



**CELEBRATE
MESSIAH**

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*In Partnership with Chosen
People Global Ministries*

**I AM THE
LIGHT OF
THE WORLD**

Dear friends,

On behalf of Celebrate Messiah and all our workers, I would like to say a hearty todah rabah (thank you very much) to all our supporters who responded so graciously to the appeal that we made in October. We are deeply encouraged by your generosity, prayers and words of encouragement. As we continue to trust the Lord for the finances needed to support and grow our ongoing work amongst Jewish people here in Australia and overseas, please consider becoming a regular supporter through our Romans 1:16 Partnership Programme. For more information, please visit our website or call our office.

- Lawrence Hirsch



The Link Between Hanukkah and Christmas

Dear friend,

Shalom and season's blessings to you from the headquarters of Celebrate Messiah Australia, in the heart of the "Jewish capital" of Australia—Caulfield.

As Jews get ready to celebrate Hanukkah, and Christians prepare to celebrate Christmas, this is a great time of the year to proclaim that **Yeshua is the Light of the World**. He is the One who has come to save Jew and Gentile alike. He is God's greatest gift to the world; *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16, ESV)

Actually, there is an interesting link between Hanukkah and Christmas that most Jews and Christians miss. I did not understand the link myself for many years. Yet these two great holidays are "joined at the hip" in quite a profound way—and the link goes much further than the giving of presents, the lighting of candles and the times of family togetherness we enjoy during this season.

If you really think about it, if you strip away the obvious inaccuracy of the date, the excessive materialism and cultural trappings, at its very core, Christmas really is a Jewish holiday. After all, Christmas was created to celebrate the birthday of the Jewish Messiah - Jesus.

Hanukkah—the Feast of Dedication—celebrates the victory of the Jewish freedom fighters over the evil Antiochus Epiphanes of the Syrian-Greek Empire in 165 BC. Hanukkah is an eight-day celebration and is sometimes jokingly referred to as the "Jewish Christmas" and, in my opinion, is also characterised by excessive materialism.

However, what I like to remind Jews and Christians is that if it weren't for Hanukkah, there wouldn't be a Christmas. 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 Saviour possibly have been born from the House of David (a Jewish king), in Bethlehem (a Jewish town) to a Jewish virgin (Miriam/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 is fulfilled and came in the flesh.

The disconnect between Christmas and Hanukkah reflects the deep chasm between Yeshua 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 20 years old as I embraced Yeshua, 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.

It is my hope and prayer that my beloved Jewish people will receive the gift of God's redemption in Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah. This proclamation is the very reason for the existence for your Mission to the Jewish People throughout the past almost 20 years—helping Jewish people cross the 2,000-year-old gulf between Yeshua and His chosen people.

My Jewish people, the people through whom God brought to the world our wonderful Messiah, remain, for the most part, unreached and untouched by the Gospel they were once called to proclaim. As I look at the Jewish people in my neighbourhood and around the suburb that I live in, Caulfield, my heart aches for their salvation.

The encouraging news is that every week we hear of a Jewish person coming to faith in Yeshua through our ministry here in Australia, New Zealand, Russia, and Israel, and through our partnership with Chosen People Global Ministries in a total of 16 countries around the world. There are great opportunities to reach out to Jewish people at this time. Yet, we do need your help to continue to bring the Gospel to the *Jewish people who brought us Jesus*.

The day is coming when the Jewish people will turn with great fervour to Jesus the Messiah. I look forward to that great day of redemption, but until that time, your Mission to the Jewish people will continue to proclaim the unchanging message of the Gospel.

Thank you so much for caring and especially for your generous gifts of support at the end of this year. It has been a challenging year for us, as it has for most ministries, so your generosity during this season is much appreciated.

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! May His glorious light shine brightly in your heart and home!

Yours together in the Messiah,



Lawrence Hirsch

Executive Director of Celebrate Messiah Australia



Executive Director of Celebrate Messiah Australia

HANUKKAH: THE STORY

Antiochus (215-164 bc), who was nicknamed "The Madman," felt threatened by the Jewish people and decided to turn the Jews into good Greeks. He demanded that the Jewish people bow down to his statue, worship him as a Greek god incarnate and submit to his authority. Now, some of the Jewish leaders may have been willing to accept his political authority, but they could never accept his religious authority. The Jews hated idols and would never bow down to one—and they could never believe that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was incarnated in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes!

The Jews who lived in a town called Modiin rebelled, under the leadership of Mattathias, a Levite who along with his son Judah Maccabee led a grassroots rebellion from about 167 to 165 bc. The Maccabees fought hard and finally took Jerusalem and the Temple back in great victory.

Redemption and sacrifice are key concepts in the Hanukkah celebration, for the victory came at great cost. According to later Jewish tradition, after the victory the Maccabees only had enough olive oil to fuel the eternal light in the Temple for one day—but it took eight days to crush the olives and prepare the oil. The miracle of Hanukkah is this: the oil, which should have only lasted one day, lasted for eight. This is why we celebrate Hanukkah for eight days.



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 8cm 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!



Sweet Sufganiyot

(makes 25 donuts)

- 3 cups of flour (sifted)
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg (optional)
- Oil for frying
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups sour cream
- Jelly (any flavor)
- 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!

NEWS BRIEFS

BEARING FRUIT AT THE FEAST OF INGATHERING

Before the Russian outreach lunch for the Feast of Tabernacles, Rita's prayer team asked God to pour out his *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) on Jewish people that they may have an encounter with Messiah Yeshua. During the service Rita gave a teaching about the *mayim chayim* (living water) that Yeshua promised to give all those who believed in him. When Rita asked them if they wanted to receive this Living Water, all 60 plus of them raised their hands. One lady reported that while she received prayer after the service, she experienced God's healing of a stomach complaint. At once she jumped up and started to run around, declaring, 'I'm free, I'm free'.

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPRIT

The Celebrate Messiah and Beit HaMashiach young adults group B'Yachad (*Together*) reached out to the hungry, homeless and broken in Melbourne city on a Friday night. The location under a railway bridge is a hot spot for the needy. Steve reported amazing testimonies and experiences. "Our Father has no plan B to save and feed the broken and hungry souls abiding within the cracks of society. We have a tremendous responsibility, for we, and we alone have been given the bread that these broken people seek." Steve says: "For we live in a world of homeless, fatherless, broken people. My prayer is that we may all be filled with the desire to eat of the food that our Master Yeshua ate, and was filled with by the well."

SEEKING INFLUENCE IN COMMUNITY

Tikkun Olam volunteer Iris* went to a Jewish community centre with an Orthodox Jewish lady named Miriam* whom she's been ministering to for quite a while. Iris wondered if security would let them in. When they arrived, Miriam just said, "I am Abe's* daughter and this is my friend." And they were waved through.

Afterwards, Miriam took Iris to a local kosher food store. At the checkout, Miriam wanted to put some items on an account. When she mentioned Abe's name, there was no problem. Iris spoke quietly to our Heavenly Father. "This man's name opens doors. May you use him to open doors here in the Jewish community for You." Iris also prayed that Miriam and

Abe's names would be written in the Lamb's book of Life, and they would be used to reach people in their local synagogue.

PHIL SEEKS AND FINDS VOICE

Celebrate Messiah associate missionary and worship leader Phil Plotnek was told he had laryngitis by the doctor around the start of The Feast of Tabernacles and needed to give his voice a rest. But the following three weeks were to be a very busy time with all the services, church ministry and teaching at school, plus a two-day recording engagement lined up in Bendigo. It seemed like an impossibility having his voice speaking and singing for 20 days straight! All glory to God, his voice held out in spite of the symptoms. Furthermore, with the churches he visited, he was not only preaching but led the worship and did a little concert. One of the churches needed a band practice before the service, making it almost two hours that day using his voice. So, his voice had been going nonstop, but God sustained him during that time, so that he didn't lose his voice at all and still has it now. Praise Adonai!



ISRAELI GUESTS CURIOUS

Having Israelis is such a delight, especially when encountering one with a curiosity to know more about Yeshua, Such was the case with Gal who travelled with Lior around New

Zealand. Celebrate Messiah worker Zohar had such a great conversation about Yeshua from the *Tanach* (Old Testament). Gal especially wanted to speak further, so they stayed for two nights. Early the next day, they had a devotion together and later at night spoke some more as they watched the Lunar eclipse. Before they said their goodbyes Gal said that he would email Zohar with some more questions after his return.

A FRENCH TRAVELLER EXPERIENCES SHABBAT

An unusual guest for Shabbat Friday dinner: Zohar stopped for Arsen, a young French traveller as he was heading on foot to the highway to hitchhike, but due to rain and the late hour, he offered for him to stay overnight. That evening Alon, a young Israeli, was also present for Shabbat. Alon had previous plans and left shortly after, while Arsen not only experienced a Shabbat meal for the first time, but was moved spiritually, and started asking sincere questions. He took a New Testament and was very eager to read it. Please pray for Gal, Lior, Alon and Arsen to turn away from their sin and trust in the Saviour alone.



EXPERIENCE A
Messianic Jewish Passover Banquet

JOIN US FOR AN
 EXQUISITE NIGHT OF
 CELEBRATING A MESSIANIC
 JEWISH PASSOVER SEDER TELLING
 THE COMPLETE STORY OF GOD'S
 REDEMPTION FROM EGYPT TO GOLGOTHA.

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THURSDAY 2 APRIL | MELBOURNE

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"We would like to remember Celebrate Messiah in



our will, but we are not sure how to go about it."

Giving to Jewish Ministry in Your Will

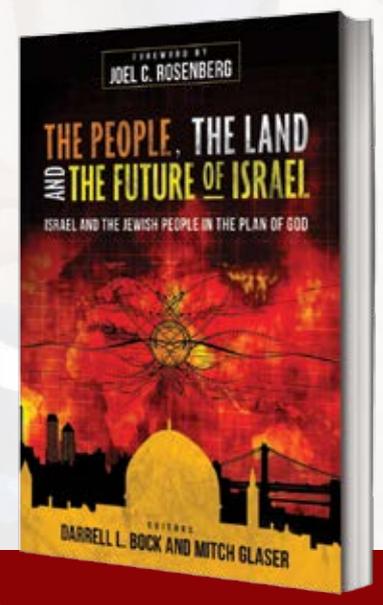
When you remember Celebrate Messiah in your Will, you become a partner in our life-changing work amongst God's Chosen People world-wide as we await the Messiah's return.

If you would like to speak to a Christian solicitor about including Celebrate Messiah in your Will, please call our office on 61 3 9563 5544 for more information.

The People, the Land and the Future of Israel

"The People, the Land and the Future of Israel" conference was held in New York City, New York on October 2013 at the historic Calvary Baptist Church. This book contains the messages from this dynamic historic event from great speakers like Joel C. Rosenberg, Dr. Mitch Glaser, Dr. Darrell Bock and Dr. Michael Brown. A must read.....

Price: \$25



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CELEBRATE MESSIAH

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