RESTRAINT?
4,000 Hezbollah rockets fired at Israel, 42 civilians killed and 4,200 injured
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About the Issue
While the world watches the missiles rain down on Israel from Lebanon and Gaza, the Jewish state again fights an all-out war. It is a battle for survival. And yet, it is not, because Israel will survive whether or not Hezbollah and Hamas are totally destroyed. God guarantees so in His Word. As for us, this is a time when knowing the facts are an absolute necessity. That’s why we set aside one issue each year to look at contemporary Israel. Here you’ll learn the facts. Make sure you read our Israel in the News: Special Report. It’s an eye-opener. Our cover photo shows an Israeli rescue worker trying to help a seriously wounded man from the wreckage of a Haifa building hit by a rocket fired from Lebanon.

(Baz Ratner/AP Wide World Photos)

Elwood McQuaid
Editor-in-Chief

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They came from across the United States and Canada, South America, Europe, and Asia. The occasion was The Friends of Israel’s 2006 field-staff conference, a gathering held every three years. For some of our workers, it was their first such conference. For others, the three-day event was an opportunity to get to know our 14 newly appointed workers, share the excitement of their ministries, and rejoice in the marvelous blessings of the Lord.

We gathered under the banner of The Friends of Israel’s mission statement: “A worldwide Christian ministry communicating biblical truth about Israel and the Messiah, while fostering solidarity with the Jewish people.”

FOI board member Dr. Daniel L. Anderson, president of Appalachian Bible College in Bradley, West Virginia, spoke to our hearts with a series of insightful messages titled “Defining Truth, Declaring Truth, and Defending Truth” in a world where truth is silenced, slandered, and slained by those who oppose it. The call to action was clear: Minister the truth of God’s unchanging Word to a largely antagonistic world where His truth is in short supply.

All of the sessions were designed to better equip our staff to serve Jesus Christ. Regional reports from around the world helped everyone understand the range of ministries and opportunities the Lord has opened to our workers. These include preaching in churches, conducting home Bible studies, visitation, campus outreaches, music ministries, marketplace evangelism, pastors’ conferences, sports outreaches, radio broadcasting, counseling, conference ministries, literature distribution, and even a medical ministry in Argentina.

Reports on the rise of anti-Semitism where FOI serves were disturbing. News from our workers in England and France was especially troubling. Our staff’s observations matched those in a June 16 article titled “Jews Are Under Siege: A Call to Action” by Charles Jacobs and Seth Klarman in The New York Jewish Week: “No one wants to think that sixty years after the Holocaust, a new storm threatens Jews everywhere. But reality cannot be avoided or minimized.”

Breakout sessions addressed a number of key issues affecting the future of The Friends of Israel, such as the task of taking the Lord’s truth to the next generation, expanding our outreach and the role of Israel My Glory magazine, and defining issues of confidentiality to assure the safety of our staff members and the integrity of their work. A session focused on the importance of recruiting additional workers for our Lord’s vineyard.

Several challenges and opportunities also came into clear focus. First is the challenge to expose the serious error of Replacement Theology wherever it is found. This teaching, which denies God’s promises to Israel and the Jewish people, can only be sustained by an allegorical, rather than a literal, interpretation of God’s prophetic Word.

Replacement Theology is the traditional teaching of the Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant churches. Historically, it has been used to marginalize the Jewish people and even to subject them to violence. Unfortunately, there is also a segment of evangelical Christianity that clings to Replacement Theology. We know that the Lord has raised up The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry to proclaim God’s truth about Israel and the Jewish people.

The second challenge for The Friends of Israel is to focus on ministries to the next generation. Reaching out to young people and younger adults must be a priority. Additionally, recruiting new workers who will hold forth the word of truth to future generations is absolutely essential.

The third challenge is also a great opportunity: to respond to momentous, positive changes among the Jewish people. The time is now for Christians to build vital relationships with their Jewish friends, neighbors, and community groups. We will be informing more and more Christians of events related to Israel that are taking place in their areas, seeking to connect them with other activities in the Jewish community. Working together, we must change the Jewish perception of Christians as instruments of persecution, violence, and Holocaust to instruments of Christian love, friendship, support, and solidarity.

There has never been a more opportune time. As Jewish author David Brog asserted in his recently released book, Standing With Israel: Why Christians Support the Jewish State, “The anti-Semitic Christians of past generations have been eclipsed in America by Christians who enthusiastically embrace the Jewish people and the Jewish State. As the Jews confront the latest threats to their existence, they will find standing alongside them Christian soldiers who passionately share their concerns not despite their Christian faith, but because of it.”

ENDNOTE

1 David Brog, Standing With Israel (Lake Mary, Fla.: Front Line, 2006), 256.

William E. Sutter is the executive director of The Friends of Israel.

Southeastern States Director Peter Colón addresses the 2006 FOI staff conference (Walter Homan/FOI).
volatile weapons into the Strip, Gaza rolled out the welcome mat for some of the world’s most vicious terrorist killers. With the election of Hamas to power and the acceleration of cross-border attacks, kidnappings, and murders, the Palestinian hierarchy made its intentions brutally clear: It would not create a peaceful, productive showcase to demonstrate to Israel and the international community that Palestinians were ready to make the leap into a viable state. Western politicians were mystified, and Israel was rebuffed and left to suffer the consequences.

Not on the ledger was there any intent by the terrorists pulling the strings in Ramallah, Tehran, and Damascus to decelerate violence, much less concede anything more than lip service to peace—on their terms, of course. The goal is to fight until Israel and the Western democracies are destroyed. Therefore, peace would put a serious crimp in their jihad-driven agenda. They want a nation whose people teach their children to strap on homicide belts, rather than one whose people work at good jobs; receive suitable remuneration for their efforts; live on clean streets; and teach their children reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The recent announcement by the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade of the recruitment of 100 female suicide bombers, with more in line to sign up, exposes the heart of the matter. Islamists are among the few people on the planet who celebrate defeats as victories. Prof. Barry Rubin has said, “Celebrating martyrs simply means bragging about your own casualties.” This is precisely what people who value life and fight only to achieve a legitimate goal do not understand. For Islamists, fighting is not a means to an end; it is an end in itself.

When the late and unlamented Palestinian chieftain, Yasser Arafat, refused to accept a Palestinian state on a platter offered by then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak in 2000, virtually everyone asked why. Instead, he opted for a war that would see thousands of new casualties among Israelis and his
Rediscovering Evil

The TV news anchors were discussing an unspeakably vicious murder that had been committed without provocation. The report was shocking but, unfortunately, the fare we have come to expect on the evening news.

What was different about this exchange was a comment by one of the reporters: “This would almost make you believe that there are some people in this world who are totally evil.” The remark’s subtle tone of surprise drew a nod of agreement from the cohost.

The exchange brought to mind the many times that elements on the left cry foul whenever they hear public officials use such phrases as evil empire, trinity of evil, or axis of evil.

The problem seems to be with the word evil, both in concept and application. It is scorned as an odious, politically incorrect violation of civility and as an assuredly unacceptable slander within the environs of the New Age “global village.” But given the compilation of evidence, it isn’t difficult to verify that evil is very much alive and afoot in our world.

Consider recent events in Israel and the Middle East where the Axis of Evil has been on the attack. Iran, Syria, Hamas, Hezbollah, and manic terrorists in Iraq have announced their immediate objective. It is genocide—that is, to wipe Israel off the face of the map and eliminate the Jewish people. Add to this the indiscriminate and deadly assaults on Christians around the world, and no more need be said.

Unfortunately, the world has lost its clear understanding that evil exists and evildoers are constantly with us. Pure evil inhabits this planet, and the prime executioners of it are numerous and identifiable. This may appear to be a somewhat simplistic assessment, but it is basic—and that is where the cultural icons of our day have missed the point.

When Israelis responded to Hezbollah’s indiscriminate shelling from South Lebanon, the immediate reaction of many was to condemn Israel for a “disproportionate response” that caused “collateral damage.” Translation: Israel inadvertently killed and injured innocent civilians. Never mind the fact that Israel had warned these people repeatedly to leave the area. Yet when photos of dead Arab women and children hit the news, they were used to make the case for the terrorists and to depict Israel and America as fountainheads of evil. If a picture is worth a thousand words, the press accomplished the objectives of the real evildoers. Lost in a shower of visual superficiality were the facts:

Hamas and Hezbollah started the war. Apparently at the behest of their Iranian sponsors, they crossed the borders of sovereign Israel to kill and kidnap Israeli soldiers. For the Iranians, the war provided cover and time to pursue their quest for nuclear weapons. Hezbollah terrorists deliberately place their missile batteries in heavily populated civilian areas—hospitals, mosques, schools, residences, markets, etc. In so doing, they rain death and destruction on Israel from these locations, then—via television—show the bodies of the Arabs whom they used as human shields, calling them victims of Israeli aggression, thus scoring big in the propaganda department.

Hezbollah has committed atrocities daily against innocent Israelis and Arabs who fell to missiles that were launched with no other intent but to kill whoever was unfortunate enough to be in the line of fire. It was Hezbollah’s leader, Hasan Nasrallah, who callously commented after two Arab children were killed by a missile in Nazareth that the missiles were not meant to murder Muslims, only Jews.

At the same time, Islamist terrorists were still strapping bombs on their young people and attempting to send them to their deaths among Israeli civilians. It has been accurately observed, When a Lebanese child is killed, Israel mourns; when an Israeli child is killed, Hezbollah celebrates.

Let’s be clear. These terrorists are calculatingly evil, with equally malevolent intentions. We have said many times that if the Axis of Evil wants peace, all it need do is stop the killing. However, wholly evil people live to kill.

All of these stark facts raise a much broader question: Why are Westerners, who should know better, confused and surprised enough to bemoan the situation with statements like “This would almost make you believe that there are some people in this world who are totally evil”?

The answer is easy. An obfuscation of reality began when our culture embraced the situational ethicists’ moral mumbo-jumbo—when nihilists began convincing the unwashed masses that rules and standards are irrelevant and every individual must decide right and wrong according to his or her personal preference. Their system militantly rejects the biblical, traditional Judeo-Christian standards that regulate human conduct with a clear and understandable moral compass.

The challenge is to turn back to the Bible and rediscover what evil and evildoers are all about.
The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.

Statement of Activities
Year Ended December 31, 2005

Changes in net assets:
Public support and revenue:

Public support:
Contributions:
- General ministry contributions ........................................ $3,952,931
- North American ministry contributions .......................... 1,114,575
- Foreign ministry contributions ........................................ 842,234
- Institute of Jewish Studies ............................................ 26,624
- Legacies, gift annuities and other .................................. 722,924
Total public support ......................................................... 6,659,288

Revenue:
- Ministry publications, audio and video ......................... 1,425,698
- Conference and special functions ................................. 68,016
- Interest and dividends ................................................. 51,428
- Other revenue ............................................................ 10,549
Total revenue .................................................................. 1,555,691

Total public support and revenue .................................... 8,214,979

Expenses:
Program services:
- Outreach ministries ..................................................... 3,859,549
- North American ministries ........................................... 1,458,195
- Foreign ministries ....................................................... 1,078,950
- Institute of Jewish Studies .......................................... 108,149
- Conferences and special functions .............................. 245,461
Total program services .................................................. 6,750,304

Supporting services:
- Management and general .......................................... 1,385,920
- Stewardship and fund raising ..................................... 348,398
Total supporting services ............................................... 1,734,318

Total program and supporting services ........................... 8,484,622
Change in net assets from operating activities ................ (269,643)

Other changes in net assets:
- Realized and unrealized gain (loss) on investments ........... (10,279)
- Change in actuarial value of gift annuities and trusts .......(303,333)

Changes in net assets ..................................................... (583,255)

Net assets at beginning of year ........................................ 3,683,982
Net assets at end of year .................................................. $ 3,100,727

Our financial statements are audited by the accounting firm of Lambrides, Lamos & Moulthrop Co., Certified Public Accountants. Their report on the audit for the year ended December 31, 2005, was rendered on March 23, 2006, with an unqualified opinion. The above figures are taken from that report.
own people. Irrational? To us perhaps, but not according to the rules of the 1974 Palestine National Council in Cairo, Egypt, which agreed to accept territorial concessions and use them as sanctuaries from which to wage war until all Israel is destroyed.

This determination of strategy was confirmed when a Hezbollah terrorist force recently crossed the border into northern Israel, killing eight Israeli soldiers and taking two others hostage. Did Hezbollah know Israel would retaliate and that the Lebanese people would be caught in the crossfire? Certainly. But its concern was not for the people of Lebanon. Its concern was to create an opportunity to fire on Israel from its stockpile of weapons that are longer in range and more deadly in accuracy than any it had used previously.

It is difficult to argue with reports that Hezbollah terrorists acted as surrogates for the Iranians who needed both relief from international pressure and shelter for their frantic attempt to develop weapons of mass destruction. If this war was, in fact, Iran’s doing, it was successful and will only rain more misery and destruction on the people of the Middle East while it gears up to destroy the rest of us as well.

What has also been put on display for the world to see is that terrorists can successfully create a state-within-a-state situation in a country that becomes politically paralyzed. We now see how they can hold a country hostage and implement an agenda of their own at the expense of the people they victimize.

This was the case in the 1970s when Arafat and his Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) used the same tactic in Jordan. Spurning the authority of King Hussein, the PLO terror groups staged cross-border attacks into Israel. The Israelis quickly retaliated, and the Jordanian population paid for Arafat’s malicious adventurism.

But in this case, the archterrorist underestimated his opposition. Jordan’s late king had the forces and ability to handle the problem—and it wasn’t through vapid diplomatic blather at the UN. He sent his troops on a bloody expedition against the PLO and ousted them from the country in an episode remembered as Black September.

In Lebanon, however, the government has not been in control of national affairs for decades. First, it was besieged by the late Syrian president, Hafez al-Assad, and his occupation force. Then, when the Syrians withdrew in measure, Hezbollah moved in to fill the void and carved out a ministate in South Lebanon. Thus, for the past six years, since Israel withdrew from the southern security zone it maintained for 20 years, Hezbollah moved into the area with its fingers on the trigger, awaiting its opportunity to make war.

And that, my friends, is why the fight goes on today.
Two years ago, attending high school in Zaria city, Kaduna, Nigeria, went from tension to tragedy when Muslims attacked their Christian classmates. This was not a scuffle. The assault was brutal, and its effects are still felt today.

Compass Direct reported that Muslims warned Christians at the school to stop worshipping in the school chapel or face the consequences. Anticipating an attack, the Christians gathered in the chapel to pray. Initially, they were assaulted by a hail of stones. When they came under attack, many sought to flee, only to be run down and beaten. Francis Yohanna Anche, 15, was struck in the head by a machete and sustained a brain injury that put him in a coma for two weeks, necessitating surgery, and permanently paralyzed his right hand and leg. After finishing with the students, the mob burned down the chapel.

The Zaria school is a microcosm of what is taking place in the strife-torn country of Nigeria. Nigeria is the most densely populated country in Africa and also bears the distinction of being the most influential. While English is the official language, there are some 470 dialects spoken throughout the country.

Religiously, Nigeria is dominated by Muslims (50 percent) and Christians (40 percent). And although the constitution guarantees religious freedom, the precipitous rise of radical Islamist fundamentalism has thrown the country, particularly in the north, into a serious situation that endangers Christians, their churches and institutions.

Over the past 160 years, evangelical ministries have flourished in many parts of Nigeria. But with the onset of the global terror-network’s campaign against believers, the climate is beginning to change.

On July 6 Compass Direct reported the murder of a Christian woman in Niger state. Her crime was doing street evangelism and sharing the gospel with a group of Muslim youths. When Muslim elders heard about the incident, they accused her of insulting the prophet Muhammad and demanded she be killed. When local police attempted to protect her from a Muslim mob that poured into the streets, they were overwhelmed; and the woman was beaten, clubbed, and stabbed to death.

This death reportedly marked the first such fatality under Niger state’s Islamic legal system that was introduced in 2000. Niger is one of 12 states in northern Nigeria to adopt Sharia (Islamic) law.

Kaduna, where Anche was macheted and the Christian students attacked, has been described as the nerve center of Islamic extremism. Many religious conflicts in northern Nigeria originate there and spread to other parts of the country. A Baptist pastor claims to have verified more than 20 religious conflicts in Kaduna from 1987 to 2006 that took the lives of more than 25,000 Christians and destroyed 500 churches.

Christian leaders further assert that Muslim-controlled authorities have banned Christian religious teaching in their schools and forbidden the airing of Christian radio programming. Compass Direct reported that churches have also endured discrimination from town planners who refuse to allow churches to improve or expand their properties and who demolish churches at will, claiming they are illegal structures. Muslims, on the other hand, construct mosques wherever they wish, without the need for approval.

Pray for the believers of Nigeria.
The Christian Thing to Do

Many of us are becoming increasingly weary with the fatuous harping of the World Council of Churches. We can always depend on the WCC to oppose conservative Christian and traditional Judeo-Christian positions.

A current example is the volley fired by the WCC’s ultraliberal executive council at a meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, in May. The council declared that Israel’s actions toward the Palestinians cannot be justified morally, legally, or politically. Furthermore, the WCC top brass called for relaxation of sanctions against the Palestinians’ genocidal, terrorist Hamas government; and it railed against the security fence being constructed to protect Israeli civilians from terrorist attacks.

Time was when mainline denominations and secular forces largely accepted the WCC as the voice of worldwide Christianity. Today it claims to speak for 340 member churches, denominations, and fellowships numbering 550 million adherents in more than 100 countries. But it does not speak for us all, as certified by its exposure as the handmaid of extremist radicalism that targets, among others, evangelical Christians who continue to accept biblical authority, cherish the democratic norms upon which Western society has been constructed, and support the rights of the Jewish people to a secure homeland in the Middle East.

Matter of fact, someone has suggested (and I agree) that the majority of WCC leaders would do well to acknowledge their repudiation of the faith of our fathers and declare their own cult. Such will not be the case, of course, largely because these people control the funds and fortunes of adherents who remain unaware of the truths of spiritual life and the moral bankruptcy of their leaders.

Christian Concern for Israel and the Jewish People

Christian Holocaust heroine Corrie ten Boom once answered a question as to why she and her family willingly risked their lives to protect Jewish people from the Nazis. Her answer was simple and thoroughly Christian: Because, her father told her, “It was the Christian thing to do.” It was, and it remains so.

In May of this year, Elbert Colenbrander and his now deceased parents were officially recognized as “Righteous Among the Nations” at a ceremony at Yad Vashem, the memorial in Jerusalem to the Holocaust. The honor was bestowed because of the...
Colenbrander family’s heroism in risking their lives by sheltering Jewish families at their farm in Holland during World War II.

Elbert Colenbrander, now 79, was surprised when contacted because he felt it was a “big honor he did not deserve.” The Jerusalem Post reported that his daughter Wilma said her father “never talked much with his children about the war, and only discussed it when asked. . . . Over the years, he always said that he was taught that as a Christian, you do these things for other people.”

The Colenbranders and Corrie ten Boom are among the 13,000 Gentiles, including three Americans, currently honored in the Garden of the Righteous at Yad Vashem. Many of them were essentially humanitarians moved by the horrifying plight of the Jewish people. Thousands of others, however, were Christians. They were motivated, despite the risks, by a biblically instilled compassion concerning “the Christian thing to do.”

Calling Israel apartheid, expansionist, illegal, and predatory is a perverse, bigoted, and unwarranted transgression of the truth. At its base, it is a heinous assault that extends far beyond the borders of aggression against a legitimate nation. It is, in fact, a violation of the viability of the Jewish people’s struggle to survive in the world’s most hostile environment. Every day Israelis face heavily armed enemies determined to destroy them.

**It Is About People**

It is a fact that millions of evangelical Christians have no compunction about being identified as Christian Zionists, and this commitment spills over into the realm of international politics. But the bottom line for Christian Zionists is an unfathomable love for the Jewish people and their land—a love that is biblically instilled and so profoundly personal it cannot be explained. It can only be expressed by the lives and actions of Christians who prove their affection for Israel and the Jewish people in quite extraordinary ways.

I remember speaking at a church in Michigan some years ago where I recounted an interview I had had with a Jewish senator about his personal
experiences with prejudice and anti-Semitism. Near the end of the interview, he rather pensively confessed that, from time to time, he would scan his circle of friends and ask himself a question he felt most Jewish people ask themselves: If an Adolf Hitler were to rise to power in America, who among these people would give me a place to hide?

A year later I returned to the church for another speaking engagement. As I entered the building, I was met by a young woman who immediately asked if I remembered my comments about the interview. “Of course,” I said.

She replied that her employer was Jewish and that, for some time, she had wanted to explain her faith to him and why she cared deeply for Jewish people and Israel. So she decided to speak to him at her earliest opportunity. The next morning, as she walked to her desk, she met him in the aisle. He seemed to sense that she had something on her mind.

“Is there something I can do for you?” he asked.

Because of the suddenness of the encounter, she found herself speechless. Suddenly, she burst out with the only thing that came to mind. “I just want you to know,” she said, “that if an Adolf Hitler ever comes to America, I’ll give you a place to hide.”

Her employer was so moved that he wept.

This is not merely a story. It is the genuine reflection of the hearts of many, many thousands of Christians. Some of them don’t know quite how to say what they feel, but they feel it nonetheless.

The late Will H. Houghton, president of the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois, from 1934 to 1947, put it in a few rather simple but immensely expressive lines of poetry:

_Say not a Christian e’er would persecute a Jew;_
_A Gentile might, but not a Christian true._
_Pilate and Roman guard that folly tried._
_And with that great Jew’s death an empire died!_

When Christians gather in cathedral, church or hall, 
_Harts turn toward One—the name of Jesus call._
_You cannot persecute—whatever else you do—_
_The race who gave Him—Jesus was a Jew!_

Or hear the words from the intrepid Poet of the Sierras, Joaquin Miller, in his “To Russia”:

_Who taught you tender Bible tales _
_Of honey-lands, of milk and wine? _
_Of happy, peaceful Palestine? _
_Of Jordan’s holy harvest vales? _
_Who gave the patient Christ? _
_I say, _
_Who gave the Christian creed? _
_Yea, Yea, _
_Who gave your very God to you? _
_Your Jew! Your Jew! Your hated Jew!_

The Christian-Zionist phenomenon is not a monolithic, political strategy brewed by right-wing conservatives with an agenda to attain or an ax to grind. It is the totality of many millions of individual believers who have arrived at their conclusions about Israel and its Jewish heritage because of two things: (1) a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and (2) interaction with the Scriptures—Old and New Testaments—that inevitably direct intellects and hearts to an affinity for the land and the people of the Book.

I have been asked repeatedly over my decades of association with Jewish people in and outside of Israel why, as a Gentile, I’ve chosen to invest my life in this fashion. My answer is not unique but, rather, what you will hear in one way or another from virtually every Christian with a serious commitment to the mandates of God’s Word: “One day I met a Jew who changed my life, assured my eternal destiny, and set my life’s course in another direction. That Jew is Jesus Christ, and I owe Him everything.”

And the testimonies of myriads of other Bible-believing Christians are on record. Blanche Dugdale, niece of Lord Arthur James Balfour, said of her uncle, “He always talked eagerly on this [the Jew in the modern world] and I remember in childhood imbining from him the idea that Christian religion and civilization owes to Judaism an immeasurable debt, shamefully ill repaid.”

And where did the primary instigator of the British decision to create a mandate for a Jewish state in Palestine find his inspiration?

Balfour liked to read from the Old Testament prophets, particularly Isaiah. He loved to read aloud, and did so . . . ‘beautifully and reverently.’ [Because of his biblical insight] He was one of those devout Christians who was able to view the Jews with insight and simple, down-to-earth understanding.

As with other early supporters of a Jewish homeland, Bible knowledge was the key to Balfour’s commitment.

Of more recent vintage was Ed McAteer, now with the Lord, whose love for Israel and the Jewish people made him a modern pioneer in Jewish-Christian relations. It was Ed who, in 1981, launched the groundbreaking, annual National Prayer Breakfast in honor of Israel in Washington, D.C. His journey as an ardent Christian Zionist began with his wife Faye’s challenge to him. In a book published about Ed in 2004 titled The Power of One: The Ed McAteer Story, Thomas and Jonathan Lindberg and Daniel E. Johnson wrote:

[McAteer said,] “Her grandfather told her to be good to the Jews, citing Genesis 12:1, where God promises to bless those who bless Abraham and his family.” Over the years, as a result of disciplined study of the Word of God, he had become a “Christian Zionist.”

**A New Way of Thinking**

What saddens many evangelicals is that, for so very long, we were viewed as no better than the pseudo-Christians who tormented the Jewish people and opposed a Jewish homeland. Fueling this misconception is Replacement Theology, the erroneous idea that the church has replaced Jewry as the true Israel of God.

In like vein, there has been a chasm of misunderstanding separating Jewish people and evangelicals, propagated
by the fallacy that the driving force in
Christian support is the motivation to
proselytize unwary Jews and facilitate
their return to the land merely to bring
about apocalyptic convulsions and
hasten the return of Jesus.

To be fair, evangelicals need make no
apology for desiring to communicate
their faith to Jewish people. Many years
ago in New York City, I spoke about
this issue with a prominent national
Jewish leader. He said he had no trouble
with Christian evangelism. The nature
of evangelicism is to evangelize, he
said. To do less would violate the com-
mission Jesus gave the church.

His problem was when Christians
evangelized in the guise of some form
of Judaism or worked like undercover
agents for Jesus, representing them-
selves as something they are not in
order to seduce Jews into converting.

I have no problem with his observa-
tion. We have an obligation to make
Christ and the gospel known to all
people, Jewish and Gentile. In the
words of Scripture, “There is no differ-
ence” (Rom. 3:22). And the gospel is to
be proclaimed to all (Mt. 28:19–20).

Ironically, the desire of Christians to
communicate their faith is actually more
unifying than divisive. I know of no
Christians today who think less of their
Jewish friends who fail to believe in
Jesus. Their friendships are strong,
demonstrating unequivocally an uncon-
ditional love. And they will remain
friends—unvarnished and irrevocable,
no apologies necessary—as far as
Christian Zionists are concerned.

It’s the Christian thing to do.

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2 Etgar Lefkovits, “A righteous family is honored after
60 years,” May 31, 2006, <jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?
pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FshowFull&cid
=1149420541940&
3 Joaquin Miller, “To Russia,” An American Anthology,
1787–1900, ed. Edmond Clarence Stedman (1900; New
4 Cited in Michael Pragai, Faith and Fulfilment (London:
5 Ibid.

Elwood McQuaid is editor-in-chief
for The Friends of Israel.
The wrong question is being asked these days. And it is time the world started asking the right one.

Since February, Hamas has been in control of the Palestinian Authority (PA). True to form, the organization so accustomed to pushing the detonator on explosives laced with nails and shrapnel has maintained the same predictable, terrible tenor: Negotiations with Israel are nowhere on the agenda, and Hamas has no intentions of disarming or changing its charter position on the desirability of Israel’s destruction.

In the Hamas Charter of 1988, the Preamble declares, “Israel will exist until Islam obliterates it, as it obliterated others before it.” Article 6 demands control of “every inch of Palestine.” Article 13 states, “Jihad is the only solution for the Palestinian question.” And Article 14 pronounces, “Liberating Palestine is an individual duty for every Muslim.”

Several theories for Hamas’s victory in the January 2006 parliamentary elections have included these: PA voters wanted Hamas as a negotiating partner against Israel because it could strike a tougher stance; some simply wanted to send a message to the Fatah party that average folks were sick and tired of the old Arafat-style corruption. Whatever the reason, “democratic” elections took place.

Since then, news commentators and networks (including BBC News) have wrung their hands, asking, “Will Hamas ever recognize Israel?”

However, the wrong question is being asked. Instead of “Will Hamas ever recognize Israel?” the real question is this: “Must Israel ever recognize Hamas?”

Putting a finer point on it, Does Israel have any obligation, rooted in concepts of either justice or morality, to negotiate with the Hamas “government” now installed within the PA?

I think not. And what follows are one man’s reasons for saying so.

Knowing the Players

It isn’t sufficient merely to refer to Hamas as a terrorist organization. That doesn’t go far enough. Granted, the United States, European Union,
Canada, Australia, and Israel all list it as a terrorist group. It also is supposedly banned in Jordan.

Yet some terrorist entities, like the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Ireland, seem capable (eventually) of a kind of transformation—a gradual migration to a modicum of recognition for social compacts and compromise, to some understanding of human decency, and to at least a passing interest in the rule of law.

Not so Hamas. Its name (meaning “fire, fanaticism”) denotes its operational philosophy. Since 1988 it has launched shootings, knifings, and kidnappings, but its real designer-death trademark is the “martyrdom operation” using suicide bombers. The deadliest of these was the grotesque Passover bombing at a Netanya hotel on March 27, 2002, where 30 people were killed and 140 injured.

The group had also called for the assassination of former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Compromise and conciliation are part of a lexicon that is completely foreign to Hamas.

On the other hand, it has been argued that, as Hamas adjusts to the realities and responsibilities of political power, it will get practical—i.e., it will come to the negotiating table with Israel. Boston Globe reporter Anne Barnard, for example, wrote: “These voters say they believe Hamas will turn more pragmatic as it moves from violent outsider to governing party.”

However, there is a problem with such thinking. Hamas has really not been on the outside of PA politics. It has, in point of fact, been intrinsically interwoven into the woof and warp of PA policies.

On August 7, 2001, Hamas, the Palestinian Authority, and Islamic Jihad reached a formal agreement concerning “a government of national unity”; two days later, a Hamas-orchestrated suicide bomber, equipped with explosives packed with nails to increase casualties, blew himself up at the Sbarro’s restaurant in the family-friendly western section of Jerusalem. Most of the 18 people killed were women and children; and the Passover slaughter the following March was green-lighted by Yasser Arafat, who sat in on meetings in which the operation was planned.

In 2004 a U.S. District Court held that Hamas should be liable for the murders of Yaron and Efrat Unger near Beit Shemesh, Israel. It also determined that the Palestinian Authority had given safe haven to the Hamas assassins.

Setting a Framework

Those who clamor for Israel to engage with a Hamas-run PA do so, presumably, because they believe there is an extrinsic, objective standard that should compel one nation to negotiate with another in an effort to wage peace rather than war.

Sometimes the term social justice is used to indicate the source of that kind of obligation. But more often than not, it is used by theological liberals to connote an agenda that has troublesome implications.

I prefer the term principles of justice. Now, do such principles require Israel to negotiate with Hamas?

Most of us recognize, at least in theory, the wisdom in the policy followed by the United States, Israel, and other nations involved in the war on terror; it counsels against negotiating with terrorists. The reasons are obvious. But what are we to make of the fact that terrorist Hamas was freely elected to power?

Elections are not the only criteria for determining a legitimate government. Adolf Hitler was freely elected on a socialist party platform. There were signs, of course, that he would prove to be more demonic than democratic. And Saddam Hussein held elections of a sort.

To constitute a legitimate democracy, government institutions that respect
the rule of law are needed, in addition to elections. That one fact alone distinguishes Israel from almost all Arab nations.

Admittedly, Iraq is struggling to become an exception. In addition to free elections, it has shown the world how it has created government branches that operate legitimately (even if somewhat weakly). Its special war-crimes tribunal is a good example. It affords legal defense counsel to Hussein and his cohorts and follows procedural rules. Can anyone imagine, by contrast, a Palestinian tribunal actually holding Yasser Arafat (if he were alive) responsible for his vast crimes against humanity?

The PA has done nothing to police its own corruption and nothing to slow its reign of terror against Israeli citizens. Hamas promises not only to continue that kind of thuggery as politics, but also to expand it exponentially.

Therefore, by what justice standard can we impose any duty on Israel to negotiate?

If we look to international law principles as an example, those paradigms seem to relieve Israel of that obligation.

Rules like the Act-of-State Doctrine seek to engender respect for nation states, even if the nations are only quasi-legitimate or even outright undemocratic, as long as they function as authentic, identifiable forms of government.

No matter what we may say about the evils of Communism, Cuba is a form of nation state. Thus, when Cuba confiscated American sugar interests on that island in the 1960s, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Banco Nacional de Cuba v. Sabbatino that the Act-of-State rule applied: Cuba was entitled to the presumption that its formal actions were lawful, even if they seemed to violate international law norms.

Yet the Palestinian Authority, even before the Hamas landslide electoral victory, lacked nation-state status. The PA is not a nation. It seeks (but does not yet have) borders, a standing army, a clear chain of governmental authority, and a uniform court system.

Now that blood-soaked Hamas is in control, whatever justice obligation Israel had to deal with the PA as a bargaining partner has evaporated.

### Bringing It Home

How should Israel respond to Hamas? In his 2006 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush called on Hamas, as a prerequisite to legitimacy, to renounce terrorism and acknowledge Israel’s right to exist. Yet the Bush administration had refused to negotiate with Arafat in years past. Is Hamas any more legitimate than Arafat simply because it won an election?

Even if we acknowledge that the Hamas-led PA should be negotiated with, I would suggest the approach Bush used with Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi dictator was given ultimatums and deadlines for compliance. So should Hamas. It has not earned the right to be treated in any other way.

Only if (and that is a monstrously large if) Hamas changes substantially—structurally, ideologically, and strategically (in other words, if Hamas ceases to be Hamas)—can it ever gain the position of a negotiating partner with Israel.

The bottom line, then, is this: Israel has absolutely no obligation to negotiate with the Hamas-controlled Palestinian Authority; however, it is free to negotiate if (and only if) there is some direct, tangible, national benefit in doing so. At present, it is difficult to envision any benefit accruing to Israel from that kind of endeavor. The burden of proof is on Hamas, not on Israel.

Following the PA elections, Ehud Olmert, then acting Israeli prime minister, vowed to deal with the PA as long as “the Palestinian government isn’t led by Hamas.” Today that stance puts Prime Minister Olmert in a difficult position. Under pressure from Washington, he quickly released some $54 million in tax and custom revenues to the PA. Likud party leaders in Israel called the payment a gift to Hamas. It is difficult to criticize the logic of that statement.

Lest we think that Israel’s problem with Hamas is Israel’s alone, two examples should suffice to explode that myth. Hamas is also America’s problem.

In 2001, leading up to the eventual Iraqi invasion, Iraq had been lobbing missiles at U.S. military reconnaissance aircraft. Tensions were growing. But Iraq was not merely engaged in “defensive” attacks on American aircraft. Saddam Hussein and his cronies were also sending Iraqi troops into Jordan (some 1,500 of them); from there, Iraq delivered weapons and ammunition to Hamas cells in Jordan and in the Palestinian Authority to use against Israel—proof positive of the interconnectedness of the web of terrorism in the Middle East.

Then there was the visit of Colin Powell, then U.S. secretary of state, to Israel in April 2002. His entourage was scheduled to drive along Highway 1. Palestinian terrorists, posing as Red Crescent medics driving an ambulance, were planning to pull over to the side of the road where they were to detonate a large bomb located in the ambulance as Powell’s motorcade approached. The plot was foiled only because of the diligence of Israel’s security forces, which had been following the suspicious ambulance. The plan had the approval and supervision of the Palestinian leadership.

In the final analysis, it is impossible to separate Israel’s dilemma with Hamas from America’s dilemma with al-Qaeda. After all, the only thing distinguishing them is an election.

### Endnotes


2 Anne Barnard, “They Voted for Hamas, but Were Surprised by Its Victory,” The Boston Globe, February 7, 2006 <boston.com/news/world/articles/2006/02/07/they_voted_for_hamasbut_were_surprised_by_its_victory>.


5 Bodansky, 488-89.

6 Ibid., 537.

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Schoolyard Fights and the Status Quo

When a young student, I sometimes stood in the circle of after-school observers as disputes between aggrieved adversaries were settled with flaying fisticuffs. In most cases, there was little or no real damage beyond torn jeans and bruised egos. Usually the combatants rolled in the dirt until one party decided he had had enough and cried uncle. In fact, there was a winner and a loser. Thereafter, the issues between the two were settled—at least to the extent that neither had a taste for renewing hostilities.

There is a lesson here that states a principle world leaders would do well to apply. Too often in these turbulent years, the flavor of the day in international conflicts is the status quo. It’s rather like no-fault insurance, where both parties settle their claims with their insurance companies and go their separate ways; no one is charged with responsibility for the accident.

Unfortunately, the international status quo currently being invoked is not as simple as a declaration of separation with no clear winners or losers. We should have learned as much from past wars—ugly affairs that did so much to impose suffering and misery on all too many people.

For example, near the end of World War II, the Nazis and Japanese pleaded for negotiations—a version of a status quo settlement—rather than surrender. Western leaders, however, wisely insisted on unconditional surrender, the international equivalent of uncle.

With clear winners and losers, the world avoids the status quo limbo that misleadingly passes for peace. In reality, it is not a peace at all; it is merely a pause.

In the current global struggle with the forces of terror, peace-loving free nations must win. There is no other option. This necessity translates into forcing the issue with terrorists who live to kill, until the matter is settled. Cease-fire, status quo nonsolutions only buy time until the enemy can rearm, reassemble, and return to fight another day.

In our Western justice systems we don’t put guns in the hands of convicted murderers. The clear choice is to disarm and incarcerate them to protect innocent people. In this global war on terror, the only acceptable outcome is to hear these thugs cry uncle and strip them of their ability to make war.

by Elwood McQuaid
To Build or Not to Build: Jerusalem’s Housing Controversy

In the minds of millions of Christians and Jews around the globe, Jerusalem is a spiritual symbol that transcends daily life. But for those of us who actually reside here, Jerusalem is much more of a tangible reality than a symbol of eternity.

We who are privileged to hang our hats in Israel’s ancient and modern capital are certainly reminded every day, if not every hour, about the spiritual significance of our special hometown. The magnificent stone walls and gates that surround the historic Old City, the Mount of Olives where the resurrected Messiah rose to heaven nearly 2,000 years ago, the Great Synagogue that ascends several stories above bustling King George Street, and the tall minarets with their blaring electric loudspeakers that call Muslims to prayer—all these and more are constant, concrete reminders of the importance Jerusalem holds for nearly half the people on Earth.

But contemporary Jerusalem is also the host of combatant city council meetings, occasional garbage strikes and constant road construction, pulsating youth discos and serene old-age homes, lush green parks and neglected open spaces, crowded banks and cramped corner grocery stores.

The Holy City is also the frequent site of substantial tussles between secular and religious Jews, competing Jewish and Christian religious sects, and—the mother of Middle East conflicts—the two groups that together comprise nearly 98 percent of the city’s current population of some 600,000 souls: Israeli Jews and Arab Muslims.

The central debate between Abraham’s quarreling offspring is focused on who should wield authoritative, if not exclusive, control over the most contested piece of real estate on Earth—the hallowed Temple Mount.

About the size of two football fields, the revered area where Islam’s golden Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque sit today has spawned many a riot over the past hundred years. The Jewish people’s steady return from around the world, in fulfillment of Bible prophecy, has sparked bewildered chagrin and outright hostility from Muslims, who claim total, divinely sanctioned ascendancy over the entire Old City and indeed over every inch of the Promised Land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

While this ultimate struggle plays out like an intriguing who-done-it thriller on television screens around the world, daily life goes on in Jerusalem. And it is here, on the local stage, that another bristling battle is being waged. It is not some cosmic tug of war between bearded, black-robed men championing various paths to eternal bliss, but a more mundane struggle between dozens of building contractors with dollar signs gleaming from their eyes and many ordinary residents who wish the city to retain some of its traditional character and quaint old-world charm.

Million-Dollar Digs

The most recent clashes are over burgeoning apartment towers that
the dominating structures, connected between their top floors by sky bridges, are an aesthetic eyesore. A newer complex containing several high-rise apartment towers is going up in the northeastern French Hill neighborhood. Nearby apartment dwellers say it is so massive that it blocks out daylight, especially during the cool winter months when the sun sits low in the southern sky.

But at least these developments cater mostly to native Israelis. A series of high-rise, luxury condos and hotels being built around the center of the city come with a price tag most Israelis cannot afford. Prices start around $1 million for a full-sized apartment. Wealthy American and European Jews eager to own a second home in the Holy City are the main sales targets.

The most ambitious construction project under way is called Jerusalem of Gold—aptly named, say some folks, because you need to own tons of gold bullion to purchase one of the condos! Located on the south side of King George Street not far from Jerusalem's Great Synagogue, the luxury housing complex is rising in two stages a few blocks west of the walled Old City and even closer to the popular Ben Yehuda outdoor pedestrian mall. Preparation work has already begun on the sprawling building site, just a two-minute walk from central Jerusalem's main public green space, Independence Park.

The initial apartment building will slope from eight to 12 floors. It was originally designed to house 120 units, but wealthy buyers—mostly from America—are already busy redesigning the preliminary architectural floor plans, decreasing the number of condos to around 80 and adding to the cost of the expanded apartments. The complex's more controversial second stage features a 24-story tower south of King George Street. When completed around the year 2010, it will be one of the tallest structures in Jerusalem's modern city center.

Catering mainly to Orthodox Jews, all Jerusalem of Gold kitchens are being designed with strict kosher dietary laws in mind. Unless altered by the buyer, every apartment will feature two sinks and separate meat and dairy cupboards and drawers to cater to traditional religious requirements. Each condo will also include an open balcony suitable for construction of an annual sukkah (booth) during the autumn Feast of Tabernacles. Hotel-style staff will be on site at all times to maintain the apartments for their mainly overseas owners and to prepare the condos for occupancy prior to the owners' arrivals.

continued on page 25
Israel was the first Middle East country to recognize Communist China. Beijing returned the favor by being the first non-Arab state to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Contradiction is universal and absolute. It is present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end.

—Chairman Mao’s essay “On Contradiction,” August 1937

China & Israel: Inscrutable Relations
On May 18 China’s ambassador to Israel, Chen Young Long, was summoned to Jerusalem from his embassy in Tel Aviv by the deputy director-general of Israel’s Foreign Ministry, Raphael Schutz, for an unprecedented reprimand.

Israel was chagrined that a diplomat in the Chinese Embassy charged to liaise with the Palestinian Authority (PA) had held meetings with Mahmoud Zahar, the foreign minister of the PA’s Hamas-led government. Schutz told Chen that Israel would not tolerate “a situation in which official diplomats stationed on its soil hold talks with terror elements.”

He warned Chen that the diplomat involved risked expulsion from Israel as a persona non grata and that Israel was none too pleased about media reports that China had invited Zahar to visit in June.

Chen later told Israel Television that the diplomat involved in the contacts with Hamas was actually assigned to China’s consulate in Ramallah.

Either way, Israelis find it bothersome that Beijing has no compunctions about embracing the Hamas-led PA. We’re also disappointed that China has proven so unhelpful just when the civilized world is trying to come up with a unified stance against Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons.

If, however, you were to step back and take a longer view of Chinese policies in the Middle East, particularly in connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict, you would have the impression that Beijing wants decent relations with Israel, as well as a stable Mideast.

Indeed, the very fact that there is a Chinese ambassador stationed in Tel Aviv who can be summoned to Jerusalem for a diplomatic dressing-down reflects China’s evolving and complicated role in the region.

Every country’s foreign policy is the result of complex domestic and international factors. No single rationale—not even the quest for oil to provide energy for China’s fast-growing economy—entirely explains the Chinese attitude toward Israel.

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) was pro-Palestinian when China’s limited oil needs were satisfied by importing petroleum from Burma and Indonesia. And it remained pro-Palestinian even when Beijing became energy independent in the 1970s. In contrast, now that China imports 58 percent of its oil from the Middle East—11 percent from Iran—its attitude toward Israel has never been friendlier.

Given the vast cultural gulf between Chinese and Western civilizations and the extraordinary differences between China (population 1.3 billion) and Israel (population 7 million), making sense out of Chinese foreign policy is not easy.

This much, however, can be posited: The Chinese attitude toward the Arab-Israeli conflict has always been based on a combination of Chinese nationalism, changing Communist ideology, Beijing’s perception of its geopolitical interests (including the quest for oil), and superpower competition.

Long before there was an “occupied West Bank,” China embraced the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) cause full throttle. Indeed, while Ahmed Shukeiry, the first head of the PLO, held meetings with China’s Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong in Beijing in 1965, few in the West even knew the PLO existed. China, however, greeted Shukeiry as if he were a head of state.

Beijing even declared May 15—the date Palestinian Arabs commemorate Israel’s birth as their nakba (“catastrophe”)—as Palestine Solidarity Day.

Speaking as a self-appointed sage of national liberation, Mao told his PLO guests in 1965, “Do not tell me that you have read this or that opinion in my books. You have your war and we have ours. You must create the principles and ideology on which your war stands.”

That being said, China did all it could to help the Arabs battle Israel. Over the years Beijing provided the PLO with weapons, training, and logistical support through its embassy in Beirut, Lebanon. China, in fact, became the first non-Arab state to recognize the PLO. In 1965, it welcomed Rashid Jarbou as the PLO’s permanently stationed diplomatic representative in Beijing.

After the 1967 Six-Day War, China referred to Israel as a puppet regime of American imperialism. It opposed UN Resolution 242, which ended the war, partly because it was the outcome of a compromise between Moscow and Washington, but also because it implicitly recognized Israel’s right to exist in secure boundaries.

With the Palestinian Arabs of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza living for the first time under Israeli rule, China encouraged the PLO to launch a “people’s war of liberation” against the “occupation.” But the Arabs did not manage to do so until the first intifada, which they began in December 1987 and ratcheted up to an even more vicious scale during the current, second intifada that began in October 2000.

China always sided with the Palestinian Arabs. It didn’t matter if they were fighting Israel or “reactionary” Arab regimes, such as Jordan in 1970 during Black September; Beijing viewed the PLO as part of a revolutionary vanguard.

But revolutions don’t last forever. As the Cultural Revolution culminated in 1976, China began inching its way toward accepting bourgeois international norms.

Beijing made and accepted overtures from the United States. It joined the UN as a permanent member of the Security Council. And gradually, Beijing began to lose some of its blind faith in the PLO as an organization—though never in the justice of the Palestinian-Arab cause.

The Wall Cracks

Beijing began sending signals that, although it blamed Israel for the conflict, it was not entirely comfortable with the PLO’s onslaught against civilian targets. The Palestinians had launched their international terrorist campaign in earnest with a 1968 attack on an El Al airplane flying out of Athens, Greece. The Chinese seemed
talks of guns

China, whose armed forces had done less well than expected in their invasion of Vietnam, suddenly discovered that Israel could be an excellent source of battle-tested weaponry. Thus China's desire to modernize its armed forces instigated reported clandestine contacts between Beijing and Jerusalem that surfaced in the 1980s.

China wanted it both ways. While making overtures to Israel, it still reportedly supplied the PLO with free weapons and ammunition to help the Palestinians maintain their "Fatah land" enclave in southern Lebanon.

Nor did China's diplomatic support for the Palestinian position wane. But the tone was changing. Communist Party leader Hu Yaobang used the opportunity of a visit by Jordan's King Hussein in 1982 to urge the Arab states to recognize "the Israeli people's right to peaceful coexistence."

And in 1984, China and Israel reportedly signed a secret $3 billion military deal channeling Israeli arms to the PRC.

This military relationship, however, didn't inhibit Premier Zhao Ziyang, during one of Arafat's many visits to China, from continuing to lash out against Israel for refusing to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people and for not "handing back the Arab lands they are occupying."

China finally went public with its Israel relationship in 1985 when it welcomed a large trade delegation of Israeli businessmen from the medical and budding hi-tech sectors.

The tide was changing. Israel's consulate reopened in Hong Kong (then still a British colony), academic exchanges were initiated, and tourist offices were established. And Chinese diplomats stopped shunning their Israeli counterparts at the UN and other international gatherings.

The start of the 1990s saw academic ties further strengthened. The Chinese made it easier for their academics to visit Israel, and Israeli scientists found it easier to travel to China; agricultural and technological exchanges blossomed, and a developing flow of Diaspora Jewish tourists to China further underscored the sense that positive change was in the...
air. Like other countries interested in currying favor with Washington, China’s leadership appeared to think it wise to seek out the friendship of the American-Jewish community.

**Diplomatic Relations**

Finally, almost anticlimactically, diplomatic relations were established between China and Israel in January 1992. A diplomatic struggle that Israeli Ambassador David Hacohen had initiated in Rangoon, Burma, decades earlier had at last come to fruition. (See “How China Shifted Toward the PLO,” page 24.)

China now found it possible to maintain cordial relations with Israel while maintaining support for a Palestinian state—not in place of Israel, but alongside it. Xinhua, the official Chinese news agency, described the September 1993 mutual recognition by Israel and the PLO as “an important turning point in PLO-Israeli relations and a historic breakthrough in the peace process in the Middle East.”

Xinhua explained the deal as a natural progression of the Palestinian cause rather than a revolutionary turn of events. It said Israel had adopted a “realistic policy” that at last recognized the PLO, while Arafat (supposedly) had rejected terrorism and recognized Israel’s right to exist.

The agency commented that the Oslo deal would “serve as a step toward a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue” and foster overall stability in the Middle East.

Significantly, Beijing opposed the activities of PLO hardliners who denounced Olso, such as Foreign Minister Farouk Kaddoumi. The road to peace, Kaddoumi was told on a 1994 visit to China, would require Palestinian flexibility.

The Israel-China relationship continued to develop, and in April 2000 then-President Jiang Zemin became the first Chinese head of state to visit Israel and the Palestinian Authority. It was a remarkable event, considering China’s long-standing involvement in Arab-Israeli affairs.

After Arafat launched the second intifada at the end of 2000, he traveled to China, among other places, seeking support. The Chinese urged “utmost restraint on the part of both Israel and Palestine, and especially Israel.”

There was no question that Chinese sympathies remained solidly with the Palestinians. Nor did Israel’s cancellation (under intense U.S. pressure) of the $250 million Phalcon early-warning radar system sale in 2000 endeared Jerusalem to Beijing.

But unlike in the “bad old days,” Arafat’s visit to China could now be followed by an Israeli leader’s visit there.

In 2002, for instance, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres led a delegation to Beijing that sought to placate Chinese disappointment over the collapse of the Phalcon deal. (Israel paid China $300 million in compensation for canceling the sale.)

These days the China-Israel relationship is mostly characterized not by politics, but by economics. Scores of Israeli businesses are active in China, and Chinese investment in Israel is aggressively encouraged. Last year bilateral trade surpassed $2.6 billion.

**A Voice for Moderation**

Although economics can never completely displace politics in the Middle East, today’s China wants to see a region that is stable so that Beijing can pursue its primary global interest: not national liberation or revolution, but economic growth.

I’m not suggesting that the Chinese don’t want commensurate political and military clout to go hand-in-hand with their burgeoning economic power. But nations that do business together, whose economies are tightly connected by the global system of trade, have a natural incentive to promote good relations and stability.

It remains to be seen whether Chinese foreign policy decision-makers can be persuaded that an Islamic regime in Iran armed with nuclear weapons threatens not only Israel and the West but also China’s long-term interests.

Similarly, China’s long-standing sympathy for the Palestinian cause helps explain its willingness to embrace even a Palestinian regime led by Hamas. Yet even here, China is using its Palestinian card to urge moderation.

In May, Zhai Jun, director-general of West Asian and North African Affairs of China’s Foreign Ministry, openly called on Hamas “to respect agreements previously signed with Israel, to recognize Israel and to return to talks.”

That is also the message, promises Chinese Ambassador to Israel Chen Young Long, that Hamas leaders will get every time they visit Beijing.

Such an attitude is a proverbial journey of a thousand miles from the days when China was fueling Palestinian violence and denying Israel’s right to exist.

The more Chinese officials are exposed to the Israeli narrative, the better our chances of fulfilling David Hacohen’s dream of harmonious relations between our two ancient civilizations.

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Almost as soon as Jerusalem’s foreign policy apparatus was up and running after the 1948 War of Independence, Israel sought diplomatic relations with China.

Since Washington didn’t establish formal ties with Beijing until 1979 during Jimmy Carter’s administration, the Jewish state’s recognition of China in January 1950 risked alienating the Eisenhower administration.

In fact, when Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett cabled Jerusalem’s recognition to Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai, Israel became the first Middle East country to recognize the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Formal diplomatic relations, however, were not attempted out of deference to American sensitivities and Cold War tensions.

During the Korean War (1950–53), both Israel and the Arab states sided with Washington at the UN, branding the PRC the “aggressor.” Nevertheless, Israel consistently supported China’s entry into the UN, which finally occurred in 1971 at the expense, regretfully, of Taiwan.

David Hacohen, Israel’s Man in Asia

Behind the scenes throughout the mid-1950s, a lone, Asia-based Israeli diplomat named David Hacohen was struggling to foster ties between China and Israel. Hacohen (1897–1984) was born in Russia, came to Israel in 1907, and joined the leftist Mapai Party (a precursor to Labor). He became Israel’s first ambassador to Burma and used his Rangoon base to promote Israel’s interests throughout Asia. Hacohen later became a Knesset member and chairman of its Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

Although the Korean War put a hold on Israeli overtures toward Peking, as Beijing was then called, Hacohen persisted in lobbying the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to improve ties with China. In December 1953, he met with Chinese Ambassador Yao Chu Ming who, he said, told him that China “was interested in finding out why we chose to send a minister to Burma and wondered whether we had ever considered a similar strengthening of ties to China.”

The two diplomats remained in touch. The following year, Yao told Hacohen that China wanted to establish trade relations (presumably to get around the American economic embargo of China).

But back in Washington, Israel’s ambassador to the United States, Abba Eban—under State Department pressure—was pulling the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the opposite direction. Eban would prevail.

Nevertheless, in June 1954 the indefatigable Hacohen met with Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai in Rangoon, Burma. The Chinese leader invited the Israeli to “visit me when you are in Peking.”

A few days later, Zhou told the People’s Congress that negotiations were under way to establish normal relations with Israel. By now, though, Eban thought he was moving toward closing an arms deal with Washington—which wanted to isolate the Chinese Communists—so Hacohen had to forgo the opportunity of a further meeting with Zhou.

Then-President Jiang Zemin of China is shown a communications system at ECI Telecom in Petah Tikva on the last day of his unprecedented April 2000 visit to Israel. ECI Telecom is a world leader in digital communication and data transmission systems. For the last decade, almost all international calls originating from China have been processed through ECI Telecom equipment (Sven Nackstrand / AFP/Getty Images).

The momentum toward an Israel-China relationship had been halted, with devastating consequences.

Israel Loses China

The first intimation that China had abandoned the prospect of ties with Israel came in April 1955 at an international conference in New Delhi, India. The Chinese delegation voted to support a resolution that called on Israel to accept the return of the Arabs who fled during the 1948 War of Independence.

But the real turning point came during the 1955 Bandung Conference, which Egypt helped to organize and that brought together Asian and African states, most of them newly independent. The conference wanted to establish an alignment of countries that had allied themselves with neither the West nor the Soviet Bloc. China was keenly interested in playing a leading role in this so-called Third World movement.

It was at Bandung, Indonesia, that Zhou first met Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser and heard a full exposition of the Arab case against Israel’s establishment as a Jewish state in the Middle East.

Ahmed Shukeiry, who would become the first leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) when it was established by the Arab League in 1964, joined Nasser in his meetings with Zhou.

Although the Chinese leader made only a modest public reference at Bandung to the Arab-Israeli conflict, it was highly significant: “The problem of Arab refugees of Palestine still remains to be solved,” he said.

Throughout the remainder of the 1950s, 1960s, and well into the mid-1970s, China’s political system grew ever more radical. Beijing’s dealings with Washington became increasingly acrimonious, and after Stalin’s death in 1953, Mao Zedong also began to lose faith in the Soviet politburo.

Sino-Soviet ties ruptured completely in 1959. China now viewed everything—including the Palestinian issue—through the lens of superpower rivalry.

It was in this fanatical revolutionary context that China’s denunciations of Israel became more strident and vitriolic.

In March 1965, Mao hosted a delegation from the newly founded Palestine Liberation Organization. He told them,

“You are one gate of the great continent. We are the other. They created Israel for you and Formosa for us. Their goal is the same: to exploit us. The West does not like us. We must understand this fact. The Arab battle against the West is the battle against Israel. So boycott Europe and America, O Arabs.”

by Elliot Jager
To Build or Not to Build
from page 19

A Potential Concrete Ghost Town?

Although current downtown area residents generally welcome the massive development, many worry that it could turn out to be a high-rise concrete jungle largely deserted by its non-Israeli residents during much of the year.

Project manager Yoram Shechter admits that most of the presold condos have been purchased by wealthy North American, European, and South African Jews who mainly plan to live there during the biblical holidays. Still, he maintains that many flats will be occupied year-round—some by resident Israelis—and that public shops and restaurants planned for the bottom floors will insure a constant flow of traffic around the cascading structures.

Shechter’s contentions do not impress some city council members. Those most opposed are from Orthodox and leftist political parties that champion more affordable housing for the local public. They note in particular that many younger Jerusalem couples are forced to locate farther away in the suburbs to afford a home of their own.

Councilman Pepe Allalu from the secular Meretz party objects in particular to the height of the main Jerusalem of Gold tower, which he points out will dwarf most surrounding buildings. “Jerusalem is an historical city with a legacy. You can’t just erect a 24-story apartment building at will,” he said. Israel’s most prominent environmental activist group, the Society for the Protection of Nature, filed the only formal petition against the project, arguing that such high-rise towers within site of the Old City’s famous walls blur Jerusalem’s special topographical form.

In objecting to the Jerusalem of Gold project, some urban planning experts pointed to the prestigious David’s Village, a low-density condo complex completed over a decade ago in a revitalized neighborhood just below the Old City’s Jaffa Gate. They noted that it sits largely empty most of the year, like a phantom ghost town or a Hollywood movie set.

Respected Hebrew University urban geography professor, Amiran Gonen, berated the project for “not creating any real human traffic in a strategic location.” He noted that no other international urban center has its central business district squarely adjacent to an ancient, walled, old city containing spiritual sites that are highly significant to several world religions. He said these conditions give Jerusalem city planners a special responsibility when considering major downtown construction requests.

City Planning Commission head, Yehoshua Pollack, who also serves as a deputy mayor, defended the Jerusalem of Gold dimensions. “We have no problem with this, since building more densely in the center of Jerusalem will help revitalize the city.”

Indeed, most local merchants and restaurant owners seem quite happy with the upscale housing addition, even if most of the wealthy condo owners are only in town a few weeks every year. “They will spend more in a day than some locals can afford to dole out over five years,” said the manager of a nearby retail clothing outlet.

Other Projects Going Up

At least four other high-end apartment and hotel building projects are also in motion around Jerusalem’s modern city core. Work began two years ago on a luxury apartment building next to the Vatican-owned Notre Dame Hotel, across from the Old City’s Christian Quarter.

Another project is going up near Jerusalem’s main business street, Jaffa Road. Twin nine-story apartment towers are rising next to the century-old Russian Compound, which houses Jerusalem’s main downtown police station and jail. Nearby residents express general support for the towers, being built by a large Africa-Israel construction consortium. They are especially happy that bulldozers are plowing under several one- and two-story buildings that have housed popular pubs attracting a noisy, nighttime young-adult clientele.

Two other building projects have drawn far more local opposition. The oldest, approved by city officials in 1999, is humbly called the King David’s Crown condo development. It is being constructed in a transformed sports field behind the landmark YMCA building on King David Street, which itself lies across the street from the prestigious King David Hotel, within sight of the Old City’s walls.

Giant cranes were moved into the former field behind the international Christian center in 2004 after several years of round-the-clock pounding to carve a deep crater out of solid rock and dirt. Local residents originally objected to the eight-story height of the upscale project, which will dwarf the YMCA (apart from its landmark tower) and a series of long-established four- and five-story apartment buildings located along nearby George Washington Street.

Many were angered to learn last year that developers had reneged on written commitments to include two public buildings on the premises, one housing a community center with a library and kindergarten and the other a public sports complex.

A second large-scale development, involving new hotels, expensive private homes, and luxury apartments, finally got under way a couple blocks south of the YMCA after nearly a decade of criticism. More recently, a proposed Four Seasons hotel has been the center of controversy. It apparently has expanded from seven stories to at least 13.

As the prophesied last days of history draw near—featuring a worldwide battle centered on the very place that the God of the universe chose for His special resting place on Earth—the far more mundane construction tussles over Israel’s contemporary capital city will apparently continue to stir up dust in this unique Holy City.
Despite the fact that almost 2,000 years have passed since the second Temple last stood in its glory on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the politics of sacred space have not changed.

The Temple Mount and the city of Jerusalem, of which it is an inseparable part, remain at the center of the Middle East conflict. As in the past, internal religious disputes continue to disrupt the sacred site, while political rivalries have turned it into the most volatile 35 acres on earth.

Today enemies wage a war on history itself by denying that the Jewish Temples ever existed. Ironically, archaeology, the one science that could effectively refute such claims because it is apolitical and strictly academic, has, in the case of the Temple Mount, become the prey of political propaganda.

Yet the dominant influence is religious, and archaeological excavation on the Temple Mount for any purpose is forbidden both by Israel’s Chief Rabbinate and the Islamic Waqf, which administers the site.

**It’s All About Religion**

Although the international news media have perpetuated the notion that the current conflict is political (the Palestinian people’s right to “their land”) or national (the establishment of a Palestinian state), the real cause has always been religious.

In 1970 the Supreme Islamic Research Council stated, “The Palestine Question is not a national issue nor is it a political issue. It is first and foremost an Islamic question.” Furthermore, Article 15 of The Hamas Covenant states, “It is necessary to instill in the minds of the Muslim generations that the Palestinian problem is a religious problem, and should be dealt with on this basis.”

As Mortimer B. Zuckerman, editor-in-chief of *U.S. News & World Report*, observed, “For Hamas, nationalism exists only ‘as part and parcel of the religious faith.’” Shortly after Hamas took control of the government, one of its leaders, Mahmoud al-Zahar, openly declared that Sharia law (Islamic religious law) will soon rule in the Palestinian territories.

Hamas’s all-controlling Islamic agenda especially targets the Temple Mount. A picture of the Islamic Dome of the Rock, which occupies the site of the Jewish Temple, is at the center of Hamas’s logo. Surrounding it are the words “There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet.” Hamas wants to “liberate” the Masjid al-Aqsa, a term that refers to the entire platform containing the site’s religious structures.

It intends to remove all Jewish elements from the site and establish Islamic religious sovereignty. This goal is also inherent in the name of one of the leading terrorist groups responsible for dozens of shooting attacks and suicide bombings against Israeli civilians: the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades.

The name was chosen because the Palestinian Authority (PA) claims Israel plans to destroy the mosques on the Temple Mount and rebuild the Temple. The name symbolizes a resistance effort to defend Islam and its holy places. Even Christian-born Arabs, lured by Palestinian propaganda and indoctrinated in Replacement Theology in their churches and schools, have joined this Islamic terrorist organization.

Because the Islamic worldview recognizes the only relevant history of the region as that which began with Muhammad, any statement that a Jewish Temple once occupied the Haram (“noble enclosure,” an Islamic term for the site) is considered “provocation” to the Islamic mind.

The PA fabricated a revisionist history based on Islamic supercessionism that maintains that nothing other than Islam’s sacred structures have ever occupied the site. The present Palestinian mufti of Jerusalem, Sheik Ikrima Sabri, illustrated this core belief when he declared, “There is not the smallest indication of the existence of a Jewish Temple on this place in the past; in the whole city there is not even a single stone indicating Jewish history.”

When I interviewed him in 1998, Sabri told me a Jewish Temple could never have been on the site, or Allah would never have permitted a mosque to be built there. He said the first mosque was built there by Adam and consecrated by Abraham and Ishmael, the progenitors of the Arab people and “worshipers of Allah.”

With this belief enshrined in sermons and inculcated throughout the Palestinian school system, it is not surprising a sincerely bewildered Palestinian merchant asked me (knowing I am an archaeologist)
Top: A member of the terrorist al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade fires into the air as Palestinians rally at a refugee camp in Nablus on July 14 to support Hezbollah’s war against Israel (Jaafar Ashtiyeh/AFP/Getty Images). Bottom: Trouble between the terrorist groups Hamas and Fatah, both vying for dominance, sparks a rally in a northern Gaza Strip refugee camp in June. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas is with Fatah, but Hamas won the most parliamentary seats in the January 2006 election (Mahmud Hams/AFP/Getty Images).
why the Jews were digging around the Haram: “What’s there that concerns them anyway?”

Explaining that the ancient remains surrounding the site are important for Jewish history only brought the further statement, “These are pre-Islamic, and nobody knows what they are!”

To minds that have been conditioned against critical thinking regarding their religion, no explanation is reasonable or welcome. This fact was made clear to me years ago when, after photographing stones in the retaining wall of the Temple Mount, an official of the Islamic Waqf asked what I was doing. When I said I was researching the past history of the site, he intoned, “You’d do better to forget the past and think about your future!”

**Archaeology Ignites Conflict**

Consequently, Muslims are hostile to Israeli archaeological pursuits of the history of the Jewish nation. They have rioted over excavations of a portion of the Herodian street along the southern end of the Western Wall and the opening of an exit to the subterranean Hasmonean Tunnel into the Muslim Quarter.

Such riots, which often spread into the territories and cost scores of lives, often mystify Westerners who suspect that Israel must have done something more serious to cause the Palestinians to respond so violently. However, as the recent international Muslim riots over an innocuous political cartoon reveal, violence in the name of religion does not require excessive provocation. For Palestinian Muslims—who insist Islamic law permits only Muslims to access the site and who know that archaeologists receive their permits from the Israel Antiquities Authority, an agency of the Israeli government—any penetration of the site is interpreted as the government’s veiled attempt to destroy the Islamic holy places and rebuild the Jewish Temple.

In the Islamic world, there is no distinction between politics and religion. So even if this division exists in the Israeli world in which the Palestinian Muslims live, it is still an alien concept and unacceptable to the Muslim mind.

Consequently, you might expect that the Israeli government would cease trying to placate Islamic religious sensibilities and exercise administrative control over the Temple Mount in order to properly excavate the site and prove to the Islamic world the Jewish claim to the city and the site. But it does not.

**Why Doesn’t Israel Act?**

People are often perplexed as to why successive Israeli administrations fail to deal decisively with the problem of the Temple Mount. In the past decade the situation has gone from bad to worse, with the Palestinian mufti usurping authority from the Jordanian mufti, moving his offices to the Temple Mount, closing the site to Jews, and destroying countless antiquities while constructing new mosques. Although many in the archaeological community protested, they received no support from the Israel Antiquities Authority or the Israeli government.4

What rationale could possibly justify this strange abandonment of what is universally regarded in Judaism as the heart and soul of the Jewish nation and the place where Israel’s final destiny will be realized?

One factor is Israel’s precarious relationship with the international community in light of Islamic terrorism and threats to the West, for which Israel is being blamed. In the past, attempts by Jewish groups to pray on the Temple Mount or hold demonstrations outside the walls of the Old City have resulted in violent Palestinian protests and brought swift condemnation from the UN for acts of “provocation.” The attempt to resolve the final status of Jerusalem at the Camp David II Summit brought mediated negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians to an abrupt halt when the issue of sovereignty over the Temple Mount was raised.

And following a visit to the Temple Mount in September 2000 by Ariel Sharon, then the leader of the Likud Party, and Arab members of the Knesset to investigate reports that the Islamic Waqf destroyed archaeological remains there, the PA staged a second *intifada* (“uprising”) and banned all Jews from the Temple Mount for the next three years until the Israeli government ended this unprecedented challenge to the status quo. This ban continues today with respect to the al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock, and other sensitive areas.

A worker at the Israel Antiquities Authority looks at one of the Dead Sea Scrolls housed at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem. The ancient scrolls were discovered more than 50 years ago in the caves at Qumran. The Israel Antiquities Authority is the leading professional body for the study of the archaeology of Israel. It is in charge of the country’s antiquities, antiquity sites, and archaeological excavations (Menahem Kahana/AFP/Getty Images).
archaeological excavations. Failing to hear my own site mentioned, I asked an official why Qumran, so famous to Israeli history for the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, was excluded. His curt reply was, “Qumran is on the map of the Palestinians.”

Qumran does lie in the area of biblical Judea known today as the West Bank; and it is true that in the provisional borders for Jericho, drawn with the Palestinians in 1994, part of the Dead Sea and two religious sites were to be included.

Yet the precise territory Israel was to concede was never specified. And certainly, the site of Qumran should be championed for archaeological and political purposes, since it continues to host one of the country’s most visited national parks and a popular tourist spot as well as a strategic military base and productive kibbutz (“collective farm”).

Nevertheless, the mere presumption of its inclusion on a proposed map for a future Palestinian state has been sufficient to exclude the site from even a mention at a reception for archaeologists in Israel.

Israel has also, in agreement with the West, staked its future on democracy and diplomacy. However, the nondemocratic countries with which Israel must “negotiate” do not recognize this policy nor respect this method. Islamic leaders are duty-bound to defend the honor of Allah and the “prophet” who subjugated the land of Israel in the seventh century and have never relinquished their claim to it.

To Hamas, this entire land is not only “Palestine” but “Islamic,” and jihad must be waged until it is liberated by the annihilation of the Jewish state. The Hamas Covenant mandates this stand:

The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgement [sic] Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered; it, or any part of it, should not be given up. Neither a single Arab country nor all Arab countries, neither any king or president, nor all the kings and presidents, neither any organization nor all of them, be they Palestinian or Arab, possess the right to do that. Palestine is an Islamic Waqf land consecrated for Moslem generations until Judgement [sic] Day. This being so, who could claim to have the right to represent Moslem generations till Judgement [sic] Day?

This is the law governing the land of Palestine in the Islamic Sharia (law) and the same goes for any land the Moslems have conquered by force, because during the times of (Islamic) conquests, the Moslems consecrated these lands to Moslem generations till [sic] the Day of Judgement [sic].

Consequently, it is understandable why the land most sacred to Islam—land containing the Islamic holy places administered by the Islamic Waqf—would never be negotiated and why Israel’s and the West’s continued attempts to do so are interpreted as a continuation of the Christian crusade against Islam, which had as its chief objective the removal of the Muslim presence from the holy sites in Jerusalem.

The politics of sacred space will continue to occupy center stage as the drama of the Middle East conflict continues to unfold. Ultimately, these events are part of the greater, divine drama that the biblical prophets foretold would climax with the coming of the Messiah to bring judgment to the nations and salvation to Israel (Zech. 12—14; Rom. 11:25–27; Rev. 19:11–17).

**Endnotes**

2 Originally cited in an interview with the German newspaper Die Welt, January 17, 2001.
4 For a complete study of this issue see “How Israel Lost the Temple Mount” in Randall Price’s The Battle for the Last Days Temple: Politics, Prophecy, and the Temple Mount (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2004), 157–78.

Randall Price is president of World of the Bible Ministries, Inc., and a professor at the Pasche Institute of Jewish Studies in Dallas, Texas.
Edgar B. Hardesty, a pastor, teacher, and biblical archaeology enthusiast, has joined the full-time faculty of The Friends of Israel Institute of Jewish Studies (IJS) at Philadelphia Biblical University in Langhorne, Pennsylvania.

“Ed has the tender heart of a pastor, and he loves the people and the land of Israel,” said IJS Director William L. Krewson.

In fact, Hardesty was in Israel this summer working on an archaeological dig as a result of a dig scholarship he received from the Biblical Archaeology Society and a research grant from the Biblical Archaeology Society of Northern Virginia.

A part-time professor at PBU since 1991, Hardesty holds a Master of Theology from Dallas Theological Seminary and is working on a doctorate at Baltimore Hebrew University.

He pastored churches in Michigan before moving to Maryland, where he has pastored for 16 years.

Edgar Hardesty
Joining IJS

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**Quoteworthy**

“Occupation was a mere excuse to persuade gullible and historically ignorant Westerners to support the Arab cause against Israel. The issue is, and has always been, Israel’s existence. That is what is at stake.”

—Columnist Charles Krauthammer

“The turmoil in the Middle East will not stay in the Middle East. This is a world war and the first shots have already been fired in Europe and America. . . . The latest upheaval in the Middle East may subside but the objectives of those whose aim is Israel’s destruction will not.”

—Columnist Cal Thomas

“Are the Israelis over-reacting in Lebanon? Perhaps they perceive their enemies’ intentions with greater clarity than most. . . . According to [a] Jordanian intelligence officer, Iran is reminding America’s traditional allies in the region that the United States has a track record of leaving its friends in the lurch. . . . In his analysis, the implication that this decade may witness a precipitous American withdrawal from Iraq has begun to produce an inclination in the region toward appeasing Iran. It is in Iraq, he told me, ‘where the United States and the coalition forces must confront the Iranians.’ He added, ‘You must build up your forces in Iraq, and you must announce your intention to stay.’”

—Former ABC news anchor Ted Koppel
Editor’s Note: Brigitte Gabriel is a survivor of Islam’s jihad against Lebanese Christians. Her story will astound you. Reared in an Arab country that taught her to hate Israel, her love for the Jewish state today is so strong that she disinterred her mother, who was buried in Lebanon, and reburied her on Mt. Zion so the world will know where her loyalty lies— with Israel.

She is a former news anchor in Jerusalem for Middle East Television and is a national lecturer on the Mideast conflict and founder of AmericanCongressforTruth.com. Her book Because They Hate: A Survivor of Islamic Terror Warns America is available in bookstores. We are privileged to reprint a portion of an interview she gave recently to Jamie Glazov, managing editor of Frontpagemag.com.

Gabriel: I was raised in the only Christian country in the Middle East, Lebanon. A lot of people think the Middle East has always been made up of Muslim countries. That is not true. There once were two non-Muslim countries in the Middle East. One is a Jewish state called Israel, which is under attack for its existence today, and the other was a Christian country called Lebanon, now under a Muslim majority controlling influence.

When Lebanon got its independence from France in the ’40s, the majority of the population was Christian. We didn’t have any enemies. We were merchant descendants of the Phoenicians, strong in commerce in which we prospered.

In no time Lebanon became the Paris of the Middle East, the banking capital of the Middle East. We were the only westernized Arab-speaking country in the region.

I was an only child to older parents. My parents were married for 22 years before I came into their lives. They were unable to have any children. My mother was 55 years old and my father was 60 when I was born. I had the ideal childhood, the love, adoration and attention of two mature adults who looked at me as a miracle in their lives and were thankful to God for blessing them with a child.

Even though I was raised in a Christian country, it was still an Arabic country trying to please its neighbors, the Arab Muslims. Even the Christian private school I went to was affected.

When we studied the Bible, we only studied the New Testament. I never saw the Old Testament or heard anything about it because it was considered the enemy’s Bible. All I heard was Israel is Satan, Israel is the Devil, Israelis are demons, and they are the source of the problem in the Middle East. I was taught the Jews are evil, they are unstoppable, and they want to control the world. I heard nothing but hatred toward the Jews.

FP: Can you expand a bit on some of the tragedy that befell your family? I am sorry that this is painful territory.

Gabriel: The Christians in Lebanon always had problems with the Muslims, but we never thought our neighbors would turn on us. That situation was aggravated by the influx of the Palestinians coming in from Jordan after King Hussein kicked them out in Black September. That’s what tipped the scale in Lebanon. Not only had Muslims become the majority, but they now also felt empowered by the presence of the Palestinians and Yasser Arafat wanting to attack the Christians, take over Lebanon, and use it as a base from which to attack Israel.

When the Muslims and Palestinians declared jihad on the Christians in 1975, we didn’t even know what that word meant. We had taken them into our country, allowed them to study side by side with us in our schools and universities. We gave them jobs, shared with them our way of life. We didn’t realize the depth of their hatred toward us as infidels. They looked at us as the enemy, not as neighbors, friends, employers, and colleagues.

A lot of Muslims poured in from other Muslim countries like Iran—the founder and supporter of Hezbollah, one of the leading terrorist organizations in the world today. They came from Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. The Lebanese civil war was not between the Lebanese; it was a holy war declared on the Christians by the Muslims of the Middle East.

They started massacring the Christians, city after city. Horrific events the Western media seldom reported. One of the most ghastly acts was the massacre in the Christian city of Damour, where thousands of Christians were slaughtered like sheep. The Muslims would enter a bomb shelter and see a mother and a father hiding with a little baby. They would tie one leg of the baby to the mother and one leg to the father and pull the parents apart, splitting the child in half. A close friend of mine was mentally disturbed because they made her slaughter her own son in a chair. They tied her to a chair, tied a knife to her hand, and holding her hand, forced her to cut her own son’s throat. They would urinate and defecate on the altars of churches, using the pages of the Bible as toilet paper. They did so many things. I don’t need to go into any more detail. You get the picture.

Americans just don’t realize the viciousness of the militant Islamic fundamentalists. I think the biggest disservice for the American people was the denial by the networks to air the beheading video of Daniel Pearl [Jewish reporter for The Wall Street Journal, murdered in 2002]. I think we as a society need to see what type of enemy we are fighting.

People have been so sheltered in this country; they have not paid attention to what was going on in the last 20 some years. They were more interested in watching a documentary about Madonna than paying attention to world events.

The majority of the Lebanese army was Muslim. Christians went to universities, not to the military. The Muslims began taking over military bases across Lebanon. They combined their forces with the Palestinians and formed what they called the Arab Lebanese Army and started attacking the Christians. I lived 50 yards below the last military base left in the hands of the Christians. While attempting to bombard the military base their shells missed landing directly on my home, bringing it down and burying me under the rubble. I was 10 years old.

I woke up from a dream life into a nightmare. My eyes were blinded by the bright light of the explosions. But the light faded quickly as a hot continued on page 40
The ancient Israelites must have stood in awe when they observed the first ever, God-ordained celebration of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. This ritual was different from all others the Lord had given to His beloved people as they wandered in the wilderness of Sinai. It was filled with emotion and drama.

The Lord commanded Aaron, “Take from the congregation of the children of Israel two . . . goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering” (Lev. 16:5). A bull was offered as a sin offering for Aaron, the nation’s first high priest. Then the people stared as the two goats were brought “before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting” (v. 7). It was there that lots were cast for the goats—“one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat” (v. 8).

The Israelites must have watched wide-eyed as this drama unfolded. As many as were able crowded around the entrance to the Tabernacle. The goat chosen for the Lord was offered as a sin offering (v. 9):

But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness (v. 10).

The Hebrew word for “scapegoat” is azazel. But the word also refers to the Devil or his dwelling. Literally, the lots were cast so that one goat would go to the Lord and the other to the Devil:

Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities (v. 21–22).

Then the scapegoat was led far into the wilderness where it died, never to be seen again. “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:12). Later tradition says the Jewish people were so afraid the goat would wander back that they pushed it off a cliff. The scapegoat was a wonderful picture of Israel’s sins being carried away. It was an even better picture of what lies in Israel’s future.

Sin separates humanity from a holy God. God cannot look on sin, and chasitement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:5–6, emphasis added).

Like the Yom Kippur scapegoat, on whom the sins of a nation were laid, so would be laid on the Messiah of Israel the sins of an entire world. While the scapegoat took the sins for a season, the Messiah takes our sin for all time. Because He is deity, He can deal with sin in the past, present, and future. The scapegoat foreshadowed the greatest Gift the world would ever receive: a sin-bearer, the Jewish Messiah. While the ancient scapegoat dealt with national sin, the divine Scapegoat deals with individual sin, promising, “He who comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (Jn. 6:37). One day all Israel will be reconciled to God through the Messiah, in the ultimate fulfillment of Yom Kippur:

No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, “Know the LORD,” for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more (Jer. 31:34).

This year Yom Kippur begins on the evening of October 1. Jewish people around the world will fast and pray, hoping their sins have been forgiven and their names sealed in the Book of Life for one more year. There is no longer a priest to cast lots, no scapegoats to send into the wilderness, and no blood to be poured on the mercy seat. For those who know Him, Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel, has finished it all.

by Thomas C. Simcox,
Northeastern States director for The Friends of Israel.
Hizbollah makes no secret of its objective, namely, the destruction of Israel.

It committed an act of war by crossing the international border and attacking soldiers in Israel and kidnapping two of them. It escalated the war by indiscriminately firing missiles at Israeli cities.

Toward the end of 1982, Iran sent fighters to assist in the establishment of a revolutionary Islamic movement in Lebanon. The radical Shi’ia Muslim group that emerged was Hezbollah. Led by religious clerics, the organization aspires to create an Iranian-style theocracy in Lebanon and, ultimately, establish an Islamic government across the Arab world. In recent years, Hezbollah has become part of the Lebanese political process, but it also uses terror as a means to achieve its goals.

As the organizational infrastructure developed, Hezbollah, with Iranian and Syrian assistance, began to establish an extensive military network in the Ba’albek area. Its militias have since spread into the Shi’ite neighborhoods in southern and western Beirut as well as into southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah has repeatedly carried out terrorist actions against Israelis and launched rockets into northern Israel. Israelis have not even been safe outside their homeland. In 1992 and 1994, Hezbollah bombed the Israeli Embassy and the AMIA Jewish center in Buenos Aires. Eight days after the AMIA bombing, the Israeli Embassy in London was car bombed by two Palestinians linked to Hezbollah.

According to Hezbollah, the United States was to blame for many of the country’s problems. Israel was seen as an extension of the United States and a foreign power in Lebanon. The immediate threat is to Israel, but Hezbollah has also repeatedly targeted Americans. There is a partial list in the chart below.

It is tragic that Lebanese civilians are harmed, but the only ones showing concern for noncombatants are the Israelis, who are pinpointing their attacks rather than carpet-bombing areas where they know Hezbollah has bases. Hezbollah has no regard whatsoever for innocents, and that is why it operates inside residential neighborhoods. Of course, Hezbollah terrorists care even less about innocent Jews than they do their own people and indiscriminately fire their rockets into Israeli cities.

Former diplomats are calling for political intervention, but just how is Israel supposed to negotiate with a group bent on its destruction? The diplomats’ answer is to capitulate to Hezbollah demands and trade dozens of Arab prisoners for two soldiers, a formula that would give the terrorists an incentive to continue to kidnap Israelis and do nothing to...
Zechariah closed his prophetic predictions with a sweeping consummation of Israel’s future. The prophet described three major events that will take place: (1) a future invasion of Jerusalem during the Great Tribulation, (2) the destruction of the Gentile invaders at the Messiah’s Second Advent, and (3) the establishment of His Millennial Kingdom. After the Lord’s return, Jerusalem will be exalted and become the center of worldwide worship. These prophecies presuppose Israel’s existence as a sovereign nation in the last days.

This chapter focuses on God’s plan for an elect, preserved, and redeemed Israel. God has not forsaken the covenants He made with the Jewish nation and will bring to fruition everything He has ordained for the Jewish people.

**Massive Attack**

Zechariah’s prophecy begins with a description of Jerusalem’s suffering in the Day of the Lord:

*Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city (vv. 1–2).*

The time is the seven-year Tribulation, also called “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). Near the midpoint of the seven years, a huge army from the north, south, and east will try to capture and plunder Israel, but God will destroy the invaders on the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 38—39).

The Tribulation closes with another attack on Israel. This time, the staging area is called Armageddon (Joel 3:9–16; Rev. 16:14, 16; 19:11–19). It is also called “the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:14). All the armies of the world will converge on Israel with a twofold purpose: to destroy the Antichrist’s rule and annihilate Israel.

The king of the North will descend on Israel. At the same time, the king of the South will come with a confederacy from North Africa. Another group of kings from the East will come across the dried up Euphrates River to do battle. The Antichrist will sweep down with his armies from Western Europe to defend Israel and secure his holdings in the Middle East (Dan. 11:40–44; Rev. 16:12). This campaign will engulf all of Israel, covering a 200-mile radius, with Jerusalem as its center.

Although Joel did not use the term Armageddon, he was one of the first prophets to foretell the details of this battle. Joel said the nations will beat their agricultural implements into weapons and assemble themselves in the Valley of Jehoshaphat to do battle. Today the Valley of Jehoshaphat is called the Kidron Valley and is located between Jerusalem on the west and the Mount of Olives on the east.

The campaign of Armageddon will extend into three other areas: (1) Mount Megiddo, located at the southwest end of the Carmel mountain range and bordering the Jezreel Valley; (2) Edom, located southeast of Jerusalem (Isa. 34:6; 63:1–6); and (3) the whole country of Judah (Zech. 12:2–7; 14:2).

Zechariah described this siege vividly. Jerusalem will be captured; houses, ransacked and plundered; women, violently raped; and half of the population, exiled into slavery. Yet God will spare a remnant of Jerusalem’s population from this massive destruction (v. 2). As previously mentioned, two-thirds of the Jewish people in Israel will die during this invasion, but one-third will be miraculously spared to enter the Millennial Kingdom (13:8–9; Rom. 11:26). The one-third is a righteous Jewish remnant that survives the Battle of Armageddon. God will supernaturally protect these Jews from annihilation by the Antichrist (13:9; Rev. 12:14, 17).

**Messiah’s Appearance**

In Israel’s darkest hour, when once again Jerusalem seems to be marked for destruction and the Jewish people destined for exile, the Lord acts with divine intervention. At that time, said Zechariah, “The LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle” (v. 3). The phrase go forth (go out) is a technical term for a king going to do battle with his enemy. The Lord is pictured here as a warrior coming swiftly to Israel’s side in order to defeat its enemies (Ex. 15:3; Isa. 42:13). If it were not for this promise, the small remnant left in Jerusalem might have despaired.

Awesome will be the appearance of the Lord! Suddenly He will appear in the clouds, and the brightness of His glory will illumine the universe (Mt. 24:30). Messiah is coming, seated on a white horse as a Warrior-King in battle array, coming in righteousness to judge and make war against the Antichrist, the false prophet, and all who follow them into battle against Israel (Rev. 19:11). He is coming to judge the rulers of darkness and reclaim the earth from Satan’s control. The white horse symbolizes the Messiah’s glorious victory over His enemies.
His eyes will be like a “flame of fire” (v. 12), indicating a penetrating gaze that will flash with intelligence, righteousness, and the look of divine wrath upon the wicked. He will wear “many crowns” (v. 12), denoting His royalty and majesty as sovereign King and Lord of heaven and Earth. He will not come alone, but the armies in heaven will follow Him on white horses. They will be clothed in fine linen, clean and white, symbolizing righteousness (v. 14).

How will the armies that invaded Israel react at the Messiah’s appearing? King David said, “Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us” (Ps. 2:2).

Their first response will be to fight Him in hope of destroying Him; but they will be no match for the Lord. Out of His mouth will come a sharp sword that He will use to destroy these rulers and their armies (Rev. 19:15). This sword refers to the Messiah’s Word that proceeds from His mouth. As the Warrior-King, He will simply speak; and His Word will consume the Antichrist and his armies.

The apostle John tells us the Messiah’s “robe [is] dipped in blood” (v. 13). This is not His blood, but the blood of His enemies. “He Himself [Messiah] treads the winepress of the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed [Messiah], saying, “Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us” (Ps. 2:2).

In other words, this massive army will look like grapes crushed in a winepress after the Lord destroys it. The carnage will reach “up to the horses’ bridles” (about five feet high) and cover an area “one thousand six hundred furlongs” (about 200 miles, Rev. 14:20). In contrast, the garments of His armies will be spotless; Messiah alone will fight and gain this victory.

**Messiah’s Arrival**

Once the Messiah intervenes militarily on Israel’s behalf, His feet will touch the Mount of Olives:

*And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south (Zech. 14:4).*

This earthquake is connected to the seventh bowl judgment in Revelation 16:18–19. The newly formed valley will enlarge Jehoshaphat’s Valley, where God will judge the Gentile nations that survive the Great Tribulation (Joel 3:2; Mt. 25:31–46).

 Millennia ago, as the Lord ascended back to heaven after 40 days of His postresurrection ministry, an angel prophesied that He would return in like manner to the same spot on the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9–12). Note that these verses emphasize the physical, personal, public, literal, and visible return of the Messiah back to Earth in His glorified body.

Zechariah continued: “Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah” (v. 5). The split will create a massive valley running eastward to Azal. Although Azal’s location is unknown today, it probably will mark the end of this newly formed valley east of Jerusalem.

Zechariah compared the earthquake’s severity to an earthquake two centuries earlier, in King Uzziah’s day (Amos 1:1). The future earthquake will produce a valley large enough to allow a remnant of Jewish people to flee from the holocaust taking place in Jerusalem.

A host of saints will accompany the Messiah on His return. Overjoyed at the coming of the Messiah, Zechariah cried out, “Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You” (v. 5). The saints are Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:1–2; Jude 14–15), church saints (Rev. 19:8), and Tribulation saints martyred for their faith (7:13–14; 20:4). All will return in their glorified bodies, with the Messiah.

Just before the Messiah’s return, phenomenal changes will occur in the heavens:

*It shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light; the lights will diminish. It shall be one day which is known to the LORD—neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light (Zech. 14:6–7; cf. Mt. 24:29).*

The word diminish means to “thicken, congeal, or become dense.” The celestial heavens will appear as dense, thick darkness immediately before the Lord returns. This day will be one of a kind; it will be difficult to distinguish between night and day. At “evening time,” or the end of this period of darkness, light will reappear. The darkness will end with the light of heaven being restored to an even greater intensity when the Lord appears. Matthew wrote, “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, . . . and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Mt. 24:30). When the Messiah returns, His glory will light the heavens with greater intensity than has ever been seen on Earth.

The apostle John tells us that the Lord’s return will be a worldwide event: “Every eye will see Him. . . . And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him” (Rev. 1:7; cf. Mt. 24:30). Two groups of Earth dwellers will mourn at the Lord’s coming: Those who are unsaved will intuit their destiny and mourn over their impending destruction, and Jewish people will instantly receive the Lord as their Messiah and mourn over their sins (Zech. 12:10–14).

The Messiah’s glorious return will be a great day of rejoicing for Israel. In that day, Israel will experience redemption, victory over its enemies, and peace on earth.

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God Is Moral
(Part 7)

Previously we examined five ways in which God revealed that murder violates and perverts His moral absolutes and fixed order of moral law.

The fifth way was through God giving Israel the following commandment: “You shall not murder” (Ex. 20:13). Some versions of the Bible use the word kill instead of murder. But since the Bible indicates that some killings are not murder but are permissible and, in some cases, required by God, “You shall not murder” is “a more precise reading than the too-general . . . ‘thou shalt not kill.’”

Biblical Distinctions

The Bible reveals that murder of a human being is an unlawful killing.

Furthermore, the fact that God instituted and commanded capital punishment for murderers signifies that executing murderers is not only lawful, but also required by God. The biblical concept that a murderer’s personal blood is on his own head indicates that he, not his executioner, is “morally accountable for the shedding of his own blood” through capital punishment (2 Sam. 1:16; cf. 1 Ki. 2:32–37).

In addition, God’s Mosaic Law required Israel to execute a man who raped a helpless, betrothed woman (Dt. 22:25–27); men and women who had}

...each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to the war.” So there were recruited from the divisions of Israel one thousand from each tribe, twelve thousand armed for war. Then Moses sent them to the war. . . . And they warred against the Midianites, just as the Lord commanded Moses (vv. 3–7).

The Israelites killed the adult males, including the kings of Midian and Balaam the son of Beor (vv. 7–8), the male children, and all the women who were not virgins (v. 17).

When two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og, came with their people to fight against Israel, God delivered them and all the people in their cities to be killed by the Israelites (Dt. 2:30–36; 3:1–11, 21–22).

Through Moses, God instructed the Israelites concerning the cities He had determined to give to them as an inheritance: You shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the Lord your God has commanded you, lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the Lord your God (20:16–18).

In obedience to this instruction, Joshua led Israel to kill all the inhabitants of Jericho except Rahab and her relatives (Josh. 6:2, 17, 20–25) and the inhabitants of Ai (8:1–2, 24–26, 29). Later they did the same to the inhabitants of many cities farther south in the land (10:28–39). They “utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded” (v. 40). Then they did so to inhabitants of cities farther north (11:1–14), “as the Lord had commanded” (v. 15). The Lord hardened the hearts of the kings and inhabitants of these cities “that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them” (v. 20).

Because Amalek abused Israel, God required King Saul, together with Israelite soldiers, to “attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child” (1 Sam. 15:3).
The fact that God commanded Israel to kill people in conjunction with their wars indicates God regarded these killings as lawful and not the same as murder.

The Mosaic Law also signified that a property owner who killed a thief who was breaking in to rob was not guilty of murder. Killing to prevent stealing of property was lawful. However, a property owner was guilty of murder if he killed a thief after the person successfully completed a robbery and got away. That was not killing to prevent stealing of property (Ex. 22:2–3).

The Hebrew word rasah, translated “murder” in the Sixth Commandment, is used almost exclusively for murder—unlawful killing. Wrote Old Testament scholar F. L. Hossfeld: “It is noteworthy that rsh [rasah] is never used for killing in battle or for killing in self-defense. Neither is it used for suicide.” He continued:

An animal is never the object of rsh. For the killing of animals (“slaughtering”), the verb shr [shahah] or tbh [tabah] is used. . . . Deissler [a reference to A. Deissler, Ich bin dein Gott, der dich befreit hat (1975), 102] says that rsh has overtones of the “private sphere” in which the killing in question takes place, thus distinguishing it from lawful execution and killing in battle, which are allowed or even required.

Deuteronomy requires the destruction (herem) of enemy peoples that are conquered in a holy war to win the vital land (Dt. 7:2; 20:17; cf. Josh. 8:26; 1 S. 15:3). The verbs used for ‘kill’ in this context are nkh [nakah] hiphil and hrm [herem].

Thus the Bible distinguishes between murder (unlawful killing) and lawful killing. But it also draws a distinction between two types of unlawful killing: murder and manslaughter.

God commanded Israel to set up cities of refuge at strategic locations throughout the nation to protect the “manslayers.” A manslayer was someone who killed another accidentally or unintentionally, not out of prior hatred (Josh. 20:1–6). Because a manslayer was innocent of premeditated murder, he did not deserve to die (Dt. 19:4–7). A city of refuge would protect him from being executed by an avenger. God thereby distinguished between manslaughter and premeditated murder. Because God did not command these types of killings, both were unlawful. But because manslaughter was accidental or unintentional, the perpetrator did not deserve capital punishment.

### Legal Definitions of Murder

Governments historically have developed legal definitions that distinguish murder from other killings. For example, The Oxford English Dictionary, the recognized authority on English-language definitions, states the following concerning “murder”:

The most heinous kind of criminal homicide. . . . In English (also Sc. and U.S.) Law, defined as the unlawful killing of a human being with malice aforethought; often more explicitly wilful [sic] murder. . . . In British law no degrees of guilt are recognized in murder; in the U.S. the law distinguishes “murder in the first degree” (where there are no mitigating circumstances) and “murder in the second degree.”

By contrast, The Oxford English Dictionary defines manslaughter as follows: Law. A species of criminal homicide of a lower degree of criminality than murder; now defined as criminal homicide without malice aforethought. . . . According to the modern interpretation, manslaughter is committed when one person causes the death of another either intentionally in the heat of passion under certain kinds of provocation, or unintentionally by culpable negligence or as a consequence of some unlawful act.

Likewise, Webster’s New International Dictionary of the English Language states the following concerning murder:

The offense of unlawfully killing a human being with malice aforethought, express or implied. At common law there were no grades or degrees of murder, but by statute in many States of the United States the offense is divided into two degrees, murder of the first degree being the more severely punished and restricted to those cases where the killing was willful, deliberate, premeditated, or especially cruel, or where it was done in the commission of some heinous felony, as arson, rape, etc. Murder is intentional and unlawful homicide.

By contrast, it defines manslaughter as follows:

Law, the unlawful killing of a human being without malice express or implied;—called at common law: involuntary manslaughter, when the killing results from the commission of an unlawful act not a felony or the doing of a lawful act in an unlawful manner, as in culpable negligence; and voluntary manslaughter, when resulting from an act done upon a sudden heat or passion due to sufficient provocation.

These dictionary records of legal, governmental definitions indicate that governments have concluded (1) there are unlawful killings of human beings (murder and manslaughter) and (2) there are lawful killings. The fact that governments call murder and manslaughter unlawful implies they recognize there are lawful types of killing.

Thus the Bible and human government both distinguish between lawful and unlawful killings.

### Footnotes


4 Ibid., 633.


6 Ibid., “manslaughter.”


8 Ibid., s.v. “manslaughter.”

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Look! Up in the sky! It’s a bird. It’s a plane. It’s a superhero who was killed and came back to life then was killed again and came back to life then killed someone else who came back to life. There’s hardly a cartoon character left who hasn’t returned from the grave. Such is the fantasy world of comic books. It is a universe where death is never fatal, merely slightly inconvenient.

In the real world, however, there is no antidote for mortality. When you die, you die; and nothing will bring your stone-cold, lifeless human body back from the beyond so you can live to fight another day in true superhero fashion, only to die again. Scripture says, “It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27).

Perhaps death’s irrevocability is why some people are so fascinated by reincarnation and resurrection fiction. They want to change the unchangeable, control the uncontrollable.

But God has not relinquished to mortal man His power over life and death. He says in Deuteronomy, “I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand” (32:39).

Sometimes, however, God decides to exercise His prerogative to do the impossible. And the mark of genuine, saving faith is believing that He can do it.

Such was the faith of the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 4:8–37. She lived in the northern, apostate kingdom of Israel during the days of Elisha the prophet, yet she believed in the true and living God and in His power to raise her son from the dead.

Scripture does not provide her name but says she was a “notable” woman (probably wealthy) who lived with her elderly husband in Shunem, which was located in the Jezreel Valley in the Lower Galilee, not far from what today is the modern Israeli city of Afula.

Despite the fact that she had no children, particularly, no son—a great tragedy in Israelite society—the Shunammite woman was content. She
apparently had a comfortable home and used it wisely and generously, offering hospitality to Elisha by persuading him to eat there whenever he was in town.

She also evidenced keen spiritual insight in perceiving her guest was a “holy man of God” (v. 9). Wanting to do more for him than feed him, she asked her husband to build and outfit a room for him on the roof of their house, where Elisha would be comfortable and assured of privacy. Wrote Bible scholar Alfred Edersheim:

An outside stair led up from the road to the roof of the house, so that it was not necessary to pass through the interior of a dwelling. . . . This [act of the Shunammite] was indeed thoughtful, unselfish, and withal, respectful kindness and hospitality. . . . Evidently the object was to provide for a prolonged stay on the part of the prophet, and for his complete privacy, and, as appears from the context (5:13), it included not only the prophet, but also his servant.¹

Wanting to thank her, Elisha asked his servant, Gehazi, to summon the woman and ask her what she would like. Interestingly, Elisha did not speak to her directly but, rather, through Gehazi:

Then he said to Gehazi his servant, “Call this Shunammite woman.” When he had called her, she stood before him. And he [Elisha] said to him [Gehazi], “Say now to her, ‘Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?’” She answered, “I dwell among my own people” (vv. 12–13).

These two verses tell much about this woman’s character. The fact that Elisha used an intermediary implies that their relationship never became familiar. And though she was “notable,” she respected the prophet and possessed a humility that distanced her from him.

“The frequency of his visits,” wrote Edersheim, “so far from inducing familiarity, only led to increased reverence on the part of the Shunammite.”² Elisha probably realized as much and felt she would be more at ease revealing her desire to his servant than to him.

But she desired nothing. She had provided for him from sincerity of heart, wishing to help him and expecting nothing in return. She exemplified the apostle Paul’s admonition to Timothy: “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6).

“What then is to be done for her?” Elisha asked (v. 14). Gehazi, apparently more attuned to the grind of everyday life than Elisha, realized the Shunammite had no son. So Elisha called her back to his room and promised her, “About this time next year you shall embrace a son”—not merely a child, but a male heir (v. 16).

This would be an enormous miracle from God’s hand, so much so that the woman, who had known only futility in childbearing, told Elisha, “No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!” (2 Ki. 4:16). Only God could give her this new life. And she understood the magnitude of the blessing. Now she would have a baby to love, wrap her arms around, protect, and provide for. Now she would have a son who would care for her in her old age and carry on her husband’s name. Nothing could have been more wonderful in Israelite society.

But now she also would have a need she never had before, because hers was not the world of comic books and fantasy.

¹ Alfred Edersheim, Bible History, Old Testament, bk. 6, The History of Israel and Judah From the Reign of Ahaz to the Decline of the Two Kingdoms (1890; reprint, 7 vols. in 1, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 766.
² Ibid.
liquid started pouring into my eyes, burning and shutting them closed like glue. I was wounded by shrapnel, which cut the artery in my arm that was twisted on top of my face. Blood was pouring over my face and into my mouth. By the time I was rescued by my parents and taken to a hospital the next morning at 8 A.M., I was on my last breath. I was put on a bench in the emergency room and operated on without anesthesia. As the nurses held me down, the doctors cut my flesh with scissors and sawed into my bone to get out the embedded shrapnel. As I faded in and out of consciousness, between my screams I prayed to God to stop my torture. I ended up in the hospital for two and a half months.

While there, I would ask my parents why this happened to us. They would say because we were Christians, and the Muslims want to kill us. So I knew ever since I was 10 that I was wanted dead simply because I was born a Christian.

When I returned home, my new home was no longer the one that I knew. We ended up living in a bomb shelter underground without electricity, water, and very little food. Little did I know that this would become my life for the next seven years. Our bomb shelter was an 8-by 10-foot cinderblock room buried underground, which my father used as a storage room for our restaurant.

FP: What is life like under the threat of Islamic terror?

Gabriel: We borrowed life one day at a time. After sleeping for a month in cardboard boxes that had been stored in the bomb shelter, thinking this would be over soon, we realized this situation was getting worse and worse. We finally furnished the bomb shelter with two old mattresses from our garage. My mom and I slept on one and my dad on the other. To get food my mother and I would go out and find different types of grass and dandelions to eat around the shelter in between the bombing. My mother would soak chickpeas, rice, lentils, and beans overnight so we could eat something during the day. My father couldn’t get out because, in the bombing of our house, he lost his hearing and he wouldn’t hear the snipers’ bullets or the bombs coming so he could hide. He had to stay put while my mother and I got out. To get water, we would crawl in a ditch under snipers’ bullets to a nearby spring. Every time we’d leave, we would say our last goodbyes because we didn’t know if we would come back alive. My mother would use her stocking on top of the bottle to filter all the worms and the debris so we could drink it. Then we would crawl back with bullets flying over our heads. Sometimes it would take us hours just to crawl 100 feet back into the bomb shelter.

One day when I was 13, one of our soldiers warned us that we were no longer able to fight and we were going to be attacked viciously that night. He wished us a merciful death as he left. Knowing we were going to be slaughtered that night, I put on my Easter dress because I wanted to look pretty when I was dead, knowing that there would be nobody to prepare me for burial. I stood in my dress in front of the mirror, crying as my mother combed my long hair and tied a white ribbon in it. I told her, “Please, I don’t want to die. I’m only 13.”

FP: Discuss your intellectual journey about your view of Jews and Israelis, from what you were told in your childhood to when you started questioning whether it was true, to what you think today.

Gabriel: My town was two and half miles from the Israeli border. We in our Christian town were faced with the combined Muslim and Palestinian forces waiting to slaughter us. We knew our fate, knowing what they had done to other Christian towns and cities in the rest of Lebanon. To our back was Israel—the enemy, Satan, the demon possessed Jews. We had nowhere to turn but one way, to the devil Israel. After all, we knew the Jews wouldn’t slaughter us because we had more shared values with them than we had with the Muslims. Under the cover of darkness, a few men from our town went to the border, flagged down an Israeli border patrol, explained the situation, and begged for help.

Israel agreed to help the Christians. Israel became our lifeline. The Israeli military would come during the night and bring food and ammunition to the military and milk for the children. They would take the Christian men, anyone from age 13 to 70, and train them to fight; most of them had never held a rifle before. Most of the Christian men had degrees that decorated their walls, but all the degrees in the world cannot defend you when an enemy is facing you with a gun, wanting to kill you by what your enemy believes is an order from God.

The only reason we stayed alive is because Israel came into Lebanon and drove the Muslims away from the surrounding hills and
set up positions in our town to protect us. Things got worse as Syrians, Libyans, Iranians, Egyptians became enraged and flocked into Lebanon to fight the infidel Christians and Jews.

The Muslims had one vision, to take control of the only Christian country in the Middle East and then attack Israel. Syria with its military already suffocating the Christians, Iran with its militia Hezbollah, the PLO with the number one world terrorist Yasser Arafat, and all the other Muslim zealots on a holy mission, were using Lebanon as a terrorist breeding ground, exporting terrorism into the rest of the world. Under the auspices of a peacekeeping force in Lebanon, Syria shelled Israel along with Hezbollah, the Iranian-financed holy warriors. The world press, which was getting its information from the Muslim-controlled areas in Beirut, were saying that Israel is occupying Lebanon and the poor Lebanese were fighting back to kick the Israelis out.

By 1982 Israel was fed up with Syria’s repeated attacks on its northern border. They invaded Lebanon, declaring war on the terrorist infrastructure, going all the way into Beirut. During the first two days of the invasion as the Muslims were retreating, they shelled us frantically. In their last artillery barrage, they scored a direct hit on the front of our bomb shelter. My mother was seriously wounded and would die without immediate medical attention. My father was too old and weak to take her to the hospital. The responsibility fell on my shoulders. We had to take her to Israel for treatment. For her it was a life-saving experience. For me it was a life-changing experience. It was my first lesson in the difference between the Arabs and the Western world, particularly the Jews.

Before we left, my father gave me $60 dollars in case I needed some money since we were going to Israel for treatment. We took her first to the Lebanese hospital in a town which was vacant and bombed out. There was an Israeli doctor on duty for first aid situations. He gave my mother first aid, and we put her in an Israeli ambulance and drove her under the bombs to the border. It was about a 10-minute drive; the driver was a friend of the family. When we got to the border we changed ambulances. The Lebanese driver asked me if I had any money for the ambulance fee. Like an innocent teenager who never handled money, I took it out of my pocket and handed it to him and asked him how much did he want. He said, “Give me $30,” which was half the money I had. I thanked him for driving us with tears dripping down my face and got in the Israeli ambulance, and we drove off.

The drive to the hospital inside Israel was an hour long. The driver was a middle-aged soldier. He treated me like his own daughter, with such respect and compassion. He listened to the radio and explained to me how the war was going in Lebanon. I felt alone and afraid. My mother was fading in and out of consciousness and moaning from pain. We got to the hospital, and I walked around the ambulance to pay him the fee. I took the money out of my pocket thinking, God, I’m sure this is not going to be enough for this man. If the 10-minute drive cost me $30, I’m sure this is going to be much more. I extended my hand with the money, asking him how much I owed him. He looked at me surprised and said, “You don’t owe me anything. The ambulance ride is a free service from us to you. Keep your money. I wish everything goes well with you. I wish your mother health, and speedy recovery.”

I thanked him from the bottom of my heart and thought to myself, What an honest man!! What an ethical man! He could have taken my money and partied all night, and I would have not known the difference. Yet he didn’t. And all of a sudden I felt this anger towards the Lebanese driver who was supposedly a friend of the family. I realized that he actually stole my money. I didn’t have to pay a fee for the ambulance; he basically robbed me. I felt violated. I thanked the Israeli driver from the bottom of my heart for his honesty and help.
As we approach the great High Holiday of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, I like to go to the ultra-Orthodox section of Jerusalem to speak to the people there.

As one who believes in the true Day of Atonement—when our God gave His only begotten Son to be the final atonement for our sins—I am obligated to go to my people, who live in such great spiritual darkness, and tell them the truth. They do not understand that the Lord saves us if we receive Him as our Savior.

So what does an ultra-Orthodox person do? He swings a chicken over his head while saying the words, You are my sacrifice, by whom my sins will be forgiven. The ultra-Orthodox men also perform this ritual for people who pass in the street and pay them for this service.

So I asked a gentleman who paid for such a chicken, “What do you think? Do you think that because of this poor chicken, you are now free from your sin?” “Of course!” he said. “You saw what I did. And I paid money for it!”

So I opened my Bible and showed him the value of his money:

Then Midianite traders passed by, so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt (Gen. 37:28).

The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver (Ps. 119:72).

Moreover the profit of the land is for all; even the king is served from the field. He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase (Eccl. 5:9–10).

“Why do you tell me this?” he asked. Since we were in the Old Quarter of the city, many people began to gather around us and listen with great attentiveness. They also began to ask questions.

“It is clearly written in the Bible that neither money nor a poor chicken can save you,” I said. “But there is a way you can be forgiven of your sins.”

Many people began to ask how they could be saved. So I told them about the one who is our atonement. “Only by Him can your sins be forgiven,” I said. “He was our atonement. And if we receive Him, we can be saved. He was the sacrifice for our sins. And all that you are doing—paying money to someone who gives you a chicken to swing over your head—does nothing for you.

“You have a great opportunity now to receive true forgiveness from God. And it will cost you nothing. You do not have to buy it.”

Again and again they wanted to know where all this was written. It was finally time to show them. So I opened my Bible and read Isaiah 53. They had never heard this portion because the rabbis forbid it to be read in the synagogue. I particularly wanted them to hear verses 5-6, where it is written, But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Every one of them wanted to read these words for himself. So I let each one read.

“Have a good look,” I said. “This is the Bible. Is this not truth?”

Since we were in the Old Quarter of the city, many people began to gather around us and listen with great attentiveness. They also began to ask questions.

“It is clearly written in the Bible that neither money nor a poor chicken can save you,” I said. “But there is a way you can be forgiven of your sins.”
I replied, “If you would like to continue our conversation, I will show you what the Bible says about what you think you must do. Do you pray every morning?”

“You see how we are dressed,” one replied. They all wore hats and the long black clothes of the ultra-Orthodox. “We are religious people. We pray every morning and three times a day.”

“Then tell me what is written in Deuteronomy 6.” No one answered. Instead, someone asked me to tell them. So I did.

“The chapter contains the most important words that you pray in your loud, high voices: ‘Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!’ [Dt. 6:4]. To whom are you going for forgiveness? Are you going to the Lord our God or to the rabbis, before whom you bow down and whose hands you kiss? And after you do these things, you believe your sins are forgiven. But you are wrong because you do not go to the living God but to men.”

“How do you know all this?” someone asked.

Because it is written,

Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; “For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.” . . . Praise the LORD, call upon His name; declare His deeds among the peoples, make mention that His name is exalted (Isa. 12:2, 4).

I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD (Ps. 118:17).

I told them, “God does not tell us that we can be saved by chickens. He tells us to come to Him. You obey the laws of men who are blind and do not know the truth. I believe in the living God, not in chickens. Therefore, it is my obligation to come to you.”

And with all the people standing around me, I read Isaiah 9:2: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.”

I was certain they would begin to attack me. But they were happy to hear these words and told me that they enjoyed our time together and gained wisdom from it.