

The Chosen People



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GIVING THANKS *for the* HARVEST

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GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD

for He is good

Dear friend in the Messiah,

Shalom and happy Thanksgiving!

This is one of my favorite holidays of the year. It is well known that the Pilgrims, who were in every sense of the word religious refugees from England, believed they were the chosen people. When they entered “the promised land,” they celebrated the Old Testament festival of thanksgiving—the Feast of Tabernacles. Although this aspect of the religious observance has changed over the centuries, we still know the celebration as Thanksgiving.

Giving thanks seems to be almost “natural” for humanity, and I cannot help but wonder if this is not part of our being created in the image of God.

THE THANKFUL PSALMIST

The Psalmist calls upon us repeatedly to show our gratitude to God. I am especially fond of Psalm 136, as this call to be thankful introduces and concludes the refrain in which the author reviews the history of the world and the Jewish people. The Psalm not only calls upon the children of Israel to give thanks to God for what He has done, but also indicates that what He has done flows from the beauty of His character and commitment to the children of Israel.

The first four verses of the Psalm seem to capture the heart of what the Psalmist is saying:

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Give thanks to the God of gods, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. To Him who alone does great wonders, for His lovingkindness is everlasting (Ps. 136:1–4).

Three Hebrew words bring us a world of meaning that don't necessarily make it fully into English translation. “Give

thanks” is *Yadah*. The term used for “goodness” is *Tov*. The Psalmist then uses a word for “lovingkindness,” *Chesed*. That is simply packed with significance.

The usual term for thanks is *Todah*. The Psalmist uses *Yadah* as it refers to the confession or declaration of “thanks.” The Psalmist is calling upon the children of Israel to rise up and publicly declare that God is good! Declaring the goodness of God is something the Psalmist encourages the Jewish people to do in public.

Through his use of the word *Tov*, the author of the Psalm invites the children of Israel to declare the “goodness” of God—specifically, the good character of God that causes Him to act on behalf of sinners and evildoers.

The next term, *Chesed*, is often translated as “covenant faithfulness.” This term is used throughout the Bible in reference to the relationship God has with the Jewish people. It is used in Exodus chapter 20 in reference to the giving of the Law. It is also used in Deuteronomy chapter 7, where Moses describes the way God has initiated His relationship with the Jewish people. As he writes,

Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers (Deut. 7:12).

So you see how the author of the Psalm weaves the words *Yadah*, *Tov*, and *Chesed* together to recount God’s covenantal relationship with the Jewish people. The Psalmist calls upon the Jewish people to declare their thankfulness to God because of His good character and His lovingkindness, which speak to His ongoing commitment to the Jewish people throughout our history.

This call to gratitude is a reminder that God chose the Jewish people for His holy purposes—and in spite of Israel’s disobedience, God will remain faithful to His covenant and promises. The Apostle Paul picks up on this

faithfulness when he writes at the end of Romans chapter 11,

I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! (Rom. 11:11-12).

And further on in the chapter, which might be the very definition of *Chesed*, Paul writes,

Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable (Rom. 11:28-29).

This is why I view this Psalm as such an important lesson on how to be a thankful person! We are to be the type of people that gives public praise and thanksgiving to God. We praise Him for His unchanging good character and His never-ending love and commitment to His promises. We thank God for who He is and for what He has done for us. This is the unchanging basis of gratitude, from which all other thanksgiving flows.

THANKSGIVING FOR GOD’S WORK IN AND THROUGH CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES

In thinking about this past year and all that the Lord has done within the global Chosen People Ministries family, I cannot help but give Him thanks in public...for all to hear! I am grateful to God for the wonderful staff He has given us around the world. This includes our ministerial staff and a dedicated host of administrative workers without whom we could not carry out our ministry.

I am grateful to God for our board members—almost 100 individuals in the 16 countries where Chosen People Ministries does its work. I am grateful to God for the bravery of our staff in Israel and for the ways in which they have ministered throughout the war and continue to do so through our relief efforts. I am grateful to God for our Messianic centers in Jewish

neighborhoods around the world: in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, London, Germany, Argentina, Canada, and Australia.

I am grateful to God for the thousands of Jewish people who heard about Jesus through the witness of our staff and our online campaigns, such as Isaiah 53 in Israel and Argentina. I believe we have broken new ground and I want to thank God for all He has done.

I am grateful to God for the Messianic congregations and congregational leaders who are part of the Chosen People Ministries team. We are in the process of either planting or leading forty Messianic congregations around the world. Not only are Jewish people worshiping the Lord in a comfortable setting, but they have a place to bring their seeking relatives and friends to hear the Good News of the Messiah in a Jewish way.

I am grateful to God for the families of our terrific staff around the world. They have endured sacrifice and hardship, and exemplified *Chesed*—covenant faithfulness—as I see husbands and wives and children stand for the Lord by supporting and participating in the service of their loved ones.

I am grateful to God for faithful donors, prayer partners, and volunteers. Without you, we could not do this great work of reaching Jewish people for the Messiah Jesus.

Ultimately, I am grateful to God because He is good and He is faithful. I know that He will keep His covenant promises, and that our ministry will continue to be blessed as we reach our Jewish people with the Good News of Jesus the Messiah.

Have a very happy Thanksgiving, and thank you so much for including Chosen People Ministries as part of your family.

Your brother in the Messiah,



Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

Caught by God

Vladimir Pikman

I was born to an educated Jewish family in Kiev, Ukraine. My upbringing was like many of the Jewish people from the Former Soviet Union. I had some knowledge of my Jewish roots because my parents kept Jewish identity and some of the traditions, but I did not sense that I was raised with any real faith in God. The Communist educational system and culture shaped my ideas far more than any religious teaching. Still, I was glad when religious freedom increased during the late 1980s, and I started to attend synagogue. It was great to have fellowship with other Jewish young people, and I became a committed Zionist. In 1991, I managed to fulfill my dream when I moved to Israel.

Seeing Israel was a life-changing experience. I got an unmistakable sense of God's presence there, but I also came to realize that there was more to knowing God and having a fulfilled life than simply living in Israel. I had to decide whether to stay in



Israel or return to Kiev to finish my education. I asked God for guidance by putting my question as a note into the Western Wall, and on the next day, I understood I should go back to Ukraine.

I completed a Master's degree in Computer Science and Mathematics at the State University in Kiev. But

something happened there that was to change the shape of my life in ways that I could never have imagined. I met an old Jewish friend, B,* who told me something that I found shocking and unbelievable. He told me that Jesus is the Messiah of the Jewish people. I told him he was crazy; no Jewish person could believe in Jesus. I wanted to prove B wrong, so

I immersed myself in the Scriptures, but it didn't work. Instead of proving him wrong, I became convinced that Jesus is the Messiah! At the time, I was too

frightened and confused to make a decision to become a believer. But once God had caught me, it seemed impossible to wriggle free of His grasp. About three months later, in 1992, I finally surrendered my life to the Messiah to immediately find a quality new and fulfilling life in Him.

* name withheld

"Lord, give me a person, and I will take them to you."

Mira Gracheva

For 49 years I did not know God...

I was delighted with the wonderful world around me, and was full of gratitude for the great miracle of LIFE. As a little girl, I was convinced that there was no God, and something closed in my mind. My unbelief became my second faith.

When I was 16, my dear mother died, and I was left alone in this rough world. But I always sensed that somebody was keeping me safe. I got married, had two daughters, then a grandson. After 22 years of peaceful family life, my husband left me. It took five years to recover from the shock of his betrayal. Yet, despite all the troubles, I was always full of life and joy.

And then it happened...

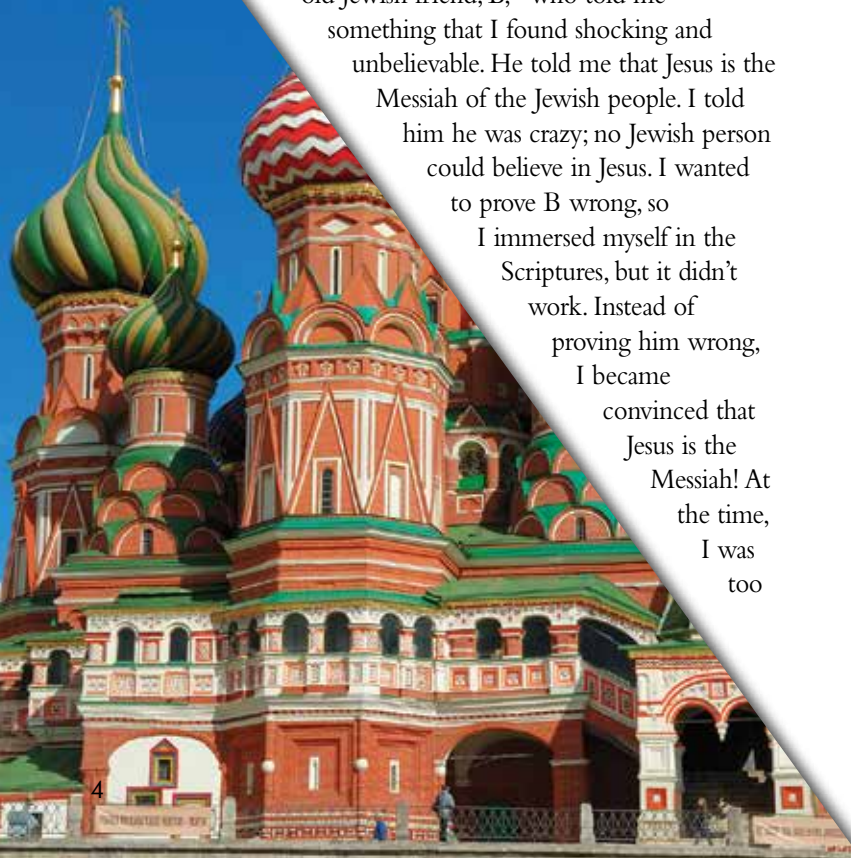
I was on a bus, reading the book *How to Become Happy* (which suggested such things as going to the sauna, etc.). A man sat next to me and began talking to me. Three weeks later, he was still telling me about God. His name was Alexander, and we lived in the same building. But, I could not understand what Jesus could do with me if He was crucified 2,000 years ago. I don't know how long our conversations would have lasted if it were not for a miracle. We were drinking tea in the kitchen and talking about God. Suddenly, I saw someone in ancient Jewish robes. I knew it was Jesus, but thought it was a hallucination. Then I felt a touch on my arm—again, I thought our conversations have produced a tangible hallucination.

And then the touch became hot, deep, alive...it touched my heart, and my heart trembled after recognizing its Creator, and I ran after Him. I did not understand much then. I only knew that Jesus was alive, and that I had a touch of His love.

That's how my new life with the Lord began.

He filled me with His love, healed my wounds, lit the sun of His joy in my heart, the sun of truth. I've been with the Lord for almost 15 years now. I've taken part in many evangelistic campaigns: in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ukrainian cities, Tashkent, New York, and Budapest. Many hundreds of people, most of whom are Jewish, have opened their hearts to the Lord.

My prayer is, "Lord, give me a person, and I will take him (or her) to you."



"This is YOUR Prophet" *Neal Surasky*

In the summer of my junior year in high school I applied and was accepted to Penn State, my first choice. The following year, on January 17th of my senior year, I was invited to a Bible study by kids who were working at a bridge tournament I was playing in. Having been raised in a secular home, I had no interest in the Bible study. I knew I was Jewish, but agreed to go because the kids doing the study were all from Penn State.

I didn't own a Bible, but I listened as they read it. I knew they were talking about Jesus, and knew I was NOT supposed to believe in Him. Not wanting to offend them, I excused myself. Before I could get out the door, they stopped me. "Wait. Why are you leaving?" I replied that I was Jewish and didn't believe in the New Testament.

They asked why I thought that they were reading from the New Testament. I said I wasn't stupid, and knew the person they were talking about was Jesus. "Jesus isn't in MY Bible, Jesus is only in the New Testament."

They turned the Bible around and showed me where they were reading from. They said, "This is YOUR prophet—Isaiah."

Sure enough, it was Isaiah 53.

Since I had already decided that the person spoken of in Isaiah was Jesus, I had no choice but to believe. So I accepted Jesus, but I didn't understand what that meant. In fact, I thought I was the only Jewish person ever to believe in Jesus. I felt totally isolated. When my parents heard about my decision, they thought I had been brainwashed. The kids who shared this with me were from Penn State, so my parents forbade me from attending that school. Having not applied anywhere else, I was at a loss. I ended up going to another school and didn't do very well. I dropped out of college and enlisted in the Army. For ten years, I did nothing about furthering my understanding of Yeshua (Jesus). It would be years later before I would find peace with my belief.

It was during those ten years that I met Kim in upstate New York and fell in love. Soon I was stationed in San Antonio for nursing school, and we decided to have the wedding there. It was during the planning of our wedding and our search for a Messianic rabbi to officiate that we were re-introduced to and accepted The Rabbi, Yeshua the Messiah.

"Always Searching" *Kim Surasky*

I was raised in a blended Jewish and Christian family in upstate New York. I was exposed to the Gospel during my childhood through my grandmother, who took me to church. I went to synagogue with my mother's parents, too. However,



our home was mostly secular, since we really did not practice anything. I always believed in God and knew who Jesus was, but it would not be until many years later that I would find the Messiah while searching for a rabbi to officiate at my wedding.

You could say that I was always searching, but if you had asked me, I wouldn't have been able to tell you what for. I knew there was something missing, and as I searched, I made a lot of mistakes and suffered through those choices. My childhood belief in God began to tarnish.

Little did I know that I was about to meet Yeshua (Jesus). My fiancé, Neal, was stationed at Fort Sam Houston with the Army Reserves for nursing school, and we had decided to have our ceremony in San Antonio. So in April of 1995 every aspect of our wedding was in place...except for a rabbi. We began the frantic search, but we struck out everywhere we looked.

Desperately, I searched through the yellow pages and came across a heading that said "Messianic Judaism." At that point, we felt we would have taken anyone, so long as it was a rabbi. We called the rabbi and agreed to attend a Friday evening service to meet him. At the service, many memories came flooding back from my childhood. It felt familiar, but yet something was different. I did not realize that the Holy Spirit was already working on my heart. The rabbi agreed to do the wedding, but wanted to meet with us one more time. So that Sunday morning, we met for coffee. It was during that meeting that we confessed that we did not know Yeshua, and he asked if we wanted to know more. Over that cup of coffee and conversation, Neal and I accepted Yeshua as our Savior. My search—and Neal's—was finally over.

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.

THE SUPREMACY OF GOD'S PROGRAM

ISAIAH 42-45

Who are the Lord's true witnesses? Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, no other nation but Israel is addressed as the "true witnesses of the Lord" (Isa. 43:10). However, under the New Covenant, every bonafide believer in Jesus the Savior is to be a witness (Acts 1:8). How did this tremendous shift occur, and what does it mean today?

ISRAEL AS WITNESS AND A SERVANT OF THE LORD

Isaiah 43:10-12 declares that Israel is the true witness and servant of the Lord. Even so, it is quite evident that Israel has fulfilled this role imperfectly. Yet, One from that chosen nation has flawlessly accomplished God's foreordained role as the "Servant of the Lord." It is Jesus the Messiah. For this reason, the Lord has preserved Israel, for "The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," says the Lord (Isa. 59:20).

Both the fall of Babylon and the deliverance of Israel demonstrate God's purposes to preserve Israel as a nation. The Lord's redemption of Israel from exile repeats what He had done for them against the Egyptians. His redemption of Israel

from Babylon will surpass His rescue of Israel from the Egyptians at the first Exodus (Isa. 43:17-19). The Lord "will do a new thing" (Isa. 43:19) for Israel. Praise and gratitude are the only appropriate responses to God's goodness and graciousness (Isa. 43:21). Yet, Israel does not respond with gratitude (Isa. 43:22-24).

THE FUTILITY OF IDOLATRY

Despite the considerable effort the craftsmen take in fashioning the idols with their hands, their work is futile. The god they produced with their hands has less value than it would have produced had they had sold the wood for fire (Isa. 44:12-17).

Israel was admonished by the Lord to forsake the idolatry of her fathers and to remember her relationship to God. It was God who "blotted out, as a thick cloud" all her transgressions and redeemed the nation (Isa. 44:22).

CYRUS AS THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

Cyrus the Persian had not yet been born when Isaiah predicted that he would be "an anointed

ruler" (Isa. 45) appointed by God to permit the Jewish people living in captivity to return to Jerusalem and rebuild both the destroyed Temple and city. He is the only king outside of Israel who bears the title of "The Lord's anointed," or messiah. Only the all-knowing God would be able to identify the name of the person who would conquer Babylon and deliver God's people, the Jewish nation, a generation before his birth.

A UNIVERSAL INVITATION FOR SALVATION

Isaiah 45:22-25 invites all people to participate in God's redemption. Israel's God is the only Savior. He proclaims through Isaiah, "there is none beside Me" (Isa. 45:21). Here is the invitation to all nations, "Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other...to Me every knee shall bow..." (Isa. 45:22-23).

Now, through faith in Jesus, as Jews and Gentiles, we are included in the precious privilege to obediently serve as His witnesses and servants in this world.

NEWS BRIEFS

GOSPEL LITERATURE LEADS TO FAITH DECISION FOR JEWISH MAN IN BERLIN

There are some who think that giving out tracts is old-fashioned and ineffective. But then along comes a story that makes you think again. Mendel,* an Orthodox Jewish man, received an evangelistic brochure on the main street of Berlin. As he tells it, at first he thought to get rid of it, but he could not. A desire to attend the Chosen People Ministries Messianic worship service grew strong in his heart. He came the very next Saturday. He was impressed. The Spirit of God was touching him, and he came to Yeshua (Jesus) one week later at the next service. Praise the Lord!

JEWISH WOMAN IN HOSPICE CARE AFFIRMS FAITH IN MESSIAH IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

Responding to a request from Darlene,* a Jewish believer, to visit her dying mother, Carole Bahm arrived at a hospice center in Boynton Beach to minister to a woman she had never met. Darlene was concerned that although her mother had prayed the “sinner’s prayer” years ago, she later said it was all “a lot of nonsense.” Although Lois* was close to death, she could hear and her mind was clear. Carole said, “I want to ask a question. If the answer is yes, I want you to blink your eyes—“Lois, do you believe that Yeshua (Jesus) is the Messiah, and do you believe that He is your Savior and Lord?” She blinked yes! Darlene was so relieved that her mother had at last accepted the Lord.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED IN ISRAEL

Eugene L. is rejoicing over fruit reaped from the Bible study he teaches at the Jerusalem Messianic Center. Elisheva,* who survived the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp as a child and later immigrated to Israel, has become a believer. When Chosen People Ministries opened a food distribution center in Jerusalem, Elisheva got to know Eugene and his coworkers, Maxim and Vicka. She not only gratefully received help, but also became a faithful volunteer. Soon, she began to attend Bible study. Now, after two years of studying the Scripture, several personal meetings and many prayers, she has received the Lord. When she asked to be baptized, Eugene and Maxim gladly completed the Lord’s command at the Jordan River. Elisheva told Eugene that it was probably the happiest day in her long life.

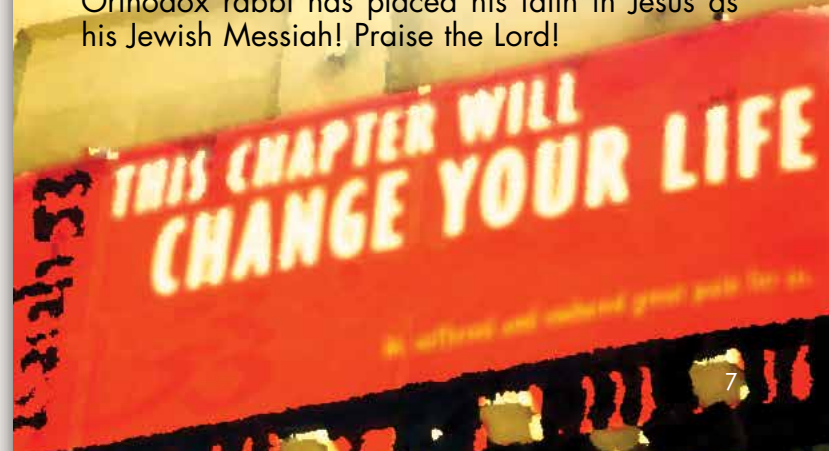
*names have been changed

FROM RUSSIA WITH MESSIAH’S LOVE

Although Shalom Brooklyn is some weeks past, staff member Mira Gracheva, who traveled all the way from Moscow to assist with the outreach to the Russian Jewish community, has this lovely report—“Shalom Brooklyn is a very blessed time for all. As I ministered, 38 Jewish seekers gave me contact information and 36 people received the Lord—31 of them Jewish! Now that I am home and resting from this difficult battle, from the hot sun, I feel how great the joy in heaven is! It is impossible to describe all of the wonderful encounters the Lord gave me. Before my eyes, a Jewish husband and wife prayed together to receive Messiah in their 92nd year!”

ORTHODOX JEWISH RABBI SEES MESSIAH THROUGH ISAIAH 53!

During Shalom Brooklyn, one of our volunteers was passing out tracts on the streets of Manhattan, while wearing his Isaiah 53 T-shirt. He was approached by a Jewish woman who asked him if he was with Chosen People Ministries. Our volunteer answered that he was. She then went on to tell him that she grew up an Orthodox Jew and years ago received Messiah Jesus as her Savior through reading Isaiah 53. After this took place, she was sadly shunned by her community and family, forced to get a divorce from her husband, and was not allowed to see her children—all because of her faith in Yeshua! Her son, now grown and an Orthodox rabbi, recently contacted her and expressed that he wanted her to be a part of his life and that of his wife and children. This woman was not shy about sharing Yeshua...even after her previous experience! She had many conversations with her son regarding Yeshua being the Messiah, and she gave him a copy of *Isaiah 53 Explained*. After reading the book, and through the witness of his mother, this Orthodox rabbi has placed his faith in Jesus as his Jewish Messiah! Praise the Lord!





CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL TOUR

JUNE 14-24, 2015



You are invited to spend a life-changing ten days on the inaugural Chosen People Ministries' Holocaust Memorial Tour of Germany and Poland. There is no better way to understand the Jewish people than to understand what was endured during World War II and how these experiences have shaped today's Jewish attitudes towards Christians and the Gospel. We truly hope that you are able to join us for what is sure to be a life-changing event.

For More Information

Call: Misty Fraser at (212) 223-2252

Email: HolocaustTour@chosenpeople.com

Visit: www.chosenpeople.com/HolocaustTour

WHAT IS 11 ELEVEN?



April 23-26, 2015

New York City

Cost \$190:

includes lodging, all meals, and travel within NYC

Ages 18-25

Register and Info:

chosenpeople.com/11Eleven

11Eleven@chosenpeople.com

888-2-YESHUA

It is an initiative, a conference and recognition of calling for 18-25 year olds. It equips you — the dreamers and doers — to take God at His word to *make Jewish people jealous*. It



offers a community in which to conceive of daring ideas and time-tested approaches in Jewish outreach. It provokes action and offers the opportunities for you to discover your unique role in fulfilling Romans 11:11. We are ready to bring the message of the Gospel back to the original messengers!

ROMANS 11:11 SO I ASK, DID THEY **STUMBLE** IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT FALL. BY **NO** MEANS. RATHER THROUGH THEIR TRESPASS **SALVATION** HAS **COME TO THE GENTILES**, SO AS TO MAKE ISRAEL **JEALOUS**.



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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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