



**CELEBRATE
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*In Partnership with Chosen
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WHOSE HOLY LAND?

INSIDE:

To Whom Does the Land of Israel Belong?

Is Israel the Promised Land?

The Mystery of Deuteronomy 28

The Future of Israel According to Moses

Loving People in the Land

Yeshua's Helping Hands in the Land

TO WHOM DOES THE LAND OF ISRAEL BELONG?



Dear friend,

Shalom! This month's newsletter is dedicated to our work in Israel. Celebrate Messiah, in partnership with Chosen People Global Ministries, is committed to the work in the Land of Israel, the heart of the Jewish soul.

The work in the Holy Land is going well—including evangelism, discipleship, congregational planting, feeding the poor and elderly, and children's work. The opportunities to reach Jewish people for the Messiah Yeshua in Israel are astounding.

While we continue, of course, to raise the name of Yeshua here in Australia, New Zealand and Russia, there is no question in my mind that the Land of Israel should and must be a focus of our work in the days ahead. There are now more than six million Jewish people living in the Holy Land. Unfortunately, not everyone is as excited about the Land of Israel as I am!

In fact, the questions, "Who has the right to the Land of Israel?" and, "To whom does the Land of Israel really belong?" are becoming an increasingly widespread focus of attention. Is it the Jewish people? The Palestinians? Maybe the Land belongs to the Bedouin tribes that have lived there for many centuries?

The answer to this burning question is not found in U.N. Resolution 181,¹ in which the United Nations recommended the establishment of Jewish and Arab states, paving the way for the modern state of Israel. Neither is it found in the declaration of Israeli independence made on May 14, 1948.

The answer is simple in my mind. The Land of Israel belongs to the people of Israel—the Jewish people. Let me give you a few reasons why I believe this with all my heart.

King David sang, "...the earth is the Lord's..." (Psalm 24:1) and it is He who determines the boundaries of nations (Acts 17:26, Psalm 74:17, Deut. 32:8). Therefore, the Land of Israel, like every other nation, belongs to the God of Israel and whomever He decides should be His stewards!

The Lord told Abram that both he and his descendants would be given the Land (Gen. 12:1-3). This promise was also given to the sons of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and to their descendants (Gen. 17:19-21, 26:1-5, 35:9-15).

We cannot ignore the present political realities and complexities of the crisis, yet we should base our personal understanding of the issues upon the Bible. I believe the Land of Israel belongs to the people of Israel, whom God created from the loins of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Of course, this does not mean that others who are not Jewish cannot live in and enjoy the Land and nation of Israel!

It does mean that Israel today needs our prayers, understanding and involvement in encouraging the nation and the inhabitants of the Holy Land to seek the Holy One of Israel.

Do the Jewish People Have a Moral Right to the Land of Israel?

Many Christians are asking whether the Jewish people of today have a moral right to possess the Land of Israel. This may shock you, but I would answer—no. Jewish people today have not earned the moral right to possess the Land of Israel. Why would I make this bold assertion?

Let's be frank: most Israelis are quite secular. Their values are not grounded in the Hebrew Bible, much less in the New Testament. Today's Messianic movement in Israel makes up less than 0.02% of the population. In other words, fewer than 10,000 of the current Jewish population of more than six million Jewish people in Israel follow Jesus as their Messiah.

It is also true that Israel is similar to many secular countries. I am sad to say that Israeli society is plagued by an increasingly high number of abortions, an increasing advocacy for gay marriage, and a growing problem with prostitution. In other words, modern Israel—like any other nation, including our own—is anything but holy!

However, I think this is the wrong question. If nations were measured on the basis of morality, then every country in the world would be forced to forfeit the right to possess its land.

There is a deeper question that must be asked.

Do the Jewish People Have a Divine Right to Possess the Land of Israel?

To this question, I would answer yes. The Jewish people do in fact have a divine right to the Land of Israel—at any moment in history since the day of Abram—based upon God's covenant. This is the only deed of ownership that really matters. By a confluence of events that reflects the hand of God, the Jewish people once again became the possessors of the Land of Israel in 1948.

As the Word of God declares—and as history has shown—the Lord is able to cast the Jewish people out of the Land if it is His will (Deut. 28, Lev. 26, etc.). Yet He is the same God who is able to bring the Jewish people back to the Land as He chooses. And regardless of world politics,

the peace and security that God promised to the Jewish people in the Land will take place during the Messianic Kingdom, when all who dwell there will acknowledge the Lordship of Yeshua the Messiah.

A Bright Future for the Land of Israel

I believe the Bible teaches that the Jewish people cannot fully enjoy the Land of Israel until they turn to the Messiah Yeshua, and until He returns as King to rule on His rightful throne in Jerusalem! At that time, the promises of God will be gloriously fulfilled when the wolf lies down with the lamb, our weapons of war are transformed into tools for farming, and the curse that fell upon the world through sin will be lifted. Yet the Abrahamic deed assures the Jewish people of the right to live in the Land whenever they are able.

Therefore, the Jewish people have a right to the Land based on the promise of God. This right is not based upon national righteousness. The complete fulfilment of this promise will only come about at the second coming of Jesus (Rom. 11:12, 15, 25-29). Until then, I believe the Jewish people have a right to the Land of Israel, even if they will never deserve it based on their own merit. Possession of the Land, as with all the promises of God, is based upon His generous and benevolent character and we will always be undeserving of His goodness and thankful for His grace.

Nonetheless, I believe that the creation of the modern state of Israel is a sure sign of God's faithfulness and power. We have no doubt that one day the Lord will complete what He started and the nation of Israel will become a Holy Land when the remnant of Israel turns to Yeshua the Messiah. As Paul promised,

Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.
(Rom. 11:28-29)

Evangelism and the Promise

This is why Your Mission to the Jewish People continues to proclaim the Good News of Yeshua, both outside and inside Israel. Chosen People Global Ministries serves among Jewish people in nations representing 96% of the world's Jewish population. We believe that there is no hope of personal salvation outside of Yeshua for either Jew or Gentile. Proclaiming this life-giving message to Jewish people is why Celebrate Messiah exists!

Yours for the salvation of Israel,



Lawrence Hirsch
Executive Director of Celebrate
Messiah Australia



Executive Director of
Celebrate Messiah Australia

1 http://www.knesset.gov.il/process/docs/un181_eng.htm

Is Israel the Promised Land?

In Genesis 12:1, God tells a childless seventy-five-year-old man and his sixty-five-year-old wife, “*Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.*” The land of Ur was a thriving metropolis at the time when Abraham was told to leave it—and the land of Canaan, where God was sending Abraham, was a virtual wasteland in comparison. Yet Abraham obediently left with his wife and their little entourage.

Then, in Genesis 12:2, God makes a startling promise: “*I will make you a great nation.*” Since no sixty-five-year-old woman is able to give birth by natural means, God would make a nation by supernatural means. This was something that Abraham and his wife Sarah did not understand, as evidenced by their attempt to fulfill the promise through Hagar, Sarah’s Egyptian maid, and the birth of Ishmael.

Those who would replace Israel with the Church also do not understand the supernatural creation of the nation of Israel. A ninety-year-old woman having a baby fathered by a one-hundred-year-old man is just as miraculous as a virgin teenage girl giving birth.

Later in the verse, God promises that Abraham’s name would be great and that he would be blessed and be a blessing to others. Then, in verse three, God promises blessings for those who bless Abraham and his seed, and curses for those who curse Abraham and his seed. In Abraham, all the nations of the earth would be blessed; this is clearly fulfilled with Jesus the Messiah two thousand years later.

Does God promise land to Abraham’s seed? Genesis 15:18 states, “*On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.’*” Clearly, there is a promise of land—an area that is much greater than the country of Israel today. This promise was later confirmed to Isaac and Jacob as well (Gen. 26:3, 28:13).

The Mystery of Deuteronomy 28

At the conclusion of the Torah, God promises to give Israel “the land” and to elevate the nation above every other nation of the earth (Deut. 28:1). This promise reiterates God’s covenant with Abraham to give Abraham’s descendants the land stretching from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates (Gen. 15:17–21). Although God reinforces His promise to Abraham, His restatement also suggests that Israel’s possession of the land depends on the nation’s consistent obedience (Deut. 28:2).

If the nation chooses to rebel against God, He warns the people that their disobedience will lead to their ruin; God will uproot them from their land and scatter them amongst their enemies (Deut. 28:58–68). This ultimately raises the question as to whether or not Israel’s disobedience invalidates God’s promise of a national homeland for the Jewish people. If the Torah ended with this warning, then it would appear that God’s relationship with the Jewish people is dependent upon the nation’s obedience. This is not, however, the complete story.

God establishes a covenant with Israel, despite knowing the nation will shortly rebel against their Redeemer and begin worshipping other gods (Deut. 31:20). God consistently seeks to restore His relationship with the nation, promising to return Israel to her land and restore the fortunes He took from their ancestors (Deut. 30:1–10). The Torah warns about the consequence of national disobedience, but also prescribes a means of restoration to the land. Even after exile into Babylon, the prophets anticipate a time when God will forgive Israel and restore the nation to the land He promised Abraham (Ezek. 36:16–38).

Therefore, Israel’s rebellion does not nullify God’s promises to the nation. Although Israel’s disobedience will result in temporary removal from the land, the Hebrew Bible repeatedly depicts the land of Israel as the rightful possession of the descendants of Abraham. In so doing, God maintains His

relationship with Israel and gives His people a homeland to demonstrate His unending love.

It is important to take God's promises literally. The Lord will save His people and fulfill His promises to the Jewish people.

The Future of Israel According to Moses

The fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, when viewed in light of the travails of the Jewish people throughout much of their history, is one of the most sobering passages of the Hebrew Scripture. Set at the moment when the children of Israel are poised to enter and occupy the Promised Land, these verses are part of the account of Moses' exhortations and warnings to them at this momentous turning point.

Here we find Moses reminding the children of Israel that although God's promises are bestowed by grace, their benefits are maintained by faithful obedience—and may be forfeited, at least temporarily. First and foremost among Moses' concerns is that Israel remain true to the God of their redemption, and that they resist the temptation to fall into the sin of idolatry. If they fail in this respect, *"The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you."* (Deut. 4:27)

Jewish history has been, in large measure, a record of this prophetic word; suffering in exile has been Israel's unhappy lot on more than one occasion. The bitter fruit of landlessness has cost the Jewish people dearly, as they have been vulnerable to oppressors, mocked and reviled.

Yet even in the midst of chastisement, the Lord is faithful to extend an open hand: *"But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul... He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them."* (Deut. 4:29, 31)

The Apostle Paul emphasizes this foundational truth concerning the Jewish people in his letter to the Romans: *"I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not... for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."* (Rom. 11:11, 29)

Among those gifts is the restoration of Israel, whose fullness will be revealed and perfected through faith in the Messiah who has never forsaken her, even in the darkest moments of her troubled history.

Loving People in the Land

It was a faith growing experience and heaps of fun for a group of 11 young people who returned from a two-week mission outreach to Israel earlier this year. Led by Beit HaMashiach youth and young adults pastor Jay, the group had an action packed program which focused on helping many ministries in a practical way. Their activities included several members of the team being baptised in the Jordan, they weeded an olive grove and painted a tool shed for House of Light ministries, cleaned and helped stocktake with Seeds of Hope ministry, pruned trees and worked the land for B'yad Chaim, cooked a BBQ for single mothers, shared the Gospel on the beach, worshipped with a Messianic congregation, served a Russian Jewish community in rocket-ravaged Sderot, painted the house of believers in Arad, and in between, had a chance to see historic Biblical sites and have some fun, like floating on the Dead Sea.

Here's a selection of experiences from some of the team:

ASHER: This trip has been an unforgettable experience, and I am constantly amazed how gifted everyone on the team is. I am so grateful for everyone I have met and how they have impacted on my life.

JOHNNY: A favourite experience for me was sitting with three elderly Arab believers looking out over the Jordan Valley at sunset, talking (in Spanish, would you believe) about God's beautiful creation, and how we are so privileged to have a relationship with the Messiah.

ALLY: Serving with the Messianic ministries in Israel has been a beautiful and inspiring experience. We have been encouraged by the amazing work God is doing in this land through the wonderful people who have given their lives to serve him. Hallelujah!

CLEMENCE: I'm everyday more in love with this country. God has particularly taught me love and service during our day in Sderot. We have met with a lot of beautiful babushkas and have been able to bless them. The smile on their faces, their hugs and kisses have also reminded me of the pure love of God for us.

BETHANY: Israel feels so warm and welcoming, the people are very open and friendly. In Sderot, the buildings were very plain. I was humbled to see that the most stunning ornament in the room was the presence of the Holy Spirit as people gave hugs and encouragement to hurting people.

Praise God for the love that this group showed people in the Land of Israel, and for the spiritual growth they have displayed since returning, evidenced by their increased willingness to step out and serve in our local mission field to the Jewish people.



Yeshua's Helping in the Hands Land

Celebrate Messiah considers the work being done today in Israel, the national heart of the Jewish people, as strategic and fundamental to our ministry.

Our partner, Chosen People Ministries, is based at the Jerusalem Messianic Center but reaches right across the Land to help with the many needs—physical and spiritual—of local communities.

We count it a privilege to be supporting this wonderful mission in several ways: we are committed to sending \$2,500 each month to help support the leader of the Russian speaking Messianic congregation in Tel Aviv, Sergei, as well as several other workers in Israel and special projects. We also send short-term mission teams from Australia to do ministry in Israel. See previous page.



THESE ARE JUST SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- Events for Holocaust survivors at Pesach and Sukkot

About 250 Holocaust survivors per event at Pesach and Sukkot, including a concert, fellowship, God's Word, gifts, and a banquet dinner.

- Trips with Holocaust survivors to Poland and Germany

Maxim led a group of 27 Holocaust survivors to Poland involving sightseeing, fellowship with believers, rest, prayer, studying the Scriptures, and visiting places of Jewish history and concentration camps. A group of 25 Holocaust survivors also visited Germany in cooperation with Beit Sar Shalom there.

- Children's Ministry – Two five-day camps in Israel for about 60 children from seven local congregations. More

than 20 children in each camp expressed a desire to follow God. A team of 15-20 helpers, aged 16-17, who attended the camps a few years ago, have become mature in life and faith. In Poland, 27 children from Israel, 10 from Germany, and 10 from Russia spent 12 days together at a camp.

- Children's Home working with 20 kids from Jewish and Arab families.
- Ministry to Soldiers with a trip to Poland of 20 soldiers who were encouraged to bring their non-believing friends.
- Ministry in Sderot distributing food packages to 240 families a month. Home visits for fellowship and bible study, and to provide practical help for Holocaust survivors.
- Ministry in Tel Aviv dry food parcels distributed to over 400 families a month, including 23 Holocaust survivors, through the Tel Aviv Distribution Centre.
- Tel Aviv Soup Kitchen once a week with over 100 people coming to eat a delicious hot lunch.
- Russian-speaking congregation "Simchat Yeshuah" (Joy of Salvation). regular congregational activities plus trips to local Biblical sites, with non-believing friends encouraged to join.
- Drug and alcohol rehabilitation ministry participants in the program are involved in congregational life and serve at the soup kitchen and distribution centre.

- Ashdod Food Distribution Centre packages of dry food products to 290 families each month and home visits to some of the people.
- Jerusalem Food Distribution Center helps more than 300 families a month. A small group has started for Bible study with 9 regular attendees.
- Netanya Distribution Center provides food to over 300 people a month.
- Jerusalem Single mothers' ministry does home repairs, and chagim (Jewish festivals) celebrations.



NEWS BRIEFS

ISRAELI BACKPACKER SHOWS INTEREST IN MESSIAH

A young Jewish backpacker from Israel came into our community recently. Happy to be visiting in Melbourne for a while, he needed some work to keep going. It turned out that R was given a job working with the food company where we get our kosher products for the Tikkun Olam food hampers. During his time of employment at the food store, R was able to see an interesting view of both the Lubavitch life here in Melbourne as well as our Messianic community which he has willingly become part of. It is always great to see God's hand at work in this way. We pray that the eyes of R's heart would see the loving hand of Yeshua our Messiah at work in his life.

FAITHFUL WORKER NEEDS HEALING

Jewish believer Victor and his wife Olga are rejoicing after doctors found no trace of a brain tumor following

their latest test results. Victor was born into a secular Jewish family in Minsk, Belarus. His father's mother and family all perished in the Holocaust. Victor and Olga's daughter Rachael has become a believer in Yeshua and was recently baptized at Beit HaMashiach. In 2006, Victor was part of an outreach team with Celebrate Messiah to Far East Russia and has been part of the Dom Misse Russian Ministry in Melbourne for many years. In March 2012, Victor was diagnosed with lung, brain and bone cancer and given only several months to live. Now he's trusting the Lord for his total and complete healing. Please pray for him and Olga.

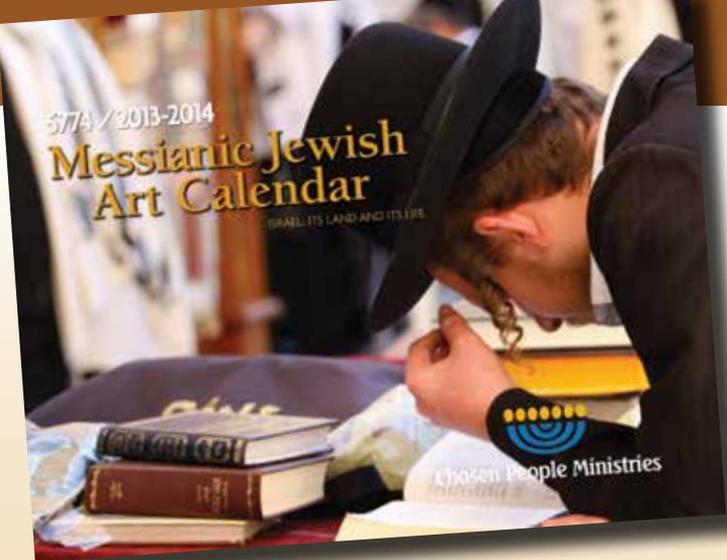
RUSSIAN MINISTRY YIELDS EIGHT NEW BELIEVERS IN YESHUA

Reports of new faith decisions from our busy Passover season are still reaching us. Kirill Polonsky, who is helping to pioneer our revived work in Russia, reports, "We telephoned the Jewish people in our area to invite them to our Messianic Seder, and fifty-two new Jewish guests attended. We gave everyone a copy of the Hebrew Bible as well as the book *Isaiah 53 Explained*. During the meeting, I asked the people to pray with me to dedicate their lives to the Lord, and many of the new people did so." In Moscow, Mira held a Passover Seder in her local Messianic congregation. Twenty-four new Jewish visitors came to this event, of whom eight prayed to receive the Lord.



SUKKOT CELEBRATIONS JOIN BELIEVERS AND SEEKERS

Celebrate Messiah's Sukkot celebrations in Sydney and Melbourne were successful beyond our expectations. Sydney was well attended with more than 200 guests of all ages from three states/territories: QLD, NSW & ACT, and from distances in NSW as far as five hours' drive north, south and west of Sydney. The diversity of cultures represented every continent of the world. The many Jewish guests—Australian, Israeli, European as well as North and South American—let us know how much they enjoyed and appreciated the evening. In Melbourne, the people just kept on coming in, with well over 500 people rejoicing to live Messianic music and dancing as well as teaching from Lawrence Hirsch and Kameel Majdali. Maybe everyone only came for the food, the music, the dance, the sound of the shofar, waving of the Lulav, Sukkot message, resource table, sukkah, decorations, fellowship, and more food . . . Whatever personal reasons for everyone coming, what they experienced was Messiah Yeshua proclaimed, worshiped, exalted, our *mayim chayim*, living water for all who are thirsty.



Messianic Jewish Art Calendar 5774/2013-2014

The new Messianic Jewish Art Calendar features photography by Lawrence Hirsch, the founder of Celebrate Messiah. This year's theme is "Israel—Its Land and Its Life." Vivid photographs give a glimpse of how the beauty of God's creation is revealed in the landscape of the Promised Land. This helps us to imagine how beautiful it will be in the fullness of time when Messiah returns to make all things new. Each month will greet you with a breathtaking photo, a relevant word of Scripture and an encouraging thought about Messiah's promise to His people. These calendars make great gifts, so don't forget to order extras.

NEW MESSIANIC JEWISH ART CALENDAR • \$20.00

To order please fill out response form, phone 03 9563 5544 or go to our website www.celebratemessiah.com.au/store

"See Israel through Jewish Eyes" TOUR



15 - 30 May 2014

with Lawrence & Louise Hirsch,
Celebrate Messiah Australia

FEATURING:

JERUSALEM, GALILEE, NAZARETH, DEAD SEA,
MASADA & BEERSHEBA plus PETRA IN JORDAN

for details visit www.celebratemessiah.com.au/events



CENTURION'S RUN



The Centurion's Run is more than just an event to raise funds for the new Caulfield Messianic Centre. It was inspired by the Centurion in Luke 7 and is an act of love to the Jewish people, so that they may come to know their Messiah.

The 226km run starts outside Lakeside Stadium, Albert Park, at 9pm Friday 25 October and finishes around 10am to 12noon on Sunday 27 October.

Please pray for all aspects of the event, and join us for prayer and celebration at the start and finish line.

For more information and to support with prayer and sponsorship visit www.caulfieldmessianiccentre.org.au.

Simcha 2013

Celebrate a special Simcha conference this year with an extravaganza of Messianic speakers from around the world.

Phillip Island Adventure Resort 6-8 December

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CELEBRATE
MESSIAH

"BRINGING THE MESSAGE TO THE ORIGINAL MESSENGERS"

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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