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THE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL GOSPEL MINISTRY, INC., P.O. BOX 908, BELLMAWR, NJ 08031-0908
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ABOUT THIS ISSUE
Want to hear some good news? A great day is coming when the clouds of the Great Tribulation will roll away and an era never seen before will dawn. It’s called the Millennium, and it will be the 1,000-year threshold of eternity. Would you like to know about Jesus’ Second Coming and what it will be like to enter the Millennial Kingdom and live during a time of peace, harmony, and perfect justice? Or do you ever wonder about the sheep and goats in Matthew 25? Who are they, and by what standard will they be judged for fitness to enter the Millennium?

Answers to these questions and much more are all here for your enlightenment. Share this issue with your friends as a part of the good news that the King is indeed coming and will usher in an unparalleled time of plenty when He arrives.

Our cover is the Valley of Jezreel where the nations will gather for the battle of Armageddon prior to the Millennium (Miguel Nicolaevsky/Stockphoto).

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I remember well when a group from Israel’s Knesset launched the Christian Allies Caucus in 2004. Spanning a spectrum of Jewish political parties in Israel, these Members of the Knesset (MKs) hoped to develop ties with pro-Israel Christian leaders. They represented a growing number of MKs who had become increasingly aware and deeply appreciative of Christians whose unshakable bond with Israel is rooted in God’s everlasting covenant with the Jewish people, as outlined in God’s eternal Word, the Bible.

Shortly afterward, we met with Caucus members at the Embassy of Israel in Washington, DC. Caucus Director Josh Reinstein has since spoken to almost all of our semiannual Up to Jerusalem tour groups. Mr. Reinstein also arranged meetings with MKs and set up special Knesset tours for the young adults participating in The Friends of Israel’s ORIGINS volunteer program in Israel. (ORIGINS stands for Our Resolve Is Giving Israel Never-ending Support.)

But this amazing story continues. In 2006 the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, DC, formed the first reciprocal caucus: the U.S. Congressional Israel Allies Caucus. In a highly unusual display of bipartisan cooperation, members of this active caucus are from both political parties and believe that those who would stand together for freedom, democracy, and justice must stand with Israel.

As Israel in June celebrated the 1967 reunification of Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty, other supporters of Israel gathered at the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill for a Jerusalem Day Prayer Breakfast. With the media present, Israel Allies Caucus cochairs, Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-CO), Rep. Shelley Berkley (D-NV), and Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY), joined other members of the House Caucus to speak boldly of their commitment to Jerusalem as Israel’s undivided capital and to Israel’s right to live in peace within secure borders.

The occasion was also used to promote the Jerusalem Embassy and Recognition Act of 2011 (H.R. 1006). This bill would remove the presidential waiver of the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, which has been the maneuver exercised year after year to prevent moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

And the story of Israel Allies Caucuses continues, as the movement is spreading to other countries through the International Israel Allies Caucus Foundation (IIACF). IIACF was founded in 2008 to strengthen international support for Israel. Under the leadership of Willem Griffioen, chief of operations, the IIACF coordinates the activities of members of parliaments and other legislative bodies in governments around the world on issues related to Israel.

According to Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN) of the Congressional Israel Allies Caucus, “As we all know, Israel today lives under an ominous shadow, in a threatening neighborhood; ... but let the world know this, America stands with Israel.”

As participation in these caucuses grows, there are ways for us as Christians to become involved as a positive expression of our biblically based beliefs. Specifically, we can make known to our elected representatives our support for (1) the policy priorities and coordinated activities of the Israel Allies Caucus and (2) the legislation to recognize Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel. We can tell our representatives we want the United States to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, where it belongs.

Your involvement in these ways is not simply “playing politics.” You are supporting what God has raised up—Israel—according to His prophetic Word. And you are upholding God’s truth of the importance of His land and His ancient people.

As the psalmist wrote, “If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill!” (Ps. 137:5).

William E. Sutter is the executive director of The Friends of Israel.
Doing the right thing is not always easy. It often requires courage and involves standing up for what you believe despite opposition. Recently two men have done the right thing regarding Israel.

At the annual Group of Eight (G-8) conference, leaders of France, United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Germany, Canada, Russia, and United States meet to discuss world events and issues. This year’s G-8 summit was held in Deauville, France, where the United States proposed that leaders endorse a statement advocating Israel’s retreat to pre-1967 borders as a precondition for peace negotiations with the Palestinians. This position, they were told, was “nothing new.”

Actually, it was new. In fact, no sitting American president had ever suggested it publicly. Six of the seven other leaders backed the stance. However, unanimity was needed to push the proposal through.

One man, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, voted no, thus making a joint statement impossible. Harper defended Israel, standing by a promise he had made in November 2010 on Parliament Hill in Ottawa:

When Israel, the only country in the world whose very existence is under attack, is consistently and conspicuously singled out for condemnation, I believe we are morally obligated to take a stand. . . . As long as I am Prime Minister, whether it is at the United Nations, the Francophonie, or anywhere else, Canada will take that stand whatever the cost. I say this, not just because it is the right thing to do, but because history shows us, and the ideology of the anti-Israeli mob tells us all too well if we listen to it, that those who threaten the existence of the Jewish people are a threat to all of us.

U.S. Rep. Dan Burton (R-IN) has also done the right thing. He has sponsored H.R. 1006, the Jerusalem Embassy and Recognition Act of 2011. The bill is an attempt to get the American government to do what it voted to do 16 years ago. In October 1995 both houses of Congress voted overwhelmingly to relocate the American embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem by May 1999. The Senate vote was 93 to 5; the House vote was 374 to 37.

The reason for the vote was simple. Every independent nation has the right to determine the location of its capital. However, the 1995 legislation contained a provision that enabled the president to postpone the move for reasons of national security.

Six years later, in 2001, the embassy was still in Tel Aviv. Elwood McQuaid, then editor-in-chief of Israel My Glory, wrote in an editorial, “Millions of evangelical Christians and Jewish organizations share [the] frustration in . . . waiting for the will of the American people and their representatives to be implemented. The primary reason is emphatically clear: It is the right thing to do.”

Today the will of the people still has not been met. H.R. 1006, embraced by representatives on both sides of the political aisle, has three primary goals. It seeks to (1) recognize Jerusalem as the undivided capital of the State of Israel and ensure that the U.S. Embassy will be established there by January 1, 2013; (2) amend the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 to eliminate the president’s authority to waive certain funding limitations for Department of State acquisition and maintenance of buildings abroad until the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem has officially opened; and (3) require any official U.S. document that lists countries and their capital cities to identify Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

God promised Abraham, “I will bless those who bless you, and . . . curse him who curses you” (Gen. 12:3). Stephen Harper and Dan Burton are doing what is right despite great opposition. It might prove profitable to keep an eye on them and see how God works to fulfill His promise.

by Steve Herzig
The Plague That Will Not Go Away

A grisly discovery was made in Norwich, England, recently. Seventeen Jewish skeletons, apparently from the same family, were found at the bottom of a medieval well. Archaeologists theorize the Jews were forced down the well by pogromists for refusing to convert to Christianity.

Ten centuries later, five members of the Udi Fogel family of Itamar, Israel, were savagely stabbed to death in their beds, demonstrating that time does not alter the hatred against the Jewish people and Israel. The “plague” is still with us—the attempt to find a “final solution to the Jewish problem”; but now it focuses on the destruction of Israel.

As Christians who fully support the Jewish people’s legitimate right to their homeland of Eretz Yisrael, we were appalled to read that well-known Italian priest Mario Cornioli flippantly declared, “What is Itamar? An illegal Israeli colony built on stolen land.”

Why would anyone under any circumstances brush off the unspeakably horrific slaughter of an innocent family because he disagrees with where they lived?

Unfortunately, the priest’s attitude is not limited to a few bigots operating on the fringe. A whole range of vaunted Christian organizations have taken to the idea that Israel must be squeezed until it either disappears or is so emasculated that it survives only as a disheveled, discredited clan of Jews forced back into ghettos by emissaries of pseudo-Christian love and/or Muslim “humanitarianism.”

Here is a sampling of those who have come to the forefront as next of kin to the Presbyterian Church USA and other mainline denominations that tout divestiture as a means of posturing Israel as an apartheid, pariah state worthy of being hauled into the economic woodshed and whipped into shape.

Lutherans from the United States, Catholics and Protestants from Greece and Russia, lecturers from Lebanon, and Copts from Egypt gathered at a conference recently to declare the Jewish state “a sin” and occupying power that dehumanizes Palestinians; they called for resistance (jihad) as “a Christian duty.”

An influential, international Catholic peace movement, Pax Christi, promotes boycotting Israeli goods “in the name of love.” Even Christian groups funded by the European Union, the Dutch Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation, and the Irish-Catholic group Trócaire are reportedly campaigning for divestiture. They are going so far as to include the popular Ahava cosmetics company as a collaborating offender. South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu added his influence by convincing the University of Johannesburg to sever all ties with Israeli fellows.

This discriminatory hostility is morphing into increasingly militant rhetoric and incitement. A popular Vatican magazine recently declared that “ethnic cleansing” by Israel created the Palestinian refugees and that “the Zionists were cleverly able to exploit the Western sense of guilt for the Shoah [Holocaust] to lay the foundations for their own state.”

Archbishop Cyril Salim Bustros added his bit by saying, “We Christians cannot speak about the Promised Land for the Jewish people. There is no longer a chosen people.” Furthermore, an important papal envoy called Israel an illegitimate “foreign implant,” unscrupulously Judaizing Jerusalem and illegally occupying Arab land.

This radical denunciation of Israel’s legitimacy paves the way for the next step: physical intervention to remove the “foreign” object. Joining the ranks of Muslim jihadists who have long sought the opportunity to attack and destroy Israel are hordes of idealistic, but uninformed, Europeans and Western zealots who are volunteering for flotillas and flytills and are serving as foot soldiers seeking to invade Israel as champions of the downtrodden. With mobs screaming for change in the region and the West supporting that scream, one can almost predict an upturn in violence in the near future.

We must ask ourselves, Why are professing Christians who are in the vanguard of such a phenomenon so clearly unchristian in every respect? The answer is Replacement Theology. It was the excuse for viciously throwing a Jewish family down a well in medieval times, and it is at the heart of the excuses used today to demonize and delegitimize Israel. Archbishop Bustros spoke for all who see themselves as the “new Israel” when he said, “We Christians cannot speak about the Promised Land for the Jewish people. There is no longer a chosen people.”

His statement is a pristine definition of the theology that confiscates what God created (the Jewish people) and despises those whom God loves. It also explains the lamentable religious arrogance that would work to dismantle a nation and persecute its people.
The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.
Statement of Activities
Year Ended December 31, 2010

Changes in net assets:
Public support and revenue:
Public support:
Contributions:
General ministry contributions .......................................................... $4,338,542
North American ministry contributions ............................................... 1,194,689
Foreign ministry contributions ......................................................... 1,022,913
Institute of Jewish Studies .................................................................. 39,125
Gift portion of annuities ................................................................. 378,470
Legacies ......................................................................................... 822,726
Gifts-in-kind .................................................................................... 24,018
Total public support ........................................................................ 7,820,483
Revenue:
Ministry publications, audio and video .............................................. 1,714,755
Conferences and special functions .................................................... 103,747
Interest and dividends .................................................................... 60,064
Other revenue .................................................................................. 15,251
Total revenue .................................................................................. 1,893,817
Total public support and revenue ..................................................... 9,714,300
Program services:
Outreach ministries ........................................................................ 4,398,203
North American ministries ............................................................... 1,629,217
Foreign ministries .......................................................................... 1,459,241
Institute of Jewish Studies ............................................................... 113,125
Conferences and special functions ................................................ 340,392
Total program services ................................................................... 7,940,378
Supporting services:
Management and general ............................................................... 1,348,287
Stewardship and fund raising ......................................................... 4,24,160
Total supporting services ............................................................... 1,772,447
Total program and supporting services ........................................... 9,712,825
Change in net assets from operating activities ............................... 1,475
Other changes in net assets:
Realized and unrealized gains/losses on investments ....................... 48,392
Change in actuarial value of gift annuities and trusts ....................... 93,081
Changes in net assets ..................................................................... 142,948
Net assets at beginning of year ......................................................... 4,075,882
Net assets at end of year ................................................................. $ 4,218,830

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, 2010, was rendered on May 19, 2011, with an unqualified opinion. The above figures are taken from that report.
The Muslim Brotherhood will impose Islamic Sharia law in Egypt if it comes to power, according to the movement’s Sobhi Saleh, the Egyptian Arabic daily Al Masry Al Youm reports. Saleh, a leading Muslim Brotherhood figure, claimed Sharia would protect Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

“Terms like civil or secular state are misleading,” he said. “Islamic Sharia is the best system for Muslims and non-Muslims.”

Prior to the “spring revolutions” that have shaken many Arab regimes to the core and brought new governments to power in Egypt and Tunisia, the United States Central Intelligence Agency had classified the Muslim Brotherhood as a “secular organization.”

U.S. President Barack Obama has pledged $1 billion to Egypt as well as the cancellation of an additional $1 billion in Egyptian debt in his bid to democratize the Middle East and advance American values in the region.

The Muslim Brotherhood, an illegal party from 1954 until earlier this year, is one of Egypt’s most powerful political forces and is well-situated to be the big winner in Egypt’s coming elections. This underscores critics’ doubts about Obama’s plans to use Egypt as the flagship of his vision to democratize and liberalize the region.

The Brotherhood recently set aside differences with rival Salafist group Jama’a al-Islamiya to form an alliance of Islamic parties. Although it now claims to have renounced violence, Jama’a al-Islamiya was responsible for a number of terrorist atrocities in Egypt throughout the 1990s, including the 1997 Luxor Massacre in which 62 people were killed.
A common thread in John Bunyan’s 17th-century Christian classic, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, involves his hero’s wisdom (or lack thereof) in choosing companions as he travels on his long road through life, heading for the Celestial City (heaven). At one point, Christian (the hero) meets an atheist who challenges the very destination itself. Because he sees no visible signs of the Celestial City, he is convinced it does not exist.

Christian also encounters a pious-looking fellow in a white robe who appears very much the man of religious spirit and who claims to share the same destination. Eventually, it becomes painfully clear that he is leading Christian away from, not toward, the Kingdom of God.

Today the political worldviews of two extremely popular philosophers, Russian-American novelist Ayn Rand (1905–1982) and Harvard Professor Michael Sandel, could be Bunyan’s antagonists.

I know Christians who are great fans of Ayn Rand, the philosopher-author of the novels *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead*. Rand fiercely supported individual liberty and capitalism and opposed big government. As a result, we can see how she might appeal to conservative Christians.

However, Rand was an equally fierce atheist who rejected all things spiritual and believed the state needed to be protected from the church. Her philosophy of “objectivism,” which she spelled out clearly in 1962, is displayed on the Ayn Rand Institute website.

She contended that only “objective” (physically and empirically verifiable) reality exists; there is no spiritual dimension to life, and only human reason can guide us to truth. She also maintained that the highest virtue is self-interest and that sacrificing for others makes no moral sense.

It doesn’t take a master of theology degree to see that Rand’s philosophy couldn’t be further from the moral and spiritual agenda of Jesus Christ. He called us to deny ourselves; seek the good of others; and follow, as a first-order principle, the transcendent truth revealed to us in God’s Word. In fact, we are not to rely on the speculations of human reason. Ayn Rand’s philosophy may look enticing, but it is biblically bankrupt.

Harvard Professor Michael Sandel is another wildly popular political and moral philosopher these days. He has gained a kind of cult following among students and intellectuals around the globe. Sandel has rejected the moral and political utilitarianism of his fellow ethics thinkers, and he has that in his favor. He has also insisted that a dialogue about spiritual values needs to be added to our political and social debate.

All of these things sound good until we realize what Sandel believes. He told the NewStatesman.com that the failure of liberals to tout their own brand of religion has “contributed to a moral vacuum that has been filled by narrow, intolerant moralisms. It has allowed the Christian right to have more appeal than it might otherwise have had precisely because the field was cleared.” Sandel’s philosophy of “remoralisation” invites liberals to take over the moral debate and to do it, not in secular terms alone, but with religious concepts as well.

Ironically, Sandel is a political philosopher who prides himself on advancing critical thinking. Yet he has categorically rejected, without critical analysis, the moral and faith-based legitimacy of the “Christian right” whose pronouncements he labels “intolerant moralisms.” Consequently, Sandel has basically declared the entire field of Bible-based Christianity to be so unreasonable that it does not need further inquiry. Thus he seems to be saying that only a liberal, secularized version of “spirituality” and religious values is worthy of consideration in public debate.

The popularity of these two misguided philosophers underscores the conservative Christian need for a worldview that is consistent with absolute truth and that can effect change in our culture. We need a coherent political philosophy that is true to the Bible, unapologetically Christian, clear enough to explain to the average person, and yet sophisticated enough to handle the complexities of the 21st century.

Such a philosophy could bridge any gap between organizational conservatives and evangelical activists. It would have to take an approach to moral and political questions that acknowledges the reality that we are citizens of two kingdoms, an earthly one and a heavenly one. Finding balance between the things of God and the things of “Caesar” and between our duties to our neighbor versus the rights we can claim for ourselves is a principle of New Testament teaching.

Rand and Sandel don’t have the answers. But we can have no doubt God’s Word, diligently studied and rightly applied, does.
Saying Is Believing

“. . . although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful . . .”

“Sooner or later in life, we all sit down to a banquet of consequences.”

Robert Louis Stevenson
Saying is believing. Did I get that right? Perhaps you’re thinking, “He must mean, “Seeing is believing.” Not anymore.

There’s a new flimflam afoot that substitutes rhetoric for reality and causes the inattentive to accept deliberate falsehoods as fact, thus leading them to wrong conclusions and worse decisions. Here’s how it works.

Pronouncements of success, made even before an event takes place, are read and digested as fact regardless of the actual outcome. A classic example is the Million Man March held in Washington, DC, on October 16, 1995. The National Park Service reported a turnout of about 400,000—a significant number, to be sure—but well below the much-heralded figure used in the advance publicity. Yet what sticks as history is the pre-event number: 1 million.

Considering what we’re being subjected to today, the Million Man March was benign. Perhaps a better example comes from Hollywood: It’s the “If you build it, they will come” fantasy in the 1989 film Field of Dreams. In this flick, a farmer, hearing voices, takes them as a command to build a baseball diamond in his cornfield on the ethereal promise that, if he builds it, they will come. The “they” turn out to be the Chicago White Sox team convicted of throwing the 1919 World Series to the Cincinnati Reds in what came to be known as the Black Sox Scandal.

As the farmer watches, Shoeless Joe Jackson and his disgraced teammates wander out of the cornfield, and the fun begins. Before the farce ends, car headlights mark the road to the farm as far as the eye can see. These, one assumes, are the true believers who want a trip into the world of make-believe.

Make-believe is fine in films, but it can create a catastrophe when applied to public policy and social practice. In 2008 Americans were bombarded with the notion that we must have “hope” and “change” in order to build a better future. “Yes we can!” was the mantra. Few, however, bothered to ask, “Can what? What can we do? What do we hope for? What is the substance of the change?”

These issues are now being debated by people on both sides of the political fence, and America’s future is very much up in the air. The matter goes far beyond political tactics; it affects the whole of our worldview in every area. Do words matter? Is it incumbent on us to demand definition before decision? Or do we opt for a “field of dreams” environment, trusting that, if we believe, the bearers of all that is good and noble will emerge from the corn?

Defining the Opiate

The Scriptures define, in exacting terms, the precise process we are enmeshed in. The first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans tells how empires, nations, and societies that once knew and honored God chose to turn away from Him: “Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God” (v. 21).

America has been the cradle of freedom and democracy, Bible-born and Christian-led. A country perhaps above all countries of which it can be said, “They knew God.” Today the very mention of His name in public is scorned, derided, or prohibited and, in some cases, even prosecuted.

“Nor were they thankful” (v. 21). Ingratitude is the inescapable result of self-delusion. Without God, all that is left is “me.” “Show me the money” becomes the watchword of the generations.

“Professing to be wise, they became fools” (v. 22). Celebrated American lawyer Clarence Darrow (1857–1938) unwittingly exposed the spiritual ignorance and arrogance of Darwinians and assorted atheistic pontificators, exhibiting the gist of Romans 1: “I don’t believe in God,” said Darrow, “because I don’t believe in Mother Goose.”

“They exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator” (v. 25). The major earmarks of end-times, godless degeneracy are the demand for change for the sake of change, the worship of the creature, and the rejection of the very thought of a Creator/God. Some people today would even strike from the U.S. Constitution the words endorsed by their Creator.

The Cost Factor

Assessing the exorbitant cost of walking away from God would never enter the minds of members of the “now” generation. However, abandoning God inevitably produces the following sordid chronicle contained in the final verses of Romans 1, which are as current as today’s news:

◆ Rampant, illicit immorality, with homosexuality and lesbianism sanctioned (if not venerated) in segments of society.
◆ Social anarchy dominated by violence, greed, and injustice; preying on the innocent. Lying becomes an acceptable alternative to truth.
◆ Manifest hatred of God, His Son, His people, and His Word. And if you believe that the current torrent of persecution sweeping many parts of the world will not arrive in America, just wait a bit longer.
◆ Breakdown of the family, with children defying authority; disintegration of what Scripture calls “natural affection.” In other words, dysfunctional families become the norm rather than the exception.
◆ Reveling in the disintegration of orderly society, defying God and loving every minute of it.

When the bizarre tops the normal, we often hear it said, “You can’t make this stuff up.” In this case, God is telling us in advance the history of human rebellion. These forecasts are not the wild rants of religious fanatics but the pattern of things to come, written 2,000 years ago.

Dr. Robert G. Lee, the late pastor of the Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, for nearly 40 years, preached what has become one of the most famous sermons in American history. It was
titled “Payday Someday.” Speaking about the transgressions of the infamous King Ahab and his wife Jezebel, Dr. Lee said, “Did God mean what He said? Or was He playing a prank on royalty? Did payday come? ‘Payday—Someday’ is written in the constitution of God’s universe. The retributive providence of God is a reality as certainly as the laws of gravitation are a reality.”

Dr. Lee’s take on the subject aligns with Galatians 6:7: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” Nineteenth-century author Robert Louis Stevenson said of sowing and reaping, “Sooner or later in life, we all sit down to a banquet of consequences.”

Ignoring consequences may be in fashion, but consequences have a way of catching up with us.

**Saying and Believing—a Perilous Venture**

People of my vintage remember well promises made that had no basis whatsoever in fact. For example, this line is famous: “This won’t hurt a bit. You won’t even feel it.” The saying was a bill of goods sold to a child as someone wound a string around a wobbly tooth and made ready to yank it out of the child’s head. It hurt plenty.

That was merely a small excursion into deception. However, the situation is far more serious when unrealistic rhetoric carries life-and-death undertones or places a country’s viability, national policy, foreign policy, military strength, economic stability, social welfare, political integrity, religious freedom, or academic efficiency at risk of collapse or international insignificance.

A case study in political cynicism surfaced in the healthcare debate when the voluminous package was put together behind closed doors and then rushed to a congressional vote. On March 9, 2010, then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi declared, “But we have to pass the bill so that you can find out what’s in it.” The issue here is not who made the remark but, rather, what was said. Should such reckless conduct and disregard for the integrity of our system and the welfare of our people be the pattern for the future?

A potentially mortal weight is being placed today on Israel in the form of a demand that it retreat to a virtually indefensible border to accommodate a hostile Palestinian state. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was taken aback when U.S. President Barack Obama said in May, “The borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders are established for both states.”

What stuck was the idea that the pre-1967 (meaning the 1949) armistice lines (incorrectly called borders) would mark the starting point toward a final settlement. The sticking point was the “mutually agreed swaps” that were left completely undefined.

Arab territorial claims will be defined by the Palestinian Authority/Hamas union taking the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip with the backing of the UN, thus imposing a Palestinian state with no concessions to Israel and without any recognition of the Jewish state’s right to exist. The endgame, of course, is for the Arabs to take it all eventually; but for the time being, following the late Yasser Arafat’s strategic plan, they will nibble Israel out of existence one bite at a time.

They believe their cause is aided by international sanctions for Israel’s retreat to the pre-1967 lines and justified by statements from the U.S. president and other Western leaders. In other words, the Arabs reason that, because they said it, they have it. And no matter how the subject is spun to mollify objectors, these entrenched opponents of Israel, America, and the West view the proposal not as a starting point, but as a done deal. Why? Because they said it. And it could be, in the short or long term, that Israelis may be forced to pay in blood.

The obvious lesson is this: Don’t believe everything you hear. Rhetoric is not reality. What’s being said may merely be designed to lead the gullible down an undesirable path. Seeing is the better way. And for those in the grandstands staring out at a field of dreams, be assured that your hope and change are not going to come out of a cornfield.
Run! run! as fast as you can! You can’t catch me, I’m the Gingerbread Man!”

So taunts the little gingerbread boy in a well-known children’s story. The arrogant little guy manages to evade everyone who wants to eat him until he meets a sly fox who knows how to get what he wants. The fox denies all interest in devouring the gingerbread man and cordially offers to carry him across the river. So they team up.

America today seems much like the gingerbread man, naively jumping on the tail of a fox and ignoring the danger.

In July, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton initiated overtures to the same Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt that in 2007 told journalist Christiane Amanpour it fully expects to institute Islamic Sharia law worldwide someday. Meanwhile, the Hamas-linked Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is laying the groundwork to lobby for free-speech restrictions to stem what it claims is a growing Islamophobia in America. (See jihadwatch.org.)

Yet in the non-Islamophobic country of Iran, where Sharia law is applied, Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, 34, awaits execution for apostasy (leaving Islam for Christianity) and evangelism. Although his death sentence reportedly was annulled, the terms of the annulment require him to recant his faith or die.

Various news reports all say Youcef has pastored in a network of house churches for the past 10 years. He is married with two sons, ages 9 and 7. A few years ago the government decided all schoolchildren, even Christians, should be taught Islam. Reports say Youcef went to his sons’ school and protested based on the Iranian Constitution that is supposed to allow religious freedom. He was arrested and imprisoned with murderers and other felons.

Authorities tried to force him back to Islam, even giving him drugs; but he remained faithful to Christ. So they arrested his wife. She was tried and sentenced to life in prison but was later released.

Present Truth Ministries has stayed close to the situation. The Present Truth Ministries website says Youcef “will be given another chance to recant and then he will be executed. Currently, there is nothing that can be done within the legal system of Iran. He could be executed at any time. This is the way that the Iranian government operates with executions. They do not give advance notice and it is done in secret.” Present Truth Ministries urges people to contact their elected officials and “fast and pray for his deliverance.”

In 2010 Oklahoma voted to forbid state courts from using Sharia law. CAIR won a permanent injunction to nullify the vote.

The minute the fox got on shore he threw back his head with a snap! “Dear me!” said the little Gingerbread Man, “I am a quarter gone!” The next minute he said, “Why, I am half gone!” The next minute he said, “My goodness gracious, I am three quarters gone!” And after that, the little Gingerbread Man never said anything more at all.

Perhaps it’s time to call a fox a fox.

by Lorna Simcox, editor-in-chief for The Friends of Israel
‘I Will Come Again’
Late in Jesus’ ministry He began to speak to His disciples of “coming again.” Indeed, other than a somewhat cryptic parable concerning a man who went away to receive a kingdom (Lk. 19:11–28, spoken at Passover when Jesus would die), Jesus said virtually nothing about a Second Coming.

So it must have been somewhat startling when, on the night before He died, He spoke about it to His disciples. In the upper room on the western hill of Jerusalem, after Judas had departed to fetch the Sanhedrists and soldiers who would arrest Him, Jesus, for the first time, explicitly and compassionately told the faithful 11 apostles that He was going away and would “come again”:

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also (Jn. 14:1–3).

In the context of first-century Jewish culture, His words would have been recognized as wedding talk. Marriage ceremonies involved two stages: the betrothal and the wedding. At the betrothal, the bridegroom’s family paid a dowry, and the couple exchanged vows; thus they became legally bound to one another as husband and wife. The wedding itself did not occur until months later at a time generally determined by the bridegroom’s father.

During the betrothal period, the couple remained separated (Mary, the mother of Jesus, spent the time with Elizabeth in the Judean hill country, Lk. 1:39–45); and both bride and bridegroom had well-defined responsibilities. The bridegroom was to prepare a home for his bride in the midst of his family or clan. That is, he would make a place where the new couple could live in the shadow of his father.

Indeed, one of the expressions for marriage in that culture was “adding a room to your father’s tent.” On the other hand, the bride was to keep herself pure and make herself beautiful for her husband.

The actual wedding was simple, though much celebrated. The bridegroom would go to his betrothed’s home and fetch her to the home he had prepared. Along the way there would be a wedding “parade” that would include great merrymaking and rejoicing and, depending on the families’ wealth, special features like musicians and poets to extemporize on the beauty of the bride.

When the wedding party arrived at the home the bridegroom had prepared, there would be a wedding feast to celebrate the happy occasion. There was no ceremony or exchange of vows; that had been done at the betrothal.

The essence of the wedding was simply that the bridegroom would return and receive his bride so that where he was, she might be always.

No occasion in all of Jewish culture was more a cause for rejoicing and celebration than a wedding. Thus it is appropriate that Jesus pictured Himself as a Bridegroom who betrothed Himself to the disciples, assuring them that He was going to prepare a place and would certainly return to fetch them.

It is difficult to conceive of a more winsome, loving, or comforting way in which Jesus might have communicated the promise of His return. Thus He prefaced it with the tender words, Let not your heart be troubled.

But there is another dimension to Jesus’ words that is little appreciated, yet tremendously significant. The culture of Jesus’ day was very much a clan culture. Jewish people lived in extended families (clans) that grew as sons eventually brought home brides.

Further, those extended families carefully watched over one another. Each clan was functionally led by a patriarch—a “ruling father” (pater/archos) who was ultimately responsible for the clan’s health and vitality. In the New Testament era, Rome ruled over all the land; political and military concerns were not left to individual clans. But daily life and welfare were very much clan functions.

When family members turned a daughter over as a bride to be cared for by her new husband, they were not so much entrusting her to the man as to his family, his clan—and, specifically, to the clan’s patriarch/father. Families sought out clans that were large, strong, and well established—all of which bespeak a wise and dependable patriarch. A family could happily and confidently entrust its treasured daughter to a bridegroom with a good father.

Jesus’ disciples were anxious for Him to inaugurate His promised Kingdom, but He spoke again and again of dying (cf. Lk. 13:31–34). They had haltingly bowed the knee to Jesus’ claim to be the Son of God, one with the Father in essence but distinct from the Father in person and role.

Then, in the upper room, He spoke as a loving bridegroom might speak vows of fidelity and comfort to his bride. In essence, He reminded them of the infinitely glorious “clan” into which they had married and of the eternally dependable character of the “clan’s” Father. Think through those precious words again from John 14:1–3:

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. [That is, all of the history of your people has taught you that you can trust Yahweh God. He is My Father! Even though I am telling you things you do not want to hear, you have learned to trust My Father, and you can trust Me as well.] In My Father’s house are many mansions; [My Father rules over a vast and strong
The solution to the problems of the church today lies in solving the problems of individual Christians, and the remedy is a person—the Holy Spirit. He is the antidote for every error, the power for every weakness, the victory for every defeat, the supply for every need, and the answer for every question. And He is available to every believer, for He lives in each believer’s heart and life. The answers and the power have already been given to us in the person of the Spirit who lives in each of us.

—Charles C. Ryrie in his book The Holy Spirit
For all we can tell, the apostle Paul went to glory unaware that the Messiah's everlasting Kingdom will begin with a 1,000-year precursor to the endless ages that follow.

The Hebrew Scriptures are explicit and univocal: The eschatological Messianic Kingdom is eternal (Dan. 2:44; 7:27). Only in the final pages of the New Testament, given to the apostle John three decades after Paul's martyrdom, did God introduce the concept of a Millennial Kingdom, revealing that the end-times drama will begin with a period of 1,000 years.

This segment of the Messiah's Kingdom will differ from the eternal segment on two important counts, at least. First, mortal humans will enter the Millennial Kingdom and bear children who will need to be evangelized.

Second, many of those born into the Kingdom will reject Christ, gather as an army against Him, and rebel at the end of the 1,000 years when Satan is loosed "for a little while" (Rev. 20:3).

Clearly, the 1,000-year Kingdom of Revelation 20 must be understood as the initial stage of the everlasting Kingdom to be ruled over by Messiah Jesus.

People who reject a literal reading of this passage and spiritualize the text by using allegorical interpretation insist there is no rationale for such a flawed first-pass at Messianic rule. Surely, we are scolded, there can be no value in an imperfect initial epoch that features a temporary binding of Satan and the Messiah ruling over an earth populated in part by mortal unbelievers.

So, say the naysayers, the 1,000-year Kingdom must be a metaphor; no defense is possible for an opening scene that concludes with another act of sedition against God and His Christ.

My reply is twofold. First, it does not follow that, because no rationale is explicit, no rationale is possible. God's Word clearly reveals an initial stage. It seems impertinent to insist that, because one's mind (or one's theology) sees no room for such a strategy, God's Word cannot mean what it quite plainly says.

Would it not be nobler to bow the knee to the clear teaching of the passage and trust that God knows what He is doing, even if it is not immediately manifest to us?

Second, the rationale for the initial Millennial epoch is really not so inscrutable. To live in this world is to be a walled city set upon by three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the Devil. In the Millennial stage of the Kingdom, the Devil will be bound; he will be incapable of troubling mortals living on Earth. The world will be under the perfect rule of King Jesus, with only peace, equity, justice, and plenty across the globe.

What is left? Fallen man, who is an inveterate excuse-maker. People love to lay blame at someone else's door: "All of the failures and wickedness of my life are someone else's fault!"

The Millennial Kingdom will demonstrate infallibly to the entire moral universe that man's problem is himself—his own rebellion; his bottomless pride and selfishness; and, above all, his hatred of the God who deserves his devotion and allegiance.

After 1,000 years, Satan will be freed; and, in a flash, the tempter will gather a vast army from among those who enjoyed the idyllic life King Jesus provided. That army will rise up in insane and futile rebellion against Him.

Is it possible to conceive of a more powerful indictment of humanity than the scenario spelled out through a literal reading of Revelation 20:1–7?

Indeed, the Millennial Kingdom is best conceived as the peroration in the Creator's prosecution of a rebellious race. God has fashioned and will fashion all of human history in the way that most perfectly displays His glory; and it is only against such a demonstration of mankind's utter depravity and rebellion, as described in Revelation 20, that we can understand the depths of God's mercy and grace (1 Cor. 1:21).
Rejoicing in Beulah Land

(Child with lamb: Jesus Cervantes/Shutterstock. Lion: Jeremy Baile/Fotolia. Digital composition and enhancement, Thomas E. Williams.)
When Theodor Herzl and the early Zionists laid the groundwork for the modern State of Israel in the 1800s, they believed having a national Jewish homeland would end anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, they were wrong. David Bar Illan, late executive editor of The Jerusalem Post, expressed the grim reality: “Israel itself,” he said, “has become the world’s Jew.”

Such will not always be the case. God has promised that a day is coming when “ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you’” (Zech. 8:23).

Israel will be the head of all the nations, no one will challenge its possession of the Holy Land, peace will flow like a river, and the Jewish people will be the most respected on Earth. These events will occur when the long-anticipated Millennial Kingdom arrives after the seven-year Tribulation (also called the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” Jer. 30:7).

Though many people today scoff at the idea of a future, literal, Jewish, Messianic Kingdom, the truth of it permeates Scripture. In the sixth century B.C. God revealed its reality to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, king of the greatest Gentile empire on Earth. In a dream, He showed Nebuchadnezzar an immense statue of a man made of metals that descended in value from gold (the statue’s head) to virtually worthless but strong iron (the feet and toes). The image symbolized Gentile domination of the Jewish homeland.

Jesus called this period the “times of the Gentiles” (Lk. 21:24). It will end when He returns to set up His 1,000-year Kingdom (Dan. 2:34-35; cf. Lk. 1:32-33).

Everything about the Kingdom will be radically different from today. Satan, bound and cast “into the bottomless pit” (Rev. 20:1-3), will be unable to deceive the nations, foment anti-Semitism, or dissuade people from worshiping the true and living God.

The Messiah will reign over the entire earth from the Temple in Jerusalem (Ezek. 43:7). “He shall be a priest on His throne” (Zech. 6:13), holding two offices (priest and king) that God never before in Jewish history allowed to be vested in one person. The combination is reserved exclusively for Jesus whose divine, righteous, sinless, incorruptible nature enables Him to rule wisely, compassionately, and with absolute justice.

In that day Israel will be the “head and not the tail” of all nations (Dt. 28:13): “You shall be named the priests of the LORD, they shall call you the servants of our God. . . . Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, . . . therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be theirs” (Isa. 61:6-7).

There will be no Palestinian situation, no terrorism, and no land-for-peace negotiations. The land will belong to the Jewish people, and they will live there in peace because it is the land God promised them: “Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for which I raised My hand in an oath to give to your fathers. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God” (Ezek. 20:42; 36:28).

True Peace

Today the world seems to think the way to peace is to dismantle Israel and give it to the Arabs. David Bar Illan called this “the peace of the grave.” Since his death in 2003, the Middle East has grown no friendlier to the Jewish people. When CBS foreign correspondent Lara Logan covered the Egyptian revolution in Cairo’s Tahrir Square in February, a mob of Muslim men beat and sexually assaulted her, shouting “Jew, Jew!” Logan is not Jewish. The word Jew was simply the worst thing they could think to call her.

Yet someday Egypt will serve the God of Israel:

Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it. And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them (Isa. 19:21-22).

In fact, two nations that once dominated the Jewish people will be at peace with each other and with Israel because of King Jesus’ presence on Earth:

In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance” (vv. 23-25).

The coming Jewish Kingdom will be characterized by justice, morality, and integrity:

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse. And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. . . . Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist (11:1, 3-5).

Centuries ago God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeans and promised him, “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise. He brought peace with God through His life, death, and resurrection. And He will bring peace to the world when, after the Tribulation, He physically returns to reign and rule over it for 1,000 years.

In that day, Israel will possess all of the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and will enjoy peace like a river (Isa. 66:12). Today Israelis must work with a spade in
one hand and a gun in the other. But a new day is coming:
You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, . . . but you shall be called Hephzibah [literally, “my delight is in her”] and your land Beulah [“married”]. They shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid (Isa. 62:4; Ezek. 34:28).

Thomas C. Simcox is the Northeastern States director for The Friends of Israel.

Israel has no better friend than America. And America has no better friend than Israel. We stand together to defend democracy. We stand together to advance peace. We stand together to fight terrorism. . . . In an unstable Middle East, Israel is the one anchor of stability. In a region of shifting alliances, Israel is America’s unwavering ally. Israel has always been pro-American. Israel will always be pro-American. My friends, you don’t need to do nation building in Israel. We’re already built. You don’t need to export democracy to Israel. We’ve already got it. You don’t need to send American troops to defend Israel. We defend ourselves. You’ve been very generous in giving us tools to do the job of defending Israel on our own. Thank you all.”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressing the U.S. Congress, May 24, 2011

For more information or to register, please contact:
REV. TIMOTHY MUNGER, FOI Church Ministries Representative
PO. Box 250712 • West Bloomfield, MI 48325 0712
E-mail: tmunger@foi.org • Web: foi.org/youthministryfest
Covenant Theology is the dominant theological system of most mainline Protestant churches. It is a system of theology that interprets the Bible’s philosophy of history through the lens of two or three covenants and is founded on Replacement Theology, which maintains that God has replaced the Jewish people with the church and that Christians are now God’s chosen people.

As a systematic theology, it attempts to explain God’s purpose for history. Why are things the way they are today? Why were they different in the past? Why was there a time when there was no government on Earth? Why was there a time when God gave the Law to a particular group of people? Why is that system of law not applied throughout the world today?

Systematic theology must make sense of the progress of revelation. Why didn’t God give the Epistles to Old Testament Israel? Why did He wait to reveal those after the church began?

Theology must provide a unifying principle that connects these historical differences with the progress of revelation, thus providing answers for the past, present, and future. Most important, a valid philosophy of history will answer these questions: “Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going?”

The Facts

Covenant Theology’s basic premise is that, in eternity past, God determined to govern all of history on the basis of three covenants. (Some combine two of the covenants into one.) These are the covenants of works, redemption, and grace.

The Covenant of Works. According to Covenant theologians, the covenant of works was established between the creation and Fall of Man. Covenants are formal, legally binding agreements in which both parties have obligations.

The covenant of works supposedly was established between the triune God and Adam, in which Adam is God’s representative head of the human race and acts for all his descendants. Covenant theologians argue that Adam’s obligation was perfect obedience to God. God’s obligation was to provide eternal life in exchange for perfect obedience. Adam’s penalty for failing to keep his part of the covenant was death to both Adam and his descendants.

Where do we find this covenant in the Bible? We don’t. It is not in the Bible. Covenant theologians infer these covenants based on certain Scriptures, including the threat of death for eating of the tree of knowledge in Genesis 2. There must be a covenant, they say, because God provided a warning and a penalty. That is the logic they use.

The Covenant of Redemption. This covenant supposedly was established before creation in eternity past between God the Father and God the Son, in which the Father made His Son the Head and Redeemer of the elect. The Son volunteered to take the place of those whom God gave to Him—the elect here on Earth. The Son’s obligation was to become human under the Law, live without sin, and willingly take the elect’s punishment on the cross. The Father’s obligation was to resurrect the Son and give Him numerous seed, all power in heaven and earth, and great glory.

Again we ask, “Where is this covenant in Scripture?” And again the answer is that it is not there. It does not exist. Covenant theologians claim it is implied based on God’s promises and God’s Son’s willingness to go to the cross.

The Covenant of Grace. Some Covenant theologians combine the covenants of redemption and grace. They are uncertain when the covenant of grace was established. Some argue it began with the promise of redemption in Genesis 3:15 when God told the serpent He would bruise the serpent’s head and that the serpent would bruise the Man-Child’s heel. Others argue it began with the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 12.

In the covenant of grace, God, the offended, makes a covenant with the elect sinner, the offender. The elect sinner’s obligation is to accept the promise of salvation willingly, agree to be a part of God’s people, trust in Christ forever, and commit to a life of obedience and dedication to God. God’s obligation is to provide salvation through faith in Christ and eternal life to all who believe.

There is no reference to this covenant in the Bible. Covenant theologians argue that it is implied in the “I will be Your God” passages throughout the Old and New Testaments. These three covenants constitute what is known as Covenant Theology. They define history’s ultimate purpose as glorifying God through the redemption of elect man. The shortcoming of this philosophy is that it presents a human-centered view of history: The glory of God is summed up only through the redemption of man.

The covenant of grace becomes the unifying principle for history, in which history is understood in terms of God’s redemption of man. If you want to understand what happened in the past, you turn to the covenant of grace. If you want to understand what is happening now or in the future, look at the covenants of grace and redemption.

The Flaws

There are a number of problems with Covenant Theology. First, its ultimate
goal for history is flawed because it only explains God’s purpose for elect man. It does not begin to touch on all the other programs God is carrying out in history.

For example, if God is the one true and sovereign God of this universe, He will restore the universe to its pre-fall condition (Mt. 19:28; Acts 3:18–21). Covenant theology provides no explanation for this aspect of history. Nor does it provide reasons for God’s dethroning of Satan as ruler of the earth (Rom. 16:20) or for reestablishing God’s theocratic Kingdom on Earth (Rev. 19—20).

Second, it is a human-centered theological system with an inherent weakness for humanism. Who is the god of humanism? It is man and the belief that, ultimately, all answers lie in man.

A theological system that believes the glory of God is centered in what God is doing with man ultimately focuses on man. Add to that fact a hermeneutic that spiritualizes the words of Scripture, reinterpreting the literal into something figurative, and you have created a platform for humanism. History bears out that liberal, modernist movements have flourished in mainline Protestant, Covenant churches.

A further problem is that the unifying principle of Covenant Theology is too narrow. It deals solely with man’s redemption; it does not include God’s plan for the redemption of all creation. Nor does it provide enough answers for what God is doing here on Earth.

Furthermore, it diminishes the true covenants recorded in Scripture: the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and New Covenants—to mention three.

Another of Covenant Theology’s serious flaws is that it denies the distinction between Israel and the church. It redefines the church as all covenant people throughout history. Therefore, the church begins with Abraham (Gen. 12), rather than in Acts 2; and Old Testament Israel no longer refers to the physical descendants of Abraham,

### THE ELEMENTS OF COVENANT THEOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Covenant</th>
<th>When It Was Established</th>
<th>With Whom It Was Established</th>
<th>Obligations on the Parties Involved</th>
<th>Appearance in the Bible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Between creation and the Fall of Man</td>
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<td>God (the offended) and the elect sinner (the offender)</td>
<td>Elect Sinner: agrees to be part of God’s people, trust Christ forever, and live a life of obedience. God: promises salvation/eternal life to all who believe.</td>
<td>NOWHERE</td>
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by James A. Showers
Israel May Have Oil!

For years, many believed the mission of Texas-based Zion Oil & Gas to be nothing more than a pipe dream, the false hope of ideological Christian Zionists. But Zion Oil & Gas’s Matt Dickerson has told Israel Today that one of the company’s drilling sites in Israel is monitoring a significant release of hydrocarbons, an organic compound that most commonly occurs in crude oil. Israel has already succeeded in finding enormous natural gas fields, but it is now believed that deep below the gas there is oil. It is that deep strata that Zion Oil & Gas and a few other companies are targeting.

Being able to extract and export oil, in addition to natural gas, in a commercially viable way would transform Israel almost overnight. Israel has already succeeded in finding enormous natural gas fields, but it is now believed that deep below the gas there is oil. It is that deep strata that Zion Oil & Gas and a few other companies are targeting.

Being able to extract and export oil, in addition to natural gas, in a commercially viable way would transform Israel almost overnight. No longer would the Jewish state have to rely on energy sources from hostile or self-serving providers.

For its long dedication to helping Israel achieve this goal, Zion Oil & Gas, a wholly Christian-owned and operated company, has secured the trust and backing of the Israeli government. Zion Oil & Gas recently won approval to do exploratory drilling in the northern parts of the Jordan Valley, an area covering nearly 56,000 acres. Together with its Joseph License and its Asher-Menashe License, the company’s new Jordan Valley License now gives Zion Oil & Gas drilling rights over 218,000 acres of northern Israel.

Israel’s recently retired petroleum commissioner, Dr. Ya’akov Mimran, told Israeli business journal Globes he is “very optimistic about both gas and oil discoveries. We’re in a good place on the road. I also have faith in onshore wells by companies such as . . . Zion Oil & Gas, which are targeting deep strata.”

A World Energy Council estimate suggests Israel could be sitting on 250 billion barrels of oil, which is nearly as much as the proven reserves of Saudi Arabia.

by Israel Today, www.israeltoday.co.il

Israel May Have Oil!

Zion Oil & Gas at work on Israel’s onshore rig (Jack Guez/AFP/Getty Images).

ENDNOTES

1 Renald E. Showers, There Really Is a Difference (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1990), 10.
2 Ibid., 9–10.
3 Ibid., 10–13.
4 Ibid., 19–24, 127, 136–137.

James A. Showers is executive vice president and chief financial officer for The Friends of Israel.
Entering the Millennium

If you’ve ever been on an Up to Jerusalem tour with The Friends of Israel, you’ve experienced the excitement of a plane-load of people craning their necks for their first glimpse of the Holy Land. Most do not know what to expect when they arrive, but they know they are in for a phenomenal experience. Christians often view the Millennium in the same way. Although shrouded in mystery, it will be unparalleled.

There will be peace and prosperity, mortals and “immortals,” a Millennial Temple, and a reigning Messiah. It will be a glorious time on Earth when God restores the Davidic Kingdom, and Israel takes its rightful place as the spiritual head of the world.

All these things will happen after seven years of tribulation devastate the earth. What will have begun as a worldwide dream of unification will end as a global nightmare, with the Antichrist seizing totalitarian control of everything. Earth will be in chaos, its financial centers destroyed and its cities reduced to rubble. As the Antichrist assembles the armies of the world in the Valley of Megiddo in a last attempt to thwart the establishment of the prophesied Messianic Kingdom (Ps. 2:2–3; Rev. 16:13–16), the heavens will break open, revealing the King of kings and Lord of lords approaching on a white horse (Rev. 19:11).

The treasury building in Petra, located in Jordan (Thomas Pullicino/iStockphoto).
Rescue and Triumph

With a single word, the Messiah will level the forces against Him in the Valley of Megiddo. Blood will flood the valley. It will be so deep it will reach the bridle of the Messiah’s horse as He leaves the battlefield (Rev. 14:20). The victory won, He will make His way south to Edom to a location especially prepared as a refuge for Israel’s remnant that will refuse to worship the Antichrist (Isa. 63:1; Rev. 12:13–17).

God will provide food and water for the Jewish people there until the end of the Tribulation, which will be the greatest holocaust since the beginning of time (Isa. 33:13–16; Mic. 2:12; Mt. 24:16; Rev. 12:6, 13). After two days of corporate repentance, God will forgive their sin and provide national cleansing (Hos. 6:1–3; Zech. 12:10—13:1, 7–9; Rom. 11:26).

Seeing the visible return of Christ in the heavens to rescue them, they will realize their cry for deliverance has been answered and will embrace their Messiah, whose garment will be stained with blood from the battlefield of Armageddon (Isa. 63:1–6). Shouting “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the L ORD” (Ps. 118:26), the Jewish remnant will proceed triumphantly toward Jerusalem, bursting through the cleft in the Mount of Olives, surging across the Kidron Valley, and ascending through the Eastern Gate into the city (Zech. 14:4; Lk. 13:35). As the “redeemed of the L ORD,” these people will enter the Messianic Kingdom alive in their material, physical bodies to function as the Messiah’s emissaries in the world (Isa. 51:11).

Shortly thereafter, the judgment of the nations, predicted centuries earlier by the Hebrew prophet Joel, will commence (Joel 3:1–17). Like the Jewish remnant, the righteous Gentiles will also enter the Messianic Kingdom in their physical bodies (Mt. 25:37–41). (See “The Gentile Sheep and Goats.”)

At the onset of the Millennium, the Messiah will rebuild Jerusalem on a reconfigured, post-tribulation landscape. A forceful tectonic upthrust will have elevated the area to form a plateau some 50 miles square (Isa. 2:2–4; Mic. 4:1–2). On the northern end of the plateau will be the earthly city of Jerusalem, 10 miles square and housing the center of government for the Messianic Kingdom, with the Millennial Temple at the heart of the city (Ezek. 48:1–28). (The rebuilt city of Jerusalem should not be confused with the New Jerusalem that descends from heaven after the creation of the new heaven and Earth, cf. Rev. 21:2, 10.)

Those living on Earth will enjoy the fulfilled promises of the Messianic Kingdom embodied in all of the unilateral covenants God made with Israel; it will be the final dispensation of history. The Messiah’s rule will provide peace, prosperity, and righteousness. Not only will there be no war, but all species of animals will coexist harmoniously; and humans will no longer be threatened by predatory or venomous creatures (Isa. 11:6–9). The world will be restored to its pre-fall condition, and mankind will enjoy longevity far beyond what it experiences today (65:20).

Messiah and the Saints

In addition to those entering the Messianic Kingdom in their physical bodies, there will be others who will not be confined to the limitations of mortal beings. The Bible says that, when Messiah approaches Earth, He will be followed by “the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean . . . on white horses” (Rev. 19:14). At first glance, it may appear that this multitude is the angelic host. Although Scripture does not discount the presence of angels in the event, angels are not identified with this host wearing bright white linen—the garments of the redeemed.1

Earlier, the apostle John described the Bride of Christ: “To her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (v. 8).

Some seven years earlier, the church was raptured to meet the Lord in the air. Upon hearing the Lord’s shout accompanied by the voice of the

The Gentile Sheep and Goats

W hen Messiah Jesus returns, He will judge the Gentiles to determine who among them will enter the Messianic Kingdom.

The prophet Joel identified those being judged using the Hebrew word goyim (“nations”), a word still used for “Gentiles” today (Joel 3:12). Jesus said all nations will be gathered before Him (Mt. 25:32), establishing the connection to Joel’s prophecy. In the Gospel of Matthew, the Greek word for “nations” refers to Gentiles who survive the Tribulation’s cataclysmic events.

As a shepherd divides sheep from goats, the Messiah will divide these non-Jews: The righteous will “inherit the kingdom prepared for [them] from the foundation of the world,” while the unrighteous will be condemned to “everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (vv. 34, 41).

Jesus spelled out the criterion He will use to distinguish the righteous from the unrighteous:

For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me (vv. 35–36, 40).

Thus He will identify Gentile survivors of the Tribulation as righteous by their attitude toward His “brethren.” These brethren belong to neither the sheep nor the goats. Furthermore, they are distinct from the nations, or goyim. So the word brethren can only refer to one other group of people: the Jewish people—Jesus’ Jewish kinsmen.

That fact should not be surprising. The Bible consistently teaches that God notices how Gentiles treat His Chosen People and that He holds them accountable. At this judgment, compassionate treatment of the Messiah’s brethren is not the basis of salvation but, rather, evidence of genuine faith. And only people with genuine faith in the Messiah of Israel will enter His Messianic Kingdom.

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archangel and the trumpet of God, the dead in Christ immediately rose from their graves, joined a split second later by Christians who were still alive (1 Th. 4:16–17). In a fraction of a second, their bodies were transformed into glorified bodies fitted for the demands of eternal life in God’s presence (1 Cor. 15:52).

These glorified saints will return with the Messiah to witness His triumph over the evil world system, and they will go on to rule with Him in the Messianic Kingdom.

After the Messiah defeats the world’s armies, but before He establishes the Messianic Kingdom, the simultaneous resurrection of Tribulation and Old Testament saints will occur (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:4). Like Church Age saints, they will be resurrected and given glorified bodies. Unlike those who survive the Tribulation and the Millennial Age in their mortal bodies, Tribulation, Old Testament, and Church Age believers will all have glorified, immortal bodies that will not be limited to the earthly realm.

Joining with “just men made perfect” (Old Testament saints) and “an innumerable company of angels” (a description of holy angels), the church will enjoy a permanent dwelling place in the New Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22–23). With bodies not bound by time or space, saints in the Millennium will have instantaneous access to Earth and the ability to interact with the mortal inhabitants of the Messianic Kingdom (Jn. 20:19; 1 Cor. 15:20; 1 Jn. 3:2). For the first time in history, mortals living on Earth will mingle with people who have resurrected, glorified bodies.

Today every level of creation groans for the climax of Earth’s history and the peace, tranquility, and righteousness associated with the Messiah’s 1,000-year reign. Our anticipation of a world where every system on the planet is under the Messiah’s direct control is truly mindboggling.

The Bible is our window into the future Millennial Kingdom. And though we may not have been given every detail about this incomparable period of history, one thing is certain: It’ll be great!

ENDNOTES


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The following is a brief excerpt from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s speech before a joint session of the United States Congress on May 24, 2011:

If history has taught the Jewish people anything, it is that we must take calls for our destruction seriously. We are a nation that rose from the ashes of the Holocaust. When we say never again, we mean never again. Israel always reserves the right to defend itself.

My friends, while Israel will be ever vigilant in its defense, we will never give up on our quest for peace. I guess we'll give it up when we achieve it. Israel wants peace. Israel needs peace. We've achieved historic peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan that have held up for decades. . . .

But there is another truth: The Palestinians share this small land with us. We seek a peace in which they will be neither Israel's subjects nor its citizens. They should enjoy a national life of dignity as a free, viable and independent people in their own state. They should enjoy a prosperous economy, where their creativity and initiative can flourish. . . .

We've helped the Palestinian economy by removing hundreds of barriers and roadblocks to the free flow of goods and people. The results have been nothing short of remarkable. The Palestinian economy is booming. It's growing by more than 10 percent a year.

Palestinian cities look very different today than they did just a few years ago. They have shopping malls, movie theaters, restaurants, banks. They even have e-businesses. This is all happening without peace. Imagine what could happen with peace. Peace would herald a new day for both peoples. It would make the dream of a broader Arab-Israeli peace a realistic possibility.
As we read the Old Testament, we sometimes miss the fact that the Pentateuch was written with a singular purpose: to prepare Israel for Kingdom living. However, from the start, the blessings unilaterally promised to Adam, Noah, and Abraham and his descendants were irrevocably extended to all Gentiles through the Abrahamic Covenant. It is not surprising, then, that the “nations” play an important role in the Millennium. It will be an age of perfection, yet a major issue we face today will remain unchanged.

The world today is under Gentile dominance. Jesus referred to this period as the “times of the Gentiles” (Lk. 21:24). The Millennial Kingdom will reverse this state of affairs. Jerusalem will be the political and religious capital of the world, and Jesus will sit on the throne of David and rule all the nations of Earth with a rod of iron: “The LORD shall be King over all the earth” (Zech. 14:9).

“...all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him” (Ps. 72:11). God’s promises to Abraham will come to fruition, and all the nations will be blessed.

Jesus will provide not only a perfect government but also a perfect environment:

- There will be no disease. “The inhabitant will not say, ‘I am sick’” (Isa. 33:24).
- Life will be lengthened. “For the child shall die one hundred years old. For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people” (65:20, 22).
- There will be no disasters. “They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble” (v. 23).
- The land will be wonderfully productive. “The land shall be turned into a plain” (Zech. 14:10). “The plowman shall overtake the reaper” (Amos 9:13).
- Animals will no longer be dangerous. “I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, and with the creeping things of the ground...to make them lie down safely” (Hos. 2:18).
- War will be forbidden. “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isa. 2:4).

Imagine living in a world of unrestrained peace and prosperity—a world needing no doctors because there is no sickness, no funeral homes because almost no one dies. No one goes to bed hungry. Neither is there crime, bad weather, corruption, or war. This is the world that will exist after the Tribulation. We cannot begin to imagine how perfect it will be.
All of these blessings are directly related to promises that God made to Adam, Noah, and Abraham. The seed (Messiah) that would crush the head of the serpent (Satan, Gen. 3:15) was always intended for the entire world.

Called to Serve

That God has chosen to extend these blessings through one nation, Israel, should never be misconstrued as favoritism. The calling of God has always been a call to serve. It has always been a call to consider others more important than ourselves. It has always been a call to walk humbly with our God. The one who would be greatest of all must become servant of all.

During the Millennium, Israel will be God’s servant, continually preaching the gospel of the Kingdom throughout the world:

*They shall call you [the Jewish people] the servants of our God (Isa. 61:6). In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:23).*

Knowledge and worship of Yahweh will be mandatory even among the Gentiles: “And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain” (14:17).

Based on these facts, we can assume the various nations will have both autonomy and national identity. Many are identified as existing during the Millennium. For example, Isaiah 19 says Egypt, Assyria, and Israel will be friends, as well as neighbors: “In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land” (v. 24). Each country clearly maintains its national identity and has some form of self-governance.

Thus a viable, identifiable, international community will flourish during the Kingdom Age. For 1,000 years there will be unparalleled peace and prosperity throughout all the earth.

### Church Age Believers

Church Age believers will be resurrected, or glorified, prior to the Tribulation (1 Th. 4:13–18). We will return to Earth at the end of that seven-year period to participate in the great marriage supper of the Lamb that opens the Millennium (Rev. 19:1–9). Then we will reign with Christ for 1,000 years (20:4).

Scripture does not specify how Church Age saints will rule in that awesome new world. With perfect weather, unbelievably productive land, and perfect health, the physical needs of this new dispensation will be limited. Our role apparently will be to provide leadership.

Perhaps some resurrected saints will be appointed as governors or mayors. Some may be appointed as pastors and teachers. Still others may become judges. We can assume that all government (legislative, executive, and judicial) will be in the hands of glorified, sinless saints because it is a perfect government.

Clearly, Jesus could handle all administrative “ruling” responsibilities without help. However, God has always seen fit to allow humans to serve in the ministry in as meaningful a way as possible. For example, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead but asked His disciples to move the stone and unwrap the burial linens.

The greatest blessing any person can have is to serve. Jesus said,

*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many (Mt. 20:25–28).*

### What Stays the Same

While it is true that the Millennial Kingdom will be a much different physical world from the one in which the church ministers now, in many ways the task at hand remains the same. Those born during the Kingdom Age will have the same primary need as people today: a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ.

One would think that, given such incredible benefits, people would be completely happy. But the opposite is the case. True joy can only exist when a person is in a right relationship with God. Man’s real problem has never been his environment. It has been his desire to rule his own life apart from God.

God will infuse the Millennium with unparalleled physical and political blessing. He will provide glorified, perfect vessels to minister to the population, administratively and spiritually. Yet the hearts of these new generations will soon turn away from Him, clearly demonstrating that even if people live in a perfect world with perfect government and perfect spiritual guidance, they will still find a way to reject God.

At the end of the 1,000 years, there will be a worldwide rebellion. Jesus Christ will squelch it immediately and bring all things to a resolution.

The Millennial Kingdom, marvelous as it will be, will prove yet again that living in a perfect world cannot make people good. Only genuine faith in Jesus Christ can change a heart.

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For centuries Bible students have been fascinated by the details surrounding the Temple revealed in Ezekiel 40—46. In fact, a major section of the book of Ezekiel is given over to a Temple that the prophet described in detail: its dimensions, priesthood, worship, sacrifices, and ritual.

Scholars have pored over these prophecies, and their interpretations are varied and often confusing. However, if you look at these Scriptures honestly and clearly, you will see they can only
refer to a Temple that will exist in Jerusalem when God, in the person of Jesus the Messiah, physically dwells on Earth in the midst of His people Israel.

**Sorting Out the Structures**

Some try to relate Ezekiel’s revelation to Solomon’s Temple. Others say it refers to Zerubbabel’s Temple, built after Israel returned from Babylon in the fifth and sixth centuries B.C. However, the dimensions, priesthood, and ministry of Ezekiel’s Temple differ completely from the other two.

Consequently, still others teach that Ezekiel depicted the “ideal” Temple that Israel was supposed to construct but did not. No text in Scripture comes close to validating this interpretation.

Today it is becoming increasingly popular to spiritualize the biblical text and teach that the Temple in Ezekiel 40 symbolizes the spiritual blessing being fulfilled in the modern church. Again, nothing in Scripture gives any credence to this position.

Nor is the Temple in Ezekiel the Tribulation Temple. A Temple will exist during the future, seven-year Tribulation (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14; 2 Th. 2:4; Rev. 11:1–2); but it will be an ungodly one that does not correspond to the godly Temple in Ezekiel’s prophecy.

So to what Temple does Ezekiel refer? The interpretation that makes the most sense is that this is a future, literal Temple that will be built in the Millennial Kingdom. Such a Temple is consistent with Ezekiel’s earlier prophecy that God will set His sanctuary and Tabernacle in Israel (Ezek. 37:26–28). A Temple will be built after God has made a “covenant of peace” (v. 26) with Israel in the Millennium.

Other prophets also wrote about a future, literal, Millennial Temple (Isa. 2:3; 60:13; Dan. 9:26; Joel 3:18; Hag. 2:7, 9).

The Temple’s purpose will be sixfold: It will (1) exhibit God’s holiness (Zech. 14:20); (2) manifest God’s glory (Ezek. 43:1–5; 44:4); (3) be the Messiah’s dwelling place (43:7); (4) be the location from which the Messiah will govern Earth from David’s throne (Lk. 1:32–33); (5) provide a place where people will offer blood sacrifices to God in worship (Ezek. 45:15–25); and (6) house a river “flowing from under the threshold” (47:1) to the Dead Sea, providing life-giving water to vegetation throughout the Negev (vv. 1–12).

**The Edifice**

This Temple will be unlike any other in Israel’s history. Bible scholar John F. Walvoord commented on some of the details:

As described in Ezekiel (40:5–42:20), the outer dimensions of the temple complex will form a square 875 feet (500 cubits) across and in length. The temple faces east as did the tabernacle and the temples of Solomon and of the Exile. The south, east, and north sides have an outer wall. Thirty rooms were also built on the second and third levels. The temple itself was projected from inside the western wall of the temple complex toward the east, and, except on the western wall, it had outer courts on three sides—south, east, and north, 175 feet in width. The rooms inside the temple area were assigned to their respective uses, including the temple proper in the center with an inner court in front of it extending to the east. The details, while not prophetic in themselves, together give a tremendous vision of the central place of worship in the millennial kingdom.

Ezekiel, who recorded this vision of the temple, was given what amounted to a tour which prompted the detailed description. He was led by an angel described as “a man whose appearance was like bronze” (40:3).

The measuring rod used by the angel was six cubits long (v. 5), with a rod being approximately twenty-one inches in length. The total measuring rod therefore was about ten feet six inches. Ezekiel entered through the eastern gate (v. 6); there was also one gate on the south and one on the north, corresponding to the gates of the outer court. Solomon’s temple had only a gate on the east.1

**The Prince**

When the Messiah rules on Earth after the Tribulation, the system of laws in effect (Ezek. 40–46) will be quite different from the Mosaic Law and radically different from today, when we live under grace without a Temple.

First, Ezekiel makes it exceedingly clear that a resurrected King David will play the major role of king, shepherd, and prince appointed by God over Israel; he will serve under the Messiah (Isa. 55:3–4; Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23–24; 37:24–25; Hos. 3:5).

Second, an appointed “prince” (Ezek. 44:3) will oversee worship and service in the Temple. His identity today is unknown. He is not Jesus Christ, as some might believe, because he must offer a sin offering for himself (45:22). Many scholars speculate that David is the prince because he is so designated in other Millennial Kingdom passages. However, this seems unlikely because the prince appears to be a human being; David will be a sinless, resurrected saint. The prince’s duties are spelled out in Ezekiel 45:9–46:18.

Third, Ezekiel 44:4–31 provides information about the dress, demeanor, and duties concerning the priests in charge of the Temple. Only Levites from the sons of Zadok will be ministering priests because they alone obeyed the Lord when other priests and the children of Israel went astray (v. 15).

What a day of blessing awaits Israel and the world when Jesus the Messiah returns to erect a new Temple in the Millennial Kingdom!

**ENDNOTE**


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The Millennial Temple’s main objective will be to provide a place of worship for Israel and the Gentile nations that will be similar to, yet distinct from, that under the old Levitical system.

Jews and Gentiles alike who have mortal bodies will be required to bring animal sacrifices ( Isa. 56:7; 66:20–23; Jer. 33:18; Ezek. 45:13–17; Mal. 3:3–4). The prince (see “A New Temple for a New Era,” page 30) will receive the gifts and oversee the sacrifices used “to make atonement” for the house of Israel ( Ezek. 45:15, 17, 20).

There will be burnt, sin, trespass (40:39), grain (45:24), and peace offerings (46:2). The prince will offer the sacrifices at “the feasts, the New Moons, the Sabbaths, and at all the appointed seasons of the house of Israel” (45:17). Only morning sacrifices will be offered daily (46:13).

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

When reading Ezekiel 43—46, people often ask, “If Jesus’ sacrifice is the only efficacious, once-for-all sacrifice to expiate sin ( Heb. 9:12), why should animal sacrifices, which could never take away sin (10:4), be offered during the Millennium?” We know these sacrifices cannot remove sin any more than the Levitical sacrifices could.

Some scholars believe the Millennial offerings will be memorials, similar to keeping the Lord’s Supper today in remembrance of Christ’s death. They reason that sacrifices are needed because Millennial saints will live in an ideal setting where Christ’s righteousness will fill the earth and people will need a reminder of the awfulness of sin.

Therefore, the shedding of blood will visibly remind them that only Christ’s blood can take away sin. This interpretation has two problems: (1) Nothing in the text indicates the sacrifices are memorials, and (2) the prophet says the sacrifices are to make atonement.

Consequently, these offerings must be much more than memorials. The word for “atonement” ( Ezek. 45:15, 17, 20) is the Hebrew word kippur, meaning to “cover” or “propitiate.” Under the Levitical system, sacrifices were required to atone for sin and to cleanse the buildings, the altar (43:20–27), the Levities (44:25–27), and the sanctuary (45:18). The blood sacrifice covered the worshiper’s sins ( Lev. 17:11) and functioned as propitiation to God.
Animal sacrifices offered in the Millennial Temple will be needed to cover the worshippers’ ceremonial uncleanness. Why? Because God will be dwelling on Earth in the midst of sinners living in their natural, unresurrected bodies. Without blood sacrifices, these impure worshippers would defile God’s holy Temple when they come to worship Him.

Bible Professor Jerry Hullinger came to the same conclusion:

_Hebrews states that animal sacrifices were efficacious in the sphere of ceremonial cleansing. They were not efficacious, however, in the realm of conscience and therefore in the matter of spiritual salvation. Because of this, Christ’s offering is superior in that it accomplished something the Levitical offerings never could, namely, soteriological benefits._

_Only Christ’s sacrifice was of the kind that could form the basis for eternal and spiritual salvation. But this in no way refutes the . . . efficacy in the Old Testament sacrifices. . . . Eternal or spiritual salvation was not the issue. Therefore, the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament and the sacrifice of Christ in the New Testament were effective at their own respective and totally different levels._

_Ezekiel 40—48 indicates that during the millennium God’s glory will return to the temple where sacrificial ritual will take place and in which offerings will make atonement. For Ezekiel the concept of atonement is the same as it was in the Book of Leviticus, namely, an act that wipes away and purges uncleanness._

_This purgation will be required because the divine presence will once again be dwelling in the land. As argued earlier, impurity is contagious to both persons and sancta. Further, impurity is inimical to Yahweh, who refuses to dwell among a people if uncleanness remains untreated. Because of God’s promise to dwell on earth during the millennium (as stated in the New Covenant), it is necessary that He protect His presence through sacrifice._

_This function of sacrifices, according to the Book of Hebrews, is efficacious. However, this was never the purpose of Christ’s sacrifice, for it dealt with the internal cleansing of the conscience. Therefore the two are harmonious. It should be further added that this sacrificial system will be a temporary one in that the millennium (with its partial population of unglorified humanity) will last only one thousand years. During the eternal state all inhabitants of the New Jerusalem will be glorified and will therefore not be a source of contagious impurities to defile the holiness of Yahweh._

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

**ENDNOTE**

If you did an Internet search asking the question, “What is heaven like?” you would receive 338 million “hits.” Most people want to know what will happen to them after they die. Where will they go? What will it be like?

God has provided that information in His Word. In addition to telling us about the Lake of Fire—where Satan, the demons, and all unsaved humanity will spend eternity—He also has told us about the eternal and glorious destination of the redeemed: the new heavens, new Earth, and New Jerusalem.

Contrary to what scientists today claim, the world will not end due to global warming. Its demise will be far more dramatic: “The heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). Then God will create something entirely new and magnificent.

This event will likely occur at the end of the Millennium (the Messiah’s 1,000-year reign on Earth) because the apostle John wrote, “And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured” the evildoers (Rev. 20:9). This judgment by fire is the book of Revelation’s final reference to the physical earth inhabited today. Wrote theologian Dr. Charles Ryrie, “The present creation will be destroyed so that it may be cleansed from all the effects of sin (2 Pet. 3:7, 10, 12).”

The New Heavens and New Earth

John continued: “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away” (Rev. 21:1). “The new heaven,” wrote biblical expert Dr. John Walvoord, “refers not to the abode of God, but to the earth’s atmosphere and planetary space.”

The concept of a new heaven and new earth are not original to Revelation; the Jewish prophet Isaiah said the same thing: “Therefore thus says the Lord God: . . . I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind” (Isa. 65:13, 17). Both Isaiah and John imply that these entities will be brand new, not merely recreations of the originals.

There also will be “no more sea” (Rev. 21:1). “In contrast with the present earth, which has most of its surface covered by water,” explained Walvoord, “no large body of water will be on the new earth.”
Instead of pain and suffering, there will be joy, peace, and fellowship with the Lord forever: “God will wipe away every tear; . . . there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new’” (v v. 4–5).

All inhabitants will have physical, resurrected bodies as Jesus had when He appeared to His disciples after He arose from the dead (Jn. 20—21).

The New Jerusalem

In addition to the new heavens and new earth, believers will enjoy a magnificent city called the New Jerusalem: “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God” (Rev. 21:2). Isaiah also foretold of this city: “Be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing. . . . The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying” (Isa. 65:18–19).

Many scholars, including Walvoord and Ryrie, believe the New Jerusalem will be home to the resurrected saints who will be part of the King-Messiah’s administration in the Millennium. Since Scripture does not place the city on Earth, many say it will hover over the earth. Wrote Walvoord, “It may be demonstrated from Scripture that (1) the heavenly Jerusalem is the eternal habitation of all resurrected and translated saints; (2) the heavenly Jerusalem is in existence in the millennium.”

It simply makes its first appearance in Scripture in Revelation 21.

Walvoord said it may depart for a time when the present earth is destroyed: “The New Jerusalem then will apparently be withdrawn from its proximity to the earth when the earth will be destroyed at the end of the Millennium, and then will come back after the new earth is created.”

The city is an enormous cube: “The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth” (Rev. 21:16). The measurements given in the Bible are “twelve thousand furlongs [1,500 miles]. Its length, breadth, and height are equal” (v. 16). To place that measurement in perspective, it is 1,531 miles (2,464 kilometers) from Bangor, Maine, to Orlando, Florida. Consequently, the New Jerusalem will have a volume of 3.4 billion cubic miles.

It will be a magnificent metropolis. The apostle John said he saw “the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (v. 10), having 12 gates (three on each side), each constructed from a single pearl (v. 21). “And [the] names written on them . . . are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel” (v. 12).

In addition, there will be 12 foundation stones under the wall, “and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (v. 14). The city wall’s foundation will be encrusted with jewels: “The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones” (vv. 18–19). “The street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass” (v. 21).

There will be no sun, moon, or stars “for the glory of God illuminate it. The Lamb is its light” (v. 23).

The New Jerusalem will also be home to the “tree of life” (22:2) and “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (v. 3). Best of all, we shall behold Him because the Bible declares that all who dwell there “shall see His face” (22:4).

So for all eternity, the redeemed throughout all the ages will enjoy perfect peace; glorified bodies; and the new heavens, new Earth, and New Jerusalem. And all God’s people said, “Amen.”

ENDNOTES

3 Ibid.

by Thomas C. Simcox

Delta May Adopt No-Jew Fly Policy

Delta Air Lines’ latest deal with Saudi Arabian Airlines may ban Jewish people from boarding Delta planes in the United States bound for Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

World Net Daily reported that Delta wants to add the Saudi carrier to its SkyTeam Alliance, which will mean adopting Saudi policies on flights to Saudi. Former U.S. Rep. Fred Grandy (R-IA) and his wife, Catherine, who are fighting the infiltration of Sharia Law into the United States, brought the issue before Congress.

Jeffrey Lovitky, a Washington, DC, attorney, said the Saudis could also force Delta to ban Americans wearing certain clothing and prevent them from “carrying and reading religious literature of their choice” on a plane that takes off from New York or Washington. “This includes, but is not limited to, both Christian and Jewish sacred texts, . . . as well as any objects that reflect their religion, such as a cross necklace,” he said.

For more on the subject, log on to wnd.com/?pageId=314309.
The Faith of Moses

Moses was a gifted leader whom God used to bring about His plan for Israel and the world. He was blessed with good looks, intelligence, opportunities, eloquence, and leadership ability (Ex. 2:2; Acts 7:20, 22). The Bible describes him as “the man of God” and “the servant of the Lord” (Dt. 33:1; 34:5). In fact, his relationship with God was so intimate that “the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Ex. 33:11).

His Parents’ Faith

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command” (Heb. 11:23).

Moses’ parents, Amram and Jochebed from the tribe of Levi, were people of faith (Num. 26:59). Moses was born in Egypt in an era when the midwives were under orders to kill all Jewish newborn males (Ex. 1:15–17).

Moses is described as a “beautiful [i.e., good] child” (Heb. 11:23; cf. Ex. 2:2; Acts 7:20). Perhaps his parents were aware that Israel’s 400-year captivity in Egypt (Gen. 15:13–14) was soon to end and that their son might play a role in Israel’s deliverance. Whatever the reason, they demonstrated faith in God and hid Moses for three months.

When Jochebed could no longer hide him, by faith she made an ark of bulrushes, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, and laid Moses in it by the riverbank. Pharaoh’s daughter (possibly Hatshepsut, the young daughter of Thothmes I) discovered the infant and asked Moses’ sister, Miriam, waiting nearby, to summon a Hebrew nurse.

In God’s sovereignty, Jochebed became his nurse. Pharaoh’s daughter gave Moses to his mother and even paid her wages until he became Pharaoh’s daughter’s adopted son (Ex. 2:1–10; Acts 7:21).

Thus Jochebed had a number of years to implant in Moses a sense of his Jewish identity. This is a beautiful example of how God honored the faith and satisfaction that is deceptive and fleeting. The patriarch Joseph had a royal position in Egypt for many years and...
remained a godly man, serving God in total commitment. The same could be said of the prophet Daniel, who enjoyed royal privileges in Babylon.

**Reflection.** Moses was well aware of the reproach he would suffer. He did not jump quickly to leave the royal court but carefully reflected on what it would cost him before making his life-changing decision. He was willing to suffer “reproach” (v. 26)—to be derided, laughed at, and persecuted for his choice.

Scripture puts Moses’ decision into a Christian context: “esteeming [considering] the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” (v. 26). The word Christ is the same as Messiah and means “Anointed One.” Some believe the phrase means Moses experienced the same type of rejection and persecution as Christ, but such was not the case. Others believe it means Christ was with Israel and Moses during their suffering and that He suffered along with them (cf. Isa. 63:9).

Still others believe the phrase refers to the reproach Moses bore because of his relationship to the promised Messiah and, by faith, anticipated it would come.

What we do know is that God revealed much to Moses about a coming prophet who would later be identified as Jesus Christ. (See Deuteronomy 18:15–19 and John 5:46.) Thus he probably knew more about Christ than Abraham before him (Jn. 8:56). It is not unreasonable to believe that Moses, being a deliverer of God’s people, suffered the same type of rejection and reproach from his people as would Jesus, the coming Messiah.

Moses considered what he had in the Messiah (Christ) to be “greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” (Heb. 11:26). Wrote Bible expositor Homer Kent: “The wealth and opulence of the Eighteenth Dynasty is well known from the remains of tombs and temples. The fabulous treasures discovered in the tomb of Tutankhamen, a later pharaoh in this dynasty, speak eloquently of the luxuries available to royalty in Egypt.” Moses gave up great wealth for the greater wealth he had in Christ.

**Reward.** Moses knew he would be rewarded for his faith, and “he looked to the reward” (v. 26). He did not look for earthly wealth and opulence but, rather, for spiritual wealth that was eternal and would be granted in the life to come.

**His Public Faith**

Moses exhibited persevering faith: “By faith he forsook [abandoned] Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king” (v. 27). Moses left Egypt twice: when he fled to Midian and when he led Israel out of Egypt. Many commentators believe Hebrews 11:27 refers to Moses fleeing Midian because the word he seems to fit that occasion better. But the verse states that Moses left not fearing the king’s wrath. When Moses fled to Midian, he did so in fear, not in faith (Ex. 2:14–15).

In the Exodus, Moses “forsook” or permanently departed from Egypt, totally renouncing it. This was not the case in going to Midian. So it seems best to interpret the passage as referring to when Moses left in the Exodus.

Moses departed Egypt strong in faith because “he endured [held fast and persevered] as seeing Him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27). With no means to defend Israel against Pharaoh, Moses persevered, keeping his eyes fixed on the invisible God who enabled him to stand boldly against the exceedingly great power of Pharaoh, who was determined to destroy him and keep the Israelites in slavery.

Moses exhibited faith by instituting the Passover: “By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them” (v. 28). In obedience to God’s command, Moses instructed each Israelite household to kill a lamb and apply some of its blood to the lintels and doorposts of their houses to protect them from physical death. For God was to pass through Egypt, killing the firstborn of man and beast in each house not protected by the blood (Ex. 11:4; 12:12–13, 23, 27, 29). Moses’ faith in God’s provision of blood protection was great indeed because neither he nor Israel nor the world had ever seen such deliverance.

Moses exhibited faith in God’s protection: “By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned” (Heb. 11:29).

The Red Sea crossing is recorded in Exodus 14. Pharaoh pursued Israel hoping to recapture his slaves. The Israelites, struck with terror, were trapped by the sea in front and Pharaoh’s army at the rear. Frightened and angry, they blamed Moses for their predicament. In a step of great faith, Moses declared, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD. . . . For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace” (Ex. 14:13–14).

As the children of Israel walked into the sea, the waters parted; and they walked on dry land with the water walked up on both sides. The Egyptians tried to follow and drowned in the sea (vv. 27–28). God had promised to protect and deliver Israel, but both Moses and Israel had to step out in faith.

Moses stands as a giant when it comes to faith, character, and resolve to serve the Lord. The lessons we can learn from his faith should strengthen our faith as well.

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**ENDNOTES**


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*David M. Levy is the director of International Ministries for The Friends of Israel.*
The key Old Testament word for God’s mercy is *hesed*. Scholars have translated it frequently as “mercy” or “lovingkindness.” *Hesed* appears 245 times within 27 books of the Old Testament, indicating that mercy or lovingkindness (for brevity, I will usually refer to it as mercy) is a significant attribute of God.

### The Relationship of God’s Love to His Mercy

The Bible reveals that God’s love prompts His mercy. God said the following concerning Israel: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you” (Jer. 31:3). The word translated “lovingkindness” is *hesed*.

God’s mighty deliverance of the Israelites from their prolonged slavery in Egypt was an example of His mercy. Moses told them God’s love for them prompted His mercy on their behalf. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (Dt. 7:7–8). Consequently, Old Testament scholar Gerhard Wallis wrote, “The deeds Yahweh does in behalf of his people are to be explained out of his love for them.”

Deuteronomy 7:7–8 indicates that God’s love for the people of Israel was not the only reason for His mercy toward them: He was committed to keeping the oath He had sworn to their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Exodus 32:13 sheds light on that divine oath:

*Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, “I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.”*

In that statement Moses referred to the promises that constituted the Abrahamic Covenant that God established forever and exclusively with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the people of Israel. The following passages also record these promises:

**Genesis 15:5.** God told Abraham, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” Then He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

**Genesis 15:18.** “On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates.’”

**Genesis 17:7–8.** “And I will establish My covenant between Me and you [Abraham] and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

**Genesis 17:19–21.** After Abraham fathered a son named Ishmael, God declared the following: “Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year.”

**Genesis 28:13–14.** Years later God promised Jacob, one of Isaac’s sons, “I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your
people of Israel involves His commitment to keep His covenant with them, and because He established that covenant forever, He will never allow Israel to be annihilated. There will always be Jewish people to experience His mercy or lovingkindness.

God has promised that, despite Israel’s sins, it will never be destroyed.

In Deuteronomy 4:30–31, Moses told the Israelites,

*When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the L ORD your God and obey His voice (for the L ORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.*

In Jeremiah 30:11 God said, “‘I am with you,’ says the L ORD, ‘to save you; though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished.’”

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

### Three Principles Involved in Mercy

Old Testament scholar H. J. Zobel presented three aspects or principles involved in mercy or lovingkindness:

1. It *involves action that is prompted by an attitude. It is an act that protects or improves life; that alleviates suffering, calamity, loss, disappointment, and sorrow.*

2. *It always involves interpersonal relationships.*

3. *It must endure and be reliable throughout time for the sake of a tolerable interpersonal relationship.*

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

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**Endnotes**


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

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**Israeli doctors save Arab baby**

Israeli doctors recently saved the life of 7-month-old Odai al-Kafarna of the Gaza Strip by repairing a hole in his heart. His grandmother, who brought him to the Israeli hospital, said the Israeli doctors “have been really good to Odai here.” Upon Odai’s return to Gaza following nearly three weeks of treatment in Israel, his family reportedly expressed deep gratitude toward the Israeli doctors who had operated on and cared for Odai free of charge.

Odai’s life-saving surgery was made possible by the Israeli non-profit organization Save a Child’s Heart, which is a group of Israeli doctors who regularly operate on poor children around the world. Save a Child’s Heart has provided medical care for more than 2,600 children from Africa, the Middle East, Europe, South America, and the Far East.

Israel itself issues permits to more than 10,000 Palestinians from the Gaza Strip every year to enable them to seek medical attention at Israeli hospitals. (www.israeltoday.co.il)

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**‘From whom?’ asks Barkat**

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat said recently that splitting Jerusalem as part of a future peace agreement with the Palestinian Authority will not work. He said he is committed to improving the situation for all residents of Jerusalem—Jews, Christians, and Arabs alike.

Barkat called UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon’s criticism of Israel for its plans to build in Jerusalem’s Jewish Gilo neighborhood a “double standard”: “Anywhere in the world, would you dare to say that Jews or non-Jews or blacks or people of a certain faith are not allowed to build somewhere? The reality is that in the last week we’ve discussed, and will be approving, 1,400 units for Arab residents; but they don’t report that. The media only report Jewish building. Even international law cannot discriminate between Jews and non-Jews.”

He sharply contradicted the assertion that Jerusalem is “occupied territory”: “This is not occupied territory. From whom? From the Jordanians? From the British? From the Turks? Anywhere you put a shovel in the ground you find Jewish roots in Jerusalem.” (Israelnationalnews.com)

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**Terrorists use Google Earth**

Terrorists in Gaza have a new tool helping them to fire on innocent civilians living in southern Israel: the popular satellite mapping program, Google Earth. “The technology is always improving,” a terrorist calling himself Abu Saif told a journalist. “Our struggle started with the Kalashnikov, and then it moved to the suicide bomb, then the locally made rocket, and now the Grad rocket.”

Gaza’s rocket-launching crews use Google Earth to aim their weapons, Abu Saif said. The program is seen as superior to maps because it is more up-to-date and precisely locates targets. Terrorists are believed to have used a laser-guided missile in a recent attack on a school bus that murdered Israeli teenager Daniel Vific. (Israelnationalnews.com)

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**Wrong turn yields beating**

A 27-year-old Israeli man was savagely beaten and nearly killed after taking a wrong turn into an Arab neighborhood in northern Jerusalem recently. Nir Nachshon, a moving company employee, was trying to reach the Jewish town of Ma’aleh Adumim on Jerusalem’s eastern outskirts when his GPS device mistakenly directed him into the Arab neighborhood of Issawiya.

Local residents who were out on the streets immediately began pelting Nachshon’s vehicle with stones after identifying him as Jewish. Nachshon was then pulled from his van and brutally beaten about the head before being rescued by one of the village leaders.

Israeli commentators say the younger generation of Arabs has been so radicalized by a Palestinian school system full of anti-Jewish incitement that they will try to kill any Jew on sight. (www.israeltoday.co.il)

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**Israeli cities tops for tourists**

Travel & Leisure magazine has ranked Jerusalem and Tel Aviv as two of the top five cities to visit in Africa and the Middle East in 2011. The best travel destinations in order were Cape Town, South Africa; Jerusalem; Tel Aviv; Cairo, Egypt; and Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Last year the magazine ranked Jerusalem the number one destination in the region, while Tel Aviv was still at number three. (www.israeltoday.co.il)
The world is becoming increasingly dangerous for people who place their faith in Jesus Christ. Figures cited recently by human rights representative Massimo Introvigne show that 105,000 Christians are killed each year solely because of their faith. That translates into one Christian every five minutes.

“The number is shocking,” wrote Michael Carl in a June 19 article in World Net Daily (WND). Introvigne, an Italian attorney and representative for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, cited the figures from an article written by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity (CSGC). CSGC researcher Bert Hickman affirmed them: “Those figures are accurate... We report that... over the last 10 years, on average 100,000 Christians have been killed every year.”

Hickman said the number “doesn’t count Christians who are killed incidentally because of other causes, so that does work out to be about one every five minutes,” reported the WND article.

The article also said Jonathan Racho of International Christian Concern was not surprised by the figures because anti-Christian violence is on the rise. WND quoted Racho as saying, “So far, the main persecution of Christians is in Muslim countries. The primary number of Christians persecuted and killed are those living in Islamic countries.”

Racho said there also is widespread persecution of Christians living in communist countries like China, North Korea, and Eritrea.

Hickman said his sources “are missionaries, human rights activists and aid workers,” the article said.

Christians are also widely persecuted by the Hindus in India. Worthy Christian News reported in July, “Several Gospel for Asia missionaries are encountering intense opposition, but persecution is not uncommon in this part of the world: entire families have been forced to leave their homes and villages because of the cause of Christ.”

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? And that same gift can increase your income and reduce future tax payments.

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A gift annuity has benefits both lifelong and eternal, allowing you to maximize the impact of your financial stewardship. For 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.
Anyone who remembers our War for Independence in 1948 knows about Latrun. It is an area in Israel located on a hilltop on the road from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in the Ayalon Valley where Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still (Josh. 10:12). It is also where some of the fiercest battles against the Arabs have taken place. I know firsthand because I fought there. Many Israeli soldiers died at Latrun, and today it is still a dangerous place.

Many years ago I met several believers who had come from a church in Latrun to visit our church in Jerusalem. When they realized that I am the Zvi about whom Elwood McQuaid wrote in his book *Zvi: The Miraculous Story About Triumph Over the Holocaust*, they invited me to their church to give my testimony. So I went. Most of the people there spoke German or Arabic. Since I speak those languages, I did not need a translator.

I never heard anything more from them until recently, when I received a long, friendly letter. They wanted me to return. However, for Israelis, Latrun is an extremely dangerous place. So I wrote back, “If you want me, you can come to me in Jerusalem.” Some came, most of them Arabs who are not friendly to Israel.

“Please answer me this,” one asked. “Do you hate Arabs?”

“Those who try to kill me I will not go to with roses,” I replied. “I have to defend myself.”

“How can it be,” he asked, “that you who believe in Christ hate your neighbors?” Now they became not so nice.

I told them, “I have lived in Israel 63 years. We have never attacked our Arab neighbors but have done all that is possible to do to make peace. I am one who passed through the seven halls of hell in the long years of the Holocaust of World War II. Are you now telling me that I shall again become like a lamb going to the slaughter, as in the Holocaust? Is this what you are waiting for? You want me to let people kill me?

“Even God Himself is against such a thing. And I will tell you why I say this. When I came to Israel in 1948, we were a mere half-million people. You Arabs came against us like the mighty locusts. And you used a German saying we knew well: ‘Butcher the Jews and cast them into the sea.’ This was the Nazi motto, and the Arabs use it to this very day.

“And now you come to me and ask me such a question? We defend ourselves against you! And you can see who has been on our side”:

“If it had not been the LORD who was on our side,” let Israel now say — “If it had not been the LORD who was on
our side, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive, when their wrath was kindled against us” (Ps. 124:1–3).

Then I asked, “Do you believe all that is written in the Holy Bible? You have a Bible before you. So read!” I showed them many facts from God’s Word, including Isaiah 41:8–11:

But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen. . . . You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Behold, all those who were incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced; they shall be as nothing, and those who strive with you shall perish.

The man replied, “This is the first time we have seen this.”

“You remind me of the ultra-Orthodox Jews,” I replied. “They only read what the rabbis tell them to read. What I have shown you is written in the Bible. You have seen it with your own eyes. I did not write it. It was written by the Holy Spirit of God.”

After a long discussion, one of the men asked if I had a Bible in his language, Arabic. I gladly gave one to him.

For many years I would not go to the Arabs to share the gospel of Christ. But in time, God gave me courage. Today it gives me great joy to bring them the good news of salvation through our Jewish Savior. As it is written in Psalm 126:5, “Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

Now we are beginning to see our work produce good fruit. So I put my trust in the Lord and speak to people who are not so nice in the beginning and often try to make trouble for us, like the Arabs of Latrun. But every now and then I meet Arabs who truly want to know the truth. And I am most happy to tell it to them.

Thank God for Israel

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• Keepers of the Scriptures
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