

To the Jew First

1
FRIDAY
JANUARY 1999

DECEMBER 1998							JANUARY 1999							FEBRUARY 1999						
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TO BE DONE TODAY (ACTION LIST)

- Read the Bible
- Pray
- Finish report
- mail tax bill
- Return library books
- Pick up cat food
- Drop dry cleaning
- Read Chosen People Ministries newsletter
- Julie to Piano lessons
- * Share Jesus with my Jewish friend, Esther

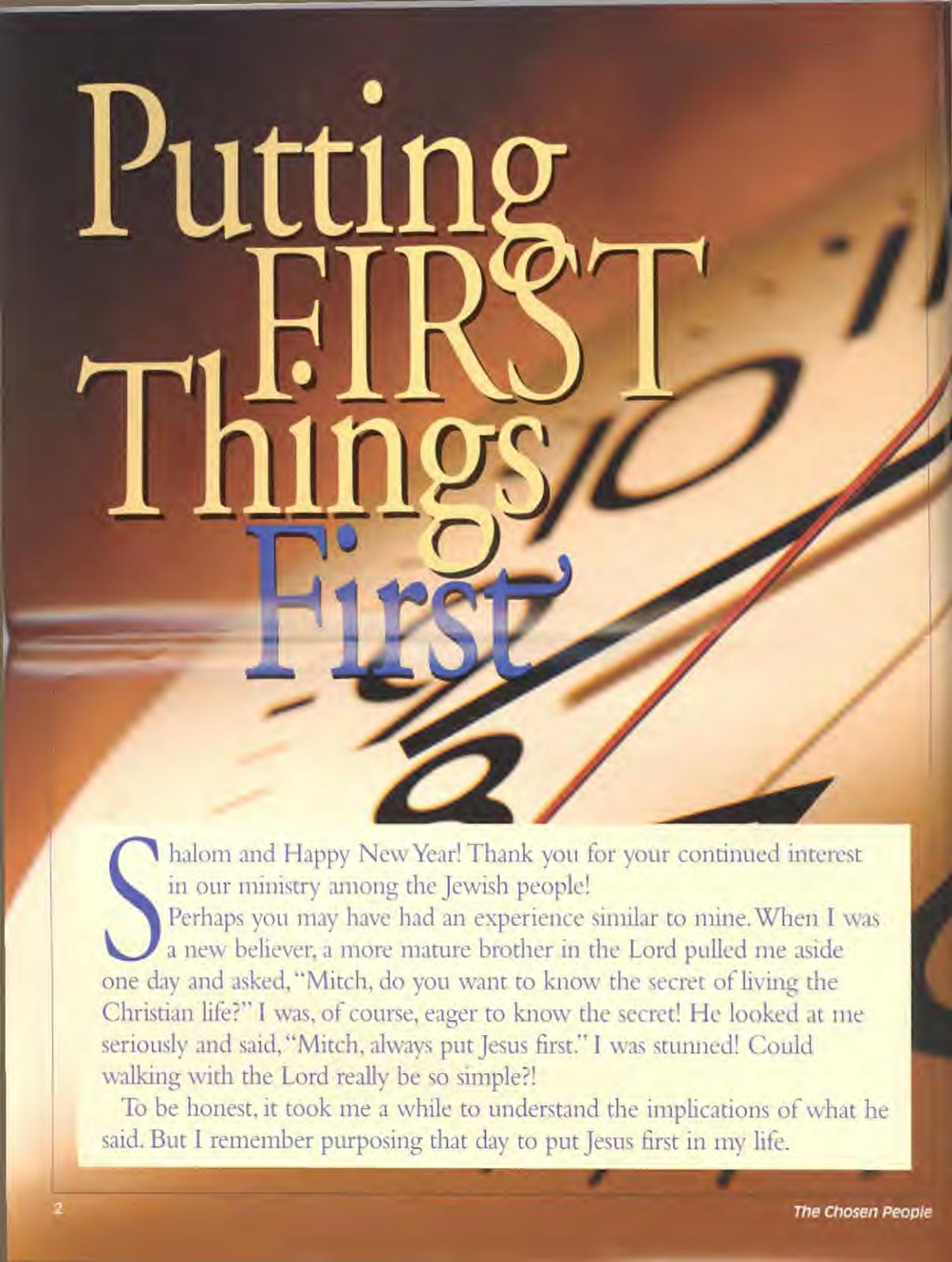
PHONE CALLS

INSIDE:

putting First Things First:
"WWPD?" What Would Paul Do?
The Martyrdom of Isaac Feinstein
A New Study of Hebrews

The Chosen People

Volume V, Issue 1 January 1999



Putting FIRST Things First

Shalom and Happy New Year! Thank you for your continued interest in our ministry among the Jewish people! Perhaps you may have had an experience similar to mine. When I was a new believer, a more mature brother in the Lord pulled me aside one day and asked, "Mitch, do you want to know the secret of living the Christian life?" I was, of course, eager to know the secret! He looked at me seriously and said, "Mitch, always put Jesus first." I was stunned! Could walking with the Lord really be so simple?!

To be honest, it took me a while to understand the implications of what he said. But I remember purposing that day to put Jesus first in my life.

Twenty-eight years later, I am still purposing, and still learning what it means to "put Jesus first." What better time than the start of the new year for all of us to pause and renew our commitment to put the Lord first?

Whether we say, "Make Jesus Lord of your life" or even ask "WWJD—What Would Jesus Do?" (my daughters are getting good at reminding me of this one), He must come first.

We must place His will above our own, His glory and honor above our dreams and desires. The first fruits of our day should be given to Bible study and prayer, and our time, talents and treasure should be offered first to Him!

My prayer for you, dear brother and sister, is that living for Jesus will be your priority in 1999. Yet allow me to call your attention to a further "priority" mentioned in Scripture.

It is a tradition in Chosen People Ministries each January to focus on the message of Romans 1:16—"to the Jew first." I know you have read this passage and believe it, but some explanation might help you better understand it.

Some suggest that "to the Jew first" means that the Gospel should first be preached to the Jewish people in a given community and preached to the Gentiles "second." Others believe that Paul simply

meant the Gospel was first preached to the Jews (as Jesus first came unto His own), and then was taken to the Gentiles. But this does not explain the present tense emphasis of the verse. Paul says the Gospel is *the power of God for salvation . . . to the Jew first.*

The best way to see what "first" meant to Paul is to ask, WWPD?—What Would Paul Do?—when he went into a town to preach the Gospel. When Paul traveled to the various cities in Asia Minor on his missionary journeys, he preached the Gospel first in the synagogues and then among the Gentiles. On one occasion, in Psidian Antioch, Paul was so vehemently persecuted that he determined to shift the focus of his efforts exclusively to the Gentiles (Acts 13:44-52). But going on to Iconium, he once again continued his pattern of going to the Jews first (Acts 14:1).

The Greek term for "first" is *protos* and it refers to priority and importance, rather than to order or sequence. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus tells His disciples to "seek first the kingdom of God." Does that mean they are to seek the kingdom of God exclusively until they find it—and only then seek a home, a wife, an education, or food?! Of course not! It simply means that the kingdom of God should be the reigning and ruling priority in their lives.

This is what Paul meant by "to the Jew first." We are to be ever-conscious of the priority of the Jewish people in evangelism. Why? Because the salvation of the Jewish people will bring great blessing to the world (Romans 11:11-15). This is why the Lord has called upon Gentile believers to make Jewish people "jealous" (Romans 11:11) with the Gospel message. Paul understood the prophetic significance of reaching his fellow Jews with the Gospel! And when you try to reach Jewish people with the Gospel, it is amazing how many non-Christian Gentiles take notice. We had dozens of unbelieving non-Jews, along with dozens of Jewish people, respond to our full-page evangelistic ad in the *New York Times*. What a joy!

So, as you consider your priorities for the coming year, please remember to put Jesus first in all things. Let's not allow the Jewish people to become the "Great Omission of the Great Commission." Remember to add WWPD to your WWJD!

May the Lord give you grace to put first things first in 1999—and please pray the same for me and my family and for our entire staff!

Yours for Israel,

Mitch
Mitch



We have an exciting announcement: Chosen People Ministries is convening a conference—"To the Jew First in the New Millennium" from September 23-25, 1999. The place will be none other than New York City! We are grateful that this event will be co-convened by Dr. Paige Patterson, the current president of the Southern Baptist Convention and President of Southeastern Seminary.

Some of our nation's brightest and best theologians will speak. Mark your calendar and join us in New York City—especially to enjoy the closing Festival of Tabernacles rally and concert. It is our hope that many unbelieving Jewish friends will attend as well.

We have already established a Conference Hot Line—1-888-2-YESHUA. Call and request a brochure with all the details. Prepare for the new millennium by hearing these Christian leaders speak about the great opportunities around the world for reaching Jewish people with the Gospel.

Watch for the announcement of the full program in our February newsletter!

Hero of the Holocaust

The Martyrdom of Isaac Feinstein Galatz, Romania

Many of us wonder whether or not those Jewish people who died during the Holocaust had an opportunity to hear the Gospel message. The following testimony will help you see that many did hear the message of Jesus, but that the Gospel was not preached without cost. It cost Isaac Feinstein his life.

We have presented a number of testimonies in *The Chosen People* newsletter of Jewish believers who have come to faith in this generation, but Isaac Feinstein's story is different than any you have ever read. It is a testimony of courage and godly heroism, of a man who was so gripped by the need to share the Gospel with his own people, that he became a martyr for the cause of Christ.

Isaac Feinstein was a Romanian Jew who accepted the Lord and became a missionary to his people. He served faithfully with the Norwegian Israel Mission—a ministry that continues until our present day.

Feinstein attempted to advance the work of the mission even in the midst of growing anti-Semitism among Romanians. He was active in evangelism, planting a Jewish Romanian Messianic congregation and editing a missionary magazine.

He was described by a fellow missionary, George Stevens, as "a powerful preacher and a remarkable singer, who always drew crowds when advertised to preach in Bucharest." He married a Swiss woman who had served as a teacher at a British mission school. The Lord blessed them with a large family.

Feinstein was a young man, only 37 years old, when the war broke out. Though he focused on the Messianic congregation in Jassy, he would regularly visit Richard Wurmbrand, whom he had led to the Lord in Bucharest. Wurmbrand recalled one of his last visits:

The atmosphere in Jassy was infected with anti-Semitism, with the ever-present overhanging threat of a pogrom. Feinstein was on a short visit to Bucharest and was staying in my flat. I suggested that he not return to Jassy, where

death lay in wait for him.

"We could send a Romanian brother for your wife and six children and bring them back to Bucharest."

He answered, "The shepherd's duty is to die together with his flock. I know they will kill me, but I cannot abandon my brethren. I am returning to Jassy."

A few days after his return to Jassy, on June 28, 1941, a pogrom broke loose. The number of Jews killed was eleven thousand. Feinstein was arrested. They took him to police headquarters where he preached to those who were his fellow detainees. He exhorted them to be converted in order that they might prepare to meet their God. Some of those who escaped told the story of how Feinstein turned to a rabbi next to him and said, "It is time for us to sing the Psalms." Feinstein died in an overcrowded cattle car stuffed with fellow Jews.

A moving account of his martyrdom was also published in 1947 in *The Chosen People* magazine from the pen and perspective of Mrs. Feinstein writing to her children. In her letter, she captured the horror of the account as no other person could:

About 11 a.m. I was upstairs again to fetch something, and I heard terrific rattling at the door and loud men's voices. As I quickly ran there I saw my husband encircled by rough types who held pistols in his face and yelled at him. Daddy [she was writing to her children] looked back at me and said to these hangmen, "This is my wife but she is a foreigner."

Those words stunned them and they lowered their guns. One of them said, slightly disturbed, "We are not going to do anything to your husband. He just has to come to the police with us. He will be back soon." I foolishly believed the words at this time.

With brutal kicking, they drove my husband outside and forced him to carry a Norwegian flag high above his head, thinking it was the flag of the Red Army. I kissed my dear husband and wanted to hold him but was pushed aside roughly and out they went with him. He walked calmly with uplifted head and turned around a last time waving good-bye to me. This is the last I saw of him.

One day a nice gentleman came to me and introduced himself as a mathematics teacher, X. He told me that he,



together with my husband and several hundred Jews, had been locked in the cellar at the police station on that fatal Sunday. "Feinstein had preached with a loud voice and appealed to the hearts and consciences of his fellow prisoners. They were not to have illusions about assumed deliverance, but rather should prepare themselves to meet their God. His words made a deep impression and many talked individually to him. In the afternoon German soldiers came down the cellar and wanted to shoot down all Jews. Feinstein stepped in front of them, addressed them in German and pleaded for his comrades. They went out again. All were amazed at the effect his words had." The story was later confirmed to me by others who had also been present.

Toward the end of September, 1941, hence three months after the abduction of our father, it was reported in the city that a number of Jews had been freed from concentration camps to be used here in town for cleaning away the rubble of the bombs. The same evening two men reported to me. They had much to tell me. I recognized them as former attendants of our meetings and knew I could believe their words. What they told me left me nearly benumbed with shock.

They related the following: "We were with your husband that very Sunday. In the cellar already he was a help to all. In the evening they led us into the yards of the police station. There were so many of us that we lay on top of each other like sardines. Our tormentors were doubtless hoping we would be hit by bombs. Regardless of the blasting around us we were spared. Alas! During the early morning we were led in long lines to the railway station. It was said that we were to be brought to concentration camps. Feinstein was in the same car as I. We were penned in until we could not catch a breath and no one could move, about 140 men in one cattle car in which there would have normally been room for only 40 men. Then doors, windows, all holes and cracks were sealed tightly and steam was introduced from below. It was a horrible holocaust; many went insane in the screaming of the torture. It was harrowing and heartbreaking. From time to time the freight car was left standing for hours in the boiling heat of the sun. Terrifying scenes occurred and those of us who got away from it are haunted daily with the memory.

"Perhaps your husband did not have to suffer long. He soon started to recite Psalms with a loud voice and his face was like that of an angel. He begged the other victims to make their peace with God and to seek salvation through the blood of Christ before it was too late. And some did before it was too late. Then he dropped to the floor and fell asleep never to wake up again. During the night, at a small station in the Muldau, the cars were opened and the bodies fell out. It was supposed that all had been suffocated on this mortal journey. But six of us men who had only been unconscious were injured when our bodies fell out, and recovered consciousness. We were revived with hypodermics and then some nourishment was given to us. Then

we were forced to bury our dead comrades in a mass grave. At that occasion, we found our beloved Feinstein. We dug a special grave for him. Previously to that we searched his pocket to send you if possible, his papers or anything else; but he had nothing left, not even his watch. Everything had been taken from him before. After that we had to do hard labor in a camp with many others and endured a pitiful existence. Many times we regretted that life had been restored back to us. Now we have been brought back into the city. But no good is awaiting us."

Mrs. Feinstein continued:

So far the awful tale of those friends. A few days later they did me the favor of witnessing in court of what they knew about my husband; so I was then able to receive the death certificate. Without that paper we would have never been granted a passport and would not have been able to leave the country. In that way the death of your beloved father made possible your salvation, my dear children. It had always been his wish to bring you to Switzerland, to safety; only from that expensive price it was made possible. Oh that you might never forget that precious life and sacrifice.

After all, we must understand that God's ways, which seem so inconceivable and cruel, mean love and mercy in the end. Only eternity will tell how much fruit and blessing have resulted from that tearful sowing (1947:14-16).

The Norwegian Israel Mission and Chosen People

Ministries under the leadership of Joseph Hoffman Cohn helped care for Mrs. Feinstein and the children who continued in ministry among the Jewish refugees. It might be asked, "What happened to Feinstein's congregation of Jewish believers in Jassy?" Unfortunately, according to Wurmbrand, not a single man from the Messianic Jewish congregation in Jassy survived; all were killed in the pogrom. This would have been true of most of the congregations of Jewish believers



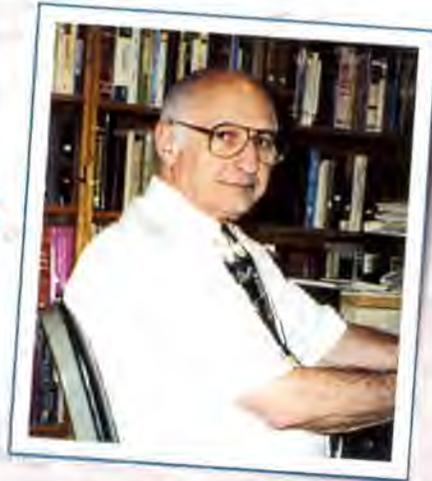
Joseph Hoffman Cohn, leader of Chosen People Ministries, was active in providing relief to Jewish refugees after the war.

started by the missions in Eastern Europe. The Messianic Jews were killed along with the rest of their kinsmen.

Feinstein was a man of God persuaded of proper priorities. He put Jesus first—before everything—including his own life. What are your priorities for 1999? By God's grace I pray that each of us will follow the example of Isaac Feinstein, who followed the Lord, "not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection . . ." (Hebrews 11:35).

See the Through Jewish Eyes Bible

by Dr. Daniel Goldberg



THE BOOK OF HEBREWS AN INTRODUCTION *(first in a series)*

The Book of Hebrews is a very important Epistle for those concerned about the relationship of Jesus to the Jewish people. The book mentions more Old Testament characters (21) than any other New Testament book. It is the only New Testament book that details the ministry of the Tabernacle (Heb. 7-10) and provides stirring commentary on the nature of the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (chapter 31 and Heb. 8). In addition, Hebrews contains the Bible's greatest chapter on faith (Heb. 11), and contains at least 86 direct references to the Old Testament Scriptures.

Best of all, Hebrews outlines the superiority of Jesus the Messiah, and of the New Covenant over the Mosaic. Throughout the book, Jesus is described as superior in both His majesty and His ministry. The masterful revelation of Messiah's superiority over all things is unmatched by any other New Testament book.

Hebrews was written prior to the destruction of the Temple and is addressed to Jewish people who

imagined that if they were deprived of the Temple, its priesthood and sacrifices, they would lose all of their blessings from God. In his

commentary on Hebrews, Adolph Saphir (1831-1891), points out that the author of Hebrews attempts to remind his Jewish readers that by faith in Jesus, they had "the real and substantial temple, the great High Priest, the true altar, the One Sacrifice, and with all the offerings, the true access into the very presence of the Most High" (Adolph Saphir, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 12). A Hungarian Jew, Adolph Saphir and his whole family trusted in Jesus as Messiah, being the "firstfruits" of the Jewish mission of the Church of Scotland.

The superiority of the Messiah is emphasized by the author's use of terms such as *better* (1:4; 6:9), *perfect* (10:14), and *eternal* (5:9; 9:15).

Addressed specifically to our Jewish people, the letter to the Hebrews teaches that Israel must find her redemption in Jesus, "the Lamb of God," the perfect and eternal sacrifice for sin. "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He . . . obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12). He is the superior and once-for-all sacrifice for sin!

A suggested outline of Hebrews, based on the superiority of the Messiah's person and performance:

- i. SUPERIORITY OF MESSIAH'S PERSON
*Hebrews 1:1-4:13***
 1. Superior to the Old Testament Prophets, 1:1-3
 2. Superior to the Angels, 1:4-2:18
 3. Superior to Moses, 3:1-6
 4. Superior to Joshua, 3:7-4:13
- ii. SUPERIORITY OF MESSIAH'S PERFORMANCE
*4:14-10:18***
 1. Messiah's Superior Priesthood, 4:14-7:28
 2. Messiah's Superior Covenant, 8:1-13
 3. Messiah's Superior Sanctuary and Sacrifice, 9:1-10:18
- iii. SUPERIORITY OF THE BELIEVER'S WALK OF FAITH
*10:19-13:25***
 1. Exhortations to Faith, 10:19-39
 2. Examples of Faith, 11:1-40
 3. Encouragements for our Faith, 12:1-29
 4. Conclusion: Faith and Practicality, 13:1-25

NEWS BRIEFS

Chicago—With a sad face and a broken heart, Fred told Eva Rydelnik that many years ago, his son had found a paper about Jesus and was “no longer a Jew.” Eva was able to share several Messianic prophecies. They spoke about believing in Jesus; that a Jewish person who follows the Messiah Jesus does not stop being Jewish. Fred was moved by this idea, and Eva encouraged him to speak with his son about his decision to believe in Jesus.

As the conversation ended, Fred said he believed this was a “Divine appointment,” and thanked Eva for speaking with him. The next time they met, Eva gave Fred some literature about Jesus, and he gladly took it.

Germany—Looking back on our ministry in Germany, we have much for which to praise God. We’ve started the first Messianic Jewish congregation after the Second World War, and four Bible study groups in Germany. Thousands of Russian Jewish immigrants in Germany have heard about Jesus. We are also grateful for the more than one hundred Jews and Gentiles who have been saved. This is drawing some public attention in the news media, and just recently, on television, there was a fair and informative program about our Messianic congregation in Berlin. Please pray for the salvation of people watching and reading about how Jewish people can believe in their Messiah, Jesus.

New York City—Anne gave us her phone number at the STEP program this past summer, so Lauren Waitsman, one of our new missionaries in Brooklyn, called her and posed the question, “So what do you think about Jesus?” Lauren braced herself for any possibility except for the shocking response, “HE is sooooooooooooo beautiful!”

It turns out that Anne had asked Jesus for help in her hospital bed while she was suffering with cancer. She believed He spared her because she was “a good person.”



Lauren Waitsman shares the joy of Messiah in Brooklyn.

“Anne, I believe He sent you back so you could come to know Him better and spend eternity with Him,” Lauren replied. Anne accepted a New Testament and gave Lauren her address so they could stay in touch. Please pray for Anne’s salvation and for the many other Jewish people who express an interest in Jesus.

Orange County—At our outreach services, we saw an unbelieving Jewish man open his heart and receive Jesus as his Messiah and Savior. He had been attending services for six weeks, and said the Gospel all of a sudden became so clear and beautiful. He realized that it was true, and since then has started to share his beliefs at work and among his people. He attends services each week, and is very excited about his new faith.



Dr. Al Reichman, one of our missionaries at large, with his family.

Our missionaries at large—Al Reichman has met several times with Rich, a Jewish man in his early 40s. Rich has not allowed himself to sit in a church service in his entire life. Rich has a long way to go before he is going to feel comfortable discussing his soul and his faith. Many folks have little concept of the struggles a Jewish man like this wrestles with when dealing with such issues. To Rich, a response to Jesus being the Messiah would be a betrayal of everything he has been raised to be. Judaism is not merely his faith; it is his life. Please keep Rich in your prayers as Al will have a number of opportunities to witness to him.

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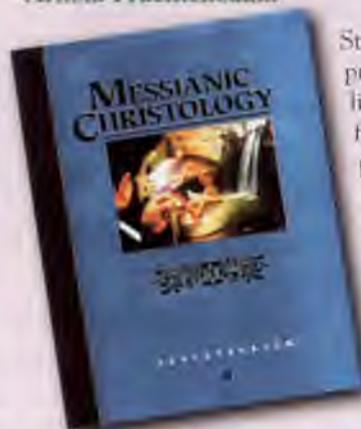
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HaMoedim

Steve McConnell



The Chosen People Newsletter

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