



CELEBRATE
MESSIAH

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*In Partnership with Chosen
People Global Ministries*

TO THE JEW FIRST?

Dear friend,

Shalom and a happy start to 2018 to you! I pray you have had a great time of rejoicing with your family and friends over this holiday season as you reflect on all the great things God has done.

I am sure you would agree that salvation is our greatest joy. I ask myself sometimes, “Where would I be today without Yeshua?” All I can say is that as a Jewish young man, I was headed for an early grave and an eternity without the Lord. But, thankfully, God gave His Son as a perfect sacrifice for our sin. Now my life and yours are filled with goodness, love, peace, and more joy than we could ever deserve.

He is everything to me and that is why I am so thankful during this season of the year.

This is also why I am so burdened for my own people—the Jewish people! I have given my life to the salvation of Israel, and I thank God that I have the privilege of serving for the past 28 years of my life. Louise and I first served with a Jewish mission in South Africa for 5 years before coming back to Australia to begin the work of Celebrate Messiah in early 1995. Since the year 2000 we have been in partnership with Chosen People Global Ministries, now with work amongst Jewish people in 18 countries around the world. What a privilege it is to serve the Lord!

I am also so thankful for you. I deeply appreciate your reading our publications, praying for us, and your generous and sacrificial financial support, which enables our work among the Jewish people.

To sum it up: during this holiday season, our entire staff around the globe is thankful for the Lord and thankful for you!

Why Jewish Evangelism?

I am often asked why we believe Jewish evangelism is so important. This is a great question to which I love to respond.

Our motivation for Jewish evangelism begins with thanksgiving to God who chose the Jewish people.

As Yeshua Himself said, “*You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews*” (John 4:22).

Without the Jewish people, we would not have the Bible or the Messiah Himself! This is quite fundamental and basic, but there are many clear passages in Scripture that support the case for the importance of Jewish evangelism.

“BRINGING THE MESSAGE TO THE ORIGINAL MESSENGERS”

Romans 1:16: To the Jew First

Paul, also a Jewish believer in Yeshua, writes, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek*” (Romans 1:16).

Although Paul was considered the “apostle to the Gentiles,” he still carried a great burden for his own people...and he practiced what he wrote. In fact, wherever Paul traveled during his ministry among the Gentiles, he **first** preached the Gospel to the Jewish people who lived in that area (Acts 13:13–52; 14:1–5; 18:7–11; 19:8–10).

We should ask ourselves why the Apostle Paul made Jewish evangelism such a priority in his own life. The Apostle Paul’s argument may be summarised as follows: “*If Jewish people are successfully evangelised, then Yeshua the Messiah will return.*” There was a sense of *end-times* urgency in his preaching, which is why Paul encouraged the Roman believers, and us, to prioritise the evangelisation of the Jewish people.



Matthew 23:37–39

Matthew 23 is a pivotal passage in understanding the logic of the argument:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Matthew 23:37–39)



Throughout His earthly ministry, Yeshua took every opportunity to turn the hearts of His Jewish people to Himself, but was thwarted by the Jewish leaders who rejected His person and message. Finally, the Savior came to the heartbreaking conclusion that He was going to be rejected by His own people (Isaiah 53:3, John 1:11). Matthew 23 should be viewed as a lament, reflecting the love of the Messiah for His people. He portrays Himself as a *hen wanting to gather her chicks under her wings*, which is a very moving image of the Savior’s love for His chosen people.

Yet, He was unwilling to reject the Jewish people because they rejected Him. On the contrary, He added a promise: The Jewish people will not see Yeshua again until they believe He is the promised Messiah and cry out, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Some suggest that this declaration is reminiscent of the statement made by rabbis at weddings when the groom approaches his wedding canopy to receive his bride. Therefore, by saying, “*Baruch haba bashem Adonai*,” Israel, the bride, is portrayed as recognising Yeshua as her true bridegroom, linking the repentance of the Jewish

people with the second coming of Yeshua.

Another Old Testament passage which teaches this idea is Zechariah 12:10. In this passage, we learn that one day the Jewish people will look to the One who was pierced and then mourn for Him like one mourns for an only son.

Romans 11:11–29

Another important passage is found in Romans chapter 11, where the Apostle Paul argues that God has not cast off His people, Israel, despite their national rejection of Yeshua as their Messiah. Paul argues that God is not finished with Israel, because one day “all Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:25–27).

He writes in Romans 11:15, “*For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?*” The Lord will not reject His people because He is always faithful to His promises (Romans 11:29). In fact, the very existence of the Jewish people today is a powerful argument for the truth of the Bible and evidence for the existence and power of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The great day of salvation for the Jewish people will bring about the return of the Lord and God’s blessing upon the world because, in that day, Yeshua will sit on the promised throne of David, as predicted in Isaiah 9:6–7 and 11:9–10.

The Bible teaches that the Jewish people will turn to Yeshua in the last days and only then will the Lord return. This is why reaching Jewish people with the Gospel must become a priority for all Christians. The salvation of the future remnant of Israel described by Paul is the final step in the chain of events preceding Yeshua’s

second coming and culmination of the Abrahamic blessings promised to the world (Genesis 12:1-3).

There is a remnant today of Messianic Jews, and I am so glad to be included among them. However, a great movement of Jewish people who will believe in Yeshua, is coming, and this is the hope that really motivates us.

What Is Our Role Today?

The Apostle Paul reminds us that we are God's instruments in preparing the hearts of those who will come to faith today, and even those who will be a part of the remnant of tomorrow. He writes, *"I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous"* (Romans 11:11).

The salvation of the Jewish people will come about because of the power of God, but He wants to use us – especially non-Jews—to share the Good News with the Jewish people. Through your prayers, giving, and witnessing to your Jewish friends and family, the plan of God will go forth in power!

I pray the Lord will burden all of us to reach Jewish people for Yeshua. Remember, it all begins with our thankfulness to God for all He has done through the Jewish people and through the greatest Jew who ever walked the earth—Yeshua the Messiah!

Our best estimate is that less than one percent of the worldwide Jewish community believes that Yeshua is the Messiah. This gives us plenty of opportunity to preach the Gospel to the remnant today and prepare for the great outpouring of His Spirit upon the Jewish people tomorrow.

Please consider a generous gift today to help us continue our ministries. We cannot do all of what God has called us to do without your partnership.

May blessings and joy fill your life in 2018.

Your brother in the Messiah,


Lawrence



2018 PASSOVER EVENT DATES:

6pm Fri 30 March:
Canberra - Vision Christian
Fellowship, Fyshwick

6pm Sat 31 March:
Melbourne - St Kilda Town Hall
Sydney - Northridge Vineyard
Church, Thornleigh



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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

In New Zealand contact: Celebrate Messiah New Zealand, P.O. Box 8355, Cherrywood, Tauranga 3145, New Zealand.
Email: celebratemessiahnz@gmail.com Web: www.celebratemessiah.co.nz

www.celebratemessiah.com.au

SPECIAL REPORT: HANUKKAH

Latkes Lead to Gospel Proclamation

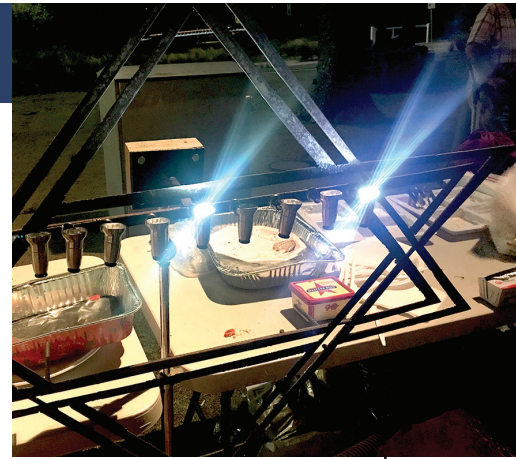
On the first night of Hanukkah this year Celebrate Messiah held a special outreach picnic on the foreshore of Elwood Beach in Melbourne. This is an ideal location, and God gave us the best weather we could hope for: a warm, calm beautiful evening with a spectacular sunset. People were in the mood for talking about God, and this is exactly what we had hoped for.

Members of the Beit HaMashiach community had cooked *latkes* (traditional “potato cakes”) and *sufganiyot* (donuts) and we had plenty to share with the people passing by, many of whom were Jewish. Some stayed to talk and eat. After a short Hanukkah message from Lawrence Hirsch, and lighting of the Hanukkah lights, several Jewish people came over to speak to Lawrence and he was so encouraged by their responses.

“One lady thanked me profusely for our lovely community who had welcomed her and given her latkes to eat. She said that she had found what I had said about Jesus very interesting.

“While she was talking to me another Israeli born Jewish man, who happened to know this lady, also came over and basically agreed with me that Jesus was the Messiah. He then began to explain it to his friend (don’t you love it when not-yet-believers share the Gospel on your behalf). This provoked this lady’s interest and I was able to continue sharing the Good News with her for some time.”

Another Jewish couple was also truly interested in our faith and received information on visiting the congregation. All in all, it was a very encouraging evangelistic night.... latkes make a pretty good Gospel Tract.



SPECIAL REPORT: SIMCHA 2017



New eyes on ancient prophecies

We had a great Simcha in November, with more than 300 people attending our annual national Messianic conference on Phillip Island. Our guest speaker Moti Vaknin, from One for Israel, was great and refreshing, in that he was our youngest speaker to date at 33 years old. It was good to hear about evangelism in Israel—One for Israel and Chosen People Ministries partner together—and also his messages on Zechariah: Messiah’s Heart for Israel (Zech 1:7-17); Messiah Removes Guilt and Iniquities (Zech 4); Israel’s Repentance as a Nation and the Kingdom of Messiah (Zech 12). Our other speakers were Paul Cohen, Zealous Over Zion (Zech 8), Dr Ashley Crane, The Ruach & The Branch rebuild the Temple (Zech.6), and Lawrence Hirsch, The Return of the King (Zech 14).

For audio recordings and sermon outlines on USB for \$25+P&H, please email simcha@celebratemessiah.com.au



Moti Vaknin with his new wife Orel