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ISRAEL MY GLORY is the bimonthly publication of The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc., an independent, Bible-believing faith mission committed to evangelism, education, and edification for more than 60 years.
In the heyday of the theological stampede toward liberalism, radical notions fluttered in the wind like puffs from a seedy dandelion. Sin, human depravity, judgment, and hell were all subjects banished from “liberated” pulpits and the halls of theological higher learning. The so-called inherent goodness of man and the divine seed in all of us made up the substance of the modern, pop-religious, mainline denominational culture. Historic biblical orthodoxy became little more than a laughing matter and the “social gospel” was heralded as the high road to the coming utopia.

Now, tragically, we know better. Evil inhabits this world of ours—a kind of evil that is not bringing mankind into the light but benightening us with a darkness we have not witnessed since the Führer and his demonic minions goose-stepped across the stage of human history more than half a century ago. This great evil is embodied in the incitement to kill those it deems “infidels”; and what’s worse, it kills in the name of its god.

The phenomenon, of course, is not new in the history of this planet. But it does appeal to the basest of all elements of the depraved human nature in this so-called age of enlightenment. And it does provide concrete evidence that Satan and his dupes are alive and sick on planet Earth.

Clearly before us now is the ultimate conflict of civilizations: the conflict between darkness and light, good and evil, God and the evil one. And though our liberal contemporaries may attempt to raise their weak arguments to the contrary, the evidence is on the table. There is an insidious, organized campaign to degrade and destroy everything related to Judeo-Christian societies and Western democracy. It is, as we are often reminded, a war the likes of which we in the Western world have not yet experienced in our lifetimes. It is also emblematic of the great issues of the last days.

Sadly, while a most vicious campaign of incitement attacks everything Christians and Jewish people revere, major elements in the Christian camp are leaving the field. Increasingly, we are hearing the voices of appeasement coming from “Christian leaders” who espouse an age of benign tolerance.

“We must, in the modern religious correctness of this new age, respect and embrace all religions as worthy of acceptance on their own terms,” they say. “There is, therefore, no basis for conflict. We must, we are admonished,” they say, “in the name of Christian civility, to treat all faiths, cults, and ‘isms’ as equal in value to our own.”

In view of this new philosophy of ministry, evangelism is rapidly being repudiated and rejected as a relic of the past. To be a true evangelical Christian today is equated with being an intolerant, religious bigot.

On the surface, it is a rather intriguing turn of events. In light of Scripture, however, the change is something we should well have anticipated. We are witnessing a fight to the finish. It is the forces of
democracy, freedom, and enlightenment against the powers of intolerance, suppression, and mental and moral enslavement. But the real fight, the one that should vitally concern Christians, is the fight for the gospel and the truth of God’s Word.

The forces of brutality and incitement to evil are equally committed to suppressing truth and spiritual liberty. To intimidate Christians into a state of evangelistic inertia is for them a major triumph. The only viable antidote to this insidious evil is not appeasement and accommodation. It is the bold and forthright proclamation of the gospel of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

We have been heartened by the ground swell of patriotic fervor and prayer for our nation and its leaders, which has risen in the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11. Yet to arise, however, is an equal sense of commitment to proclaim the gospel.

For several decades now, evangelical Christians in America have been distracted. Good times, peace, and prosperity have obscured our vision. Consequently, many of us began to feel that our tranquil state of life was the norm. Personal relationships and how to be secure, well-adjusted individuals in the here and now became much-sought-after, almost obsessive, goals in life. Seminars, sermons, upscale books on the better life and how to attain it became the fashion of the day.

But since September, Christians have been placed in shock therapy. As the Jewish people did in centuries past, we stand today in the cross hairs. An evil tide intends to destroy everything we believe and revere. To say we are involved in a clash of civilizations is by no means an overstatement. It is, like it or not, a fact of life. The issue is whether we will awaken and commit ourselves to proclaiming the gospel and obeying the Lord’s commission or throw in the towel. The choice is ours.

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USE THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE TO ORDER.
by Elwood McQuaid

Little Action on the Third Front

On the dreadful morning of September 11, 2001, America entered a new phase in her history—one she never before encountered or even imagined. We knew from past experience that someday terrorism in some form would visit our shores. After all, the Oklahoma City bombing and assorted minor acts of terror served notice that, sooner or later, something would happen here. We accepted that knowledge in theory. Functionally, however, virtually no one believed such horror could come so suddenly or on such an unimaginably devastating scale. The fact of the matter was that we never took the danger we faced as a nation seriously. U.S. airport security, which is irritatingly stringent in other countries, such as Israel, was slipshod to the point of virtual nonexistence. Then, in a few awful moments, as thousands were dying, America heard the warning bell.

All or Nothing

It was never a matter of not being forewarned. For years radical Muslim fanatics around the world have been crying “Death to America” and promising repeatedly to destroy the “Great Satan” of America and its surrogate in the Middle East, the “Little Satan,” Israel. We now know their threats were not just idle rants or rhetoric designed to vent their “righteous” rage and assuage the frustration of the downtrodden masses they themselves were shamelessly exploiting. Calls for jihad (holy war) constantly emanated from their mosques and swelled up from their streets.

Yet, when explaining the ominous Arabic word to English-speaking
audiences, they claimed that *jihad* refers only to an “intellectual” struggle and debate between Western ideals and the benevolent dictums of Islam. We have learned the hard way what the radical, fundamental Islamic mind believes *jihad* is really all about. It is, in fact, a despicable instrument of terror used in bloody wars of aggression. Radical Islam sees democracy, freedom of religion, individual personal rights, and national liberties as corrupting atrocities. Western women, liberated in the Judeo-Christian culture, pose an equally galling offense.

Mullahs in such places as Iran, the Sudan, and other extremist Islamic regimes are obsessed with confining their wards in the religious ghettos of the Dark Ages. Consequently, one of their greatest fears is today’s new age of technology, especially the information explosion that is slowly infiltrating their fiefdoms.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu once said that a great, long-term hope for eventual progress toward peace in the Middle East would be the invasion of the satellite dish and modern global communications into repressive Islamic regimes. It is only a matter of time, he postulated, before modern communication will affect even the most backward nations. Perhaps when information-starved individuals finally have the opportunity to see what freedom can bring to their lives, they will demand change.

So the battle has been joined. And make no mistake, the war against terrorism is a fight to the finish. These people mean to win, and they have no intention of quitting until they are victorious or vanquished.

### War on Two Fronts

Since the early 1800s, when young Jewish pioneers began moving back to their ancient homeland, they have been forced to fight for their survival. Their return brought them into malaria-infested swamps that had been duly purchased from absentee Muslim landholders. They had no protection or sponsorship from the United States of America; and their great offense, according to their intractable adversaries, was to establish an “infidel” presence in a portion of the Middle East that, until their arrival, the Arabs cared little for and paid scant attention to. Of course, there was always the irri-

tant of Judaism—an infidel religion to doctrinaire Muslims.

But these Jewish immigrants brought yet another equally offensive element to the minds of many of the ruling regional sheiks. They brought a new way of life and, in so doing, established a bastion of democracy and freedom unknown and unwelcome in the feudal world of scowling monarchs of the desert. Jews built bustling cities, created efficient farms and industries, set a standard for decent housing and jobs—lots of jobs. What the Osama bin Ladens and Yasser Arafats of the world never mention is that thousands of Arabs voluntarily came to Israel to find work to sustain their families. Each day these people labored shoulder to shoulder with their Jewish neighbors. The new and vastly better life in the modern State of Israel meant a new world for the Arab people of the region.

For these reasons, among others, Israel was marked for destruction. The goal became to drive her into the sea. At first, Israel stood alone on the hit list of radical religious fanatics. But now she has been joined by another: the United States of America.

Contrary to a growing misconception, the reason for the attacks on the United States is not Israel. Despite the blather of media pund-

ts, Arab and otherwise, terrorists did not attack America because of Israel. If America did not exist, Israel still would be marked for destruction. And if Israel did not exist, America would stand alone on the radical Islamic hit list. The real issue is what these countries represent: freedom. And that concept is intolerable to the world of imperial Islam.

Since the catastrophes in New York, Washington, D.C., and the fields of Pennsylvania, Osama bin Laden and his ilk have made it clear their mission is to create, by whatever heinous and violent means necessary, a new world order—an international, Islamic world
order—where Islamic law, dress, strictures, and insufferable subjugation will prevail. That is their goal. Like it or not, we are involved in a long-term, vicious war for the survival of our way of life. And to turn away from our alliance with Israel will not change the equation one iota.

The Third Front

Almost totally ignored in this new war is the third front. It is here that so many of the issues confronting us are clarified. This third front is Christianity. The wanton attacks on Christians in many parts of the world are orchestrated by the same alliance of terror cells waging war against America and Israel. Believers are being persecuted and slaughtered in Indonesia, Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria, the Middle East, Philippines, Afghanistan, and the list goes on. These people are not Americans or even Israelis. They are being killed as enemies solely because they are Christians. This undeniable fact belies the folly that America and Israel are the reasons for the Islamic jihad. No, it is quite the contrary. Muslim rage at peaceful and peace-loving followers of Christ reveals a spiritual struggle that is intensifying by the day.

To state that a direct link exists between these fanatical Islamic elements and Osama bin Laden and his terror network is not a flight of fancy. Recently a secular international news agency reported a direct tie between bin Laden and the Lasker Jihad in Indonesia. Lasker Jihad is the Muslim extremist organization that has committed unspeakable atrocities against Christians in the Maluku Islands.

It is difficult to explain why the majority of Western leaders fail to attack the problem of Christian persecution in the world. One reason, we suspect, is their reticence to offend the Muslim countries that hold the keys to Western access to oil. But perhaps the overriding reason is the one we consistently hear from Western diplomats: We don’t want this conflict to have the appearance of a religious holy war—namely, Christianity versus Islam. For President George W. Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, it is not a religious war. In the eyes of radical Islamists, however, it is a religious holy war to be waged on a global scale. From the outset, they have made their motivations and intentions exceedingly clear. This conflict, as those of ancient days, is about the triumph of Islam over the infidels, namely, Christians and Jews. Radical Islamics have thrown down the gauntlet, and we find ourselves forced to pick it up.

Mainline Islamic people in the Western world keep assuring us that Islam is a peace-loving religion. For the majority of Muslims, this may be true. However, even they are saddled with an element that is calling into question the entire Islamic religion by declaring itself the only true adherent to the faith. Therefore, if mainstream Muslims want to separate themselves from this radical killer-element, they must declare themselves and stand unequivocally on the side of the nations that are providing all of the benefits of Western society for them and their families. They must vigorously denounce terrorism and help catch and incarcerate the radicals, who are a blight on their people. In light of the present situation, America and the Free World can expect no less.

Christians are not waging war on Muslims. Israel and the Jewish people are not making war on the followers of Allah and the prophet. And the vast majority of Islamic people, according to their own words, have no desire to enter a holy war with Christians and Jews. This being true, it should be possible to create a united front to extract the fanatical tares that are attempting to overtake a religion and use it as a force for incitement, aggression, and a license to kill.

We must accept the fact that America, Israel, and the Free World have entered a protracted struggle; and there is no choice but to see it through to a satisfactory conclusion. The battle will require an international force of will, tenacity, and a high degree of discipline. No matter what forces are brought to bear, we must never become guilty of discriminating against, persecuting, or physically injuring people based on their faiths, lifestyles, or methods of worship. Such action is un-American and, most assuredly, unchristian. Yet it is equally morally unconscionable for national and spiritual leaders to stand by and tolerate being done to Christians in other parts of the world what we will not countenance in our own land.

There are, indeed, three fronts in this conflict. The Christian front is as much a part of the war on terrorism as either of the others. This war will never be won unless Christians, too, are assured that we will be able to live tranquil lives, free of the terror that comes in the night via fanatics who believe they have the right and duty to kill us in the name of their god and religion.

Elwood McQuaid is editor-in-chief for The Friends of Israel.
Scripture teaches that God purposed and planned the incarnation before the foundation of the world (1 Pet.1:20; Heb.10:5). It even was foretold in the Old Testament. Isaiah 9:6 states that “a child” (Messiah) would be born, a reference to His humanity; but it also states, “a son is given,” suggesting His purpose and divinity. Further more, this verse says this child will be called “The Mighty God” and “The Everlasting Father.”

When Jesus Christ came to Earth to dwell among men, the greatest onetime event in all history finally occurred—the manifestation of God in the flesh. Jesus, the eternal second person of the triune God, took on Himself humanity (Jn.1:1, 14). Incarnation is the term used to convey this essential Christian doctrine, which has at its core the fact that God so loves us that He condescended to become one of us so He could do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
—Charles Wesley

Scripture is clear that He came “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3, italics added).

The question often arises, Why would God take on the frailty of human flesh and dwell among men? The Bible asserts three major purposes for the incarnation.

The Incarnation: Why Would God Do Such a Thing?

To Redeem Sinners
(Jn. 6:38–40)

Remarkably, God wanted to identify with humanity in order to
provide an effective sacrifice for our sin. A poet once said, “He forsook the courts of everlasting day and took with us a house of darksome clay.” Redemption was the divine reason for the incarnation. Adam and Eve’s transgression in the Garden of Eden doomed mankind with an active sin nature (Eph. 2:1–3) and severed our relationship with God. Then, to add more misery to man’s hopeless predicament, Scripture states that the payment for sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Whether the world knew it or not, it desperately needed a Savior.

In Old Testament times, animal sacrifices served as short-term solutions. However, something far better and permanent was needed. God became flesh so He could die a physical death as the final sacrifice for our sins. Because Jesus is God, His onetime death and resurrection were sufficient to pay for the sins of all humanity (Heb. 10:1–9), “once for all” (Heb. 10:10). As Jesus said, “If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came, not to judge the world but to save the world” (Jn. 12:47).

Paul, the former rabbi of Tarsus, left no doubt as to the intent of the incarnation: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). God became a man to redeem lost sinners. An old hymn by Cecil F. Alexander aptly reflects this sentiment:

There was no other good enough To pay the price of sin; He, only, could unlock the gates Of heaven and let us in.

To Regenerate Sinners (Jn. 10:10)

During World War II, a pilot on a bombing mission in the South Pacific got lost and could not find his aircraft carrier. His plane was low on fuel; and he knew the crew would have to land on one of the islands that dotted the ocean, many of which were inhabited by cannibals. The pilot was desperate. As they neared an island, the navigator called out, “We’re all right; there’s a church down there. I see a cross on the steeple!” Later, when remembering how relieved he was to have seen the church, the pilot became a Christian.

The incarnation proves that God does not hide Himself, hoping people will find Him. Rather, He is the God of revelation, who has made Himself known through Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1–2).

The navigator knew the church meant that chances were good the inhabitants no longer were cannibals and would be governed by biblical principles. This account illustrates the second purpose for the incarnation: to regenerate sinners and destroy the Devil’s influence on mankind (1 Jn. 3:2).

This world is governed by the powers of darkness (Jn. 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 2:2; 6:12; Col. 1:13). The incarnation challenged Satan in his own arena:

Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, And deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2:14–15).

Since God incarnate took the initiative to redeem us back to Himself—to purchase us out of Satan’s clutches—He also had the prerogative to bestow His holy nature on those who believe and are saved. To be regenerated means a whole new life, one that reflects the image of God and godliness. God, having become flesh, made it possible for sinful people to live “abundant” lives (Jn. 10:10), unfettered by sin and its awful consequences.

Lew Wallace was a famous American Union Civil War general and literary genius. He and his famous ungodly friend, Robert Ingersoll, once agreed to write a book that would forever destroy the “myth” of Christianity—the main “myth” being that Jesus was God in the flesh. For two years, Wallace gathered information from the leading libraries of Europe and America. He got no further than chapter two when he suddenly found himself on his knees, crying out, “My Lord, and my God.” He had found his evidence, and it overwhelmingly and conclusively supported the deity of Christ. He could no longer deny that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. So Wallace abandoned his project and became a Christian. Later he wrote one of the finest novels ever written concerning the time of Christ, Ben Hur.

Only the incarnation can make possible such a change and enable sinful people to live God-filled,
God-centered lives. Scripture states that God “hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling . . . hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:9–10). God became flesh to instill a godly nature into sinful man and crush the Devil’s authority over humanity.

To Reveal the True and Personal God (Jn. 14:9)

The Bible says God created man in His image and likeness (Gen. 1:26). Yet many people probably would agree with the statement, “We created God in our own image and likeness.” The Greek philosopher Aristotle felt that way: “Men create gods in their own image, not only with regard to their form, but with regard to their mode of life.”

People, by nature, are spiritual beings. Human history reveals their quest to know God; but they often have been misled and confused, worshiping “gods” of their own invention. The Assyrian and Babylonian gods were barbaric and brutal. In contrast, the many Greek gods, such as Zeus and Jupiter, were whimsical, often portrayed as constantly quarreling with one another. Mars, Rome’s harsh war god, incited the soldiery to savagery. How sad to think of the countless offerings of one kind or another that were made to appease those neurotic, false deities of the ancient world.

Even today, the personal God of Scripture is still unknown in many societies. Perhaps Albert Einstein spoke for all skeptics when he said, “The idea of a personal God is an anthropological concept which I am unable to take seriously.” If only he and others knew that God designed the incarnation for intimacy, so He could clearly reveal His loving and caring character. The incarnation proves that God does not hide Himself, hoping people will find Him. Rather, He is the God of revelation, who has made Himself known through Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1–2).

Failure to appreciate the significance of the incarnation has caused many people to customize their ideas about Jesus. Former Soviet dictator Mikhail Gorbachev reduced Jesus to “the first socialist, the first to seek a better life for mankind.” People just find it difficult to accept that a Jewish carpenter from a small village could actually be the Creator of the universe. But when a disciple of Jesus said, “show us the Father,” Jesus responded, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (Jn. 14:8–9). The incarnation was to bring light to those who abide in the darkness of their own notions about God (Jn. 12:46).

Jesus told Pontius Pilate, “for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (Jn. 18:37)—the truth being that God of the Old Testament came in the flesh to redeem humanity. Yet many people will continue to refuse to worship Him.

The humanity of Jesus the Christ does not mean that He was less than fully God. He was not part man, part God. He was not God disguised as a man. The incarnation does not mean that His Godhood mixed with His manhood to make Him a strange type of third being. The fundamental position of faith is that Jesus the Messiah was wholly God and wholly man and that He came to redeem and regenerate sinners and to reveal the true God.

An unknown author put the importance of the incarnation this way:

“If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an economist. Had our greatest need been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer. But our greatest need was forgiveness and salvation, so God sent Himself through the incarnation and provided us a Savior.”

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16).

As Jesus walked through the Temple during Hanukkah, some religious leaders demanded He state plainly if He was the Messiah—the Christ. Part of Jesus’ response was, “I and my Father are one” (Jn. 10:30). They did not misconstrue what Jesus was saying about Himself, namely, that He was God. The Law was clear. It demanded death for anyone claiming deity. So they “took up stones” to stone him (Jn. 10:31).

Reaction to the incarnation has not changed in 2,000 years. Some still respond in rock-tossing rage at the idea that Jesus is God in the flesh. Not much can be said for those determined to deny the evidence of Scripture. On the other hand, those who truly understand why God Almighty would condescend to become flesh have accepted Him as their personal Redeemer. They alone have experienced the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit in their lives, can say confidently they know the true and living God of the Bible, and can give whole-hearted devotion and praise to the incarnate God—Jesus Christ.

Peter Colón is the Southeastern States director for The Friends of Israel.
The “waiting ones,” a small group of people in a tiny and oppressed nation, watched for Him. For 1,500 years, others like them had waited for a coming Deliverer; yet He had not come. One of those waiting at the Temple had been promised by God “that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ [Messiah]” (Lk 2:26). Taking the small infant in his arms, old Simeon prayed, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, . . . For mine eyes have seen thy salvation” (Lk. 2:29–30).

Another, a widow of great age, after seeing the Child, “spoke of him to all those who looked for redemption” (Lk. 2:38). Not all who were waiting, however, were old. In the nearby Migdal Eder, where He was to be revealed, lay flocks of sacrificial Temple sheep tended by shepherds who could not avoid thinking of His coming. And not all of these “waiting ones” were Jewish, for Gentiles—wise men from the East—followed the sign of the Jewish King-Messiah to the tiny child in Bethlehem. Thirty years later, John the Baptist waited. For him it was a matter of life and death. He was captive in a Roman jail, just as his nation of Israel was captive to Roman domination. He, along with many others, looked for national deliverance such as the nation had experienced through Moses. Seeking assurance, John and his disciples asked Jesus of Nazareth, “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?” (Mt. 11:3).

Even today, Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin looks for a coming Messiah who will “bring about the political and spiritual redemption of the people Israel through the ingathering of the Jews to their ancestral home of Eretz Yisrael and the restoration of Jerusalem to its spiritual glory.” Unlike “the waiting ones” who wait no more, he, along with many others, still awaits the one who will accomplish “what the Messiah was supposed to accomplish.” Yet more
than 456 specific Old Testament Messianic prophecies tell us how to recognize the Messiah and show us if He has come or if “we look for another.”

**Ancestry of the Coming Messiah**

Ancient Jewish writings derive the Messiah’s ancestry (a son of the sons of Jesse) from Isaiah’s prophecy: “And there shall come forth a rod [twig] out of the stem [stump] of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots” (Isa. 11:1). Isaiah wrote this section during a very difficult period in Israel’s history (739 B.C. to approximately 692 B.C.). By 701 B.C., the Assyrian army under Sennacherib already had conquered the northern kingdom and was threatening the southern kingdom. Isaiah likened God’s miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army (Isa. 10:33–34) to a man hewing down a mighty tree with an ax (2 Ki. 19:35–37; 2 Chr. 32:21; Isa. 37:36–38). This event prefigures Israel’s ultimate deliverance from all its enemies by the “ax” of the Messiah against the strong “tree” of Israel’s foes.

Surprisingly, Isaiah links the Messiah’s ancestry to Jesse rather than to King David or Nahshon, chief of the tribe of Judah during Moses’ day. In Isaiah’s day, Nahshon’s once-noble line had become a mere tree stem, or stump. David’s enemies often insulted him by calling him the “son of Jesse” rather than “son of Nahshon” (1 Sam. 20:27, 30; 22:7; 25:10; 2 Sam. 20:1). Since many expected the Messiah to come from a leading or wealthy family or from a powerful leader, they would have been shocked to think of Messiah as a “rod” of humble ancestry. Yet from the insignificant “root” of Jesse would come the mighty Messiah-Deliverer.

On his deathbed, the great patriarch Jacob prophesied of this “rod” and the “last days” (Gen. 49:1). Blessing his son Judah, Jacob declared,

> The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be (Gen. 49:10).

This early Messianic prophecy declared the ruling authority (“the scepter”) of the last days to be Shiloh. Scholars interpret Shiloh many ways, but the best meaning seems to be “rest giver.” It rest includes the reunification of Judah and Israel and an end to their enemies:

> There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth” (Num. 24:17).

These are just a sample of the many prophecies indicating that the Messiah will be the preeminent King of a united Israel in the last days. Then He will bring peace and rest to all under His rule. In addition to the Old Testament prophecies, more than 558 rabbinic writings interpreted the Scriptures as proclaiming a future earthly Kingdom ruled by the Messiah. “Art thou he that should come?” (Mt. 11:3). Jesus of Nazareth’s ancestry, recorded in Matthew 1, answers a resounding yes.

**Acts of the Coming Messiah**

A second way to authenticate the real Messiah involves examining His actions. Did Jesus do what Messiah was supposed to do? When asked, “Art thou the One?” Jesus answered,

> The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them (Mt. 11:5).

Physical healing served as undeniable, visible evidence of Jesus’ Messiahship. Anyone restoring sight, healing the lame, cleansing the leper, restoring hearing, and even raising the dead must be doing the miracles of the Messiah. Since all of these physical ills entered the world because of man’s fall in the Garden of Eden, such signs pointed to a spiritual restoration offsetting the curse of sin.

Therefore, these miracles prefigure the restoration of all the redeemed in Messiah’s coming Kingdom of Peace, where the blind
shall see and deaf shall hear. There
the lame shall leap as harts, and
the dumb shall sing (Isa. 35:5–6).
Thus the rest giver’s acts of physi-
cal restoration help us picture spir-
itual restoration (Isa. 35:4).

However, Messiah’s prime authen-
ticating sign was His ability to
draw people as an “ensign” to
Him for spiritual healing: “In that
day there shall be a root of Jesse,
who shall stand for an ensign of
the peoples” (Isa. 11:10). In the
ancient world, an ensign (or flag)
on a tall pole was where troops
rallied around their general.7

Moses used the bronze serpent as
an ensign to offer healing in the
wilderness (Num. 21:8–9). Jesus
referred to that ensign as a sign of
the spiritual healing He offered
(Jn. 12:32). Unlike the mere root of
a tree, Messiah would raise
David’s line to prominence as the
tall ensign, drawing men to Him
and offering spiritual salvation
to all those seeking Him. Isaiah
testified, “Behold, God is my
salvation; I will trust, and not be
afraid” (Isa. 12:2).

Does Isaiah 12:2, then, mean the
Messiah will be God? In chapter 9,
the book of Isaiah answers that
question with an explicit yes:
For unto us a child is born, unto
us a son is given, and the govern-
ment shall be upon his shoulder;
and his name shall be called
Wonderful, Counselor, The
Mighty God, The Everlasting
Father, The Prince of Peace. 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 hence-
forth even forever (vv. 9:6–7).

“Wonderful” speaks of things
that are unusual and beyond
human capabilities. Thus the
“Wonderful” one would perform
miracles that defied explanation
apart from God. Further, in the Old
Testament, the term Wonderful is
applied exclusively to God.8 Since
Jesus performed such signs, He is
“Wonderful” and must be God.

Twice more Isaiah emphasized
that Messiah would be God by
proclaiming Him “The Mighty
God, The Everlasting Father.” This
statement answers both how and
why the Messiah could perform
miracles, for they demonstrate that
God Himself is the Messiah.
Further, only God can bring the
gospel of salvation to the poor and
give real peace, for He is the
“Prince of Peace,” the “rest giver”
of Shiloh.

Paul told us that the Jewish peo-
ple of his day sought signs or mira-
cles in order to recognize the
Messiah, the King of Israel, the Son
of Jesse and David, and God
Himself. Thus Jesus offered signs
as an ensign to all men who would
seek Him. “Art Thou he that
should come?” Jesus of Nazareth
answered a resounding yes by His
wondrous acts 2,000 years ago.

Appeal of the
Coming Messiah

Many of the Messianic prophe-
cies associate the Messiah with
events of the latter days when
the Messiah will call the Jewish
people back to their land. Since
1948, God has been gathering
“the dispersed of Judah from the
four corners of the earth” (Isa.
11:12). But simultaneous to this
gathering, the world is gathering
against the little nation of Israel.
Scripture tells us that Israel will
be surrounded by its foes in the
latter days, and only those who
love Israel and God will desire
Israel’s triumph:

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a
cup of trembling unto all the
peoples round about, when they
shall be in the siege both against
Judah and against Jerusalem.
And in that day will I make
Jerusalem a burdensome stone
for all peoples. And I will pour
upon the house of David, and
upon the inhabitants of Jerus-
alem, the Spirit of grace and of
supplications; and they shall
look upon me [the Messiah]
whom they have pierced, and
they shall mourn for him, as one
mourneth for his only son
(Zech. 12:2–3, 10).

In that day, “the LORD shall be
king over all the earth; in that
day shall there be one LORD, and
his name one” (Zech. 14:9).

Whether you are Jewish or
Gentile, the Messiah is appealing
to you now. He is “an ensign of the
peoples; to him shall the nations
seek, and his rest shall be glorious”
(Isa. 11:10). Today both Jewish and
Gentile people find “glorious” rest
in the “rest giver” through person-
al salvation in Jesus the Messiah.

Almost 2,000 years ago, Jesse’s
descendant Jesus of Nazareth, after
performing many Messianic signs,
returned to a city and “the people
gladly received him; for they were
all waiting for him” (Lk. 8:40). Are
you still waiting for Him? Have
you answered the question, “Art
thou he that should come, or do
we look for another?” Look no fur-
ther, for Jesus of Nazareth is truly
God, truly Messiah, and truly the
Lord and Savior. “And it shall
come to pass that whosoever shall
call on the name of the LORD shall
be delivered” (Joel 2:32).

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sentative for The Friends of Israel in the
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When Paul arrived at Thessalonica on his second missionary journey, he spent three Sabbaths in the synagogue, developing a two-point sermon. The first point was pure exegesis. According to the divinely superintended notes of Dr. Luke, the apostle Paul alleged from the Scriptures “that [the] Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead” (Acts 17:3). (The Greek includes the definite article.)

To this point, the name Jesus of Nazareth had not entered the sermon. The Greek word for “Christ” was used here as a generic title. It is the Greek counterpart of the Hebrew term for “Messiah,” an important title of the Deliverer for whom Israel had been taught to wait for so many centuries (Ps. 2:2; Dan. 9:25–26). Paul’s argument here was preliminary: He contended that, according to the portrait drawn centuries earlier by God in the Scriptures, the Messiah—whoever He was—must suffer and die and rise again. Then, in his second and culminating point, the apostle argued from the drama that had recently unfolded in Judea: “This Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is [the] Christ” (Acts 17:3).

Paul’s polemic strategy was simple and basic. Long before Jesus of Nazareth was born, God “spoke . . . unto the fathers by the prophets” (Heb. 1:1). A recurring focus of that earlier revelation was the Messiah-Deliverer who was to come. Not only was He promised, He also was described in significant detail. The intent of that prophetic portrait clearly was that men might know Him when He arrived. Thus, when Jesus came
claiming to be Messiah, men were able to test and confirm that claim by comparing Him to the picture the Hebrew Scriptures so carefully etched of the promised Redeemer. Many people today deny the possibility of such a “theology of fulfillment.” They insist that the Old Testament is not sufficiently clear or specific to support the argument the apostle Paul made in Thessalonica. To be sure, the New Testament record proves otherwise. Appeal was made to a “theology of fulfillment” often and effectively—by Paul (not only in Thessalonica but also in Salamis, cf. Acts 13:32–33), by the resurrected Lord on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:25–27), by Stephen in his defense before a murderous throng (Acts 6—7), and by Peter in Caesarea (Acts 10:43), to cite but a few. But a further point begs to be made concerning not just the possibility but the absolute necessity of using specific, prophetic details of the coming Messiah to argue the validity of Jesus’ Messianic claims.

The generation to whom Jesus appeared had jettisoned the notion of a suffering Messiah and had fixed its hope entirely and exclusively on a conquering Warrior-Messiah. The generation to whom Jesus appeared had jettisoned the notion of a suffering Messiah and had fixed its hope entirely and exclusively on a conquering Warrior-Messiah.

A Twofold Dilemma

It is a little appreciated fact that Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah of Israel was exceptionally difficult to believe for at least two reasons.

His Deity. The first (and more legitimate) reason relates to the fact that, throughout the first two and a half years of His ministry, Jesus made two startling claims concerning Himself. He declared Himself to be not only Israel’s Christ but also Israel’s God, come in the flesh (cf. Mt. 16:15–17; 26:63; Lk. 4:41; Jn. 6:69; 11:27; 20:31). Today’s world has had two millennia to get used to the concept of God becoming man. But it is worthwhile to ponder what it would have been like to have been confronted with that claim by the man Jesus of Nazareth. It is hard to appreciate how incredibly difficult it must have been to accept such an assertion, especially for Jewish people.

His Death. The second reason Jesus’ claim of Messianic identity must have been difficult to accept and then, at a subsequent coming, to reign. But the concept of two comings, though not foreign to the Old Testament, certainly is not revealed clearly there, and for good reason. Messiah’s Second Coming was necessitated by the fact that He was rejected at His First Coming (Jn. 1:11).

That rejection did not take God by surprise. Indeed, the prophets anticipated it (Isa. 53:1; cf. Jn. 12:37–38). But Christ’s rejection—and the consequent necessity of two Messianic comings—could not be revealed clearly, or the people to whom Jesus came could have convinced themselves that they had a legitimate excuse for rejecting and scorning Him. (Note, for instance, Caiaphas’ attempt to appeal to the prophesied suffering of “one man” as an excuse for executing Jesus [Jn. 11:49–50].)

The mystery Peter articulated produced a dilemma with regard to Jesus’ Messianic claims. Much rabbinic discussion has focused on exactly how to interpret these two seemingly contradictory lines of prophetic truth. But again, the New Testament record is clear: Whatever the rationale, the generation to whom Jesus appeared had jettisoned the notion of a suffering Messiah and had fixed its hope entirely and exclusively on a conquering Warrior-Messiah who would bring to a dramatic end the “times of the Gentiles” (Lk. 21:24).

They “yearned for the promised deliverer of the house of David, who would free them from the yoke of the hated foreign usurper, would put an end to the impious Roman rule, and would establish His own reign of peace and justice in its place.”1

That this selectively diminished Messianic ideal was embraced not only by those who rejected Jesus
but by His closest followers as well is demonstrated by the apostles’ reaction when Jesus first spoke explicitly about His imminent suffering (Mt. 16:21–22). By insisting that He was going to die, as well as in many other particulars, “Jesus was so unlike what all Jews expected the Son of David to be that His own disciples found it almost impossible to connect the idea of the Messiah with Him.”

To a people cherishing an exclusively political-military hope, ever more feverishly anxious to throw off the yoke of Gentile dominion, Jesus came and offered Himself as Messiah. He led no army; He posed no obvious threat to the Roman Empire; and He called His people not to rebellion but to repentance. In short, His claim to be Messiah was as disappointing as His claim to be God was unbelievable.

The Twofold Solution

How did God arrange to convince men that Jesus’ claims concerning Himself were true? The divine strategy was basically twofold. First, Jesus performed miracles that demonstrated He was a genuine spokesman for God, verifying that His message was true—including His claims concerning His own person and work. This method was always and ever the divine means of authenticating a man’s claim to be a messenger of Yahweh (cf. Ex. 4:1–9; 1 Sam. 12:14–18; Heb. 2:3–4). Such miracles were certainly strategic in establishing the bona fides of Jesus (Jn. 3:1–2; Mk. 2:1–12; Acts 2:22).

But miracles alone were not enough (cf. Dt. 13:1–5). Even more basic was the requirement that every spokesman for God be consistent in word and deed with all God had revealed so far (Isa. 8:20; Gal. 1:8–9). Because Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, it was incumbent on those who heard Him to determine whether He did indeed fulfill the prophecies concerning the Messiah.

There was much to appeal to in that regard. Messiah’s lineage had been foretold: He was to be of the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15; cf. Gal. 4:4), of Abraham (Gen. 22:18; cf. Gal. 3:16), of Judah (Gen. 49:10; cf. Heb. 7:14), and then of David (2 Sam. 7:12–13; Ps. 132:11; Jer. 23:5; cf. Acts 13:23). The Deliverer was to be born at a certain time (Dan. 9:24–27) in a designated city (Mic. 5:2; cf. Lk. 2:4–5; Jn. 7:40–43); and His birth was to be preceded by the ministry of a forerunner (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1; cf. Mt. 3:1–3).

His ministry was to commence in Galilee (Isa. 9:1–2; cf. Mt. 4:12–17, 23), but He was also to enter Jerusalem (Zech. 9:9; cf. Mt 21:1–5) where He would possess the Temple (Mal. 3:1; cf. Mk. 11:15–18). The Messiah’s ministry was to be punctuated with miracles (Isa. 35:5–6; cf. Lk. 7:21–22); yet He would be despised (Isa. 49:7; cf. Jn. 7:48; 15:25), rejected by the nation’s rulers (Ps. 118:22; cf. Mt. 21:42), betrayed by someone close to Him (Ps. 41:9; 55:12–13; cf. Jn. 13:18–22), and abandoned for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:13; cf. Mt. 26:15).

He would be smitten on the cheek (Mic. 5:1; cf. Mt. 27:30), spat on (Isa. 50:6; cf. Mt. 27:30), mocked (Ps. 22:7–8; cf. Mt. 27:31, 39–44), and scourged (Isa. 50:6; cf. Mt. 27:26–30). His hands and feet were to be pierced (Ps. 22:16; Zech. 12:10; cf. Jn. 19:18, 37; 20:25), yet none of His bones would be broken (Ps. 34:20; cf. Jn. 19:33–36). His body was to be buried with the wealthy (Isa. 53:9; cf. Mt. 27:57–60) but was to remain uncorrupted (Ps. 16:10; cf. Acts 2:31) because, shortly after dying, He would rise miraculously from the grave (Ps. 2:7; 16:10; cf. Acts 13:33).

This is but a partial catalog. However, it begins to make the point that a scholar once summarized as follows:

The Messianic prophecies extend over a thousand years. They are interspersed throughout all the books of the Old Testament. They are found in the books of Moses, the oldest writer, and in the prophecy of Malachi, the last of the prophets. They are numerous; if all were to be collected from the sacred writings, and if the secondary and typical prophecies were to be included, it would be found to be no exaggeration to affirm that the Old Testament was pervaded with the Messianic idea. They are varied; they relate to minute particulars as well as to great events; some of them are seemingly contradictory; some represent the Messiah as a mighty king and others speak of Him as a man of sorrows. . . . But all these prophecies, when examined, will be found to have received their fulfillment in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and not one will be discovered that is inconsistent with the history of His life.

It was such a body of prophesied details that the Spirit of God used to confirm Jesus’ claims and, thus, to convince men of the truth that Jesus of Nazareth “is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world” (Jn. 4:42).

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Apparently, Peter understood only the first part of this message because he immediately rebuked Jesus (Mk. 8:31–32). And we can understand why. How could Messiah die? If Messiah died, what about the promised Kingdom? What about us? The answer to these questions is found in the last words of Jesus’ teaching: After three days, He would rise again.

Many Jewish people, primarily the Pharisees, believed in a resurrection based on Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:2. However, not all Jews did. The Sadducees, who considered only the Pentateuch as Scripture and were influenced by Hellenism,
mocked the concept of a resurrection (cf. Mk. 12:18–27; Acts 23:6–10). Furthermore, the Pharisees understood that the resurrection would come at the establishment of the Kingdom, which a victorious Messiah would usher in. So if Messiah died, how could all this happen?

**MESSIAH’S Resurrection**

Peter did not understand until later that Messiah’s suffering, death, and resurrection had already been foretold in the Old Testament. Zechariah 11 envisions the Shepherd being rejected for 30 pieces of silver. Isaiah 53 tells of the Lord’s Servant and His atoning sacrifice. Yet when Jesus went to the Hebrew Scriptures for prophetic typology, He used the Davidic Psalms. They not only prophesied Messiah’s victory over the nations (e.g., Ps. 2) but also His suffering and resurrection.

On the cross, Jesus cried out the first phrase of Psalm 22:1: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mk. 15:34). The rest of this psalm pictures the suffering Jesus experienced in His crucifixion. Near the end of Psalm 22, David wrote, “but when he cried unto him, he heard” (v. 24). Jesus’ vindication did not come in the form of a rescue from the cross but, rather, three days later, in His resurrection. That God raised Jesus from the dead was God’s testimony that Jesus was truly the Messiah and that His sacrifice for the sins of the world was accepted and completed.

After Jesus’ 40-day postresurrection ministry to the disciples, (when He explained all these truths from the Old Testament, Lk. 24:44–48), Jesus ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9–12). A few days later, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter and the other disciples were praying in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. When Peter preached to the crowd, he proclaimed that Jesus had been raised from the dead; and he used Psalm 16:8–11, where David prayed, “neither wilt thou permit thine Holy One to see corruption” (v. 10). Peter argued that Psalm 16:10 prefigured Jesus’ resurrection and that it did not speak of David because David’s body was in a tomb known in Jerusalem. Jesus’ body, however, could not be produced (Acts 2:29–32). Although Jesus died, His body did not lie in the tomb long enough to decay; and thus Psalm 16:10 prophesied His resurrection from the dead.

Jesus’ resurrection does not contradict the Old Testament teaching of Isaiah and Daniel. At the establishment of the Kingdom, all the saints who have died will have been raised to enter the Kingdom (Rev. 20:4–5). Paul later likened this event to the Jewish feast of Firstfruits. Jesus’ resurrection was like the first sheaf that was waved before the Lord as a testimony of faith that many more would follow (1 Cor. 15:20).

**MESSIAH’S Ascension**

Also on the Day of Pentecost, Peter not only proclaimed that Jesus had been raised from the dead but, most important, that He was now Lord (LORD) over all. To prove this truth, he again went to the Davidic Psalms, this time Psalm 110:1. Jesus had used this verse to stump His opponents when they questioned Him in the Temple (Mk. 12:35–37). In Psalm 110:1 David wrote, “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool.” Jesus asked His opponents how David’s son (the Messiah) could also be David’s “Lord,” since the father always receives more honor than the son. Jesus’ opponents could not answer the question. Neither did Jesus at the time. However, the only answer is that Jesus is not only the Messiah—David’s physical son—but He is also the Son of God, making Him David’s Lord.

Consequently, Peter quoted Psalm 110:1 (Acts 2:33–36) to
prove that Jesus had taken His place at the right hand of the Father in heaven and is now “Lord and Christ,” which was the basis of the pouring out of the Spirit in the first place—the very activity that caused the excitement in Jerusalem that day. Peter reasoned that, since the Spirit had been poured out in accordance with Joel 2, Jesus must have ascended to heaven because He is the one who poured out the Spirit.

Jesus the Messiah has not yet finished His work and will come again to establish that Kingdom and rule from Jerusalem.

It is at Jesus’ Second Advent, or His return, that the remainder of Psalm 2 finds fulfillment. The Kingdome and rule of the Son is spoken of as a “rod of iron” that will break humanity’s willful rebellion against God’s Messiah (v. 9; cf. Acts 4:23–28). This event will occur at Jesus’ Second Coming, as pictured in Revelation 19:15 (cf. Ps. 2:9) where Jesus as Lord destroys the Antichrist and his forces and establishes His throne in Jerusalem and His righteous rule over the earth (cf. Matt. 25:31ff.).

The psalmist in Psalm 2:10–12 warns people to take note of the authority given to the Son and “kiss the Son,” lest He be angry and one receive His wrath. Although Messiah’s return is an object of great hope to those who know Him, it will be disaster for those who do not. The Messiah waits in heaven for everyone to come to Him. But He is returning soon.

On the island of Patmos near the end of the first century, the apostle John had a vision of God’s throne. Before the throne stood a Lamb that had been slain. An angel introduced this personage as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root [Branch] of David” (Rev. 5:5), who had prevailed and been found worthy to receive from the Father’s hand the book that represented the inheritance of the earth. In Jesus’ First Advent, which culminated in His death on the cross, He was the Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of the world. In response to Jesus’ obedience as the ultimate Servant of the Lord, God then raised Him from the dead and has now exalted Him as Lord (Phil. 2:5–11; Is. 45:20–25).

As Jesus taught His disciples to pray, so is our prayer today:

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name [cf. Ezek. 36:23]. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:9–10).

**MESSIAH’S Return**

A reasonable argument in Jewish circles against Jesus being the promised Messiah is the absence of the promised Israeliite Kingdom, ruled by a Davidic descendant from Jerusalem (Ezek. 34—37). The New Testament’s answer to this criticism is that Jesus the Messiah has not yet finished His work and will come again to establish that Kingdom and rule from Jerusalem as promised.

A few days after the Day of Pentecost, Peter again found himself preaching to Jewish people in Jerusalem. He exhorted the nation to repent so the Kingdom would come. In a sense, he said that Jesus was waiting in heaven until the Jewish people repented, so He could return to establish the Kingdom (Acts 3:19–22; cf. Zech. 12:10–14). At that time, Jesus actually will set His feet on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4).

But the nation did not repent at Peter’s preaching, nor has it to this day. And so the Lord remains in heaven, waiting as He intercedes for believers. In the meantime, His purpose is not frustrated, for, as Jesus taught His disciples, the gospel must go forth to the whole world before the end comes (Mt. 24:14). Paul recognized “that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom. 11:25). Then the nation will repent, and “all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 11:26).

**Jesus as Lord**

Herb Hirt is the director of The Friends of Israel’s Institute of Jewish Studies.
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difficult. And it was difficult for ancient Israel. In the days of Hosea the prophet, the Lord sought to redeem His Chosen People from their lives of spiritual infidelity and immorality by convincing them to return to Him. In chapter 14, Hosea closed his revelation with a final plea regarding what Israel must do to receive forgiveness of sin and be reconciled to the Lord.

A Plea to Repent

Hosea clearly stated that before Israel can be restored, she must come to the Lord in repentance:

O Israel, return unto the LORD, thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the LORD; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips (vv. 1–2).

The prophet's call for Israel to return in repentance is a major theme of this book (2:7–9; 3:5; 5:4; 7:10, 16; 11:5; 12:6), occurring four times in this chapter alone (vv. 1–2, 4, 7). Israel’s return was not to be halfway or halfhearted but a total surrender to the Lord.

Hosea provided three conditions that Israel must meet before she can be reconciled to God. First, Israel’s “words” (v. 2) of repentance must express a heartfelt prayer for pardon as she confesses her sins to the Lord. Second, in turning to Him with her whole heart, not her lips alone, Israel must petition God to remove her specific sin of “iniquity” (v. 2). The word iniquity best describes Israel’s rebellion, deceitfulness, perversity, and crookedness. Finally, Israel’s people must ask the Lord to receive them “graciously” (v. 2).

The Lord will receive Israel when the nation comes to Him in a spirit of repentance, using the words He requires from them. In the past, Israel offered sacrifices out of habit. Now the nation must propitiate God, not by sacrifices or gifts of gold and silver but by rendering Him the “calves [fruit] of . . . [their] lips” (v. 2). In other words, Israel was to worship God sincerely, by expressing heartfelt praise when seeking forgiveness, rather than by merely offering the perfunctory animal sacrifices.

Israel’s words must be accompanied by actions. If the nation is to receive God’s forgiveness, she must forsake three besetting sins: her trust in foreign alliances, military equipment, and idols. The nation must renounce reliance on Assyria for help, deliverance, and security (v. 3) and depend instead on God. She must say, “We will not ride upon horses” (v. 3) because horses and chariots were military equipment imported from Egypt for defense. God strictly forbade the Israelites to “multiply horses,” but they did so anyway in direct rebellion to His command (Dt. 17:16). This action showed that the nation lacked trust in God. Israel was not to put confidence in worldly power or human aid but was to trust only in the power of the Lord for deliverance.

Israel also must stop practicing idolatry: “Neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods” (v. 3). The practice of seeking spiritual help and blessing from deaf and dumb idols was to be forsaken forever.

In the final analysis, Israel must realize that her only hope is in God, where “the fatherless findeth mercy” (v. 3). Man without God is like a fatherless creature that is no better off than a weak, forlorn orphan.

Being an orphan implies a lack of identity, parental relationship, and care. Without God, Israel is fatherless, friendless, and helpless, like so many poor orphans.

**Man without God is like a fatherless creature that is no better off than a weak, forlorn orphan . . . fatherless, friendless, and helpless.**

Earlier in this book, Hosea named his children “not pitied” and “not my people,” symbolizing that God had severed His relationship with Israel. Deprived of all help, Israel will come to realize that God alone is the One in whom she can find mercy, love, forgiveness, and ultimate deliverance.

**A Promise to Restore**

God will respond to Israel with compassion and consolation when she comes to Him in genuine repentance, with a contrite heart. Then He will grant the nation favor and forgiveness, restoring Israel in three ways. First, He “will heal their backsliding [apostasy]” (v. 4). Such healing includes curing her of idolatry, rebellion, immorality, and renewing her covenant relationship with the Lord.

Second, God promises, “I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him” (v. 4). Despite the centuries of Israel’s rebellion and idolatry, the Lord continues to love the nation freely. His love for Israel is voluntary, spontaneous, and a free gift that is totally unmerited (cf. Jer. 31:3). Just as all believers today are justified freely by faith through God’s unmerited grace, so Israel will be justified at Messiah’s Second Coming. Only then will God’s anger turn away completely from His people.

Third, God said, “I will be as the dew unto Israel” (v. 5). He will renew Israel’s blessing and pour it out like the heavy evening dew on the land. Heavy night dew refreshes and revives a sun-scorched land and provides the moisture necessary to bring about new life—an apt picture of the Lord’s blessing on Israel after centuries of a dry and barren spiritual life. Israel will experience this prosperity and fruitfulness during the Millennial Kingdom.

When Israel, at last, experiences redemption and renewed fellowship with the Lord, “he shall grow [blossom] like the lily, and cast forth his roots like Lebanon” (v. 5). A lily is a delicate plant that grows rapidly and reproduces abundantly, and its long stem bears a beautiful flower that emits a pleasant fragrance. Although the lily is beautiful, its shallow root system means it also dries up quickly and dies. Thus Hosea compared Israel’s root in the time of her redemption to the cedars in Lebanon. Their roots descend deep into the mountain.
soil and easily support massive growth and weight, enabling the trees to grow strong, tall, and stately, piercing the sky. Israel, who has been uprooted often throughout her history, will, in the day of her redemption, be rooted in her land forever. The nation will be as strong and stable as the cedars of Lebanon because she will be planted in the Lord.

Hosea also mentioned three more results of Israel’s redemption: “His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be like the olive tree, and his fragrance like Lebanon” (v. 6). These branches represent Israel’s expansion and numerical growth during the Millennium. In that day, Israel’s beauty will be like the olive tree, whose green foliage and fruit production symbolize the nation’s holiness and spiritual vitality. Israel’s fragrance will be like cedars of Lebanon, which emit an aroma that delights all who experience it. In the Millennium, Israel will be acceptable to God; and her loveliness, pleasing to man.

In verse 7, the simile becomes a metaphor:

They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive like the grain, and grow [blossom] like the vine; the scent of it shall be like the wine of Lebanon (v. 7).

Some teach that the metaphor refers to the Lord as a great tree and to Israel as dwelling under His shadow in the Millennium. Others believe the tree represents the nation of Israel, to whom individual Jewish people return at the inception of the Millennial Kingdom. The latter interpretation is consistent with the similes of the previous two verses, which compare Israel with the trees of Lebanon. The people who have been regathered and restored to the land will be revived physically and spiritually, like grain that springs up in abundance. In that day, Israel will “grow [blossom] like the vine” (v. 7), a sign of great prosperity. The “scent” of Israel’s restored reputation will be like the wine of Lebanon that surpasses all others in aroma, taste, and value.

Furthermore, Israel will abhor idolatry: “Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?” (v. 8). The nation will surrender completely to God and never practice idolatry again.

The Lord will accept Israel’s repentance: “I have heard him, and observed him; I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found” (v. 8). After Israel’s repentance and redemption, the Lord will be like a green fir tree, providing the nation with shelter and security. The fir tree is an evergreen, symbolizing fruitfulness from the Lord, who will supply every spiritual and material blessing that Israel needs in the Millennial Kingdom. What a change from Israel’s situation in Hosea’s day!

Appeal to Return

Hosea concluded his prophecy with an appeal for Israel (and people everywhere) to heed God’s counsel:

Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall in them (v. 9).

A wise person (one who lives according to it) will learn three lessons from Hosea’s prophecy. First, the “ways of the LORD are right.” They are the right path for us to take because, when we follow His ways, God guides, governs, and guards us in the way we should live. Second, “the just shall walk in them,” meaning righteous people will obey God and, in so doing, experience and enjoy the Lord’s blessing. Third, “the transgressors shall fall [stumble] in them.” People who refuse to follow God’s ways are transgressors, as were the people mentioned in Hosea’s prophecy. Sin causes transgressors to stumble and fall, relegating them to the same unfortunate fate prophesied in this book.

God calls on the readers of His prophecy to repent, return to Him, and experience the redemption available to them. The prophet summed it up well when he wrote, “O Israel, thou has destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help” (13:9).

Despite dire circumstances, Hosea stayed faithful to God’s call on his life, living with an adulterous wife amid a rebellious people. God honored Hosea’s faithfulness, for in time, Gomer was reunited and reconciled to her husband. Although the prophet did not live to see it, one day Israel will be reunited and reconciled to God in righteousness. The Lord greatly used Hosea as he boldly proclaimed what was right to his family and nation. May Hosea’s example inspire each of us to be more diligent and faithful in our commitment to the Lord in these last days.

David M. Levy is the director of Foreign Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
Does abhorrence of terrorism depend on the nationality or religion of the victim? Are some lives less precious than others, so much so that the word terrorism would not apply to murderous attacks on these victims? To, say, Israeli victims?

Repugnant as such distinctions might seem, they are apparently employed by some of America’s leading media outlets, including The New York Times, The Boston Globe, and CNN. The Times, for example, in covering the October 3 attack against an Israeli community in Gaza in which two young Israeli civilians were murdered by Palestinian invaders, managed not even once to refer to the attack or to the attackers using any form of the word terror. This despite the fact that the “gunmen,” as the Times repeatedly called them, fired AK-47s at every civilian they saw and hurled grenades into homes.

And Hamas, the group responsible for the bloody attack, was deliberately referred to as a “militant group,” not a band of terrorists.

Not that the words terror or terrorist are banned at the Times—on the contrary. On that same October 3, the Times used some form of the word terror in at least 93 stories (not counting paid obituaries). But in each case, the reference was to the terrible attacks in the United States on September 11, in which thousands of innocent Americans were killed.

Was it the number of dead, rather than their religion or nationality, that explains the difference in the Times’ usage? It seems not. The newspaper, for example, quite rightly used the word terror in reporting the attack against the USS Cole, even though the victims were relatively few in number and neither the ship nor its crew were civilian targets. An editorial on October 13, 2000, for example, referred to “an apparent terrorist attack.” On the same day, a Times report informed readers that the Cole was refueling in Yemen “despite its history as a haven for terrorist groups,” and added that “if confirmed as a terrorist attack, it would be the worst against American military forces since the bombing of an Air Force barracks in Saudi Arabia.”

Yet attacks against Israelis—in their homes and communities—receive radically different treatment. The killers are routinely termed “militants” or “activists”; and the groups that train, equip, and send them on their “missions” are regularly referred to in a similarly antiseptic manner.

The point, of course, is that the nation’s leading newspaper has decided that the killing of Jewish Israelis by Islamic-inspired murderers is somehow different than when very similar killers instead target Americans. One can only imagine that, to the Times, Israelis are somehow guilty either of oppressing Palestinians or, perhaps, of some more ancient sin; so the killers, therefore, are not to be called terrorists.

Of course, the Times is not alone. The Times-owned Boston Globe has followed exactly the same pattern, referring repeatedly to the bombing of the Cole and, of course, to the recent attacks in America, as terrorism perpetrated by terrorists, while resisting such usage when the victims...
are Israelis. The attack on October 3, for example, was attributed by the *Globe* to “Palestinian attackers” and “gunmen,” who were sent by the “military wing of the Islamic militant group Hamas.” Certainly neither the *Globe* nor the *Times* has ever referred to any “military wing” of bin Laden’s Al Qaeda group.

At CNN the same pattern is evident. Speaking on October 3, anchor Bill Hemmer explained that with “Israeli tanks rumbling into northern Gaza,” the cease-fire seems to have “crumbled . . . the toll there, eight Palestinians and two Israelis dead after the fighting.” Of course, the Israelis didn’t die in any “fighting”—they were unarmed innocents cruelly executed by terrorist invaders. And if the cease-fire was in trouble, it was because of unprovoked Palestinian attacks, not Israeli retaliation.

The Mike Hanna report that followed only made matters worse, with the attackers described as “Palestinian gunmen” and the 18-year-old murdered woman described as an “Israeli soldier” as if she were an armed combatant. She was off-duty and strolling down a residential road with her boyfriend, who was also murdered.

Nowhere did CNN describe the murders or the murderers using any form of the word *terror*, despite the fact that most CNN reports these days are headlined “Target: Terrorism.”

Now is the time for these institutions—and any that follow similarly indefensible policies—to cease discriminating between terror’s victims. All deserve to be remembered as the innocent quarry of an identical scourge.

Alex Safian is associate director of CAMERA. Copyright © 2001 by the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America.

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Saturday, October 14, was another very bad day for Christians in Nigeria, West Africa. According to a CNN report, Muslim terrorists used the cover of anti-American riots, held in protest of the bombing of Osama bin Laden and the Taliban in Afghanistan, to slaughter hundreds of Christians. In the city of Kano, survivors fled to police stations and army barracks for safety. During their flight, dozens of churches were set on fire. Among those killed were six high school girls on their way to take university entrance exams.

The Muslim rampage followed a pattern that has become all too familiar in Nigeria over the past two years. During these religious clashes, thousands have been killed.

One of the most inflammatory issues in these conflicts taking place in many parts of the Muslim world is the institution of Islamic Sharia law. When Muslim elements controlling a government declare a fundamentalist Islamic state, as was the case in Sudan, Islamic religious law becomes the law of the land. Under radical regimes, this law brings a crushing burden to citizens who are Christian or non-Muslim. For Sudanese and Nigerian Christians, it means a brutal struggle for survival.

Reports of mass murders, burned churches, enslavement, and severe persecution of pastors and church leaders are common. A report from The Voice of Martyrs organization documents the atrocities being committed against Nigerian Christians:

A reverend and principal of Advanced Bible Training School (owned by the Church of Christ in Nigeria) reported, “About 50 houses were burned down in my area, among them was the school itself.” The vice principal of the school was burned in the violence. In Garigari and Jigawa, many houses were torched while residents were on their farms. While some people fled [the area] completely, many have
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Elwood McQuaid is editor-in-chief for The Friends of Israel.
Why is there so much evil in the world? That question has challenged philosophers and scholars since time began. Spend just 30 minutes watching the national news—with its usual display of wars, man’s injustice to his fellow man, murders, violent crime, and war—and it becomes obvious why so many people ask such a question.

For centuries Jewish people have pondered the question of evil. In a book titled *Understanding Judaism*, Eugene Borowitz explained sin (or evil) this way: “Judaism knows there are many influences on us. Despite them, it insists that we are free and so, responsible.”¹ The book of Ben Sirach (translated into Greek about 132 B.C.) sums up the Jewish view this way:

*Don’t say “God made me do evil” for God doesn’t want people to be evil. . . . If you want to, you can keep the commandments. Besides, it’s simple sense to do what God wants. Life and death...*
The rabbis arrived at this position by interpreting the Hebrew word *vayyitzer* (formed) found in Genesis 2:7: “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground.” According to many rabbis, the two *yods* (like the English letter *y*) stand for the word *yetzer*, which means “impulse.” This they believe indicates that man was created with two impulses, one good (*yetzer ha-tov*) and one evil (*yetzer ha-ra*).4

Judaism has long been regarded as a religion that emphasizes *mitzvot*, or good deeds. It teaches that there are 365 positive deeds and 248 negative ones, for a total of 613. A constant unction exists to strive to follow the Law. Yet the urge to disobey also is constant.

Commenting on the battle of these two urges, Yehiel Mikhal, the Hassidic Rebbe of Zlotchov, put it this way: “One of the favorite tricks of the evil urge is to tell people that they really ought to be perfect. When they find they can’t be they give in to the evil urge altogether.”5

In the book *What Christians Should Know About Jews and Judaism*, Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein expressed a long-held Jewish view: “Although the rabbis regarded man as intrinsically pure, they readily acknowledged that he is in possession of both a ‘good and a bad inclination.’”6 Rabbinic Judaism does not believe in the depravity of man, as does biblical Christianity. Yet the consensus of Jewish thought is that the good impulse is not innate but, rather, comes on a person later in life. Some believe it comes gradually, growing stronger over time. Others believe it comes all at once at the time of bar/bat mitzvah, when, according to the rabbis, individuals become accountable for their own sins.

The *yetzer ha-ra*, the evil inclination, is likened to selfishness. A rabbinic story explains it this way: The evil inclination within man lusts only after what is forbidden. On the Day of Atonement, when eating and drinking are strictly prohibited, Rabbi Mana visited Rabbi Haggai, who was sick. Rabbi Haggai complained, “I am very thirsty.” Rabbi Manna said to him, “Seeing that you are sick, you may drink.” After a while, Rabbi Mana returned and asked Rabbi Haggai, “How is your thirst?” Rabbi Haggai replied, “The moment you permitted me to drink, my thirst disappeared.”7

When left to run amok, unchecked by the *yetzer ha-tov*, these selfish desires can produce
terrible consequences. For example, nothing is wrong with hunger; but if it leads one to steal food, it is wrong. Nothing is wrong with sexual desire; but if it leads one to commit adultery, it is wrong.

Because they believe that God formed (vayytzir) man with these two urges, the rabbis contend that the yetzer ha-ra (evil inclination) can be a positive force. Commenting on Ecclesiastes 4:4, the Talmud states, “King Solomon taught that all labor and skillful enterprise come from men’s envy of each other” (Genesis, Rabbah 9:7). The Midrash (rabbinic writings) reports that without the evil inclination, “a man would not build a house or marry or have children or engage in commerce.”

The idea of a fallen angel (Satan) who makes life miserable for people is not generally accepted within Judaism. Instead, Judaism teaches that people make conscious choices and are entirely responsible for which impulses they follow. However, even though Jewish people may reject the concept of Satan working in the world, the Jewish Scriptures teach it nonetheless, as demonstrated in the books of Job, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and 1 Chronicles, which clearly depict a literal Satan. His activities are described in Job 2 and Isaiah 14; his appearance is described in Ezekiel 28; and his name is given in Job 2 and 1 Chronicles 21. Yet most Jewish people say Satan is a fable used to explain the existence of evil. His description in the Bible is regarded as the personification of each person’s selfish desires. Some observant Jews teach that the yetzer ha-ra, Satan, and the angel of death are one and the same.

Judaism acknowledges the constant temptation to do what is bad, wrong, or evil. When God gave the Law to the Jewish people at Mt. Sinai, He wanted them to follow His commands. Thus Jewish people know what is right and good. They are taught to follow the yetzer ha-tov, the good inclination, to hate what is evil and cling to what is good. When they fail, the result is guilt.

Guilt has dominated the Jewish experience for years. In fact, it often protects Jewish individuals from yielding to the “evil urge” and pushes them to follow the good.

The Talmud addresses this subject when it comments on 2 Samuel 12:4: “The yetzer ha-ra is first called a passerby, then a guest and, finally, one who occupies the house. When a man sins and repeats the sin, it no longer seems to him as forbidden” (Yoma 88b).

How does Judaism deal with the whole sin issue? Most Jewish people would say they deal with sin once a year during Yom Kippur when they spend an entire day in the synagogue, fasting and praying. Therein lies a fundamental difference between modern Judaism and biblical Christianity.

Bible-believing Christians consider every word of the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of God—including, of course, the Old Testament. Thus creation, the flood, and the tower of Babel are actual, historical events. Equally as true is the account of satanic temptation and the fall of man, recorded in Genesis 3. The Bible says Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit. Their disobedience to God’s command changed them and their progeny forever. The Bible also says that God created man in His own image and that, after the fall, “Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth” (Gen. 5:3, italics added). To be sure, Seth possessed remnants of God’s image; but when his father, Adam, had sinned, God’s image within man became marred. Christians believe that human beings, beginning with Adam, pass this marred image of God to every child who is born. Jewish Scripture supports the concept that every person is born with a sin nature and is not innately good but, rather, utterly depraved: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9). “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). Such was the consequence of Adam’s sin.

Why is there so much evil in the world? Because the human heart is “desperately wicked.” Jesus understood the real meaning of leaven when He commented on the hard-heartedness of many of the Pharisees. He wanted His disciples to ponder the question of evil and, as they did so, to consider the only true cure for human depravity—Him:

Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed (1 Pet. 2:24).

Steve Herzig is the director of North American Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
Each day The Friends of Israel sends out hundreds of pieces of literature intended to spread God’s Word, encourage God’s children, support His Chosen People, and glorify our precious Lord and Savior.

The Lord has so graciously blessed our resources ministry that we long ago outgrew our 2,800-square-foot shipping-and-mailing area and have had to stash crates of books, tapes, videos, and cassettes in every available nook and cranny throughout our property.

Praise God, He looked on our “affliction”! This spring a 6,800-square-foot Ministry Resources Center will take its place on our New Jersey property, adjacent to our international headquarters. Its spacious floor area will allow us to use the latest operational technologies to fill orders and ship them promptly to our constituents in more than 100 countries. And its 22-foot-high ceiling will enable us to stack many cases on top of each other, enormously increasing our storage capacity.

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As always, we will work diligently to use all the space God has given us to further the ministry He has called us to. We are deeply grateful to Him for His goodness and pray that He will enable us to continue proclaiming the eternal truth of His Word through every means possible until He comes to carry His church home.
Some people are unlikely leaders. On the surface, they appear to lack the distinctives we usually associate with greatness. David, for example, was a shepherd boy, a dreamer, who wrote songs and played a harp—qualities not generally sought after when you’re calling someone to vanquish your enemies. Yet God not only called him to be a man of war but to be king over all Israel. Why? Because David had something more important than military skill or royal pedigree. He had faith.

In the days of the judges, a woman named Deborah became leader of Israel. By our standards, she, too, was an unlikely candidate for such a call. The Bible says little about her credentials other than the fact that she was a wife and mother (Jud. 4:4; 5:7), neither of which qualified her to run a country. But she had the same advantage David had. She had faith.

At a time when Israel was floundering and every man was doing what seemed right in his own eyes, God reached down and plucked out a woman of great faith who was willing to follow obediently after Him.

Scripture says Deborah was a prophetess, meaning God spoke to her and she relayed His Word to the people. She was a judge, meaning she ruled and individuals came to her to settle their disputes. And, of course, she was a wife and mother in Israel.

Her best-known feat came when the Israelites cried out to God for relief after 20 years of oppression under Jabin, king of Canaan. Mighty Jabin had 900 iron chariots and ruled from Hazor in northern Israel. Deborah, who lived in the south, outside Jerusalem in the hills of Ephraim, summoned Barak from the tribe of Naphtali, near Hazor. When Barak arrived, Deborah boldly relayed God’s plan:
Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward Mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand (4:6–7).

Barak was willing to comply, but he insisted Deborah go with him. Deborah agreed but told Barak that now he would relinquish to a woman the honor of capturing Sisera.

That day God fought for Israel, as Deborah knew He would. The Lord sent a torrential downpour that flooded the Kishon River and mired Sisera’s seemingly invincible armada in the mud. Sisera fled and was done in by another woman, Jael, who drove a tent stake through his head and killed him. Thus God delivered Israel.

Afterward, Deborah wrote a beautiful song (Jud. 5) that exalts God and reveals much about herself. She was a woman of profound faith and discernment. She had astutely assessed her country’s dismal situation (5:6–7), understood the reason for it (idolatry, v. 8), and took charge (vv. 7, 12). She had risen to such power that when she summoned Barak, he came immediately, never questioning her authority or instructions. Deborah is the only woman in the Bible who both ruled Israel and gave military orders to a man, with God’s blessing.

When she demanded the troops be mustered, she expected them to show up. Those who ignored the call, she cursed: “Curse ye Meroz . . . curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord” (v. 23). Deborah probably could not understand why these fighting men of Israel had so little faith in God.

On the one hand, Deborah seemed “tough,” a woman to be reckoned with. Yet, on the other, she seemed extremely maternal. Only a mother who cared for her children would even think to picture Sisera’s mother as waiting anxiously for her son to come home, worried that he was late returning from battle (v. 28).

Interestingly, no scriptural evidence exists that Deborah usurped male authority. Sad to say, little godly male authority probably existed in those days. Israel was in such sorry spiritual shape that God further shamed the nation by placing its top leadership into the hands of a woman.

However, we might do well to remember that the history of modern missions is filled with women of great faith whom God placed in positions of enormous responsibility. In the jungles of Colombia and Venezuela, Sophie Muller planted hundreds of churches for more than 50 years until the Lord finally called her home in October 1995. Her autobiography, published by New Tribes Mission, is called His Voice Shakes the Wilderness.

After Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, and three other missionaries were speared to death in Ecuador by the Huaorani (Auca) Indians in 1956, two women succeeded them: Elisabeth Elliot, Jim’s widow, and Rachel Saint, Nate’s sister. Miss Saint remained in Ecuador, leading the Indians to Christ, discipling and ministering to them until her death in 1994.

Living in a world driven by material success and accomplishment, it’s easy to forget that it isn’t so much our skills God wants as it is our wills. Barak, no doubt, was a fine military man. And he is listed in Hebrews 11 as a man of faith. However, he would have captured Sisera himself had he trusted God a little more. Deborah, on the other hand, was a wife and mother. But her faith made her a vessel of far greater use to the Lord than anyone would have imagined.

The Bible teaches that our time on Earth is short: “For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jas. 4:14). Many people may shake mountains with their credentials and build kingdoms with their skills. But in the end, what will count for eternity will not be what we

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According to a report in The Jerusalem Post, Israeli Cabinet minister Dan Meridor hailed a recent Palestinian statement as “a major breakthrough.” Apparently the Palestinian Authority (PA) has offered to resettle Arab refugees in the coming Palestinian state rather than in Israel proper. The report said PA Chairman Yasser Arafat is willing to drop his demand for the “right” of millions of Palestinians to be relocated inside Israel’s Green Line. This statement is, according to Meridor, a major breakthrough. If Arafat is serious (which is always a consideration), it is indeed a major concession.

You will recall that the Camp David negotiations of July 2000 broke down largely because Arafat demanded a massive number of displaced Palestinians be relocated to Israel proper as well as to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Arafat’s intractable stand on this point was clearly unacceptable to both the United States and Israel. As a result, despite the Israeli government’s overly generous land-grant offer, the talks collapsed, infuriating then-President Bill Clinton and the American administration.

Beyond the shadow of any doubt, this latest offer comes as a result of intense U.S. pressure to find at least an interim settlement of the thorny problems facing Israel and the PA at this time.

We are, of course, well aware that Mr. Arafat is accustomed to making promises he has no intention of keeping. This has been his pattern for decades.

Sari Nusseibeh, chosen by Arafat as his chief envoy in Jerusalem, told the Associated Press that the Palestinians erred in insisting on the right of refugees to return to Israel proper. Nusseibeh, a philosophy professor whose family has deep roots in Jerusalem, said the refugees should be resettled in a future Palestinian state “not in a way that would undermine the existence of the state of Israel as a predominantly Jewish state.”

Currently, about 5 million Jews and 1 million Arabs live in Israel. Although the Jewish population is growing by about 50,000 immigrants a year, the Arab population is increasing much faster.

If the Palestinian refugee issue were to be settled Nusseibeh’s way, two problems would be solved: (1) Israel would not face potential elimination by assimilation. That is to say, the Jewish nation would not become absorbed by a hostile state-within-a-state. (2) Disgruntled Israeli Arabs, disenchanted with the Jewish state, would have a place to go and live among their own people—a situation that could be healthy for both parties.

Many people fail to realize that, due to some of these factors, Israel did not annex the West Bank and Gaza when it captured the territories in the 1967 war. Yet it immediately annexed Jerusalem into the State of Israel. Israelis realized that if they incorporated the territories into the state and gave full citizenship to the Arabs there, eventually the significant and rapidly growing Arab populations of the territories would jeopardize Israel’s identity as a national Jewish entity. Conceivably, Israelis could be voted out of office in their own country.

Thus, if the Palestinian Authority has at last seen the folly of its demands for the massive “return” of refugees into the heartland of Israel, it would be a step in the right direction. In view of the way Yasser Arafat’s mind works, however, the offer may represent only a passing mood of the moment or, worse yet, another outright deception.
God is Triune

The Triunity in the Old Testament

The Unity of God in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 6:4 states, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.” This passage, the Shema, clearly asserts the existence of only one God. It thereby rejects all forms of polytheism.

The Plurality of God in the Old Testament. Several elements in the Old Testament indicate that a plurality exists within the one God.

1. The name Elohim, one of God’s primary names, appears more than 2,000 times in the plural form. The *im* ending makes a Hebrew noun plural instead of singular. Some scholars claim that when Elohim refers to God, its plural ending is not to be regarded as a true plural but as a plural of majesty, emphasizing God’s majestic nature. However, Jack C. Scott states that a better reason for the plural ending of Elohim can be seen in Scripture itself where, in the very first chapter of Genesis, the necessity of a term conveying both the unity of the one God and yet allowing for a plurality of persons is found (Gen. 1:2, 26). This is further borne out by the fact that the form elohim occurs only in Hebrew and in no other Semitic language, not even in Biblical Aramaic.

Thus it is probable that Elohim “is a unique development of the Hebrew Scriptures and represents chiefly the plurality of persons in the Trinity of the godhead.”

2. Plural pronouns are used with reference to God. Genesis 1:26 states, “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness [italics added].” Genesis 1:27 states, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.” This and other passages (Gen. 5:1; 9:6; Jas. 3:9) indicate that mankind was created exclusively in the image of God, not in a combination image of God and other beings, such as angels. Thus, in Genesis 1:26, God used the plural pronouns exclusively for the Godhead. In Genesis 3:22, after the fall of mankind, “the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil” (cf. Gen. 3:4–5).

In Genesis 11:7, in response to mankind’s building of the city and tower of Babel, God said, “Come, let us go down, and there confound their language.” Genesis 11:9 indicates that it was God, not God and angels, who confused the languages. Here again God used a plural pronoun exclusively for the Godhead.

The Basis of the Doctrine of the Triunity

The terms triune, triunity, and trinity do not appear in the Bible; but the concept of the Triunity of God is found there. The basis of that concept is threefold. First, the Bible calls three persons God. Second, the Bible presents those three persons as separate, or distinct, from one another. Third, the Bible declares that there is only one God.
3. **Plural verbs are used for God.** For example, Genesis 35:7 states, “God appeared unto” Jacob. The Hebrew verb translated “appeared” is plural.

4. **Primary names of God are applied to more than one person in the same passage.** There are at least three instances of such application. 
   First, Psalm 45:6–7 states, 
   
   Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

   The Hebrew text uses Elohim (a primary name of God) for all three references to God in this passage. But a normal reading indicates that two distinct persons are Elohim. The statement, “therefore God [Elohim], thy God [Elohim], hath anointed thee,” especially signifies this fact. The fact that the word Messiah means “anointed one” prompts the conclusion that the Elohim who is anointed by the other Elohim is the Messiah. 

   Hebrews 1:5, 8–9 indicates that the Elohim who speaks and anoints in Psalm 45:6–7 is God the Father, and the Elohim who is anointed is His Son.

   Second, Psalm 110:1 declares, “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Two distinct persons are involved in this passage because one is speaking about the other. In the Hebrew text, the speaker is Jehovah (the personal name of God and deity); and the person about whom Jehovah speaks is assigned the name Jehovah our righteousness.

   Three facts should be noted here: (1) The passage applies God’s personal name, which is also a primary name of God (Jehovah) to two distinct persons. (2) According to Hans Bietenhard, Throughout the Old Testament there is a sense of the significance of the proper name. The name denotes the person, establishes its identity, and is a part of it. It can often be said: “As a man is named, so is he.”

   A person’s name “discloses his nature.” In light of this significance of names in the Old Testament, Jeremiah 23:5–6 identifies two distinct persons who are Jehovah and have the same divine nature. (3) The person assigned the name Jehovah our righteousness is the Messiah. The description of the person indicates that fact.

   5. **The name Elohim, one of God’s primary names, appears more than 2,000 times in the plural form.**

   They correctly identified the Messiah as David’s biological descendant. Jesus then asked them, How, then, doth David, in the Spirit, call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David, then, call him Lord, how is he his son? (Mt. 22:43–45).

   Jesus thereby indicated two truths: (1) When David wrote Psalm 110:1 through the influence of the Holy Spirit, the person he called “my Lord” (my Adonai) was the Messiah. Thus David applied one of God’s primary names (Adonai) to the Messiah. (2) The fact that David called the Messiah “my Adonai” signified that the Messiah would be far more than a human descendant of David.

   Peter also indicated that in Psalm 110:1, David referred to the Messiah as “my Adonai.” Peter further asserted that the resurrected, ascended, exalted Jesus is the Messiah, David’s Adonai (Acts 2:32–36).

   Third, Jeremiah 23:5–6 states, Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

   Two distinct persons are involved in this passage because one is speaking about the other. In the Hebrew text, the speaker is Jehovah (the personal name of God and deity); and the person about whom Jehovah speaks is assigned the name Jehovah our righteousness.
that the Messiah’s name would include “The Mighty God” and “The Everlasting Father.” Isaiah 10:20–21 indicates that “The Mighty God” is “the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.” Edward J. Young suggests that “The Everlasting Father” signifies that the Messiah “is One who eternally is a Father to His people.” Since a person’s name discloses his nature, this name signified that the Messiah would have the nature of eternal deity.

Daniel 7:13–14 describes the Messiah as coming “with the clouds of heaven.” It thereby ascribes deity to the Messiah because Psalm 104:1–3 and Isaiah 19:1 indicate that it is God who uses the clouds as His vehicle of travel. The fact that the high priest, elders, and scribes of Israel accused Jesus of blasphemy when He claimed that the Son of man would come in the clouds of heaven reveals they understood that only God travels on the clouds of heaven (Mt. 26:63–66).

Proverbs 30:4 and Psalm 2:7 indicate that Jehovah, the Creator, has a Son. Psalm 2:2 signifies that God’s Son is “his anointed” (the Messiah). The language of these verses prompts the conclusion that God the Father and His Son are distinct persons. According to Eduard Lohse, in the Old Testament and the writings of postbiblical Judaism, the Hebrew words for son were “often used to denote the relationship which determines the nature of a man.” Thus the term son signifies that a son has the same nature as his father. Therefore, Proverbs 30:4 and Psalm 2:2, 7 indicate that God’s Son, the Messiah, as a distinct person, has the same divine nature as God the Father.

Ancient Jews recognized the absolute deity inherent in the title the Son of God. Because Jesus called God “My Father” (Jn. 5:17) and thereby implied that He was God’s Son, His enemies “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). Another time His enemies 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 reply, Jesus 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 reply reveals that it was Jesus’ claim to be the Son of God that prompted His enemies to accuse Him of making Himself equal with God.

6. The word translated “one” in “The LORD our God is one LORD” (Dt. 6:4) emphasizes unity but recognizes “diversity within that oneness.” The same word is used in Genesis 2:24 for two persons (husband and wife) being one and in Genesis 1:5 for several parts making one day.

7. Some Old Testament passages suggest three persons in the Godhead. Isaiah 48:16 refers to “the Lord GOD,” “His Spirit,” and another person sent by God, indicating three distinct beings. Old Testament scholar Franz Delitzsch indicated that the person sent is God’s ultimate servant, who will restore Israel and be a light to the Gentiles (see Isa. 49:5–6). In other words, the one sent is the Messiah. Isaiah 61:1 refers to three distinct persons. The person who speaks has been anointed and sent by Jehovah and, therefore, is distinct from Jehovah. The fact that the word Messiah means “anointed one” prompts the conclusion that the speaker is the Messiah. The speaker claims that, because Jehovah anointed Him and sent Him to minister, “the Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon” Him. This claim signifies that the Spirit is distinct from both the speaker and Jehovah. Concerning these distinctions, Old Testament scholar Edward J. Young stated, “This is a Trinitarian shade that should not be overlooked.”

The fact that David called the Messiah “my Adonai” signified that the Messiah would be far more than a human descendant of David.

The next article will examine the Triunity of God in the New Testament.

Renald E. Showers is an author, professor, and international conference speaker for The Friends of Israel.
and one Pakistani declared, “Bin Laden is Islam. He represents Islam.” In France, Muslim youths chant bin Laden’s name as they throw rocks at non-Muslims.

Poll shows Americans feel Israeli concessions will encourage terrorism

The Jerusalem Post—Most Americans believe that U.S. pressure to make concessions to the Palestinians will only encourage more terrorism, according to a new survey conducted by the New American Initiative and The Chicago Sun-Times.

In a national poll conducted between October 12 and 14 by McLaughlin & Associates, 62 percent said that after the World Trade Center attack, forcing Israel to give up territory—including dividing Jerusalem—to Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat for a Palestinian state, will encourage terrorism. Twenty-eight percent had no opinion, and 9.7 percent thought that pressuring Israel will end terrorism.

The poll, which has a 3.1 percent margin of error, also indicated continued strong support for Israel.

Asked if the U.S. “should continue support of Israel,” some 80 percent said yes and 14.6 percent said no.

Some 56 percent of the respondents said they have a “favorable opinion of Israel,” while 19.5 percent said they have an unfavorable opinion. By contrast, 12.6 percent said they have a favorable opinion of Arafat and 60.4 percent said they have an unfavorable opinion of him.

Asked whether they think that U.S. support was a “major factor...
in the terrorist attacks against the United States or whether the attacks would have happened regardless of U.S. support of Israel,” some 63 percent said the attacks would have happened regardless and 30 percent said it was a major factor.

Regarding whether the Arab world seeks the eventual destruction of Israel, 62 percent said they believe the Arab world does seek to destroy Israel, while 14.6 percent said they believe the Arab world sincerely accepts Israel’s right to exist.

U.S. doesn’t need another terrorist state in Middle East

Arutz-7—Does the U.S. need another terrorist state in the Middle East? Yoram Ettinger, Israel’s former liaison to the U.S. Congress, asked this question in his weekly column, “The Jerusalem Cloakroom,” published by the Ariel Center for Policy Research. He answered it with a resounding no.

“The PLO’s track record,” wrote Ettinger, “suggests that a PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] state would have bolstered Saddam [ever] since 1990; aligned itself with Iran; doomed Jordan during the 1970 Syrian invasion; threatened Kuwait and other Persian Gulf sheikdoms; become the prime training ground for international terrorists; provided Russia and China with another Mideast platform; been the most corrupt and oppressive regime in the region; and utilized its initial territory as a springboard to establish a narco-terrorist state from Iraq to the Mediterranean.”

He also noted the pro-Osama bin Laden, pro-Saddam Hussein, and anti-American rallies in PLO-controlled areas, reflect the “eight years of brainwashing by the PLO via schools, mosques and media.”

Placenta blood bank to help people needing bone marrow transplants

A new blood bank using blood collected from afterbirth placentas will soon help people requiring bone marrow transplants.

The National Placenta Blood Bank being started by Magen David Adom will collect blood from the placentas which, until now, were thought to be valueless and were disposed of after the mothers gave birth to their children.

Professor Eilat Shenhar told Arutz-7, “It turns out that the placenta that gives nourishment and life to the fetus while it’s in its mother’s womb can continue to give and save life even after the birth. In the blood that gathers in the placenta, about 100 to 120 milliliters worth of blood, there are blood cells that can help patients who require a bone marrow transplant.”

Arutz-7 reported that the blood will be checked and sorted according to tissue types, as is done when searching for bone marrow donors, and will be stored in a deep-freeze of -190 degrees Celsius. “There are two important advantages,” said Professor Shenhar. “One is that this organ would otherwise have been thrown out. More importantly, precious time is saved when searching for a donor because the blood will already be there when the need arises.”

Armed school buses delivered to front lines

Many Israeli children now ride to school in armored vehicles to protect them from unrelenting Palestinian gunfire.

The Jewish Agency delivered 11 armored school buses to communities under fire and have another nine buses on order. They were purchased with funds raised by world Jewry, an Israeli governmental news agency reported.

The Jewish Agency is transferring the vehicles through the Center of Regional Councils to the various towns and villages, using Israeli Defense Forces guidelines. Jewish people all over the world helped buy the armored vehicles to bus school children, due to continuing terror attacks on roads throughout Israel, Judea, Samaria, and Gaza.

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Arutz reported that, 20 kilometers to the west, police thwarted yet another serious attack when they caught two Arabs carrying a bag with a bomb and other explosives.

Placenta blood bank to help people needing bone marrow transplants

Terrorists kill 2 near bus station; Hamas vows to kill Sharon

Two Jewish people were shot dead and 30 more injured as Palestinian terrorists opened fire while running from the Afula Central Bus Station to a nearby open-air market recently. Meanwhile, Hamas declared its intent to assassinate Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon or another senior government official. Terrorists succeeded in assassinating Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze’evi in October.

Ten people are listed in serious condition in Afula’s HaEmek Hospital following the Afula attack. At least one, who is being treated for shock, was injured in a previous terror attack on a bus station in October. Three people were killed then.

Arutz-7 reported that, 20 kilometers to the west, police thwarted yet another serious attack when they caught two Arabs carrying a bag with a bomb and other explosives.

Following the murders in Afula, Interior Minister Eli Yeshai said, “I thank God and the security forces for all the attacks that have been thwarted over the past few weeks. But at the same time, we see that there has been no change in the Palestinian policy of violence, and it is important for the Americans and Europeans to see this. The previous attack in Afula [in which three Israelis were murdered] was carried out by none other than Palestinian Authority policemen.”

Environment Minister Tzachi HaNega told Arutz-7, “It’s very hard to be optimistic when we see not only [American mediator Gen. Anthony] Zinni, but many other world leaders making pilgrimages to Arafat and begging him to stop the violence, and all they hear in response is more violence and fantasies of Israeli uranium plots. We simply have no one to speak with—we never had—and the only choice is to go back to what the prime minister said a few months ago, which is to rely only on ourselves and to fight terrorism with whatever tools we have at our disposal.”
First, I wish to express my sorrow to the many families who are suffering because of what happened in America on September 11. It was a terrible tragedy. We are familiar with tragedy in Israel. Every day we have funerals to bury the victims of terrorism. And we know how deep is the anguish of losing those who are most dear to us because of violence. Where there is no faith, there is hate. We are praying for you in America.

According to the United Nations, Israel is always wrong. So many of our people, especially innocent women and children, die or become crippled by suicide bombs. But the UN always finds Israel guilty. It does not seem to matter to anyone that 56 Muslim countries dominate the UN, while we are only one tiny country fighting to stay alive. Yet God tells us not to be afraid:

Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish. Fear not, thou worm, Jacob, . . . I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 41:11, 13).

Where I live, many Palestinian Arabs surround me. Many of them hate us very much. But I walk among them and try to show them that they are living in deep blindness. When I see them, I smile and greet them nicely in their own language, asking politely, “How are you?”

Recently, after I greeted a group of Arabs in this manner, one looked at me and replied angrily, “Have you not seen the headlines?”

“Yes,” I said. “These I see every day. I know what is in the news. Do you know what is in the Ten Commandments?”

“Certainly,” he replied.

“Tell me what is written there.”

“You must ask our sheik; he knows the answer.”

So I told him, “It is written, ‘Thou shalt love . . . thy neighbor as thyself’ (Lk. 10:27). And you are our neighbors.”

“This is nice,” they all agreed.

“But how do you expect us to love you since you are our enemies?”

Now was my opportunity to show them that, by faith in the Lord, all things are possible. “We cannot do this in our own strength,” I said. “But, as it is written in Zechariah 4:6, ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.’ We can be good friends if we believe in the Lord because He is love. And He has told us to pray for our enemies and bless them” (Lk. 6:28; Rom. 12:14; 1 Pet. 3:8–9).

“Does your Quran tell you to pray for those who persecute you?” I asked. “Your leaders are blind. They tell you stories filled with hatred; and you believe them and are even ready to become suicide bombers and make your children suicide bombers as well, all because of hatred. We see this every day.
Your leaders say they are godly people. But if they were godly, they would not be sending their children to be killed this way.”

We spoke for a long time. They asked me to show them where it is written to love one’s enemies. “It is hard to believe,” they said. So I showed them the truth from God’s Word. It was a big surprise for them when they read it for themselves.

“Can you really do this?” one asked.

“I am not perfect,” I said. “But we can truly love our enemies if we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. Only then can we do what otherwise would seem impossible.”

“Why do you speak to us about Jesus?” another asked. So I began to teach them about God from the beginning. You must go slowly with these people. They wanted to know where everything was written, so I showed them. They asked me how I came to believe in Christ, so I explained that also. This is the only way to come to such individuals, with patience and love. It is important to show them the great difference between people who believe in Christ and people such as their blood-thirsty leaders.

I showed them we can make peace only by His love, not by hatred. We spoke for such a long time. Then they asked me if I could give them a copy of the New Testament, which I did gladly.

Even though we live like sworn enemies, through God’s love we can become the best of friends. Before we parted, I read them Ephesians 6:10–17, which teaches about the armor of God. They have promised to meet with me again. I am anxious to see them and pray that they will come.