Christ in the Passover

The Friends of Israel is pleased to present “Christ in the Passover,” a video hosted and narrated by Steve Herzig, our Director of North American Ministries. This dramatization of the Passover celebration demonstrates the Passover seder while teaching the clear message that “Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7).

Not only will this video provide a source of instruction for you, your church, or your study group, it will also be a valuable tool in communicating the richness of the Passover message to those who need Christ.

PASSOVER BEGINS AT SUNDOWN APRIL 19th

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ABOUT THE COVER
No place on earth has ever aroused the degree of controversy that has swirled around the Temple Mount in Jerusalem for millennia. And from every available evidence, the 21st century will bring more of the same. Our cover photos, courtesy of Jimmy DeYoung and Shofar Communications, picture Islamic desecration of the Temple Mount. Important artifacts from the first and second Jewish Temples have been unearthed and discarded. The Islamic attempt to destroy the Jewish identity of Mount Moriah reflects the ferocity of the struggle to control the place Jehovah has chosen for His house of praise and wor-

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EDITORIAL

Christians and the Jerusalem Giveaway

When, during the 1967 Six-Day War, Israeli Colonel Mordechai “Motta” Gur uttered the electrifying words, “The Temple Mount is in our hands!” Jewish people danced in the streets; and Bible-believing Christians shared their unbridled joy.

After 2,000 years of exile and two decades of having the doors to the Old City slammed in their faces, the Jewish people were home—in Jerusalem. And when we heard Israel’s then-Minister of Defense, General Moshe Dayan, speak at the wall that day, we believed he spoke for us all.

“We have returned,” Dayan said, “to our most holy place, never again to leave it.” He added, “We earnestly extend our hands to our Arab brethren in peace, but we have returned to Jerusalem, never to part from her again.”

Those were the best of days. Three decades later, the heroism and sacrifice of those young Israeli paratroopers and the aura of optimism they brought have faded with the inscriptions on their headstones. Dayan’s words, “never to part from her again,” are barely remembered, much less echoed, in Jerusalem, Washington, D.C., or the halls of the United Nations.

In the American-forged bridging proposals accepted by the cabinet of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, the Old City is to be dismantled. A bizarre arrangement cedes sovereignty over the surface of the Temple Mount to the Muslims. Thus it henceforth would be called Haram al-Sharif. Only what lies beneath the flagstone pavement would belong to Israel. Jewish archaeologists forever would be denied access to the remains of their first and second Temples.

However, compounding this blatant trampling of Jewish rights is the proposal to cede control of all holy sites—Muslim, Jewish, and Christian—to Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority.

The first question is obvious: Who gave politicians the right to make this decision? Only people with exceedingly short memories could forget how poorly the Jews and their synagogues fared in the Old City during the nineteen years of militarily imposed Islamic “sovereignty” following the 1948 War of Independence.

And who, pray tell, decided that Christians are itching to live and worship under the sovereign dictates of the Muslim Mufti of Jerusalem? Arab Christians have fled Bethlehem since Arafat took over. Shortly before Christmas, members of a Christian video crew filming inside the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem were arrested by Palestinian police who accused them of being Zionists, burned their film, and incarcerated them for hours before allowing them to leave.

In Lebanon, many of our Christian brethren are languishing in Lebanese prisons, some for up to twenty years. In the Old City of Jerusalem, many Arab Christians are already leaving areas tagged for Muslim takeover. Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert’s advisor on Christian affairs noted, “The Christian population [in the Middle East] is continually shrinking. They are voting with their feet because they are living under the constant threat of our Moslem neighbors.”

Unfortunately, most Christians have no idea what is at stake for them and their future visits to the Holy Land. In the American plan for the Old City, “what is Arab should go to the Arabs, and what is Jewish, to the Jews.” No distinction is made regarding Arab-Christian and Muslim-Arab communities. All Christian holy places within Arab sectors would fall to the Muslim-dominated Palestinian Authority. Such places as the Garden of Gethsemane and the Garden Tomb may well become Palestinian. Olmert fears that even the Mount of Olives may pass to Arafat. If it doesn’t, a corridor through Arab territory still would be needed to provide access for Jews and Christians.

One of the many aspects of Israeli control that Christians have appreciated but taken for granted is their free access to all Christian holy sites. That the same will be true under Islamic sovereignty is not a prospect we can count on.

Furthermore, beyond the threshold of Israeli concessions looms the creation of the State of Palestine. Whatever is taken from Israel today will reemerge as part of the sovereign State of Palestine tomorrow, never to be retrieved. When Christians or Jews want to visit their holy places in Palestine, they will have to enter another country. And not one shred of assurance exists that Islamic Palestine will keep its promises. Visitors may well find “closed” signs posted at the borders.

Giveaway enthusiasts claim that a Palestinian state will need the tourist business. They forget, however, that providing bread for Palestinian families has never been a priority of Palestinian leadership. During the most recent intifada, a reporter asked Yasser Arafat if he was not concerned about the deprivation suffered by his people due to the uprising and consequent lack of work. His reply was that his people are more concerned about their cause than their bread.

All of which brings us to the underlying issue negotiators consistently neglect. In the eyes of radical Islamic elements, this is a jihad—a holy war. For them, treaties are conveniences designed to be broken in the name of Allah, and all concessions made by Israel and her Western allies are but steps on the road to what they call a “unified Palestine.” They are fighting for total victory and will not stop until the remnants of a demolished State of Israel drift helplessly in the Mediterranean Sea.

If any outrage or “righteous indignation” still smolders within those of us who are truly Christians, now is the time to fan it into flames. Our brethren in distress need us. And if we are serious about the biblical mandate to comfort the Chosen People and pray for the peace of Jerusalem, we must speak now or live to regret it.
Krewson’s
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Battle lines have long been drawn on the issue of whether the Holocaust was fact or fiction. Anti-Semitic historical revisionists have labored tirelessly to twist their absurd denials of this profound tragedy into some semblance of reality for people who are equally as demented and filled with hatred as they. Fortunately, they have failed to sell their fictional brand of wishing-well history to lucid people who know better. The lines of emaciated victims, piles of withered corpses, and meticulous records kept by the managers of Hitler’s killing machines fully expose the big lie of revisionism.

With the turn of the millennium, however, comes a new and equally insidious rewrite of history that reaches far beyond the confines of the Jewish community and assaults all of us who regard the preservation of historical accuracy as a sacred trust. Not surprisingly, this latest attempt to establish fiction as fact again involves the history of the Jewish people. At issue are ancient Jewish associations with Mount Moriah, commonly known as the Temple Mount, in Jerusalem.

During the Camp David negotiations last year, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and American intermediaries offered a plan to share sovereignty of the Mount or declare it under “divine sovereignty.” Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat flatly refused the offer. In an article titled “Power of the Myth,” which appeared in the November 20 issue of The New Republic, Gershom Gorenberg wrote, “Arafat’s sole concession was to suggest “Islamic sovereignty” under the Islamic Conference Organization…. The Palestinians refused to acknowledge any Jewish connection to the site, a position that exasperated even left-wing Israelis. It made the denial of Jews’ historical roots to their homeland into the central Palestinian negotiating point. By dismissing the Jewish past, Arafat focused Israeli public attention on the Mount and invited Ariel Sharon to use the spot’s symbolism for his own statement of ownership.
Fact Versus Fantasy

Two thousand years ago, the historian Josephus described the Jewish Temple as it stood before it was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. Viewed from without, the Sanctuary had everything that could amaze either mind or eyes. Overlaid all around with stout plates of gold, in the first rays of the sun it reflected so fierce a blaze of fire that those who endeavored to look at it were forced to turn away as if they had looked straight at the sun. To strangers as they approached it seemed in the distance like a mountain covered with snow; for any part not covered with gold was dazzling white.

In Rome today you can see evidence of the destruction of Israel’s ancient, sacred edifice in an arch depicting Caesar’s triumph over the Jews. Roman legionnaires are shown carrying vessels on their shoulders from the Temple at Jerusalem. There is reason to believe that the menorah from that Temple may be stored somewhere in the Vatican.

History attests that the Jewish people were evicted by force from the holy Mount that King David purchased from Araunah the Jebusite millennia ago.

And King David said to Araunah, [Araunah], Nay, but I will verily buy it for the full price; for I will not take that which is thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings without cost. So David gave to Araunah for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. And David built there [on Mount Moriah] an altar unto the LORD (1 Chr. 21:24–26).

After the Roman destruction of the Temple and the scattering of the Jewish people, the Temple Mount was under occupation by various Gentile powers. They included the Muslim forces that seized it and the city of Jerusalem by weight of arms in A.D. 637. Gentile occupation continued until June 1967 when Jewish soldiers regained control of the city and the Mount.

Despite these facts, Yasser Arafat and other Muslims who are dedicated to the total supremacy of Islam over Judaism and Christianity are working on two fronts to discredit Jewish claims to the site. They contend the Jewish people have never had a serious or prolonged presence on the sacred mountain. The assertion, of course, is preposterous—as preposterous, in fact, as Holocaust revisionism. But in the world of Islam, where rhetoric is more forceful than fact, the absurd is often a marketable product. Add to this situation the historical illiteracy afflicting much of a credulous Western society, and you have a world where lies, as in the Hitlerian era, become volatile and destructive commodities.

To establish an identity that is exclusively Arab for the area historically known as the Temple Mount, Arafat is up to his old tricks. Not many years ago, he chose to call Arabs living in Palestine by a new name. Rather than being Arabs with homes in Palestine, he determined they would henceforth be called Palestinians. This move, he reasoned, would create a perception that the Arabs were the ancient inhabitants of the land, whereas the Jews were Hebrews-come-lately into the territory of the people akin to the ancient Philistines. In fact, however, the vast majority of Arabs in Palestine had been there no longer than their Jewish neighbors who were known as Jews who lived in Palestine, or, if you choose, Palestinian Jews. The ploy was swallowed completely by the Western media, which have perpetuated it to the advantage of the Arab world ever since.

And now they are perpetuating a new ploy. After being known for 3,000 years as the site of Israel’s Temples, the Temple Mount has emerged with a new name. The Palestinians and much of the Western media have suddenly begun to refer to the Temple Platform as Haram al-Sharif, the Arabic name for the Temple Mount. This well-calculated change came at the very time Palestinian negotiators began to demand exclusive rights and control of the Temple Mount and East Jerusalem.

Destroying the Evidence

Under the guise of providing space for a mosque on the Temple Mount, Palestinians have carted off tons of earth containing artifacts...
that Israeli archaeologists (who have been banned from the site) say come from the first and second Temple periods. These experts in digging up history are mystified as to why the Barak government is allowing such wholesale desecration to continue. There is no mystery, however, concerning the intent of the excavators and their leaders. The Palestinians are blatantly attempting to destroy as much physical evidence as possible of the Jewish presence on the Mount.

When Yasser Arafat, in an attempt to ingratiate himself and his cause to Christians, recently referred to Jesus walking the streets of East Jerusalem, he implied that the Lord walked where Palestinians will soon be directing the affairs of their future state. Ehud Olmert, Israel’s mayor of Jerusalem, was ready with an answer. He stated, and accurately so, that when Jesus walked the streets of ancient Jerusalem, He would have seen no Dome of the Rock or Al-Aqsa mosques on the Temple Mount. Nor would He have seen a mosque anywhere in all of Israel. He would have seen a Jewish Temple on Mount Moriah and scores of synagogues dotting the landscape. As a matter of fact, Islam did not come into existence for another six hundred years.

Jerusalem, furthermore, is not mentioned even once in the Muslim holy book, the Quran. Islam’s claim to sovereignty over the Temple Mount is based solely on a tradition that Muhammad’s “winged” steed touched down there on the way to paradise, thus making Jerusalem the third holiest site for Muslims. And while Islam’s heart is in Arabia’s Mecca and Medina, Jewry’s heart longs for Jerusalem, which is deeply enshrined in both history and the Word of God. The Scripture says it best.

**If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy (Ps. 137:5–6).**

**Implications Too Large to Ignore**

To some, the foregoing discussion may mean little more than quibbling over semantics and a pile of dusty stones. For Jewish people and Christians, however, the implications are much more serious. The intent of the Palestinians and the Muslim world is clear. They regard both Christians and Jews as inferior infidels who have no right to any area that Islam calls sacred. This, of course, means Israel and every grain of sand in the East and elsewhere. The orchestrated Arab uproar that ensued after Israeli official Ariel Sharon set foot on the Temple Mount last fall spoke volumes about what we can expect if and when a Palestinian state comes to fruition. East Jerusalem and the Temple Mount will be returned to the pre-1967 era when the barbed wire fences, by their very presence, said, “No Jews Allowed.”

But the gravity of what confronts us has a still deeper, more serious aspect that we can ill afford to ignore. If, in fact, the Jewish people never had a significant attachment to the Temple Mount, then biblical Judaism perpetrated a lie and, for thousands of years, practiced a most despicable deception. In addition, the revered records of the New Testament, transmitting the knowledge of Jesus’ extended ministries at the grand Herodian Temple in Jerusalem, would be a fabrication; and Christianity would have to join Judaism as a shameless purveyor of myth and spiritual skullduggery.

The conclusion is obvious. If Jews and Christians fabricated their tales of the Temples and the centrality of those edifices to legitimate relationships to God, then both religions would be discredited. If this were the case, the only major religion left, of course, would be Islam. And since Muslims already regard Islam as the only true religion, this coup would seal the final phase of their centuries-long *jihad* against their rivals.

**Conclusions**

- The warfare now being conducted with such ferocity in Israel and the Middle East is not merely a confrontation between two groups of people with unbending, self-serving agendas.
- As the Word of God constantly reminds us, this is a spiritual warfare that will intensify until the Messiah makes His decisive appearance and settles all scores.
- As Christians, we must be discerning and not allow the media or politicians to sway our commitment to Israel and the Jewish people despite the constant, dishonest, and manipulative depiction of Israel as the persecutors of helpless Arabs.
- Our defense of the integrity of the Word of God, both Old and New Testaments, is critical in these days of denial.
- We must be biblically literate discerners of the times and be prepared to fight the good fight in these last days.

Elwood McQuaid is the Executive Director of The Friends of Israel.
This world is becoming a very, very small place. People speak about such things as “the global village” and “the world community” as effortlessly as any ordinary topic in the morning news. What would have been unthinkable not long ago is now accepted as simple fact. The Internet, global satellite television, international banking, and the like have become as familiar and commonplace as the family car. And talk of a one-world system hardly threatens anyone anymore.

Is a global economic system the way to go? Actually, in many ways, it’s already here. All that remains is for an articulate spokesman to champion the cause of making official what is already operative. That man will come, bringing with him the day when the world will literally see itself as one, in precise fulfillment of what the Scripture says about the world in the last days.

We have had many events lately that point out how far we have come down the road to one world, especially in the area of global finance. As the stock markets opened in Japan on a day that came to be known as “black Monday,” investors became aware that something had gone awry. Stock prices were down substantially, and the market quickly lost almost a quarter of its value. One by one, as the world turned and sleepy nations awakened to the business of the day, stock markets reeled and lost value...
on hearing news of the crash in Japan. The creeping contagion relentlessly made its way here to the United States, where the New York Stock Exchange experienced the largest single day’s drop in its checkered history.

There once was a time when individual economies of the world were somewhat isolated, almost as islands unto themselves. But those days have long since gone. Vast global businesses now operate everywhere. Billboards for McDonald’s restaurants, Coca-Cola™, and similar enterprises litter the roadsides from Moscow to Johannesburg, from Singapore to Paris. People in virtually every corner of the world watch CNN. MasterCard™ boasts that it has become the global currency—accepted on every continent and in every nation.

But what does this situation mean for the fledgling world economy? Is this growing interdependence good, or does it portend darker times as we move toward the end of the age?

In the United States, we have a real problem. We have many of them, of course; but one stands out above the rest. America is $5.5 trillion in debt. It is, in fact, the largest debtor nation in history. That’s an incredible amount of money, almost beyond imagination. As a result, taxpayers have to come up with $1 billion every day just to pay the interest on such a staggering sum. It amounts to nearly a quarter of every dollar that is collected in taxes. Why do we do this? Because that’s what it takes to keep up the pretense of prosperity that we brag about in the United States.

But so far we have made almost no effort to pay down the national debt and relieve our taxpayers from the awful burden of paying the interest on it. We hear much talk about the recent surpluses in the national budget. But rather than prudently considering paying off the massive debt or reducing our overhead so we could operate on much less should trouble arise, we are debating how to spend the monies that have not yet come in. We are “counting our chickens before they are hatched,” and that is a very foolish practice!

**A coming world ruler . . . will promise to unify the globe’s economic systems and bring universal stability, putting “a chicken in every pot.”**

Many economists believe we have already pressed our economy to the limit. A continued rise in the price of fossil fuels, a terrorist attack on a major city, or another war in the Middle East could easily bring the American economy and, in turn, the economies of the world, crashing down. By the way, the attack last fall on the American warship Cole reminds us that a more massive terrorist assault may not be so far away. Nor would anyone be surprised if the conflict in and around Jerusalem escalated so much it drew in the nations of the world, including the United States.

A nation in great debt risks financial collapse when beset by extraordinary circumstances, and the American debt has the potential to be history’s most spectacular and volatile example of that principle. That’s a terrible situation to be in. According to an old saying, “If you’re going to dance, you have to pay the piper.” The time has come to pay the piper in the United States. The situation cannot go on forever. In fact, it can’t go on much longer.

But the same condition is true practically the world over. Staggering debt is almost universal, and nations cannot pay their bills. When a nation goes bankrupt, people have no food to eat, no gasoline for their automobiles, no milk for their children. The threat of economic collapse is a terrible thing. Sadly, the Bible indicates that our present economic system will induce a massive, global, economic collapse.

In the book of Revelation, the third rider of the Apocalypse carries a balance in his hand and says, “A measure of wheat for a denarius, and three measures of barley for a denarius, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine” (6:6). A denarius in Roman times was what a person received for a day’s labor. Eventually it will take an entire day’s wages to buy a loaf of bread. That will be the economic condition as we move toward the end of the age.

Such vast economic disorder will cause great international disillusionment. “What shall we do?” When that call is raised across the globe, desperate people will be willing to accept the word of anyone who promises to get them out of their economic difficulties.
The Bible foretells the rise of a coming world ruler known in the prophetic Word as the Antichrist. Recognizing the volatile climate in a world writhing in financial chaos, this clever and diabolical politician will promise to unify the globe’s economic systems and bring universal stability, putting “a chicken in every pot,” as it were.

Is that, in fact, possible today? We’ve all become aware of some powerful technological advances that you and I might never have dreamed of just a few years ago: the World Wide Web, the Internet, electronic funds transfer. All these capabilities involve money and the communication of money and information around the world. Furthermore, amazing new devices can now scan your eye as you walk up to the automatic teller, verifying that you are the person you present yourself to be. In the works are computer chips that can be implanted in your ATM card, just as others are now being implanted in human beings to identify and track their movements.

We should have seen it coming. Not long ago, the practice of implanting computer identification chips in pets became commonplace. Today, if you have such a chip inserted under the skin of your precious pet, he can be identified as yours by a simple scan (much like the one that scans your food items at the grocery store). That development has provided much comfort to pet lovers here in the United States.

Our world is coming together as never before. We have an economic system already in place that permits the instant transferal of money to any place in the world without ever touching a single piece of currency. It’s as though someone has opened a Pandora’s box! In fact, economists representing five or six different points of view that we could easily name are asking, “What shall we do? How can we get a handle on this burgeoning financial capability that no one can control or even fully understand? It has taken on a life of its own. Is there someone with a new plan who will help us get it under control?”

Stepping onto the scene will be the man with a plan. He will announce, “I have the economic system that will work.” During last fall’s election campaigns, many politicians made almost unbelievable claims to have the economic solution to make it all come together. And we wonder how much they really know about what they are saying.

When the world finally discovers that all those vaunted human plans don’t work, along will come the Antichrist; and he’ll lay his big card on the table. “We can put together a unified world. There will be money for everyone. There will be milk for the children. There will be a house for every family. Everyone will have his own shade tree to sit under. We will export prosperity to the ends of the earth.”

How would you feel about that offer if you were starving? How would you feel about that if you had no food for your children, as is true in so many places today? How would you feel if someone offered to come and solve all of your problems? You would say, “I want to be a part of that great system!” That is precisely the offer the Antichrist is going to make.

And one of the ways he will make that offer possible is by trying to make sure that everyone who will not be part of his plan, who will not cooperate with it, who will be an economic drain on it, or who will refuse to take his identification number presumably will starve to death. The Antichrist is going to give every person a number. It is called in the Bible “the mark of the beast.” If a person refuses that number, he will not be able to buy, he will not be able to sell, and he will be out of luck as far as money is concerned. Therefore, a massive wave of death is expected to overtake the nations because there will not be enough money, in any foreseeable plan, to solve the problems of the people of the world.

Why? Because once again, man has deserted God. He has come short of the glory of God. Man cannot survive when he lives by principles that are satanic rather than divine. But satanic principles are what the Antichrist will offer the world—veiled in a unified world economic system. And that system, when accepted by a world in crisis, will not bring peace and plenty. It will bring a time so terrible that the Bible says, “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” (Mt. 24:22).

We live in tremendously exciting times. The world is rushing headlong toward the end of the age, and the economic machinations and manipulations of our day will play a great role in bringing about the rise of the Antichrist. As Christians, we need not fear those days; but, rather, we should look to the sky for a redemption that draws nigh. Jesus is coming back for His own, and it is our prayer that each one of us will be ready!

Dave Breese is President of Christian Destiny, Inc., and World Prophetic Ministry, Inc.
As the world moves rapidly toward the formation of a global village, attention is being shifted increasingly from concern over what is best for individual nations (nationalistic interests) to what is best for the whole world (global interests). This revolutionary surge toward a new world order is the result of dramatic developments over the last hundred years. In fact, Kofi Annan, secretary-general of the United Nations, has written, “If one word encapsulated all the changes the world was living through, it was globalization.”

**Secular Developments**

The twentieth century witnessed many major changes in the secular realm. Military conflicts shifted from being primarily localized in scope (one nation against another) to being international (clusters of nations uniting against an enemy). Two world wars involving the armed forces of many nations brought unparalleled destruction and loss of life to large areas of the world. Multinational forces intervened militarily in the Far East (Korean and Vietnam Wars), the Middle East (Gulf War), and Europe (Bosnia and Kosovo).

Warfare technology developed nuclear weapons and delivery systems with the potential of destroying all life on earth.

The World Court was established to judge actions and disputes of nations and leaders. The United Nations was formed to provide a forum where nations could solve differences without war.

The development of long-range airplanes enabled us to travel almost anywhere in the world in one day.

The telephone, satellites, computers, and e-mail made instant, worldwide communication possible between people, governments, and businesses. Television and radio brought the sight and sound of world events directly into our homes.

Individual nations and the United Nations attempted to influence human rights policies of nations. World conferences were held to address such issues as AIDS, population control, the plight of women, the environment, and human rights.
The migration of significant numbers of people to various parts of the world prompted the exposure and even amalgamation of diverse racial, national, and ethnic groups.

The nations of Europe are forging a form of unification (the European Union) with a common economic system and currency and the possibility of eventual political and military union.

Economies of nations have become increasingly interdependent, moving the world toward an international economic system. The European Union is one step in that direction. Nations in various parts of the world are forming regional free trade blocks (such as NAFTA). What happens with the stock market in one part of the world dramatically affects the performance of stock markets in other parts. Significant companies have internationalized with branches in several nations. Companies of different nations are merging with each other. Some companies are taking over or purchasing companies from other nations. Banking firms are continually merging into larger conglomerates. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are significantly advancing the internationalization of economics.

All these developments, some of which benefit and others of which threaten mankind, have made the world smaller. Events in one region can have repercussions for the entire world. As a result, individuals can no longer afford to focus their attentions exclusively on local and national matters. This increasing globalization imposes a growing concern for what happens worldwide.

In light of this concern, on September 6–8, 2000, approximately 150 world leaders gathered at the United Nations world headquarters in New York City for the UN Millennium Summit. It was the largest gathering of world leaders in the history of mankind. Its stated purpose was to make globalization “fully inclusive and equitable” by getting world leaders and their nations to commit to the goals of freeing all peoples of the world from want and fear, protecting the environment from destruction, and renewing the United Nations. The summit ended with world leaders unanimously adopting the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which “contains a statement of values, principles and objectives for the international agenda for the twenty-first century.”

## Religious Developments

The last one hundred years have also witnessed significant developments of an ecumenical nature in the religious realm, including interdenominational cooperation; union of denominations; national federations of church groups (such as the National Council of Churches); international councils and fellowships (such as the World Council of Churches); dialogues between groups within organized Christendom; dialogues between Christendom and non-Christian religions; Catholic observers at World Council of Churches’ meetings; Protestant observers at Roman Catholic meetings; and joint participation of Protestants, Catholics, and people of other religions in large public rallies.

In October 1999, representatives of twenty religions from forty-eight nations met at the Vatican to explore cooperative opportunities in the new millennium. Non-Christian attendees included Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, Mandaeans, Jains, Shintoists, Confucians, Baha’is, representatives of traditional religions, and several Japanese faiths. Organized Christendom attendees came from the following church groups: Roman Catholic; Anglican; Lutheran; Reformed; Mennonite; evangelical; and Greek, Armenian, Romanian, and Assyrian Orthodox.

Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops from thirteen world regions met in Toronto in May 2000 to form “a joint commission to consider unification.”

The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church (America’s largest Lutheran denomination) have approved the formation of an alliance “to share clergy and sacraments, and work together in ‘shared mission.’” This alliance was to take effect on January 1, 2001.

Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox leaders from around the world met in Emmitsburg, Maryland, in July 2000 “to seek common ground” with the prospect of eventual complete reconciliation. The meetings ended without significant progress.

In June 2000, three hundred representatives of thirty-nine religions met in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, under the leadership of Episcopal Bishop William Swing, to sign a charter establishing the United Religions Initiative (URI). The URI asserts that all religions derive their wisdom from the same source. It implies that all religions have a common base for unification. In 1995 Bishop Swing declared that, as the world is progressing toward “unity in terms of global economy, global media and global ecological system,” one thing is missing—“a global soul.” In other words, a unified world will need a unified religion.
On August 28–31, 2000, one thousand representatives of religions from around the world met at the UN for the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. Its purpose was to create “an International Advisory Council of Religious and Spiritual Leaders that is designed to serve as an ongoing interfaith ally to the UN in its quest for peace, global understanding and international cooperation.”

The secretary-general of this religious summit, Bawa Jain, worked with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his office to arrange this gathering. Jain is a leader in Bishop Swing’s United Religions Initiative. Jain expressed belief that all religions are equal, that claims of absolute truth must be dealt with, and that all attempts to persuade people from one religion to believe another should be outlawed. He stated that the timing of the religious summit one week before the UN Millennium Summit of world political leaders was perfect because it afforded religious leaders the opportunity to show political leaders “how to usher in the peace of the new world order through religious universalism.”

This religious summit received heavy support from American communications mogul Ted Turner, founder of CNN, and Canadian billionaire Maurice Strong. In his speech at the summit, Turner told how he rejected the Christian faith he was taught in his childhood, and that he rejected Christianity because of its intolerant claim to be the only true religion. Strong, who is senior advisor both to the UN secretary-general and the president of the World Bank, is so influential in global affairs that The New Yorker magazine stated, “The survival of civilization in something like its present form might depend significantly on the efforts of a single man.”

Representatives of several religions reacted negatively to the summit’s emphasis that all religions are equal and that no attempts should be made to sway people from one religion to another. Less than two weeks after this Millennium Religious Summit, the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a thirty-six-page document declaring that most non-Catholic Christian denominations are not “churches in the proper sense.”

During the second week of September 2000, more than 160 Jewish leaders from all major branches of Judaism signed “a landmark statement acknowledging Judaism’s shared roots with Christianity and calling on Jews to give up distrust of Christians.”

On September 9–11, 2000, representatives of “Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Reformation Protestant, Pentecostal, and evangelical churches as well as Christian networks and para-church organizations” from around the world met at Fuller Theological Seminary to explore the possibility of forming a “global Christian forum” that would address issues of common concern and “foster relationships that could lead to common ministry.”

Leaders of the National Council of Churches, the National Association of Evangelicals, and possibly the Roman Catholic ecumenical affairs office in Washington are considering meeting together this spring to study the possibility of forming “a new broad-based national ecumenical body that would work together on common social causes.”

**A Biblical Perspective**

These secular and religious developments toward globalization take on more significance when viewed from a biblical perspective. Revelation 17—18 reveal that a global, political-economic-religious system will dominate the world during the future Tribulation period. The political division (“the beast”) will tolerate domination by the religious division (“the harlot,” which has global influence [17:15]) as long as it needs that division to help it attain complete global domination (17:3, 7). But once that goal is reached, the political division will turn against the religious division and destroy it (17:16).

According to Vatican expert Malachi Martin, powerful cardinals in the Vatican have formed an alliance with “leaders of major international humanist organizations,” such as “academia, foundations, nongovernment organizations, even some governmental agencies.” These cardinals and humanist leaders have a “globalist view.” They believe that the Roman Catholic Church is “the only global structure” that is able “to act as a stabilizing social force in the world.” Thus the humanist leaders hope that “they can get the Roman Catholic Church to side with them” in fulfilling their globalist view.

In light of this, one can expect that globalism will increasingly pressure religious groups to unite with the Roman Catholic Church.

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The Bible reveals that the God of the universe chose to establish His earthly throne at the physical center of the world. This disclosure was made through the great Jewish prophet Ezekiel: “Thus saith the Lord GOD: This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her” (Ezek. 5:5). Widespread belief that Jerusalem is truly situated at the geographical heart of the planet is even reflected in the common term for the region, Middle East.

Spiritually speaking, the holy city also lies at the apex of many people’s religious affections. No fewer than three faiths regard Jerusalem as sacred. More than two billion self-professing Christians—from the Philippines to Argentina, from Siberia to South Africa, indeed from virtually every nation on Earth—gaze toward Earth’s central city with reverent eyes. More than one billion Muslims also hold Jerusalem in high esteem, even though their primary hallowed sites are in nearby Saudi Arabia. And although the Jewish people are far fewer in number, they undeniably look to the Old City’s Temple Mount as the earthly center of their faith, as they have done for more than 3,000 years.

Consequently, Jerusalem is sacred to around half the people on earth. This fact alone helps explain why Israel’s growing capital city has now...
become the lightning rod of world media attention and the future address of Earth’s final conflict.

The Battle for Jerusalem

During the twentieth century, two countries nearly brought the rival superpowers to the brink of a devastating nuclear war. One of them was the small Communist island-nation of Cuba. The other was the even tinier country of Israel. (As small as Cuba is, it is still around five times larger than the Jewish state.) Anyone who even occasionally studies the Bible should not be surprised that Israel has become such a flash point. After all, both the Old and New Testaments foretold that the Promised Land would be the focal point for the climactic battle of history that would usher in the Messiah’s earthly reign.

After I moved to Israel from America in 1980, it took me a few years to figure out why this semiarid country is such an international hot spot. I already understood its importance to the three faiths named above and realized that regional oil supplies amounted to the lifeblood of the world economy. Still, these facts alone did not seem to explain why Jerusalem, of all places, was so controversial.

The Islamic world’s fixation with the city particularly puzzled me since Islam’s holy book, the Quran, does not mention Jerusalem even once by name. Everyone surely realizes that Mecca is, well, their Mecca. And the holy town of Medina, where their revered prophet Muhammad is buried, is clearly more important as well. Why then do so many Muslims seem to get so worked up over a place that is obviously not their primary holy site?

After living in Jerusalem for several years and talking to hundreds of Muslims, it finally dawned on me. This is the place on earth—not Mecca or Medina—where they believe that Islam demonstrated, for all the world to see, that it is “the final revelation of truth.” It was here, in the city I have called home since the 1980s, that the Islamic faith affirmed its self-professed superiority over Judaism and Christianity. Indeed, the Muslims believe that their military conquest of Jerusalem in A.D. 637 was the ultimate testament that their religion is true and the other two faiths flawed, as the Quran insists is the case. Surely, they say, it was none other than Allah himself who delivered the holiest city of both older faiths into their anxious, jihad-stained hands!

If capturing Jerusalem testified to the veracity of their faith, what did losing it to the “Christian” Crusaders say? It was a horrendous humiliation. Many contemporary Mideast Muslims still talk about the relatively brief conquest as if it occurred last week. If a Crusader Jerusalem was unbearable, what about a reborn Jewish state? Unthinkable, unimaginable, impossible.

So they thought until 1948.

Local Arab Muslims have long called Israel’s incredible reappearance on the modern world stage—in the face of an all-out military attempt by several Arab states to prevent it—al-Nakba, “the catastrophe.”

There was but one consolation after the swirling dust of battle finally settled. Sanctified Islamic clerics still ruled over most of the holy sites that the ancient Muslims had long ago “adopted” from Judaism and Christianity, such as Joseph’s tomb in Nablus; the tomb of the patriarchs and matriarchs in Hebron; and, most important, the Haram al-Sharif, or “Noble Sanctuary,” on Jerusalem’s holy Mount Moriah.

The Conflict Continues

Such, at least, was the case until the same coalition of Arab states went to war against the struggling “Zionist entity” in 1967. If the earlier war was a catastrophe, then the Six-Day War was an unspeakable desolation. The hallowed Haram was in despised Jewish hands! So, too, were many other Promised Land sites that had long been under exclusive Islamic control.

It was the burning Islamic need to retrieve the eastern half of Jerusalem that propelled Arab nations to launch a surprise attack on Israel on Yom Kippur in 1973. With full Soviet backing, the Arabs thought they might just succeed. Compared to their Six-Day War rout, they came remarkably close to achieving their goal. But Israel’s rumored nuclear arsenal gave the Kremlin pause. Meanwhile, in America, President Richard Nixon reversed his initial passive stance and began resupplying the besieged Jewish state, which again emerged victorious—if badly bruised.

Still, the desire to retake Jerusalem for Allah never disappeared in the years following the fierce Yom Kippur War. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, when making peace with Israel at Camp David, insisted that negotiations include the Muslim world’s unwavering demand for an Israeli handover of “occupied Arab east Jerusalem.” Although the explosive issue was not even remotely resolved at the picturesque Maryland retreat, Sadat insisted that he would never sign any peace pact that did not include an Israeli promise to deal with the issue in the future.
The 1978 Camp David Accord succeeded in kicking the volatile Jerusalem issue into the stratosphere. But it was bound to come crashing back to earth one day. That day came fifteen years later on the White House lawn, where Israel’s Yitzhak Rabin signed a preliminary peace accord with Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat. As part of the accord—and to the utter astonishment of many Israelis—Rabin formally agreed to negotiate the “final status” of Jerusalem. The combustible issue had landed like a thud on the negotiating table.

More than seven years later, it became clear to all that the Oslo peace process would not succeed in satisfying Muslim aspirations regarding Jerusalem. Once more at Camp David, but with a different American president and Arab and Israeli leaders, Bill Clinton oversaw many long days and nights of intense negotiations to reach a “final status” accord. But the talks broke down last July over the stumbling stone of Jerusalem, with Arafat demanding complete sovereignty over the Temple Mount or no deal. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered him everything but full sovereignty over the holy hill, including actual hands-on control of the site. (The Muslims actually have always run things there during Israel’s nearly 34-year rule of the Old City, although they don’t control the access gates to it.)

The New Palestinian Uprising

On September 27 last year, the new Palestinian uprising began. The Arabs immediately dubbed it the “Al-Aqsa intifada.” Unlike the first uprising that ended almost ten years ago, the goal this time was to wrest control of Jerusalem and especially of the Temple Mount. The aging Arafat said that the violence would stop only when Jerusalem became the capital of his independent Palestinian state “whether Israel likes it or not.” With uncharacteristic candor, he added that anyone who opposed his intentions to set up his throne in Jerusalem “can go to hell.”

One had to wonder if it wasn’t the evil ruler of that fiery domain who actually inspired Arafat’s political demand. After all, it was Satan’s eternal opponent—the God of Israel—who foretold, through His ancient Hebrew prophets, that He would restore control over Jerusalem to His dispersed Jewish people in the last days of human history. That restoration, says the Bible, will be the sign of all signs that the Messiah is on His way back to the Mount of Olives from where He ascended to heaven almost 2,000 years ago. Satan cannot be pleased that God continues to bring back His scattered Jewish people to their homeland at the center of the world.

The Final Showdown

The new Palestinian uprising thrust Israel again into the international spotlight. The world media have flocked to Jerusalem like a gaggle of geese to join those of us who are stationed here permanently. Even the American presidential candidates were suddenly forced to talk about something other than their domestic agendas. The price of oil shot way up, and world stock markets went sharply down.

Everyone realized that this new/old conflict at the center of the globe had the potential to turn extremely ugly, boding ill for the future stability of the world.

At worst, the unstable Middle East is again heading for a major bust-up. This alarming prospect became more probable after Arab leaders—holding their first summit meeting in more than four years—termed Israeli leaders “war criminals” and urged each other to downgrade or cut diplomatic ties with the Jewish state. Meanwhile, Iraq’s brutal dictator has called on all Islamic countries to support the new Palestinian uprising by joining him in a “holy war to liberate Jerusalem.” Iran, Yemen, and Libya have pledged to do so; and Syria has indicated it is leaning in the same direction.

Despite what takes place in the coming months, we can safely say that we are not about to witness the final showdown of history, the battle of Armageddon. According to the Scriptures, many things must still occur before that climactic conflict unfolds. Still, a close examination of current events here in the Middle East can only lead to the momentous conclusion that the prophesied end of the age is indeed drawing near.

One thing is indisputable: Israel will remain at or near the epicenter of world attention until the King of the Jews, the Messiah Jesus, returns to Jerusalem to rule from His glorious throne!

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As I walked toward the Western Wall in Jerusalem recently, I saw a friend of mine, Rabbi Nachman Kahana. Rabbi Kahana is the man most responsible for making preparations for a future third Temple here. He asked an interesting question. “What are the Americans doing in Kosovo?”

I didn’t respond but instead asked him a question. “What do you think of the Kosovo situation?”

He thought for a moment, then replied, “Kosovo today, Jerusalem tomorrow.”

As the European Union (EU) continues to increase in strength, Christians around the world are wondering, Will the EU and NATO eventually evolve into the colossal instrument of world control that someday will rest in the hands of the Antichrist? Will these entities, in fact, become the powers that will descend on Jerusalem during the Great Tribulation and, as the Bible says, trample it under foot (Lk. 21:24; Rev. 11:2)?

As I write this, I am not in Israel but in a hotel in London. And as I gaze out on the shores of the Thames River, I am reminded that London is one of those major cities whose inhabitants make daily decisions that affect the world.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, forty-seven, has been a key player on the world scene since his landslide election to office in May 1997. As the youngest British prime minister in 200 years, Blair has been active in the Middle East quest for peace and is a mover and shaker on the European continent.

The European community is definitely on the rise; and all discerning eyes are fixed on it, NATO, and the connection these two may have to what seems to be the imminent arrival of the Antichrist.

Those of us who know Bible prophecy know that the prophetic scenario, revealed by God centuries

Europe, NATO and the Antichrist
ago through the ancient Jewish prophet Daniel, looks almost like today’s headlines. Daniel’s vision, found in Daniel 7, speaks to the issue of the Antichrist and the possible role the European community and NATO will play in these last days.

Daniel had a vision that spanned at least 2,500 years of world history. He saw the Gentile world powers from the Babylonian Empire of his day through the coming, revived Roman Empire. In his vision, four beasts rose from the “sea,” which is symbolic of the Gentile world. These beasts were (1) the winged lion—Babylonian Empire; (2) the bear on his side with three ribs in his mouth—Medo-Persian Empire; (3) the leopard with four wings and four heads—Grecian Empire; and (4) the beast unlike the rest, “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly”—Roman Empire (Dan. 7:7). These represent the four Gentile world powers from Daniel’s time until the time of Christ’s return.

Daniel’s dream also revealed that the dreadful beast has ten horns, and a “little horn” will rise to power from among them. This “little horn” is the Antichrist. He will subdue three of the other horns to move into a position of absolute control.

With control of the other horns, the little horn, empowered by Satan, will position himself to take over the entire world as he makes his way to Jerusalem to set up his kingdom on this earth. This scenario will unfold exactly as prophesied by Daniel, with the aid of the political structure of this present-day world.

Bearing in mind God’s plan as revealed through Daniel’s vision, we can now focus on the role that the European Union and NATO seem to be playing in this end-times program. No one, of course, can proclaim absolutely that the EU and NATO are the organizations God will use to fulfill Daniel’s prophecy. But prophetic Scripture is like a spotlight. We can shine it on world events to help us understand where we are on God’s timetable of history and what is transpiring spiritually in this present world.

At least four ingredients are currently needed to solidify Europe into what the Bible teaches will be a future version of the old Roman Empire. All four are now coming into their own.

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one language became many (Gen. 11:1–9). With the Internet, many languages have become one.

It is obvious that the role the Internet has played in international economics has positioned Europe to become a major player in the financial system that runs our everyday lives. Furthermore, on January 1, 1999, eleven European nations adopted the new Euro as its official currency, establishing a viable foundation for a solid European identity, an integration of capital markets, and the unification of the European community.

I have spoken to many Europeans in Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain, and Great Britain who believe the Euro is starting to firm up in the financial markets. So far, the strength of the American dollar has been the only slowing factor in the Euro’s advance to the common currency for all of the European Union.

The United Kingdom has not adopted the Euro yet. But it is one of the significant members of the 15-nation European Parliament, the representative assembly of the European Union. The other members are Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, and Sweden. The Parliament has 626 seats, with Germany holding the most at ninety-nine and the United Kingdom, Italy, and France holding the next highest number at eighty-seven each.

The European Parliament has grown steadily in power since the Single European Act of 1987. I’ve spoken to several members of the European Parliament over the years. On Easter Sunday last year, I was standing on the Mount of Olives when a young couple and their three children asked me for directions to a certain holy site.
The woman introduced herself as Eija-Ritta Korhola from Helsinki, Finland. She was in Israel on business as a representative of the European Parliament.

We spoke about the most recent elections to Parliament and discussed how much power this legislative body is accruing on the European continent. She was well qualified to speak about the elections since she had just been reelected to one of Finland’s sixteen seats and had been chosen to visit Israel to prepare a report for the Parliament.

With each passing day, Mrs. Korhola said, the Parliament is increasing in prestige and authority within the European Union. And I have seen evidence of this fact as I’ve traveled throughout Europe.

Recently in Belfast, Northern Ireland, I was told that a well-known Protestant minister holds seats in three different parliaments. He is a member of Stormont, the Northern Ireland House of Parliament; Westminster Houses of Parliament, the parliament for Great Britain; and the European Parliament.

His participation in all three is indicative of the power they each hold. As many other parliamentarians, he can see the handwriting on the wall and realizes that all of Europe is moving toward a unity that will give ultimate power to the European Parliament.

The final ingredient needed to solidify the European Union into a United States of Europe is a military operation. Though there are efforts to put together such a military arm, no viable structure is in place at this time. However, a military operation stationed on the European continent is filling the void. That military organization is known as NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

NATO was created in 1949 as an alliance of twelve independent nations, including the United States, that joined for their mutual defense. Headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, it now numbers nineteen nations. For its first fifty years, it served solely as a defensive unit until the recent conflict in the Balkans over Kosovo. Then its political leaders issued new orders to the military leaders of NATO to go on the offensive. With the military might of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the other seventeen members, NATO was able to bring Yugoslavia to its knees.

NATO’s action in Kosovo far surpassed the military action of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its leader at the time, President Slobodan Milosevic. In what was intended as a move to stop Milosevic from continuing to kill the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, NATO launched 10,484 air strikes from March 24 through June 10, 1999. The assaults reportedly killed thousands and contributed to about 780,000 people becoming refugees by the end of the conflict. And none of the areas that were embroiled in the conflict are members of NATO.

How, you might ask, could NATO’s action be construed as a precursor to fulfilled prophecy? On the surface, it may not appear so. But I’m not speaking solely of the military actions of NATO but of developments within the European Union as they relate to the unity of the European community. The combination of these two certainly set the stage for the coming Antichrist.

The European Union is coming together before our very eyes. Those of us who had the privilege of traveling Europe last year can see it clearly. Through development of a common language, common economic system, political structure, and military operation, the political stage is being set for the prophetic to be fulfilled. Although I am not ready to state unequivocally that the European Union, as it is developing today, is the definitive fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy of the revived Roman Empire (2:40–44; 7:7–8, 23–25), I will say that it could well be the infrastructure.

God has a plan, but it is not always easy to see. How, for example, will the “little horn” (Dan. 7:8) subdue three of the ten horns so that he can come to power? Now, after the use of NATO in the Kosovo situation, it is a little easier to understand how such a situation will occur in the end-times.

A strong military with broad enough and sufficient enough political backing can accomplish almost anything. And in God’s plan, it will. “Kosovo today, Jerusalem tomorrow.” Unfortunately, these are prophetic words.

The Antichrist will come to power from a revived Roman Empire. He will use a military structure to subdue three of the “united” nations by force; and he will take dominion of the world. The potential for this prophetic scenario to occur is greater than it has ever been in the history of our world.

The coming of the Antichrist appears imminent because of the events we see taking place all around us. But let me remind you of something else too. The Rapture of the church will take place before the Antichrist appears. With the arrival of the Antichrist seemingly so close, how much closer, then, must the Rapture be?
As fall chilled the air last year, Gwyne Campbell traveled home to New Jersey to attend a wedding. Shortly before she was to return to Word of Life Bible Institute in Schroon Lake, New York, Gwyne died in a car accident. She was 18.

In his profound grief, Gwyne’s father, Pastor Kenneth Campbell, plumbed the depths of his faith and found comfort in the shelter of the Almighty.

“You know,” he said, “I’ve taught the sovereignty of God. I believe in the sovereignty of God. But I’ve come to love the sovereignty of God.”

Life’s most important events are often beyond human control. But He who sits in the heavens reigns. In March, Jewish people around the world will celebrate Purim, a holiday that came about because of the sovereignty of God, the Ruler of the universe, who holds the heart of the king in the palm of His hand.

Purim commemorates how God used a beautiful young woman named Esther to deliver the Jewish people from annihilation. Esther, whose Hebrew name was Hadassah, was probably even younger than Gwyne when her life also took an unexpected turn, one over which she had no control.

Esther was a subject of King Ahasuerus, also known as Xerxes, who ruled the vast Persian Empire between 486 and 465 B.C. Although the Israelites’ captivity in Babylon had ended, only 50,000 or so Jewish people returned to their land in 538 B.C. Esther lived not in the land but in Shushan, city of the palace, with her cousin Mordecai who had reared her as his own daughter because her parents were dead (Est. 2:7).

Like most girls, she probably entertained thoughts of marrying and having children. Yet one day her life changed completely. Because of the king’s decree to gather the young virgins so he could pick a new queen, Esther was taken from her home and put into a harem. The Bible says she was “brought also unto the king’s house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women” (2:8).

There the girls “beautified” themselves for a year in hopes of becoming queen. When Esther’s turn came to see the king, her fate would be sealed. Either he would crown her or consign her to the harem where she would be confined for the rest of her life, except when he desired to see her. She was probably still a teenager, but truly her life was no longer her own; and neither she nor Mordecai could control the circumstances.

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In 1843 twelve Jewish men, each one an immigrant, met on the Lower East Side of New York City. Their purpose was to form an organization to help their own people in need—a type of mutual-aid society. The work they began has endured for more than 150 years, and today the B’nai B’rith (Children of the Covenant) is the oldest service organization among the Jewish people.

Its mission statement appears at the beginning of its constitution. B’nai B’rith has taken upon itself the mission of uniting persons of the Jewish faith in the work of promoting their highest interests and those of humanity; of developing and elevating the mental and moral character of the people of our faith; of inculcating the purest principles of philanthropy, honor, and patriotism; of supporting science and art; alleviating the wants of the poor and needy; visiting and attending the sick; coming to the rescue of victims of persecution; providing for, and protecting, and assisting the widow and orphan on the broadest principle of humanity.1

Organizing for service has long characterized the fabric of Jewish life. Even in the Bible we see how...
Moses organized the Israelites according to tribes (Num. 2:2). King David organized the Levites into twenty-four groups for spiritual ministry (1 Chr. 25:6 ff.). And in the early church, which was almost exclusively Jewish, the apostles set apart seven men to minister to the physical needs of that newborn body (Acts 6).

Throughout the world, Jewish people continue to form organizations for service. Some care for religious and spiritual needs while others minister to the physical and social needs of the Jewish people.

B’nai B’rith’s comprehensive mission statement has served it well over the years and has helped guide and focus its work. The ravages of the Civil War in America had left many Jewish children without parents. B’nai B’rith established an orphanage in Cleveland, Ohio, and the leadership of B’nai B’rith helped prevent the expulsion of Jews from some southern states.2

In 1865 B’nai B’rith contributed to the aid of people suffering from cholera in what is today Israel. When a fire devastated the city of Chicago in 1871, B’nai B’rith provided food, clothes, and medical supplies.3 At the turn of the twentieth century, when Jewish immigration to the United States was at its peak, B’nai B’rith was there to organize and assist.

B’nai B’rith has always kept pace with the needs of the people, creating simple but effective outreaches called societies. Coal societies provided coal for families who could not afford to heat their homes. Matzoh societies provided matzoh for Jews who could not afford to purchase it for Passover. Loan societies made money available—interest free—to those in financial need.4 From these emerged more extensive endeavors to help clothe the poor, feed the hungry, aid victims of such disasters as hurricanes, and help survivors of tragedies like the 1995 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City.5

Most Jewish people have always highly valued education, but they often were barred from admission to institutions of higher learning simply because they were Jewish.

Education has also been part of B’nai B’rith’s vision. One of its first projects was to build Covenant Hall in New York City, a forerunner of what we know today as the Jewish Community Center (JCC). Completed in 1851, it housed Maimonides Library, which was used as a Jewish public library.6

Educating future generations of Jewish youth has always been a major concern for many Jewish leaders. To address that issue, B’nai B’rith organized B’nai B’rith Youth Organization (B.B.Y.O.) in 1923. Chapters were started all across the country, consisting of B.B.G. (B’nai B’rith Girls) and A.Z.A. (Aleph Zadic Alef) for boys.

As a teenager, I participated in A.Z.A. Our chapter was called David, after the Israelite king. As required, an adult volunteer served as our leader and advisor. Each chapter was bound by national guidelines that outlined the various activities we could participate in. Our chapter was involved in community enrichment, fund-raising for Israel, nursing home visitation, and social and religious activities. These activities gave us a sense of pride, both as Jews and Americans. Today approximately 30,000 high school-aged people are involved in B.B.Y.O.7

Born from its desire to continue to work with students after their high school years, B’nai B’rith formed the Hillel organization to work among the college aged. Hillel first made itself available to the 400 Jewish students at the University of Illinois in 1923. Since then it has grown into the largest international Jewish campus organization in the world.

Since Bible times, persecution has been a fact of life for the Jewish people. So B’nai B’rith set up the Anti-Defamation League in 1913 to protect the Jewish people whenever they are attacked or slandered.8 Today many regard the ADL as the leading advocate in the fight against anti-Semitism in the United States.

Most Jewish people have always highly valued education, but they often were barred from admission to institutions of higher learning simply because they were Jewish. In 1880 a group of Jewish Russians received permission from the czar to start agricultural schools to train and feed Russia’s five million Jews living in poverty. The Society for Trades and Agricultural Labor was established, known the world over as ORT, the acronym for its Russian name, Obschestvo Remeslenovoi Zemledelcheskovo Trouda.9
For the next twenty-five years, in spite of an anti-Semitic Russian government, ORT successfully trained 25,000 Jews in 350 towns. After World War I, ORT expanded into other Eastern European countries. Each chapter established trade schools to train people for skilled jobs. A branch was opened in Brooklyn, New York, in 1927. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin shut ORT down in the Soviet Union in 1938; but fifty-two years later, with the collapse of Communism, it was revived in that country. Today the countries of the former Soviet Union have twenty-two ORT schools that provide much-needed technical training.10

In 1948, in the fledgling State of Israel, ORT opened a school in Tel-Aviv. At least 100,000 Jewish, Arab, and Druze students today attend 140 schools and colleges in fifty-three communities. ORT is a nonsectarian and nonpolitical organization that oversees a global network of schools teaching more than 280,000 students in more than sixty countries.11

Of all the many Jewish organizations around the world, Hadassah is perhaps the most familiar one. To appreciate Hadassah’s contribution to modern society, listen to these words of Scripture, read at the memorial of Hadassah’s founder, Henrietta Szold:

I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I broke the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the prey out of his teeth (Job 29:15–17).12

Daughter of a Baltimore rabbi, Henrietta Szold associated herself with the Daughters of Zion, a group of women interested in the establishment of a homeland for the Jewish people. She became appalled at the living conditions in Palestine when she visited there in 1912. Disease was rampant and sanitary conditions poor for both Arabs and Jews. Shortages of doctors, nurses, and hospitals exacerbated the situation.

When Henrietta Szold returned to the United States, she almost immediately began a new chapter of the Daughters of Zion. Calling it Hadassah after the Hebrew name of Queen Esther in the Bible, she embarked on a mission to raise money to send medical supplies and personnel to help the Palestinian Jews and Arabs. These women met regularly at Temple Emanu-El in New York City. In the first year, they raised $930. In 1913 the chapter sent two American public health nurses to begin a maternity center that also treated children with trachoma.13 In 1918 forty-four physicians, nurses, sanitary engineers, dentists, and administrative staff set sail for Palestine. The money was gathered with the help and sponsorship of Hadassah and the Joint Distribution Committee.14

Hadassah’s crowning achievement, however, came in 1939 with the completion of a hospital bearing its name on Mt. Scopus in Jerusalem. Yet fewer than ten years later, in 1948 during the Israeli War of Independence, tragedy struck when the Arabs massacred seventy-eight doctors and nurses as their medical bus passed through an Arab neighborhood on route to the hospital. From 1948 to 1967, the hospital found itself situated in an Arab-controlled area and was virtually cut off from the rest of Israel.

Ein Kerim, a new medical facility, was begun and completed on the west side of Jerusalem. Today Ein Kerim is a 700-bed facility that serves as a hospital and research facility dealing with bone marrow transplants; heart, lung, and liver transplants; laparoscopic surgery; cold laser surgery; and gene therapy.15 The Hadassah Hospital at Mt. Scopus now has 300 beds and serves both Jews and Arabs.

An advertisement for Hadassah appeared in the October 2000 issue of The Jerusalem Report, an international magazine. It summarized the function of the organization, now 300,000 women strong. “With hundreds of Hadassah-sponsored programs in Israel, ranging from health care to education, youth at risk, and land development, the proud volunteers of Hadassah have chosen this year, 5761, to rededicate ourselves to the Jewish state, the Jewish people and the Jewish future.”16

Interestingly, The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry was also organized to serve the Jewish people. Begun as a relief society to help Jewish people fleeing Nazi persecution in 1938, The Friends of Israel has maintained a friendship with Israel and the Jewish people for more than sixty years, and we still send various forms of aid when it is needed. Although we are an evangelical Christian organization, we are, nonetheless, unequivocally committed to helping and supporting Jewish people and their biblical, God-given right to live in the land given to their forefathers.

These are but a few of the many fine Jewish organizations that were organized for service and have benefited countless numbers of people—both Jewish and Gentile—over the years.

Steve Herzig is the Director of North American Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
One of the greatest paintings of all time is Michelangelo’s *The Last Judgment*. The entire work, painted on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel, reflects the despair of people who are marked for judgment. Though some elements of the painting may be unbiblical, its message reminds us, nevertheless, that God will surely judge those who have rejected His saving grace for a life of sin.

When the sixteenth-century painting was unveiled, a storm of conviction is said to have fallen on the viewers. Later, all Europe reportedly trembled as the work was explained from city to city through pictures.

Hosea also painted a portrait of sorts. His words vividly depicted Israel’s sinful condition. But unlike the people who saw *The Last Judgment*, the Israelites neither repented nor trembled at the message. Instead, Israel seemed to live in disbelief that judgment would soon destroy her. In chapter 9, God condemned Israel’s degrading practices, which resulted in the withdrawal of His presence and the announcement of the nation’s demise.

**Captivity Declared**

Hosea sternly reprimanded Israel for paganizing the Feast of Tabernacles. “Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, like other peoples; for thou hast played the harlot from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every threshing floor” (v.1). During the Feast of Tabernacles, Israel attributed its plentiful harvest not to God but to Baal, a Canaanite fertility deity, and participated in the licentiousness linked to Baal worship. Prostitutes frequented the threshing floor and the winepress to commit adultery with the men who guarded the grain. These sins involved wild shouting and merrymaking that degraded the character of the Feast of Tabernacles. Israel’s immorality and idolatry would result in God removing future harvests. “The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her” (v. 2). This judgment was a direct fulfillment of Moses’ prophecy before Israel entered the
land (Dt. 28:38–42, 51).

Hosea prophesied, “They shall not dwell in the LORD’s land, but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria” (v. 3). The Israelites would not literally return to Egypt but would suffer the same conditions of exile, bondage, slavery, oppression, toil, and sorrow that they experienced there. However, they would be exiled to Assyria, where they would be forced to eat “unclean things.” They had dedicated their harvest to Baal; therefore, the Lord would remove their kosher, sanctified food and make them eat unclean food that had been offered to idols. Israel would dwell in the defiled country of Assyria without a sanctuary, sacrifice, or sanctified food.

During the Assyrian captivity, all their means of worship according to the Levitical Law would be cut off. The wine offerings would cease; and should Israel attempt to offer sacrifices in Assyria, such “sacrifices shall be unto them like the bread of mourners; all that eat of it shall be polluted; for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the LORD” (v. 4). God vowed that eating such sacrifices would bring no joy or satisfaction. Instead, they would be like the unclean bread of mourners. Everything mourners touched became unclean because they had touched a dead body (Num. 19:14–15, 22). Mourners’ bread was unclean and unfit to use for worship. Therefore, all who ate of the sacrifice would become polluted as well.

Hosea proceeded to ask Israel a rhetorical question concerning her ability to celebrate the feast while living in exile: “What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the LORD?” (v. 5). Naturally, Israel’s religious calendar ceased to have significance during her captivity in Assyria. In exile she would be unable to worship. One can only imagine the condemnation the Israelites felt when their appropriate feast days arrived. Eventually Israel’s spiritual life diminished.

Hosea envisioned the great destruction that was soon to fall on Israel. The prophet knew that those who escaped death and captivity during the Assyrian siege would flee to Egypt for refuge. Hosea revealed that “Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them” (v. 6). That is, despite their escape to Egypt, they would still experience death and be buried in Memphis. Memphis was the ancient capital of Egypt on the western bank of the Nile and south of old Cairo, where Egypt buried her kings. It was, in fact, in Memphis where the Egyptians buried the Israelites who died.

The Israelites who returned to Israel after the Assyrian siege found only wasted cities. Hosea prophesied that “the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them; thorns shall be in their tabernacles” (v. 6). In other words, all their precious possessions of silver (including idols) had been confiscated; their cities, homes, and places of worship were overgrown with weeds, thorns, and thistles.

**Corruption Denounced**

Again Hosea enumerated the reasons for judgment. First, he said, “the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad” (v. 7). Some believe this prophecy expresses the people’s response to Hosea and his ministry. Others believe it is Hosea’s condemnation of Israel’s false prophets. Commentators marshal strong arguments for both interpretations. However, the context would indicate that it is Hosea’s prophecy against the false prophets of Israel. The word fool means “insane” and the word spiritual can be interpreted “wind.” In actuality, the phrase says that the words of a false prophet lack substance and are like the wind. Such a one is mad or insane. Second, Hosea said a false prophet is filled with “iniquity, and . . . great hatred” (v. 7). The people harbored extreme bitterness toward Hosea for denouncing their sins and their prophets. It stirred them to hostility and to hold grudges against Hosea and God.

In contrast to Israel’s false prophets, Hosea said, “The watchman of Ephraim was with
nation were compared to the first ripened figs—the sweetest of all fruit. These metaphors express God’s delight over Israel and His intent to do great things through the nation. But Israel abused her privileged relationship with God and pursued shameful practices of idolatry—described as an abomination.

**Children Denied**

Israel believed that by practicing pagan fertility rites, she would be guaranteed many children and bountiful crops. But God said, "As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception. Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them. Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit; yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb" (v. 11–12, 16).

Israel would lose her prosperity and become barren and sterile as quickly as a bird takes flight. She was a vibrant, fruitful land; but that blessing would be replaced by drought and dried-up crops. Though the women would conceive, their children would die through miscarriages, accidents, and disease.

Hosea compared Ephraim’s fate to that of Tyre. “Ephraim, as I saw Tyre, is planted in a pleasant place, but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer” (v. 13). God had planned for Israel to become prosperous like the city of Tyre; but like Tyre, immorality and idolatry became her downfall. God would destroy Israel as He did Tyre, and Israel’s children would be murdered during the Assyrian invasion.

Knowing that judgment was on the way, Hosea prayed that God would withhold children from Israel. “Give them, O LORD—what wilt thou give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts” (v. 14). This God did.

**Coming Dispersion**

God’s tone toward Israel turns to anger:

“All their wickedness is in Gilgal; for there I hated them. For the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more; all their princes are revolters” (v. 15).

It was in Gilgal where Israel practiced immorality and idolatry like an adulterous wife who was unfaithful to her husband. In anger, God removed His protective care from the nation and drove her from His house (the land of Israel). There was no “prince” (leader) in Israel to guide the nation back to God; the leaders had all rebelled against Him.

Israel’s fate was sealed. Hosea said, “My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations” (v. 17). God would temporarily cast Israel out of its land and make the Jewish people wander throughout the world for centuries. This 2,700-year-old prophecy foretells what we call today the Diaspora—the Jewish dispersion. It explains why the Jewish people are scattered around the globe and why they struggle to return to the land that rightfully belongs to them. What great price this nation has paid for...
Sheik Hassan Nashrallah has a suggestion for all Jewish people living in the State of Israel. Nashrallah is the secretary-general for the Hezbollah terrorist organization that operated against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon. Now that Israel has withdrawn from the Lebanese security zone, Hezbollah aspires to take its fight into Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel proper using the same tactic it employed against the Israel Defense Forces in Lebanon—attacking civilian cars, buses, and Israeli army vehicles with roadside bombs, Katsuysa rockets, and other deadly devices.

Hassan Nashrallah suggested that, in order to bring peace to the Middle East, all Jewish people should return to the countries they came from in the first place. In other words, “Get out of town and leave the country to us.” To a man who aspires to drive Israel into the sea, this may sound like a reasonable proposal. In fact, however, Nashrallah would be creating a bigger problem than he professes to solve.

In the population exchange that saw about a half million Arabs leave what became the modern State of Israel, an equal number of Jews were forced from their homes and businesses in Arab countries. What about them? Is Secretary-General Nashrallah willing to go to the leaders of these Muslim nations and ask them to welcome back their former Jewish residents? And, just as the much-talked-about Palestinian refugees have increased in number since 1948, so, too, has the number of Jewish refugees from Arab countries. That figure no doubt has risen to a million or more. Here are a few statistics that reveal how many Jews left Arab countries after 1948:

- Iraq: 121,512
- Libya: 30,500
- Yemen: 50,000
- Tunisia: 108,000
- Aden: 8,000
- Algeria: 130,000

Can anyone truly believe that the likes of Iraq’s Saddam Hussein or Libya’s Muammar Qadhafi would extend a “welcome home” to Jewish people from whom they have appropriated lands, bank accounts, and businesses? We think not. What Nashrallah is suggesting is as old as the Diaspora itself (the Jewish dispersion): Create a situation where the Jewish people wander, homeless and helpless, among the nations—except, that is, among the nations in the world of Islam. Economics and geopolitics are not the issue here. The issue is the survival of a nation and a people.

Scan the records of the treatment of Jews in Arab countries. An objective reading of history substantiates the fact that Arabs don’t want Jews living in Arab lands and for centuries have mistreated those who did. Logically speaking, you would think the Arabs would be delighted to have the Jewish people in a country of their own, conducting their own affairs. Yet people who share the fanaticism of someone like Adolph Hitler feel otherwise and, like Hitler, wish to create a Jewless world.

Hassan Nashrallah’s revealing statement should be a warning to all who profess to be negotiators in the Middle East peace process. Israel is a fact of life. Moreover, Jewry in the Middle East has no place else to go. Eventually, Jewish people everywhere may have no place else to go. And anyone who attempts to help negotiate a peace between Palestinians and Israelis must recognize that the foremost issue on the table is the security of the State of Israel.

Mr. Nashrallah will not get his wish. Israel will survive. We can only hope that the oil-craving nations of the Western world will choose principle over economic expedience and stand fast in their commitment to our only reliable democratic ally in the Middle East.
Jesus Christ and the Future Kingdom of God

(Part 12)

We have already seen two evidences that the theocratic Kingdom has been postponed until Christ’s Second Coming. This article will examine more evidences of that postponement.

The Chronology of Matthew 24—25

In Matthew 24—25, Jesus Christ presented a chronological order of future events related to His Second Coming. In Matthew 24:29–31, He taught that after the Great Tribulation, He will come as the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory and with His angels.

Matthew 25:31 refers to the same time as Matthew 24:30–31, namely, the coming of the Son of man in glory with the holy angels. Jesus declared that, at that time, the Son of man will “sit upon the throne of his glory” (Mt. 25:31, David’s throne as noted in the previous article); will reign as King; and will send righteous people into the theocratic Kingdom (v. 34).

Through this chronological order in Matthew 24—25, Christ revealed that He will not take His seat on David’s throne, reign as King, and send people into the promised Kingdom of God until He returns after the Great Tribulation. He thereby indicated that the theocratic Kingdom will not be established until His Second Coming.

The Order of Events at Christ’s Second Coming

In His parable of the tares, Christ taught the following order of events at His Second Coming: All the unsaved, meaning those who have not received Christ as Savior (the tares—“the children of the wicked one”—Mt. 13:38–39) and who are living on the earth at His Second Coming (“the end of the age,” v. 39) will be removed from the earth in judgment by the angels of the Son of man (vv. 40–42). Then all the saved (the good seed—“the children of the kingdom”—v. 38) living on the earth at Christ’s Second Coming will remain to enter the theocratic Kingdom (v. 43).

Christ taught the same order of events in His parable of the dragnet. At His Second Coming (“the end of the age,” Mt. 13:49), “the angels shall come forth, and separate the wicked from among the righteous, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (vv. 49–50).

Jesus presented this same order again in Matthew 24:37–41. There He taught that the order of events at His Second Coming after the Great Tribulation will be the same as the order of events in Noah’s day (v. 37). In Noah’s day, the flood took all the unsaved from the earth in judgment while all the saved (Noah and his family) remained to enter the next period of history (vv. 38–39). After relating this sequence, Jesus said, “so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (v. 39). At His Second Coming after the Great Tribulation, the living unsaved will be “taken” from the earth in judg-
ment; and the living saved will be “left” on the earth to enter the next period of history, the theocratic Kingdom Age (vv. 40–41).

Through these teachings, Christ indicated that at His Second Coming, all living unsaved people will be removed from the earth in judgment before the future theocratic Kingdom will be established. The fact that all unsaved people have not yet been removed in judgment prompts the conclusion that the theocratic Kingdom has not yet begun.

The Parable of Luke 19:12–27

As Jesus drew near to Jerusalem shortly before His death, He spoke a parable to His disciples “because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear” (Lk. 19:11). Christ talked about a nobleman who travelled a long distance “to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return” (v. 12). Because this journey required the nobleman to be away for an extended time, he entrusted portions of his wealth as stewardships to his servants. He ordered his servants to tend his wealth for his benefit until he returned to establish the kingdom he would receive while away. When he returned, he gave ruling positions in the government of his kingdom to the servants who had exercised their stewardships faithfully for his gain (vv. 13–24).

The nobleman in the parable represented Jesus Christ. Jesus was indicating to the disciples that He would go away to a faraway place (heaven) for an extended time to receive the future theocratic Kingdom. When He had it, He would return to earth to establish it. Thus the theocratic Kingdom of God would not be established immediately but would be postponed until His Second Coming.

The Daniel 7 Prophecy

Two parts of the prophecy recorded in Daniel 7:9–27 also signify that the Kingdom will not be established until the Second Coming.

First, in verses 9–14, Daniel saw God the Father (the Ancient of days) give the Messiah the following:

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his...
The book of the Revelation presents the following order of events:

1. Christ’s Second Coming to earth to destroy the political and military forces of Satan’s domain (19:11–21);
2. The imprisonment of Satan in the bottomless pit for one thousand years (20:1–3); and
3. The theocratic-Kingdom reign of Christ for one thousand years (20:4–6).

Two facts should be noted in light of this order.

First, this order indicates that the theocratic-Kingdom will not be established until Satan and his rule of the world system have been removed from the earth. We know that Satan and his rule were not removed while Christ was on earth in His First Coming or when He sat down at the right hand of God in heaven because of the following:

1. Years after Christ ascended to heaven, Paul taught that Satan was still “the god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4); and
2. John declared that the whole world was still lying under the control of “the wicked one” (1 Jn. 5:19).

Thus, the theocratic Kingdom was not established during Christ’s First Coming or when He sat down at the right hand of God in heaven.

Second, this order in Revelation indicates that the theocratic Kingdom will not be established until the Second Coming of Christ.

The evidences here and in previous articles consistently prompt the same conclusion: The theocratic Kingdom of God is yet to come. It was not established with the nation of Israel at Christ’s First Coming.

The Chronological Order of Revelation

The restoration of nature will take place after the Great Tribulation, when Christ returns to earth.

When the armies of all the nations of the world will come against Jerusalem, the Messiah will come out of heaven.

The Restoration of Nature

Also in an earlier article, I noted that Christ taught that nature will be restored to its pre-fall condition when He, as the Son of man, “shall sit on the throne of his glory” and the apostles “shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mt. 19:28). In Luke 22:28–30, Christ revealed that the apostles will “sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” in His “kingdom.” Together these passages indicate that the restoration of nature will not take place until Christ and the apostles sit on thrones to rule the world in the future theocratic Kingdom.

The fact that nature has not yet been restored to its pre-fall condition prompts the conclusion that Christ is not seated on the throne of His glory and, therefore, the theocratic Kingdom has not yet been established.

A comparison of Matthew 25:31 with 24:29–31 indicates that Christ will not sit on the “throne of his glory” until His Second Coming after the Great Tribulation. Thus the theocratic Kingdom will not be established until His Second Coming after the Great Tribulation.
Israel in the News

For more Israel in the News, updated at least twice each week, visit our Web site at www.foigm.org or www.foi.org.

Israel may face major water crisis

Israel needs 528 billion gallons of water annually to survive. But if things stay as they are, the Jewish nation will run out of fresh water in fifteen years, according to Ronald S. Lauder, president of the Jewish National Fund (JNF).

According to a JNF advertisement in the December 18 issue of The Jerusalem Report, Israel may have only until 2015 before “there will be no more fresh water in the cities to drink or to bathe in. No more recycled water for agriculture. Industry will cease. Wildlife will die. The wells will turn sour, the lakes will be empty, the rivers and streams gone.”

The JNF wants to spend $250 million to build 100 more reservoirs that will supply 40 billion gallons of water to the people of Israel. According to the ad, Israel is running a 53-billion-gallon water deficit. It requires 528 billion gallons, but only has 475 billion gallons of fresh water. Even Lake Kinneret—the Sea of Galilee—is running a deficit. It requires 528 billion gallons, but only has 475 billion gallons of fresh water. Even Lake Kinneret—the Sea of Galilee—is running a deficit. It requires 528 billion gallons, but only has 475 billion gallons of fresh water. Even Lake Kinneret—the Sea of Galilee—is running a deficit. It requires 528 billion gallons, but only has 475 billion gallons of fresh water. Even Lake Kinneret—the Sea of Galilee—is running a deficit. It requires 528 billion gallons, but only has 475 billion gallons of fresh water.

Israel aims to put more Israeli Arabs into high-tech jobs

Motorola, Microsoft, and NetVision were among the participants at a conference in Herzliya designed to promote putting university-educated Arab Israelis into Israel’s high-tech industry. The industry currently employs more than 70,000 people, only 300 of which are Arab Israelis.

According to Ha'aretz, an Israeli newspaper, high unemployment among Arab-Israeli university graduates is making younger Arabs feel it is useless to attend college. Ha'aretz reported that Mohammad Zuabi, the Jewish-Arab center’s technology coordinator, said Israel could place at least 1,000 Arabs into high-tech positions without having to train them.

Palestinians attack Israel’s chief rabbi

The Jerusalem Post—Israel’s Chief Rabbi Meir Lau and his driver narrowly escaped an ambush recently by Palestinian gunmen who riddled with automatic gunfire the bus the two were traveling in after dedicating a new Torah scroll at a yeshiva in the West Bank settlement of Ateret.

The bus was armor-plated, but the bullets shattered the windows and sent shrapnel and shards of glass splattering through the first row of seats. Lau and his personal driver had taken second-row seats and were not injured. The bus driver was also unhurt.

Lau said the Israel Defense Forces had asked him to leave his car at a junction and take the armored bus for safety reasons. He sat in the front seat on the way to Kinor David Yeshiva, but chose the second row for the return ride.

“It was dusk,” said Rabbi Lau. “The bus was empty, but a superior power guided me and I took the second-row seat.”

Palestinian snipers improving their aim

The Jerusalem Post—Within the space of a few days, an 18-year-old settler in a moving car was shot dead from 300 meters and an Israeli soldier and officer were similarly killed by long-range fire in two separate incidents. Palestinian sharpshooters reportedly use Russian Dragunov sniper rifles, with an effective range exceeding 700 meters.

“The Palestinian snipers have improved amazingly since the beginning of the riots, and that is very disturbing,” said one Israeli official.

According to Israeli intelligence, Palestinian spies gather three weeks to six months and fined $666 each for entering Israel. Many of those convicted also were fined $266.

Military verdicts cannot be appealed. Since June 2000, one month after the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) pulled out of the southern security zone known as “The Good Fence,” Lebanon has sentenced more than 1,600 people to jail terms of up to twenty years for “collaborating” with Israel.

The Associated Press has reported that at least ten former SLA militiamen have been sentenced to death (in absentia) for killing Lebanese guerrillas who were fighting the IDF in south Lebanon. The SLA once numbered 2,500. According to the Associated Press, some 2,200 fighters surrendered to Lebanese authorities or were captured after the Israeli withdrawal, whereas others fled to Israel with their families.

Lebanon is technically at war with Israel and forbids contact with the Jewish state.

Lebanon to jail 78 militiamen for helping Israel

Seventy-eight members of the South Lebanese Army (SLA) who helped Israel maintain stability along the border of Israel and South Lebanon have been sentenced to prison by a Lebanese military court.

According to The Associated Press, five persons received sentences of three years at hard labor, while seven were given...
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Many people here live with horrifying memories of the Holocaust. They came here to find peace. But with the unrest in Israel today, the terrible fear they lived with in Europe has returned to them. The nations surrounding us are trying hard to destroy us and are singing the same songs we remember from the Holocaust but in a different language.

_Etbaḥ ēl Yehud! Ermiyum ēl bahar!_ “Butcher the Jews! Cast them into the sea!”

People who are far from the Lord are terrified. So I often go to them to encourage them—not with fictitious stories but with the Word of God. I show them passages, such as Deuteronomy 7:17–18 where it is written,

> If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them? Thou shalt not be afraid of them, but shalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt.

What happened in Egypt at the time of Moses is much the same as what is happening today. When I was in the army in 1948, the enemy came against us like the swarm of locusts in Egypt, trying to cast us into the sea. The Arabs were sure they would win without even a fight. They believed they would destroy us easily and march triumphantly into Jerusalem because they were so many in number and we were only half a million and had no weapons.

But God is the same today as He was centuries ago. I want people here to understand this fact, so I teach them from the Bible. I show them Exodus 15:4–22 where the Bible teaches how Pharaoh’s big army was hurled into the sea and the Lord covered Himself with glory. They must believe the Bible, or they will live in fear forever.

I spoke with a group of people a few days ago. Many of them have started reading the book of Psalms every day. Unfortunately, most of them read only with their lips, not with their hearts. So I read them Psalm 118:8–9 to encourage them to trust the Lord, not man.

> At first they thought I was from a political party. “We have listened so much to you,” they said. “But now we want to know, Who are you? Whom are you representing? Which party?”

I told them I represent the Lord and that I go to people who are at a crossroads and are looking for direction. I want to help them find the right way. I am not from a political party but have come to my people to teach them about God’s salvation. Then the questions started coming.

> “How can you speak about faith?” they asked. “You come here and do not even have your head covered.”
“What is on my head is not important,” I said. “What is in my heart is what matters. I come before the Lord with an open heart. A hat will not bring salvation or forgiveness of sin.” I showed them Ezekiel 36:24–31 where God says He will give them a new heart and put a new Spirit within them.

But this was not good enough. They still wanted to know who I was. I had to be careful. You cannot come to people here like a big wind and blow them over. You must come gently. So I read to them from Isaiah 53 and verses from the prophet Zechariah, so they could see for themselves whom I was speaking about. This is the best way to bring the gospel of Christ to these people.

They could not tell me that I was lying because I showed them that all the words I was reading were from the Bible itself, not from brochures or pamphlets. They saw everything in black and white. Then I read to them from Jeremiah 31:34, where it is written,

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

We had a good conversation, and they told me their doors are always open to me. I plan to return and speak to them again and help them see that God will remove their sin and their fear if they place their trust in Jesus the Messiah.

But God intervened. In His divine sovereignty, He picked Esther, positioned her, protected her, and prospered her. In addition, He gave her five years to mature into her new life before He used her courage and intelligence to deliver His people from destruction.

Sadly, Esther was queen for only eight years more. In 465 B.C., when she was probably around thirty years old, Ahasuerus died. Secular records do not mention her. We never learn if she bore children, how long she lived, or how she died. But the king who succeeded Xerxes was Artaxerxes who, eight years later, (457 B.C.) let Ezra the scribe return to Jerusalem and after twelve more years, gave Nehemiah permission to rebuild the city’s walls. Truly, Esther had been appointed “for such a time as this” (4:14).

Sometimes we look at our lives and have no idea why certain things befall us. We have no control over our circumstances and no power to change them. It is then we, too, should love the sovereignty of God. For in the sovereignty of the One who laid the foundations of the earth (Job 38:4), who makes the earth tremble at His presence (Ps. 114:7), and who loves us so profoundly that He gave His only begotten Son for us (Jn. 3:16), there is rest. The Lord has a purpose for everything, and He will work everything out for our ultimate good and His ultimate glory. He is unquestionably in control, and wrapped in our love of His sovereignty lies the unsurpassing peace of life in Christ.

Lorna Simcox is Senior Editor for The Friends of Israel.