

The Chosen People



Volume III, Issue 12 December 1997

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Hanukkah: The Forerunner of Christmas
Learn More About the Festival of Lights

David & Libbeth
1997
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Hanukkah & Christmas: God's Sovereignty in Action



Dear friend of Chosen People Ministries,

Shalom and Happy Holidays! May the light of our Messiah shine brightly in your home.

The *Hanukkah*-Christmas season is one of my favorite times of the year. I enjoy both holidays, but as you can imagine, this has not always been the case. Growing up in a Jewish home in New York City, I celebrated *Hanukkah*, (the Festival of Lights. *Hanukkah* was a time when we could stand tall, put a *menorah* in our windows, and let the world know that we were Jewish. It was our small way of asserting our identity in a mostly Gentile country. Christmas was always "their holiday"—not ours!

You can imagine my surprise when, after having been a believer for only a short time, one of my new Christian friends asked me, "What are you going to do for Christmas?"

I was bewildered by the question and asked him, "Do real believers in Jesus celebrate Christmas?"

He was shocked by my response, but answered, "Of course."

I asked him if it was kosher for me to celebrate *Hanukkah*, too, but he did not know. Finally, I met some Jewish believers and they told me it was acceptable to celebrate both holidays—so I did! And I still do.

Both festivals remind us that God is our Savior; that He cares for us and watches over us. For years, I tried to find a deeper link between the two festivals. One day, a friend helped me to see the relationship between the holidays in a whole new way. "If it was not for *Hanukkah*," my friend said, "there might not be a Christmas." As I thought about it, I could see his point: both celebrations played a part in fulfilling God's plan for His chosen people to be a channel of blessing for the world.

The Eternal Light

Hanukkah is an eight-day celebration beginning this year on the evening of December 23. The word *Hanukkah* means "dedication," referring to the rededication of the Temple. The holiday memorializes the military victory of the Jewish people over the Syrian-Greeks almost two centuries before the birth of Christ. A brutal ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes, had taken control of the land of Israel after the death of Alexander the Great. His goal was to destroy the Jewish people. When he forced the Jewish people to worship a statue of himself, a group of Jewish nationalists revolted, led by a Levite named Mattathias, and his sons. Three years of bitter struggle resulted in a Jewish victory in 165 BC.

Upon reclaiming the Temple in Jerusalem, the Jewish leaders discovered Antiochus had sacrificed a pig upon the sacred altar in the Holy of Holies—a desecration beyond belief! While cleansing the Temple, they discovered that the eternal light in the Temple only had enough oil left to last one day—and it took eight days to produce the olive oil needed to keep the light burning (see Exodus 27:20-21). Jewish tradition



Photo by: [unreadable]

tells us that the day's worth of oil lasted for eight days until the new oil was available. *Hanukkah*, therefore, is an eight-day celebration of God's provision of light for the rededication of the Temple—a sign of His presence and care for His covenant people.

Did the miracle of the oil really occur? Perhaps—we do not know. But what we do know is this: the Lord was faithful to His people and once again delivered them from their enemies.

An Eternal Light for the Heart of Humankind

Had the Jewish people not been preserved in the land, how would the greater Light that God had promised—"a light for the Gentiles"—be born when and where the Old Testament prophets predicted (see Isaiah 42:6)?

Approximately 160 years after Mattathias' victory over Antiochus, the greater Light came into the world as a humble Servant, a simple light shining in the darkness. *"In Him was life,"* the Scriptures say, *"and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it"* (John 1:4-5). Satan, the avowed enemy of the nation of Israel, tried once again to snuff out the light—first through Herod, then through the religious leaders, and finally through Pontius Pilate. But the Light flickered to life again in a dark garden tomb, and is carried now in the hearts of true believers everywhere.

Israel Needs to See Their Great Light!

Hanukkah celebrates God's provision of a temporal light, and Christmas celebrates His provision of an eternal Light. One of Israel's greatest prophets, Isaiah, prophesied about the light of Messiah: *"The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined"* (Isaiah 9:2). Unfortunately, most of Israel has not yet seen the Light. Israel's greatest danger is not military or political as in the days of Antiochus, but is spiritual, as in the days of Jesus—continuing to our present day. My prayer this *Hanukkah*-Christmas season is that of the Apostle Paul, *"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved"* (Romans 10:1).

As you and your family enjoy the beauty of the holiday lights this year, please do not forget that the *Hanukkah* lights were a prelude to the eternal light of Jesus Christ—and that most Jewish people are still walking in darkness. And remember that in order to shine brightly for the Lord we need our lamps filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit. So, dear friend, our staff around the world needs your prayers at this time. Pray that we will be filled to overflowing with His life and light as we share the Gospel during this holiday season.

Shining the Light with you,

Mitch
Mitch Glaser
President



Why
Hanukkah
is a
forerunner to
Christmas



To the Jew First



Helping Non-Jews Reach Out to Their Jewish Neighbors

Latkes like Grandma Used to Make

(and Zhava, our president's wife, still does! This is Zhava's mom's recipe, imported from Russia via Buenos Aires, Argentina)

- 4 large potatoes
- 2 eggs
- 1 onion
- enough potato starch, matzo meal, or flour to make it look right
- oil for frying

Wash and peel potatoes. Zap about half of them in the food processor and shred the other half. Mix with beaten egg and finely chopped onion and a bit of potato starch. Let sit for a bit. Drain the potato mixture well and form into nice, three-inch-round patties. Fry in way-too-much oil until golden brown on both sides. Drain on paper towels to absorb the oil. Serve with sour cream and apple sauce on the side and make sure everyone eats plenty. In fact, why don't you go ahead and make a few more, just in case?

Hanukkah: The Festival of Lights

by Zhava Glaser

As you drive around your neighborhood from December 23rd through the 31st, you might notice some windows displaying a brightly lit, nine-branched candelabra, also known as a *hanukkiyah*. These are the homes of your Jewish neighbors, commemorating the festival of *Hanukkah*! Pray for your Jewish friends, that during this Festival of Lights, the true Light of the World, Jesus the Messiah, will shine in their lives.



The Menorah

According to tradition, when the Maccabees recovered the temple in 165 BC, they found that the Greeks had defiled all the oil for the candelabra, except for one cruse, which contained enough oil to keep it burning for only one day. A miracle, however, was said to have happened and the oil burned for eight days, just long enough to obtain new oil for the lamp.

In commemoration of this, Jewish people to this day light the *Hanukkah menorah*, a nine-branched candlestick, on the festival of *Hanukkah*. The middle light, the *shammash* (servant), is lit first and the others are lit with its flame: one light the first night, two the second night, and one more light each night of *Hanukkah* until all the candles are lit.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Send a *Hanukkah* card to your Jewish friends. This will let them know you care about them and appreciate their heritage.
- Give small gifts to your Jewish friends' children.
- Pray for your Jewish friends. You might even share some of Dr. Goldberg's Bible study (included with this newsletter) with them!

Ministry Updates from Around the World

The Dreydl

Hanukkah today is a children's holiday. As the candles burn, children gather around, sing songs and play with a "dreydl"—a four-sided top that contains four Hebrew letters standing for the phrase, "*Nes Gadol Hayah Sham*"—"A great miracle happened there" (in Israel, this is changed to, "A great miracle happened here!"). You can be sure there will be plenty of dreydl playing on *Hanukkah*!



The Presents

Many Jewish families give presents to the children on *Hanukkah*. One traditional present (which our children really look forward to) is *Hanukkah gelt*—delicious chocolate covered with gold foil and designed to look like ancient coins. Mmmmm!



Latkes

My favorite part of *Hanukkah* is the *latkes*—traditional potato pancakes served with sour cream or applesauce. We thought you might enjoy trying these for yourself, and since we couldn't insert one in each newsletter, well, I decided I'd give you my recipe. Let us know how they turn out!

Israel Through Jewish Eyes

Like the men Moses sent to "spy out the land," 55 modern-day pilgrims have just returned from our November tour of Israel. "We went from Mount Carmel in the north to Jericho in the south," said Ben Alpert, the tour



leader and Bible teacher. "The highlight of the trip, however, was our time in Jerusalem, where we literally walked through the ministry of our Lord." Join us March 4-15, 1998 as we again "see Israel through Jewish eyes." Call 1-800-459-9402 for more information.

Focus on South America

Prophecy Conference in Argentina

Over 500 people attended the 13th annual Chosen People Ministries Prophecy Conference held this year in the beautiful city of Mar Del Plata, Argentina. Percy Johnson, Director of Overseas Ministries, was the featured speaker. Percy, a native of Peru, was able to address the participants in their native language and help equip them to witness to their Jewish friends and neighbors.



Percy Johnson

Representatives from "Friends of Chosen People Ministries," a volunteer network in Latin America, came from as far away as Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile and Peru. One afternoon, conference participants marched to the city center where they presented a declaration to city officials commemorating Israel's 50th anniversary, while condemning anti-Semitism and terrorist acts.

During the ceremony, a woman said, "I am Jewish and I've always wanted to know more about Jesus."

Her daughter interjected, "Mom, you know that I attend Chabad and we Jews don't believe in those things."

"For a long time I've wanted to ask this question and I've never had the chance," the mother answered.

Two believers proceeded to engage them in separate conversations, so the mother was able finally to get answers to her questions.

New Work in São Paulo, Brazil Adds New Missionary

João Garcia, the newest Chosen People Ministries missionary in Brazil, is concentrating his efforts on evangelism in São Paulo, the city with the largest Jewish population in Brazil. He has already begun teaching a weekly discipleship class, with about 15 people attending. Chosen People Ministries' congregation in Brazil consists of young families and many singles in their 20s. João has a special gift and ability to reach young people.

When God Answered an Atheist's Prayer

I was born in Kiev, Ukraine, and grew up as an atheist. Atheism was very common for people in the former Soviet Union. I even had a special course in college called "Atheism." I eventually was married, and had a son and a daughter.

We desired to emigrate to America when our son was 18. We realized that the Soviet government was bankrupt, that everything around us was a lie, and that letting our son go into the Soviet Army was the same as voluntarily letting him go into prison. But the law said that all young men of 18 years of age had to go into the Army, and his only other choice would be to be declared mentally ill—or be imprisoned. The documents that allowed our family to leave the country were held back, so now my family and I were in a desperate situation. Then, for the first time in my life, I really wanted God to exist! I prayed to Him, even though I didn't know Him. Then, just in time, all the paperwork came through.

From that time on I became curious. I couldn't sleep at night. "Is God real?" I wondered. "This is not possible! But His answer was so real!" I decided to at least try to find God, so I could be honest with myself.

Since I was Jewish, I decided to attend synagogue regularly. I began attending in Kiev, and when we moved to Italy I did the same. Every time I went to synagogue, I learned something new from my Jewish tradition—but I didn't get any closer to God! When we were in Italy, we met a Baptist pastor who was an American missionary working with Russian Jews in Italy. We received a Bible and he told us that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. I decided to read the Old Testament to find out if this was true, and after studying for some time, I realized Jesus really was my

Messiah. Soon after that, my entire family came to America as believers in Jesus!

At the beginning of the summer of 1997, I was invited to serve with Chosen People Ministries. My ministry is in Brooklyn among Russian Jewish immigrants. I understand them because I am one of them. I am able, by God's grace, to help the immigrants come to know the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. The Russian Jewish congregation I helped start, and which my son Greg pastors, is active in evangelism and helping the immigrants in many ways. For example, we teach them English and Bible. Right now, we have 90 Russian Jews studying English and I teach them the Scriptures. I thank God for the opportunities He gives me every day to tell my people about Jesus, the Jewish Messiah.

Before she ever believed in Him, Klaudia Zhelezny cried out to God—and He answered!



This testimony was written in Klaudia's "Russian English" and was lightly edited for easier U.S. reading.



If you have a special story to share with us, we'd love to speak with you.
Contact us at CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES • 1300 Cross Beam Drive • Charlotte, NC 28217.

Changed Lives

Faith Transforms in Israel

A young university student with a very difficult home background had been attending our Chosen People Ministries Bible study in Jerusalem for several weeks. He seemed uninterested in the Gospel and very skeptical until one evening when he broke down in tears after studying Romans 12. He realized that Jesus was his Messiah. Now we are seeing God's transforming grace at work in his life as he attends Bible studies regularly.

New Birth in Berlin

In Germany, a Russian Jewish woman who attended our Chosen People Ministries congregation was very ill and in a coma. She was not yet a believer in Jesus, so the congregation prayed for her spiritual as well as her physical health. God restored her to health after two months of unconsciousness! She recognized God's part in her healing and came to the congregation to give Him thanks. "Now I believe!" she declared. "God gave me life and health and salvation. He wanted me to know Him."

Answered Prayer at Ladies' Retreat

Zhava Glaser spoke at a ladies' retreat for Gateway Cathedral in Staten Island, New York, and met Lila, a Jewish woman whose neighbor had been witnessing to her for many years. Lila had heard Zhava speak several months earlier at a Mother's Day breakfast, so she agreed to come to the retreat. Lila couldn't help but be touched by the love of the ladies around her. After Zhava's message, the ladies got together in discussion groups. The woman sitting next to Lila asked her if she wanted to receive Jesus, and to her delight, Lila answered, "Yes!" Lila's neighbor had been praying for her for 20 years! "I thought this would be impossible," Lila said later to Zhava, "But I guess with God, all things are possible!"

Russian Jewish Doctor Receives Jesus

Yura is a Russian Jew who used to read the Bible with his Gentile wife, but not because they were believers. They felt it was a book for intelligent people, so they were interested to see what it had to say. They began attending the Chosen People Ministries congregation in Berlin, and after a while, they both came to believe in Jesus as their Messiah. "I always knew I was Jewish," Yura says, "but I felt that I had to hide my Jewishness. Now that I know Jesus is the Jewish Messiah I feel that I can express who I am as a Jew." Yura, a doctor, now has many unique opportunities to share the Gospel with his patients and friends.

Drug Addict Finds Freedom

Larry Feldman, Chosen People Ministries missionary in Los Angeles, received a phone call from frantic parents whose son was having problems with drug use. The son had previously spent a year in prison because of his involvement with drugs, and the parents were terrified that he would have to go back. Larry met with the young man and his fiancée the next day. As they talked about the physical steps they could take to clear up the problem, they became interested in spiritual things, and both prayed to receive the Lord, right there in the outdoor café.

Gospel Preached Through Classical Music in Brooklyn

The Brooklyn branch of Chosen People Ministries invited one of our Russian staff members from Israel to the United States for a month to help follow up on interested Russian Jewish people. Since our staff member is an accomplished musician, they held a free evangelistic concert of classical music one evening. Several local Russian Jewish believers performed as well. Fifty people attended and three Jewish people gave their lives to Jesus.

The Temple:

Yesterday, Today . . . and Tomorrow?



The Temple
\$24.95

Discover the ministry and music of Jewish worship with resources from Chosen People Ministries.

The Temple by Alfred Edersheim

This 19th-century Jewish believer and scholar spent decades researching the life and ministry of Jesus, the Messiah. His book on the Temple in Jesus' day is newly updated, with more than 75 full-color photographs and illustrations. Jesus' ministry, as well as present day Temple discussions, take on new meaning as you understand the central role of the Temple during the ministry of Jesus.

Ready to Rebuild
\$9.95



Up to Zion
CD - \$15.95
Cassette - \$10.95

Up to Zion by Paul Wilbur

Your study of the Temple, the site of Jewish worship in days past, will be energized today with *Up to Zion*. This joyous recording of Messianic praise and worship comes from Paul Wilbur, one of the most accomplished musicians of the Messianic movement. The eighteen selections (approx. 45 minutes) will enhance personal and corporate worship through "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs."



Ready to Rebuild
VHS - \$24.95

Thomas Ice & Randall Price

Ready to Rebuild (book and video)

Authors and contemporary Temple experts Randall Price and Thomas Ice reveal little-known, behind-the-scenes activity in Israel—and other parts of the world—related to the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. Exclusive photographs of Temple preparations, as well as a panoramic survey of the role of the Temple in Bible prophecy, make this book required reading for students of Scripture.

Jimmy DeYoung, a broadcast journalist in Jerusalem, has produced a companion video to *Ready to Rebuild*. In documentary format, DeYoung's *Ready to Rebuild* video affords viewers comprehensive visual access to the personalities and projects surrounding the movement to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

Please note that the Internal Revenue Code permits you to deduct any amount you give to Chosen People Ministries that goes beyond the value of the materials we send you. All proceeds will be allocated to our Jewish Evangelism Outreach Fund to expand our evangelistic and discipleship efforts among Jewish people around the world.



The Chosen People Newsletter

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

For more information or to receive *The Chosen People* newsletter by including your gift of \$25 or more, write to:

Chosen People Ministries • 1300 Cross Beam Drive • Charlotte, NC 28217

In Canada: Box 897 Station B, North York, Ontario M2K 2R1 • www.chosen-people.com