Fast Facts on the Middle East book Ad (Waveline)
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ABOUT THE COVER

Left to right: Ousted Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, President George W. Bush, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and Jordan’s King Abdullah. When the principal players at the Aqaba summit last June announced their intentions to implement a road map to peace, there was a sense of shared optimism among them. Others, however, had no such hope. Today their doubts appear justified. The question is, Where does one turn now?

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES
More and more Jewish people are beginning to recognize a simple truth we Christians have known for years: Protestantism is a mixed bag. Not all Protestants believe the Bible is God’s Word; not all interpret the Bible literally; not all support Israel. In fact, not all Protestants are even Christians.

A truly dramatic evidence of this growing awareness occurred earlier this year in Baltimore, Maryland. Some 350 national Jewish leaders gathered for their annual plenum to consider issues of importance to their communities. They adopted resolutions strongly supporting Israel and praising the Bush administration for its war on terrorism. But they did something else as well. They voted to support the growing relationship between the Jewish and evangelical Christian communities.

A resolution was enthusiastically debated that uniquely had Bible-believing Christians as its focus. Matthew E. Berger of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported on this development in an article titled “Defeat: JCPA nixes controversial resolution” in the March 5 Jewish Community Voice:

On another front, delegates voted to support increasing dialogue with the evangelical Christian community. Evangelicals have shown increasing interest in working with Jewish leaders on their shared support for Israel, although Jews have been reluctant because of divergent domestic policy views and concerns about proselytization.

Berger quoted Alan Respler, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of Southern New Jersey, who said, “Evangelicals are not monolithic. We need to dialogue with them to understand the differences between the different groups, to see who we can work with effectively.”

The article said that in South Jersey, “according to Respler, the JCRC works closely with two Evangelical Christian organizations that strongly condemn anti-Semitism [sic] . . . and strongly support Israel as God’s promise to the Jewish people in the book of Genesis.”

We thank God that He has privileged The Friends of Israel (FOI) to play a key role in building relationships between Bible-believing Christians and the Jewish community. Our nearby JCRC, spurred by Respler and other agency officers, has welcomed FOI’s participation in a wide range of activities on behalf of Israel and the Jewish people.

Meanwhile, leaders of mainstream Protestant churches have virtually abandoned the Jewish state. Steeped in liberal theology that rejects the Bible as God’s Word and often even rejects the Bible’s criteria for becoming a Christian, they frequently embrace pro-Palestinian activism and positions that undermine the security of Israel and safety of the Jewish people.

The Friends of Israel has participated with our Jewish friends in rallies and press conferences supporting Israel. We have stood with them to oppose the rising tide of anti-Semitism. Friends of Israel has welcomed visiting Israelis to our headquarters and helped open doors for them to speak in churches and Christian schools. We have encouraged Christians to “Shop Israel” and have mobilized Christians nationally and internationally to support the beleaguered Jewish state.

When true Christians support Israel and show heartfelt compassion for the Jewish people, we are used of God to demonstrate the unconditional love He has for His covenant people.

The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt (Dt. 7:7–8).

The times are difficult; yet they provide exciting opportunities for us to stand and work with our Jewish friends. Relationships are being built for time and eternity. We all need to be involved and respond to God’s challenge to reflect the hope He gives us in His holy Scriptures:

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you (1 Pet. 3:15).

William E. Sutter is the executive director of The Friends of Israel.
Exposing the Growing Intolerance Toward Christianity
by Elwood McQuaid

In his newest book, Persecuted, Elwood McQuaid shares eye-opening, up-to-the-minute information and personal stories about people who are being persecuted for the sake of Jesus, challenging readers to break their silence. Christians will discover how they can make a difference through prayer and action to help those who risk everything for what truly is going to last forever.

With great passion and inspiration, Elwood McQuaid unflinchingly calls readers to reexamine their lives and be people of hope and purpose. Persecuted will make a lasting impact as it lifts your vision to Jesus and the hope of His return.

“Christians are being slaughtered, starved, and persecuted today in unprecedented numbers. And it is imperative that this generation of believers not only recognize the enormity of the conflict but also come to grips with its own indifference... and do something!”

—Elwood McQuaid

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Five Big Words

When speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Tom DeLay, visited Israel recently, he said cryptically, “Israel’s fight is our fight.”

Just five words to be sure, but words defining what the conflict in the Middle East is all about. There were those who, predictably, took exception to the speaker’s unvarnished declaration of solidarity with Israel. Since September 11, 2001, blackened the pages of American history, there has been a concerted effort to separate America’s war on terror from events afflicting Israel in the Holy Land. A double standard has reared its head; and it defies logic and denies the obvious. DeLay set the record straight: Israel’s fight is our fight.

If any doubts lingered about the accuracy of his comment, they should have evaporated after the twin tragedies of August 19 and 20, when a bus was bombed in Jerusalem and an explosives-laden cement truck slammed into UN headquarters at the Canal Hotel in Baghdad.

The total casualty count in Jerusalem and Baghdad numbered forty killed and approximately two hundred wounded.

In Israel, a cease-fire of sorts had been in force for weeks. Although terrorist attacks on Israelis did not stop, they diminished somewhat as U.S. envoys, Israeli leaders, and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Abu Mazen discussed how to implement the Road Map and birth an Arab Palestine that lives side by side with Israel in peace.

Meanwhile terrorists were busy repairing their infrastructure, which had been badly damaged by Israel’s Operation Defensive Shield. In addition, they were rearming and preparing for another all-out assault on Israelis as soon as conditions were right.

For them the opportune moment arrived when a Muslim cleric boarded bus number 2 on a Jerusalem street with a powerful explosive strapped to his body. The explosion tore through the bus, killing infants, children, men, and women, many of whom were returning from worshiping at the Western Wall.

In Baghdad, UN staffers were posted on a purely humanitarian mission. They were not soldiers. They were on the scene to help put Iraq back on its feet after years of oppression and deprivation under Saddam Hussein and his murderous regime.

By all civilized measures of computation, the blast was incomprehensible, senseless, and barbaric beyond description. But the perpetrators of the bombing did not see it as such. These people have no interest in securing stability or tranquility for the Iraqis. Indeed, no more so than Islamic militants favor bringing peace and the normalization of life for deprived Palestinians.

The war in Iraq was an easy military victory. In a matter of weeks, American and coalition forces swept aside meager Iraqi opposition and brought down the government of Saddam Hussein. Most in the West thought that would be the end of it. Then rebuilding the country could begin.

However, we soon discovered that the war continues. And this is a different kind of war than we understood. Radical Islamists from other countries have rallied to join the terror campaign to kill American troops, sabotage efforts to rebuild the country, and drive the West from the region. It has been done successfully before.

In 1982 the United States sent a force to keep peace between
Muslims and Christians in Beirut, Lebanon. On October 23, 1983, a Muslim drove a truck loaded with 2,500 pounds of TNT through the main gate of U.S. Marine headquarters, killing 241 marine, army, and navy personnel. Another eighty-one were wounded.

The attack was carried out by Hezbollah, aided by Syria, and financed by Iran. Consequently, the United States withdrew its forces.

Eighteen American soldiers, part of a UN peace-keeping force in Somalia, were killed in a 15-hour gun battle with Somali rebels. As a result, the U.S. Congress pressured the administration to withdraw from Somalia.

The implication of these withdrawals was not lost on radical Islamists.

Today they are counting again on their determination to break the will of their enemies. If the West loses the will to fight terror until total victory is won, the Osama bin Ladins, Saddam Husseins, and Yasser Arafats of the world will win the larger war, even if they do so from the grave. Neither Israel nor America can afford to let that happen.

Israelis used to say they lived in a tough neighborhood. Since 9/11 Americans have come to realize that we, too, live in a tough global neighborhood, one where only the truly tough and tested survive.

And Rep. DeLay’s observation spelled out the rules of engagement to survive in a world gone bad: Israel’s fight is our fight.
The more things change, you know the rest: the more they stay the same. We received a grisly reminder of the accuracy of that observation with the report of an incident in the life of Uday, the now deceased son of Saddam Hussein.

Uday reportedly was carrying the decapitated head of an enemy to present to his father on a golden platter. One is immediately reminded of the fate of John the Baptist two thousand years ago and the conduct of affairs in such ancient empires as Babylon many centuries earlier.

This empirical evidence blows apart the fiction that man is innately good and that the human species is on an ever-upward climb toward a utopian semiparadise. With such evidence in hand, it is inconceivable that otherwise intelligent individuals would tenaciously hold to the “spark of good” folly and refuse to consider that an ingrained streak of depravity might run through the human family. Inconceivable, that is, unless we understand the natural man’s compulsion to break free from the facts transmitted in God’s Word and documented on every page of the human chronicle.

At the root of the issue is the irrevocable rejection of the premise that sinful humanity needs a sinless Savior. Put another way, people cling to a lie because they consistently and increasingly repudiate the gospel message and anyone who dares to proclaim it. But the evidence is in, and we need only continue reminding the offenders—and ourselves—that the basic problems assailing this planet are spiritual. And that’s where our approach to problem solving must begin.

Just the Facts, Please

Let’s turn the clock back to the seventh century B.C. The spotlight was on Babylon and what that marauding, imperial juggernaut was about to do to errant Israel. In that day it was not Scud missiles that assaulted the Jewish people. It was the hordes of Nebuchadnezzar, armies that were “terrible and dreadful” and spared none as they crushed weaker nations.

Conditions within Israel were succinctly described by the prophet Habakkuk as intolerable to God. So much so, that the Lord was going to use corrupt and violent Babylon to give the Israelites a taste of the fruits of their depravity:

_O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! Even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? For spoiling and violence are before me; and there are those who raise up strife and contention. Therefore, the law is slackened, and justice doth never go forth; for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore, justice goeth forth perverted_ (Hab. 1:2–4).

The prophet leveled a number of charges at his countrymen: (1)
iniquity, (2) exploitation of the weak, (3) violence, (4) rabble-rousing contention, (5) disregard for law, (6) judicial injustice, (7) prevailing culture of wickedness, and (8) perverted justice.

Thus the situation was reduced to several inescapable realities. From without, the Babylonians were about to wreak havoc on, spoil, destroy, and enslave the cream of Israelite society. In that mix was the destruction of the Temple and carrying away as booty the furnishings of the sacred chambers.

From within, the situation had become irredeemable. And the divine bill of particulars was certified in a series of woes pronounced against the leaders and people of the land: drunkenness (2:5); insatiable covetousness and a desire to defraud the innocent (2:9); social impurity, lewdness, and the equivalent of drug addiction (2:15); and unbridled devotion to idolatry (2:18–19).

Little wonder that Habakkuk and his fellow prophets vented their frustration before the Lord (2:1). They simply could not comprehend what had gone wrong with the Chosen People. One thing they did understand, however. And it likely fueled their bewilderment.

The prophets understood well that Israel was created to be a witness nation among godless Gentile world powers. They knew that the Israelites were a nation in waiting. Waiting for the Messiah, waiting for the coming of the promised King. Therefore, if the nation were dispersed or destroyed, all would be lost.

The God/Satan Struggle

The conflict was far bigger than it appeared. What difference would it have made if another relatively insignificant nation had passed from the scene? After all, that seemed to be an almost daily occurrence in the ancient world. The Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans regularly folded small nations into their imperial portfolios.

But it was different with this people and this nation. Across the millennia the great world empires have marched in succession into Israel and attempted to craft her destruction. They are all dead and gone. Israel is alive and well. This fact alone should cause people, especially Christians, to understand that the preservation of the Jewish people against all odds is not a mutation of the historical norm.

In his extremely insightful book What on Earth Is God Doing? Renald Showers documents the larger issue. While we have only a horizonal, limited view of the traumatic convolutions of history, God has the whole view. World history, as Dr. Showers deftly chronicles, is a struggle between God and his arch adversary, Satan. The composition of the conflict is in the Word of God; the confirmation is written in the history of fallen humanity.

Why is it that one of the stated dreams of the “new Nebuchadnezzar,” Saddam Hussein, was to float a barge carrying a nuclear device into Haifa harbor and detonate it? Why would the Iranians make a great case of developing ballistic missiles with a range that could strike every city in Israel? What purpose is there for a Palestinian graduating class of 2003 in Gaza to sing at its commencement exercises, “With words and with a rifle we will sing . . . from Jerusalem to Gaza”? Or for Palestinian children attending summer camps named in honor of suicide bombers to receive military training in hopes of destroying Israel?

Any rational human being must conclude that there is something going on that involves a larger, malignant strategy; and at the center of the contest are Israel and the Jewish people.

All of which causes us to press the point that Christians should recognize the integral position of Israel in God’s plan and that the keys to this understanding lie in the Book. Some speak disparagingly about believers who adhere to the literal and historical interpretation of Scripture, refuse to allegorize Israel into the church, and
stand as Christian Zionists by what God has dictated. Yet these positions are essential to remaining true to the essence of the matter delineated in Genesis 12:1–3: “I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee” (v. 3).

**The Answer Is On the Way**

Habakkuk’s answer to all of his turmoil and Israel’s trouble came in three segments. First was the assurance that God had not left the premises:

*But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him* (2:20).

The Lord was precisely where He should have been, doing exactly what He should have been doing. And where is He today when we need Him most? Right there, controlling everything taking place. God is in charge of the end game. We may grope about seeing things “through a glass, darkly”; but we can rest in the absolute competence of the Lord.

Second, final rest and reward are anticipated:

*For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea* (2:14).

This promise was given in the midst of Israel’s darkest hour. The brightest shafts of divine light always seem to rise from the hottest cauldrons of distress and uncertainty. An era of millennial bliss is coming, when the knowledge and glory of Jehovah will be universal realities. One day the Messiah will mount His throne in Jerusalem; and His adversaries, and ours, will be no more.

It is intriguing that God always encouraged ancient Israel to look ahead. The King and Kingdom were coming. During this dispensation of grace, believers are admonished to keep looking up in expectancy of the blessed hope, His coming in clouds to call us home to Him.

**God always encouraged ancient Israel to look ahead. The King and Kingdom were coming. During this dispensation of grace, believers are admonished to keep looking up in expectancy of the blessed hope, His coming in clouds to call us home to Him.**

**When “It” Becomes a “He”**

The link between Old Testament revelation and New Testament Scripture is a constant source of instruction and inspiration and is indispensable to grasping the whole of God’s perfect plan. Habakkuk provides a vivid example:

*For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul that is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith* (2:3–4, emphasis added).

The vision of deliverance was associated with the appearance of “it.” The identity of “it” is clarified in Hebrews 10:37: “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

Thus the “it” of Habakkuk becomes “he” in Hebrews. And who is “he”? Without question, he is the Messiah. Thus the final segment of Habakkuk’s three-part answer to Israel’s troubles involves the personal intervention of Jehovah on behalf of his people.

This revelation contains a marvelous fusion of truth, one we can ill afford to miss. For in the immediate context of exposing the identity of the one referred to as “he,” there leaps from the pages of God’s Word the fullness of Messiah’s mission for Israel and individuals of all elements of humanity who believe. This truth is bound up in a few simple words, “But the just shall live by his faith” (2:4).

The New Testament associates the quotation from Habakkuk with redemption (Rom. 1:16–17), victory over the law (Gal. 3:11), and living a triumphant life in the Messiah (Heb. 10:38).

**A Standard for the Season**

At this special season of the year, when Jewish people commemorate the deliverance of Israel and her people from the threat of annihilation and Christians celebrate the incarnation, we have a marvelous opportunity to pause and commemorate God’s steadfastness. Although it is true, humanly speaking, that the more things change, the more they stay the same, this season is a reminder that an immutable God changes not and that He who watches over His people neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Elwood McQuaid is editor-in-chief for The Friends of Israel.
Israel is in more danger today than at any time since its 1948 War of Independence. The “road map to peace” conceived by the UN, United States, European Union, and Russia ignores the fact that Islam requires all Jewish people to be killed before the “last day.” It also forgets that, according to Islam, Israel may not possess any part of “Palestine,” which Islam claims (despite Gen. 17:15–21 to the contrary) was given to Ishmael and his Arab descendants, not to Isaac and his Jewish descendants.

Unfortunately, Israel’s past leaders share the blame for today’s crisis. Accepting Yasser Arafat’s promises, they agreed in 1993 to recognize him and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as “partners in peace.” Why would anyone, especially Israelis, believe any promise from a man notorious for forty-five years of lying, mayhem, and murder?

A far worse desecration of justice is the honor the world and Israel have accorded Arafat, whose terrorism far surpasses that of Osama bin Laden. In 1995 Ariel Sharon said, “I don’t know anyone since Nazi times who has as much Jewish blood on his hands as Arafat.” Yet this worst mass murderer and terrorist was given the Nobel Peace Prize.

Arafat and his PLO hold every terrorist record: the most passenger aircraft blown up: 40; largest ransom collected: $5 million from Lufthansa; the most hostages taken at one time: 300; largest number of people shot in an airport attack: 31; largest total number of victims killed and wounded: hundreds of thousands; widest variety of targets: ocean liners, passenger planes, children’s schools and school buses, consuls, etc.

A meeting at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York City.
embassies, airports, shopping malls—even 11 Israeli athletes by PLO’s Black September faction at the 1972 Munich Olympics. Yet the PLO was invited to compete in subsequent Olympics.

Although the entire world watched live on TV the PLO attack on Israeli athletes, Arafat was invited to address the UN General Assembly on November 13, 1974. Moreover, early in 1973, the National Security Agency (NSA), Israeli intelligence, and others had recorded Arafat from the Black September radio command center in Beirut directing Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) in the Khartoum office of the PLO’s al-Fatah in the unusually brutal murder of U.S. Ambassador Cleo A. Noel, Jr. (America’s highest-ranking black diplomat); chargé d’affaires, George Moore; and Belgian chargé d’affaires, Guy Eid.

Defying the United States and Belgium, Arafat brought to the UN three members of Black September (Abu Marwan, Abu Tariq, and Farouk el-Husseini), who were directly involved in the Khartoum murders. Also in his entourage was Ali Hassan Salameh, Black September’s leader of the Khartoum incident, clearly visible with Arafat on media TV. As former NSA employee, James J. Welsh, who heard Arafat’s radio transmissions to Khartoum, has said,

This message of a humiliated US was heard loud and clear by the terrorists who have continued to inflict insult upon injury on the US; 9-11 is but one episode [resulting from] the US non-reaction. . . . I often wonder why Yasser Arafat’s . . . continued presence on the world scene is more important than simple justice for [three] dedicated diplomats who were murdered.

In his 1974 UN speech, Arafat referred to Israel as “the Zionist entity.” He then called for support in doing away with “imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and racism, the chief form of which is Zionism.” The response to his call for “doing away” with Israel was a standing ovation. In fact, for the UN (or the U.S. Justice Department) to fail to arrest this master terrorist was a violation of international law.

Israel—Always the Exception

A year later the UN overwhelmingly voted to condemn Zionism as “a form of racism.” It wasn’t “rascism” for any other people to live in their own country. But it was “racism” for Jews to desire to live once again in the land God gave them and where their forebears have lived for centuries.

Sixteen long years later, over stiff objections from Arab countries, the UN repealed the shameful “Zionism is racism” decision 111 to 25. But on the same day, it voted 152 to 1 (the U.S. abstained) to demand that Israel not use Jerusalem as its capital. Every other country in the world picks its own capital—Israel is the lone exception. The General Assembly has recorded about sixty thousand individual votes cast against Israel, fulfilling God’s Word that in the last days Jerusalem will be “a burdensome stone for all peoples” (Zech. 12:3).

For decades the International Federation of the Red Cross has honored Islam’s Red Crescent but refused to recognize Israel’s Magen David Adom. For opposing this fraud, Bernadine Healy was forced to resign as president of the American Red Cross. Nor is Israel granted membership in the 53-member UN Commission on Human Rights, currently chaired by Libya. Members include such other “champions” of human rights as Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe.

Recently the Organization of Islamic Conference told the Commission that September 11 had “brought about an increase in the gravity of Muslims’ suffering.” The Palestinian spokesperson blamed September 11 on a failure to heed Palestinian “warnings” that Palestinian demands come first. Of course, Israel is never seen as suffering any abuse.

Many exceptions apply to Israel, some fulfilling the prophecy that Israel “shall not be reckoned among the nations” (Num. 23:9). Of the 189 members of the United Nations, 188 (including terrorist nations, such as Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria) are allowed to serve in rotation as members of the Security Council. Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, is excluded.

The Palestinian National Charter also denies statehood to Israel: “Claims of historical or religious ties of Jews with Palestine are incompatible with the facts of history and the true conception of . . . statehood . . . Jews . . . are citizens of the states to which they belong.” The emblems of the PLO and related terrorist groups, such as Fatah, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the PFLP General Command, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, each contain a map showing “Palestine” without Israel—as demanded by Islam.

The ‘Peace’ of Slaughter

On March 26, 1979, President Jimmy Carter hosted at the White House the signing of a “peace treaty” by Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.
Carter wanted to quote one verse each from the Bible and the Qur'an about peace. There are four hundred such verses to choose from in the Bible. He found only one to quote from the Qur'an: “But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace” (Surah 8:61).

Surah eight is titled “Spoils of War.” Other verses in that chapter declare: “Fight them until . . . religion is all for Allah” (39); “O Prophet! Exhort the believers to fight” (65); “It is not for any prophet to have captives until he hath made slaughter in the land” (67).

Arafat quoted the same lone verse December 10, 1994, when he received the Nobel Prize for Peace. The only “peace” Islam offers to non-Muslims is to those who surrender when vanquished by jihad (holy war).

Belatedly, on February 12, 1986, forty-seven senators sent a letter to U.S. Atty. Gen. Edwin Meese, III, recalling the murder of U.S. diplomats in Khartoum thirteen years earlier and declaring that “a warrant for Arafat’s arrest should be issued.” Nothing has been done. Al Gore signed that letter; yet he and then-President Bill Clinton celebrated Arafat as one of their most frequent guests at the White House.

Failure to bring Arafat to justice undermines U.S. integrity, encourages terrorists, and mocks the worldwide campaign against terror. How can we pursue Osama bin Laden while we support Arafat?

The continual political correctness is shameful and harmful to Israel. In December 1988, in Tunis, Tunisia, Robert Pelletreau, the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia, opened direct dialogue with PLO representative Abu Tariq, who fifteen years earlier had emptied his Russian-made assault rifle into Ambassador Cleo Noel, George C. Moore, and Guy Eid.

Arafat’s reinvention as an icon of peace was childishly simple: He vowed to reform—and presto—his heinous crimes of four decades were as though they had never been.

In a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, dated September 9, 1993, Arafat said,

The PLO recognizes the right of . . . Israel to exist in peace and security . . . commits itself . . . to a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the two sides . . . renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence [and] affirms that those articles of the Palestinian Covenant which deny Israel’s right to exist . . . are now inoperative and no longer valid [and] undertakes to submit to the Palestinian National Council for formal approval the necessary changes.

As a reward for this transparent lie, President Clinton promised to pay $500 million to the PLO and its agencies. In exchange, Arafat solemnly swore to comply with all terms of the peace accords.

In fact, Islamic law forbids Arafat or any other Arab leader to sign any agreement allowing Jewish people to rule territory once possessed by Muslims. “Palestine” and Jerusalem were conquered by Muslims in A.D. 641 and cannot be relinquished. Nor may Jewish people (or any non-Muslims) rule over Muslims anywhere—including in the United States. This is not an obscure doctrine but the very foundation and heart of Islam.

Dividing the world into dar al-Islam (the house of peace) and dar al-Harb (the house of war), Islam requires unceasing jihad until “all people” submit to Allah. According to Islamic law, there can never be peace, only a temporary cease-fire, between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds. All Muslims must observe this rule. As Bosnian Muslim leader Alija Izetbegovic recently said, “There can be no peace or coexistence between the Islamic faith and non-Islamic societies.” Such is Islam.

As everyone expected (but pretended not to), Arafat, a devout Muslim and compulsive liar addicted to slaughtering Jews, has violated every “agreement” made with Israel. Not once has he denounced violence or encouraged peaceful coexistence in Arabic. Instead, he has sponsored terrorism and trained and praised those who murder Jewish people. The PLO Charter still denies Israel’s right to exist and pledges to exterminate it. In fact, since that handshake on the White House lawn sealing “peace,” Israelis have been dying at the hands of terrorists twice as fast as before—and more than twenty Americans have become victims of Palestinian terrorists in Israel. Yet the U.S. State Department insists that the PLO is meeting its pledges, and we continue to support Arafat with hundreds of millions of tax dollars.

In pushing Israel along a “road map” toward a Palestinian state, the nations of the world defy God who said, “The land shall not be sold [or traded] forever; for the land is mine” (Lev. 25:23). The false peace that may soon be established is, in fact, a “road map” to Armageddon.

The nations of the world should heed God’s warning:

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

Dave Hunt is author, founder, board member of and international speaker for The Berean Call, Bend, Oregon.
The United States is undoubtedly Israel’s closest ally. Substantial American financial aid is sent to the world’s only Jewish state every year, as it is to Egypt and several other Middle East countries. The U.S. ambassador to the UN is often one of only a handful of envoys voting in Israel’s favor after the world body debates hostile, anti-Israel resolutions. American politicians and media and entertainment celebrities frequently travel to the semiarid land situated along the southeastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, along with thousands of American-Christian and Jewish tourists whose visits play a vital role in Israel’s economy.

However, the world’s reigning superpower was not always so supportive. The State Department urged President Harry Truman to vote against Israel’s rebirth at UN headquarters in New York in 1947, worried that Arab oil powers might boycott American businesses. Fortunately, Truman had some knowledge of the many biblical prophecies (such as Isa. 11:11; 43:5–6; Jer. 16:14–16; 23:3–8; 31:7–8; Ezek. 36:22–25) that foretold Israel’s resurrection in her ancient boundaries at the “end of days.” Therefore, he ignored the professional diplomatic advice and ordered his UN ambassador to support Israel in the crucial vote.

His successor, Dwight Eisenhower, was not at all amused when Israel joined with Great Britain and its then closest Western ally, France, in an invasion to wrest the strategic Suez Canal from Egyptian control in 1956. President Eisenhower was concerned the action might spark a clash with America’s Cold War rival, the increasingly threatening Soviet Union. This same concern produced only tepid U.S. support for Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War and an even chillier reaction after Soviet-backed Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel in 1973. During the latter conflict, American...
officials worked hard to restrain Israel from capturing Cairo and Damascus after the tide of battle finally turned in Israel’s favor following two weeks of bitter fighting.

Diplomatic, cultural, and military relations warmed after Israel and Egypt signed the White House-brokered Camp David peace accords in 1979 under President Jimmy Carter. The consequent financial and military aid packages are still in effect today. Still, the next administration, headed by Ronald Reagan, leaned hard on Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and his controversial defense minister, Ariel Sharon, to restrain their attack on Syrian occupation forces in Lebanon in 1982. U.S. government officials were worried once more that Israeli military action could prompt a severe reaction from Syria’s Communist comrades in the Kremlin.

American-Israeli relations soured yet again after the first Bush administration basically ordered Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to attend an international Middle East peace conference in Madrid following the Gulf War in 1991. But they warmed to unprecedented levels when Shamir’s successor, Yitzhak Rabin, agreed to the U.S.-backed Oslo peace accords in 1993.

President Bill Clinton spent more time on the Arab-Israeli conflict than any other foreign policy issue, frequently meeting with Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat and various Israeli politicians in the 1990s. Trade and military ties were strengthened still further. Many Israelis—used to standing virtually alone on the hostile world stage—welcomed such heartening sentiments, although some worried that officials in Jerusalem were becoming too close and, therefore, too reliant on their generously supportive Uncle Sam.

The warm feelings continued into the current administration of George W. Bush, despite the collapse of the U.S.-backed Oslo “land for peace” process at another Camp David summit in July 2000. Bush seemed to understand that his Democratic predecessor had been too easy on Arafat, who responded less than vigorously as terrorist groups grew stronger inside the territory that Israel had handed over to the Palestinians from 1994 onwards. After embracing the Oslo process so enthusiastically, the Clinton White House had issued only mild protests when Arafat himself threatened his peace partners while barely rebuking the terrorists who were increasing their attacks on Israeli civilians in the mid-90s.

The Bush administration has been preoccupied fighting international Islamic terrorism ever since the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington. However, with Saddam Hussein out of office and al-Qaida pushed out of Afghanistan, the spotlight again returned to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The White House released the so-called Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in late April. President Bush then demonstrated his personal commitment to the plan by flying to the Middle East to meet with Israeli and Palestinian leaders, where he told them he is determined to see the plan through to completion.

Bush made it clear that no significant alterations will be allowed in the four-page peace plan. This stand was reiterated by U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, who said during a visit to Jerusalem that the Road Map is basically a “take it or leave it” document. He added that the four international cosponsors, the so-called Quartet (United States, UN, European Union, and Russia), will “listen to some suggestions” from the opposing sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but will not “engage in endless negotiations” over the plan.

Israeli cabinet ministers voted 11 to 7 in late May to accept the Road Map outline but expressed various reservations about it. Although welcoming its emphasis on a complete end to Palestinian violence and “free elections” for an “independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state,” Prime Minister Ariel Sharon made it clear he is worried about the plan’s implied call for a total Israeli withdrawal from “territory occupied in 1967.” He is also concerned over the suggested “return” of at least some Palestinian refugees and their offspring to family homes inside Israel’s pre-1967 borders (most of the pre-1948, single-dwelling homes have long been replaced by apartment buildings).

Almost every Israeli political party, including the far left Meretz party, agrees that such a “return” would spell the end of Israel as a Jewish-led state.

The Palestinian leadership officially welcomed the Road Map plan. Israeli commentators said this was mainly because it repeats the failed 1993 Oslo peace formula of forcing Israel into making tangible and risky land transfers in exchange for mere verbal promises of a permanent end to Palestinian violence. They said the Palestinians could gain control over most, if not all, of the land they want even if they only lay down their weapons for the duration of the withdrawal process. (Over 40 percent was
already transferred to Arafat’s Palestinian Authority as part of the Oslo “land for peace” process.)

Although the Oslo accords called on the Palestinians to take various concrete steps as Israel handed over land, the mechanisms to insure that Arafat fulfilled his obligations were extremely weak. Yet international pressure, especially from the Clinton White House, bore down on Israel to complete the territorial transfers despite unprecedented Palestinian violence that erupted in 1995 and 1996. Even though the Road Map promises that such pressure will be proportionate to Palestinian performance in ending all terror attacks, many Israeli officials strongly doubt that the holy war will actually come to an end.

Opinion polls show that a majority of Israeli voters support the Road Map’s ultimate goal—the soon creation of a sovereign Palestinian state in the hills of Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Like Sharon, most do not trust the Palestinian leadership to end the long war of annihilation against the detested “Zionist entity.” But they agree with him that Israel’s economic prosperity depends on the country’s cooperation with international demands to end the conflict. They believe that since the nations, including the powerful United States, insist such a “final solution” feature a Palestinian state, Israel cannot resist.

Still, most Israeli Jews want their leaders to retain control over Jerusalem’s walled Old City, or at least the Jewish Quarter and the nearby Temple Mount. However, Judaism’s physical heartland is precisely the area that militant Islam wants most to wrest away from the beleaguered Jewish people. The Road Map contains no plausible solution for this explosive dispute, which is really a question of which god, Allah or Jehovah, is truly God.

**The Prophets Still Speak**

The ancient biblical prophets made clear that no satisfactory political solution will ultimately take hold in the Holy City until the Messiah Himself intervenes. That event will take place when Jesus returns to the Mount of Olives. His Coming will occur in the middle of a brutal international battle centered in Jerusalem, revealed the prophet Zechariah (Zech. 14:1–7, 12–15).

How should Christians respond to the Road Map peace plan? While we are called to be peacemakers, we are also told that the Lord Himself will judge the nations for attempting to divide His Promised Land (Joel). It is clear that the Road Map is just such a plan, as was its failed Oslo predecessor. As with that process, the new plan is based on the proposition that Israel must hand over land to the Palestinians in exchange for promises of peace.

Shouldn’t the utter failure of the Oslo accords serve as a warning to the international community that the idea is flawed? Should we not heed the warnings of the prophets that the God of Israel is not at all happy with attempts to force His restored Jewish people out of their homes in the hills north and south of Jerusalem and cut them off from the most sacred parts of the holy city itself?

The Palestinian people have an obvious right to live in peace, prosperity, and dignity. Most Israelis have acknowledged this right for many years, as demonstrated in majority acceptance of the Oslo peace process. But Christians should carefully ponder the fact that Western democracies like the United States and Great Britain are once again sponsoring a “peace process” intended to rid Judea and Samaria of many thriving Jewish communities as a condition for establishing a Palestinian state.

Either biblical prophecy is being fulfilled by the substantial Jewish return to the hills of Judea and Samaria over the past thirty-five years, or it is not. If one deduces that it is—as even a casual reading of Ezekiel 36 and Jeremiah 33 strongly indicates—then it becomes clear that the Road Map to a two-state solution is not a biblical resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Having lived in Israel for more than two decades, I have long ago concluded that the Palestinians’ ultimate welfare and prosperity are bound up with their willingness and ability to accept the fact that the Jewish people share their historic and emotional ties to the Holy Land. Indeed, the land is clearly more sacred to Judaism than it is to Islam. Muslims still look to Mecca, not Jerusalem, as the earthly center of their faith.

By pandering to Muslim demands that Judea and Samaria be declared officially off limits to most, if not all, Israeli Jews, international leaders are actually helping to perpetuate the Palestinians’ long and difficult plight. They would do better to make clear to the Arab world that it is unacceptable to demand that Judaism’s biblical heartland join Saudi Arabia as one more place on Earth where Jewish people will not be permitted by law to reside. They would also do well to pay heed to the biblical warnings that the God of Israel will ultimately judge international attempts to undo His foretold last-days Jewish ingathering to every portion of the Promised Land.

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The only parties who seemed the least bit surprised that the “road map” to peace got detoured in a new wave of Palestinian terrorism and Israeli responses were the plan’s American and European sponsors. While Western diplomats professed shock, neither Israelis nor Palestinians missed a beat.

Traffic on Jerusalem’s Jaffa Road was fully restored less than three hours after sixteen people were killed June 11 by an 18-year-old Palestinian suicide murderer. In his premission video, the young killer said he was acting at the behest of Hamas leader Abdul Aziz Rantisi, the lucky survivor of an unsuccessful Israeli Air Force missile strike the day before.

A general view of the intersection of Jaffa Road and Haneviim Street in downtown Jerusalem after a bus exploded June 11. The explosion, set off by a suicide bomber, ripped through the bus, killing at least sixteen and wounding dozens, police said.
Some restaurants into which body parts of victims had been blown even made a determined effort to reopen quickly to serve customers equally determined to patronize them.

None of the most influential supporters of the Road Map, the latest blueprint for Middle East peace, bothered to notice that virtually no one who actually lives here, be he Israeli or Palestinian, hawk or dove, believes the scheme has more than a remote chance of success.

On the other hand, if half a century of failure to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict didn’t dissuade the Road Map’s advocates from giving the same old approach yet another college try, why should a bunch of local skeptics?

Like so many plans before it, the Road Map demands that Israel take concrete risks for peace while asking Palestinians merely to restate unfulfilled promises. But unlike earlier peace initiatives, the Road Map doesn’t bother asking the Arab states to renounce the war to destroy Israel that they started on the day of Israel’s birth in 1948 and have never ended.

And so U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell reacted to the June 11 massacre not by calling for reevaluation or even a pause, but rather by seeking still more Israeli concessions: “We must not let this latest terrorist outrage derail the path to peace,” he said in Washington, D.C.

What really threatens to derail the process, however, is Washington’s failure to understand the predicament of its favored Palestinian leader—the new prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas. He is the figure now called upon to insure implementation of Palestinian commitments under the Road Map. To put it bluntly, if Abbas fails, the Road Map fails.

Yet how can Abbas succeed? He is a powerless figurehead, threatened by Hamas leaders who openly call for his murder, while Yasser Arafat works both publicly and behind the scenes to undermine him. Arafat calls Abbas a “traitor to the Palestinian cause.” The hard truth is that, had Israel succeeded in eliminating Hamas mastermind Rantisi, it would have done far more to help Mahmoud Abbas than George Bush has done.

That’s what made President Bush’s condemnation of Israel’s failed attempt to kill the Hamas leader so worrying. More important, Hamas is as much a threat to Abbas as it is to Israel. Failure to recognize that fact undermines the very peace plan the president has so publicly embraced. Unless the United States backs real change in the Palestinian regime, Mahmoud Abbas stands exposed to his people as powerless.

Last year, on June 24, 2002, President Bush shocked the diplomatic world by calling for the Palestinians to “choose” a new leadership “not compromised by terror.” Implicitly, he was calling on them to replace Yasser Arafat.

By the time the Road Map was finally released earlier this year, Bush’s demand for Palestinian “regime change” had been watered down to the appointment of a Palestinian prime minister without the removal of Arafat. Abbas took office in May, but he has floundered ever since. In the period leading up to June’s mayhem, Abbas had command of not a single Palestinian police officer and, therefore, neither arrested a single terrorist nor confiscated a single illegal weapon.

In a concession to Israel, the Americans insisted that Prime Minister Abbas and not Arafat be the Palestinian official responsible for implementing the Road Map. Yet to succeed, Abbas needs much more than pronouncements of support. He needs power, and at present what little he has is rapidly slipping through his fingers.

To crack down on terror, Abbas needs control of the Palestinian Interior Ministry, yet that ministry remains firmly in Arafat’s hands. To stop the incitement to violence, Abbas needs control of the communications and education ministries, which are likewise controlled by Arafat. Far from helping his former deputy, Arafat is now orchestrating a bloodcurdling incitement campaign against him in the Palestinian media. But most important, Abbas needs the destruction of terrorist organizations like Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Arafat’s own Al Aksa Martyrs Brigade.

How can Abbas succeed?
He is a powerless figurehead, threatened by Hamas leaders who openly call for his murder, while Yasser Arafat works both publicly and behind the scenes to undermine him.

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End Times and Exodus Revealed Ad (by Waveline)
A nation that has lost more than 21,000 of its finest young men and women in bloody conflicts in its short fifty-five-year history understands what it is to be at war. From the beginning of its modern-day era, Israel has had to fight for its existence almost daily against those who wish to annihilate it.

Bible students who understand the prophetic scenario for the last days realize there will be continuing conflict between the Jewish nation and the nations surrounding Israel. The Scriptures reveal that Israel’s neighbors are set on removing this tiny state from not only the map of the Middle East but the region itself.

For years some have speculated that World War III will play out on the battlefields of Israel and the Middle East. However, in the last six months or so, former U.S. Central Intelligence Agency Director R. James Woolsey has said World War III is over. Said Woolsey, we are now fighting World War IV.

Woolsey believes the Cold War was World War III and that we are now engaged with the enemies on three fronts. This war, he said, did not begin with the attacks on America on 9/11. September 11, Woolsey says, was merely when America discovered that three powerful and dangerous elements had been at war with her for some time.

Behold the Enemies

Woolsey points out that the enemies are (1) the Shiite Muslim fanatics who rule Iran and control Hezbollah, (2) the Islamo-fascists who rule Syria and previously controlled Iraq, and (3) the Wahhabi brand of Sunni Islamists who get their inspiration and funding from Saudi Arabia.

Woolsey admits that these three enemies hate each other and occasionally kill each other in wars and smaller skirmishes. But he also believes they are fully capable of uniting against a common enemy and are doing so now in the Middle East. The battle in Iraq has seriously weakened the Islamo-fascist leg of this evil axis; however, World War IV is far from won, he suggests.

Because Saddam Hussein’s regime has been defeated and the Iraqi people once again have their country, the risk now, according to Woolsey, is that we simply pack up and go home and pretend the war is over. But it is not over. One partner of the Islamo-fascist camp in Iraq has been dealt with; but the other member, Syria, is very much a threat to the region and the rest of the world.

Syrian officials have said lasting peace in the Middle East depends on Israel’s “total retreat” from territories it acquired in the 1967 war. Syria claims that once Israel accepts the so-called right of Palestinian refugees to return to Israel proper and retreats to the 1967 boundaries, “all Arab countries will be willing to sign a peace treaty with Israel. Total retreat in exchange for total peace.”

The question of Syria hiding Saddam’s weapons of mass destruction and harboring members of the Saddam Hussein-led Iraqi regime has never truly been answered. Many reliable reports have surfaced about Iraqi leaders hiding in Syria, and U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice doubts Syrian promises that no such weapons crossed from Iraq into Syria.

As to the offices of at least eleven Palestinian terrorist organizations in Damascus, a Syrian official said he considers those offices “cultural information points.” He warned...
that shutting them down would accomplish nothing, adding that terrorism in the region would end once Israel handed back “occupied” territories and allowed the “return” of Palestinian refugees.

**The Iran Factor**

With its Shiite Muslim fanatics ruling the country and its surrogate terrorist group, Hezbollah, in southern Lebanon, Iran has presented to the world that it is moving toward reforming its government, even as it prepares weapons of mass destruction. U.S. and Israeli intelligence have uncovered evidence that Iran will be ready to go nuclear in the near future.

Under the pretense of building a nuclear reactor for much-needed electrical power, Iran built a major reactor with the help of Russian technology and technicians. Intelligence reports indicate Iran also has two other reactors and facilities to convert uranium mined in Iran to “weapon-grade” uranium for use in nuclear weapons of mass destruction.

It is a known fact that Iran has a delivery system and short-range, mid-range, and long-range missiles that could deliver a nuclear, biological, or chemical warhead to Israel and any part of Europe. Israel has always claimed that Iran is the real threat in the Middle East. Israel has also urged Russia to stop transferring its nuclear technology and technicians to Iran.

On a landmark visit to Lebanon recently, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami said that Syria, Lebanon, and Iran will not simply bow to U.S. pressure and warned America against creating a crisis in the region. President Khatami’s three-day visit included talks with Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader.

To the strains of songs about resistance and martyrdom and chants of “death to Israel,” thousands of Shiites from all over Lebanon greeted Khatami at Beirut’s sports stadium. Khatami’s visit, the first by an Iranian head of state since the 1979 Islamic revolution, allowed the Iranian president to express his backing for Hezbollah, a terrorist organization.

**The Wahhabi Connection**

“The third group, the Islamist Sunni, al-Qaida and the like-thinkers, are in many ways going to be the hardest to deal with,” Woolsey says. “They are fueled by oil money from the Gulf, Saudi Arabia principally. However, many of them are wealthy in and of themselves. They are present in some sixty countries in the Middle East region and are fanatically anti-Western, anti-Christian, and anti-Jewish.”

Though the Bush White House and the U.S. State Department’s diplomatic corps continually praise Saudi Arabia’s cooperation in America’s war on terrorism, many questions are yet unanswered concerning Saudi involvement in worldwide terrorism.

Wahhabism, founded by Muhammad al-Wahhab almost three centuries ago, is the religious and political philosophy embraced by the present government of Saudi Arabia and its ruling family, the House of Saud. Wahhab was a zealous Muslim revivalist who lived during the Ottoman Empire’s early decline.

Wahhab believed that Islam in general and Arabia in particular needed to be spiritually and literally repurified and returned to the true
tenets of the faith. His Qur’anic literalism gave rise to a movement that sees itself as the guardian of “true” Islamic values.

In 1818 the Turks broke the first Wahhabi state in what today is known as Saudi Arabia. Later the Wahhabis resurrected to provide the focus of Arab resistance to the Ottoman Empire, which they considered degenerate and corrupt.

In the chaotic years after the demise of the Ottoman Empire, those who embraced Wahhabism proved to be an able and fanatical fighting force, securing victory for Ibn Saud, their leader and founder of the present royal dynasty. The rest of Arabia was united and placed under the Wahhabist view of the world, man, law, and Allah.

The House of Saud owes Wahhabism for its very existence and the dynasty it has today. Consequently, it is understandable that the funding and inspiration for terrorism around the world come from members of the ruling family of Saudi Arabia.

Considering all this information, Woolsey’s perception that World War IV is now underway is remarkably viable. Woolsey’s list of enemies, the Shiite fanatics who rule Iran, the Islamo-fascists who rule Syria, and the Wahhabi brand of Sunni Islamists who get their inspiration and funding from Saudi Arabia, is precisely on target.

What About Israel?

Israel’s participation in Woolsey’s World War IV comes into focus practically and prophetically as one takes a closer look at the region and the potential for biblical prophecy to be fulfilled. To understand the practical aspect of the situation requires evaluating the region’s political activities.

Woolsey’s Islamo-fascists who rule Syria have consistently supported those who want to destroy Israel. In June 1967 the Syrian military might moved down from the north to attack Israel as the Jordanians approached from the east and the Egyptians came from the south.

The Israel Defense Forces stopped this three-sided invasion at least temporarily, only to face another effort by Syria to overrun Israel’s military in 1973 and 1982. Since these desperate attempts to destroy Israel, Syria has facilitated Hezbollah’s operation out of South Lebanon and its constant attacks on Israel’s northern border.

Syria’s refusal to close down the offices of at least eleven terrorist organizations in Damascus, its relationship with Saddam Hussein’s regime, hiding of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction, and development of its own weapons of mass destruction have positioned the country for its part in World War IV.

The Shiite fanatics ruling Iran have made known that they are still in charge of this hotbed of Islamic fundamentalism and that Iran is preparing for the battle with the “big Satan” (the United States) and the “little Satan” (Israel).

With Russia’s help, Iran has developed a program that includes biological, chemical, and nuclear warheads, with a delivery system to take a major war to Israel and even to the European Union.

Israeli intelligence has long said that Iran, not Iraq, is the major enemy in the Middle East. And now British and American intelligence agencies are beginning to agree.

The Wahhabi brand of Sunni Islam that controls Saudi Arabia and the interest of the royal family have the earmarks of the scenario pictured in Woolsey’s World War IV. Saudi funding of terrorism around the world and in particular in Israel has advanced the cause of radical Islam and set the stage for future intensity on this front.

Interestingly, the Bible speaks of the same three enemies as in Woolsey’s World War IV. The ancient Jewish prophet Daniel revealed the truth about Syria, referred to as the “king of the north” in Daniel 11:40–42. Daniel helps us understand that Syria may be the first Arab state to move against Israel as the seven-year Tribulation Period begins.

Daniel alluded to Iran (Dan. 11:44) when mentioning the “tidings out of the east.” Ezekiel provided more information about the “eastern” enemy in Ezekiel 38:5. Biblical Persia, included in the list of nations rising up against Israel in the last days, is what we know today as Iran. Iran of today was called Persia until the 1920s.

The writer of Psalm 83 included another list of nations that aligned against Israel at the time of the end. In verse 6 the “Ishmaelites” are mentioned as part of a coalition of nations. Saudi Arabia is where Ishmael traveled to after leaving his father Abraham and where Ishmael established the one nation God promised him (Gen. 17:20).

The psalmist described the scenario for James Woolsey’s World War IV in verse 4: “They have said, Come, and let us cut them [the Jewish state of Israel] off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.” The stage is indeed set, the nations are in place, and the curtain is about to go up on World War IV—or whatever the number might be.

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Nineveh’s Destruction

On March 19, 2003, a coalition of the United States and more than thirty-five countries implemented a preemptive strike against Iraq to disarm it of weapons of mass destruction. Twenty-six hundred years ago (612 B.C.) a Medo-Babylonian coalition launched a similar preemptive strike against the Assyrian capital of Nineveh (modern-day Mosul, Iraq). That coalition disarmed and demolished the boastful Assyrian nation that had slaughtered, plundered, and oppressed every country in the Middle East.

In chapter 1, Nahum announced Nineveh’s coming destruction. In chapter 2, he provided a detailed description of Assyria’s demise—and within fifty years, Nahum’s prophecy was fulfilled.

Perils of War

In a spirit of subtle sarcasm, Nahum prophesied that Assyria should ready herself for war: “He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face; keep the fortress, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily” (v. 1). The words He that dasheth (literally, one who scatters) in pieces refers to the huge Medo-Babylonian army under the command of Median King Cyaxares and Babylonian King Nabopolassar. The picture is of the army advancing swiftly toward Nineveh and the Ninevites scattering to seek protection from their enemy.

Nahum gave a fourfold command, calling on Nineveh to fortify itself against its attackers. First, the Ninevites were to “keep the fortress,” or set up guards to counter the invading enemy. Second, they were to “watch the way,” or set watchmen on the city walls to scan the horizon for the first sign of an invading enemy. Third, Nahum said, “make thy loins strong.” Loins speak of the seat of physical and mental strength, implying the Ninevites were to gird themselves with courage in anticipation of an attack. Fourth, he said, “fortify thy power mightily,” meaning “pull together all your strength in the face of the coming attack.” Nineveh had boasted of her impregnability; now she would have to prove it.

Before describing Nineveh’s destruction, Nahum predicted Israel’s restoration: “For the LORD hath turned away [literally, restored or brought back] the excellency [glory and honor] of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel; for the emptyers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches” (v. 2). The “emptyers” are the Assyrians who captured the ten tribes of Israel in 722 B.C. During the conflict Assyria plundered and stripped Israel as one would strip vine branches of their fruit. Nineveh’s destruction will provide an opportunity for the glory and honor of Jacob (Southern kingdom) and Israel (Northern kingdom) to be restored.

Israel’s restoration depended on the destruction of its enemies, such as Assyria. The ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy will take place after the Great Tribulation, when the Messiah will destroy Israel’s enemies and restore the twelve tribes to the land promised the Jewish people in the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Medo-Babylonian coalition moved swiftly toward Nineveh in a rage of war. Nahum described the invasion as if he were an eyewitness:

The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet; the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways; they shall seem like torches, they shall run like lightnings (vv. 3–4).

The Medo-Babylonian army had shields of wood and wicker covered with leather or copper, and its soldiers’ clothing was scarlet. Shields, painted red to look as though they were covered
Invading chariots will race toward Nineveh. Once in the city, the chariots will jostle or bump into each other on the crowded streets, looking like flashes of lightning as they race to and fro in battle.

Verse 5, “He shall recount his nobles; they shall stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall, and the defense shall be prepared,” is interpreted two ways by scholars. Some teach that it refers to the Medo-Babylonian warriors who will attack Nineveh. Others say it means the king of Nineveh will rush his noble leaders to the wall in defense of the city.

The word *defense* refers to a protective covering or mantelet, prepared by either the attackers or defenders. A *mantelet* is a mobile screen or shield used to protect soldiers in war. The Assyrians used to put a protective barrier of interwoven branches between the towers on their city walls. Invaders likewise prepared a covering to protect their troops as they moved toward the city wall. The covering protected them from flying arrows, stones, and lighted torches.

Invaders will use the Khoser River to help destroy Nineveh: “The gates [sluices] of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved” (v. 6). A 150-foot-wide moat surrounded Nineveh on three sides, with the Tigris River on the city’s west. The moat ran between two walls that protected Nineveh. In time of invasion, sluices were opened to fill the moat with water from the Khoser River, making the moat a barrier to protect the city. In the third year of the siege, heavy rains flooded the Khoser and Tigris Rivers. The invaders opened the sluices, causing floodwater from the reservoirs to break through the city walls and destroy the palace.

**Plunder of Wealth**

Assyria’s destruction and exile had already been decreed by God: And it is decreed, she [some Bibles use the word Huzzab] shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, beating upon their breasts (v. 7).
Although some believe Huzzab was the name of the queen or goddess of Nineveh, there is no historical proof for this interpretation. Others believe Huzzab was the symbolical name of Nineveh; but neither is there proof for this view.

The word Huzzab means “fixed, settled, determined, or decreed.” God had decreed that Nineveh be stripped of her wealth and led into exile. The pathetic scene is enhanced by the plaintive wail and mournful procession of maids (slave girls) as they lament their fate. They are victims of their master’s fate and at the mercy of ruthless soldiers. The anguish and moaning of these innocent girls as they beat their breasts in grief is said to be like the mournful sound of a dove.

In verse 8, Nineveh appears completely submerged under water as people hastily flee the city, leaving their possessions behind. Through the prophet Nahum, the Lord called on the Medo-Babylonian coalition to gather up the spoils of war: “Take the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold; for there is no end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture” (v. 9). The spoils taken from Nineveh consisted of ill-gotten gain that Assyria had gathered from countries it had conquered. Nineveh’s wealth seemed inexhaustible. Household goods were made of gold, silver, precious stones, carved ivory, copper, and bronze.

**Plight of the Wicked**

The prophet presented a picture of what Nineveh would look like after being conquered: “She is empty, and void, and waste” (v. 10). The Hebrew words empty, void, and waste express the pillaging and plundering that went on in the city. The Ninevites, in a dirge-like lament, mourn their city’s destruction. Nahum prophesied that terror would fill the once proud and fearless people of Nineveh: “The heart melteth,” or faints away like melting wax; “the knees smite together,” or shake and give way in terror; “much pain is in all loins,” or their anguish is like the pain of a mother in childbirth; “and the faces of them all gather blackness,” or take on the pale and ashen color of death as they fill with fright (v. 10).

Nahum compared Nineveh to a den of lions—an apt metaphor because Assyrian chieftain Sennacherib compared himself and the rulers of Assyria to lions. The prophet belittled this arrogant people:

*Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion, even the old lion, walked, and the lion’s whelp, and none made them afraid? The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with torn flesh (vv. 11–12).*

The Assyrians, like lions without mercy, were rapacious, bloodthirsty predators who cruelly butchered those they conquered and proudly recorded their atrocities. As a lion fills its lair with torn flesh, so Assyria’s leaders filled Nineveh with treasures they plundered from nations they conquered. They lived in Nineveh with perfect security and never feared reprisals from those they devastated.

Assyria’s atrocities, however, will come to a screeching halt. God Himself will destroy Nineveh using the Medo-Babylonian coalition:

*Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will burn her [Nineveh’s] chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions; and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard (v. 13).*

First, God will destroy the strength and mobility of the Assyrian army by burning the chariots the army relied on for swift conquest. Second, “the sword shall devour,” or slaughter, the young fighters of Nineveh. Third, God will “cut off thy prey,” that is, the wealth Assyria confiscated from the nations it conquered. Fourth, “the voice of thy messengers,” or of agents sent to collect tribute from vassal nations, will be silenced. No longer will Assyria be a threat to Israel or the surrounding nations.

God is sovereignly in control of history and will not allow wicked men and nations to go unpunished. He punished ancient Nineveh, as He said He would. And a day is coming when He will destroy all despots and Messiah will reign from Jerusalem. Then true peace, social justice, and righteousness will fill the earth.

**Endnote**


David M. Levy is the director of International Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
It is our duty to praise the Lord of all things, to ascribe greatness to Him who formed the world in the beginning, since He hath not made us like the nations of other lands, and hath not placed us like other families of the earth, since He hath not assigned unto us a portion as unto them, nor a lot as unto all their multitude.

For we bend the knee and offer worship and thanks before the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

Who stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, the seat of whose glory is in the heavens above, and the abode of whose might is in the loftiest heights. He is our God; there is none else: in truth He is our King; there is none besides Him; as it is written in His Law, And thou shalt know this day, and lay it to thine heart, that the Lord He is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else.

"Is it almost over?" Who hasn’t sat in a meeting without thinking such a thing? For those who regularly attend “religious” worship services, the question probably has not only been thought, but spoken as well. Although it was not by design, there is within Jewish liturgy a prayer that tells the worshiper when “over” is approaching. The prayer, quoted in part above, is called Aleinu le-shabbat—"It is our duty to praise." Most Jewish people know it simply as Aleinu. Its familiar melody and words are always chanted near the end of the prayers that are recited three times a day. It is also placed near the end of the New Year (Rosh Hashanah) service.

Composed in the third century A.D., Aleinu was used in the Middle Ages whenever Jews were martyred. The theme of the prayer “is the kingdom of God.”

Contained within the first paragraph of the worship poem are offerings of praise to God for His creative power and His choice of the Jewish people as His own. With the second paragraph, worshipers bend their knees before Him. The third paragraph praises His glory and the fact that “there is none besides Him.” And the fourth paragraph speaks of Jewish hope that rests in Him to remove...
power, and the perfection attained under God’s kingdom.

**Trapping the ‘Divine Light’**

Although he is among the lesser-known rabbis, Luria’s conclusions have immensely influenced juristic thought to this day. Luria came up with a story to explain the condition of the world and to provide hope in dealing with it. In Luria’s story God had several vessels that contained His essence or light. A heavenly calamity occurred when an explosion caused “divine light” particles to come into contact with evil matter.

Writer Joseph Naft explained that, according to Luria, “Our world consists of countless shards of the original vessels entrapping sparks of the Divine light. Humanity’s great task involves helping God by freeing and reuniting the scattered light.”

The prevailing thought among extremely observant Jews at that time was, “By obeying the commandments and living pious lives, Jews could help free the divine sparks and repair the broken universe.” Such thinking resulted in the concept and resultant phrase *tikkun olam*, or “repairing the world.” The term, wrote Francine Klagsbrun in *Moment* magazine, “has become synonymous in Jewish life with acts of social justice, which, for many Jews have come to stand for all of Judaism.”

This rabbinic ordinance was made for the good of society. Observant Jews today use the phrase to encourage people to perform mitzvot (commandments) to “help” God make things right. The Talmud states, “It is not upon you to finish the work, but you are not free to ignore it (Mishna, Ethics, 2:21).”

Bettering the world is not to be a one-time effort. It is a process: “In order to be a partner with G-d, there has to be a connection. Just as one prepares for the day ahead, and just as you must spend ‘quality’ time with your spouse in order to keep the vitality in your marriage, one also needs to look at one’s relationship with G-d.”

For some observant Jews, one way to “fix the world” is through repentance. Rabbi Abraham Kook, the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel, taught that repentance would help to bring about the healing of creation. Other observant Jewish leaders emphasize that repairing the world takes place when one strives to become observant and live a Jewish lifestyle.

Although the more observant Jews birthed the concept of *tikkun olam*, it was the Reform Jewish movement that embraced it and expanded it. “It was the giants of the early Reform movement who took this idea of ‘repairing the world’ and told us how to do it,” says Rabbi Margaret Holub. They did so by tweaking the idea of “repairing” into simply making the world a better place to live in. Many organizations are dedicated to such humanitarian causes as feeding the hungry, improving race relations, instituting social justice (organizations fighting social injustice), women’s rights, etc.

There is even a *tikkun olam* award. A two-time winner of the award is Peter Yarrow of the once-popular singing group Peter, Paul, and Mary.

These overtures can indeed be helpful, even noble. But in reality...
they have little, if any, relationship with Judaism. Yet these organizations refer to the “Jewish teaching, tikkun olam.”

**Cuomo-Lieberman Philosophies**

The idea of *tikkun olam* has even entered the political arena. In the United States two liberal Democrats—one Jewish, one Gentile—invoke a *tikkun olam* philosophy in their lifestyles. The first is former New York Governor Mario Cuomo. In an interview with journalist Jack Newfield, Cuomo, calling himself a Christian, reportedly said the following:

Tikkun olam, translated roughly, means to repair or cure the universe. What it means to me as a Christian—because it was a truth adopted by Christianity as a cardinal principle—is that God made the world but did not finish it, and our mission as individuals is to use all of our strength to finish the world, to complete it, making it as good a place as we can. That is the mission that gives our life significance. We are perceived, as Christians, as an army trying to win the battle against imperfection.9

Although Cuomo may have a handle on the meaning of *tikkun olam*, he sorely missed the mark when it comes to understanding biblical Christianity. The Bible teaches that God created a perfect world and man ruined it with sin. Furthermore, man has absolutely no ability whatsoever to “repair” it. God Himself will do so when He creates the new heavens and new earth.

Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, a failed vice presidential candidate and current presidential hopeful, is an observant Jew who says he has been greatly influenced by the idea of *tikkun olam*:

“The summary of our aspirations was in the Hebrew phrase *tikkun olam*, which is translated ‘to improve the world’ or more boldly to complete the creation which God began. . . . my faith was just one of many great gifts my father and mother, Henry and Marcia Lieberman, gave me,” wrote Joe Lieberman in his recent political autobiography, *In Praise of Public Life* (Simon and Shuster [sic], New York, 2000).10

**Sincere but Flawed**

Although belief in *tikkun olam* may inspire people to do good works, help their fellowman, and work diligently to make the world a better place, the concept, nevertheless, is not found anywhere in the Jewish Scriptures. The idea of helping God fix the world is entirely manmade, appealing to the well-intentioned but misinformed. It also can lead to further error. Rabbi Margaret Holub wrote:

I don’t really think we are God’s partners in repairing the world. I think we are the whole show—with all our confusion, all our limitations, all our misguided passions, all the diversions, all the disinformation. If anything, maybe God provides the cry, the call. But if we don’t respond, no one will, I’m afraid.11

I recently asked a Jewish woman if she had heard of *tikkun olam*. Her reply was that not only had she heard of it, it was *all* she heard about at her synagogue until that rabbi left. “He centered all the work around *tikkun olam*,” she said, “helping God perfect the world.”

The *Alenei* prayer is the source behind the idea of *tikkun olam*. How sad it is that Rabbi Luria interpreted the words the world will be perfected under the kingdom of the Almighty to mean human beings would do the perfecting instead of God Himself. Sadder still is the fact that the Hebrew Scriptures do not teach *tikkun olam*. In fact, they teach that God is perfect and righteous and man is sinful and unrighteous. It is not God who needs help. It is man.

And two thousand years ago, on an old rugged cross, God gave mankind the greatest help it would ever receive. He provided a final atonement for our sins so that we could be “perfected” by faith: Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed (Isa. 53:4–5).

**ENDNOTES**


5 Ibid.

6 “Jewish Ethics,” “Tikkun Olam,” [www.mishpacha.com/zedakah.htm].

7 Zalman Myersmith, “Letter from America,” [www.newwestend.org.uk/mag/02/America.htm].

8 Rabbi Margaret Holub, “Tikkun,” “Rabbi’s Notes—November 2001” [www.mjc.org/mjoldart/MJAMH033.htm].


11 Holub.

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israel has been under intense pressure by the united states, europe, the arab nations, and others to stop construction of a security fence in areas that have exported suicide bombers and assorted terrorists bent on murdering innocent israeli civilians.

opponents of the protective barrier argue that it is not conducive to promoting peace because it offends the palestinians. accompanying the criticism have been threats that construction costs for the fence may be deducted from american loan guarantees. for weeks one of the foremost foreign policy issues discussed in the media was israel’s alleged insensitivity to the complaints of the palestinian authority (pa).

but while there was much heat generated over the protective fence, nothing was being said about the tunnels being bored from egypt into gaza to deliver arms to palestinian terrorists.

these tunnels reportedly channel an assortment of explosives, grenade launchers, mortars, rockets, surface-to-air missiles, and ak-47 rifles for the sole purpose of killing israelis and destroying the state of israel.

egress from these lethal conduits is often located in homes. in at least one instance, a tunnel opened into a child’s bedroom.

when the israel defense forces locate these passages, they destroy them and bulldoze the houses. only then does the international media take notice and accuse the israelis of egregious violations of palestinian civil rights and obstructing the so-called road map to peace.

viewing the facts on the ground, one is compelled to ask why, while condemning israel’s protective fence, there is no outrage or action against the smuggling tunnels. after all, these passages come from the egyptian side of the egypt-gaza border. not only are weapons being delivered from egyptian territory, but someone is sending these armaments through areas controlled by the forces of egyptian president hosni mubarak.

yet no one condemns cairo. and there is no word of penalizing the egyptians by reducing their foreign aid stipends.

fencing off potentially dangerous areas is routine procedure everywhere in the world. the united states has built such barriers between itself and mexico to inhibit the passage of illegal aliens and drugs. in israel, fences on the jordanian and lebanese borders have effectively inhibited terrorists from infiltrating israel.

and contrary to claims that israel is establishing new borders, israeli officials have made it clear these fences are not permanent but are there only until the killing of innocent civilians stops. and it might be worth mentioning that it is the israelis who have kept their word regarding negotiated agreements.

we should also note two facts. (1) whenever israel has relieved its closure of towns that terrorists have used as launching sites for murder, it has paid the price in israeli blood. (2) israel’s security fence has not killed, wounded, or harmed anyone.

the same cannot be said for the weaponry being hauled through the tunnels. the intention is to use the contraband to kill. and in all too many cases that intention has been satisfied.

israel work on the fence to separate israel and the palestinian territories near the palestinian city of qalqilya.
We’ve examined the fact that God exercises sovereign rule over the universe, angels, history, and nations. Now we will examine other spheres subject to His sovereignty.

**Sovereignty Over Rulers, Counselors, and Judges**

**Assertions of Sovereignty.** The Scriptures declare, “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, 25, 32). In Isaiah 40:23 God asserts that He “bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.”

Psalm 107:40 states that God “poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.” Isaiah 3:1–12 indicates that the Lord judged Jerusalem and Judah by taking away good, capable leaders and giving them oppressive leaders who should not have ruled. Thus God gives a nation the kind of rulers or leaders it deserves.

**Examples of God’s Sovereignty.**

God told Pharaoh of Egypt that He raised him up to his ruling position to exhibit His power in him “that my name may be declared throughout all the earth” (Ex. 9:16; Rom. 9:17). God accomplished that purpose by sending ten devastating plagues on Egypt to break Pharaoh’s stubborn refusal to free the people of Israel from slavery to him.

Because the ruler of Tyre claimed deity for himself, God declared He would bring foreign nations against him to cause his death (Ezek. 28:1–10).

Powerful King Sennacherib of Assyria attacked God’s holiness by claiming Jehovah was no different from the gods of the nations he had already conquered (2 Ki. 18:28–35; 19:8–13). God stated that Sennacherib had reproached and blasphemed “the Holy One of Israel” (2 Ki. 19:22).

He declared that, as a result of what He would do to Sennacherib, the king would return to Assyria where God would cause him to be killed by the sword (2 Ki. 19:7, 28). In one night the angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in their camp outside Jerusalem (2 Ki. 19:35). This event caused Sennacherib to return home, where two of his sons killed him with a sword (2 Ki. 19:36–37).

God called King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon His servant, the ruler whom he used to judge Judah, Egypt, and other nations (Jer. 25:9–11; 27:6–11; 43:10–13). But because Nebuchadnezzar became consumed with pride, God inflicted him with a form of mental illness that caused him to live for a time like a wild animal (Dan. 4:28–37).

God gave King Jehoiakim of Judah into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:1–2).

God called King Cyrus of Medo-Persia His “anointed” and declared that He enabled Cyrus to conquer nations, terrify other kings, break through defenses, and gain treasures and entrance to secret places (Isa. 45:1–3). In addition, the Lord “stirred up the spirit of Cyrus” to exhort the Jewish people to return from Babylon to Jerusalem to build the second Temple (Ezra 1:1–3).

In the future God will raise up the Antichrist to work His sovereign will on Israel, but then He will judge him severely (Zech. 11:15–17).

Near the end of the future Tribulation, the Antichrist, kings, and rulers of the earth will gather their armies and try to prevent God and His Messiah from establishing His theocratic, millennial
rule over the world (Ps. 2:2–3; Rev. 19:19). God will laugh at them, mock the puniness of this opposition, vex them, and subject them to His divine wrath (Ps. 2:4–5).

The Antichrist will be cast alive into “a lake of fire burning with brimstone,” and the rest will be killed by the Messiah (Rev. 19:20–21).

Sovereignty Over Ministries

Scripture indicates that spiritual gifts are God-given abilities to minister to other people (1 Pet. 4:10). In addition, the Bible reveals they are given to believers by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7–11) and that the giving of a gift is an act of God’s grace. The major part of the word translated “gifts” is the New Testament word for “grace”; compare with Romans 12:6 and 1 Peter 4:10.) Thus God is the sovereign creator or source of these abilities to minister.

Although the apostle Paul told the Corinthian Christians to “covet earnestly the best gifts” (1 Cor. 12:31; cf. 14:1), he made it clear that the Holy Spirit distributes the gifts according to His sovereign will. After listing several different gifts the Spirit gave to believers (1 Cor. 12:8–10), Paul declared, “But all these worketh that one and the very same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will” (1 Cor. 12:11).

Paul further stated, “But now hath God set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it hath pleased him” (1 Cor. 12:18). This means that believers have no guarantee that they will receive the specific spiritual gifts they desire. Thus God is the sovereign distributor of these abilities to minister.

In 1 Corinthians 3:5–7 Paul wrote, “Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So, then, neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.

Paul thereby indicated that it is God, not the gift possessor, who sovereignly causes the beneficial results of ministry.

The Holy Spirit sovereignly directed the leaders of the church in Antioch of Syria to set apart Barnabas and Paul for the missionary ministry to which He had called them (Acts 13:1–4). The Spirit also sovereignly prevented Paul and his companions from going to Asia Minor and Bithynia because He wanted them to minister in Macedonia (Acts 16:6–10).

Sovereignty Over Nature

God created the heavens (plural in the Hebrew text), the earth, the sea, and all that is in them (Ex. 20:11). Thus He is the sovereign source of all of nature.

God appointed man to be his earthly representative with the responsibility to administer God’s rule over all of nature on this earthly province of God’s universal Kingdom (Gen. 1:26–29). But man fell away from God. As a result, God judged man by sovereignly placing nature under a curse.

He cursed the soil of the earth, apparently with a reduction of fertility, and caused it to produce thorns and thistles, all of which would make man’s work of growing food more difficult (Gen. 3:17–19). The curse also changed animal nature from being tame and vegetarian in diet (Gen. 1:30; 2:19–20) to being wild and flesh-eating.

In light of these radical changes, the apostle Paul wrote, “Creation was made subject to vanity” and “the bondage of corruption,” and “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Rom. 8:20–22).

Since the fall of man, God has demonstrated His sovereignty over nature in multiple ways. For example, because man became so evil and violent, God judged the world with a devastating flood during the days of Noah (Gen. 6:5–8, 13–22).

God used various aspects of nature (frogs, lice, flies, hail, fire, locusts, darkness) and afflicted areas of nature (death of livestock, boils on humans and animals, destruction of vegetation) to force Pharaoh to free the people of Israel from their slavery in Egypt (Ex. 8—10).
God caused a strong wind to part the waters of the Red Sea and dry its bed to enable the Israelites to cross safely from Egypt to the Sinai Peninsula (Ex. 14:21–22). He then let the sea return to its natural state to destroy the chariots and horsemen of Pharaoh when they entered the parted sea to pursue the Israelites (Ex. 14:23–28).

Scripture indicates that God sovereignly rules and stills the raging sea (Ps. 89:9), commands and raises the stormy wind (Ps. 107:25), calms the storm (Ps. 107:29), turns rivers into a wilderness and water springs into dry ground (Ps. 107:33), turns a fruitful land into barrenness (Ps. 107:34), turns the wilderness into a pool of water and dry ground into water springs (Ps. 107:35), causes vapors to ascend from the earth, and makes lightnings with rain (Jer. 10:13).

Jesus Christ exhibited sovereign rule over nature by calming a storm (Mk. 4:36–41), walking on water (Mt. 14:25–26), turning water into wine (Jn. 2:7–11), and changing the nature of a colt that had never been sat upon from wild to tame in order to ride it calmly in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mk. 11:1–11).

During the future Tribulation God will judge the world with a great earthquake and cosmic disturbances (Rev. 6:12–14); hail and fire that will burn one-third of the trees and all green grass (Rev. 8:7); a burning object that will turn one-third of the sea into blood and kill one-third of sea creatures (Rev. 8:8–9); a burning object that will turn the water of one-third of the rivers and fountains into deadly poison (Rev. 8:10–11); darkness of one-third part of the sun, moon, and stars (Rev. 8:12); and lightnings, thunderclaps, an earthquake, and great hail (Rev. 11:19).

Also, the sea will become like the blood of a dead man with the resultant death of every living thing in it (Rev. 16:3). The rivers and fountains will become blood (Rev. 16:4); the sun will scorch with great heat (Rev. 16:8–9); darkness will cover the earth (Rev. 16:10); the Euphrates River will dry up (Rev. 16:12); and thunders, lightnings, an unparalleled earthquake, and very heavy hail will prevail (Rev. 16:18–21).

When Jesus Christ will establish the future Millennial Kingdom, He will remove the curse of sin from nature. Nature will experience “the regeneration” (literally, “genesis again,” Mt. 19:28), “the times of refreshing” (Acts 3:19), “the times of restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21).

Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities to minister to other people. ... Believers have no guarantee that they will receive the specific spiritual gifts they desire.

Once again all animals will be tame, harmless, and herbivorous (Isa. 11:6–9). There will be beneficial changes in the earth’s climate and natural elements (Isa. 30:23–26; Ezek. 47:1–12; Joel 2:23). Food will abound (Joel 2:22, 24; Ezek. 36:29–30; Zech. 8:11–12), and animals will produce greatly (Ezek. 36:11; 47:8–10).

Sovereignty Over Individuals

Scripture also reveals that God exercises sovereign control over individuals. For example, God gives life and breath to all persons (Acts 17:25). Sometimes God closes wombs to prevent conception (Gen. 20:18), and other times He opens them (Gen. 29:31–32).

He gives “power to the faint” and strength “to those who have no might” (Isa. 40:29). God used the selling of Joseph into slavery by his brothers as His means of elevating Joseph to power in Egypt (Gen. 45:5–8; 50:20). God extended Hezekiah’s life for fifteen years (2 Ki. 20:1–7), delivered Daniel from the lions’ den (Dan. 6:21–22) and Daniel’s three friends from a fiery furnace (Dan. 3:26–28).

Because of Jonah’s disobedience, God prepared a great fish to swallow him (Jon. 1:17). Jesus increased the life spans of Jairus’ daughter (Mk. 5:22–42), the son of the widow of Nain (Lk. 7:11–15), and Lazarus (Jn. 11:43–44) by raising them from the dead.

Consequently, believers should find comfort in the fact that God exercises sovereign control over individuals.

Renald E. Showers is an author, professor, and international conference speaker for The Friends of Israel.
Our January/February issue of IMG included a time line from the call of Abraham to the establishment of the League of Nations in 1920. In this issue we pick up events beginning in 1918 and conclude with the appointment of Mahmoud Abbas in April.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>British General Edmund Allenby defeats the Ottoman Turks and occupies all of Palestine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919–23</td>
<td>Third wave of Jewish immigration arrives, mostly from Russia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Britain receives League of Nations mandate over Palestine at San Remo Conference and is told to facilitate creation of a national Jewish homeland there; Arabs riot.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>First Jewish moshav, Nahalal, is founded. Arabs riot in Jaffa.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Churchill White Paper reduces British commitment to the Jewish people and gives 77 percent of area designated for them to Abdullah and the Arabs (Transjordan).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924–32</td>
<td>Fourth wave of immigration arrives, mostly from Poland.</td>
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<td>1925</td>
<td>Hebrew University founded in Jerusalem.</td>
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<td>1926</td>
<td>Arabs riot in Hebron, killing Jews.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Arabs riot in Jerusalem and massacre Jews in Hebron and Safed. Second White Paper further reneges on Britain’s Jewish commitment and limits Jewish immigration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Hitler comes to power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933–36</td>
<td>Fifth wave of immigration, mostly</td>
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from Poland and Germany.

1934
Trying to flee Hitler, Jews begin “illegal” immigration because Britain refuses them entry while allowing massive, illegal Arab immigration—36,000 Arabs from Syria alone in just a few months.

1935–36
Record 65,000 Jewish people immigrate.

1936
Arabs revolt and go on strike, demanding Jewish immigration stop; 500 Jews killed; British Capt. Orde Wingate establishes “night squads” to defend Jewish settlers. Massive illegal Arab immigration continues.

1937
Peel Commission recommends partitioning remaining 23 percent of the land designated for the Jews into two countries: one Jewish, one Arab.

1939
Hitler invades Poland. White Paper limits Jewish immigration to a mere 60,000 for five years. Ben-Gurion states, “We shall fight the war as if there is no White Paper and we shall fight the White Paper as if there is no war.”

From Nazi Germany to Independence

1939
Third British White Paper rejects partition concept, further restricts immigration, and severely limits land sales to Jews. Massive illegal Arab immigration continues, and Arabs appropriate the land Jews are clearing for Holocaust refugees.

1940
While Britain fights Hitler, Haj Amin Al-Husseini, grand mufti of Jerusalem, moves to Berlin to help Hitler.

1941
Britain refuses entry to the ship Struma, carrying 767 Romanian-Jewish refugees. It sinks. All aboard die.

1943
Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Meanwhile, Britain deports “illegal” Jewish refugees to Cyprus while allowing illegal Arab immigrants.

1945
World War II ends. Jews smuggle Holocaust survivors into Palestine. Jewish underground works against the British.

1946
The Jewish Irgun blows up the west wing of the King David Hotel. Transjordan becomes the independent, Hashemite kingdom of Jordan.

1947
The British repel the ship Exodus. Its 4,500 Jewish refugees are returned to displaced-persons camps in war-torn Europe.

NOVEMBER 29, 1947
UN partitions Palestine into two states: one Arab, one Jewish. The Arabs reject the plan; the Jews accept it.

NOVEMBER 29, 1947–MAY 14, 1948
Jews defend themselves against Arab gangs. Guerrilla warfare rages. Arabs blockade road to Jerusalem. More than 1,200 Jewish people are killed, more than half of them civilians.

MAY 14, 1948
Ben-Gurion declares independence. Within minutes, U.S. President Harry Truman recognizes the new State of Israel.

From the Yom Kippur War to Netanyahu

1974
Arafat addresses the UN and calls for a united “Palestine” with a democratic, secular government “where Christian, Jew, and Muslim can live in justice, equality and fraternity.”

1977
Menachem Begin becomes Israel’s prime minister and supports keeping all disputed territories.

1979
Israel and Egypt sign Camp David Accords.

1943
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Ben-Gurion declares independence. Within minutes, U.S. President Harry Truman recognizes the new State of Israel.

1943
Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Meanwhile, Britain deports “illegal” Jewish refugees to Cyprus while allowing illegal Arab immigrants.

1945
World War II ends. Jews smuggle Holocaust survivors into Palestine. Jewish underground works against the British.

1946
The Jewish Irgun blows up the west wing of the King David Hotel. Transjordan becomes the independent, Hashemite kingdom of Jordan.

1947
The British repel the ship Exodus. Its 4,500 Jewish refugees are returned to displaced-persons camps in war-torn Europe.

NOVEMBER 29, 1947
UN partitions Palestine into two states: one Arab, one Jewish. The Arabs reject the plan; the Jews accept it.

NOVEMBER 29, 1947–MAY 14, 1948
Jews defend themselves against Arab gangs. Guerrilla warfare rages. Arabs blockade road to Jerusalem. More than 1,200 Jewish people are killed, more than half of them civilians.

MAY 14, 1948
Ben-Gurion declares independence. Within minutes, U.S. President Harry Truman recognizes the new State of Israel.
1982
Israel moves into Lebanon to protect Israel’s northern border and stabilize a weak and struggling Lebanese people.

1987
Palestinian Intifada (uprising) against Israeli control explodes in the disputed territories.

1988
The PLO supposedly recognizes Israel and renounces terrorism, calling for negotiations. Yitzhak Shamir is elected Israel’s prime minister.

1991
Gulf War. Iraqi Scud missiles attack Israel. United States deploys Patriot missiles to help Israel.

1992
Yitzhak Rabin becomes Israel’s prime minister.

SEPTEMBER 1993
U.S. President Bill Clinton, Rabin, and Arafat sign the Declaration of Principles (Oslo I) at the White House.

JULY 1994
Between 7,000–15,000 Palestinians organized by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and PFLP protest Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian negotiators sign an agreement on water rights at Oslo.

JULY–AUGUST 1994
Palestinians and Israelis discuss transferring authority to the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank.

DECEMBER 1994
Arafat, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, and Israeli Prime Minister Rabin receive the Nobel Prize.

JANUARY 1995
Israel recognizes Palestinian passports, permits Palestinian vehicles on Israeli roads, and lets Palestinian men over 50 and students cross between Gaza and Jericho.

SEPTEMBER 1995
Arafat and Rabin sign Oslo II, allowing expansion of Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank.

NOVEMBER 1995
Rabin assassinated. Peres becomes acting prime minister.

JANUARY 1996
Palestinians elect Arafat president.

MARCH 1996
Hamas detonates bus bomb that kills 19 people. Peres declares war on Hamas, increases security, and begins destroying homes of suicide bombers and their families.

MAY 1996
Benjamin Netanyahu elected Israel’s prime minister.

From Netanyahuto the Road Map

SEPTEMBER 1996
“Al-Aqsa tunnel riots.” Arabs spread lie that an exit door Israel installed to an underground tunnel to help tourists endangers the Al-Aqsa mosque. (The tunnel existed 800 years before the mosque.)

JANUARY 1997
Israel and Palestinians reach agreement on Israeli redeployment in Hebron.

MARCH 21, 1997
Hamas suicide bomber detonates bomb at Cafe Apropos in central Tel Aviv.

JULY 30, 1997
Two suicide bombers hit Mahane Yehuda open-air market in Jerusalem, killing 12 and wounding at least 150.

OCTOBER 17, 2001
PFLP assassinates Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze’evi in an Israeli hotel.

JUNE 1, 2001
Suicide bombers hit Dolphinarium Discotheque in Tel Aviv; 20 killed, including many Israeli teenagers.

AUGUST 9, 2001
Islamic Jihad suicide bomber hits Sbarro pizzeria in Jerusalem; kills 15, wounds 130.

MAY 30, 2002
Arafat signs PA transitional constitution to guarantee Palestinian rights. However, it is based on Islamic Sharia law; declares Islam the official religion of “Palestine”; and contradicts Arafat’s “democratic, secular state” UN speech.

SEPTEMBER 28, 2000
Palestinians initiate riots after Ariel Sharon legally visits the Temple Mount. Violence and terrorism mount and continue today, termed the Oslo War.

FEBRUARY 6, 2001
Sharon elected prime minister.

JULY 17, 2001
Suicide bombings hit Dolphinarium Discotheque in Tel Aviv; 20 killed, including many Israeli teenagers.

APRIL 2003
Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) elected Palestinian prime minister; Arafat maneuvers to retain control. Violence continues unabated. U.S. releases Road Map peace plan.
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).

In mid-July a Muslim convert to Christianity left his home and headed for a mountainous region of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank. He took with him Christian materials, including audiocassettes, videos, and Bibles.

For ten days his family heard nothing from him and became increasingly concerned for his welfare. Their fears were justified. When he was returned home to his wife and two small children, it was in a box. His brutally beaten body had been carved into four pieces. The radical Muslims who murdered him were issuing a warning to other Muslims who might be inclined to listen to the gospel and become believers in Jesus.

It was also a warning to local Christians to stop helping converts from Muslim backgrounds who are persecuted by Islamic extremists in PA-controlled areas. In fact, some of these Christians have also been attacked.

Last year a Christian received a call telling him a Muslim convert was in serious condition in the hospital. On the way there to see if he could help the man, the Christian’s car was deliberately run off the road. The call had been a hoax designed to lure him into a position where he could be killed or injured. The same Christian was later hospitalized after another attempt on his life.

These attacks are reportedly the handiwork of the Hamas terrorist organization that receives funding from Iran specifically for this purpose.

According to the Sharia (Islamic law), any Muslim male who leaves Islam becomes an apostate and faces a death sentence. Although this law is not strictly enforced in some of the more secular Arab countries, it is being executed in places like Sudan, where Islamists are in control.

It is therefore not difficult to understand why so many Christians are emigrating from the Middle East. In 2002 the pope urged Arab Catholics to stay put and even announced a plan to deliver $400,000 in aid to Catholics living in Jerusalem.

Former U.S. Sen. Connie Mack (R-Fla.). He learned firsthand how the Palestinian Authority uses torture and coercion on Muslim converts to Christianity from a devout believer who was jailed eight months and hung from the ceiling by his hands because of his faith in Christ. Mack visited Israel while in Congress and reported his findings on the Senate floor: “Needless to say, these Christians met with me at considerable risk. They conveyed to me a message of fear and desperation.”
and Bethlehem. In spite of the Vatican’s incentive, the exodus has continued.

Significantly, the Christian population in the West Bank today is estimated to be around fifty thousand, or 1.7 percent of the total population. Fifty years ago 17 percent of those living in the area were Christians. A prominent religious figure in Bethlehem recently commented, “There is a new mentality that says Palestine is Islamic, making us second-class citizens.” Thus the outlook for Christians living in West Bank communities is not promising.

The fact that the inclusion of Sharia law will be basic to any future Palestinian constitution raises red warning flags for all non-Muslims living in the area.

During the negotiations to establish a Palestinian state, Arabs may give lip service to democracy to placate Western ears. But the facts on the ground are best seen by looking into the box containing the mutilated remains of a man who became a believer in Jesus and dared share his good news with others.

Neither Israelis nor Christians nor moderate Muslims nor people in the Western democracies can countenance the birth of another country with a deadly core of fanatic Islamic enforcers on the loose. There’s too much for everyone to lose.

Elwood McQuaid is editor-in-chief for The Friends of Israel.

Jim McAlpine, chairman of the FOI Gospel Ministry of Canada since 1999 and long-time Canadian representative on the Board of Directors of The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, entered our Lord’s presence on July 20, 2003. He left behind a rich legacy of love for his Savior and steadfastness in God’s Word and Christian service.

His stable, consistent decision-making and extraordinary wisdom were an inspiration to those of us who were privileged to serve with him. And his deep love for Israel and the Jewish people was evident in his exceptional character and commitment.

Following retirement he and his devoted wife, Ruth, made their home in Calgary, Alberta. Both Ruth and June, his first wife who preceded him in death, served tirelessly at Jim’s side in service for the Messiah. We continue to pray for Jim’s family even as we rejoice in knowing that he is finally home.

Contributions to the James McAlpine Memorial Scholarship Fund to help train people in Jewish ministry can be sent to FOI Gospel Ministry Inc., 60 Queen Street East, Suite 210, Brampton, Ontario, Canada L6V1A9.

Mickey was born August 5, 1936, in Atlanta, Georgia. She accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Savior at age nine, attended Bob Jones University, and later did three years of seminary study in theology.

Mickey taught Bible studies in homes and nursing homes and counseled and trained others in sharing their faith. Whenever someone needed her, Mickey was there.

We will miss her terribly, but we rejoice in knowing she is breathing new air in the glorious presence of the Lord she loves.

Promoted to Glory

IN 2003

James Malcolm McAlpine • 1931–2003

Myrna Pickett (left) • 1936–2003

Miss Myrna “Mickey” Pickett, 67, of Boca Raton, Florida, a faithful servant of Jesus Christ and staff worker with The Friends of Israel for thirty-three years, entered the Lord’s presence July 9 after succumbing to pulmonary fibrosis.

Mickey’s unselfish and steadfast commitment to the Lord was a hallmark of her personality and her ministry, both in the Philadelphia area and later in southeastern Florida. Her devotion to living according to God’s Word and her faithfulness in teaching others made her a testimony to all who knew her and resulted in many people coming to faith and even going into full-time Christian service.

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We will miss her terribly, but we rejoice in knowing she is breathing new air in the glorious presence of the Lord she loves.
The worst Christmas I ever had was the year my first husband died. It wasn’t the loneliness that did me in; it was the self-pity.

As a young widow, I was faced with raising my four-year-old daughter alone. I didn’t know for whom I felt worse—her or me.

I knew I couldn’t stay home. So I packed our things, loaded up my car, and made the long drive from New Jersey to North Carolina to spend the holiday with my mother-in-law and my husband’s family, as we had always done when James was living. As usual, everyone was wonderful to us. But it’s easy to be miserable when you decide to feel sorry for yourself.

Looking back on that Christmas twenty years ago, I realize that God was bringing me through something, so He could bring me to something. The lovable American baseball player Yogi Berra once said, “Sports is 50 percent physical and 90 percent mental.” Although his percent-
ages didn’t add up, his point was well taken.

The apostle Paul made almost the same point when he said, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). Life is filled with profound agonies that God uses to conform us to the image of Christ for our good and His glory. And though widowhood is lonely, it is not a curse unless you make it so. The Lord loves widows deeply and reserves for them extraordinary blessings that many other women never receive—providing they set their minds on walking with Him.

Anna was such a widow. The entire Bible contains only three verses about her, but they have exalted her for more than two thousand years as a woman who put God ahead of self and service ahead of self-pity: And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, who departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day (Lk. 2:36–37).

Some say Anna was eighty-four. But I doubt it. She was probably more than one hundred years old—“of a great age”—and had been a widow eighty-four years. Jewish women were eligible to marry when they turned twelve. She likely married young and was widowed in her twenties. The Bible does not say if she had children. Nor does it say who supported her.

But during the four hundred “silent” years, when God sent neither prophet nor angelic messenger to His people Israel, there was Anna—a prophetess. Undoubtedly, He blessed her with a remarkable, personal relationship with the God of all creation. She communicated with Him faithfully, diligently, and daily, “with fastings and prayers night and day”; and He communicated with her. Her life revolved around the Temple and service to her Lord.

Anna lived in Jerusalem during the Roman occupation. But she had seen better days. She was born when the Hasmoneans ruled (140–63 B.C.); and she knew what it was like to live in an independent, Jewish Judea. The Hasmoneans descended from Judah “Maccabee,” whose guerilla fighters eventually forced the Seleucid kingdom to grant the Jewish nation its freedom.

Although not descendants of David, the Hasmoneans brought much of the ancient land of Israel under their control, plus Idumea (Edom), and spread Jewish influence in all directions. The Pharisees, however, considered them too secular. And some circles particularly repudiated their rule, feeling that the royal crown “was reserved for the House of David only.”

Anna had lived through the Roman conquest of Jerusalem, when Roman General Pompey swept into the Holy Land in 63 B.C., stationed mechanical engines and battering rams inside the walls, and fiercely pummeled the Temple with stones. Pompey finally took Jerusalem from the Jews after a three-month siege, seized the Temple, and entered the Holy of Holies. Wrote the ancient historian Flavius Josephus, “Of the Jews there fell twelve thousand; but of the Romans very few.” So ended some eighty years of independent Jewish rule.

Yet, despite all her grief, both personal and national, Anna never doubted that God would keep His promises. She served him willingly, believed wholeheartedly that someday He would redeem Israel, and “spoke of him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (Lk. 2:38).

Consequently, God, who helps widows (Ps. 146:9), executes justice for them (Dt. 10:18), condemns those who prey on them (Isa. 10:2), and always hears their cries (Ex. 22:23), reached out to a faithful widow in Jerusalem on that first “Christmas” and let her behold the One who would redeem her people Israel.

Anna could not have understood the magnitude of the blessing she received that day. Many years earlier she had witnessed the destruction of Jewish independence. Now God allowed her to see not only the One who will restore the Jewish nation, but the legitimate heir to the throne of David, God Himself—the One who will someday rule the Davidic Kingdom and the world forever.

The Bible says that man is “born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7). Life is not easy. For many, particularly at Christmas, life may seem like one long road of heartache and pain. Anna chose not to look down that road, but to fix her eyes on the Lord and serve Him fully. Like Anna, we should do likewise until that blessed day when we, too, shall behold His face.

ENDNOTES

1 Dr. Herbert Lockyer, All the Women of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 30.
3 Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, 14.4.2–4.
4 Ibid., 14.4.4.

Lorna Simcox is senior editor for The Friends of Israel.
**Rockets-R-Us?**

What is the Palestinian fascination with the Kassam rocket, an imprecise weapon containing 10 to 15 kilograms (22–33 pounds) of explosives with a range of six to eight kilometers (3.73 miles)?

Caroline Glick of *The Jerusalem Post* has reported that Hamas is assembling Kassams in Nablus with help from Hezbollah. “Several rockets with extended ranges have been test-fired into the Mediterranean.”

If terrorists can extend the rocket’s range, they will be able to fire into the heart of Israel, including into Jerusalem, Netanya, Petah Tikva, and into Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv.

Glick reported that Maj.-Gen. Ya’acov Amidror, former head of Israeli military intelligence, said the *hudna* (so-called cease-fire) greatly strengthened the terrorists’ position and enabled the PA to “acquire and develop new and more sophisticated weapons” without IDF hindrance, rebuild its terrorist cadres, and revamp its influence over PA areas and Palestinian society.

“All the new weaponry they will be able to field will be a direct consequence of the hudna,” he said.

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**Israelis find fatal flaw in GSM service**

*Cryptology experts at the Technion in Haifa have managed to crack the code used by 850 million cellular phones, finding faults that could be used by thieves to steal calls and even to impersonate phone owners in the middle of ongoing calls.*

If the cellular phone companies in 197 countries want to correct the errors, they will have to call each customer and change the cell phone’s programming.

Three researchers discovered the flaw in the encryption system of the GSM (global system for mobile communications) network, which is used by 71 percent of all cellular phones in the world.

They revealed their discovery recently at the Crypto Conference in Santa Barbara, California. The 450 participants, many of whom are world leaders in encryption research and encryption industry, were “shocked and astounded” by the revelation that most cell phones in the world are susceptible to misuse.

The researchers cracked the GSM encryption system at the initial ringing stage, even before a call begins. Later they could listen in on calls and broadcast. They found it possible to steal calls and assume the identity of a phone’s owner even in the middle of an ongoing call. The Technion researchers even managed to overcome a security improvement to the system.

A free copy of the research has been sent to the GSM Association in Dublin so member companies can correct the problem if they wish.

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**Arabs buying up city of Acco**

*ARUTZ-7—The downtown, upscale Wolfson neighborhood in Acco is now 95 percent Arab. More than 10,000 Jews have left the city over the years, and their apartments are snatched up by Arabs.*

Local Chief Rabbi Yosef Yashar said, “I assume that there is a guiding hand behind all this. It turns out that every time a Jew puts his apartment up for sale, an Arab shows up at the door with the full amount, with no haggling. Where does the money come from? They’re trying to [take over] the entire city.”

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**Bus-bombing massacre due to ‘hurt feelings’**

*ARUTZ-7—What does the Arab press have to say about the August 19 Jerusalem bus bombing that killed 21 people returning from prayers at the Western Wall? The *Egyptian Gazette* implied that the attack was the result of “hurt feelings.” The paper wrote that the bombing “followed the Jewish passengers’ pilgrimage to the Wailing Wall in the Holy City, where non-Muslim visitors are allowed by the Israeli authorities to go into al-Haram al-Sharif [the Temple Mount], a move which hurts the Muslims’ feelings.”

The English-language *Gazette* columnist implied that such attacks help defend the Temple Mount: “Al-Aqsa mosque is the Muslims’ third holiest site, a fact which makes it imperative to defend it and regain it from the occupiers.”
A third explanation provided by the *Gazette* is, “Israeli officials’ statements add to the Palestinians’ frustrations and fuel their vindictiveness to demonstrate their unpreparedness to give up their inalienable rights under all circumstances.”

Another Egyptian publication, the weekly magazine *Akher Sa’a*, said that Israel “forces” the terrorists to murder Jews. Commenting on the U.S.-backed Road Map, which the magazine praises for envisioning a Palestinian state, *Akher Sa’a* editorialized, “The Sharon government clearly rejects the plan and seeks to undermine it. [But] they cannot openly declare this, and thus resort to provoking the Palestinians and force them to commit suicide bombings.”

**Israelis fear hits on schools**

*Arutz 7*—Bracing for a wave of terrorism, Israeli Minister of Public Security Tzachi Hanegbi promised unprecedented protection at the nation’s schools.

The intelligence community has warned that a fully renewed campaign by Arab terrorists may include attacks on schools located in areas bordering the Green Line between Israeli and (Palestinian Authority) PA areas.

Security officials reported that a terrorist dressed as a student, teacher, or security guard may target a school, carrying a school bag or backpack containing a bomb. Other bleak scenarios put forth included a car bomb that would crash a school gate, or a bomb-laden ambulance, public vehicle, or delivery truck. Attack scenarios also included a lone terrorist armed with an automatic weapon, as well as multiple terrorists working in unison.

There are 9,405 kindergartens in Israel, and 2,924 schools, for a total of 12,329 educational facilities.

**What about Jewish refugees?**

*Arutz 7*—The UN must fairly examine both sides of the Middle East refugee issue—Arab and Jewish—if it is to play a meaningful role in finding a solution to the conflict, representatives of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) has told the international body.

Maya ben-Haim Rosen, the WJC representative in Geneva, told a UN subcommission on Human Rights, “Truth is the link to justice and peace. There will be no lasting and cohesive peace in the Middle East without also addressing the gross and systematic violation of the human rights of the Jewish communities of Arab lands.”

The WJC presented two recent studies on the issue—“The Jews of Iraq: A Forgotten Case of Ethnic Cleansing,” and “UNRWA, Terror, and the Refugee Conundrum: Perpetuating the Misery.”

The studies document the forced expulsion of the Jews of Iraq and many other Arab countries, and how the UN agency responsible for the Arabs displaced during the Arab war against Israel has been hijacked by terrorist groups. The WJC has submitted the studies to the White House, members of the U.S. Congress, the British parliament, the European parliament.

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**Memorial Gift to The Friends of Israel**

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved (Ps. 55:22).
As it is written in Ecclesiastes 11:1, “Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.” So it has been with me.

Before I was married, I worked in a joinery doing construction. It was extremely hard labor. In the summer, many students would work there to make money for school.

One summer a student came who was too weak a man for such difficult work. He was working very hard with concrete; and the others were cruel to him, mocking him and ridiculing him day after day.

One day I went to my boss and said, “You see that student there? I want him to work with me.”

My boss replied, “But he is weak and has no strength. He can die doing such hard work.”

“But I want him,” I said.

So he came to work with me. And I respected him and trained him. We got along well, and he was happy to be with me. The other workers saw how well we worked together and stopped shouting and cursing at him. Even my boss saw the difference and asked, “What is happening here?”

I told him, “We are not beasts. We are human beings. God created us in His image, and I am treating him with respect.” After three months the young man returned to the university.

A few years later I got married, and my wife became pregnant. When she was about to deliver our first child, I brought her to the hospital. We were not in a good situation and had little money. We sat there waiting for the doctor to arrive. And who should come but the man who had worked with me as a student!

He quickly attended to my wife and gave her a private room, one of the best rooms in the hospital. He delivered my baby and provided such good care that people asked us why she was receiving such special treatment. This doctor watched her night and day. “Cast thy bread upon the waters.”

Many years have passed, but we never forgot how well this doctor treated us. A few months ago my wife and I were walking in Jerusalem; and I saw an old man with white hair, stooped over and walking slowly. When I looked more closely, I recognized him. It was the doctor who had delivered my firstborn, who had worked with me as a student. Now, forty-two years later, we met again.
He asked about my daughter. I told him she has four children of her own and that I have fourteen grandchildren who are all growing up faithful to our Lord.

“How can you speak about the Lord without covering your head?” he asked.

I hear this question all the time. “Did Abraham come before the Lord with his head or his heart?” I asked.

The man looked at me and asked, “How did you come to believe the way you do? This is very interesting to me. Please tell me.”

“You know,” I began, “I will never forget all that you did for us forty-two years ago.” I read Ecclesiastes 11:1 to him and said, “Now I will do something for you. I will show you how you can be happy and rejoice in your life.”

“But I am not a young student anymore,” he said. “I am an old man. How can you make me happy now, in my old age?”

I showed him what the prophet Nehemiah said: “Neither be ye grieved; for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (8:10).

“This joy can belong to us,” I said. I told him how I had passed through the Holocaust as a 10-year-old boy. For five years I eluded the Nazis. All my family was murdered. I was embittered and alone.

“Then I began to read the Bible and received the Lord as my Savior. And you can see what joy He has given me, even after all I went through. He gave me a new family, and I can rejoice in Him.”

The doctor told me he was so happy to see me after all these years. I gave him my Bible, and he thanked me for it.

1/2 Calendars Ad by (Waveline)