Israel My Glory

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Too many Christians today are asleep in the pews and don’t understand what big changes are taking place in the world. Dr. Rogers has a cure. And everyone should take it.

D id you ever wish you had a simple device to clarify the differences between Christianity and Islam? Well, now you have. This issue is packed with important information, including a chart titled “The Muslim Jesus versus the Christian Jesus” by Islamic expert Emir Caner. It lays out differences that will astound you. Plus you’ll read about Iran’s concept of the Mahdi, Islam’s messiah who many Muslims believe will return soon. With everything happening in the world, where is the church headed? Our dear friend Adrian Rogers, now with the Lord, felt the church needs to wake up and get busy. Our cover depicts that sobering truth. It’s all here. You’ll want to share this one with a friend! (Walter Homan/FOI Image Archive; digital composition and enhancement, Thomas E. Williams)

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Recently we have witnessed an almost daily assault on biblical values designed, it would seem, to subvert the influence of America’s Judeo-Christian heritage on the forces of God-free humanism.

Inaugural festivities had scarcely died down when President Barack Obama signed an executive order striking down U.S. government policy that barred recipients of U.S. foreign aid from promoting abortion as a method of family planning. The administration’s continuing attacks on biblical morality include calls to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act, which defines marriage as a union of one man and one woman; nominations of proabortion and homosexual- rights advocates to key government positions; and extending employment benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees.

Along with supporting a White House proclamation declaring June 2009 as “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month,” the President said, “I am proud to be the first President to appoint America’s highest office, now travels great distances to speak to Muslims endearingly and with numerous references to the “holy Qur’an.” We can’t help but contrast his homage to the Muslim world with his lack of interest in the religious heritage of the United States.

Blatantly denying the importance of America’s Judeo-Christian roots, Obama declared, “We do not consider ourselves a Christian nation.” Mere weeks later, while referencing highly inflated Muslim population figures, he proclaimed America “one of the largest Muslim countries” and pointed with pride to 1,200 mosques scattered throughout the nation. In an additional slap to America’s faith-based community, the White House announced it would not observe the National Day of Prayer.

Equally troubling is the administration’s treatment of Israel. Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, prominent radio and television host, observed, “Last year, right after Obama captured the Democratic nomination, I received a phone call from his campaign asking if I would serve as one of the chairs of ‘Rabbis for Obama.’ In the end I declined because I feared that Obama would draw equivalence between Israel and the Palestinians and pressure the former to appease the latter. But even I never suspected that it would happen so quickly and so lopsidedly.”

A disturbing case in point was Obama’s address June 4 to the Muslim world from Cairo, Egypt. In a dramatic dislocation from reality, he equated the Palestinian people’s sufferings to the horrific persecution of the Jewish people during the Holocaust. Additionally, he has applied public pressure on Israel to halt a growing Jewish presence in the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria—commonly called the West Bank by the dominant news media.

Sadly, our President fails to acknowledge that legitimately founded and developed Jewish communities among the Arab populations of Judea and Samaria should never be an excuse for Arab hostility. Some 1.2 million Arabs live freely among the Jewish people of Israel where they receive equal protection and equal rights under the law, including voting rights. Why should legally established Jewish communities not be permitted to develop among Arab populations? Why should Jewish people become victims of apartheid just because they’re Jews?

The real problem in the Middle East is one our President refuses to acknowledge: Israel’s opponents have no desire for a Palestinian state existing side by side with Israel in peace. Their real desire is to replace Israel. They want no Israel! That indisputable fact is on their Web sites for all to see. And they labor tirelessly day and night to accomplish that goal.

Almost as striking as the administration’s pressure on Israel is its silence regarding a host of disturbing realities. Silence on the Arabs’ inhumane treatment of their refugees. Silence on Islamic terrorism; the administration even avoids using accurate terminology to describe the reality. Silence on the plight of Christians who are horrendously persecuted in many Muslim-dominated countries. Silence on the inculation of hatred for Israel and the Jewish people that permeates every aspect of Palestinian life. Silence on the exploitation and abuse of children by indoctrinating them in the glories of becoming suicide bombers.

The Friends of Israel cannot sit still in the face of these continuing assaults on biblical morality and on Israel. We pray God will strengthen us daily and uphold us with His righteous right hand as we proclaim His Word from the Bible and forge ahead with our worldwide mission of communicating biblical truth about Israel and the Messiah while fostering solidarity with the Jewish people.

William E. Sutter is the executive director of The Friends of Israel.
In what, under the circumstances, some would think incredible, 100 people deplaned in June in Tel Aviv as new immigrants to Israel. They were the vanguard for thousands more scheduled to make aliyah before the summer of 2009 was out.

What made their arrival newsworthy is the fact that they did not come from the Third World where deprivation drives people to Israel despite the potential dangers. These new arrivals came from the United States. And according to a report by Israel National News, they were to be followed by 3,000 others from Great Britain, Canada, and France. According to current records, immigration from English-speaking countries has risen in recent years, and aliyah from Britain alone “has jumped by more than 50 percent.”

While many subplots could be written about why Jewish people would leave the most affluent nations in the world for life in a country awash in a sea of uncertainly, the prime subplot must be rising anti-Semitism. A British editor of The Church of England Newspaper complained that whenever he prints anything sympathetic to Israel, he is deluged with complaints of his being a Zionist as well as a racist.

Another expert on Palestinian-Israeli relations said he is acutely disturbed by the deeply rooted anti-Semitism growing in Britain and the West. Anti-Semites in the United Kingdom now say the September 11, 2001, attacks on America are Israel’s fault because the Jewish state supposedly created a level of anger that provoked the Muslims.

Unfortunately, recent events in the United States contribute to the conclusion that it might be a good time for some Jewish people to consider a move. In June anti-Semites plastered two Jewish synagogues in New York with swastikas and hurled smoke bombs and eggs against the buildings merely days after eight Jewish children were injured in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn by a bottle of dangerous chemicals thrown at them.

People with a solid grip on history recognize such incidents as symptomatic of a greater evil. James Wenneker von Brunn’s June attack on the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, is a glaring example. A certified racist who blames the Jewish people for virtually every ill of humanity, von Brunn is among a growing number of revisionists who claim the Holocaust is a Zionist invention designed to advance a so-called Jewish agenda of world domination.

The 88-year-old American took his hatred so far that he gladly attacked and killed at the American institution that exposes the lies of such mindless Holocaust denial.

It is impossible to overlook the growing Western trend to tolerate and even submit to Muslim factions and Islamic organizations that funnel support to terrorist groups from the majority of Western countries, including the United States.

Under the circumstances, can we expect increased Jewish emigration? Without a doubt. Especially if things continue to degenerate in countries that have been havens for the Jewish people in past days.

It is a thrill to learn the testimonies of the early immigrants to the United States who wept at the sight of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor and flowed through Ellis Island to find a new beginning in a land where welcome and opportunity awaited them. Today the question is, Are we beginning to see the departure of those who have come to believe that the welcome no longer extends to them? If that’s the case, we are nearing the end of our Golden Era.

In her storied poem The New Colossus, Emma Lazarus called to the huddled masses, homeless, and tempest tossed to find a haven “beside the golden door.” Sad it will be if that door is closing behind what has been a treasured, invaluable asset to our lives and societies.

*by Elwood McQuaid*
How to Win a War Without Firing a Shot

There’s a sleeper in the two-states-living-side-by-side scenario now tantalizing the Mideast peace process. Israelis have offered a perfectly sensible five-point plan that takes into account their need for future security:

- Explicit Palestinian recognition of Israel as the national state of the Jewish people.
- Demilitarization of a Palestinian state in such a manner that all of Israel’s security needs will be met.
- International backing of these security arrangements in the form of explicit international guarantees.
- A solution to the Palestinian refugee problem that must be outside the borders of Israel.
- Acceptance of the agreement as a final end to the conflict. Palestinians would not be able to raise additional claims following the signing of a peace agreement.

Although a hopeful theme threads through current conversations, proposals, and counterproposals, a specter of former days still taints the process. It is the sleeper, as we say: the remnant of the infamous Khartoum Resolution of September 1, 1967. Leaders of eight Arab countries joined hands in a policy declaration based on three specifics: No peace with Israel. No recognition of Israel. No negotiations with Israel.

The situation has changed somewhat, mainly because Egypt and Jordan have peace agreements with the Jewish state. Also, after the October 1973 Yom Kippur War, it was pretty well settled that the Arab states could not deliver a military knockout blow to Israel. Thus Palestinians decided another strategy was needed. It involved dialoguing, mixed with rhetorical zigzags and hornswoggling, to persuade the Western countries to enter the game as mediators. The result was the Road Map two-state solution framed by the United States, European Union, United Nations, and Russia.

While professing loudly that it is not meddling, the international community is on the verge of imposing a settlement to its liking. For their part, the Palestinians and their Muslim and Arab mentors are making sounds of qualified approval, titillating the would-be framers into thinking things are moving ahead and that a solution is just around the corner.

But there is an almost unspoken agenda under the table that would deliver an Arab victory in the war against Israel without firing a shot. If you’ve been listening, you have heard Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas and company holding the line on three basics: (1) No recognition of a Jewish state. (2) No concessions on the refugees’ return to Israel proper. (3) No surrender to the Palestinian claim on Jerusalem, which is another way of saying the war will go on until Israel is destroyed. Different tactic, same endgame.

Why so? Because if Israel is not a Jewish state, it is open to occupation by anyone. It is fair game for an invasion of millions of refugees, thus becoming merely one more Muslim-dominated entity with a subservient minority of stateless Jews. Islamic dominance of the Temple Mount and Old City of Jerusalem would be seen as certifying the claim of the supremacy of Allah and his followers.

Should such become the case, all of Israel’s other requests would be null and void. Why, for instance would a Palestinian state need to be demilitarized? Or why should there be a need for secure and recognized borders? Everything would, in fact, become Palestine. This is nothing less than war by demographic revolution.

A major component in diplomatic negotiations is always the nuance factor. Consequently, much is made about how words and phrases are used and interpreted. So far the big word is Jewish. We will all do well to watch what is done with that word and whether it will become the death knell for the Palestinians accepting a state of their own.

But when all is said and done, the battle is the Lord’s. And from that perspective, the battle has already been won. The perseverance of Israel is assured. I’m always refreshed and encouraged to remember the words of Jeremiah 31:31–37, where the Lord announces there will always be an Israel because if Israel is to be destroyed, He must first be displaced. And that isn’t going to happen.

The enemies of Jehovah and His Chosen People will try every device known to man to win their war against Him—with or without military weapons. But that war is unwinnable. As God told Israel through the prophet Isaiah, “Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake. No weapon formed against you shall prosper. . . . This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is from Me” (Isa. 54:15, 17).
The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.

Statement of Activities
Year Ended December 31, 2008

Changes in net assets:
Public support and revenue:

Public support:

Contributions:
- General ministry contributions ............................................. $4,686,172
- North American ministry contributions ............................. 1,157,271
- Foreign ministry contributions ............................................. 846,289
- Institute of Jewish Studies .................................................. 3,635
- Gift portion of annuities ..................................................... 317,953
- Legacies ........................................................................... 1,186,841
- Gifts-in-kind ....................................................................... 16,885

Total public support .............................................................. 8,215,047

Revenue:
- Ministry publications, audio and video ............................... 1,722,275
- Conferences and special functions ....................................... 61,615
- Interest and dividends ......................................................... 92,523
- Other revenue ..................................................................... 13,115

Total revenue ........................................................................ 1,889,529

Total public support and revenue ......................................... 10,104,576

Program services:
- Outreach ministries ............................................................... 4,550,507
- North American ministries .................................................. 1,621,640
- Foreign ministries ................................................................. 1,747,456
- Institute of Jewish Studies ..................................................... 62,111
- Conferences and special functions ....................................... 263,856

Total program services ......................................................... 8,245,610

Supporting services:
- Management and general .................................................... 1,335,042
- Stewardship and fund raising ............................................... 391,156
- Total supporting services ..................................................... 1,726,198
- Total program and supporting services ......................... 9,971,806

Change in net assets from operating activities ..................... 132,768

Other changes in net assets:
- Realized gain (loss) on investments ........................................... (163,190)
- Change in actuarial value of gift annuities and trusts .......... (1,637,716)

Changes in net assets ................................................................ (1,668,138)

Net assets at beginning of year ............................................. 4,963,717

Net assets at end of year ....................................................... $3,295,579

Our financial statements are audited by the accounting firm of Lambrides, Lamos, Taylor LLP., Certified Public Accountants. Their report on the audit for the year ended December 31, 2008, was rendered on May 7, 2009, with an unqualified opinion. The above figures are taken from that report.
Once There Was a Wicked, Wicked Man

Oh once there was a wicked, wicked man
And Haman was his name sir,
He would have murdered all the Jews,
Though they were not to blame sir.
Oh today, we’ll merry, merry be
Oh today, we’ll merry, merry be
Oh today, we’ll merry, merry be
And nosh some hamantaschen.

Yes, the villain Haman is still remembered year after year as Jewish children sing this little song. The lyrics help them learn the story from the biblical book of Esther as they celebrate the feast of Purim. Wicked Haman, key advisor to King Ahasuerus, devised a plan to destroy all the Jews throughout the entire kingdom—127 provinces, from India to Ethiopia:

There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people’s, and they do not keep the king’s laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain. . . . Let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work (Est. 3:8–9).

Haman’s demonic hatred of the Jewish people was focused and intense. It can be traced back to his people, the Agagites, archenemies of the Israelites (1 Sam. 15). Fast forward 2,500 years to Iran, modern-day Persia. Like Haman, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is fixated on the “Zionists.” Like Haman, he said the Jews “must be wiped off the map.” At the World Without Zionism conference in Iran in 2005, he said, “They [ask]: ‘Is it possible for us to witness a world without America and Zionism?’ But you had best know that this slogan and this goal are attainable, and surely can be achieved.”

He added, “Imam [Khomeini] said: ‘This regime that is occupying Qods [Jerusalem] must be eliminated from the pages of history.’ This sentence is very wise.”

Like Haman, Ahmadinejad possesses a demonic hatred for the Jewish people, which becomes clear when he denies the Holocaust. Whether speaking at the UN, Columbia University, or in the Muslim world, his desire is the same: the destruction of Israel.

The book of Esther records Haman’s demise. He was hung on the gallows he had built specifically for Mordecai the Jew. He died, while the Jews live on.

Ahmadinejad now looks to attain nuclear capability to obliterate Israel. Yet God promises in the Bible that no one will ever destroy the Jewish people (Jer. 31:35–36). Who knows? Maybe someday the Jewish people will sing a song of the wicked Ahmadinejad.

ENDNOTES

2 Ibid.

by Steve Herzog
A part of my work with National Religious Broadcasters, I was involved in a small meeting in the Capitol Hill office of a congressional representative not long ago. Known in political circles for his Christian principles, the congressman discussed with us a recent vote in the House of Representatives to pass a stunningly radical bill, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, advocated by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

If it becomes law, it will create within the U.S. State Department a permanent Office for Global Women’s Issues that would, among other things, promote—as part of America’s official foreign policy—abortion and homosexuality on a worldwide scale.

As pernicious as it is, however, the bill is only the latest in a series of astonishing positions taken by our current Congress and administration in support of abortion, gay rights, a new openness toward Islam, and the recasting of the federal government as the new property-rights overlord for failing national corporations.

The congressman sharply criticized the failure of much of the Christian church to oppose these new hyperliberal initiatives. Sadly, his words rang true.

When we compare our current national slide into sexual decadence, socialistic economics, and anti-Christian ideas of governance with the philosophical presuppositions held by our Founding Fathers, the differences are shocking. When John Adams wrote to Thomas Jefferson on June 28, 1813, reflecting on the men and women who sacrificed blood, toil, and treasure to the cause of freedom during the American Revolution, here is what he saw: “that army of young fellows” had all been bound together by two critical ideas: First, they had been “educated in the general principals of Christianity.” Second, they had been schooled in the “principals of English and American liberty.”

These two concepts, liberty and Christianity, are intrinsically related. A gospel-centric view of life provides both theological meaning as well as moral limitations to our concept of liberty.

So when my friend in Congress strongly suggested the church is remaining too silent in the face of an aggressively secular and radically humanistic, if not outright pagan, mentality in our nation’s capital, I also had to ask a more basic question: “Exactly what should the church of Christ do to stem this anti-Christian tide?”

It has been my observation that many in our movement have either forgotten or failed to learn God’s revealed position on certain matters. Can we readily articulate God’s position on owning private property? When God issued His Ten Commandments, two dealt specifically with property in a way that presupposes He values the right of private ownership. (See Exodus 20:15, 17.)

What is God’s view on national sovereignty? Acts 17:26 tells us God intentionally created the nations and their boundaries. By contrast, Genesis 11:6 explains how and why the Lord opposed ancient humanity’s attempt to forge a single, unified, global civilization.

God’s principles are not difficult to discern. In fact, the entire first chapter of Exodus is a clear renunciation of partial-birth abortion, selective abortion, and infanticide and is also a call for us to oppose governmental mandates when they collide with God’s clear dictates on matters of life.

When I was in law school, I received an excellent education in the “nuts and bolts” of the practice of law. Sadly, however, my class was the first in that university’s history not to have been given the time-honored instruction on the philosophical principles, most of them of Judeo-Christian origin, underlying our legal system.

In a similar way, I wonder if the church has done the same thing. We know the “nuts and bolts” of social and moral issues. But have we forgotten or neglected the biblical principles that enable us to articulate and advance our positions on such critical issues as the sanctity of life and the definition and importance of marriage and family? Do we appreciate the fact that the sanctity of life is implicit from the very beginning of Genesis, where people were created in God’s “own image” and where God was the divine agent who chose mankind’s form and breathed “the breath of life” into our race (Gen. 2:7)?

Most Christians know homosexuality is wrong, yet they may be duped into agreeing with homosexual activists who falsely claim that Jesus said nothing about the subject. Yet Jesus affirmed God’s design for marriage as being between one man and one woman (Mt. 19:4–6). And both the apostles Peter and Jude said God condemned Sodom and Gomorrah for their ungodly immorality (2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 1:7).

If Christian leaders and parents reinforce biblical concepts in both the church and home, we may yet see an entire generation rise up that not only understands the times in which it lives, but also can engage the culture in a way that may yet spark the blessed fires of revival.
There’s a story about two men sitting on a porch one summer evening. Soon a small dog came wobbling down the street and fell at the bottom of the steps in a disheveled heap. “That little dog looks awfully beat up,” observed one.

“Oh, that’s my dog,” said the other. “He comes home looking like that almost every night after he gets into fights with other dogs in the neighborhood.”

“Well, he must not be much of a fighter,” said the friend.

“Oh, he’s a very good fighter, but he’s a very poor judge of opponents.”

Need we be reminded again that an all-out war is on to eliminate God and, in particular, Jesus Christ and the Christianity He personifies from public displays and discourse? From the highest offices in America to the rabid minorities that have become the news media darlings, the hostilities are being ramped up feverishly.

But need we also be reminded that, like the little dog, the purveyors of anti-God belligerence have bitten off more than they can chew? They’ve chosen to pick a fight with the wrong opponent. No one can defeat the Almighty.

**A Culture of Incoherence**

The latest swill, as we’ve observed, is that America is no longer (nor has ever been, claim some) rooted in Christianity. The “new America” now consists of nothing more than a conglomeration of religions and ideologies that represent the new state of the world.

Consequently, everything is moving at a blistering pace into a culturally incoherent morass in the name of progress and at the expense of all that America has ever stood for. Everything that has aligned this nation with God and the precepts scripted into the republic’s history are in serious jeopardy. Here are a few examples:

- For 42 years sponsors of the patriotic Fourth of July God and Country Festival in Idaho have included a military flyover by Air Force jets honoring the troops that have
fought and died for the cause of freedom here and abroad. The event has always been regarded as a patriotic salute to those who have done so much for us. This year, however, the Pentagon decided that patriotism and Christian allegiance to America are not compatible and cancelled the Air Force’s participation.

As reported in the Idaho Press Tribune, the Pentagon complained it opted out because the event’s Web site “stated that this is a Christian event.”

In Tulsa, Oklahoma, Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) was jolted by the news that, after 20 years of faithful ministry in Tulsa’s tough housing projects, the organization would no longer be permitted to conduct its program. Officials informed CEF it would be allowed to go in and play games and talk about moral things, but it was strictly forbidden to mention God.

Larry Koehn, CEF’s executive director, said the organization was told that teaching Bible and discussing God with children violated a policy prohibiting religious instruction at public housing. He said housing was strictly forbidden to mention God.

The event has always been in effect, but it’s just never been enforced.” Yet CEF has had the permission and cooperation of parents who endorsed and supported the programs for two decades as good for their children.

This year the White House decided to pass on the National Day of Prayer as a public event. White House spokesman Larry Gibbs said a proclamation would be signed, but prayers would be offered privately, not as a national commitment.

In the currency of the incoherent, there is no free government now exists in the world, unless where Christianity is acknowledged, and is the religion of the country.

—Pennsylvania Supreme Court, 1824

We profess to be republicans, and yet we neglect the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government, that is, the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by the means of the Bible. For this Divine Book, above all others, favors that equality among mankind, that respect for just laws, and those sober and frugal virtues, which constitute the soul of republicanism.

—Benjamin Rush, Signer of the Declaration of Independence

To the kindly influence of Christianity we owe that degree of civil freedom, and political and social happiness which mankind now enjoys. . . . Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican forms of government, and all blessings which flow from them, must fall with them.

—Jedediah Morse, Patriot

and “Father of American Geography”

In Psalm 11 King David said, “In the LORD I put my trust; how can you say to my soul, ‘Flee as a bird to your mountain?’” (v. 1). He then extended his exclamation of trust by laying bare the ultimate prognosis of how God views destroyed foundations:

The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD’s throne is in heaven; His eyes

Irresistible to some. Following President Barack Obama’s June 4 concession speech to the Muslim world in Cairo, Egypt, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR, whose officials have been convicted of associating with Muslim terrorists) was to announce the launch of its “education campaign” involving the distribution of 100,000 copies of the Qur’an to local, state, and national leaders. CAIR said the move was prompted by Obama’s speech in Cairo.

“Through this ground-breaking outreach initiative,” said CAIR board chairman, North Carolina State Senator Larry Shaw, “we hope not only to educate policy-makers and opinion leaders about Islam, but also to provide an opportunity for American Muslims to reach out to their fellow citizens of other faiths.” Shaw is both a Muslim and a Democrat.

With the current hate-crimes legislation being promoted in Washington, one cannot help but wonder if the same restrictions aimed at preventing Christians from evangelizing and mentioning God will be placed on Muslims. Not likely.

Though America is still considered the land of freedom of religion, that freedom is rapidly drying up for God-loving, Bible-believing Christians.

If the Foundations Be Destroyed

“If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps. 11:3).

In the currency of the incoherent, there is a myth that America was never built on the precepts of the Bible but, rather, on a secular motif fashioned by patriots with deist tendencies, such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. Bible-thumpers then supposedly hijacked an essentially secular entity and imposed their religion on it.

However, history speaks for itself. The Founding Fathers of this nation left us their vision for America:

If we and our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us that shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity.

—Daniel Webster, Early-American Statesman

The law given from Sinai was civil and municipal as well as a moral and religious code; it contained many statutes . . . of universal application—laws essential to the existence of men in society, and most of which have been enacted by every nation which ever professed any code of laws.

—John Quincy Adams, Sixth President of the United States

A New Force du Jour

And while all things Christian are being “thrown under the bus,” as people say, the allure of Islam is becoming irresistible to some. Following President Barack Obama’s June 4 concession speech to the Muslim world in Cairo, Egypt, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR, whose officials have been convicted of associating with Muslim terrorists) was to announce the launch of its “education campaign” involving the distribution of 100,000 copies of the Qur’an to local, state, and national leaders. CAIR said the move was prompted by Obama’s speech in Cairo.

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If we and our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us that shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity.

—Daniel Webster, Early-American Statesman

The law given from Sinai was civil and municipal as well as a moral and religious code; it contained many statutes . . . of universal application—laws essential to the existence of men in society, and most of which have been enacted by every nation which ever professed any code of laws.

—John Quincy Adams, Sixth President of the United States

We profess to be republicans, and yet we neglect the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government, that is, the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by the means of the Bible. For this Divine Book, above all others, favors that equality among mankind, that respect for just laws, and those sober and frugal virtues, which constitute the soul of republicanism.

—Benjamin Rush, Signer of the Declaration of Independence

To the kindly influence of Christianity we owe that degree of civil freedom, and political and social happiness which mankind now enjoys. . . . Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican forms of government, and all blessings which flow from them, must fall with them.

—Jedediah Morse, Patriot

and “Father of American Geography”

In Psalm 11 King David said, “In the LORD I put my trust; how can you say to my soul, ‘Flee as a bird to your mountain?’” (v. 1). He then extended his exclamation of trust by laying bare the ultimate prognosis of how God views destroyed foundations:

The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD’s throne is in heaven; His eyes
As I’ve been writing this article, a verse keeps running through my mind: Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, “Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.” He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the LORD shall hold them in derision (Ps. 2:1–4, emphasis added).

Behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. The LORD tests the righteous [soon we may indeed suffer through some painful days], but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. Upon the wicked He will rain coals; fire and brimstone and a burning wind shall be the portion of their cup (vv. 4–6).

Two farmers lived side by side. One was a believer; the other, an agnostic. The agnostic made it a point to work his fields on Sunday then boast to the believer that his defiance of God went unanswered because he farmed on the Lord’s day and reaped a harvest as abundant as the Christian’s. “And how do you answer that?” he declared one fall day.

“There’s an easy answer to that one,” said the Christian, “and one you should be thinking about. You see, God doesn’t collect all of His debts in October. But there is a payday coming.”

Just as the little dog harbored delusions about his prowess as a street fighter, was badly overmatched, and paid a high price for his poor judgment, so it is with those who deign to create a world without God. Jedediah Morse was correct. “Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown . . . all blessings which flow from them, must fall with them.”

But we can thank God for our tomorrows because we recognize that He is in the heavens, and His throne is the one to which we pledge our eternal allegiance.

ENDNOTES
1 James Osborne, “Evangelical Group Banned From Tulsa Housing Projects, Chapter Leader Says,” June 8, 2009 <foxnews.com/story/0,2933,525424,00.html>mep>.
3 All five quotations and more may be found on wallbuilders.com.

Elwood McQuaid is executive editor for The Friends of Israel.
For all of the talk in the highest echelons of American politics and religion about conciliation between Islam and Christians, nothing is changing for beleaguered believers in Jesus in countries where the heat of persecution is being turned up. This may be true in part because there are no discernable expressions of outrage against the atrocities.

In July, Compass Direct News reported the beheading in February of two boys in Somalia because their Christian father refused to divulge information about a church leader whom militant Islamists were seeking. The man’s wife said Muslims entered their home while she was fixing lunch and abducted the family’s three sons: 11-year-old Abdi; 12-year-old Hussein; and Abdulahi, 7. Their mother, Arbow, lamented, “I watched my three boys dragged away helplessly as my youngest boy was crying. I knew they were going to be slaughtered. Just after some few minutes I heard a wailing cry from Abdulahi running towards the house.” She fainted from shock.

After burying the boys, the family sought refuge in a Kenyan refugee camp where they were last reported to be living in the open without shoes, a mattress, or shelter.

Also in July, Compass Direct reported that more than 500 Muslims in Lahore, Pakistan, went on a rampage against Christians after a Christian field worker on a tractor asked a Muslim to let him pass. Outraged at the lower-class Christian field worker’s request, 15 to 20 Muslims attacked the 37-year-old farmer and his family with hatchets.

Compass Direct reported that leaders of radical Islamists then met at the local mosque and decided to charge the Christians with blaspheming Islam. They conspired with a Muslim cleric to “teach Christians an exemplary lesson,” and the cleric used a mosque loudspeaker to incite 500 to 800 Muslim men to attack Christians.

The mob tore through the village, destroying electric meters, breaking down gates, wrecking and plundering homes, and in some cases beating Christian women. They also set vehicles and homes ablaze.

Later, reported Compass Direct, “several young Muslims gathered and began chanting slogans calling for expulsion of Christians, saying, ‘We will not let them live here.’ By 2:30 p.m., the area mosque was announcing that no shop should provide anything to Christians and that they should totally ostracize them.”

Christians and Muslims have lived together peaceably in the area for more than a century. “There has never been any such incident before,” said one Christian.

Some Muslims condemned the violence, and a Muslim leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party of Provincial Assembly told Compass the culprits must be brought to justice.

How long it will take to repair the damage and restore confidence that Christians can live in Lahore, Pakistan, in peace is anybody’s guess. But this incident emphasizes the growing problems facing Christians living in areas where radical Islamists feel empowered to attack followers of Jesus.

And with the world and virtually the entire Christian church ignoring their plight, these believers must feel a creeping sense of isolation as they fear future outbreaks.
EDITOR’S NOTE: Many Westerners like to think religion plays no role in modern politics. However, belief in Islam’s messianic figure, called the Mahdi or Hidden Imam, drives the policies of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Shi’ites believe the Mahdi will return, rule over a one-world system on Earth, and pour out judgment on all non-Muslims. This article explains the doctrine of Mahdism and shows how it affects the world. (Excerpted with permission of the Washington-based Middle East Media Research Institute [MEMRI]. © Copyright 2007 by The Middle East Media Research Institute [MEMRI]. All rights reserved.)

According to Shi’ite tradition, the Twelve Imams, descendants of the Prophet Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law Ali Ibn Abi Talib, were endowed with divine qualities that enabled them to lead the Shi’ite believers and to function as Allah’s emissaries on earth. However, when the Twelfth Imam fit: Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami, a close friend of Ahmadinejad (Abedin Taherkenareh/epa/Corbis). Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, head of the Guardian Council (Abedin Taherkenareh/epa/Corbis); Mohammad Yazdi, head of the judiciary (Mohsen Shandiz/Sygma/Corbis).
Muhammad Al-Mahdi disappeared in [A.D.] 941 CE, his connection with the Shi’ite believers was severed, and since then, the Shi’ites are commanded to await his return at any time.

In the meantime, Shi’ite senior clerics are considered to be the representatives of the Imams, and thus have the authority to handle the affairs of the Shi’ite community, mainly in the religious and judicial spheres, until the Hidden Imam returns to lead the Shi’ite community and deliver it from its suffering.

According to Shi’ite belief, during the period of the Mahdi’s absence (termed ghaibat or “occultation”), no one but God knows the hour of the Mahdi’s return, and no man can presume to foresee when this hour will come. Upon the Mahdi’s reappearance, all wrongs will be righted, divine justice will be instated, and the truth of Shi’ite Islam will be acknowledged by the entire world (Mahdism).1

**Mahdism and the Islamic Regime in Iran**

From the establishment of the Islamic Regime in 1979 to [Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad’s rise to power in August 2005, Mahdism had been a religious doctrine and a tradition that had no political manifestation. The political system operated independently of this messianic belief and of the anticipation of the return of the Mahdi. It was only with Ahmadinejad’s presidency that this religious doctrine has become a political philosophy and taken a central place in politics.

During the era of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of Iran’s Islamic regime, Mahdism remained outside the political realm. However, Khomeini’s era was nonetheless characterized by messianic fervor. The Iranians attributed messianic qualities to him and conferred upon him the title of “Imam,” which until then had been reserved for the Twelve Imams. In fact, Khomeini’s rise to power was seen at the time as the realization of the prophecy regarding the Mahdi’s return.

Khomeini’s instatement of the Rule of the Jurisprudent (velayat-e faqih) in Iran prompted a transformation in Shi’ism, replacing its traditional passivity with a more active outlook. As part of this change, Khomeini stated that the Shi’ites must not just passively await the return of the Mahdi but must actively prepare the ground for his return and for the deliverance of the Shi’ite community. One component of this active approach was the taking of power by the clerics. However, Khomeini kept the doctrine of Mahdism at the periphery of the political sphere. He neither claimed to have a direct connection with God, nor presumed to foresee the hour of the Mahdi’s return.


This document reviews the politicization of Mahdism by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and by his spiritual mentor, Ayatollah Taqi Mesbah-e Yazdi.

**Messianism in Iranian Foreign Policy**

The messianic doctrine of Mahdism is also manifest in Iranian foreign policy, especially in its attitude toward the Western superpowers and towards the nuclear program. Ayatollah Mesbah-e Yazdi, mentor to Ahmadinejad, expressed this approach in an October 11, 2006, speech: “The greatest obligation of those awaiting the appearance of the Mahdi is fighting heresy and global arrogance [i.e. the West, primarily the U.S.].”4

Ahmadinejad’s speeches are characteristically derisive of the “forces of arrogance,” i.e., the West, primarily the U.S., and threatening towards anyone who does not accept Shi’ite messianism as an alternative to the “perdition and destruction” awaiting them: “Those who do not respond to the call to proceed toward the truth—a good destiny does not await them. I heard that the president of one of those countries [i.e. U.S. President George Bush] . . . said that Iran’s president was threatening him. I say to him, ‘I am not the one threatening you. It is the entire world that threatens you because the world in its entirety is steadfast against oppression and the oppressors. You [Western countries] are nothing compared to the might of God. We invite you to [take] the righteous path, the path of the Prophets, of monotheism and justice. If you believe that you can sit in your glass palaces and determine the fate of the world, you are mistaken. . . . Our call [to you] to take the direction of truth [stems] from pity. We do not want you to get into trouble, since you know that the outcome of oppression and injustice is perdition and destruction.”5

These characteristics are also evident in Ahmadinejad’s nuclear policy. In contrast to Khatami’s government, which endeavored to soften the position of the West on the nuclear issue via ongoing dialogue, Ahmadinejad and his close circle do not avoid confronting the West, since they consider this struggle to be one of the ways to prepare the ground for the return of the Mahdi.

According to the Internet daily Rooz, “Some of those close to Ahmadinejad, who frequently speak [of the need] to prepare the ground for the Mahdi’s return, explicitly link the [fate of] the Iranian nuclear dossier to this need. . . . According to reliable information, they stressed in various private meetings that the [Iranian] opposition to global pressure [on the Iranian nuclear program] and its insistence on the right to utilize nuclear power are among the ways to prepare the ground for the return of the [Hidden] Imam.”6
“Implementing the laws of Islam, establishing justice and fighting heresy and oppression are the most important duties for those who await [the return of] the Hidden Imam and prepare the ground for his coming. . . . We must enhance religious faith and [the power] of religion in Iran and in the entire world. . . . In order to hasten the coming of the Hidden Imam, we must disseminate justice and religious law, in order to increase the public’s awareness of them [throughout the world] so that the [Shi’ite] faith will be accepted by society [everywhere]. . . .

“One of the ideological aspects of the Mahdist doctrine is [its] universality, since the Mahdi comes to establish justice and righteousness in the entire world. Another aspect is the dissemination of justice and righteousness [under the rule of] a single man, a single center, and a single system. Since it is the Hidden Imam who is responsible for disseminating righteousness and justice, the world will need to have a single center and government . . . so that it will emerge from a state of [division] and establish a single [universal] rule headed by the [Hidden Imam], and every kind of oppression and exploitation will [then] vanish from the world.”

In a 2006 speech marking the Mahdi’s birthday, Ayatollah Mesbah-e Yazdi emphasized the importance of fighting heresy, which, in his opinion, is delaying the coming of the Mahdi: “Our noblest duty is to strive to reduce oppression, to be more [stringent] in our implementation of Islamic law . . . and to weaken the control of oppressive and tyrannical regimes over the oppressed. These [actions] can [hasten] the return of the Hidden Imam. . . . If we wish to expedite the Mahdi’s coming, we must remove any obstacles [delaying his

continued on page 31
Walking for Israel

Stars of David glistened in the sun as 1,000 supporters of Israel participated in the fourth annual Walk for Israel in West Bloomfield, Michigan, in May.

Walkers came in all ages and sizes, from children to the elderly and from Israelis to Asians. Waving Israeli flags and declaring their support for the Jewish state, all made the mile-long trek that began at Temple Shir Shalom, a main sponsor of the event.

About 40 Jewish groups participated. The only evangelical-Christian sponsor was The Friends of Israel (FOI).

Under the direction of Church Ministries Representative Tim Munger, FOI manned a literature table that offered the May/June 2008 issue of Israel My Glory, which celebrated Israel’s 60th anniversary; the popular booklet Five Facts You Should Know About Israel by Renald Showers; and informational brochures about our summer ORIGINS tour to Israel for people ages 17 to 26.
Ahmadinejad’s Messianic Policy
Immediately upon assuming the presidency of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad began to assert his belief in the imminent return of the Mahdi as the basis for his political activities. Despite the traditional belief that no one can foresee the hour of the Mahdi’s return, Ahmadinejad frequently stated that his coming was nigh, and even gave a more specific prediction. During a meeting with the foreign minister of an Islamic country, he said that the crisis in Iran “presaged the coming of the Hidden Imam, who would appear within the next two years.”1

In a December 2006 speech in Kermanshah, Ahmadinejad wished the Christians a merry Christmas and said, “I hereby announce that, with God’s help, the day is not far off when Jesus will return at the side of the Hidden Imam.”2

Not only has Ahmadinejad wished to proclaim the imminent coming of the Mahdi and thereby to legitimize his policy and actions by associating them with Hidden Imam, but he has also presented himself as being directly connected to God. In a speech about Iran’s nuclear program, he claimed to have “a connection with God” and exhorted the Iranians to be true believers so that God would support them in their just struggle for nuclear technology:

“Believe [me], legally speaking, and in the eyes of public opinion, we have absolutely succeeded. I say this out of knowledge. Someone asked me, ‘So and so said that you have a connection.’ I said, ‘Yes, I have.’ He asked me, ‘Really, you have a connection? With whom?’ I answered, ‘I have a connection with God,’ since God said that the infidels will have no way to harm the believers. Well, [but] only if we are believers, because God said, You [will be] the victors. But the same friends say that Ahmadinejad says strange things. “If we are [really] believers, God will show us victory, and this miracle. Is it necessary today for a she-camel to emerge from the heart of the mountain2 so that my friends will accept the miracle? Wasn’t the [Islamic] Revolution [enough of] a miracle? Wasn’t the Imam [Ayatollah Khomeini] a miracle?”3

Ahmadinejad has also presented himself as being privy to God’s intentions and actions, as reflected in his statement that “God has appointed the Hidden Imam to be our supporter.”4 His claim of having a direct relationship with God was also evident in the speech he made upon his return to Iran after addressing the U.N. General Assembly in 2005. Ahmadinejad claimed that, as he was delivering his U.N. address, he felt himself “surrounded by a halo of light” symbolizing the messianic nature of his message to the nations of the world.5

Ahmadinejad’s speeches have been characterized by the use of messianic terms and by emphasis on the need to prepare the ground for the Mahdi’s return.6 For example, in a May 2007 speech in Kerman province, he said, “We have a mission—to turn Iran into the country of the Hidden Imam.”7

As part of their commitment to these preparations, and at the suggestion of senior Ahmadinejad aide Parviz Daoudi, the Iranian ministers signed a pledge of allegiance to the Hidden Imam during the government’s first session, along with the pledge of allegiance to Ahmadinejad.8 In accordance with his messianic policy, Ahmadinejad has also endorsed an Iranian-Shi’ite folk tradition which maintains that the Hidden Imam attaches special importance to the Jamkaran Mosque in Qom—a tradition that has not been supported by the conservative religious establishment.9 As part of this policy, Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad Hossein Saffar Harandi was ordered to drop the ministers’ pledge of allegiance into a well in the courtyard of the Jamkaran Mosque, where believers drop prayers and personal requests. Ahmadinejad also allocated $10 million for renovating the mosque and its surroundings in preparation for the return of the Mahdi, and in 2005, he spent some $8 million on refreshments for pilgrims during the celebration of the Mahdi’s birthday.10 The regime’s encouragement of Mahdism is also evident in content on the Web site of Iran’s government broadcasting service. For example, the site presents information on the Iranian TV series “The World Toward Illumination,” which deals with the imminent arrival of the Mahdi.11

It should be noted that political manifestations of Ahmadinejad’s messianic beliefs were evident even prior to his election to the presidency. According to reports, during his term as mayor of Tehran (2003–2005), the municipality printed a city map that showed, among other things, the route that will be taken by the Mahdi upon his return.12

At the International Seminar on the Doctrine of Mahdism, held in Iran September 6–7, 2006, during the celebrations for the Mahdi’s birthday and attended by representatives of various countries, Ahmadinejad emphasized the universal and active nature of Mahdism and called on the West to accept it: “Today mankind is proceeding towards the truth. Today the happiness of mankind depends on proceeding towards the truth. Today we invite everyone to proceed towards the truth, since [the truth] is the only way. . . . This celebration [of the Mahdi’s birthday] is not only for Muslims but for the entire world. The Mahdi belongs to all of mankind. . . .

“The Hidden Imam has no tangible presence among us, but he is always [here], and we must prepare the ground for his speedy appearance. . . . Some claim that during his occultation, his [nobility] is suspended, but that is not true. . . . On the

Scenes from modern Persia. Clockwise from top left: President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Salvatore Di Nolfi/epa/Corbis); Iranian flag; angry man joining protestors who opposed Ahmadinejad’s reelection (AP Photos).
Connection With God, Since God Said That the Infidels Will Have No Way to Harm the Believers. "We Have [Only] One Step Remaining Before We Attain the Summit of Nuclear Technology"; The West 'Will Not Dare to Attack Us," October 19, 2006 <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP132806>.

Fars (Iran), April 1, 2007.

Rooz (Iran), October 1, 2006.

For examples, see Kayhan, September 29, 2005; Fars news agency, October 11, 2005; Sharg, November 12, 2005; ISNA news agency, November 16, 2005; IRNA news agency, April 16, 2006; Kayhan, November 23, 2006; Emrooz, December 20, 2006; Jomhouri-ye Eslam, December 24, 2006.

Aftab (Iran), May 10, 2007.

ILNA (Iran), October 17, 2005.

Shi’ite scholars are divided regarding the status of this mosque. The daily Jomhouri-ye Eslam, which is affiliated with the religious seminaries in Qom and which represents the views of important Ayatollahs from the seminaries, stated that the mosque is no different than any other (September 13, 2006), while the weekly Parto-ye Sokhan, affiliated with Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah-e Yazdi, cited the traditional belief that the mosque had been built at the order of the Hidden Imam and that it holds special importance for him (September 20, 2006).

The Shi’ites celebrate the birthday of the Hidden Imam on the 15th day of the Muslim month of Sha’ban, which in 2006 coincided with September.


The reports stated that “the distribution of a distorted map . . . showing the route [that will be taken] by the Mahdi [upon his return] has been stopped [following critical] reactions from political and religious circles. The map was distributed by Tehran municipality . . . but the copies were soon recalled following [criticism] by senior officials in the regime.” (Hatef Web site—apparently the Web site Hatef News, associated with supporters of Rafsanjani—December 5, 2005, quoted in Rooz, December 5, 2005).

ISNA (Iran), September 6, 2006.

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People are fond of saying, “You know, it doesn’t matter how you get to God. All religions lead to God.” Friend, that is not true. The Bible says only one person in all of history is qualified to atone for our sins and reconcile us to God. And that Person is Jesus—the Prophet, Priest, and King.

Jesus Is a Prophet. In fact, He is the prophet—the one Moses told the Jewish people to look for (Dt. 18:15–19). Several times He said, “Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak” (Jn. 12:50). For three years He did precisely what the Old Testament prophets did: manifest God’s truth to mankind.

Jesus Is a High Priest. He is the only Mediator between God and man. He is the only perfect and sinless sacrifice for sin.

Everyone is born with a sin nature. We can see the human tendency to do wrong even in young children. Only Jesus was born without a sin nature, and only He lived a sinless life (2 Cor. 5:21). Today He functions as our High Priest:

For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself (Heb. 7:26–27).

Because He did not have to offer a sacrifice for His own sins, He was qualified to become the payment, or sacrifice, for ours. Jesus alone can stand between man and God: “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:5–6).

God sent Jesus to die for the sins of the entire world. His death is the only sufficient payment for the sins of men and women across the face of the earth. He is the only Mediator, the only go-between, and the only one who can “get you in” with God.

Jesus Himself said, “Broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Mt. 7:13; Jn. 14:6).

Those statements even eliminate the teachings of some branches of Christianity that maintain you can get to heaven if you are a good person, based on your own merit. The Bible says Jesus must be your substitute. We must accept Him as the one who died in place of us in order for us to receive forgiveness of sin.

He passed through the heavens into the heavenly Temple to offer His own blood. It is amazing that He would be both Priest and Sacrifice, but that is what Scripture teaches. In His death, He presented His blood as a sufficient sacrifice, rendering inoperative the Old Testament’s sacrificial system. It is no longer available as a means of access to God because Jesus’ sacrifice replaced it.

Jesus is a Priest forever: “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). His ministry is ongoing; He functions as a Priest today. When we sin, Jesus is there immediately to intercede for us and plead our case. He tells the Father, “I died for that sin.” His blood is efficacious even for sins we commit between now and the day we die. Jesus paid for them all.

Jesus Is a King. Today Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 8:1). But one day He will return to reign as conquering King. And when He comes, He will defeat God’s enemies and establish His Kingdom here on Earth. It’s called the Millennial Kingdom and will begin with 1,000 years before it moves into eternity.

Jesus is “the King of Glory” (Ps. 24:7–10). He is Prophet, Priest, and King. His prophetic ministry is finished. His priestly ministry is ongoing, and His royal ministry lies ahead.

Only Jesus Christ solves fallen humanity’s dilemma. Because of sin, we are estranged from God. But God sent Jesus to be the propitiation, or satisfaction, for our sins. While we were still sinners, God sent Jesus to die for us so that He might welcome us into His Kingdom (Rom. 5:8).

Jesus is our only hope. He is the only way. And since God went to all the trouble of sending Him and having Him live here for 33 years and die in our place to make atonement for our sins, is God not justified in saying, “Friend, this is the only way”? God has that right, and that is what He clearly communicates in Scripture.

Either we agree with Him, or we spend eternity outside of His presence. Jesus is the sole Mediator between God and man, and we must put our faith in Him as Savior and Lord.

by Richard D. Emmons, senior professor of Bible and doctrine at Philadelphia Biblical University and senior pastor of GraceWay Bible Church in Hamilton Township, New Jersey.
### THE MUSLIM JESUS vs. THE CHRISTIAN JESUS

*The Qur’an, Hadiths, and Islamic Teaching vs. The Bible*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Muslim Jesus</th>
<th>Christian Jesus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is a created human being and is not eternal (Surah 3:59).</td>
<td>10. Not fit to be an intercessor (Hadith Vol. 9, Book 93, Number 507).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is not the Lamb of God who was slain (Surah 4:157).</td>
<td>11. Is simply another prophet (Surah 2.136, 2.84).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is not involved in salvation, which is found only in the Five Pillars of Islam (Surah 4:124; 9:20–22).</td>
<td>14. Destroys the Antichrist and exterminates the Jewish people and Christianity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cannot be worshiped (Surah al-Maa‘idah 5:116).</td>
<td>18. Will die 40 years after his return (Sunan Abu Dawud, Book 37, Number 4310).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**There is no passage in the Qur’an or Hadiths that speaks of Jesus’ love for the world. Only the biblical Jesus loves the world:**

*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Jn. 13:34; Rom. 8.38–39).*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Christian Jesus</strong> by Emir Caner</th>
<th><strong>The Bible</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Is eternal Creator of everything (Mic. 5:2; Col. 1:16–17).</td>
<td><strong>10.</strong> Is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Is the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29).</td>
<td><strong>11.</strong> Is the name above all names (Eph. 1:21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Appeared to Saul (apostle Paul) after His ascension (Acts 9:5).</td>
<td><strong>12.</strong> Returns arrayed in white (Dan. 7:9; Rev. 1:14–15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Sent the Holy Spirit (Comforter) who came 50 days later, not 500 years later (Muhammad was not born until A.D. 570).</td>
<td><strong>13.</strong> Returns to Jerusalem and stands on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4; Acts 1:11).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.</strong> Salvation is found in no one but Jesus (Acts 4:12; Rom. 10:9).</td>
<td><strong>14.</strong> Destroys the Antichrist and rescues the Jewish people (Zech. 12; 2 Th. 2:8; Rev. 19:15, 20–21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.</strong> Made Himself a voluntary servant (Phil. 2:6–8).</td>
<td><strong>15.</strong> Was pierced for our transgressions (Isa. 53:5; Zech. 12:10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7.</strong> By His death and resurrection, He saved people from their sins (Jn. 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:14, 20).</td>
<td><strong>16.</strong> Will marry His Bride (the church) at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8.</strong> Is the Son of God, the Word made flesh, who dwelt among us (Jn 1:14; 3:16).</td>
<td><strong>17.</strong> Breaks every curse of sin and death (Isa. 53:6; Gal. 3:13; Rev. 22:3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9.</strong> It is commanded that He be worshiped (Phil. 2:9–11).</td>
<td><strong>18.</strong> Is alive forevermore (Heb. 7:24; Rev. 1:18).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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2. Traditions No. 21; No. 9-15-21, No. 10-14-15, No. 1-2-4-6; Muslim, Dhikr Dajjal; Abu Dawud, Kitab ul-Malahim, Bab: Khuruj; Dajjal; Tirmidhi, Abwab-ul-Fitna; Bab: Fi Fitna al-Dajjal; Ibn Majah, Kitab ul-Fitna, Bab: Fitna al-Dajjal.
4. A brief version of this tradition has been recorded in Muslim. Hadiz Ibn Hajar in Fath-ul-Bari Vol. VI, p. 450 declares this tradition to be authentic.

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A former Sunni Muslim, Emir Caner is a best-selling, evangelical Christian author and president of Truett-McConnell College, a Baptist school in Cleveland, Georgia.
When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, many said, “The bear is dead!” But the Russian bear did not die; it simply hibernated, and today it has awakened with great fury as Prime Minister Vladimir Putin attempts to restore to the modern nation the former glory of Mother Russia.

The Russian “bear” has been busy making new friends. The most significant are Russia’s emerging alliances with Islamic nations bent on Israel’s destruction. Most notable of these is Persia, that is, modern-day Iran.

Looking thousands of years ahead through the lens of prophetic history (prophecy is simply history in advance), the prophet Ezekiel saw several amazing events (Ezk. 36—39), some of which warn us to keep our eyes on the bear.

First, Ezekiel said Jewish people the world over will return to their ancient, God-given homeland of Israel. And return they have. They have come back from Europe, Russia, Ethiopia, America, the nations of the former Soviet Union, and a host of other countries to which they were scattered.

And second, on May 14, 1948, a miracle happened that scholar and skeptic alike said was impossible: Israel was reborn as a nation.

### The Coming Invasion

However, Ezekiel wrote of a yet-future war in which Russia (called “Magog,” 38:1–4) and a coalition of nations (all of which are now Islamic) will come against Israel in an attempt to destroy it: “Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet” (v. 5).

The first nation Scripture mentions in the coalition is Persia, meaning Iran. Wrote Bible scholar David Jeremiah:

*The next country Ezekiel names is Persia, a name that appears thirty-five times in the Old Testament.* Persia is easy for us to identify because it retained the name it had held since ancient times until March 1935, when it became the nation of Iran. Nearly four and a half decades later, Iran officially changed its name to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Today, with its population of 70 million people, Iran has become the hotbed of militant Islam and anti-Semitic hatred.

The reality of the Russian bear’s warming relationship with Iran is evident from media headlines:

- **“Russia Agrees to $1 Billion Arms Deal With Iran”** by the Associated Press, December 2, 2005. This article, posted on the FOX News Web site, calls Russia “a key Iranian ally.”

For years, Russia has not been happy sitting in the back of the bus, so to speak. Last year, after Russia invaded Georgia, Robert Baer wrote in *Time* magazine that Russia wants an empire:

*Russia’s invasion of Georgia has less to do with South Ossetia than with a Russia that never reconciled itself to losing an empire—or to being treated like a second-rate power all these years. Russia’s resentment has only grown as oil prices have risen. . . . By invading its neighbor, Russia has crossed the Rubicon. . . . The question now is what else Russia is prepared to do to make up for those 17 years of humiliation. One thing we should pretty much count on is that Moscow right now is casting an eye toward Iran, the most direct route to restoring its influence in the Middle East.*

### Rescue and Redemption

What chance would tiny Israel have against the Russian bear and its many Islamic cubs? The answer is in Ezekiel 38:18: “And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel,’ says the Lord God, ‘that My fury will show in My face.’” God will be enraged, and He will rise in Israel’s defense and utterly crush the coalition (38:18—39:10).

The result of this divine rescue will be Israel’s redemption:

*“Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer. And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,” says the Lord God (39:28–29).*

God will not forsake His covenant promises, and He will not fail His covenant people.

Russia and Iran are on the march, and they have evil intentions when it comes to Israel. But the God of Israel’s return will be the God of Israel’s rescue and redemption.

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**Endnotes**


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**Patrick Neff** is the director of Church Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
Furthermore, He arose from the dead, leaving an empty tomb in Jerusalem, and will one day return to Earth in power and glory. Until then, Jesus warned that false messiahs will arise, but God’s people must accept no substitutes: “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ [Messiah],’ and will deceive many” (24:5).

He warned that many people in the future Tribulation will look like the Deliverer, but they will be frauds; and the concept of Messiah will become distorted and deformed in various ways: “False christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand” (vv. 24–25).

But we need never be fooled. When Jesus returns, His entrance will be spectacular: For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles [vultures, NASB] will be gathered together (vv. 27–28).

Just as you can see lightning when you’re not watching for it, so, too, can you see vultures gathered, indicating the presence of a dead animal. The point is that humanity will not miss the Messiah’s appearance. Jesus will return in power and glory, and all the world will know it.

Many have claimed to be the messiah. Junichiro Sawaguchi believes Jesus is buried in his yard. But the greatest deception is yet to come:

The Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life (1 Jn. 2:18, 22–25).

The English word Christ comes from the Greek word Christos. In Hebrew, “anointed one” is the word Mashiach, which is Messiah continued on page 29

seven hours north of Tokyo is a small town called Shingo where you can buy biscuits, chopsticks, and postcards to commemorate your visit to the place where Jesus is buried. And you can visit 52-year-old Junichiro Sawaguchi who claims to be His descendant.

According to an article by Julian Ryall in the British Telegraph titled “Japanese who say they are the descendants of Jesus,” a Shinto priest in Japan found a document in 1935 purporting to be Christ’s will. It “bizzarely [sic] identified Shingo as his last resting place” and said the Romans mistakenly crucified Jesus’ brother.¹ Then, wrote Ryall, “carrying his brother’s ear and a lock of hair from the Virgin Mary, Jesus fled across Siberia to Shingo, where he grew rice, married a local woman called Miyuko and had three daughters.”² He died at age 106 and was buried in Sawaguchi’s yard.

Who actually lies beneath the dirt in the garlic-farming town of Shingo may never be known. But one thing is certain: It is not Jesus Christ. Jesus declared Himself God’s Anointed One, the true Messiah of Israel, and the Son of the living God (Mt. 16:13–17); and He authenticated His claims by the miracles He performed.

The One and Only Christ by William L. Krewson

AN APOCALYPSE IS COMING! and even the church is setting the stage.

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How Jesus Can Change a Life

When I got the idea for this article, my dear friend Josephine Marcone was lying in a hospital bed suffering from pneumonia. Since she’s 82 (you’d never know it), I had no idea how things would turn out. I did know that every nurse and doctor who attended her would hear about Jesus; and if she failed to pull through, she’d be rejoicing in heaven in the presence of her Savior.

Thirty years ago Jesus changed Josephine’s life, and now she spends most of it telling people that He can change theirs. “I was the most fearful girl,” she told me. “I was afraid at night. I used to get depressed [you’d never know that, either], and I would never walk into my house alone. One time I was driving and had a panic attack. Today I’ll go anywhere, do anything. I drive to Florida. God has really taken all my fears away.”

She was also on the verge of a divorce. “When I got saved I fell in love with my husband all over again.” He came to Christ the following month.

If you think Josephine grew up without religion, you’re wrong. She had plenty of religion. She went to church faithfully and made her children go. She even sent them to parochial school. But none of those things makes one a Christian. “I was always a Goody Two-shoes,” she said. “I told myself, ‘When God puts my life on a scale, He’ll say, ‘All right, Josephine, you’re good enough. You can come to heaven.’”

One day she was walking home and passed someone watering the lawn. “I told him, ‘You have a beautiful lawn.’ He said, ‘I should. I’m the gardener here.’ Then he asked me, ‘Do you know where you’re going when you die?’ I was so insulted! What kind of a question was that!”

But she didn’t know. So she told him about all her good works. And he told her what God said through the prophet Isaiah: “All our righteousnesses are like filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6).

“What?” she asked. “You mean as good as I’ve been means nothing to God?” He said it didn’t.

“Well, then, how do you get to heaven?” she asked.

And he told her about Jesus from the Bible. He explained that God sent His Son to Earth to be the final sacrifice for sin. Jesus took the punishment she deserved by dying in her place, and Jesus’ blood atoned for her sin. Then He arose from the dead because He is God. All she had to do was accept that truth by faith and trust in Jesus, not in herself. Then God would apply Christ’s blood to her account and give her the gift of everlasting life.

Soon afterward the gardener recommended a good Bible-believing church, and Josephine went. When the pastor invited people to come forward and ask Christ into their lives, Josephine did. The pastor’s wife escorted her into another room where they spoke, and Josephine prayed to receive Jesus as her personal Savior.

“Then she asked me, ‘Where are you going when you die?’ I said, ‘I think I’m going to heaven.’” She said, ‘No. I’m going to ask you again. Where are you going when you die?’ Then I said, ‘I’m going to heaven!’”

Thirty years have gone by, and Josephine is more in love with Jesus than ever. She has been through severe illness, had an eye removed, battled a brain tumor, and has a pacemaker and two stents in her heart. “I’ve been through the mill,” she said, laughing. “But I never feel alone because Jesus said He would never leave me or forsake me” (Heb. 13:5).

And He hasn’t. “He’s healed my marriage. My children got saved. And I’ve led a few people to the Lord. What the Lord did in our lives is amazing.”

Today Josephine is home from the hospital, back to hosting her Bible study, and never misses an opportunity to talk about Jesus. And, in case you’re wondering, she’s still in touch with the gardener!

EDITOR’S NOTE: While we were in production with this issue of Israel My Glory, Josephine suffered a stroke. She is recovering in a rehabilitation facility, and she and her family would appreciate your prayers.

by Lorna Simcox, editor-in-chief for The Friends of Israel.
There is an invisible war all around us, and today there needs to be a modern Paul Revere who tells us to wake up!

The enemy is coming, and we need to sound the alarm. The sad thing is that many of God’s children are sound asleep when they ought to be awake. The church is asleep, snuggled up in her pews with the covers pulled over her head; and the sanctuary is dark. God’s alarm clock is going off, and we need to get up. This is no time to push the snooze button!

Just as in 1775 in America, when the light from two lanterns warned of impending destruction, today the light from the Word of God is broadcasting another warning about a far deeper danger. We have been given a wake-up call by the Word of God—is anyone listening?

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light (Rom. 13:11–12).

According to God’s clock, it’s time to wake up. The apostle Paul gave a wake-up call to the saints in Rome. How much more we need his wake-up call today! There is anarchy in the world, apostasy in the church, and apathy in the pew.

It’s probably later than most of us think. This world is in a moral free fall like never before in history. The alarm has sounded, and we need to heed the call. But what are people doing? They are rolling over and yawning in the face of God. Paul says “it is high time to awake” and “the night is far spent.”

It’s later in this age than you may think. I believe Jesus Christ is at the threshold. I believe the trumpet is about to sound. Christ is going to come soon, and it is only the restraining hand of Almighty God and the Holy Spirit that keeps the floodgates of evil closed as much as they are.

I pray God the Holy Spirit will write upon your heart three things the apostle Paul told the church at Rome and wants to tell the church today.
Wake up!

It’s later in the day of opportunity than you think. We have unparalleled opportunities now to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. When He was here on Earth, Jesus said, “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work” (Jn. 9:4). Do you know what’s wrong in the church today? Too many sermons are like bedtime stories rather than reveilles. God’s alarm clock is going off all around us. Jesus is coming as a thief in the night. The apostle Paul said, “For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Th. 5:2, 4).

How can we sit comfortably in the pew when civilization is crumbling around us? The night is far from civilization is crumbling when we are full of bitterness, jealousy and unsatisfied desires, someone else has. If your heart is full of hatred, if you’re not in the pew when civilization is crumbling, if you’re full of jealousy and unsatisfied desires, these are the works of darkness. God says put these things off.

I’m amazed that today there is no sense of shame. We have a generation of “unblushables,” people who commit immorality and are not ashamed. Someone said that man is the only animal that can blush—or needs to. “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; nor did they know how to blush” (Jer. 6:15). Oh, how we need to come before our Lord in honesty and confession!

Dress Up!

Not only is it time to wake up, but it’s time to dress up. This is the heart, the climax of the matter: “Cast off the works of darkness, and . . . put on the armor of light. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 13:12, 14).

What do I do after having woken up and cleaned up? Dress up in Jesus. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Put Him on for direction because He is Lord. You must have someone who can dress you in robes of righteousness, protect you, cleanse you, and keep you clean. Put Him on for deliverance because He is Savior. Put Him on for dominion because He is King Messiah, Lord of lords. I am to wear Jesus like armor of light.

So where do you think we stand as a culture, as a church, and as individual Christians? Paul sounded the alarm in the first century, and we need to sound it today as well. The hour is late, the night far spent. Soon He comes with trumpet sound. What we’re going to do for Jesus we’d better do right now.

Life is too short. Eternity is too long. Souls are too precious. The gospel is too wonderful for us to sleep through it all. You’ve heard the alarm. Now you can either roll over and hit the “snooze” button; or you can get up, clean up, and dress up!

Clean Up!

Not only is it time to wake up, but it’s time to clean up. Romans 13 tells us to put off rioting, drunkenness, shamelessness, strife, and envy. Strife means the desire for power. Envy is wanting more and wanting what someone else has. If your heart is headquarters for hate, if you’re full of jealousy and unsatisfied desires, these are the works of darkness. God says put these things off.
If I perish, I perish! Those words probably mean little in Western society where people routinely use expressions like “I’ll just die” or “kill me now” when encountering the least bit of difficulty. But 2,500 years ago in Persia (modern Iran), those words were extraordinary.

They were spoken by Esther, a Jewish woman who had become queen of Persia when it ruled the world and whose decision to help her people jeopardized her life. As a result of her intercession, prompted by her cousin Mordecai, Jewish people around the world were spared annihilation and still celebrate the feast of Purim.

Today Mordecai’s and Esther’s tombs lie in Hamadan, Iran, a silent testimony to Esther’s courage and to the ancient roots of Persia’s dwindling Jewish community. Jewish people came to Iran through the Assyrian and Babylonian Captivities. Assyria took the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C., then Babylon took Assyria. When Babylon took the southern kingdom of Judah in 586 B.C.,...
it became ruler over all world Jewry. And when Medo-Persia captured Babylon in 539 B.C., control was transferred to Persia.

Under the Pahlavi Dynasty (1925–1979), Jewish people fared well. The Shah of Iran reversed centuries of cruel, anti-Semitic conditions; and Jewish people and Judaism flourished. But in 1979 everything changed. Overnight the Islamic Revolution returned Jewish people to second-class status and brought back persecution with a vengeance.

Iran’s meager 25,000 Jewish people (down from 80,000 in 1979) now suffer greatly under Islamic law; and Iran’s ruler, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has declared his intentions to exterminate world Jewry.

Of course, he is not the first Persian to do so. Each year in February or March (Hebrew month of Adar), Jewish people attend synagogues to commemorate Purim, when a previous Persian official intended to do the same. The official was Haman, and the date for his planned massacre was determined by casting lots (Hebrew, Pur; Est. 3:7), which gives the holiday its name.

Today children dress up in costume to play Esther, Mordecai, King Ahasuerus, or even the wicked Haman. And the entire congregation reads aloud, in unison, the Megillah—the whole story in the book of Esther—word by word, line by line.

Whenever Haman’s name is read, the congregation explodes with loud boos and hisses and the rattling of gragers (noisemakers). When Mordecai’s name is read, everyone cheers.

Mordecai had told Esther to keep her Jewish identity secret. She obeyed, even after marrying the pagan king. When Mordecai discovered Haman’s plan, he warned Esther and exhorted her to act, reminding her that, as queen, she was perfectly positioned “for such a time as this” (4:14).

Persian law, under penalty of death, forbade Esther to go to the king uninvited. Yet if she did nothing, her people would die. Contemplating her possible fate, Esther devised a plan, declaring, “If I perish, I perish!” (v. 16).

Haman’s plot was foiled through the intercession of the beautiful Jewish queen, and Haman and his sons were hanged on gallows 75 feet high.

Despite the absence of God’s name in the book of Esther, the evidence of His providence and presence is overwhelming. Shortly before Babylon took Judah captive, God told the Jewish people through the prophet Jeremiah, “I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jer. 31:3). And as He was then, so is He today and forever.

**The Doctrine of Mahdism**

from page 16

return]. What are the obstacles delaying the appearance of the Mahdi? [They are] the [heretical] denial of the blessing [conferred] on society by the presence of the Imam, [as well as] ingratiation, insubordination, and objections [to the doctrine of Mahdism]. If we want to hasten the coming of the Mahdi, we must eliminate these obstacles. We must strive to instate greater justice, ensure a [more stringent] implementation of Islamic law, [bring] the people to take greater interest in the faith and its directives, [establish] the religious laws as the dominant [values] of society, [ensure] that religious faith be taken as a consensus at conferences, and limit the [control of the oppressors, i.e. of the Western powers] over the oppressed throughout the world—both Muslim and non-Muslim. [This is what we must do] in order to prepare the ground for the Mahdi’s coming. Thus, the greatest obligation of those awaiting the appearance of the Mahdi is fighting heresy and global arrogance.”

Fatemeh Rajabi, who is affiliated with Ansar-e Hizbullah and who authored a book about Ahmadinejad titled The Miracle of the Third Millennium, said that the “Ahmadinejad government [was established to facilitate] the coming of the Hidden Imam.”

A. Savyon is director of the Iranian Media Project.

Y. Mansh arof is a research fellow at MEMRI.
Many Old Testament prophecies inform us about the Messiah. By comparing them with the New Testament, we can see that the true Messiah is Jesus Christ who was born of a virgin and is the biological son of King David of Israel. Here are a few of those prophecies.

**Genesis 49:10:** The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people.

Messiah would be a descendant of the tribe of Judah, deriving His humanity through the nation of Israel. Luke 3:23–33 verifies Jesus’ biological genealogy, tracing Jesus’ descent from Judah, one of Jacob’s 12 sons. Revelation 5:5 refers to Him as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah”; and Romans 9:4–5 makes it clear Jesus came from the nation of Israel.

**2 Samuel 7:12, 16:** When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. And your house and your kingdom shall be

Tomb of Cyrus (576–530 B.C.) in Pasargad, Iran. Isaiah prophesied about Cyrus more than 100 years before the Persian king was born. (FOI Image Archive/digital enhancement, Thomas E. Williams).
established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.

God covenanted with David to establish David’s house—meaning his family, line of descent, throne, and kingdom—forever through his biological descendant, the Messiah. The Psalms also refer to this promise. In Luke 1, the angel Gabriel told Mary the unique Child she would bear would sit on the throne of His ancestor King David to rule; and the genealogy in Luke 3 traces Jesus’ descent directly to David.

In Acts 2 the apostle Peter confirmed that Jesus, in fulfillment of Old Testament messianic prophecies, is David’s descendant. And in Revelation 22:16, Jesus Himself said He is a descendant of David. It was almost as if, at the end of the biblical revelation, He was emphasizing, “I’m not yet finished with the world. I’m a descendant of David; I’m going to come back; I’m going to sit on his throne and ultimately fulfill the covenant God established with my ancestor David many, many years ago.”

Deuteronomy 18:18–19: I will raise up for them a Prophet like you [Moses] from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.

God promised to produce another great Israelite prophet like Moses. That prophet would speak God’s words to Israel, and anyone who did not heed the prophet would suffer dire consequences. In the Gospel of John, people asked John the Baptist if he was the prophet he foretold in Deuteronomy 18, and John said no (1:21; cf. v. 25). Later, in light of Jesus’ miracles, some said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world” (6:14; cf. 7:40). Repeatedly, Jesus indicated He spoke the words the Father gave Him and that He was God’s Prophet-Spokesman, declaring God’s Word to Israel.

Hebrews 1:1–2 says, “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,” referring to the Lord Jesus and indicating He is the ultimate Prophet of God to Israel and the world.

Psalm 2: Foretells how all the Gentile powers at the end of the future Tribulation (Time of Jacob’s Trouble, Jer. 30:7) will rebel against God and His Messiah to prevent God from setting up His Messianic Kingdom-rule. But God laughs at their puny opposition and grants His Son permission to pulverize the rebels. He then sets up the Messiah in Jerusalem as King over all the earth. In Revelation 19 Jesus emerges from heaven at His glorious Second Coming to wage war. Pitted against Him are the Antichrist, the false prophet, and all the rulers and armies of the world. They are assembled to fight the Lord Jesus, God’s Messiah, when He comes out of heaven. Revelation teaches that Jesus will destroy these godless forces, in fulfillment of Psalm 2.

Psalm 27: I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’

Foretells the day God would resurrect the Messiah from death, saying, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” Paul quoted this verse in Acts 13:33 and said it refers to God resurrecting Jesus. In Acts 2:24, Peter said God raised up Jesus, “having loosed the pains of death.” The word pains is literally “birth pangs,” meaning God gave birth to Jesus’ body via resurrection from the dead—removing Him from death’s womb. In Romans 1:3–4, Paul said Jesus was “declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” When God raised Jesus, He was declaring to the world, “I don’t care if He died by crucifixion. He is My Son,” in fulfillment of Psalm 2:7.

Psalm 16:10: For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

God said He would not allow His Holy One to decompose. Peter quoted this Scripture in Acts 2, indicating God foretold He would raise Jesus’ body from the dead before it would begin to decay.

Psalm 22:1–18: Foretells Messiah’s suffering on the cross and the distribution of His garments. It begins, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” On the cross, Jesus endured tremendous agony and suffering, described graphically here more than 1,000 years ahead of time. The New Testament tells us the soldiers divided His garments among themselves and cast lots to see who would get His seamless cloak (Jn. 19:23). Psalm 22:18 says such a thing would happen when the true Messiah would be crucified.

Psalm 72:7–11, 17: Foretells Messiah’s rule as King over Earth and proclaims (1) the submission of earthly kings and nations to Him, (2) the enduring nature of His name, (3) the blessing His subjects will experience when He rules, and (4) His subjects’ gratitude to Him. Revelation 19:16 shows this prophecy is fulfilled through Jesus. Also, Revelation 21:24–26 indicates that in the future eternal state, earthy kings will exist under Jesus’ rule as He reigns over the new, eternal Earth. They will bring their nations’ products to Him at the New Jerusalem in worship. It also indicates how greatly people will be blessed while He rules.

Isaiah 7:14: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Foretells Messiah’s virgin birth. Matthew 1:18–25 records the angel Gabriel explaining Mary’s pregnancy to Joseph. Matthew said Jesus would be born of the virgin Mary, in specific fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. Luke 1:26–35 records Gabriel telling Mary she would bear the One who would be called God’s Son, or the Messiah, even though she was a virgin.

Isaiah 9:6–7: This portion begins, “For unto us a Child is born.” Deity is not born. Deity is eternal. Humanity is born. So the Messiah would be human, coming into the world via a human birth. It continues: “Unto us a Son is given.” Whose Son is given? God’s Son. John 3:16 states, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” Galatians 4:4 declares, “When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman.”

Calling Jesus God’s Son implies He has the same nature as God the Father: full deity. Isaiah 9 says Messiah would be a God-Man. He would be eternal deity incarnated in human flesh through a human birth. Isaiah 9:6 calls Him names that would be true of the Messiah: “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” It speaks of His governmental rule on David’s throne when He will rule Earth on God’s behalf, again indicating His direct descent from David.

Isaiah 11:1–5: Foretells Messiah’s line of descent and governmental rule, using four major prophecies.

(1) Messiah will be a biological descendant of Jesse, David’s father (v. 1). Luke 3 traces Jesus’ biological genealogy to David and Jesse. Acts 13 reiterates Jesus’ descent from David’s father.

(2) Messiah will rule in the power of the Holy Spirit ( Isa. 11:2–3). When Jesus emerged from the waters of baptism, the Holy Spirit descended on Him as a dove coming out of heaven ( Mt. 3:16). John’s Gospel indicates Jesus ministered on Earth in the power of the Holy Spirit.
(3) Messiah’s governmental rule will be characterized by intense judgment (Isa. 11:4). The man of sin, the Antichrist, will be severely judged (2 Th. 2:8). Revelation 19:20 says when Jesus returns, He will cast the Antichrist into the eternal Lake of Fire where he will be tormented day and night forever. Jesus also will judge and destroy the wicked.

(4) During Messiah’s rule, all animals will be tame and herbivorous (Isa. 11:6–9). In Genesis 1, the animals ate plants and vegetables before the curse of man’s sin came on them. When the Messiah rules, animals will again be completely tame and vegetarian in diet. It is interesting that when Jesus prepared to make His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He told the apostles to obtain a donkey that was wild in nature and had never been sat on. And He rode it with no problem from east of the Mount of Olives, up over the Mount of Olives, down through the Kidron Valley, up the other side, and into Jerusalem. He instantaneously changed the animal’s nature, demonstrating His power to tame all animals when He rules the world.

ISAIAH 11:10–12. When Messiah returns to rule, the Gentiles will seek Him; and Jewish people who have been scattered the world over will be gathered to their homeland. Romans 15:12 says the Gentiles will seek after the Lord Jesus, the true Savior. In Matthew 24:30–31, Jesus said that, when He comes out of heaven in great glory after the Tribulation, “He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (v. 31). Elect refers to the Jewish people still scattered among the nations at His Second Coming. Several times the Old Testament calls the people of Israel “God’s elect,” or His “Chosen.”

Notice, Jesus said, they will be gathered with the sound of a great trumpet. In Isaiah 27:12–13 God foretold that when Messiah comes to reign, Jews will be gathered one by one from nations with the blowing of a great trumpet. Every part of Jesus’ statement in Matthew 24:31 comes from Old Testament passages that speak of God scattering the Jewish people in all four directions because of their rebellion. But in the future, He will regather them to their homeland from all four directions with the blowing of a great trumpet.

ISAIAH 52:14: Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.

Foretells Messiah’s abusive disfigurement. His face was to become so disfigured that He would no longer look human. Matthew 27:26 says Pilate had Jesus “scourged,” or whipped severely. Verses 27–30 teach that the soldiers spit on Him and pounded His head and face. Even the men in the Sanhedrin spit on Him and struck Him in His face (26:67).

ISAIAH 53. Foretells Messiah’s rejection and substitutionary death for mankind’s sins. Here are some of its important points.

(1) Most Jewish people would not believe Messiah was on Earth, despite His powerful miracles: “Who has believed our report?” (v. 1). What report? That the true Messiah who can set up the future Kingdom of God is here.

(2) “And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?” (v. 1) The “arm of the LORD” refers to God’s tremendous power, displayed through Jesus’ miracles. Each was a sample of miraculous changes He will bring to nature when He sets up God’s future Kingdom; thus each substantiated His claim to be the true Messiah. John 12:37 says, though He performed many “signs” (meaning “powerful miracles”), most people still did not believe. These miracles were intended to reveal His identity. Hebrews 6:5 says those who witnessed Jesus’ miracles with their own eyes sampled the powers of the “age to come,” meaning the Messianic age when Messiah will rule the world.

(3) People would not desire or esteem the Messiah (Isa. 53:2–3). John 1:11 says, “He came to His own [His own creation], and His own [His own people] did not receive Him.”

(4) Despite all Messiah would do for people, they would still consider His death to be God’s judgment on Him (Isa. 53:4). When Jesus was on the cross, even Israel’s religious leaders mocked and ridiculed Him. To paraphrase Matthew 27:21–43, “You claim to be the Son of God. If God believes that, let Him intervene and deliver You from this crucifixion. If You stay on that cross, it’s all the evidence we need to prove You’re not the Son of God. So if You’re the Son of God, You’d better come down here before You die by crucifixion.” They strongly believed that if God ever had a son, He would not allow Him to die on a tree because Deuteronomy 21:23 says anyone hanged on a tree is cursed. So they mocked Him despite the overwhelming evidence of His messiahship and clung to the opinion that God was punishing Him for making false claims about Himself.

(5) His death would be a substitutionary payment for mankind’s sins (Isa. 53:5). The New Testament stresses this point. A good verse is Romans 4:25: He “was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”

(6) Because all people go astray, God would lay their iniquity on the Messiah: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). Again, many New Testament references corroborate this verse. One is, “For He [God] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

(7) Messiah would remain silent when falsely accused (Isa. 53:7). When on trial before the Sanhedrin and also before Pilate, Jesus did not defend Himself. His accusers were amazed at His silence.

(8) Scripture foretells that the Messiah would be buried with the rich, atypical of the circumstances (v. 9). Because He died with wicked men (Jesus was crucified between two thieves), He normally would have been buried with them. However, Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, retrieved His body and laid it in his own new tomb.

(9) Because it would accomplish God’s purpose to sacrifice the Messiah as an offering for sin, God would resurrect Him; and Messiah would see the prosperous result of His substitutionary death, namely, the salvation of many (vv. 10–11). God also would prolong His days forever. Many New Testament references corroborate this text.

(10) Because of what Messiah would accomplish, God will exalt and glorify Him. Philippians 2 says that, even though Jesus died like a slave, “God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (vv. 9–11).

In other words, everyone will one day profess that Jesus is exactly who He claimed to be.
Moshe Sharon, now retired professor of early Islamic history at Hebrew University, presented an analysis of some key Middle East issues at an annual conference of the Counter-Terrorism Institute in Herzliya, Israel, in 2006. He focused on three main topics: the nature of Islam, the Iranian drive for nuclear weapons, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. I also cut my teeth on early Islamic history and read his analysis with great interest because it so closely parallels what I think, though with a couple of major differences.

**The nature of Islam:** It is a mistake to differentiate between radical and peaceful Islam. After scornfully dismissing the understanding of Islam by Western politicians, he summarized the spirit of the three main monotheisms as follows:

*Judaism* speaks about national salvation—namely, that at the end of the story, when the world becomes a better place, Israel will be in its own land, ruled by its own king and serving God.

*Christianity* speaks about the idea that every single person in the world can be saved from his sins.

*Islam* speaks about ruling the world, as summarized in a phrase “Allah sent Muhammad with the true religion so that it should rule over all the religions.” It is not that the whole world will become Muslim instantly, but that it will eventually be subdued under the rule of Muslims. “Islam is a messianic religion. . . . From the very beginning, it talked about the end of the world.” In Islam, “Allah is the king of the end of days.”

**The Iranian drive for nuclear weapons:** This goal, Sharon said, motivates the regime in Tehran. “This is why [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad seeks nuclear weapons.” He concludes that a deep belief in the mahdi, a messiah, drives the Iranian nuclear project.

They truly believe that the Shiite messiah, the Twelfth Imam (also known as the mahdi), is here, and that he will reveal himself. . . . What moves the Iranian government and leadership today is first and foremost the wish to bring about the Twelfth Imam. . . . How will they bring him? Through an apocalypse. He needs a war. He cannot come into this world without an Armageddon. He wants an Armageddon. The earlier we understand this the better. Ahmadinejad wants nuclear weapons for this.

Sharon concluded: “This is a time of messianic expectation.” Israel is a side issue for the Iranian leadership, who use it primarily as a means to win support from other Muslims and eventually to dominate them. “But they cannot bluff the Saudis, the Wahhabis. . . . The Shiites are hated by the Sunnis. The Saudis are far more apprehensive of nuclear weapons in the hands of Iran than Israel.”

**The Arab-Israeli conflict:** “The root of the problem between us [Israelis] and the Arab world is Islam. Islam is not only a religion. It is a culture, politics . . . a state; Islam is everything. It has been like this, and it will be like this, for the foreseeable future.” From the Muslim perspective, Islamic territory was taken away from Islam by Jews. “You know by now that this can never be accepted, not even one meter. So everyone who thinks Tel Aviv is safe is making a grave mistake. Territory which at one time was dominated by Islamic rule, now has become non-Muslim. Non-Muslims are independent of Islamic rule, and Jews have created their own independent state. It is anathema. Worse, Israel, a non-Muslim state, is ruling over Muslims. It is unthinkable that non-Muslims should rule over Muslims.”

Sharon then waved away the peace treaties and other documents Israel had signed with Arab leaders as “pieces of paper, parts of tactics and strategies . . . with no meaning.” Muslims see Israel’s establishment as a “reversal of history” and are therefore unable to accept peaceful relations with it. He concluded, “There is no possibility of peace between Israel and the Palestinians whatsoever—forever.”

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by Daniel Pipes, Taube Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and director of the Middle East Forum. His Web site is danielpipes.org. (Used by permission.)
Who Is Melchizedek?

First-century Jewish believers faced some perplexing questions concerning Christ’s high priestly ministry. Why wasn’t He called a priest while here on Earth? How could He be a legitimate high priest and how could His atoning work be efficacious if He was not from the tribe of Levi?

The writer to the Hebrews reached back into the Old Testament and, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, presented an obscure truth that had been hidden for two millennia. Christ is a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek is mentioned earlier (5:6, 10; 6:20); but chapter 7 makes a fuller comparison, revealing that the Melchizedekian order was superior to the Aaronic one.

Much controversy has revolved around Melchizedek, who is one of the most significant types in Scripture to validate Christ’s high priestly ministry. He stepped briefly onto the stage of biblical history and then vanished; little is known of his background.

Introduction to Melchizedek

Melchizedek is first mentioned in relation to Abraham. After Abraham and his nephew Lot parted, Lot eventually moved to Sodom. Later four kings from the East invaded and defeated a coalition of five kings in the Jordan Valley. On hearing that the Eastern kings had abducted Lot from Sodom, Abraham marshaled 318 militarily trained men from his household and, in a nighttime assault, rescued his nephew, along with the spoils the invaders plundered from Sodom and Gomorrah. While returning from the war, Abraham was met by Melchizedek, the king of Salem and priest of God Most High, who brought out bread and wine (Gen. 14:1–18).

In Abraham’s presence, Melchizedek offered two blessings. First, he said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High” (v. 19; cf. Heb. 7:1). He recognized that Abraham had victory because he put faith and trust in God to provide it. Abraham did not receive, nor would he accept, any honor from the king of Sodom; but he did accept honor from Melchizedek.

Second, the king of Salem blessed God: “And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand” (Gen. 14:20). Melchizedek honored God for Abraham’s miraculous victory. Although Abraham exercised great faith in waging war against the four kings, it was the Most High God who deserved the glory and honor in providing success.

Abraham responded by giving Melchizedek “a tithe [one-tenth] of all” of the spoil (v. 20; cf. Heb. 7:2). (Notice, tithing began with Abraham at least 400 years before the Law of Moses was given.) Abraham’s response demonstrates three points: the victory belonged to God; the spoils of war rightfully belonged to God; and a portion of the spoils should be dedicated to honor God.

Identity of Melchizedek

The book of Hebrews identifies Melchizedek in one long sentence:

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually (7:1–3).

These verses reveal a number of facts about Melchizedek. First, his name means “king” (from the Hebrew, melach) of “righteousness” (Hebrew, tzedek). Thus he was a king who ruled in righteousness—a type of Christ who, in His person and ministry, established true righteousness.

Second, Melchizedek was the king of Salem (later identified as Jerusalem), which means “peace” (Ps. 76:2). Righteousness and peace characterized Melchizedek’s rule. After His Second Coming, Christ will reign in righteousness; and Jerusalem will become the city of peace.

Third, Melchizedek was a “priest of the Most High God [Hebrew, El Elyon],” which means “God the Highest,” speaking of the true and living God. The God of Israel established Melchizedek’s priesthood, yet it was not of the same order as the Aaronic priesthood that God later established.

Fourth, Melchizedek was “without father, without mother, without genealogy [descent].” There is no record of his predecessors or successors. Since Melchizedek was a man, he had both a father and mother; but unlike Aaron’s lineage, nothing is recorded in Scripture about his descent, birth, or when he was appointed by God to become a king-priest. Israel placed great importance on a priest’s genealogy. Priests had to be able to prove they were qualified to function within the Levitical system. But no genealogy appears for Melchizedek.

Fifth, Melchizedek had neither “beginning of days nor end of life.” There is no
record of his birth or death because he “remains a priest continually.” In comparison, the Levitical priesthood began and ended at a specific point in history. Thus Melchizedek’s priesthood is like Christ’s in its timelessess.

Sixth, Melchizedek’s priesthood was like Christ’s in its unlimited scope, while the Levitical priesthood ministered only to Israel.

Seventh, Melchizedek was “made like the Son of God” (Heb. 7:3). Some say this verse implies a theophany, or preincarnate appearance of Christ, similar to His appearance to Abraham (Gen. 18:1). However, the text simply states Melchizedek was made like the Son of God (v. 3), not that he was the son of God.

Dr. Homer A. Kent Jr. provided four compelling reasons why Melchizedek was not the preincarnate Christ:

1. Melchizedek is said to be “made like the Son of God.” This is strange language if the sense is that he was actually the Son of God. To argue on the basis of a pagan king’s statement regarding the fourth figure in the fiery furnace, “one like a son of the gods” (Dan. 3:25 ASV), is hardly convincing. (2) The statement of Psalm 110:4 calls Messiah a priest “after the order of Melchizedek.” This clearly differentiates Christ and Melchizedek, and it would hardly be a clarification if the text said he was a priest after the order of himself. (3) The historical record indicates that Melchizedek was king of a city-state in Canaan, a situation involving a fairly permanent residence on the part of the king. This would be totally without precedent so far as Old Testament revelation regarding theophanies is concerned. These were always temporary manifestations. (4) To argue from etymology that Melchizedek (“king of righteousness”) was a theophany has its hazards. Historical and archaeological data indicate good reason to understand compounds with -zedek as reflecting a dynastic title for Jebusite kings of the areas. We have the Biblical example of Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem, in Joshua 10:1 (whose name is even more impressive); yet it can hardly be suggested that this wicked king was a theophany.

In other words, he was not an angel, superhuman individual, or the preincarnate Christ. He was merely a man who was a king and is continually a priest. No other person in Scripture is identified as a king-priest apart from Melchizedek and Jesus Christ.

**Importance of Melchizedek**

To convince the Hebrew Christians of Melchizedek’s great importance, the author explained the king’s superiority to Aaron using two illustrations from the Old Testament.

First he asked readers to consider Abraham’s and Aaron’s responses to Melchizedek’s greatness: “Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils” (Heb. 7:4).

Abraham was in a position of superiority as patriarch and progenitor of the nation of Israel. But even with his pedigree, he realized Melchizedek was superior to him. And though he was under no obligation to tithe to Melchizedek, he voluntarily abased himself and generously gave the king-priest a tenth of the spoil taken from the four kings he defeated (vv. 2, 4; cf. Gen. 14:20).

Second, he discussed the Levitical priesthood that came through Aaron: And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives (vv. 5–8).

In the Law of Moses, God ordained that Levitical priests were to receive tithes from the Israelites, putting them in a superior position to those who gave the tithes. Melchizedek was not a Levite because Levi, Abraham’s great grandson, had not yet been born. Melchizedek and Abraham were contemporaries.

Furthermore, Melchizedek never demanded that Abraham give him the tithe; Abraham gave it voluntarily. Melchizedek accepted it and then blessed Abraham (Gen. 14:19–20). The Greek word for “blessed” in Hebrews 7:6 is in the perfect tense, indicating the result of Melchizedek’s historical action has lasting significance. His blessing was more than mere praise for paying tithes; it was an expression of approval from God. Melchizedek is indisputably greater than Abraham. It then follows that, if Melchizedek is greater than Abraham, he is also greater than the Levites who emigrated from Abraham. Therefore, Melchizedek’s priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood.

In addition, the Levitical priests died, but Melchizedek’s death is never mentioned. This does not mean Melchizedek never died but, rather, that Scripture is silent concerning his death. Thus, in type, his priesthood is eternal—another reason Melchizedek’s priesthood is superior to Aaron’s and the Levites.’

The author concluded this section on the importance of Melchizedek by saying, “Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him” (vv. 9–10).

In other words, the Levitical priests, although yet unborn, paid tithes to Melchizedek through their ancestor Abraham—the lesser (Levi) paying tithes to the greater (Melchizedek).

The beautiful truth presented in this chapter shows the greatness of the Lord Jesus’ high priesthood. Melchizedek, the king-priest, was superior to Aaron, Israel’s high priest. But with all his greatness, Melchizedek was only a type of the true High Priest, Jesus Christ, who is preeminent over all priests. Thus Christ is the Priest who can meet the needs of all believers everywhere, Jewish and Gentile.

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1 Homer A. Kent Jr., The Epistle to the Hebrews (1972; reprint, Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2002), 127.

**ENDNOTE**

David M. Levy is the director of International Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
God’s Sixth Purpose for Israel
(God Is Jealous—Part 4)

T he previous article observed five purposes God has for the nation of Israel in light of the Gentile nations’ historic apostasy and false worship. Now we will examine one more, along with the significance these purposes have for His name Jealous.

Spiritual Leadership

Israel is to be God’s spiritual leader of the world. When Israel was at Mount Sinai, God told Moses the exact words to speak to the children of Israel (Ex. 19:1–6). Included was the statement, “You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests” (v. 6). Gottlob Schrenk wrote, “Here the reference is to Israel’s relation to the nations.”1 In addition, he said, “The expression ‘kingdom of priests’ comes from a period in which it can mean that all members of the people of Israel should be priests, i.e., a kingdom consisting of priests.”2 God ordained Israel to have a priestly function toward the nations. He purposed it to be His spiritual leader of the world.

On the personal level, a priest “belongs and is consecrated to deity.”3 On the national level, God designed Israel to belong and be set apart, or dedicated, exclusively to Him.

A priest functions foremost as mediator between the deity to which he belongs and a body of people.4 God intended Israel to mediate between Him and the Gentile world.

The mediator’s role involved many priestly duties.5 He was to dispense “oracles” (to be a channel through which the deity would communicate divinely revealed messages to people).6 He was to teach people the significance for them of the divinely revealed messages.7 He was to guard what was sacred to the deity.8 And he was to reconcile disobedient people to their offended deity.9

Israel was to perform these same priestly duties as God’s mediator between Him and the Gentile nations. First, Israel was to be the channel through which God communicated His divinely revealed messages of truth to mankind. “What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God” (Rom. 3:1–2). God gave the Scriptures to humanity through Jewish prophets and apostles.

Second, Israel was to teach Gentiles the significance of God’s divinely revealed messages (2:17–24; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11).

Third, Israel was to guard God’s Holy Scriptures, protecting them from destruction and perversion.

Fourth, Israel was to bring reconciliation between the rebellious Gentiles and God. For that to happen two things were necessary: (1) Israel was to represent God accurately to the Gentiles. Through its conduct, it was to impress the Gentiles with the fact that Yahweh, the God who supernaturally brought the Israelites out of Egypt, is the only true God. (2) Israel was to lead the Gentiles into a right relationship with Him.

To fulfill its assignment as God’s spiritual leader of the world, it was necessary for Israel to keep itself “holy,” divided from the Gentiles by being different from them. They were not to worship the nations’ false, man–made gods or follow their perverted lifestyles. “Constant holiness and purity are important requirements for the priesthood.”10

Consequently, when God appointed Israel to be a kingdom of priests, He also declared they were to be a “holy nation” (Ex. 19:6). So He placed the nation under the Law, including the Ten Commandments and hundreds of other regulations (Ex. 20). God never gave the Law to the Gentiles (Rom. 2:14–15). He intended it exclusively for Israel because of His purpose for that nation.

The Law was not a way of salvation. Galatians 2:16 states, “a man is not justified by the works of the law . . . for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” Instead, the Law was “the ministry of death” and “condemnation” (2 Cor. 3:7, 9). It required the death penalty for rebels who worshiped false gods and followed the perverted lifestyles of the Gentiles. The Law was God’s way of removing rebels quickly from Israel in order to maintain the nation’s holiness and purity required for the priesthood.

Significance of the Name Jealous

When Israel was at Mount Sinai, God said,

You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a
carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God (Ex. 20:3–5).

Later He said, “You shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (34:14).

God had one exclusive, personal name: Yahweh. He revealed it in response to Moses’ request for His name (3:13–14). R. Allan Killen wrote that Yahweh “is the most significant name of God found in the OT in that it is the personal proper name Israel had for their God . . . Strictly speaking, this is the only personal name of God belonging to Him alone.”

The fact that Yahweh was God’s exclusive, personal name and had overwhelming significance to Him is indicated by His declaration, “This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations” (3:15). That declaration implied the name Yahweh revealed His true nature or essence that always has been and always will be the same forever. Thus Gottfried Quell indicated that a person’s name “embraces his nature. . . . The nature of God is thus compressed in the name of God. The name is both the quintessence of His person and the vehicle of His power.”

J. A. Motyer claimed that Yahweh is the name “related to the Hebrew verb ‘to be’; and it must be pointed out that while this verb cannot help meaning ‘to exist,’ its characteristic force is ‘to be actually present,’ ‘to be a present reality.’” Thus the name Yahweh revealed that the God who has that name always has been and always will exist and be present reality.

Gottfried Quell concurred: “We have in Yahweh a concrete manifestation of divine reality.” Yahweh is “the Creator and Ruler of the world.” Yahweh is “the One apart from whom none other has the property of God.” Yahweh is the “one God who is truly God in the full sense,” and that concept was “the essential difference between the faith of the OT community of God and the beliefs of the Gentiles, who are marked by the fact that they make gods, fashioning in wood and stone. . . . These gods cannot help or avail. They are a silent mystery. They cannot release any impulse of will. They are inoperative, therefore they are to be regarded as nought.”

Since Yahweh was God’s only exclusive, personal name, and since it revealed His true nature or essence, then His statement that His “name is Jealous” seems to indicate that His name Yahweh is Jealous. To understand the association of Yahweh with Jealous, several things must be considered.

First, the name Yahweh is closely connected to God’s holiness. Since it indicates that the God of Israel is the only God who exists, it signifies that He is holy (divided from all other gods, unique, one of a kind). Thus God says, “‘To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?’ says the Holy One” (Isa. 40:25). Since Yahweh is God’s name exclusively, the name itself is holy (divided from all other names, unique, one of a kind). Thus God refers to His “holy name” (Ezek. 36:20–21).

Second, Joshua warned the Israelites of a significant connection between His jealousy and holiness (Josh. 24:19). He warned that forsaking the exclusive worship of Yahweh by serving other gods would stir up God’s jealousy because they would be denying His holiness—the fact that He is the only God who exists and deserves their worship (vv. 14–25). E. Reuter pointed out, “Here for the first time jealousy and holiness together are understood as attributes of God’s nature, with the result being a kind of jealous holiness.”

Third, the fact that both the name Yahweh and God’s jealousy have connections to His holiness sheds light on what God meant when He said His name “is Jealous.” The people of Israel had covenanted to worship Yahweh exclusively because His name Yahweh signified that He is the “Holy One,” the only true God. Their worship of false gods would ignite the jealousy element of the name Yahweh because it would strike at the very holy essence of God signified by that name and thus violate His purposes for Israel: (1) to have a permanent, unique relationship with Him, not with false gods; (2) to be a holy nation, different from those that worshiped false gods; (3) to be a witness of His being the only true God; (4) to serve Him, not other gods; (5) to be an instrument of His glory, impressing the world with who He is; and (6) to be His spiritual leader of the world, leading the Gentile nations from false gods to Him.

ENDNOTES

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., “ieros,” 223.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 67.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 66–67.
9 Ibid., 69–70.
10 Ibid., 70.
12 Gottfried Quell, “kuros,” TDNT, 1070.
15 Ibid., 80.
16 Ibid., 82.
17 Ibid., 87.

Renald E. Showers is an author and international conference speaker for The Friends of Israel.
No peace!

“Our goal has never been peace,” a Fatah official admitted on Palestinian Authority (PA) TV. “Peace is a means; the goal is Palestine,” meaning the conquest of Israel.

“It has been said that we are negotiating for peace,” she further stated, “but our goal has never been peace.” Arutz-7 reported that Kifah Radaydeh, deputy head of the Jerusalem chapter of Fatah, openly said the PA will resume violence and terror against Israel when Fatah is “capable” and “according to what seems right.”

Fatah MP Najat Abu Bakr said Fatah’s goal remains the destruction of Israel, but that its political plan is to focus on returning to the 1967 borders. “It doesn’t mean that we don’t want the 1948 borders,” Abu Bakr said, referring to all of Israel, but rather that “our current political program is to say that we want the 1967 borders.”

Obama pressure

Arutz-7—U.S. President Barack Obama assured 15 leaders of Jewish American organizations of his commitment to Israel, but he also insisted he will publicly press the Jewish state to conform to his vision of Middle East peace.

Hosting the Jewish delegates in the White House, Obama repeatedly made it clear that, in his view, this can only mean the creation of an Arab state within Israel’s current borders. Obama also said he will continue to press his administration’s demands on Israel urgently and publicly, regardless of opposition from the Israeli government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu.

A ploy to kill Israel

Arutz-7—Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Arabs must renounce their demand for the “right of return,” which he said reflects a will to destroy Israel after signing a peace accord with it.

“I yearn for the day,” he said, “that the Palestinian leaders face their people and say these clear words: ‘We have had enough of this conflict. We, the Palestinians, recognize the right of the Jewish people to a country of its own on this land. We will live beside you in true peace.’”

Readmitting the refugees would be equal to the U.S. admitting nearly 70 million of its sworn enemies.

The “right of return” is the Arab claim that Arab residents of Israel who left their homes during the 1948 Independence War be allowed to return. But, as Mitchell G. Bard documents, many left by choice, preferring to adhere to promises of the invading Arab armies that if they evacuated, they would return after the war to their own homes as well as those of their Jewish neighbors.

Contemporary press reports conspicuously fail to mention any forcible expulsion by the Jewish forces. The Arabs are usually described as “fleeing” or “evacuating.” One refugee, quoted in the Jordan newspaper Ad DiIhaa (September 6, 1954), said, “The Arab government told us: Get out so that we can get in. So we got out, but they did not get in.”

Bombed hospital never existed

Arutz-7—Another anti-Israeli campaign, this time charging on television that Israel destroyed a Christian hospital in Gaza, has gone up in smoke following an investigation by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA).

A star-studded, television telethon was conducted earlier in the year in Greece to raise funds for a hospital Israel allegedly “destroyed with their bombs” during the Operation Cast Lead counterterrorist campaign from December 2008 through mid-January 2009.

However, the JTA revealed that the supposed hospital was not on UN or Red Crescent Society lists of damaged structures. Officials of non-government groups in Gaza said only one Christian hospital was used during the campaign, and it did not sustain damage.

When questioned, the Greek television station said it was only responsible for providing air time and that the government and a trade union ran the campaign. The union referred the JTA to the government. The Greek ambassador in Israel in turn referred the JTA to the Greek consulate in Jerusalem.

After the investigation, a financial newspaper in Greece published a small article that “a project is being sought in Gaza to be financed by the money” that was raised in the telethon.

Arabs protest road signs

Arutz-7—In an attempt to create uniformity in road signs, Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz wants to adjust English and Arabic versions of city, town, and village names to a direct transliteration of Hebrew. However, Arab Knesset members expressed outrage over the move.

Road signs in Israel are written in Hebrew, English, and Arabic and feature the names used by each language. Jerusalem, for example, is identified as Jerushalaim in Hebrew, Jerusalem in English, and Al Quds in Arabic. In addition, a wide variety of English and Arabic spellings can be found throughout the country, which Ministry officials say “reflect the vast changes and development in Israel’s highways.” Caesarea, for example, appears as Caesarea, Kesarya, Qesaryya, and Cesarya.

To make things easier, the new signs will still feature Hebrew, English, and Arabic but rely exclusively on Hebrew transliteration. In all three languages, for instance, Jerusalem will be Yerushalayim, Natzarot for Nazareth, Kesariyya for Caesarea, and Yafa for Jaffa. More than 2,000 names are expected to be adjusted.
**“Christian Palestinianism” Moves Church Toward Islam**

A new and growing slant on Replacement Theology not only replaces Israel with the church but is moving the church toward Islamic subjugation.

Its proponents, all of whom oppose Israel and Christian Zionism, include Stephen Sizer, a vicar of Christ Church in England, who calls Christian Zionists one of “the most powerful and destructive forces in America”; Donald Wagner, one of America’s leading opponents of Christian Zionism; Marc Ellis of Baylor University; Gary Burge of Wheaton College; and Hank Hanegraaff of the Creation Research Institute in Charlotte, North Carolina, and host of the radio show “The Bible Answer Man.”

In an online article, Thomas Ice, executive director of the Pre-Trib Research Center in Lynchburg, Virginia, quoted Egyptian scholar Bat Ye’or who said this movement “paves the way for the Islamization of the Church as it prepares mentalities for an Islamic replacement theology.”

The movement rejects Dispensationalism, which maintains that Israel will one day receive all God has promised it, and discards the literal interpretation of Scripture. Ice noted that Philip Sa’ad, a Palestinian Christian in Haifa, Israel, said some Christian Palestinians “do not use the Old Testament as a source for their theology”; and they all spiritualize the text rather than use the literal method of interpretation.

In her book Euabria, Ye’or said Islamizing Christianity involves separating Christianity from Judaism and turning the historical, Jewish Jesus into an Arab Palestinian. Ice said Ye’or “declares that the Palestinian Christian movement is guilty of ‘de-biblicizing’ the Bible,’ expelling ‘the Jews from their own Scriptures,’ and reinterpreting it ‘from the viewpoint of the Qur’an.’” Ice also said Donald Wagner’s “attempt to disestablish the role of Israel and to exalt Palestinians into their place is typical of the movement.”

Sizer, Wagner, Ellis, and Burge all spoke at a 2004 conference in Jerusalem titled “Challenging Christian Zionism.” The event’s highlight was a meeting with then-Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat.

“The Bible teaches Zionism (Psalm 132),” wrote Ice. “It is becoming clear that when one rebels against God’s Word on this point, it opens them to not only replacement theology, but to an increasing acceptance of Islamic viewpoints. As issues clarify, there is no place for neutrality where one can hide.”

**ENDNOTES**

3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.

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**Gift Annuities**

Did you know it’s possible to give a one-time gift to The Friends of Israel—a gift annuity—that will reap spiritual fruit among God’s Chosen People?

In addition, that same gift can increase your personal income and reduce your future tax payments.

If your heart’s desire is to invest in the Lord’s work, yet at the same time you need to make the most of your current financial resources, then you may want to consider purchasing a gift annuity from The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.

If you decide to give appreciated property, such as stock or real estate, rather than sending a check, you will pay capital gains tax on only part of the appreciation. In addition, the capital gains tax will be spread over many years, rather than all being due in the year of your gift.

Indeed, a gift annuity is a gift with benefits both life-long and eternal, allowing you to maximize the impact of your financial stewardship. For specific details about how a gift annuity can work for you, complete the form and mail it in the return envelope in this magazine. There is absolutely no obligation on your part.

Name __________________________________________
Address _________________________________________
City/State/Zip _____________________________________
Date of Birth (month/day/year) ________________________________
(Suggested minimum age of 60)
Name of Joint Annuitant _____________________________
Date of Birth (month/day/year)  __________________________
(Suggested minimum age of 60)
Relationship to First Annuitant ________________________
Phone (               ) _________________________________
Possible Amount of Annuity $ _________________________
(Minimum annuity amount is $5,000)
Income to be paid:
- Quarterly
- Semiannually
- Annually
- I would like a Friends of Israel representative to contact me.
Now we are approaching the most important holidays of the year: Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Many people in Jerusalem where I live are going to the rabbis asking for help to have their sins forgiven. But how do they go? With chickens!

They believe in an old ceremony called kapparot, or kappores, where a chicken is swung over their heads while they pray, “This is my exchange. This is my substitute. This is my atonement. This chicken will die, but I will have a long life and peace.” Then the chicken is slaughtered.

We have neighbors who believe this way. One day one asked me, “Do you have a rooster for these great high holy days?”

“I do not need to buy a rooster to have my sins forgiven,” I said. “There is one in whom I have put my trust. And through Him, my sins are forgiven.”

They looked at me with great surprise. “Are you dreaming?” one asked. “What you say is not possible.”

“I believe what is written in the Holy Bible,” I replied.

“So show us in the Bible where it is written about this one who takes away sins. If we see you are right, we will do as you do. But if we see you are wrong, you will do as we do.”

“I am ready!” I said. But first I took my Bible, which I always carry, and showed it to them. “Have a good look,” I said. “Is this the Holy Bible?”

So they took my Bible and examined it page by page and agreed it was the true Bible. “So,” one asked, “what do you want to show us? In whom have you put your trust?”

They were anxious to know what I would say because they put their trust in their rabbis, not in God. They worship God the way they are told, based on the commandments of men rather than on the Bible. Although they are sincere, they are going down the wrong road, full of confidence that they are right and I am wrong.

So I looked at the one who was the most certain he was right—who was so full of confidence that by the death of a poor chicken he could be forgiven of all his sins—and I gave him my Bible.

“Where should I begin to read?” he asked.

“At the beginning of this chapter,” I said, opening my Bible to Isaiah 53.

When he came to verse 5, he became extremely serious. There it is written, But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (vv. 5–6).

“How is it,” I replied, “that you, who are so religious and go so often to
the synagogue, and listen to the rabbi preach, have never read this passage and do not know about something that is so important to our faith?"

Everyone became silent and puzzled until one asked, “Who was this one who was pierced for our transgressions? How did you come to know the answer to this question? Who is he?”

First I told them that I came to know the truth because I do not trust in men but in God. They listened with great attention as I explained how I read the Bible only, not books written about the Bible.

“There is something true about what you say,” one replied. “We must think about this and what the rabbi says when he gives his sermon. We must ask him to tell us about this one on whom He has laid the iniquity of us all.”

While we were speaking, an ultra-Orthodox man who had been listening approached us. “Be very careful! This one with whom you speak will try to take you out of the true faith! He will try to make you believe in This Man. [The ultra-Orthodox will not utter the name Jesus]. You know of whom I speak,” he said.

They then turned to me, and one asked, “What do you say about this? Have you an answer for him?”

“Of course!” I said. “You go every day to the synagogue to pray. Every day you read Deuteronomy 6:4–5: ‘Hear, O Israel: The L ORD our God, the L ORD is one! You shall love the L ORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.’ But you go before the world with a big stack of books written by men, rather than with the Bible written by the Holy Spirit of God.”

I was so sure this man would be against me. But to my surprise, he, too, began asking questions. We had a good conversation, and I told him to think about what he reads in the Holy Bible and not to depend on stories written by men.

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