

# The Chosen People

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*A young STEP Trainee  
and a curious New Yorker*

**STEP '85: Twenty Who  
Made a Difference**





## The Chosen People

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE is published monthly (except August) 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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There is a beautiful legend in Judaism. It tells us that in heaven God has a special cup for His tears. Whenever the Jewish people suffer, God's tears flow into this cup. Finally, when the cup of tears overflows, the Messiah will come to deliver His people. While the legend has no basis in the Word of God, certainly, if such a cup existed in heaven, God's tears would have overflowed it long ago.

A cup as deep as the ocean itself could not begin to contain the tears God has shed over His chosen people. The prophet Isaiah cried, "In all their affliction, He was afflicted" (Isa. 63:9). What a comforting truth this verse expresses. God suffers with His children whenever they suffer. The Psalmist expressed his desire that God be his co-sufferer when he wrote, "Thou tellest my wanderings; put thou my tears into thy bottle. Are they not in thy book?" (Ps. 56:8).

Think for a few moments of the suffering of the Jewish people. From the destruction of the first Temple and the Babylonian captivity to the present-day political and economic unrest in Israel, no people have suffered more than the Jews.

Who can measure the suffering during the Inquisition, the Crusades, the pogroms, the Holocaust? Who can evaluate the suffering caused by prejudice, hatred, and terrorism?

The Bible teaches that man's suffering is the direct result of sin. He suffers because he is disobedient to the laws of God and because he refuses to believe God, to take Him at His Word. Perhaps it really was the overflowing cup of God's tears that brought forth our Messiah to deliver His people.

The Bible tells us that it was in the fullness of time that "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). Our Messiah came to deliver those who were afflicted (cf. Isa. 53). Nevertheless, multitudes today, both Jew and Gentile, refuse to receive Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God.

The future of Israel and the future of the nations are strangely intertwined and depend upon their acceptance of Jesus as Messiah and Lord. Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem because its people refused to believe in Him. I believe God continues to weep over that city and over its people, as well as over all men, both Jew and Gentile, whose hardened hearts refuse to recognize the love of God in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus.

It is this marvelous message of hope, of peace, and of forgiveness of sins that our missionaries are proclaiming to the Jewish people. This is the message that our STEP teams brought to the Jewish community as they crisscrossed the United States this summer proclaiming the love of God and the forgiveness of sin through the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah.

The Psalmist said, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps. 126:6). Please continue to uphold us in prayer as we faithfully present the Gospel to the Jewish people.

In our Messiah,

*Harold A. Sevensen*

HAROLD A. SEVENEN



# STEP '85: Twenty Who Made A Difference

*They came from all over the U.S. and Canada; one came from Alaska, another flew over from Holland, but they all arrived with the same burden: to share the joy of Messiah with the Jewish people.*

"If only STEP could be conducted year round," I thought as Phase One of STEP 1985 concluded.

So much excellent ministry had taken place, it seemed a pity to end it. But I smiled as I realized that there was more ministry yet ahead in STEP, Phase Two. This summer, twenty young men and women participated in STEP. A couple of fellows journeyed from Alaska, where they are students at Alaska Bible College. Some were Dallas Seminary graduates. One young man flew over from Holland.

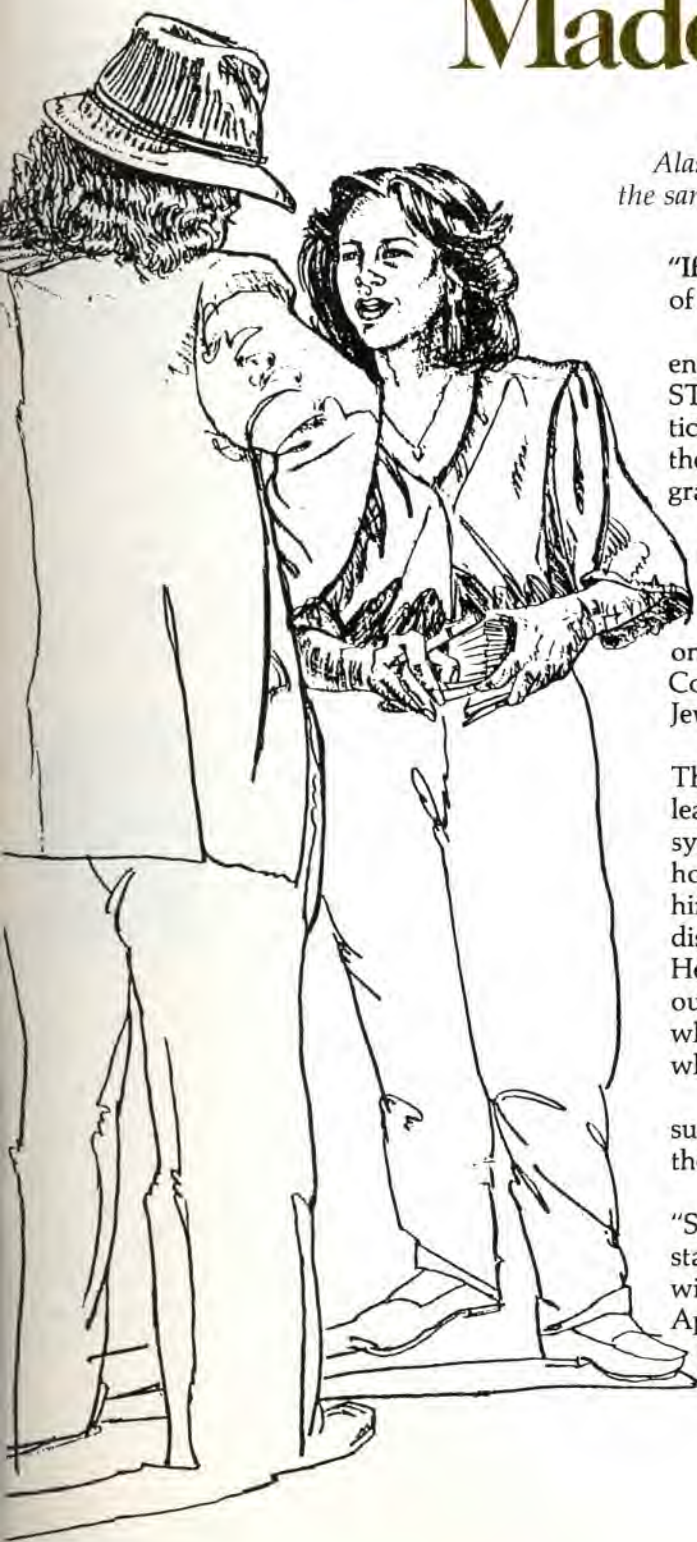
Two young women had known each other for years—one, a fourth-generation Jewish believer, had helped lead her friend, the granddaughter of Nazis, to the Lord. Now both desired to serve Him by reaching Jewish people. Also included in our program was one of our own ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries' Church Ministry Coordinators. There were also students from the Moody Bible Institute's Jewish Studies Program.

One woman arrived from Seattle, and one man from Boston. There was a former rock musician from Canada and also the son of the leader of another Jewish ministry. There was a former cantor of a synagogue and a young man who had been recently kidnapped and held hostage by a Russian ship near Alaska. One man, whose doctors told him he had reached five years beyond his life expectancy because of the disease he had, has given these five years to sharing with Jewish people. He came for additional training. There was a Gentile member of one of our Jewish-oriented congregations. There was a man, born in Russia, who had lived in Poland and Israel before coming to the United States, where he found his Messiah and Savior.

And finally, two Jewish women from Los Angeles gave their summer to learn how to share with their own people the Good News that the Messiah has come.

I was most impressed with the level of spirituality of the "STEPers," as they came to be called. Without any prompting from the staff, they developed prayer groups. Realizing from my correspondence with them that they were entering into spiritual warfare in the "Big Apple"—an apple that's rotten with sin—they wanted to prepare to touch the lives of some of the millions of Jewish people who live in

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the greater New York area. And touch them they did!

In addition to their rigorous classroom and study schedule, these zealous STEP participants led twenty-eight people to the Lord—eight of them Jewish—during the time they were in New York. They distributed over 100,000 pieces of Gospel literature and talked with anyone who had a question. And many people did have questions.

They knocked on nearly a thousand doors in Jewish communities and engaged in hundreds of conversations with residents. They sat on park benches and shared several hundred of our survey questionnaires adapted for Jewish evangelism from *Evangelism Explosion*. The secretary in our Manhattan office had a sore on her ear from handling all the calls that came in.

Indeed, Phase One of STEP was a blessing and a success.

As this is being written, the teams are beginning Phase Two of STEP—traveling to cities such as Montreal and Toronto, Raleigh and Memphis, Pittsburgh and Detroit. I'm praying that in addition to the twenty-eight people saved in Phase One, many more will come to faith in Phase Two as a result of the witness of our newly trained, traveling missionaries.

When the program ends, the teams will head back home, taking with them a deeper appreciation for the Jewish people and how to communicate the message of Messiah to them. I know they will all have had life-changing experiences as the Lord molds and shapes them. Seeing them grow spiritually as well as in ministry was a real pleasure.

Each ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries staff member feels responsible to minister to the whole person, not just to train them in the techniques of Jewish evangelism. In the long run, we have found that this builds the kind of character and testimony that attracts Jewish people and, even more, that glorifies our God.

—Barry Rubin



**Julie Baker (23)**, Watchung, New Jersey. Julie was a self-proclaimed iconoclast all her life. In college, she became an anarchist, a

Marxist, and a student of Nietzsche. Her search even led her to the occult. "I would have become a witch if I hadn't chickened out at the last minute." Then, in August of 1981, Sarah Galiley (STEP 1985) confronted her with her need to turn to Jesus.



**Bill Berg (41)**, Pueblo, Colorado. Married with two children, Bill holds two master's degrees, one in social work and

the other in public administration. Raised in a Conservative Jewish home, Bill's zeal for Judaism was no secret. "Other members of the Pueblo Jewish community saw me as the religious boy dedicating myself and my time to the *schul* (synagogue) in place of experiencing the normal peer group activities of adolescence." A public school teacher prayed for Bill for twenty-six years. Her prayers were answered when Bill came to faith in 1983. (See page 10 for Bill's testimony.)





**Valery Izbicki** (40), *Chicago, Illinois*. Born in Russia, Valery is a Jewish believer with three children. In 1970, Valery became a

believer through the witness of his fiancée. Following the Lord's leading, he entered seminary in South Dakota. Valery, who speaks four languages (Russian, Polish, Hebrew, and English), carries a real burden for the Russian immigrants and the need for good pastoral counseling.



**Joel Brotman** (23), *Kensington, Maryland*. Joel's dad, Manny, was one of the "founding fathers" of the Messianic Jewish

movement. At the age of three, Joel told his parents he wanted to accept the Lord. But it wasn't until his late teens that he really submitted to His Lordship. Musically talented, Joel is enrolled in the Jewish Studies Program at Moody Bible Institute. Please pray for Joel's mother as she battles a recurring illness.



**Scott Brown** (30), *Silver Spring, Maryland*. God began drawing Scott to Himself when a Gentile believer gave him a pocket New

Testament. Married in 1977, Scott "played" with the Gospel until 1981. Then a series of dramatic Christian films on the end times and the future of the world brought him under conviction. "Although I'm Jewish, I spent most of my life despising my heritage and repressing my Jewishness. Shortly after my conversion, however, God began to work a great transformation in my heart, turning it back to the Jewish people. He replaced my cold passivity with intense love."



**Charles Burrall** (30), *Homer, Alaska*. Charles loved working with teenagers as a high school teacher, but an impossible

workload and teaching schedule forced him to resign his post. The bond he had developed with his students, however, was so strong that one student even wanted to travel with him to his new destination—Alaska! In the northernmost state, God directed a native American (American Indian) to share his faith with Charlie—and Charlie believed.



**Jonathon Lyon** (24), *Brookline, Massachusetts*. A member of Gary Derechinsky's congregation, Jonathon grew up in Bethesda,

Maryland, and later lived in the Chicago suburb of Glencoe.\* In his freshman year at Northwestern University, Jonathon first heard the Gospel from an "ex-Moslem, born-again Turkish Christian," but he didn't act on it until God began to reach him while singing with the university's Black Gospel choir. During a Black Baptist church revival in the campus chapel, he came to faith. He has studied race relations and urban policy at Northwestern University and Tufts University, respectively. He recently applied to seminary and hopes to minister with Gary in the Boston area. \*Gary is ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries' Boston missionary.



**Sarah Galiley** (23), *Summit, New Jersey*. In the 1800s, like the patriarch of old, Sarah's great-grandfather ventured far from his

home (Odessa, Ukraine) for the promised land, Israel. In Turkey, her great-grandfather and great-grandmother were prevented from entering Israel. They were heartbroken. God brought a Turkish Christian across their path who shared with them the way to the *real* promised land—belief in the Messiah of Israel. They believed, and later one of their sons (Sarah's grandfather) established a Jewish mission in Canada. Growing up in a Jewish Christian home, Sarah's parents invited her to accept the Messiah after viewing a Billy Graham crusade in their home in 1970.





**Julie Phillips (30),** Pasadena, California. As a young child, Julie remembers feeling a love for Jesus as she poured over pictures of Him in

her father's Bible. Julie's loving Orthodox Jewish grandparents taught her about the Sabbath, Jewish holidays, and kosher food. But Julie began a search for God that took her around the world, through Eastern meditation, astrology, EST, and drugs. It took a near death experience at the hands of a kidnapper to shake Julie into the awareness that Jesus was truly the Messiah, the Passover Lamb.



**Curly Dalke (26),** Whittier, California. According to the doctors, Curly is well beyond his life expectancy. Curly suffers from neu-

rofibromatosis (the Elephant Man's disease), and tumors riddle his body. This degenerative illness has already claimed the life of Curly's father. But Curly wanted to be a missionary to the Jewish people. Ask Curly (or anyone on the STEP team), and they will tell you that STEP has been the thrill of Curly's life. On the college campuses where he ministers as a volunteer for ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries, Curly has "won the right" to share the Gospel with many Jewish professors.



**Rob Styler (31),** Cicero, Illinois. Rob was saved in 1977 while reading a tract given to him by a Christian co-worker at his job.

After that, God gave him a curiosity about the Jewish people and their customs. This curiosity blossomed into a burden, and Rob, a Gentile, applied to the Jewish Studies Program at Moody. While at Moody, Dr. Louis Goldberg recommended the STEP program. Rob's goal? "To learn how to witness to the Hasidic Jews."



**Sam Miller (36),** Fort Worth, Texas. Missionaries explained the Gospel to Sam when he was ten years old. But not until after

high school did he really accept Yeshua. Born in Birmingham, Alabama, married with three children, Sam, a Jewish believer, attends Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. During STEP, Sam visited an elderly uncle and aunt he hadn't seen for many years and led them both to the Lord.



**Jim Galloway (36),** Dallas, Texas. Because of Jim's great interest in Jewish studies, they used to call him "the Rabbi" at his alma mater,

Dallas Theological Seminary. For Jim, applying to the STEP program was truly a step of faith. Jim had to leave his son, Benny, who was three and a half years old, and his wife, Patricia, who was pregnant throughout the STEP program. At the last minute, Jim's place of employment went bankrupt, and Jim's last two paychecks bounced. But God undertook, and Jim passed his STEP experience with flying colors.



**Craig Parry (26),** South Orange, New Jersey. Thinking salvation came through works, Craig left church at fourteen and

got involved in Eckankar and astral projection. In college, Craig started an "organization" whose partying philosophy was "live for today for who knows what tomorrow will bring." Then he met a believer who explained salvation through grace. Craig continued to party, but after a while couldn't deny God's claim on his life. He is a member of Larry Feldman's congregation, has a degree in adapted physical education, and works with the physically handicapped.





**John Suriano** (35), *Alberta, Canada*. Born in Italy in a Roman Catholic family, John (Giovanni) is a talented musician who traveled

extensively in the rock music scene. John eventually emigrated to Canada and became the lead singer for a rock group there. The continual touring and the fast life style of the worldly music scene convinced him that there had to be something more to life. In November 1980, while still traveling with the band, he accepted the Lord.



**Terry Charrow** (30), *Topanga, California*. Terry might seem to be the most unlikely STEP candidate because she had already worked

for ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries for two years!

Perhaps it is a debt of love that motivates Terry STEP-ward, because it was through the witness and friendship of a Jewish Christian that she first heard the Gospel. "I was raised a Roman Catholic and didn't know what it meant to be saved," recalls Terry. "Because of my position at ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries and my personal burden for the Jewish people, I feel STEP will enhance my love and appreciation for our ABMJ missionaries."



**Sue Meyer** (38), *Seattle, Washington*. Sue has the same disease as Curly Dalke. She writes this about herself: "After years of

drugs, alcohol, and the occult, I realized there was a void in my life. I kept running into Jesus everywhere, but no one took the time to explain salvation." Then one night, Sue sat down to consider suicide but turned on Billy Graham instead. He explained how to be saved, and she accepted the Lord. Sue's burden is for the city of Seattle.



**Christopher Melisko** (25), *Horseheads, New York*. A student at Moody Bible Institute, Christopher first heard about the STEP

program through two former Moody roommates and current ABMJ/Chosen People missionaries Jeff Seif and Jerry Gross (see July 1985 issue of *The Chosen People*). A believer for three and a half years, he has worked with the Olive Tree Congregation in Niles, Illinois, and has been preaching in predominantly Jewish nursing homes for the last year and a half.



**Erwin Vos** (20), *c/o Orangeburg, New York*. Erwin has come the farthest to be a part of STEP—all the way from Holland! Erwin grew

up in a Christian home but in later years went his own way. When a friend invited him to a youth group meeting, Erwin obliged. That night's message on the impossibility of serving two masters confronted him squarely. A popular young man, Erwin's decision for the Lord cost him all his friends.



**Debbie Miller** (23), *Woodland Hills, California*. Debbie (shown on this month's cover) hails from Gary, Indiana, but currently lives

in California rooming with STEP 1985's Julie Phillips. "I want to become an effective witness to the Jewish people. I know it's a real challenge, but my heart really cries out to them." Debbie demonstrated her sensitivity to the Jewish people in the many contacts and conversations she had on the streets of New York as part of STEP's Phase One. She currently works in a health food store.





# CAPTURED

*God will give you peace, even as the Russians  
are towing your little merchant boat from Nome, Alaska to Siberia  
and calling you a spy. Ask Charlie Burrall (STEP '85).*

Four years ago Charles Burrall, aged thirty, a New York state public school teacher, set out to seek his fortune in Alaska. Thanks to a native American (American Indian) believer who shared his faith with Charlie, the fortune he found was the "pearl of great price."

A member of our STEP team this summer, Charlie shared the following story with several other STEP trainees and a few of us at headquarters.

—Editor

In September 1984, Charles Burrall was one of five crew members aboard the freighter *Frieda K*. Like most of the trips he had taken as cook on the small Alaskan merchant boat, this was a routine run carrying diesel fuel, fresh water, and food to a seismic crew in the Arctic.

The trip quickly lost its sameness when, on the boat's return to Nome, they were pulled over by the Soviet Coast Guard. At first, certain he had stayed within U.S. waters, the *Frieda K*'s captain thought they were being stopped by a fishing boat. But when

uniformed soldiers wielding knives and machine guns climbed aboard, the message became plain. The *Frieda K* had apparently strayed into Soviet waters.

The invaders immediately disconnected the radio. Then they tried to coerce the captain into signing a statement written in Russian. The captain flatly refused and told his crew they were to sign nothing. Three hours later, a Soviet destroyer arrived, and the *Frieda K* was towed for thirty hours to Siberia.

Charles Burrall remembers the day vividly. "It was a perfectly clear day with calm seas. We knew we hadn't gone into the Soviet waters, but it was plain that there was no reasoning with these people. As we were towed to Siberia, I was never afraid. As a matter of fact, God gave me such remarkable peace and clarity, that I felt His presence as never before in my four years as a believer."

For five days and nights they were interrogated at all hours, threatened

with imprisonment, and questioned about alleged spying activities. Then something happened that seriously shook Charles' calm.

"I was particularly burdened for one of my guards and witnessed to him every chance I got. But I wasn't certain how much English he understood, so I wrote a letter explaining the Gospel, hoping he could find a trusted friend to interpret it for him. I ended the letter by referring to Ezekiel 38, urging him to trust in Christ before the time when the prophecies about the nation to the north would come true. At first he refused the letter, but when I left it in a place where he could inconspicuously pick it up, he indicated that he had taken it.

"The next day our crew was called together by the head of Siberia's frontier guard. He showed us the letter and, referring to the passage I had quoted from Ezekiel, said, "As a result of the actions of one of your crew members, you have been declared unfriendly to the Soviet Union." He saluted, turned on his heel, and left.

For two days I lived under the fear of what would take place. They already suspected me of being a spy because my passport showed travels through Europe, Egypt, and Israel. They frequently threatened me with thirty years in a Russian prison. I never appreciated the openness, fairness, and justice of our American system as much as I did during these dark days."

On the eighth day, without any warning or apparent reason, the crew was called together again.

"The incident has become too well known," they were told. "Moscow has decided to release you."

The interrogations finally ceased, the threats came no more. That night, under the cover of darkness, the crew was transported back to the *Frieda K* and accompanied to U.S. waters.

Home at last, the privilege of freedom has taken on a whole new meaning for the five men who faced danger in a Soviet jail. Perhaps the jailers who heard God's Word will experience a freedom far greater than any even the USA can offer—freedom from the tyranny of sin through faith in Messiah. □



By DEBBIE MILLER  
STEP Participant, 1985

At first, I didn't think I should stop and talk to the couple sitting on the bench. They looked so worn-out and so tired that I almost felt it would be too much of an effort for them even to listen. But I decided to give it a try anyway.

"Hi," I said, smiling with my best "I'm-a-tourist" smile.

They returned my greeting with stoney silence. I continued chatting away about the weather, about how much I liked New York, about anything that came to mind.

The whole time they sat there expressionless, sort of slumped down, ignoring me.

Common wisdom should have made me shut up, but something inside of me became very determined. Maybe it was the Holy Spirit, and maybe it was just a stubborn streak, but the longer I talked with (or should I say *talked at*) this man and woman, the more convinced I became that they needed to hear the Gospel.

Finally I started to ask them questions from the religious survey we were taking that day. Surprise of surprises, in a mumbling sort of noncommittal voice, the man answered my questions. Then, when I asked if they

believed in God, there was a real shift in his tone.

"Yes, I do believe in God," he said with real feeling, "and I think He's punishing me for all the bad things I've done. I've got all kinds of health problems, and everything is going wrong, and I'm scared."

As he talked about his various health problems, his wife joined in. I felt like I had at last struck up a real conversation with Myrna and Al. Then, just as suddenly as they had started talking, they stopped. It wasn't like they were being rude, but more like they had run out of energy. With no explanation, they just stood up.

Just then Jerry Gross, who was my teammate that day, came over and started listening. As Al and Myrna took a step to leave, Jerry interrupted.

"You don't have to remain depressed. You don't have to stay that way for the rest of your life."

He had put his finger right on their problem: Al and Myrna had lost all their energy and enthusiasm. The weariness and sadness in their faces really did seem like a severe depression. Jerry explained that Jesus could make a difference, that the Messiah had come to bring new life.

"But we're so tormented, we never have peace," Al said impatiently.

"Do you want to stay that way forever? You don't have to," Jerry replied.

Several times Jerry explained the Gospel, how God came to earth, how He died for our sins and was raised on the third day. At one point Jerry asked, "Would you like to receive Him?"

Myrna hesitated. "Yes," she said tentatively, still sounding like she was carrying the world on her shoulders. Al said nothing.

"Al, you've admitted you are broken. Jesus makes broken people whole, but you have to ask. Do you want Him?"

All the time Jerry was speaking, I was off to the side praying. But when Al agreed and the three of them began to pray together, I was so excited that all I could do was praise the Lord!

When I looked at them again, Jerry was reviewing what it meant to receive Jesus. From their responses, I could tell it was going to take a lot of faith and growth before they could let the Lord begin to change their lives. I was certain, though, that they had taken a sincere step in that direction.

Then, as they talked to Jerry, I noticed for the first time that the "what's-the-use" expression they had both worn was gone! In its place, on two tired faces, were beautiful smiles. □

*The longer this dejected, elderly couple ignored Debbie Miller (STEP '85) the more she was convinced they needed to hear the Gospel.*

*"Al & Myrna"*





**O**ften on the High Holy Days, as I would stand next to the rabbi in front of the congregation with the shofar [ram's horn] pressed to my lips, I felt the awesomeness of God calling His people together. The soft, rhythmic chant of the prayers came naturally to my mind. At such times, I had no doubt that I was reaching God. I didn't want to recall my early teen years when I had heard I could only reach God through the Messiah."

Watching Bill Berg hand out tracts during the Summer Training and Evan-

four or five years old. Also, his teachers spoke Yiddish, which he didn't understand. So he returned to public school. But he didn't give up his dream.

At public school he struck up a friendship with his English teacher, Miss Middleton. As he shared his hopes and dreams with her, they became friends. Miss Middleton would frequently ask Bill questions about Jewish customs and holidays. One day she asked him if he would be inter-

had been diagnosed as having terminal cancer, and I didn't want to add more problems to my parents. Also, I loved Judaism, and I felt like something was drawing me to the synagogue.

"I just couldn't come out and say I believed in Jesus. Eventually I stopped going to church and committed myself to being Jewish, which I thought meant rejecting Christ. I learned all the cantorial chants, songs, and prayers, and by the time I was in high school, I was serving as cantor for

**"There were a lot of times when I just knew the message of the New Testament was true. I'd have butterflies in my stomach, I'd be so convicted. But my dad had been diagnosed as having terminal cancer, and I didn't want to add more problems to my parents."**

gelism Program, one notices his warm and friendly look that says, "I really would like to tell you about this great discovery I've made."

Just as obvious is Bill's fervor for the Lord, an excitement that's so contagious it's a surprise to some people that only two years ago he was president of a synagogue and serving as a cantor, the person who leads prayers in the synagogue.

Bill always had a special love for Judaism. When he was twelve years old, his parents allowed him to go to a special school where he could begin studying to be a rabbi. But he felt lost among the students, many of whom had been studying since they were



ested in learning about the New Testament.

Miss Middleton invited Bill to attend a Sunday evening service with her. That visit turned into a year and a half of regular attendance. His parents didn't approve, but they didn't interfere. Perhaps if they had understood fourteen-year-old Bill's serious spiritual struggle, they would have made him stop.

"There were a lot of times when I just knew it was true. I'd have butterflies in my stomach, I'd be so convicted. But my dad

my synagogue."

The years passed. Bill attended Southern Colorado State College. He married a lovely Jewish girl, Betty, and they set up a kosher home and regularly observed Jewish customs and holidays. When he was in the Army, he served as the Jewish lay leader for the 14th Naval District.

After Bill received his master's degree in social work from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, the Bergs returned to their home in Pueblo,



Colorado, and settled into a very comfortable, active life. They had two children, a girl and a boy. Bill was serving as cantor and vice-president (an elected official who helps oversee administrative matters) of his synagogue.

"At times, if I really thought about it, I'd say, 'Well, yeah, I really should acknowledge Yeshua as my Messiah.' But most of the time I felt like I was serving God and meeting a need in my community. I was

the Flower of Judaism by Ruth Rachel Specter, which Miss Middleton had given me back in 1958. She had inscribed it to 'Billy, with warmest wishes for full joy and blessing in all his life. May he find this blessed Yeshua as his Lord, Messiah, and Savior.'

"I also reread a New Testament, Prophecy Edition, and a King James Bible, both of which Miss Middleton had given me.

"About this same time, I met Charles Anderson at the local Y where our sons

"One night Chuck called and said, 'Bill, would you and Betty have about a half hour when I could come over? I really have a burden on my heart, and I'd like to share something with you.' He explained that with everything happening in the Middle East, he was thinking that the Church would be raptured soon. He didn't want us to be left behind.

"What impressed us was that he didn't preach about hell and that he had such a genuine love and compassion for us.

"During the next few months I realized that Yeshua really was the Messiah. Isaiah 53 was very impressive to me. I worked out

TESTIMONY OF BILL BERG  
STEP Participant, 1985

# A ZEAL FOR GOD

## *According to Knowledge*

*A lover of tradition, the cantor of his synagogue, Bill Berg had no doubt that he was reaching God. The last thing he wanted to hear was that really knowing God was impossible without the Messiah.*

*Bill Berg (left) and the ram's horn, a photo taken during his days at a Denver synagogue (photo by Joel Radtke).*

doing fairly well professionally, having started out as a case worker when I came back from grad school and gradually moving up to a supervisory position."

Then in August 1979, Miss Middleton stopped in to visit the Bergs.

"Miss Middleton had been praying for me for twenty-two years. On this trip she gave us a copy of *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsay. After reading it, I became very curious about prophecy.

"I reread a book called *The Bud and*

*played on the same basketball team. Chuck was the pastor of a new church in my neighborhood, and because we shared an interest in the Middle East and prophecy, we spent a lot of time talking.*

"He knew I was very active in the Jewish community and respected that, frequently asking me questions about Jewish concerns or customs.

"One time he invited me to come to his church and hear a series of sermons he was preaching on King David. I asked Betty, and she said, 'If you want to go, go.' So I started going to church once in a while.

**"I had to face the fact I had avoided all these years. I couldn't go on with my life unless I proclaimed Him publicly. For months I struggled. How would I tell Betty? What about the children? What would happen at the synagogue? Then, on top of everything, I lost my job of fifteen years!"**

*the time of Messiah's coming from Daniel 9 and realized Messiah had to have already come.*

"The Lord was seriously convicting me that I was sinning by not coming out with a public profession of my faith in Him. I had heard the Word of God since I was very young, and yet I never let it change my life. One Scripture in particular, Psalm 119:11, haunted me: 'Thy word have I hidden in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.'

"I had to face the fact I had avoided all these years. I couldn't go on with my life unless I proclaimed Him publicly. For months I struggled. How would I tell Betty?

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**"Chuck asked me if I wanted to receive Christ and I knew I already had. But I was so afraid it would get back to my friends—I had become president of my synagogue."**

*continued from previous page*

What about the children? What would happen at the synagogue? Then, on top of everything, I lost my job of fifteen years!

"I couldn't even bring myself to tell Betty about my job. That's how crazy things were in my life. Finally, I sat down one night and said, 'I really need to share something with you.' First I told her about my job. Then I told her I had become a believer in Messiah. She said she already knew something had been happening. After all, I was going to church, reading Christian books, and studying the New Testament.

"She said if this belief was so important to me, she wanted to find out more and wanted to come to church with me. Actually, she was a lot more upset about my job.

"Within a month, on Christmas Day, Betty made a personal decision to trust in Messiah. The following week we began attending Eliezer's meetings together. About nine months later, we followed the Lord in baptism."

"One time Chuck asked me if I wanted to receive Christ, and I knew I already had. But I was so afraid it would get back to my friends—I had become president of my synagogue by now—that I just said, 'I'm giving it serious thought.' And even though Betty knew about my interest in Christianity, I was afraid of what she'd do, so I was trying to hide my real interest from her."

In 1983 Chuck Anderson introduced Bill to Eliezer Urbach. Until then, Bill had always felt if he publicly admitted his belief in Jesus, he would be betraying his Jewishness. Seeing and talking with Eliezer completely contradicted his opinion.

"How could I not think that the Gospel was Jewish, hearing it from Eliezer! He spoke Yiddish and Hebrew, had been

through the Holocaust, lived in Israel, and knew Jewish teachings. He was obviously a Jew, and believing in Messiah hadn't made him any less so."

Bill began going to Denver to attend a Messianic congregation with Eliezer. Seeing so many Jewish believers keep their Jewish identity while believing in Christ was the final confirmation to Bill.

The Bergs now decided they had to make the move they had dreaded. They called the rabbi.

"I told him that I had been searching and studying and that I had come to the conviction that Yeshua is the Jewish Messiah. At first he was shocked, but then he tried to understand. 'I don't agree,' he admitted. 'But I know I can't change your mind.' I told him the children didn't share our beliefs and asked for special consideration for them, which he said was no problem.

"The next thing we did was write a letter to the congregation, resigning and explaining our beliefs. I thought that would be the hardest letter we would ever write, but God gave us so much joy and peace that we were really excited to see how God could use us. Mostly, people didn't say anything to us. A few called us up just to see what had happened, but the real effects remain in God's sight, not mine."

Since then, Bill has realized that God is calling him to witness to his own people. He has been praying for direction and guidance. Watching him witness on the streets of New York, one senses that God is answering that prayer. He has asked our Chosen People readers to pray for him and to pray for his children, neither of whom believe in Christ yet.

"I see now that even when I was young, I had a desire to serve God and I missed out on a beautiful experience all those years. And I suppose some people would look at the years I spent avoiding the Messiah as wasted time. By His grace, though, I know the truth now, and I can see how everything I learned helps me love Him more today.

"I still love the liturgy and its eloquence and the holiness of the synagogue prayers. But what I longed for, and finally gained, is the fulfillment of all those teachings—the personal relationship God has given me with Yeshua Ha Mashiach—Jesus, the Messiah of Israel. Hallelujah!" □

## **Rabbis Don't Make House Calls**

When a Jewish person is aged and alone, who is there? When there is no one to care for his spiritual needs, whom can he call?

Many elderly people are without families to care for them, without a rabbi to visit them, and without any other friends who will reach out and say, "I care."

By God's grace many of your ABMJ/Chosen People missionaries are burdened to minister to these precious souls. Sometimes it is to read Scripture at a hospital bed. Other times it's helping pick up groceries or get a ride to a Bible study.

Yes, dear friends, rabbis don't make house calls on these people, but missionaries do. Missionaries make house calls and hospital calls and nursing home calls. Calls on people who are too often alone, people who long for the comfort of God.

Thank you for being there with us when we call on these people, for being part of the new birth we see so often in old hearts.

- ☐ I promise to pray for ABMJ missionaries and for the salvation of the Jewish people.
- ☐ I also enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in support of ABMJ missionaries.

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# From the Exile To the Christ:

## *The Prophets of the Exile*

### *The Lamentations of Jeremiah*

By DR. DANIEL FUCHS

The Lamentations of Jeremiah is the most eloquent book in the Bible. It is the anguished sob of Jeremiah over the fall of Jerusalem. Because he had warned about the destruction of the city and the Temple, Jeremiah had been arrested and placed in stocks. Another time, he was lowered by ropes into a dungeon that was filled with mire.

All during his long ministry, Jeremiah was accused of being a false prophet on the grounds that God would never forsake Jerusalem nor let His Temple be destroyed. However, Jeremiah lived to see that day and was proved to be a true prophet.

Not many prophets live to see the fulfillment of what they predicted, and a lesser prophet would have gloried in his personal triumph. But not Jeremiah! His anguish over the destruction was unbearable, even though he had known it would happen: "How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave" (Lam. 1:1).

In griefs anticipatory of our Lord, Jeremiah wept. "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look around and see. Is any suffering like my suffering that was inflicted on me, that the Lord brought on me in the day of his fierce anger?" (Lam. 1:12).

Because the Book of Lamentations is poetry, it has been neglected by some as source material in the study of the history of Judah. It is, however, the only extant eyewitness account of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Before reading Lamentations, carefully study the curses for disobedience that were prophesied by Moses in Deuteronomy 28:15-57. Note how literally the prophecy of Moses was fulfilled as described in Lamentations.

Deuteronomy 28:53-55 foretold the horrors of starvation that would befall Jerusalem. "Because of the suffering that your enemy will inflict on you during the siege, you will eat the fruit of the womb, the flesh of the sons and daughters the Lord your God has given you.

Even the most gentle and sensitive man among you will have no compassion on his own brother or the wife he loves or his surviving children, and he will not give to one of them any of the flesh of his children that he is eating."

Nine centuries later, over the fulfillment of this terrifying prophecy of Moses, Jeremiah lamented: "Those killed by the sword are better off than those who die of famine; racked with hunger, they waste away for lack of food from the field. With their own hands compassionate women have cooked their own children, who became their food when my people were destroyed" (Lam. 4:9, 10).

If it were not for Lamentations, we would never know how literally the prophecies of Moses were fulfilled during the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

The first four chapters of Lamentations are poems that are also alphabetic acrostics. In chapters 1, 2, and 4, each verse begins with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet (e.g., verse 1 begins with the letter *aleph*; verse 2, *beth*; and so forth). Chapter 3 is a triple acrostic. Each stanza has three verses. The verses of each stanza begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

"The fifth chapter, although not alphabetical, contains twenty-two verses in a plaintive meter, which—the second half of each verse being shorter than the first—conveys a somber effect of diminuendo."

*The New Scofield Bible*, p. 832.

The rabbis say that these acrostics express Israel's suffering from *aleph* to *tau*, that is, from A to Z.

An acrostic is an aid to memory. Lamentations was written to be memorized. There are other acrostics in the Scriptures. Psalm 119 is the best known. Each of its stanzas has eight verses, all of which begin with the same letter of the alphabet.

Each year on the ninth day of Av (usually in August),

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the Jews keep a solemn fast commemorating the destruction of Solomon's Temple, over which Jeremiah so deeply lamented.

On the ninth day of Av, the oldest member of the congregation announces, "This is the \_\_\_\_\_th year since the destruction of the Holy Temple." He then exhorts the congregation as follows: "Each generation in which the Temple is not rebuilt should regard itself as responsible for its destruction." Later, the entire Book of Lamentations is recited from memory in dim candlelight while the congregation sits on the floor.

Many other terrible events of Jewish history occurred on the ninth day of Av and are also commemorated on this day. "The Mishnah (Ta'an. 4:6) enumerates five disasters: (1) On the 9th of Av it was decreed that the Children of Israel, after the Exodus from Egypt, should not enter the Promised Land; (2) the First and (3) the Second Temples were destroyed; (4) Bethar, the last stronghold of the leaders of the Bar Kokhba war, was captured in 135 C.E.; and (5) one year later, in 136, the Roman emperor Hadrian established a heathen temple on the site of the Temple and rebuilt Jerusalem as a pagan city which was renamed *Aelia Capitolina* and which the Jews were forbidden to enter.

"The expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 is said also to have occurred on the 9th of Av.

"The 9th of Av thus became a symbol for all the persecutions and misfortunes of the Jewish people, for the loss of national independence and the sufferings in exile."

*Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 3, p. 935.

Since the Book of Lamentations is essentially poetry, it is difficult to identify a particular theme in the individual chapters. However, certain subjects do stand out in each poem:

Chapter 1 repeats Jerusalem's distress because its people are abandoned by their former allies.

Chapter 2 expresses God's role in Jerusalem's destruction. The Lord is the Executor of judgment.

Chapter 3 describes the meaning of suffering.

Chapter 4 stresses the inhabitants' sufferings.

Chapter 5 is a prayer of hope.

The core of the book is found in Chapter 3, where Jeremiah expresses the meaning of suffering. In verses 1 through 21, Jeremiah describes his own peculiar sufferings during those days. Observe that he uses the first person time and time again in these verses: "I am," "He has driven me," "He pierced my heart."

Later, in verses 25 through 66, he uses the third person: "Those whose hope is in him," "pursue them." In other words, Jeremiah, as he describes his own suffering, did not suffer so much because of his own sins but because of the unrighteousness of his people. The latter part of the chapter is a psalm of repentance, not of Jeremiah's but the people's.

In between the "I" of the first verses and the "they" of the latter verses is expressed one of the most overwhelming truths of the Scriptures: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22, 23).

"His compassions never fail." In the depths of his suffering, Jeremiah realized that he didn't suffer alone. "Compassion" is the act of suffering together. God suffered with Jeremiah, and He suffered with His people.

The Book of Lamentations is an answer to one of mankind's most troubling questions: "Why do people suffer?" There is no easy answer. In Lamentations, as far as Judah is concerned, the answer is sin: "Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins?" (Lam. 3:39).

But why do the righteous suffer? Why should Jeremiah have suffered, when throughout his whole life he waged war against sin? Jeremiah sublimates this seemingly unanswerable question to a deeper truth. Not only did Jeremiah suffer, but God also suffered. He suffered together with Jeremiah and His people, just as He does with all men today. This is the compassion of God! □

## MAKE YOUR LIFE INSURANCE LIVE!

Everyone knows that life insurance is used at death, but many don't realize that it may also be used while living!

The needs that originally prompted the purchase of life insurance—protection for young children or to satisfy a mortgage in case of the breadwinner's early death, for example—may no longer exist.

Some may wonder, then, why they really keep such policies in effect by continuing to pay the premiums!

If that describes your situation, you may wish to consider putting your insurance to work now in a new and exciting way. Here are two possibilities:

1. You may designate ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries as your beneficiary to provide a final gift far larger than you would have otherwise thought possible.

2. You may assign the ownership of your policy to this ministry and claim an income tax deduction now if your policy has cash value.

In either case, you will achieve an estate reduction for the amount of this "hidden asset." Perhaps more important, you will enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that an asset with which the Lord has entrusted you will be used to help Jewish missionaries with their front-line tasks.

If this idea interests you, we suggest you ask your insurance representative to make the change.

Or, for other assistance or information, we invite you to write the President, ABMJ/Chosen People Ministries, P.O. Box 2000, Orangeburg, N.Y. 10962. Please include your phone number so we may respond promptly. □



# Questions and Answers

By GARY DERECHINSKY

**QUESTION:** Do you think liberal Jews will accept the Antichrist as their Savior?

**ANSWER:** The answer to your question depends upon what is meant by *savior*. If you mean a false messiah, then I would answer no. Scripture does not portray the Antichrist as one who claims to be Israel's Messiah, nor does it present him as a Messiah. In fact, the name "Antichrist" means "opponent of the Messiah." Thus the Antichrist will make no pretense to a Messianic claim.

However, if you mean by *savior* a political ally, then I would answer yes. It is quite understandable that Israel would enter into contracts and agreements with Gentile powers or leaders, as they carry on normal diplomatic relations with the other nations of the world. And, although the Antichrist ultimately exalts himself against God and sets himself forth as God (see 2 Thess. 2:4), his early presentation

evidently does not manifest this, for he does not break his contractual agreement with Israel until three and one-half years later (see Dan. 9:27).

One should also keep in mind that not only will liberal Jews accept the help offered by the Antichrist through this covenant arrangement, but all Jews and Gentiles will. The only ones exempted are those who acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Savior and who do not take the mark of the beast (see Rev. 13:11-18; 17:8). □

**QUESTION:** What is the significance of the resurrection of the many saints who were raised after the resurrection of Jesus (Mt. 27:52, 53)?

**ANSWER:** This was an eschatological sign signifying the complete redemption of man through the finished work of Messiah. Calvin writes: "For Christ is called the 'first-born from the dead' (Col. 1:18), and the 'first-fruits of those who rise' (1 Cor. 15:20), because by

his death he commenced, and by his resurrection he completed, a new life. . . . Now by this sign it was made evident, that he neither died nor rose again in a private capacity, but in order to shed the odour of life on all believers."

It was expected by the rabbis that at Messiah's coming at the end of the age in Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives would be split in two (Zech. 14:4) and the dead would be raised (Ezek. 37:1-14). The earthquake (Mt. 27:51) parallels the splitting of the Mount of Olives in Zechariah, and the raising of the saints (Mt. 27:52) parallels the opening of the graves in Ezekiel. The latter also parallels the future resurrection of the dead.

These events recorded in Matthew's Gospel are a foretaste or prefiguring of the events prophesied in Zechariah and Ezekiel which will find their ultimate fulfillment at the Second Coming of Christ.

*For more information about introducing your Jewish friends to the Messiah,  
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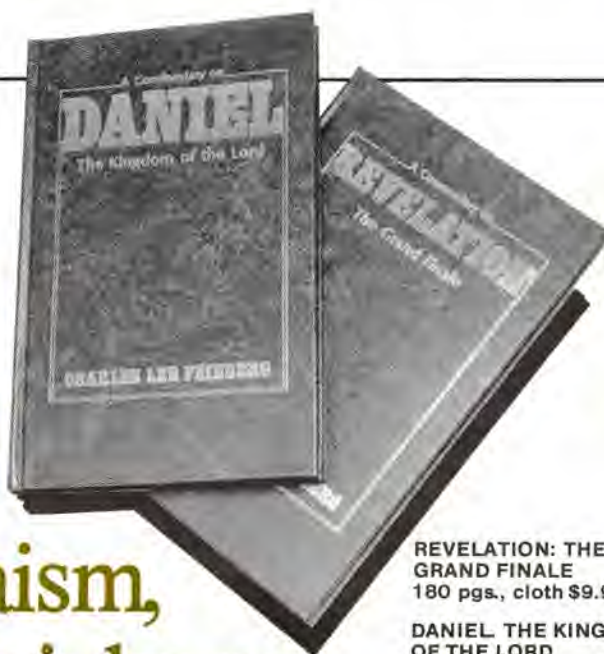
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