

The Chosen People



Volume XV, Issue 4 April 2009



SEARCHING FOR NEW LIFE IN THE NEW AGE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Bringing the Gospel to New Age Seekers • Foreign "Gods" in the Promised Land? • From New Age to New Creation • Matthew 11-12



SEARCHING FOR NEW LIFE

Dear friend,

Shalom in His grace! I hope you are enjoying the afterglow from Easter and Passover! I love this season of the year because it powerfully points to the death and resurrection of our Messiah Jesus. He is the Lamb of God who died to take away the sin of the world, and He is also the Lamb enthroned who reigns forevermore! It is as if the Gospel is “in the air” during these days, and this makes it much easier to talk about the Lord to both Jews and Gentiles.

The Lord is giving us some wonderful opportunities to reach a whole new generation of Jewish seekers! I have found a hunger for spiritual truth growing among young people in particular—but their search is taking them down some winding roads!

I understand this because my route to the Savior was similar. I was willing to consider almost anything but Jesus, because I was raised in a traditional Jewish home that viewed Jesus as “non-Jewish” and to some extent as an enemy of His own people! I was far more willing to explore some pretty offbeat ways to find God, because these were not considered anti-Jewish. I was sincerely searching—I just did not really know where to look.

New Age Teaching or New Life in Messiah?

Before I received Jesus as my Messiah, I tried all sorts of religions

and philosophies, including various “mystical” versions of the Judaism in which I was raised. Like many other young people at the time, I also became enamored with Eastern religions and assorted New Age philosophies—but none of them satisfied my longing for a personal relationship with God.

Today, young Jewish people are even more attracted to this style of spirituality than they were in my day! This is why I am so deeply concerned about the vast numbers of Jewish people who are becoming involved in what is commonly termed the “New Age” movement. This increasing interest among sincere but misguided seekers makes it imperative that we try to develop ways to reach them. I want to tell you what we are doing so you can pray for us!

An Attractive Counterfeit

As I entered my teenage years, I became a rebel. I did not want anyone—parents, teachers or rabbis—telling me what to do or what to believe. The music, availability of drugs and pressure from peers to reject the values of our parents set the stage for a significant number of young people to chart a new “spiritual” course for our generation. The only problem was, we did not have a map!

What were we looking for? Where were we going? Actually, no

one knew! I definitely wanted a deeper spirituality, but I did not know where to find it. I was searching for something beyond the dusty dogmas of traditional religion. “Eastern thought,” as we called it back then, proved to be very attractive. These new philosophies offered—and still offer—a “feel-good” salvation without “religious” and especially “Christian” baggage for the average Jewish person! After all, who ever heard of a Hindu or a Buddhist accused of being antisemitic? Remember, in the Jewish mindset, Christianity is unfortunately associated with anti-Jewish sentiments. So Eastern and other exotic faiths seem to be safer for young Jewish seekers.

Tens of thousands of Jewish people are now involved in the New Age movement, and we want to reach them for the Lord. So many are honestly seeking a deeper and more vital faith, but they simply do not know where to look. And like I did, they want a DEEPER spirituality without the stigma usually attached to Christianity and to Jesus by the Jewish community!

Creating God in Our Own Image

The New Age movement generally teaches that truth is relative. This is very appealing to members of our younger generation, who have been raised in a pluralistic, post-modern culture. But the truth is that



all religions are *not* valid paths to God. In New Age thinking, all that matters is that a person is well-intentioned and sincere! However, we know that in the spiritual realm, there is good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error.

This makes the exclusivity of the Gospel (John 14:6) a difficult truth for young people—and even for many from my generation—to accept. Some might want to believe that Christianity is God's best without believing that other faiths—like Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism—are not! Some spiritual seekers try to combine as many faiths as possible into a New Age potpourri that cannot possibly lead to complete spiritual satisfaction.

Many Jewish young people are attracted to the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, for example. When I was first considering Jesus, I was so impressed by those words of the Savior! Ultimately it took the persuasion of the Spirit of God to help me understand that there was *no other name given among men whereby we must be saved*—and that name is Yeshua, Jesus!

Our continued gentle presentation of the person of Jesus is a powerful approach in reaching New Age seekers, especially Jewish people who need to be slowly introduced to Jesus and His teachings before they will give their hearts to Him.

Hope for New Age Seekers

I want to tell you what your Mission to the Jewish people is

doing to reach Jewish New Age seekers across the globe—especially in Israel!

Each year, tens of thousands of people attend New Age festivals around the world. These festivals are particularly popular in Israel, and the vast majority of those attending are young people. Israelis involved with the New Age movement often begin learning about these forms of spirituality as they travel around the world after serving in the army. Many travel to India, Thailand and other spots where they learn about these “alternative” paths to God. They then bring these views back home, which explains why there are now at least three New Age festivals each year in Israel.

Our missionaries in Israel attend these festivals to share the Gospel with these precious young seekers. Last year, we sent a team to India, and we will send another team in the near future to reach the thousands of Jewish young people who are seeking a more satisfying spirituality. Our staff regularly meets Jewish people who are intrigued by New Age thinking and practice.

What do these seekers want? So many are longing for a deeper and more intimate relationship with God. They do not want the usual diet of formal religion—neither Judaism nor Christianity. They want something they believe will be authentic and life-changing!

These young people want genuine spiritual peace. My heart breaks because I know they will never find what they are looking for

until they encounter the living Lord and surrender to Him. For those who do, their New Age seeking will have been a step along the way. But for those who remain in the seductive grip of New Age philosophy, it will become an almost unbreakable bondage.

May I encourage you to share the Gospel with New Age seekers? So many are open to the Lord, but are simply misguided. Many have never even heard the Gospel! I know that sometimes listening to what these folks believe will be difficult—but love them, open your heart, and smile when you can. Then, with the gentleness of Jesus, tell them where they can find what they are looking for. In Jesus they will find all the treasures of God—everything they had looked for and never found elsewhere.

The answer to the seeking heart is not a philosophy, but a Person: Jesus.

I hope our reports on what God is doing in the lives of Jewish people who have come to faith from a New Age background will brighten your day and strengthen your resolve to bring the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles.

Thanks for your prayers and generous support! Our staff could not be reaching Jewish people around the world for Jesus without you!

Blessings,

Mitch
Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

BRINGING THE GOSPEL TO NEW AGE SEEKERS

by Scott Brown

Tranquilizers and pain suppressants work by numbing the senses and masking the pain long enough to give one a momentary sense of relief. The New Age movement and related philosophies work in much the same way. They mask the problem of sin long enough to give their followers a false sense of peace and serenity. While the New Age movement may promise enlightenment, in the end the payoff is darkness.

Why are Jewish people so drawn to this movement? One New Age community reported that almost 40% of its membership is Jewish. Over 21% of the participants in a study of ex-members of cults are Jewish. God's unique relationship with the Jewish people seems to have planted in the Jewish soul a passion for things spiritual. But when this passion is misdirected, Jewish people become especially

humbly admitting that you do not understand the secret things of God. Cultivate the gentle art of simple listening and gracious responding (Col. 4:6).

Use evil for good (Gen. 50:20) – New Age philosophies all contain counterfeit elements of the truth. For example, enlightenment, transformation, and contentment are common terms in the language of the New Age that have profound relevance to our Gospel message. You can communicate the message of your King using words that are meaningful to your hearer. The Apostle Paul deliberately used elements of the pagan cultures he addressed as bridges to truth.

Highlight your shared values (Acts 22:3) – Chances are good that your Jewish friend is exploring this path because of an earnest hunger for spirituality. That is something you also desire, right? Do not be afraid to express your own passion for growth as a spiritual person. You can begin the conversation in general terms that will invite—not alienate—your friend.

Suffer peacefully (1 Peter 3:15) – The New Age and Eastern religions promise to deliver peace and contentment in turbulent times through “being at one with a force within.” It is a compelling promise that delivers—but only momentarily and superficially. A person's deepest needs remain unfulfilled. So do not be surprised when God delivers an opportunity for you to demonstrate hope in a hopeless situation, and “be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” Your hope will quietly challenge your friend's confidence in crystals and mantras.

Kindly ignore apparent confidence (1 Cor. 1:20) – Despite your friend's glowing reports of spiritual transformation and inner peace, the truth remains that his or her spirit yearns for the life that only Yeshua (Jesus) can provide. Remember that the Holy Spirit is faithfully convincing your friend of his or her sin problem, and desperate need for righteousness and of the coming judgment (John 16:8). Speak to the person behind the veil of self-confidence and remember: “God has chosen the weak things of the world [us!] to put to shame the things which are mighty” (1 Cor. 1:27). 🌈

Scott Brown and his wife Margie serve with Chosen People in New Zealand, where they operate a Gospel ministry of hospitality to young Israelis who often travel abroad in search of spiritual truth.



Our staff members go where seekers gather, whether at festivals like the one held in April in Israel (above) or in the Goa region of India (below).

vulnerable to the old lies of the New Age. Here are some suggestions for reaching out to Jewish friends and relatives who are attracted to or involved in the New Age:

Make room for mystery (Deut. 29:29) – Jewish fascination with “signs” (1 Cor. 1:22) contributes to the high percentage of Jewish involvement in the mystical disciplines. Add to this the mounting intolerance for religious dogma and the result is a general abhorrence for organized religion. As an ambassador for Messiah (2 Cor. 5:20), you can avoid being dogmatic without compromising your convictions. Break down walls by

FROM NEW AGE TO NEW CREATION

The Spiritual Journey of Alan Shore

The first tug toward New Age thought I ever experienced was at about the age of sixteen, when I encountered the writings of Herman Hesse. *Siddhartha*, a book about the search for Eastern “enlightenment,” was very popular at the time, and it set me on a path that whetted my appetite for spiritual experiences. I steeped myself in Eastern thought, did yoga and tried meditation in an attempt to penetrate the inner mysteries I was convinced lay in store for me.

New Age thinking is powerfully attractive. Who doesn't want to be a better person, be more successful, have fulfilling relationships and all the rest? That's what New Age thinking and philosophy promises. The problem is that it feeds human pride, luring you with the idea that you are better than other people because you have found a way into a secret, “enlightened” circle. When I became a believer in Jesus, I realized that this sort of elitism is the very opposite of the Gospel, which is available to anyone who is humble enough to receive it. I am always reminded of this when I read Paul's words, “*Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men*” (1 Cor. 1:25).

Even more to the point are Messiah's words in Matthew 16:26—“*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*” Although New Age thought promises fulfillment, it cannot meet our deepest need—the need for fellowship with Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God who alone is capable of transforming hearts and renewing minds. ☺

Alan Shore is Staff Writer for Chosen People Ministries



and also represents the ministry in churches, Messianic congregations and learning institutions. He is also presently working on a Ph.D. in Jewish History and Culture in Berkeley, California.

FOREIGN “GODS” IN THE PROMISED LAND?

How do the words “Israel” and “New Age” fit together? Although you may think that the Israeli people hold closely to the Jewish faith, that's not always true. Let me explain a recent phenomenon occurring in Israel.

Every young Israeli spends a number of years of mandatory service in the Israeli army, whether in elite fighting units, social work or other areas. When they finish their military service, many spend the next three to twelve months traveling the world, often going to South America, Asia or India. It is said that Israel issues 50,000 visas to India every year. Sadly, many young Israelis get swept up in the drugs, rave and party scene and the idolatrous worship of India's many gods.

When these young travelers return to Israel, they often bring their “New Age” faith with them. Many claim that it makes them feel peaceful in the midst of the daily struggles of life in Israel. As a result, during three major biblical feasts (*Rosh Hashanah* [New Year], Passover and *Shavuot* [Pentecost]), some 30,000 people participate in New Age festivals. Instead of giving thanks to the God of Israel for His provision, freedom and mercy, they pray to foreign gods and consume things that are harmful to their bodies and minds.

Yet these precious young people are still searching. As we reach out during these festivals, I have had some of the most amazing conversations about the God of Israel, the truth of the Scriptures and the atonement that Jesus made for us. These young people are starving for answers that they have not found in the things they have adopted from foreign lands. Although they are profoundly lost and involved in unhealthy activities, their questions tell me they are still searching for the truth that is found in Jesus! ☺

Rachel G. serves with Chosen People Ministries in Israel, reaching Israelis and helping to coordinate short-term missions programs in the Promised Land.



SEE THE BIBLE THROUGH JEWISH EYES

BY DANIEL GOLDBERG, TH.D., D.D.



Dr. Goldberg serves as International Ministries Representative for Chosen People Ministries and lives in Pineville, North Carolina with his wife, Madeline.

THE REJECTION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Matthew 11, 12

Sadly, both the rulers of Rome and the religious leaders of Israel rejected the King of Heaven. The reasons why an entire generation refused the message of Jesus are described in Matthew 11 and 12. To sum up, it was a combination of their pride, religious traditions and Satanic influences.

REJECTION BECAUSE OF PRIDE (Mt. 11:20-30)

Most of the “mighty works” of Jesus were performed in three cities of Galilee, namely Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (Mt. 11:20-23). The pride of these cities’ inhabitants blinded them to the truth of the Gospel that the miracles were meant to illustrate. Jesus stated that God Himself conceals the truth from persons of pride (Mt. 11:25-27). King Solomon warned in Proverbs 29:23 that “*a man’s pride will bring him low.*”

Jesus foretold the future doom of these cities. In the coming Judgment Day, they would be “*brought down to Hades*” (Mt. 11:23) for their refusal of His message and miracles. Jesus the King will Himself sit as the greatest Judge because God “*has committed all judgment to the Son*” (Jn. 5:22).

REJECTION BECAUSE OF RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

The Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians all had their religious traditions. Throughout the ages, religious traditions had gained weight and momentum; so much so that Jesus told them they were “*making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down*” (Mk. 7:13).

In Matthew 12:1-13, Jesus sought to return the Pharisees to the true meaning of the Sabbath, because their understanding had strayed from the truth. Our text offers the following teachings of Jesus concerning the Sabbath-day controversy with the Pharisees:

- (1) As King, Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mt. 12:8).
- (2) Old Testament Sabbath laws sustain the support of life and health (Mt. 12:3-5; Lev. 24:5; Num. 28:9).
- (3) Preservation of life (human and animal), Messiah confirmed, is commendable every day (Mt. 12:9-13).

The Lord of the Sabbath went on to correct the traditions of the Pharisees by healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day. Nevertheless, the religious leaders continued to neglect the weightier matters of the law (Mt. 23:23).

REJECTION BECAUSE OF SATANIC INFLUENCES

While Jesus did His mighty works on earth, the Pharisees attributed His miracles to Satanic power. Such accusations comprised an unforgivable sin against the Spirit of God by those individuals (Mt. 12:31).

In Mt. 12:24-45 we are warned of the danger of falling under demonic influence:

- (1) The grip of evil forces on a life is real, and often different from a disease.
- (2) Certain physical infirmities may sometimes be of demonic origin (Mt. 12:22; 17:18).
- (3) Evil spirits are highly organized under Beelzebub (12:24), a name of Satan, who is compared to a “strong man” (Mt. 12:28).
- (4) Rejection of the light of God (Mt. 12:43-45), calling good evil, is the essence of apostasy.

Deliverance from demonic destruction marked the coming of the Gospel, as Jesus the King of Heaven declared, “*Come to Me...and you will find rest for your souls*” (Mt. 11:28, 29). This is the most important decision anyone can make—to come to Messiah with faith in Him and the promises of His Word. 🇺🇸



Boxes of supplies were stacked to the ceiling in the Jerusalem Messianic Center. A team of young people from Australia helped to deliver them to Sderot.

"IT HAS TO BE GOD IN YOUR HEARTS!"

Our workers in Israel were active during the outbreak of hostilities earlier this year, visiting the town of Sderot several times and distributing more than 200 boxes of food as well as Gospel literature. They also brought more than a hundred children and their parents out of the cities of Ashdod, Sderot and Ashkelon to give them some respite from their stressful circumstances. In cooperation with another ministry, we were also able to help thirty Holocaust survivors by giving them a whole week of rest in a hotel in Tel Aviv. One Jewish woman declared, "It has to be God in your hearts!" We were privileged to share our testimony in this way!

JESUS IS OUR MESSIAH

Vladimir Pikman, who directs our work in Germany, had to travel a long distance to speak in a small church of only fifteen people in Nuremberg—but God had something else in mind. Instead of fifteen, there were almost sixty people at the church, more than half of them Jewish seekers! As Vladimir preached the Gospel with boldness, he sensed receptiveness among his listeners. After the service, he overheard a conversation between a Jewish woman and her parents, whom she

came to pick up after the service. She told them, "Jesus is not for us, not for the Jews." But her father immediately replied, "You are mistaken—Jesus IS our Messiah! It is very Jewish to believe in Him, and we should do this."

FUNERAL SERVICE OFFERS OPPORTUNITY FOR GOSPEL PRESENTATION

Staff member Kirill Swiderski has labored faithfully in the Chicago area to build trust in the Jewish community. Recently, a Jewish neighbor died and her husband invited Kirill to lead the funeral service. Kirill writes, "I had an opportunity to speak to two hundred Jewish people in a Jewish cemetery! As I preached, I read Isaiah 53. People began to whisper to each other, but I continued and called people to depend upon this Messiah that the chapter describes. The husband of the deceased woman was very thankful, as were some of the others, and asked about visiting our worship services. We are now ready to plant a new congregation in the area where most of the visitors at the funeral live!"

TO THE JEW FIRST RECEIVES AWARD OF MERIT

Christianity Today magazine recently announced their 2009 Book Award winners, and among the Award of Merit recipients in the Apologetics/Evangelism category is *To the Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History*, edited by Darrell Bock and Mitch Glaser. *To the Jew First* is based upon the biblical mandate to take the Gospel "to the Jew first" (Romans 1:16).

The book is a comprehensive resource that looks at the historical, theological, and biblical context for Jewish evangelism. According to a *Christianity Today* press release, this year's judging process began with 436 titles from sixty-seven publishers and was narrowed down to ten winners and eleven notable Award of Merit winners. This book is available at www.chosenpeople.com/store or by calling and placing your order at 1-800-333-4936.



Award Winner: Christianity Today 2009 Apologetics / Evangelism

To the Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History is a comprehensive resource that looks at the historical, theological and biblical context for Jewish evangelism and provides encouragement for Christians and Messianic Jews engaged in taking the Gospel "to the Jew first."

Contributions by Richard Averbeck, Craig Blaising, Walter Kaiser, Richard Pratt, Jr. and ten other evangelical scholars.



To the Jew First book • [3131] • Price: \$21.95^{us}

Debt of Love, 21 Reasons to Believe, Of Whom Does Isaiah 53 Speak, The Broken Matzah and Why Did Messiah Have to Die? are tracts designed for and written to Jewish people. These five tracts will help answer common Jewish questions and objections to the Gospel and provide scriptural insight—from a Jewish perspective—regarding the Messiah of Israel.

Tract Sampler Packet (5 tracts) • [2020] • Price: \$1.95^{us}

An anointed collection of worship songs that will lift your spirit and strengthen your faith, featuring world-renowned Messianic worship leader Paul Wilbur. *The Watchman* is a perfect CD for praise and has something for everyone!



The Watchman - CD • [4053] • Price: \$18.95^{us}

For phone orders call 1-800-333-4936 in the U.S.
Or visit us online at www.chosenpeople.com/store.

Outreach Israel

May 20-June 21, 2009

A ministry trip designed for twenty-somethings with a heart for God's people and land, who are interested in reaching Israelis for the Messiah. Outreach Israel offers excellent opportunities to witness for the Lord and to encourage Israeli young people who are part of congregations in the Land. This trip includes ministry activities such as beach and café outreach as well as youth work, service projects and visits to historic biblical sites.



experience Israel

July 11-26, 2009

A spiritual pilgrimage designed for young adults (ages 18-35) who want to engage with God by walking through the pages of biblical history and serving the people who live in Israel.



1-888-2-YESHUA • www.chosenpeople.com



We'll help you review your estate plan

Whether you rely entirely upon a will to distribute your estate, or whether it is part of a more complex estate plan, a periodic review is necessary.

Family changes, inflation, changes in tax and probate laws, as well as changes in your desires . . . all require periodic review of your estate plan.

Our *Guide to Planning Your Estate* will be a valuable source of information as you begin this review. Or if you have not completed your estate plan, it will help you take the first step in this important act of stewardship.

There is no cost or obligation, and we would like to help. For confidential assistance, contact us at 888-293-7482 (ext. 245), or email plannedgiving@chosenpeople.com, or in Canada call 888-442-5535.



The theme for Chosen People Ministries' annual Messianic retreat will be "The Parables of Yeshua" with guest speaker Roy Schwarcz. Join us for a special evening concert with worship leader Ted Pearce.

Simcha
2009

...in Your presence is fullness of joy...

May 22-25

Carlisle, Pennsylvania



The Chosen People Newsletter

Chosen People Ministries has been taking the love of the Messiah to Jewish people worldwide since 1894.

The Chosen People newsletter is published monthly by Chosen People Ministries. For more information or to receive The Chosen People newsletter, write to: Chosen People Ministries, International Headquarters, 241 East 51st Street, New York, NY 10022. In Canada, write to: Box 897 Station B, North York, ON, M2K 2R1. In Great Britain, write to: P.O. Box 47871, Golders Green, London, NW11 1AL (www.chosenpeople.org.uk). In Australia, write to: Celebrate Messiah Australia, P.O. Box 304, Caulfield, South Vic 3162, Australia (www.celebratemessiah.com.au). Editor: Zhava Glaser; Staff Writer: Alan Shore; Art Director: Brian Freeman; Designer: Lois Gable

Serving in: Argentina • Australia • Canada • France • Germany • Hong Kong • Israel • Mexico • New Zealand • Russia • Ukraine • United Kingdom • United States
Chosen People Ministries U.S. Board of Directors: Mr. John Holbrook, Jr., Chairman • Mr. Roy Adams • Dr. Darrell Bock • Mr. Jeffrey Branman • Ms. Cindy Forbes • Dr. Mitch Glaser • Dr. Gregory Hagg • Mr. Eugene Johnson • Mr. Tom McHugh • David Schiller, Esq. • Mr. David C. Weland

Cover image © Monika Gniot/Dreamstime.com. The model does not represent the views of Chosen People Ministries.

Visit us on the Web at www.chosenpeople.com Our Spanish website is www.pueblolegido.com ©2009 Chosen People Ministries

Please remember Chosen People Ministries in your will. "I will bless those who bless YOU." (Genesis 12:3)



Printed in the USA