

# The Chosen People



Volume XVII, Issue 9 December 2011

# I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

JOHN 8:12

INSIDE  
THIS  
ISSUE:

Bridging the Great Divide • Keeping the Hanukkah Light Shining • Hanukkah Recipes • Three Parables of the King

# HANUKKAH & BRIDGING "THE GREAT DIVIDE"

Shalom from beautiful, sparkling, New York City! I don't know about you, but the Hanukkah-Christmas season is my favorite time of year. For these few weeks, even the most Orthodox Jewish New Yorker or the most secular non-believer of any background cannot help but notice Jesus. You cannot walk down the street or shop at a department store without hearing Christmas carols. In fact, the Hanukkah-Christmas season is one of my favorite times of the year to intensify our evangelistic efforts to help refocus peoples' eyes and hearts on the One who is undoubtedly God's greatest and most generous gift to mankind.

For years, I've tried to persuade my Jewish family and friends that Christmas is a Jewish holiday at its very core. After all, this holiday was created to celebrate the birthday of the Jewish Messiah. By the same token, I've also tried to help my Christian friends understand how Hanukkah, a wonderful holiday in its own right, is "joined at the hip" with Christmas!

In fact, there would be no Christmas without Hanukkah. If Antiochus Epiphanes had succeeded in his nefarious plan to stamp out Judaism, the Hebrew language, culture, biblical heritage and religion would have been wiped off the map of

history. If this had happened, then how could a Jewish Savior possibly have been born from the House of David (a Jewish king), in Bethlehem (a Jewish town) to a Jewish virgin (Mary)?

One of the great joys of celebrating Hanukkah is that it points to an all-powerful God who always keeps His promises. Yet it is still a challenge to help Jewish people and even many Christians see the links between Hanukkah and Christmas. I am not relating the two holidays because I want Christians to celebrate Hanukkah and Jewish people to celebrate Christmas—it is much more than that! The Hanukkah-Christmas connection demonstrates to Christians (and Jews) that without God's faithfulness to the Jewish people throughout history, the promised Messiah could not have arrived. And the Christmas-Hanukkah connection demonstrates to Jews (and Christians) that faithfulness fulfilled in the Messiah who was foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures and came in the flesh.

Although I like both holidays a lot, I am actually concerned about something far more important. You see, the disconnect between Christmas and Hanukkah reflects the deep chasm between Jesus and the Jewish people—and the disconnect between some Christians and the Jewish roots of their own saving faith. I crossed this divide when I was 19 years old as I embraced Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, who completely transformed my life. Ever since then, I've been telling Jewish people and others the glorious Gospel message of reconciliation.

This is what this holiday season is really about! It is my hope and prayer that my beloved Jewish people will receive the gift of God's redemption in Jesus, the Jewish Messiah. This proclamation is the very reason for the existence for your Mission to the Jewish People throughout the past 117 years—helping Jewish people cross the 2,000-year-old gulf between Jesus and His chosen people.



# CHRISTMAS:

## The Great Divide

The borough of Brooklyn is where my wife and I make our home. It is also the location of our new Charles Feinberg Messianic Center (currently under renovation)—in the heart of an Orthodox Jewish community. This community provides a clear illustration of the deep divide between Hanukkah and Christmas.

One of our favorite family activities during this time of the year is to drive around the religious Jewish neighborhoods and also the many Italian and Irish Catholic

neighborhoods in Brooklyn. In the latter neighborhoods, there are rows of homes stretching for miles with the most ornate Christmas decorations you have ever seen! And in the Jewish neighborhoods, there are similar rows of homes with beautiful Hanukkah menorahs glowing in their front windows. It is very rare to see a home decorated for Christmas and a home decorated for Hanukkah next door to each other.

The neighborhood where we are renovating the Charles

Feinberg Messianic Center is one where all you see from home to home are menorahs. There is not a Christmas tree, reindeer, Santa or nativity scene anywhere in this very religious Jewish community. The Jewish people who surround our new center believe that Christmas is a Gentile story and that believing in Jesus, for a Jewish person, is the same as committing “ethnic suicide.” Our neighbors simply do not know the Jewish side of the Christmas story.

This is why my heart breaks for my own people—because they do not know the Jewish side to the story of Jesus, and how He is the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14, when the prophet foretold that *“the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”* How I long for the day when our neighbors surrounding the Charles Feinberg Messianic Center understand that the words of the prophet Isaiah in Chapter 9:6-7 are fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah—that He is indeed the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace who will one day return to reign forever on the throne of His forefather David!

The chasm separating Hanukkah and Christmas can be crossed, because Hanukkah is a story about deliverance

and Christmas is the story of the Jewish Messiah! Please continue to pray for Chosen People Ministries as we bring the message of Messiah to both Jews and Gentiles—especially over the next few weeks as we intensify our outreach across the globe.

Please remember to pray for the Charles Feinberg Messianic Center. I am happy to let you know that a generous supporter of Chosen People Ministries has offered us a matching grant whereby your gift will be multiplied by 50% up to \$250,000. I hope that you will consider making a generous end-of-the-year gift for the renovation of the Charles Feinberg Messianic Center in the heart of Orthodox Jewish Brooklyn.

Please pray, not only that God will provide what is needed to complete the project, but also that He will prepare the hearts of the thousands upon thousands of Jewish people who surround this new facility to hear the real—and very Jewish—story of Jesus the Messiah.

Whether you celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah—or both—may this season of the year be a time of refreshment, renewal and great joy to you and your family!

Your brother in the Messiah,

  
Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser  
President

# Keeping the Hanukkah Light of the Lord Shining in the Promised Land



## Not-too-Healthy Potato Latkes (serves 12)

Come on, this recipe is way too easy and too delicious to NOT try it! If you're feeling guilty about so much 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
- Oil for frying
- applesauce or sour cream (optional)

Grate potatoes and remove as much liquid as possible. Then grate the onions, combine with the potatoes, and mix together with the eggs, salt and flour. Drop by heaping tablespoonsful into hot oil in frying pan, and press with a spoon until they measure about 3 inches across. Fry until light brown, turn over and fry the other side. Drain on a paper towel and serve hot. Latkes are traditionally served with applesauce or sour cream. Have a Happy Hanukkah!

Every child in Israel eagerly awaits Hanukkah—and so do adults! How can anyone pass up a *sufganiah*—a soft, warm, jelly-filled donut? These donuts, traditional Hanukkah treats, are fried in oil in remembrance of how the Lord provided enough consecrated oil to keep the light shining in the Temple after it was recaptured from our enemies.

If you stroll down the streets in Israel during the Hanukkah season, you'll see a *hanukkiah*—a nine-branched candelabra—in the window of virtually every house. These sparks of light, shining during the darkest time of the year, remind everyone of the miracle that took place in the Temple.

Although the Temple is no longer standing, Israelis (and Jews around the world) light the *hanukkiah* to remember its importance. The glowing candles are a symbol of freedom and protection from the foes that threatened the Jewish people. Nowadays, beset by physical threats from neighboring countries and biased attacks from the global media, Israelis sense a special kinship with the freedom fighters of old.

As believers in Messiah, Hanukkah reminds us that Jesus, the Light of the World, walked and taught in the Temple, preaching salvation and spiritual freedom. Celebrating Hanukkah as believers thus adds a special dimension to the holiday. Retelling the Hanukkah story, singing the traditional songs and playing games creates warm memories as we remember the Light of the World, the Giver of salvation and the One who protects and provides for our families.

During Hanukkah, children take turns lighting the candles on the *hanukkiah*, and parents reflect on the freedom and protection given by God. We thank the Lord for His salvation!

Source consulted:  
*Response to Modernity* by  
Michael Meyer  
"Hanukkah, American Style"  
[www.myjewishlearning.com](http://www.myjewishlearning.com)

- Hanukkah memorializes the defeat of Assyrian Greeks by the priestly Maccabean family in 162 BC. It is not recorded in the canon of the Old Testament (which was already completed by this time).
- Hanukkah is celebrated beginning on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev, which usually falls some time in December.

- The lighting of the candles reminds Jewish people of the tradition of the Hanukkah miracle. When the Maccabees retook the Temple, they found that there was only enough olive oil left to keep the eternal light in the Temple burning for one day. Tradition says that the light burned for the eight days that it took to make more oil.
- The story of Hanukkah is alluded to in the first Book of Maccabees, chapter 4. This book is part of the Apocrypha, a collection of inter-testamental writings that are accepted as historical by Jewish people, but are not part of the Old Testament.



Every Jewish holiday has its own special foods. In Israel, *sufganiyot* (jelly donuts) are the Hanukkah treat, while *latkes* (potato pancakes) are more popular with folks in North America and Europe.

What do these have in common? They're both fried in oil to commemorate the Hanukkah miracle. Yes, oil has lots of calories, but what's a few extra calories when you're celebrating God's goodness?



### Sweet Sufganiyot

(makes 25 donuts)

- |                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 3 cups of flour (sifted) | 2 Tbsp. sugar      |
| 2 tsp. baking powder     | 2 eggs             |
| ½ tsp. vanilla           | 2 cups sour cream  |
| ½ tsp. nutmeg (optional) | Jelly (any flavor) |
| Oil for frying           | Powdered sugar     |

In a bowl, blend together the flour, baking powder, sugar, vanilla, nutmeg, eggs and sour cream. In a skillet, heat the oil and when it is very hot, drop tablespoons of batter into it. When the batter puffs up and turns light brown, turn it over and cook the other side. Set on a paper towel to cool and drain. Then, make a small hole and fill with jelly (a syringe can make this easier), then sprinkle with powdered sugar. These are absolutely delicious when served immediately!

- Hanukkah is a joyous holiday and in many Orthodox Jewish communities, the children do not go to school. Carnivals and parties are held, and games are played with colorfully decorated tops called *dreydl*s.

- The Hanukkah menorah is a nine-branched candelabra, called a *hanukkiah*. The middle candle is always there, but as the nights go on, you place additional candles from right to left as you face the *hanukkiah*. The candles are lit with the middle candle—known as the “servant” candle, from left to right (lighting the newest candle first).

# Renewing the Significance of Hanukkah

Poor *Hanukkah*—for centuries it was a barely-noticed minor holiday in Judaism. What brought Hanukkah into the spotlight? Oddly enough, it was Christmas!

In the late nineteenth century, the Jewish people in Germany were among the most prosperous and most assimilated Jewish populations in the world. Eager to demonstrate they were good Germans, many were drifting away from Jewish identity and thought nothing of celebrating Christmas along with their Christian neighbors. Troubled by this trend, a gathering of Reform rabbis in Leipzig, Germany in 1871 resolved to encourage congregants to emphasize the celebration of Hanukkah, which happens to fall around the same time of the year.

Not many years later, American Jews were faced with the same dilemma. Jewish immigrants from Europe, wanting to show what good citizens they were, jumped on the Christmas celebration bandwagon. *The Jewish Daily Forward* in New York City reported, “Who says we haven’t Americanized? The purchase of Christmas gifts is one of the first things that proves one is no longer a greenhorn (new arrival).” But by the late 1920s, Hanukkah had begun to come into its own, as rabbis here took the same stand as their colleagues in Germany.

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 highlighted one vital dimension of the Hanukkah story. Jews around the world could identify with tiny Israel’s valiant efforts to gain and retain its independence against great odds, just as the Maccabean freedom fighters of long ago had done.

- It is traditional to eat foods fried in oil during the eight days of Hanukkah to commemorate the miracle of the oil that lasted eight days. In Israel, *sufganiyot*, a special jelly doughnut, is enjoyed, but outside of Israel the traditional foods during this time are *latkes*, potato pancakes, dipped in either sour cream or applesauce.

- The only mention of Hanukkah in the Bible is in John chapter 10:22, where Jesus is found to be walking in the Temple area on what is called “the Feast of Dedication.”

- Hanukkah is celebrated for eight nights in Jewish homes, and it is customary to give the children presents on each day.

# 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.

## THREE PARABLES OF PREPAREDNESS FOR THE KING'S RETURN

### Matthew 25

Much of Messiah's teaching consisted of parables, and each parable taught one major principle. In Matthew chapter 25, all three parables underscore the main theme of preparedness in the light of Messiah's return to gather together His elect.

#### A WEDDING PARABLE OF WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS – Mt. 25:1-13

The wedding details described are Jewish in context, so the parable is directed to Israel, primarily in reference to the return of their Messiah. In Bible days, the bridegroom first travelled to his bride's home. Along the journey, he would be followed by various friends until the entire company was complete. Then all would partake of the wedding feast at the bridegroom's home.

This parable may be applied to Israel's preparedness to wait for and acknowledge their promised Jewish Messiah. Unfortunately, a number of persons in the wedding party did not take sufficient oil for the lighting of the lamps.

Consequently, they became lost in darkness along the way. These foolish virgins arrived late for the marriage feast and were not permitted entrance. In fact, the bridegroom (the Lord Himself)

stated to them, "I know you not" (Mt. 25:12).

The unprepared virgins represent that portion of the nation Israel that refused to recognize their Messiah Jesus at His first coming (Jn. 1:11), and also those who will refuse to recognize Him when He returns the second time (Rom. 11:20, 25). Thus, the major lesson is directed to the nation Israel to believe in and be prepared for the return of their promised Messiah.

#### A PARABLE OF WISE AND FOOLISH LABORERS – Mt. 25:14-30

In this instance, before the Master departed, He distributed His "talents" or finances and the oversight of His goods to His servants. The Church that Jesus promised to build (Mt. 16:18) was established at His death and resurrection. Our Lord left a legacy of instruction and example behind, including the promise of His return (Jn. 14:3). Then, the Holy Spirit gave "gifts" to equip believers.

The parable of the talents applies to the Church Age from Pentecost to the Lord's return for His own (1 Thess. 4:14-18). At His return, there will be an examination, with awards granted

to all those who have invested the proper use of their "talents" for the glory of the Lord (1 Cor. 3:9-15).

#### A PARABLE OF SHEEP AND GOATS – Mt. 25:31-46

This parable concerns Messiah's promised return to earth just after the horrible tribulation time. In Daniel 7, all the nations are portrayed as ferocious beasts. Just preceding our Lord's return to earth, Satan will gather all nations against the Jews in Jerusalem (Rev.16:14). At that time, King Messiah will return with His own to battle and conquer these nations (Jude 14-17). In this context, Jesus will separate "the sheep from the goats" according to their treatment of the Jewish people (Mt. 25:41, 46).

#### CONCLUSION

All three parables concern judgment and the separation of believers and unbelievers. May I ask you, do you have a personal relationship with the Lord? Does He recognize you as a sheep of His? What is your attitude toward the Jewish people, His "brethren according to the flesh?" Are you prepared for His imminent return?



# NEWS BRIEFS



## SEEKING MEANING IN THE SCRIPTURES

Mitch Forman, who leads our work in Boston, reports that the Messianic High Holy Days services are

always very well attended by not-yet-believing family members—and this year was no exception. Aaron,\* a young man who married the daughter of one of the congregants, has come to various events over the years and has developed a good relationship with Mitch, who reports, “This year, I gave a message from the Book of Revelation, and Aaron raced up to me right after the services. Smiling, he said that he has been reading the Book of Revelation, and this led to our first discussion about deeper things in life. He agreed to meet with me and look further into the Bible.” Please pray that Aaron will come to faith in Messiah.

## HIGH HOLY DAYS CELEBRATION OPENS HEARTS

Cathy Wilson rejoices in Arizona: “God did abundantly beyond what we asked or imagined for our High Holy Days outreach!” Thirty-five people gathered for the festivities, including a number of seekers from Russia, Poland, Israel, and Bulgaria. During the Rosh Hashanah celebration, traditional prayers and Messianic worship lit up the room with joy. Staff member Jeffrey Kran clearly proclaimed the Gospel, and many people engaged in one-on-one conversations about Jesus. “God impacted hearts and broke down walls,” Cathy says. After the service was over, the wife of an Orthodox man remarked, as she moved toward the door, “This is a time of repentance for us.” Her husband, nodding in assent, said, “It’s all about the heart.”

## PRINCE OF EGYPT LEADS TO SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS

Staff member Lisa W. is wrapping up her ministry activities in Chicago and preparing to move to Israel. She is excited to go to the Holy Land, but sad to leave

the people to whom she has been ministering all these years. Lisa is praying especially for God to bring a great influence into the lives of a Jewish family for whom she babysits. She has been talking with them about Moses, because their young son loves the movie *The Prince of Egypt*. Recently, the boy’s mother asked Lisa if she knew of a good movie about the birth of Yeshua, because her son has been asking about Christmas. Please pray that this family’s openness may lead them to the Messiah Yeshua!

## NETANYA CENTER HELPS OVER 200 HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Chosen People Ministries staff member Brian S., serving in Israel, cannot contain his excitement about the new Outreach Center and Food Pantry in the Israeli city of Netanya: “Our grand opening was marked by the hand and heart of Yeshua!” Brian says. “The recipients of the aid had tears in their eyes knowing that we cared for them in their time of great need. This is our heart for this work!” On the Center’s opening day, 100 local Holocaust survivors and 30 Ethiopian immigrants received food baskets. Many voluntarily took Bibles from the free book table and had divinely ordained conversations with the Center’s workers. Within a few weeks, an additional 125 Holocaust survivors had received assistance. Brian requests your prayers for the increase of food, finances, volunteers and for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

## SHARING THE GOOD NEWS ON THE STREET

Tony Savarese, serving on the West Coast, recently participated in an outreach at a popular annual street fair in San Diego. Tony and other members of the Messianic congregation set up a literature table to distribute invitations to the services and a tract explaining why we believe in Yeshua as Messiah. Tony rejoices over the many positive visits to the table: “We pray that seeds have been planted and that some of the people will come to visit our congregation.” Tony and his team even had the opportunity to share the Gospel with some of the people at the Islamic table, who didn’t even know that Jewish believers in Jesus existed!



# Special Benefits for Year-End Gifts

Are you aware of the benefits available when you make a gift at the end of the calendar year?



Benefits of year-end gifts include the following:

- Potential tax savings from charitable deductions
- Avoidance of capital gains tax on highly appreciated property
- Personal satisfaction in knowing that you are involved in Chosen People Ministries
- Income tax deductions this year for gifts actually made in future years

We know you give because you care about reaching Jewish people with the Good News. We appreciate the confidence you have

placed in us. It is our prayer that God will richly bless you for it, and that He will allow us to bear fruit... fruit that will be credited to your account. As you pray and as you give, you are an important partner in the outreach of Chosen People Ministries.



**Chosen People Ministries**

241 E. 51st Street • New York, NY 10022

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# MESSIANIC RESOURCES

Equip yourself to present the redemptive work of the Messiah to the Jewish community. Exploring issues of atonement and redemption, respected scholars show how Christ is the fulfillment of Isaiah's "suffering servant"—and offer suggestions on how to share the Good News with our Jewish brothers and sisters. Edited by Darrell Bock and Mitch Glaser.



**3138 The Gospel According to Isaiah 53 \$22.95<sup>US</sup>**



The flickering lights of the nine-branched Hanukkah menorah remind us that God is mighty to save and that Yeshua, Jesus, the Messiah is truly the Light of the World. Hanukkah is truly a time of celebration and now you can own this beautifully crafted 9" tall Hanukkah menorah from Israel, to place in your window as a statement of your faith and hope in the Messiah of Israel and all the nations of the world.

**5023 Hanukkah Menorah \$24.95<sup>US</sup>**

For phone orders call 800-333-4936 in the U.S. Or for even more resources visit us online at [www.chosenpeople.com/store](http://www.chosenpeople.com/store).

## ISRAEL, THE CHURCH AND THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

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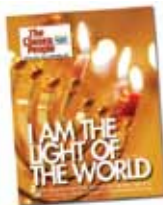
with Joel Rosenberg at Biola University



### The Chosen People Newsletter

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



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