lord, and his dedicated mission to see his Jewish people accept Jesus as their Messiah and Savior. "If only we could have other rabbis like Leopold Cohn accept Jesus," I thought. "What a wonderful testimony this would be to the Jewish community! What a marvelous impact it would have upon the Christian Church at large. It would give a new challenge to Jewish missions and evangelism."

I began to earnestly pray for the salvation of rabbis. Our staff also began to pray. A few months passed and then a friend called long distance to tell me about a rabbi in New York he suspected was interested in the claims of Jesus! I wasted no time in dialing his number. As the phone rang, I wondered whether this was an answer to prayer or whether I would simply be rebuked by a rabbi who wanted nothing to do with Jesus. My thoughts were interrupted by a voice with a thick Israeli accent. I introduced myself and mentioned our mutual contact. Then, sensing an openness, I went on to explain the work of our mission. Rabbi Zvi listened. I could tell

# RABBI ZVI

BY HAROLD A. SEVENER

## The Story We Can Finally Tell

he was not hostile to what I was saying, so I dared to make a proposal. Would he meet me for lunch to further discuss Messianic Judaism and Jesus? My heart leaped when he agreed. We made a date a few days later at Wolf's delicatessen on West 57th Street in Manhattan.

The next few days were filled with anticipation. I hastily rearranged my schedule to be able to keep my date with Zvi. Then the day of our meeting arrived. As I drove into the hustle and bustle of New York, I prayed that our

meeting would go well. I hardly noticed Carnegie Hall and the small specialty shops along 57th Street as I praised God for this rabbi who wanted to know more about Jesus.

I made sure that I arrived at Wolf's early. I prayed that God would allow Rabbi Zvi to show up, and that, meeting on a street corner where literally thousands passed each hour, we would recognize each other.

Only a few minutes had passed when a little Jewish

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man shuffled up and introduced himself as Rabbi Zvi. No, he wasn't as old as he sounded on the telephone. And his Israeli accent had that wonderful British inflection that is part and parcel of learning English in Israel. He had a sleepy kind of look; a shock of dark hair told me that he wasn't past his midforties. But his face was ringed with creases and lines of age that betrayed a life of suffering and hardship. As the waitress took our order

**I made sure that I arrived at Wolf's early. I prayed that Rabbi Zvi would come, and that we would recognize each other.**

and left the table, he began to reveal the details of his past to me.

Rabbi Zvi was born in Europe. Before he was eight, his parents were taken away from him and put to death in the concentration camps. Thus orphaned, he had been smuggled out of Europe through the underground and had been sent to Jerusalem, where he was reared in an ultra-Orthodox orphanage. He attended Yeshiva and was certified to teach Talmud and Torah.

Upon graduation, he joined the Israeli underground, feeling a keen sense of responsibility to this tiny nation of Israel which had provided for him and saved him from certain death in the concentration camps.

In June 1967, Zvi was severely wounded while fighting in the effort to regain Israeli control of Jerusalem. Lying on a hospital bed, his wounds healed. But his mind still raged with questions. The Holocaust, man's inhumanity to man, Israel's continuous conflicts—this was not the world God had in mind.

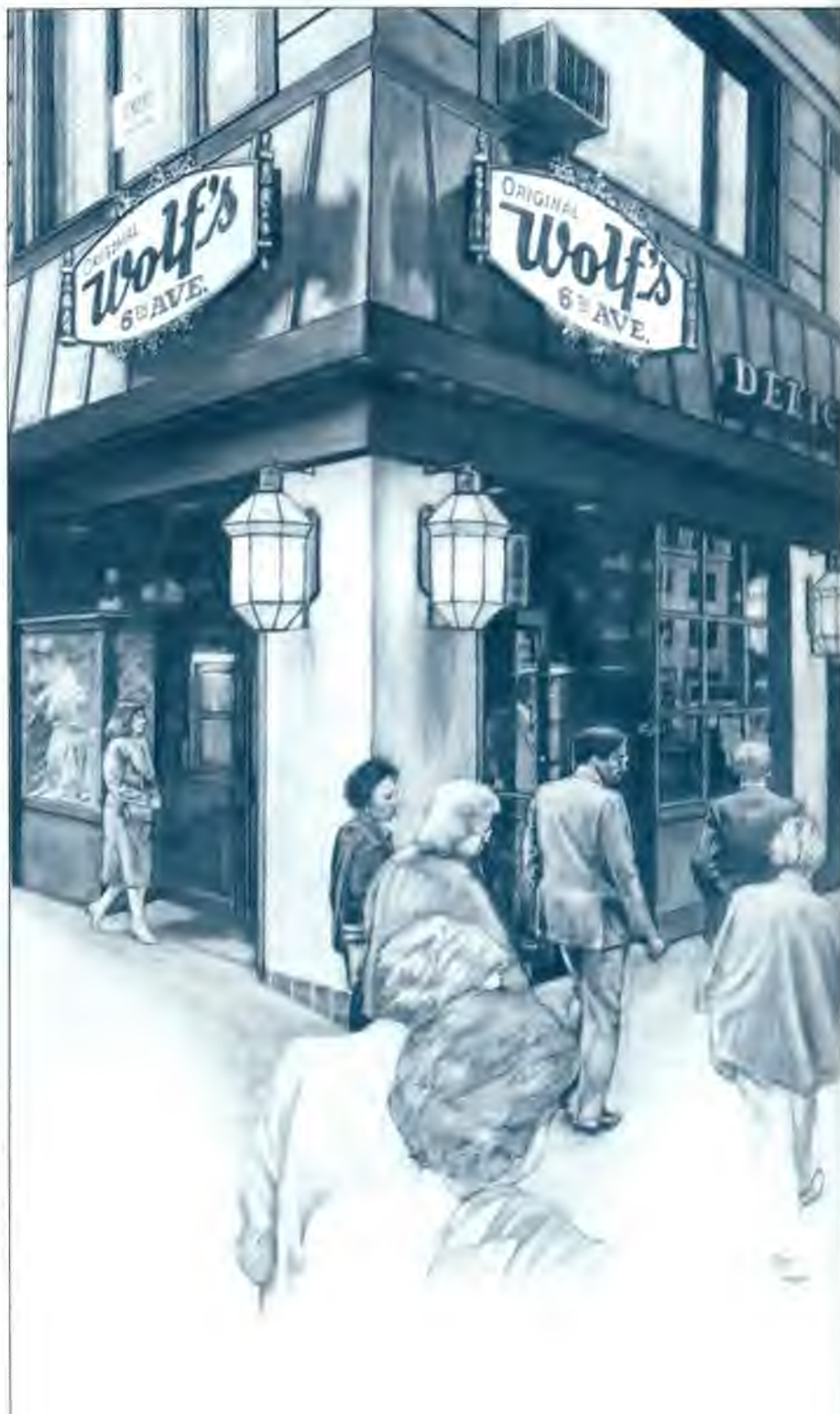
These thoughts deeply troubled Rabbi Zvi. He knew the promise of a coming Messiah, who would put an end to armed conflict. He prayed for this Messiah to come and longed for

the peace He would bring. But, like so many Israelis, he could not find peace in the city of peace, Jerusalem. The world's turmoil only heightened Zvi's own sense of loss, unrest, and loneliness.

**I**n his search for an answer, he had come across some literature which talked about the Messiah. It spoke about Jesus. Shortly after the Six-Day War, Rabbi Zvi decided to make a new start. He left Israel

and came to New York City. In Brooklyn, he carried on his ministry as a rabbi, teaching Bar Mitzvah classes, teaching Hebrew, and seeking to maintain an Orthodox Jewish life style.

In the back of his mind, however, he questioned the value of leading a "holy" life while the rest of the world was bent on destruction. His dear Israel was never in worse straits. Nor was his life style bringing him any personal peace.



As he continued in his search for an oasis of calm in his conflict-ridden life, Zvi began to read the New Testament. Convinced that Jesus had to be the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, he even began to allude to Him in the Bar Mitzvah lessons which he gave the young Orthodox students in his Brooklyn neighborhood. When the boys went home, they told their parents of this rabbi who talked about Jesus.

Now Rabbi Zvi, who had slipped through the Nazi's hands and dodged bullets in Israel, was once more running for his life. Only this time, his own people, the ultra-Orthodox Jews of his neighborhood, were chasing him. In tears and frustration, he cried out, "Where can I find peace?"

**I**smiled softly at the sensitive and confused man sitting across from me. "Rabbi Zvi, it's ironic," I began slowly. "Jesus came to give the world peace and was misunderstood, also by His own people. One day He *will* bring peace to the world. But right now He can give individual peace. He can give you *personal* peace."

"Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, shaking his head emphatically.

"Do you believe that He died for you?" I queried softly. Again, Zvi nodded in the affirmative.

Right there, in the middle of a Jewish delicatessen in midtown Manhattan, we both bowed our heads, and Zvi asked the Lord into his heart. God had answered prayer!

Realizing that he had no real means of support apart from his teaching of Bar Mitzvahs and teaching in the Talmud-Torah schools, all of which were closed to a rabbi who believed that Jesus is the Messiah, we helped Rabbi Zvi through the mission's relief fund. He became our "resident rabbi." He began to teach Hebrew, Jewish customs, and the Jewish calendar in our training program and in our various New York branches.

Everyone loved Zvi. At the mission, he would peer shyly into your office and, when invited in, would comment on one or another aspect of your



**Like so many Israelis, Zvi could not find peace in the city of peace, Jerusalem. Shortly after the Six-Day War, Rabbi Zvi decided to make a new start. He left Israel and came to New York City.**

work. Zvi had a way of turning the conversation around to the spiritual. He would discourse softly on a fine point of Scripture, drawing new meaning out of a verse or expression by his knowledge of Hebrew and Talmud.

Eileen Miller, one of Zvi's students, recently wrote, "When I was a member of the Beth Sar Shalom congregation in Brighton Beach, Rabbi Zvi graciously taught Hebrew to a small group of believers in my home. Before coming to know the Lord, Zvi had been a Hasidic rabbi in Israel. As a part of his daily routine, an Orthodox rabbi would wear a fringed *tallith* (prayer shawl). In America he set aside his Hasidic dress, adopting the everyday American garb, except for one thing. Almost always, Rabbi Zvi would wear a short, green wool, fringed muffler around his neck. He wore it in the same manner as the *tallith*. He would often fondle the fringes of the muffler while searching for a way to

help us understand the nuances of the Hebrew."

Even as a believer, Rabbi Zvi maintained his Orthodox life style. He had very little and lived in constant fear for his life among the Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn, who considered him a traitor. When he would tell me of his problems and troubles, I would encourage him to move from the area, but he stubbornly refused. He was determined by God's grace to be a witness to the peace of God among the Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn.

**F**or the Jewish holidays, Zvi usually made his way to our home. Our family enjoyed his entertaining stories from Talmud, his quick wit, and his ability to find an appropriate Hebrew song for every occasion. Once he found the Lord, the joy of Zvi's life was singing. He loved to get people together to sing the Hasidic melodies, to sing the psalms and portions of Scripture. We would sit around the table discussing life in Israel, fine points of doctrine, and Talmud. Zvi was an encyclopedia of rabbinic information.

As the weeks and months passed, Rabbi Zvi grew more and more open in professing his faith in Jesus as Messiah and Lord. He no longer seemed to fear what others might say or do to him. He had found the peace for which he had searched so long. He desired only to serve the Lord.

One day he came to me and said that he was now ready to go to the churches and openly share his faith in

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Jesus. Since he was not married and had no family, he was free to travel and would go wherever the mission wanted to send him. Not only had he found the peace for which he was searching, but he had also yielded his life to the Lord. He was willing to do whatever God wanted him to do. He was willing to go wherever God wanted him to go.

I thought of all the places I could send Zvi. I thought of the impact he would have upon the Jewish community and the evangelical world.

God, however, had other plans. The war injuries that Zvi had suffered, along with a lifelong struggle with disease, were beginning to take their toll. Suddenly, Zvi was hospitalized for diabetes. Then his heart and kidneys began to give him trouble.

I remember sitting beside the bed in the hospital where Zvi lay. He was in tears, not because of pain, nor because of fear. He was weeping because he wanted to share the peace and joy he had found in the Lord Jesus with so many others of his own Jewish people. He knew his health was failing. I remember praying and asking God why. We had prayed for a resident rabbi. God had answered our prayer. But now it seemed He was going to take Rabbi Zvi home. What was the purpose? What was the lesson?

As I spoke further with Zvi, I realized that he was not afraid of death. He knew Jesus. He recognized that his struggle for peace was over, that God in His sovereignty could choose to do with us as He wills. He is the Potter and we are the clay.

Perhaps this was the lesson that I was to learn from Zvi. God does grant us the desires of our hearts. He gave us Zvi. But He didn't mean for us to have a resident rabbi on staff in order to accomplish the task of Jewish evangelism. God simply needs us to have a prayerful and willing heart, a willingness to allow Him to be sovereign in our lives and to trust Him for the ministry.

Shortly after my last visit with Zvi, he was moved to a Jewish nursing home in the Bronx. He went downhill quickly. Then one day I received a telephone call that God had taken Zvi home. He was now with his Messiah.

A few weeks before Zvi was taken home, Eileen Miller and some of Zvi's students went to see him. They gathered around his bed and played a tape recording of traditional Israeli and Hasidic music. Eileen recalled that when the "Bashana Haba-a," the most famous traditional song of hope for peace and the return to the land of one's forefathers, was played, "Zvi looked up at us and began to cry while he sang in his native Hebrew, 'Next

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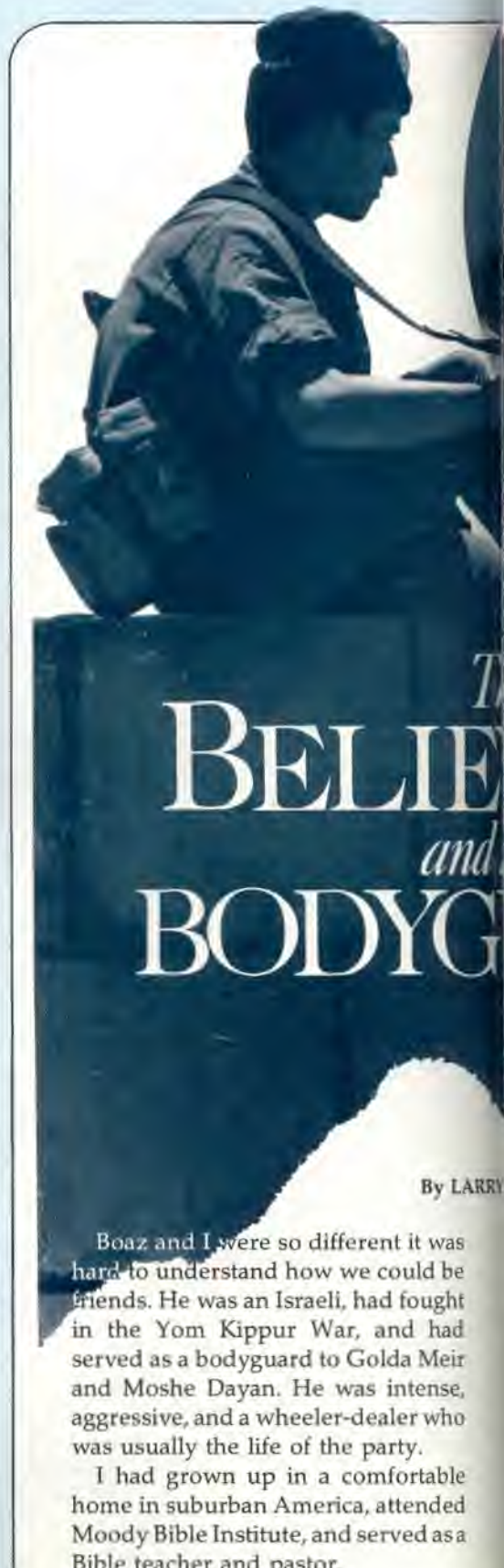
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Year in Jerusalem.' "

Yes, God always answers prayer, but not always in the way that we expect. Yes, we are continuing to pray for more rabbis like Rabbi Zvi to come to know Jesus as their Messiah and Savior. I know that God in His sovereignty will bless His Word and I am confident that other rabbis will come to know Jesus as their Savior. But more importantly, I know that God will give us the vision and the strength to reach many Jewish people for Him whether we have a resident rabbi or not. The important thing is our heart attitude.

Please continue to uphold us in prayer as we faithfully seek to bring the testimony of Jesus to the Jewish people. □



# T BELIE and BODYG

By LARRY

Boaz and I were so different it was hard to understand how we could be friends. He was an Israeli, had fought in the Yom Kippur War, and had served as a bodyguard to Golda Meir and Moshe Dayan. He was intense, aggressive, and a wheeler-dealer who was usually the life of the party.

I had grown up in a comfortable home in suburban America, attended Moody Bible Institute, and served as a Bible teacher and pastor.



Raised in a suburban Philadelphia Jewish home, Larry Feldman was convinced by Isaiah 53 that Jesus was Messiah. Larry is currently planting a Messianic congregation in New Jersey for ABMJ.

# the VER the GUARD

## **Boaz, an Israeli, had been a bodyguard to Golda Meir and Moshe Dayan. Larry Feldman was a Jewish believer and seminary student reading Paul and Isaiah. When their lives crossed in Dallas, it was no coincidence.**

same age; and had a passion for running, jogging, and other athletic pursuits. These were enough for us to base a friendship on, but soon there was something else that formed an even closer bond: Boaz deeply envied the peace he saw in my life.

I'd explain that what he saw was a reflection of God in my life, but he would shrug it off. "It's not for me," he'd say. "It might be all right for you, but I don't understand why you don't want to be *really* successful." By successful, Boaz meant making lots of money and buying beautiful things.

During the two years that we were friends, Boaz continually rejected my explanation of how to find true happiness. However, there was very little else that he didn't try. He was always involved in one big deal after another and would come by our home almost every evening with tales of his latest venture. He frequently jet hopped to New York, Europe, or some other exciting place.

Yet in spite of all the flash and fire in his life, Boaz and I spent countless quiet hours together. One time when we were jogging, he said, "It's amazing, I work so hard to make money and get more things. But still, I'm not happy. You have none of these things, and yet you have joy and peace that I can't

find." As I once again chalked up the peace in my life to my relationship with the Messiah, Boaz turned a deaf ear.

Frequently we would discuss Scripture. But like many young people today, he still insisted financial security was the key to finding meaning in life. One night around dinner time, as I struggled with a difficult school assignment, it seemed that God opened up a special opportunity. I was in the midst of translating Isaiah 53 when Boaz stopped by. I showed him the Hebrew text and said, "Here, you can help me. Read through it, would you?" Boaz read in a matter of minutes what took me hours. Now I had the opportunity to explain the passage to him.

"God is telling us here about the Messiah," I said. "The Messiah has come, and He died for our sins, just like it says here."

For a second, I thought there was a breakthrough. I could see tears in his eyes as I explained the significance of this passage. But then Boaz confessed, "Becoming a believer means giving up too much. It's not for me," he shrugged. We talked for several minutes about the passage, but Boaz had made up his mind.

Soon my years in Dallas began winding down. It seemed that Boaz was no closer to the Lord than he had been the day we met. His marriage was in trouble, his life was full of difficulties, but instead of listening to what I had been telling him, he was constantly looking for new and different highs. I was excited about what God had in store for me as I left the Seminary, but I grew melancholy when I thought about my friend Boaz.

Sitting in my living room one evening, just two days before graduation, Boaz and I were talking as we had countless times before. The topic turned to peace. "Boaz, can't you understand that God alone can give you what you want? He has a gift for you. It's something you can't buy; it's something

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FELDMAN Missionary, New Jersey

When we moved into the same apartment complex in Dallas, Boaz had already been married twice and had made, and then lost, a fortune in the stock market. He wore expensive suits hand-tailored for him in Europe. I was a missionary with the ABMJ and a junior at Dallas Theological Seminary. The best suit I owned was the one I wore when I preached at nearby churches on Sunday mornings.

Yet we were both Jewish; were the

you can't earn. It's the only thing that is really worth having."

Then, like I had so many times before, I waited for his shrug and denial. When it didn't come, I was frankly a little shocked. Had I missed Boaz's change of heart? "Would you like to accept that free gift right now?" I asked hesitantly.

As if everything he had heard during the past years was now condensed in one singular Gospel presentation, Boaz heard the message. "Yes," he said, "I want to."

"Would you like to pray now?"

"Yes, let's."

Together we bowed our heads, and Boaz asked the Messiah into his life.

"Where is the Messiah?" I asked him joyfully.

"He's in my heart!" Boaz proclaimed. "He's in my life!"

The excitement we both felt was wonderful. It even overshadowed the fact that our time together in Dallas was coming to a close. As the days flew by, we had only brief moments to spend together, but we spent them as brothers, as well as friends.

**Boaz continually rejected my explanation of how to find true happiness. However, there was very little else that he didn't try.**

Now Fran and I have moved to New Jersey, where I have the opportunity to start a Messianic congregation. Just recently, we went next door to meet our neighbor and discovered that he was an Israeli. We come from two different worlds, but, interestingly, we are about the same age. The first night we met, he told me he had come to New Jersey to make a new start, that in the past he had made and lost a lot of money in the stock market. When I told him I was a believer in the Jewish Messiah, he didn't seem put off. He just shrugged and said, "Oh, that may be all right for you, but not for me. . . ." □



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*Have a Blessed Christmas  
and a Happy Hanukkah*

*from ABMJ / The Chosen People Ministries  
Missionary Staff*



Larry and  
Gail Jaffrey  
Reston, VA

# FRIEND

*They won't care how much*

## "GUESS WHO JUST ACCEPTED THE LORD?"

By JOHN BELL  
Midwest Regional Director

Mr. R. is a world-acclaimed concert musician, an alert, elderly Jewish man originally from Russia. I first met him in Columbus, Ohio, when Wilma Koch, one of our volunteer missionaries, asked him to provide special music for our Passover dinner. At that time, I spoke to him of the Lord, and in the manner which older people often have,



*John Bell has been with ABMJ/The Chosen People Ministries for eight years. He and his wife, Linda, have four children.*

he managed to listen intently without committing himself one way or the other.

But he was deeply impressed with the service and the people. From that time on, Wilma and he became close friends. For almost six years, she spent hours and days driving him to concerts and bringing him to Bible studies, special services, and even to a Messianic Jewish wedding. Even though all of our area missionaries witnessed to him at one time or another, it was Wilma who was always there, inviting him to dinner, talking to him, and explaining the daily aspects of faith. He often told her that, while it made

sense, he had promised his mother over 60 years ago that he would never leave Judaism. Even though he now saw that he could still be Jewish and accept the Lord, a strong tradition bound him to unbelief. Wilma never gave up praying, always believing that even though she had little encouragement, God was working.

Then two weeks ago, I got a call from Howard Silverman, one of our workers in Ohio. "Guess who just accepted the Lord?" he blurted out. "I was teaching at Beth Messiah Congregation, and after the service someone told me that Mr. R. wanted to accept the Lord. When I went up to him and asked if this was true, he nodded and said, 'Yes, I want to believe. I'm ready to accept the Messiah.'

"Everyone was standing around talking, and there, right in the midst of it, he and I prayed together, and he invited Yeshua to be his Messiah."

Though Mr. R. is still a new believer, he is growing in his faith, and we are daily praising God for this new birth. Please pray for this brother in the Lord and join me as we rejoice in the friendship which brought this man to a true friendship with the Lord God of Israel. □

## "WE DON'T BELIEVE LIKE YOU DO"

By IRV AND CORDELIA RIFKIN  
Missionaries, California

The Felds, an active Jewish couple in their late forties, are typical of many

transplanted New Yorkers who enjoy the culture and climate of Southern California. Cordelia and I met them through a Gentile Christian couple who wanted the Felds to hear the Gospel from a Jewish perspective. When we first got together with the Felds, there was indeed a strong bond of common culture.

When we explained that we were believers in Jesus, Mr. Feld made their position clear: "There are all kinds of Jews, so I guess you can believe what you want. But it isn't for us. It just isn't our way." Still the four of us became friends and enjoyed spending time together.



*ABMJ's Irv and Cordelia Rifkin have been sharing the Lord with the Jewish people of San Diego for almost twenty years.*

In our numerous conversations, the topic of God frequently came up. One time I showed them Isaiah 53, and they could hardly believe that Jesus was right there in the Old Testament. But the Suffering Servant remained a distant concept to them, something that had nothing to offer. No matter what I said, they didn't understand their need for a personal relationship with God.

Then one night on the local news, I saw that the Feld's son had been killed. I knew that this was a time when our friendship, as well as the comfort of God, would mean a great deal. When I called to offer any help

you know until they know how much you care.

# SHIP

they might need, Mrs. Feld thanked me but said there was nothing to be done. Cordelia and I prayed for some way to bring them God's comfort.

The next day, Mrs. Feld called back. "Irv, there is something you could do. Could you lead the memorial service?" She hesitated for just a moment. "Of course, you know we don't believe like you do, but would you do something Jewish?"

I was happy to respect her wishes, and through the Scriptures and prayers, I was confident that God's name would be proclaimed and honored. The service itself was everything we had hoped and prayed for, plus much more. The Felds were very open in telling their guests that I was a Jewish believer in Jesus, so I had extensive opportunities to share my faith after the service.

Since then, the door has been more open than ever to share the love of God with the Felds. I pray that God will work through this to bring them even closer to the greatest Friend they'll ever know. □

## "I DON'T BELIEVE IN YOUR JESUS"

By LARRY JAFFREY  
ABMJ Southeast Regional Director

"I'm not quite ready to take the leap of faith, but keep praying," said Joe. I could hardly contain my joy. It was more than three years ago that Mabel had first brought Joe to our meetings.

They were neighbors in a senior citizens' community—Mabel was the widow of a pastor from the Midwest; Joe was a retired New York bookstore owner. He came to our Bible study out of respect for her, but his respect didn't hamper his very vocal objections to our message. Quite often, he would sit and argue with me for hours on end.

Sometimes Joe would stop coming for weeks at a time, but he would always return, saying, "I love Larry too much to stay away." We would occasionally meet just to talk and spend time together, but usually our conversations turned to the Lord and



In 1969 Larry Jaffrey attended an ABMJ training seminar and has been "hooked" on Jewish evangelism ever since.

he would heatedly proclaim, "I don't believe in your Jesus. I don't even believe in God."

That's why it was such a joy to me when we recently met for dinner, and Joe told me that he had started to go to church with Mabel. "It's really starting to make sense to me, Larry. It's starting to be real. Please, don't stop praying."

When I heard him say that, I knew that the hundreds of prayers by Christian friends had not been in vain and that God Himself was working a miracle in Joe's life. So, together with him, I ask our *Chosen People* family to keep praying. "Please," as Joe himself said, "don't stop praying." □

## The True Light of HANUKKAH

Small flames flicker in the menorah as the seven candles are lit. Jewish families stand together listening to the soft rhythm of the prayers. God's overwhelming victory against those who tried to desecrate His holy Temple is celebrated once again. It is Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights.

Yet even as the reflective glow of the candles softly lights the room, many of these happy families are in darkness, blind to God's true Light.

During the Hanukkah and Christmas season, as they do throughout the year, your ABMJ missionaries are reaching thousands of Jewish people with the message that Yeshua, God's true Light, has come into the world. They are sharing God's great salvation, and helping others see that Hanukkah is but a small symbol of God's greatest victory against spiritual darkness.

Your gift now will help us reach out with this message of love and faith. Help us place the light of Jesus on a hilltop, a beacon to those who have yet to find the way.

I promise to pray for ABMJ missionaries and the salvation of the Jewish people.

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## Our Lord's Message About **HANUKKAH**

By DR. DANIEL FUCHS

It may surprise some of our readers to learn that our Lord celebrated Hanukkah. "And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch" (Jn. 10:22, 23). This feast of dedication was actually Hanukkah, and it is so translated in the margin of the New International Version.

Hanukkah is a post-Mosaic festival that is not mentioned in the Old Testament. The reference in the Gospel by John is its only mention in the inspired Scriptures. It is celebrated for eight days beginning on the 25th of Kislev (usually our December).

This feast was instituted in 165 B.C. by Judas Maccabaeus, his brothers, "and the whole assembly of Israel" as an annual celebration of the rededica-

tion of the Temple three years after it had been vilely desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes.

During the intervening years, the Jews lived in mountains and caves

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like wild beasts. Just a few months before the rededication, they had been able to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. Because of this, the new festival was patterned after that feast. They waved the palm branches and sang the praises of Him who had helped them purge the Temple.

Just before the earthly ministry of our Lord, Herod the Great repaired and rebuilt this same Temple. The result was that Herod's Temple became one of history's most magnificent structures.

During Passion week, "Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount

of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" (Mt. 24:1-3).

In the verses immediately following, our Lord answered the question, "And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" Some of these signs are wars, international unrest, famines, pestilences, and false messiahs.

These are general signs. There have been few, if any, generations who have not experienced them in some degree, but there is one specific sign that would identify the end of the age. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, . . . then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains" (Mt. 24:15, 16).

What our Lord told His disciples was that there is to be a Hanukkah of the future. The Hanukkah that our Jewish neighbors celebrate this month commemorates the cleansing of the Temple after it was defiled by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C.

The Hebrew word for abomination is *shiqquts*, meaning "filthy." "When Daniel undertook to specify an abomination so surpassingly disgusting to the sense of morality and decency, and so aggressive against everything that was godly as to drive all from its presence and leave its abode desolate, he chose this as the strongest among several synonyms, adding the qualification, 'that maketh desolate.'"

*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, p. 16.

At the close of Old Testament history, Israel was ruled by Persia. Persia permitted a large degree of self-government as well as religious freedom. The Persians permitted the Jews to organize a political commonwealth governed by the high priests. Ezra had given a new significance to the Law when it was read and explained to the whole house of Israel (Neh. 8).

Specialists of the Law, known as

scribes, devoted themselves to its study and interpretation. The most pious Jews believed that the highest moral accomplishment was the scrupulous observance of every precept.

However, when Alexander the Great defeated Persia, the Greeks actively sought to Hellenize the world.

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**"The pious Jews fled to the mountains. There was a copy of the Prophecy of Daniel that had been preserved. As pious Jews studied the eleventh chapter of Daniel, they knew that hundreds of years before, Daniel had foretold the present situation . . ."**

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The Greeks were passionate missionaries seeking to convert the whole world to Greek religion and philosophy.

In Israel the scribes and priests soon saw that they had a rival party, the more liberal Hellenistic Jews. It was not long before Judea became Hellenistic in all phases of its political, social, and religious life. This was the situation when Antiochus Epiphanes deliberately attempted to destroy Judaism by brute force.

When Antiochus was crowned king, the high priest was Onias III. He was the leader of the old Orthodox party in Judea. On the other hand, the head of the Hellenist party was Onias' brother, Jason.

Jason promised Antiochus huge amounts of money to purchase the office. By doing this, he said it would enable him to erect a temple to Phallus

in Jerusalem, together with a gymnasium. He also promised to enroll the inhabitants of Jerusalem as citizens of Antioch.

Antiochus gladly agreed to everything. Onias was deposed, and Jason was appointed as high priest, and the "final solution" was begun.

A gymnasium was erected outside the castle; the youths of Jerusalem nakedly performed gymnastics in the sight of the Temple. Priests left their service at the altar to take part in the games. Many Jewish youths surgically removed the traces of circumcision from their bodies. With characteristic liberality, the high priest Jason sent a contribution to the sacrifices in honor of Heracles at the quadrennial festivities in Tyre.

Antiochus felt that the time was ripe to undertake the total eradication of the Jewish religion. "He gave himself the surname *Epiphanes*, which means 'the visible god'; in other words, he and Jupiter were to be considered identical. Worse still, he acted as though that were really the case, with the result that the people began to call him *Epimanes*, 'the madman.'"

Solomon Grayzel,  
*A History of the Jews*, p. 54.

Antiochus had a fixation about the Sabbath and circumcision, and he forbade both under the penalty of death. Altars were built in all cities of Judea, and pagan sacrifices offered to Greek gods. Once-a-month searches of homes were instituted. If the officers found a copy of the Scriptures or a youth who had been circumcised, the whole family was slain. In Jerusalem on the 15th of Kislev 168 B.C., Antiochus violated the Holy of Holies: A pagan altar was erected on the great altar of burnt offerings.

Finally, on the 25th of Kislev, Solomon Grayzel continues in his account, "In the Temple above the altar was placed a statue of Jupiter bearing an obvious resemblance to

*continued on following page*



**Sister Barbara's  
Potato Pancakes  
(Latkes)**

*"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine. . . ." Proverbs 17:22*

There's been much written in medical circles concerning the surprisingly beneficial effects of laughter. Doctors say it has a way of realigning the body's organs, aiding digestion, and letting off steam.

Many of us at ABMJ headquarters have proven the validity of these findings while standing at the threshold of Barbara Benedict's office. As administrative assistant to Harold Sevener, Barbara covers a lot of ground. But God has also given her the gift to see the funny side of life's little headaches and heartburns.

What does all this have to do with *latkes*? Nothing. Except that Proverbs speaks of a merry heart also having a "continual feast" (Prov. 15:15). As an authority on the Jewish palate, Barbara Benedict (nee Goldstein) is second to none. Her matzo ball soup is fit for a King David. Below she furnishes an authentic Jewish recipe for *latkes* (LOT-kiss), a Hanukkah staple.

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 large onion,<br>chopped                     | 2 cups mashed<br>potatoes   |
| 3 tablespoons chicken<br>fat or vegetable oil | salt and pepper to<br>taste |
| 2 tablespoons self-<br>rising flour           | 2 eggs, beaten              |

Fry the onion in some of the fat until golden. Mix all the ingredients together. Form into pancakes, and fry in the remaining hot chicken fat. Drain. Serve with applesauce and meat or fowl. Serves four.

So this Hanukkah, reflect on the true Light of Hanukkah, eat a few latkes, and laugh a little, maybe.

—Editor

*continued from previous page*

Antiochus. Over such a Temple, Menelaus, who supplanted Jason by a larger bribe, consented to remain as high priest. To that statue were brought as sacrifices the animal most detested by the Jews, the pig. An abominable act had been perpetrated on that 25th day of Kislev in the year 168 B.C. and, to use the descriptive expression of the Book of Maccabees, it left the Jewish people desolate."

Ibid., p. 56.

It looked as if the God of Abraham, Isaac, and David was crushed in defeat. But two thousand years before, God had promised Abraham, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3), and God's Word would prevail.

The pious Jews fled to the mountains. There was a copy of the Prophecy of Daniel that had been preserved. As the pious Jews studied the eleventh chapter of Daniel, they knew that hundreds of years before, Daniel had foretold the present situation: "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate" [editorial italics] (Dan. 11:31). This was the "abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" that was mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 24:15.

Just think of the Jewish people living in caves, eking out an existence like wild animals. It seemed as if God had forsaken them. But the Prophecy of Daniel had been written for such a time! They realized that God knew about this centuries ago, and they learned that God was still in control and that He would be Victor, because "the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Dan. 11:32).

The story of Hanukkah is the story of those exploits. I believe that the Letter to the Hebrews describes the faith of these heroes: "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had

trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy); they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:35-40).

This is the story of Hanukkah. Our Lord told His disciples that there is to be another Hanukkah in the future. He says that one will arise (see Dan.

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**"This feast was instituted in 165 B.C. by Judas Maccabaeus, his brothers, 'and the whole assembly of Israel' as an annual celebration of the rededication of the Temple three years after it had been vilely desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes."**

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12:11, 12) who is another Antiochus Epiphanes, the man of sin, or beast. (See 2 Thess. 2:3-8.) Just as there was a falling away and Antiochus as a type of the "man of sin" was revealed, so there will be one "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, . . . so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4).

When our Lord returns in His glory, the man of sin will be overthrown and the millennial kingdom established. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). □

# Questions and Answers

**QUESTION: I heard that Herod and his descendants were Edomites. Would you please comment on this? When do the Edomites pass out of history?**

**ANSWER:** Antipater, the father of Herod the Great (37 B.C. to A.D. 4), was of Idumaeen stock. The Idumaeans were of Edomite blood, the descendants of Esau. (See Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XIV. 8,5; *Wars of the Jews*, I.10,3.) Lange writes, "According to the statements of the fathers, the Herodians were of purely heathen extraction, their ancestors having been Philistines from Ascalon, and they had been brought to Idumaea as prisoners of war."

During the period of Maccabean rule (170 to 63 B.C.), the Edomites were completely subdued. Under the leadership of John Hyrcanus (125 B.C.), they were forced to observe Jewish laws, rites, and rituals. They were then incorporated into the Jewish nation, while their province was referred to by Greek and Roman writers as *Idumaea*. According to Josephus, just prior to the siege of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70, which resulted in its fall, 20,000 Idumaeans were permitted to enter the Holy City to fight on behalf of the zealots. From this point

on, the Edomites as a separate people disappear from the pages of history.

**QUESTION: Why do Christians continue to celebrate Christmas in light of the fact that many pagan traditions are associated with it?**

**ANSWER:** Christians who celebrate Christmas do so in honor of the incarnation or birth of the Lord Jesus. Even though the exact date of this event is unknown, and many pagan traditions have contributed to its celebration, these need not distract one from either the spirit nor the significance of the meaning behind Christmas, namely, "... good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:10, 11).

There are several biblical principles which ought to be applied in such cases, especially since there is a difference of opinion among believers. These are found in Romans 14:1-23:

1. Those who would abstain from celebrating Christmas ought not stand in judgment over those who do (vv. 3, 4).
2. Everyone ought to be fully persuaded in his own mind (vv. 5, 22).

3. Both the abstainer and the partaker ought to do so as unto the Lord (vv. 6-9).
4. One should not stand in judgment over the other, for all shall give an accounting to the Lord (vv. 10-13).
5. Nothing is unclean in itself (vv. 14, 15).
6. One ought not to allow his freedom to become a stumbling block for the other (vv. 16-18).
7. Pursue that which makes for peace (vv. 19-21).
8. Everything we do ought to spring forth from personal conviction and faith (vv. 22, 23).

**QUESTION: Can born-again believers be influenced by demons?**

**ANSWER:** Scripture makes plain that we are doing battle with our adversary, the devil, and the forces of evil (Eph. 6:11, 12; 1 Pet. 5:8). Demons can influence us in the following ways. They can prevent us from accomplishing certain goals by setting up obstacles in our way (1 Thess. 2:18). They can tempt us to sin against the Lord and one another (Mt. 4:1-11; 16:23; Acts 5:3; 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:11). They can attempt to lead us astray through false teaching (2 Cor. 11:14) and discourage and ensnare us as a result of unconfessed sin or refusal to forgive others (Eph. 4:27). Also, they can attempt to disgrace us and the Church (1 Tim. 3:7).

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