



CELEBRATE  
MESSIAH

**March 2016**

Vol 22, Issue 2

*In Partnership with Chosen  
People Global Ministries*

# A NEW HAMAN HAS RISEN

So they hanged Haman on  
the gallows which he had  
prepared for Mordecai . . .

ESTHER 7:10



# NEW HAMANS HAVE ARISEN

Dear friend of the Jewish people,

Shalom in the great name of our Messiah!

One of my favourite Jewish holidays has always been Purim—the biblical Feast of Esther (Est. 9:22). The holiday is observed on the 14th day of the Hebrew month Adar, which corresponds to our solar calendar date this year on March 24. I have had the joy of celebrating Purim in Israel with my wife Louise. It is such a fun time with people dressing up in costumes and with street festivals and a full day celebration. I've posted a video of my "Purim in Israel" photos on Celebrate Messiah's Facebook page for you to see.

This year the Festival falls on March 24, but remember, the Jewish day begins the night before and concludes at sunset and so celebrations begin on the evening of March 23.

There are many reasons why I enjoy Purim (a Hebrew word which means "lots"). But perhaps the foremost reason why I love Purim is because I am Jewish and if the evil Haman had succeeded, I would never have been born! On Purim we celebrate the survival of the Jewish people, usually against great odds and far more powerful enemies.

## We Are Still Here!

In fact, this pattern of deliverance is such an important part of the Jewish story. Just about all Jewish holidays can be summarised by the statement: "The tried to kill us, we survived, so let's eat." On Purim we celebrate by eating special baked goods called *hamantaschen*—sometimes referred to as "Haman's hat" or "Haman's ears"! These are wonderful pastries with various types of fruit and poppy seeds enfolded into a very buttery and delicious cookie.

## The Scroll of Esther

The main event of the Purim celebration is the reading of the Book of Esther, called in Hebrew, the *Megillot Esther*, the Scroll of Esther; and oftentimes a play based upon the story is used to entertain and educate both children and adults alike. Jewish people are at their most creative in putting on these plays and use different themes each year to keep the story interesting. I am sure there will be plenty of Purim plays with a Star Wars theme this year! The plays are supposed to be fun and are not viewed as irreverent as they do tell the great story of God's deliverance of the Jewish people from the hateful hands of Haman.

## Second Purim

There is also a phenomenon in Jewish history called the *second Purim*. These events are not widely known, but perhaps you can already understand why Jewish people created them. A second Purim refers to an instance, aside from what was recorded in the Book of Esther, when the Jewish people were saved from imminent destruction.

The enlightening description of second Purim on the website Jewishgen.org concludes,

*In a few fortunate cases, the danger (facing the Jewish community) was suddenly removed, or the dreaded law was*

*inexplicably abrogated. Then, that community would commemorate each anniversary of the happy change by observing a "Second Purim," a festival, which mimicked the original Purim, which marks the deliverance of the Jews of Persia from the evil machinations of Haman. Historians have listed some 90 "second Purim" anniversaries observed by various Jewish families and communities, beginning with the early Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup>*

There were even times throughout Jewish history when the enemies of Israel selected Purim as the day they would attack the Jewish people. There was an instance during the Holocaust period when Purim became a day of slaughter for a local Jewish community.

It seems that both the Jewish people and enemies of Israel understood the symbolic value of the story of Esther.

## New Hamans Arise in Every Generation

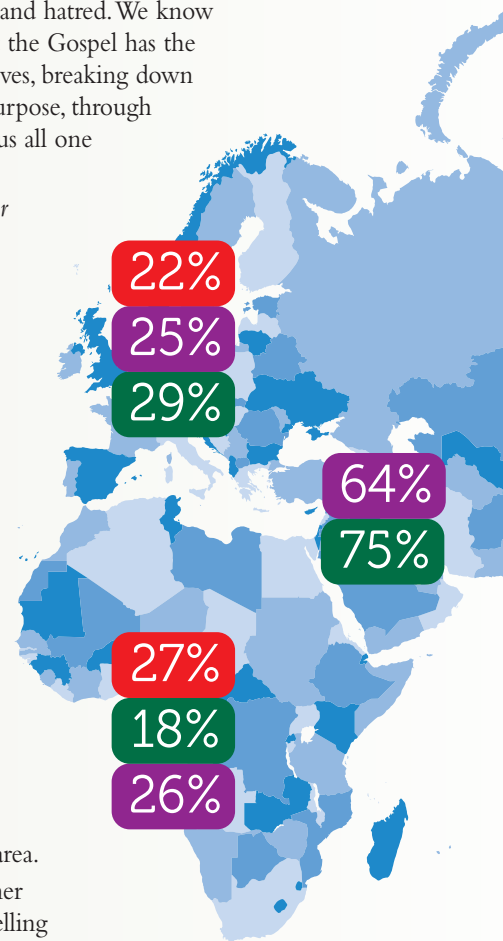
There are new Hamans on the world scene today seeking the destruction of the Jewish people. Israel is under attack and antisemitism is tragically on the rise. On August 12, 2015, the Councillor on Human Rights, Nelly Shiloh, spoke at the UN and stated that "Antisemitism is not a relic from the past, but an ever-present reality for Jews in many places. We must take action now to eradicate the plague of Jew-hatred from our future."<sup>2</sup>

As followers of Yeshua the Jewish Messiah, we need to oppose all forms of racism and hatred. We know and we have experienced that the Gospel has the power to transform people's lives, breaking down walls of hostility. It is God's purpose, through Yeshua the Messiah, to make us all one in Him (Ephesians 2:14-22).

It is for this reason that *your mission to the Jewish people* is working fervently, taking every opportunity to present Yeshua (Jesus) to the Jew first and also to the Gentile (Rom. 1:16).

In this regard, can we please ask you to pray for Rita Ivenskis who will be leading a team to continue our mission to the "Forgotten Jews of Far East Russia" in the cities of Vladivostok, Khabarovsk and Birobidzhan. They will also be visiting a new town called Chita, reaching out to Jewish people in this remote area.

Please pray too for our other missionaries who will be travelling thousands of kilometres across Australia over the next month or so, taking the opportunity to present the Gospel to thousands of people during the Easter and Passover season through our *Messiah in the Passover* presentations and *Passover Seders*.





By the way, I hope you will be able to join us at one of our Passover Seders on the Sunshine Coast, Sydney, Melbourne, or perhaps in the nation's capital Canberra this year (please see the enclosed flyer for registration details).

God Is Faithful to His Promises

As followers of Yeshua the Messiah we understand that God still has His hand on the Jewish people! This is why we have a long history of second Purims, where we celebrate God's faithfulness to the Jewish people.

In reflection upon God's promises to the nation of Israel in Jeremiah 31:35-37 and also in Romans 11:29 we can say: **"The Jewish people will not be destroyed until they fulfill all God intended them to do. God is not yet finished with His chosen people."**

The above rests upon the foundational passage in the book of Genesis when God promised Abram that He would bless those who bless the Jewish people and curse those who curse them. We also see in this passage that God promised to bring blessings to the entire world (Gen. 12:3) specifically through the Jewish people. God created the Jewish people to be a bridge of blessings and revelation to the nations.

These truths of Scripture are clear to me and are a great foundation for our understanding of God's plan and purposes for the Jewish people!

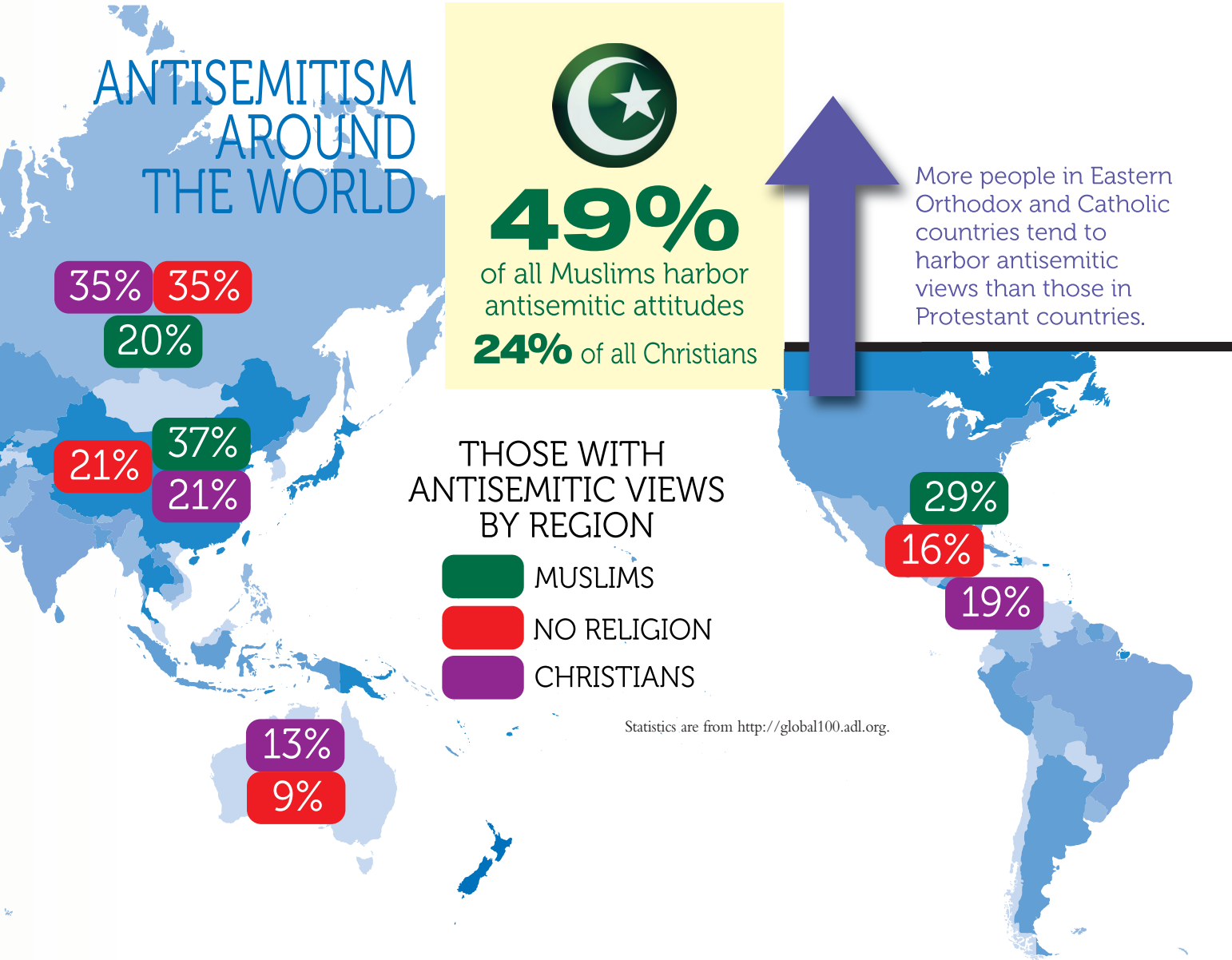
Dear friend, your continued partnership with us in the mission of Celebrate Messiah is much appreciated. Thank you for prayerfully considering your financial support at this time.

Happy Purim! I pray the Lord will guide us as we try to understand our times, stay true to the teachings of the Scriptures and remain faithful to our Messiah, Deliverer and Lord!

In Him,  
*John Sch*  
Lawrence



- 1 <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Piotrkow/pit237.html>
- 2 <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/AntiSemitism/Pages/Rise-of-Global-Genocidal-Antisemitism-12-Aug-2015.aspx>





# PURIM FAQ

**Q: What does the word Purim mean?**

A: The word Purim literally means “lots.” The holiday is named Purim because it looks back to a time in Jewish history when the “lot was cast” and the fate of the Jewish nation literally hung in the balance.

**Q: What is the historical background to Purim?**

A: The events associated with Purim are recorded in the Book of Esther (c. 450 BC). During the reign of Ahasuerus (Xerxes), king of Persia, many Jews lived comfortably throughout the Persian Empire, having been exiled from Judea approximately 65 years earlier by the Babylonians.

However, an evil government official named Haman rose to power and insisted that his subjects bow down to him as a public act of worship. The book of Esther tells us that the only person who refused to bow down to Haman was a servant of King Ahasuerus, a Jewish man named Mordecai, who had previously foiled a plot against the king and saved his life (Est. 2:21-23).

“When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath” (Est. 3:5). Then Haman cast a lot (pur in Hebrew) to set a date for the annihilation of all Jewish people living in the Persian Empire (Est. 3:13).

**Q: Who was Esther?**

A: By a divine coincidence, it just so happened that a Jewish woman named Esther, who was actually the niece of Mordecai, had been chosen by King Ahasuerus from among all the virgins of the land to be the Queen of Persia. When Mordecai discovered Haman’s plot to destroy the Jewish people, he appealed to Esther to plead the case of the Jewish people in the presence of the king, telling her that she had been promoted in the kingdom for “such a time as this” (Est. 4:13-14). Although Esther was in a position of prominence in the Persian Empire, still anyone who approached the inner court of the king without direct permission would be put to death. In preparation for her decision, Esther told Mordecai to have all the Jews in the region fast for three days.

**Q: How does the story end?**

A: On the third day of the fast, at the risk of her own life, Esther put on her royal robes and entered the inner court of the king’s palace. When the king saw her, he extended his golden sceptre. This was a sign that he was accepting her into his presence and would not have her put to death.

Esther then requested of the king that he hold a banquet and invite Haman to be present.

Later that night, the king could not sleep. He resorted to reading the historical chronicles of Persia and discovered that Mordecai had never been honoured for saving his life.

At the banquet Esther told the king of Haman’s plot to destroy the Jewish people. The king then ordered that Haman be hanged on the very gallows that he had originally built for Mordecai and issued a decree effectively preserving the Jewish people from annihilation.

**Q: How is Purim celebrated today?**

A: Purim is commonly celebrated today with one day of fasting, followed by a day of rejoicing. Other Purim traditions include reading the scroll of Esther at home and in synagogue, dressing up in costumes, giving gifts to the poor, and eating traditional Jewish cookies called “hamantaschen.”

**Q: Is there a prophetic significance to Purim?**

A: Purim reminds us of the spirit of anti-Semitism that has sought to annihilate the Jewish people for thousands of years, and ultimately of God’s divine providence in preserving His chosen people.





# NEWS BRIEFS

## WAY OPENS FOR ORTHODOX STUDENTS

Barry B has been working with a couple of young Jewish men who have come to faith in Yeshua their Messiah. In the area where David\* stays he has had over the past couple of years Yeshiva (Rabbinical training) students come to his home to visit and put on *tefillin*. On these occasions, David has readily shared his faith in Yeshua. What continues to be a mystery is that despite David's clear sharing of his faith in Yeshua as his personal Messiah, a continuous flow of new Yeshiva students keep coming to his door to visit and put on *tefillin*. Praise God for this wonderful open-eyed opportunity.

(Teffilin are a set of small black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah).

## SEARCHING ISRAELIS FIND MESSIAH

In Israel, Jewish seekers keep coming to Chosen People Ministries' events. Recently, Robynne, a staff member in Tel Aviv, met Haim\*, who showed up for a Bible study. He is not yet a believer but has very consciously begun a journey to find his spiritual side. He said he was amazed that right in the heart of a most secular city, a city that usually isn't spiritual at all, he found a group of people thinking and dialoguing about God and how to have a relationship with Him. He enjoyed the openness of the discussion and said he will return. Pray that Haim comes to know Jesus in a very real way. While people like Haim are searching, others have found their Messiah. Our Israel director, Michael Z., reports that seven people were baptized this year!

## NEW LODGE TRIUMPHS FOR GOOD NEWS

A new lodge in New Zealand for Israeli backpackers is already wildly popular among travelers in its first summer season. Celebrate Messiah New Zealand's Zula Lodge, in the resort town of Wanaka, is packed every night, and the born-again Israeli hosts are faithfully sowing Gospel seeds every day. It's estimated that between Zula and the camp ground at Oamaru, several thousand young Israelis will have received a personal witness of the good news of Yeshua during this season alone. But, the popularity of the Zula has triggered opposition. An ultra-orthodox Jewish organization has hurriedly established a facility only a few minutes away in an effort to "save Jewish souls from the missionaries." However, their efforts have generated very little interest among local Israelis, while interest in the Zula continues to mount daily. Please pray for the staff there who are experiencing significant spiritual warfare.

## MIGHTY MOVE AMONG LOCAL RUSSIANS

Melbourne's Dom Missi'ee (House of the Messiah) Russian speaking congregation has seen the Lord move in a mighty way over the past few months. The congregation is made up of mostly elderly Russian Jewish men and women, many of whom survived the Holocaust. Many of them have said that in the former USSR they didn't know God but since coming to Dom Missi'ee, they have experienced an intimate relationship with Him. At a meeting last month, most of the people prayed for Yeshua to come back saying, "Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord". Rita Ivenskis, who has been leading this ministry for many years says that people are now wanting to have a personal relationship with Yeshua, and they understand that they are all part of God's family. Rita says that she is seeing God do many miracles amongst these beautiful Russian-speaking Jews.

*\*Names have been changed for privacy*

10-27 MAY 2016

## "See Israel through TOUR Jewish Eyes"

with Lawrence & Louise Hirsch,  
Celebrate Messiah Australia



FEATURING:

Tel Aviv, Dead Sea, Be'er Sheva, Eilat, Galilee, Golan Heights,  
Safed, Rosh HaNikra, Jerusalem, & Mt Zion.  
JORDAN: Wadi Rum, Petra, & Mt Nebo.

for details visit [www.celebratemessiah.com.au/getinvolved/israel-tour](http://www.celebratemessiah.com.au/getinvolved/israel-tour)  
or email [holyland@ift.net.au](mailto:holyland@ift.net.au)



# MESSIANIC RESOURCES

PLAN A PASSOVER MEAL AT YOUR HOME THIS YEAR! DISCOVER CELEBRATE MESSIAH'S TOOLS TO HELP YOU SHOW MESSIAH IN THE PASSOVER TO YOUR FAMILY!



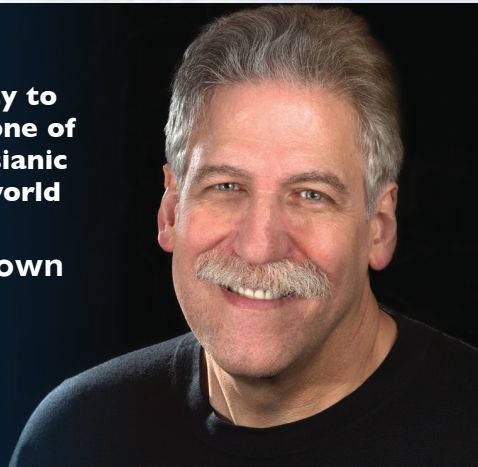
Our special **Passover Set** from Israel has a Seder Plate, Matzah Tash, Kiddush Cup, and Messianic Haggadah. The Seder Plate helps tell the story of the Exodus and points to our Messiah. The Matzah Tash, or matzah cover, is a pouch with three compartments, each hold a piece of matzah (unleavened bread). It is a vivid illustration of the unity of God's nature. The Kiddush Cup (15cm 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 (4 pieces) • \$115<sup>AUD</sup> plus p&h**

Purchase on enclosed response form or online at [www.celebratemessiah.com.au/store](http://www.celebratemessiah.com.au/store)

Save the date **24-25 June 2016**

A rare opportunity to see and hear live one of the foremost Messianic apologists in the world

**Dr Michael L Brown**



Prolific author including the 5-part series *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus*, *The Real Kosher Jesus*, *Our Hands are Stained with Blood*, and *60 Questions Christians Ask about Jewish Beliefs and Practices*.

Friday - Full day conference

Saturday - Morning Shabbat service, evening evangelistic outreach provisionally titled: *Is Jesus Kosher for Jews?* Format will be either a debate, or a talk followed by an open mike Q&A.

Conference will be held in Melbourne.  
Venues and booking details to be announced



EXPERIENCE A

*Messianic Jewish Passover Banquet*

**THURSDAY 24 MARCH AT 6.30 PM**  
HEADLAND PARK GOLF CLUB, GOLF LINKS RD, BUDERIM

**THURSDAY 21 APRIL AT 6.30 PM**  
HORNSBY FUNCTION CENTRE, HORNSBY NSW

**SATURDAY 23 APRIL AT 6.30 PM**  
ST KILDA TOWN HALL, MELBOURNE

**SUNDAY 24 APRIL AT 6PM**  
VISION CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, 62 GLADSTONE ST, Fyshwick ACT

BOOK ONLINE AT [WWW.CELEBRATEMESSIAH.COM.AU](http://WWW.CELEBRATEMESSIAH.COM.AU)  
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**CELEBRATE  
MESSIAH**

## "BRINGING THE MESSAGE TO THE ORIGINAL MESSENGERS"

Serving together with Chosen People Ministries in: Argentina • Australia • Baltic States • Canada • Finland • France • Germany • Hong Kong • Hungary • Israel • Netherlands • New Zealand • Poland • Russia • South Africa • Ukraine • United Kingdom

In Australia contact: Celebrate Messiah Australia, PO Box 304, Caulfield South, VIC 3162, Australia.  
Phone: +61 3 9563 5544 Fax: +61 3-9563 5544 Email: [enquiries@celebratemessiah.com.au](mailto:enquiries@celebratemessiah.com.au)

In New Zealand contact: Celebrate Messiah New Zealand, P.O. Box 8355, Cherrywood, Tauranga 3145, New Zealand.  
Email: [celebratemessiahnz@gmail.com](mailto:celebratemessiahnz@gmail.com) Web: [www.celebratemessiah.co.nz](http://www.celebratemessiah.co.nz)

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