



**The
Chosen
People**



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HAPPY PURIM: DID YOU KNOW QUEEN ESTHER SPEAKS RUSSIAN?

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OUR MINISTRY TO RUSSIAN JEWS



Dear friend in the Messiah,

Shalom from our New York City headquarters. It is a joy to let you know that the Charles Feinberg Messianic Center in the heart of Orthodox Jewish Brooklyn is now up and running! We are praising God for His faithfulness!

Thank you for your prayers, support and encouragement!

Purim: God Preserves His Chosen People

Jewish people around the world will soon celebrate the festival called *Purim*—its name comes from the Hebrew word for “lots,” because casting lots was how the wicked Persian minister, Haman, chose the date of his proposed destruction of the Jewish people (Esther 3:7). The Book of Esther unfolds

the story of how God delivered the Jewish people from Haman’s plot and turned the tables on their enemies!

There is much more to learn about this great holiday that will bless you and enrich your faith, and so we have added quite a bit of teaching, information about Jewish customs, recipes, Bible studies and more on our website at www.chosenpeople.com/purim. One of my favorite Purim traditions is what is known as the *Purim Shpiel* (Yiddish for “story”) where the children usually put on play telling the story of the Book of Esther. This is done by Jewish people around the world and so Esther—our heroine—speaks the language of the children doing the play! This is why Esther speaks Russian, Hebrew, Spanish French and even English! You might try going to a local Messianic congregation or Synagogue if they are having a play—you will love it!

This great festival is also an annual reminder of God’s greater plan for the Jewish people, which the Apostle Paul describes in Romans 11:12, *Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!*

The best is yet to come!

The Real Spiritual Russian Revolution

Another reason I know that God loves His chosen people and that at any moment myriads of Jewish people could become followers of Jesus is because I lived through a very special season which I call “the real, spiritual Russian revolution.” Let me explain!

Sholem Aleichem created a character in his short stories, who has come to be synonymous with the perception of the Russian Jewish experience. This character is Tevye the Milkman. He and his faithful and long-suffering wife, Golde, and the fictional Jewish community of Anatevka serve as symbols of the struggles of the Russian Jewish people, many of whom immigrated to America in waves beginning in the 1880s and are continuing to this day.



Our modern-day Tevyes and Goldes began to disembark at our shores in massive numbers with the arrival of Perestroika in 1989 and the fall of the Soviet Union. This was a new wave of Jewish immigrants who, for the most part, had been denied their Jewish heritage and were raised knowing little about the Jewish religion. Yet, there was a deep emptiness of the soul in many—so when they came to the United States and many other countries (including Germany and Israel), these *modern-day Tevyes* were seeking a new spiritual reality that would enable them to re-identify with their lost Jewish heritage stolen from them by the Communists.

My own experience with evangelizing Russian Jews began in 1990, when I began meeting many of these immigrants through my ministry in New York City. I quickly realized that these recent immigrants were looking for North American friends. But I also sensed, based upon my conversations with them, that there was also a genuine interest in the Gospel.

The Birth of a Vision

Max Doriani, a former Moscow policeman, Russian Jewish believer and retired Baptist pastor, had served as a part-time missionary to Russian Jews with Chosen People Ministries, and he became my tutor.

Max introduced me to the First Slavic Evangelical Church on First Avenue, where many Jewish immigrants attended as they were growing in their faith after coming to know Yeshua (Jesus) as their Messiah in Italy and Vienna, which were stop-off points for those on their way to America, Canada, Israel and Germany. A number of groups had created ministries in Western Europe to reach the Russian Jewish immigrants, and quite a few received the Lord on their way to a new and more permanent home.

In the fall of 1990 I conducted a Messianic Jewish New Year service in Brooklyn, and over a hundred people attended. As the service began, a group of about 20 to 25 Russian Jews walked in—to my great surprise! That night, I met Klaudia and her husband Vladimir, both Russian Jewish believers.

Since there were so many Russian Jews in attendance, we decided to translate my sermon into Russian. At the end of the service, I gave an evangelistic invitation and four of the Russian Jews raised their hands to receive Jesus. However, we were not able to follow up with them, because we did not have any ministry staff who spoke Russian...though Max was a great help!

I asked Klaudia and Vladimir if they might begin a Bible study in their home, and they agreed. The Bible study developed into a worship service, which eventually grew into a Russian-speaking Messianic congregation and is now called Hope of Israel.

At that time, I was working on my doctoral program and was reading through old copies of *The Chosen People* magazine. I actually read every issue of *The Chosen People* beginning in 1900 and continuing through the early 1980s.



As I read these old magazines and studied the life and ministry of Rabbi Leopold Cohn, I noticed that he utilized varied strategies in reaching his fellow Jewish immigrants on the Lower East Side of New York City and in Brooklyn. Rabbi Cohn understood the needs of the immigrants from his own

personal experience. He established medical clinics in Brooklyn, taught English to the immigrants, and trained them in sewing and other trades, so they could find work.

I began making some connections between the past and the present. I noticed that the immigrants of my generation also had a great need to learn English. We decided to begin English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, which were held both before and after the Saturday night worship service. The numbers grew, and we decided to try to establish a center where Russian Jews could learn English and study the Scriptures.

In time, we saw dozens of Russian Jewish people come to receive the Lord. Little did I know that what was happening in Brooklyn was also occurring in Israel, Germany, Canada and even beginning to take place in the Former Soviet Union itself, where millions of Jewish people still lived.

Russian Jewish Evangelism Today

At present, Your Mission to the Jewish People has more than twenty Russian-speaking missionaries around the globe, serving in the United States, Israel, Germany, Australia and the Former Soviet Union. We have planted more than a dozen Russian-language Messianic congregations, held leadership conferences with more than 100 Russian Jewish pastors and leaders in attendance each time, and continue to feed thousands of poor Russian Jewish immigrants each month in Israel.

We are also reaching different types of Russian Jewish people. One of these groups is known as the Bukharans (or Bukhari). They are primarily immigrants from the Central Asian countries of the Former Soviet Union. These folks, many of whom settled in the New York City borough of Queens, are more traditional and in many ways more difficult to reach for the Lord.

That is why I'm so grateful for the ministry of Randall and Luda Ford. As you continue to read this issue, you will learn more about these Russian Jewish people and what God is doing in their lives.

Enjoy the remainder of the newsletter and please pray for our growing work among the Russian Jewish community—of which half a million live in New York City.

Happy Purim and remember—the God of Esther lives!

Your brother in the Messiah,

Mitch
Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

Ministry to Bukharan Jews – An Ancient and Reclusive Jewish Community



Randall and Luda Ford are a married couple who share a ministry vision. Luda was born into a Bukharan Jewish family in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Randall, although not from a Jewish background, studied Hebrew at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for ten years. During their twelve years of outreach and evangelism in New York with Chosen People Ministries, the Fords have touched the lives of many Bukharan families, as they have established a believing community among Bukharan Jewish people in Queens.

Bukharan Jews come from Central Asia, where they have often lived in isolated communities since Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. and perhaps earlier. The Soviet Union's collapse triggered a new exodus of Bukharan Jews from that area in the 1980s. The largest group of Bukharan Jews in the United States is made up of about 50,000 in Queens, New York City, where the Fords carry out their active ministry.

According to the Fords:

The foundation of our ministry is our marriage; because Luda is Bukharan, we already had many relatives in the New York community, including Luda's father and siblings. This has helped Randall to make friends

with older Bukharan immigrants, because they often do not have any American friends who grew up here.

We have found that the Bukharans can be open to the Gospel, but this is by no means automatic. It requires patient relationship building. Our best relationships, and probably the ones we cherish the most, are with people from our neighborhood. We have found that being ourselves is very important. We are a family of followers of Jesus, but also a Jewish family living in a Jewish neighborhood. We try to follow God's leading on when to share our faith. Sometimes we have shared very gradually with people we get to know in our neighborhood. There have been other times when we shared more overtly and directly during big Sabbath meals, usually in response to questions from others who knew us and were asking about our faith.

In general, there is more and more curiosity among Orthodox Jews about Jesus nowadays, including among Bukharans—this is very different from

twenty years ago. To make new friends in the community, we also put up literature tables and reach out to passers-by. We've found that the Jesus film and the Bible on MP3 are effective tools in reaching elderly Bukharan people, since many do not have a strong tradition of reading.

As the congregation/church-planting in Queens was a new and pioneering effort, we tried many different things to see what works. We found that Bukharans prefer to meet in our apartment, rather than in a rented space, even though we're a little crowded sometimes. Our weekly highlight is the teens and preteens meeting. A few of our Bukharan friends plan to get baptized this year at our annual Messianic retreat called Simcha!

The main adult meeting is incredibly effective. Every week, we feel swamped trying to prepare for both of these meetings, yet we have witnessed many breakthroughs. Some of the funds from supporting individuals and churches

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Bukharan Jewish Purim Celebration

The Bukharan Jewish community originates from a region in Central Asia, surrounding an area once referred to as the *Emirate of Bukhara*, which today includes parts of the former Soviet republics of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. This community has largely immigrated to either Israel or the United States. Presently, only a small remnant of this community remains in Central Europe.

The Bukharan community traces its roots back to the Persian King Cyrus, when he issued a decree allowing the Jewish people to return to their land. Rather than return, this community decided to stay in Persia. Since they remained separated from the larger Jewish community, the Bukharan Jewish community developed many of their own unique traditions. These include unique Purim traditions, in honor of God's deliverance of the Jewish people living in the Persian Empire during the time of Esther, when the king's wicked counselor Haman attempted to annihilate the Jewish population.



Birobidzhan – A Breath of New Life in Far East Russia

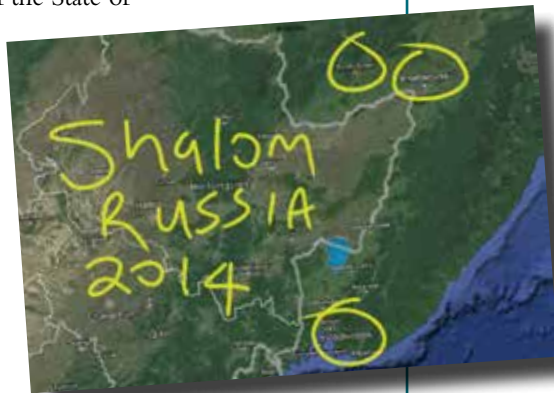
Prior to the establishment of the State of

Israel in 1948, Josef Stalin created his own Communist version of “Zion.” His solution to the “Jewish problem” was to give the Jewish people a homeland—a barren stretch of mosquito-ridden swampland in the Far East of Russia, just north of the Chinese border, farther east than Siberia and Mongolia.

This region was designated the *Jewish Autonomous Region* and called *Birobidzhan*.

It was established in April 1928, twenty years before the existence of the modern State of Israel. At its height, Birobidzhan boasted Yiddish schools, theaters, publications and synagogues. However, as Stalin became more repressive toward the Jews, the experiment lost momentum. Even so, we estimate that the combined Jewish population of the Far East cities of Vladivostok, Khabarovsk and Birobidzhan together totals about 70,000. There are also smaller numbers of Jewish people scattered across the region in Magadan, Kamchatka and the Sakhalin Island.

Beginning in September 2004, under the leadership of founder Lawrence Hirsch, Celebrate Messiah (Chosen People Ministries in Australia) has undertaken an evangelistic mission in this region. It has been fuelled by significant contacts with prominent people in the Jewish and Christian communities, including a Messianic



Jewish couple in Birobidzhan. In addition to fellowship and encouragement, Celebrate Messiah has also gathered and given practical aid to families in the district, such as food parcels and a van to distribute them.

This past year, in addition to many other ministry opportunities while visiting, Lawrence was invited to preach at a local synagogue. At the conclusion, he gave an altar call, inviting those in attendance to accept Yeshua (Jesus). Several people responded, young and old alike.

There are plans to expand the ministry further in 2014. Russian worker Rita will follow up on last year’s ministry visit and plan for two Messianic family camps in July. Rita will scout for campsites and encourage fellow workers Nicolai and Natasha and their fellowship, as well as speak in churches. She’ll also visit Birobidzhan to encourage workers Genya and Irina, who have started a new work there, and visit Jewish families in the area.

Lawrence writes, “Ministry to the ‘Forgotten Jews’ of Far East Russia represents an extraordinary opportunity to reach Jewish people with the Gospel message. God has already put together a network of Messianic Jewish believers and Christians who have a heart to reach Jewish people.

It is our vision to establish a Messianic Center in Birobidzhan that would be a place of ministry to disabled, disadvantaged and homeless Jewish people, as well as a worship center for Jewish believers in Yeshua. We ask you to please pray for the ongoing ministry in Birobidzhan and the rest of the region.”



Ministry to Bukharan Jews - continued from page 4

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help cover the cost for these home-based meetings. In this way, our friends have helped to spread the Gospel in this very tightly-knit Jewish community.

Messianic Jewish groups are often small, but we have a bold “footprint” in the community. We continue our weekly congregational meeting and teens meeting, and started doing more street evangelism in Bukharan neighborhoods. This helps us meet new people, while nurturing the current group of believers.

The Lord is showing that He can supernaturally build a congregation of believers, even in an Orthodox and cohesive Bukharan culture. We are so excited to be a part of it!

A note from Dr. Mitch Glaser – President of Chosen People Ministries

I am so delighted for the faithful ministry of Randall and Luda as they reach a group of Jewish people that would otherwise be forgotten. Their ministry is another reminder of God’s faithfulness to all of His chosen people.

During Purim, the Bukharan Jews constructed a Haman snowman near the synagogue. They formed a large torso and decorated the Haman snowman with charcoal eyes, a carrot nose and a beetroot mouth, along with fruit peels and other forms of garbage. As symbols of Haman’s broken office, the children placed a broken pot on the figure’s head and a “necklace” made out of melon peels upon the figure’s stomach. Then, after dinner, they built a large bonfire near the figure of Haman and celebrated while they waited for the snow figure to melt and disappear.

Bukharan Jews eat a special dumpling, called *manti*, during the Purim celebration. Bukharan *manti* have meat, vegetarian or cheese fillings. The vegetarian *manti* often contain squash or potato and are served with yogurt. The meat *manti* are served warmed, sprinkled with parsley or dill, along with some type of dipping sauce.

For Purim, Bukharan Jewish men and women dress in vibrantly colored robes, or *kaftan*, and wear brightly colored hats. Like other Jewish communities, they read through the scroll of Esther, referred to as the *Megillah*.

SEE THE BIBLE THROUGH JEWISH EYES

BY DANIEL GOLDBERG, TH.D., D.D.



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EGYPT IN BIBLICAL PROPHECY ISAIAH 19

There's no doubt about it—Isaiah 19 contains the most important prophetic information on Egypt in Bible prophecy. Let's see what this significant passage of Scripture has to tell us.

EGYPT – THE TRADITIONAL ENEMY OF ISRAEL

History has traditionally seen Egypt as the enemy of Israel since the time when Israel sojourned in Egypt, and this view has continued into the present era. The people of Judah looked to Egypt for help against the mighty Babylonians, but God warned them that Egypt would not assist them (Eze. 17).

Hosea reminds us that “when Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt” (Hos. 11:1). Thus, when Israel left Egypt, God constituted Israel as a nation at the Exodus (Ex. 12-14). Much later, Matthew applies Hosea's message to Messiah during His sojourn in Egypt after His family fled the bloodthirsty Herod, to show that what is true of the nation is true of her King (Matt. 2:15).

EGYPT AND HER FUTURE DOWNFALL (Isa. 19:1-25).

Egypt in God's future plan will be beset by internal troubles (Isa. 19:1-4) and suffer defeat at the

hands of the mighty Assyrian empire. The climate of Egypt will become dry and her entire economy will suffer (Isa. 19:5-10).

Furthermore, the wise men of the nation will become foolish before God and His sagacious plan (Isa. 19:11-15). As a result, the leaders of Egypt will lead the nation astray (Isa. 19:13) because the nation will have no respect for the Lord of Israel.

Egypt will tremble with fear as the Lord shakes the nation by His mighty hand (Isa. 19:16). God will send “a perverse spirit” over the land, which may well refer to the release of demonic activity causing the nation to err (Isa. 19:14). Isaiah describes the results of the worst of Egypt's woes when the Nile River fails (Isa. 19:6-9). Her streams and canals shall putrefy and all the vegetation dependent on the Nile will dry up and vanish.

Isaiah looks into the future and portrays the future of Egypt when they will serve a “cruel lord” who will lead the nation into captivity (Isa. 19:4). Thus, the nation that held the Israelites in bondage will itself become a nation of slaves under the mighty judgment of the Lord.

EGYPT AND HER FUTURE ALLEGIANCE TO ISRAEL AND HER MESSIAH (Isa. 19:18-25)

Egypt's chastisement is not, however, the Lord's final word to her. Isaiah predicts both the nation's downfall and her future restoration and rise to worship the God of Israel. In that future day, Israel will rule over the nation of Egypt; the Egyptians will even learn Hebrew and travel to worship the God of Israel in Jerusalem (Isa. 19:18; Zech. 14:16-19). The day is coming when Israel will control Egypt (Isa. 19:16,17) and Egypt will swear allegiance to the God of Israel (Isa. 19:18).

When the Messiah returns to earth as promised, the worship of the one true God will be established in Egypt (Isa. 19:19-22). Thus, Isaiah accurately foretells both the future downfall and rise of Egypt in Isaiah 19. All will be orchestrated by the sovereignty of the God of Israel.

CONCLUSION

Like Egypt, we begin as God's enemies. And like Egypt, everyone who will worship the true Messiah Jesus has a bright future in the plan of God.

NEWS BRIEFS

INTEREST BUILDS AT CHARLES L. FEINBERG CENTER BUILDING

Robert Walter, one of our gifted young evangelists serving in New York City, was present at the new Feinberg Center in Brooklyn while the plaque and signage were being installed on the outside of the building. After the installers were finished, as Robert stood outside admiring the new signs, a young Orthodox Jewish man approached him and asked about the new facility. Robert told him about Jewish people who believe Jesus is the Messiah and invited the young man inside, where they had an hour-long conversation about Jesus, the Bible and Israel. Robert writes, “It was truly a fruitful time and hopefully a precursor of what is to come in the new center. Please keep this young man in prayer.”



JEWISH WOMAN FINDS NEW LIFE IN MESSIAH

Last fall, Robert Pristoop, who serves the Mission in Maryland, met an unbelieving Jewish woman at a Sabbath meal sponsored by a church. At first she was standoffish and suspicious, but she stayed for the presentation and heard the Gospel clearly presented. Some time later, at another presentation, there she was again, to Robert’s surprise—but her demeanor had completely changed. She gave Robert a hug and told him that she now knew Jesus as her Messiah. She was eager to speak with Robert about helping other Jewish people see the truth of the Gospel. Robert writes, “Talk about being a new creation in Messiah! She announced that she would be a regular attendee in our fellowship, and we are excited to have her.”

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR RECEIVES THE GOSPEL

Anna Bortsova and her husband, Vladimir, met an elderly couple, Aaron* and Naomi,* who had just moved to their high-rise building in Toronto. Anna helped Aaron plant some bushes which he had brought from his garden. In time, Aaron told his story. He and his Jewish family had suffered terribly during World War II. He was spared as a four-year-old boy only because his uncle died shielding Aaron’s small body from the bullets of the German soldiers. He escaped into the forest, and the next day a guerilla brigade found and adopted him. Anna’s husband Vladimir gave Aaron a salvation tract, which he read with interest. A week later, they met and Aaron prayed to accept Yeshua! He is overwhelmed with joy, and the Bortsovs are praising God.

MINISTRY TO THE SUPER BOWL CROWDS

The New York staff of Chosen People Ministries took to the streets with 10,000 Gospel tracts to reach the crowds in town for the Super Bowl! We developed a Gospel tract entitled *Every Team Needs a Great Quarterback* which made the point that Jesus the Messiah is the only One who can quarterback our lives and lead us to a greater prize than even the Vince Lombardi trophy. Our teams had dozens of conversations with New Yorkers and tourists, Jews and Gentiles who were enjoying the festivities in the middle of Manhattan, where some of the streets were shut down and a mock toboggan run was built for folks to enjoy. We continue these types of street ministries throughout the year, but especially during Shalom Brooklyn—so please pray for us as we develop Gospel literature that speaks to the hearts of the ones for whom our Messiah died.

TRANSCONTINENTAL FAITH DECISION

Tony Savarese, who lives and serves in the San Diego area, felt led to ask his believing brother to attend a conference close to where he lives in Florida. They agreed to go, and were pleasantly surprised to find that Tony’s sister-in-law, who was not yet a believer, wanted to accompany them. After the conference preacher spoke, he asked if anyone would like to enter into a personal relationship with Yeshua. To the Savarese brothers’ great joy, Tony’s sister-in-law prayed out loud to receive the Lord. It was evident that the brothers’ witness had helped to pave the way. Tony writes, “Her salvation was certainly worth the sacrifice of the time and expense of going to the conference.”

*names have been changed

SHORT-TERM MISSIONS WITH CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES



What are you doing this summer?

Come serve with Chosen People Ministries for a dynamic experience reaching Jewish people for Messiah!

Outreach Israel is a challenging and exciting ministry trip designed for young people ages 18-30 who are interested in reaching Israelis for the Messiah.

May 21 - June 21, 2014

eXperience Israel is a spiritual pilgrimage designed for adults ages 18-35 who want to engage with God by walking through the pages of biblical history and serving the people who live in Israel.

July 13-27, 2014

Shalom Brooklyn (New York City) is a whirlwind of in-depth training, engaging evangelism, and Jewish cultural excursions.

August 2 - 16, 2014

For more information visit www.chosenpeople.com/shortterm call 212-223-2252, or email: opportunities@chosenpeople.com

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Our special **Passover Set** from Israel has a Seder Plate, Matzah Tash, Kiddush Cup, Messianic Haggadah and Leader's Manual. The *Matzah Tash*, or matzah cover, is a pouch with three compartments, each for holding a piece of matzah (unleavened bread). It is a vivid illustration of the unity of God's nature. The *Seder Plate* helps tell the story of the Exodus and points to our Messiah. The *Kiddush Cup* (five inches tall) symbolizes the blood of the sacrificed paschal lamb, or the Lamb of God. It is filled four times during the Passover meal as the story of God's redeeming work among His people, the people of Israel, unfolds.

Items also available for individual purchase.

Passover Set (5 piece) [5027] • \$64.95US

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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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