EXCLUSIVE:
Attorney Craig L. Parshall examines America's shedding of Jesus—Page 14

Israel's true tikvah—Page 12

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A Christian's view from the Temple Mount—Page 8
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Christ: The Hope of Nations
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America’s Founding Fathers placed their hope for this nation on the truth of Christianity. But as important as the American historical record is, something else is even more important.

Tidings of Comfort and Joy
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At this Christmas season, do you have joy? True joy comes from something you might not associate with it. But once found, it lasts forever.

Strength for the Journey
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Jesus is, indeed, knowable. And He can bring us through the toughest times, give us peace like a river, and be an anchor for our souls—as this article demonstrates.

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About the Issue
Christianity is rooted in biblical Judaism, and this issue magnifies the dynamic relationship that binds root and branches together. It begins in Isaiah 53, which illuminates the primacy of the Messiah’s redemptive ministry that flows into the pages of the New Testament. Consequently, the church and its ministry, message, and challenges are the essence of what true Christians live and breathe today. Out of these transforming realities come the tidings of comfort and joy that we celebrate as the song of the Christmas season. All of these are distilled in the personal, heart-moving, and real-life testimonials of individual believers who have found strength in the midst of extreme trials. Thus we have the full scope of what the Messiah came to deliver to us all. It’s all here. Enjoy! (Cover: Digital composition and enhancement, Thomas E. Williams)

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In our September/October issue, we inadvertently failed to credit Jeff Titcomb and Getty Images for the photo of the scales and gavel that ran on page 20.

To contact us, call 856-853-5590 or 800-257-7843. There’s never been a better time to visit foi.org.
When Halina entered the room, we immediately realized we were in the presence of someone special. Now 89 years old, Halina has logged 45 years of service with The Friends of Israel and many more years as a choice servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

During World War II, she fought in the Polish underground. Later she experienced hardship as a prisoner of war under the Germans and oppression as a Polish citizen under the Communists. Yet her life has also been characterized by an extraordinary love for the Jewish people.

Known formerly to Israel My Glory readers as Sister Alice or Mrs. Alice due to security concerns under Communism, Halina recently shared with our board of trustees the thrilling accounts of how God established and blessed The Friends of Israel’s ministry in Poland in the face of great adversity. We had traveled to Poland to experience the outreach firsthand and to encourage our workers on this strategic field.

We stayed in downtown Warsaw, in sight of the towering, notorious structure that was once the Russian administrative headquarters for dispensing Soviet oppression to the Polish people. Today this building serves as a cultural and science center in the midst of the capital’s booming economy. The fall of Communism less than two decades ago has led to a new day of vibrant ministry and growth for The Friends of Israel throughout Poland and Eastern Europe.

Our hearts were stirred as we met with our entire Polish team at the farm outside Warsaw. Here, not far from the road that leads to Moscow, our workers recounted God’s faithfulness and rejoiced in today’s unprecedented opportunities. We also saw the children’s summer camping ministry in action. Children from Russia, the Ukraine, and other former Soviet-bloc countries joyfully sang familiar Christian tunes in their native tongues. They recited Bible verses with enthusiasm and answered questions with truths they had learned from the Word of God. The farm also serves as an important conference center for adults from these same countries, who come for Holidays in the Bible, studies in God’s Word, and opportunities to learn of the treasures of His grace in Jesus Christ.

The joy we shared with our workers at the farm contrasted sharply with the darkness we experienced the day we journeyed to Auschwitz. Few sites are more chilling reminders of the Holocaust than this one—the largest of the Nazi extermination camps. We stopped first at Auschwitz I, the administrative headquarters for the mass murder of the largest number of European Jews. We toured its stark brick structures that warehoused up to 20,000 inmates. Daily, they were force-marched under the disingenuous German sign ARBEIT MACHT FREI (“work will make you free”) to jobs in construction and farm labor.

Some held here were non-Jewish political prisoners, but the Jews were the ones treated with the severest inhumanity. We saw the standing cells where prisoners, four at a time, were forced to spend their nights in areas so small that they could do nothing but stand. Other cells were designated for starvation, where prisoners were denied food and water until they died. Outside, at the execution wall, thousands were shot to death. Then our somber group continued for less than two miles to Auschwitz II, also known as Birkenau, the main killing center designed to carry out Hitler’s “final solution.” Jewish people from throughout Europe, along with other prisoners of war, were stuffed into cattle cars on trains and sent to Birkenau. We walked through the notorious “death gate” and stood on the railroad tracks where German SS officers made their infamous selections: Most of the women and children and those who looked “unfit” (the majority) were sent to the left, while most of the young men and others judged “fit” were sent to the right. The left meant certain death in the gas chambers followed by cremation in the ovens, and the right meant hard labor and housing under the most inhumane conditions imaginable. Of the 405,000 recorded laborers between 1940 and 1945, about 340,000—84 percent—were starved or beaten to death or died via execution or sickness.

We were gripped by the huge 425-acre expanse of Birkenau. Forty-five buildings still remain of the more than 300 originally constructed. Some 1.1 million people, mainly Jews, were murdered there, largely by gassing.

The inhumanity and depravity of what we witnessed at Auschwitz renewed our commitment to mankind’s real hope: the grace of God in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Our board members and staff leaders left Poland more determined than ever to combat anti-Semitism and more grateful than ever for the privilege of witnessing the Lord’s ministry through our Polish workers who are impacting Eastern Europe for the glory of God.

William E. Sutter is executive director of The Friends of Israel.
A recent report out of the Middle East could provide a formula for how not to run a war.

Following the cease-fire that interrupted the battle between Hezbollah and Israeli forces in Lebanon in 2006, terrorist leaders trumpeted their “great victory.” From Hezbollah’s point of view, the battle was a stunning defeat for Israel and a harbinger of the ultimate elimination of the Jewish state.

However, we have now heard another view that, if correct, changes everything and demonstrates that things aren’t always what they seem.

On July 31 The Jerusalem Post ran a story titled “Hizbollah [sic] officer: We would’ve given up.” He said his men would have surrendered if the war had lasted 10 more days.

In an interview aired on Israel’s Channel 10, the officer said, “The cease-fire acted as a life jacket for the organization [Hezbollah].” He said the terrorists were running perilously low on food, ammunition, and supplies, so much so that had the conflict continued for only 10 more days, Hezbollah would have been forced to run up the white flag. Then Hezbollah would be busy today licking its wounds rather than threatening to launch a new war on behalf of its Iranian and Syrian benefactors.

Since the 2006 war, Israel’s political leaders have attempted to convince the country that the standoff actually had been a victory for the Israel Defense Forces.

Whatever the facts, a few lessons emerge that are much needed in these turbulent days of attack and defend.

(1) It is folly to attempt to direct a war from a statehouse with an eye on the polls and prospects for reelection.

This action gave naysayers a chance to accelerate their cries for President Lincoln’s political scalp by calling for a negotiated, stalemate peace. Mr. Lincoln, however, possessed the character to risk his career for the greater good of the country. Some 150 years later, we remember and revere Abraham Lincoln. There are no statues in Washington commemorating the achievements of his detractors.

(2) It is also folly to believe every negative report you hear. Radical Arab elements, whatever the facts, never admit defeat but alchemize every military trouncing into a sterling victory.

Consider the Six-Day War of 1967. While Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser’s forces were being pummeled by the Israelis, Nasser sent messages to Jordan’s King Hussein claiming to be winning big. If Hussein wanted to wear a garland when victory was declared, Nasser told him, he would have to get into the fight. Hussein believed the lie and lost the West Bank and Jerusalem.

After Egyptian and Syrian forces scored initial gains in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, they were handed a devastating, humiliating thrashing by the Israelis. Nevertheless, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and the Egyptian army celebrated annually the military action that would better have been forgotten. While commemorating the eighth anniversary of Egypt’s “achievements” in the war, Sadat was gunned down as he sat in a reviewing stand.

In short, wars are better left to the military. We must never allow the enemy to outfox our leaders by convincing timorous elements that they have more tough than bluff.

by Elwood McQuaid
Checking Up on the ‘Big Split’

We were recently taken by a headline that appeared in The Jewish Week. It read, “Evangelical Split Over Israel Batters Bush.” The crux of the article rested on the premise that evangelical Christianity is divided over Israel, as evidenced by “dueling letters” recently sent to President Bush. Wrote Larry Cohler-Esses:

The two groups’ dueling letters to the president, each critical of Israeli policies from respective viewpoints, marked a new, more complex phase in evangelical Christianity’s political stand towards Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, observers and partisans from all sides agreed. The Jewish Week article echoed the same strain flowing in the American secular media that for years has attempted to create a schism in the Christian-Zionist movement supporting Israel’s rights in the battle against terrorism.

The fact is that these letters show that nothing of any material consequence has changed. There are still millions of pro-Israel evangelicals in North America. Allow me to explain.

Those who question the feasibility of Israel and a future Palestinian state living side by side in peace have consistently believed the idea is unworkable and will only fortify radical Islam’s determination to eradicate the Jewish state. Israel’s sacrifice of substance, in the form of land, for meaningless Palestinian promises written on worthless pieces of paper has confirmed the objections to negotiating with parties that have no intention of truly making peace. The validity of this position can readily be seen in the new, Islamicized Bethlehem and in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip.

The only acceptable solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict will come when Palestinian and Arab radicals are convinced they will never succeed in their quest to drive Israel into the sea. When Israel’s leaders and Western allies demonstrate the fortitude to say no to more dangerous concessions and yes to survival through strength and unity, then perhaps negotiations based on realistic goals can begin.

A first step toward creating acceptable negotiating conditions must be to stop the shooting. In late August, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the armed wing of Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas’s Fatah Party, renounced its so-called truce with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and attacked IDF soldiers near Ramallah. The same day, Israel suffered rocket attacks on its communities near the Gaza Strip and destroyed tunnels that Hamas terrorists were using to smuggle fighters and weapons into Gaza. To say the least, this is no way to establish conditions conducive to a peace initiative.

With regard to the contentious, verbal sorties of those who have made themselves spokespersons for evangelical Christianity—on either side of the controversy—we say the following with confidence: Pro-Israel, Zionist Christians are not more divided today than they have been all along.

For the most part, the 30-plus signatories to the letter endorsing the president’s two-state plan can hardly be viewed as stalwart, pro-Israel advocates. Many are heartily pro-Palestinian, while others entertain the Replacement Theology fiction that the church has become the true Israel of God and that God’s promise of land rights to the Jewish people is null and void. It is therefore not surprising that their document assigns equal culpability for Mideast violence to both Israel and Palestinian terrorists.

“Both Israelis and Palestinians,” their letter states, “have legitimate rights stretching back for millennia to the lands of Israel/Palestine. Both Israelis and Palestinians have committed violence and injustice against each other.”

In actuality, these self-anointed “evangelical leaders” are positioned where they have always been. Conversely, pro-Zionist, evangelical proclamations for a Jewish state with clear and secure boundaries are also nothing new.

While we’re at it, we must also say that Israel’s Christian friends cannot appoint themselves to dictate national policy for sovereign countries. Biblical Zionism is not fundamentally a political action. Israel’s leaders and citizens must decide what terms Israel can accept. Evangelical leaders can pray, comfort, and speak their piece; but when push comes to shove, America’s individual evangelicals will do what they’ve always done: take their convictions to the polling booths and vote.

Perhaps all of this commotion only confirms the axiom “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” And, we might add, they stay the same despite political and left-leaning media powerbrokers who try to manipulate a change.
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The writer was the ancient Jewish historian Flavius Josephus who recorded not only the splendor of the magnificent Herodian Temple but also the Roman destruction of it in A.D. 70. Josephus' accuracy is literally set in stone in the massive Arch of Titus in Rome. A scene on the arch depicts legionnaires returning triumphantly from Judea carrying spoils from the Jewish Temple. Included in the booty are the gold menorah, the table of showbread, and the silver trumpets associated with the feast of Rosh Hashanah.

These historical realities irrefutably authenticate the biblical and extrabiblical sources that speak of the Jewish Temples located on Mount Moriah in the Holy City, beginning with Solomon's house of worship built nearly 3,000 years ago. After being ravaged by the Babylonians in 586 B.C., the Temple was rebuilt in 515 B.C. by the Jewish exiles whom Persian King Cyrus permitted to return from Babylon. Later it was greatly embellished by Herod the Great under the Romans and endured as the center of Jewish worship until it was destroyed in A.D. 70.

It wasn't until 692 that the fledgling Muslim crusaders under Caliph Abd al-Malik built the Dome of the Rock on the site of the Jewish Temples. In 715 the al-Aqsa mosque was added to the complex. These are the facts regarding the small piece of land that has become the most controversial acreage on the planet.

**Stuff and Nonsense**

Of recent vintage is the outrageous Islamic revisionist nonsense being peddled by some Muslim "intellectuals" who claim the site has nothing to do with Jews or Judaism, but is wholly Muslim, and that the al-Aqsa mosque possibly dates back to Adam and the creation of the world.

In an article in the Israeli daily Haaretz, Nadav Shragai reported the following: 

*Increasing numbers of Muslim academics and religious leaders claim it [al-Aqsa] existed even before Jesus*
and Moses and that Islam preceded Judaism in Jerusalem. . . . An Islamic legal pronouncement (fatwa) on the Jerusalem Waqf (Muslim religious trust) Web site says King Solomon and King Herod did not build the Temple at all, but merely refurbished an existing structure that had been there from the days of Adam. Today, many Muslims call the Temple “the greatest fraud crime in history.”

In an interview with WorldNetDaily (WND), Waqf official and chief Palestinian Justice Tayser Tamimi claimed no Jewish Temples ever existed on the Temple Mount.

“About these so-called two Temples,” Tamimi told WND, “they never existed. . . . Israel started since 1967 making archaeological digs to show Jewish signs to prove the relationship between Judaism and the city and they found nothing. There is no Jewish connection to Israel before the Jews invaded in the 1880s.”

WND reported that, when asked about the Western Wall, “Tamimi said the structure was a tying post for Muhammad’s horse and that it is part of the al-Aqsa mosque, even though the Wall predates the mosque by more than 1,000 years.”

And so it goes. From creating outright fabrications to conducting illegal digs that destroy artifacts from the Temples, Islam is determined to use any means available to obliterate evidence of the historical Jewish presence on the Mount or, for that matter, in Jerusalem’s Old City.

Occupied Territory

With these facts in mind, it is clear that the Temple Mount is what we might call occupied territory—a term reserved exclusively these days to describe land Israel holds to ensure its survival.

When it comes to the wishful thinking of some beguiled Western leaders and left-leaning Israelis who believe Jerusalem will become a shared entity in a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli dilemma, one need but look at the present state of affairs at the Temple Mount. Islam is an exclusivist religion with a special measure of animosity reserved for Jews who believe they have a right to a Jewish state in their homeland or a claim to their legitimate, religious roots in the Middle East. And that fact will not change by planting a Palestinian flag on land excised from a truncated State of Israel.

Turn the clock back to Jordan’s dreadful, 19-year occupation of the Jewish sector of the Old City after 1948. With a no-Jews-allowed policy in force, the Arabs deliberately and maliciously destroyed synagogues and turned the street in front of the Western Wall into a dung heap. That condition did not change until Israel liberated the area during the Six-Day War in 1967. And now Israel’s adversaries are suing, with international assistance, to reverse the outcome of that war.

However, any objective evaluation of the situation confirms Israel’s biblical, historical, moral, and legal right to its land and full and free access to the Temple Mount.

Why Should This Matter to Christians?

Why should this matter indeed? It matters because truth is essential for survival. Free people cannot preserve their freedom if they ignore the reality that big lies—even preposterous ones—if told with force, frequency, and determination can eventually win the day. Such lies must be challenged.

Then there is the matter of perception. An example is the rewriting of World War II history. Throughout much of the Arab world, the demented dogma of Holocaust denial stokes the popular anti-Semitic refrain, “All Jews are pathological liars.”

Distortions and lies muddle the mind. And the rising ideology of “who knows what’s right or wrong?” allows people to believe whatever they consider relevant and makes chaos a future certainty.

Finally, there is the issue of motivation. Why do Muslims concoct deliberate, nefarious lies?

Because two elements motivate Islam’s drive to create for itself an exclusive and perpetual right of ownership to the Temple Mount and surrounding acreage: the desire to (1) control the land and (2) dominate the world’s religions. Islam is following the same pattern as when it expelled Jewish people from territories it considered Islamic. Little matter that prior ownership and occupancy predate Islam’s birth by millennia. Destroying all Jewish associations with the area is vital to Islam’s exclusive occupation of the Mount.

In addition, Islam wants to establish religious dominance over Judaism and Christianity, both of which are rooted in the Temple Mount and the historical records of the Bible—Old and New Testaments. Were there no Jewish Temples on Moriah, it follows that the biblical records of events and worship there would be riddled with mythology and false claims; and the credibility of both religions would be destroyed. Judaism and Christianity would be gigantic frauds “exposed” by Islam.

Christianity’s Sacred Ties to the Temple

The New Testament is replete with accounts of Jesus’ pilgrimages to the Temple in Jerusalem during the nation’s festive celebrations. As recorded in the Gospels, Jesus attended at least three Passovers, the Feast of Tabernacles, the “unknown feast” (probably Rosh Hashanah), and the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah). It was on those sacred occasions that He made some of the greatest declarations concerning His person and mission on behalf of mankind.

It was around Passover, in a conversation with the Pharisee Nicodemus, that Jesus said,

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For
God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (Jn. 3:16–17). At the Temple in John 5, we find these words:

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life (v. 24).

At Tabernacles, He declared, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM (7:37–38; 8:12, 58).

Especially appropriate for this season of the year, when Jewish friends light Hanukkah candles to commemorate the Temple’s deliverance from the infamous Antiochus Epiphanes and Christians celebrate Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, are His words spoken at the Temple during the feast of Hanukkah:

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand (10: 27–29).

Surpassingly appropriate in this declaration, which fuses events from the archives of the Chosen People, the Temple, and the nation, is the fusion of thought for both Jews and Christians. For the Jewish people there is the profound reality that, try as they might, the forces bent on the destruction of Judaism and Israel will never succeed. God raised up deliverers and preserved the nation when all seemed to be lost. And to this day, the lights of that deliverance still burn brightly throughout the world, testifying to the faithfulness of Israel’s God.

For Christians, the imagery is unmistakable. Just as Israel was secure in Jehovah’s grasp, so believers are forever safe in the Savior’s hand. No force on Earth or beyond will ever be able to snatch them away.

For this reason, we can stand together on the Temple Mount and give thanks to God that events there can never be erased by the fallacious claims of those who try to destroy the truth and the liberty it assures.

ENDNOTES

1 Josephus, The Wars of the Jews 5:5.6.
4 For more on this subject, see The Outpouring by Elwood McQuaid (Belfamwr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc., 1990).
Jim Jacobson, president of Christian Freedom International (CFI), said recently, “Christians in this nation don’t realize how fortunate they are to live in the U.S.” In a CFI press release, Jacobson said American Christians “belong to an international fellowship of believers” and “have an obligation to care for their brethren around the world.”

Jacobson said the government could play a greater part in publicizing the issue of persecution; but it is negligent because of political (and, we might add, economic) considerations. “Which means,” he said, “that it is up to Americans, all Americans who believe in freedom of conscience and faith [to speak up on the problem of the overt suffering of Christians]. . . . It is ironic that in an age when many people once thought religion was on the wane, persecution has become a bigger issue than ever.” And as persecution rises abroad, he said, “We must make our voices in protest even more loudly known.”

Jacobson made a valid point and raised a question that must be addressed by every evangelical Christian: Can American Christians be counted on to aid suffering brethren the world over?

Unfortunately, at this juncture all that can be said is that they are doing very little. Perhaps their inertia is due to indifference, a lack of information, or a preoccupation with more personal concerns. Or perhaps much of the blame for America’s current silence can be laid at the feet of Christian leaders who do not make the plight of suffering saints a priority or even mention it to their constituents.

The facts are clear, and the information is readily available. Consider the recent South Korean Christian aid workers who were taken hostage by the Taliban in Afghanistan and members of their group assassinated. Where was the swell of outrage that one would expect? CFI reported that attacks in Turkey continue “on Christians and churches.” Earlier this year, Turkish Muslim extremists gruesomely dismembered alive three Christians who were working on a translation of the Bible.

Attacks on Christians in India have accelerated. In Kazakhstan, Jacobson said, Christians were evicted from their homes for conducting a prayer meeting, and a Baptist minister was arrested in Azerbaijan while conducting services.

CFI said Pakistan “is preparing to execute a Christian falsely accused of blaspheming Islam and the prophet Mohammed.” China, which the United States is vesting with economic predominance, continues to close down Protestant house-churches. “Vietnam recently arrested and tortured Montagnard Christians. In Indonesia scores of Christians have been arrested for blasphemy,” CFI said. In July in Laos, at least 13 Christians were killed by soldiers, police, and others, while some 200 have been imprisoned after being falsely charged with ties to separatist rebels.

Far worse, Jacobson said, “is the plight of Christians in Iraq.” They are routinely murdered and kidnapped and Christian churches destroyed. “Hundreds of thousands of Christians have fled,” said the press release.

These figures barely begin to chronicle the plight of believers abroad. The vicious, current wave of anti-Christian militancy runs deeper than can be explained in human terms. At its base is a clearly satanic element identifying the biblically predicted conditions that earmark the end-times.

If help for the persecuted church is to come from American Christians, more of us must stand up and be counted. For more information, visit Christian Freedom International at ChristianFreedom.org.
Where was he? It was many years ago, before the cell-phone era. I had scheduled an appointment for lunch with a friend and had arrived at the restaurant. After scanning the area and seeing no sign of him, I took a booth and waited.

Soon our meeting time had come and gone. Frequently I would stand up and survey the area, hoping to see him. Twenty minutes passed. Why didn’t he show up? Was he okay? Then I thought, Patience. Give him time. He’ll be here. He always keeps his word. He always shows up. Maybe he’s stuck in traffic or something. I’ll just wait and watch for him. Soon 30 minutes had passed. I was convinced he was a no-show. He said he would come, and he didn’t. I was there; he was not. Disappointed, I got up to leave.

Today many Jewish people know the disappointment of a no-show. Their meeting was set up by God Himself to bring Israel and the Messiah together. According to the Jewish Scriptures, this meeting will usher in a wonderful era of peace and prosperity. It will bring a divine Kingdom on the earth. It is of such importance, in fact, that it is often referred to as Israel’s hope.

From the time of Moses (the Law) and later through the prophets, God revealed the details of this appointment. He gave its location and time and described the One the Jewish people were to meet: He would be greater than Moses and would rescue Israel in its time of great need. So clear was the description that many rabbis called this person the King Messiah. To meet him, God’s people needed to watch and wait constantly.

This they did, especially when times were the most difficult. They looked for him during the agonizing years of the Roman occupation of their land in the first century A.D. They looked for him as the hoofbeats of the Crusaders’ horses thund-er through their villages in the 11th through 13th centuries and the Jewish people became victims of terror and death. They looked for him while they were being massacred in the pogroms of Eastern Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries. They looked for him when Adolph Hitler murdered 6 million of them during World War II in his quest for a Jew-less world. And they looked for him in 1948, as five Arab nations attacked the newborn State of Israel with the intent of sweeping the Jewish nation into the Mediterranean Sea.

With each subsequent war, they looked, waited, and hoped. Today they still wait, while a proliferation of voices scream ever louder for the eradication of the Jewish people and the disembowelment of the Jewish state.

Yet the Jewish people have good reason for such hope—for such tikvah, in Hebrew. The One for whom they wait is depicted clearly in the Jewish Scriptures, which describe Him so people will recognize Him when they see Him.

So Where Is He?

Why hasn’t He come? Has God forgotten His promise? Has the hope of Israel turned to despair? Should the Jewish people simply give up and move on?

That is what I was about to do in that restaurant. Yet a funny thing happened. As I stood up to leave, directly behind me, at the same time, my friend also stood up. Without knowing it, we had been sitting back to back. He was watching the restaurant’s front entrance for me, as I watched the rear entrance for him. We were there together all the time. We just did not know it.

For Bible-believing Christians, Christmas is a wonderful time to be with family and friends and to celebrate the birth of the One who came 2,000 years ago, just as God promised He would. For Jewish people, Christmas is the day to take in a first-
HOW TO IDENTIFY HIM

GENESIS 49:10—His Authority
The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people. This portion of the Torah (Five Books of Moses) describes a person arriving at a precise time. Traditional Jewish scholarship considers the passage Messianic. According to The Jewish Study Bible, this verse “has traditionally been viewed as a messianic prophecy in both the Jewish and Christian traditions.” Shiloh, the key word in the verse, is often not even translated because of the difficulty in doing so. Yet that same word is translated “Until He comes whose right it is” in Ezekiel 21:27. The Targums (Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible) say the word Shiloh refers to a “King Messiah.” Thus the man of authority from Judah is King Messiah.

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

This Torah portion describes a person who would come after Moses, who would be like Moses. Thus he would be a Jewish prophet. And, like Moses, he would communicate the very words of God to God’s people. It would be incumbent upon them to listen to him.

ISAIAH 7:14—His Birth
Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

A virgin having a baby is certainly unique and hard to believe. In fact, such a thing would be a miracle. Yet it is no easier for an 89-year-old woman long past the change of life (“Sarah had passed the age of childbearing,” Gen. 18:11) to have a child with a 99-year-old man. God’s announcement that Sarah would have a child with Abraham a son caused her to laugh in disbelief. Yet Isaac (Hebrew for “laughter”) was born, his very name a testament to the miracle.

If that miracle happened—and Jewish people believe it did—what would prevent another, similar miracle? Is Almighty God not capable of doing the impossible? And the precedent for a supernatural birth was already in place. While working on the Septuagint (200–300 B.C. Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures), Jewish scholars chose the Greek word parthenos to translate the Hebrew word almah. Parthenos unmistakably means “virgin.” Thus every Jewish person who read the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible understood the child in Isaiah 7:14 would be born of a virgin.

Who was this child whose name would be Immanuel, meaning “God with us”? Traditional Jewish thinking consistently says that he is King Messiah. The Babylonian Talmud states, “R[abbi] Huni in the name of R[abbi] Ide and R[abbi] Joshua said, that this man is the King Messiah of whom it is said, Psa. 2:7, ‘This day have I begotten thee.’”

MICAH 5:2—His Birthplace
But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose going forth are from of old, from everlasting.

The prophet Micah foretold that Messiah would be born in southern Bethlehem (Ephrathah). There were two Bethlehems, one in the north and one in the south. Targum Jonathan states, “Out of thee Bethlehem shall MESSIAH go forth before me, to exercise dominion over Israel.”

ISAIAH 9:6—His Name
For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

This prophecy tells of the unique nature of the baby to be born. These names characterize his nature. Wrote Dr. Michael L. Brown, As the brilliant Hebrew and Rabbinic scholar Franz Delitzsch noted, even Samuel David Luzzatto, one of the greatest of the Italian rabbis, rightly observed that “you do not expect to find attributes of God here, but such as would be characteristic of the child.” This agrees with statements in the Talmudic and midrashic writings, along with the comments of Abraham Ibn Ezra, all of which state that the names refer to the child.

The Midrash on Ezekiel 48:35 asks, “What is the name of KING MESSIAH? R[abbi] Abba, son of Kohana said ‘JEHOVAH,’ for it is written, This is the name whereby HE shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Clearly the boy (King Messiah) that is born will possess the name God and bring peace.

Despite these scholarly commentaries, it is interesting that the 1917 Jewish Publication Society translation of the Holy Scriptures takes Isaiah 9:6 and merely transliterates the Hebrew, with the English footnoted at the bottom of the page. This suggests an uneasiness with the text, perhaps because the reference to King Messiah is too obvious.

END NOTES
3 Ibid., chart 10.
4 Ibid., chart 10.
6 Beshore, chart 14.

—SH

run movie and take out Chinese food. There is no cause to celebrate. Yet in the future, the hope of Israel will be realized when Messiah returns in great power and authority. Then “they will look on Me [Jesus] whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son” (Zech. 12:10). Then they will finally realize, just as my friend and I did, that they were simply looking in the wrong direction. And He was there all the time.

As you celebrate the birth of your Savior—the King Messiah and Hope of Israel—take a moment to pray for your Jewish relatives and friends. Ask the Lord to help them realize their Hope, too, has been there all the time.

Steve Herzig is the director of North American Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
For believers in Jesus Christ, it is an unwavering given that our one, only, and true hope lies in our Savior. Everything else is shifting sand. For me, the book of Colossians sums up this truth magnificently, reminding us that God has made known to us a great mystery, namely, “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

Though each day’s dismal headlines cast a long shadow over what often seems to be our hopeless culture, the individual hope we have in Christ burns ever brightly and ever surely. He is our personal Hope, the “anchor” of our souls (Heb. 6:19).

But what about the world or, for that matter, our nation? Can we say that the only true hope for America lies in Jesus Christ? When the radical advocates of the “separation of church and state” hear such talk, they immediately bellow that Christians are trying to turn our democracy into a theocracy like Iran’s. That notion, of course, is absurd. Our Founders placed their hope for America on the truth of Christianity. But, as important as the American historical record is, it is not enough. We must go to something much more foundational.

Here are the questions, then: What is America’s hope? And where do we find it?

One National Tree, Three Branches

In the book of Nehemiah we read a dramatic account of what happened when Israel’s political leader (Nehemiah) and religious leader (Ezra) helped usher in national repentance and revival.
Nehemiah 9:33–34 makes the distinction between God’s faithfulness and justice on the one hand and Israel’s collective disobedience on the other:

However You are just in all that has befallen us; for You have dealt faithfully, but we have done wickedly. Neither our kings nor our princes, our priests nor our fathers, have kept Your law.

There is an important logic to the three groupings: First come the kings and princes (our political system); second, the priests (our religious system, such as the church); and last, the fathers (our families).

Here, then, are the three areas we must evaluate in diagnosing the cause of America’s moribund spiritual health and in prescribing a cure.

**Heretical Theology in Religion**

Since a fateful U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1947, which unjustifiably erected a wall of separation between church and state, our legal philosophy in church/state cases has slid downhill. (See “America’s Historical Amnesia,” page 16.) But its downfall is not America’s sole problem. It has merely been the framework for the bedevilment of America’s soul. The real corruption has been among the “priests” of religion who teach and preach false notions of God and His Word, as in Nehemiah’s day.

Although the so-called quest for the historical Jesus in the late 1800s was accompanied by a liberal view of the authority of Scripture, it was in the 20th century that this poisonous fruit finally blossomed.

To see how quickly this downward slide has taken place, let’s look at two popular, mainstream publications on the subject of Christianity. The first is a special issue of *Life* magazine, published on Christmas, December 25, 1964. It dealt exclusively with the Bible. Although it was a secular, general-market publication, it still evidenced a genuine sense of reverence for the principles of Christianity and the Bible:

To Christians, God’s most sensational intervention in history was the life and death of Jesus, which made the divine pattern partly manifest . . . the Story of the Bible that ends with John’s vision of Jesus’ second coming has continued for 1,900 years without a second coming. Instead it has given believers a hope that sustains them in this life on earth, where the harvest of human accomplishment in history surpasses all that went before. The hope is not dead and the harvest not fully gathered yet.¹

Now look at the position taken about 42 years later, also near Christmas, in a December 18, 2006, cover story in *U.S. News & World Report*. The outside cover reads, “In Search of the Real Jesus—New research questions whether he was more teacher than savior.” This article gives huge play to the “Gnostic gospels” written hundreds of years after the deaths of the reliable, first-century witnesses to the actual Jesus of Nazareth. The Gnostic writings were not widely regarded until the mid-20th century. The Gnostic view eliminates the historicity of Christ’s death as the sacrifice for all sin and creates a heretical view of Him as a philosophical, spiritual force bereft of any redemptive role.

Yet the Gnostic heresy is given an upper hand in the conclusion of the article, which is supposed to be devoted to a discussion of the person of Christ:

The Gnostic perspective is unlikely to wither even under such forceful attacks . . . . The Gnostic claim that the truth lies within an argument so deep and old—and indeed so fundamental to who we think we are—that it is hardly surprising that it finds expression in our contemporary culture wars. And unlikely that it will cease doing so in the culture wars to come.²

Such popular treatments of Jesus as a persona in confusion rather than as a Savior in reliable history merely reflect the degeneration of Bible scholarship regarding the New Testament. Radical, liberal religious thinkers who are part of the Jesus Seminars have concluded—based on biased presumptions and low respect for the Bible text itself—that only 16 percent of the events in the Gospels involving Jesus probably happened and are worthy of our confidence.³ It is no wonder then, that the person of Christ tends to become blurred and indistinct to the modern mind: a fuzzy, speculative, moral teacher—but not a Savior, not Lord, and certainly not the Son of God.

**Hapless, Helpless Families**

The Bible is clear that the family has the primary responsibility to transmit faith from generation to generation. By God’s design, the family is to be a moral and spiritual greenhouse where eternal values and principles are grown. Then, when children can understand, hopefully they will adopt these principles personally and make thoughtful, individual decisions of faith in Jesus Christ.

This process is laid out masterfully in Scripture, particularly in Deuteronomy 11:19–21, where parents (fathers, in particular) are commanded to honor God’s precepts and share them with their children:

You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land.

Where are we as spiritual role models for our children? Christian pollster George Barna has made some sobering conclusions. Deriving his results from American adults who identify themselves as born-again Christians, here is what he found:

Less than half use the Bible as a source of life principles and standards.

Only 2 people out of 10 (20 percent) rely on the values and views taught to them by their parents.

A scant 20 percent say that religious ideas or teachings shape their moral decisions.⁴

Judging by this data, Christian families in America are in deep trouble. We cannot expect our children to understand Christ as the ultimate source of all hope if our lives do not consistently proclaim this truth.

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¹ Is it not strange that believers are now told not to believe what they have believed for 1,900 years?

² Why would anyone believe a book written hundreds of years after the deaths of the reliable witnesses to the actual Jesus of Nazareth could provide answers to so many questions that the Bible cannot?

³ But a book written hundreds of years after the deaths of the reliable witnesses to the actual Jesus of Nazareth can provide so many answers that the Bible cannot?

⁴ How is it possible to arrive at such conclusions when most of the adults who are surveyed do not even use the Bible as a source of life principles and standards?
**Heaven-Sent Revival**

It is no accident that the Great Awakening—that evangelical revival that swept through the American colonies in the early 1700s—preceded America’s miraculous independence from England, the world’s most formidable economic and military empire at the time. The revival instructed the hearts and souls of families and leaders concerning God’s understanding of liberty and man’s individual responsibility toward Him.

Afterward our Constitution was drafted with a tripartite system of checks and balances bred from the understanding of men like James Madison who believed, as the Bible teaches, that mankind is infected by an inherent sin nature; thus our institutions must be built on that presupposition.

The ideas of religious freedom contained in the First Amendment were not supposed to guard the government from the influence of Christianity, but precisely the converse: Belief in Christ was deemed so precious a liberty that government was forbidden to regulate, prohibit, or interfere with it.

This year we celebrate the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, Virginia. In these last 400 years, we have witnessed both the steady decline in the legal right to participate in public acknowledgments of God and an alarming rise in heretical ideas about Christ and the Bible. And Christian families are, at least statistically speaking, failing to live out the truth of the gospel fully and effectively before their children.

What is America’s hope? It is and always will be the Lordship of Jesus over the lives of its citizens. Where Jesus is Lord, our institutions will improve; truth rather than heresy will flourish; and families will grow strong. We need spiritual revival.

And that revival must begin with you and me. Psalm 96:2–3 commands us, “Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.”

With such good news and such a great Savior, let’s not wait another hour. Let us give our lives wholly and abundantly, while it is still day, to exemplify the revolutionary truth that Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, before whom every nation, kindred, and tongue shall ultimately bow.

**ENDNOTES**


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**AMERICA’S HISTORICAL AMNESIA**

From 1776 until 1947, there was little argument that Christianity was the primary worldview that shaped America’s values and national vision. Not all Americans were Christians, of course. But the truths and first principles of Christianity were America’s first principles. And they found their way into our laws, public policy, and public discourse.

Our Founders and national leaders consistently invoked the Almighty as the guiding Source of America’s blessings and the chief Cornerstone of our liberty and moral righteousness.

Over the years I have argued numerous cases of religious liberty in courtrooms around the nation. Frequently, particularly in appellate cases involving the so-called separation of church and state, I have cited the wealth of historical data about the religious practices of our Founding Fathers. Thomas Jefferson, for example, authorized prayer at the graduation ceremonies at the University of Virginia, the college he founded. President James Madison issued proclamations for prayer and acknowledgement of God’s sovereignty over America. President John Adams, a primary moving force for American freedom and a signer and coauthor of the Declaration of Independence, looked back to the War of Independence in a letter to Thomas Jefferson dated June 28, 1813, and wondered at that “army of fine young Fellows” who spilled their blood and risked their lives to birth a nation. What did they have in common?

According to Adams, they all shared the general principles “of Christianity, in which all those Sects were united.”

Unfortunately, 134 years after Adams penned his letter, the U.S. Supreme Court latched onto another letter, this one from then President Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptist Association. Jefferson’s letter used the phrase separation of church and state merely to suggest that the church had nothing to fear from the designs of the state. Jefferson in no way suggested that government rid itself of Christian influence.

Nevertheless, in its 1947 decision in the case of Everson v. Board of Education, the majority of the court, led by Chief Justice Hugo Black, wrenched the “separation of church and state” concept from Jefferson’s letter and pasted it, so to speak, into the First Amendment religion clauses. Try as they might and criticize it as they have, our courts (including several Supreme Court justices) have been unable to rid our legal landscape of the “wall of separation” erected by that single Supreme Court decision. As a result, legal groups like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) have championed case after case in an effort to strip all acknowledgments of Christianity from our public spaces.

—CLP

**ENDNOTE**

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Scrooge was not happy. “At the first sound of ‘God bless you, merry gentleman! May nothing you dismay!’ Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action that the singer fled in terror.” So wrote Charles Dickens in his classic book *A Christmas Carol*. The line he quoted came from “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen,” first sung in England around 1827:

> God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay.
> Remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day;
> To save us all from Satan’s power when we were gone astray.
> O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
> O tidings of comfort and joy.

In the Dickens novel it took the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future for mean, miserly Ebenezer Scrooge to find the comfort and joy of the season. Scripture teaches that life is filled with trouble, causing some people year-round to display a Scrooge-like disposition (Job 5:7; 14:1). So where is the comfort? Where is the joy?

True tidings of comfort and joy are found in the person of Jesus Christ. He alone remains the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33).

**Jesus Christ, Our Yesterday**

Jesus’ death on behalf of sinful humanity is a cardinal doctrine of biblical Christianity. It is the entire reason why He came to Earth: “When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law” (Gal. 4:4–5). His purpose in coming was to save sinners: “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins” (Mt. 1:21). The name Jesus is a precious name, and no other is sufficient for eternal salvation (Acts 4:12).

Hard to imagine that our comfort and joy begin with His suffering. But they do. King David foretold the Savior’s death in Psalm 22:

> My God, My God, why have You forsaken me? All those who see Me ridicule Me. I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax;
> it has melted within Me. They pierced My hands and My feet.
> ... They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots (vv. 1, 7, 14, 16–18).

He carried His heavy wooden cross through the narrow streets of Jerusalem. He allowed men to pound iron nails through His wrists and feet as He suffered the physical agony and
I S R A E L   M Y   G L O R Y

over the many rocks and stones in our paths, turning them into stepping-stones to strengthen our faith (Ps. 91:11–12).

“For You are with me” (23:4). He did not leave His sheep shepherdless. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus promised to send the Comforter (Jn. 16:7, 13). The Holy Spirit dwells in all believers to guide and lead us. Along with providing eternal salvation, Jesus also gave us the means to live life more abundantly (10:10).

As the Great Shepherd, He rules by His “rod” and supports by His “staff.” This means that God controls all our afflictions and, at the same time, upholds us by His grace. Comfort and joy come in knowing that Christ is always near. He conquers the fears that come in our “todays”:

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 (Isa. 41:10).

Many Christians do not experience the joy of Christ today because they are stuck between the regrets of yesterday and the fears of tomorrow. Naturally, there will be times when the pathway will be difficult to see. Yet the Lord is on His throne. When God’s plans are not easily understood, hold on to His promises and trust Him:

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him (Ps. 28:7).

Jesus Christ, Our Today

A famous orator once was asked to recite Psalm 23, which begins, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.” When he finished, the audience clapped with excitement. Then an old minister was asked to recite the same psalm. He was clumsy and not very polished in his delivery, and his grammar was a bit off. Yet when he finished, there wasn’t a dry eye in the room. People asked themselves, What made the difference? It was the elegant orator who responded: “I know the psalm, but he knows the Shepherd.”

The joy and comfort that Christ provided yesterday is the same today. Perhaps the most famous line of Psalm 23 is verse 4: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” In this life there is much suffering and sorrow, disease and death. It is the shadowy valley that God’s children often have to walk through. But Christ, the Great Shepherd, is ever present to give us His peace in this dark and gloomy world. Because “the LORD is my shepherd,” we can trust Him to uphold us during trials. His protective presence is there to guide us over the many rocks and stones in our paths, turning them into stepping-stones to strengthen our faith (Ps. 91:11–12).

“Their humiliation described as the most wretched of deaths. Why was He willing? Because His death was the crowning act of God’s manifested love: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16).

The comfort and joy of the season come from intimately knowing the Christ who came “yesterday.” Christ crucified and resurrected is the greatest theme of the universe, and it accomplished the greatest purpose: the salvation of souls. “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3–4). In a hymn titled “Jesus, My Hope,” 19th-century evangelist Dr. M. L. Rossvaly wrote the following:

The Jewish rites are all fulfilled.
The sacrifice we see.
Our hope alone on Him we build,
Obtained from Calvary’s tree
For you as well as me
Through Christ, salvation’s free.

Jesus Christ, Our Forever

Jesus Christ is the same forever. He preexisted in eternity; and when the time was right, He became incarnate: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14). The name Immanuel literally means “God
EDITOR’S NOTE: Seven hundred years before Jesus was born, God led the Jewish prophet Isaiah to describe Him so clearly that the people of Israel—and the world—would recognize the Messiah. The incontrovertible accuracy of Isaiah 53 stands as one of the purest proofs that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. We are delighted, at this Christmas season, to run part one of an article by Israeli Pastor Meno Kalisher on this all-important chapter of the Hebrew Scriptures.

From the writing of Isaiah 53 in the 8th century B.C. until the 11th century A.D., all Jewish commentators believed this portion of Scripture spoke of the Messiah of Israel.

The first to object to this view and thus suffer severe criticism from other commentators of his time was Rabbi Solomon Ben Isaac (also called Shlomo Yitzhaki), known as Rashi (A.D. 1040–1105). Rashi argued that Isaiah 53 describes the people of Israel as suffering for the sins of the Gentile nations. Only in the last century have rabbis emphasized this interpretation and rejected the belief that Isaiah 53 speaks of the Messiah.

Unfortunately, Rashi based his interpretation on the assumption that “this [Servant] is not the Messiah since that is how the Christians interpret it.” It is a great shame to ignore the clarity of God’s Word for such a poor reason.

From Isaiah 52:13 to the end of chapter 53, God describes the character, ministry, and identity of the Servant of the Lord. (See also Isaiah 42:1–9; 49:1–13; 50:4–11.)

He is different here from other servants of the Lord described in Isaiah, such as the people of Israel and King Cyrus of Persia. This Servant offers His life as an atoning sacrifice to provide forgiveness of sins, both for the people of Israel and humanity in general. These verses describe the goal of God’s Word and speak of the salvation of human beings and the restoration of their holy and eternal relationship with God.

Our hope is that people will understand the Lord according to what is written in His Word so that they can receive the salvation of God that comes only through the Messiah.

The Servant’s Exalted Position

In Isaiah 52:13–15 (see text, page 21) God is clearly the speaker, and He describes the works and attributes of His Servant.

This Servant of the Lord would be exalted above all because He would deal prudently and perform the Lord’s will completely.

Jeremiah the prophet used the same Hebrew word, hiskil, to describe the King Messiah, the righteous Branch who would come from the house of David to reign over Judah and Israel and bring peace to our region (Jer. 23:5–6).
He is equal in status to the Lord, surpassing all human standing. All human eyes will look to Him (Isa. 45:23; Jer. 23:5; Phil. 2:9; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men;

ISAIAH 52:13–15
13 Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and exalted and be very high.
14 Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men;
15 So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider.

ISAIAH 53
1 Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.
3 He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
4 Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.
5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.
6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.
8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.
9 And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.
10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.
11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.
12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Throughout the book, Isaiah spoke of the punishment the Lord will bring on the proud. Every time a sinful mortal coveted such an exalted position, he was punished and humiliated (2:12; 10:33; 13:11; 14:11; 16:6; 23:9; 57:7). The prophet emphasized, in fact, that only God is worthy to be exalted and exalted. In chapter 6 it was the Lord who sat on a throne, high and lifted up; the same is true in 57:15.

Yet the Servant of the Lord is described as high and lifted up, righteous and prudent. Therefore, He is equal in status to the Lord, surpassing all human standing. All human eyes will look to Him (Isa. 45:23; Jer. 23:5; Phil. 2:9; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). Just as many were astonished at His marred, repulsive, and uncomely appearance, so will they be astonished when they see Him in His glory, exalted above all.

In 52:15, the prophet described a work of the Servant of the Lord that emphasizes His deity. The verb *sprinkle* describes the action of the priests when they purified the people of Israel or the Temple vessels (Ex. 29:21; Lev. 4:6; 8:11; 14:7; 16:14–15; Heb. 9:13). The priests, however, purified only Israel, whereas this Servant will purify “many nations.”

When kings will understand and recognize His identity, they will be speechless and understand their mistake (v. 15). The same One they despised and disregarded will be revealed as the only One who can purify them before God.

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**THE REDEEMER'S ADVENTS**

**FIRST ADVENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prophecies of His First Coming</th>
<th>His Arrival As a Human Being</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jewish prophet like Moses: I will raise up for them a Prophet like you [Moses] from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth (Dt. 18:18).</td>
<td>Born to Mary, wife of Joseph, both from the tribe of Judah: Joseph . . . went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary. And she brought forth her firstborn Son. Then the angel said to them [shepherds], “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ [Messiah] the Lord” (Lk. 2:4–5, 7, 10–11).</td>
<td>He would be on Earth in A.D. 32: From the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem [445 B.C.] until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks [49 biblical years, to 396 B.C.] and sixty-two weeks [434 biblical years, to A.D. 32]. . . And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself (Dan. 9:25–26).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin-born male: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given (Isa. 7:14; 9:6).</td>
<td>Deity, born in Bethlehem: But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting (Mic. 5:2).</td>
<td>During the biblical practice of the Mosaic Law: But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law (Gal. 4:4–5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deity, born in Bethlehem: But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting (Mic. 5:2).</td>
<td>Named Jesus (Yeshua, Hebrew for “salvation” or “God saves”): You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins (Mt.1:21).</td>
<td>God became man: Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me” (Heb. 10:5).</td>
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**Explanation:** Down through history the nation of Israel has strongly embraced the concept of a promised Redeemer as understood through the Hebrew Scriptures. Many Jewish scholars have seen Messianic passages but struggled to understand how one person could both suffer and die and then reign and rule. So some assumed there must be two Messiahs: Messiah Ben Joseph (a suffering Messiah Ben David (a reigning and ruling Messiah). This chart presents both advents of the one and only Messiah who came to become the final sacrifice for sin (Isaiah 53) and who will come a second time as King of kings. (Panels: 1, Kathy Morris; 2–6, FOI Archives; 2 and 5, composition and digital enhancement, Thomas E. Williams)
## Second Advent

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Prophecies of His Second Coming</th>
<th>His Arrival As Divine Judge and King</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
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</table>

### All nations will obey Him:
The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people (Gen. 49:10).

### He will rule:
And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him (Isa. 9:6; 40:10).

### He will fight Israel’s enemies:
When the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:3–4).

But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? (Mal. 3:2).

### His coming will be visible and spectacular:
For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be (Mt. 24:27).

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. . . . On His head were many crowns. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:11–12, 16).

### At end of Tribulation:
Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Mt. 24:30).

### Exact time unknown:
But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect (Mt. 24:36–37, 42, 44).
The Story of Scott and Janet Willis

High school sweethearts Scott and Janet Willis married at the age of 20. Within a few years they had three children. When Scott was 27 he trusted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. Janet had trusted Christ in high school but grew little in her faith until she, too, was 27. Three years after trusting Christ, Scott was in Bible college training to be a pastor.

When Janet was 34, the unexpected happened. She had another baby. Not wanting their new boy to be raised alone, the Willises looked to God for another child. Over the next 13 years, He gave them five more. They now had three grown children and six young ones.

The Willises and their “B Team,” as Scott affectionately called them, grew into an intimate household filled with laughter, music, sports, and family activities. Janet educated their children at home, while Scott pastored the Parkwood Baptist Church in Chicago. The Word of God was central in the
Willis family. Scott tried to read the entire Bible every year. Janet had Bible time with the children as part of their curriculum. Together with members of their congregation, Scott and Janet memorized Psalm 34. With the Lord as their guide, the Willises took the long view of life, measured not in days or years, but in eternity.

By helping Scott and Janet to build their lives on the rock (Mt. 7:24–25), God had prepared them for the storm that was about to strike.

On the clear, autumn morning of November 8, 1994, the Willises packed their six young children into their mini-van to visit one of their elder sons in Wisconsin. Joseph, 11; Sam, 9; Hank, 7; and Elizabeth, 3, were in the back. Ben, 13, and baby Peter, 6 weeks, were in the middle seats. Scott drove. As before all their trips, the Willises buckled their seat belts and prayed together. Once on the road, Scott mentioned to Janet how a friend of his had recently died of a heart attack and how quickly—in just a moment—a woman’s life had changed from wife to widow.

The family passed the time singing. Scott stopped to fill the gas tank and suggested that everyone get some rest. The four in the back quickly drifted off. Peter was already asleep, and Janet reclined her seat and closed her eyes. Ben, the romantic who often envisioned himself as a knight in King Arthur’s court, chose to read.

A few minutes later Scott saw the car in front of him swerve. A 90-pound mud-flap bracket that had broken off an 18-wheeler lay in the road. Making a split-second decision, Scott drove over the debris rather than risk rolling the van. The metal smashed into the vehicle, embedding itself in the gas tank. Immediately a fireball exploded through the rear floorboard and engulfed them. Flames shot up around Scott’s face and between the front bucket seats as he struggled to keep the vehicle under control.

“Get out of the car!” he yelled. He and Janet plunged their hands into the flames, released their seat belts, and fell out of the van. Ben, whose clothes had been mostly burned off, also unbuckled, then followed his mother out the door.

Someone who had stopped to help cried out to Ben who was still aflame, “Stop! Drop! Roll!” The five youngest children, still strapped in, struggled briefly but then succumbed to the flames and smoke.

Janet looked back at the inferno and began to scream, “No, no!”

Scott clutched his wife. “Janet, they’re with the Lord. It was quick. God has prepared us for this.” She knew he was right. All the years of Sunday school, all the times of sitting under the preaching of God’s Word, and all the wonderful moments of Christian fellowship had had their cumulative effect. The Lord, in His grace, had used all these godly influences and more to prepare the Willises for such a time as this.

Scott said recently, 13 years after the tragedy, “We don’t know what we’re going to need ahead of time.” But God does. And His grace is always sufficient.

As the paramedics arrived, Scott and Janet were able to spend a few minutes with their son, Ben, alongside the road. Ben had severe burns over 90 percent of his body. Scott had burns on his face and hands; and Janet, on her hands.

As Janet was taken to the ambulance, the Holy Spirit reminded Scott of the Scripture that had meant so much to them. From 30 feet away, he called out to his wife, “Psalm 34!” Scott told me, “In the midst of all of this, the one thing I needed to do was to praise God.”

Janet prayed, “God, there’s no way I can handle this. I give it all to you.” More so out of obedience to God than emotional readiness, Janet began to recite Psalm 34 aloud in the ambulance: “I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” At first she said it softly. Then, as her voice grew louder and stronger—“I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth”—she felt God strengthen her.

Shortly afterward, Scott watched his son Ben being flown away in a medical helicopter. Later that night the Willises, learned that Ben had died and, like his siblings, had passed into the very real presence of Jesus.

In a brief moment, Scott and Janet’s “B Team” was gone.

In the days following the accident, the Willises’ story made national television. Local newspapers covered it for weeks, often admiring Scott and Janet for their strong faith. But the Willises make it plain that they are no supersaints.

“We realized [like Job] it was possible to praise God without an explanation. God has a reason for these things. We can maintain an attitude of thankfulness. Find encouragement from friends. And look for ways to minister to others. It helped the Willises to share what God had done for them and to pray for those in need. Janet also wrote a children’s book titled A Dad’s Delight, a true story about their son Hank. (See www.adadsdelight.org.)

Scott and Janet, now 60, are grateful for their many blessings. They have three adult children and 26 grandchildren. They believe God is still working in their lives, and they know He has taught them many beneficial lessons. Scott shared, “We realized [like Job] it was possible to praise God without an explanation. God has a reason for these things. We can leave it there and trust Him.”
John and Bev Leonard will spend Christmas in Brazil this year. And though that may not seem like much to some people, it is actually a miracle.

John Leonard was only a toddler in 1962 when his parents left Ankeny, Iowa, and moved to Brazil, South America, as missionaries. John grew up in Brazil, learning Portuguese and acquiring a love for the people. In 1990 he returned with his own family to minister in the capital city of Maceió in Alagoas, the poorest state in the nation.

In only 15 years, God used John to plant five churches, one in a nearby fishing village and four in the city, where illiteracy, drugs, alcohol, prostitution, Satanism, and gang warfare were rampant.

But not everybody appreciated the Leonards' ministry.

On Sunday evening, July 3, 2005, John preached a message from James 1:19–21 at the fishing-village church. As John stood at the church door greeting departing congregants, two Brazilian, hired assassins approached from outside. While one gunman stood guard, the other pulled out a .38 caliber semiautomatic pistol and began firing at John. The congregants scattered in terror. One bullet passed through John's upper left arm, shattering the bone. Three more went into his face, tearing out teeth and
parts of his right jaw. John fell forward. The gunman stood over him and, at point-blank range, fired two more shots into the back of his neck, destroying the fourth and fifth vertebrae. Then the assailants fled in a stolen car.

John was taken to the hospital an hour away; given nine units of blood; and placed in a hot, stuffy room with eight other patients. Finally, while in a coma, John was flown to the United States. He was not expected to live. But three months later, following numerous reconstructive surgeries, John was released from the hospital.

Today, at 47, he is paralyzed from his underarms down. He has some movement of his hands and arms, but no feeling or grip. He maneuvers about in a mechanized wheelchair. John’s wife, Bev, and their four children lovingly take care of his every need.

Yet John is certain God has a reason for all that has happened. “Someday I’ll know,” he said recently, without bitterness. He believes his injury has brought him closer to the Lord. “He’s always there, but feeling God’s presence, knowing that He’s there, speaking with Him more, and having closer communion with Him since my injury, I would say that I’ve grown a lot closer. . . I do wake up in pain at night, and I don’t always like to wake Bev up. So I pray. And I would say that one of the main benefits of this injury for me personally is my prayer life.”

Seeing her husband suffer is not easy for Bev. Yet she endures through memorized Scripture. “It was those verses in the hours of my despair that came back to me and had real, true meaning,” she said.

What would John say to other Christians who are suffering trials? “Bear it. There is a reason behind it. How we go through it is the amount of impact that it will make on others.”

The two gunmen were never brought to justice. Nevertheless, affirming Matthew 5:44, John wrote an article about his experience and had it published in a major Brazilian newspaper. In it he expressed forgiveness for the two men. “In order to make any headway at all, I had to come to the point of forgiving these men. That was, I would say, the hardest thing I ever did in all my life. But for God to use me, I had to forgive them.”

In June, John and Bev Leonard returned to Brazil and are serving the Lord in the city of São Paulo—a vivid testimony to the comforting truth that with God, nothing is impossible.

Bruce Scott is staffing coordinator for The Friends of Israel.
Pulling the Plug on Christian TV in Israel?

by Craig L. Parshall

When Israelis turn on their televisions, they can choose from a sophisticated array of programming: educational, live political debate, ESPN and FOX sports, the History Channel, home shopping, and much more. But if one Israeli cable company has its way, Christian broadcasting may no longer be among the options.

HOT Cools on Gospel Programming

The HOT Cable Network, which in 2006 permitted Daystar Television Network to air on Channel 98 upon customer request, wants to end Christian programming because of concerns about its religious content. HOT reaches about 1 million homes. Daystar also can be seen in Israel on the YES satellite system, which has about 635,000 viewers, and on the Hotbird 6 Satellite that taps into another 185,000 homes.1

Ironically, in examining the issue, I’ve concluded that one of the best arguments for Christian television in Israel comes from the rabbinical opposition to it.

There is no denying Israel’s Judaic background, both in its historic biblical origins and in the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Judaism shapes the vast majority of Israeli culture and life. But where Israel falls on the secular vs. sacred scale, at least in terms of its national identity, is not easy to determine.

In the weeks following the HOT cable announcement, more than 150 Israelis commented on The Jerusalem Post’s talkback blog. Those against Christian broadcasting all voiced a similar thought: Israel is not a civil, secular state like America. It is a religious state with a single, unified religious foundation: Judaism, and differing or competing religious worldviews have no mandatory “right” to be heard.

On the other hand, there is an increasingly strong push for full democratization of Israeli life. In their 1999 book Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel, Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, both academics, argued that “fundamentalist” Judaism (loosely defined as “Orthodox” and “nationalistic”) is incompatible with Israel’s

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It happened against all odds. Sixty years ago this month, on November 29, 1947, in a building left over from the 1939–1940 New York World’s Fair in Flushing Meadows, Queens, the fledgling United Nations did something Jewish people had been dreaming of, praying for, and dying for since 586 B.C. In a vote of 33 for, 13 against, and 10 abstentions, the ancient ancestral homeland of Abraham, David, and Jesus was partitioned. UN Resolution 181 divided Palestine, which had been governed by the British since 1917, into two entities: one Jewish, one Arab.

In a plan to solve the problems between the Jewish people and the Arabs, the UN attempted to create two homelands from a piece of real estate roughly the size of the State of New Jersey. To Islam it was a slap in the face, an atrocity of the highest proportion that would ultimately be rejected and intensify terrorism against Jews in the region. To the Jewish people, it was a hope. Governing themselves in their ancient land was something they had longed to do for centuries.

Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Union’s representative to the UN, speaks in favor of dividing British-ruled Palestine into independent Arab and Jewish states. The Jewish people accepted the UN plan. The Arabs did not and attacked Israel in 1948, intending to destroy it. Their intentions have not changed in 60 years (Bettmann/CORBIS).

There had been many attempts to enable the Jewish people to live “officially” again in the land God promised them in His Word. Theodor Herzl and the World Zionist Organization, the Balfour Declaration, the League of Nations, and numerous congresses and Zionist meetings had proposed creating a homeland for the Jewish people on the land where they had once been the main settled population for more than 1,600 years. But nothing happened until November 29, 1947.

Radio waves and print media carried the details of that historic event around the world for all to grasp. To all who properly understood God’s Word, it was memorable. It was biblical prophecy being fulfilled in their lifetime, right before their eyes. To the Jewish people, it was a beginning, a step that would lead to the creation of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948.

As we mark the 60th anniversary of that historic UN resolution, we urge our fellow believers in Christ to pray for our Jewish friends and especially “for the peace of Jerusalem: May they prosper who love you” (Ps. 122:6).

by Thomas C. Simcox, Northeastern States director for The Friends of Israel.
A critical question believers must ask themselves today is, “What is the nature, purpose, and function of the church?” To reach the unsaved, must the church conform to the world’s concept of relevancy? The answer, of course, is that it must conform to God’s concept of relevancy.

God intends the church to be different in nature from the world system, which means He never intended it to pander to the unsaved or to use a market-driven philosophy to attract unbelievers. Unfortunately, many churches today are falling away from God’s ideal. Yet He has revealed in His Word what He intends the church’s nature, purpose, and function to be.

Clean, Pure (Eph. 5:25–26). The word translated “cleanse” means “make clean, cleanse, purify.” In the Old Testament, the word most closely related in concept to the word for “holiness” was the word for “purity.” To the people of the Near East in Bible times, purify meant to “make free from impurity or evil.” Purity played a “highly important role in worship,” and purification included “avoidance of everything repugnant to the deity.” Ephesians 5:25–26 indicates that to be clean of the world’s defilement, or to be pure, the church must avoid whatever would offend God and His holy nature.

Glorious (v. 27). The word glory in the Bible refers to what is impressive or influential concerning a person or thing. “In relation to God it
Purpose and Function

Ephesians 5:27 indicates that the church’s primary purpose is to glorify God and Christ. This involves such things as (1) doing God’s work the way He wants it done, (2) displaying God’s wisdom, and (3) doing good works for the saved and unsaved (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:9–11). It was, after all, God’s wisdom that provided a way to remove the enmity that existed between people (such as Jews and Gentiles) and thereby bring them together as equals in one body with mutual respect, harmony, love, and concern (Rom. 15:5–9; Eph. 2:11–19; 3:4–6, 9–10).

Biblically, the function of the church involves at least the following items:

**Worship** (originally “worthship”). Worship is to be God- and Christ-centered, not man- or self-centered. It consists of telling God and Christ how worthy and deserving they are to receive honor, reverence, homage, adoration, praise, commitment, obedience, and service. The means of worship involves studying and teaching God’s Word, willingly accepting and obeying His Word, testifying, praying, giving financially to God’s work, being baptized, partaking of communion, and expressing worth through music.

**Evangelism.** Evangelism declares to the unsaved the gospel defined in 1 Corinthians 15:1–8. (See also Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8.) It is true some churches that use the world’s market-driven philosophy of conforming the church to unsaved people’s concepts of relevancy do become huge. But that approach prompts some significant questions: How many people in those churches are truly saved? What is the spiritual depth and biblical knowledge of those who are saved? Have the natures of those churches been corrupted or defiled, contrary to the holy nature God intended for the church?

We should keep in mind that what appears to be great success is no guarantee that right methods were used. God told Moses to speak to the rock to obtain water. Instead, Moses struck the rock. God gave the right result. He provided the water. But there was a consequence. Because Moses used the wrong method, God judged him by preventing him from entering the Promised Land (Num. 20:7–12).

The market-driven approach is not the way God intends the church to grow. His ordained method for numerical growth is through evangelism. Each local church should develop and consistently carry out an aggressive program of evangelism.

**Training, Equipping the Saints** (Eph. 4:11–21).

Equipping the saints to do God’s ministry involves several factors.

1. Helping believers discern how they have been gifted for ministry and training them to use their gifts effectively. Every believer has received at least one spiritual gift (ability to minister, 1 Pet. 4:10; 1 Cor. 12).

2. Systematically teaching the saints all the doctrines and books of the Bible (Acts 2:42; 6:4; 20:27; 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:16–17). This solemn responsibility should be the priority of pulpit and Sunday school ministers, including those for children and youth. Tragically, many churches purposely avoid teaching doctrine and the books of the Bible because they consider them controversial. Instead, they emphasize making people feel good about themselves. And, ironically, some people think that children and youth, who are amazingly capable of understanding complicated computer programs, are not capable of understanding the doctrinal teachings of the Bible.


4. Fellowshiping (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 8:4; Eph. 3:9; Phil. 1:3; 1 Jn. 1:3, 7).

5. Praying (Acts 2:42; 4:31; 12:5; Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2–3; 1 Th. 5:17, 25; 2 Th. 1:11; 3:1; 1 Tim. 2:8; Jas. 5:14–16).


**Footnotes**


6. Ibid., 831.

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Recommissioning of Jonah

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.” So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent (3:1–3).

The Lord commanded Jonah, “Arise, go” (v. 2). The prophet was now ready to serve. He immediately “arose and went to Nineveh” (v. 3). His journey from Israel to Nineveh was approximately 500 miles and would take almost a month.

Revelation of Judgment

After arriving at Nineveh, Jonah wasted no time boldly proclaiming God’s message: “And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s walk. Then he cried out and said, ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!’” (v. 4). The text does not say that Jonah started preaching after he walked a day’s journey into the city, but that he began to preach the very first day he arrived.

Scripture’s account of Jonah’s message is brief and concise: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” (v. 4). The proclamation sent shock waves through this great city, as the people reflected on the prophet’s words and their own wickedness. The phrase forty days told the Ninevites of their divine appointment with destiny: God was going to pour out His wrath on them and destroy their great city.

The number 40 in Scripture is not arbitrary. Frequently it is associated with a time of probation and testing. The Lord was giving the Ninevites 40 days to reflect on their ways and repent of their sins. Their refusal to heed Jonah’s message would mean their demise.

The word overthrown was also used to describe the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:25; Jer. 20:16; Lam. 4:6). In Hebrew, it can mean either “to overturn” or “to turn around.” Here there is a play on words: Nineveh could either turn around through repentance or be overturned like Sodom and Gomorrah.

Jonah must have preached of Nineveh’s destruction with fervor and great passion, wanting the city to receive the judgment he thought it deserved. Why? The Ninevites were notorious for their idolatry, immorality, and violence and for the shameful atrocities they committed toward those they conquered.

Their cup was now full, and in 40 days God would destroy them.

Response to Jonah’s Preaching

Luke wrote, “Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites” (Lk. 11:30). Although Jonah’s message was brief and concise, in some way Jonah was a sign to the people of Nineveh; and they knew immediately the prophet’s message was from God.

How was Jonah a sign? Some believe the fish’s gastric juices had so dramatically altered Jonah physically by bleaching his skin and hair white that his appearance alone sent a message to Nineveh. However, there is no indication of this in Scripture. Others believe that Jonah’s preaching,
although not recorded, must have included his experience with the fish. Still others believe that, even if Jonah did not mention the story of his survival, it must somehow have reached Nineveh.

What we know for sure is that the sign was tied to Jonah’s survival for three days in the fish’s belly. Jesus Himself validated the story of Jonah by using him as a sign of His own resurrection, which would occur after the Savior spent three days and nights in the grave (Mt. 12:39–40). How Nineveh received the sign of Jonah is uncertain. The story of his survival may have helped people believe the prophet’s message was from God. What is certain is that Jonah’s preaching pierced the hearts and souls of the Ninevites through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Nineveh’s response was immediate and electrifying: “So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them” (Jon. 3:5).

Nineveh responded in four ways. First, “Nineveh believed God.” The Hebrew says, “believed in God.” This means they recognized Jonah as God’s messenger, believed Jonah was speaking God’s Word, believed Jonah’s God had the power to destroy them, and personally trusted in God to show them mercy and deliverance.

Second, their trust led them to initiate a fast. Fasting in ancient times frequently was used to mourn over one’s sin. Abstaining from food and drink was seen as a sign of afflicting one’s soul to assuage God’s anger and judgment with the hope of avoiding divine wrath and destruction.

Third, the people put on sackcloth—a rough, coarse material made from goat or camel hair, which was worn next to the body—as a sign of their self-affliction, humility, and repentance. The goal was to abase themselves before God in hope that He would acknowledge their contrition, withdraw His wrath, and show them mercy and deliverance.

Fourth, everyone in Nineveh was made to put on sackcloth and fast, from the “greatest to the least.”

News of this citywide repentance reached Nineveh’s king. Scripture does not identify him, but most likely he was one of two kings who ruled during the reign of Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.) in Israel: either Adadnirari III (810–783 B.C.) or Assurdan III (771–754 B.C.). Many commentators embrace the latter.

Regardless of who he was, upon hearing Jonah’s message he arose from his throne, laid aside his royal robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat on a pile of ashes in humble repentance before God (v. 6).

The king also issued a royal proclamation:

*Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.*

Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish? (vv. 7–9).

The king’s royal decree contained four commands to the city. First, it declared a fast for all living creatures; even animals were made to participate in sorrow over sin. The bleating and belowing of innocent animals were seen as pleas for mercy, symbolic of the city’s general humiliation.

Second, both people and animals were to be covered with sackcloth. Earlier we saw that all the people put on sackcloth; but now the king decreed that even the animals should be covered with it. Covering animals was often practiced as a sign of mourning at the death of great men.

Third, the city was to “cry mightily to God,” that is, to cry loudly, earnestly, and with urgency.

Fourth, the king’s decree called on every individual within the nation to turn from his “evil way” and from “violence.” Not only did the edict require repentance, but it also required the nation to reform its conduct. The people of Nineveh could earnestly humble themselves before God; but if they did not reform their conduct, God’s judgment would still befall them.

The king and his nobles hoped their actions would move God to have mercy on them: “Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?” (v. 9). The king knew that fasting and prayer could never assure God’s forgiveness, but he hoped God would acknowledge the sincerity of their repentance and stay His judgment—a hope also expressed by the pagan sailors who had reluctantly thrown Jonah overboard to calm the sea (1:16, 14).

**Relenting of Judgment**

God acknowledged the genuineness of the Ninevites’ repentance: “Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it” (v. 10).

The Hebrew word for “relented” means to have a change of mind. Thus, in seeing Nineveh visibly turn from its evil ways, God had a change of mind about destroying the city. The Lord rescinded His judgment and spared the city.

Verse 10 gives us a number of principles concerning God’s judgment: (1) The Lord longs to extend grace, not judgment, to people who forsake sin. (2) Even though a nation’s judgment may be imminent, God will give that nation time to turn from sin. (3) God does hear those who intercede for a nation and will act on their prayers of genuine repentance. (4) God will withhold the judgment He has planned for a nation when that nation turns from its evil ways (Jer. 18:8).

God is not to be trifled with. As is written in the book of Hebrews, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (10:31). But God is also merciful and often gives us opportunities to repent and obey.

Jonah also teaches us that God’s spokesmen must speak the Lord’s Word, not their own, and that God even extends His love and grace to cruel and godless nations in hope that they will turn from their evil ways. He stands ready to forgive and spare both individuals and countries. But if repentance does not come, His holiness demands that He judge sin.

Individuals and nations would do well to heed the lessons taught by the prophet Jonah and to remember that “the goodness of God leads you to repentance” (Rom. 2:4).

David M. Levy is the director of International Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
In our previous article we noted that biblical descriptions of various types of eyes indicate that eyes reflect the moral condition of a heart. The first type we observed was the “evil eye,” which reflects a heart consumed by “insatiable greed for riches [and an] inordinate, miserly desire to gain and hoard wealth.” Here are other biblical descriptions.

**The Reflection of the Heart in the Eyes**

**Generous Eye.** “He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor” (Prov. 22:9). The word translated “generous” literally means “good.” In this context it refers to the type of good that is generous to the poor. To be good to someone reveals a person’s desire or will. Thus a generous eye reflects a heart that wants to help the needy.

**Winking Eye.** Eliphaz asked Job, “Why does your heart carry you away, and what do your eyes wink at?” (Job 15:12). The word translated “wink” means “flash.” It seems to indicate that Job’s eyes flashed with anger. Psalm 35:19 refers to the eyes of enemies winking (flashing with anger) at someone they hate.

Proverbs 10:10 states, “He who winks with the eye causes trouble.” This word translated “winks” refers to narrowing the eyes with “a deceitful and malicious look” to express “hostility.” The word translated “trouble” refers to “physical and mental discomfort” or “anguish” that such a look causes another person. A person who winks in this manner is “a worthless person, a wicked man” who has “a perverse mouth” (6:12). “Perversity is in his heart, he devises evil continually, he sows discord” (v. 14). Thus, a winking eye reflects an angry, hostile, or perverse heart.

**Mocking Eye.** “The eye that mocks his father, and scorns obedience to his mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it” (30:17). To mock is to ridicule or deride. This eye reflects a heart of contempt for parents.

**Unsparing Eye.** Isaiah 13:18 foretold that Babylonian soldiers “will have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye will not spare children.” The unsparing eye reflects a heart devoid of pity toward those in trouble.

**Desiring Eyes.** God told Ezekiel, “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I will profane My sanctuary, your arrogant boast, the desire of your eyes, the delight of your soul; and your sons and daughters whom you left behind shall fall by the sword.’” Will it not be in the day when I take from them their stronghold, their joy and their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that on which they set their minds, their sons and their daughters (Ezek. 24:21, 25).

The word translated “desire” refers to “pleasant things” to focus on. The desiring eye reflects a heart that focuses on what is pleasant.

**Full Eye.** Second Peter 2:14 refers to men “having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin.” Commentator Kenneth O. Gangel wrote, “With eyes full of adultery is literally ‘having eyes full of an adulteress,’ that is, thinking only of adultery when they see women. They never stop sinning is literally, ‘unceasing in sin,’ probably referring to their sinning with their eyes (Matt. 5:28).” The full eye reflects a heart consumed with thoughts of adultery.

**Blinded Eye.** “But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes” (1 Jn. 2:11). The blinded eye reflects the heart of a person who exists and functions in the sphere of moral and spiritual darkness that is at enmity with God and is earthly and demonic. As a result, that person is blinded to ultimate reality and does not understand the purpose of his existence or the reality of his ultimate destiny.

**Lusting Eye.** First John 2:16 states, “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” The word episthymia, translated “lust,” means, “evil desire.” Evil desire
“is a manifestation of the sin which dwells in man and which controls him.” Wrote German theologian Friedrich Buchsel:

\textit{The special feature in Jn. [Gospel of John] is the connection between desire and the world, 1 Jn. 2:15–17. Desire arises out of the world, constitutes its essence and perishes with it. . . . The seriousness of man’s God-given duty has to be fully impressed upon him in order to stir his will to resolution in self-denial. . . . The essential point in epithumia is that it is desire as impulse, as a motion of the will. It is, in fact, lust, since the thought of satisfaction gives pleasure and that of non-satisfaction pain. Epithumia is anxious self-seeking. . . . Epithumia bursts upon him with the force of immediacy.}

The sin nature stirs up evil desire for what the eyes see in the world, and the eyes reflect that inner desire. Wrote German theologian Friedrich Buchsel:

\textit{“winks” means “shut.”}

There are two types of shut eyes: one good, one bad. Proverbs 16:30 refers to a person who “winks his eye to devise perverse things.” This word translated “winks” means “shut.” This person shuts his eyes to concentrate without distraction on the perverse thing he wants. Thus, the shut eye reflects a perverse heart.

Jesus said,

\textit{“For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them” (Mt. 13:15; cf. Acts 28:27).}

Described people who shut their eyes to God’s truth in the sense that they stubbornly refused to accept it and its implications for them. This type of shut eye reflects a heart that has become calloused to God’s truth by repeated hostility toward it.

But Isaiah 33:15 describes a person who “walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil.” This type of shut eye reflects a heart that opposes focusing on evil.

\textbf{Hiding Eye.} There are also two types of hiding eyes: insensitive and ignoring. “He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses” (Prov. 28:27). The latter person ignores the needs of the poor. That type of hiding eye reflects a heart insensitive to the plight of the needy.

On the other hand, Israel’s priests allowed the Israelites to pollute God’s Sabbaths, manifesting an ignoring eye.

\textit{“Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them” (Ezek. 22:26; cf. 20:16, 21, 24).}

Wrote Bible scholar Charles H. Dyer, “Abandoning God’s precepts, they [the priests] let sin run rampant among the people.” They did so by purposely hiding their eyes from (ignoring) these sinful activities. This type of hiding eye reflects a heart that regards God and His holy things as being common or insignificant.

\textbf{Lofty Eye.} Proverbs 30:13 exclaims, “There is a generation—oh, how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up.” Lofty eyes reflect a heart of “arrogance,” “pride,” “presumption,” and “haughtiness.”

\textbf{Unsatisfied Eye.} “The eyes of man are never satisfied” (27:20). This type of eye reflects the heart attitude of people who “constantly want to see new things (cf. Eccl. 1:8) and to own new things.”

Ecclesiastes 1:8 declares, “All things are full of labor; man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing.” Because the monotony of daily labor does not give ultimate meaning to life, each generation continuously looks for some new thing that will give people ultimate meaning. But no matter how many new things people see, their desire for meaning can never be satisfied.

“There is one alone, without companion: He has neither son nor brother. Yet there is no end to all his labors, nor is his eye satisfied with riches” (4:8). A person driven by desire for wealth avoids personal relationships in order to work incessantly to gain and hoard more wealth; and he is never satisfied that he has enough.

\text{\textbf{Notes}}

3. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 171.
13. Ibid.
18. Ibid., 964.
Pulling the Plug on Christian TV in Israel? from page 28

A Common Biblical Thread

In researching the issue, I discovered that one of the most consistent opponents to Christian broadcasting in Israel is Tovia Singer, an Orthodox rabbi in his forties. His Web site, OutreachJudaism.org, calls Rabbi Singer the “top counter-missionary in the world, teaching and educating thousands, bringing many back to their Judaism.” He found the idea of airing the Christian gospel in Israel “unimaginable.”

On his Web site he addresses the subject of “Judaism’s Responses to Christian Missionaries.” So I listened to one of his lectures, called “How Do Missionaries Paint Jesus Into the Jewish Scriptures?” His main premise is that Christian theology presupposes a conclusion, rather than deductively trying to discover it. He believes Christian theology predetermined that Jesus is found within the Hebrew Scriptures and then set out to prove it.

Rabbi Singer’s didactic approach is entertaining, lively, and generally respectful of Christianity, though he considers it totally un biblical. For instance, he disputes the truth of Matthew 2:14–15, which says Joseph “took the young Child [Jesus] and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, ‘Out of Egypt I called My Son.’”

Most New Testament versions connect the “out of Egypt” quotation with Hosea 11:1: “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.” Rabbi Singer points out the Gospels show that Jesus was called to Egypt to flee Herod, not out of Egypt, as Hosea indicates. However, he ignores the fact that God called His Son Jesus both into Egypt to preserve Him and then “out of Egypt” so that Jesus could return to first-century Israel to fulfill His mission of reconciliation between God and man.

Rabbi Singer’s second point is that Hosea 11:1 could not refer to Jesus’ flight to Egypt because it says, “when Israel was a child.” However, sometimes an entire nation can be identified as a person (“My son”). Likewise, a single person can be associated with the entire nation of Israel. Such was the case with Jacob. After struggling with God, Jacob is renamed Israel (Gen. 32:28). Bible scholar John F. Walvoord, late president of Dallas Theological Seminary, put it this way:

Why was Joseph directed to Egypt? Why not to Babylon with the Magi, or some other direction? Matthew (2:15) cites Hosea 11:1, “Out of Egypt have I called my Son,” referring to the exodus of Israel from Egypt to the promised land. Matthew draws the contrast between Israel, as the Son of Jehovah going to Egypt and returning, to Christ, the greater Son who also came from Egypt. In both cases, the descent into Egypt was to escape danger.

In both cases, the return was important to the providential history of the nation of Israel.

My point is this: In both Rabbi Singer’s critique of the Christian gospel and my defense of it, we traveled over the same theological geography, namely, the Hebrew Scriptures. We both rendered interpretations of the same texts, though with differing results. It seems to me that the best reason to air Christian broadcasting within Israel is that stout-hearted rabbis like Tovia Singer and others are free to counter what they see and hear.

As long as Israelis are not forced to watch gospel programming and as long as there are rabbis out there with the freedom to dispute it, Israeli viewers stand to benefit. In essence, then, Christian broadcasting within Israel is like the proverbial family reunion. While it may engender squabbles and disagreements, there is a familial tie between Christians who bring the message of Jesus Christ and Jewish Israelis just as there was between the apostle Paul—a Jewish scholar—and the people of Israel for whom he prayed (Rom. 11:1).

A powerful responsibility, however, rests on the shoulders of Christian broadcasters. They must be respectful, tasteful, honest, and biblical. We are guests in a land that bears the very imprint of God’s hand on history. And our broadcasts should always reflect that fact.

ENDNOTES


Craig L. Parshall’s views do not necessarily represent those of the National Religious Broadcasters, where he serves as senior vice president and general counsel.
Tidings of Comfort and Joy
from page 19

with us.” The night before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed, “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (Jn. 17:5). He came from glory, and He returned to glory.

For the LORD Most High is awesome; He is a great King over all the earth. The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein (Ps. 47:2; 24:1).

Some think the throne of the universe is empty. Wickedness appears to control the world. Lies and falsehood seem to prosper, while truth fades into obscurity. Yet the secret of peace and joy in the midst of a troubled world is the fact that “the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” (Rev. 19:6).

Despite how things appear, nothing happens that is not under the Lord’s sovereign control. The child that once lay in a lowly manger is now seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven (Col. 3:1). And believers in Christ are seated with Him and “will reign in life” through Him (Rom. 5:17; Eph. 2:6).

Therefore, we need not fear the future: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling (Ps. 46:1–3).

What is true about Christ will be true about Christ forever. This blessed hope makes all His promises sure and steadfast and gives us courage and confidence to face our tomorrows.

Apparently, the “good cheer” of the familiar carol in Dickens’ novel only incited contempt in crabby Ebenezer Scrooge. But eventually he experienced the comfort and joy of the season: “I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!” Scrooge repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. ‘The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me.’

Biblical Christians, however, have something infinitely better to embrace: “Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God” (Ps. 146:5). Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith—the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 12:2; 13:8).

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

Peter Colón is the Southeastern States director for The Friends of Israel.
Isaiah 53 and the Messiah of Israel
from page 21

The Servant’s authority exceeds even that of the high priest who was the highest spiritual authority in Israel. In fact, the prophet Jeremiah declared, “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth” (Jer. 23:5). Jeremiah called this One “THE LORD [YEHOWAH] OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (v. 6). Thus the Servant can only be God Himself.

All will see the Servant’s greatness and glory because His return will be accompanied by supernatural events in the skies and on Earth (Zech. 14; Acts 1:9–11). As soon as people see the Servant, they will understand that He is Jesus. Jeremiah 23:5–6 will be fulfilled completely when Jesus returns to reign over the world from Zion in Jerusalem (Ps. 2; Zech. 14:4; Mt. 24:30–31).

Since this is a unique and extraordinary message (the Lord coming as a Servant to serve His creatures), Isaiah then described the difficulty of believing the message, beginning with 53:1.

The Nation’s Lack of Faith

The prophet ached because of his people’s lack of faith. They found it difficult to identify the Servant of the Lord and believe in Him, despite clear Bible prophecies about Him and a show of His sovereign power and supernatural works.

Yet Israel’s spiritual blindness came as no surprise. Isaiah had already said, “The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider” (1:3). So the prophet asked with pain, “And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?” (53:1).

The phrase arm of the LORD refers to the Lord’s strength and power, as manifested by His salvation of men (Ex. 6:6; Isa. 40:10; 42:6). The prophet actually said, “Look and see who is working out the salvation of God. It is the Servant of the Lord!”

Verses 2–3 describe how the Servant will appear and how the people will receive Him. He grew up before the Lord supernaturally and wonderfully—like a tree that springs up in a dry desert, like life that flows in a dry and hostile place.

Although the Lord raised up and nurtured His Servant, it becomes apparent that Isaiah’s people, the Israelites, neither recognized the Servant nor honored Him as they should. They saw no difference between Him and any other person.

Apparently, the driest place was the nation’s heart. It was a spiritual “desert” in every respect.

Verse 3 emphasizes Israel’s spiritual blindness. The Lord’s Servant came to His people, but they despised Him and distanced themselves from Him. (See John 1:11.) We despised what He said and did. We did not regard Him as an honorable dignitary, since we did not think He was of any importance. And when He passed by us, we turned aside and walked away.

The Servant’s Sacrifice

In 53:4–6, the people finally understand the reason for the Servant’s infirmities, pain, and suffering, which the prophet described in order to emphasize the great sacrifice offered up for us, as well as the depth of repentance that will come over Israel in the future.

The people of Israel thought the sufferings of “That Man” came upon Him because of His own sins. The truth is that, to this very day, many Jewish people believe Jesus was crucified as punishment for alleged apostasy.

But the day will come when they will recognize that the Lord Jesus Christ accepted the affliction they should have received (Zech. 12:10). He suffered in our place and because of our sins; He had no sin of His own (53:9).

Jesus Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law: “Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’” (Dt. 27:26). The Lord’s Servant became a curse in our place so that God’s blessing would come upon us (Gal. 3:13). Thus we can be counted righteous and “sons” worthy of inheritance. (See also Matthew 8:16–17; Romans 3:21–26.)

“But He was wounded for our transgressions” tells us plainly that the Servant of the Lord was pierced because of our sins. He took our uncleanness on Himself (Isa. 53:5).

Throughout the entire passage, Isaiah emphasized the motive of this great exchange: The Servant of the Lord took on Himself the punishment that was supposed to come on us, so that good would come to us instead.

As it says in Galatians 1:3–4, “Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”

The meaning of the phrase the chastisement for our peace was upon Him is extremely significant (Isa. 53:5). When a lawbreaker hurts someone, he injures his relationship with the society in which he lives. To “reenter” society, he must first pay his debt, be it imprisonment and/or a fine. The chastisement is the penalty, or price, the lawbreaker must pay to rectify relationships.

By giving His own life and blood, the Messiah paid the penalty for our sins. He fully paid the price God had determined was necessary to make peace between Him and us. The chorus of Elvina Hall’s 1865 hymn “Jesus Paid It All” says it well:

*Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain,*
*He washed it white as snow.*

continued next issue

Meno Kalisher is the pastor of the Jerusalem Assembly House of Redemption in Jerusalem, Israel.
Arab rockets traumatize Sderot

Intense rocket fire from Palestinian Gaza into Jewish Sderot has led Defense Minister Ehud Barak to declare a state of emergency in the western Negev communities, thereby transferring authority over local councils and municipalities to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Nine Kuds-3 rockets struck Sderot as school opened, sending 12 Israeli children to the hospital. Islamic Jihad boasted of the vicious attack, calling it “a present for the start of the new school year.”

One Israeli mother declared, “My 13-year-old son refuses to go to school, and he has to have psychological treatment twice a week, but no one cares. We practically live inside the shelter on the ground floor, and my kids can’t even take a shower. Does anyone care?” Arutz-7 reported.

Asked what she would advise the government to do, she said, “They should bomb Gaza from the air! I don’t want to have to live in fortified buildings; let the people in Gaza fortify themselves. Nor do I want any soldiers to get killed because of us. An air attack to wipe out all traces of those who have sent us rockets for the last seven years and made our lives unbearable—that’s the solution.”

Israeli officials are trying to decide how to handle the situation. Arutz-7 reported Prime Minister Ehud Olmert opposes a proposal to cut electricity, water, and gas supplies to Gaza to combat the rockets but has ordered officials to review the legal ramifications of doing so in an effort to impair Hamas’s ability to govern the Strip.

Said one official, “We won’t continue to supply oxygen [to Gaza] in the form of electricity, fuel, and water when they are trying to kill our children.”

Muslims destroy Temple wall

Arutz-7—A large trench being dug on the Temple Mount is destroying a never-before uncovered section of the outer wall of the second Temple. The construction is being supervised by the Waqf—the Muslim authority acting as custodians to the Temple Mount.

Top Israeli archaeologists warn that the Arab excavations may destroy the wall. Dr. Eilat Mazar said, “Irreversible destruction is going on there.”

Archaeologists demand construction halt on the trench, which is about 1,300 feet long and five feet deep. The Waqf, which is using bulldozers, steam shovels, and other heavy equipment, claims the trench is being dug to replace 40-year-old electrical cables for nearby mosques.

Photos show carved stones, which appear to be a section of the wall, casually dumped in a pile. Rabbi Chaim Richman, international director of the Temple Institute, said the Temple remains are being “purposely destroyed with no supervision.”

Netanyahu: ‘Enough!’

Arutz-7—Benjamin Netanyahu has denounced Prime Minister Ehud Olmert’s intention to give away most of Judea and Samaria to the Palestinian Authority (PA).

“We keep hearing about an international summit in November in which we will more or less promise to give away more land in another unilateral withdrawal,” Netanyahu said. “It wasn’t enough that we retreated in Lebanon and Gaza, that now they’re planning another one!”

So they’ll say that it’s not unilateral, rather now we have a partner,” Netanyahu continued. “And who’s the partner? Abu Mazen [Abbas]! He’s a partner? Reciprocity is when you give something back in exchange for what you give. But what will we receive? Will we receive the complete nullification of the [Arab] right of return [to Israel]? We know that we will not. Will we receive sovereignty over Jerusalem?

No, we know that [our government] has ceded this. And it keeps on going, with every Olmert-Abbas meeting, another 100 terrorists are freed . . . and that’s when they meet here. When they meet in the US, it’s hundreds of terrorists who go free, and we hear that at the summit they’re going to be talking about thousands! . . . Not to mention the guns that the PA keeps receiving.

“This government just gives and gives,” Netanyahu railed, “and receives nothing. And this will place us in dangers much greater than we have known before, as we see in Sderot; the risks in the Galilee continue as well. Our country will end up endangered by rockets from three directions.

“They themselves [Barak and Olmert] realize there is a problem, and they say they can’t withdraw right now [from Judea and Samaria], because then the terrorists will take over and fire at us. This means it won’t bring peace, but will rather bring the rockets closer.

“What, then, must we do? We must first of all realize that at present, there is simply no Palestinian partner. The reason why Judea and Samaria do not turn into Hamastan is because we are still there. We must also create conditions that will make it harder for extremist Muslims to recruit youths to their ranks. In addition, we must have joint economic projects with Jordan; as opposed to some people who say that peace will bring prosperity, we know that economic prosperity can create some conditions for peace.”
Critics Slam Amanpour’s Reporting

Christian Amanpour’s reporting on “God’s Jewish Warriors,” which aired in August on CNN as part of her six-hour, three-part television feature on Jews, Muslims, and Christians, was the “most poisonously biased and factually shoddy feature to air on mainstream American television in recent memory,” said CAMERA’s executive director, Andrea Levin.

Jonathan Tobin, executive editor of The Jewish Exponent in Philadelphia called the series “nothing short of a brazen lie” that asked viewers to “pretend that there is an intrinsic connection, or even symmetry, between Christian, Jewish, and Muslim extremists.”

CAMERA, the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, has published a detailed, scathing attack on the highly publicized program. Levin cited numerous errors and condemned Amanpour for equating a handful of Jewish extremists who have been overwhelmingly condemned by Israeli society with “the violent jihadist Muslim campaigns underway across the globe.”

Amanpour also concentrated on the West Bank settlements, Levin said, suggesting they are illegal and the cause of Arab anger. “Yet the Arab world was just as anti-Israel (actually more so) before the settlements were built.”

Wrote Levin: “Amanpour . . . portrays Jewish settlements in the West Bank as an encroachment on ‘Arab’ land—repeatedly referring to disputed territories as ‘Arab’ or ‘occupied’ land (22 times throughout the program).”

She interviewed former President Jimmy Carter, who is overtly pro-Palestinian and told her no American politician could survive politically while calling for settlement-related aid cuts to Israel: “There’s no way that a member of Congress would ever vote for that and hope to be re-elected,” Carter said. However, Levin listed 17 congressmen who have voted against aid to Israel and/or opposed other resolutions favoring Israel.

Tobin said Amanpour’s segment on “the threat from extremist Jewish settlers and the entire network of support for the State of Israel in the U.S. was as classic an example of a dishonest piece of biased programming as anything that has been broadcast on a major network.”

In his article titled “View from America: CNN’s False Symmetry” that ran August 27 in The Jerusalem Post, Tobin said the idea that the West Bank settlements obstruct peace “is nothing short of fantastic, especially given the events of the past several years, which have shown how uninterested the Palestinians are in peace with Israel, no matter where its borders are.”

Tobin said CNN used an argument “that has rightly been termed a modern intellectual justification for anti-Semitism” and that the Jewish settlers threaten no one “and are, if anything, among the primary victims of Muslim terror.”

To read CAMERA’s rebuttal in its entirety, log on to camera.org.

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Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved” (Ps. 55:22).
In my lifetime I have had many surprises. But the greatest surprise came a few months ago. As most of you know, all of my family died during the Holocaust of World War II. I was 10 when the war came to Poland. But because I had blond hair and blue eyes and understood German, I survived by fleeing from place to place, telling no one I was Jewish, and finding odd jobs so I could eat and stay alive.

For six years I survived this way, not knowing what had become of my family but living with the hope that they were alive. When the war ended, I tried to find them but could not. They had all been murdered in the Warsaw Ghetto. I was completely alone. Wanting to begin a new life, I moved to Israel and have lived here ever since.

A few months ago, a man came to my door. “My name is Kalisher,” he said. After 60 years, I met the son of my father’s brother. He lives in America. My wife and I welcomed him warmly into our home. All four of my children received him in their homes, too, and he met all 15 of my grandchildren.

But he did not know that we believe in the Lord Jesus. So I began asking the Lord what to do. I wanted to invite him to worship with us at the Jerusalem Assembly. But I did not want to frighten him because we have more than 300 people attending. We all sing and pray together. And who is the pastor? Our son Meno! So I wondered, What do I do?

As it is written in Proverbs 19:21, “There are many plans in a man’s heart, nevertheless the Lord’s counsel—that will stand.” So I put it all in His hand. I was so sure that this cousin, the only one left from my family, would leave me because I believe in the Lord.

As I read the Bible, I came to a familiar verse. After those years during the war, when I had no one, the Lord was the One who took care of me. For the first time in my life, I saw something different in Psalm 27:10. There it is written, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me.” So I said to myself, The Lord is much more important to me, even more important than family.

So when the time came, our children brought him to church. He was so surprised to see so many people. He could not believe his eyes. I was sure he would pack his bags, say shalom (goodbye), and leave us forever. So I prayed from the depths of my heart that this man, the only one left from my family, would come to know the Lord and rejoice in his salvation. I prayed through the entire service. And I said to myself, I lost all of my family in the Holocaust, but I found the best comfort in the Lord.
As it is written in Isaiah 40:1, "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" says your God. So have I been comforted. By people? Certainly not! But by the Lord Himself.

After the meeting I was certain my cousin would leave. But he did not. God answered my prayers. I saw such great joy in my cousin's eyes, and he was full of joy when he left. He wrote a beautiful letter, full of thanks, to my sons and told them he would never forget his wonderful visit to the assembly.

The Lord had told me not to be afraid. With all the terrible things I have seen in my lifetime, what a joy it is to see that we are still here and able to bring God's truth and His salvation to the world. I often read Psalm 126:5: "Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy." I have sown many tears in my life, but I reaped such great joy in meeting my cousin and seeing him learn the Word.

He asked me, "Are you afraid of people who know that you believe in Christ?"

I told him, "I have believed in the Lord according to the Bible. And because I believe in the Bible, I know the Lord personally." So he began asking me many questions, and I opened the Bible and showed him what is written.

I gave him two things to take back to America: a copy of the book Elwood McQuaid wrote about my life, Zvi: The Miraculous Story of Triumph Over the Holocaust, and the video Elwood did, Zvi: The Return.

When it was time for him to leave, he told me, "To meet you was one of the greatest joys in my life. Now we are more than cousins."

The Lord answered my prayer. I showed him that it is written, "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

"As you are doing here in Jerusalem," he said, "so will I do where I am living in the United States."

So you see, I am no longer alone. There is another Kalisher, and he will be a good testimony for the Lord.

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As it is written in Isaiah 40:1, "'Comfort, yes, comfort My people!' says your God." So have I been comforted. By people? Certainly not! But by the Lord Himself.

After the meeting I was certain my cousin would leave. But he did not. God answered my prayers. I saw such great joy in my cousin's eyes, and he was full of joy when he left. He wrote a beautiful letter, full of thanks, to my sons and told them he would never forget his wonderful visit to the assembly.

The Lord had told me not to be afraid. With all the terrible things I have seen in my lifetime, what a joy it is to see that we are still here and able to bring God's truth and His salvation to the world. I often read Psalm 126:5: "Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy." I have sown many tears in my life, but I reaped such great joy in meeting my cousin and seeing him learn the Word.

He asked me, "Are you afraid of people who know that you believe in Christ?"

I told him, "I have believed in the Lord according to the Bible. And because I believe in the Bible, I know the Lord personally." So he began asking me many questions, and I opened the Bible and showed him what is written.

I gave him two things to take back to America: a copy of the book Elwood McQuaid wrote about my life, Zvi: The Miraculous Story of Triumph Over the Holocaust, and the video Elwood did, Zvi: The Return.

When it was time for him to leave, he told me, "To meet you was one of the greatest joys in my life. Now we are more than cousins."

The Lord answered my prayer. I showed him that it is written, "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

"As you are doing here in Jerusalem," he said, "so will I do where I am living in the United States."

So you see, I am no longer alone. There is another Kalisher, and he will be a good testimony for the Lord.

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