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Imperishable Remnants
by Elwood McQuaid

There was never a time when all of Israel rebelled against God. A remnant has always been faithful. Today twin remnants form a marvelous union of grace.

That ‘Chunk of Dirt’
They Call Home
by Charles E. McCracken

Does God really care where the Jewish people live? Why don’t they simply move their homeland to somewhere less controversial? Yes, God cares. And here’s why.

Facing the Goliath
of the Liberal Media (Part 2)
by Craig L. Parshall

The news media has called Christians everything from demented to stupid to downright evil. If you aren’t aware of what’s happening, it’s time to read this and smell the slander.

Hamas: The Haters of Israel
by David Dolan

Where did this terrorist organization come from and what is its agenda? Here’s the information you won’t get on the evening news.

The Trouble With Preterism
by Thomas Ice

Has all prophecy been fulfilled? Preterists say yes, God has done it all. Such skewed theology is not only bad for Israel, it’s bad for the church as well.

Ask yourself these questions: Is it over prophetically for Israel? Did God close the book on Israel’s future when the Romans destroyed Israel in A.D. 70? The answer is found in an insightful article by Dr. Thomas Ice, who sets the record straight, exposing the errors of a theological mutation called Preterism.

Also in this issue David Dolan shows why the Hamas terror group, with its stranglehold on the people of the Gaza Strip and its diabolical hatred of Israel, will never make peace with the Jewish people. These articles, along with vital knowledge about the Abrahamic Covenant and the Millennial Temple, provide indispensable information you will not get from the secular media. Here are discernment for living and real hope for the future. Our cover is of Israel—an aerial view of the Old City of Jerusalem and its environs (Duby Tal/Albatross/Israelimages).
Have you noticed the Institute of Jewish Studies advertisement on the inside front cover of this issue of Israel My Glory? We have an exciting development! The Friends of Israel Institute of Jewish Studies (IJS) will go worldwide in September with an Internet-based, distance-learning program that will dramatically improve your access to our school’s outstanding teaching. Beginning this fall, you can enroll in IJS online and take advantage of affordable courses leading to a Certificate in Jewish Studies.

The IJS program has been tailored to meet the varying needs of students everywhere. Take one course at a time, or pursue an accelerated schedule of courses. The decision is strictly yours.

Since its inception more than 20 years ago, IJS has offered a unique program that God has used to transform lives. Through IJS you’ll become acquainted with the Jewish background of Scripture, including Jewish history and culture; the uniqueness of Israel—its land, history, geography, and place in world affairs; and the vital role Israel and the Jewish people play in redemptive history.

You’ll also learn the critical importance of interpreting Scripture literally. In an age when more and more people spiritualize, allegorize, minimize, and trivialize God’s Word, you’ll learn Scripture in its context for a proper understanding of the entire Bible, including prophecy. The Bible will come alive in your heart as you discover how God’s plan of salvation throughout the ages relates to His plan for the future. IJS will challenge your spiritual priorities and your goals for life and ministry.

The Institute of Jewish Studies’ new Internet-based, distance-learning program will make Friends of Israel’s teaching accessible anytime and anywhere by removing the limitations of geography, employment, travel, and family commitments. Even though you may have a difficult work schedule, the program’s flexibility will enable you to study and complete your assignments whenever it’s convenient for you. The learning environment will be interactive, as you will be guided by dedicated faculty—many of whom have taught in previous IJS programs.

Why is The Friends of Israel expanding IJS? Over the years we have received a multitude of inquiries and comments from people expressing a sincere interest in obtaining an IJS education that would be both affordable and convenient. More than two years ago, we earnestly began planning for distance learning, and The Friends of Israel board of trustees made a commitment to take IJS to the world.

Since it was founded in 1986 at our international headquarters, the Institute of Jewish Studies has been dedicated to training men and women to declare God’s Word concerning His love for the Jewish people and their role in His plan of salvation for the world. In 1996 The Friends of Israel and Philadelphia Biblical University (PBU) agreed to relocate the school to PBU’s campus, where it became known as The Friends of Israel Institute of Jewish Studies, a school of Philadelphia Biblical University.

Now IJS is on the move again! Instead of being geographically restricted to a specific location, we’ll be coming to you online, wherever you are in the world. And we thank God in advance for the great things He plans to accomplish.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this new IJS educational opportunity, check out the IJS advertisement on the inside front cover, or log on to www.foi.org/IJS for additional information.

William E. Sutter is the executive director of The Friends of Israel.
have surrendered its only opportunity to become energy independent. The oil reserves had become the country’s largest single source of energy, supplying approximately one half of Israel’s needs. Experts estimated that the untapped reserves in the Alma fields were worth some $100 billion and projected that by 1990, the country would achieve self-sufficiency in energy. But peace was more precious than oil; so the Alma and its black gold were gifted to the Egyptians. In a sense, the Israelis cast their oil upon the sands of Egypt in the hope that someday the investment would bring reward. For three decades that hope faded steadily, and little Israel was forced to depend on other sources. But always lurking in the background was the thought that somewhere, somehow, Israel would tap into the right spot and discover the energy that could transform the future of the Promised Land.

In January, Noble Energy, Inc., of Houston, Texas, announced the discovery of three massive gas reserves off the coast of Haifa. Noble Energy president and CEO, Charles D. Davidson, quoted in The Jerusalem Post, announced that the company is “extremely excited by the results. This is one of the most significant prospects that we have ever tested and appears to be the largest discovery in the company’s history.”

Yitzhak Tshuva, owner of the Delek Group Ltd., one of the owners of the well, was also ecstatic. The Post said Tshuva declared, “I have no doubt that this is a holiday for the State of Israel. We will no longer be dependent [on foreign sources] for our gas, and will even export. We are dealing with inconceivably huge quantities; Israel now has a solution for the future generations.”

So confident are officials in the significance of the find that plans to construct a coal-fired power plant in Ashkelon have been put on hold. And if the discovery proves to be as massive as is believed, the benefit to Israel is incalculable.

Israel cast its bread upon the waters and may finally have found it after many days. But what else can we expect? Israel is the Land of Promise—promises that are not based on wishful thinking. The Lord has designated Israel as His land, graced by irrevocable assurances of a plentiful supply for every contingency. Consequently, for every sacrifice Israelis have made, or will make in the future, the dividends will not only bless His Chosen People but, in the end, be a fountain of blessing for the entire world.

Of one thing we can be certain: This discovery is only a small token of what lies beneath the soil and seas of Israel. Archaeology, industry, and exploration of resources continue to cause us to marvel and understand more fully His purposes. And, above all, the resilience and ingenuity of the People of the Book continue to assure us that what God promised, He will surely perform.

by Elwood McQuaid
The ‘Danger’ of Christian Zionism

“Christian Zionism” is a dangerous movement that distorts the teachings of the Church, fosters fear and hatred of Muslims and non-Western Christians, and has negative consequences for Middle East Peace.

Thus read the first line of a December 2008 news release from the National Council of Churches (NCC). So exercised is this liberal federation of mainline denominations, which claims to represent some 35 member communions, that a brochure titled Why We Should Be Concerned About Christian Zionism has been published by its Interfaith Relations Commission.

The brochure purports to define Christian Zionism both broadly and narrowly. The broad frame: Christian Zionists recognize and therefore endorse the national revival of the Jewish people and the modern State of Israel as a legitimate factor in the divine plan.

“More narrowly defined,” it reads, “Christian Zionism is an ideology grounded in beliefs which consider the State of Israel to be divinely ordained and scripturally determined with a central role in ushering in the end of history, where unconverted Jews and unbelievers (including Christians who are considered to be of questionable status) are judged by God’s wrath. It is the narrower form that causes concern.” Five concerns are listed:

- It is a movement with negative consequences for Middle East peace
- It fosters fear and hatred of Muslims and non-Western Christians
- It can lead to the dehumanization of Israelis and Palestinians
- It is not based on traditional teaching or doctrines of the church
- Evangelical Christians are concerned

In sum, evangelicals who endorse the existence of the modern State of Israel as biblically documented, internationally legal, and morally justified are, according to the NCC, the real troublemakers in the world of religion and, more specifically, Israel and the Middle East.

Few accusations by those who claim to be frontline seekers of peace and tranquility could be more slanderous or perverse. Furthermore, in addition to other gross inaccuracies in the brochure, there is this one: Christian Zionists “treat Israelis and Palestinians not as neighbors to be loved, but as pawns in a cosmic drama of divine vengeance and retribution. The conclusion of this drama involves the death of all non-Christians, including Jews, through apocalyptic warfare or divine judgment.”

No genuine Christian Zionist can justifiably be accused of “the dehumanization of Israelis and Palestinians.” The very hint of such an accusation is preposterous.

Sadly, the clarifying paragraphs of the brochure reveal the guts of an agenda based more on reactionary bigotry than scholarly research and legitimate observation. It is but one more example of an organization that has consistently endorsed, defended, and enabled the most radical elements in society while targeting those with whom it disagrees. Never mind the protestations about an inclusive, loving embrace for people of all faiths, stripes, or distinctions.

Mark D. Tooley, director of the United Methodist committee at the Institute on Religion and Democracy, put his finger on the problem. In an article titled “Christian Zionists: The Real Terrorists,” published in December in FrontPageMagazine.com, he wrote, What actually frustrates the NCC is that pro-Israel sentiment in the U.S.—which includes but is far from restricted to evangelicals—has prevented the U.S. from forcing Israel into surrender and a disastrous settlement. A 2003 Pew poll showed that U.S. white evangelicals favored Israel over the Palestinians by 54 to 6 percent, compared to general American support, which tips toward Israel by a robust 41-to-13 percent. Mainline Protestants and Catholics favored Israel by two-to-one margins. More than 60 percent of evangelicals thought Israel would play a role in the Second Coming, along with 21 percent of Mainline Protestants and one quarter of Roman Catholics.

That Americans as a whole . . . are more partial to Israel than the Palestinian cause is informed not just by Israel’s role in the Bible but by modern history. Democratic Israel is seen as a miraculous regathering of an ancient people into a successful nation state. The Palestinians, who have never had a nation, often seem more enthusiastic about destroying their Jewish neighbors than creating a country of their own.

And what about the claim that Christian Zionists ignore or minimize the suffering of Palestinian Christians, believers in Iraq and Iran, and Muslims under such radical Islamist rules as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the horrifically murderous Sudanese Muslims? Take a look at who is praying, reaching out, rescuing, and speaking out for these beleaguered people. You’ll find that a large majority are Zionist Christians who understand what is going on and other believers, many in mainline churches, whose compassionate convictions are at odds with their leaders’ prejudices.

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preposterous proposal has been floated since the war in Gaza. It was provoked by Hamas terrorists and slanted in their favor by the international press. Left-wing politicians, Arabs, and even elements in the UN are calling for war-crimes trials of Israeli soldiers because of collateral damage to civilians during the recent fighting.

It’s the old story of the victim being cast as the aggressor. Neglected is the well-documented fact that Hamas—a true war-crimes candidate—deliberately used Palestinian civilians as human shields while dumping thousands of rockets indiscriminately on Israeli citizens until Israel was fed up enough to respond.

Nevertheless, in Britain, for example, courts can arrest foreigners accused of war crimes and force them to stand trial. In fact, some retired and active-duty Israel Defense Forces (IDF) officers have canceled trips to England because complaints have been filed against them. Alarmingly, parts of Europe are now so awash in malicious anti-Semitism that graffiti and placards declare, “Jews, return to the ovens!”

How, in the realm of reason, common sense, and rational thinking can such bizarre actions be explained? The answer is as old as Jewry itself: Hatred for Israel and the Jewish people is satanically inspired. The fantasy of the “final solution to the Jewish problem” did not originate with Hitler and the Nazis. It is the story of the ages. And you can be sure it will not abate with a new age of reason or promises of change and hope by feeble politicians.

Most grievous is the theological anti-Semitism that has discolored much of the church’s history. The Christ-killer stigma that Jewish people have endured for millennia has not gone out of fashion. Excising Israel from the huge segment of the Bible delineating God’s promises to the Chosen People—past, present, and future—is a popular trend today among Protestantism’s theological luminaries. The growing Replacement Theology mutation of God’s Word gives evidence that even some touted evangelical leaders have followed the pack of “God is through with Israel” ranters.

Another Side of the Story

Perhaps one of the greatest untold, or at least underemphasized, truths of the Bible is God’s abiding love for the people He has chosen to call His own. That story is wrapped in grace and provides a profound exhibition of divine exactitude. And though it is often asserted that the whole of Israel has been swept aside because of intermittent lapses into disobedience, such is not the case. Nor does the Lord love the Jewish people any less now than He did at first.

It is a fact needed to be heard that, despite times when the vast majority of Israelites fell into disobedience, the entire nation never did. There has always been a distinguishable remnant that lived in fidelity to Jehovah. For instance,

Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name. “They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him” (Mal. 3:16–17).

It was a dark day in Israel’s history when those words were penned. Many within the nation had departed from the God who had made them. The distinguishing comment of those who chose that precarious road was, “It is useless to serve God” (v. 14).

However, Malachi 3 in its entirety tells the whole story, one that is not merely a consummate exhibition of rebellion and rejection. It speaks of the Redeemer’s provision and purposes; the nation’s final reconciliation and cleansing; and the precious and enduring remnant, reflecting...
the spirit of Job during his deepest time of testing: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15).

A favorite of mine, perhaps because of my years as a pastor, is the account in 1 Kings of the prophet Elijah hustling into the wilderness, fearing that the sword handlers of Queen Jezebel, the notorious wife of Israel’s King Ahab, were hot on his trail. Tucked up under a juniper tree, he lamented, “It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life. . . . I alone am left; and they seek to take my life” (19:4, 10). The pouting prophet was unaware that he was not alone. There was a healthy remnant at God’s disposal: “Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him” (v. 18).

Every time I read the accounts of these godly people who, against all odds, clung to the hope of hopes contained in the promises of God, I am encouraged and inspired. I visualize aged Simeon, shuffling along in the Temple: “And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him” (Lk. 2:25). That longing was bound up in the promise that he would not pass from this world until he had seen the Lord’s Christ; and Simeon saw that promise realized in the face of Jesus.

Think of it. Rome held Israel and its people in a death grip. Corrupt leaders controlled the very Temple Simeon frequented. Yet Simeon remained faithful. And this saintly Jewish man was not alone. God was, in fact, very much on the premises, as were others of a remnant that refused to stop believing. Aged Anna, a daughter of the once-scattered tribe of Asher, “did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (vv. 37–38).

All who looked for redemption in Jerusalem? Yes. We hear much about Jesus’ enemies in and around the Temple, but there also was a band of believers in the coming Consolation. Even within the elitist hierarchy of the Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus possessed a spiritual sensitivity that the majority of their colleagues lacked.

Have you ever wondered about the huge numbers of Jewish people from all parts of the known world who attended the celebration of Pentecost (Shavuot) when the apostle Peter delivered his sermon? Scripture says 3,000 immediately believed on the risen Messiah whom Peter proclaimed (Acts 2:41). A short time later, “the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith” (6:7).

The truth is that, contrary to what many assume, there was never a time when all of Israel was in rebellion against God. A believing remnant, though often small, was always there.

Two Remnants, One Fabric

Today’s church is a body of twin remnants of Jews and Gentiles. It is not a Gentile institution; and when a Jewish person becomes a believer in Jesus, he or she does not become a Gentile. Nor, for that matter, is it an extension of Judaism. Gentiles are not transformed into Jews, nor do they become a new branch or extension of Judaism. The church is unique.

The book of Ephesians explains the union:

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation (“dividing wall of hostility,” NIV). Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (2:14, 19–20).

This union of grace explains a longstanding enigma: How would God bless the Gentiles through the Jewish people, as He promised in His Word? The answer is, “The Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel” (3:6).

This is the wonder of the entire process. A Jewish Messiah sovereignly

An unknown artist’s interpretation of the prophet Elijah rebuking King Ahab (The Print Collector/Heritage-Images/Imagestate).
decided to invade humanity to bring to fruition all that the patriarchs and prophets had been directed to proclaim concerning Him and His people. It all happened, as Holy Writ said it would.

What was not as clearly anticipated was that God would open the door of grace to undeserving Gentiles as well: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). It is to the great “whoever” that God offers the peace that binds us and that has rewritten the story of humanity.

It is interesting, if not unsettling, that true Christians should be reviled as enemies of the Jewish people. Yet we are accused of anxiously awaiting the day when Israel and the Jewish people will be crushed and forced to accept a religious/political agenda concocted by spiteful Gentile suppressionists. Admittedly, the Bible spells out the dismal issues of the last days. But you can be certain that people who for centuries have reached out in love and friendship to the Jewish community are not standing on the sidelines cheering for God to kill the Jews. You’ll never see a bona fide, Bible-believing Christian holding a sign that reads, “Jews to the ovens.”

Beloved Enemies

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

Those who castigate Bible-believing Gentiles for believing Israel is very much in the picture should take the time to read Romans 11. God has obligated the Gentiles to appreciate the Jewish people, express humble gratitude for being grafted into His family by grace, and remember that the current separation between Jews and Christians is only temporary.

For there is only one major disagreement: the identity of the Messiah. When that issue is settled, the breach will be sealed. As believers in Jesus, we accept Him as the promised Messiah as well as our Savior. He is the basis of our faith, and we make no apology for it. In fact, genuine love for Jesus has turned many a heart from hatred to love of Israel and the Jewish people.

We would do well to remember that, as Christians or Jews, we comprise a remnant of the global population that is increasingly at risk today. And as a part of that shrinking remnant, we will fare much better as friends than as enemies.

THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET

For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? (1 Cor. 14:8).

The apostle Paul used the Roman military trumpet as a metaphor for spiritual battle. First-century historian Josephus wrote that the Roman army did nothing, except by trumpet signals. He listed three specific trumpet sounds, all of which can be devotionally applied.

The first trumpet was a signal to prepare to depart: “Now when they are to go out of their camp, the trumpet gives a sound.”1 The Bible believer should be ready to depart swiftly for any field of conflict as ordered, always ready to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7).

The second trumpet was a signal to form up: “Then do the trumpets sound again, to order them to get ready for the march.”2 At this stage, a believer should have on the whole armor of God. The Lord wants skilled warriors, lined up with others, who will do battle against the wiles of the Devil (Eph. 6:11).

The third trumpet sound was the order to march: “Then do the trumpets sound again, to order them to get ready for the march.”3 At this stage, a believer should have on the whole armor of God. The Lord wants skilled warriors, lined up with others, who will do battle against the wiles of the Devil (Eph. 6:11).

Josephus also noted that before the army marched out, the soldiers raised their right hands high and shouted in martial fury, “We are ready!” Are you?

ENDNOTES
1 Josephus War of the Jews 3.5.4.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.

by Peter Colón
A shelter in Orissa, India. Forced conversions and attacks on Christians have forced more than 20,000 villagers into refugee camps and shelters (Parth Sanya/Reuters/Corbis).

**T**hose were the words Jesus spoke to His disciples in what we know as the Sermon on the Mount—words that traveled across the centuries to lodge in the heart of a 10-year-old girl in India.

On August 26, 2008, Hindu extremists burned a home belonging to a Christian family with whom Namrata Nayak was staying. WorldNetDaily.com’s Chelsea Schilling reported that Namrata and her siblings hid in a small bathroom. As the attackers left, they planted a bomb in a dresser. “While the little girl surveyed the destruction,” Schilling wrote, “the bomb detonated and burned her face.”

Namrata also has shrapnel wounds on 40 percent of her body. Her family carried her to a hiding place in a forest and then moved to a refugee camp in Orissa, India.

WorldNetDaily reported, “Hindus have offered money, food and alcohol to anyone who murders Christians and destroys their homes—especially pastors. Thousands of homes and churches have been destroyed, and Christians have been forced to flee the violence. Many have been doused with kerosene and torched after refusing to renounce their Christian faith.”

Furthermore, Hindu radicals have vowed to continue the assaults. They have falsely blamed believers for the death of one of their leaders whom Maoists admitted killing.

Despite Namrata Nayak’s permanent disfigurement, she has a message for Christians who may or may not be under similar attack.

WorldNetDaily said she told Asia News, “We forgive the Hindu radicals who attacked us, who burned our homes. They were out of their minds, they do not know the love of Jesus. For this reason, I now want to study so that when I am older I can tell everyone how much Jesus loves us. This is my future. . . . The world has seen my face destroyed by the fire, now it must come to know my smile full of love and peace. I want to dedicate my life to spreading the Gospel.”

Indeed, the world may see in the disfigured face of this young girl the results of unprovoked hatred against people whose only crime is their faith in Jesus. But through her words and dedication to her Savior, we are allowed to look into the sanctuary of her heart and discover the sufficiency of Christ, even in times of unspeakable distress.

There is much emphasis today on personalities, on individuals the world deems worthy of following into the vagaries of a future over which they have no control. When the future is surveyed, however, we can be well assured that more will be accomplished by the Namrata Nayaks of the world than all of the religious and political movers and shakers we hear so much about. And though you may never hear of Namrata again in this life, her legacy of love and courage will endure because she believed—and that simple trust in the competence of her Lord translates into never-failing love, strength, and courage for all of us.

**But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you (Mt. 5:44).**
That ‘Chunk of Dirt’ They Call Home

(COI Image Archive; digital enhancement, Thomas E. Williams)
In an open letter that ran in 2002 on the opinion page of the Fox News Web site, someone suggested—tongue in cheek—that Israel relocate to the Baja Peninsula in Mexico. Highlighting the benefits of wonderful beaches, a larger land mass, and no terrorists, he asked, “You [Israel] think God cares about what chunk of dirt you call home?”

Actually, God does care. As the executor of a covenant promising a specific land to Abraham and his descendants forever (Gen. 15:7; Jer. 7:7), God explicitly spelled out the borders in Scripture, repeatedly underscoring that the “chunk of dirt” in the Middle East is the homeland of the Jewish people (Gen. 15:18–21).

Moses declared, “If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and . . . bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it” (Dt. 30:4–5). The consistent, compelling precedent of history underscores this truth.

Every prophetic book of the Old Testament except Jonah speaks of a future, permanent return to the land of Israel that will be so spectacular the Exodus from Egypt will pale by comparison:

It shall no more be said, “The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,” but, “The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.” For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers (Jer. 16:14–15).

The prophet Ezekiel said, “Thus says the Lord God: I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel” (Ezek. 11:17).

The prophet Jeremiah declared, “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).

Although spoken at the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity in 586 B.C., the context of Jeremiah’s prophecy indicates that its fulfillment goes far beyond the return from Babylon. It speaks of a final return from “all nations where I have scattered you . . . in the latter days” (vv. 11, 24).

Israel’s homecoming is certain, though incremental. According to Jeremiah, outside forces will influence the final return: “‘Behold, I will send for many fishermen,’ says the Lord, ‘and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks’” (16:16).

It is significant that in the early 1800s the “baying hounds of anti-Semitism” added urgency to the modern Zionist movement. Wrote Barbara W. Tuchman: “Always it was pushing, pushing the Jews, some toward nationalism and Palestine, others toward escapism and assimilation.”

Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones reaffirms a two-stage return. The bodies that come to life where only dry bones had been (Ezek. 37:1–14) imply an initial return and restoration in unbelief: “there was no breath in them” (v. 8). God then promises, “I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land” (v. 14).

In the second half of the vision, “breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army” (v. 10).

Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, forever (vv. 21, 25).

The prophet Isaiah told the Israelites that after an initial, partial regathering to their homeland in unbelief, God will “set His hand again the second time to . . . assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isa. 11:11–12). The modern State of Israel is only a preview of that final regathering.

God’s promise is unambiguous. The land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people, and He does not intend for them to abandon it for another geographic location, no matter how attractive it may be—including the Baja Peninsula.

ENDNOTES


2 Dr. Thomas Ice, “Modern Israel’s Right to the Land,” Pre-Trib Research Center <http://tdolphin.org/landrights.html>.


4 Ibid., 227.

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As Jerusalem and the Temple came into view, the ancient pilgrims sang for joy. It was the Festival of Weeks, or Shavuot. The Israelites carried on their shoulders beautiful baskets filled with wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates (Dt. 8:8). In the Temple court, the faithful gathered to read of God’s goodness in delivering them from bondage and providing a rich land and boundless blessings (26:5–10).

As Jewish people celebrate this festival on May 29, Christians might do well to remember that it is also Pentecost, the birthday of the church, and give thanks for our redemption through our Jewish Savior.

Deliverance

The act of remembering Passover was part of the Shavuot ceremony. All of Israel’s blessings began with Passover and deliverance from Egypt. For Christians, the basis of all our joy today and our hope for tomorrow is rooted in the fact that “Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7).

Land

“He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey’” (Dt. 26:9).

God kept His promise. The land and Temple were theirs to enjoy. Today the true spiritual Temple of God resides within each believer (1 Cor. 3:16). Therefore, we have a sure inheritance that is better than anything on Earth; we have a “heavenly country” (Heb. 11:16).

Blessing

“Behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me” (Dt. 26:10).

The offering of firstfruits was a small token that symbolized the Jewish people’s continued trust in God for promised blessings yet unrealized. Jesus is the present source of all good things for all believers, and we continue to trust in Him to deliver all that He has promised, both for this life and the next: “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10:10).
Historically, the press has repeatedly proven itself a notoriously poor judge of character. When Abraham Lincoln, universally regarded as one of America’s truly great presidents, was nominated for office, the mainstream New York Herald had this to say: “The conduct of the Republican Party in this nomination is a remarkable indication of a small intellect, growing smaller.”

There is nothing unusual about the news media taking shots at political candidates. What is unusual, however, is the consistently left-leaning worldview that now permeates American journalism. And though such a lopsided view of politics endangers our constitutional republic, there is an even more troubling development; and it poses a direct threat to evangelical, Bible-believing Christians.

Politically Correct Christianity

The press now considers itself an arbiter of what constitutes acceptable Christianity. The indications arose during President George W. Bush’s administration when it continually portrayed Bush (a Republican) as a religious extremist because he candidly admitted he is a born-again Christian. Jimmy Carter (a Democrat) made the same claim in his run for the White House in the 1970s. And former President Bill Clinton (a Democrat) is a Baptist who often posed for photographs with his Bible in hand as he entered the ultra-liberal Methodist church in Washington, D.C., where he attended services.

Yet nary a reporter called Carter or Clinton fanatical, left-wing evangelicals. And it turns out that in 2003, Bush mentioned Jesus or Christ a mere 14 times, while Clinton did so no fewer than 41 times! Why didn’t the press lambaste President Clinton for excess religious zeal? Because he exhibited politically correct Christianity—a left-leaning brand that no doubt later gave hope to now-President Barack Obama’s cam-
campaign strategists. Democratic Party leaders, in fact, admitted they attempted to woo evangelical voters in 2008. However, to my knowledge, no mainstream pundits slandered the left-of-center senator for soliciting evangelical votes. (The National Journal ranked U.S. Sen. Obama [D-Ill.] as “the most liberal senator in 2007.”)

A Parade of Slanders

But what about the conservative, politically incorrect version of evangelicalism? What does the press say about that? Let’s take a stroll down the last few years of press coverage.

In the February 22, 2005, issue of the Online Journal, Mark Drolette wrote this about President Bush’s Christian faith:

George W. Bush has anointed himself—or rather, considered himself anointed by the Great Anointer—the protector of some weird form of Christianity. When asked once to name his favorite philosopher, Bush said, “Christ.” I’ve often wished there’d immediately been a follow-up to determine if Dubya meant the purported Son of God, or Charles Manson during his messianic phase.

Of course, we might try to dismiss such mean-spirited writing as a product of the lawless, frontier world of Internet journalism. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Bill Moyers has been a mainstream journalist for years, most notably on PBS. On December 1, 2004, in accepting the Global Environment Citizen’s Award from Harvard Medical School, Moyers assailed a “theology” he deems “delusional.”

“Theology,” he bemoaned, “asserts propositions that cannot be proven true; ideologues hold stoutly to a worldview despite being contradicted by what is generally accepted as reality.”

The problem with the environmental movement, he said, is that it is opposed by a theology (Bible-based Christianity) that is wedded to a right-wing ideology. “For the first time in our history,” Moyers said, “ideology and theology hold a monopoly of power in Washington,” apparently referring to the effect conservative Christians have on national environmental policies.

Moyers gave the scorched-earth treatment to Left Behind series co-author Tim LaHaye, calling him a “religious-right warrior” who subscribes, like other “true believers,” to a “fantastical theology.” He painted a monstrous portrait of “Christian fundamentalists” and then condemned them, inaccurately claiming they believe “environmental destruction is not only to be disregarded but actually welcomed—eagerly hastened—as a sign of the coming apocalypse.”

What, he asked, should be the response of the liberals? To wrest America from the hands of the conservative Christians who would destroy planet Earth.

Moyers later expanded his Harvard speech in an article that ran on March 24, 2005, in the New York Review of Books. The title tells it all: “Welcome to Doomsday.”

The same month, an astoundingly malicious article appeared in the Los Angeles Times titled “Made-in-America Wahhabism.” Former Time correspondent William Thatcher Dowell opined that the debate over posting the Ten Commandments in public places showed him that conservative Christianity is remarkably similar to the “fanatical ultra-religious Wahhabi movement—the movement that is spiritually at the core of Al Qaeda.” Suddenly, conservative Christians were reduced to the level of Islamic terrorists.

Two months later, in May 2005, Harper’s magazine editor Lewis H. Lapham wrote “The Wrath of the Lamb” that ranted about evangelical “stupidity.” All it took to stir up his self-righteous indignation was an evangelical organization’s statement to call its members to “civic responsibility” to seek God’s “abundant wisdom” for national public policy.

Lapham denounced the attempt as reflecting “jihadist fervor and invincible ignorance.” Then he lambasted Dr. James Dobson and Focus on the Family for espousing “gospels of fear and hate.” Calling such Christians “delusional,” he concluded,

“We err on the side of folly if we continue to grant the boon of tolerance to people who mean to do us harm in the conviction that they receive from Genesis the command “to take dominion over the earth,” to build the Kingdom of God, to create the Christian nation. The proposition is as murderous as it is absurd.”

In that same issue of Harper’s, an article by Chris Hedges reached new heights of antievangelical fury in criticizing my organization, the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB). It was titled “Feeling the Hate with the National Religious Broadcasters.” After pointing out the NRB’s opposition to the aggressive homosexual movement, he concluded by reflecting on comments by the late Dr. James Luther Adams of Harvard Divinity School:

Adams told us to watch closely the Christian right’s persecution of homosexuals and lesbians. Hitler, he reminded us, promised to restore moral values not long after he took power in 1933, then imposed a ban on all homosexual and lesbian organizations and publications.

Conservative Christians would be blind, deaf, and dumb, not to notice the increasing hostility against them. They are being compared to Islamic terrorists and Adolf Hitler. Meanwhile, the mainstream news media either ignores these slanders or perpetuates them, apparently without the slightest twinge of journalistic conscience.

Three months later, the August 2005 issue of Harper’s ran an article it hyped on the front cover by author/environmental-mentalist Bill McKibben titled “The Christian Paradox: How a Faithful Nation Gets Jesus Wrong.” It criticized conservative evangelicals while praising liberals like Jim Wallis of Sojourners, “the magazine of the progressive evangelical community,” and “that Baptist seminary graduate Bill Moyers.”

Then, in December 2007, Harper’s ran an article by David Lewis and Philip Kitcher titled “And Lead Us Not,” which was promoted on the contents page by the provocative, mean-spirited question, “Are Christians Evil?” The authors wondered if “Christians [who]
accept a God who inflicts infinite torment on those who do not accept Him... are those who worship the perpetrator of divine evil themselves evil."


The author concluded, “The studios now seem to view the Christian market as it would a difficult girlfriend: elusive and hard to please; ultimately, you keep your distance but still take pains not to irritate her.” Apparently, the mainstream press does not even exercise the same minimal effort “not to irritate” Christians as Hollywood does (an industry that itself has been a notorious critic of biblical Christianity). There has never been a courtship between evangelicals and the major media. In fact, the opposite is true. The press seems to be screaming for a nasty divorce from a relationship that never existed.

And the slander against conservative evangelicalism marches on. In the May 20, 2008, online magazine Salon.com, Gary Kamiya wrote an article with the outlandish title “Psycho Christians and the Media.” The gist was that Republican presidential candidate John McCain was wrong to align himself with certain Christian television preachers. And Kamiya described the beliefs of a host of recognizable evangelical leaders as “right-wing religious deviancy,” “whacked-out,” and “Christian-right insanity.”

The faith of Bible-believing Christians was held up as an example of “extreme, even demented beliefs.” One wonders why such hostility was never levied against Obama’s mentor and pastor of 20 years, Jeremiah Wright, a religious leader whose views epitomize the very definition of extremism. The answer is because much of the press is quick to forgive or simply ignore liberal missteps, while it gathers rocks to stone evangelical conservatives.

The Response From Pilloried Pilgrims

It is inconceivable that any other demographic group in America would have to withstand the militant slander that conservative, evangelical Christians receive. Most shocking of all is that the mainstream press, which often touts itself as the advocate of objectivity and defender of the oppressed, has ignored its own outrageous, anti-Christian bias and vitriol.

Books have been written about it. Two by Marvin Olasky, editor-in-chief of World Magazine, were published in 1988. Then, a little more than a decade later, former New York Daily News reporter William Proctor came out with The Gospel According to The New York Times, where he showed how that newspaper’s liberal bias is, in fact, a carefully thought-out worldview that permeates its pages.

So how do we respond to this tidal wave of media misrepresentation and manipulation? Proctor had a suggestion. He urged Americans to be more discerning when reading newspapers and magazines and watching the news. Unfortunately, we now need to assume the major news organizations have a left-leaning, antievangelical, antibiblical worldview. We should dissect the news and become aware of language that subtly slants things against Bible-believing Christians while affirming those who denounce us.

We also must oppose the tyranny of a biased media. Let your voice be heard. Write letters to the editor. Call radio and television talk shows. But before doing so, pray for wisdom and a winsome witness. And do your homework. Know what you are talking about before you talk about it in public. Realize also that Christians are held to a higher standard. Accept that challenge, and do everything zealously for the glory of God, giving no offense but seeking “the profit of many” through your witness (1 Cor. 10:33).

We also need to support the Christian media, much of which is struggling now in times of great economic turmoil.

The late Christian theologian Francis Schaeffer observed that the turning point in the breakdown of the American culture was chronicled by a media report in the 1990s. Then, both the “defrocking” of the great Christian apologist Dr. J. Gresham Machen and the Northern Presbyterian Church’s division over liberalism versus biblical orthodoxy became front-page news across the nation.

Schaeffer said the events marked the apostate drift of many Protestant denominations away from biblical truth and toward the humanism of the age. This drift has created a spiritual void in many of America’s churches. Their failure to remain anchored to biblical truth is pushing America toward the rocks and shoals of a godless worldview.

Schaeffer mourned the fact that even the Christian press seemed impotent to raise a voice against this shift:

Has the Christian press exposed the real implications of this world view? One Christian magazine came out with the conclusion that the concern over secular humanism and its resulting impact on society was only a bogeyman. Rightly defined, secular humanism... is a vicious enemy... Humanism is the defiant denial of the God who is there, with Man defiantly set up in the place of God as the measure of all things.

Those of us in the Christian media have a profound responsibility. We are watchers on the wall. God forbid that we abdicate this position. It would be easy to become negative and bitter about the betrayal by America’s media and its biased treatment of Christians. But our focus, like King David who was unjustly slandered by his enemies, must be on God who alone is worthy of absolute and uncompromising praise and glory. Though he had been utterly maligned, here is how David concluded the matter: “My tongue shall speak of Your righteousness and of Your praise all the day long” (Ps. 35:28).

Continued on page 31
Although some scholars question the reality of a literal, future Temple, the prophet Ezekiel described it in great detail. He provided its dimensions (Ezek. 40—43) and spoke of a future priesthood (chap. 44), future worship (chap. 45), and future manner of worship (chap. 46). Three times he declared that God will establish His sanctuary in the midst of Israel forever (37:26–28).

What will worship be like in the Millennial Temple? It will be similar to Old Testament Levitical worship, yet different. This Temple will be filled with God’s glory (43:1–5), as in the day of Solomon’s Temple. Only priests from the sons of Zadok will minister there, oversee worship, and serve at the Lord’s table (44:15–16).

Both Jewish people and Gentiles will be required to sacrifice animals at the Temple ( Isa. 56:7; 66:20–23; Jer. 33:18; Ezek. 45:13—17; Mal. 3:3–4). The Lord will appoint a prince to receive the gifts and oversee the sacrifices used “to make atonement” for the house of Israel (Ezek. 45:15, 17, 20).

Presented will be burnt, sin, trespass (40:39), grain (45:24), and peace offerings (462). The prince will offer sacrifices at “the feasts, the New Moons, the Sabbaths, and at all the appointed seasons of the house of Israel” (45:17; 46:1). Only morning sacrifices will be offered daily (46:13).

The feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread will be kept to commemorate Israel’s deliverance from Egypt (45:21–24). All nations will appear in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles; those failing to obey will be denied rain or receive a plague, as in Egypt’s case (Zech. 14:16–18). The “year of liberty” (Jubilee, cf. Lev. 25) will be observed at its proper time (Ezek. 46:17). However, the feasts of Pentecost, Trumpets, and Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) will not be kept in the Millennium.

The question most people ask when reading Ezekiel 43—46 is, “If Jesus’ sacrifice is the only efficacious, once-for-all sacrifice to expiate sin (Heb. 9:12), why will animal sacrifices that could never take away sin (10:4) be offered when Christ reigns?” We know the Millennial sacrifices will not remove sin, just as the Levitical ones could not.

Some scholars believe the offerings during the Millennium will be memorials, similar to keeping the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of Christ’s death. They reason that, because Millennial saints will live in an ideal setting where the awfulness of sin is glossed over, the blood sacrifices will visibly remind people that only Christ’s blood can take away sin. Two problems mar this interpretation: (1) Nothing in the text indicates the sacrifices are memorial in nature, and (2) the prophet Ezekiel said the sacrifices are to make atonement.

Consequently, the offerings must be much more than memorials. The word atonement (Hebrew, kippur; Ezek. 45:15, 17, 20) means to “cover” or “propitiate.” Under the Levitical system, God required sacrifices to atone for sin and to cleanse buildings, the altar (43:20–27), the Levites (44:25–27), and the sanctuary (45:18). Blood sacrifices covered the worshiper’s sins (Lev. 17:11) and propitiated, or satisfied, God under the Mosaic Law.

Animal sacrifices at the future Temple will not be efficacious, but they will be needed to cover the worshipers’ ceremonial uncleanness. Why? Because God will be dwelling on Earth in the midst of sinful people who live in their natural bodies. The sacrifices will ensure that impure people will not defile God’s holy Temple when coming to worship Him.

Sacrifices in the Millennium will not be a substitute for God’s plan of salvation or change the way a person is redeemed. Salvation will be through faith in Christ and His shed blood on the cross. Nor will these sacrifices diminish Christ’s work on the cross (Heb. 10:10). It was Christ’s death, not the Levitical system, that made it possible for sins to be removed permanently.

The first Palestinian uprising began in December 1987 while I was working for CBN television news in Jerusalem. Violence erupted in the Gaza Strip and quickly spread to Arab portions of Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. The intense rioting and Israeli army reaction instantly became the main feature of our nightly newscasts, as was the case around the globe.

The little town of Bethlehem scaled back traditional Christmas celebrations that year as the conflict rapidly reached it. Thousands of Christians visiting for the holiday season, along with many Jewish people who had come to celebrate Hanukkah, found their schedules radically altered as tour guides, family, and friends scrambled to keep them out of harm’s way. Jerusalem’s historic, walled Old City became off limits to most visitors as Arab shops closed to observe a prolonged general strike ordered by Yasser Arafat.

Yet it was not Arafat’s Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) that was leading the escalating revolt, but a relatively new group called the Islamic Resistance Movement whose acronym in Arabic is Hamas. In that ancient Semitic language, hamas means “enthusiastic zeal”; but in Hebrew it is one of several words denoting animated violence, particularly the pillaging of vanquished foes.

Hamas was actually just a new version of one of the oldest regional Islamic-fundamentalist political groups, the Cairo-based Muslim Brotherhood Movement. Though banned in Egypt for decades, it still managed to operate clandestinely. Hamas was merely its Palestinian branch.

Two prominent Muslim clerics living in the Gaza Strip, Sheik Ahmed Yassin and Muhammad Taha, were behind the 1987 Hamas creation. They took full credit for the escalating uprising against Israeli army rule in both the Gaza Strip and Jordan’s former West Bank, saying that only an Islamic-based Palestinian movement could succeed in ousting “Zionist forces from occupied Arab-Muslim land, with Allah’s blessing.”

The aging Arafat outwardly welcomed the new player on the Palestinian political stage. However, he worried privately that the extremist movement would grow in street popularity and end up resisting not only Israeli rule but his own political authority as well, which was largely based on his widely accepted claim to be the “father of the Palestinian nation.” Indeed, that is exactly what took place.

Charting Its Course

In August 1988, Hamas emulated the PLO by publishing a lengthy “founding charter.” The document echoed the anti-Jewish ravings of Adolf Hitler’s Mein Kampf but in a Muslim fundamentalist framework.
The charter called on all Palestinians to be ready to become shahids, or martyrs, for the cause of destroying Israel and replacing it with an Arab state based solely on the Qur’an’s civil and religious laws.

Here are a few other highlights from the Hamas charter:

- Article Six makes clear that the group’s ultimate goal is nothing less than to destroy Israel and replace it with an Arab-Muslim fundamentalist state. It boasts that Hamas is “working to unfurl the banner of Allah over every centimeter of Palestine.”
- Article Seven quotes one of the most well-known anti-Jewish, genocidal, prophetic verses from the Islamic Hadith, or oral tradition, that carries nearly the same weight in the Muslim faith as the Qur’an: “The day will come when Muslims will fight the Jews and kill them, to the degree that the Jew will hide behind the rocks and trees, which will cry out to the Muslim and tell him, ‘Servant of Allah, a Jew is hiding behind me. Come and kill him!’”
- Article Eleven forbids any Palestinian peace negotiations or treaties with Israel: “Palestine is Islamic land assigned to the Muslims until the end of time. It may not be renounced or conceded, whether in whole or in part.”
- Article Thirteen amplifies this, stating there is “no solution to the Palestinian problem except through jihad.”

- Articles Fourteen through Nineteen insist that Muslim educators and parents are duty-bound to instruct the Palestinian masses, especially children, in the ways of jihad.
- Article Twenty-Two is the one that most closely echoes Hitler in grossly exaggerating and demonizing international Jewish power, wealth, and influence. It claims, “The enemy has amassed astounding and influential wealth, which has been exploited to . . . gain control of the world media, news agencies, the press, broadcasting stations, etc.” It ludicrously goes on to claim that nefarious Jews were “behind the French and Communist Revolutions” and have set up “clandestine organizations to destroy society and serve the interests of Zionism.” Such groups are said to include “the Freemasons, the Rotary and the Lion’s Club.”

As hate-filled and ridiculous as it was, the Hamas charter did not seriously bother most Israeli officials, who were convinced the new movement would be fairly harmless. Indeed, many officials and Middle East commentators pointed to the Sunni Muslim group’s growing network of health clinics and schools as a sign that Hamas was actually quite benign.

On the other hand, I felt that Hamas would probably become powerful and dangerous and might eventually rival, or even surpass, the PLO’s hegemony on the Palestinian street.

My view, spelled out in my first book, Holy War for the Promised Land, was definitely not the main one around in those days. It was partially based on the 1979 Shiite Iranian revolution that brought Ayatollah Khomeini’s anti-Israel and anti-Western diatribes and Islamic-fundamentalist teachings to the world stage, creating major waves around the Middle East—and not only in Shiite circles.

But more than that, I surmised the sad fact that Hamas had accurately quoted several of the harshly anti-Jewish teachings found in the Qur’an and the Hadith, which would give the group a leg up in the end. It was Egypt’s assassinated President Anwar Sadat who had seemingly violated those sacred Islamic principles by making peace with “the Zionist entity.” If Arafat did the same (as he later did, at least on paper), he would become easy fodder for the Hamas propaganda machine, I believed. And so it was.

**Overturning Arafat**

Hamas had little trouble overturning Arafat’s 1993 signature on the American-backed Oslo peace accords that had been secretly negotiated with Israeli officials in Norway. All it took was a series of hideous terror attacks on Israeli public buses and other civilian targets, which began in April 1994. By the time Benjamin Netanyahu became Israel’s prime minister in May 1996, the treaty was effectively dead despite Israel’s transfer of most of the Gaza Strip and several Palestinian cities in Judea and Samaria to Arafat’s control.

The peace process’s final death knell came in January 2006 when Hamas triumphed in the Palestinian elections—ironically held in accordance with the very Oslo accords the terrorist group totally rejected!

To add vast insult to severe injury, Hamas then responded to Israel’s 2005 Gaza Strip pullout by staging a violent coup in June 2007 against PLO-aligned Palestinian Authority security forces stationed in the small coastal zone.

What will come next is anybody’s guess. But one thing seems certain: The radical Hamas movement—now completely aligned with and supported by Shiite Iran, the Lebanese Hezbollah movement, Syria, and Osama Bin Laden’s al-Qaida and similar Sunni-Muslim Arab groups—will not soon disappear. This means that Israel will continue to have no choice but to fight the violent pillagers who work day and night to wipe out the world’s only Jewish state.

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The Israel to Come

The world has a plan for Israel. It thinks it knows how to bring peace to this tortured land. Yet all its attempts—the Camp David Accords, Oslo, Wye River, and the Road Map to peace—have only led to more terrorist attacks and suicide bombers. The current “two-state solution” to create a Palestinian state alongside Israel will fare no better.

As the world slices and dices the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob into indefensible, noncontiguous entities, Scripture presents a different peace plan—one that is forever settled in the heavens because it was decreed by the Lord of heaven and earth.

Some of Israel’s God-ordained boundaries are difficult to pinpoint on a modern map. A number of scholars have gone so far as to say Israel will extend from Egypt as far north as Turkey and as far east as Babylon. Others disagree. We can see from Scripture, however, that Israel will one day encompass the holy disputed areas of Gaza, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights, as well as a large portion of Lebanon and a small part of Syria.

The first mention of the land grant is in Genesis 15:18–21: “The Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites’” (Gen. 15:18–21).

The borders of this land mass appear in Numbers, Ezekiel, and Obadiah. The southern and western borders are the easiest to ascertain. Although the River of Egypt may refer to the Nile, many evangelical scholars believe, as stated by Walter Kaiser, that “it is more accurately placed at the Wadi el-‘Arish which reaches the Mediterranean Sea at the town of El Arish, some ninety miles east of the Suez Canal and almost fifty miles southwest of Gaza.”

The southern border can easily be traced around the Dead (“Salt”) Sea (Num. 34:3–5) to Kadesh Barnea to the River of Egypt (the Wadi) and out to the Mediterranean Sea, which is the western border: “The south side, toward the South, shall be from Tamar to the waters of Meribah of Kadesh, along the brook [the Wadi, also called the Brook of Egypt; v. 5] to the Great Sea [Mediterranean]” (Ezek. 47:19).

The northern border is more difficult to place. Because God gave Israel the land of the Hitites, and Hitites appear to have occupied Turkey, some scholars say Israel eventually will occupy Turkey as well. However, that seems doubtful. Also, some of the cities used as markers do not exist today. What is clear is that the border comes extremely close to Damascus, Syria, which some commentators include as part of future Israel. This shall be the border of the land on the north: from the Great Sea [Mediterranean], by the road to Hethlon, as one goes to Zedad, Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim (which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath), to Hazar Hatticon… Thus the boundary shall be from the Sea to Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus; and as for the north, northward, it is the border of Hamath. This is the north side (Ezek. 47:15–17).

Charles Dyer identified Zedad “with the town of Sadad about 25 miles north of Damascus.” Charles Ryrie, however, said it is “possibly a town about 65 miles NE. of Damascus.” Either way gives Israel land that is now part of Syria.

From there the boundary descends to include the highly disputed Golan Heights. It travels “from between Hauran and Damascus, and between Gilead and the land of Israel, along the Jordan, and along the eastern side of the sea [Dead Sea]” (v. 18).

When Israel entered the Promised Land, God told the Israelites they would not get Edom, Moab, or Ammon (Dt. 2:4–5, 8–9, 18–19), all of which today are in Jordan. However, some interpret Obadiah 19 to mean that Israel will possess some of that land in the Millennium. Wrote Ryrie: “Israel shall possess the Negev, that is, Mount Esau, etc. In other words, the boundaries of the Davidic kingdom will include the territory formerly occupied by Edom in the south, the inhabitants of the Philistine lowland (Gath, Ekron, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gaza), the territory of Ephraim and Samaria, Gilead across the Jordan River, and as far north as Zarephath (between Tyre and Sidon).” Zarephath is in Lebanon.

Even though some of the biblical landmarks are difficult to pinpoint today, the Bible still provides enough information to allow a glimpse of the breadth and scope of the wonderful inheritance that awaits the Jewish people in the Millennium.

Wrote commentator Allen P. Ross: “Israel has never possessed this land in its entirety, but she will when Christ returns to reign as Messiah.”

What a day it will be when Israel will finally possess all God has given it. King Messiah will reign on the throne of David for 1,000 years, “and the kingdom [the entire Earth] shall be the Lord’s” (Obad. 21).

ENDNOTES

4 ibid., 1404 n Obadiah 19–20.

Thomas C. Simcox is the Northeastern States director for The Friends of Israel.
I’ve been to many churches during my lengthy ministry with The Friends of Israel. Most have welcomed me warmly. But I spoke at one recently that did not.

Even the pastor disliked having me there. But the leaders had asked students in a Bible class whom they wanted as a guest speaker, and they voted for me. The concern was that I might influence the class to believe that God has a future for Israel.

This church does not believe in the future restoration of Israel in its own land. As I see it, the problem stems from a failure to understand the unconditional covenant in Genesis 12:1–3. Even if Israel does not physically possess its inheritance, this covenant guarantees that the title deed to it still belongs to the Jewish people forever.

God vowed to give Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan, located “from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates” (Gen. 15:18). He repeated the promise to Isaac (26:2–5) and then to Jacob (28:13; 35:12). Ownership was transferred via an
Like multitudes of Jewish people prior to 1948 when the modern State of Israel was born, both Jacob and his son Joseph lived most of their lives exiled from the Promised Land. Jacob spent almost 20 years in northern Mesopotamia due to a conflict with Esau, his brother (27:43—28:10). God eventually brought Jacob and his family back (31:3). Joseph was sold into exile (chap. 37). He and four generations of his people would live in Egypt until the Exodus, when God forced Pharaoh to let them go (Ex. 13:14).

Both Jacob and Joseph died in Egypt. Yet both asked that their bones be buried back in the land of Canaan. Few may appreciate this prophetic act. It reflected their deep faith in God’s covenant promise to give all that land to the children of Israel. They knew what everlasting meant (Gen 17:8): The land covenant for ethnic Israel extends all the way through the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom (Isa. 43:5–6; Zeph. 3:14–20).

During the New Testament period, the apostle Paul, a former Pharisee, said Jesus came “to confirm the promises made to the fathers” (Rom. 15:8). Since ownership of the land is embedded in the terms of the promises, Israel’s future restoration is certain. God’s unchallengeable name and character are at stake. If El-Shaddai (God the Almighty) is not able to bring the Jewish people back to their land, how then can He be trusted?

Many first-century Judean coins even bore an imprint stating belief in the Messianic Kingdom to come. During the first Jewish-Roman war in A.D. 66–70, early coins bore the inscription “For the Freedom of Zion.” Toward the end of the war, however, as the battles intensified, new coins were minted with the message “For the Redemption of Zion.” Scholars suggest that the rally cry was for liberation from Roman oppression and then for the Messianic redemption that comes with Israel’s restoration in the new Davidic Kingdom.

As my class ended, the leaders quickly scurried out. One gentleman lingered and offered to help me pack my literature and display. He whispered, “I’m a Jewish believer. I only come to this church because it’s my wife’s family tradition. In spite of what is preached here, I know that Israel has a future; and many others in the class also know it. Thank you for coming.” His confession encouraged me that, though the truth may be unpopular today, God still has His believing remnant.

Peter Colón is the Southeastern States director for The Friends of Israel.
In the spring of 1905, Civilla Martin and her husband, Pastor Walter Martin, visited their friends the Doolittles in Elmira, New York. Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for 20 years, and her husband was confined to a wheelchair. But these conditions did nothing to dampen their spirits. When Pastor Martin commented on their hopefulness, Mrs. Doolittle replied, “His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.”

His Eye Is on the Sparrow

In the spring of 1905, Civilla Martin and her husband, Pastor Walter Martin, visited their friends the Doolittles in Elmira, New York. Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for 20 years, and her husband was confined to a wheelchair. But these conditions did nothing to dampen their spirits. When Pastor Martin commented on their hopefulness, Mrs. Doolittle replied, “His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.”
Mrs. Doolittle knew how to take God at His word. From that experience, Mrs. Martin wrote a poem that soon became “His Eye Is on the Sparrow,” one of the most enduring hymns ever written about God’s love and faithfulness as expressed in Matthew 10:29–31.

Throughout Scripture, God makes promises He expects us to appropriate. And His Word is forever settled in the heavens (Ps. 119:89). This truth is important because long ago God made a promise that affects both Israel and the church today. And whether we realize it or not, how we view that promise influences our theology and our perspective on the Bible and the world.

**Creator’s Prerogative**

Today’s world is bent on believing in evolution. It claims that billions of years ago, an itty bitty piece of something (origin unknown) exploded, and the entire universe came into being. Then it claims that, over billions of years more, a protozoan became a fish; a fish became a whale (mammal); a whale walked ashore; and eventually it evolved into American astronaut Neil Armstrong who stood on the moon and declared, “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”

People who believe this way reject the Genesis 1 creation account that says God took absolutely nothing and, in six 24-hour days, made absolutely everything. And once you reject God’s power, you are more likely to reject His commandments and promises. If you accept Genesis 1, then you must believe in an all-powerful Creator who has the right to do whatever He wants with His creation. Genesis says the Creator gave a specific land in the Middle East to Abram and his physical descendants through Isaac—forever (12:1–3; 21:12). God told Abram (later called Abraham), 

*Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed* (12:1–3).

This multifaceted promise is the Abrahamic Covenant. Not only is it still in effect, but it affects both Israel and the church. How Christians view this covenant determines if they subscribe to Replacement Theology or believe that God does what He says.

### Heifer, Goat, Ram

Abraham was 75 and childless when he first received this promise. He was 100 when Isaac was finally born. Yet in his lifetime, the only land he owned in Canaan was the cave of Machpelah in Hebron where he and his wife are buried. It is known today as the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

However, God promised him a land that encompasses all of Israel, including the West Bank and Gaza and parts of Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. Obviously, God’s promise extends beyond Abraham himself to the nation of Israel.

Many today say the Abrahamic Covenant is no longer valid and that the land God gave the Jewish people is up for grabs. However, they could not be more wrong.

Scripture presents two types of covenants: conditional and unconditional. In a conditional covenant, both parties agree to terms, and each must uphold his end of the bargain. In an unconditional covenant, one party agrees to do something regardless of what the other party does. God’s covenant with Abraham was unconditional; God agreed to do everything Himself: “I am the LORD, who brought you [Abraham] out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it” (Gen. 15:7).

When Abraham asked God, “How shall I know that I will inherit it?” (v. 8), God told him to get a heifer, goat, and ram, plus a dove and pigeon. Abraham cut everything in half but the birds and placed the halves opposite each other, making an aisle in between (v. 10).

Today lawyers hammer out contracts. In ancient times the contracting parties walked between divided animals, as if to say, “If either of us breaks this promise, what has happened to these animals will happen to us. We will die.” You laid your life on the line when you made a covenant. In fact, the Hebrew word for “covenant” also means “cutting.” It is the same word used for “circumcision,” which is the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant.

So Abraham cut the animals. In fact, to let us know the animals were clearly dead, Scripture says, “When the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away” (v. 11). Then the living God did something He does nowhere else in Scripture: He put Abraham to sleep and “walked” between the pieces, placing responsibility for maintaining the covenant on Himself alone: 

*And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—the Kenites, the Kenazzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites’* (vv. 17–21).

He also told Abraham, *Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete* (vv. 13–14, 16).

These few verses summarize the books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
God brought Abraham to the threshold of the events in the book of Joshua, where his descendants would take possession of the land He gave them.

**How Long Is Everlasting?**

Scripture says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). Scripture also says nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:38–39). Nothing means even you cannot separate yourself from God’s love. Satan, however, calls God a liar and would have you believe God will take back His gift of salvation if you’re not careful.

My friend, that is not possible! He promises, “The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (Jn. 6:37). “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5). “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” (Jn. 10:27–28). You can count on God to keep you saved. He made those promises, and He never lies.

He also promised land to Israel as an “everlasting possession” (Gen. 17:8; 48:4). How long is everlasting? Until the United Nations says the time is up? Until Washington, D.C., does? Until the Russians do?

God does not care what Washington thinks. Nor does He care what the UN or Russia thinks. In fact, He doesn’t care what you or I think. When God says “everlasting,” He means “without end.” He whose eye is on the tiny sparrow “rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses” (Dan. 4:32). He does as He pleases and tells us, “Indeed before the day was, I am He; and there is no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?” (Isa. 43:13).

He says, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (55:8–9).

This same God promised Abraham’s physical (not spiritual) descendants a specific land. He did not promise this land to the church. Nor did He leave it to the UN or to the descendants of Ishmael.

And Israel’s failure to keep the Mosaic Covenant, made later at Mount Sinai, does not affect God’s promises in the Abrahamic Covenant. In Jeremiah 31 God promised to make another covenant with the Jewish people, “not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke” (v. 32, emphasis added).

God here promised the New Covenant, designed to replace the Mosaic, not the Abrahamic, Covenant. Ownership of the land comes through the Abrahamic Covenant; possession and blessing come through the Mosaic. Because Israel broke the Mosaic Covenant, it temporarily lost possession. But it can never lose ownership. One day Israel will regain permanent possession and blessing forever.

Why? Because God is faithful. The apostle Paul understood this fact and warned Gentiles not to “boast” against the Jewish people because all the covenants belong to them; Gentiles are grafted in by faith (Rom. 11).

God keeps His promises. He who neither slumbers nor sleeps and whose eye is on the sparrow watches you, me, and His beloved people Israel. Great is His faithfulness.

ENDNOTE

14His Eye Is on the Sparrow” <cyberhymnal.org/htm/h1/hisyeis.htm>.

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How would your view of Christianity change if you came to believe that the Rapture, Tribulation, Antichrist, mark of the beast, Second Coming of Christ, and many other supposedly future events had taken place in the first century A.D.?

There is a group of evangelicals who look to the past instead of the future to find fulfillment for many of these prophetic events. This view is commonly known as Preterism; and it produces one of the most extreme forms of Replacement Theology, since preterists widely teach that God has divorced Israel and replaced it with the Bride of Christ—the church.

Definition

The term Preterism is based on the Latin preter, which means “past” or “gone by.” Preterism teaches that many of the prophecies in the book of Revelation and in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled in the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Many preterists actually believe that we are living in some form of the new heavens and new earth of Revelation 21—22.

Generally, the preterist spectrum can be divided into two categories: partial and full Preterism. Full preterists hold that all Bible prophecy was fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. If there is a future Second Coming, they say, the Bible does not speak of it. Full preterists also believe there is no future bodily resurrection, which places them outside the realm of historic Christian orthodoxy.

Moderate preterists believe that most, but not all, prophecy was fulfilled in the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem. Although they see many traditional Second Advent passages as fulfilled, they do believe a few passages still teach a future Second Coming (Acts 1:9–11; 1 Cor. 15:51–53; 1 Th. 4:16–17). They also see a future judgment and the resurrection of believers at Christ’s bodily return.

Advocates

Full Preterism arose in North America during the 1950s and ’60s within Church of Christ circles. No doubt the American champion of full Preterism has been Max R. King and his son Tim, formerly of the Parkman Road Church of Christ in Warren, Ohio. Formerly moderate preterist David Chilton converted to full Preterism several years before his death in 1997. Other full preterists include Ed Stevens, Don K. Preston, John Noe, and John L. Bray. An amazingly high proportion of preterist Web sites advocate a full preterist position, even though they likely represent smaller overall numbers than partial preterists.

Partial preterists include a number of well-known evangelicals: R. C. Sproul, R. C. Sproul Jr., Kenneth L. Gentry, Gary DeMar, Greg Bahnsen, Gary North, Hank Hanegraaff (the Bible Answer Man),1 and Steve Gregg. Many lesser-known partial preterists inhabit virtually every community in North America. Preterists are often found within conservative Reformed circles like the Orthodox Presbyterians (OPC) and the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA). Many people within the home school movement and conservative, politically active evangelicals favor Preterism.

Key Passages

The Bible verse preterists use most widely in their attempts to establish their thesis concerning Bible prophecy is Matthew 24:34: “Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till...”

Continued on page 32
Victory at Armageddon

(FOI Image Archive; digital composition and enhancement, Thomas E. Williams)
Some say Israel’s existence threatens world stability. Eliminate Israel and the world will achieve peace.

So say the misinformed. Yet this worldview is thriving. In fact, a day is coming when the entire world will want to eliminate Israel. But the world will find itself fighting against God Himself.

Hostility toward the tiny Jewish state began with its birth in May 1948 when five Arab nations attacked, intending to drive Israel into the Mediterranean Sea. When they failed repeatedly, such Islamic organizations as Fatah, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad sprang up, certain they could do better. These groups use dynamite and rockets to terrorize their enemy. Suicide murderers explode themselves in schools, restaurants, and hotels, killing and maiming thousands of Israelis. And Arab rockets indiscriminately pound Jewish cities.

Terror and murder are not the only tactics in this battle to crush Israel. Israel’s enemies are influencing companies and organizations to divest themselves of financial investments in the Jewish state. Many Western universities and liberal church groups have succumbed to this tactic, designed to choke Israel to death economically.

Yet through it all, Am Yisrael Chai! The people of Israel live! But with Israel’s enemies likely to obtain nuclear capability soon, will Israel continue to live? Will Israel’s enemies eventually win?

The Bible definitively answers these questions. A worse day is coming when the whole world will try to eliminate Israel. The prophet Joel called that time “a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness” (Joel 2:2), when God will “gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat” (3:2).

The world will focus intensely on Jerusalem. Speaking through the prophet Zechariah, God said,

“I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it” (Zech. 12:2–3).

God said, “I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem” (14:2). The apostle John described the “battle of that great day of God Almighty,” when all the leaders of the world bring their armies “to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon” (Rev. 16:14, 16).

Then Israel will face its darkest hour and its greatest victory. God, who is always faithful, promised His people through the prophet Jeremiah that Israel will never “cease from being a nation before Me forever” (Jer. 31:36). All the armies and weapons in the world will not destroy God’s Chosen People because God Himself will fight for them: “The LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west. And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea. . . . And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—‘The LORD is one, and His name one’” (Zech. 14:3–4, 8–9).

God said, “Then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn” (12:10).

In that day Israel’s Deliverer will give the Jewish nation victory over its enemies and its transgressions. And instead of seeing Israel as an impediment to peace, the world will acknowledge Jerusalem as the city of peace where the Prince of Peace rules and reigns.

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ENDNOTES

Facing the Goliath of the Liberal Media (Part 2) from page 18

5 Ibid.
7 Ibid., 105.
8 Facing the Goliath of the Liberal Media (Part 2).
all these things take place.” (See also Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32.)

Kenneth Gentry said of this much-debated passage, “This statement of Christ is indisputably clear—and absolutely demanding of a first-century fulfillment of the events in the preceding verses, including the Great Tribulation.”

However, I believe the timing of “this generation” in Matthew 24:34 is governed by the related phrase all these things, which refers to events Christ described in verses 4–31, which are the events of the Tribulation. Consequently, Christ was saying that the generation that sees all these things will exist until all the events of the future Tribulation are fulfilled literally.

Preterists ignore the fact in Matthew 24 that it is Israel whom the Lord is rescuing. Matthew 22—23 speaks of Israel’s judgment, which did come in A.D. 70, but one should not ignore the identity of the nation rescued in 24:27–31. It is saved Israel, so this is clearly a future event. This is a literal interpretation and one that was not fulfilled in the first century.

Preterists believe they are driven to an A.D. 70 fulfillment of Revelation because, like the Olivet Discourse, they believe it says it was to be fulfilled “soon.” Thus they say terms like quickly and at hand teach that Revelation had to be fulfilled within a few years of its writing. Even though virtually everyone down through church history has held to an A.D. 95 date for the writing of Revelation,3 preterists say the book was written in A.D. 65. The A.D. 95 date renders the preterist view impossible and fortifies the argument that the terms quickly and at hand teach imminence—that Christ can return at any moment—not that He will return soon.

Problems

Placing most prophecy in the past greatly changes one’s overall view of God’s plan for history. Many preterists believe we are beyond the Millennium and currently reside in the new heavens and new earth. Traditionalists, on the other hand, believe the new heavens and new earth refer to the eternal state.

If we were in the new heavens and new earth, then the New Testament epistles would not directly apply to believers today because they were written to instruct Christians how to live between the two comings of Christ. Since preterists often employ an allegorical rather than a literal hermeneutic, some do not believe in a literal interpretation of the book of Genesis or in young Earth creationism and a global flood.

Further, some no longer hold to a personal Devil or angels, whether elect or evil, or a literal hell. Some within the emerging church, like Brian McLaren, are attracted to Preterism. More within that movement, however, tend to idealism;4 but none support a literal interpretation of the Bible.

Preterism produces one of the more extreme forms of Replacement Theology because it widely teaches that the theme of Revelation is about God’s divorce of Israel, which is replaced by the bride of Christ, meaning the church. In fact, Kenneth Gentry teaches that the scroll in Revelation 5 “would be a bill of divorce5” against Israel.

This position radically opposes that of Renald Showers and The Friends of Israel. Wrote Showers in his book Maranatha Our Lord, Come! The sealed scroll Christ took from the right hand of God in heaven (Rev. 5) is the deed of purchase for mankind’s tenant possession or administration of the earth…. The seven seals on Christ’s scroll make it totally secure from tampering or change. Thus, they are the guarantee that Christ’s scroll deed is absolutely irrefutable evidence that He is the Kinsman-Redeemer who has the right to take tenant possession of the earth.6 “As the Kinsman-Redeemer,” wrote Showers, “Christ will keep the earth to administer it for God’s purposes (Rev. 11:15). Christ ‘shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one’ (Zech. 14:9).”7

Christ will take possession and rule Earth for a literal 1,000 years from amid a restored nation of Israel. At the conclusion of that Millennium, eternity will begin.

According to the preterist view, however, Rome’s destruction of Israel in A.D. 70 annihilated Israel’s future. Israel has no national future whatsoever. It is not surprising that most preterists do not support the modern State of Israel and tend to be sympathetic to Palestinian propaganda.

Prognosis

For the last 150 years, the Bible-study movement in America has taught that Scripture reveals a future for national Israel. It has taught Premillennialism (that

A History of Preterism

When did the preterist interpretation first arise in church history? This question poses a big problem for preterists. If the Olivet Discourse and the book of Revelation were fulfilled in the first century, why is there no evidence in the early church writings that the church understood things in this way?

There is zero indication from known, extant writings that anyone understood these teachings in this way. No early church writings teach that Jesus returned in the first century.

Not until the post-Reformation period did Preterism begin to show up on the church’s radar. The first clear preterist was Spanish-Catholic Jesuit Luis Alcazar (1554–1613) in his Investigation of the Hidden Sense of the Apocalypse.8 Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) of Holland was “the first Protestant recruit to Preterism.”9 Grotius was “extremely liberal in his religious views” and took a critical approach, called “the historical-philological method,” to interpreting Scripture.10 Grotius was ecumenical in spirit.

He expressed a desire for the unity of the church and was willing to make such extensive concessions to restore union with Rome that he was accused of converting to Roman Catholicism. The
subjective hermeneutic where readers make the Bible relevant to themselves and their culture, rather than desiring to understand what God intended so that they may change their personal lives and cultures to correspond with timeless biblical standards.

Although many still believe the Bible plainly says what it means and means what it says, our numbers appear to be on the decline, especially in the academic world. Unless the general direction of things changes, we are headed backward to a new theological dark age when allegorical interpretation ruled the church and produced many false teachings and practices.

This is why Christian leaders must become informed about the hermeneutical shift that has taken place within evangelicalism so that they will not be misled. Laymen need to seek out those ministries and churches that teach the Bible literally and support them in every way possible. Maranatha!

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reason for his irenic approach was his desire as a Christian and a statesman to bring peace and unity to a world torn by religious wars.¹

Henry Hammond (1605–1660) is called the “Father of English Biblical Criticism” and first taught Preterist in his Paraphrase and Annotations Upon all the Books of the New Testament (1653). “This volume,” noted David Brady, “contained a brave but lonely attempt to introduce the preterist interpretation of the Book of Revelation to English soil.”¹ He followed Grotius closely and “acknowledged his indebtedness in this matter” to him.²

The preterist interpretation rarely appeared in Protestant scholarship until the 1800s. It gained a wide following among German liberals who did not believe the Bible contained predictive prophecy. In the late 18th century, J. G. Eichhom (1752–1827) introduced a version of Alcazar’s Preterism in 1791 to the liberal German rationalists. Wrote LeRoy Froom: “Soon he was joined by other rationalist scholars, such as G. H. A. Ewald (1803–1875), G. C. F. Lucke (1791–1855), W. M. L. De Wette (1780–1849), Franz Delitzsch (1813–1890), and Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918).³

Nineteenth-century British scholar E. B. Elliott called Preterism “the German Preterist School” that was about this time rising more and more into notice and influence: a School characterized by considerable mental acuteness, research, and philological learning; and at the same time by much of the hardship and rashness of religious skepticism.”⁴ Nevertheless, the interpretive outcomes of this liberal school are the ones evangelical preterists primarily follow today.

The father of American Preterism is clearly Moses Stuart (1780–1852) of Andover Seminary who “introduced Preterism into the United States about 1842.”⁵ Dr. Stuart’s commentary on the Apocalypse was a two-volume work that taught the milder form of Preterism that prophesied the defeat of God’s two ancient “enemies”: Israel and the Roman Empire.⁶ Enoch Pond said of Dr. Stuart’s commentary on Revelation that it was “borrowed mostly from the Germans.”⁷

Around the 1970s Preterism began its current rise in American evangelicalism. Before its recent upswing, contemporary forms of Preterism tended to be found only within academic circles, providing an occasional commentary here and there. The preterist rise to more popular visibility likely began simultaneously within the ranks of the Churches of Christ and, as it received renewed attention, within the Reformed tradition by the publishing of Jay Adams’s The Time Is at Hand (1966) and J. Marcellus Kik’s An Eschatology of Victory (1971).⁸

However, the most significant impetus to the current rise of Preterism has to be its widespread adoption and propagation by those within the Christian Reconstruction movement.⁹ Reconstructionist attraction to Preterism appears to have been adopted by the late Dr. Greg Bahnsen and spread through him to many of his disciples who, in turn, propagated it to others like R. C. Sproul.

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² Ibid., 2:506.
³ Ibid., 2:521.
⁵ Froom, 2:524.
⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Froom, 2:510.
¹⁰ Froom, 2:510.
¹² Enoch Pond, “Review of Professor Stuart on the Apocalypse” <covenanter.org/Postmil/AntiPreterist/pondreview.htm>.
said John Whitehead, president of The Rutherford Institute, “is a very important free speech case that will affect the rights of religious persons across America. If government officials can extinguish speech by turning off microphones at public assemblies, then none of us will have any rights.”

None who are Christians, at any rate. Across America, Christians are being forced to keep silent in school about their faith in the God of the Bible. Yet U.S. taxpayer money is funding Arabic-language, Islamic education in a New York City public school; and Muslim students in many other schools are allowed to take time to pray to Allah.

“For years,” wrote Barbara Pytel, “Christian prayer has been banned in public schools. Now, Muslims are demanding prayer time and getting it.”

Cinnamon Stillwell, a writer from San Francisco, California, who has appeared on Fox News, had this to say: Islamists have taken what’s come to be known as the “soft jihad” into America’s classrooms and children in K-12 are the first casualties. Whether it is textbooks, curriculum, classroom exercises, film screenings, speakers or teacher training, public education in America is under assault.

Coach Borden’s case was summarily disposed of in March when the U.S. Supreme Court refused to deal with it. In a press release, The Rutherford Institute explained: In refusing to hear the case of high school football coach Marcus Borden, the Supreme Court has let stand a lower court ruling with chilling ramifications for coaches and teachers everywhere—namely, that Borden has no constitutional rights of liberty, expression or academic freedom in connection with his duties as a teacher and coach.

Attorneys for The Rutherford Institute, acting as co-counsel for Coach Borden, had urged the U.S. Supreme Court to affirm that the liberties secured by the U.S. Constitution guarantee Borden’s right to offer a simple, silent gesture of respect, whether he does so by silently bowing his head or taking a knee while his players say their pre-game prayer.

Brittany’s case is still pending.

ENDNOTES

CHRISTIANS FIGHT FOR RIGHTS IN U.S. SCHOOLS

Brittany McComb was one of three valedictorians chosen to give a speech before 400 of her peers at her high school graduation in Henderson, Nevada, in 2006. But during commencement, when she began to refer to the Bible, God, and her faith in Jesus Christ, school officials turned off her microphone.

In East Brunswick, New Jersey, high school football coach Marcus Borden wanted to bow his head while his team offered a pre-game prayer, as it had done for more than 25 years. School officials refused to let him.

And in Colorado, 9-year-old Wade wasn’t allowed to deliver a report to his fourth grade class on his “hero” because he picked Jesus. Instead, he had to present it to his teacher in private.

These are merely a smattering of the cases being handled by The Rutherford Institute in Charlottesville, Virginia, dealing with the First Amendment rights of Christians. Brittany’s case,

East Brunswick High School football coach Marcus Borden before the start of a football game in Edison, New Jersey, in 2005 (Noah K. Murray/Star Ledger/Corbis).
Maturing in Christ

Maturing in Christ is a process; it doesn’t happen overnight. Unfortunately, some people never get there. They regress rather than progress. Hebrews 6 warns believers in Jesus to forsake practices that hinder their spiritual growth and urges them to advance to full maturity in Christ.

Speaking to Jewish believers in particular, the author first unfolded Christ’s glorious priesthood. He started to explain how it related to that of Melchizedek, the king of Salem in Abraham’s day. But he abruptly changed the subject to address the callousness of believers who had become slothful in their spiritual growth (5:11–14). Rather than mature in their faith, they were in danger of returning to the Levitical system from which they had been delivered.

Scholars disagree on whether these items are Christian teachings, elements of Judaism that these new believers still practiced, or both. Six “elementary principles” appear in three sets of two each.

(1) Conversion. The first pair of principles addresses conversion: “not laying again the foundation of [1] repentance from dead works and of [2] faith toward God” (v. 1). At the time of their salvation, these people evidenced repentance from dead works and faith toward God. Repentance is only acceptable to God the Father when one turns from his or her old life and embraces Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin. In fact, the Levitical system never provided salvation (cf. Heb. 10:1–4, 10). It provided an awareness of sin. Salvation has always been through faith. Since Christ’s death and resurrection, true “faith toward God” is experienced only through receiving Jesus Christ.

(2) Ceremonial Cleansing. The second set of principles addresses ceremonial cleansing: “the doctrine [teaching] of [1] baptisms [washings], of [2] laying on of hands” (v. 2). Because the word baptisms is plural, it could refer to the Levitical system’s ceremonial rites of cleansing. Judaism incorporated many ceremonial washings, both in worship and daily living. Jewish believers probably carried some of these practices into their Christian experience, and now they needed to put them away.

“Laying on of hands” may refer to a practice connected with presenting an offering in the Temple. An Israelite typically placed his hands on the sacrificial animal’s head as a symbol of identification. A twofold identification took place: The Israelite’s sinful life was committed to the animal, and the offering’s acceptability was transmitted to the Israelite (Lev. 1:4; 3:8, 13). New believers may have continued offering Levitical sacrifices in Temple worship.

This phrase may also refer to the early church’s practice of laying on of hands during believer’s water baptism. The laying on of hands was used as a symbolic act of identification, authentication, and confirmation of the apostles’ ministry when the Holy Spirit was initially poured out in the early church (Acts 8:17).

(3) Coming Events. The third set of principles addresses (1) “resurrection of the dead” and (2) “eternal judgment” (v. 2). These doctrines were first taught to new believers at the time of their salvation, and their importance cannot be overstated. Before their redemption, Jewish people believed in a resurrection from the dead (Job 19:23–27; Dan. 12:1–3), but their understanding was extremely limited. In the apostles’ preaching, the resurrection finds full meaning in Jesus Christ who is “the resurrection and the life” (Jn. 11:25). Although understanding the resurrection is extremely important, believers must mature beyond this basic teaching.

Jewish people also believed in eternal judgment as taught in the Old Testament, but their knowledge on this subject also was fragmented and limited. They learned a great deal more about eternal judgment as revealed through Jesus Christ, and they needed to embrace this more thorough teaching.

Confident that his readers would progress to maturity, the author wrote, “And this we will do if God permits” (v. 3). The phrase if God permits does not ask if it is God’s will to mature in Christ but, rather, assumes it is His will.

Progressing in Faith

The author listed the elementary principles these believers needed to move past:

Therefore, leaving [putting away, not repudiating] the discussion of the elementary principles [literally, “beginnings”] of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits (6:1–3).

Perils in Faith

The author then issued one of the strongest warnings in the New Testament:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of
God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame (vv. 4–6).

This passage has been misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misapplied; and it rates among one of the most controversial texts in the New Testament. The most predominant interpretations are these: (1) These people lose their salvation. (2) These are professing believers who never possessed salvation. (3) This is a hypothetical situation that could never happen. (4) Those who received enlightenment about salvation, tasted the heavenly gift, and became partakers of the Holy Spirit never received Jesus Christ as Savior. (5) These are saved people who lost their rewards. (6) These are saved people being exhorted to mature in Christ. This last interpretation best fits the context of Hebrews 5:11–6:8.

The author reviewed five spiritual truths that believers experience when coming to the Lord. First, they “were once [once-for-all] enlightened” (6:4). At the time of their salvation, these people were spiritually permeated with the light of the gospel and clearly perceived, understood, and appropriated it for their salvation.

Second, they “tasted the heavenly gift.” The word *taste* means more than to sample something; it speaks of full participation. The author used *taste* to refer to Christ’s death (2:9). Christ did not merely sample death; He experienced it. Throughout the New Testament, the word *gift* is used to refer to the blessings associated with salvation and eternal life. These are saved people who received the gift of eternal life when they received Christ.

Third, they “have become partakers of the Holy Spirit.” The word *partakers* means to share or participate in something. The author used this word concerning the Incarnation of Jesus Christ who partook of “flesh and blood” at His physical birth (2:14). Consequently, these people were not simply associated with the Holy Spirit; they were actually indwelled with the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation.

Fourth, they “have tasted the good word of God” (v. 5). That is, they heard and received the spoken Word that they knew came from God.

Fifth, they tasted or experienced “the powers [miracles] of the age to come.” They were eye witnesses to the miracles Christ and the apostles performed (2:4), and they believed those miracles were from God. Christ will manifest these same powers more fully in the “age to come,” meaning in the Millennial Kingdom.

The evidence indicates that those mentioned here are not merely professors but possessors of salvation. Wrote Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost: “All the words the writer uses—enlightenment, tasted, become partakers—are never used in the New Testament of empty profession, but always of an actual experience. Thus there can be no question that the apostle viewed the recipients as believers.”

Speaking of people who were redeemed but might later decide to return to Judaism, the author wrote, “For it is impossible . . . if they fall away [deviate, turn aside, or wander from the true faith], to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame” (vv. 4, 6).

What does verse 6 mean? First, verse 4 says it is “impossible” for believers to do what is mentioned in verse 6. Second, the phrase *fall away* is an aorist participle in Greek and refers to a point when one might abandon his faith, but no specific reference to an actual abandonment is given. The words *fall away* cannot mean a loss of salvation because it is not possible to lose one’s salvation; and if it were possible, the text would mean such individuals could never again become saved.

Third, the word *if* in the phrase “if they fall away” is absent from the Greek text; the verse should read “and then have fallen away.” Thus, the verse contains no hint of a conditional element. Fourth, should a person return to Judaism, “it is impossible” (v. 4) to “renew [restore] him again to repentance” (v. 6).

In other words, those who willfully defect from Christianity after receiving its great spiritual privileges could never be brought back to repentance. Why? “Because to their loss [with respect to themselves] they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace” (v. 6, NIV).

Such attitudes and actions amount to a public rejection of Christ and an affirmation before His enemies, who condemned and crucified Him, that His death was deserved. To renew such people to repentance (not conversion but recommitment) would be almost impossible because of their extreme hardness of heart. If such people remained so indifferent after being chastened by the Lord, they would be at a point of no return and would remain perpetually in a state of spiritual immaturity.

**Parable on Faith**

The author used an agricultural analogy to further clarify his argument: “For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned” (vv. 7–8).

Rain here is compared to God’s provision for creation and is symbolic of His spiritual blessings on all believers. Believers are compared to a field upon which the rain falls. The field that is properly sowed and tilled receives rain and produces fruit.

Another field receives rain but produces only thorns and briers. What the unfruitful field produces is “rejected,” meaning disapproved (cf. 1 Cor. 9:27). It is “cursed” and its produce is gathered to be burned” (v. 8). The field itself, however, will survive. In other words, the person’s works will be burned at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:11–15; 2 Cor. 5:10), but the individual will not (cf. 1 Cor. 3:15; Jn. 15:6). Anyone who refuses to grow spiritually or returns to a system of good works will be disapproved, resulting in the loss of reward.

This warning is to all believers today. Those who have become dull of hearing, callous, or stagnant in their faith must leave spiritual infancy behind and move on toward maturity in Christ.

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1 J. Dwight Pentecost, Faith That Endures (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1992), 104.
God Is Jealous—Part 2

Previously we studied God’s jealous response to Jerusalem’s unfaithfulness to Him. Like an unfaithful wife, Israel’s capital city had committed spiritual adultery by worshiping false gods and entering into forbidden alliances with idolatrous nations.

The Nation’s Adultery

Jerusalem’s unfaithfulness was a symptom of the spiritual adultery that characterized most of the nation of Israel. (We must remember, however, that God always preserves a faithful remnant; and in every generation, there have been Jewish people who have been loyal to Him.) God used Hosea’s experience with an unfaithful wife to illustrate His tragic situation with the unfaithful northern kingdom of Israel primarily, but with passing comments about the southern kingdom of Judah as well.

In the book of Hosea, God said the Israelites had “committed great harlotry by departing from the LORD” (1:2). He said they sought counsel from wooden idols and “played the harlot against their God” (4:12); were “joined to idols” (v. 17); committed “harlotry continually” (v. 18); “dealt treacherously with the LORD” (5:7); did “not return to the LORD their God, nor seek Him” (7:10); sought forbidden alliances with idolatrous nations (v. 11); “rebel[led] against” Him (v. 14); and “devise[d] evil against” Him (v. 15).

He also said Israel “transgressed” His “covenant and rebelled against” His “law” (8:1); had “forgotten his Maker” (v. 14); “sacrificed to the Baals, and burned incense to carved images” (11:2); and was “bent on backsliding” from God.

“None at all” exalted Him, He said (v. 7). Instead, people sinned “more and more” and “made for themselves molded images” (13:2). Consequently, God told the northern kingdom, “Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel” (Jer. 3:20).

Because the northern kingdom’s spiritual adultery was so persistent, God “put her away and” gave “her a certificate of divorce” (v. 8). Consequently, God told the northern kingdom, “Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel” (Jer. 3:20).

The prophet Jeremiah, God addressed Judah’s spiritual unfaithfulness, but He referenced the northern kingdom significantly. Portraying these kingdoms as two sisters, He declared that even His judgment of the northern sister (Israel) through destruction and captivity by Assyria did not stem Judah’s unfaithfulness: “Her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also,” and “has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense” (Jer. 3:8, 10). In fact, God said Judah “became more corrupt in her lust . . . and in her harlotry” than her sister (Ezek. 23:11).

Descriptive Terms

The Bible uses vivid terms to describe God’s jealousy.

Jealousy and Fire. When the word fire is used in a nonliteral sense, its “predominant” sense “is the consuming power of fire.”1 Thus “fire is a common image for the judicial wrath of God.”2 A major emphasis “in the OT [Old Testament] is Yahweh’s judicial intervention in the course of history.”3 “With fiery zeal He watches over obedience to His will.”4

God Himself associates fire with His jealousy: “My burning jealousy” (Ezek. 36:5), “in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath” (38:19), and “All the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy” (Zeph. 3:8).

People also associated fire with God’s jealousy. Moses warned the Israelites not to forget the Mosaic marriage covenant that God established with them at Mount Sinai or to make idols to worship, “For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Dt. 4:23–24). Asaph the psalmist wrote, “How long, L ORD? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy burn like fire?” (Ps. 79:5). The prophet Zephaniah referred to “the day of the LORD’s wrath” when “the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy” (Zeph. 1:18).

Jealousy and Fury. God also associated fury with His jealousy: “I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy” (Ezek. 16:38). “So I will lay to rest My fury toward you, and My jealousy shall depart from you” (v. 42). “Thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and My fury’” (36:6). “My fury will show in My face. For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken” (38:18–19).

The prophet Nahum declared, “God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; the LORD avenges and is furious” (Nah. 1:2).
The word translated “fury” normally conveyed the concept of an inner, rising, emotional heat that was fanned to varying degrees. It could be translated as “anger, hot displeasure, indignation, wrath, rage or fury.” Once God experiences fury, “satisfaction of some kind must be made by the execution of judgment upon the cause of it.”

**Jealousy and Wrath.** God associated wrath with His jealousy: “For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken” (Ezek. 38:19). “Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD’s wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, for He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land” (Zeph. 1:18).

The word translated “wrath,” “when used in relation to God, is used as a synonym” of the word translated “fury” in Ezekiel 16:38; 42:36; and 38:18–19. “However, it adds the nuance of the fierceness of God’s wrath (Ps. 78:49) expressed in an overwhelming and complete demonstration (Isa. 13:9). God’s wrath burns, overflows, sweeps away everything before it (Ezek. 22:21, 31).”

**Jealousy and Anger.** God’s anger is associated with His jealousy: “The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven” (Dt. 29:20). “How long, LORD? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy burn like fire?” (Ps. 79:5). God said, “My determination is to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all My fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured by the fire of My jealousy” (Zeph. 3:8).

The word translated “anger” emphasizes the following:

*The emotional aspect of anger and wrath, whereas its synonyms and terms related to them give particular expression to other aspects. . . . This anger, though fierce (Jer 25:37) is not sinful, evil, or the source of capricious attitudes or deeds. However, it is expressed in chastisement (Ps 6:1; Isa. 12:1) and punishment (II Sam 6:7; Jer 44:6).*

**Jealousy and Vexation.** God’s covenant people provoked Him “to jealousy with foreign gods; with abominations they provoked Him to anger” (Dt. 32:16, 21; cf. Ps. 78:58). “The root meaning” of the word translated “anger” in these passages “is to vex, agitate, stir up, or provoke the heart to a heated condition which in turn leads to specific action.” God was “deeply vexed, agitated, pained, or grieved by disobedient Israel.” Israel’s “judgment, in keeping with God’s justice, is not contrary to divine love. Rather it is an expression of divine love which has been offended, rejected and deeply grieved.”

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### Objects of God’s Jealousy

Scripture reveals several objects of God’s jealousy.

**His People Israel.** “Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done” (1 Ki. 14:22; cf. Ps. 78:58). The nation was unfaithful to its Mosaic Covenant marriage relationship with God.

**God’s Land and His People.** God declared, “the land is Mine” (Lev. 25:23). Because He is the owner, He stated, “Surely I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all Edom, who gave My land to themselves as a possession, with wholehearted joy and spiteful minds, in order to plunder its open country” (Ezek. 36:5). “Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, and pity His people. . . . I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations” (Joel 2:18–19). God was jealous for His people and avenged their cruel treatment by the Assyrians (Nah. 1:2).

**Jerusalem and Zion.** The term Zion originally referred to the mound on which stood the Jebusite city that David conquered. Eventually that city was called the City of David. Over time, the term Zion included the Temple Mount and later the entire city of Jerusalem.

God expressed His attitude concerning Jerusalem and Zion in these statements:

*Thus says the LORD of hosts: “I am zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zeal. I am exceedingly angry with the nations at ease; for I was a little angry, and they helped—but with evil intent.” Therefore thus says the LORD: “I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be built in it,” says the LORD of hosts, “and a surveyor’s line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.” Again proclaim, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Of My cities shall again spread out through prosperity; The LORD will again comfort Zion, and will again choose Jerusalem.” Thus says the LORD of hosts: “I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervor I am zealous for her.” Thus says the LORD: “I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain” (Zech. 1:14–17; 8:2–3). The major word for “jealousy” in the Old Testament can mean “to be zealous.”

**God’s Name.** God declared, “I will be jealous for My holy name” (Ezek. 39:25). The next article will examine the relationship of God’s jealousy to His holy name.

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2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., 936.

4 Ibid., 937.


6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 375.


9 Ibid.


12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

Source says U.S. prepares to abandon Israel

A highly placed U.S. intelligence official said Washington intends to abandon Israel in favor of the Arabs in a policy “designed to end with [Israel’s] political annihilation as a nation.”

“I have every reason to believe, based on what I’ve seen at my level of [security] clearance especially over the last several years, that Israel will soon be completely on their own . . . or worse,” he told Douglas Hagmann, director of the Northeast Intelligence Network.

An article on the Network’s Web site, homelandsecurityus.com, said the U.S. has slowly proceeded down this road. It said the unnamed official “cited the 2005 surrender of Gush Katif to the Palestinian Authority as one critical example of the slow dismantlement of Israel as a viable nation.”

Despite critical intelligence outlining in every possible manner imaginable that this would be a disastrous move leading to the events we are seeing today, it was done anyway,” he stated.

“We are seeing the very scenario play out today that was outlined in intelligence briefs three and four years ago. Knowing that, there is something very wrong with this picture,” he stated.

The article said, “The disinformation coming and going to and from Washington is getting worse, as is the media bias against Israel,” and “the events currently taking place in Israel are extremely perilous for Israel and especially perilous for the national security of the United States, according to this source.”

EU demands PA state

Arutz-7—The European Union (EU) has issued an oblique threat to the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana told reporters the European body of nations will change its relationship significantly with the Jewish state if the Netanyahu government does not back the establishment of a new Arab state within Israel’s current borders.

“Let me say very clearly that the way the European Union will relate to a government that is not committed to a two-state solution will be very, very different,” Solana said.

Meanwhile, the EU has yet to keep the promise it made at an Egyptian-hosted summit in Sharm el-Sheikh in January to help prevent arms smuggling into Gaza.

Israel ended its counterterrorist Operation Cast Lead on January 18, partly on the strength of commitments by Western nations to prevent Hamas terrorists from replenishing their weapons supplies. Nevertheless, Hamas has continued in smuggling in new weapons.

**UNRWA wrong, Israel right**

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), long known to employ Hamas members, was forced to cancel a delivery of humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza because Hamas broke into an UNRWA warehouse several months ago and stole 800 tons of blankets, food, and other basics to sell to the highest bidders.

Reported the Middle East Forum: “Israeli officials have been saying all along that Hamas routinely diverts humanitarian aid.” Hamas gunmen have hijacked fuel trucks as well as trucks loaded with food and medical supplies, the Forum reported.

“All that is only more ironic given the worldwide castigation of Israel for allegedly preventing humanitarian aid to flow into Gaza during the military operation,” the Forum said.

The UN, which also condemned Israel for allegedly hitting a school and wounding people, also admitted recently that Israel had not hit the school at all, but an area outside it.

No Israel, never!

The Jerusalem Post—In a recorded speech aired in Beirut in honor of the Prophet Muhammad’s birthday, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah recently rejected a U.S. condition for talks and stressed that Hezbollah will not recognize Israel, “even in 1,000 years.”

He said the Lebanese people are “capable of defeating this entity [Israel] and can make it disappear,” and therefore, Hezbollah will not recognize Israel, “not today, not tomorrow, not even in 1,000 years.”

He added, “Before the U.S. lists its conditions for negotiations, we must ask ourselves if we want to hold contacts with it.”

50,000 rockets aimed at Israel

Arutz-7—Hamas and Hezbollah terrorists have amassed an arsenal of 50,000 rockets aimed at Israel, United Press International (UPI) has reported. Israel still has no defense against the threat, and the government’s highly touted Iron Dome short-range missile defense system is far from being in operation and may not even be practical.

“Even if Iron Dome works perfectly, it is never going to have the firepower in interceptors to credibly intercept most, let alone all,” of the rockets, according to the UPI report.

Hezbollah has amassed far more rockets than it possessed before the Second Lebanon War in 2006, despite Israel’s agreeing to a ceasefire on the condition that United Nations Interim Forces (UNIFIL) would prevent arms smuggling into Lebanon.

In the south, Hamas continues to smuggle weapons into Gaza despite a similar ceasefire agreement, supposedly conditioned on a cessation of arms smuggling.

Last year, officials admitted that the Iron Dome system would not be effective against Kassam rockets fired from less than two miles, meaning that it had no solution for tens of thousands of residents in the Gaza Belt communities, including Sderot.
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 That Works*, 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.

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**U.S. Textbooks Distort Truth, Promote Islam**

What are your children learning in public school? They may be learning that Jesus was a “Palestinian” and that Islam is the truest religion.

A new study reveals many prominent textbooks used in America’s public schools grossly misrepresent Israel, Judaism, and Christianity and glorify Islam. A sixth-grade social studies text titled *The World*, published by Scott Foresman, states, “Christianity was started by a young Palestinian named Jesus,” reported WorldNetDaily.com (WND).

A WND article titled “Brave New Schools: ‘Jesus was a Palestinian,’ claims U.S. history text,” by Bob Unruh, said the five-year study looked at 28 major textbooks being used across the country. The study is available as a book titled *The Trouble With Textbooks: Distorting History and Religion*.

In addition to the outrageous claim that the Jewish people contributed practically nothing to the arts and sciences, the textbooks also routinely present “negative stereotypes of Jews, Judaism and Israel” and blame Israel for all the wars in the Middle East, wrote Unruh. “The study,” he said, “also supports other assessments of U.S. texts on which WND has reported. According to an earlier report from the American Textbook Council, history textbooks throughout the U.S. schooling system promote Islam.”

Unruh said the study found, among other disturbing things, the textbooks taught these so-called facts: “Jesus was a ‘Palestinian,’ not a Jew. The Arab nations never attacked Israel. Arab-Israeli wars just broke out, or Israel started them. Arab nations want peace, but Israel does not. Israel expelled all Palestinian refugees. Israel put the Palestinians in refugee camps in Arab lands, not Arab governments. Palestinian terrorism is nonexistent or minimal. Israel is not a victim of terrorism, or terrorism against Israel is justified. U.S. support of Israel causes terrorism, including 9/11.”

The study also discovered “Judaism and Christianity are treated as matters of believing, while Islam is treated as a matter of fact. In the glossary of *World History: Continuity and Change*, the Ten Commandments are described as ‘Moral laws Moses claimed to have received from the Hebrew God Yahweh on Mount Sinai.’ But the same glossary states as fact the Quran is a ‘Holy Book of Islam containing revelations received by Muhammad from God.’”

The list of textbooks studied is available at troublewithtextbooks.org.
Now, after so many years have gone by, I cannot believe I am still alive. During the Holocaust of World War II, many people died before my eyes. I was brutally beaten by the German Gestapo and left for dead. Often I thought about suicide, particularly when I was in the Warsaw Ghetto. And all this began when I was only 10 years old.

I am no longer a child. I have raised four children and have 16 grandchildren. In body I am no longer young, but I am young in spirit.

After the Holocaust, when I was a teenager, I came to Israel. Immediately I began fighting in the army in the War of Independence. Young men died all around me. But I stayed alive. How can this be? I wondered. How did I stay alive in Europe? Why did I not die like everyone else?

In 1948 we were only half a million people fighting against five Arab armies that came against us like the locusts of Egypt. We were facing a new holocaust here in Israel. How could we win against 250 million people devoted to our destruction? They even chanted a German motto from Nazi Germany to frighten us: “Butcher the Jews and cast them into the sea!”

During that war, I found myself asking the same question: Who is fighting our war here in Israel? Why am I still alive? I should be dead. Who is the one who has been preserving my life?

I received the answer in the Israeli army after someone gave me a Bible:

If you should say in your heart, “These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?” — you shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember well what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt. . . . So shall the Lord your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. You shall not be terrified of them; for the Lord your God, the great and awesome God, is among you (Dt. 7:17–19, 21).

In time I came to know the One who protected me during the Holocaust and while I fought so many wars in the Israeli army. And I received Him as my Savior. Some of my army friends were
They marvel that I seem so young after all I have gone through. “How can this be?” they often ask.
And I tell them, “I put my trust in the Lord. It is He who is with me, and it is He who has protected me. Until I came to Israel, I lived on the edge of death every day.”

God privileges me to give my testimony, and I explain how I came to know the Lord. Over the years He has given me great courage to speak to people who often become angry when they hear in whom I have believed. But my heart breaks for them because they do not know the Savior and have no hope.

So I continue, even though I am old in body. But thanks to God, I am young in spirit.