Israel My Glory

A ministry of The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.

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Many Jewish people these days are increasingly inquisitive about the unique phenomenon of Christian support for Israel in the face of growing anti-Israel sentiment worldwide. They want to know what really motivates evangelicals who stand with the Jewish state and genuinely love the Jewish people.

Their curiosity is drawing them to a host of Friends of Israel ministries, including our “Thank God for Israel” programs. And it has also led to a flow of invitations from Jewish communities and agencies, asking us to come and explain ourselves. The topics we’re being asked to address bear such themes as “Understanding Christian support for Israel,” “Who are Israel’s Christian friends?” and “Examining Christian love for the Jewish people.” Underlying these requests is a desire to better understand who we are and what we’re about. Perhaps you, too, have been asked similar questions.

Given the history of the Jewish people and the “Christian” anti-Semitism that has ravaged them over the centuries, they have every reason for skepticism. Some believe Israel’s Christian supporters are, at best, a fleeting phenomenon. Or, worst-case scenario, “It is the Inquisition with a smiley face”—a Jewish fear that David Brog explains in his book (which we highly recommend) Standing With Israel: Why Christians Support the Jewish State.

I sensed the concern that the friendship of evangelicals may only be temporary when a rabbi asked me, “What happens when evangelical Christians find out we are not the wonderful people they seem to think we are?” After all, early in his ministry, 16th-century Christian reformer Martin Luther professed love for the Jewish people and sympathy with their resistance to the Roman Catholic Church, only to reverse himself later and unleash some of the most vicious tirades of anti-Semitism ever known. In his little publication, On the Jews and Their Lies, Luther told Christians to expel the Jews from their communities and burn down their homes and synagogues. No small wonder Adolf Hitler quoted Martin Luther to bolster his designs to exterminate the Jewish people.

We at The Friends of Israel now have the privilege of answering questions about messages of a different type that are cropping up in evangelical circles. What are the core beliefs of churches that are displaying signs like “Happy Hanukkah to Our Jewish Friends” and “Happy Birthday Israel”?

To properly explain this wave of supportive Christian messages about Israel, we at The Friends of Israel point to the Bible as the true basis of evangelical support for the Jewish state. Christians who stand with Israel believe the Bible is God’s revealed Word, not to be negated by unbelief or stripped of its truth by allegory. God’s promises to Abraham (the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12 that was repeated to Isaac in chapter 17 and confirmed to Jacob in chapter 28) are the unshakable basis of Christian belief and support for Israel as God’s promised homeland for the Jewish people. Thus it is God’s “everlasting covenant” that makes us committed friends of the Jewish state forever.

He remembers His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant (Ps. 105:8–10).

William E. Sutter is the executive director of The Friends of Israel.
A
n Islamist terrorist’s attempt to blow up a Northwest Airlines plane over Detroit, Michigan, on Christmas Day set bells ringing across America and the Western world, and near panic ensued as officials scrambled to react to the threat. New scanners, tighter security, and full-body exposure machines were installed in airports amid claims and counterclaims about possible violation of individual rights.

One thing is certain: like the aftermath of the 2001 Richard Reid shoe-bomber incident, when it was mandated that ever thereafter all passengers whip off their shoes, travelers will be forced to undergo more intrusive inspections—which is a major victory for jihadists.

Israel handles security altogether differently, to which everyone who has ever boarded an El Al airplane can testify. Following the announcement of stricter inspections after the attempted Christmas bombing, Rafi Sela, a security consultant at Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv, offered some worthwhile advice. First, he said, “If you have a suicide bomber or somebody who wants to make an impact, he doesn’t have to bring down a plane. He can just explode in the middle of this huge crowd that is waiting for security.”

Second, reported Arutz-7, “Sela criticized security procedures that check everyone equally, regardless of whether he is a potential threat or a tourist who is among the majority of harmless travelers. . . . Direct eye contact by security officials can help them spot abnormal behavior.”

Sela also said the use of such a system would probably have stopped the bomber had he attempted to board a plane in Israel. He also said the information the U.S. State Department had received about the bomber before the flight would have red-flagged the man at Ben Gurion Airport—especially the warnings the man’s own father gave over concerns his son had been radicalized by jihadists and therefore posed a danger.

America’s obsessive concern about political correctness reviles any degree of profiling, considering it imprudent to look more closely at people from countries sponsoring terrorism. So America takes the burden of inspection from a few and places it on all travelers.

As Israelis see things, additional equipment is not the answer for protecting passengers from violence in the sky. They rely on inspections, even interrogations, of questionable individuals by qualified people who know what to ask and the proper way to interpret the answers they receive, including signs of evasive conduct and revealing body language. To this end, Israelis reportedly employ only college graduates and look for quality people who can be thoroughly trained to screen passengers. And although Israelis will quickly agree that no system is foolproof, the evidence affirms that Israel has a high rate of success in keeping the bad guys off El Al planes.

The fact is that equipment, however sophisticated, can be beaten. We are told that every new piece of security equipment America and Western countries purchase is also procured by terrorists who make it their mission to learn how to get explosives and dangerous cargo through without detection.

The difference between Israel, America, and Europe is that the Jewish state understands it is in a war—a real war for survival—and conducts its affairs accordingly. In most of the West, things are perceived quite differently. Repeatedly denying there is a war going on and turning a blind eye to those who are waging it merely assures that more of the same is on the way.

Better take a lesson from our Israeli allies.

by Elwood McQuaid
Assessing the “What Hit Us?” Conundrum

It feels a lot like a dream, or nightmare if you prefer, from which we’ll emerge in the morning. But it isn’t. It is, in fact, a revolution that has ridden in on the wings of the promise of change.

Interestingly, words and phrases like change, hope, a better future, new world order—or, as of old, a chicken in every pot—have an allure almost certain to win massive numbers of unsuspecting followers. The wake-up call too often comes when these buzzwords are finally defined.

Now that we are in the early stages of 2010, definitions are taking shape, leaving the majority of Americans bewildered and asking the inevitable, “What hit us?”

Our conundrum is the product of Washington and the strange phenomenon that seems to take place when elected officials cross the Potomac to breathe the mind-altering air of Foggy Bottom. Whether or not we approve of the changes overtaking us, the fact remains that we now live in an environment to which most of us are unaccustomed.

For some, the experience may be akin to what they endured as children when a trusted parent or relative asked to wiggle a loose tooth on the promise of a nonviolent tweak. But the tweak turned into a wicked yank that left trusting kids screaming like banshees all the way to the dentist. A lingering sense of betrayal and alienation usually remained for years. Finding quarters under the pillow helped a little, but who really believed in the tooth fairy?

In reality, America is in the unpleasant age one might call the national loss of innocence. Perhaps the World War II era that journalist Tom Brokaw described as “the greatest generation” in his best-selling book of the same name was exactly that—for the nation and individuals as well.

But we are not privileged to live in the past. We are creatures of the moment, living with the reality of the now. Perhaps the sardonic “that was then, and this is now” axiom applies.

For Bible-believing Christians in America, the challenges are self-evident. The allure of affluence and the titillations of the here and now have proven devastating distractions. The 1940s through the 50s was an era that forged the great missionary movements and evangelistic campaigns that sent passionate emissaries of the gospel to the ends of the earth, ready to give their lives for Christ. The message was the mission, and a chasm separated the lifestyles and values of the “world” and those of the churches. Sanctification meant something to believers, and the sense of personal obligation to share a Christian witness with the lost was a paramount objective in daily living.

In a sense, America’s contemporary Christian condition was exemplified by our commander-in-chief’s announcement, “We are no longer a Christian nation.” No longer is America to be regarded as dominated by Judeo-Christian mores. Instead, we are supposedly a country of heterogeneous religious fiefdoms—Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc.—each demanding equal status and brooking no criticism or hint of the necessity to communicate the message of Christ. As a matter of fact, one must believe that, if the current trend of hostility toward anything related to Christ or historic Christianity continues to accelerate, anyone who openly declares Jesus as the only Source of life will pay a heavy price.

The new wave of thinking for the “now” constituency loosely termed evangelical is assimilation. It is not a new phenomenon. It is no more or less than the social gospel that swept the mainline denominations roughly a century ago. Cresting the new wave is the burgeoning emergent movement that majors in converting churches into social-action agencies: less classical biblicism, more contemporary action. In the main, called by whatever name, there is a movement toward accommodation with secular culture, driven by the “you’re okay, I’m okay” philosophy.

We must remember, however, that change doesn’t always run in one direction. In democratic societies, changes may be made at the polls, where people are free to speak their minds with the pull of a lever, touch on a computer screen, or mark on a ballot.

In the house of God, there is a mechanism we remember as revival, with Jehovah controlling spiritual revolutions among His people. If we truly believe our times are in His hands, we can believe in hope and change that will alter events and revitalize His church. The key here is bound up in the word return. It was the operative word every time ancient Israel turned back to God. It remained so during the great revivals that swept America and Western countries in the past. Can it happen again? Don’t presume to tell your Maker it cannot.
The Dispensation of Law

Not long ago I was driving on a scenic mountain road in Arizona and decided to let my car coast downhill. Suddenly, I saw a bright flash of light. I had just driven through an automated-camera speed trap. A few weeks later I received a letter sporting a picture of me and my license plate and a ticket for $187. I had broken the law, albeit unintentionally. And my punishment as a lawbreaker was an expensive ticket.

In somewhat the same way, the Mosaic Law was given to Israel as a code of conduct, a “radar gun” to reveal transgressions and levy penalties on the transgressor.

The dispensation of Law began with the Mosaic Covenant when Israel was in the wilderness of Sinai. On hearing the covenant’s terms, the Israelites enthusiastically responded with confidence, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do” (Ex. 19:8). The Law was given to Israel as a stewardship, or stewardship, of Law was instituted for at least five reasons.

(1) To magnify God’s holiness. The prophet Habakkuk many years later spoke of God’s holiness when he said, “You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness” (Hab. 1:13). The Law stresses the holiness of God (Ex. 19; 20:18–26). When we compare ourselves with others, we may appear good. But when forced to compare ourselves with God, we should quickly recognize His moral purity and our moral pollution.

(2) To reveal man’s sinfulness (Rom. 3:19–20). The Law acted like a mirror, showing the Israelites their imperfections.

(3) To show the Israelites how to live in a moral society. It was given to keep them from hurting and destroying one another. People were created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, we have moral natures and are called to live on a higher moral plane than animals.

(4) To show the Israelites their need of a Savior. The Levitical sacrificial system used blood as a purifying agent. Thus the book of Hebrews says, “According to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb. 9:22).

People go to physicians because they know they are sick. What would prompt people to turn to the Savior? A realization of their sinfulness and need of forgiveness. The apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). The Law was given to show mankind its true condition, its need of a Savior, and to point us to “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29).

The Law was not given to impart salvation, nor did it guarantee any Israelite that he or she would go to heaven. Salvation has always been by faith. The Law was given to show the need of salvation by contrasting man’s sinfulness with God’s holiness. For someone to be saved by keeping the Law, he had to keep it perfectly. He could never stumble: “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas. 2:10).

(5) To demonstrate God’s grace and mercy. Despite Israel’s failure to keep the Law, God provided redemption. The Levitical sacrifices made it possible for those with sincere hearts to have their sins covered. And the once-for-all death of His Son, Jesus the Messiah, has provided final, lasting atonement. Although Israel failed under the dispensation of Law, God’s gracious promises to regather, restore, and fully redeem Israel will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

The dispensation of Law ended at the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Today, in the dispensation of grace, God expects people to be guided by the Law but by the Holy Spirit. When individuals realize their sinfulness and need of forgiveness from a holy God, they are to go in faith to the only One who ever kept the Law perfectly: Jesus the Messiah. He takes their sinfulness and clothes them in His righteousness, so they are “found in Him, not having [their] own righteousness” but “the righteousness which is from God by faith” (Phil. 3:9).

The ultimate purpose of the Law is to show both Jews and Gentiles their sinfulness and point them to the One of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke: “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:5–6).

by Patrick Neff, director of Church Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
Even the quickest glance at the text of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution makes one thing exceedingly clear: each of the rights guaranteed therein—religion, speech, assembly, and freedom of the press—were meant to apply to private citizens and were enshrined in our Bill of Rights to keep them vibrant and free from excessive government control.

If we go back to the intent of our Founding Fathers, we see their very notion of freedom of the press, for example, was to safeguard the news media from government regulation. There was a good reason for that. In 1774, when the beleaguered Continental Congress began to realize the colonies might have to break with England, the delegates were already thinking ahead to the basics of a free government and healthy society. On October 26, 1774, members of the Congress penned a letter to the inhabitants of the Province of Quebec, hoping to gain their support against England. In that letter they described, among other things, what they saw as the essentials of a free press:

The last right we shall mention, regards the freedom of the press. The importance of this consists, besides the advancement of truth . . . its ready communication of thoughts between subjects, and its consequential promotion of union among them, whereby oppressive officers are shamed or intimidated, into more honourable and just modes of conducting affairs.

Obviously, the more our government funds and/or controls the press, the less inclined the news media will be to expose corrupt governmental policies and practices.

One of the disturbing trends in Washington today, under the guise of trying to “save” journalism, is the rush to insinuate the federal government into the private news and information business. The collapse of much of the print newspaper industry in America (some newspapers are, however, switching to all-electronic formats rather than closing their doors) is seen as an opportunity to create a federalized press.

In July 2009, Michael Copps, one of the five commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), released a report that bemoaned the decline of American journalism and invited the federal government to see how it could become involved. He blamed the decline, in part, on “deregulation.” Translated, the solution for him is more regulation.

In September 2009 the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation awarded a $1 million grant to National Public Radio (NPR), forming a partnership of sorts between the liberal think tank that advocates more government intrusion into journalism and NPR. In December the FCC met with representatives of this partnership to help the effort along and assist NPR (a taxpayer-funded entity) in enlarging its already considerable media presence through Web and mobile platforms, such as cell phones.

On October 19, 2009, the Columbia Journalism Review ran an article by The Washington Post’s Leonard Downie, Jr. and Columbia University communications professor Michael Schudson. Titled “The Reconstruction of American Journalism,” it suggested the federal government correct the decline of journalism by increasing public taxpayer funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The FCC has launched a plan to institute new federal regulations and oversight of the Internet and is scheduled to report to Congress about creating a massive national broadband initiative that will reach every home in America. Furthermore, in the spring of 2010 the Federal Trade Commission and FCC will jointly investigate more ways in which the federal government can address the issue of “journalism” in America.

As I consider this trend, I am reminded of a comment I read from Russian journalist Irina Samokhina. At a freedom-of-the-press roundtable in November 2009, she described what happens when a state-run press is allowed to flourish. The private press’s biggest competitor becomes the government, she said, which uses public tax dollars to suppress and oppress the private media. In Russia there are 63 state-run newspapers in one region alone. As Washington increases its grip on the news media, both through increased regulation and state-sponsored news outlets, we can only wonder whether we will soon see an American approach to news that resembles the old iron-curtain, arm-of-the-government newspaper, Pravda.

Craig L. Parshall is a leading trial attorney who argues cases involving civil liberties, constitutional rights, and religious freedoms. He is senior vice president and general counsel for the National Religious Broadcasters, as well as a critically acclaimed novelist.
In an astonishing display of self-deception and anti-Israel theological rhetoric, a group of Palestinian-Christian church leaders have denounced the Jewish state as the main obstacle to peace in the Middle East. In a declaration labeled the Kairos Palestine Document, a message of “faith, hope, and love,” Israel was tagged as the instigator of all significant Palestinian suffering and deprivation. The messengers include leaders of Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Anglican, and Baptist churches.1

We, a group of Christian Palestinians, after prayer, reflection and an exchange of opinion, cry out from within the suffering in our country, under the Israeli occupation, with a cry of hope in the absence of all hope, a cry full of prayer and faith in a God ever vigilant, in God’s divine providence for all the inhabitants of this land. . . . Today we have reached a dead end in the tragedy of the Palestinian people.

The character and tone of the message of “faith, hope, and love” can be seen in a reference that deprecates Israel’s very right to exist:

One of the most important signs of hope is the steadfastness of the [Palestinian] generations, the belief in the justice of their cause and the continuity of memory, which does not forget the “Nakba” (catastrophe) and its significance.

The Nakba is the national rebirth of Israel that is officially lamented annually by Islamists, Palestinians, and Muslim enemies of the Jewish people.

Occupation is the operative word cropping up throughout the document, as in, “The roots of ‘terrorism’ are in the human injustice committed and in the evil of the occupation.” The human injustices Israel supposedly committed are compared to the former apartheid of South Africa and are said to deserve the same resistance. Therefore, the

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international community—including religious institutions, individuals, companies, and states—should “engage in divestment and in an economic and commercial boycott of everything produced by the occupation.” In short, Israel should be economically strangled into surrendering to its enemies.

The document claims the following:

- The separation wall built to restrict Palestinian suicide bombers from entering Israeli towns is inexcusable: The “cruel war Israel launched against [Gaza] during December 2008 and January 2009” has allegedly forced people there “to live in inhuman conditions, under permanent blockade and cut off from the other Palestinian territories.” Also castigated are the Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (West Bank), which are seen as illegal seizures of Palestinian property.
- Terrorism against innocent Jewish civilians is merely legitimate resistance: “The injustice against the Palestinian people which is the Israeli occupation, is an evil that must be resisted. It is an evil and a sin that must be resisted and removed. Primary responsibility for this rests with the Palestinians themselves.” It also states, “Yes, there is Palestinian resistance to the occupation. However, if there were no occupation, there would be no resistance, no fear and no insecurity.”
- Israel should free Palestinians incarcerated for terrorism: “And the prisoners? The thousands of prisoners languishing in Israeli prisons are part of our reality. The Israelis move heaven and earth to gain the release of one prisoner, and those thousands of Palestinian prisoners, when will they have their freedom?”
- Israel is responsible for the abysmal Palestinian refugee problem: “Refugees are also part of our reality. Most of them are still living in camps under difficult circumstances. They have been waiting for their right of return, generation after generation. What will be their fate?”
- Emigration of Christians from Palestinian areas is also laid at the feet of the “occupation”: “The absence of any vision or spark of hope for peace and freedom pushes young people, both Muslim and Christian, to emigrate. Thus the land is deprived of its most important and richest resource—educated youth.”
- Israel is further accused of using “fear and security” as a pretext for aggression: “We call on Israel to give up its injustice towards us, not to twist the truth of reality of the occupation by pretending that it is a battle against terrorism. The roots of ‘terrorism’ are in the human injustice committed and in the evil of the occupation. These must be removed if there be a sincere intention to remove ‘terrorism.’”

The Blame Game

Especially noteworthy is that the positions expressed in this document appear to be almost entirely the same as those of militant Islamists. The broad implication is that Israelis must become virtual pacifists; and, in the name of “faith, hope, and love,” relinquish their quest for security with no shred of evidence that the forces determined to destroy them will play by the same rules. The irrefutable fact is that Islamist radicals operate not only among Palestinian hard-liners but wherever they can in a worldwide war against free societies, particularly those with Judeo-Christian roots.

This document is permeated with inaccuracies. For example, the Christian exodus from the region cannot be blamed on Israel. Bethlehem, where the Kairos Palestine Document was forged, stands as a glaring testimonial to the drive by radical Muslims to send Christians fleeing for their lives. It is the well-documented and openly declared position of radical Islamists to clear the entire Middle East of its Christian presence. The aim is not restricted to the theoretical. The fact is that radical Islamists are the major persecutors of Christians in a host of countries the world over that have significant Muslim populations.

To suggest that Israel has no interest in peace is a monumental distortion of reality. Every overtone of reconciliation that Israel has ever made through unilateral land concessions (and there have been many, the Gaza giveaway being a prime example) and every Israeli expression of willingness to live side by side with a Palestinian state have been rebuffed by the Palestinian leadership. In short, Palestinian church leaders would do well to direct their ire in the right direction: toward the Islamic radicals who have hijacked control of the Palestinian people and contribute daily to their deprivation and misery.

Getting to the Root of the Problem

This issue of Israel My Glory is devoted to theology and the impact it has, positive and negative, in our society. The issue at hand provides dramatic evidence that doctrine matters. There is an overwhelming amount of theological animosity toward Israel, and Christians who support the right of a Jewish state to exist in its God-given land are treated as enemy number one of the Palestinian people. Those who hold to what has become known as Replacement Theology refuse to connect any biblical associations with Jewish rights to a modern homeland. Furthermore, they give no quarter to an agreement to disagree theological analysis of the question of Jewish rights. Indeed, the opposite is true, which seems to be the norm for them. They believe the church has replaced Israel and is now the true “Israel of God.” All promises in the Bible—Old and New Testaments—related to a literal, historical future for Israel are, for them, null and void.

Consider:

Furthermore, we know that certain theologians in the West try to attach a biblical and theological legitimacy to the infringement of our rights. Thus, the promises, according to their interpretation, have become a menace to our very existence. The “good news” in the Gospel itself has become a “harbinger of death” for us.

. . . We declare that any theology, seemingly based on the Bible or on faith or on history, that legitimizes the occupation, is far from Christian teachings, because it calls for violence and holy war in the name of God Almighty, subordinating God to temporary human interests, and distorting the divine image in the human beings living under both political and theological injustice.

. . . Our word to the Churches of the world . . . is a message of solidarity with those Christians and Churches who have suffered because of their advocacy for law and justice. However, it is also a call to repentance; to revisit fundamentalist theological positions that support certain unjust political options with regard to the Palestinian people. It is a call to stand alongside the oppressed and preserve the word of God as good news for all rather than turn it into a weapon with which to slay the oppressed.

These references to the “occupation” disavow the very existence of Israel as a country, the legitimacy of which Replacement Theology advocates deny. Beyond this, people who advocate, on biblical grounds, the right of Jewish people to a national home in the land God gave them are accused of using their theology as a “harbinger of
The Friends of Israel’s NEW online courses are designed to train and equip believers with the truth of God’s Word from its uniquely Jewish perspective. This worldwide distance-learning program offers individuals the ability to subscribe to a diversity of quality biblical teaching previously available only on a Bible college campus.

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Please visit www.foi.org/ijs for more information!
A Look at the Persecution of Christians Around the World

Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

by Elwood McQuaid

Compass Direct News reports that Christians in India were battered last year by radical Hindu extremists. A partial listing of the violent attacks confirmed that Christians were assaulted more than three times each week. As in many areas dominated by radical Muslims, Hindu militants employ the spurious accusation of “forcible conversions” against believers marked for attacks. The situation boils down to the question, “Who will the courts believe?” Most often they side against Christians falsely accused of forcing people to convert to Christianity.

Dr. John Dayal, a member of the government’s National Integration Council, said, “If 2007 and 2008 went down in history as the most blood-soaked ones in the history of modern Christianity in India, 2009 surely rates as the year of frustrating confrontations with the law and tardy governance and on justice for the victims of communal violence.”

In the state of Orissa, reported Compass Direct, where a violent rampage against Christians took place in 2008, there was little reason for believers to be encouraged. “The courts in Kandhamal make a mockery of the judicial process, and the murderers lord it over the witnesses and victims while judges and law look on,” Dayal said. “The church remains helpless.”

Christians in the Orissa district are still shaken from Christmas-week attacks in 2007 when at least four Christians were killed, 730 houses burned, and 95 churches destroyed. Few of those charged with violent crimes were brought to justice; and of those who were taken to court, few were punished.

Compass Direct reported, “Dr. Sajan K. George, national president of the Global Council of Indian Christians, said the growing number of acquittals was producing a culture of impunity, ‘where those who commit crimes against the Christian minority do not fear punishment by law.’”

A prime example is the violence in Kandhamal in August 2008 after right-wing Hindus falsely accused Christians of an assassination. Consequent violence resulted in 100 people killed, 4,640 houses burned, and 252 churches and 13 educational institutions destroyed, wrote Compass Direct.

A huge problem for believers in these countries is the success of their persecutors in leveling false charges of “forced conversions” that are too often taken by courts as justification for hostile action against Christians and their institutions. Complicating the problem is the Western world’s silence in refusing to protest the process that is leaving a bloody trail across countries where Western leaders could make a difference if they chose.

Buoyed by their successes, militant Hindus and Islamists will certainly ramp up their campaign of carnage against those who share a common faith in Jesus Christ. There can be no doubt that a genocidal, all-out war is being waged against Christians.

All of this has happened before, but countenancing reruns are of little comfort to the families and communities bearing the brunt of the suffering. The fact is that, after the reign of terror against the innocent by the Nazis, Russian Communists, and the Communist Chinese under Mao Zedong, people everywhere should see red flags when persecution is permitted or ignored. Such situations should be regarded as a threat to the stability of every country where the rule of law is taken seriously.

But will there be a wake-up call? The jury is out on this one.
Dispensationalism* and Replacement Theology* are not compatible. Many Christians today subscribe to Replacement Theology, which de-emphasizes prophecy and eschatology* in favor of promoting theological harmony and the solving of perceived personal, national, and global problems. Though we love our brothers in Christ, we must also pursue and uphold truth and correct doctrine.

Understanding why Replacement Theology is inadequate and why Dispensationalism provides the correct biblical viewpoint is extremely important. Dispensationalism provides the best understanding of God’s Word and His plan for His creation because it provides a superior hermeneutic,* harmonization of the Scriptures, and historiography.*

Dispensationalism Contrasted with Covenant Theology

There are three major forms of Replacement Theology: Covenant Amillennialism,* Covenant Postmillennialism,* and Covenant (also called Historic) Premillennialism.* All three are usually built on the foundation of Covenant Theology,* which views the church as replacing Israel in God’s overall plan for world history. Jewish circles call this doctrine Supersessionism.

Covenant Theology is based on allegorical interpretation* of Scripture. It views human history as God’s redemptive relationship with mankind based on two (or

* See glossary on page 16 for definition.
three) major theological covenants, and it emphasizes the “continuity” between Israel and the church— with continuity usually meaning the church replaces Israel.

The covenants are works (Gen. 2), grace (Gen. 3), and redemption. All are implied in Scripture, rather than explicit. The covenant of grace governs human history from the Fall to the Consummation as the major unifying construct of the system, making mankind’s redemption the overarching theme and unifying factor of God’s relationship with mankind.

All three forms minimize Israel’s future. Amillennialism sees there is no future, earthly Kingdom, Jewish or otherwise. Postmillennialism sees the church as Israel’s replacement, charged with bringing the Kingdom to this earth so Jesus can return and take over. Covenant Premillennialism teaches that the church is the promised Kingdom inaugurated by Jesus during His earthly ministry, sustained through the Tribulation, raptured, and established as some form of an earthly Kingdom that will admit many Jewish people in its latter stage.

In contrast, Dispensationalism is built on consistent, literal interpretation of Scripture. It views the world as a household administered by God for His own glory through a series of progressive but distinct dispensations, emphasizing the discontinuity between Israel and the church. The unifying theme is God’s plan to exemplify His love and glorify Himself through His creation as He answers Lucifer’s challenge lodged against His holiness (uniqueness): “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:14).

The structural elements of Dispensationalism are the dispensations, which theologian Charles Ryrie defined best as distinguishable economies in the outworking of God’s purpose. Man’s redemption is only one way God manifests His love and glorifies Himself. His program of sanctification—administered through progressive, distinguishable working relationships—allows believers in every dispensation to glorify God by responding to His revelation in loving obedience.

Furthermore, Dispensationalism emphasizes the discontinuity between Israel and the church. It affirms that God had a plan all along (though hidden in the Old Testament) to secure a multitude of Gentiles for His glory. The apostle Paul wrote that God wanted to “make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles” (Rom. 9:23–24). Then Paul quoted the Old Testament:

**As He says also in Hosea:** “I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ there they shall be called sons of the living God” (vv. 25–26).

Using the Greek term oikonomia exactly as it is used in Dispensationalism, Paul stated the point of his ministry:

**To make all see what is the fellowship oikonomia; administration, NASB** of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 3:9–11).

God’s eternal plan, unveiled on the heels of Israel’s rejection of its Messiah, does not replace Israel with the church but adds the church for a season.

Thus Dispensationalism sees human history as divinely revealed, distinguishable, progressive stewardships (much like stages in the development of one’s career) whereby people may glorify God by responding to His love with faithful obedience. Salvation is by grace through faith in every stage, but the sanctification stewardship changes.

### Dispensationalism Superior to Covenant Theology

Although all theological systems are man-made and therefore limited, Dispensationalism is preferred for the following reasons at least:

A **SUPERIOR HERMENEUTIC.** Some falsely suggest the distinction between literal and allegorical interpretation of Scripture is no longer an issue because all conservative, evangelical theologians purport to interpret literally. Allegorical interpretation is the method of interpreting a literary text by regarding its literal sense as a vehicle for a secondary, more “spiritual” meaning. Everyone acknowledges figures of speech; but whenever anyone takes figuratively any part of Scripture that the human and divine authors intended to be taken literally, allegorical interpretation occurs.

Although no interpreter is infallible, Replacement theologians are much more apt to interpret allegorically. The integrity of their theological system requires it. Dispensationalists are not always consistent, but they strive for literal interpretation of all passages. Obvious examples are the words *wolf* and *lamb* and *lion* and ox of Isaiah 65:25 and the Revelation 20:4–6 passage about the resurrection.

A second aspect of Dispensationalism’s superior hermeneutic is the relationship between biblical theology* and systematic theology.* While most agree with Ryrie that “Biblical Theology is foundational to Systematic Theology,”1 Dispensationalism and Replacement Theology use different procedures. Replacement Theology develops New Testament biblical theology first and then proceeds to establish the Old Testament biblical theology in light of the New Testament.

Theologian Michael Stallard correctly indicated that this methodology causes the Old Testament to be interpreted through the lens of the New Testament, resulting in three problems: (1) the possibility of minimizing Old Testament...
backgrounds, (2) subordination of grammatical-historical interpretation to the conclusions of New Testament biblical theology, and (3) failure to incorporate correct Old Testament biblical theology into one's systematic theology.²

Observing the progressive nature of revelation, dispensationalists are committed to developing their Old Testament biblical theology first, and in its own right. Such a reading understands the eternal nature of God's choice of Israel and of His covenants with and promises to His people. The church is then understood as a previously planned, temporary program during the “blindness in part [which] has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins’” (Rom. 11:25-27).

The choice of one's hermeneutic has far-reaching ramifications. Interpreting one passage allegorically opens the way to interpret others that way. Taking God at His Word, even when it is uncomfortable, is preferable to reinterpreting what He has said.

A Superior Harmonization. Dispensationalism also provides a superior harmonization of the Scriptures.

Replacement Theology struggles with how to utilize many Old Testament passages. Having a single governing covenant of grace for the entire Bible creates tension with the clearly cultural and ceremonial aspects of Old Testament revelation. The Mosaic Law is divided into moral, ceremonial, and civil categories. The difficulty of dealing with dietary laws and leprosy and their application to today, for example, tends to cause those passages to be ignored. Dispensationalism, on the other hand, with its emphasis on progressive, sanctifying relationships (dispensations), solves this problem by interpreting such passages in place.

While some are admittedly difficult for all (Genesis 38, for example), most passages can be interpreted in light of

continued on page 30
Earl D. Emmons of Pemberton, New Jersey, a longtime member of The Friends of Israel (FOI) board of trustees, entered the presence of his Lord and Savior on November 16 at age 96. He had suffered a serious stroke a few days earlier after enduring several debilitating ministrokes over the years.

"Words fall short in adequately expressing Earl Emmons’s vital contribution to The Friends of Israel through his service on our board," said Executive Director William E. Sutter. "He has been an active, wise, and consistently godly member. We know him as unfailingly faithful to Jesus Christ."

Earl joined the FOI board in 1973, retiring in 2001. In his almost 30 years of service, he held several key positions, including that of recording secretary.

A devout man of God, Earl and his wife, Jeanne, began to search for spiritual truth and meaning in life following the death of their toddler son, Earl Dallas, Jr., in 1943. Earl reaffirmed a commitment to Jesus Christ that he had made as a youth at the First Baptist Church in Pemberton; and with new assurance of his salvation, he began to devote his energies to the local church, where his deep love for God’s Word became evident to all.

He chaired the deacon board at Calvary Baptist Church in Pemberton for many years and served in leadership and teaching capacities at First Baptist, Calvary Baptist, Victory Baptist, and GraceWay Bible Church, all in New Jersey. He also taught a Bible study in his home for many years.

Mr. Emmons’s children remember him as a man who fervently loved Jesus and His church, consistently applied the principles of God’s Word, and faithfully met the needs of others. He modeled a life of hard work and faithful service.

One of the men he mentored was Rev. Thomas C. Simcox, Northeastern States director for The Friends of Israel. "I met Earl when I was 19 and joined Calvary Baptist Church," said Tom. "He prayed for me regularly when I was struggling financially to get through Philadelphia College of Bible [now Philadelphia Biblical University]. Earl would slip money into my pocket and take my car to his farm, where he had it filled with gasoline. I never said a word about my need, but Earl always knew and never failed to respond. He was a true man of God, and he will be greatly missed."

Mr. Emmons spent most of his life in the dairy industry, serving on the Burlington (NJ) County Farmers Cooperative (later Agway), the Burlington County Milk Producers Cooperative, and the New Jersey Milk Producers Association.

From 1960 to 1978 he was the Pemberton Township tax assessor. When he retired, the governor appointed him to the Burlington County Board of Taxation, where he served several terms totaling 15 years.

His wife, Jeanne Emmons, to whom he was married for almost 56 years, predeceased him, as did his son Donald who died in 2002. Mr. Emmons leaves two sons: Dr. Richard D. Emmons (married to Fran) who is senior pastor of GraceWay Bible Church in Hamilton Township, New Jersey, and a professor at Philadelphia Biblical University (PBU); and Walt (married to Brenda) of Pemberton, also with PBU. Dr. Emmons writes for Israel My Glory. Mr. Emmons also leaves his daughter-in-law Evelyn of Pemberton; a sister, Mrs. Mabel Cross, of Basking Ridge, New Jersey; eight grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.
Replacement Theology: The Black Sheep of Christendom (Part 1)
If you watch the news headlines, you may have read these: “Episcopal Church Is the Next to Shun Israel,” “Presbyterian Church to Justify Israel Divestment,” and “Methodist Church Renews Drive for Divestment From Israel.”

Divestment involves withdrawing investments from companies doing business with a particular nation in order to put economic pressure on the government. It was a technique used against South Africa to break apartheid. Over the years, some Protestant churches have asked people to stop investing in companies doing business with Israel based on their claim that Israel is a racist nation. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Israel is a democracy that freely gives the vote to both Jews and Arabs. Apartheid occurs when a minority race uses its power to take economic advantage of the majority of another race. Such is not the case in Israel.

In 2007 a Methodist women’s group wrote a report, sponsored by and paid for by the Methodist church, that referred to the founding of the State of Israel as the “original sin,” thus equating modern Israel with Adam and Eve’s rebellion against God. The report implied humanity sinned against God in creating the modern nation. It was a shocking statement.

The same report claims, “The Holocaust, and the impact of the Holocaust on Israel’s society, has caused hysteria and paranoia amongst Israelis.” The report not only treated the murder of 6 million people casually, as if it were a minor event, but also claimed Jewish people have blown it out of proportion. If an event in history had put 6 million Methodists to death, these women probably would have a different outlook on the Holocaust.

Then, of course, there is Jimmy Carter. The former U.S. president’s 2006 book, Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid, distorted facts, demonized Israel, and contained hundreds of falsehoods and fictional statements.

In light of all these events, perhaps you’ve asked yourself, Why are all of these Christians picking on Israel? What’s behind these attacks?

The answer is Replacement Theology, the belief the church has replaced physical Israel (the Jewish people) in the plan of God. Those who hold this view believe the church has become “spiritual Israel” and the inheritor of all the covenant promises God made to Israel. But they say the Jewish people retain all the curses.

Effects on the Church

In the Old Testament God often said, in effect, “Keep My covenant, and I’ll bless you; I’ll do all these good things for you. But if you do not keep My covenant, I will curse you; and these judgments will come upon you.” Replacement theologians take the blessings for themselves and leave the curses with Israel. Therefore, whenever they read Israel in Scripture, they replace it with church. The leadership of most mainline Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church hold to Replacement Theology.

Here are some implications of this belief:

- The Jewish people as a nation have no place in God’s future plan, and Israel has no future as a nation.
- There is no Tribulation or Millennial Kingdom. In fact, such prophecies become problematic, which is why Replacement theologians want us to see Israel not as a physical nation but as the church.
- The church begins with Abraham in Genesis 12, not at Pentecost in Acts 2. Old Testament Israel (not physical Israel, but only those who put their faith in God) are defined as the church.
- Old Testament Law still applies to the church because, if the church began with Abraham and continues today, then everything in the Old Testament still relates to the church. (The church, in this discussion, includes all denominations.)

Some churches, for example, have altars up front, in the center. Why? Because the Law requires sacrifice, and sacrifices go on an altar. Consequently, they view communion as the re-sacrifice of Christ, believing the elements mutate into the physical body and blood of Christ through transubstantiation.

Under the Law, a man needed an intercessor between himself and God. He could not go to God directly. Hence, some churches have priests rather than pastors.

Infant baptism replaces circumcision that, under the Law, placed a child under God’s covenant.

Have you ever heard Christians refer to Sunday as the Sabbath? In Scripture, Sabbath is sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. God defined it that way, telling Israel, “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work” (Ex. 20:9–10). So church leaders thought, Because we worship on the first day of the week, we’ll redefine Sabbath to be Sunday. It is commonly referred to as the “day of rest.” However, Sunday is the first day of the week, not the seventh. To refer to Sunday as the “Sabbath Day” is contrary to Scripture. There was a reason the church began to meet on the first day: it was the day our Lord arose from the dead.

All these church practices came about because of the belief that God replaced Israel with the church and that the Old Testament Law still applies to the church.

Replacement theologians make the grievous error of interpreting the Old Testament by reading the New Testament back into it. Doing so is the only way they can make their argument. However, if you take God’s Word progressively, in its literal and historical context, as God
revealed it to us, you will not believe in Replacement Theology.

Clearly, Replacement theologians believe the State of Israel has no theological reason to exist. They call it a “mistake in history” and see its creation as the “original sin.” Dispensationalists know better. And Dispensationalism makes better sense.

Understanding the Differences

Dispensationalism is a system of biblical interpretation that sees God working with mankind in different ways at different times in history. It is based on a consistent, literal interpretation of Scripture. While salvation has always been by grace through faith, dispensationalists believe the Bible teaches the ultimate purpose of history is not the salvation of man but, rather, the glorification of God. Dispensationalists believe God has two distinct programs for history: one for Israel and one for the church.

Dispensationalism, God began birthing Israel by calling Abraham and leading him to Canaan, often called the Holy Land. Then He brought the Israelites down to Egypt where they grew into a nation. By the time they fled Egypt, they numbered in the millions.

God led the Israelites into the wilderness and gave them the Mosaic Law, which covers the period of Old Testament history in which they were in the Promised Land. Then they were exiled because of disbelief and idolatry. Later God returned them to their land, where they remained for several hundred years before Christ’s First Coming. All this time, the Gentiles were in a period of ignorance.

Then came Christ’s First Advent, His death on the cross, and His burial and resurrection. Shortly thereafter the Jewish people were scattered, and the church began (Acts 2). Today we are in the Church Age. But the Bible says the church will be caught up and taken out of this world. We call that the Rapture. And with it, the Church Age will come to an end.

Many will come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ after the Rapture, but they will not be part of the church. The church (also called the bride of Christ) will be in heaven with its Bridegroom, Jesus.

After the Rapture, the seven-year Tribulation will begin. It has two purposes: (1) to bring Israel to repentance, reconciliation with its Messiah, and restoration as a nation; (2) to judge the Gentile nations for their rebellion against God and their treatment of the Jewish people.

At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will return to Earth and set up His Millennial Kingdom. He will confine Satan, restore Israel and elevate it above all nations, establish His throne in Jerusalem, and rule the world from there. Believing Gentiles who survive the Tribulation will enter the Millennial (1,000-year) Kingdom.

At the end of the thousand years, Satan will be freed and allowed to lead a final rebellion against God and the reigning Messiah, but he will be defeated and destroyed. Then will come the Great White Throne judgment of all unbelievers, followed by the appearance of the new heavens and new earth.

Replacement Theology. It teaches there are not two programs for history but only one and that Israel and the church began with Abraham’s call. Therefore, the Mosaic Law did not end with Christ but still applies to the church today.

Replacement theologians say that in Old Testament times, God worked through physical Israel; and in the New Testament He worked through so-called spiritual Israel, meaning the church. The Jews once were God’s Chosen People, but now they are the rejected people of covenant curses. The Gentiles who were ignorant in the Old Testament are now the chosen people.

There is no Tribulation or Millennium. They are not needed. In fact, the Millennial Kingdom becomes a real problem for churches that embrace Replacement Theology. They wrestled with it, and out of that struggle came Amillennialism: the belief that the Church Age is the Kingdom of God on Earth and that, at some point, Christ will return to judge sinners and take us to the eternal state—the new heavens and new earth. Amillennialism projects a negative outlook on life because it provides no resolution. The world continues until Christ comes back and judges it before taking believers to the new heavens and earth, and that’s that.

Later in church history, Postmillennialism came along. It contends the church is the active agent of change in the world; and as the church’s impact grows, the entire world will eventually believe in Christ, opening the doors for Christ’s return. This seems to be a more positive outlook, but it is not what the Bible teaches.

Replacement Theology has been the “black sheep” of Christendom because, over the past 2,000 years, it has led to countless acts of anti-Semitism by some in the church—and I cannot overemphasize the word countless. A tremendous amount of anti-Jewish violence has been committed by people who claimed to be “doing it for the Lord.” Jewish people have lived for centuries with the legacy of Christians persecuting them in the name of Christ. And it is because of Replacement Theology that Christians have justified their actions.

In the next article we will travel back through history to see how Replacement Theology became established in the church.

Visit fo.org/IMG extras to download the accompanying, printable chart.
## Abraham Called to the Land

Now the Lord had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you” (Gen. 12:1). Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land” (v. 7).

## God Owns the Land

The land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me (Lev. 25:23). The world is Mine, and all its fullness (Ps. 50:12).

Dt. 32:8–9; Ps. 24:1; 1 Cor.10:26

## A Warning for the Nations

I will also gather all nations . . . and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land (Joel 3:2).

Dt. 32:41–42; Ezek. 36:6–7; Obad. 10; Zech. 12:8–9

## A Guarantee for Israel’s Final Return

“For behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,” says the Lord. “And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it” (Jer. 30:3).

Dt. 30:4–5; Isa. 11:11–12; 35:10; 60:21; Jer. 16:14–15; Ezek. 11:17; 28:25–26; 36:24; Amos 9:14–15; Zech. 8:8

(Top panels, left to right: Richard Nowitz; 2–3, FOI Image Archive; Hanan Isachar/Israelimages. Bottom panels, left to right: FOI Image Archive; Israel Talby/Israelimages; FOI Image Archive; Duby Tal/Israelimages.)
A Specific Geographic Location

Look [Abraham] from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever (Gen. 13:14–15).

Gen. 15:18; 17:8; Jer. 7:7; 33:4–16; 50:19; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13–15

A Blessing to the Jewish People

They also took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us . . . saying, “It is a good land which the LORD our God is giving us” (Dt. 1:25).


An Irrevocable, Nontransferable Inheritance

The covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance” (Ps. 105:9–11).

Dt. 4:21, 38; 12:9; 25:19; 26:1; 30:20; 31:7; Jer. 7:7; 25:5; Rom. 11:29

An Eternal Possession

I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever (Jer. 7:7). Behold, I will make you [Jacob] fruitful and multiply you . . . and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession (Gen. 48:4).

Lev. 25:23; Ezek. 36:5

Charles E. McCracken is the Canadian director of FOI Gospel Ministry in Brampton, Ontario.
Israel's Primacy in God's Program

(Digital composition, Thomas E. Williams/EDI Image Archive)
The history of Israel began more than 4,000 years ago when God called Abraham in Ur of the Chaldeans, telling him to leave Ur and settle in the land of Canaan. There God made a covenant with him through which He would bless Abraham and his seed and launch a plan that would affect the entire world.

The Abrahamic Covenant incorporated a number of provisions, including four personal promises to Abraham: He (1) would be forged into a great nation, (2) be greatly blessed, (3) have his name made great, and (4) become a channel of blessing to the world (Gen. 12:2–3). Later all the promises were confirmed to and through Isaac and Jacob, the patriarchs of the Jewish people (26:1–5; 28:10–16).

The covenant also promised Gentiles spiritual and physical blessings contingent on their treatment of Abraham and his seed (meaning the Jews). Nations and individuals who committed anti-Semitic acts of hatred and persecution would be cursed and suffer God’s inevitable judgment (12:3). Nations that were good to the Jewish people (26:1–5; 28:10–16).

The Abrahamic Covenant’s promises would be expanded via three others made with Israel:

- **Land Covenant.** The land promise (Gen. 12:1; 13:14–17; 15:7; 17:7–8) was reaffirmed in the Land Covenant (Num. 34:1–12; Dt. 30:1–10).

- **Davidic Covenant.** The promise of seed (Gen. 17:4–8) was reaffirmed in the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:12–17; Ps. 89:3–4, 34–37; Isa. 9:6–7; Lk. 1:30–33).

- **New Covenant.** The promise of blessing (Gen. 12:2–3) was reaffirmed in the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31–34; 32:40; Ezek. 16:60–62; 34:25–31; 37:26–28; Heb. 8:6–13). Like the Abrahamic Covenant, these three covenants are unconditional and eternal and will be fulfilled in their entirety to Israel at Christ’s Second Coming.

## Israel’s Crucial Place in Prophecy

Scripture emphatically affirms that God selected Israel out of the good pleasure of His own will. He set Israel apart to be a holy, special people—a treasured possession—unto Himself. He did not select Israel because of its size, for it was the least of nations. Nor did He choose it because it was superior to others for the nation possessed no innate goodness, beauty, or desirability.

God selected Israel for two simple reasons: He loved it; and He had sworn an oath to its fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Dt. 7:6–8).

Scripture also reveals God selected the nation for three main purposes: (1) to be a people to worship Him in holiness and through which He would manifest His divine purposes and plan to the world; (2) to receive, record, and propagate God’s Word to the world (Rom. 3:1–2); and (3) to be the channel through which His divine Son, Jesus the Messiah, would make salvation available to lost humanity (Jn. 3:16; 4:22).

Through Abraham and his seed, God promised to establish His theocratic Kingdom (God’s rule) on Earth, the final form of which is to be implemented in and through Jesus the Messiah. At His First Advent, Jesus offered the Kingdom to Israel contingent on the nation’s repentance and acceptance of Him as the Messianic King (Mt. 4:17). Jesus confirmed, identified, and authenticated His authority and message as the Messiah of Israel through the miracles He performed. He alone was qualified to establish God’s theocratic Kingdom on Earth.

However, though many Jewish people accepted Jesus, Israel’s leadership rejected Him, attributing His miracles to Satan (12:24). So the offer of the Kingdom was postponed (not annulled) until Israel receives Him by faith. From that day forward, Christ changed His message from one of hope and rest (11:28) to one of judgment (21:33–44; 22:1–7; 23:37–24:2; Lk. 19:11–27; 21:20–24). The theocratic Kingdom will not be restored to Israel until Israel is reconciled to the Messiah at His Second Coming. Then Jesus will sit on David’s throne and reign over Israel, and His Kingdom will be established forever on Earth (Lk. 1:32–33).

Israel’s primacy overflows in both Old and New Testaments. Israel plays a crucial role in history and prophecy as God implements His redemptive purpose and plan for the world through the nation.

## Israel’s Crucible of Persecution

For the past 4,000 years, Satan has incited hatred and persecution of the Jewish people with the objective of annihilating them. Why? Because he knows God plans to destroy him through Jesus the Messiah. He thinks that, if he could destroy the Jewish people, he could prevent his demise and thwart God’s program for Israel and history. So he has used every means possible, both individuals (even Christians) and nations, to try to destroy the Jewish people.

His attempts are well documented in biblical and non-biblical literature. Anti-Semitism extends from Israel’s slavery in Egypt to today.

For example, in the Old Testament, Satan tried to annihilate Israel by using Pharaoh of Egypt. Pharaoh ordered the death of all Jewish newborn males. During Israel’s wilderness wandering, Satan tried to destroy Israel by using the Amalekites and Amorites, as well as King Balak and the prophet-for-hire, Balaam. Then he tried to use the Philistines, Canaanites, Midianites, Ammonites, Babylonians, and Romans. He also tried to use an anti-Semitic Persian bureaucrat named Haman (but Queen Esther saved the day) and the villainous Syrian ruler, Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), but the Maccabees prevailed.

Satan also tried to pollute and destroy the royal line of King David through whom the Messiah would be born. When this tactic failed, he tried to kill the Messiah at His birth (Mt.
2:16–18), then unsuccessfully tempted Him to sin (4:1–11). Later He motivated Jewish leaders to reject and plot His death (12:14, 24) and ultimately used the Roman Empire to crucify Him. This strategy also failed to destroy Jesus the Messiah. In A.D. 70, Rome besieged Jerusalem, killing 1.1 million Jews and enslaving 97,000. In 135, Rome put down a revolt led by Simon Bar-Kokhba, killed 500,000 Jewish people, and banished the rest from Jerusalem. Although Jewish people remained elsewhere in the land, the vast majority was scattered worldwide to suffer persecution greater and longer than any people in the history of mankind. Some of the worst attempts to brutalize and annihilate entire communities of Jewish people came from anti-Semitic elements within organized Christendom, including the Spanish Inquisition, the pogroms in Russia, and Adolf Hitler’s Germany and through organized terrorism worldwide for the past 19 centuries.

But Satan’s greatest effort will take place during the Great Tribulation when two-thirds of the world Jewish population will be killed (Dan. 9:27; Zech. 13:8; 14:1–2; Rev. 12:6, 13–17; 16:13–16). One-third of all humanity also will die (Rev. 9:18).

However, all Satan’s attempts to annihilate the Jewish people will fail, and he will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire to suffer eternally (20:10).

Israel has survived every satanic attempt to destroy it and will continue to do so (Isa. 54:17). God will preserve Israel and cause the nation to flourish in its own land, as He has promised, because it plays a primary role in implementing God’s theocratic Kingdom on Earth after Christ’s Second Coming.

David M. Levy is the director of International Ministries for The Friends of Israel.

Are You Amillennial, Premillennial, or Confused?

Then it’s time to clear things up. Dr. Charles L. Feinberg, one of the 20th century’s leading Hebrew-Christian scholars, does just that in his outstanding work, Millennium: The Two Major Views.

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The fourth dispensation, the dispensation of promise, extended from God’s call of Abraham to the giving of the Mosaic Law at Mount Sinai. The Scripture portion that covers this dispensation is Genesis 12 through Exodus 18.

Since man had failed to obey God on the basis of human conscience, the restraint by the Holy Spirit, and human government, God started a fourth dispensation by instituting promise as a new ruling factor. The fact that promise began as a significant factor with God’s special dealings with Abraham is made evident by such passages as Galatians 3:15–22 and Hebrews 6:13–15.

A principle is a ruling factor if it makes a difference in the way people live. God intended His promises to Abraham and his descendants to make a difference in the way they would live. Hebrews 11:8–30 demonstrates the fact that God’s promises did make such a difference in the lives of Abraham and his descendants. Thus promise functioned as a ruling factor.

This dispensation had four ruling factors that God used to govern Abraham and his descendants: human conscience, the restraint by the Holy Spirit, human government, plus divine promise. Dispensational theologians named the fourth dispensation after the new ruling factor, since that is the factor that distinguished it from the third dispensation of human government.

The special revelation that God gave to Abraham and his descendants for the fourth dispensation is recorded in Genesis 12:2–3; 13:14–17; 15:7–22; and 22:16–18. God made personal promises to Abraham: He would bless him, make his name great, give him many physical descendants, make him the father of a multitude of nations, give him the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and bless those who blessed him and curse those who cursed him.

God made national promises concerning Israel: He would bring Israel into existence as a nation and make it great, give Israel the land of Canaan forever, and establish the Abrahamic Covenant with the nation as an everlasting covenant.

God also made a universal promise: He would give blessing to all families of the earth through Abraham’s line of descent (the Redeemer would come through Israel).

The responsibility of Abraham and his descendants during the fourth dispensation was to obey God on the basis of human conscience, the restraint by the Holy Spirit, human government, and promise. This responsibility subjected Abraham and his descendants to the following test: Would they obey God on the basis of these four ruling factors?

Abraham and his descendants failed the test of the fourth dispensation. On several occasions they disobeyed God as the result of lapses of faith concerning the fulfillment of His promises. Abraham fathered Ishmael through Hagar. Twice he lied concerning his wife, Sarah. Isaac lied concerning Rebekah. Jacob was a great deceiver. The Jews did not return from Egypt to Canaan after the famine of Joseph’s time ended. Apparently they forgot that their destiny was related to the land of Canaan rather than Egypt.

Note: This article was excerpted from Renald E. Showers’ book There Really Is a Difference: A Comparison of Covenant and Dispensational Theology, published by The Friends of Israel. It is available in our online store, or you may order it by calling us at 800-345-8461.
In 1965 Hebrew National, a leading producer of kosher meat products, coined a slogan that has sold a lot of kosher meat: “We answer to a higher authority.” Its claim assures customers Hebrew National adheres to the strictest specifications known: God’s.

“We answering to a higher authority” could also serve as a slogan for many evangelicals, not because they keep kosher but because they strongly desire to be accountable before God.

The very word evangelical means “gospel” or “good news.” The gospel is the life-changing good news that Christ died for our sins. Because He took the punishment we deserve, we can stand by faith in God’s presence and dwell in His house forever.

In essence, evangelicals believe that, since “God so loved the world” (Jn. 3:16),
they should too. Proclaiming the gospel message of salvation is imbedded in the “DNA” of most evangelical Christians. And answering to a higher Authority compels them to proclaim the message of Jesus to everyone, including Jewish people.

In the past several years, Christian Zionism has become a highly visible movement. Evangelicals who believe God has irrevocably given the Promised Land to the Jewish people have planned and hosted many events to generate support for Israel. Yet many Jewish people remain suspicious. Scarred from a long history of anti-Semitism and forced conversions, the good news often seems like bad news to them. And Christian Zionism, coupled with the “gospel DNA,” merely seems like a devious attempt at conversion. However, unbeknownst to most Jewish people, it is doctrine that makes Christian Zionists so pro-Israel.

**Not All Christians Think Alike**

Although most evangelicals agree on the essence of the gospel, they disagree in the area of theology known as eschatology: the study of last things. A huge segment of Christianity holds to a doctrine known as Replacement Theology, which teaches that God has removed the Jewish people as His special people bound by a special land and replaced them with the church. This group believes God’s physical people have been replaced by God’s “spiritual people” and that God is finished with physical Israel.

Jews know this theology all too well. It has been the underlying cause of most of the evil, cruel, and bloodiest assaults against them for two thousand years. They call this theology Supersessionism. Supersessionists see themselves as the “new Israel.” Consequently, when they read in Scripture of God’s wonderful promises to Israel, they take the word Israel to mean the church.

Christian Zionists, on the other hand, are appalled at Replacement Theology. Theirs is a long history of taking literally the promises given by their higher Authority. They interpret Scripture using the literal-grammatical (also called plain, or normal) method and see a glorious future awaiting the Jewish people and their country of Israel.

Since Scripture calls the Jewish people “the apple of His eye” (Zech. 2:8), these evangelicals believe the Jewish people will one day live in their Promised Land forever. On the throne of David will be King Jesus who, when He returns to His country, will destroy His and Israel’s enemies and bring worldwide shalom (peace). This peace will be preceded by great Tribulation on Earth that will befall Jews and Gentiles alike.

**Standing With Israel**

Though disputes have long raged between these two evangelical groups over the meaning of the word Israel, most Jewish people paid little attention. There seemed to be scant reason for them to care because both still believed “only Jesus saves.” Over the past few years, however, Christian Zionism has become highly visible, noticed even by prominent leaders in Israel and Washington, DC.

One of the reasons is statistics. There are an estimated 20 million to 60 million Christian Zionists in the United States. They donate millions of dollars to organizations dedicated to supporting and advocating love for Israel. They read and listen to information about Israel published and broadcast by Christian Zionists, as well as by Jewish Zionists. They fund programs that help Jewish people make aliya (move to Israel), and they organize rallies to stand with Israel.

Numerous churches host “Honor Israel” days, inviting local rabbis and other key leaders from the Jewish community to demonstrate public support and love for Israel and the Jewish people. They travel to Israel in droves, seldom regarding travel alerts or personal safety. They volunteer to serve for weeks at a time on military bases in Israel, doing whatever they are asked. They participate in joint Christian-Jewish trips to Israel to promote solidarity.

Such activity has caused mixed but strong reactions among the Jewish people. After an “Honor Israel” day last year in the Midwest, several Jewish people made such comments as, “This is the greatest day of my Jewish life.” “Thank you for having a day like this for us.” “I am so full, and I know it is because of God.” “I felt that those people really love Israel.”

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**So What’s the Problem?**

The problem is that suspicion still exists because of the gospel. “This is just a Trojan horse,” said one person. “It’s a ploy to turn Jews into Christians.” “This is really an Inquisition with a smiley face.” The most often-voiced fear is this one: “They want the Jews [to be] in Israel so the Messiah will come, and all Jews will be killed.”

Dan Cohn-Sherbok, professor of Judaism at the University of Wales, wrote an article titled “Christian Zionism and the End of Judaism” in which he said, “Christian Zionists are looking to the day in which Israel will disappear in a nuclear Holocaust, and the Jewish faith will vanish from the earth.”

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said, “This is not support without strings. They would like to see us at the end of the day be Christians, so what good is it to have a strong Jewish state if at the end of whatever millennia we are to disappear as a people?”

David Brog provides a different Jewish view. In his book, Standing With Israel, Brog wrote,

> There is a wonderful irony in secular critics of Christian Zionism, typically Jewish, complaining about the great disasters that will befall them upon Christ’s Second Coming. These critics, of course, don’t actually believe there will be a Second Coming of Christ. If there will be no Second Coming, then there will be no mass conversion or death. So
what exactly are these critics worried about?

What are they worried about? Proselytizing. To the average Christian Zionist, proselytizing means sharing one’s faith. No divisiveness is seen in the command to preach the gospel to all creatures and love Israel unconditionally.

To the average Jewish person, however, proselytizing brings to mind forced conversions, anti-Semitism, and hate. Jews assume, “If you can’t wipe us out physically, as in the Holocaust, you’ll wipe us out by conversion.”

When a Jewish person asks an evangelical if he proselytizes, the evangelical thinks, I don’t try to force anyone to believe as I do. I just share my faith in Christ and let the Lord take it from there.

Because Christian Zionists answer to a higher Authority, they will continue to love Jewish people unconditionally. Their biblical worldview is that of a pessimistic optimist: pessimism about man’s future apart from God, optimism about the day when God will finally usher in a wonderful time of refreshing on the earth with Israel as His centerpiece.

Christian Zionists know that, despite the great and terrible days ahead, Israel has a glorious future in the land. And because they answer to a higher Authority, Christian Zionists will stand with Israel knowing full well they may be the only Christians standing. They know any “help” they might provide does nothing to change God’s plans. He will come when He is ready. After all, He is the highest Authority.

ENDNOTES

2 David Brog, Standing With Israel (Lake Mary, FL: Strang, 2006), 184.
3 Ibid., 184.

Steve Herzog is the director of North American Ministries for The Friends of Israel.

Upholding the Truth

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Upholding the Truth

how they were intended to teach or reflect the process of glorifying our loving God through the believers’ obedience to their given revelation. Eternal principles of divine truth may then be extracted from what God saw in or expected from His people, without damaging the literal nature of the text. Leviticus 14 detailed God’s concern for the “cleanness” of His people. Instead of adhering to the meticulous and often physical laws of holiness in the Mosaic economy, believers today should exercise the same concern for cleanness through a more adult relationship with the Holy Spirit who indwells them (Gal. 4:1–7).

A Superior Historiography. Dispensationalism provides a superior historiography. Dispensationalism’s meta-narrative is superior because it more accurately reflects the biblical revelation of God’s plan and intention. The prophet Jeremiah’s promise of a New Covenant clearly contrasts the new one with the old one mediated by Moses. This New Covenant will eventually cause God’s Word to be written on the very hearts of His people Israel, who had caused Him so much grief.

This promise means nothing if it is fulfilled with an entirely different people; Israel would be deprived of hope, and God’s grace would be diminished. Clearly the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel understood the promise of an earthly kingdom where God’s glory will fill the earth and His Chosen People will glorify Him voluntarily. None of these things happened at the Messiah’s First Coming.

Replacement Theology’s teaching that there is only a spiritual kingdom and/or that Jewish people are only minimally involved does not adequately reflect the historiography of God’s revelation. Jesus said He will return physically (Mt. 24:29–31) and assume His earthly throne (25:31–46), both teachings of which are tied directly to Daniel’s prophecy (24:15) and are Jewish in nature. If Jesus knew the Jewish Kingdom was going to be replaced, did He deliberately mislead His Jewish disciples by not telling them, a mere two days before His death?

Understanding that the Time of Jacob’s Trouble is still future—and that it will be followed by the Messiah’s visible return to establish His Jewish, earthly Kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital—is a superior historiography because it better reflects both Old and New Testament revelation. John clearly identified Jesus’ Kingdom as a Millennium (1,000 years) situated between the judgment of the Beast (Antichrist), False Prophet (Rev. 19:20), and Dragon (Satan; 20:1–3, 7–10) and between two resurrections (vv. 4–6, 11–15). If the second resurrection is physical and literal, then the first resurrection must be as well.

Dispensationalism’s literal interpretation sees God’s relationship with Abraham coming full circle as Jesus, the Second Adam and Son of David, fulfills the biblical covenants in Messiah’s earthly Millennial Kingdom.* After 1,000 years, this final earthly stewardship will be transferred to its ultimate, eternal form in the new heaven and earth.

ENDNOTES


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The Marvelous Age of Grace

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin.
—From the hymn “Grace Greater Than Our Sin” by Julia H. Johnston, 1911.

A
n amazing grace characterizes the present Church Age. This dispensation began with the Holy Spirit indwelling and sealing the brethren during the Jewish holiday of Shavuot, or Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4), and will culminate with the church’s sudden removal when Jesus returns in the air (1 Th. 4:17).

Today the church is God’s principle program to lead people to Him (Mt. 16:18). The church was a mystery (something hidden) during the Old Testament period but was later revealed, as the apostle Paul explained:

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel (Eph. 3:3–6).

Both Jewish and Gentile individuals form the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12–25). The purpose of the church is to glorify God and tell the world of God’s grace—a commodity not everyone understands.

Jesus said, “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn. 6:40). Yet, for many, the major transgression during this period is the rejection of God’s grace (2 Tim. 3:1–7).

American theologian Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871–1952), founder and first president of Dallas Theological Seminary, said grace “is not mercy or love.” He defined it as “what God may be free to do and indeed what He does accordingly for the lost after Christ has died on behalf of them. ‘By grace are ye saved’ (Eph. 2:8).”1

It is through grace that individuals obtain eternal salvation: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (vv. 8–9). It speaks of the good news of Christ: “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3–4). The precious blood of Christ purchased redemption for humanity (1 Pet. 1:19).

God gives His grace freely: “being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24). Grace provides a perfect position and unending peace with God through Christ (Col. 1:21). Yet still more benefits are associated with God’s gracious work during this age of grace, such as reconciliation; regeneration; justification; sanctification; and, eventually, glorification.

John Newton, author of the familiar hymn “Amazing Grace,” best described the personal reality of this marvelous age of grace: “I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once was, I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am.” 2

ENDNOTES

1 Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 7:178.
2 “Grace-Gratitude” <thegracetabernacle.org/quotes/Grace-Gratitude.htm>.

by Peter Colon, Southeastern States director for The Friends of Israel.

From the Diary of John Adams

John Adams, one of America’s Founding Fathers, served as the second president of the United States from 1797 to 1801. He recorded the following thought about the value of Christianity in his diary 20 years after he signed the Declaration of Independence:

One great advantage of the Christian religion is that it brings the great principle of the law of nature and nations—Love your neighbor as yourself, and do to others as you would that others should do to you—to the knowledge, belief, and veneration of the whole people. Children, servants, women and men, are all professors in the science of public as well as private morality. No other institution for education . . . could diffuse this kind of necessary information.

—August 14, 1796
Reflections on the public value of “the Christian Religion” show the Founding Fathers viewed Christianity not only as something of great spiritual merit, but also as a shaper of public virtue.

Adams obviously saw no inconsistency between the First Amendment’s prohibition against government doing anything “respecting an establishment of religion” on the one hand, and the acknowledgment that Christian

As a result, for the last 48 years, church-state separatists have labored feverishly to make sure the “wall of separation between church and state” erected by the Supreme Court continues to act as a de facto Berlin Wall, blocking traditional religious ideas from entering the secular haven of public education. Most Americans have instinctively known from the start that the Supreme Court got it wrong. John Adams’s reflections on the public value of “the Christian Religion” show the Founding Fathers viewed Christianity not only as something of great spiritual merit, but also as a shaper of public virtue.

Adams obviously saw no inconsistency between the First Amendment’s prohibition against government doing anything “respecting an establishment of religion” on the one hand, and the acknowledgment that Christian
principles were of vital importance to the fledgling United States on the other. Since the Bible is clearly the source of Christian principles, one would expect the courts to honor our Founders’ intent to treat biblical Christianity as, in Adams’s words, “necessary information” for the citizenry. Obviously, the opposite has occurred.

**The Bible and the Battle Lines**

In recent years some educators have taken a close look at the 1963 *Schenck* decision and concluded the Bible has not been banned from public education. *Schenck* continues to be the pole star by which court decisions are guided. Here is a quotation from it:

*It is insisted that, unless these religious exercises are permitted, a “religion of secularism” is established in the schools. We agree, of course, that the State may not establish a “religion of secularism” in the sense of affirmatively opposing or showing hostility to religion, thus “preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe.” . . . In addition, it might well be said that one’s education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment. But the exercises here do not fall into those categories. They are religious exercises, required by the States in violation of the command of the First Amendment that the Government maintain strict neutrality, neither aiding nor opposing religion.*

**Texas.** Needless to say, the separatists have not permitted the Bible-as-curriculum proponents to get off easy. The 2009–2010 school year is a good example. In Texas the legislature passed a law mandating Bible literacy in the state’s schools. Opponents say the law lacks sufficient guidelines. *The Dallas Morning News* quoted Mark Chancey, an associate professor of religious studies at Southern Methodist University, as saying that failure to provide a well-defined educational plan for the classes “is like sending a teacher into a minefield without a map.” Other critics were not so nuanced.

In a September 2009 online article titled “The Lies of Texas Are Upon You” in *The Huffington Post*, columnist James Moore ridiculed the entire state of Texas for permitting the Bible to enter the classroom. Sounding (perhaps intentionally) like a latter-day H. L. Mencken at the 1925 Scopes evolution trial, Moore declared, “So this is Texas, folks . . . where black presidents are not allowed to encourage our children, there are two sides to every story, even McCarthyism, Richard Nixon is the man that saved the world, and the bible [sic] is a text book, and Fox News is on every TV screen.” And all who disagree with him are considered right-wing bigots.

This battle has already seen numerous skirmishes. When schools in West Texas tried to use the Bible before the current state law was passed, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and People for the American Way filed a federal lawsuit to stop it. The schools had been using a curriculum developed by the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools (NCBCPS). The plaintiffs claimed the curriculum was “religiously biased” and was a covert attempt to “proselytize” students. The suit was settled, and school officials abandoned the NCBCPS curriculum. With the new Texas law in place, more lawsuits are likely.

**Idaho.** In Idaho a public charter school had planned to include the Bible in its curriculum, exploring its “literary” and “historical” values (using *Schenck* decision language). But the Idaho Public Charter School Commission nixed the idea in August 2009. The Alliance Defense Fund later filed a lawsuit in federal court on behalf of the school, arguing the Commission’s ban was exactly the type of “hostility” against religion the Supreme Court warned against in *Schenck*. That suit is still pending.

**Florida.** In 1998 the ACLU filed a lawsuit against the proposed use of a NCBCPS Bible curriculum in Lee County (Fort Myers) schools. It argued the proposed instruction violated the First Amendment Establishment Clause, claiming “the curriculum is in fact a sectarian and proselytizing tool.” Those two arguments—that Bible instruction is “sectarian” (taught from a Christian position) and a “proselytizing” opportunity (a veiled attempt to evangelize) are at the heart of the legal debate.

The school district was defended by the American Center for Law and Justice. The federal trial court ruled there was too little evidence that the Old Testament class would be conducted in an illegal manner, and it upheld that part of the curriculum. But it struck down the New Testament curriculum: “This Court too finds it difficult to conceive how the account of the resurrection or of miracles could be taught as secular history.”

**Avoiding the Minefield**

The Florida court’s reasoning is utterly confounding. The same decision noted (quoting from another decision on the same subject) several examples of how the Bible has independent, literary merit worthy of study and said many English terms derive from Scripture. If the Bible’s contribution to English literature and Western thought can be taught without violating the First Amendment, why can’t the resurrection be taught as an important issue in world history?

The courts have missed the point of teaching “history.” They wrongly assume that all instruction about Christ’s resurrection constitutes a “religious exercise,” which the Supreme Court forbids. They apparently have bought into the ACLU’s position that teaching about the resurrection is inherently “sectarian” and involves a covert attempt to evangelize.

Paradoxically, the Florida trial judge viewed Christ’s resurrection as “the central statement of the Christian religious faith.” So, to follow this logic, the only material that can be taught about biblical
Christianity is, ironically, the material that does not explain the most defining element of one of the world’s major religions.

If we contrast these types of New Testament battles with other religious studies in public school, we see a stunning dichotomy. A move is under way to launch a “comprehensive educational plan” that focuses on the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. It will be tested in New York City, California, New Jersey, Alabama, Indiana, Illinois, and Kansas. According to experts, “a range of viewpoints are reflected in the curriculum, including from Muslim scholars, to enrich the discussion.”5 Will the ACLU and People for the American Way suit there too? Hardly.

Further, California state law requires teaching Muslim history.4 What? Islam suitable there too? Hardly. Different from or the same as the Christian claim about Jesus being raised from the dead?

However, “objective” classroom presentation of Christian themes raises another issue. Should Christians want secular teachers dissecting Christian theology? I have no pat answer. But I do have some suggestions:

1. Know your school district. Know whether teachers will be required to exert a good-faith attempt not to imply hostility toward Christianity.

2. Make sure the instructional materials are age appropriate. The younger the students, the more the courts may deem them susceptible to “indoctrination.” So a higher degree of neutrality would probably be required.

3. Create a curriculum that is tailored to your district, so local school officials and the school district attorney will have some intellectual ownership over it. The trial court in the Florida case made a point of noting that the school district attorneys had repeatedly warned school officials about the potential illegality of the proposed, prepackaged curriculum.

4. Realize that perfect and absolute neutrality in the classroom is never possible. The key is to craft a curriculum that meets the Schenck requirement that it be “presented objectively.” If the materials lend themselves to an objective presentation, then the neutrality element will likely be satisfied.

Making the Case

Those who support a Bible-as-curriculum proposal need to remember they must be able to make the case to secular education officials. There are a number of academic references that could back up the appropriateness of both the literary and historical approaches to using the Bible. Using nondevotional, secular sources for your argument is essential. However, due to a concerted anti-evangelical bias in much of the academic world, you have to dig to find it. Here are two examples:

Regarding the importance of the Bible and Christian texts to the literary background of famous English writers (specifically Jonathan Swift and the inimitable Dr. Samuel Johnson), a lecturer at the Library of Congress noted, “Swift was reading the Bible, and Dr. Johnson the Book of Common Prayer before each was three.”7

On the issue of the importance of the Bible and Christian literature to the average American in the founding of the nation, one scholar noted, “Americans early on had stressed literacy in their daily, Bible-reading lives, and nearly every visitor from Europe was soon struck by the fact that even chambermaids and husbandrymen owned copies of Pilgrim’s Progress.”6

These types of citations from generally accepted sources, coupled with the acknowledgement by the courts that (at least in theory) knowledge of the Bible is indispensable to a well-rounded education, should be enough to get your foot in the door. Then the truly difficult work of generating an acceptable curriculum begins. And though there may be perfectly logical reasons why Christians might not want secular educators explaining the Bible to their children, the misguided belief that the First Amendment prohibits it should certainly not be one of them.

ENDNOTES


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We Have Heard This Before

As the world hears the gospel, more and more people will turn to Christ until Earth becomes a wonderful place of spirituality, peace, and righteousness. This position is called Postmillennialism; and people who hold to it consider it optimistic because it sees the world as getting better, with Christians at the forefront of making the planet a cleaner, greener, and more altruistic place to live. Such is the eschatology of the modern movement known as emergent church.

Emergent eschatology (doctrine of future things) is identical to the liberal Postmillennialism that flourished in the early 20th century. Postmillennialism is the view that Christ will return after the Kingdomage, which it defines as on Earth today in the body of the church. Postmillennialism does not hold to a future Messianic Kingdom or a future for Israel.

Conservative postmillennialists believe that, “through the proclamation of the gospel in the present age, an unprecedented number of people in the world—in fact, the vast majority—will turn to Christ and be saved.” The focus of God’s people, then, is to expand the Kingdom through the preaching of the gospel. As the world is increasingly evangelized, it will become a place of “spiritual prosperity, universal peace and righteousness, and economic well-being.” Loraine Boettner (1901–1990), a postmillennial theologian, summarized: Postmillennialism is that view of the last things which holds that the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals, that the world eventually is to be Christianized and that the return of Christ is to occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace commonly called the millennium.

Liberal Postmillennialism shares some of the same optimism as its conservative counterparts but directs its attention to social enhancement of the planet. Liberal postmillennialism focuses on societal transformation rather than personal conversion. Their “social gospel” sees the saving of society from social evil as the great purpose of the church. The mission of the church is not to preach the gospel to sinners in need of God’s great salvation, but, rather, to liberate mankind from poverty, racism, disease, war, and all kinds of injustice.

The similarity between liberal postmillenialism and emergent theology is striking. The Postmillennial system, which was nonexistent in the early days of church history, was originally systematized by liberal Unitarian minister Daniel Whitby (1638–1726). His system grew legs partly due to the optimism of the age, but it lost steam when the two world wars of the 20th century shattered dreams of the world progressively improving. Since that time a more realistic understanding of human development has set in, and most Christians recognize (at least they did until the emergent conversation began popular) that the earth is not only not moving toward utopia but is more likely closer to annihilation.

Emergent Kingdom theology—like its liberal, postmillennial predecessor—is based not so much on the observation of an improving world but on feelings of desperation. Emerging church leader Brian McLaren admitted many might see his Kingdom view as a mere pipe dream. But if that is so, he asked, “What do we have to look forward to if they’re right? Simply more of the same in human history?”

But truth does not emerge from groundless optimism or “what if” desperation; it emerges from Scripture. What God says about life now, the future, and the Kingdom is what matters. In answer to McLaren’s question, we have much to look forward to, for Christ will one day bring His Kingdom to Earth, at which time the very social and earthly issues that concern all of us will be made right.

But this Kingdom will come through the power of Christ, not the good deeds of men. It will come when He returns, not as a prelude to it. It will not only remedy societal wrongs, but it will usher in the worldwide righteousness and justice of Christ. We have much to look forward to when the Kingdom comes, but it will come as a result of God’s actions, not ours.
Christ’s high priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood because it is based on a New Covenant and operates in a heavenly sanctuary. When referring to the heavenly sanctuary, the author of Hebrews did not speak of the Solomonic Temple (destroyed in 586 B.C.) or the Herodian sanctuary. When referring to the heavenly sanctuary with a new service and is based on a once-for-all sacrifice, Christ’s ministry functions in a new copy of the heavenly one:

**Sanctuary of the Tabernacle**

The chapter begins by reviewing familiar facts about the Tabernacle’s sanctuary and service under the Mosaic Covenant, reminding readers the Hebrew sanctuary was merely a copy of the heavenly one:

*Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary, and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holy of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail (Heb. 9:1–5)*

Assuming readers were familiar with the Tabernacle, the author did not mention the courtyard or its surrounding curtain, gate, brazen altar, or laver. He did mention four pieces of furniture used in worship: the lampstand, table of showbread, golden censer, and the Ark of the Covenant. Keep in mind the service mentioned in the first (Mosaic) Covenant was divinely established by God (v. 1) and used by the priests to intercede on behalf of the people.

The Tabernacle proper was 15 feet wide, 45 feet long, and 15 feet high. It was divided into two sections: the sanctuary, or holy place, was 15 feet wide and 30 feet long; and the Holiest of All (Holy of Holies) was 15 feet square (vv. 2–3).

The sanctuary contained three pieces of furniture: the lampstand, table of showbread, and golden censer. The lampstand (v. 2, cf. Ex. 25:31–40) stood on the left (south) and was hand-hammered (not made from a mold) from a single talent of pure gold weighing 90 pounds (Ex. 37:17, 24). It had a center stem with three branches on each side, making it seven-pronged.

Light from the huge lampstand filled every corner of the sanctuary with a warm, shimmering brilliance, providing illumination for the priest as he ministered. It was the priest’s duty to care for the lampstand. He kept the lamps burning perpetually by filling them daily with pure olive oil (27:20–21). He trimmed each lamp every evening and morning (30:7–8) using pure gold tongs and snuff dishes to collect the used wicks (25:38).

The table for the showbread was made of acacia wood covered with gold (Heb. 9:2). A gold rim circled its top. Gold rings were placed at each corner, and gold-covered acacia-wood staves were placed through the rings to carry it. The table stood on the right (north) and was three feet long, one and a half feet wide, and two and three-tenths feet high (Ex. 25:23–28). Twelve cakes of unleavened bread containing about six pounds of flour were arranged weekly on the table in two rows of six each in an elaborate service. The bread represented the 12 tribes of Israel. It was called showbread (literally, “bread of the face,” or “bread of presence”) because it was set before the face, or presence, of Jehovah (who dwelt in the Holy of Holies) as a meal offering from the children of Israel (Lev. 24:8). God gazed with delight on the pure bread offering that sat continually before His face.

The censer was 36 inches high and 18 inches square. It was made of acacia wood covered with gold. It had a horn at each corner pointing outward, and a gold rim encircling the top, with gold rings at each corner. Gold-covered acacia-wood staves went through the rings to transport it (Ex. 30:1–4). The altar of incense was actually in the sanctuary in front of the veil (v. 6; 40:5), not in the Holy of Holies. But the high priest filled it with burning incense and took it into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:12–13).

The Holy of Holies, which had a huge “second veil” (Heb. 9:3) shielding its entrance, contained only the Ark of the...
Covenant. The Ark was a rectangular box, three feet nine inches long and two feet three inches wide and high, made of acacia wood overlaid with gold inside and out. It had a gold rim encircling its top, gold rings on the four corners, and staves of gold-covered acacia wood to carry it. The lid, called the mercy seat, was of pure gold. Two cherubim of gold stood on top of the Ark, facing each other. They looked down on the mercy seat, their wings touching, as they stretched out over its top (Ex. 25:10–22).

Hebrews 9:4 states the Ark contained three objects: “the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.” It has been suggested that a contradiction exists in Scripture because 1 Kings 8:9 says only the tablets of the Law were in the Ark. But there is no contradiction. Hebrews 9:4 describes the Ark’s original contents, while 1 Kings 8:9 records the contents at the time of Solomon’s Temple.

After describing the Tabernacle and its furnishings, the author made no mention of the Tabernacle’s relationship to or fulfillment in Christ because it was merely a type and shadow of Christ’s earthly ministry, which was already completed. Later in the chapter he focused on Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

**Service of the Tabernacle**

Hebrews 9:6–7 briefly describes the service of the sanctuary and Holy of Holies. Priests ministered daily in “the first part [sanctuary] of the tabernacle” (v. 6). Each evening and morning they trimmed and lit the golden lampstand that burned perpetually. They replaced and partook of the showbread every Sabbath, then ate the old bread; and they burned sweet incense evening and morning on the golden altar of incense, the ascending fragrance of which symbolized the worship and prayers of Israel to God.

The high priest alone entered the second room (Holy of Holies) only “once a year, not without blood” (v. 7). He did so on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the 10th day of Tishri (September/October). Divested of his royal, priestly garments and clothed only in white linen (Lev. 16:4), he parted the huge veil and entered the Holy of Holies to offer blood “for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance” (Heb. 9:7). It was necessary that he enter to offer blood, for “without shedding of blood there is no remission” of sin (v. 22; cf. Lev. 17:11).

This was either a day of judgment or life for the people of Israel. If the Lord did not accept the blood atonement, the high priest would die in the Holy of Holies; and the people would not have their sins covered. If the high priest emerged alive, God had accepted the blood atonement for Israel’s sin.

**Spiritual Significance of the Tabernacle**

The Tabernacle, along with its regulations, had been given by direct revelation from God. But it was designed only to be “symbolic [literally, “a parable”] for the present time” (Heb. 9:9). A parable is an earthly story used to illustrate or teach a spiritual truth. The ordered service of the Tabernacle, mediated through the Levitical priesthood, was used as an object lesson in which the Holy Spirit (v. 8) taught the true realities of God to Israel. There are three lessons here:

1. **Way to God.** The Holy Spirit taught, “The way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing” (v. 8). In other words, the way into the Holy of Holies was not disclosed until the inner veil between the two rooms was torn at Christ’s crucifixion. After that event, everyone had access through Christ into God’s presence. Opening the Holy of Holies was an indication to the Levitical priests that their ministry had been dissolved.

2. **Worship of God.** The Spirit taught that the Israelites could not be made perfect (brought into a right relationship with God) through the gifts and sacrifices they offered (v. 9). The sacrifices were powerless to remove sin. Thus worshipers experienced no peace but continually had guilty consciences (v. 9).

3. **Works of the priests’ service.** The Spirit also taught that such ordinances as “foods and drinks” and “various washings” were “fleshy” (v. 10). The word *fleshy* does not mean “sinful.” Rather, it indicates these sacrificial, ceremonial regulations lacked sufficient value because they removed only external defilement and depended solely on the strength of the flesh. In other words, the Tabernacle and its Levitical sacrificial system were temporary and utterly incapable of bringing the Israelites into a right standing before God.

They were provisionally imposed on Israel “until the time of reformation” (literally, “setting things right, a complete rectification”; v. 10). They could not set things right or restore mankind to a right relationship with God. The Tabernacle and its service were a temporary shadow, external figure, and parable used to represent spiritual truths and point people to a new and better program that God would establish through the ministry of Christ.

A new order was inaugurated when Christ offered Himself as the perfect and final Sacrifice for sin. He fulfilled all the types and shadows mentioned here and made it possible for God to expiate sin. The day of rectification came when the Temple veil was torn in half, opening the way for people to go directly to God through the blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sin. From that day forward, the Levitical system, along with its blood sacrifices, was set aside.

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Specific Reasons for God’s Anger and Wrath

Previously we saw that the ultimate reason for God’s anger and wrath is mankind’s arrogant rejection of Him as the Creator, sovereign Ruler, and Owner of the universe. Fallen humanity wants to be its own god, with total freedom from accountability to its sovereign Creator. As a result, God’s administrations of wrath solemnly remind people of ultimate reality; namely, that He, not they, is the ultimate Sovereign who determines their destiny now and in the future.

Now we will examine how the ultimate reason for God’s anger and wrath is expressed.

Specific Reasons for God’s Wrath Against Israel

The Bible reveals that Israel, the nation God chose for a unique, permanent relationship with Him (Dt. 7:6; 2 Sam. 7:23–24), gave Him many reasons to administer His wrath. As Moses exhorted the Israelites, “Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD” (Dt. 9:7).

Making and worshiping the golden calf at Horeb, while Moses received the Law of God.

They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, “This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!” And the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation” (Ex. 32:8–10).

Moses pleaded with God not to destroy the people, “So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people” (v. 14).

Complaining at Taberah because of adversity.

Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the LORD, the fire was quenched. So he called the name of the place Taberah, because the fire of the LORD had burned among them” (Num. 11:1–3).

Weeping for lack of meat, not satisfied with the manna God miraculously provided for them every day. Some yielded to intense craving for meat, greatly arousing God’s anger. So He provided meat. “But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving” (vv. 33–34; cf. Ps. 78:30–31).

Testing God. Ten of the 12 men sent to spy out the Promised Land brought back a negative report:

“The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.” So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt” (Num. 13:32–14:4).

God asked Moses, “How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?” (v. 11). As a result of their testing Him, God made them return to the wilderness for 40 years until everyone 20 and older who had murmured against Him died. Those people never entered the Promised Land (vv. 27–35).

As a result of that tragic experience, years later God gave the following exhortation to later generations of Israel:

Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers tested Me; they tried [tested] Me, though they
some deliverance. My wrath shall not destroy them, but I will grant them bled themselves; therefore I will not As a result, God said, “They have humbled themselves before God. Consequently, King Shishak of Egypt and a large Egyptian army came against Israel, captured Judah’s fortified cities, and came to Jerusalem. In light of this threat, Rehoboam and the leaders of Israel humbled themselves before God. As a result, God said, “They have humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance. My wrath shall not

Forsaking and shutting down the Temple, God’s dwelling place. Wrath came on Judah and Jerusalem because Judah’s leaders forsook the Temple and worshipped images and idols. A Syrian army came to Judah and Jerusalem, destroyed all the leaders, left King Joash severely wounded, and sent all the spoil to the king of Damascus. Later King Joash’s own servants killed him (24:17–25; 29:6–10).

Capturing and enslaving God’s people. Soldiers of the northern kingdom of Israel carried away 200,000 “women, sons, and daughters” of the southern Kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem, intending to make them slaves (28:8). A prophet of God warned them, “Return the captives, whom you have taken captive from your brethren, for the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you” (v. 11).

Having a proud heart that gave nothing to God in return for His favor. God’s wrath loomed over King Hezekiah, Judah, and Jerusalem because of Hezekiah’s proud heart. Later it turned away when the king and people humbled themselves before God (32:25–26).

Contracting marriages forbidden by God. Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, “You have transgressed and have taken pagan wives, adding to the guilt of Israel. Now therefore, make confession to the LORD God of your fathers, and do His will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the pagan wives.” Then all the assembly answered and said with a loud voice, “Yes! As you have said, so we must do. Let all those in our cities who have taken pagan wives come at appointed times, together with the elders and judges of their cities, until the fierce wrath of our God is turned away from us in this matter” (Ezra 10:10–12, 14).

Forsaking and burning incense to other gods. When the people of Israel were about to enter the Promised Land of Canaan, God warned, “Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the LORD’s anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you” (11:16–17).

Many years later, as a result of their not heeding that warning, God said, “Because they have forsoaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath shall be aroused against this place and shall not be quenched” (2 Ki. 22:17).

Helping the wicked and loving those who hate God. Good King Jehoshaphat of Judah was told God’s wrath was on him because he allied himself with wicked King Ahab of Israel in a war against Syria (2 Chr. 18:28—19:2).

Israel My Glory

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Does NY Times hate Israel?

While the world marveled at the speed and efficiency with which Israel responded to January’s Haitian disaster, *The New York Times* found fault.

The tiny Jewish state launched such a massive humanitarian relief effort in Haiti that even ABC News, NBC, and CNN offered praise. The Israel Defense Forces’ medical and rescue teams spent 13 days in the country devastated by earthquakes and treated more than 960 patients, conducted 294 successful surgeries, delivered 16 babies (including three caesarean sections), and pulled many from the ruins. It sent two jumbo jets carrying more than 220 doctors, nurses, engineers, and other personnel; and its field hospital was the first and finest in operation.

Yet *The New York Times* reported, “The left has complained that there is no reason to travel thousands of miles to help those in need—Gaza is an hour away. . . . The government has been trying to figure out how to make the most of the relatively rare positive news coverage, especially after the severe criticism it has faced over its Gaza offensive a year ago.”

In his article “The NYT can’t run anything positive about Israel,” Leo Rennert wrote in the online *American Thinker*, “Likening Haiti to Gaza is a totally irrelevant apples-and-oranges ploy.” Besides, he said, even when Israel imposed an economic blockade of Gaza, it still sent in 100 truckloads daily of food, medicine, and other basics. Plus it “admitted hundreds of injured and sick Gazans into Israel where they receive the same dedicated, advanced medical care that Haitians receive in Israel’s field hospital at Port-au-Prince.”

But apparently nothing Israel does will satisfy *The New York Times*, which has been owned since 1896 by the Jewish Ochs-Sulzberger family.

**Oil in the Negev?**

_**Arutz-7**—A joint venture near the Negev city of Arad has produced “preliminary indications” of an oil reserve. The three companies involved in drilling notified the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange that they found oil west of the Dead Sea but do not yet know if the quantities are commercial.

In December the Givot Olam Oil Exploration company announced it had found a very large amount of oil and gas below the city of Rosh HaAyin in central Israel. Recently, Noble Energy said it had discovered more than 3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the Mediterranean Sea, about 90 kilometers from Haifa.

**JNF donates 3,000 trees to PA**

_**Arutz-7**—A member of the board of the Jewish National Fund said “the system has gone haywire” after hearing reports that the venerable Zionist organization is donating 3,000 trees to the Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority (PA) for a new city near Ramallah. Benny Kashriel, mayor of Maaleh Adumim—which, along with the rest of Judea and Samaria, has been slapped with a freeze on new construction with the threat of arrest for breaking the ban—said, “The country has gone crazy when it plants trees while at the same time that it forbids Jews to build. The system does not know who it is representing—us, the Palestinian Authority or the Americans.”

**New security at Ben Gurion**

_**Arutz-7**—Israel has upgraded its international travel security with a new biometric screening system that is expected to significantly speed up security processing and check-ins at Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv.

The Unipass Airport Management System scans passports through a machine at the registration desk, where fingerprints and facial imaging samples are also recorded in order to create a biometric signature. A personal “smart card” created from the one-time process is then issued to the passenger.

The information stored on Unipass computers will be “fully secure” and inaccessible to outsiders, according to an official.

Each passenger will swipe his or her card and passport through a machine, which will then confirm the biometric match. A companion touch-screen panel will present a series of questions that will confirm the passenger’s identity and security status, a process that until now was carried out by human security personnel.

Staff members will be standing by to assist in case passengers run into difficulties with the machines—or fail the test. Those who fail, said an official, “will be taken aside by a guard for an indepth check before being allowed to proceed.”

Passengers who pass will proceed as usual to luggage security, where they will again swipe their Unipass cards and send their bags through the X-ray machine.

The third layer of security will come at the check-in counter, where again the Unipass will be swiped. At this point, passengers will have passed all initial security checks, hand luggage will be accepted for scanning, and travelers will swipe the Unipass for their fourth and final screening before heading for the duty-free shopping area, border control, and terminal gates.

Eventually, Unipass machines are expected to replace passport inspectors at the border control area. At present, biometric fingerprint scanners are available only for frequent flyers.
Each day, we as Christians are given the opportunity to glorify God. Using our time well, exercising the gifts the Holy Spirit has given us, and making wise use of the finances God has entrusted to us are only a few of the many ways in which we can honor Him.

One way we can glorify God beyond our time here on Earth is through a will. A will allows us to make sure that what the Lord has entrusted to us remains His when we no longer need it.

Sadly, it is reported that more than 50 percent of Americans (Christians included) have no legal will in force. This requires the laws of your state to intercede and make a will for you. Does your state know how you want your estate handled? Distributions are often made in ways that may be contrary to your wishes. In addition, your desire to see the Lord’s work benefited is likely to go unfulfilled.

If you would like to have a will written but don’t know where to start, let us help. We would like to send you our informative brochure Making a Will That Works at no cost and without obligation. It is our way of helping you become a wise steward over all the Lord has entrusted to you. To receive Making a Will, simply check the appropriate box on the envelope in this magazine; or write to Tom Geoghan at The Friends of Israel, P.O. Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08099.

ARUTZ-7—A delegation of the Rabbinical Congress for Peace (RCP) met with U.S. ambassador to Israel, James Cunningham, and told him it was time to try the biblical approach to the dispute over the land of Israel.

“The past 17 years have proven without a shadow of a doubt that every square inch ceded by Israel to the Palestinians was transformed into a platform of hatred and terrorism,” RCP Director Rabbi Avrohom Shmuel Lewin told the ambassador. “In other words, the ‘land for peace’ formula in the Israel-Palestinian context, besides being a formula that goes against the Divine will, is ineffective, obsolete, and an exercise in futility. Most of all it is a dangerous policy that only leads to bloodshed and instability in the region and harms vital American interests in the region as well,” Lewin said.

The delegation was headed by RCP chairman, Rabbi Joseph Gerlitzky, who presented the ambassador with the Halachic (Jewish legal) ruling signed by over 350 prominent rabbis in Israel that it is forbidden to give up even one inch of territory controlled by Israel today because it will bring bloodshed and instability to the region.

“In the name of the overwhelming majority of rabbis in Israel,” he said, “we request of you Mr. Ambassador, to convey our Halachic message to President Barack Obama that it is time for a complete reversal and reassessment of U.S. policy in the Middle East. The ‘land for peace’ policy never worked and harms U.S. interests in the region and the world at large.”

The ambassador was visibly moved by Rabbi Sholom Gold, a leading rabbi in Jerusalem, who described the suffering the Jewish people have endured ever since the implementation of the Oslo Accords and the agreements that followed. “It’s all a play of words, there is no peace process,” he said. “From the day that we started conceding and withdrawing we did not have one day of rest and peace. Why should our enemies want to make peace with us when they see that with terrorism they get what they want? Even the U.S., Israel’s supposedly best friend, sides with them in demanding a freeze and evacuation of settlements. Is the triumph of Arab terror one of American interests?” Gold asked.

Rabbi Dov Lior said, “God gave the U.S. the power and influence to affect the rest of the world and supporting Israel is the key to America’s success.”

“You must switch the entire approach to the situation,” said Rabbi Gerlitzky. “We all believe in the Holy Bible and up until now we tried every formula except for that which is delineated in the Bible. Let’s try it and who knows, Mr. Ambassador, maybe this is your defining moment, that God Almighty has placed you in this capacity in order to precipitate a new course which will bring a true peace to the entire region.”
We often have many surprises in life. And so it was one week when a neighbor came to my home to confront me about my faith in Christ. He was not friendly and was full of confidence that he could outsmart me and show his friends how he fights against those of us who believe in Jesus. In fact, making trouble for us is his greatest joy.

So he began to insult me. Then he asked, “Can you give me the answer to my question? What is the greatest wisdom on Earth? Since you say you worship God, tell me what is written in the Holy Bible. Can you give me the correct answer?”

I replied, “You call yourself a good man who worships the Lord according to what is written in the Bible. So why ask me this question? You tell me what is written in the Bible.”

“But I want you to give me the answer,” he said. “What does God want us to do?”

I told him I would indeed answer him from the Bible. “I do not do as you do. You spend your life reading fictitious stories composed by rabbis. And you believe the stories and worship the rabbis, rather than follow what is written in God’s Word. You think you are full of wisdom, but you are very far from faith in the Lord. You worship men instead of God, and you believe falsehoods instead of truth.”

“I know in whom you have believed,” he said. “You believe in This One,” meaning Jesus.

Soon his friends arrived to help him. Now he was even more confident. One asked, “Show us about whom you have believed. Is it written about Him in the Bible?”

“Ah. Now we have come to an important point,” I said. And I read to them from Isaiah 53:

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (vv. 5–6, 12).

Immediately they all began jumping up and down. “Where is this written in the Bible?” they demanded. “You have made this up! This is not in the Bible; and if our rabbis were here, they would put you in your place!”

“If I show you where this is written,” I asked, “what will you say?”

“We would have to think about what to do,” one said.

“I did not write the Bible. Here. Take this and read for yourself,” I said, handing them my Bible. “I have read this portion to many people just like you.” So they began to read. And they
began to open their eyes and, with time, their hearts.

After a while one said, “You must be a man of wisdom. So, do you have a good answer for us about wisdom?”

“My answer is also from the Bible,” I replied. “It is what the Lord says, not what I say.” They were all interested to know what I would read. This time I gave the Bible to the man who was so much against me. His friends had started listening to me, so the man told them to be careful and not speak to me because I was dangerous.

But they wanted to know what the Bible said. So I read, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 111:10).

After that they started to ask me many questions and wanted to know where I learned about faith. I told them I read the Bible. And because I know the Lord, I am full of wisdom and try to do His will. I also told them He told His servants, “Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves” (Lk. 10:3).

Then they became angry and hostile: “But people who believe in This One, as you do, are no longer Israelis and have no right to be here!”

“Is that so? And how about you?” I asked. “You say you are such faithful Israelis. Have you fought for this country in all the many wars we have had? Did you fight in the War of Independence in 1948?” Of course, none of them fought in any wars because the ultra-Orthodox do not join the military.

“I suppose you will tell us that you took part in all those wars,” one said sarcastically.

So I showed them my army papers. Then they began to listen more intently and asked many questions. And they also wanted to know how I came to know Jesus as my Savior.

So I opened my Bible and taught them about the One who was wounded for their transgressions. We had a long conversation. It was a big surprise—and a welcome one.