And I saw a new heaven and a new earth...
Bible History Old Testament Ad (Waveline)
IN THIS ISSUE

Goose-Stepping Americans?
by Elwood McQuaid ..................................... 8
An influx of Muslim immigrants is changing the face of Europe. Suddenly, Americans are being called the new Nazis; and Bush, the new Hitler.

The New Heavens and New Earth
by Douglas Bookman ................................... 14
What a joy it will be to step from this life into the glorious future that awaits all true believers. But don’t think it will be all play and no work.

The Final Rebellion
by Peter Colón ............................................. 18
Peace. Tranquility. Justice. They will cover the Earth like a blanket during the millennial rule. But will mankind be satisfied? What do you think?

The Restrainer
by Renald E. Showers .................................... 20
Someone or something is preventing evil from overtaking the world. And when this restrainer is removed, it truly will be like hell on Earth.

Safeguard Your ‘Moorings’
by Bruce Scott ............................................. 27
True faith requires commitment. Without it, you can find yourself awash in the world. Have you checked your moorings lately?

TIME TO RENEW?
Check the mailing label on the back cover of this magazine. The date in the upper right corner of the label indicates the end of your current subscription.
Use the enclosed envelope to renew.

Subscription Rates:
USA: $16.95 for 1 year, $25.95 for 2 years
Overseas: $19.95 for 1 year, $31.95 for 2 years
(U.S. dollars only) Single copies $4 each
Canada: $21.95 CAD for 1 year, $31.95 CAD for 2 years
Israel My Glory is also available in Spanish.
Call during business hours 8 A.M. to 9 P.M. (Eastern time) 800-345-8461

ABOUT THE COVER
The book of Revelation speaks eloquently of a new heaven, a new earth, and the new Jerusalem. In short, a new creation. It also portrays an eternal state where death, anguish, suffering, and the machinations of Satan and his demonic, fallen angels will no longer plague God’s people. And through the ages to come, we will live His promise to make all things new. Our cover depicts the majesty of that hope. (Digital composition, Thomas E. Williams)

ALSO FEATURING
From Bill Sutter’s Desk ....................... 4
Eye On the Middle East ..................... 5
Editorial ............................................. 6
The Invasion by Gog and Magog .... 11
The Book of Zechariah ................. 24
The Foundations of Faith .............. 28
Islam’s Suicide Solution ............ 30
A Literal Kingdom on Earth .......... 31
From Terrorist to Zionist ............ 32
Conversions Won’t Hasten 2nd Coming 34
Myths/Facts ................................. 35
They Cry in Silence .................. 36
Women of the Bible ................. 38
Israel in the News ................. 40
Zvi ................................................................ 42

To contact us, call 856-853-5590 or 800-257-7843.
We’ve redesigned our Web store! There’s never been a better time to visit www.foi.org.

Note: No materials contained in this magazine may be reproduced in any form without the permission of The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc. For all permissions, please write to Mrs. Vera Bowker, The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc., P.O. Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08039.

Israel My Glory (ISSN 8755-402X) is published bimonthly for $16.95 per year by The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc., an independent, Bible-believing faith mission committed to evangelism, education, and edification for 65 years.

ECPA
The symbol of trust

© Copyright 2004 The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA by Waveline Direct.
And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon (Rev. 16:16).

We looked at verses in Revelation 16 and 19 to identify the opponents in this latter-times conflict. On one side will be the kings and armies of the nations of the world. On the other side will be He who is the Word of God. At Armageddon, Messiah and His forces will defeat the armies of the rebellious Gentile world powers and establish His rule over them:

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:15–16).

Fighting on the side of His people, the Lord will judge the godless Gentile nations who lay siege against Israel. And in keeping with His promises, He will deliver His people.

What is the ultimate destiny of the Jewish people? Bible-believing Christians know the true end-times scenario, orchestrated by the Lord Himself, that is, the redemption and reconciliation of the nation to Messiah in preparation for His reign, as recorded by the prophet Zechariah:

Thus saith the LORD of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you (Zech. 8:23).

Bill Sutter teaches about the Battle of Armageddon as tour members view the Valley of Jezreel, where the future conflict will take place.

Turning to the Old Testament, we noted the Hebrew prophet Joel's further explanation of the Lord's intervention on behalf of His people:

I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and will judge them there for my people and for my heritage, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land (Joel 3:2).

Throughout this issue of Israel My Glory magazine are many illustrations of The Friends of Israel's commitment to the clear teaching of God's prophetic Word. As you consider His marvelous works—past, present, and future—our prayer is that you will be strengthened in His truth and encouraged in your walk with Jesus Christ.

William E. Sutter is the executive director of The Friends of Israel.
We have known for years that Islamist terrorist cells have been operating in the United States and North America. In 1994 investigative reporter Steven Emerson produced a one-hour documentary, *Jihad in America,* that aired on PBS. The video featured never-before-seen terrorist conferences and documented the operation of a terrorist network in the United States. Emerson used footage shot by the terrorists themselves, often in meetings where Islamic leaders exhorted their followers to commit violence against Jewish people, Christians, and moderate Muslims.

*The Washington Times* reported that if the World Trade Center bombing was a wake-up call to the very real threat of Middle East terrorism coming to the United States, the PBS documentary “ought to be a call to serious action.”

But that was nearly a decade before September 11, 2001. And in the mid-1990s, few people, in or out of the government, were paying attention. The pervasive belief was, “It couldn’t happen here.”

On 9/11 that delusion was shattered in a single, dreadful morning. Before the attacks in New York and Washington, most were of the opinion that the Islamic terrorist cells located in major cities across the country were nothing more than isolated bands of radicals with bad intentions but little power.

Now an article by Jerry Seper in the February 10 *Washington Times* describes how terrorists are increasing their efforts to infiltrate the United States: “Islamic radicals are being trained at terrorist camps in Pakistan and Kashmir as part of a conspiracy to send hundreds of operatives to ‘sleeper cells’ in the United States, according to U.S. and foreign officials.”

According to the report, law-enforcement officials believe dozens of Islamic extremists have been routed into the U.S. through Europe and resettled in Muslim communities. Intelligence officials state that, despite denials by Pakistani officials, as many as four hundred terrorists have been and are being trained in the camps in Pakistan and Kashmir. And the funding, they say, is coming from al-Qaeda and sources in Saudi Arabia.

Already al-Qaeda sleeper cells are in forty states, according to the FBI and other federal authorities. And what are these terrorist operatives doing? “Awaiting orders and funding for new attacks in the United States. Financed in part by millions of dollars solicited by an extensive network of bogus charities and foundations, the cells use Muslim communities as cover and places to raise cash and recruit sympathizers,” writes Seper.

All of which brings us to the question of how much the average American citizen knows, or even cares to know, about such potentially deadly activity. According to columnist Cal Thomas, not much. In a piece titled “The Threat Among Us,” Thomas writes,

*One of the advantages the United States has had over its enemies is that they openly state their goals. One of the advantages our enemies have over the United States is that too many Americans don’t take them seriously. We prefer the short-term comfort that denial brings. We fear being labeled “bigots” more than we fear the intentions of those who hate us, and so we are reluctant to speak ill of another person’s faith, unless it is the majority faith. We watch events in the Middle East from a distance and the comfort of our living rooms. It is a violent and bloody region of the world. And we must realize that the worst perpetrators of violence are on a global quest. Israel and other freedom-loving people on the other side of the planet are not the last intended victims. Europe and North America are engaged, like it or not, in a conflict that will surface with fury if the denizens of the “sleeper cells” have their way.*

The lesson from 9/11 is that we probably didn’t learn much from that terrible episode. The fact is, our enemies have plans for us. The issue is, What plans do we have for them?

United States is that too many Americans don’t take them seriously. We prefer the short-term comfort that denial brings. We fear being labeled “bigots” more than we fear the intentions of those who hate us, and so we are reluctant to speak ill of another person’s faith, unless it is the majority faith. We watch events in the Middle East from a distance and the comfort of our living rooms. It is a violent and bloody region of the world. And we must realize that the worst perpetrators of violence are on a global quest. Israel and other freedom-loving people on the other side of the planet are not the last intended victims. Europe and North America are engaged, like it or not, in a conflict that will surface with fury if the denizens of the “sleeper cells” have their way.

The lesson from 9/11 is that we probably didn’t learn much from that terrible episode. The fact is, our enemies have plans for us. The issue is, What plans do we have for them?
friend of mine who lives in Jerusalem was on his way to work on the morning of January 29. He was suffering the usual heavy morning traffic, three cars behind an Egged bus loaded with schoolchildren and commuters. Suddenly a huge explosion and ball of fire tore through the rear of the bus, ripping it to shreds and flinging bodies and body parts high into the air.

A young suicide bomber had boarded the bus a few stops earlier. He had left his Bethlehem home at four in the morning to carry out his deadly attack. His mentors and suppliers of the lethal device laden with metal balls, nails, and bolts were members of Yasser Arafat’s Fatah-linked al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades.

As rescuers rushed to the scene, they saw ten bodies and more than fifty wounded scattered amid the wreckage. The count in both cases would rise over the next few days.

Such horrific atrocities are seen in the West only in short clips that provide glimpses of the scene after the victims’ remains have been removed. These images are far from what my friend witnessed from the windshield of his car.

The sanitized reports talk much of political frustration and offer reasons why these Arabs consider genocide a legitimate enterprise. Then there are the protestations, sincere or insincere, condemning the acts, often coming even from those behind the deadly bombings.

What reporters tend to obscure is the human side of the issue. Virtually nothing is mentioned about the Palestinian victim who carries his backpack onto a bus and flips the switch on the detonator. Yes, he is a victim too—a victim of years of brainwashing and incitement in classrooms, summer camps, and vehemently anti-Israel mosques by unscrupulous leaders who promise paradise, a martyr’s welcome by Allah, and money that will enrich his family after he “sacrifices” himself.

Before his fall, Saddam Hussein and our allies, the Saudis, sent thousands of dollars to the families of suicide bombers. Through notes and prerecorded videotapes left behind, to be exploited by those who feed these victims into the jaws of certain death, the bombers urge their families to celebrate their “heroism” and send candy to the people of their towns and villages.

The pathetic episodes are an inexpressible horror that should bring the wrath of civilized nations down on the purveyors of this newest weapon of war. But it doesn’t. Instead, there is silence or a sort of justification and placing of blame on the victims themselves. In this case, victims who were just trying to get to school.

But what brings these unspeakable atrocities into sharp focus is the immediate aftermath of such attacks. Everywhere are charred bodies, body parts, bits and pieces of human remains in the streets, on the storefronts, and on the faces of those who stood nearby. Innocent lives were cruelly snuffed out because they were Jewish and unfortunate enough to get on a bus at the wrong time and on the wrong day.

For one observer, this attack seemed different. As he ran to the scene to offer whatever assistance he could render, he heard the sound of dozens of cell phones scattered among the carnage, ringing endlessly.

“The cell phones,” he said, “wouldn’t stop ringing.”

That observation succinctly summarizes the depth of the tragedy that, for over the past three years of Arafat’s war on the Jews, has struck down more than one thousand innocent men, women, and children.

On one end of the relentless ringing were frantic parents, friends, or family members hoping to confirm that their child or loved one was all right. On the other end, lying in the bloodied street, were phones that would never be picked up. On one end life; on the other, death.

Sadly, that is only the beginning of the story. The next day come the funerals. The faces and lists of the dead appear in newspapers and on television. But the hardest blow of all is the finality of the event, starkly depicted in the echoes of the unanswered cell phones. That loss will stalk every day and night for all of the years to come.

You see, the story isn’t told by the remains of bombed-out buses—vehicles that can be replaced and service restored the next day. It is told by human casualties, who cannot be replaced. And if the mania and hysteria of war subside before the Lord brings it to an end, the casualty count will still be the same. And tears will continue to stain the faces of the innocent survivors.
Thousands of Jewish people will make their traditional trek on foot to the Western Wall later in May to celebrate one of Judaism’s holiest days, Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks.

One of three God-given pilgrimage festivals, Shavuot (Hebrew for “weeks”), also called Pentecost (Greek for “holiday of fifty days”), begins at sundown May 25, fifty days after the start of Passover.

Shavuot has enormous significance to Jews and Christians alike because it is both the birthday of the Jewish nation and the birthday of the church.

On the third day of the third month (Ex. 19:1, 11), the Lord descended on Mount Sinai in smoke and fire and spoke the Ten Commandments that form the basis of Jewish law (Torah). There He transformed three million Hebrew refugee-slaves into a nation designed to be a special treasure to Him (Ex. 19:5—20:1–17).

The fourteenth day of the first month (Ex. 12:1, 6) was the Lord’s Passover. He spared every Israelite home in Egypt that had sacrificed a lamb and applied its blood to the lintels and doorposts. But He destroyed all Egypt’s firstborn.

About fifteen hundred years later, Jesus died on Passover as the “lamb of God.” And on Shavuot the Holy Spirit descended on devout Jewish men who had come to Jerusalem (Acts 2:1–5). They heard the apostle Peter preach about Jesus, and three thousand “gladly received his word” and were baptized (Acts 2:41). So began the church.

This unique school offers . . .

A **An Accredited Program**
PBU is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.* So you can earn 38 hours of credit toward a bachelor’s degree.

A **An Accommodating Schedule**
Twenty-four courses are divided into eight three-week modules, plus a two-week study tour abroad. Attend full-time, part-time, or take any course in any module.

A **An Avenue for Continued Study**
Over half of our graduates continue their education at PBU, using their IJS credits to earn a bachelor’s degree.

A **An Affordable Cost**
IJS costs the same as a year at PBU. Federal and state loans and grants are available, as well as scholarships.

A **An Accomplished Faculty**
Our faculty combines outstanding academic excellence and practical ministry with many years of teaching, pastoral, and evangelistic experience.

A **An Accepting Environment**
IJS enrollment is limited. So your educational, interpersonal, and ministry experiences are maximized. And faculty student discipleship is an integral part of the program. IJS is for students of all ages—from 17 to 70!

For more information, contact The Friends of Israel Institute of Jewish Studies, Philadelphia Biblical University, 200 Manor Avenue, Langhorne, PA 19047. Or call 215-702-4356, 800-366-0049, or e-mail foi-ijs@pbu.edu. Check out the IJS Web page: www.pbu.edu/programs/ijs.

The world the former Israeli prime minister referred to is the realm of the Western democracies. The Jewish State of Israel is an extension of the West, with all of its unfettered freedom, boundless resourcefulness, and optimism about what the future could hold if peace were achieved. For these reasons and more, fanatical Islamists, now on a crusade to destroy Israel and globalize their repressive interpretation of Allah’s will, are determined to have it all—at any cost.

Without fear of serious contradiction, one can delineate the general strategy for reaching this goal. First are Israel and the Middle East. Phase I is to destroy every vestige of Western presence and influence there.

Phase II is the conquest of Europe where, until recently, Islamists have chalked up an impressive score. Then, of course, comes the United States—the Goliath-like “Great Satan”—enabler of every evil deed perpetrated on the planet.

In the mix, although hardly noticed by liberal, North American and European movers and shakers, is the long-standing, often-voiced Islamic commitment to crush the “Saturday people” first and then deal with the “Sunday people.” If many didn’t believe it then, they had better believe it now.

**Israel Under the Gun**

An in-your-face example of just how determined the Muslim and Palestinian worlds are to set the stage for a Jewish exodus out of the Middle East is the recent charade at the International Court of Justice in The Hague over Israel’s security fence.

The Israeli government refused to be hauled before the tribunal, convinced that the court had no jurisdiction to initiate hearings on the fence. To their credit, the United States, all of Europe, Russia, Japan, and China refused to participate.

Nevertheless, the Palestine Liberation Organization, along with Israel-hating, Arab-Muslim nations, was allowed to vent in an exhibition that was nothing less than a show of racist venom, as is so often the case in the environs of the United Nations and its institutions.

Missing, of course, was the fundamental issue of **WHY** the 450-mile security fence is being built—an issue Islamists and their cadres of suicide bombers avoid at all cost. The day before the hearing began in the Netherlands, a bus was bombed in Jerusalem. Eight innocent people died, while more than sixty were wounded.

Barely three weeks earlier, another suicide attack took eleven lives and injured more than seventy. And those tragedies do not begin to tell the story of how many such attacks Israeli authorities thwart on a daily basis.

**Europe on the Brink**

An awakening of sorts has come to the statehouses of Europe. The cost of allowing an influx of millions of Muslim immigrants is beginning to be tallied. For starters, radical Islamists are fomenting a disturbing anti-Semitic atmosphere that many say has brought Europe back to the terrible days of the 1930s.

According to a 2002 report by the World Jewish Congress, the Muslim population in the European Union ranges from twelve million to twenty million—which means there are more
The Netherlands, with a population of sixteen million, is currently home to one million Muslim immigrants. Dutch legislators now want the government to investigate activities in the mosques, which often incite anti-western sentiment and violence:

There is a strong current in Muslim society in Europe that balks at the idea of any genuine integration into the surrounding society. Quite the contrary, in the European Muslim community a definite and very worrying rise in religious fundamentalism can be observed—one that precludes Muslims from becoming full-fledged members of the societies in which they live. This is not a question of resistance toward adopting a different life-style or adherence to age-old ritual, but rather a conscience and often militant antipathy to the dominant host culture.1

For some European leaders the event in The Hague over Israel’s security fence was a catalyst:

Some of them . . . understood that what they were witnessing was not a trial, but an invasion, an invasion of barbarians from juridical moonscapes such as Cuba, Algeria, and Saudi Arabia who landed in the heart of Europe in order to collapse Western ideals and institutions—in this case the independent judiciary. And those Europeans who get all this are the same ones who are finally beginning to understand that theirs is a choice between regressing to the past’s anti-Semitism or confronting the future’s Islamism.2

Muslims in Europe than there are Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, Greeks, Czechs, and Hungarians. In Great Britain Muslims now outnumber Roman Catholics and constitute the second largest religious community in the nation. In France the Muslim population numbers some six to eight million.

France reportedly has twelve hundred mosques, funded almost without exception by foreign money and led by imams imported from other countries. All too often they teach and preach the virulent, anti-Jewish, rabidly radical, Wahhabi brand of Islamist fundamentalism.

America’s ‘Fuhrer’

To depict evil and spread the notion that an individual represents the demonic dregs, the worst the world has to offer, a comparison to Adolf Hitler often serves the purpose. With increasing fervor and frequency, Islamic leaders make this horrific association.

A chilling example is seen in an article published February 16 in the Arabic paper Al-Hayat Al-Jadida:

The world stands today at the edge of a dangerous slope which threatens the destiny of all humanity. . . . President Bush will be juicy material for tens of psychology books, for he has many characteristics of historical figures that left a negative impact on [the] course of global history lead by the Fuhrer of Germany, Adolf Hitler, and his Nazi and racist proclamations. The Cuban President, Fidel Castro who has deep knowledge of President Bush’s history already called him “Fuhrer of the globalization era or the new world order.”

. . . And while the German Fuhrer’s adventure ended with tens of millions of dead and wounded, and partial destruction of several countries, this adventure of the new Fuhrer [Bush] will return the world to the Stone Age.3

It is of no little interest that there are frequent references to the Cuban Communist dictator Fidel Castro and America-haters in the Muslim world. America’s tenacious desire to free oppressed people and spread democracy is a gallant contradiction to every principle these masters of fear and deprivation understand.

The same can be said of the tyrannical leaders of North Korea—a Communist ghetto-state that has made it a national obsession to take from the poor and give to the military to enhance its ability to make war and enrich its stockpile of horrific instruments of destruction. As in Palestinian Authority classrooms, North Korean children are psychologically brutalized by xenophobic lessons in how to hate.

A CBS 60 Minutes segment in February documented the journey of a Dutch reporter who received permission to visit classrooms and interview North Korean children. Her purpose was to assess their response to The Diary of Anne Frank, Holland’s most famous book. It was written by Anne Frank, a Jewish teenager and Holocaust victim who, with her family, spent two years in hiding in Amsterdam, Holland, before being betrayed and taken to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp where she died.

Her diary has been printed in more than sixty-five languages and has
brought hope and inspiration to countless millions. Her message reveals the triumph of personal courage and love in the face of overwhelming odds.

The message being transmitted from her work to the children of North Korea, however, is vastly different. President George Bush is the vile imperialist warmonger, a reincarnation of Adolf Hitler; and Americans are his goose-stepping minions on a mission to brutalize and slaughter the innocent masses. To witness the mutilation of all that Anne Frank’s memory represents and to see the hatred etched in the faces of these young people was extremely disturbing.

But beyond that was the question, “Will these millions of boys and girls in the world of remnant Communist societies and crusading Islamic countries ever be reclaimed from the debilitating brainwashing they receive in their irretrievable, formative years?”

The Diary of a Young Girl, first published in 1947 under a different title, is Anne’s story in her own words. Written during her two difficult years in hiding (1942–1944) with her parents, sister, and another Jewish family, it reveals her emotions, fears, hopes, and dreams while shut off from the outside world in a cramped, secret annex above her father’s warehouse in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam, Holland. Following are a few excerpts:

Our many Jewish friends and acquaintances are being taken away in droves. The Gestapo is treating them very roughly and transporting them in cattle cars to Westerbork, the big camp in Drenthe to which they’re sending all the Jews . . . . We assume that most of them are being murdered. The English radio says they’re being gassed. —October 9, 1942

Have you ever heard the term “hostages”? That’s the latest punishment for saboteurs. It’s the most horrible thing you can imagine. Leading citizens—innocent people—are taken prisoner to await their execution. If the Gestapo can’t find the saboteur, they simply grab five hostages and line them up against the wall. You read the announcements of their death in the paper, where they’re referred to as “fatal accidents.” —October 9, 1942

I’ve reached the point where I hardly care whether I live or die. —February 3, 1944

It’s a wonder I haven’t abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart . . . . It’s utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too, I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more. —July 15, 1944.

Anne’s final entry was August 1, 1944. Someone betrayed the family to the Nazis, who raided the annex three days later, arrested all eight occupants, and deported them to concentration camps.

Only Otto Frank, Anne’s father, survived. His secretary, Miep Gies, later searched the hiding place and found Anne’s diary, which she gave to Mr. Frank after the war.

Anne Frank’s The Diary of a Young Girl has sold more than 31 million copies in sixty-seven languages and is one of the best-selling books of all time.

Through it, Anne’s memory lives on—a symbol of courage, hope, and life to millions—and the voice of centuries of Jewish people who have yearned, with Anne, for the time “when we’ll be people again and not just Jews.”

Is America the ‘New Germany’?

The answer to this question is demonstrated every day in the conduct of the majority of American citizens, leaders, soldiers, and in the immeasurable amount of humanitarian efforts and resources being spent to bring aid and comfort to a world awash in privation and suffering. The same can be said of many of America’s Western allies and, most certainly, of Israel, which gives terrorists the same medical care in the same hospital wards as their victims.

These very principles are why our enemies refer to us as refurbished Nazis, Big Satan, Little Satan, malignant aggressors. They accept our benevolence and watch our people go halfway around the world to dig their families from the rubble of devastating earthquakes and similar catastrophes. Yet these good deeds make us the enemy and fuel a conflict that will go on for years to come.

In all of this, we must remember two things: (1) For all of America’s faults, we have nothing to apologize for. Not to these people who, in the words of Benjamin Netanyahu, “do not hate the world because of Israel, but because they hate the world.” (2) Despite a strident chorus of denial rising from within the ranks, we have been forged in the furnace of our Judeo-Christian heritage; and as long as the Bible is the driving force behind a significant segment of our population, we will always stand true to the mission of love and mercy that we have been taught. And whether

continued on page 16
Since Israel's rebirth in 1948, it has been fighting for its life. But a greater battle lies ahead, when Gog of the land of Magog (Ezek. 38–39) will invade the Holy Land and cover it "like a cloud":

Son of man, set thy face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee, . . . And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses, and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armor, . . . thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy hordes (38:2–4, 9).
What is Magog? Who is Gog? And when will this invasion occur?

Gog is identified as a prince of Rosh. He is associated with a land called Magog, which has two named cities: Meshech and Tubal. Little is said about Magog’s location, except that it is in the remote parts of the “north” (Ezek. 38:15).

Since Israel is the geographic center of the biblical world, “north” means north of Israel. The fact that Magog is in the far north identifies it as the area of the former Soviet Union, or Russia. The ancient historian Flavius Josephus identified Magog as the land of the Scythians, the region north and northeast of the Black Sea and east of the Aral Sea. This area is now occupied by Russia.

Allied with Magog will be “Persia, Cush, and Put; . . . Gomer, and all its hordes [troops]; [and] the house of Togarmah” (Ezek. 38:5–6).

Persia is generally identified as Iraq. Cush is probably Sudan; and Put is Libya, both of which are in northern Africa. Gomer is sometimes identified as the land of the Cimmerians, tribes that settled along the Danube and Rhine Rivers and later formed the Germanic peoples.

Bible scholar Charles Ryrie places Gomer in eastern Turkey and the Ukraine, and Togarmah in the area of Turkey that borders Syria.

However you look at it, this attack will come from a confederation of nations represented by elements from the region now known as Russia and a number of Islamic countries.

According to Scripture, it will occur when Israel is “at rest” and experiencing peace and security in a land of “unwalled villages” (Ezek. 38:11). Many scholars identify this “at rest” period as Israel’s false peace made in league with the Antichrist (Dan. 9:27).

Gog will “come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many peoples with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army; . . . against my people of Israel, like a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days” (38:15–16). This event must be future since nothing like it has ever happened to the Chosen People.

The invaders will fail. God said He will break the power of Israel’s enemies, and they will die and burn:

I am against thee, O Gog . . . I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee . . . And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy hordes, . . . I will give thee unto the ravenous birds . . . and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. And I will send a fire on Magog (39:1–4; 6).

So thorough will be this defeat that Israel will burn its enemies’ weapons “with fire seven years, So that they shall bury Gog and all his multitude; and they shall call it the Valley of Hamon-gog. And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying them, that they may cleanse the land” (39:11–12).

Scholars differ on the exact timing of this event. John Walvoord and Clarence Mason Jr., place the battle in what Mason called a “tributational setting.” In a chapter titled “Russia’s Last Bid for World Conquest” in his book Major Bible Prophecies, Walvoord wrote:

The invaders are urged to attack Israel, but the land of Israel is described as a territory “recovered from war,” and the people of Israel are described as those who “were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate.” . . . As pointed out previously, this would fit naturally into the prophetic picture of the first half of the last seven years leading up to the second coming of Christ.

A final reference to Gog and Magog remains. As the future, literal reign of King Jesus on Earth comes to its close, Satan will be freed from his prison. He will deceive the nations “in the four quarters of the earth” and amass an army referred to as “Gog and Magog, . . . the number of whom is as the sand of the sea” (Rev. 20:8).

Here Gog and Magog come from everywhere, not just the “north” and its allies. This reference appears to use Gog and Magog as a type, representing all who will live through the Millennium yet rebel and reject Jesus as their King. Fire from heaven will devour them (Rev. 20:9).

ENDNOTES

5 John F. Walvoord, Major Bible Prophecies (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 332.
Tape of the Month Ad
(Waveline)
Have you seen the cartoon? As I recall it, two citizens of the heavenly kingdom are standing atop a cloud, harps slung over their shoulders, newly won “angel wings” hanging at the ready. But the two seem bored. As they peer off into the limitless beyond that stretches before them, one complains to the other, “I wish I had brought a magazine!”

Really bad theology in a lot of ways, but peeking through the silliness of that cartoon is a popular notion that deserves to be dispelled: the notion that the eternal state—the new heavens and new earth, that blessed place where Jesus went to prepare for His own (Jn. 14:1–3)—will be a place of perpetual indolence.

A student once expressed the same notion to me (albeit a bit facetiously): “It will probably take us a millennium or two to really master the harp; but after that, what will we do to pass the time?” There is something intrinsically unsatisfying about such a prospect, and with good theological reason. Consider three theological realities that usher in an extremely different—and much more appealing—vision of what life will be like in that eternal city.

**ISSUE #1: The Image of God**

First, man is made in the image of God, and as such, he was never intended for indolence. Before the Fall, Adam was given a garden to keep and an earth to subdue (Gen. 1:28). God intended that, in tending to those responsibilities, Adam would reflect the image in which he was made, the image of a creating and sustaining God.

The responsibility to work is not a result of the Fall. However, the odious,
heavy character of it—the requirement that man struggle against thorns and thistles in the sweat of his brow—is the consequence of his rebellion against God. Man is made with the capacity and the impulse to produce, and only in so doing does he honor the God who created him.

Thus people will still work in the eternal state; but the work’s onerous nature will have been eradicated. In the life to come, redeemed men and women will finally be delivered from the presence of sin; they will live in a re-created universe that no longer groans under the weight of sin’s curse. Thus redeemed humanity will be equipped to reflect the Maker’s image perfectly.

Delightful, productive labor will certainly be an important part of the eternal state. Such is the happy assessment of Revelation 14:13, where the Spirit of God pronounces those who die in the Lord blessed because “they may rest from their labors [the Greek for labors emphasizes pain and hardship], and their works [the Greek for works speaks of the productivity and accomplishment that comes only from work] do follow them.”

Unquestionably, Scripture speaks of heaven as a place of rest (Heb. 3:11—4:11; Rev. 6:11; 14:13; cf. Rev. 14:11). Labor’s painful dimension is so ever-present in this world that it is easy to misperceive “rest” as indolence, to carelessly conclude that the only way to escape from the pain and heaviness of labor is to cease once and for all from all effort or work. Indeed, it requires a deliberate act of a sanctified imagination to conceptualize a moral/physical universe in which there is productive “work” without the odium of “labor.”

However, though you and I have never known anything but a physical universe that fights back, resisting every effort to be productive, from the beginning it was not so. The promise of Scripture is that God will one day reshape the moral universe into a place where “his servants shall serve him” (Rev. 22:3) happily and effectively, without any of the heaviness and odium that has accompanied all effort and work from the day of Adam’s fall until today.

**ISSUE #2:**

**Eden Restored**

Adam and Eve were not placed in the Garden of Eden to wear out hammocks! That Garden was intended to be a busy, productive place. We cannot know the earth’s pre-Fall ecology in all of its details, and the evidence is compelling that precious little time went by before the tempter appeared and the whole enterprise was thrown into disarray. Nevertheless, we can be sure that Adam and Eve were given a mandate to be busy about the stewardship God had assigned them and that they were happily engaged in fulfilling that mandate for that short time before their wickedness.

All of this is instructive in that Scripture makes it clear that the eternal state will be Eden restored. In Eden, God walked with His creatures in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8); in the new heavens and new earth, redeemed men and women “shall see his face” (Rev. 22:4).

In the Garden of Eden the tree of life enabled Adam and Eve to live in health perpetually (Gen. 2:9; 3:22, 24). In eternity, the tree of life will provide for the healing of the nations in the eternal city (Rev. 22:2, 14). The Garden of Eden was uncorrupted by sin until Adam embraced rebellion and was expelled from that holy place (Gen. 3:22–24). In the same fashion, no wickedness will be tolerated in the new heavens and earth (Rev. 21:8).

However disappointingly brief the history of mankind in Eden was before the Fall, it still shows us that God intended people to be active and productive. Therefore, we can happily anticipate that the culture God will fashion in the new heavens and new earth will intend the same.

**ISSUE #3:**

**The Millennium**

What is the relationship of the Millennium to the new heavens and new earth?

The people of God in the Old Testament were taught to anticipate a day when the earth would be purged of sin and corruption, when the heavens and earth would be made over anew (Isa. 65:17–18; 66:22). That hope was reinforced and expanded upon in the New Testament.

Yet a problem arises in tracing how the New Testament revelation builds upon the earlier promises of the Old Testament.

**Old Testament Revelation.** As the Old Testament end-times picture is
fleshed out, there emerges the concept of a worldwide Kingdom ruled by Messiah and established when God intervenes powerfully in human history to bring to a sudden and final conclusion “the times of the Gentiles” (Lk. 21:24).

That Kingdom will be a fifth world empire (following four wicked Gentile empires); and it will be characterized in every way as a kingdom. That is, it will have a King who reigns from His capital city; an administrative structure (absent of sin and corruption); and all of the apparatus and appurtenances intrinsic to a culture (a sinless one).

In short, the Messianic Kingdom is explicitly described as a real Kingdom—a busy, productive, living society. Every facet of human life, every aspect of society and interaction intrinsic to a vibrant, functioning (albeit unfallen) culture, will be a part of that Messianic Kingdom.

But the Messianic Kingdom will be distinct from every human culture that preceded it. Among those distinctives is this one: The Messianic Kingdom will be eternal. The Scriptures are explicit in this regard (Dan. 2:44–45; 7:13–14, 27). This will be a Kingdom that has no end (Isa. 9:7; Mic. 4:7).

The Solution. The apostle Paul provided the answer when he discussed the program of resurrections in 1 Corinthians 15. The apostle cataloged the various resurrections and then concluded with this remarkable affirmation: “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father” (15:24). That is, at the conclusion of the thousand-year reign of King Jesus, the Kingdom is not dissolved or abandoned; it is handed up to the Father.

Thus the thousand-year Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:1–7) is not a kingdom distinct from the new heavens and earth. Rather, the thousand-year reign is the first stage of that eternal blessedness that will issue and culminate in the new heavens and new earth.

And in that truth resides a world of instruction concerning the life we will live when the heavens and earth are made new. Though there is in the Scriptures little explicit description of life in the eternal state, there is a great deal of instruction as to life in the Messianic Kingdom. But the eternal state is the Kingdom handed up to the Father; and therefore, with certain important exceptions related to God’s purposes for each stage, that which is true of the thousand-year Messianic Kingdom is true of the new heavens and new earth.

The best way to understand life in the eternal city is to study the extensive description and characterization of Messiah’s Kingdom throughout Scripture. As the Kingdom is a busy, happy, functioning, industrious culture, so will be the eternal state. And just as the citizens of the thousand-year Kingdom of Revelation 20 will be living active lives as part of that vibrant society, so will the multitudes of redeemed and resurrected sons of Adam live in that day when the heavens and earth are made new by God.

So what is the sum of the matter? There is much about life beyond the ages of mortality that we cannot know. Indeed, I suspect that the surprises of God—like His compassions—will be new every morning. But I can tell you this with confidence: Don’t worry about having to bring a magazine!

Douglas Bookman is the pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Pasadena, Calif.

**Goose-Stepping from page 10**

or not our enemies, or even some of our friends, like to admit it, they need us.

During that ignominious hearing in The Hague on Israel’s security fence, a group of Jewish people from many countries gathered to stand beside the bombed wreckage of the bus where a suicide bomber had committed a senseless act of mass murder. And standing with them were at least two thousand Dutch Christians. The bus, flown in from Israel, was on display outside the court.

Despite the neo-anti-Semitism plaguing that little nation today, the presence of these Christians represented the best of what the Dutch have personified over the years. They assembled beside the Jewish people in the strength and spirit of the Corrie ten Booms and the sturdy band of Dutch heroes who defied the Nazis and now have their names graced in plaques along the Street of Righteous Gentiles at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

Not long ago, I listened enthralled by the clarity and eloquence of an elderly black minister whom I greatly respect. He told his congregants, “When you come to the place where your life is wracked by tribulation, turmoil, trouble, and confusion, it’s time to look for the God factor.” Let that be a word for us all, as well as our call to our leaders and the nations of the world—it’s time to look for the God factor.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord (Ps. 33:12).

**ENDNOTES**


3 Quoted in “Relentless PA Hate Incitement Against the US and the West,” February 27, 2004, [www.pmw.org.il/new/Latest%20bulletin.html].

Elwood McQuaid is editor-in-chief for The Friends of Israel.
C.H. Spurgeon Ad
(Waveline)
The church has been raptured from Earth. Israel and the world have suffered through seven years of tribulation. Jesus Christ has descended to Earth on a white horse for His Second Coming. The long-awaited Messianic, Millennial Kingdom has come. Christ, the “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6) and “Sun of righteousness” (Mal. 4:2), reigns absolute for a thousand years (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 19:15). It couldn’t get any better.

Yet, surprisingly, at the end of the Millennium a great rebellion occurs. Why? How can an ideal world suddenly revolt against God? The answer lies in three important facts: First, Satan exists. Second, sin is ever present. Third, the old sin nature seeks to live on.

**Yes, Virginia, There Is a Devil**

A story is told about two youngsters who argued over the existence of the Devil. One said, “Oh, there isn’t any Devil.”

The other, rather upset, said, “What do you mean, there isn’t any Devil? The Bible talks about him all the time!” (He’s mentioned seven times in the Old Testament, nineteen times in the New Testament; and Jesus mentioned him fifteen times.)

The first child then replied, “Naw, there really is no Devil, you know. It’s just like Santa Claus. The Devil turns out to be your dad.” Although some people are like this child and believe the Devil is merely a myth, he is real indeed. And he is the first cause for the world’s final rebellion against God.

Like the other angels, Satan was a perfect, created being (Ezek. 28:11–16). His sin originated in pride, grew into self-deception, and ended in rebellion (Isa. 14:13–14; Ezek. 28:15, 17; Rev. 12:4). He is pure evil (Jn. 8:44; 2 Cor. 11:3; 2 Tim. 2:26); the “god of this age [world]” (2 Cor. 4:4); and the “prince of the power of the air,” whose authority extends over the unsaved (Eph. 2:2; 1 Jn. 5:19) and allows him to accuse the brethren (saved people) before God, day and night (Rev. 12:10).

In a spiritual sense, he is the father of all who accept his philosophy of independence from God (Jn. 8:44).

During the Millennium, life will be much as it was in the Garden of Eden. It was in Eden that Satan deceived Adam and Eve. However, during Christ’s reign he will not be able to deceive the inhabitants of the earth because he will be bound in the abyss, or bottomless pit, for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1–3).

Nevertheless, man’s evil inclination will make people susceptible to Satan’s deceptive ways as the Kingdom Age comes to a close. Scripture makes it clear that a massive group in that generation will be disposed to follow Satan.
when he is set loose (Rev. 20:7–9). What a pity, for it and Satan will be devoured by fire from heaven (Rev. 20:9).

Yet today there are those who, in outward hypocrisy, display conformity to the rule of Christ but inwardly accept the lying promises of Satan. As someone once said, Satan promises the best, but pays with the worst; he promises honor and pays with disgrace; he promises pleasure and pays with pain; he promises profit and pays with loss; he promises life and pays with death.2

The testimony of Scripture is that Satan is a living being who will instigate the final rebellion. The good news is that his final doom is irrevocable and his final destination is the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).

**Missing the Mark**

The archer carefully sights his target, pulls back the string of his bow, and takes a deep breath as he releases the arrow. Whistling through the air, the arrow appears to strike the target. But as the archer approaches, he is dismayed. In spite of all his training and skill, he has missed his mark. Humanity also has missed the mark of God’s perfect righteousness. Our defect is called sin (Gen. 3:4; Rom. 3:23; Rom. 5:12, 19).

Sin manifested itself among the angelic host (2 Pet. 2:4). It also entered the human experience as recorded in Genesis 3 with the fall of Adam and Eve.

There are many expressions for sin in the Bible. However, the main significance of all sin is that it is directed against God:

*We never see sin aright until we see it as against God.* . . . All sin is against God in this sense: that it is His law that is broken, His authority that is despised, His government that is set at naught. . . . Pharaoh and Balaam, Saul and Judas each said, “I have sinned”; but the returning prodigal said, “I have sinned against heaven and before thee”; and David said, “Against Thee, Thou only have I sinned.”3

The former Pharisee rabbi, Paul, also expressed its offense: “The carnal mind is enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7). Even the ancient rabbis viewed sin as nothing more or less than rebellion against God. Sin is a falling away from a relationship of faithfulness toward God (Jer. 3:10; Hos. 2). Sin is disobedience to the Word and commands of God (1 Sam. 15:23; Ps. 78). The result is separation from God (Isa. 59:2).

The Millennium will be a theocratic rule. Although sin’s outward expression will be forbidden, discontent and wickedness will exist in the hearts of men. Multitudes will yield superficial obedience to Christ (Ps. 18:44). So when Satan is set free at the end of the thousand years, he will lead a rebellion of people as numerous “as the sand of the sea” (Rev. 20:8).

Why? Because sin dulls man’s hearing of God’s Word: “To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken” (Jer. 6:10).

Sin darkens human understanding: “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God” (Rom. 3:11; cf. Eph. 4:18).

Finally, sin decays the conscience (Isa. 42:18–25; 1 Tim 4:1–2) and eventually destroys the soul (Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23).

Susannah Wesley, mother of the great Methodist preacher John Wesley, defined sin for her son this way: “Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, and takes off the relish of spiritual things—that to you is sin.”4

Not everyone in the coming Kingdom will accept Christ. Many will be enemies of the Lord in their hearts. Sin will still be an active influence and a real factor in the final rebellion.

**The Enemy Within**

Yet another grim factor will contribute to the final rebellion against God. It is like an enemy within, a type of Trojan horse.

The story goes that ancient Greece fooled the defenders of the city of Troy into believing it had retreated. In front of the city gate a large wooden horse was left as a “gift.” The trojans rejoiced that the enemy
In 2 Thessalonians 2:3 the apostle Paul referred to the revelation of “that man of sin.” He indicated “that man” cannot be revealed until a restrainer, who hinders his revelation, is taken out of the way (vv. 6–8). In light of these remarks, three identifications must be addressed.

The One to Be Revealed

Paul described the person to be revealed as “that [literally, “the”] man of sin” (v. 3). The word translated “sin” means “lawlessness.” It “can denote a general state of lawlessness or wickedness.” This person will be controlled and characterized by a spirit of lawlessness.

Paul emphasized this fact in verse 8 by calling him “that wicked one” (literally, “the lawless one”). Paul’s use of the definite article the in both expressions implies this person will be the epitome of human lawlessness. He will oppose and reject all governing authority and laws except what he approves or establishes.

Since the God of the Bible is the ultimate existing authority, the man of lawlessness will make God and His Messiah the ultimate objects of his rejection of governing authority. He will deny God “the Father and the Son” (1 Jn. 2:22) and the truth that Jesus is God’s Son “come in the flesh” (1 Jn. 4:3; 2 Jn. 7) and the Messiah (1 Jn. 2:22). He will deny these truths because God’s Son came into the world through incarnation in human flesh for the purpose of (1) crushing Satan and Satan’s man of lawlessness and (2) restoring God’s authoritative rule to the world system (1 Jn. 3:8). Because of these denials, John called him “antichrist” (1 Jn. 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7).

The One Who Will Reveal Him

Several items help identify the person who will reveal the Antichrist.

First, all verb forms that refer to the Antichrist’s revelation (2 Th. 2:3, 6, 8) are in the passive voice. Thus the Antichrist will not reveal himself through actions that he performs. Another person will reveal him.

Second, Paul stated that the Antichrist will be revealed “in his time” (2 Th. 2:6). The word translated “time” refers to a “definite, fixed time.” It refers to “the specific and decisive point” and strongly emphasizes that God is the one who determined that definite, fixed, and decisive time.

Christ asserted that the authority to determine such times belongs exclusively to God (Acts 1:7). Thus the time

The Restrainer
of Antichrist’s revelation has been determined exclusively by God, not by Antichrist or Satan; and Antichrist will not be revealed until that time.

Third, God declared that He will raise up a “foolish” and “idol” shepherd (Zech. 11:15–17). The word translated “foolish” (v. 15) refers to a person who is morally perverted, insolent, “impatient with discipline,” “does not fear God,” “feels that his own way is without error,” and “is overbearing in his attitude” because he thinks “he has all the answers.”

This shepherd will be an “idol” shepherd (Zech. 11:17). The word translated “idol” means “something worthless (particularly as an object of worship)” and “is used primarily in Scripture to describe vain objects of worship, i.e. the gods of this world.” These gods “even included people in whom men trusted but who were deceitful and of no value (Job 13:4; Isa. 19:3; Zech. 11:17).” Thus this shepherd will be a person who, through deceit, will convince people to put their trust in him as a god.

Careful study of the biblical passages describing the Antichrist indicates that he will be this foolish, idol shepherd (Dan. 7:20–21, 25; 11:36–37; 2 Th. 2:4, 9–11; Rev. 13:4–8).

God declared that He will raise up this shepherd (Zech. 11:16). In this specific verse, the verb translated “raise up” means to “bring on the scene.” God thereby indicated that He will bring the Antichrist on the world scene.

These items prompt the conclusion that God is the one who will reveal the Antichrist. At a time He sovereignly determines, He will bring the Antichrist on the world scene in the sense of revealing him as the next great world ruler.

The One Who Restrains

John stated that the spirit of antichrist was already operating in the world during the first century (1 Jn. 2:18; 4:3). Paul indicated the same

A number of suggestions have been proposed concerning the identification of the restrainer. Yet these suggestions all have their problems.

1. The Ancient Roman Empire and Its Ruler. But that empire and its rulers disappeared centuries ago, and the Antichrist was not revealed at that time. In addition, the Antichrist will be the ultimate ruler of a future form of the Roman Empire (Dan. 7).

2. Gentile World Dominion or Human Government. But these will not be removed before the Antichrist is revealed. He will be the ultimate ruler of the last form of Gentile world dominion or human government prior to the Second Coming of Christ (Dan. 7).

3. The Jewish State. But the Jewish state will not be removed before the Antichrist is revealed. It will enter a binding, seven-year covenant relationship with him and will be desolated by him during the second half of his reign (Dan. 9:27).

4. Satan. But instead of being removed before the Antichrist is revealed, Satan will empower him during his reign (2 Th. 2:9).

5. The Binding of Satan. But Satan will not be bound and imprisoned in the bottomless pit until after the Antichrist has reigned and been judged by Christ at His Second Coming (Rev. 19:11—20:3).

6. The Preaching of the Message of Salvation. But the fact that many people will get saved during Antichrist’s reign (Rev. 7; 13:7; 20:4; Dan. 7:21, 25) indicates that the message of salvation will not be removed before Antichrist is revealed.

7. The Church. Paul’s indication that the restrainer is a person (2 Th. 2:7) militates against this identification.

8. Michael, the Archangel. But instead of being removed before the Antichrist is revealed, Michael will be actively involved protecting Israel from total annihilation during the Great Tribulation portion of Antichrist’s reign (Dan. 12:1).

9. Elijah. Paul indicated that the restrainer was present in the world, hindering the ultimate expression of lawlessness during the first century A.D. (2 Th. 2:7). Elijah was not in the world at that time.

(Digital enhancement, Thomas E. Williams)
when he wrote that “the mystery of iniquity [literally, “lawlessness”] doth already work” (2 Th. 2:7). But he emphasized that something (“what” in the phrase what restraineth is neuter in gender, v. 6) or someone (“he” in the phrase he who now hindereth is masculine, v. 7) is restraining the spirit of lawlessness from attaining its ultimate expression in the Antichrist. That ultimate expression will not be attained until the time the Antichrist is revealed, and he will not be revealed until the restrainer (“he,” v. 7) is removed (vv. 6–8).

Proposed Identification. God is the one who will reveal the Antichrist and has sovereignly determined the definite, fixed, and decisive time of that revelation. In light of this and the fact that the time of that revelation will not take place until the restrainer is “taken out of the way,” two things seem evident.

First, God sovereignly determined to have a restrainer restraining the spirit of lawlessness from attaining its ultimate expression in the Antichrist until the determined time for his revelation. Second, God will sovereignly stop that restraint by removing the restrainer at the appropriate time.

These considerations prompt a question. Does the Bible reveal that God has had a restrainer restraining the spirit of lawlessness during history? Two passages indicate that He has.

First, in Genesis 6:3 God said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” He thereby signified that His Spirit strove with lawless mankind in the days before the Noachic flood (vv. 5, 11–13). The word translated “strive” means “to govern.” It “embodies the idea of government, in whatever realm.”1 This indicates that the Holy Spirit has one of the same functions as government—the restraint of lawlessness (Rom. 13:3–6; 1 Pet. 2:13–14).

Thus the Holy Spirit’s restraint of lawlessness has been a significant factor in the administration of God’s rule over the world. The possessive pronoun “my” implies that the Spirit was God’s appointed restrainer. God’s declaration that His “Spirit shall not always strive with man” implies the Spirit’s restraint is temporary and that God has sovereign authority to remove it at the appropriate time.

Second, in Romans 8:2 Paul referred to “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” that provides the believer with freedom from “the law of sin.” All law has the purpose of governing or controlling people or things. Paul was teaching that the governing or controlling power of the Holy Spirit gives Christians freedom from the governing or controlling power of the sin nature, which causes people to be lawless. Thus the Holy Spirit has the function of restraining lawlessness in Christians.

These passages provide a biblical basis for concluding that the restrainer in 2 Thessalonians 2 is the Holy Spirit. If that be so, why did Paul use a neuter gender participle in verse 6 (“what restraineth”) and a masculine gender participle in verse 7 (“he who now hindereth”) to describe the restrainer?

Paul used the neuter to refer to the restraining power or activity of the Holy Spirit (v. 6), but the masculine to refer to the Spirit as a person (v. 7). In addition, the New Testament Greek word for the Spirit (pneuma) is neuter, but the New Testament also uses Greek masculine words (translated “he” and “him”) to refer to the Spirit. That combination is found in Christ’s statements about the Spirit in John 14:26; 15:26, and 16:13–14.

Clearly, the Spirit has other functions besides restraining lawlessness. He also has functioned as a revealer (1 Cor. 2:10), reprover (Jn. 16:8), regenerator (Jn. 3:5–6; Ti. 3:5), and seal (Eph. 1:13–14). The fact that 2 Thessalonians 2:7 refers to the Spirit being removed as a restrainer does not mean He will be removed from all functions. He will not, for example, be removed as a regenerator. If He were to be removed as a regenerator, no one could become saved during the Antichrist’s reign. But Scripture clearly reveals that many will get saved during that time (Rev. 7).

The Holy Spirit’s restraint of lawlessness has been a significant factor in the administration of God’s rule over the world. The possessive pronoun “my” implies that the Spirit was God’s appointed restrainer.
What on Earth
book Ad (Waveline)
God’s Care for Judah

By DAVID M. LEVY

Zechariah 1:7-21

Jewish returnees from the Babylonian Captivity immediately began to rebuild their Temple in Jerusalem. Within two years they had completed its foundation. But Gentiles in the area opposed the project and acquired a decree from the King of Persia to halt it abruptly.

For sixteen years the work lay dormant. Like his contemporary Haggai, Zechariah called on Judah to finish rebuilding the Temple immediately because its completion was important to God’s future blessing. Zechariah did not rebuke but used words of comfort, emphasizing God’s care for His covenant people.

Zechariah’s message stirred these returnees from their apathy and moved them to resume construction with zeal (Ezra 6:14). Soon after reconstruction began, the Lord gave Zechariah a series of eight night visions (1:7—6:15) concerning God’s care for Judah’s present and future states. Zechariah received all eight visions in one night.

He did not imagine them while sleeping but received the divine revelations while awake. These visions unfold prophetic events that extend from Judah’s repatriation to the day when Israel’s Messiah will return to establish the Millennial Kingdom.

The Bible gives the exact date of these eight visions:

Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shevat, in the second year of Darius [January/February 519 B.C.], came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet (v. 7).

This was three months after Zechariah’s message on repentance (1:1—6).

The first vision involves a rider on a red horse standing among myrtle trees (vv. 7—17). The second is of four horns and four artisans (vv. 18—21). In these two visions, Zechariah revealed God’s mercy and care for His own people and the eventual destruction of Israel’s enemies.

The Horsemen

Zechariah said, “I saw by night, and beheld a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees [shrubs] that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, sorrel, and white” (v. 8).

The Riders. The man riding on a red, or chestnut, horse is identified as “the angel of the LORD”—a Christophany, or preincarnate appearance of the Messiah (v. 11). The other riders are angels accompanying Him.

It is evident from the text that the rider on the red horse stands above the others in dignity and authority. The riders stood in a ravine, possibly the Kidron Valley or other low area around Jerusalem, where myrtle trees grew.

Many believe the ravine represents the lowly or humble state of Judah, which was engulfed by Gentile world powers. Pictured here is the physical presence of the divine Messiah, who cares for His covenant people and stands ready to deliver them from the Gentile nations.

Behind the rider on the red horse were riders on horses of “red [bay or chestnut] . . . sorrel [reddish-brown], and white” (v. 8). Much speculation exists concerning the meaning of the horses’ colors. Yet speculation is fruitless because no symbolism is given for them in the interpretation of Zechariah’s vision.

The Mission. Zechariah asked the angel to explain the vision, and the angel complied: “O my lord, what are these? And the angel who talked with me said unto me, I will show thee what these are” (v. 9).

The word lord is a term of respect. It in no way implies that the angel who talked to Zechariah was divine. Then the angel revealed to the prophet the interpretation of his vision:

And the man that stood among the myrtle trees [not the Lord of hosts] answered and said, These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest (vv. 10—11).

The “man” is another angel who functioned as a go-between to interpret the vision. The interpreting angel unveiled the mission of the various riders. Like a military squad sent out on reconnaissance, they were to patrol the whole earth and report back on the condition of the Gentile world. They reported to “the angel of the LORD” that “all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest” (v. 11).

By 520 B.C., peace had been secured by the Persian Empire. The Gentile world was at rest, living in comfort and ease, free from the upheavals of war. But Judah had no rest, comfort, ease, or security amid the surrounding Gentile nations.

The Lord’s Mercy. The Jewish people, who had been chastened by the Babylonian Captivity, now needed comfort. In an unusual role, the Angel of the Lord (preincarnate Messiah) intercedes before God the Father on behalf of His
people. This is a reversal of roles, for the Messiah’s role is to represent God the Father to the Jewish people.

Here is a clear picture of a plurality within the Godhead. The Messiah pleaded to the Father, “O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these three score and ten years?” (v. 12).

The words how long in the Messiah’s prayer are a threefold request that God the Father would (1) remove His hand of chastening from Judah, (2) bring a speedy end to the suffering of the Jewish people after their seventy years of captivity, and (3) restore Judah and Jerusalem.

God the Father answered the Angel of the Lord through the interpreting angel. He spoke “good words and comforting words” (v. 13) concerning the consolation that Judah was about to receive. In the verses that follow, the interpreting angel described the type of mercy God would bestow on Judah.

The angel told Zechariah, “Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts: My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad” (v. 17). This promise is made to all the cities that suffered when the Babylonians destroyed Judah.

(4) God will restore the cities of Judah with prosperity: “Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts: My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad” (v. 17). This promise is made to all the cities that suffered when the Babylonians destroyed Judah.

(5) God reassured Judah He would comfort her: “The LORD shall yet comfort Zion” (v. 17). Such news was a great encouragement to a feeble remnant of returnees from Babylon who came back with little more than the clothing on their backs.

(6) God reaffirmed His divine election of the Jewish people: “And shall yet choose Jerusalem” (v. 17). Although the Lord rejected Israel (Hos. 1:9) and chastened her because of sin, He never removed His divine election from her or replaced her in His program, as Replacement Theology would lead one to believe. Israel’s election stands unimpaired and secure.

These promises were partially fulfilled in Zechariah’s day. But a greater fulfillment awaits the return of Israel’s Messiah, when He will judge Israel’s enemies and will bring to full fruition the six promises He made to her.

The Promises

(1) God will return to Jerusalem: “I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies” (v. 16). The Lord returned to His people, showing tender mercy like that of a mother’s affection for her child.

(2) God’s Temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem (v. 16).

(3) Jerusalem’s boundaries will be reestablished. A surveyor’s “line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem” (v. 16) to fix the exact location of buildings that need to be constructed in the city.

(4) God will restore the cities of Judah with prosperity: “Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts: My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad” (v. 17). This promise is made to all the cities that suffered when the Babylonians destroyed Judah.

(5) God reassured Judah He will comfort her: “The LORD shall yet comfort Zion” (v. 17). Such news was a great encouragement to a feeble remnant of returnees from Babylon who came back with little more than the clothing on their backs.

(6) God reaffirmed His divine election of the Jewish people: “And shall yet choose Jerusalem” (v. 17). Although the Lord rejected Israel (Hos. 1:9) and chastened her because of sin, He never removed His divine election from her or replaced her in His program, as Replacement Theology would lead one to believe. Israel’s election stands unimpaired and secure.

The Promises

(1) God will return to Jerusalem: “I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies” (v. 16). The Lord returned to His people, showing tender mercy like that of a mother’s affection for her child.

(2) God’s Temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem (v. 16).

(3) Jerusalem’s boundaries will be reestablished. A surveyor’s “line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem” (v. 16) to fix the exact location of buildings that need to be constructed in the city.

(4) God will restore the cities of Judah with prosperity: “Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts: My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad” (v. 17). This promise is made to all the cities that suffered when the Babylonians destroyed Judah.

(5) God reassured Judah He will comfort her: “The LORD shall yet comfort Zion” (v. 17). Such news was a great encouragement to a feeble remnant of returnees from Babylon who came back with little more than the clothing on their backs.

(6) God reaffirmed His divine election of the Jewish people: “And shall yet choose Jerusalem” (v. 17). Although the Lord rejected Israel (Hos. 1:9) and chastened her because of sin, He never removed His divine election from her or replaced her in His program, as Replacement Theology would lead one to believe. Israel’s election stands unimpaired and secure.

These promises were partially fulfilled in Zechariah’s day. But a greater fulfillment awaits the return of Israel’s Messiah, when He will judge Israel’s enemies and will bring to full fruition the six promises He made to her.

The Horns

Zechariah lifted up his eyes and saw another vision, this time four horns (v. 18). He asked the interpreting angel, “What are these?” (v. 19).

The angel answered, “These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem” (v. 19). The word horn in Scripture speaks of a nation’s or individual’s invincible power. It often symbolizes Gentile empires (Dan. 7:24; Rev. 17:12) that oppose Judah. Although the Bible does not state whom the four horns represent, many commentators see them as Babylon, Medio-Persia, Greece, and Rome (Dan. 2; 7—8). The Jewish people were severely brutalized and scattered under the savagery of these nations.

Within the vision Zechariah also saw “four artisans [smiths or craftsmen]” (v. 20), workers who were skilled in shaping materials from wood, stone, and metal. The prophet asked, “What come these to do?” (v. 21).

The interpreting angel answered, “These are come to terrify them [the horns], to cast out the horns of the nations, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it” (v. 21). The artisans will terrify (strike fear in) and destroy the horns that severely persecuted, destroyed, or scattered Judah. Although the artisans are not identified, they probably represent each subsequent empire that succeeded in overthrowing the one before it. In other words, Medio-Persia overthrew Babylon; Greece under Alexander the Great captured the Persian Empire; the Roman Empire took over the Macedonian-Greek Empire after Alexander the Great died and his kingdom disintegrated; and the Roman Empire, to be revived just before the Tribulation, is destined to be destroyed by the Messiah at His Second Coming. Then the Messiah’s Millennial Kingdom will fill the whole earth (Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45; Rev. 19:16—20:6). God has promised Israel, “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper” (Isa. 54:17).

The Jewish people today can take great comfort in these promises of God’s care and preservation, knowing that Israel will never suffer annihilation by any nation (Jer. 30:11).

David M. Levy is the director of International Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
left and, in a false sense of safety, pulled the wooden horse inside the city walls. What they didn’t know was that Greek soldiers were hiding inside the structure. As the drunken Trojans slept, the Greeks emerged and conquered them.

Similarly, unregenerate humanity is unaware of the insidious enemy that constantly dwells within. Scripture calls it the “old man” (Eph. 4:22), commonly understood as the old sin nature.

The sin nature is one of the consequences of man’s Fall (Gen. 3). Adam’s sin and guilt are divinely imputed directly to every person at birth (Rom. 5:12). The result is that man, although physically alive, is actually spiritually dead and separated from God (Eph. 2:1, 5). No one is righteous in God’s eyes, and no one naturally seeks after Him (Ps. 53:1–3; Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:9–12). Such is the state of fallen humanity: sinful by nature and spiritually dead.

God made a provision to deal with this human moral and spiritual problem. Although the Bible says we were dead in our trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1) and “were by nature the children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3), it also says that the problem was dealt with at the cross (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24). The gift of Christ’s righteousness is divinely imputed on all who believe and accept Him as their Lord and Savior (Rom. 5:17–19). For them the eternal penalty has been removed, and they have been sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13).

In spite of the fact that the old sinful nature has been crucified (Gal. 2:20), this earthly stigma still seeks to revive and take control (Rom. 7:15–25).

The Millennium environment will be ideal for godliness. Satan will be bound and his voice silenced in the hearts and minds of people for a thousand years. Thoughts of rebellion or stubbornness against God certainly will not be publicized while Christ rules from His throne as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Yet, exclusive of any external stimuli, the old sin nature will thrive. It will continue to tempt and lure many in the Millennium generation into a state of sinfulness. The ultimate consequence will be a futile assault against the saints and the city of Jerusalem (Rev. 20:8–9). Thus the third factor that contributes to man’s final rebellion is the energizing force of the old sin nature.

The earthly Millennium to come will be ideal, not perfect. Problems will exist. Satan, sin, and the old sin nature will be major contributors to the final rebellion.

A story is told that the French Academy took 297 years to write a book of 263 pages. Grammaire de L’Academie Francaise was written from 1635 to 1932; and, when finally published, it contained fifty errors! Time and utopian conditions will not improve mankind. Only genuine belief in the finished work of Jesus Christ at Calvary can make an everlasting difference now and for those in the Kingdom to come.

1 G. Lewis, Demon Possession, ed. J. Montgomery, in “Humor,” [www.christianglobe.com/Illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=d&whichFile=devil].
2 Thomas Brooks, in “Quotes,” [www.bible.org/illus/s-s-18.htm].
4 Resource, July/August 1990, in “Sin,” [www.christianglobe.com/Illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=d&whichFile=sin].
5 Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times (Rockville, Md.: Assurance

Peter Colón is the Southeastern States director for The Friends of Israel.
Moorings connect sea vessels to solid ground. If these moorings break, the vessel becomes subject to the wind and waves and is likely to go adrift. Similarly, when Christian institutions break away from their biblical moorings, they become subject to worldly influences and theological liberalism; and ultimately, they drift toward apostasy.

Apostasy can often result from a slow and gradual erosion of certain fundamentals of the faith. The following is a sampling of those all-important “moorings.”

   Harold Lindsell astutely observed, “Down the road, whether it takes five or fifty years, any institution that departs from belief in an inerrant Scripture will likewise depart from other fundamentals of the faith and at last cease to be evangelical in the historical meaning of that term.”

2. A Commitment to Propositional, Revelatory Truth.
   The use of other sources (i.e., tradition, culture, reason, the scientific method, or experience) for discovering ultimate, revealed truth effectively diminishes the Bible’s authority. Eventually there is no longer an objective standard by which to measure heresy. Man becomes the measure.

3. A Commitment to Clarity of Theological and Doctrinal Terms.
   Theologian Millard Erickson perceived that theological liberals “continued to use the same terminology, but invested it with different meaning.” Further, “In a day in which meaning is thought by some to reside, not objectively in the words and expressions themselves, but in the person who receives them so that its meaning is what it means to the recipient, this concern is especially appropriate.”

4. A Commitment to Separation.
   Entangling alliances with unbelievers can lead to compromise (2 Cor. 6:14–18). An example is the life of King Solomon.

5. A Commitment to Pleasing God.
   A subtle but major shift towards apostasy occurs when a believer seeks man’s approval over God’s. This situation can lead to concessions in all the previously mentioned areas. The Bible and history are filled with examples.

Contemporary departures from the faith portend a future apostasy that will come during the Tribulation (2 Th. 2:3). Today, theologically liberal “sirens” constantly call for those who would join them. Unfortunately, too many people have “put away” a good conscience and “have made shipwreck” their faith (1 Tim. 1:19).

How are your moorings?

ENDNOTES
1 Harold Lindsell, The Battle for the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 120–21.
3 Erickson, 15–16.
4 See 1 Sam. 13:11; Jn. 12:42–43; Gal. 2:11–12; George M. Marsden, Reforming Fundamentalism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 144, 146, 181, 186; Marsden, The Soul of the American University, 24, 61, 270, 287.

Safeguard Your ‘Moorings’

Bruce Scott is a field representative with The Friends of Israel in New Hope, Minnesota.
The present age is characterized by the encroachment of a secular, humanistic world-life view on society. Many people go to great lengths to deny the existence or relevance of the personal, sovereign God of the Bible and to deify man. They reject God’s revealed truth for a lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:23, 25).

Biblical history demonstrates that the cure for this loss of awe, reverence, and fear of the true and living God is to confront the glory of God.

The Meaning of Glory

The Scriptures teach that God is a God of glory. They call Him “the King of glory” (Ps. 24:7–10). Seraphim, referring to God as “the LORD of hosts,” asserted, “the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:3). Stephen described Him as “the God of glory” (Acts 7:2), and Paul called God “the Father of glory” (Eph. 1:17).

What is the glory of God? The most basic and frequently used word for “glory” in the Old Testament is kabod. The Hebrew root means “heavy” or “weighty.” Thus Paul referred to the “weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

The Bible uses kabod most frequently in a figurative sense for “the concept of a ‘weighty’ person in society, someone who is honorable, impressive, worthy of respect.” Thus the word refers to something weighty concerning a person. An individual’s glory is whatever enables him or her to carry weight with others. It is that which is impressive and demands recognition, gives a person influence, sets him apart, and distinguishes him from others.

For example, the Hebrew text calls Jacob’s great wealth and Joseph’s position in Egypt’s government “glory” (Gen. 31:1, KJV; 45:13). These elements gave these men influence and recognition and impressed their contemporaries.

In light of this meaning of glory, we can conclude that the glory of God is whatever enables Him to carry weight or have influence with His creatures. It is what demands their recognition of Him, impresses them with His greatness, sets Him apart, reveals His uniqueness, and distinguishes Him as the only true God. Because His glory sets Him apart from all others and reveals His uniqueness, God refuses to share His glory with others (Isa. 42:8; 48:11).

Manifestations of God’s Glory

Historically, God has manifested His glory in at least four different ways, two of which we will discuss here.

(1) Through His Created Universe.

Israel’s King David wrote, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork” (Ps. 19:1).

He thereby declared that the heavens are recounting or telling what is impressive or influential concerning their Creator. They display what should be obvious to the human eye and mind, namely, the conspicuous, distinctive stamp of God’s divine handiwork.

The magnitude, beauty, order, and design of the heavens testify concerning the existence and incredible wisdom and power of the one, true, living, personal God who created them.

Any person who has not been impressed with God after looking at the magnificent heavens on a clear night should consider this information about the universe. The sun in our solar system has a diameter of 860,000 miles and is so large that it would take more than one million Earths to equal its volume.

The sun experiences explosive eruptions of hydrogen and helium that sometimes leap one hundred thousand miles into space with more force than a billion hydrogen bombs. Each second five million tons of the sun’s mass escape as energy—more energy in one second than mankind has used throughout history. Despite this current rate of depletion, the sun has enough mass to enable it to continue for at least five billion years.

The distance from the sun to the outer limits of our solar system is 3.5 billion miles. In spite of its large size, the solar system is an extremely small part of our galaxy, the Milky Way.

Our galaxy is so gigantic that it possesses more than one hundred billion stars, some of which are many times larger than our sun. Astronomers claim that light, traveling about 5.88 trillion miles in a year, would need approximately one hundred thousand years to cross the length of our galaxy.
Despite its vastness, the Milky Way is only one of at least one hundred billion galaxies, some of which contain two hundred billion or more stars, with stars separated from each other by trillions of miles.11

Recent observations have prompted some astronomers to conjecture that the universe may be so enormous that it may take light, traveling from our sun at the rate of about 5.88 trillion miles in a year, about ten billion years to reach the outer limits of the universe.12

No wonder the Scriptures declare that God, who created the heavens, “stretched them out” (Isa. 42:5).

Why is the universe so overwhelming in size? God designed and created it that way to so impress His creatures with His greatness that He can have life-changing influence on them.

David indicated that God’s glory far exceeds the glory of the heavens and that He is so much greater than the magnificent universe He created that He has to humble Himself to pay attention to it (Ps. 113:4, 6). Observing the vastness of the universe should impress mankind with the infinity of God and the finiteness of humanity.

David expressed such an impression: “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou findest time to visitest him?” (Ps. 8:3–4).

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou findest time to visitest him?” (Ps. 8:3–4).

(2) Through Historic Events. God has manifested His glory through unique, historic events that only His supernatural intervention could cause.

For example, in Noah’s time God supernaturally caused a universal flood to remove all unsaved people from the earth in judgment (Gen. 6—7). Several factors indicate that that intervention by God impressed later generations with the fact that God has the authoritative power necessary to judge the unsaved.

First, centuries after the flood Eli- phaz asked,

*Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trod, Who were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood; Who said unto God, Depart from us? And what can the Almighty do for them? (Job 22:15–17).*

Second, Jesus Christ indicated that, just as all the unsaved were removed from the earth in judgment by the flood in Noah’s time, so, too, will all the unsaved be taken from the earth in judgment at His Second Coming (Mt. 24:37–41).

Third, the apostle Peter used God’s judgment of the unsaved of Noah’s time as evidence that He has authoritative power to judge the unsaved in the future (2 Pet. 2:4–5, 9; 3:5–7).

God’s supernatural destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone from heaven during Abraham’s time (Gen. 18:20—19:29) so impressed future generations that Moses (Dt. 29:23–24), Isaiah (Isa. 13:19), Jeremiah (Jer. 50:40), Amos (Amos 4:11), Jesus (Mt. 10:15), Peter (2 Pet. 2:6), and Jude (v. 7) used it as an example of God’s ability to judge people of their day or later.

God indicated that the supernatural plagues He would bring on Egypt through Moses (Ex. 7:14—12:30) would cause the Egyptians to know that He is the Lord (Ex. 7:5) and Pharaoh to know that there is no other god like Him (Ex. 9:14).

God performed the plagues before the people of Israel so that they (1) might “know that the LORD, he is God; there is none else beside him” (Dt. 4:34–35); (2) would not fear the nations they were to conquer in Canaan (Dt. 7:17–19); (3) would obey His Word that He had given them (Dt. 11:1–9); and (4) would worship Him alone (2 Ki. 17:36–37).

The report of God’s plagues on Egypt so impressed the Gibeonites of Joshua’s time that they used an unusual method to escape destruction by the Israelites (Josh. 9:9).

By supernaturally parting the waters of the Red Sea to enable the people of Israel to cross safely and then closing the waters to destroy the Egyptian military force that pursued Israel (Ex. 14:15–31), God gained honor over Pharaoh (Ex. 14:17); the Egyptians knew that He was the Lord (Ex. 14:18); and the Israelites feared and believed the Lord (Ex. 14:31).

Moses and the Israelites declared that God’s right hand had become “glorious in power” (Ex. 15:6). Miriam asserted that God had “triumphed gloriously” (Ex. 15:21). The Israelites foretold that knowledge of this event would cause fear, sorrow, amazement, trembling, melting away, and dread for other nations (Ex. 15:14–16).

Years later Rahab of Jericho testified to that effect when she told two Israelite spies,

*I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt. . . . And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there...* continued on page 33.

**The magnitude, beauty, order, and design of the heavens testify concerning the existence and incredible wisdom and power of the one, true, living, personal God who created them.**
As if it were not already enormous, the gulf between Islam and Christianity grew even greater in January when Reem Rayashi, a 22-year-old Palestinian mother of two, blew herself up at the Erez Crossing in the Gaza Strip.

Posing as a cripple with a metal plate in her leg, Rayashi cried that her leg hurt and begged the Israeli soldiers to have mercy on her and let her pass through the checkpoint into the industrial complex in Israel where six thousand Palestinians work. She had set off the metal detector.

When a guard took pity on her, she detonated her explosives and became the seventh female suicide-bomber since 27-year-old Wafa Idris blew herself up in January 2002 in a Jerusalem shopping mall, killing one Israeli and wounding 131.

In her pre-suicide videotape, a tradition with suicide-bombers, Rayashi cradled a rifle as she told of her childhood dream to become a so-called martyr: “It was always my wish to turn my body into deadly shrapnel against the Zionists and to knock on the doors of heaven with the skulls of Zionists,” she said.

However, killing herself may have been less of a dream than her video suggests. Rayashi, the first woman suicide-bomber dispatched by Hamas, was, in fact, an adulteress “who was forced to carry out the attack to restore her family’s honor,” reported the Israeli news agency Arutz-7.

Hamas originally hesitated to use women. Now, however, the Islamic terrorist organization encourages it when a woman’s chance of success exceeds that of a man’s or when the woman requires “atonement” for family-related sins.

Arutz-7 reported that Rayashi’s “illicit lover recruited her and gave her the suicide bomb belt.” Furthermore, “PA [Palestinian Authority] security officials said her husband drove her to Erez to carry out the attack.”

Afterward, Rayashi’s family refused to speak to reporters, “a rarity in these cases, and did not set up a mourning tent for her,” Arutz-7 reported.

In the world of Islam, women are considered inferior to men and adulteresses are often killed by their relatives to restore honor to the disgraced family. Forgiveness is unavailable; and the power of Jesus Christ to transform broken lives through faith in His atoning sacrifice is unknown.

Whereas Christianity teaches of love and of a God who forgives sinners and provides eternal life as a free gift through faith in Jesus (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 6:23; Ti. 3:5; 1 Jn. 1:9), Islam teaches only judgment. Muslims are indoctrinated from childhood that the only certain way to reach Paradise is by becoming a martyr for Allah.

Over the years the Palestinian leadership has exploited this Islamic teaching in its fight to destroy Israel. By glorifying terrorism and using their schools and pulpits to promote vicious anti-Israel, anti-Jewish—and now, anti-American—propaganda, the Palestinians have reared a generation that functions on hate rather than love and craves death more than life.

By blowing herself up “for Allah,” Rayashi believed she had found a solution to her problem and a way into Paradise.

Islamic men are promised seventy-two dark-eyed virgins as their reward for being suicide-bombers. Hamas leader Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi told reporter Barbara Victor that women martyrs receive “satisfaction.” “There is no competition between men and women,” he said. “Everyone gets what they want and are their own master. They achieve total satisfaction after death.”

Hamas says the streets are lined with women begging for a chance to become suicide bombers “for Allah.” Another Hamas official told Victor, “In Bethlehem alone there are two hundred girls willing and ready to sacrifice themselves for Palestine, and obviously it is much easier for women to go through checkpoints.”

A Shia Muslim cleric calls these women the authors of a “new, glorious history for Arab and Muslim women.” And that “glorious” history is making its way across continents.

At the Swedish Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm, an exhibit opened in January that immortalized Hanady Jaradat, a 29-year-old lawyer from Jenin who murdered twenty Israelis and wounded fifty-one others when she blew herself up in the Maxim restaurant in Haifa in October 2003.

Called “Snow White and the Madness of Truth,” the exhibit included a swimming pool-like structure filled with red water to symbolize blood and a sailboat floating peacefully by, bearing a picture of Jaradat. The exhibit also contained these words: “As white as snow, as red as blood, and her hair was as black as ebony and the red looked beautiful upon the white.”
Infuriated, Zvi Mazel, Israel’s ambassador to Sweden, walked around the pool unplugging wires. Said Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom, “It was an artistic expression glorifying or justifying terrorism.”

Jaradat was female “martyr” number six. Before her was Hiba Daraghmeh, a 19-year-old English literature major who gave up her dream of teaching English to blow herself to bits at a mall in the northern Israeli town of Afula in May 2003. She was recruited by Islamic Jihad, which later praised all its women terrorists in a pamphlet distributed in universities and published on its Web site. The pamphlet said these women have “exchanged their perfume for the smell of the land and wear weapons on their arms instead of jewelry.”

Wafa Idris, who would have been considered defiled because she was divorced, is an icon today, venerated as “the bride of Heaven.” A women’s suicide-bomber unit has been named in her honor.

According to Pravda, Russia’s major news agency, Arab mercenaries are training female suicide-bombers there as well. In December 2003 two women carried out an attack near the Kremlin by detonating a device in a handbag. One of the women also wore an explosives belt, packed with nails and metal pieces, like those worn by Palestinian terrorists.

But the main target so far is Israel. “We will eventually win and have an Islamic state on all the land of what is now Israel, including all of the West Bank and Gaza,” said al-Rantisi.1

In the end, Hamas’s goal is no different from Adolf Hitler’s. As the German dictator embroiled the world in war and sought new, more heinous ways to pervert genocide, he preached, “Today Germany, tomorrow the world.”

In commenting on Reem Rayashi and her suicide attack, Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar declared, “She is not going to be the last because the march of resistance will continue until the Islamic flag is raised, not only on the minarets of Jerusalem, but over the whole universe.”

**ENDNOTES**

1 Barbara Victor, Army of Roses (n.p.: Rodale, 2003), 114.

2 Ibid., 51.

3 Ibid., 57.

---

**ISRAEL MY GLORY**

A Literal Kingdom on Earth

Evangelicals often use the phrase One Messiah, two appearances. Although most of the world acknowledges the first appearance—a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger—few realize that this same Jesus will come again as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish a genuine, earthly Kingdom.

First, Jesus will return to rescue an embattled Israel at the conclusion of the seven-year Tribulation, called by the prophet Jeremiah, “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). Jesus will again enter human history in visible form and “seek to destroy all the nations [Gentiles; Hebrew, hagoyim] that come against Jerusalem” (Zech. 12:9).

Israel will recognize Him and “shall look upon me [God] whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son” (Zech 12:10).

God revealed this advent to the prophet Daniel. In Daniel 2, Babylon’s King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a great image. It represented the Gentile powers that would dominate Israel and her people. In interpreting the vision, Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, “Thou sauwest until a stone was cut out without hands [Messiah], which smote the image upon its feet. . . And in the days of these kings [ten rulers represented by the image’s ten toes] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; . . . but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (Dan. 2:34, 44).

Then, as the rightful heir of King David, Jesus will reign on Earth from Jerusalem. God gave this exact promise to Jesus’ mother, Mary, when the angel Gabriel told her, “and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father, David” (Lk. 1:32). David’s throne was a literal, earthly reality.

Further confirmation of Messiah’s literal, earthly rule can be found in Isaiah 11, which reveals a measure of its scope and design: And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse [David’s father], and a Branch shall grow out of his roots . . . And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears, But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, . . . and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked (vv. 1, 3–4).

Clearly, this is an earthly Kingdom because it contains both poor and wicked people. Yet the King will judge fairly and tolerate no evil. Furthermore, the Jewish people will be the Kingdom’s spiritual leaders when “ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:23).

Messiah also will assure peace within nature (Isa. 11:5–7). The Old Testament does not reference the duration of the Millennial Kingdom, but the New Testament states it will endure for one thousand years (Rev. 20:4).

Those who enter will be the righteous, resurrected dead of all time, plus the believing Tribulation survivors (Rev. 20:4–6). Others who survive the Tribulation but reject Messiah will be taken in judgment (Mt. 25:46). Thus the Millennial Kingdom will be composed of resurrected saints; ordinary human beings; and the glorified, resurrected King of kings and Lord of lords ruling on literal planet Earth.

---

by Thomas C. Simcox, Northeastern States director for The Friends of Israel.
Bethlehem-born Walid Shoebat detested Jews. Not that he had ever spoken to one. But he had been so well indoctrinated with fanatical Jew-hatred from childhood that by the time he was sixteen he was an eager terrorist.

His chief goal in life was to kill Jews and die a martyr for Allah.

"From kindergarten we were taught that Jews were dogs," he told BBC News. "We were taught that Jews were the converts of monkeys, that Jews were Sabbath breakers and prophet killers. We even considered Arabs in pre-1967 Israel traitors because we could not understand how they could coexist with Jews."

As a teenager in the mid-1970s, Shoebat became an active Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) member, fomenting riots, demonstrations, and doing everything he could to accomplish his life’s goal. He helped a mob use a club to beat an Israeli soldier senseless then prepare to hang him. The soldier was rescued, sending the Arabs scurrying into a monastery “where the nuns protected us—even they hated the Jews!” he said.

Another time he was recruited to blow up an Israeli bank with a loaf of bread packed with explosives. But when he saw Arab children in the area, he threw the bread on the roof instead, doing little damage.

So what makes this terrorist different from all other terrorists?

Today he is a Christian Zionist dedicated to exposing the lies of Islam and supporting Israel and the Jewish people. His dream is to go into Israeli prisons and teach the Palestinians Jewish history.

“My first goal is to give strength to the Jewish people, to give encouragement, to get rid of this stupid idea of establishing a Palestinian state,” he told The Jerusalem Post in an interview from his home in California.

His Web site (www.Abrahamic-faith.com) states, “The G-d of Israel Reigns Supreme” and “Am Israel Chai” (Hebrew for “the nation of Israel lives”). It has links exposing “Palestinian savagery”; Muslim persecution of Christians; and contains articles with such titles as “Why Muslims Choose Yeshua as Saviour” and “Who Do You Trust for Your Salvation, Jesus Christ or Mohammed?”

How did a Jew-hating, Muslim, Fatah terrorist become an evangelical supporter of Israel? He read the Bible and trusted Jesus as his Savior.

Walid moved to the United States at eighteen to attend college in Chicago, where he raised money for the PLO and recruited members. After moving to California, he married his third wife in 1993. She was a Christian.

“I wanted to convert her to Islam,” he told the BBC. “I told her Jews had corrupted the Bible.” She asked him to prove it. So he bought a Bible.

For six months he studied the Word intensely from cover to cover, and
discovered the truth. He renounced terrorism, repented of his sin, and gave his life to Jesus Christ. He and Maria were baptized together.

Now Shoebat, 43, speaks in churches, synagogues, and on radio. His Muslim family has disowned him. His father says he should be killed. And he is certain the PLO is planning his demise. But Shoebat is undaunted.

“I chose to speak out because I was a victim, as a child I was a victim of this horror. Now I see other victims, millions of them, [Arab] kids. I was taught songs about killing Jews. You need to get rid of the education system where they are teaching this type of thing and get rid of the terrorist groups. It will take a generation, but until then, there’s not going to be peace, it doesn’t matter what kind of land settlement you have,” he told the BBC.

Speaking on a radio show, he said the Arabs don’t want a Palestinian state “We never wanted a Palestinian state. Even today the Palestinians do not want a Palestinian state. . . . They want the destruction of the Jews, period.”

In an article by Michael Freund in the February 13 issue of The Jerusalem Post, Shoebat said he wants “to fight for Israel from both theological and political perspectives. Israel must never be divided. I am very Zionist. I believe that Zionism is the process of Jews making aliya and going back to their land.”

“The occupation is not Israel occupying the land which supposedly belongs to the Arabs,” he said. “The true occupation is of the minds of Palestinians, of teaching them hatred for Jews. That is the real occupation.”

Asked what it was like growing up on the “occupied West Bank” under Israeli control, Shoebat was quoted by WorldNetDaily.com as saying, “Beautiful. Prices fell. We had no problems.”

His mission now, he said, is “to go to Americans and churches and anywhere I can go and explain God’s plan for the state of Israel, and how God intended Israel to be a light unto the nations, and how all of our hatred toward Israel is really evil.”

Walid Shoebat, former terrorist turned Christian Zionist, speaking on a radio talk show:

“What the West does not understand about Islam is that jihad has stages. If Muslims have the upper hand, then jihad is waged by force. If Muslims don’t have the upper hand, then jihad is waged through financial and political means. Since Muslims do not have the upper hand in America or Europe, they talk about peace while supporting Hamas and Hezbollah. The whole idea of Islam being a peaceful religion emanates from that silent stage of jihad.”

Foundations of Faith from page 29
remain any more courage in any man, because of you; for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath (Josh. 2:9–11).
Because of His mighty act, this Canaanite woman became so impressed with God that He had life-changing influence upon her.

God broke the back of the mighty Assyrian army by supernaturally destroying 185,000 of its soldiers in one night when it threatened Jerusalem during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah (2 Ki. 19:35). God did this for His own sake (2 Ki. 19:34) to impress all the kingdoms of the world with the fact that Jehovah alone is God (2 Ki. 19:19).

God supernaturally inflicted King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon with a form of mental illness that caused him to act like a wild animal for a time. This illness made it necessary to drive him from his throne and royal palace and turn him loose in the field to live and graze among the animals (Dan. 4:24–25, 31–33).

The purpose of this divine intervention was to impress “the living” with the fact that “the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Dan. 4:17).

The next article will examine further the manifestation of God’s glory.

Quoteworthy

Walid Shoebat, former terrorist turned Christian Zionist, speaking on a radio talk show:

“What the West does not understand about Islam is that jihad has stages. If Muslims have the upper hand, then jihad is waged by force. If Muslims don’t have the upper hand, then jihad is waged through financial and political means. Since Muslims do not have the upper hand in America or Europe, they talk about peace while supporting Hamas and Hezbollah. The whole idea of Islam being a peaceful religion emanates from that silent stage of jihad.”

ENDNOTES
3 Journeys to the Edge of Creation: Our Solar System (video, Moody Institute of Science, 1996).
 4 Ibid.
 5 Ibid.
 6 Ibid.
 7 Ibid.
 8 Journeys to the Edge of Creation: The Milky Way and Beyond (video, Moody Institute of Science, 1996).
 9 Ibid.
 11 Journeys to the Edge of Creation: The Milky Way and Beyond.
 12 Ibid.

Renald E. Showers is an author, professor, and international conference speaker for The Friends of Israel.
faulty theology is becoming prevalent today. It claims that Christians must “convert” Jewish people to Christianity so that Jesus Christ can return to Earth.

True, Bible-believing Christians are commanded to make salvation through Jesus known to all (Mt. 28:19–20). Jesus Himself gave that mandate, called the Great Commission, after His resurrection and prior to His ascension into heaven.

The problem is not in the commission but in how it is being interpreted and applied. Even if the church effectively reached out to and successfully evangelized the entire world, it would have no effect on the timing of Jesus’ return.

Even if believers led hundreds of thousands to Christ and saw those people become baptized into the church, it could not accelerate the Lord’s promised return in any way. Nowhere does the Bible give Christians anything we can say or do, institute, or implement that will hasten the return of the Lord to planet Earth.

A misunderstanding of several verses in particular has led to the flawed position that assumes the church can usher in the Second Coming through evangelization. These passages are Romans 1:16 and Revelation 7:4–8.

Romans 1:16 states, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” Some claim this verse gives Christians a mandate to “convert” everyone, especially Jewish people.

Although competent scholars have varying views on how to interpret this passage, the preponderance of opinion is that it refers to the order in which salvation came to lost humanity. As noted commentator Matthew Henry suggested,

*The lost sheep of the house of Israel had the first offer made them, both by Christ and his apostles. . . . But upon their refusal the apostles turned to the Gentiles. . . . Jews and Gentiles now stand upon the same level, both equally miserable without a Saviour, and both equally welcome to the Saviour.*

At Pentecost (Shavuot), three thousand Jewish people came to faith in the Messiah (Acts 2:1–41); and days later, another five thousand believed (Acts 4:4). And the gospel had not even gone to the Gentiles yet.

The other misunderstood passage, Revelation 7:4–8, states that 144,000 Jewish men will come to faith during the Tribulation. Some take this passage to mean that Jesus’ Second Coming depends on these men converting to Christianity; and afterward, all remaining Jewish people will die.

The Bible, however, teaches that God seals 144,000 Jewish believers in the Messiah (twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, Rev. 7:4–8) to protect them during the Tribulation, also called the seventieth week of Daniel

continued on page 39
ardent supporters was the Mufti of Jerusalem. Jews were never permitted to live in Jordan. Civil Law No. 6, which governed the Jordanian-occupied West Bank, states explicitly, “Any man will be a Jordanian subject if he is not Jewish.”

The Arab countries see to it that even young schoolchildren are taught to hate Jews. The Syrian Minister of Education wrote in 1968, “The hatred which we indoctrinate into the minds of our children from their birth is sacred.”

After the Six-Day War in 1967, the Israelis found public school textbooks that had been used to educate Arab children in the West Bank. They were replete with racist and hateful portrayals of Jews:

The Jews are scattered to the ends of the earth, where they live exiled and despised, since by their nature they are vile, greedy and enemies of mankind, by their nature they were tempted to steal a land as asylum for their disgrace.

Analyze the following sentences:

1. The merchant himself traveled to the African continent.
2. We shall expel all the Jews from the Arab countries.

The Jews of our time are the descendants of the Jews who harmed the Prophet Muhammad. They betrayed him, they broke the treaty with him and joined sides with his enemies to fight him.

The Jews in Europe were persecuted and despised because of their corruption, meanness and treachery.

A 1977 Jordanian teachers’ manual for first graders used on the West Bank instructs educators to “implant in the soul of the pupil the rule of Islam that if the enemies occupy even one inch of the Islamic lands, jihad (holy war) becomes imperative for every Muslim.” It also says the Jews plotted to assassinate Muhammad when he was a child.

According to a study of Syrian textbooks, “the Syrian educational system expands hatred of Israel and Zionism to anti-Semitism directed at all Jews. That anti-Semitism evokes ancient Islamic motifs to describe the so-called unchangeable and treacherous nature of the Jews. Its inevitable conclusion is that all Jews must be annihilated.”

An Arabic translation of Adolf Hitler’s Mein Kampf has been distributed in East Jerusalem and territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and became a bestseller.

Occasionally, Arab anti-Semitism surfaces at the United Nations. In March 1991, for example, a Syrian delegate to the UN Human Rights Commission read a statement recommending that commission members read “a valuable book” called The Matzoh of Zion, written by Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Tlas. The book justifies ritual murder charges brought against the Jews in the Damascus blood libel of 1840. (The phrase blood libel refers to accusations that Jews kill Christian children to use their blood for the ritual of making matzoh at Passover.)

King Faisal of Saudi Arabia uttered a similar slander in a 1972 interview: Israel has had malicious intentions since ancient times. Its objective is the destruction of all other religions....
A Look at the Persecution of Christians Around the World

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

by ELWOOD McQUAID

Each Sunday, millions of Western Christians go to worship with Bibles in hand, usually one for every member of the family. Such a public display of God’s Word is an inherent right we seldom think of as an increasingly unique aspect of life in this world.

But clearly, this privilege is increasingly under attack in countries where millions of our fellow believers and their families are attempting to survive.

Two thousand years ago, in a world strangled by malignant paganism, churches were seized, people were dragged from their homes and torn to bits by wild beasts for the pleasure of the masses, and believers were tortured and beaten to death for their faith.

Some will say, “Regrettable, but that was then, and this is now.”

Those who see it that way need to take a good look at the world outside the boundaries of countries where the right to carry a Bible, enjoy public worship, and speak openly of their faith without fear is taken for granted.

Here is a glimpse beyond the narrow world of the West.

Mass slaughter of Christians has accelerated at an astonishing pace. Ten thousand have been slain in the past five years alone. At least one thousand churches have been burned, along with some eighty thousand Christian homes.

Carrying a Bible openly in North Korea can mean a death sentence or long stretch in prison.

A recent report revealed that in the northern state of Jigawa, Nigeria, Muslim radicals burned down ten churches and more than one hundred Christian properties. An undetermined number of believers died in these attacks, which the extremists justified by charging that a Christian had blasphemed the prophet Muhammad.

A leader of the Nigerian Christian community countered the pretext by saying the attack was “premeditated and [demonstrates the] continuous persecution of the Christian community here. We have faced these attacks over the years, and the situation is becoming more difficult for us to practice our Christian faith.”

And if there is a hint of suspicion that things are improving, one need only look to central Nigeria where radical Muslims attacked and killed forty-eight Christians in a farming...
village in February. Most were slain in a church, where they were attempting to take refuge.

On the more personal side, soldiers captured a Christian in Vietnam and beat him severely with batons. Witnesses reported seeing blood flowing from his nose and mouth. But that did not stop the soldiers. They then shocked him with an electric rod until he fell to the ground unconscious.

Some congressional leaders seem to be growing more aware of these atrocities and are acting in response to Christians who have taken the time, not only to pray, but to inform elected officials of the vicious wave of persecution Christians are experiencing in other lands.

A fact-finding team of four U.S. congressmen expressed shock at the level of Christian persecution in India at the hands of extremist Hindus. Joseph Pitts (R-Pa.) said the team would take the matter up with both Indian and American authorities, calling it “a great human rights tragedy.”

According to police, attacks on Christians in India rose from seven in 1996 to 380 in 2003. Unofficial estimates place last year’s total at six hundred. And Indian courts have at least four thousand cases pending involving assaults on Christians.

These undeniable facts of life should serve as a dramatic reminder of the biblical mandate of Hebrews 13:3:

Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them who suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

If you are fortunate enough to live in the West, you have an obligation to your brethren who do not. And when you go to church next Sunday, let the Bible in your hand cause you to give thanks to the Lord for your freedom and remind you to pray for those in the body of Christ who are deprived of the same privilege.

Myths/Facts from page 35

They regard the other religions as lower than their own and other peoples as inferior to their level. And on the subject of vengeance—they have a certain day on which they mix the blood of non-Jews into their bread and eat it. It happened that two years ago, while I was in Paris on a visit, that the police discovered five murdered children. Their blood had been drained, and it turned out that some Jews had murdered them in order to take their blood and mix it with the bread that they eat on this day. This shows you what is the extent of their hatred and malice toward non-Jewish peoples.

On November 11, 1999, during a Gaza appearance with then-First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Suha Arafat, wife of PA Chairman Yasser Arafat, stated, “Our people have been subjected to the daily and extensive use of poisonous gas by the Israeli forces, which has led to an increase in cancer cases among women and children.” Similar specious allegations have been made by other Palestinian officials.

The Arab-Muslim press, which is almost exclusively controlled by the governments in each Middle Eastern nation, regularly publishes anti-Semitic articles and cartoons. Today it remains common to find anti-Semitic publications in Egypt. For example, the establishment Al-Ahram newspaper published an article giving the “historical” background of the blood libel tradition while accusing Israel of using the blood of Palestinian children to bake matzohs up to the present time.

Anti-Semitic articles also regularly appear in the press in Jordan and Syria. Many of the attacks deal with denial of the Holocaust, its “exploitation” by Zionism, and a comparison of Zionism and Israel to Nazism.

In November 2001, a satirical skit aired on the second most popular television station in the Arab world, which depicted a character meant to be Ariel Sharon drinking the blood of Arab children as a grotesque-looking Orthodox Jew looked on.

Abu Dhabi Television also aired a skit in which Dracula appears to take a bite out of Sharon, but dies because Sharon’s blood is polluted. Protests that these shows were anti-Semitic were ignored by the network.

The PA’s media have also contained inflammatory and anti-Semitic material. A Friday sermon in the Zayed bin Sultan Aal Nahyan mosque in Gaza calling for the murder of Jews and Americans was broadcast live on the official PA television:

Have no mercy on the Jews, no matter where they are, in any country. Fight them, wherever you are. Wherever you meet them, kill them. Wherever you are, kill those Jews and those Americans who are like them and those who stand by them they are all in one trench, against the Arabs and the Muslims because they established Israel here, in the beating heart of the Arab world, in Palestine.

Even Palestinian crossword puzzles are used to delegitimize Israel and attack Jews, providing clues, for example, suggesting the Jewish trait is “treachery.”
Logically speaking, the State of Israel should not exist. Five fully armed Arab nations tried to snuff it out at birth in 1948. Nevertheless, with few weapons; no air force; no navy; and an “army” composed of feeble, broken refugees who had escaped the ovens of Europe and could not even communicate with one another in a common language, tiny Israel survived. It was a miracle.

Logically speaking, the Jewish people themselves should not exist. They have been persecuted, victimized, and slain in almost every country they have lived in and by almost every means possible. Other civilizations that endured less have been erased from the earth. But the Jewish people have survived. It is a miracle.

In fact, logically speaking, the nation should never have been born. Sarai, Abram’s wife, was unable to conceive when she was young and later grew too old to conceive. Yet she did. And yes, it was a miracle.

In fact, Israel’s very existence is a triumph of the miraculous over the logical. But when has God ever been confined to human logic? And when has time, space, or natural law ever restricted the workings of the Almighty?

Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me? (Jer. 32:27).

I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure (Isa. 46:9–10).

And His pleasure was to use a ninety-year-old barren woman and miraculously create His own special nation to which He would give the land of Canaan and through which He would bless all mankind.

When Sarai’s servant, Hagar, gave birth to Ishmael, neither Abram nor Sarai realized that Ishmael was not the...
heir God had promised. But the Lord kept silent on the issue for thirteen years. Then, when Abram was ninety-nine, He spoke (Gen. 17).

He changed Abram’s name to Abraham (meaning “father of a multitude”); changed Sarai’s name to Sarah (meaning “princess”); reiterated His covenant with Abraham, including His promise to give him “all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession” (Gen. 17:8); gave the rite of circumcision as the sign of that covenant; and promised a child through Sarah, who by then was eighty-nine years old: “And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her” (17:16).

Abraham immediately “fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? . . . Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee!” (vv. 17–18).

Despite his great faith, Abraham struggled to understand how Sarah could give birth; and thus he begged God to make Ishmael his heir. But God said no:

Sarah, thy wife, shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him (17:19).

What did it matter to God that Sarah was past childbearing and would be ninety years old? He controlled conception. And He sovereignly established the child’s sex, name, and date of birth (17:19; 18:14). After Abraham laughed, God decreed the child would be called Isaac, meaning “he laughs” (17:19).

Later Sarah laughed also when the Lord appeared with two angels and told Abraham, “I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah, thy wife, shall have a son” (18:10).

Understandably, Sarah had difficulty believing she would give birth. But failing to comprehend God’s ways is vastly different from failing to believe in Him. He says, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways” (Isa. 55:8). God does not explain to us everything He does. But He promises that if we trust and lean on Him, He will direct our paths. Even people of great faith sometimes struggle and have been known to make great mistakes when they lean on human reason rather than divine guidance.

Despite her doubts, Sarah was a woman of faith, as evidenced by what the New Testament affirms about her: Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised (Heb. 11:11).

Thus, when Abraham was one hundred and Sarah ninety—when it was illogical and clearly impossible for Sarah to bear a child—Sarah gave birth to Isaac. It was a simcha (Yiddish for “special joyous time”) that caused Sarah to declare, “God hath made me laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me” (Gen. 21:6).

Indeed, the very utterance of Isaac’s name should confirm to Jewish people throughout every generation that their existence is nothing short of a miracle. As God told Abraham, “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” (18:14).

Many people view life strictly from their human vantage points, desperately seeking earthly explanations for everything and reducing God to proportions that their limited, finite minds can comprehend. But often there are no earthly explanations. Sometimes the miraculous happens. And those occurrences (the Bible is full of them) come exclusively from the hand of an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God.

The child born of Abraham and Sarah was the seed of all of Israel. The unconditional promises of the Abrahamic Covenant passed to him (Gen. 21:12; Rom. 9:7), then to his son Jacob (Gen. 28:13–15), and to the entire nation of Israel (Ezek. 37:25).

More important, the redemption of all mankind rested in Isaac because from his seed would come the promised Messiah—another miraculous birth.

Lorna Simcox is senior editor for The Friends of Israel.

Conversions from page 34
(Dan.9:24–27) and the time of Jacob’s Trouble (Jer. 30:7).

Their protection, or sealing, has nothing to do with the church. The church will not even be present because it will have been removed through the Rapture prior to this event. It is likely, however, that the testimony of believers before the Rapture will have an influence on the 144,000 accepting the Messiah.

The 144,000 are supernaturally protected by God to prove that God is able to sustain and deliver the Jewish people from Satan, who is trying to destroy them. The seal also protects them from God’s awful Tribulation judgments falling on Earth, ultimately to rout Satan from power.

The 144,000 are also God’s guarantee that Israel will never be destroyed, as He promised (Jer. 30:11; 31:35–37; 46:28; Zech. 13:8–9).

While Jesus was yet on Earth, His disciples asked, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6).

His response was gentle and clear: “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:7). Jesus explained that His return is in the Father’s timetable, not ours.

It is noteworthy that the question was not so much about when the Lord will return but why: He will return to restore the Davidic kingdom to Israel. When Jesus returns, He will judge the world then reign over it from Jerusalem, which will be its capital. Restoration of the Jewish kingdom, with Messiah as King, is what the Second Advent is all about. Christ’s return does not hinge on anything the church can do while it remains here on Earth. The Lord’s return is totally in the hands of Almighty God.

ENDNOTE

1 Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, 1721; [www.ccel.org/h/henry/mhc2/MHC45001.HTM].

Lorna Simcox is senior editor for The Friends of Israel.
Israel to Buy Turkish Water

Arutz-7—Israel has signed an agreement to buy 50 million cubic meters of fresh water from Turkey each year for the next 20 years at a minimum price of 70 cents per cubic meter. This is cheaper than desalinated water, but much more expensive than local water.

Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opposed the deal, saying it was too expensive. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, however, said that the importance of the deal surpasses merely the water issue and affects the strategic relationship with Turkey. Government sources have said that not only can it be a forerunner of additional large-scale deals with Turkey, but that canceling it would be liable to push Turkey towards the Arab world.

Israeli water experts continue to bemoan the lack of a large-scale desalination system. Israel consumes some two billion cubic meters of water each year, while its water supplies are replenished at a rate of only some 1.8 billion. This produces a yearly deficit of 200 million cubic meters, or four times the amount to be purchased from Turkey.

Fifty million cubic meters is roughly equivalent to 30 centimeters of height in the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee), Israel's largest water source. For the first time in over a decade, the Kinneret is nearing its optimum level of 208.8 meters below sea level and stands only 28 centimeters (11 inches) short of this level.

MK wants bigger Knesset mosque

Arutz-7—Arab MK Ahmed Tibi has filed a request with Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin to expand the mosque in the Knesset sanctuary. The Arab MK said he filed the request on behalf of the increasing number of Muslims who come to pray at the Knesset, Israel's parliament.

MK Gila Finkelstein called Tibi's request a provocation. “I pass through the corridor opposite the Knesset mosque dozens of times a day,” she said, “and never have I seen one worshipper there—not even Tibi himself.”

Greek patriarch okays terrorism

Israel’s Supreme Court has frozen the appointment of Metropolitan Irineos, a friend of Yasser Arafat, as Greek Orthodox Church patriarch until the end of legal proceedings. Although his appointment has government approval, two court suits block it Arutz-7 reported.

The news agency has copies of letters Irineos wrote to Arafat using sharp anti-Semitic terminology and openly expressing his support of terrorism against Israel.

Arutz-7 reported that on July 17, 2001, Irineos wrote, “You [Arafat] are aware of the sentiments of disgust and disrespect that all the Holy Sepulchre fathers are feeling for the descendants of the crucifiers of our Lord Jesus . . . actual crucifiers of your people, Zionists [sic] Jewish conquerors of the Holy Land of Palestine.”

The appointment is particularly sensitive because the Greek Orthodox Church owns so much land in Israel.

According to Arutz-7, its extensive holdings include the land on which the Knesset stands, the prime minister’s and president’s official residences, parts of Jerusalem’s wealthiest neighborhoods, locations in the Old City and in the new Jerusalem neighborhood of Har Homa, and land in Ramle and Lod.

Soldiers need Zionist infusion

Sentiment is growing that too many Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers don’t know what they’re fighting for.

Arutz-7 reported that a new program to imbue IDF soldiers with Jewish and Zionist values has been approved.

A creator of the program, Prof. Binyamin Ish-Shalom of Bar Ilan University, said some 20 percent of the army is composed of new immigrants, with the rate even higher among combat soldiers. “But it’s not only that; many native Israelis don’t know much about the land. We were astonished to see how many have never been to Jerusalem, and how many from the south have never been to the north and know nothing of the biblical and historical background of the areas they are supposed to defend.”

Another orphan

Arutz-7—Eitan Kokoyo and Rima Novikov were on their way to friends in Ashdod when Palestinian terrorists ambushed them with heavy gunfire, then made sure they were dead.

With the victims’ car totally stopped, the terrorists approached and shot the two in their heads from point-blank range. Later a passing motorist saw the bullet-riddled car and alerted security forces.

The couple’s 2-year-old daughter, Michelle, now joins the growing ranks of Israeli children left without
In another field entirely, orthopedic surgeons at Hadassah University Hospital-Mt. Scopus became the first in the world to perform hip replacement surgery (arthroscopy) with the assistance of a computer navigation system. Hadassah Hospital presented the results of the surgery last week, in the person of 53-year-old Amram Weiser of Kibbutz Yad Mordechai, who was the fourth patient to have undergone the computer-assisted operation.

If Rabin had only known

ARUTZ-7—President Moshe Katzav, visiting in France, said recently that the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin never would have signed the Oslo accords had he known Yasser Arafat would continue terrorism.

Since the signing of the Oslo accords, we have not had one day of peace—while we have made far-reaching compromises,” he said. “Rabin took this historic step,” Katzav said, but “if he had known that Arafat would continue with terrorism, he would never have signed. [While] Israel has accepted the Road Map plan, the response from the Palestinians is to increase terrorism.” Rabin and Arafat received the Nobel Peace prize for having signed the 1993 Oslo accords.

El Al to get extra protection

ARUTZ-7—El Al passenger jets are about to be fitted with an anti-missile system made by Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI). The first two or three systems should be installed soon on El Al’s Boeing 767s. The push for the installation of such systems on civilian aircraft intensified following Al-Qaeda’s unsuccessful attempt to shoot down an Israeli Arkia Airlines passenger plane in Kenya in November 2002.

Parents due to terrorism. Eitan’s sister said she and her husband would adopt Michelle.

Terrorists plan to bypass fence

While the world castigates Israel for building a security fence to protect itself, terrorists are figuring out ways to attack Israel despite the fence.

Arutz-7 reported that Palestinian Authority (PA) Arabs are investing heavily in long-range artillery. Israeli Commander Avi Dichter said terrorists also are trying to transfer information on artillery manufacture from Gaza to Judea/Samaria to be able to attack Israel from there as well.

“The organizations are working on upgrading their materials and the destructive effect,” he said, “by using careful timing and even chemical materials in their attacks.

The controversial security fence is a 450-mile barrier of chain-link fencing, natural barriers, ditches, and watch posts, with less than 5 percent being concrete walls that Israel is erecting in and around Judea and Samaria.

Medical firsts

ARUTZ-7—Israeli fertility experts at the Hadassah University Hospital-Ein Karem have facilitated the birth of two healthy babies from embryos that were frozen for five years longer than previously thought possible. The happy parents, from Jerusalem, had their IVF (in vitro fertilization) embryos frozen in 1990 as a result of unidentified fertility abnormalities.

The Hadassah process was reported on in the February edition of the prestigious medical journal Human Reproduction. The procedure was carried out by Dr. Ariel Revel of the In Vitro Fertilization Unit of Hadassah’s Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and a team of Hadassah physicians.

Each day, we as Christians are given the opportunity to glorify God. Using our time well, exercising the gifts the Holy Spirit has given us, and making wise use of the finances God has entrusted to us are just a few of the many ways in which we can honor Him.

One way we can glorify God beyond our time here on Earth is through a will. A will allows us to make sure that what the Lord has entrusted to us remains His when we no longer need it.

Sadly, it is reported that more than 50 percent of Americans (Christians included) have no legal will in force. This requires the laws of your state to intercede and make a will for you. Does your state know how you want your estate handled? Distributions are often made in ways that may be contrary to your wishes. In addition, your desire to see the Lord’s work benefited are likely to go unfulfilled.

If you would like to have a will written but don’t know where to start, let us help. We would like to send you our informative brochure Making a Will That Works at no cost and without obligation. It is our way of helping you become a wise steward over all the Lord has entrusted to you.

To receive Making a Will That Works, simply check the appropriate box on the envelope in this magazine; or write to Tom Geoghan at The Friends of Israel, P.O. Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08099.
Psalm 81 is a nice chapter in the Word of God. It begins, “Sing aloud unto God, our strength; make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob” (v. 1).

Unfortunately, many of the people who read it do not understand it. They think that because they study many books written by men, they know everything. But when I speak with them, I can see clearly that they are poor in faith.

It is written in Psalm 81, “There shall no foreign god be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any foreign god” (v. 9). Yet these people worship men and the words of men. They believe they are faithful to God; but in fact, they are sinners in need of repentance. And what is worse, they try to teach others to do as they do.

Often I go to these men who believe they are holy because of their many books and their quick tongues. I feel sorry for the many people who do not have true faith who listen to these men, fall into their net, and are caught there.

One day recently I stood among a group of people and listened to several rabbis who were sure they could cast their net around me also. But when one of the rabbis asked me, “What do you think about all that you have heard?” I told him.

“Life and death are in the power of the tongue,” I said. “And your tongue cannot bring life.”

He was surprised because he thought I would support him and say “Amen” to all his nice words. I told the people gathered that they must beware of this man’s words because, as we say in Israel, honey and milk are under his tongue.

King Solomon said, “A soft tongue breaketh the bone” (Pr. 25:15). Many people believe much that is not true because of nicely spoken words. But then they suffer for it.

My response did not please the rabbis. “Which Satan brought you here?” one asked.

The people who heard him began to perk up and were looking around to see to whom he was speaking.

“I am not the one persuading these people to believe in false gods,” I said.

“How can you tell these people who do not know about faith that what we say is not true?” the rabbi asked.
This time I opened my Bible. “Have a good look,” I said, talking to the crowd. “Where is the true word about faith in the Lord? In the Bible or in those many books that you see in the hands of the rabbis?”

Someone in the group asked me, “May we see your Bible?”

So I showed it to him. The people around me agreed that what belongs to faith is written in the Bible and not in books. Anyone can write a book. But God gave us the Bible.

Now the rabbis were angry. One of them shouted at me, “We never want to see you anymore!”

After a long conversation the people decided they did not want to listen to the rabbis anymore. Instead, they started to ask me questions. I could see, however, that behind me, the rabbis were listening.

We began to talk about the late ultra-Orthodox rabbi from New York who some claim is the Messiah. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson died in 1994. They read about him in the newspapers here and see his picture regularly.

So I read to them about Messiah from the Bible and asked, “Where here does it say that the Messiah will come to the people of Israel from New York?”

Everyone started to laugh. This time the rabbis told them, “Be very careful. This man is dangerous.”

So I asked them again, “Where is the full truth about God written?”

All of them replied, “In the Bible, of course!”

Then the rabbis said, “Now we know who you are!” The rabbis understood that I believe Jesus is the Messiah prophesied in God’s Word.

I told them, “It is good that you know and see that these people are going after truth, not your false beliefs.”

It is our duty to teach His Word and be His servants. As the Lord said, “Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified” (Isa. 49:3).