

The Chosen People



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A Savior Is Born for Jew and Gentile

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The Awe-Inspiring Blessings of God through HANUKKAH and *Christmas*

Dear friend of the Jewish people,

Shalom in the wonderful name of Jesus the Messiah! I hope that you are enjoying the holiday season! Our missionaries are busy holding services across the globe celebrating Hanukkah and proclaiming the joy of knowing the Light of the World—Jesus!

I hope you enjoyed the cover of the newsletter this month. We don't know exactly when Jesus was born, and perhaps we've taken some liberties with the historical context, but it's our way of reminding our brothers and sisters in Christ that Joseph, Mary and Jesus were Jewish!

My friend Michael Rydelnik, who teaches at Moody Bible Institute, likes to explain the Jewish holidays as follows: *They tried to destroy us, God saved us...let's eat!* Special foods play such an important part in celebrating Jewish holidays! During Hanukkah, it is customary to eat foods fried in oil, such as *latkes* (potato pancakes—see Zhava's recipe on page 4). This reminds us that the Jewish freedom fighters who rededicated the Temple only had enough oil to keep the eternal light in the Temple glowing for a day. Although they needed eight days to make and cure olive oil, the miracle that transpired—and that every Jewish child around the world believes—is that the oil lasted eight days!

I love Hanukkah because we enjoy so many wonderful family traditions. We light the Hanukkah menorah for eight successive nights to commemorate the eight days of the miracle, which is the heart of Hanukkah. On each night, we also give our kids a present! This causes many Gentile children to wish they were Jewish! We also play games with a little top called a *dreidl*. And we tell the beautiful story of God's faithfulness in preserving the Jewish people.

I view Christmas in a similar way. The story of Jesus' birth is one of the greatest and most profound illustrations of God's ability to deliver His people in tough times! And yes, we eat well on Christmas, too! Some of the staff members in New York City bake the most incredible Christmas cookies you have ever tasted. You can visit our web site to get some wonderful recipes for Christmas cookies...with a Jewish twist!

The Birth of Jesus and God's Faithfulness

Although we do not usually view it this way, the birth of the Messiah took place during a dark period in Israel's history. The Romans had control of Israel, and the Zealots and other Jewish political activists were seething with hatred against these oppressors. Messianic expectation was also fervent in the first century and the burning questions were, "When would He come?" and "How would we know Him?" Perhaps what surprised so many Jewish people was that the Messianic Son of David came into the world as the child of a young virgin, rather than as a general with a well-equipped army.

Yet His coming was as much a sign of God's ability to orchestrate earthly events to fulfill His holy purposes as the Exodus or the feasts of Purim or Hanukkah!

Let me explain...

You see, the union of Miriam (Mary's Hebrew name) and Joseph speaks of the sovereign power of God to intervene in the natural processes He established in this world to accomplish His will. And I am not only referring to the *virgin birth* as predicted by Isaiah in chapter 7 verse 14, but also to the way in which He worked this out in history.

First of all, we must recognize that Miriam and Joseph, as a young Jewish couple, would have been betrothed

before the wedding. In fact, betrothal was tantamount to marriage. Jewish custom of the time would suggest that these two Jewish teenagers may have known one another, but it was their parents who arranged the betrothal and wedding. A contract would have been drawn up and agreed to by the parents. It would have cost Miriam's parents money, as they would have had to pay a dowry at the signing of the betrothal documents.

This gives us a whole different view of Matthew chapter 1, where Joseph had thought of putting Miriam away quietly and yet was willing to follow through on what the angel told him in the dream to take Miriam as his wife since the child in

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her womb *was of the Holy Spirit*. It was not romantic involvement, but Joseph's obedience to God that prompted him to act as he did.

We can rightfully say that, although a betrothal contract was signed, it was God Himself who actually arranged the wedding of Joseph and Miriam. The Lord not only made sure He had the right mother for Yeshua, but the right father as well. Joseph is described in the Scriptures as a *just* or *righteous* man. Because of the angel's intervention he did far more than another man might have done in a similar situation. There might have been no Christmas story if Joseph had been a different type of man!

The Holy One of Israel had once again intervened dramatically in the history of the Jewish people to accomplish His purposes that would ultimately bring blessing to the entire world. As God promised to Abraham, "...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3).

A Savior for Jew and Gentile Is Born

The Christmas miracle and the Hanukkah story are similar in many ways. They both speak of a God who loves His people and brings deliverance at just the right moment. The Lord saved His chosen people from national destruction and now wants to save His people at a more profound level. It is God's intention to save His people—and all who believe in the Son of God—from their sins.

My heart breaks this holiday season to see all the materialism and our society's general lack of interest in the truth of the Gospel. This is such a wonderful season for showing God's love to our families and to be especially generous with all He has entrusted to us. He has given us so much!

I do hope you will prayerfully consider making a generous year-end gift to Chosen People Ministries. I am happy to tell you that we are able to double your gift—dollar for dollar—up to \$50,000 through our year-end matching grant. Please let me know you would like us to do so by checking the appropriate box on the enclosed card. We are hoping that the Lord will use you and others to help us provide for many of the missionaries in Israel, New York City, Argentina, Russia and other places where they are unable to raise much-needed funds.

Enjoy these Festivals of Light, remembering the One who came into the world to dispel the darkness: Yeshua, the Light of the World.

Your brother,


Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

Marriage in the Time of Joseph and Mary



Marriage is perhaps the oldest and most durable social institution in the world. It is certainly the cornerstone of Jewish life, and it is not surprising that many customs have arisen through the ages to adorn the Jewish wedding ceremony. Their enduring beauty reminds us of our eternal relationship with God as the Bride of Messiah.

Even in the time of Joseph and Miriam's betrothal, a rich tapestry of tradition was already in place regarding Israelite marriage, as Jesus' miracles, parables and teachings amply demonstrate.

The responsibilities of marriage are even today spelled out in the marriage contract, called the *ketubah*. Dating perhaps as early as the Babylonian exile, the *ketubah* is written in Aramaic, and its primary purpose is to make clear the responsibilities of the husband to his wife. It begins, "Be my wife according to the practice of Moses and Israel, and I will cherish, honor, support and maintain you in accordance with the custom of Jewish husbands who cherish, honor, support and maintain their wives faithfully." It is interesting to note that Paul's instruction to husbands and wives in his Letter to the Ephesians shares this emphasis.

Often, the *ketubah* is beautifully written, framed and prominently displayed in the Jewish home as a reminder to both spouses of their continuing commitment to each other.

Betrothal in the time of Jesus was a much more serious affair than today's "engagement." It was, in effect, the first phase of marriage, although the couple did not live together or consummate the marriage. Therefore, to break a betrothal was considered almost as serious as a divorce. Understanding this makes us realize how faithful Joseph was to remain committed to Miriam in light of the unique life she was about to bring into the world.



BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND:

Zhava's Quite Unhealthy Potato Latkes

Come on, this recipe is way too easy and too delicious NOT to try! If you're feeling guilty about the frying, just remember: the miracle of Hanukkah is that Jewish people have been eating latkes for 2,000 years and we still survive!

- 4 medium potatoes
- 1 medium onion
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Tons of oil for frying
- applesauce or sour cream (optional)

Grate potatoes (OK, you have my permission to do it in a food processor—just don't tell anyone). Now here's the important part: **MAKE SURE** you remove as much liquid as possible from the grated potatoes! Now grate the onions, combine with the potatoes, and mix together with the eggs, salt and flour. That's all! Now drop by heaping tablespoonsful into hot oil in a frying pan, and smooch a bit with your spoon until they measure about 3" across. Fry until the latkes turn nice and brown. Don't turn them over more than once, though, or they'll get soggy, and I'll have to say, "I told you so!"

Latkes are traditionally served with applesauce or sour cream—I like them with both! Enjoy—and have a Happy Hanukkah!



**Makes about
12 small
latkes which
is definitely
not enough!**

Ruth Wardell

A "Miriam" to Many

Whatever has made me a Miriam—a spiritual mother to those whom the Lord has placed in my life—must come from the "Miriams" I knew from my own childhood and upbringing. I had a wonderful mother. My father was a preacher, and my mother was known as a very capable and helpful pastor's wife.

However, my parents were busy beyond words in their work at church, so the Lord saw fit to provide for some of my needs by a dear lady whom I affectionately called "Mum T." Her influence on my life extends to this day, and my memories of her continue to bless me. From her, I learned many things about being a "mother." Hence, all the things my mother and Mum T. taught me, I shared with my "spiritual children" in Chosen People Ministries.

I saw a lot of children accept the Lord in my 61 years of ministry, and I still teach the children at the Messianic congregation I attend in Dallas, Texas—only now I serve not only as a "mother" but also as a "grandmother!"

I thank the Lord for ALL the children like Emily (whose article is below) and young people the Lord put in my path, and to whom I was able to be a "spiritual mother," even as Mum T. was to me when I was young.

My Miriam Was A Ruth

By Emily Seemar

How does one express the effect of a life that touches you in such a profound way that your path is forever altered? God orchestrated that moment in time when, as a young

girl, I first met Ruth Wardell. At approximately 5'10", she seemed

like a giant to me, yet her cheerful, lovable and fun-loving spirit attracted kids of all ages. As a missionary with Chosen People Ministries, Ruth loved to teach Jewish people, especially children, about the Messiah.

I remember how much she made the Bible stories come alive, as if you were transported to the hill country of Judea or trembling in the lion's den with Daniel! Yet she took the time to find out about each one of her students. In our family, birthdays were a very limited celebration. So you can imagine the thrill it was on one birthday when Ruth appeared at my home to celebrate with us! That was one of the few birthdays that I remember as being special!

A few years later, when I was permitted to go to Chosen People Ministries' Camp Sar Shalom (Prince of Peace) at age eleven, I was thrilled to know that Ruth would be there. It was at that camp that I finally came to faith in the Messiah. From that point on, her role in my life as mentor became even more important and, over the years, I have come to realize that Ruth's influence



has been written all over my soul. Ruth has been my lifeline to the Lord and my biggest cheerleader. She has loved me unconditionally and given me hope for the future and the confidence to try new things.

Ruth's support, nurture and example inspired me to go to Bible college and become a missionary. To this day, Ruth remains my biggest encourager in ministry. In fact, Ruth's desire is to be known as an encourager. The synonyms of the verb "encourage" are many: inspire, hearten, cheer, buoy, reassure, boost, embolden, support, nurture, foster, assist, help and aid. All these words embody the characteristics of Ruth "With-the-Truth" Wardell, as she likes to be called.

I could write volumes about Ruth's inspiration, guidance and consolation to hundreds of people throughout her 61 years of ministering to Jewish people. But I am so thankful that God saw fit to have our lives touch and remain forever entwined. At age 84 this month, Ruth is still teaching children about our Messiah. Ruth is truly my Miriam, as I am privileged to call her MY MOM, for she truly preserved my soul for the Messiah!

Ruth Wardell served as a missionary with Chosen People Ministries from 1946-1987. At the age of 84, she is still an active servant of Messiah and an encouragement to many. Emily Seemar and her husband, Bob, are members of Chosen People Ministries' staff.



Emily Seemar (above left) with Ruth Wardell. At right, Emily, in the blue dress, was a student of Ruth's.



See the THROUGH JEWISH EYES Bible

by Daniel Goldberg, Th.D., D.D.



THE SUFFERINGS AND EXALTATION OF DAVID'S GREATER SON

Certainly neither David nor any other Old Testament prophet, priest or king suffered the agonies described in Psalm 22. Here, David gives a more vivid description of Messiah's sufferings at Calvary than do the Gospel authors. In this Psalm, we have a Gospel before the Gospels and an apocalypse before Revelation.

MESSIAH'S ABANDONMENT BY GOD Psalm 22:1-6

The Spirit of God described Messiah's sufferings before He appeared on earth. The most tragic factor in Yeshua's sufferings is His being forsaken by God. He cried out at His death, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Ps. 22:1a; Matt. 27:46b). Here we behold what our redemption cost God and what it cost

His Son. The depths of His atoning work and His great sin offering are before us. Mystery of all mysteries, He who is God was forsaken by God. At Calvary, the spotless One bore the wrath of a righteous God, and He who "knew no sin" was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). At His death, Yeshua truly became "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29b).

MESSIAH'S ABUSE BY MEN Psalm 22:7-18

David never suffered a death by crucifixion as our Messiah did. Egyptians and Persians used crucifixion, as did the Greeks and Romans. The Jews considered it an abhorrent form of death (Dt. 21:23). Only after the death of a notorious criminal would they tie the body to a stake to expose it to public shame (Josh. 10:26). Many years before

Yeshua died, the abuse He received was outlined as we see in Psalm 22.

SCORN (22:6) "I am a worm, and...despised by the people."

In the Hebrew language, "worm" can denote the color crimson. Through Him, our sins, though red as scarlet, shall be made white as snow (Isa. 1:18).

RIDICULE (22:7, 8)

Note the language used by both priests and elders as they surrounded Him. They laughed, shook their heads and mocked, saying, "He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him" (22:8). We see a description of His enemies, both Jews and Gentiles, at His death.

CRUELTY (22:12-18)

His bones are out of joint. His heart is melted like wax, His hands and feet are pierced, and His clothes are gambled for by Roman soldiers and divided among them. How is it possible that religious and learned men who boast of scholarship can reject the written Word and deny the Master who redeemed them? The answer is the depravity of the human heart (Jer. 17:9), the very reason for which Yeshua came to die.

MESSIAH'S APPROVAL BY GOD

Although Messiah was abandoned by God at Calvary, the tremendous results of His vicarious death and atonement are cited. First is His resurrection, after which the risen, ascended Messiah will gather all His own around Himself and call them "My brethren" (Ps. 22:22; Heb. 2:12, 13).

Finally, Messiah is seated on the Davidic throne and "all...the families of the nations shall worship" and "shall bow before Him" (Ps. 22:27, 29). "For the kingdom is the LORD'S, and He rules over the nations" (Ps. 22:28). ✪



SOUTH FLORIDA MESSIANIC CENTER DEDICATED

This month, the new South Florida Messianic Center in Boynton Beach celebrates its opening with a first-phase

dedication service with Dr. Mitch Glaser as special speaker. "Dedication" is a fitting theme, for this month also marks the celebration of Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication. The second phase will expand the existing facility from 2,400 to approximately 7,200 square feet. This will allow us to develop and implement programs designed to reach out with the Gospel to the large Jewish community of Palm Beach County.



A PLANTED SEED BRINGS A HARVEST OF SALVATION

Earlier this year, when Boris Goldin of South Florida was on a speaking tour of churches in the Midwest, he met a Jewish couple who were originally from New York and who had come in response to an invitation by the pastor. Boris had a chance to visit with them before and after the service. As they talked, it was evident that the foundation of a good friendship had been established. God gave Boris the opportunity to share the Gospel, and he encouraged them to stay in touch with the pastor and the people from the church. Boris just received a phone call from the pastor with the news that both the man and wife had received the Lord!

NEW WEBSITE IS UP AND RUNNING

Chosen People Ministries' new website is up and running with wonderful new videos, testimonies, articles and other resources for believers and seekers alike. Take a look at www.chosenpeople.com.

I N M E M O R I A M

The Chosen People Ministries family wishes to extend its prayers and comfort to the family of Leona Pretlove, the widow of Harold Pretlove. She went to be with the Lord on October 19, 2007. Harold had a long association with the Mission, serving as Executive Director after the death of Joseph Hoffman Cohn in 1954 and sitting on the board of directors for many years after his retirement. Leona was an avid reader of the Scriptures who dealt with infirmities with courage, dignity and faith.

BEAUTY FOR ASHES

Israel staff member Victor B. reports the sad news that the facility that houses the Messianic congregation he leads was set ablaze by arsonists, causing at least \$30,000 in damage. Victor writes, "We are praying for these people, knowing that the Lord can give beauty for ashes—and we've seen already that indeed He does!" This beauty has come in the form of many expressions of God's love and encouragement not only through secular, but also through religious Israeli neighbors. One of the rabbis of a neighboring synagogue actually offered Victor's congregation use of their facility for their services. This expression of support is a blessing beyond words!

DIVINE APPOINTMENT LEADS TO FAITH DECISION

Lorraine* is a Jewish woman who came with a friend to hear Chosen People Ministries' Michael Cohen deliver a *Fall Feasts of Israel* presentation. The women left the church before Michael could meet them, but on the way home, Michael stopped for lunch—and there were Lorraine and her friend! At first, Lorraine seemed unreceptive and offered a number of objections to the Gospel. As Michael responded to the objections, he also shared his testimony. Lorraine's attitude began to change, and Michael sensed the Spirit prompting him to ask her if she wanted to receive Jesus' forgiveness for her sins. She said, "Yes!" Together they prayed a prayer of confession and repentance. Please pray for Lorraine's spiritual growth.

THE INTERCONTINENTAL ARM OF THE LORD

Rebecca Lohnes, recently returned from France, had the joy of leading a French Jewish man to the Lord in Los Angeles, where she now serves. Rebecca met Richard* in France three years ago at a Messianic



congregation where his sister, who is a believer, attends. At that time, they spoke at great length, but Richard remained uncommitted. This year, however, at a special service in Los Angeles, Rebecca translated and explained the Lord's Supper to Richard. At the end of Rebecca's presentation of Yeshua as the perfect sacrifice for our sins, Richard asked to be included in this ceremony and shared for the first time in the symbols of the New Covenant as his sister rejoiced in tears at this newborn spiritual life.

*name changed

