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ABOUT THE COVER
This issue of IMG features articles magnifying the majesty and eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ. Graphics designer Tom Williams has created a cover that combines several central attributes of the Son of God. He is seen as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe; the divine Sovereign and King; the One who will come again; and the One who provides the rainbow of promise. All in all, He illuminates our lives as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, and everything of even miniscule significance in between.

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CREDITS
Cover & Pages 9, 18, 21, 22: Thomas E. Williams
Pages 6, 25: Harold Lambert/Super Stock, pg. 6; Superstock, pg. 25
Pages 12, 15: Stan Stein

PRODUCTION
Editor-in-Chief: Elwood McQuaid • Senior Editor: Lorna Simcox • Associate Editor: David M. Levy • Contributing Editors: Steve Herzog, Renald Showers • Copy Editor: Josephine Bak, Lin Johnson • Publications Manager: Vera Bookner • Production Assistant: Alison Gracely • Art Director: Thomas E. Williams

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Executive Director: Elwood McQuaid • Executive Vice President: William E. Sutter • Director of Operations: Dolores Barney • Director of Information Services: Daniel Pearson • Director of North American Ministries: Steve Herzog • Director of Foreign Ministries: David M. Levy

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Listening for the Chariots

According to a recent report in Ha'aretz, Israel is weighing the prospect of international control over the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The Israeli newspaper reports that “Israel is not ruling out the possibility of acceding to a proposal by Palestinian Chairman Yasser Arafat to place sovereignty over the Temple Mount in the hands of a body consisting of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and the Jerusalem Committee of the Islamic Organization Conference.

“Under this idea, which is still being formulated, the joint body would confer on Arafat the jurisdiction over the Temple Mount and appoint him custodian of the Islamic holy places. Israel would retain sovereignty over the Western Wall and work out with the Palestinians and representatives of the Jerusalem Committee [of the Islamic Organization Conference] arrangements for the day-to-day administration of the compound, including security and worship for Jews.”

Israel’s Prime Minister Ehud Barak has denied that Israel would consider such an arrangement, saying, “No prime minister could ever give the Palestinians sovereignty over the Temple Mount.”

Two elements of interest in this report are sure to surface repeatedly in the future, albeit with slightly varying formats. The first is that control of both the Temple Mount and Western Wall (Wailing Wall) area would be dominated by Palestinian and Islamic authorities under this arrangement. The thought that Israelis would “work out” with the Islamic Jerusalem Committee day-to-day administration of the area does not bode well for the comfort or eventual presence of Jewish worshipers. The history of relations there in the past says all that need be said.

Second (and still on the table) is the often-stated “nonnegotiable” Palestinian demand for future sovereignty over the entire Old City with oversight of all Muslim and Christian holy places, devoid of all Israeli military presence. If this plan were implemented, it would recreate much the same scenario that existed before the Six-Day War in 1967, when Jews were banned from their holy sites. Access to Jewish holy sites would totter on the whims of Arafat and the Muslim Mufti of Jerusalem. No responsible Israeli, in or out of government, would agree to such debilitating concessions.

Of more momentous dimensions for the future is the prospect of sovereignty over the Temple Mount being placed in the hands of members of the United Nations Security Council. In light of the repeated failure of peace negotiations aided by Western intermediaries and the recent suggestion, born of desperation, that the Mount be placed under “divine sovereignty,” the idea of internationalizing Jerusalem will have increasing appeal. It is, in fact, what the nations have been warming up to since the founding of the modern State of Israel in 1948. That Israelis were never allowed to name Jerusalem as their capital makes this clear enough. Additionally, the world’s unprecedented and prejudicial refusal to establish national embassies in Jerusalem has punctuated international intentions with a giant exclamation point. The broader community of Gentile nations has other plans for the sacred city.

At the UN Millennial Summit held in New York last September, Yasser Arafat referred to Jesus Christ walking around Jerusalem. His statement was obviously intended to tie Jesus and Christians more closely to Islam than to Judaism. Ehud Barak retaliated by saying that when Jesus walked in Jerusalem, He would have seen no Islamic mosques. He would have seen a Jewish Temple and scores of synagogues.

Chairman Arafat’s references to Jesus have become a staple in his conversation for some time now. You would wonder, however, if he pays even scant attention to any of the words Jesus spoke while He walked those streets. One of His statements immediately comes to mind.

Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Lk. 21:24).

Jesus referred to the last days and the demolition of Gentile domination of Jerusalem. As one of the Gentiles driving his chariot toward the last gathering of the nations in an attempt to crush Israel and control the Holy City, Mr. Arafat should be forewarned. The same alarm should be ringing in the corridors of the United Nations. As in the days of Jabin and Sisera of old, the chariots and battlewagons of the world’s great Gentile powers will someday roll from the Plain of Megiddo toward Jerusalem. But the final outcome has already been announced.

Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle (Zech. 14:3).

If you listen closely, you can almost hear the rattle of those chariot wheels.
David Levy’s book AD by Waveline
ASCENDING MARS' HILL

And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces (Zech. 12:3).

As negotiators slumped away from the vaunted Camp David and UN millennial summits of last summer, they took with them a keen awareness of how burdensome Jerusalem can be. Though the major players were not astute students of prophetic Scripture, they certainly must have sensed the gist of its message.

For the three principals at the negotiating table, Bill Clinton, Ehud Barak, and Yasser Arafat, nothing but frustration filled the air. President Clinton, at least temporarily, must have seen his much-sought-after Nobel Peace Prize flying out the window. Ehud Barak, after promising to cede much more than most Israelis could tolerate, was, to say the least, deflated. Yasser Arafat, who wanted everything but walked away with nothing, exuded the arrogance toward Israel and the West that radicals in his camp so deeply admire. Each of them must have been mulling over the question, “Where do we go from here?” By all appearances, the sign at the end of the road read “Dead End.”

Going to the Court of Last Resort

With talk of new negotiations, yet another summit, and proposals for backroom deals flying through the air, the issue of Jerusalem stood like an impassable blockade. It was perhaps out of that very frustration that a new—and, given the state of international opinion toward God, revolutionary—idea was put forth. As bizarre as it may sound, the
proposition suggests that sovereignty over the Temple Mount be granted to God! The notion apparently was first floated during the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, where it must have seemed more like a joke than a serious proposal. The impertinent thought that quarrelsome humans could bestow on the Almighty what is His to begin with is bizarre indeed. But there it is. God superintending the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It sounded good to Ehud Olmert, the mayor of Jerusalem, who said he could live with it. In an interview with foreign journalists, Olmert stated, “The idea of divine sovereignty is something that can be pursued.”

Commenting on Olmert’s statement, The Jerusalem Post reported on August 31, “The idea of putting the area under divine sovereignty has been discussed by senior Israeli and Palestinian negotiators as a possible solution to the most difficult question of sovereignty over the Temple Mount, which led to the collapse of the Camp David talks.”

So beleaguered Israeli and Palestinian negotiators seemed ready to throw in the towel and refer the matter to a higher court. Under such an arrangement, Israel would be in charge of overall security, while Muslim clerics would have autonomy in administrating their own shrines. Those who endorse the plan believe the idea of “divine sovereignty” is a vague enough term to win endorsements from both Palestinians and Israelis. Mayor Olmert believes the arrangement would not alter present positions, just encourage the status quo. In other words, although God is sovereign, we can still wrangle over the details.

But the same problem exists that has dogged this peace process from the beginning.

When we speak . . . of the God of the Jews as opposed to Allah of the Muslims, we are not speaking of the same deity.

Whose God would it be? That question, in the final analysis, looms as the big issue.

What the politicians don’t seem to realize is that if God is officially declared sovereign over the Temple Mount, someone will have to determine whose God it will be. Will it be Allah of the Muslims or Yahweh, the God of the Jews? Also, will others come up with a list of potential divine sovereigns? This matter is not to be taken lightly, because when we speak, for example, of the God of the Jews as opposed to Allah of the Muslims, we are not speaking of the same deity. And while the seriously misinformed will loudly and impassionately argue that they are one in the same, they are not.

In his book The Islamic Invasion (Harvest House), Dr. Robert Morey addresses the problem. In his conclusion to the chapter titled, “The Moon God,” he writes the following: In the field of comparative religions, it is understood that each of the major religions of mankind has its own peculiar concept of deity. In other words, all religions do not worship the same God, only under different names. The sloppy thinking that would ignore the essential differences which divide world religions is an insult to the uniqueness of world religions.

Which of the world religions holds to the Christian concept of one eternal God in three persons? When the Hindu denies the personality of God, which religions agree with this? Obviously, all men do not worship the same God, gods, or goddesses.

The Quran’s concept of deity evolved out of the pre-Islamic pagan religion of Allah-worship. It is so uniquely Arab that it cannot be simply reduced to Jewish or Christian beliefs.¹

Ascending Mars’ Hill

Unquestionably, Western culture is turning back to paganism. The matter before us makes the point. It has become anathema for anyone to criticize another’s concept of faith or declare his belief system superior to others.

Early last September the Vatican issued a 24-page document reaffirming commitment to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. The document implied that other religions are, in the Vatican’s view, inferior to Catholicism. A howl of protest arose from world religious leaders, condemning the pope and the proclamation. How dare he diminish the worth or speak judgmentally of any other religion? Weren’t all religions of equal value and stature? Whether one worships a god, an insect, a tree, or a stone—what difference does it make? There is no superior system of faith. Who among us has the
right to dare propose that others are wrong or that we are correct? What this argument exposes is that, after 2,000 years, we are once again in Athens, trudging up Mars’ Hill.

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market place daily with them that met with him (Acts 17:16).

The philosophers and intellectuals subsequently took the apostle to a place called Mars’ Hill (Areopagus). There members of the pagan religious establishment met to exchange arguments about their gods and to learn of new ones.

If you stand atop Mars’ Hill today, you can look down at the agora, or market, where Paul disputed with the Athenians. An upward view to the right reveals the awe-inspiring Parthenon, a true wonder of the ancient world. The structure housed statues of pagan deities and was designed to represent their glory. In short, Paul was virtually surrounded with every artifice of paganism that his world had to offer.

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ Hill and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are very religious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you (Acts 17:22–23).

In Athens every man had his altar and his God. But every man was wrong! Paul, a Jew, declared that they were passing by the only altar that could make a difference. There was but one God and one way to gain His favor.

For in Him we live, and move, and have our being: . . . we ought not to think that the Godhead is like gold, or silver, or stone, carved by art and man’s device. And the times of this ignorance God overlooked, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; concerning which he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:28–31).

Paul proclaimed the resurrected Christ as the only way to redemption and the eternal favor of God. His message did not set well with the majority of his hearers—no better, in fact, than it does today with religious pagans in this new millennium. Nonetheless, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah is not a negotiable issue. Nor is it but one of many ways to whatever one may define as God. In this fact, the battle was joined; and it is moving toward a consummation.

Bow Down or Die

In our brave new world of religious tolerance stands a false assumption: By accepting every concept of god on the face of the earth, we have at last breached the wall of ignorance and bigotry. We have created a new freedom—a camaraderie of the liberated global man, unfettered by the old ways or the impediments of esteem-stunting, dark-age religious superstitions. These new-world dreamers, however, are moving inexorably toward a nightmarish awakening. They are being set up because, when they appear to have their houses in order—as those who lived confidently in the shadow of the Tower of Babel—their worlds will come crashing down.

The Bible teaches that before the Second Advent of Christ, a satanic pretender will come on the scene. We call him the Antichrist. When he appears, there will be one global religion that apparently condones anything and everything that anyone calls god. Will this beast, this pseudo-Christ, join the fraternity? The answer is in the Word of God:

And the king shall do according to his will; and shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods. . . . Neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above all (Dan. 11:36–37).

The portrait is enhanced in 2 Thessalonians 2. This Antichrist, “the son of perdition” (v. 3), takes the spotlight. There on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, Israel, he says what others have dared not say: Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (v. 4).

The world of this tyrant-suuper will have zero tolerance for anyone who embraces any other deity. His credo simply will be, “Bow down or die.”

Thus the “I’m okay, you’re okay” New Age religion is not okay after all. And any contemporary declaration of divine sovereignty over the Temple Mount is only a reflection of man’s enduring folly and an obvious reminder of what the God of the Bible promises is yet to come.

Elwood McQuaid is the Executive Director of The Friends of Israel.
Was there anything unique about Jesus being the Son of God? Certainly, it is difficult to dispute that He referred to Himself by that title—and His followers, more so. But it is also true that the New Testament calls each one who believes in Jesus a “son of God.” John 1:12 says: “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children [sons, KJV] of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

How then does Jesus being the Son of God differ from my being a son of God (apart from a capital letter!)? Does the title Son of God clearly express Jesus’ deity, or do Christians read more into it than the Bible intends? The only way to answer these questions is to comprehend how the first hearers and readers of the Christian message understood the title when they encountered it.

Who were those first hearers/readers? On the most basic level, some were Gentiles and others were Jews. Both already had the expression son of God in their first-century linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The Pagan Concept of the Son of God

Oscar Cullmann, in his excellent book The Christology of the New Testament (Westminster Press), summarizes well how the phrase son of God was used in the Orient and in Hellenism during the period of the New Testament. Evidently, ancient Oriental religions, especially in Egypt but also in Babylonia and Assyria, viewed the king as divine. Their literature often called him a “son of God.” In Greek religions, however, the designation was applied to anyone believed to be possessed by divine power. The reputation of these itinerant, so-called miracle workers rested solely on their own claims to possess such powers.
These ideas helped shape the worldview of Gentiles who encountered the claims of Christ. Their idea of a son of God was rooted deeply in polytheistic thought and was, therefore, difficult to transform into the monotheistic message of Jesus and His apostles. Whereas kings and other holy men in Oriental and Hellenistic thought claimed to be sons of God, Jesus claimed and was proclaimed to be the Son of God. The uniqueness of the concept as it applies to Jesus goes far beyond the idea of a son of God in Oriental and Hellenistic Gentile thought.

Cullmann concludes, therefore, that the Old Testament/Jewish concept of “Son of God” is a more likely point of contact for the Christian title. Although Gentiles would have associated the term Son of God with some divine connection, Jesus’ message that He was the only Son of God would have challenged them with a tone of finality unknown in pagan thought.2

SON OF GOD
IN
Judaism

This phrase is used four ways in the Old Testament. First, it refers to Israel as a people. “Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my first-born” (Ex. 4:22). Also, in Hosea 11:1, Yahweh says, “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” The title here expresses the idea that God has chosen this people for a special mission and that they owe Him absolute obedience.

Second, kings also bear the title. In the Davidic Covenant, God says about any one of David’s royal descendants, “I will be his father, and he shall be my son” (2 Sam. 7:14). The king, too, is a son as one chosen and commissioned by God. It is easy to see how New Testament writers saw this and other passages as referring ultimately to Jesus. Compare Psalm 2:7 (“The LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee”) with its application in Hebrews 1:5.

Third, early Hebrew texts sometimes apply the title to angelic beings. This fact is indubitably clear in the book of Job (see 1:6; 2:1; and 38:7) as well as in Psalm 89:6 (“sons of the mighty,” KJV). Many believe this meaning also applies to the use of the term in Genesis 6:2.

Fourth, the title sometimes refers to the Messiah. The son that would be born, according to the prophetic word in Isaiah 9:6, was to be given divine titles because He Himself would be divine: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Consider also its use in Proverbs 30:4: “Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son’s name . . . ?” Furthermore, the previously mentioned references to the Israelite king as God’s Son are applied to the Messiah in the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, therefore, son of God can refer to Israel, a king, or an angel. But only the Messiah can be called the Son of God. The Jewish concept of Son clearly contains the kernels of election, obedience, and sometimes even divine character. This last idea forms the main framework for use of the phrase in the New Testament. Furthermore, it is the concept of divine that arose in the minds of first-century Jewish people as they confronted the claim of one of their own to be the Son of God.

SON OF GOD
IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT

The title Son of God is used for Jesus of Nazareth in three ways in the New Testament Scriptures. Jesus, of course, used it of Himself; others used it when addressing Him; and others used it when writing about Him.

First, Satan addressed Jesus as “Son of God” in the first two of the temptations: “If thou be the Son of God . . . ” (Mt. 4:3, 6; Lk. 4:3, 9). Satan did not question Jesus’ Sonship and, in fact, began precisely with Jesus’ consciousness of it. It is significant that Jesus rejected the Hellenistic concept of divine sonship, which hinged on the manifestation of miraculous powers. Cullmann remarks, The point of the first two temptations is not whether Jesus believes that God’s miraculous power is present in the Son, but whether he will be disobedient to his Father by attempting to use that power apart from the fulfillment of his specific commission as the Son.3

Second, others addressed Jesus as the Son. These included Peter (Mt. 16:16), a centurion at the foot of the cross (Mk. 15:39), and even the demons who possessed a poor man (Lk. 8:28).

This last reference prompts the observation that the demonic world understands infinitely more about the deity of Jesus than do many modern theologians. The controversial Jesus Seminar, composed of so-called scholars, concluded that later
writers invented all such statements. However, the only inventions in this regard are the writers’ own faithless conclusions. The most significant use of the title came from the Father Himself, who, after the Mount of Transfiguration experience, thundered, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Mt. 17:5).

The third set of references to Jesus as Son of God appears in Acts and the epistles. In fact, there are so many that a few representative texts will do. Perhaps none are as dramatic as Paul’s brilliant observation in Romans 1:3–4:

Concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

The high Pauline concept of Jesus’ divine Sonship is perhaps surpassed only by the Christology of Hebrews. “Seeing, then, that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession” (4:14).

Chapter 1 of this grand epistle repeatedly mentions that the final One through whom God spoke was His Son (1:2). This Son expresses the divine essence of the Father (1:3), is higher in rank than angels (1:4ff.), and is addressed directly as “God” in Psalm 45:6 (1:8). Hebrews understands Son of God as meaning “one with God.” Jesus’ deity is more powerfully asserted in Hebrews than in any other New Testament writing with the possible exception of the Gospel of John.

In John, the title Son of God appears more frequently (ten times) than in any other New Testament book. Furthermore, the word Son by itself is used of Jesus approximately thirty additional times. One of the most familiar is John 3:16:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

But is this Son deity incarnate? In His message during the Festival of Hanukkah in Jerusalem, recorded in John 10, Jesus is absolutely clear that He viewed Himself as deity. “I and my Father are one” (v. 30), “the Father is in me, and I in him” (v. 38). These verses recall the statement about the Logos in chapter 1: “the Word (Logos) was with God, and the Word was God” (v. 1).

But did His hearers understand Him to be claiming deity; or, as the Watchtower Society tries to tell us, did He never intend to declare Himself as equal with God? It is best to let the Savior speak for Himself:

Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shown you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God” (Jn. 10:31–33).

Clearly, they understood that by claiming to be the Son of God, Jesus was claiming to be fully God. Note John 10:36, “Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?”

But there is so much more. Earlier, in debating with the Jewish leaders, Jesus had experienced their opposition to His claim to be the Son of God. They considered such an idea blasphemous because they clearly understood it to be a claim to deity:

Therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God (Jn. 5:18).

In the Gospel of John, the title Son of God as applied to Jesus means “embodying the Divine essence of His Father.” Nothing less than that conclusion does justice to the text.

Should Jesus receive the same honor and worship the Father desires? Does His Sonship mean more than He is “godlike” in some mystical way? Let the Son affirm His thoughts on the matter:

All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father, who hath sent him (Jn. 5:23).

Can anything be clearer than that?

---

William C. Varner is a Professor of Old Testament at The Master’s College, Santa Clarita, CA.
The apostle Paul defined the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ in a remarkably succinct way: “In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead [θεότης, literally “God-ness”] bodily” (Col. 2:9). That is, in the man Jesus there dwells, at all times, all that there is to God. As John expressed it in the prologue to his Gospel, the Word, which was in the beginning, which is and was God, “was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (1:14). But in taking on Himself real—albeit unfallen—human nature, Jesus surrendered nothing of deity so that when men beheld Him, they beheld “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father” (Jn. 1:14). As Christian creed and chorus have ever acknowledged, He was at once very God and very man. And yet, although the truth of the Theanthropic Person is an infinitely precious reality, cherished and celebrated by believers throughout Christian history, it is also a great mystery. It is, perhaps, a besetting sin of twenty-first-century believers to overlook the infinite mystery inherent in the biblical teaching concerning the person of Jesus. After all, we have had two thousand years to get used to the idea of God becoming man; and the doctrinal affirmation

The Relationship of the Son to the Father

by Douglas Bookman

January/February 2001
rolls comfortably from our lips. But has any divine proposition more thoroughly humbled the finite mind of man or more certainly driven the saint to his knees in humble submission to the authority and majesty of God’s revealed Word than this one? “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4)

Although orthodox Christians universally confess this truth concerning the unique person of Jesus Christ, they often compromise it in the way they conceptualize Christ’s life on earth. Many believers appear to think of Jesus as God “dressed up like man.” They seem to believe He carefully perpetuated the illusion of genuine humanity while actually living His mortal life by secret and constant appeals to supernatural powers and insights that no other mortal has ever possessed. Yes, the biblical narratives describe Jesus as growing and learning (Lk. 2:40, 52; Heb. 5:8), as subject to human frailty (Mt. 4:2; Jn. 4:6), as disappointed (Mk. 3:5) or frustrated in some endeavor (Mk. 7:24), and as struggling with the temptation to turn back from an unimaginably difficult task (Mt. 26:37-39; Lk. 22:41-44; Heb. 5:7).

But the quiet assumption is that these passages are somehow superficial and illusory—that the real Jesus (because He was, after all, God) was never truly weak or surprised or frustrated or tempted. All that appeared to be evidence of human limitations in Jesus’ life were simply the Son of God playing a part, adopting the persona of a real human being for some devotional or instructive purpose.

To be sure, few believers probably would subscribe to this view of Jesus’ life if it were explained this way. Yet many read the Gospels from just such a perspective. Surely this slant is wrong!

Obviously, the mystery concerning the Person of Jesus Christ is bottomless. As Moses reminded his generation, “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God.” However, in the next breath, Moses affirmed that “those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever” (Dt. 29:29). Clearly, revealed truth exists concerning the Person of Jesus.

The New Testament is unambiguous that in His incarnation, Jesus took on Himself genuine, unfallen humanity. Scripture explicitly and consistently has testified to this fact (Jn. 8:40; Acts 2:22; 1 Cor. 15:21; 1 Tim. 2:5), as has the common confession of orthodox Christians throughout the history of this age. (An example is the Definition of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, which affirms that Jesus is “at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man.”)1 Indeed, it is by virtue of His real and full (and unfallen) humanness that Jesus can be our Kinsman-Redeemer as well as a High Priest who is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15; cf. 2:16–18).

But wait! Did Jesus not at times demonstrate the possession of divine attributes and powers? Did He not know Nathanael though He had never met him (Jn. 1:47–48)? Did He not supernaturally discern that a woman He had just encountered in Samaria had been married five times (Jn. 4:16-18)? Did He not foretell the future (Mt. 24—25), call nature to obey Him (Mk. 4:41; Lk. 5:1–7), and instantly conquer disease (Mt. 8:1–17), injury (Lk. 22:50–51), and even death (Mk. 5:31–42; Lk. 7:11–16)? He certainly did! The biblical narrative is clear that Jesus possessed divine attributes and that, on occasion, He employed those attributes as the Father directed Him to do so through the Holy Spirit (Isa. 61:1; Mt. 3:16; 4:1; Lk. 4:14, 18; 10:21; Jn. 3:34; Acts 2:32–33). But it is a mistake to conclude that because Jesus occasionally accessed supernatural power, He must have been constantly or perpetually availing Himself of it.

How then are we to understand the relationship between the divine and the human natures in Jesus? Although this issue cannot be resolved unequivocally, the teaching of the New Testament in this regard is best summarized as follows: In some ultimately inscrutable sense, when Jesus took on human nature, He surrendered to His Father the independent exercise of His divine attributes. Jesus did not surrender deity in any sense, to any degree, or for any time (Col. 2:9); but He chose to wait on the Father’s direction to employ those attributes. In so doing, our Lord graciously and
voluntarily subjected Himself to all the limitations intrinsic to unfallen humanity. He lived His earthly life within the scope of those limitations, except in those moments when the Spirit directed Him to access divine attributes. Because of such occasional direction, Jesus’ life was punctuated by flashes of omniscience and omnipotence.

Notice, then, that Jesus was both a man like every other man and a man different from all other men. He was like us in that He took on Himself all that belongs to humanity. But He was different on at least two counts. First, of course, He had no sin nature. We easily assume that sin is a necessary and intrinsic element of humanity—that no one can be truly human who is untouched by sin. But such is not the case. Sin is an invader in the human experience. The first Adam sinned away his creaturely righteousness; when the “last Adam” was confronted by the tempter, He remained pure and obedient (1 Cor. 15:45).

Again, Jesus differed from other men in that all others are subject to the limitations of humanity because of what they are—finite creatures bound by intrinsic restrictions. However, Jesus was subject to those limitations because of what He consciously and graciously chose to become. He had framed the world into which He came, but the eternal Son of God made Himself of no reputation and entered that world in the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7).

Hymn writer Charles Wesley said it eloquently in the familiar carol, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”:

Christ, by highest heav’n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord:  
Late in time behold Him come,  
Offspring of a virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
Hail th’ incarnate Deity! Pleased  
as man with men to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

The incarnation of the Son of God was an act of deliberate and immeasurable grace.

But another question arises. Given the reality that Jesus genuinely became man and lived His earthly life within the constraints of unfallen humanness, what was the relationship of the Son to the Father during the years of that mortal life? Again, the Scriptures are explicit: Jesus was entirely dependent on (Jn. 5:19, 30) and submissive to (Jn. 8:28; 12:49) His Father in heaven. Such was Jesus’ confession in moments of victory (Jn. 4:34; 6:38) and in times of despair (Mt. 26:39). Further, such is the testimony of the Gospel records of Jesus’ life. When, as a maturing boy, He discerned that it was not yet the Father’s will for Him to be about His Father’s business, He returned with His parents to Nazareth “and was subject unto them” (Lk. 2:51). When Jesus needed to amplify His ministry by choosing twelve apostles to carry the gospel in His name, He first found solitude and “continued all night in prayer to God” (Lk. 6:12). And when His soul began to be overwhelmed with the anticipation of the infinite terrors to befall Him on a hill outside a northern gate of Jerusalem, Jesus stole away to a garden on the Mount of Olives. There He cast Himself on the love and wisdom and will of His heavenly Father (Lk. 22:51). Jesus rested on the wisdom and strength of the One whose purposes He had come to accomplish.

Has your heart been broken by those whom you love most in this world? Jesus knows what that is like. His own family and friends were convinced that He was mad and tried to abort His ministry (Mk. 3:20–21, 31–35). The Scripture is explicit that His brothers still clung to unbelief late in His ministry (Jn. 7:5). Does your struggle with temptation seem more than you can bear? Jesus’ struggle was so dark (Mt. 26:38) and the trauma so heavy that He sweat great drops of blood (Lk. 22:44). Finally it became necessary for the Father to dispatch an angel to enable Him to arise and make His way from Gethsemane (Lk. 22:43).

In all of this, what resource did Jesus have but His Father? He prayed, “not my will, but thine, be done” (Lk. 22:42). He “committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pet. 2:23), and for the joy that was set before Him—a joy He anticipated on the basis of His Father’s Word—He endured the cross (Heb. 12:2). Because He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” His Father has “highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Phil. 2:8–9).

Here lies a most profound and practical truth: Jesus’ resource is our resource. We are enjoined to cast our every care on the God who loves us with an everlasting love (1 Pet. 5:7). Could there be any greater encouragement to live in dependence on and submission to our loving and all-wise Father than the pattern of Jesus, who left us an example, that we should follow His steps.
A common refrain throughout the Word of God is the term Son of man. In the Old Testament, it is used almost exclusively of the prophet Ezekiel. In the New Testament, it is used exclusively of Jesus, with one possible exception.

Son of man is used no fewer than 192 times in the entire Bible—108 times in the Old Testament and 84 times in the New Testament. In the book of Ezekiel, the term is used 93 times to refer to Ezekiel. Thirteen times the term is used in the Old Testament to refer to mankind in general. In Daniel 8:17 it is used of Daniel. The one additional time it is used in the Old Testament is in Daniel 7:13, where it refers to the future Messianic King and Judge.

In the New Testament Gospels, Son of man is used of Jesus eighty times. The other four references are in Acts 7:56; Hebrews 2:6; and Revelation 1:13 and 14:14. All refer to Jesus, with the possible exception of the verse in Hebrews, which some believe refers to Jesus and others believe refers to man.

The use of the term in reference to Jesus undoubtedly looks back to Daniel 7:13:

*I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.*

At least three references to the Son of man in the Gospels (Mt. 24:30; Mk. 13:26; and Lk. 21:27) clearly follow the usage of the term in Daniel 7:13 in relation to the person of Jesus.

With this information, how are we to understand this term with regard to Jesus? Does it refer solely to the humanity of Jesus? Or are we to understand it to mean more?
Romans 5 teaches the same truth. Verses 12 through 21 teach the same basic analogy over and over.

For if through the offense of one many are dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many (v. 15).

The title Son of man as applied to Jesus is not predicated on His physical birth . . . and speaks of a greater position than mere physical birth could bestow.

Adam and Jesus, in their function, were representative of all mankind. In this capacity, among others, the term Son of man is used regarding Jesus.

The term undoubtedly speaks of His humanity. Its use, however, neither contradicts nor denies His divine nature. In Jesus alone, these two attributes merge in the person of the God-man.

The phrase Son of man used in reference to Jesus’ humanity is unique. In Hebrews 2:14 we are told, “Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.” Two different Greek words are used in this phrase. “Partakers” is koinonia and “took part of” is metecho. A Greek believer once provided an excellent explanation of the difference between these words. “If I entertain someone in my home,” he said, “we are both partaking of the home environment. I belong, though, since I live there. But you don’t belong since you are just visiting. Even though both of us are partaking of the same benefits at the time, one of us doesn’t really belong to the home.” In the same way, humans share in flesh and blood, with all its liabilities, because we all have a sin nature. Jesus “took on” flesh and blood (metecho) but did not “belong” (koinonia) because He had no sin nature.

Jesus, being the Son of man, identified Himself with humanity by becoming man. This identification was unique in that God had prepared a body for Him (see Heb. 10:5). That body was without sin and would represent all mankind when Jesus went to the cross.

Thus the term Son of man is used in conjunction with His salvation ministry in His humanity. As Luke 19:10 tells us, “the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Four men were carrying a man stricken with palsy. With the size of the crowd preventing entrance through the front door, these four men took the initiative. They carried the crippled man to the roof, made a hole in the roof, and lowered him down on his bed through the hole. On seeing the faith of this man, Jesus pronounced his sins forgiven. The scribes present responded bitterly, “Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?” (v. 7).

They knew that the authority to forgive sins belonged to God alone. Where they erred was in their understanding of the person of Jesus. Jesus read their hearts. This action alone must have silenced them, at least temporarily. Jesus then healed the crippled man, proving His authority. He did so for one reason: “But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins” (v. 10).

The second incident is recorded in 2:23–28. The disciples were walking through grain fields on the Sabbath and began to pluck and eat some of the grain. The Pharisees noticed what was taking place and condemned the disciples for breaking the Sabbath law. After reminding them of the time King David and his men ate of the shewbread from the high priests’ house, Jesus then shared a basic principle: The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Jesus then concluded by saying, “Therefore, the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath” (v. 28). Intrinsic with the title Son of man is authority that is not limited to just an earthly sphere but embraces the realm of deity. The Father has “given him authority
to execute judgment . . . because he is the Son of man” (Jn. 5:27).

**The Son of Man and the Messiah**

The title *Son of man* as applied to Jesus is not predicated on His physical birth. Rather, it is independent of His human birth into this world and speaks of a greater position than mere physical birth could bestow. Surely, this exalted position is what Jesus alluded to when He said that “no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man” (Jn. 3:13). The Son of man was already in heaven before He came to earth. His physical birth had nothing to do with this title. Jesus taught this fact in John 6:62 when He said, “What if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?” The Son of man was in heaven before. Before what? Before His coming to earth.

His birth in Bethlehem, foretold by the prophet Micah, was separate from and not connected to his title *Son of man*. Undoubtedly, the birth of the man Christ Jesus was the fulfillment of what the title suggested, but this designation is not limited in scope to His humanity. No, as we have already seen, it carries with it much more than just the concept of humanity.

Neither is the title, in its strictest sense, Messianic. As Sir Robert Anderson stated in his book *The Lord From Heaven* (Kregel), “the Son of man’ is a Messianic title only in the sense that it belongs to him who is Israel’s Messiah.”

When Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?” (Mt. 16:13), Peter gave a divinely inspired answer. “Thou art the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the living God” (16:16). He basically answered, “You are more than just a man. You are the Son of man, yes. But beyond that, you are the Messiah as well as the Son of God.”

Likewise, in Matthew 26:63–64, when the High Priest asked Jesus to “tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God,” Jesus identified Himself as the Messiah with authority and power.

*Thou hast said; nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

In essence, He said, “I am the Messiah. Furthermore, not only am I the Messiah, but I am also the Son of man; and this title carries with it both authority and power. I am the one that Daniel spoke of in chapter 7 verse 13. I am the coming Messianic King.”

**Jesus the Son of Man**

Although the phrase *Son of man* is not Messianic, it is, nevertheless, illustrative of the Messiah and His person and work. Captured in this title is the work the Messiah would do on earth. A. R. Fausset suggests that “‘the Son of man’ expresses His visible state, formerly in His humiliation, hereafter in His exaltation.” His first coming to earth as the suffering servant of Isaiah’s writings would be as the pure, spotless, sinless Son of man who would die for the sins of the world. He would accomplish redemption through His sacrificial death and resurrection. Many of the sons and daughters of Adam would find forgiveness through His work on the cross. He was a man—yes. And His work was necessary, prophesied, and substitutionary. But it was also much more.

His second, visible coming to earth will be on “the clouds of heaven” in power and glory. The long-anticipated Davidic King will appear in all His glory. Because He is the Son of man, He will rule and reign with the power and authority inherent in this title. He will have, as Daniel 7:14 states, dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

The designation *Son of man* implies more than just a man. It is the exalted title of one who is vested with power and authority, who is representative of all mankind. And only Jesus, as the Messiah, can embrace it in the fullness of its meaning.

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Mark Robinson is the Director of Shalom Outreach Ministries, El Cajon, CA.
Sincere Christians disagree concerning the issue of the eternal sonship of Christ. Some contend that Christ has always been the Son of God; therefore, He was God’s Son in eternity past. Others argue that Christ did not become the Son of God until His conception and birth or later. Therefore, He was not the Son of God until His incarnation. A careful look at the Scriptures can settle this important issue.

The Concept of Servanthood

Some who insist that Christ was not the Son of God in eternity past do so with the belief that the Bible conveys the following concept of sonship: A son is subservient to the authority of his father and, therefore, is not equal to his father. Thus they reason that if Christ had been the Son of God in eternity past, He would have been subservient, not equal, to the Father. But in eternity past, Christ was absolute deity exclusively. As such, He was equal, not subservient, to God the Father. Therefore, they reason, He could not have been the Son of God in eternity past; and to claim that He was dishonors the person of Christ and reflects negatively on His deity.

However, several things prompt the conclusion that the Bible does
not convey such a concept of sonship. First, in Matthew 21:33–39 Christ taught a parable about a man who planted a vineyard, entrusted its care to a group of husbandmen, then traveled far away. When harvest time came, the owner sent some of his servants to the vineyard to receive the fruit. The husbandmen beat one of his servants, killed another, and stoned another. So the owner sent a larger number of his servants. The husbandmen abused them as well. Finally the owner sent his son to the vineyard. He reasoned that, contrary to the way the husbandmen had dealt with his servants, surely they would respect his son.

Through this parable, Christ drew a distinction between the son of the owner and the servants. He thereby indicated that the relationship of a son to his father was not that of a servant.

Second, in Hebrews 3:1–3 the writer declared that Christ “was counted worthy of more glory than Moses” (v. 3); and he contrasted Moses’ position of a servant with Christ’s position of a son in their relationship to God (vv. 5–6). Through this contrast, the writer indicated that the relationship of a son to his father was not that of a servant.

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Third, in Galatians 4:7 the apostle Paul stated, “Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son.” Paul thereby signified that the position of a son was not that of a servant.

Fourth, Christ contrasted servant and son in the parable of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11–32). When the prodigal son decided to return home, he determined to say to his father, “I . . . am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants” (vv. 18–19). The father ordered his servants to wait on his son (vv. 22–24). These details of the parable reveal a distinction between a son and a servant.

These four items, then, indicate that the biblical view of sonship does not include the concept of subservience.

The Significance of “The Son of God”

In the Bible, the term son has a threefold significance. First, it signifies that a son is a separate person from his father. This fact is evident, for example, in God’s statement to Abraham: “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac,” and offer him there for a burnt offering” (Gen. 22:2). It is evident again from the prodigal son’s statement: “I will arise and go to my father” (Lk. 15:18). In relationship to Christ, the only way that God’s declaration, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mt. 3:17; 17:5), can make sense is if Jesus, as God’s Son, is a separate person from the Father.

Second, the biblical term son signifies that a son is the heir of his father. In Christ’s parable of the man who entrusted the care of his vineyard to husbandmen, when the husbandmen saw the owner’s son coming to the vineyard, “they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance” (Mt. 21:38). In Galatians 4:7 the apostle Paul indicated that a son is an heir. In relationship to Christ, the writer of Hebrews stated that God has “in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things” (Heb. 1:1–2; cf. v. 4). In Psalm 2:7–8 God said to the Messiah, “Thou art my Son; . . . Ask of me, and I shall give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”

Third, in the Bible the term son signifies that a son has the same nature as his father. In both the Old Testament and post-biblical Judaism, the Hebrew words for son were “often used to denote the relationship which determines the nature of a man.” In light of this definition, Christ’s designation as the Son of God indicates that He has the same nature of deity as God the Father.

The Bible provides evidences for the conclusion that the designation “the Son of God” signifies the deity of Jesus Christ. First, the Bible indicates that the Jewish people understood that absolute deity was inherent in the designation. Because Jesus called God “My Father” (Jn. 5:17), His opponents
“sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (Jn. 5:18). On another occasion when His enemies tried to kill Him, they said, “For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God” (Jn. 10:33). In response to this charge, Christ asked, “Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (Jn. 10:36). This response indicates that it was Jesus’ claim to be the Son of God that caused His opponents to accuse Him of making Himself God.

Second, the book of Hebrews reveals that God the Father ascribed deity to Jesus Christ as the Son of God:

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; . . . therefore, God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows (1:8–9).

In both statements, God the Father calls His Son “God.”

Third, the Bible refers to the incarnated Christ as both “the Son of God” and “the Son of man.” The purpose of these two designations is to emphasize the two natures of the incarnated Christ. One scholar has stated that Christ’s designation as the Son of man “denotes true humanity.”

Since the designation “the Son of man” indicates Christ’s humanity, then the designation “the Son of God” must indicate His deity. Another scholar has written, “Unquestionably the title ‘Son of God’ affirms the full deity of Jesus, as the title ‘Son of man’ affirms his true humanity.”

It is important to note that, when Christ became incarnated in human flesh, He took on Himself humanity, not deity (Jn. 1:14; Heb. 2:14–17). In light of this truth and the significance of the designations “the Son of man” and “the Son of God,” we must conclude that He became the Son of man, not the Son of God, when He became incarnated.

Fourth, the book of Hebrews declares that as the Son of God, Christ is “the express image of his [God’s] person” (1:3). The Greek word translated “express image” means “impress, reproduction, exact representation.” Judaism used this term to refer to “the likeness between parents and children.” With these meanings in mind, one language scholar has concluded that Hebrews 1:2–3 presents the concept that “Christ as the Son of God is the impress of God’s nature.”

Fifth, the biblical expression “the only begotten Son” indicates that the designation “the Son of God” signifies the divine nature of Christ. In contrast to believers who are born of God (Jn. 1:13; 1 Jn. 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18) and are sons of God (Jn. 1:12; Rom. 8:14), Christ is “the only begotten Son” of God (Jn. 3:16, 18; 1 Jn. 4:9). He is the Son of God in a way that believers are not. Being born of God and as sons of God, believers partake of the holiness aspect of God’s nature (2 Pet. 1:4) but do not partake of His other attributes. As the only begotten Son of God, Christ possesses the total nature of God. The apostle John used the expression the only begotten Son of God to emphasize “more strongly the distinction between Jesus and believers and the uniqueness of Jesus in His divine sonship.”

These five biblical evidences reveal that the designation “the Son of God” signifies absolute deity. That significance prompts two conclusions. First, since Christ has always been deity, then He has always been the Son of God. He is the eternal Son of God. Second, in order to be consistent, the view that claims that Christ was not the Son of God before His incarnation should also claim that He was not deity before His incarnation. In light of that, we must reject the idea that He became the Son of God at some point in history.

Editor’s Note: For an in-depth treatment of this issue, see The Eternal Sonship of Christ by George W. Zeller and Renald E. Showers (Loizeaux Brothers.)

Renald E. Showers is a National Ministries Representative for The Friends of Israel.
Are you a Muggle? You don't know? Then you must be one of the few people in America who haven't read a Harry Potter book (Scholastic)—a slickly dressed, literary version of a wolf in sheep's clothing. This hugely popular and highly controversial series about an 11-year-old wizard and his exploits at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry has burst on the scene like dynamite, spawning everything from Web sites to school curricula to an entire subculture revolving around Hogwarts, magic, and witchcraft.

Are you a Muggle? Of course you are because, in the world of Harry Potter, Muggles are humans—nonmagic persons. We are depicted as a rather unfortunate life form that fears witchcraft and can't do anything wonderful, such as cast spells, ride a broomstick, play Quidditch (a sort of soccer in the air), or learn how to “bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death.”

We can, however, apply the Word of God. Although most of the Harry Potter-reading universe considers witchcraft pure whimsy, the Bible does not. Nor does Wicca, an official organization of witches and neopagans. Nor, apparently, did King Saul.

His visit to the witch of En-dor is recorded in 1 Samuel 28:7–25. The witch is referred to as a “medium,” or someone “who hath a familiar spirit” (28:7, KJV). She apparently survived Saul’s purge when he “had put away those who were mediums [had familiar spirits], and the wizards, out of the land” (1 Sam. 28:3). Saul probably had them killed because (1) the Bible says, “A man also or woman who hath a familiar spirit, or who is a wizard, shall surely be put to death” (Lev. 20:27); and (2) the witch feared for her life (1 Sam. 28:9).

The term familiar spirits refers to the demons involved in an individual’s alleged communication with the dead. The Lord Jesus called Satan “a liar, and the father of it [the lie]” (Jn. 8:44). These spirits, of course, are no different. The witch of En-dor had no power to communicate with dead people; she merely contacted demons who impersonated them. And, as with many professing witches today, she may have denied the reality of what she was doing.2

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You would think that such a want ad would yield few, if any, applicants. Yet just after the turn of the twentieth century, forty thousand Jewish people made aliya (immigration to Israel), knowing they had no more to gain than the promise of the fictitious ad above. Most of these brave adventurers were Eastern Europeans, descendants of the Diaspora, the Jewish community that has been scattered throughout the world since the Roman invasion of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

What would compel entire families to make such a difficult move back to the land of their ancestors? What possible advantage could there be in going to a place that offered virtually nothing but back-breaking work?

First, these people sought peace. In oppressive, Czarist Russia in particular, the Jewish people were being murdered en masse in pogroms, the result of blatant anti-Semitism. Second, they sought independence. For centuries, Jews had been denied the privilege of owning land and were beholden to their Gentile landowners. Third, the time was right. The first
Zionist Congress, held in Basle, Switzerland, in 1897, was energizing the Jewish people in the Diaspora with a Zionistic fervor that gave these idealistic pioneers the hope they needed to chase their dreams.

Although they tended toward socialistic ideas, they were still very much Jewish. Zionism’s goal was to “establish for the Jewish people a publicly and legally assured home in Palestine.” It was a movement that fueled real hope that someday a place would exist on this planet where being Jewish would not be a crime.

These young pioneers highly esteemed hard physical labor and considered it a blessing, not a burden, to reclaim the malaria-infested swamps and barren desert of Israel through the sweat of their brows. Working the sun-scorched soil of their ancestors with their own hands became a dream come true. Their immigration ushered in the dawn of a new movement. These are the tireless men and women who established the kibbutz (collective or communal community) forty years before the birth of the modern State of Israel.

From the beginning, the operating principle has been “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

These communities even today are comprised of people who genuinely want to live there. They are free to leave whenever they wish, and they govern themselves through democratic rule. The membership meets regularly, affording opportunity to register opinions and/or grievances. All major decisions are made by the membership (chaverim), each person possessing one vote. The individual owns nothing; the kibbutz owns everything. The collective decides and provides for all individual needs. Cars, clothes, food, health care, education—every physical need is provided. The community exists for the benefit of its members.

The first kibbutzniks (individual members) faced an enormous task. The great majority had no agricultural experience and possessed few resources. They were pioneers in a land that had lain desolate for years and was subject to drought as well as to raids by nearby enemies.

As in the days of Nehemiah, . . . it was common for a kibbutznik to be working in the field with hoe or shovel and a rifle slung over his shoulder.

It was as in the days of Nehemiah, that “half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the coats of mail” (Neh. 4:16). Thus it was common for a kibbutznik to be working in the field with hoe or shovel and a rifle slung over his shoulder. Before 1948 and the War of Independence, kibbutzim were used to train Jews to defend themselves against terrorism, a constant intruder. Each member of each kibbutz has always understood the need to be completely self-sufficient. Since most kibbutzim were located near borders and served as defense fortifications, every kibbutznik knew that each conflict was a fight to protect not just the homeland but also his own home. It is not surprising, therefore, that a large percentage of Israel’s military officers have come from kibbutzim.

Kibbutzniks also take great pride in their country, and a number have become dedicated civil servants. David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of the State of Israel, was himself a kibbutznik. He returned to his kibbutz in the Negev after retiring from public life in 1963.

In addition to contributing to the defense of their country, kibbutzim have helped immigration. Many provide ulpan, a five-month, intensive Hebrew-language study course for new immigrants.

All responsibilities in kibbutz life are shared equally between men and women who hold jobs on a rotating basis, including supervisory positions. The kibbutz owns all the land, all the equipment, all the homes. Food also is produced on the kibbutz. Crops vary but include oranges, lemons, artichokes, bananas, dates, olives, apples, cotton, tomatoes, peanuts, and walnuts. Kibbutzniks also raise livestock, such as cows, chickens, turkey, and even fish. Today many kibbutzim sustain a variety of manufacturing facilities in light industry.

Meals are prepared by kibbutz members, most of whom dine in the community dining room. In the early years, children were reared in community nurseries, visiting their parents only once a week. In many
*kibbutzim* today, this system has changed. Children sleep in the homes of their parents, often enjoying some of their meals together.

The first *kibbutz*, Degenyah (God’s wheat), was established in 1909. Its 750 acres are located on the southern tip of Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee). It began with just ten men and two women, and the average age was twenty. The land was purchased by an agency of the World Zionist Organization called The Jewish National Fund (JNF), or *Keren Kayemet L’Yisrael*. This organization was founded for the purpose of purchasing land for the Jewish people. Its Hebrew name is derived from a talmudic dictum about good deeds, “the fruits of which a man enjoys in this world while the capital abides [ha-keren kayemet] for him in the world to come” (pe’ah 1:1).

Before the land of Palestine had become the State of Israel, JNF purchased thousands of acres of land from absentee Arab owners who regarded it as useless. At first, land acquisition was JNF’s chief purpose. Once Israel became a nation, JNF shifted its purpose from acquiring land to developing it. Many people, including evangelical Christians, assist the JNF in forestation programs. The Friends of Israel Forest located outside Jerusalem has been established under the authority of the JNF. Millions of trees have been planted there. JNF also has been involved in irrigation projects, flood control, and establishing campgrounds and picnic facilities.

Today approximately 275 *kibbutzim* exist around the country. Yet many people are surprised to learn that only 120,000 or so *kibbutzniks*, or 2.3 percent of Israel’s population, actually live on a *kibbutz*. Most of today’s Israelis would say it is not a lifestyle they would choose. When young *kibbutzniks* return from their required time in the military service, they must choose whether to become members of the *kibbutz* or leave. Only about 40 percent stay.

Yet, despite their small numbers, *kibbutzim* produce a third of all Israeli agricultural products and nearly 10 percent of all goods manufactured in the country. Combined, these constitute 12 percent of the gross national product. *Kibbutzim* are key to the country’s ability to introduce young people to the land. Jewish youth groups, colleges, and synagogues send their young people to experience Israel through a *kibbutz*. Non-Jewish groups, including evangelical Christian ones, also use the *kibbutz* as a means to introduce their young people to the land. These young people often volunteer their labor in exchange for room and board. During their off-hours, they are able to tour the country. Many have enjoyed the *kibbutz* experience so much they have made aliya and moved to Israel permanently as a result of these programs.

*Kibbutzim* are organized according to their social and religious characters. There are four federations: (1) Union of Collective Settlement (Ihud ha-Kevuzot ve-ha-Kibbutzim), (2) The National Kibbutz Movement (Ha-Kibbutz ha-Arzi-ha-Za’ir), (3) United Kibbutz Movement (Ha-Kibbutz ha-Me’uhad), and (4) The Religious Kibbutz (Ha-Kibbutz ha-Dati). These groups pool their resources and work together to accomplish mutually agreed-on goals.

Another type of community village found in Israel is called the *moshav*, begun as a compromise between a family-owned farm or business and a *kibbutz*. The first two *moshavim* were founded in 1921 by families who liked the *kibbutz* concept but wanted to keep the family together. The *moshav* became a viable alternative for some of the newer immigrants who felt threatened by the way *kibbutz* was operated. On *moshavim*, families pool their resources and cooperate in producing goods or crops, then distribute the profits among themselves.

Nearly ninety years have passed since the founding of the first *kibbutz*. If you lived on a *kibbutz*, you would probably say, “It is not an ideal society, but a society of ideals,” a place that offers security while demanding loyalty and diligence. Most would agree that it has proved to be a stable and reliable institution that has given *kibbutzniks* a family atmosphere and the satisfaction of knowing they have worked for the good of their country and their people.

Steve Herzig is the Director of North American Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
Few things are more destructive than a tornado. Its funnel-shaped wind can swirl up to 500 miles per hour, devastating everything in its path. The mere sight of the cloud is usually terrifying, and most people who have experienced tornadoes know they leave little time to prepare and few places to hide. In chapter 8, Hosea reveals that God’s judgment is like a tornado. Israel’s idolatry and immorality would bring judgment that would sweep the nation like a tornado, destroying everything in its path.

Predicted Invasion

God had stationed Hosea as a watchman over Israel to faithfully warn of impending judgment. He commanded Hosea,

Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come like an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law (v. 1).

The phrase house of the LORD refers not to the Temple in Jerusalem but to the northern tribes of Israel. Today cities have sirens to warn of an impending tornado or invasion. In biblical times, Israel blew a trumpet to signal the nation that danger was imminent.

Hosea alerted Israel to prepare for an invasion from the mighty Assyrian army. Soon the Assyrians would swoop down on Israel like eagles, snatching it as its prey. This image aptly symbolizes the Assyrians because their attacks were swift and brutal. God had raised up Assyria to judge Israel, directly fulfilling Moses’ prophecy: “The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth” (Dt. 28:49).

Israel had transgressed God’s covenant and His law (v. 1). This verse reiterates God’s first indictment against Israel (6:7). In the preceding seven chapters, Hosea detailed how Israel committed gross and abominable sins. Israel had numerous opportunities to repent; but she continuously sinned and rebelled against His love and mercy.

Hearing of judgment, Israel hypocritically cried, “My God, we know thee” (v. 2). The nation’s appeal was twofold: First, Israel claimed to be God’s people. Second, she claimed to know God. In essence, the nation was saying, “We are your people, God. So deliver us from the coming judgment.” Yet Israel’s immorality and idolatry proved, in fact, that she neither knew the Lord nor desired to practice God’s law (4:1, 6; 5:4).

So God ignored Israel’s plea for help. The nation had “cast off the thing that is good; the enemy shall pursue him” (v. 3). Israel had continually rejected God’s goodness,
mercy, and love. Consequently, God would not hear Israel’s plea. The Assyrian invasion was inevitable.

**Pronouncement of Iniquity**

**Civil Rebellion.** At this point, Hosea presents the list of indictments against Israel that precipitated the judgment of God. First, Israel had committed civil rebellion.

They have set up kings, but not by me; they have made princes, and I knew it not; of their silver and their gold have they made idols for themselves, that they may be cut off (v. 4).

Even in its revolt against King Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, Israel had failed to seek God’s guidance or approval. The ten tribes split from the southern kingdom of Judah without consulting Him. During the divided-kingdom period, not one of Israel’s kings was chosen by the will of God. Men in Israel schemed, slew their rivals, and set up rulers and princes whom God never approved.

**Corrupt Religious System.** Second, Israel had implemented a corrupt religious system. She had amassed gold and silver to construct golden calves and silver idols in Bethel and Dan and had instituted Baal worship, a direct violation of the second commandment (Ex. 20:4). The whole degrading, idolatrous practice was an offense to God and denied His sovereignty over Israel.

Jeroboam I had established calf worship at Dan and Bethel (1 Ki. 12:28–31), misleading the people to assume that God accepted such worship. God vented His anger: “Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them. How long will it be before they attain to innocence?” (v. 5). No evidence exists of calf worship in Samaria. Nevertheless, Hosea links calf worship in Bethel to the citizens of Samaria (10:5–6). The phrase Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off is better translated, “He [God] has rejected your calf, O Samaria.” Israel had rejected what was good and had turned to idols, so the Lord responded by rejecting Israel’s idols.

God’s anger burned against Israel’s idolatry. He asked how long it would be until they attained to innocence? (v. 5). No evidence exists of calf worship in Samaria. Nevertheless, Hosea links calf worship in Bethel to the citizens of Samaria (10:5–6). The phrase Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off is better translated, “He [God] has rejected your calf, O Samaria.” Israel had rejected what was good and had turned to idols, so the Lord responded by rejecting Israel’s idols.

Israel hoped to maintain her political power and prestige and expected Assyria to protect her from the judgment of God.

and captivity of both Judah and Israel to finally break the nation of idolatry.

Concerning the construction of an idol, Hosea said that “the workman made it; therefore, it is not God. But the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces” (v. 6). Israel was without excuse concerning idols, for she knew that her idols were man-made, not divine, and eventually would be smashed to pieces.

Hosea uses a metaphor of cause and effect to express the futility and emptiness of Israel’s idolatrous practices and the foolishness of her foreign policy. “For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind” (v. 7). Wind symbolizes futility and fickleness, which often turn into a whirlwind that brings destruction. Israel’s idolatry and foreign policy would result in a whirlwind of destruction from the Assyrian army.

Hosea continues with the sowing metaphor: “It hath no stalk; the bud shall yield no meal; if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up” (v. 7). Perhaps the seed planted would sprout, but there would be no stalk to hold the ear of corn. If a bud did appear, it would not produce an ear of corn to make meal. Moreover, even if a plant did produce grain, Israel’s labor would still be in vain because her enemy would take the grain for himself.

**Compromising Relationship.** Israel had entered a compromising relationship with Assyria and Egypt. Hosea said, “Israel is swallowed up; now shall they be among the nations like a vessel in which is no pleasure” (v. 8). Assyria swallowed up Israel in 733 B.C., made her a province, sapped her power, and drained her
prosperity by requiring the nation to pay tribute. Other neighboring nations considered Israel nothing but a cheap and worthless clay pot to be cast aside.

Hosea compared Israel’s alliance with Assyria to that of a wild donkey and a prostitute: “For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself; Ephraim hath hired lovers” (v. 9). Israel, in her stubborn self-will and independence, had embarked on a solitary course to carve out her own destiny without consulting God. Instead of being faithful to God (her husband), Israel prostituted herself to the Gentile nations by bribing the heathen Assyrians. In return, Israel hoped to maintain her political power and prestige and expected Assyria to protect her from the judgment of God. Usually a prostitute receives payment for her services, but Israel was so unwanted by the surrounding nations that she had to pay Assyria.

All of Israel’s attempts to protect herself from the punishment of God were futile. God said, “Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes” (v. 10).

God cut off any help they had sought from Assyria and Egypt and hemmed them in for judgment. They would sorrow because of the financial tribute they were required to pay to Assyria; but such tribute would be nothing compared to the judgment from God. Ironically, God used the “king of princes” (Assyria)—the very nation from whom Israel sought help—as His rod of correction.

Indeed, God’s judgment was justified because Israel had erected many altars to idols, particularly to the Canaanite fertility deity Baal. The altars Ephraim erected are said to be “altars . . . unto him to sin” (v. 11). With every altar it built, Israel multiplied its sin. Instead of proving its piety, each altar actually plunged the nation deeper and deeper into iniquity and guilt.

**People’s Indifference**

Israel was without excuse. God said, “I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing” (v. 12). Israel had the ceremonial, civil, and moral law that revealed how to walk before the Lord. It included thousands of directions, precepts, and prohibitions that were so explicit, comprehensive, and minute that Israel could not help but know what God demanded in true worship. Yet the Israelites treated the Law like an alien that had no place in their thoughts.

The priests multiplied sacrifices throughout the land, not to please God or expiate sin, but selfishly, to acquire personal gain. Such practices were offensive to God, and He totally rejected them. Hosea said, “but the LORD accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and judge their sins; they shall return to Egypt” (v. 13). The cup of Israel’s sin was full, and the time of her judgment had come. Egypt symbolizes exile, bondage, slavery, oppression, toil, and sorrow. The Israelites, of course, would not literally return to Egypt. But they would suffer the same plight and conditions they experienced in Egypt before their deliverance under Moses. Egypt represents the new exile and bondage Israel would endure under Assyria.

Hosea stated both the nature of Israel and Judah’s sin and the source of their suffering:

*For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fortified cities; but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour their palaces* (v. 14).

God was Israel’s salvation and security. How could she forget her Maker? Moreover, Moses had clearly warned the nation that if she forgot God, she would perish (Dt. 8:19). Israel became known as “the land of forgetfulness” (Ps. 88:12). In like manner, Judah also became infected with forgetfulness of God’s grace. Judah hoped its fortified cities would bring security from its enemies. Fortified cities symbolize a futile turning from trust in God to trust in one’s own self-sufficiency. God promised to devour the cities and palaces of Judah, and He did so in part when He used Sennacherib of Assyria to destroy all of Judah’s fortified cities except Jerusalem. Thus Israel experienced the definite fulfillment of what she was promised if she forgot God (Dt. 28:52).

Thousands of years later, Hosea still has a lesson for us today. Israel had not forgotten God intellectually but had neglected God spiritually. Her self-sufficient attitude resulted in national indifference, immorality, and idolatry. We, too, must remember that we not only reap what we sow, but we often reap more than we sow. And though the harvest may not come immediately, its arrival is inevitable.

*David M. Levy is the Director of Foreign Ministries for The Friends of Israel.*
Every now and then a story breaks that contradicts the notion that Jews and Palestinian Arabs could never live together in peace and mutual respect for one another. Recently, on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, a young Palestinian Arab and his family were enjoying a day at the beach with their two children. Omri Jadah, 24, was the oldest in a family of fourteen children. His wife, Kifiya, is expecting their third child soon.

A short distance from where the Jadahs were picnicking, members of a Jewish family were enjoying a swim. Suddenly, cries came from the water where six-year-old Gosha Leftov, from the Jewish family, was swimming. It was immediately obvious that the boy was having great difficulty keeping his head above water. Without hesitating, the young Palestinian ran into the water and made his way out to the child. Jadah successfully pushed the exhausted six-year-old into the arms of a cousin. Before he himself could reach safety, however, Omri Jadah was caught by a current and dragged back into deep water, where he drowned. Twenty minutes later, his body washed ashore.

When word of his heroism spread, an immediate outpouring of sympathy and gratitude came from the Israeli Jewish community. The Jerusalem Post, Israel’s oldest English-language daily newspaper, initiated a fund-raising campaign to raise $100,000 for the family. Contributions and phone calls flooded the office of the Post. Although Jadah had no national health insurance, the National Insurance Institute allotted the family a $750-per-month benefit with an increase scheduled when the baby is born.

Two Jewish schoolchildren expressed the sentiments of thousands of other Jewish people. In a letter sent to Kifiya Jadah, they wrote, “Our Mother read us the story, and we have decided to donate whatever we have. We know it is not much, but we hope it will help. When we say our prayers in school, we will mention you and your late husband."

Yes, many great issues remain between Israel and her neighbors. But all of us can learn that when the issues are reduced to two young families on a beach in the Galilee, there is neither Arab nor Jew, just an extremely personal, mutual struggle to survive. As a result, through the selfless act of one young father, a bond was established that will never be broken. Such bonds between Israelis and Palestinians at street level do exist; and peace negotiators on both sides of the street will do well to take note of it.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. William E. Sutter, Vice President
Jesus Christ and the Future Kingdom of God

(Part 11)

Since Israel rejected Jesus Christ and His offer of God’s theocratic Kingdom, the theocratic Kingdom was not established with the nation of Israel that existed at the time of Christ’s First Coming. Instead, its establishment has been postponed until the Jewish nation of His Second Coming will believe. This article examines two biblical evidences of that postponement.

Jesus Christ and the Throne of David

Biblical Declarations. Isaiah prophesied concerning the Messiah,

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever (Isa. 9:7).

The angel Gabriel announced that God will give Jesus Christ the throne of His ancestor David, that Jesus will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and that Jesus’ Kingdom will never end (Lk. 1:31–33).

The apostle Peter declared that God had sworn with an oath to David “that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne” (Acts 2:30).

These biblical declarations indicate that Christ’s Kingdom (the future theocratic Kingdom) will be present and functioning when He sits on the throne of David. They thereby imply that the future theocratic Kingdom will be established when Jesus Christ takes His seat on David’s throne. In light of this implication, to determine the time of the theocratic Kingdom’s establishment, we must discern the time of Christ’s taking His seat on David’s throne.

Did Christ take His seat on David’s throne when He ascended to heaven after His resurrection and sat on the right hand of God and God’s throne (Mk. 16:19; Heb. 12:2)? If so, then David’s throne is to be equated with God’s throne in heaven; and there is some sense in which the theocratic Kingdom was established at that time.

Or will Christ take His seat on David’s throne in conjunction with His Second Coming to earth after the Great Tribulation (Mt. 24:29–31)? If He will do so at that future time, then David’s throne is separate and distinct from God’s throne in heaven, and no part of the theocratic Kingdom has been or will be established until Christ’s Second Coming.

To determine which of these positions is correct, we must examine three biblical items.

The Description of the Throne in Heaven. Three facts should be noted concerning the throne in heaven. First, the Scriptures consistently describe it as God’s throne, indicating that it belongs to God the Father (Lam. 5:19; Mt. 5:34; 23:22; Acts 7:49; Heb. 8:1; 12:2; Rev. 7:15; 12:5; 14:5). Second, the Bible signifies that God’s throne is located in the...
heavenly realm (Ps. 11:4; 103:19; Heb. 8:1). In fact, the Scriptures declare that heaven is God’s throne (Isa. 66:1; Mt. 5:34; 23:22; Acts 7:49). Third, the Bible never calls God’s throne in heaven “the throne of David.”

The Distinctiveness of the Throne of David. Several factors indicate that David’s throne is separate and distinct from God’s throne in heaven.

First, several descendants of David have sat on his throne, but only one of his descendants ever sits on the right hand of God’s throne in heaven. That descendant is Jesus Christ (Ps. 110:1; Heb. 8:1; 12:2).

Second, David’s throne was not established before his lifetime (2 Sam. 7:16–17). By contrast, since God has always ruled over His creation, His throne in heaven was established long before David’s throne (Ps. 93:1–2).

Third, since God’s throne in heaven was established long before David’s throne and since God’s throne was established forever (Lam. 5:19), then it was not necessary for God to promise to establish David’s throne forever (2 Sam. 7:16) if they are the same throne.

Fourth, David’s throne was on the earth, not in heaven. David and his descendants who sat on his throne exercised an earthly, ruling authority. They never exercised ruling authority in or from heaven. By contrast, as noted earlier, the Bible indicates that God’s throne is in heaven.

Fifth, the Bible’s consistent description of David’s throne indicates that it belongs to David. When God mentioned David’s throne to others, He referred to it as “his throne” (Ps. 89:29, 36; Jer. 33:21), “David’s throne” (Jer. 13:13), and “the throne of David” (Jer. 17:25; 22:2, 4, 30). By contrast, the Scriptures’ consistent description of the throne in heaven indicates that it belongs to God the Father.

The Distinctiveness of Christ’s Throne. Several things indicate that when the future theocratic Kingdom is established and Jesus rules over it, the throne on which He sits is separate and distinct from God’s throne in heaven.

First, several decades after Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, He made the following statement in Revelation 3:21: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Christ drew a clear distinction between His throne (where He and His overcomers will sit in the future) and the throne of God in heaven (where He presently sits with His Father).

Second, God the Father’s declaration to His Son, Jesus Christ, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever” (Ps. 45:6; Heb. 1:8) indicates that God recognizes a throne that belongs to Christ as separate and distinct from the throne that belongs to God in heaven.

These distinctions by Christ and God militate against Christ’s throne and the throne of God in heaven being the same throne. Since it is the throne of David that God promised to give to Jesus Christ (Lk. 1:31–32), then Christ’s throne must be David’s throne. Since Christ’s throne must be David’s throne and since Christ’s throne is separate and distinct from God’s throne in heaven, then David’s throne must be separate and distinct from God’s throne in heaven.

Conclusion. In light of the description of the throne in heaven, the distinctiveness of the throne of David, and the distinctiveness of Christ’s throne, the following conclusions can be drawn: First, the throne of David is not equatable with the throne of God in heaven. Second, since the throne of David is not equatable with God’s throne in heaven, when Jesus Christ ascended to heaven after His resurrection He did not take His seat on David’s throne. Instead, He sat down on the right hand of God’s throne. Third, the fact that Christ has continued to sit on the right hand of God’s throne in heaven to this present time
indicates that He has not yet taken His seat on David’s throne. Fourth, since the future theocratic Kingdom will be established when Jesus Christ takes His seat on David’s throne and, since He has not yet done so, then no part of the theocratic Kingdom has been established yet.

Jesus Christ and the Sealed Scroll of Revelation 5

In an earlier article concerning Jesus Christ and the future Kingdom of God, we examined the relationship of Christ to the sealed scroll of Revelation 5. There we noted the following truths: As a result of the first Adam joining Satan’s revolt against God, mankind temporarily lost its God-given tenant possession of the earth. In addition, the original theocratic Kingdom of God was lost from the earth. Satan usurped the rule of the world system away from God and has continued to dominate it ever since. To fulfill His purpose for history, God must crush Satan by ridding the earth of him and his world-system rule; and then He must restore His theocratic-Kingdom rule to this earth before earth’s history ends.

God revealed that Jesus Christ, as the last Adam and mankind’s Kinsman-Redeemer, will do the following three things: (1) redeem mankind’s lost tenant possession of the earth, (2) crush Satan, and (3) establish the future theocratic Kingdom (when tenant possession will be restored to mankind).

Through the shedding of His blood on the cross, Christ paid the price to redeem mankind’s inheritance of the earth. At that time, a scroll deed of purchase for that inheritance was made. The scroll was legal evidence that Christ paid the redemption price and, therefore, had the right to do two things—rid the earth of Satan and his world-system rule and establish the future theocratic Kingdom.

The scroll was sealed with seven seals and placed in God’s right hand in heaven (Rev. 5:1—6:17; 8:1). Not until then will Christ rid the earth of Satan and his rule and establish the future theocratic Kingdom.

This relationship of Jesus Christ to the sealed scroll of Revelation 5 indicates that (1) Christ did not establish the theocratic Kingdom of God after He ascended to heaven and sat at the right hand of God and God’s throne, and (2) He will not establish it until His Second Coming to earth.

Conclusion

The relationships of Jesus Christ to the throne of David and the sealed scroll of Revelation 5 indicate that the theocratic Kingdom was not established with the nation of Israel that existed at Christ’s First Coming. Instead, its establishment has been postponed until His Second Coming. The next article will examine more evidences of that postponement.

Renald E. Showers is a National Ministries Representative for The Friends of Israel.
Dr. Aaron Grossman of Chicago, Ill., was shocked to discover that the Associated Press had supplied newspapers with a photograph of his badly beaten son and had identified him as a Palestinian being brutalized by Israeli police.

After seeing the photograph in The New York Times, Dr. Grossman sent the following letter to the paper:

“Regarding your picture on page A5 (Sept.30) of the Israeli soldier and the Palestinian on the Temple Mount—that Palestinian is actually my son, Tuvia Grossman, a Jewish student from Chicago. He and two of his friends were pulled from their taxicab while traveling in Jerusalem, by a mob of Palestinian Arabs and were severely beaten and stabbed. That picture could not have been taken on the Temple Mount because there are no gas stations on the Temple Mount and certainly none with Hebrew lettering, like the one clearly seen behind the Israeli soldier attempting to protect my son from the mob.”

Tuvia Grossman was on his way to the Western Wall when attacked. He was so severely wounded he had to be hospitalized.

Palestinians beat him on the head with a rock and stabbed him in the leg. He ran away with a knife in his leg, “and I was able to make it up the hill where there were soldiers by the gas station and they took care of me,” he told Arutz-7, an Israeli newspaper.

“That policeman was yelling at the Arabs to back off,” Tuvia told the paper, “and was protecting me from them—so to change it around and to say that he was beating me, that’s just total distortion, and the world must be notified about how this is not true—the Jews are the ones suffering at the hands of the Arabs.”

Arutz-7 reported that the Times published a correction, but identified Grossman only as an American, not as a Jew. And it incorrectly identified the site of the attack as “Jerusalem’s Old City,” when, in fact, it was an Arab-populated neighborhood of Jerusalem, not in the Old City.

An Associated Press spokesman told Arutz-7 that it was looking into the matter.

According to reports in The Jerusalem Post, a Paris synagogue was firebombed and nearly 100 anti-Semitic incidents were reported in France. In Germany a wave of Jewish hatred has prompted attacks on Jewish sites and a demonstration by about 100 Palestinians and Lebanese.

In London, a yeshiva student was stabbed more than twenty times in the chest, face, arms, and legs while riding a bus. The Post said the incident followed a spate of attacks on synagogues throughout Britain and “is linked to the violent rhetoric of Islamic extremists,” who have mounted daily demonstrations near the Israeli Embassy in London’s upscale Kensington shopping district and at university campuses throughout Britain.

Father to AP: He’s my son, and he’s Jewish

Anti-Semitism up around the world

Firebombings, anti-Jewish demonstrations, graffiti, and flagrant anti-Semitism of all kinds have erupted in Europe and Australia since the Middle East crisis escalated in October.

Wallenberg coworker honored in Israel

The Jerusalem Post—Per Anger, a Swedish diplomat who took part in the desperate attempt to save Hungarian Jewry in 1944, has been rewarded with honorary citizenship by the State of Israel.

Together, Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg and Anger saved as many as 100,000 Jews, a figure unmatched by any other rescuer.

Anger risked his life to issue provisional passports and phony documents to Jews destined for extermination. Wallenberg set up thirty-two safe houses in Budapest, each flying the Swedish flag and ultimately housing more than 20,000 Jews. Wallenberg and Anger routinely pulled Jews out of line as they were herded together for deportation, shoving the life-saving passes into their hands. More than once they jumped aboard the crowded death trains and dragged Jewish people off.

A TREE for A LOVED ONE

Did you know there’s a very special way you can express your condolences, thanks, or respect for someone? For only $10 per tree, you can have trees planted in The Friends of Israel Forest in Jerusalem. You’ll receive a beautiful certificate that you can send as a tangible expression of your gift. Won’t you take this opportunity to provide a living memorial for a family member, friend, or associate? You may even wish to plant one or more trees in their honor or on your own behalf. It is a thoughtful and meaningful way to say “I care,” and you will share in helping to make the desert of Israel bloom.
Each day, we as Christians are given the opportunity to glorify God. Using our time well, exercising the gifts the Holy Spirit has given us, and making wise use of the finances God has entrusted to us are just a few of the many ways in which we can honor Him.

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

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

If you would like to have a will written but don’t know where to start, let us help. We would like to send you our informative brochure, How to Make a Will That Works, at no cost and without obligation. It is our way of helping you become a wise steward over all that the Lord has entrusted to you. To receive How to Make a Will That Works, simply check the appropriate box on the envelope in this magazine, or write to Tom Geoghan at The Friends of Israel, P.O. Box 33, Israel My Glory, P.O. Drawer 999, Olathe, KS 66061.

Lorna Simcox is Senior Editor for The Friends of Israel.
We have a saying in Israel: Curses, like chickens, come home to roost. But a curse cannot rest where a blessing has been pronounced. Many rabbis today are making new laws, and they claim these laws are holy and blessed. Yet each rabbi belongs to a different faction or political party (of which we have many here), and the parties are not overly friendly toward one another.

I often witness among the Hasidim (ultra-Orthodox) because it is written to “bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate...and persecute you” (Mt. 5:44). The Hasidim make much trouble for us because we believe in Christ. When I come among them, I feel like I am back in the army, clearing the minefields. Nevertheless, God gives me much courage to bring them the message of salvation despite the fact that they have this great intolerance.

Recently some of these Hasidim asked their rabbi for advice. In the morning in the synagogue, the rabbi read from Psalm 109:5–14, which speaks of cursing one’s enemies. The people responded with a hearty “Amen.” But these people did not need to learn about curses and hatred. They needed to learn about God’s love.

So I told them that everyone is a sinner. But what does God say? I read to them from Jeremiah 31:33–35 where God promises, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (v. 34). I asked them if they knew what is written in the Ten Commandments, especially in Leviticus 19:17 where God says, “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart.”

They were listening to me with great suspicion, wondering who I was. I cannot go to their places with a loud voice, shouting, “I believe in Jesus Christ!” It is too dangerous. Therefore, I come only with what is written about Christ in the Bible, particularly in the prophets.

So they began to discuss things with me. They repeated many commentaries, as their rabbis do. This took a long time. It seemed to me as though they were dancing around a poisonous snake, not knowing how to run away.

“What do you say to this?” they finally asked me.

“I never use commentaries, as your teachers do,” I said. I gave them the Bible and had them read Isaiah 53. The rabbis forbid the reading of this chapter.

“Who is your rabbi?” they asked.

“In which yeshiva did you study?”

“My study,” I replied, “is by faith. I have believed what is written here and believe that there is no other way to come to God but this way. About whom is it written here: ’and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all’” (v. 6)?

They asked me again, “What do you think? Who was this one?”
But I did not tell them. Instead I said, “Read it again. Read the whole chapter and think about it. If this is difficult for you, ask your rabbis, your teachers. I am sure you will receive the right answer, providing they do not go to their commentaries.”

A few minutes later, a rabbi arrived. He seemed to be very sure of himself. He asked his pupils what they were discussing. So they said, “We are speaking about this prophecy in Isaiah 53.”

“Are you blind?” the rabbi asked, greatly upset. “Are you crazy! Don’t you see that this one wants to make you Christians?”

The pupils were very surprised and suddenly became very frightened. “But we only read from this chapter in Isaiah and spoke about it,” they explained.

Then the rabbi turned to me. “Are you a missionary? Did you come here to brainwash my students?”

“I came here,” I said, “because it is written in Isaiah 43:10, ‘Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen.’ And it is written in Ezekiel 33:7–11 that we are to warn people who are not walking down the right path. It is my duty to come here and not to run away, as the prophet Jonah did.”

Please pray for these students. It is important that they learn to think for themselves and to read the Word of God instead of reading commentaries and listening only to their rabbis. Then they will know the truth about Jesus. God blesses His Word. God’s Word is truth, and they need the truth so they can be set free.