



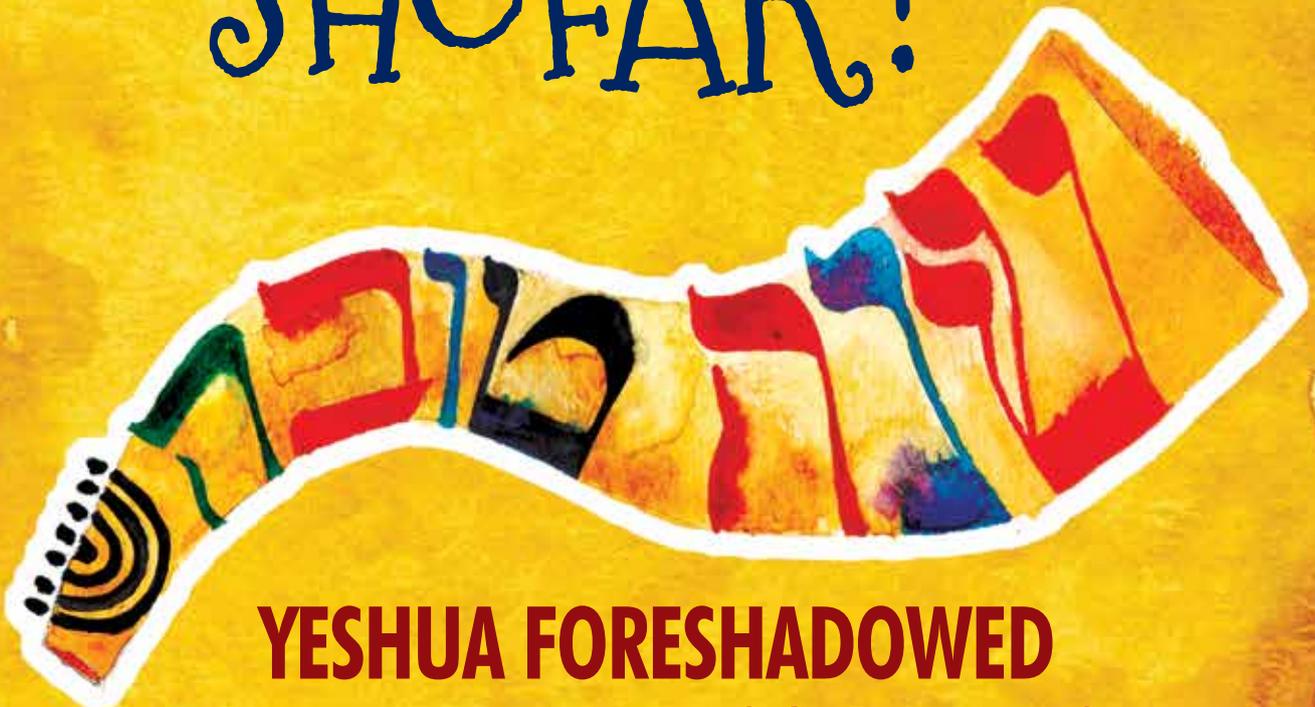
**CELEBRATE
MESSIAH**

September 2020

Volume 26 Issue 3

*In Partnership with Chosen
People Global Ministries*

SOUND THE SHOFAR!



YESHUA FORESHADOWED IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

THE SHOFAR | REDEMPTION AND FORGIVENESS | NEW JEWISH TESTIMONY PROJECT

“BE THOU MY VISION” IN 2020

Dear Friend,

Shalom and greetings in the name of Yeshua our Messiah. I trust and pray that you are safe and well, and hopefully even thriving in the Lord, despite the challenges we are all facing with the COVID-19 crisis.



Lawrence Hirsch

Executive Director of
Celebrate Messiah

I am so grateful to the Lord for his continued blessing on the ministry of Celebrate Messiah, and we are so appreciative of the support and prayers we are receiving from our supporters like yourself. COVID-19 has not stopped Jewish evangelism.

At the beginning of this year, in our January newsletter, I made a statement that 2020 would be a year of vision. No one would have anticipated the turmoil our world was going to go through with the Coronavirus. However, I still believe this to be true: this year is a year of vision being fulfilled, especially for us at Celebrate Messiah.

25 Years of Jewish Evangelism

This year is our 25th anniversary as a mission, and we are celebrating all that the Lord has done through *Your Mission to the Jewish People*. Over the past 25 years, by God's grace, we have been a part of some significant milestones in Jewish evangelism. We have seen:

- The **formation of Chosen People Global Ministries** that now has a partnership of 19 countries around the world: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Finland/Baltic States, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States.
- The **planting of four Messianic congregations** across the country: in Melbourne (Beit HaMashiach and Dom Missi'ee), Sydney (Brit Chadashah) and Canberra (Hineh Yeshua).
- A **significant move of God amongst Russian speaking Jews** in Melbourne resulting in literally 200-300 Jewish people coming to faith in Yeshua
- The **pioneering of the first organised outreach to the Forgotten Jews of Far East Russia** resulting in the planting of two congregations, one in Birobidzhan in the Jewish Autonomous Region, and the other in Artyom just north of Vladivostok. These ministries continue to reach Jewish people today, and hundreds have come to faith.

- The **launching of Celebrate Messiah New Zealand** in 2008 resulting in a fully-fledged, self-supported and dynamic ministry to Israeli backpackers in New Zealand. Celebrate Messiah New Zealand now owns a backpacker lodge in Wanaka and runs several other outreaches to Israeli backpackers across the country. Thousands of young Israelis receive a powerful testimony of the Gospel through this ministry every year, and many have come to faith. This ministry, under the leadership of Scott Brown, has made a significant impact on Jewish evangelism globally.
- The **beginning of our involvement and continued support of ministry to Jewish people in Israel**, through our partnership with Chosen People Global Ministries. Celebrate Messiah remains heavily committed to reaching out to Jewish people in Israel, and we are so appreciative of this effective ministry led by Michael Zinn.
- The **development of a benevolent ministry** to Jewish people in Australia called Tikkun Olam – Repair the Word.
- A recent initiative of **developing a hosting ministry to Israeli backpackers** in Australia called ZulaRoo.
- The **soon to be completed building** of the first custom-made Messianic Centre in the Southern Hemisphere – the Caulfield Messianic Centre – housing the mission of Celebrate Messiah and the congregation of Beit HaMashiach, and providing a facility for the training of the next generation of leaders for the Messianic movement in Australia and abroad.

What a privilege it is to be part of what God is doing in reaching Jewish people today with the message of Yeshua the Messiah. As we look back, I am grateful that we have been faithful to the original vision of Celebrate Messiah. This is a great encouragement to us as we forge ahead in Jewish evangelism.

What Celebrate Messiah is Doing Today

Under the severe restrictions during the COVID pandemic, just about all the ministries of Celebrate Messiah have had to go online. We have continued doing personal and relational evangelism through the use of media and internet. Celebrate Messiah has been hosting special seminars on YouTube and Facebook that have reached thousands of people.

Our congregational ministries across the country, and in Russia, have also mostly gone online. What we have found is that we are reaching far more people than would normally walk through the doors of our services. Of course, once we are able to host proper meetings again, we will continue streaming our services online, increasing our reach hopefully into the homes of many Jewish people.

I am very grateful to our ministry teams and volunteers, who have been calling people to encourage and pray for them during this time of isolation.

Thankfully, the ministry of Tikkun Olam has been able to distribute special gift parcels to needy Jewish people during these last few months.

What Celebrate Messiah is Planning for the Future

As we look ahead over the next year, we are planning to continue doing some of the things that we have learned during this COVID-19 period, as well as initiating some new ministry opportunities.

With God's help and your support, we will:

- **Continue and improve online ministries** of both evangelism and discipleship. We are making significant plans and investment into our capacity to develop online evangelistic content. One of the projects we have just started is the production of short and powerful video testimonies of local Australian Jewish people who have come to faith in Yeshua. We will also continue to provide online seminars on relevant subjects (see page 6) and Bible studies for believers.
- Our creative and dynamic partners in New Zealand are **developing an App that will be used to facilitate a global approach to hosting Israel backpackers** called Planet Zula. This App will provide a platform for Israeli backpackers to find hosts, and for hosts to be fully vetted and trained. We hope to build this network across Australia in the year ahead.
- Celebrate Messiah in partnership with Beit HaMashiach is going to **launch a special targeted outreach to inter-married families**, that is, marriages between a Jewish and a non-Jewish spouse. This is a growing group of people in Australia and world-wide, and typically they find themselves outside of both the Jewish and Christians communities. We believe that the message of Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah who has made Jew and Gentile one in Him, is a particularly relevant message to this group of people and their families.
- Of course, we are incredibly excited about the **launching of the Caulfield Messianic Centre**. We are hoping that the building of the first, custom-made Messianic Centre and Synagogue in the Southern Hemisphere will be completed, God willing, in mid-September just in time for the Jewish High Holidays. This represents a whole new era of ministry and outreach to Jewish people not just in Melbourne but Australia-wide. This centre will also house the first Messianic Jewish Training and Study Centre in Australia from which to train the next generation of leaders for the Messianic movement in Australia and worldwide.



Be Thou My Vision

As we head into our 26th year as a mission dedicated to sharing the Gospel with Jewish people, I know without a doubt that we will only succeed if we keep Yeshua as the centre of our vision. He is our Vision and we will keep our eyes on him as the writer of Hebrews says; "...*Let us run with endurance the race set before us, focusing on Yeshua, the initiator and perfecter of faith...*" (Hebrews 12:1-2, TLV)

The future is very bright as we stand on the promises of God and position ourselves to continue to fulfil His calling on Celebrate Messiah: **Bringing the Message to the Original Messengers.**

"He has saved us and called us with a holy calling—not because of our deeds but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Messiah Yeshua before time began," (2 Timothy 1:9, TLV). And *"He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it."* (1 Thessalonians 5:24, ESV)

COVID-19 will not stop Jewish Evangelism

Thank you, our dear supporters, for your partnership in bringing the Gospel to Jewish people. **Thank you for your sacrificial giving, even at this time, to ensure that COVID will not stop Jewish evangelism worldwide.** We are working towards the day when "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:25) and that their salvation will mean "life from the dead" for the whole world (Romans 11:15).

Very soon, on the evening of the 18th of September, we will hear the blast of the shofar at the Feast of Trumpets. At the end of the proceedings the final trumpet, the *Tekiah Gedolah* (the Great Tekiah) will be sounded. The Apostle Paul speaks of this "last trumpet" blast when he said to the Corinthians:

"Behold! I tell you a mystery.

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:51-52, ESV)

What a glorious thought when we will exchange our mortal bodies with immortality. Creation will be renewed and disease, pain, suffering and even death will be swallowed up in Messiah's victory.

We are certainly living at a time of the imminent return of the Messiah. Let us be found fulfilling his last command to us just before he ascended to heaven to "... *be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and through all Judah, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*" (Acts 1:8, TLV)

Your brother in Messiah,

Lawrence Hirsch
Executive Director of
Celebrate Messiah Australia



THE SHOFAR

The ram's horn, called the shofar, is blown on the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah). There are many reasons for sounding the shofar that are found in Scripture and in Jewish tradition. In addition to the New Year, the shofar was sounded at the arrival of a visiting dignitary, as an alarm, at the start of the new year, and even at the beginning of every new month. It was also blown to inaugurate the movement of troops into battle (Numbers 10:1-10).

The sounding of the shofar is also a call to worship. It reminds the Jewish people of the shofar blasts heard at the base of Mount Sinai just before receiving the Ten Commandments. *“When the sound of the trumpet (קול השופר, kol ha-shofar, the sound of the shofar) grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder”* (Exodus 19:19). In this sense, the sounding of the shofar may be viewed as a precursor to an encounter with God.

Today, the shofar is not completely foreign to Christianity. There has certainly been an increase in Christian use of the ram's horn since the explosion of the Messianic movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As many within the Messianic community sought to restore the Hebraic heritage of Christianity, there was a resurgence of forms of worship that were once considered culturally limited to the Jewish world. Songs with a Jewish flavour became popular within the Church, including *“Trees of the Field,”* and found their way into mainstream Christianity. The music and growing popularity of seeing Jesus in His original Jewish context led to the use of the shofar in a variety of different Christian venues.

In the future, the shofar will be blown to announce the second coming of Jesus. The Greek word used to translate the Hebrew *shofar* is the same word as the word for trumpet found in 1 Thessalonians 4:16: *“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Messiah will rise first.”* In the same way that the children of Israel heard the shofar sounded

when the written Word was given at Mount Sinai, so will we all hear the same shofar sound when the Living Word comes to dwell with us for good!

This New Testament connection may be one of the greatest reasons the shofar can be seen at Christian events. Of note is the National Day of Prayer held in the U.S. capital each May. This event usually opens with the blowing of the shofar. One year, the shofar was introduced with a description of how it was used in the book of Joshua. In Joshua 6:20, the people shouted and the trumpets sounded *“and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet (kol ha-shofar, the sound of the shofar), the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat....”* While the symbolism of the shofar will often depend on the circumstances and the personal experiences of the listener, the sounding of the shofar is spiritually moving to many Christians.

Blowing the shofar at public events is one way that Israel's Christian supporters show solidarity with the nation of Israel. Through blowing the shofar, pro-Israel evangelicals are able to connect with Israel. By using the shofar in worship services and other events, they are showing Israel and the world their love and support.

As the Jewish world celebrates Rosh Hashanah this month with the shofar's joyful sound, may we all count ourselves blessed to belong to our Messiah, and may we be reminded of the coming day when the trumpet will sound and the Lord, for whom we wait, will return.

FORGIVENESS FOR SINS AND THE RABBIS

One of the most common questions Christians ask our ministry is, “What do Jewish people do today to find forgiveness for sin without the existence of the Temple and the ability to offer a blood sacrifice?” Coming from our perspective as believers in the Lamb of God whose sacrificial death atoned for our sins, the question is natural. However, most Jewish people do not give a second thought as to whether or not a blood sacrifice is necessary today for atonement.

As followers of Jesus who believe in the authority of both Testaments, we are well familiar with the words of Moses who wrote, “*For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement*” (Leviticus 17:11; 16:34).

At one time, the faith of the Jewish people, as revealed in Scripture, was centered upon the Temple and priesthood in Jerusalem. After the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in AD 70, the Jewish people were forced to rethink nearly everything about their way of life and approach to God. What were the Jewish people to do now that over half of the five books of Moses were impossible to be observed without the Temple and an active priesthood?

For Jewish believers in Jesus, this question was not difficult. Yeshua came to His people offering a New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34), a better priesthood, and an atoning sacrifice that accomplished all that the Temple was meant to accomplish. As the writer of Hebrews notes, “*Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people*” (Hebrews 2:17 NASB).

How did the Jewish leaders respond to the destruction of the Temple and the inability to offer atoning sacrifices on the Day of Atonement? In the years following the destruction of the Temple, the Jewish leaders, who never ceased to mourn the destruction of the Temple and remember what was lost and destroyed by the Romans, developed a series of substitutes for the Temple sacrifices. These “substitutes” for sacrifice continue to our present day.

Their solutions to finding redemption without a Temple can be summarised in three broad categories: *relaxing* the biblical commands because of the inability to obey them

in light of the destruction of the Temple, *transcending* the biblical commands, and *substituting for* the biblical commands.

One common rabbinic response was to relax the commandments that were now impossible to perform, including the commandments to sacrifice. The rationale was that God had temporarily suspended those commandments until the Messianic era by allowing the Temple to be destroyed.

Many sages pointed to repentance as having the power to provide atonement, thus transcending the need for a blood sacrifice. They emphasised repentance, as found in the Prophets, but downplayed the message of Leviticus, which emphasised sacrifice. However, the Bible still teaches that both are necessary for atonement. The sages had not considered that God had fulfilled His promises to send a perfect sacrifice that became the ultimate sacrifice for sin for all of Israel and for the Gentiles as well.

The Jewish leaders tried to help the Jewish community survive and find a relationship with God apart from the Temple and priesthood. They innovated new ways to help their fellow Jewish people fulfill what had become impossible commands to obey. Some said that praying three times a day would be as if they performed the three daily sacrifices. Others said that merely studying the *impossible* commandments would be considered as if they had actually performed them. Suffering for righteousness was considered as if such suffering were the suffering of a sacrificial animal. Acts of charity would be considered fulfillment of the impossible commandments. In rabbinic literature and traditional prayers, there is little that is not considered a substitution for the impossible commands.

Consequently, most religious Jewish people believe that their sins are atoned for without a literal sacrifice. How do we pray for the salvation of our Jewish friends and loved ones, especially during the High Holiday season when Jewish people are seeking atonement (Hebrews 10:1-10)? Specifically, we pray that the once-for-all sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah will be found to be the soul-satisfying path to forgiveness for our Jewish friends and family at this time of the year.

As Isaiah promised, “*All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him*” (Isaiah 53:6).

FOR THE
JEWISH SAGES,
REDEMPTION WITHOUT A
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RELAXING THE BIBLICAL
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COMMANDS.

CELEBRATE MESSIAH IS EXCITED TO
LAUNCH THE JEWISH TESTIMONY
PROJECT - AIMED AT REVEALING
THE LIGHT OF YESHUA IN THE
AUSTRALIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY.



The imperative to share our testimony is thoroughly Biblical. Yeshua teaches that He is the “*Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*” (John 8:12).

But that’s not where it ends! Incredibly, we as disciples become that light and are commissioned to shine His light onto others. “*You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.*” (Matthew 5:14-15)

This concept of the Light of Messiah is so important, it is found in each one of the Synoptic Gospels. (Luke 8:16:18, Mark 4:21-22) Furthermore, when Yeshua cleansed a

demon-possessed man, he instructed him to “*Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.*” (Mark 5:19) We believe that the imperative to tell others about what the Lord has done for us, in his great mercy, is of eternal importance.

In the world of Jewish Evangelism, Jewish testimonies have time and time again, proven to be one of the most engaging and effective ways of reaching out to the Jewish community. Our partner ministry, One for Israel, has had their video testimonies viewed millions of times. Sid Roth’s book *They Thought for Themselves* has over 2 million copies in print.

However, these testimonies are typically from Israeli, American, and British Jews. To reach Australian Jews, we believe that we need to tell the true stories of local Jews who have found their salvation in Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah!

We want the Australian Jewish community, and indeed Jews all over the world, to see that there is a strong Messianic Jewish presence in Australia and to hear first hand, how God is working to reveal his Messiah and transform lives, even Downunder!

That’s why we will be collecting testimonies from dozens of Australian Jewish Believers and publishing them both in article and video format, sharing them far and wide.

It is through testimony, that the miraculous outpouring of God’s spirit is revealed in our times. We will be telling the stories of a number of Australian Jews including:

- Eric: a young Jewish doctor from Melbourne from an Orthodox background, who through the witness of a loving Christian friend in medical school, started exploring the

scriptures and overcame his fear to follow Yeshua and become a leader in a Messianic congregation

- Sharon: a Jewish woman in Melbourne from an ultra-orthodox Chabad background, who gave up everything (including contact with her family and community) to follow the Messiah.
- Mark: A Jewish engineer in Melbourne from a secular background, who was searching for the truth, and through prayer and repentance, had the identity of the Messiah revealed through miraculous signs along with a revelation of his new life purpose: to be a witness in the Jewish community.

This is just the tip of the iceberg! There are so many other stories that need to be told. As well as exploring the incredible life-giving transformation of Jews who found Yeshua, we will also be sharing some of the many difficulties and challenges we have faced in following Yeshua. *Counting the cost* is as true and relevant for Jewish believers now, as it was for the first Jewish believers over 2000 years ago.

Telling our stories is especially important now, as the world, and each of us individually, are facing unprecedented challenges and uncertainties about the future.

In these dark times, our fellow Jews are searching for understanding, meaning, and the presence of God more than ever. We as Jewish believers, know first hand that there is nothing more important in the world than finding and following the Light of Yeshua, and it is our life’s mission and purpose to bring that light to our fellow Jews.

In Yeshua’s Light,
Mark Elsdon
Jewish Testimony
Project Coordinator

If you would like to partner with us in this project there are a number of ways you can:

- If you know Jewish believers who would like to share their story, please let us know.
- Please pray with us for God’s spirit to open the eyes of our fellow Jewish brothers and sisters
- If you feel led to, you can make a special donation to the project to help cover the costs (eg videography)

NEWS BRIEFS

AUSTRALIA

Our outreach worker Esther* is grateful for the extraordinary opportunity this past year to pray for salvation with Mira*, a Holocaust survivor. Esther was introduced to Mira through a Christian aged care worker. As a child, Mira was hidden in a convent, and then raised by a Catholic family. As an adult she has struggled all these years to understand her identity. Now she understands her identity is in Yeshua and is absolutely radiant, enjoying the Scriptures and sharing Yeshua with all of her friends. Please pray for Mira's witness to her family and friends, and that the peace of Yeshua will come into many lives through her witness.

NEW ZEALAND

One Friday, while having the Shabbat meal at the newest outreach centre in New Zealand, Zohar started talking with a girl named Naomi* and shared the gospel with her. She seemed very open and interested. "I continued to share my testimony of how I came to believe in Yeshua," Zohar said. Our Israeli

guests, Gal* and Shira,* remarked in a pleasantly surprised tone, "We can tell you all are different from other people. We love the way you've served and cared for us. Why do you care about us?" They gladly received some evangelistic literature and a New Testament. While talking to a guy named Adam* one evening in the lounge, six other Israelis joined the conversation. "I ended up sharing the gospel openly with all the Israelis who were there," said Zohar. They were all listening intently. Some were quiet, while others were asking a lot of questions. "It was a typical scenario that happens almost on a daily basis at the centre, and I am very thankful for all of these great opportunities!"

ISRAEL

Our brother Maxim in Israel reports that since February, the number of requests for help have increased by 50%. "It is painful to see people who, until recently, belonged to the middle class, were considered to be well-off. Today, they are besieging social services, free dining rooms, and warehouses."

Avi, 30, a father of two: "In the first weeks of the crisis, my family's income fell sharply. We had to save on everything. All the money is spent on renting an apartment, food, diapers, and baby food. We can't even buy a new baby bath, the old one wore out." Avi first asked for help before Passover. "I didn't ask for money; I just need some food because my refrigerator is empty."

Esther, a single mother, said that with the onset of the crisis, she and her children found herself below the poverty line. "I'm embarrassed to ask for help, but the children must be fed. I'm ready for anything for their sake."

Naomi, a 69-year-old, admits that she is ashamed to ask for food. When I first came here, I just burned with shame," said N. "I felt like the end of the world. There is no choice; there is not enough money for food."

Maxim says another big challenge, especially for Holocaust survivors, is loneliness. Please pray for God's comfort and peace to be upon them.

*names changed

REVEALING MESSIAH IN THE JEWISH HIGH HOLIDAYS

Webcast over three nights:

**MESSIAH IN
THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS**
Thursday 17 September, 7:30pm

**MESSIAH IN
THE DAY OF ATONEMENT**
Thursday 24 September, 7:30pm

**MESSIAH IN
THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES**
Thursday 1 October, 7:30pm

SPECIAL ONLINE EVENT

Viewing will be free,
but registration will be
required on our website

celebratemessiah.com.au/events



A three-part series produced by Celebrate Messiah with teaching from Rabbi Lawrence Hirsch, Dr Ashley Crane, Paul Cohen, Barry Buirski, Robert Miles and Dr Eric, with worship by Lizzie and Simon Nygaard.

MESSIANIC • RESOURCES



PRAISES OF ISRAEL CD \$25

A live recording of 13 Messianic songs performed at a public Concert in Jerusalem. A continuation of the well-known series "Praise to Our God" albums produced by the Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel. The name of the concert and CD is based on the verse "But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel. (Psalms 22:3).

The Shofar has sounded through the centuries as a call to repentance, to gather God's people and a call to battle.

RAMS HORN SHOFAR (35 – 40cm) \$75

Made from a Ram's horn and featuring natural shades of brown and black as well as natural ridges and lines on its body. The bottom of the Shofar near the mouthpiece is polished with the rest kept in a natural finish. This Shofar will look incredible on display or to sound as a reminder of Messiah's presence and power.

YEMENITE SHOFAR (90-100cm) \$235

This fabulous Shofar 90-100cm in length was made from an antelope horn and features natural shades of brown and black as well as natural ridges and lines on its body. The bottom of the Shofar near the mouth piece is polished and appears in jet black.

These products will be sent to you POST FREE



Purchase these resources on the enclosed response form or visit us online for these and even more Messianic resources at celebratemessiah.com.au/store



**CELEBRATE
MESSIAH**

"BRINGING THE MESSAGE TO THE ORIGINAL MESSENGERS"

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