

The Chosen People



Volume XIX, Issue 4 May 2013



Pentecost

SHAVUOT

FULFILLED

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Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem



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Dear friend,

Shalom in the wonderful name of Jesus our Messiah! It has been a wonderful season of the year for Your Mission to the Jewish People. I am still rejoicing in all that God did a little over a month ago as our staff spoke in hundreds of churches and participated in dozens of Passover Seders, where we had the opportunity to speak to hundreds of Jewish people about Jesus.

If you have never had a Messiah in the Passover demonstration at your church—you should! It is a tremendous blessing for believers to make the connection between the Last Supper and the Jewish Passover Seder. Please get in touch with us now and start scheduling your Messiah in the Passover presentation for next spring. Our schedules fill up very quickly and we would love to visit your congregation—so please call or ask your pastor or Bible study leader to contact our Church Ministries department to get the process started for next year! You can call 1-888-405-5874 or e-mail churches@chosenpeople.com. In Canada, call 1-888-442-5535 or email info@chosenpeople.ca.

The Feast of Weeks

We are just entering into the season of the Jewish Feast of Weeks, called

Shavuot. You know this festival in English—it is usually called the day of Pentecost. We learn all about this in Leviticus 23:15–21 and Acts 2:1–13.

This is the only major holiday that both Jewish people and Christians share. In Jewish tradition, this day is understood as the day when God gave the *Torah* (Law) through Moses to the Jewish people. According to the second chapter of Acts, the day of Pentecost was also the moment when God sent His Holy Spirit to the early Jewish believers who were gathered together, waiting for the promise of the Father that was given in the Old Testament (Joel 2:28–32) and by Jesus in Luke 24:49.

I am often asked the question, “How can we pray for you and for Chosen People Ministries?” The answer is simple—pray that God fills us with His Holy Spirit and gives us the power to preach the Gospel to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

The Holy Spirit is the best friend of evangelism! We rely upon His work in the heart and souls of our Jewish loved ones, friends, neighbors and coworkers—to convict them of sin and their need of a Savior. So please

don't be discouraged with your Jewish friends who might be apathetic to the Gospel, or at times even get a little upset—instead, trust that as you pray for them, the Holy Spirit will prepare a place in their hearts for the Gospel.

President Obama's Speech in Israel

On another note, I wanted to share some thoughts with you about President Barack Obama's trip to Israel, particularly on the speech he gave on March 13, 2013 before 2,000 mostly “younger” Israelis.

Most people who heard the speech appreciated the president's passion, friendliness and directness. President Obama assured his Israeli audience of American support for Israel and affirmed the common Judeo-Christian and democratic values shared by both nations. The president



because Israel's not going anywhere."

In discussing peace in the Middle East, President Obama clearly reveals his agenda — not that it was particularly hidden! He calls for what he views as fair treatment of Palestinians. The president's solution to achieve this goal is to charge Secretary of State John Kerry to negotiate a two-state solution with Benjamin Netanyahu and Mahmoud Abbas.

So, what has changed? Not much—but I am certainly glad the president affirmed his overall support of Israel.

Where do we go from here? I would suggest four “agenda items:”

- **We need to pray for Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6)**

The Middle East crisis is complex, and Benjamin Netanyahu and the leaders of Israel will need God's wisdom in the days ahead—perhaps as never before—in light of the nuclear threat and the continuing political and social changes in the Middle East.

- **We need to pray for President Barack Obama**

Personally, I am praying that he comes to terms with the scriptural truths regarding God's plan for Israel and the Jewish people. I pray that he will be driven by Scripture and understand that the land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people not simply because of the U.N. mandate, but because God made a promise and He will keep His promise to the Jewish people (Genesis 12:1-3, 15:18-21). I am praying that the Lord will give our president wisdom and empower him to use his great gifts of rhetoric for holy purposes.

clearly affirms the right of the nation of Israel to exist as a Jewish state.

I wish the president had told his Israeli audience that he recognizes that the Bible is true and the reason the land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people is because of God's promise to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 12:1-3)—but I suppose this would be asking too much.

There is much to praise about President Obama's remarks. When it came to his comments on security, the president assured the Israelis that the United States would do whatever is necessary to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. He also specifically singled out Hamas as a terrorist organization, expressing his opposition to their practices and the need for Hamas to recognize Israel in order for the peace talks to continue.

He also added, with resounding words that I can only hope and pray will guide our president's thinking and U.S. policy in the years ahead,

“That's why the security of the Jewish people in Israel is so important; it cannot be taken for granted. But make no mistake: Those who adhere to the ideology of rejecting Israel's right to exist—they might as well reject the earth beneath them and the sky above,

- **We need to pray for the Palestinians and their leaders**

I am praying that God will give Mr. Abbas and Khaled Meshal, the political leader of Hamas, wisdom and a spirit of cooperation, so that whatever details of a peace agreement that can be humanly developed will be effective and lasting. We also need to pray that Hamas will recognize Israel's right to the Land and that these leaders would renounce terrorism and put a stop to those firing missiles on innocent Israelis.

- **We need to pray for the advancement of the Gospel among Jewish people and Palestinians**

Most of all, I am praying for Israelis and Palestinians to know that the true God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob loves them dearly and sent His only son, Jesus the Messiah—a Jewish man who dwelled in the Jewish homeland—to live a perfect life, to die for their sins and rise from the dead. I pray that Israelis and Palestinians will have the hope of the resurrection and recognize the days coming soon when Jesus the Messiah will return to reign on His rightful throne in Jerusalem as the Prince of Peace.

And in that glorious day, there will no longer be a Middle East crisis; Palestinians and Jewish Israelis will live in peace. The wolf will lie down with the lamb, and the weapons of war will turn into instruments of peace. This is my hope—and I pray that before Messiah comes, we will get as close to it as possible.

Happy Shavuot and may the Lord fill you with His Spirit and joy!

Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

Shavuot in the New Covenant

Most Christians are familiar with Luke's description of the events on Pentecost in Acts 2 and their significance in the establishment of the early Church. Few, however, are aware of the Jewish backdrop to this day. The Jewish name for this holiday is *Shavuot*, meaning "weeks." Shavuot is a harvest festival, celebrating the end of the barley harvest and the first fruits of the wheat harvest (Ex. 34:22; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:10). The term *Pentecost* is a Greek word referring to the *fiftieth* day of counting the harvest after Passover (Lev. 23:15-16). It is one of the three pilgrimage festivals when Jewish people travel to Jerusalem (Ex. 23:16-17; 34:22-23; Deut. 16:10, 16).

According to Jewish tradition, Shavuot represents the annual commemoration of the day God gave the Torah to the nation of Israel on Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:1-6). *This means that the entire nation was celebrating the anniversary of God's covenant with Israel—on the same day God fulfilled His promise to send the Holy Spirit.* The parallels between the giving of the Torah and God's gift of the Holy Spirit reinforce the significance of the arrival of God's promised Spirit on Pentecost.

Luke's description of the events in Acts 2 shows the close connection between the giving of the Torah on Shavuot and the giving of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost in several ways. First, Luke mentions tongues "like fire" descending upon the disciples (Acts 2:3). Similarly, God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai in the form of fire (Ex. 19:18-19). Second, later Jewish tradition associates multiple tongues (languages) with the events at Sinai: the Talmud says every word proceeding from God's mouth "divided into seventy tongues" (b. Shab 88b). Third, Luke describes a sound like "the blowing of a violent wind" (2:2). Although the account in Exodus does not mention wind, Josephus, the Jewish historian, says there were strong winds that became a mighty tempest on the third day of Israel's stay at Sinai (J. Ant. 3:80). Fourth, Peter's proclamation of the Gospel resulted in 3,000 new believers (Acts 2:41). Luke's reference here suggests the restoration of the 3,000 individuals who died when the nation rebelled against God by worshiping a golden calf at the base of Mount Sinai (Ex. 32:1-29). Finally, the celebration of Shavuot was the day Israel offered God the first fruits of their wheat harvest (Num. 28:26). Since Shavuot is the celebration of Israel's first fruits, Luke uses this relationship to show how the Spirit begins God's work of redemption (Rom. 8:23).

The Hebrew Bible looks forward to the events fulfilled on Shavuot. The Torah anticipated a time when Israel would

fail to keep God's commandments—but that is not the end of the story. God also promised to bring His people back to their land and circumcise their hearts (Deut. 30:1-6). The prophet Jeremiah anticipates a "new covenant" between

God and Israel, when God would engrave His covenant upon the hearts of His people, unlike the covenant He wrote on tablets of stone (Jer. 31:31-34). The hope for a restored relationship with God is at the heart of Jeremiah's promise of a renewed covenant with Israel, because God would forgive His people and transform their hearts (Jer. 31:33-34).

Luke points to the fulfillment of these promises on Shavuot (Acts 2:1-4, 17-21, 33, 37-39). Thus, the gift of the Spirit on Shavuot was evidence of Messiah's redemptive work and the affirmation of the new covenant. The indwelling of God's Spirit within His people indicates a shift in the way God relates to us, as He transforms the hearts of His people through the Spirit's power.



Above: Russian believers celebrate Shavuot by enacting the story of Ruth and offering "first fruits." Left: Outreach Israel team joins Israelis at a picnic.

Celebrating in Israel

In Israel, Shavuot is both a practical, agricultural holiday celebrating the first harvest and a spiritual holiday remembering the giving of the *Torah* (Law) on Mount Sinai. It reminds us to be thankful for God's Word and to delight in it. As the Word is read, it should bring joy, sweetness and happiness. This is why we eat sweet dairy things like cheesecake or *blintzes* (crepes or pancakes with a sweet cheese filling inside) on Shavuot. These foods help us remember that "honey and milk (God's Word) are under your tongue" (Song of Solomon 4:11).

As Shavuot falls in the spring, people often decorate their homes and synagogues with fresh greens, flowering plants and floral arrangements. Children weave stems together to make flower crowns. All this is done to remember the thanksgiving offering brought to the Lord in gratitude for providing the first harvest after the winter. Also, since the Lord provided the Torah for His people to be better able to obey His will, His people brought Him the first of the springtime harvest as an expression of gratitude for this sign of His election of the children of Israel.

On Shavuot, most synagogues are open all night long for a special reading of the book of Ruth, one of the five *megillot* (scrolls), along with the Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther, that are read on special holidays. The message is about a young woman who relied on the Lord to provide for her and her widowed mother-in-law's basic needs. Ruth gleaned in the harvest fields as she hoped for her kinsman-redeemer to marry her. Although Ruth was not Jewish, she believed in the God of Israel and was rewarded for her faith. In fact, her great-grandson was none other than King David.

Shavuot shows us many examples of how the Lord provides for His people—in both practical and spiritual ways. As dawn approaches, you can find Jewish people walking home, having stayed up all night, ready for a little sleep and looking forward to a Shavuot brunch!

As we remember Shavuot, we are also reminded that believers in Messiah also know it as Pentecost, which celebrates the giving of the Holy Spirit as described in Acts 2. Can you imagine a celebration of Israeli believers from all over the country getting together for brunch, eating cheesecake, with the children running around with flower wreaths in their hair? This actually happens! Every year, a picnic takes place where hundreds of believers get together to fellowship and enjoy each other's company.

There was a time, many years ago, when these gatherings were just a couple dozen people. The harvest is slowly coming in and now at these gatherings, it is quite possible you won't know everyone's name, because the numbers have grown so large. What a good "problem" to have—let us rejoice in the harvest of believers among God's chosen people in Israel!



Cheese Blintzes

Filling recipe provided by Mitch Forman, Vice President of U.S. Ministries.

Mitch's mother used a filling as follows:

- 1 lb. farmer's cheese*
- ½ cup cottage cheese
- 2 eggs
- dash of salt
- sugar to taste

Mix all ingredients together.

**Farmer's cheese is an Eastern European cheese. If you have difficulty getting this, you may substitute cottage cheese or even ricotta cheese, but we recommend purchasing it or even making it yourself.*

Blintz recipe from *The Art of Jewish Cooking* by Jennie Grossinger, published in 1958.

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup milk or water
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons salad oil
- ¾ cup sifted flour
- Butter or oil for frying pan

Beat the eggs, milk, salt and salad oil together. Stir in the flour.

Heat a little butter or oil in a 6-inch skillet. Pour about 2 tablespoons of the batter into it, tilting the pan to coat the bottom. Use just enough batter to make a very thin pancake. Let the bottom brown, then carefully turn out onto a napkin, browned side up. Make the rest of the pancakes.

Spread 1 heaping tablespoon of the filling along one side of the pancake. Turn opposite sides in and roll up like a jelly roll.

You can fry the blintzes in butter or oil or bake them in a 425° oven until browned.

Serve dairy blintzes with sour cream. Makes about 18.

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.

ISAIAH CHAPTER SIX — WOE, LO, AND GO

Worthwhile service for the Savior involves three essential qualities; namely, contrition for sin, cleansing from all iniquity, and a commission or call from the Lord.

THE “WOE” OF INIQUITY

One day, Isaiah was standing in the Jerusalem Temple when he received a vision of the Lord “*sitting on a throne, high and lifted up...*” (Isa. 6:1). Seraphim surrounded the Lord’s throne and sang praises about God’s holiness (Isa. 6:3).

The contrast between a holy God and humanity’s sinful nature was too great, and Isaiah was overcome by his unworthiness. He cried out, “*Woe is me...for I am a man of unclean lips...*” (Isa. 6:5). Confession of sin provides the gateway to cleansing, for “*if we confess our sins, He [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1 Jn. 1:9).

THE “LO” OF CLEANSING (ISAIAH 6:6,7)

Immediately, God provided the means of cleansing. One of the angels purged Isaiah’s iniquity-filled lips with a burning coal taken from the altar before God’s presence (Isa. 6:6,7).

In order to engage in any particular service for our Lord and Messiah, we must first freshly

receive the benefits of the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah, which cleanses us from sin. We can only enter God’s holy presence by means of our Messiah’s sacrifice on the cross.

In Isaiah’s day and throughout ancient times, forgiveness was only possible by means of the annual atonement, or *kippur* in Hebrew. The *kippur* required:

- (1) A specific place: The Temple in Jerusalem (Lev. 16:3).
- (2) A set day: The Day of Atonement, *Yom Kippur*, the 10th day of the 7th month (Lev. 23:26, 27).
- (3) A High Priest: Aaron or one of his descendants (Lev. 16:2-34).
- (4) An Ordained Sacrifice: A spotless goat (Lev. 16:15).

Now, under the New Covenant, we have complete forgiveness through our Messiah’s sacrifice and resurrection. In fact, the ancient Temple, High Priest and sacrifices were only reflections of an eternal Temple, Priest and Sacrifice (Heb 8:1-6; 10:1-18). Since forgiveness requires a sacrifice, both Jews and Gentiles need the sacrifice of our Messiah Jesus for cleansing. (Heb. 9:21-28)

THE “GO” OF COMMISSION (ISAIAH 6:13)

Once the Lord prepared Isaiah for service, he heard God’s invitation, saying, “*Who will go for us...*” (Isa. 6:8). God gave Isaiah a solemn message to declare to Judah: “*Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’*” (Isa. 6:9).

The people of Judah persistently twisted their relationship with God so much so that the nation had gone beyond the possibility of repentance and healing. However, Isaiah knew that God would not cast off Israel and Judah forever (Ex. 32:9-14).

In this light, Isaiah asked, “Lord, how long?” The Lord informed Isaiah that his ministry would appear to end in failure. This would result in the desolation of the Promised Land and exile into a foreign land.

However, a Remnant would survive! It would be similar to the stump of a felled tree, from which a shoot would provide fresh life (Isa. 6:13). Future hope rested in the coming of Israel’s Messiah (Isa. 2:2-4; 7:14). In the same way Isaiah the prophet was faithful in his preaching and call, let us be faithful to the calling the Lord gives us.

NEWS BRIEFS

EIGHTEEN HOURS AND COUNTING

Staff member Larry Feldman, who shepherds a Messianic congregation in Southern California, was asked to speak at a three-day Jewish evangelism seminar in Atlanta. A Jewish woman in her early sixties attended on Friday night and was noticeably moved. She returned the next morning and spoke with Larry after the service. During their discussion, Larry discerned that she was ready to make a faith decision. When he asked her if she wanted to pray with him to receive the Lord, she did—and they shed tears of joy together. The next day, she came back for another session of the seminar and was telling everyone that she had “now been a believer for 18 hours.”



ISAIAH 53 EXPLAINED – IN MANY TONGUES

The *Isaiah 53 Explained* book is now available in Hebrew, Spanish, Russian, Finnish and English...and is being translated into French, Chinese, Korean and quite a few other languages. Once the French version is printed, we will have this book available in languages spoken by 95% of the world’s Jewish population! Many believers are already giving *Isaiah 53 Explained* to their Jewish friends, and others are reading it to develop a deeper understanding of the Old Testament and, specifically, this powerful prophecy. If you would like a copy of the book to pass on to a Jewish friend, visit www.isaiah53.com.

ARGENTINA MESSIANIC CENTER REOPENS FOR MINISTRY

After almost a year of repair and remodeling, we have reopened the Buenos Aires Messianic Center! Vice President David Sedaca, responsible for the Mission’s Latin American ministry, reports with joy that a number of non-believing Jewish neighbors joined the service for the Feast of Purim. David writes, “We have now

begun holding regular services and Bible studies. A second building on the property will now be used primarily to receive young Israelis who are vacationing in Argentina after completing their military service in the Israeli Defense Forces. This program is already bringing dozens of non-believing young Israelis through our Center, and they are hearing the Gospel in their native Hebrew language!”

JEWISH EDUCATOR FINDS FAITH IN MESSIAH

Mark Surey, who serves the Lord at the Feinberg Center in New York City, made contact with a Jewish man who lectures at an Ivy League college in the Northeast. While meeting at a coffee shop, Mark discovered that Joe* was a Bulgarian-born but U.S.-educated Sephardic Jew whose closest friends were evangelical believers. He was drawn to Jesus, but was sincerely struggling with the question of how individuals who had committed horrible sins could truly be forgiven if they repented. Mark pointed to numerous examples from the Hebrew Bible, such as King David. When Joe saw this and understood the connection between repentance, forgiveness and faith in Jesus, he prayed to receive Messiah.

BREAKFAST CLUB BRINGS JEWISH MAN TO FAITH

Staff member Eugene I., who serves in Germany, is rejoicing that Samuel,* a Jewish man who regularly attends Chosen People Ministries’ Messianic services, put his faith in Messiah—in the informal setting of the weekly men’s breakfast club. Eugene writes, “I felt the Holy Spirit’s guidance in explaining to him that *Yeshua* (Jesus) took all our sins as a perfect sacrifice in our place, and that we can trust Him as our Lord and Savior. Samuel then prayed the prayer of repentance and receiving of *Yeshua* as the Messiah! God is truly faithful to His covenant people, and I was honored to be His instrument, helping this Jewish man take a life-changing step of faith.”



*name has been changed

THE PEOPLE, THE LAND AND THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

October 3-5, 2013

This conference will focus on the Bible's account of the role of Israel and the Jewish people—both now and in the future. The speakers are renowned scholars with profound insight into God's unfolding plan and purpose for the nation of Israel as the Scripture depicts them.

This event will also help you develop a deeper understanding of both current and future events in the Middle East as described in both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. The program will also include testimonies of both Jewish and Arab believers serving the Lord in Israel and concluding with a dynamic Saturday evening message by best-selling author Joel Rosenberg and music by Marty Goetz.

For more information, call 1-888-405-5874 or visit www.chosenpeople.com/conference.

THURSDAY – Beginning at 7:00 PM

- Dr. Eugene H. Merrill, Dr. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.

FRIDAY – Morning sessions begin at 8:00 AM

- Pastor David Epstein, Dr. Robert B. Chisholm, Dr. Michael J. Wilkins, Dr. Darrell L. Bock

- Dr. Michael Vanlaningham, Professor Craig A. Evans

Evening sessions begin at 7:00 PM

- Dr. Michael L. Brown, Dr. Mitch Glaser

SATURDAY – Morning sessions begin at 8:00 AM

- Dr. Craig A. Blaising, Dr. Mark R. Saucy, Dr. John S. Feinberg

- Dr. Michael J. Vlach, Dr. Barry R. Leventhal, Dr. Michael Rydelnik

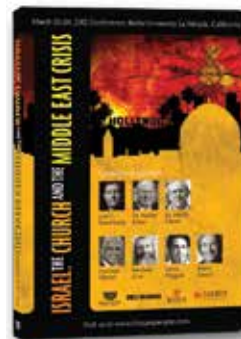
CLOSING CELEBRATION 7:30 PM

- Joel C. Rosenberg, Music by Marty Goetz

GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WORLD EVENTS WHEN YOU WATCH A RECENT CONFERENCE DVD

Israel, the Church, and the Middle East Crisis (DVD) is the result of Chosen People Ministries conference, with over 2,300 in attendance, held at Biola University in 2012. The conference focused on the current Middle East crisis, with special attention to what is happening in Iran, Syria, Egypt and Israel. It is critical to understand contemporary events from the perspective of Scripture, as all too often we allow ourselves to be overly influenced by the media! Understanding the complexities of the current Middle East crisis and what the Bible says about God's promised future for Israel and her neighbors will move us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem; more effectively, more intelligently and with greater passion.

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

