

# The Chosen People

FEBRUARY 1989 ISSN 0164-5323



## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE CHILDREN?

Camp Simchat Yeludim: Teaching Our Children To Serve The Lord As Jews Who Believe In Messiah

# See Israel THROUGH Jewish Eyes



**A UNIQUE TOUR OF THE HOLY LAND  
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# The Chosen People

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE is a medium of information concerning the Jewish people, Israel, and the work of the Chosen People Ministries, 1300 Cross Beam Drive, Charlotte, N.C. 28217-2800.

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## From the President

Israel perhaps is in the most vulnerable position that it has ever been since the founding of the nation forty years ago.

Internally, the nation is divided. The last election, which gave neither the Likud nor the Labour Party a clear majority, emphasizes this fact.

In order to form a new government, Yitzhak Shamir had basically two options, both of which would further divide the country.

First, he could turn to the religious parties for support. In so doing, the religious party would impose upon the Likud government and the people of Israel a strict interpretation of halachic law. It would seek to define a Jew by strict orthodox law. They would impose Sabbath regulations upon the country. They would seek to curb all missionary and evangelistic efforts within the country.

Such an imposition of law upon a secular Israel would only further divide the country.

Yitzhak Shamir's second option was to seek to form a government with the Labour Party and, in so doing, alienate the religious leaders in Israel.

The Palestinian Organization, well aware of the internal struggles going on within Israel, has chosen this opportune time to declare a Palestinian State in the West Bank—the territories controlled by Israel since June of 1967.

For the benefit of public opinion and to further create division within the nation of Israel, the Palestinians included within their declaration the subtle recognition of Israel's right to exist according to the U.N. Resolution 242.

By seeming to offer to Israel this olive branch, the Palestinians are seeking to sway world opinion—thus pressuring Israel to give up the West Bank and to create a Palestinian State within its own borders.

One cannot help but think that the planning of this declaration of a Palestinian State was orchestrated by the PLO, recognizing Israel's vulnerability.

The recent uprising of the Palestinians in the occupied territories prior to the Israeli elections caused further division within the country. Where there is division, there is weakness. Our Messiah, the Lord Jesus, said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

Yassar Arafat and the PLO, recognizing this deep division within Israel, have used this situation in another grandiose scheme to attempt to destroy the nation of Israel.

The Palestinians already have a state. It is called Jordan. If the Palestinians want to declare themselves to be a state, they should declare Jordan to be their national homeland.

As believers in the Messiah we need to be much in prayer for the nation of Israel, the Jewish people, as well as for the Arab world and the Palestinians. Peace can only come to the Middle East through the Prince of Peace, our Messiah, the Lord Jesus. Only through Him can the people of the world be unified. We have an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate the transforming power of the Gospel to the Jew, to the Arab, to the Gentile.

The Middle East solution cannot be found in politics, in armament, in religion. It can only be found in a personal relationship with God through the Messiah.

In Messiah,

HAROLD A. SEVENER

Time





# But What Will Happen To Children?

*The rabbis accuse us of wiping out the next generation of Jewish people – our children. But just outside of Philadelphia, Camp Simchat Yeludim (Joy of the Children) teaches our children to serve the Lord as Jews who believe in Messiah.*

BY LARRY FELDMAN Camp Director

**B**ut what will happen to your children...? As a Jewish believer in Yeshua, I'm frequently asked this question by rabbis. "Fine, believe if you want," they say, "but you're wiping out the Jewish people, because, after all, what will happen to your children?"

My answer to them is that in our home, through a worshipping congregation and by example, I can show

my children the love of God and the meaning of their Jewishness. But being Jewish is to be part of a people. And that is what camp is all about: coming together to teach our children how to serve the Lord as Jews who believe in Messiah.

### **Fear and Trembling**

When I was chosen as camp director for Chosen People Ministries, I accepted with fear, trembling and expectations of an adventure. The

camp program had been dormant for several years but now as a result of our congregations, there were many Jewish believers who wanted their children to grow in faith.

So, on August 14, 1988, Camp Simchat Yeludim (Joy of the Children) was born.

Waking up at 7:00 every morning with 62 children on hand, and knowing we had to find ways to satisfy them spiritually and emotionally (not to mention to keep up with them

Camp was the best in the world too me. We had teams and I was on the orange team. I loved it when we had a night swim. It was extra fun because my dad was made camp director. The counselors were very nice. We had chapel and bible verses had to be memorized. And I memorized every verse. I made lots of very nice kids. One night one of the counselors came to my bunk and wrote all over our faces. I loved camp!!! See you next year!

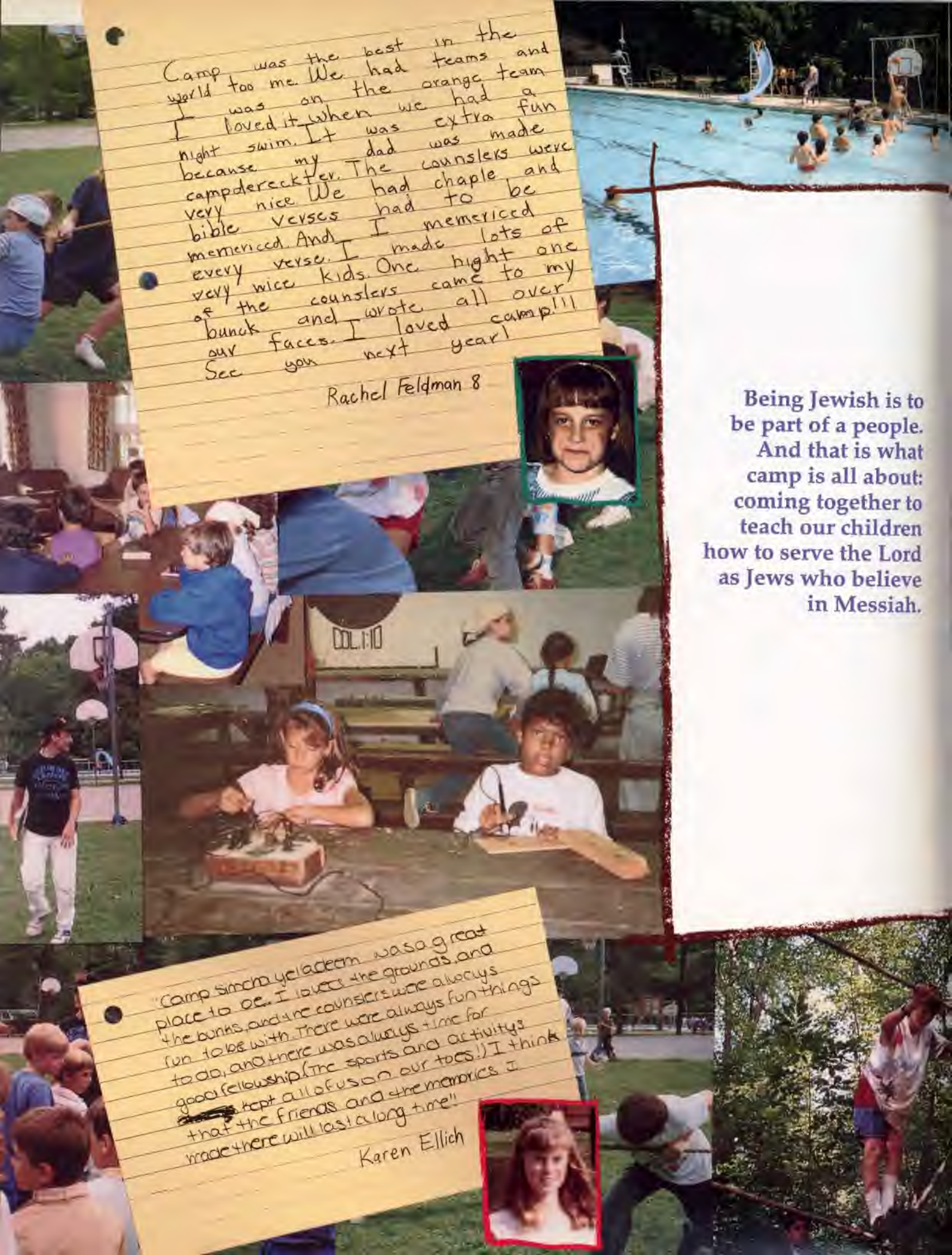
Rachel Feldman 8



Being Jewish is to be part of a people. And that is what camp is all about: coming together to teach our children how to serve the Lord as Jews who believe in Messiah.

Camp Simcha Yeladim was a great place to be. I loved the grounds and the bunks, and the counselors were always fun to be with. There were always fun things to do, and there was always time for good fellowship (the sports and activities ~~we~~ kept all of us on our toes!) I think that the friends and the memories I made there will last a long time!

Karen Ellich





physically!) until 9:00 p.m. was the fear and trembling part!

The adventure is the way God brought workers, counselors and campers together to accomplish this.

### A Full Program

Morning exercise began at flag raising and continued with cabin clean-up, baseball, boating, canoeing, obstacle courses, basketball, street hockey, volleyball, crafts, swim lessons, soccer and archery. And that's just what athletic director Stewart Weinish planned before lunch!

Mornings also included a chapel where Chosen People Ministries workers Miriam Nadler, Lisa Cagan and Tom Huckel did a great job of providing music, Bible studies, workbooks, memory verses and Hebrew lessons. Each day they focused on a different fruit of the Spirit and talked about knowing Messiah and making Him known through our lives.

After lunch came rest (more for me and the counselors I think) and after that the daily Olympic events and team activities to help the campers learn and work together.

Evenings mixed team activities with scavenger hunts, crazy races, cookouts, skits, camp fires, and an evening chapel filled with Bible stories and gospel concerts.

I could see God answering prayer and it was especially encouraging to see campers treating each other with kindness and to hear the prayers and concern for one another. One highlight for me, as a mom and as a counselor, was to hear one of my sons stand up during the sharing time to say that he didn't really want to come to camp but his parents made him...and he was glad they did.

– Miriam Nadler, counselor

Probably the most important and precious times for me were spent with the girls in my cabin. What a rowdy bunch (you know who you are!). We swam together, laughed hysterically together, prayed together, worked together and got our faces painted by Ruth Wardell while sound asleep. (Wait 'til next year, Ruth!!). But what I remember most are their faces, their laughter and their prayer requests: "Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for [them]" 1 Sam. 12:23.

– Lisa Cagan, counselor

Before lights out the counselors had evening devotions in their cabins to reflect on their day and to pray together.

### A Fresh Vision

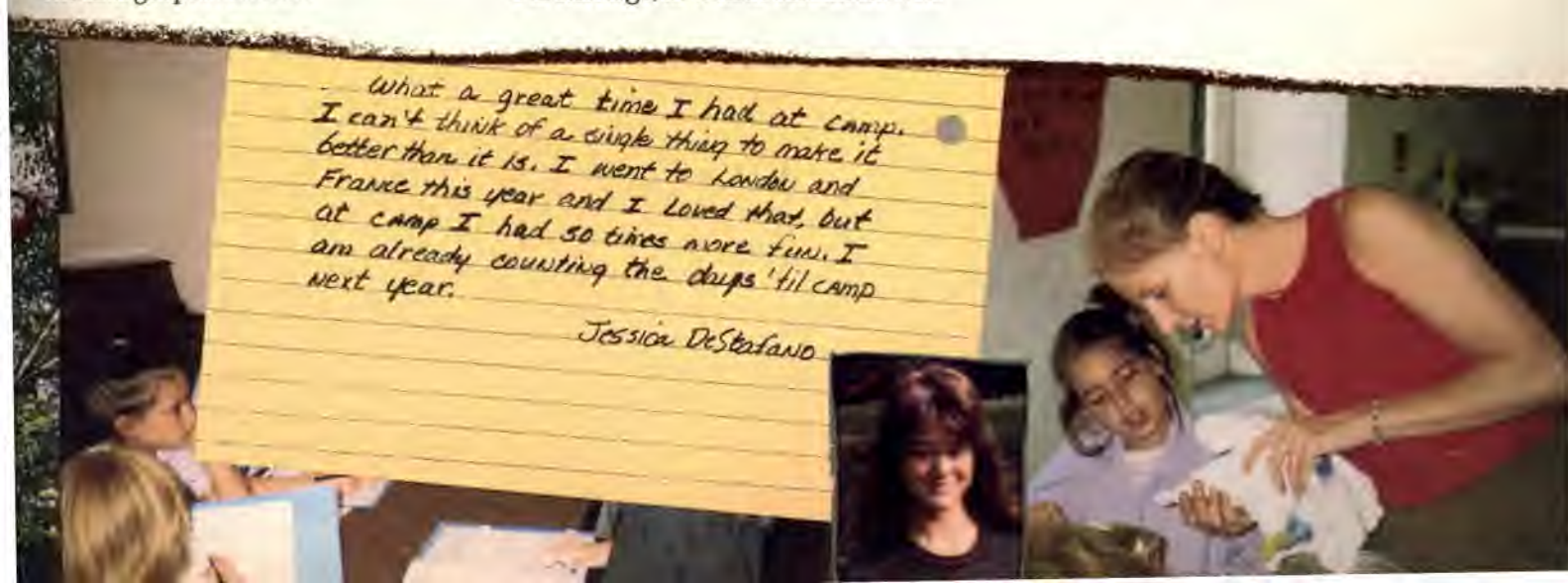
One of the most moving moments was our Friday night worship service. I am, after all, a father concerned with teaching the beauty of our Lord and our heritage, as well as a minister who

longs to see people grow in faith. To see so many children gathered, the future of our people and the legacy of our faith, gave me a fresh vision of God's work among the Jewish people and the rewards of our work.

*continued on next page*

What a great time I had at camp. I can't think of a single thing to make it better than it is. I went to London and France this year and I loved that, but at camp I had 50 times more fun. I am already counting the days 'til camp next year.

Jessica DeStefano





## 'He's A Different Child.'

Barry, a Jewish seven-year-old from Philadelphia, tumbled out of the van the first day at Camp Simchat Yeludim.

"What's that," the boy asked, pointing to a boulder with the words, "The Lord Is My Rock."

His counselor, Gary Derechinsky, explained.

"You see that rock. You see how sturdy, how secure that rock is? Well, that's how the Lord is for us. A father who loves us...."

"OK, OK," Barry interrupted, running off, almost sorry he'd asked.

### Broken Home

Barry's home life was anything but sturdy and secure. He came from a broken home—with several step-brothers and sisters and no father to love him and establish a good role model.

At camp, through the nightly devotions, Bible studies and activities, Barry for the first time experienced the love of God. But his stunts (pushing other boys and other aggressive behavior) usually won him a lecture from either Gary or Mitch Triestman.

"No one wants to be friends with someone who acts like this," Mitch advised him. "But more than that, God is displeased with your actions."

### God's Forgiveness

Barry must have savored these last words for several days for by Mitch's next lecture, Barry expressed the desire to have God's forgiveness. Mitch

sent him to Gary, his counselor.


"Would you like me to pray for you?" Gary asked him.

"Yes, but can I pray too?" Barry asked innocently. Gary began. "Lord, I want to thank you for opening Barry's heart, for being a father who loves us."

Faltering, Barry prayed, "Father, forgive me for the bad things I've done. Make me your child. And God, tell the Messiah, 'thank you' for me."

**At camp, through the nightly devotions, Bible studies and activities, Barry for the first time experienced the love of God.**

Gary hugged him and kept a close eye on him the last few days of camp. Barry still acted up but now he was more likely to be truly sorry for his actions and apologize to those he'd wronged.

Several weeks after camp ended, Barry's mother delivered the most telling postscript to Barry's coming to faith: "He's a different child." 

*Now is a good time to begin thinking about enrolling your child or sponsoring a child in Camp Simchat Yeludim this summer. Clip the coupon below and send it to us for more information.*

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Charlotte, NC 28217-2800

- Please send me more information on Camp Simchat Yeludim '89.
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*As you listen to the story of 29-year-old Iris Smith's life, it is sadly apparent that disappointments with spirit-crushing potential are all too real in our world. Still God is . . .*

# An Ever-Present Help

THE TESTIMONY OF IRIS SMITH



**S**he looks like a brown-haired pixie, smiling, friendly, likeable. The kind of person you'd say has it all . . . looks, a great husband, a happy, six-

year-old son. It isn't until you hear her music that you understand there is something not quite so storybookish behind the apparent charm. Playing her guitar and softly singing, she tells of hurts that run deep.

As you listen to the story of 29-year-old Iris Smith's life, it is sadly apparent that disappointments with spirit-crushing potential are all too real in our world.

## The Story of Three Women

"I often think of writing a book titled, *The Story of Three Women*," Iris Smith says. "It would be the story of my grandmother, my mother and myself; three women who faced struggles, each of us nearly overwhelmed in our own way.

"For my grandmother, it was the Russian revolution. Caught up in its chaos, she had to flee her home in the night, just ahead of the soldiers. Like many Jews of that time, all eight of her brothers and sisters were caught and killed.

"My mother's life wasn't so dramatic, but she too had her struggles. Though she was deeply in love with my father, their relationship was full

of emotional hardship, two people unable to show and tell how much they cared, frequently fighting and saying things that hurt."

## Well-to-do Home

Iris was raised in a well-to-do Jewish home where she and her three brothers and sisters enjoyed camp, tennis lessons, nice clothes, nice cars. Even when she was young, however, the serenity was misleading, for by the age of eight she was being sexually abused by her father.

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**Iris was raised in a well-to-do Jewish home where she and her three brothers and sisters enjoyed camp, tennis lessons, nice clothes, nice cars. Even when she was young, however, the serenity was misleading.**

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"The only reason I can even talk about it now," she says, "is because my dad and I have resolved it between us and, like me, he has found help in a relationship with Jesus. But when it was happening, it was very scary, and especially because he kept



*Iris and Cy: "How I found my husband Cy during that confused time in my life is a miracle."*

telling me he knew it was wrong and he needed help.

"At the same time, my parents were always fighting. There were tensions in the house that I don't think you can understand unless you've lived like that. Mom was always crying; there was never any peace."

Like most young girls, Iris didn't tell anyone about the sexual abuse. Finally, at the age of 12 she tried to talk to her mother. "She accused me of making it up. Things could have been a lot worse for me but when she told my father, he admitted that it was true and asked for help."

#### **Parents Separated**

By this time the long-struggling relationship between Iris's parents was deteriorating in a number of areas and they separated. The children were suddenly moved from a nice house in the suburbs to a small apartment.

"Mom was upset, feeling guilty over the breakup, worrying about money. I was deeply depressed and began to wonder if I could ever count on anything in the world."

Yet even as a young teen, Iris sensed her only hope for happiness was in

God. "One time when I was very young, four or maybe five at the oldest, I was in my pajamas ready to be tucked into bed. Daddy was there with me.

"I looked beyond him, out the window and saw a star-filled black sky. I felt a sense of wonder that somehow I knew my daddy shared.

"Daddy, who's God?" I asked.

"He lives in heaven and watches over us," he replied. "God loves us very much and if you ever need anything, you can pray to God and He'll take care of you."

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**Iris never gave up hope that when things were bad, God would help. She found that help at a neighbor's home when she was 14.**

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#### **God Would Help**

Iris held that promise through her childhood, never giving up hope that when things were bad, God would

**Iris's parents' relationship was deteriorating in a number of areas and they separated. The children were suddenly moved from a nice house in the suburbs to a small apartment.**

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help. She found that help at a neighbor's home when she was 14.

"It was Christmas and some friends invited me to spend the day with them. It had been a bad year. My folks were getting divorced. My mother was depressed. My parents were accusing each other of all sorts of things.

"At my friend's house, I encountered an almost foreign-like peace. These people had something I desperately wanted and they said it was Jesus.

"I started attending church with them. Mom didn't like it, she thought Christians were people, like the Russians she had grown up hearing about, who murdered Jews.

"Yet the real blow up came when I went to a Sunday night service and came home carrying a Bible. Somewhat naively, I couldn't wait to tell my mother the good news: I had accepted Jesus and He, the Author of peace, wanted to come into her life also!

#### **Ripped Up The Bible**

"When my mother heard my news, an anguished expression caught her face. She grabbed the Bible and ripped it apart. 'I'll use this for toilet paper,' she shouted."

Though Iris was determined to keep her faith, going against her mother's antagonism was eventually too much.

"The only thing that offered me hope—a relationship with Jesus—actually caused revulsion in my mother."

A teenager whose world was upside down already, Iris felt that it was her duty to lighten her mother's burden, not add to it. She knew she had to rid herself of her love for Jesus.

"By the time I was 16, I was a problem drinker. At least that way I could ignore the anger and confusion building up in me and even if it didn't work, it did blur the edges."

#### Confused College Days

Off to college at age 17, Iris partied often and hard. "How I found my wonderful husband Cy during that confused time in my life is a miracle to me, but he was a haven. We were married by the time I was 21."

It seems that here at last, there should have been some relief. A happy ending. But that wasn't to be.

"I started to get sick with nausea and headaches, which I thought were

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**"When my mother heard my news, an anguished expression caught her face. She grabbed the Bible and ripped it apart. 'I'll use this for toilet paper,' she shouted."**

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emotional. My doctor agreed. He gave me valium. My sickness progressed, and I went onto that horrible see-saw of using drugs and being sick, eventually not knowing if I was sick from the drugs or something else. I checked into a detox center, where, as I came down so did the world I had built around me.

"I knew drugs and drinking were never going to solve my problems, and saw clearly what I was missing. I remembered that I had once found God and that more than ever I needed Him."

#### Recommitment

Iris recommitted her life to Christ, and with this new commitment ex-

pected all things to become new.

"At that point, everything fell apart. I was pregnant and had my son by cesarean, but was so sick during and after the pregnancy I could hardly move. I had developed a variety of unconnected symptoms which left me unable to take care of my baby. I had no energy. When people came in to help me, they sometimes found me curled up on the couch in a ball of pain.

"I was a newcomer in a rural area, with few friends. People were meeting me for the first time, and though I met Christians who tried to be supportive, they wondered about this woman who was always sick with undiagnosed illnesses.

"My family, due to my renewed belief in Jesus, was cold to me. My husband was starting out in his work, often busy. He tried to be supportive, but it was difficult. Eventually, he began to drink and stay away from home.

#### Abundant Life Elusive

"I kept reading my Bible and seeing the abundant life, wondering

*Iris' mother, brothers and sister. "My family, due to my renewed interest in Jesus, was cold to me."*



**Iris felt that it was her duty to lighten her mother's burden, not add to it. She knew she had to rid herself of her love for Jesus.**

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*Iris, today, during the recording of some of her original music.*

where it was. God kept telling me His grace was sufficient for me. It was all I had and, I realized, all I needed.

"Amazing to me now is that much of this could have been prevented if I had been diagnosed properly: I had candida, a systemic yeast infection which was actually causing my other problems. I had a pre-diabetic condition that went untreated, and for five years a chronic pelvic inflammatory disease."

In five years Iris had six operations. Before the sixth operation, a hysterectomy, things went from bad to worse. Her son Paul had a bad fall and was hospitalized for a month. Her husband's business failed and he filed for bankruptcy.

"When you are really deserted, you see things you wouldn't see otherwise. I saw that in my whole life God had never abandoned me. I stopped looking for solutions that would come 'If only . . .' I wanted only to be satisfied within God, whatever that meant.

"Eventually, life became less of a horror. Circumstances didn't change at first, only the courage to see God in them and accept what He allowed to

**"When you are really deserted, you see things you wouldn't see otherwise. I saw that in my whole life God had never abandoned me. I stopped looking for solutions that would come 'If only . . .'"**

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happen. Then, circumstances came around too.

#### **Life Was A Mess**

"Cy came home one night in tears, saying his life was a mess. He prayed with me to receive the Lord. Together we began to go to church."

When Cy came to faith, it didn't put a "happily ever after" ending to Iris's story. There were still struggles, including another pelvic mass that appeared to need surgery. And though God had cured the other infections through surgery, He chose to heal this one through prayer.

"When my radiologist saw that the mass disappeared, he exclaimed, 'You're lucky!' which gave me the occasion to explain how much more than luck it was."

Is it all over? Are the trials behind and the abundant life about to begin?

"I see now that these questions aren't the ones to ask," Iris says. "Even through it all, I was experiencing the abundant life, though I couldn't always see it at the time. A friend told me at the time, 'I know you're going through a lot right now, more than most people understand. But please, please, use this time for God. I know He has a special plan for you.'"

#### **A Doctor's Query**

"I thought of that when my doctor sat down with me a few months ago and said, 'Let me ask you something. Most of my patients would have been devastated by what you went through, yet you sit here today confident and healthy. Tell me how you did it.'"

"As I explained how God had never, ever left me, I knew that I don't know what is in the future. I only know that troubles will happen to all of us. Yet, maybe more than many people, I can say with assurance, God is the ever-present strength in times of trouble.

"In the story of three women, the book I'd like to write about my grandmother, mother and myself, there are three lives and a variety of struggles. Yet, finally, I've found the ending that will produce a legacy that lasts." ☺



# SIMCHA!

**CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES** invites you to rejoice with us  
at a special gathering of believers in Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) May 19-21, 1989.



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Pennsylvania  
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Pastor, Woodbridge  
Community Church  
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**SIMCHA! (JOY!)** Three joyful days of fellowship, teaching, and relaxation as we joyously lift up the name of Yeshua. You'll study the Bible from a distinctively Jewish perspective. Enjoy special music and relax amidst New York's beautiful Adirondack mountains.

**LOCATION** Word of Life Inn at scenic Schroon Lake provides outstanding accommodations, excellent food, and a wide range of recreational activities which include boating, fishing, swimming (in an indoor pool), jacuzzi, game room, tennis and much more.

**PROGRAM** The theme for SIMCHA! is The Joy of Skillful Living (Studies in Proverbs): Speakers will address the following: Turning a Wise Guy into a Wise Man, Keeping Balanced on the Tightrope of Life, What Makes a Skillful Leader, Portrait of a Fulfilled Woman, The Way of Wise Relationships, Using Wisdom to Beat the Marriage Blues, plus assorted workshops.

**COST** The cost of SIMCHA! depends on the accommodations you select. Accommodations range from \$90.00 to \$105.00 (cost per adult, based on double occupancy). Cost for children is structured according to age and reasonably priced. Prices of accommodations include meals from Friday supper through Sunday midday dinner.

Schroon Lake is also accessible to many Canadian cities via I-87. Please clip coupon and send for our SIMCHA! brochure containing further information.



*"You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands" (Isaiah 55:12).*

## SIMCHA!

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Please send me more information on your special conference SIMCHA! May 19-21, 1989, at Word of Life Inn.

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# The Prophet Daniel

**L**ast month, we reviewed the actions of Daniel in requesting a diet that consisted of nothing but vegetables and water. In contrast to the luxuries that sin (Babylon's pagan culture, food and wine) has to offer, we see the vegetables and the water of God's Word. Those who are willing to feast upon the Word of God will receive spiritual nourishment—they will grow in wisdom and understanding of God.

## Knowledge and Understanding

So it was with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. In Daniel, chapter 1, verse 17 it is written, "To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds."

These young Jewish men, removed to a foreign country, to a different culture, in servitude to a pagan king, faithfully served their God. Hence, God blessed them.

Notice that God gave them knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning.

In other words, He did not censor their reading nor their exposure to a pagan culture. But He gave them the ability to discern the truth of God in spite of all the pagan secular teaching that they had received. They were able to exercise godly wisdom. As such, they were able to put everything into its proper perspective.

## Sensitive to the Holy Spirit

This is a principle which is applicable to our lives as believers today. We need to study the Word of God. We need to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We need to allow Him to be our teacher and then to view the political arena, the economic arena, the theaters of learning through the proper understanding of God's Word. We need to apply godly wisdom to our lives and in so doing, separate right from wrong—good from bad—righteousness from evil.

And, so it was when the king talked with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, he found there was none equal to them in all of Babylon. Notice verse 20, "In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom."

How we need men like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah today; men and women who are students of the Word of God, servants of the living God who are able to view culture from a godly perspective, separating truth from error—based upon God's Word and a living relationship with God the Father.

Having thus met Daniel and his three friends, let us now see how God uses him after having gifted him with the gift of the understanding of visions and dreams of all kinds.

As we indicated earlier, the book falls into a natural division based upon the Hebrew parts of the prophecy and the Aramaic parts of the prophecy. There's also a natural division based upon the visions that Daniel interprets and the visions that Daniel sees.

We could call chapters 1-6 "Daniel, the Interpreter of Visions" and chapters 7-12, "Daniel, the Seer of Visions." Thus, the first half of the book deals primarily with the visions seen by the Gentile kings. These were interpreted by the prophet Daniel,

*God never censored Daniel's exposure to pagan culture.*

*Instead, He gave him the ability to discern His truth and exercise godly wisdom.*

BY HAROLD A. SEVENER  
PRESIDENT  
CHOSEN PEOPLE  
MINISTRIES

revealing God's great program of judgment and redemption in reference to the Gentile nations of the world.

#### God's Purpose for Israel

In the last half of the book God reveals His truth to Daniel in vision form and basically gives us an understanding of how God will perfect His will and purpose for the nation of Israel. Chapters 1-6 give us a Gentile view of history and chapters 7-12 give us a Jewish view of history.

This great book ties together both the Jew and the Gentile in God's program of redemption. It shows that God is no respecter of persons. It gives us a preview of that great truth taught in the book of Galatians that in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female. We are all one in the Messiah, Jesus (cf. Gal. 3:28).

*continued on next page*

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Daniel served as the interpreter of the visions of the Gentile kings, serving under Nebuchadnezzar in chapters 1-4, serving under Belshazzar in chapter 5, and serving under Darius in chapter 6.

I find it unique that within God's program during this great period of time, called the Times of the Gentiles, which began with Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. when he sacked and destroyed Jerusalem, that God raised up a Jewish prophet to interpret and to preach His truth to Gentile kings who would ultimately be used of God to chastise Israel for her sin and disobedience.

#### **Times of the Gentiles**

It is also in this same period of time called the Times of the Gentiles, a few centuries later, after Daniel, when the Church was born at Pentecost. God would once again raise up Jewish men, fill them with His Holy Spirit, and He would send them forth to Gentile kings to preach the Good News of salvation. They would preach that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all who would believe—to the Jew first and also to the Greek (cf. Rom. 1:16).

Then we find that when the Church is complete and is raptured (or caught away), before the great period of time called the Tribulation, we find God once again raising up Jewish evangelists who will proclaim the Gospel to Gentile leaders throughout the world. In the Tribulation period He will raise up 144,000 from all of the tribes of Israel to proclaim God's coming judgment in the person of the Lord Jesus, the Messiah (cf. Rev. 7, 14).

Throughout history God has made provision for the Gentile kings to hear His program of redemption through the Jewish people. I find it heartbreaking and a sad commentary on Christendom and the Church that even after most Gentiles come to faith in Jesus, very few of them ever share the Gospel with Jewish people.

It grieves me as I see Gentile Christians so concerned for world missions and world evangelism (and they should be, this is Biblical), yet so few are really con-

cerned for the evangelization of the Jews. How I praise God for each one of you who faithfully prays for and supports this ministry in reaching Jewish people with the Gospel! I believe God has a special blessing for Gentile believers in this age who faithfully carry the truth of God's Word back to the Jewish people.

Now let us look at Daniel, chapter 2, and begin to examine the passage dealing with Nebuchadnezzar's dream. It is the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. He had inherited the throne of Babylon from his father, Nabopolassar. We know from history, as well as from Scripture, that Nebuchadnezzar had been used of God to capture the city of Jerusalem (cf. Jer. 25, 27).

#### **Nebuchadnezzar Summons Magicians**

At this point in his reign he had already brought numerous Jewish people back to Babylon, of which Daniel was one. Scripture tells us that Nebuchadnezzar was troubled in his sleep and he was dreaming dreams so he summoned his magicians, his enchanters, his sorcerers, and his astrologers. He asked each of them to tell him his dream and then to interpret it.

Whether Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten the dream and thus wanted the wise men to recall it for him, or whether he was just putting them to the test is unclear. The weight of the evidence, however, seems to indicate that Nebuchadnezzar knew exactly what his dream was—he could recall it vividly—but he could not interpret it.

It would also appear that Nebuchadnezzar was already suspicious of the abilities of his wise men in their interpretation of dreams and in the advice that they had been giving to him. Remember, it was God who had raised up Nebuchadnezzar as the rod of chastisement against Jerusalem and Judah. Perhaps God had instilled in Nebuchadnezzar a hunger to know Him and Nebuchadnezzar was already beginning to see through the false teachings of his wise men.

Whatever the reason, Nebuchadnezzar asks them to tell him his dream and then to interpret it (cf. Dan. 2:2-5). Now remember that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah had also been placed in this elite core of wise men. But seemingly, because they were Jews, they had been separated from the rest as was customary. They, then, were not present when Nebuchadnezzar called for the others to come and tell him what his dream was and to interpret it.

#### **Amazed Astrologers**

What happens next is most interesting. The wise men are asked by the king to tell him his dream and, of course, the wise men and the astrologers are amazed. In their profession they were often called upon to interpret dreams, visions, and symbols but no rational person had ever called upon them to recite the dream.



In many ways these wise men and astrologers are like so many well-meaning people today. I meet a lot of people who can tell me a lot about the Bible. They can tell me what they think it means or what they think it says. But when I begin to pry and ask them what it really says, I find that they have never really read the passage in question. Perhaps they have heard a sermon, or read a commentary, or heard someone's comment on a verse—but they, themselves, have never really sat down to examine the Word of God for themselves. They've never really understood what God was saying to them individually through His Word.

So it was with these wise men. As long as Nebuchadnezzar would tell them what his dreams were they would give him an interpretation—but they themselves really had no idea what the dreams really were.

Notice verses 10 and 11, "The astrologers answered the king, 'There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has

ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men.'"

### Wise in Worldly Wisdom

In reality the wise men were not wise at all. They were wise only in the things of the world and in the traditions of pagan Babylon. They knew nothing of Almighty God. Little did they realize that God, indeed, dwelt among men. He had dwelt in the Temple at Jerusalem. He was dwelling among them in the persons of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Since the time of Abraham salvation has always been of the Jews and it always will be. Remove the Jews from God's program of redemption and you remove its truth. This is exactly what these wise men had done. They had left Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah out of their confrontation with the king and now they were going to face the consequences. ☺ (continued next month)



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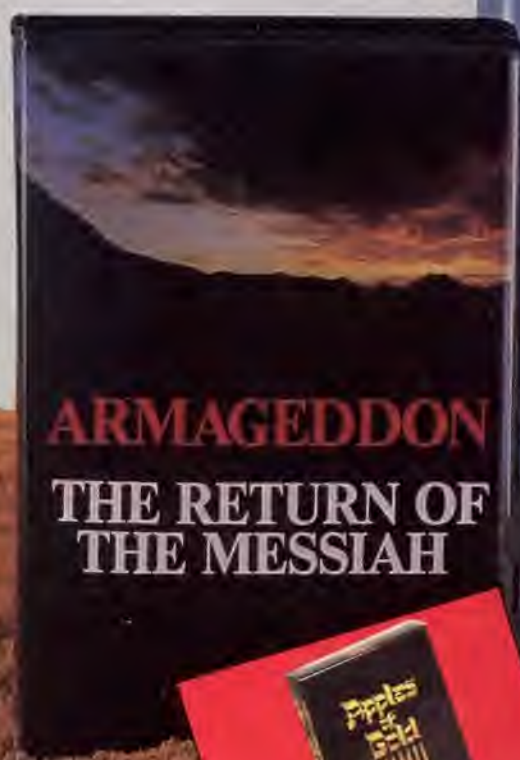


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