



**CELEBRATE
MESSIAH**

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*In Partnership with Chosen
People Global Ministries*



LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

| MESSIAH IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD | THE PROMISE OF A KING |
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LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

One day, when looking at the Caulfield Messianic Centre, we will tell our children and grandchildren, “God built this during the Worldwide Pandemic of 2020,” and that would be true! Miraculously we have seen the completion of the Caulfield Messianic Centre, the first custom-made Messianic centre and synagogue in the Southern Hemisphere, in a year with so many challenges and crises. And it is almost debt free!

But God didn’t do it alone. He used many wonderful people like you, who like the Centurion of Luke chapter 7, loved the God of Israel and the people of Israel so much that he built them a synagogue (Luke 7:5). Thank you for your sacrifice and your witness. We are so grateful to the Lord and for each one of you who have given and prayed for this historic project over the

past 10 years. Thank you for letting “...*your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*” (Matthew 5:16, ESV)

Now Celebrate Messiah has a viable base of operations from which to reach out to Jewish people, not only locally in Caulfield but across Australia and around the world. One thing that the COVID-19 crisis has shown us is that we can have a global reach through the internet, and we certainly have learned a new set of skills that have helped us reach more people than ever before.

Beit HaMashiach, our local Messianic congregation, also has a wonderful facility now from which to reach out to Jewish people in the largest Jewish community in Australia. As I write this report, we are still waiting for our occupancy certificate as some compliance issues are sorted out, but we are preparing to open our doors when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted adequately.

It is certainly a new era of ministry for Celebrate Messiah, as we celebrated our 25th anniversary as a mission earlier this year. We are looking forward to initiating some new outreach projects and continuing to improve and grow our existing ministries.

For example, we are excited

about developing the first Messianic Training Centre in Australia with a focus on raising up the next generation of outreach workers and leaders in the Messianic movement, as well as offering Bible study courses from a Messianic Jewish perspective for those wanting to deepen their understanding of the Bible. This will be a blessing not only on the work in Australia but around the world, through our partnership with Chosen People Global Ministries which is now working in 19 countries.

Other evangelistic projects we are working on are:

- Video testimonies of Australian Jewish people who have come to faith in Yeshua.
- Reaching out to Israeli backpackers through a new platform called Planet Zula that has been developed by our ministry partners Celebrate Messiah New Zealand.
- Outreach to a large and growing segment of our community of people in “inter-married families,” i.e. marriages between Jewish and a non-Jewish spouses and their families.

Dear friends, as we move forward with the mission of Celebrate Messiah, we know we cannot accomplish anything without your prayers and support. Please pray for our mission projects locally in Australia, and for our work in New Zealand, Russia and Israel.

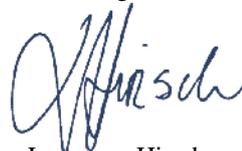
This year has obviously been challenging financially for all of us personally, and for congregations and mission organisations. I want you to know that as a mission organisation, we are so grateful for the sacrificial generosity of our supporters. All our missionaries and workers do not take your support for granted. We count it a huge privilege to be able to share the Gospel with our Jewish people.

Very soon, on the 10th of December we will celebrate the Festival of Hanukkah and then of course, Christians all around the world will be celebrating the birth of a Jewish baby, Jesus, at Christmas time. The rest of this newsletter is dedicated to exploring these two festivals from a Jewish perspective.

Let us take a moment at this time to pray for and consider the spiritual needs of the Jewish people. Our Jewish people worldwide need the life-saving and eternity-changing Gospel message preached to us, and as the Apostle Paul said; “... *how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?...*” (Romans 10:14–15, ESV)

For this reason, **would you please prayerfully consider giving a generous end-of-year gift to Your Mission to the Jewish People?** Help us to continue the mission of Celebrate Messiah – “Bringing the Message to the Original Messengers.”

Yours together for the salvation of Israel,



Lawrence Hirsch

Executive Director of Celebrate Messiah Australia



Lawrence Hirsch

Executive Director of
Celebrate Messiah

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
Matthew 5:14–16, ESV



The Messiah Is the Light of the World

‘Tis the Hanukkah-Christmas season! It is a time of good cheer when, generally speaking, Jewish people are celebrating Hanukkah, and Christians are celebrating Christmas. Though I must admit, even in New York, there are quite a few “Hanukkah bushes” (a Christmas tree decorated for Hanukkah) displayed in homes throughout the area.

I’m sure the same is true in Caulfield and other parts of Jewish Australia.

It goes without saying that there are many differences between the holidays, but through the years I have discovered many parallels as well.

One of the most obvious similarities is that both Hanukkah and Christmas are observed the same time of year. The precise date of the Messiah’s birth is a bit controversial in some circles, but what is absolutely clear from the New Testament is that the God of Israel became man, dwelled among us, died for our sins, and was raised to life in fulfilment of the plan of God’s redemption detailed in the Bible.

I grew up believing that one of the ways you could tell a Jew from a Christian was by the holidays he or she celebrated. For that reason, celebrating Hanukkah was viewed as a symbol of loyalty to the Jewish people. My family, and other Jewish people who know that I believe in Jesus as my Messiah, often ask me which holidays I celebrate. The underlying question being so subtly asked is whether or not I still view myself as Jewish now that I believe in Jesus.

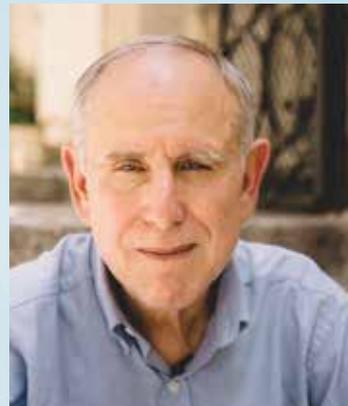
In case you are unfamiliar with Hanukkah, let me give you a brief overview of the celebration.

Hanukkah celebrates the great victory of the Maccabees, a family of Levitical priests, over the armies of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian Greek general whom the Jewish people nicknamed “Antiochus the madman”. He tried to destroy the Jewish people by turning them into Greeks, but failed.

Hanukkah is also called the “Festival of Lights.” According to Jewish tradition, when the Temple was recaptured from Antiochus, there

Pictured above: Gold Coast, Australia / December 2018: The Jewish community celebrates the festival of Hanukkah. © Rafael Ben Ari / Alamy Stock Photo

A special message from Dr Mitch Glaser, President of Chosen People Ministries, USA



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THE PROMISE OF A KING

The incarnation reminds us that God is faithful to His promises. The prophecy that the Messiah will be born of a virgin was spoken by the great prophet Isaiah in these words: *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel”* (Isaiah 7:14). God fulfilled this promise by sending His only Son to be the Saviour for both Jews and Gentiles. Yet, the Bible teaches us that He is not finished yet. There is more to come and more to be fulfilled.



Although everyone loves cute babies, we must never forget that the little baby Yeshua in the manger is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. One of the great prophecies linking His first and second comings is found in Isaiah 9:6-7. The prophet tells us that the character of the divine baby born of the virgin will be revealed through a number of different names. He will be called “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace” and sit on the throne of King David forever. When Messiah comes, He will establish His throne, fulfil His covenant with King David, and deliver and rule over all those who embrace Him as their Saviour and Sovereign Lord.

The Great Hallelujah

George Frederic Handel, the beloved German composer, understood these promises of God as well. The reason Handel’s Messiah concludes with the Hallelujah chorus is because the first coming of the Messiah cannot be separated from His second coming. He was born to die and will return to rule. His atoning work is finished, but His plan and purposes for the Jewish people will continue until He fulfils every last promise He made by covenant to His chosen people.

The Jewish people were central to His first coming and will also be critical to His second coming, as the Bible teaches that the end-time remnant of Jewish people will repent and turn to Jesus the Messiah. This turning will coincide with His return as *“they look on [Him] whom they have pierced”* (Zechariah 12:10). God cannot allow His Jewish people to be destroyed because He cannot break His promises to His chosen people whom He loves.

The Messiah’s first coming gives us hope because He will be faithful in fulfilling the promises tied to His second coming. His return will be the ultimate moment of deliverance for the Jewish people when they cry out and receive Jesus as their Messiah and King. The babe from Bethlehem will one day stand on the Mount of Olives, which will be split in two, and His full glory and majesty will be revealed. At that time, the enemies of God and of Israel will be destroyed. Yeshua the Messiah will rule (Zechariah 12:10) and fulfil His promise to Abraham that, through him, the nations of the world will be blessed (Genesis 12:3).



THE INCARNATION & VIRGIN BIRTH: TRUTH OR HERESY

The chasm between Judaism and Christianity goes beyond the unfortunate and sometimes bloody history between the two faiths. There are some deep theological divides as well. For example, Jewish people traditionally find it very difficult to understand the idea of the Incarnation: that Jesus is both fully man and fully God. So how can a Jewish person possibly come to believe that Jesus is God in the flesh, when their community and heritage is so opposed to this belief?

Jewish people affirm that God is one; He is singular and not three. One of the core prayers of Judaism, referred to as the Shema, is based on Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!” This is often viewed as a religious rallying cry within the Jewish community and recited almost every time Jewish people gather for prayer. The idea that God is three-in-one is viewed as non-Jewish and heretical by almost every Jewish person in the world, apart from Jewish believers in Messiah!

Jewish people also do not believe God can become a man, and are taught that worshiping God in any form – be it flesh, wood, or stone – is idolatry. Therefore, to believe that God became a man and to then worship this individual, would be viewed as antithetical to the Jewish faith. Resistance to the idea that God became a man is woven into the Jewish soul.

It is only when a sincere Jewish seeker studies the Old Testament – and sees that the possibility of what has been taught for ages might not sync with what was revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures – that he or she can consider the essential truth of the Incarnation. The Bible presents the Incarnation as a finishing touch on the promise God made to Abram in Genesis 12:1–3. In this fundamental passage, God promises to bless Abram and transform his descendants into a great nation, and to bless the nations of the world. The blessing of the world was accomplished through the writing and preservation of the Bible, and in the first coming of the Messiah.

Christmas, the celebration of His Incarnation, and Hanukkah, point us to the One who was faithful in the past and will be faithful in the future. His promise to the Jewish people did not hit a dead-end at the cross. The Bible teaches us that there is so much more to come when He returns. His chosen people have a vital and continuing role to play. Jesus, our resurrected King and Messiah, was born of a Jewish virgin, lived among the Jewish people, died and rose in Israel, and will shelter the Jewish people until the day He comes to reign over His kingdom.

WHY WAS IT IMPORTANT THAT GOD CAME IN THE FLESH?

One of the most well-known passages indicating the marvellous truth of the Incarnation is found in Isaiah 9:6-7:

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.”

In this passage, Isaiah uses four different names for the coming Messiah, two of which indicate that this future son of David would be God in the flesh. The son predicted earlier in Isaiah 7:14 would be God with us (Immanuel) as well as the “Mighty God” and “Everlasting Father.” The other two Hebrew terms in 9:6-7 indicate that He will be royalty, since He will be both a “Wonderful Counsellor” (a wise King) and the “Prince of Peace,” promoting peace throughout the regions of His reign.

This Messianic King who suffered and died will one day reign on the throne of His forefather David, and rule over the promised earthly kingdom. This is confirmed in verse 7, when the Messiah will sit on the throne of David His forefather, forever. In that day, injustice, unrighteousness, and all the marks of sinful earthly kingdoms will be removed and transformed by the Son of David, who will bring in a new and holy order of earthly government. It will be a kingdom no longer tainted by sin.

A second passage that also speaks of the divine character of Messiah was penned by a contemporary of Isaiah, the prophet Micah. In Micah 5:2, the prophet describes the coming Messiah, the ruler in Israel, as follows: *“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”*

The ruler in Israel would be born in Bethlehem, which is further defined by the word Ephrathah as referring to the Bethlehem located a few miles from Jerusalem. This was the ancestral home of David, and the birthplace of Jesus the Messiah. This ruler is described as again being eternal in nature. We understand the passage in this way because the two Hebrew phrases translated “from long ago” and “from the days of eternity” when used elsewhere in the Old Testament most often refer to God.

All of these passages indicate that the promised Messiah, who would reign on David’s throne forever, would be God in the flesh. Jesus literally had to be “God with us” in order to be the Saviour of the world. We are surrounded during this season of the year by hints of the truth well expressed by C.S. Lewis: “The Son of God became a man to enable men to become the sons of God.”

Continued from page 3

was only enough oil to keep the menorah in the Temple lit for one day. However, a miracle happened, and the eternal light of the Temple menorah lasted for eight days, the time it took for the ceremonial olive oil to cure and keep the lights perpetually burning. Jewish people see this as a great dual miracle: that God gave the Jewish people a humanly impossible military victory, and marked the event by ensuring the lights lasted the full eight days. That is why we light a candle each night as part of the eight-day festival.

The lights provide an obvious bridge between Hanukkah and Christmas. When my kids were small, I used to take them through parts of Brooklyn during the Christmas season just to see the homes decorated with lights in the most magnificent ways. Some neighbourhoods looked like they belonged in Rockefeller Center or Times Square at New Year's!

The tradition of giving presents is also important for both holidays. Jewish people give one gift to their kids each night of Hanukkah, and the tradition of giving presents on Christmas, in the tradition of the magi at Jesus' birth, continues until this very day. Of course, both holidays are often over-commercialised, but in my opinion, there is never a bad time to give presents, as long as you are focused on the real reason for this season. Jewish people are thankful to God for preserving the nation and express this thanksgiving by giving presents to one another. This is similar to Christmas, as we show our gratitude to God for sending His only Son to die for our sins by giving presents.

This is also a great time of the year to show your gratitude to God and to the Jewish people by giving an end-of-year gift to Celebrate Messiah that will be used to reach Jewish people for Yeshua!

A Messianic Jewish Perspective

As a Messianic Jew, I am always looking for deeper links between the festivals, and believe there is an absolutely amazing parallel that I want to share with you.

In the Gospel of John, chapter 10, we see that Jesus celebrated Hanukkah, also called the Feast of Dedication. (The Hebrew word Hanukkah literally means "dedication.") The festival also served as a platform for Jesus to make one of His most profound statements about His person and ministry recorded in the New Testament.

It is this one statement that I believe brings Hanukkah and Christmas together in the most dramatic and profound way.

At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How

long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one" (John 10:22–30).

When asked if He was the Messiah, Jesus did not give a simple yes or no. Rather, He revealed His true nature to the Jewish leaders and declared that He and His Father were one. This declaration affirms the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah

who predicted that, one day, God would take on human flesh, dwell among us, and reveal the character of our heavenly Father in the most tangible of ways.

Isaiah wrote, *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel"* (Isaiah 7:14).

It is only fitting that Jesus made this declaration on the Feast of Dedication, which reminds us of the great miracle of the Incarnation and revelation of God's glory and light. This parallels the symbolism found in the menorah in the Temple, as

God Himself is the true light that illuminates our hearts and souls. As Jesus said earlier in John's Gospel, *"I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life"* (John 8:12).

The real link between Hanukkah and Christmas is Jesus Himself. He is God in the flesh; the light of the world who dispels our personal darkness and transfers us to the kingdom of His Son. As Isaiah predicted and Jesus fulfilled,

"But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them" (Isaiah 9:1–2).

And Paul adds,

"For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son..." (Colossians 1:13).

I hope you have great joy in this marvellous deliverance! I also pray you have a wonderful season of joy and that the light of your personal testimony of God's grace and victory will shine brightly among Jews and Gentiles during this special season of the year!



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NEWS BRIEFS

THREE SONS BLESSED WITH HAMPERS

Celebrate Messiah's Tikkun Olam benevolent ministry has been limited in its reach during COVID-19 but has managed to bless 20 Jewish families over the past two months with food hampers. One grateful recipient reports: "Thank you for delivering such wonderful food hampers for my family and my sister. All the pantry staples are definitely a great help for families like mine, with three growing boys who study from home and are always looking to snack on something to quell their hunger during school breaks. These food hampers are also a great help for my sister; she is a low-income single mum with two dependent children, and is sometimes struggling to put food on the table. Thank you once again for delivering these food hampers to us. God Bless you all."

EVANGELISTIC ENCOUNTER ACROSS THE DITCH

During the lockdown in New Zealand, Zohar had a lovely Israeli guy stay with his family for several weeks. Omer came back to visit a second time, after Zohar had shared the entire Gospel with him the first time he stayed, and this time was even more open to talking about Yeshua (Jesus). This was as a result of the love and care that he received

and experienced from many believers in New Zealand over the preceding several months. Many of them shared their testimony of how they became believers in Yeshua with Omer, which has proven to have had a great impact upon him. Omer is now asking many questions, clearly wanting to better understand what the 'big fuss regarding Yeshua' is all about?

Please pray for Omer to have a full encounter with Yeshua, His own promised Messiah, and that he will put his full faith and trust in Yeshua.

WIFE LONGS FOR HEAVENLY REUNION

A Jewish friend, Ruth, asked our outreach worker Esther to attend her husband's funeral, and the meal in their home afterwards. As the guests were leaving, Ruth asked Esther to stay longer. "She took me into another part of the house and confided in me that her husband had told her before he passed away, that he believed in Yeshua and wanted her to, so they could be together for eternity."

Esther was able to share the scriptures and pray with Ruth to meet Yeshua, and they are continuing to discuss the Scriptures and pray together every week. Please commit Ruth's eternal salvation through Yeshua to prayer,

and also for Esther that the Lord provides her with the energy and strength she needs to continue to sow His Word into Ruth's life.

INVITATION TO MINISTER TO IDF SOLDIERS

The Israel Defense Force (IDF) has a special program for young adults that offers them the option of serving a part of their military service as an educational contribution to Israeli society. Before they embark on service in schools and youth groups, the soldiers go through a training program where they learn the different aspects of Israeli society, and in the program, they also learn about Messianic Judaism and Jews who believe in Yeshua and the New Testament! The commander of the program has often approached a Messianic congregation in Tel Aviv and requested a workshop for the soldiers to introduce to them the faith of Jews who believe in Yeshua and the New Testament. One of our missionaries, Vered*, had the opportunity to minister to the soldiers and to share her faith with them. The soldiers heard the gospel and some of them asked for a copy of the New Testament to bring back to their base camps. Please pray with us for these soldiers who heard from Vered about faith in the Lord, that the seed of faith sown in their hearts will grow.

ONLINE HANUKKAH EVENTS

Yeshua: The Light of the World

A virtual Messianic Jewish
celebration of Hanukkah

6.00pm | Sunday 13 December | **Yeshua: The Light of the World**, a time of storytelling and fun for the whole family! In conjunction with Chosen People Ministries.

7.30pm | Thursday 17 December | Candle lighting and songs for the 8th night with a Hanukkah message from Rabbi Lawrence Hirsch and worship with Lizzy and Simon.

There is no cost to participate, but you will need to register to receive the link.
Register at www.celebratemessiah.com.au/events

MESSIANIC • RESOURCES



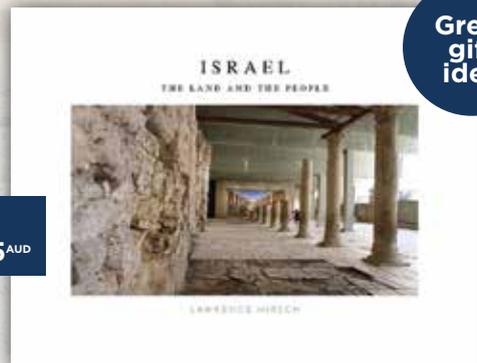
*\$25^{AUD}

All Israel Shall be Saved (Rom 11:26) replaces the annual Jewish & Israel Prayer Focus and includes articles from Messianic Jewish and Arab Christian ministry leaders and pastors from Israel who share their insights with us. Compiled by Jill Curry, It covers the entire year from January to December.

The book guides you in prayer for Israel and the Jewish people throughout the year, and introduces you to the Israeli congregations and ministries, and the annual biblical feasts. It includes monthly articles and prayer points to give you information for prayer and understanding of God's plans for His people and modern Israel, and daily prayer points for the whole year with feast dates till 2030.

*We offer this book as a free gift for donations of \$100 or more.

Israel: The Land and the People is a wonderful book with some of the best photos of Israel anywhere! Through 70 spectacular photos by Lawrence Hirsch, Executive Director of Celebrate Messiah, this coffee table book presents the beauty, history, culture and variety of the land from snow-topped Mt. Hermon to the fortress of Masada, ancient Jerusalem, modern Tel Aviv, Jaffa and much, much more. A must before you visit Israel, a reminder afterward, and a perfect gift for anyone who wants to feel as if they've been there.



Great gift idea

\$25^{AUD}

Fill in the order form or visit our online store at celebratemessiah.com.au/store for these and other great resources.



CELEBRATE
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"BRINGING THE MESSAGE TO THE ORIGINAL MESSENGERS"

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